

A Comparative Study on Wedding Invitation Card Genre in Indonesian and American Contexts: A Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

Wedding invitations are complex cultural artifacts that encode societal values and social hierarchies, yet they are often overlooked as mere functional announcements. In culturally distant contexts like Indonesia and the United States, differences in religious orientation and social organization create a gap in how marriage is discursively constructed, necessitating a systematic comparative study. This study aims to compare Indonesian and American wedding invitation cards to investigate how cultural differences shape their genre conventions. The method employed Swales' (1990) genre analysis framework, sampling ten invitations per context through maximum variation sampling and conducting an in-depth analysis of representative exemplars. The findings reveal that Indonesian invitations consistently feature seven obligatory moves religious invocations, hierarchical kinship naming, ceremony details, and prayer-based closures reflecting collectivist values and high-context communication. In contrast, American invitations typically comprise five to six moves, emphasizing individualistic agency and logistical efficiency. These results demonstrate how genre structures act as powerful vehicles for cultural ideology, revealing the profound ideological weight carried by these routine documents. This study also concludes that standardized genres remain culturally contingent, adapting their rhetorical form to serve the specific values of their producing communities.

Keywords: *comparative study, genre analysis, wedding invitations, cross-cultural discourse analysis*

1. INTRODUCTION

Wedding invitations occupy a distinctive position in the landscape of written communication as documents that simultaneously fulfill practical, social, and symbolic functions. While their ostensible purpose appears straightforward to inform prospective guests about the logistical details of a wedding ceremony these texts operate as far more complex cultural artifacts. They encode deeply embedded societal values, negotiate family relationships, express religious identities, and communicate social hierarchies through carefully selected linguistic and structural features. The challenge confronting scholars of discourse analysis lies in understanding how wedding invitations function not merely as informational documents but as genre-specific performances of cultural identity.

Understanding wedding invitations requires careful attention to how cultural elements are represented and communicated through textual features. As research on cultural representation in Indonesian contexts has demonstrated, texts do not merely reflect culture but actively construct and transmit cultural meanings through their linguistic and structural choices. The ways in which source culture, target culture, and global cultural elements intersect within textual materials reveal complex negotiations of identity and values (Jismulatif & Putri, 2023). In the case of wedding invitations, these cultural negotiations become particularly visible as couples and families navigate between traditional expectations and contemporary practices, between local customs and global influences, and between collective family identities and individual couple autonomy. This cultural complexity is especially pronounced in comparative contexts such as Indonesia and the United States, where fundamental differences in religious orientation, social organization, and communication norms shape how wedding invitations are constructed and interpreted.

The issue becomes particularly compelling when examining wedding invitations across culturally distant contexts. Indonesia, as a predominantly Muslim nation characterized by collectivist social structures and high-context communication norms, constructs wedding invitations in ways that fundamentally differ from the United States, where individualist values and low-context communication practices prevail. These differences manifest not only in surface-level linguistic choices but in the very architecture of the genre itself in which moves are included, how they are sequenced, what linguistic resources realize each move, and how agency is distributed among divine authority, family structures, and individual actors.

The discourse practices evident in wedding invitations reflect broader patterns of how language functions in culturally specific contexts. Recent scholarship on multilingual discourse has illuminated how linguistic choices serve pedagogical and communicative functions that extend beyond mere information transmission. In multilingual contexts, the strategic deployment of different languages and registers accomplishes important social and identity work, positioning speakers and writers within particular cultural frameworks while negotiating relationships with multiple linguistic communities (Jismulatif et al., 2024).

Several specific issues emerge when examining wedding invitation discourse cross-culturally. First, there exists the question of religious expression and its positioning within the invitation's rhetorical structure. Indonesian wedding invitations routinely open with Islamic devotional phrases such as "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim" (In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful) and "Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh" (Peace be upon you and God's mercy and blessings), immediately establishing the sacred nature of the marriage covenant. These expressions are not merely decorative or optional; they constitute obligatory genre moves that signal the couple's religious identity and frame marriage as a divinely sanctioned institution rather than solely a social contract.

In contrast, American wedding invitations typically omit explicit religious references in their opening moves, instead prioritizing host identification and formal invitation language. While some American couples include religious elements particularly in faith-based communities these are generally positioned as optional moves rather than foundational genre requirements. This difference raises critical questions about how

religious discourse functions within wedding invitation genres and what cultural-ideological work these textual choices perform.

Second, the issue of family representation versus individual agency presents a fundamental tension in wedding invitation discourse. Indonesian invitations characteristically employ hierarchical name presentations that foreground parental lineage, often formatting this information as "Adelia, putri dari Bapak Adriana dan Ibu Giri Novianti" (Adelia, daughter of Mr. Adriana and Mrs. Giri Novianti). This formulation accomplishes multiple social functions: it demonstrates filial respect, acknowledges family heritage, validates the union through parental authority, and positions the wedding as an alliance between two families rather than merely two individuals. The use of honorific titles such as "Bapak" and "Ibu" further reinforces social hierarchies and conveys linguistic politeness that aligns with Indonesian cultural norms of respect toward elders.

American invitations tend to foreground the couple's individual names with minimal or simplified family attribution. While traditional formats may begin with parental names (e.g., "Mr. and Mrs. Henry Milan request the honor of your presence"), contemporary American invitations increasingly adopt couple-centric formulations that emphasize the individuals entering marriage rather than the families being joined. This shift reflects broader sociocultural changes in American conceptions of marriage as a companionate partnership based on romantic love and individual choice rather than arranged familial alliances.

Third, the structural organization of ceremony information reveals divergent cultural conceptualizations of the wedding event itself. Indonesian Muslim weddings distinguish between the Akad Nikah (Islamic marriage contract ceremony) and the Resepsi (reception celebration), with invitations carefully delineating these as separate events occurring at different times and sometimes different locations. The Akad Nikah receives priority placement in the invitation's informational hierarchy, signaling its religious and legal significance as the moment when the marriage is officially contracted under Islamic law. The reception, while important for social celebration, occupies secondary textual space. This structural prioritization communicates that the sacred dimension of marriage takes precedence over its celebratory aspects.

American wedding invitations typically present ceremony and reception as a unified sequence, often using transitional phrases such as "Reception to follow" without the structural separation observed in Indonesian invitations. This integration reflects a conception of the wedding as a holistic celebratory event rather than as distinct sacred and social components. The emphasis falls on the temporal flow and guest experience, prioritizing convenience and clarity in a way that aligns with low-context communication norms where information must be explicitly stated rather than culturally inferred.

Fourth, formality registers and politeness strategies manifest differently across these contexts, reflecting deeper patterns of how discourse operates within specific cultural frameworks. The selection of appropriate registers, the deployment of honorific systems, and the structuring of information all constitute strategic linguistic choices that accomplish important social work. Just as multilingual speakers strategically draw on different linguistic resources to construct meaning and manage social relationships in educational and communicative contexts, wedding invitation authors select from available cultural and linguistic resources to position their events appropriately within social hierarchies and

value systems. Indonesian invitations consistently maintain elevated formal registers throughout their textual components, employing elaborate ceremonial language that stresses the solemnity and significance of the occasion. This formality extends to venue descriptions, which often incorporate honorific language and deferential expressions. The language choices signal not only respect for the institution of marriage but also for the guests being invited, positioning them as valued community members whose presence confers blessing and legitimacy upon the union.

American invitations demonstrate greater variability in formality levels, with traditional formats maintaining high formality through expressions such as "request the honor of your presence" while contemporary variations may adopt more casual registers. This variability itself reflects American cultural tensions between tradition and modernity, formality and authenticity, social convention and individual expression. The optional RSVP move, typically rendered as "RSVP by date," exemplifies American pragmatic orientation it serves the practical function of facilitating event planning while demonstrating negative politeness by giving guests autonomy in their response while still requesting timely confirmation.

These issues have been partially addressed in existing scholarship on wedding invitation discourse, though significant gaps remain. Early foundational work by (Isaacs & Clark, 1990) established that wedding invitations must fulfill certain fundamental communicative criteria: they must specify the time and location of the event and include a mechanism for guest response. While this provides a baseline understanding of the genre's functional requirements, it does not account for how these requirements are culturally inflected or how additional moves beyond these basics encode social meanings.

In addition, (Kristina & Saptaningsih, 2019a) examined the evolutionary aspects of Javanese printed wedding invitations, documenting how these texts have changed over time in response to social transformations. Their diachronic analysis revealed that genre conventions are not static but rather evolve alongside shifting definitions of marriage, family, and social propriety. Then , (Sri Dewi Mulyani et al., 2024) analyzed Indonesian wedding invitations more generally, identifying distinctive features such as hierarchical name presentations, religious expressions, and elaborate ceremonial language. These studies documented the prevalence of Islamic devotional phrases, Quranic verses, and family-oriented formulations in Indonesian wedding invitations, though they remained primarily descriptive rather than offering systematic cross-cultural comparisons.

The present study addresses these gaps through several novel contributions. First, it provides the first systematic comparative analysis of Indonesian and American wedding invitation cards using (Swales, 1996) genre analysis framework applied consistently across both contexts. This comparative approach enables direct examination of how cultural values manifest in genre conventions. Second, the study explicitly analyzes agency distribution, formality markers, and religious elements as they function within each cultural context, revealing how these linguistic features encode different cultural logics. Third, by employing maximum variation sampling followed by typical case sampling, the study addresses methodological concerns about representativeness that have limited previous research.

Furthermore, this research demonstrates how attention to cultural representation in texts examining how source, target, and global cultural elements intersect and are

negotiated illuminates the complex work that wedding invitations accomplish in positioning couples and families within local traditions while responding to global influences. Similarly, attention to how linguistic resources are strategically deployed to accomplish social and communicative functions reveals that wedding invitations, like other discourse forms, serve multiple purposes simultaneously: they inform, they position, they construct relationships, they perform identity, and they transmit cultural values. Given these gaps in existing research and the novelty of the proposed contributions, this study is designed to address the following research questions:

1. What typical textual and structural features can be identified in Indonesian and American wedding invitation cards?
2. What are the differences in linguistic features related to agency, formality, and religious elements between Indonesian and American wedding invitation cards?

2. METHOD

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative comparative research design focused on genre analysis. To ensure a rigorous investigation, the methodology integrates Swales' (1990) Move-Step Analysis with Bhatia's (1993) multidimensional genre framework. This dual approach allows the study to move beyond surface-level textual mapping toward a deep sociopragmatic interpretation of wedding invitations. While Swales' model provides the mechanism for identifying the "rhetorical architecture" (moves and steps), Bhatia's framework facilitates the deconstruction of the underlying cultural ideologies and agency.

Research Contexts and Participant

In terms of participants, the study focused on wedding invitations themselves as primary texts. The Indonesian invitations collected for this study originated from Muslim families across several regions in Indonesia, representing a range of socio-economic backgrounds, levels of religious observance, and design preferences from traditional calligraphic formats to more contemporary digital layouts. The American invitations were sourced from English-speaking, predominantly secular households across different states. The selection of one representative exemplar for in-depth analysis is methodologically grounded in Typical Case Sampling (Patton, 2015). This approach is sufficient as the exemplar was identified by cross-referencing its structural moves against the broader corpus, ensuring it embodies the 'central tendencies' of the genre. As noted by Swales (1990), once the prototypical move structure is established, a micro-level analysis of a single representative text provides more profound insights into the socio-pragmatic functions and cultural ideologies than a superficial survey of multiple identical texts.

Table 1. sample of invitation from Indonesia and United States

Sample	Country	Province / States
S1	Indonesia	Jawa Barat
S2	Indonesia	Riau/Sumatra
S3	Indonesia	DKI Jakarta
S4	Indonesia	Jawa Tengah
S5	Indonesia	Sulawesi
S6	Indonesia	Kalimantan

S7	Indonesia	Sumatra Barat
S8	Indonesia	Digital platform
S9	Indonesia	Banten
S10	Indonesia	Sumatra Utara
S11	United States	New York
S12	United States	California
S13	United States	Texas
S14	United States	Illinois
S15	United States	Florida
S16	United States	Washington
S17	United States	Massachusetts
S18	United States	Georgia
S19	United States	Colorado
S20	United States	Digital platform

The selection of sample 2 (Riau, Sumatra) and sample 14 (Illinois) as the primary units of analysis was strategically grounded in Typical Case Sampling to illustrate the "central tendencies" and normative conventions within the wedding invitation genre of both nations. According to Patton's (2015) methodological framework, an in-depth analysis of typical cases is robust when the samples serve as prototypes that encapsulate the essential features of a broader corpus. The validity of this selection was reinforced through a rigorous preliminary screening of twenty documents which confirmed that sample 2 consistently manifested the seven obligatory moves reflective of Indonesia's high-context culture, while sample 14 captured the logistical precision and individual agency characteristic of "General American" standards in the Midwest. From the perspective of Swales' (1990) Genre Architecture, focusing on these prototypical texts allowed for a precise deconstruction of the "rhetorical genetics" and structural integrity of the genre, surpassing the limitations of a superficial survey of redundant data. Furthermore, aligned with Bhatia's (1993) conceptualization of genre as social action, the utilization of the Riau and Illinois samples effectively unveiled the profound sociocultural ideological contrasts ranging from theological-collective agency to secular-individual autonomy that govern social practices within these respective communities.

Data Collection

The research corpus comprises twenty wedding invitations with ten samples collected from each cultural context. Data were gathered through purposive sampling guided by the maximum variation principle (Patton, 2015) to capture a broad spectrum of socio-economic statuses, geographic locations, and degrees of religious observance. Following the initial collection, the researchers employed typical case sampling to select one representative exemplar from each context for micro-level analysis: IDN-02 (Riau, Sumatra) representing a modern-classic Indonesian style, and USA-14 (Illinois) representing a standard formal American format. These specific regions were selected as they serve as "cultural prototypes"; Riau characterizes the high-context, collectivist, and religious norms of Indonesia, while Illinois represents the "General American" standard of low-context communication and individualistic agency. The identification and coding of rhetorical moves followed a systematic three-stage operational procedure grounded in Swales' (1990) Genre Analysis. Initially, the researchers conducted semantic-functional mapping and identified linguistic signaling such as formulaic expressions and honorifics to

segment the texts into discrete moves and steps. To ensure analytical rigor, an iterative re-coding process was performed after a two-week interval to verify consistency. Furthermore, the analysis was validated through Investigator Triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), involving independent double-coding by the researchers and a negotiated consensus mechanism to resolve any interpretive discrepancies. This rigorous selection and validation process ensures that the chosen exemplars are not merely idiosyncratic samples but are methodologically principled "central tendencies" that accurately reflect the sociocultural ideologies of their respective communities.

Data Analysis

The analytical framework applied in this study draws primarily from (Swales, 1996) genre analysis theory, which conceptualizes genre in terms of communicative purpose and move structure that is, the identifiable rhetorical units that together constitute a genre and enable it to accomplish its social functions. This framework was supplemented by insights from Bhatia (1993), whose work on professional and institutional genres provides practical tools for analyzing how texts simultaneously conform to and deviate from generic norms. Additional methodological guidance was drawn from prior studies on wedding invitation discourse, particularly (Eslami et al., 2016) and (Yasmin et al., 2019), whose work on Iranian and Pakistani contexts offered comparable analytical categories.

The analysis was organized around three interrelated levels. At the structural level, each invitation was examined for its sequential organization of information that is, the moves present, their ordering, and their relative elaboration or compression. At the linguistic level, the analysis attended to lexical choices, register, honorifics, formulaic expressions, and the construction of agency specifically, who is grammatically positioned as the social actor initiating the invitation (Fairclough, 2003) At the visual and symbolic level, elements such as religious imagery, color palettes, typography, and the presence or absence of Arabic script or Quranic verses were examined for their cultural and semiotic significance., the presence or absence of Arabic script and Quranic verses was examined not merely as decorative elements, but for their profound cultural and semiotic significance in establishing religious authority. As argued by (Al-Ali, 2006) these linguistic and visual markers serve as a 'Religious Invocation' move that reinforces the spiritual legitimacy of the marriage contract within high-context Muslim societies like Indonesia, a feature that is characteristically absent in the more secular-logistical American invitations.

To facilitate systematic comparison, the analytical findings were organized into structured tables documenting the presence, phrasing, and function of each genre move across the two national contexts. This tabular representation served both as an organizational tool during analysis and as a transparency mechanism allowing readers to trace the interpretive basis of the study's conclusions.

Coding was conducted iteratively by two researchers working independently on the same corpus, consistent with the principle of investigator triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) Each researcher first coded the invitations individually, generating lists of moves and linguistic features; the two independently produced coding schemes were then compared, discrepancies were discussed, and consensus was reached through negotiation. This process of collaborative refinement significantly reduced the risk of interpretive bias and strengthened the internal validity of the analysis. Data triangulation was further achieved through the diversified sourcing strategy described in the data collection section.

Throughout the analytical process, analytical decisions were recorded in a reflexive audit trail, providing a basis for potential replication and enhancing the study's overall trustworthiness (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

In addition, the systematic identification and categorization of linguistic features in this study were informed by prior research on lexical analysis in translation studies, particularly the work of Kasriyati et al. (2019), which demonstrates the importance of structured error classification and rater validation in ensuring analytical rigor. Although the present study does not focus on lexical errors, the methodological emphasis on transparent coding procedures and cross-checking mechanisms provides relevant support for the reliability of discourse-based linguistic analysis.

3. FINDINGS

A. Typical Textual and Structural Features

1. Indonesian Wedding Invitation Cards

Picture 1. Indonesian Wedding Invitation Cards



The figure shown above represents a selected Indonesian wedding invitation card used as the study's research data. During the analytical procedure, the visual information from this invitation was immediately transformed into a tabular analytical format as follow:

Table 1. Indonesian Wedding Invitation Cards (1)

No.	Component/Move	Example Phrase
1	Opening	“In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,” “Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh”
2	Heading	“With the blessings and permission of Allah, we would like to invite you...”
3	Names of Couple & Family	“Adelia (daughter of Mr. Adriana & Mrs. Giri Novianti)”
4	Ceremony Details	“Sunday, May 19, 2024, Akad Nikah: 8:00 AM at our residence”
5	Reception & Venue	“Reception: 11:00 AM, Edelweiss Hall, Sport Club Palembang”
6	Additional Information	“Please confirm your attendance, parking is available”
7	Closing	“We kindly ask for your prayers and blessings. Wassalamualaikum. The families of...”

The data presented above is the result of converting visual information from images into tables that display the distinctive textual and structural features of Indonesian and American wedding invitations cards. These tables outline the main components (moves) typically found in wedding invitations from both countries with provided phrases for each component. The analysis of Indonesian wedding invitations reveals a genre structure that is

both elaborate and deeply embedded in religious and familial conventions (Kristina & Saptaningsih, 2019b). The invitations typically consist of the following moves:

Religious Opening:

Most invitations commence with Islamic phrases such as “In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful” or “Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh,” establishing a solemn and sacred tone (Al-Ali, 2006)

Spiritual Heading:

This section often contains Quranic verses or invocations, situating the event within a religious context and emphasizing divine blessing (Sari & Widodo, 2019).

Names of Couple and Family:

The names of the bride and groom are accompanied by those of their parents, reflecting the collectivist nature of Indonesian society and the importance placed on lineage and family reputation (Nilep, 2010)

Ceremony Details:

Invitations provide detailed information about the Akad Nikah (religious ceremony) and the reception, often including both Hijri and Gregorian dates, times, and venues.

Reception and Venue:

Detailed descriptions, often with honorifics such as "di kediaman Bapak/Ibu," signal hierarchical respect and hospitality (Hall, 1976).

Additional Information:

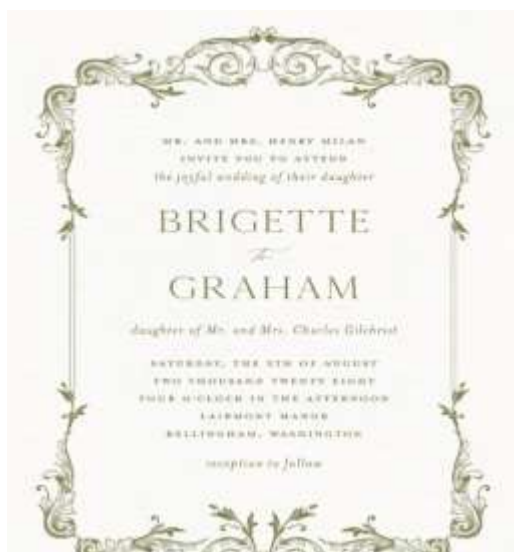
This section may include RSVP instructions, parking details, or dress code, presented with courteous and formal phrasing.

Prayer-Based Closing:

The invitation often ends with a prayer for blessings and gratitude, reinforcing the sacred and communal nature of the event. This structure aligns with Swales’ (1990) genre theory, which posits that genres are shaped by the communicative purposes and socio-cultural values of their discourse communities.

2. American Wedding Invitation Cards

Picture 2. American Wedding Invitation Cards (2)



The image presented above is a sample of an American wedding invitation card that has been selected as the research object. In the analysis process, the visual data from the invitation card was directly converted into an analytical table format without going through symbolic or semiotic interpretation stages below.

Table 2. American Wedding Invitation Card (2)

No.	Component/Move	Example Phrase
1	Inviters' Names	"Mr. and Mrs. Henry Milan"
2	Invitation Text	"request the honor of your presence at the marriage of their daughter"
3	Couple's Names	"Brigette to Graham"
4	Ceremony Details	"Saturday, June 30, 2013 at 2:00 PM, Shirley Acres, Houston, TX"
5	Reception	"Reception to follow"
6	Other Optional Moves	"RSVP by May 10th"

Agency:

In Indonesian invitations, agency is distributed collectively among God, the family, and the couple (e.g., “With the blessings and permission of Allah, we would like to invite you...”), emphasizing humility and collective will (Kristina & Saptaningsih, 2019; Fairclough, 2003).

Formality:

The language is highly formal, featuring religious salutations and respectful expressions, which underscore the importance of the occasion and the hierarchical nature of social relations (Yasmin et al., 2019) American wedding invitations, in contrast, exhibit a more streamlined and minimalist structure ((Bhatia, 1993; (Al-Zubaidi, 2017), typically including:

Inviters’ Names:

The card opens with the names of the hosts, most commonly the bride’s parents.

Formal Invitation Statement:

Phrases such as “request the honor of your presence” are used, conveying formality while remaining concise (Amjad & Riaz, 2020).

Names of the Couple:

Both individuals’ names are clearly stated, reflecting the individualistic orientation of American society.

Ceremony Details:

Straightforward mention of date, time, and location, with a focus on logistical clarity.

Reception Details:

Information such as "Reception to follow" is included, but with less elaboration than in Indonesian invitations.

Optional Moves:

RSVP requests or dress codes, when present, are brief and to the point. The genre moves in American invitations prioritize efficiency and guest convenience, resonating with low-context communication norms (Hall, 1976). The Indonesian invitations’ emphasis on religious and familial elements highlights the collectivist, high-context nature of Indonesian society (Hofstede, 2001; Hall, 1976). The elaborate structure not only conveys logistical details but also serves to reaffirm communal and spiritual bonds. Conversely, American invitations reflect low-context, individualistic values, focusing on clarity, brevity, and guest autonomy (Bhatia, 1993; Georgakopoulou, 2019). These findings support Swales’s (1990) argument that genres are deeply intertwined with the cultural values and communication practices of their communities.

B. Analysis of Agency, Formality, and Structural Organization**1. Indonesian Wedding Invitation Data****Structure and Content:**

The invitations are detailed, with explicit sections for religious opening, couple and family names, ceremony and reception details, additional instructions, and a prayerful closing.

2. American Wedding Invitation Data

Agency:

Agency is typically vested in the parents (e.g., “Mr. and Mrs. Henry Milan request the honor of your presence...”), reflecting a more secular and individualistic framework (Amjad & Riaz, 2020)

Formality:

While formal, the tone is neutral and direct, with less emphasis on religious references or elaborate courtesies (Brown et al., 1987)

Structure and Content:

The structure is concise, often limited to the names of hosts, the couple, event particulars, and optional RSVP, with minimal ornamentation.

The findings reveal fundamental contrasts in the expression of agency, formality, and structural organization. Indonesian invitations reflect a collectivist ethos, where religious and family authorities play a central role (Kashef et al., 2014) The high degree of formality and religious language signifies respect and spiritual legitimacy, supporting Hall’s (1976) high-context theory and (Hofstede, 2001) collectivism index.

American invitations, in contrast, demonstrate agency that is parent- or couple-centered, with communication characterized by clarity and pragmatism. The formal, yet direct, structure minimizes hierarchical expression and religious references, consistent with the low-context, individualistic orientation of American society (Bhatia, 1993; Hall, 1989)). This approach is further supported by (Brown & Levinson, 1987) politeness theory, as American invitations often employ negative politeness strategies, such as RSVP requests, to respect guest autonomy.

The genre moves and linguistic strategies observed in Indonesian invitations correspond closely with research by (Sri Dewi Mulyani et al., 2024) and Eslami et al. (2016), who found that Islamic expression and familial collectivism are central to Indonesian wedding discourse. Similarly, studies by (Al-Zubaidi, 2017) confirms that American wedding invitations prioritize efficiency, guest convenience, and individual recognition.

Overall, the contrasts between Indonesian and American wedding invitations underscore the foundational role of culture in shaping genre conventions. The detailed, religiously framed, and family-oriented structure of Indonesian invitations stands in marked contrast to the concise, secular, and guest-centered approach of American cards.

C. Analysis of Formal and Religious Opening in Indonesian Wedding Invitations

The Indonesian wedding invitations under investigation consistently displayed a preliminary statement at the commencement of the written portion. Analysis demonstrated that invitations routinely began with two distinct Islamic expressions: a devotional reference to the divine and a welcoming greeting emphasizing peace. Such conventions correspond closely with Indonesia's social fabric as a nation predominantly shaped by Islamic faith and practice.

The language choice for this opening move demonstrates interesting variation. The Bismillah maintains standard presentation in both Arabic characters and Romanized text, though particular invitations add Indonesian meanings to enhance accessibility. Modern couples typically select simplified religious introductions combined with current design features, while conventionally-minded pairs favor ornate Arabic calligraphy and more

extensive scriptural passages in the heading section. Sacred passages receive prominent placement in the heading section, emphasizing the spiritual weight of these invitations. This practice reveals the profound impact of Muslim principles on Indonesian matrimonial customs, presenting marriage as a sacred covenant rather than merely a communal celebration. Every invitation examined contained these religious features, confirming their vital role as faith-based and cultural standards that persist regardless of income level, region, or individual design choices. Within Indonesian wedding invitations, the heading area serves dual religious and communicative functions, typically appearing as the second primary section following the opening invocation. Two linked components comprise this section: a Quranic reference and the invitation language. While Iranian invitations often specify the event through standard expressions, Indonesian invitations position these details within a devotionally oriented message. Each Indonesian invitation reviewed featured a quotation from the Quran, typically selecting verses concerning marriage, devotion, and family ties most commonly from Surah Ar-Rum (30:21), which illustrates how God established mates for tranquility and instilled their relationship with care and tenderness. This scriptural foundation validates the marriage religiously and frames it as a divinely sanctioned institution beyond mere social festivity. After the scriptural citation, the actual invitation text appears, written in formal Indonesian with varying levels of elaboration. While each invitation reviewed sustained elevated formality suitable for such a meaningful event, minor distinctions in phrasing emerged. Traditional versions employed intricate, respectful language stressing the importance of parents and family lineage, while contemporary couples sometimes opted for briefer text that nevertheless maintained ceremonial tone. A striking aspect of Indonesian wedding invitation headings is the complete lack of casual variations. Whereas Iranian invitations occasionally shift substantially from elaborate to relaxed styles, Indonesian invitations uniformly uphold formal standards. This pattern demonstrates that religious and cultural pressures significantly shape language selections, allowing minimal variation from established practices. The wedding ceremony is universally treated as a sacred religious observance (especially the Akad Nikah marriage contract), requiring dignified expression throughout. The heading also discreetly conveys ceremony details. Indonesian Muslim weddings differentiate between the Akad Nikah (religious contract) and Resepsi (celebration), with this information typically incorporated within or directly after the heading rather than serving as the heading's main focus. This structure demonstrates a spiritual priority: the religious sanctioning of the union holds greater importance than celebratory gatherings.

Couple's Names

Name presentation for couples on wedding invitations reveals substantial variation representing wider sociocultural beliefs and practices. Within the Indonesian invitations analyzed, the groom's name usually leads, and both individuals commonly include full ceremonial address forms such as "Bapak" (Mr.) and "Ibu" (Mrs.), or titles signifying spiritual or academic distinction. Complete names paired with surnames are frequently displayed, demonstrating substantial regard for ceremonial conventions and ancestral ties. The positioning of names, whether structured vertically or horizontally, tends to align with regional norms, with the groom's name typically occupying the primary spot.

Ceremony Details

Different cultures have different ways of writing wedding invitations that include information about the ceremony, such as the date, time, and place. This shows how people communicate and what is important to them. In the Indonesian sample, information about

the ceremony is often given in a very formal and detailed way. It's common to include details like the day of the week, the full date (using both the Gregorian and Islamic calendars), the exact time, and the full address. Indonesian invitations also often have ceremonial words or phrases that tell you what kind of event it is, such as "Akad Nikah" or "Resepsi." Using polite language and honorifics when talking about the venue, like "di kediaman Bapak/Ibu," shows how important formality and hospitality are in Indonesian culture.

Venue

How location details appear on wedding invitations reveals much about cultural values and communication practices. Indonesian invitations typically feature locations described through respectful titles and comprehensive address information. Expressions such as "di kediaman Bapak/Ibu" or specific mentions of the family home demonstrate regard for social standing and hierarchy. Complete addresses appear regularly, often including references to nearby recognizable places, which reflects Indonesia's community-oriented culture, where showing respect to hosts and helping guests navigate are considered crucial. This thorough treatment of venue information matches what Hall (1976) identified as high-context communication, where substantial meaning comes from situational and relationship-based signals.

American wedding invitations, by comparison, display venue information in a direct, minimalist way, generally providing only the location name and street address. Formal titles or honorific language rarely appear; instead, the emphasis lies on delivering clear, practical details for attendees. Supplementary information like directions, parking instructions, or digital map links may be added, illustrating what Hall (1976) called low-context, individually focused communication. This distinction validates Swales' (1990) argument that textual patterns emerge based on what particular communities need and anticipate, valuing guest practicality and straightforward information delivery.

Closing

These findings support genre theory's assertion that wedding invitations reflect community norms and values (Swales, 1996). The Indonesian model, with its formal style, relationship-focused aspects, and spiritual overtones, represents a community-oriented, high-context culture that values social balance and respect (Hall, 1989; Hofstede, 2001). In contrast, the American model emphasizes straightforward information, personal choice, and guest practicality, mirroring a low-context, individualistic society.

From an academic standpoint, these contrasts demonstrate how even a seemingly simple genre negotiates, expresses, and strengthens cultural values. Swales (1990) observes that "genres serve as communicative tools designed to accomplish particular goals, influenced by community expectations and customs." Through analyzing venue presentation and supplemental information, this study reveals the cultural reasoning behind genre patterns in both settings, highlighting the importance of comparative genre research.

CONCLUSION

This comparative genre analysis conclusively demonstrates that wedding invitation cards function as culturally embedded discourse practices that systematically reflect and perpetuate distinct societal values. The data analysis reveals fundamental structural and linguistic divergences between Indonesian and American wedding invitations that directly correspond to their respective cultural frameworks.

The Indonesian wedding invitation genre is characterized by seven obligatory genre moves: (1) religious opening with Islamic expressions, (2) spiritually-framed heading incorporating Quranic verses, (3) hierarchical presentation of couple and family names, (4) detailed ceremony specifications differentiating Akad Nikah from reception, (5) comprehensive venue information with honorific language, (6) auxiliary guest information, and (7) prayer-based closing. This structure embodies high-context, collectivist communication where marriage is constructed as a sacred covenant requiring divine blessing and community validation. Agency is distributed collectively across spiritual authority (Allah), extended family, and the marrying couple, reflecting Indonesia's Islamic cultural foundation and emphasis on communal harmony. The American wedding invitation genre demonstrates five to six moves: (1) host identification, (2) formal invitation statement, (3) couple's names, (4) logistical ceremony details, (5) reception notification, and (6) optional RSVP request. This condensed structure exemplifies low-context, individualistic communication prioritizing informational efficiency and guest convenience. Agency resides primarily with parental hosts or the couple themselves, consistent with American secular individualism and autonomy-centered values. Religious elements are categorically absent, ceremony and reception are treated as unified social events, and linguistic formality serves pragmatic rather than spiritual functions.

The practical implications extend to intercultural communication competence, particularly for international weddings, cross-cultural marriages, and multicultural societies. Misinterpreting invitation conventions can lead to unintended offense or confusion. Understanding that Indonesian invitation elaboration signals respect rather than verbosity, and that American invitation brevity reflects efficiency rather than coldness, facilitates culturally sensitive engagement. Future research should investigate how globalization and digital platforms influence traditional wedding invitation genres, whether hybrid forms emerge in multicultural contexts, and how younger generations negotiate between inherited conventions and contemporary preferences. Longitudinal studies tracking generational shifts within single cultures would illuminate genre evolution dynamics. Expanding the comparative framework to include additional cultural contexts (Middle Eastern, East Asian, African, Latin American) would further enrich cross-cultural genre scholarship and deepen understanding of how fundamental life events are discursively constructed across human societies.

In summary, wedding invitation cards are not merely functional documents announcing marriages; they are complex cultural texts that encode, communicate, and reinforce profound societal values regarding spirituality, family structure, social relationships, and communicative norms. This study demonstrates that even standardized genres remain culturally contingent, adapting form and function to serve the specific values and expectations of their producing communities.

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