

Comparison of How Arabic and English Foreign Language Learners Compliment and Respond to Praises

Kamsinah Kamsinah¹, Yuliyannah Sain², Nurazizah Aliah³, Nurasia Natsir^{4*}

¹ Universitas Hasanuddin, Makassar, Indonesia

² Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari, Kendari, Indonesia

³ Universitas Terbuka, Makassar, Indonesia

⁴ Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Administrasi Yappi Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

nurasianatsir@stiyappimakassar.ac.id

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : 2022-04-19

Revised : 2022-07-14

Accepted : 2022-07-16

KEYWORDS

Foreign language learners

Pragmatics failure

English students

Arabic students

Speech acts

ABSTRACT

Researching the speech acts performed between Arabic and English speakers is one of the popular trends in pragmatic research. However, the majority of previous studies have only obtained data from native Arabic and English speakers, or Arabic natives who are learning English as a foreign language. This study intends to fill the research gap of comparing the speech acts of giving praise and responding to praise made by students who are studying both English and Arabic as their foreign languages. This descriptive study used two instruments, namely a discourse completion task questionnaire consisting of twelve scenarios and an interview, involving 70 English learners and 70 Arabic learners from UIN Alauddin Makassar which is the only university in Indonesia that offers the unique Foreign Language Intensification Development (PIBA) program. Results have determined that the dominant praise strategies of Arabic learners are awe and congratulating, while English learners tend to use surprise and congratulating strategies. Both language learners dominantly use the strategies of giving appreciation and reassigning praises as their praise response strategies. This study concluded that Arabic foreign language learners tend to have a small repertoire of praise and praise response strategies, while English foreign language learners' arsenal of strategies is much more diverse.



1. Introduction

The diversity of the world's languages, cultures, religions, beliefs and traditions manifests the most in the languages. Cross-cultural communication is a currently thriving field as globalisation, instant communication and easy travel access make people from different parts of the world more connected than they have ever been in the past centuries (Bakhov et al., 2021; Luo & Zhang, 2021; Shadiev et al., 2021). Alongside the significant, positive interest people generally have when it comes to learning and interacting with people from different cultures, this diversity is also a causal factor in cross-cultural misunderstandings when communicating (Herdi & Handayani, 2020; Sahadevan & Sumangala, 2021). One of the most common features of everyday discourses, whether in one or multiple languages, is complimenting. In a world where politeness is key to upholding civility among humanity (Sembiring & Sianturi, 2019), compliments are present in almost all kinds of conversations due to their great number offered and received," (Shaheeb & Jibreen, 2008). Thus, for the larger goal of facilitating a thorough

understanding of cross-cultural communication, this study focuses on the particulars of speech acts the acts of getting things done by using words of complimenting between Arabic and English language learners.

Researchers have been studying Arabic and English together in a comparative light for decades, in large part due to the stark differences between the two languages. On top of the unrelated orthography and language family origins, the two languages have different vowel sounds, consonants, sentence structuring, etc. Coupled with the fact that both English and Arabic learners are two of the most dominantly used language and are also two languages with the highest number of speakers around the globe, there is little doubt why the study of Arabic and English remains so strong through decades (Ameur et al., 2020).

Existing literature on Arabic and English languages in a comparative light is certainly not limited to the speech act of compliments. 30 EFL learners from Jordan were given a discourse

completion test to collect not just their speech acts of compliments, but also how they express condolences, giving congratulations and asking for permission by Almahameed and Al-Ajalein (2019). The study was focused on testing whether the learners could produce the appropriate utterances, and found few evidences of pragmatic failure, citing the participants' good competence in communication. Their reasoning is supported by Alrefaee and Al-Ghamdi (2019) study on 40 Yemeni EFL learners and 40 American English native speakers, in which the data given by low proficient learners tend to reveal negative first language (L1) pragmatic transfer. Al-Kayed and Al-Ghoweri (2019) covered speech acts of criticism among Jordanian Arabic speakers, and Chikhi and Chebli (2021) conducted a similar investigation but with Algerian Arabic speakers. Other kinds of speech acts between Arabic and English have also been explored by many researchers within the past five years; Almegren (2018) focused on Saudi EFL students' speech acts of apologising, Al-Ghamdi and Alrefaee (2020) compared Yemeni EFL speakers with American English native speakers' speech acts of refusal, Hosni (2020) analysed the Egyptian Arabic native speakers and American English native speakers' speech acts of advising, and Alghazo et al. (2021) addressed Jordanian Arabic natives' speech acts of congratulating.

Many researchers have been particularly productive in publishing papers exploring the speech acts of praising in Arabic and English languages. Comparing the Arabic and English compliments made by 100 Iraqi EFL learners, Ebadi and Salan (2015) observed that learners have a high tendency to accept compliments in English more than Arabic compliments. Another study compared the compliment speech acts made by 104 American native speakers and 71 Saudi learners of English using a discourse completion task of four hypothetical scenarios (Alsalem, 2015). The previous study found that the Saudi EFL students greatly assimilated the native English speech acts, attributing it to the Saudi learners' experience in the United States. Almansoob et al. (2019) compared how Yemeni Arabic native speakers and American English native speakers compliment people. By involving 30 participants of each speaker groups, the study collected data using a discourse completion test consisting of six hypothetical compliment scenarios. Frequency counts revealed admiration as a universal strategy between the Arabic and English data provided by the natives, and that exaggeration, gratitude to God and metaphor seem to be culturally specific to the Arabic language speakers. The researchers of this previous paper also continued to investigate how the Yemeni students' Arabic native language (L1) negatively influences their compliment speech acts in English (L2) (Al-Ghamdi, 2019). They found 50% of the L2 production were the result of pragmatic failures, specifically when it comes to Yemeni EFL learners producing

compliments using the strategies of acceptance, comment history, praise upgrade, return, no acknowledgement, offer, promise and wish.

What stands out to the researcher from this literature review is the dominant trend of collecting data from native speakers. The majority, if not all of the existing studies are set in the context of native Arabic speakers who would provide data in Arabic as their first language and/or data in English as their foreign language. Then, the Arabic datasets of speech acts are almost always compared with the English datasets supplied by native English speakers, usually from the United States of America. As far as the researcher knows, there seems to be no study comparing English and Arabic speech acts of complimenting made by both foreign language learners of the two languages. Current knowledge has fully represented how English natives and Arabic natives perform, but there is a research gap on how foreign language learners whose native languages are neither English nor Arabic would perform. Moreover, the majority of existing studies often emphasizes the L1 negative transfer to L2, but the current school of thought that language researchers ought to follow is how L1 actually scaffolds the students' additional language acquisition and mastery (Rasman, 2018). Therefore, to address this gap, this study will carry out a two-fold investigation on how English and Arabic foreign language learners produce the speech acts of praise and how they would respond to praises.

The originality of this study lies in the nature of the research participants, specifically the type of students that this study chose to be the participants. This study is set in the English and Arabic Departments of the Faculty of Adab and Humanities at State Islamic University (UIN) Alauddin Makassar, Indonesia. The Departments were chosen because the students have gone through a program known as the Foreign Language Intensification Development (PIBA) program, which is a program that emphasises character building and formation to reflect the values of being active, innovative, creative, effective, and fun in the learning of both English and Arabic. The program has a vision of supporting the realisation of English and Arabic as international languages, thus the English and Arabic Department students in this university are always taught not just to master the linguistic skills of their target languages, but also to master the pragmatic skills so that they can apply their knowledge appropriately when interacting in real life. With this program, the Indonesian students have access to a supportive Arabic-language environment alongside a supportive English-language environment. Currently, only UIN Alauddin Makassar offers this program in eastern Indonesia (Israwati, 2017). Additionally, this university also gives its students other innovative Arabic learning programs, such as the Enlightenment of Faith and Life Skills Program (PIKIH), the Character-Building Program (CBP) and

training for the Test of Arabic as a Foreign Language (TOAFL) (Rusydi & Musgamy, 2021). Therefore, the students in this study have a higher-than-average competence in English and Arabic compared to many other English students and Arabic students. The results of this study will be comparable with the existing, dominant linguistic data from native speakers, because the researcher assumes that the students' who study the two languages as foreign learners will mainly provide pragmatically appropriate responses that rarely contain grammatical errors. The research questions formulated in this study:

- 1) How do Indonesian Arabic and English foreign language learners give praises?
- 2) How do Indonesian Arabic and English foreign language learners respond to praises?

This research is very important because the findings will be very useful in assisting lecturers or teachers of English and Arabic in improving their lessons, lecture, and learning materials in the process of teaching foreign languages in the classroom. It is hoped that with the findings in this study, both English and Arabic teachers will obtain authentic and comprehensive input to improve their teaching and learning process more efficiently while balancing linguistic competence and pragmatic competence in teaching.

3. Method

This study is designed as a descriptive research, which is a statistical method that is used to search and summarise historical data in order to identify patterns or meaning. This study took place in October 2020 (one month) at the Faculty of Adab and Humanities at State Islamic University (UIN) Alauddin Makassar, which is the only university in eastern Indonesia that offers a Foreign Language Intensification Development (PIBA) program for the English and Arabic Departments. This study purposely selected 70 English students and 70 Arabic students who completed the language intensification program (140 participants in total). The students gave their consent as participants through a brief survey that contains a brief explanation of the purpose of the research and requests their demographic details such as gender, mother tongue background, and known foreign language mastery.

The researcher used two instruments to collect the data for this study, namely online questionnaires and one-on-one interviews. Both instruments were designed as a Discourse Completion Task (DCT). This instrument is a data elicitation method that generates large amounts of contextually varied and comparable cross-linguistic speech act data and is used predominantly in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics research (Ogiermann, 2018). A DCT is a questionnaire that consists of brief descriptions and short dialog, accompanied with empty slots for the participants to provide data of speech acts (Blum-Kulka, 1982; Al-Khateeb, 2009).

Table 3.1. The 12 Scenarios of Discourse Completion Task

Type	Scenario	Topic
Praising someone	1	Praising your friends/uncles/aunts/teachers' appearance, in particular their famous branded jackets.
	2	Praising someone you know who has won a competition.
	3	Praising someone at a party who is known for being charming and can impress everyone.
	4	Praising someone's new and magnificent house when you visited them.
	5	Praising someone's achievements and performance during their promotion celebration.
	6	Praising the appearance of someone you know when you met in a shopping centre/mall
Responding to praise	7	A male colleague on campus praising your expensive new bag
	8	A car driving instructor praising your performance and skills during training
	9	A female colleague praising the new clothes you just purchased at a shopping centre.
	10	Uncles/aunts praising your victory in a competition.
	11	Uncles/aunts praising your party dress/attire during your visit to her house.
	12	Parents and teachers praising you for having a good GPA.

140 participants were given the DCT questionnaire which consisted of twelve scenarios, of which six are topics which prompts them to give praise based on the social context of the topics, while the other six prompts the students to respond to the

praises they would receive in the hypothetical scenarios given in the topics. The researcher then discussed the students' questionnaire responses through online interview sessions.

Table 3.2. Types of Praise and Praise Response Strategies

Praise Strategies (Enssaif, 2005)				
No	Strategies	Coding	Definitions	Examples
1	Admiration	adm	Explicitly using verbs as: like/love or inserting positive adjectives such: pretty, great, nice ...etc.	It is nice; I like it.
2	Encouragement	enc	Stimulating the complimentee to persuade more achievements.	Go ahead!
3	Approval	apv	Positively evaluating what has been achieved.	Well done!
4	Wish	wsh	Making a wish for the complimentee.	I wish you a happy life!
5	Surprise	srp	Expressing a surprise on the part of the complimentee.	I can't believe it!
6	Exclamation	exc	Implicitly making an admiration via an exclamatory utterance.	What a beautiful hairstyle!
7	Congratulations	cgr	Explicitly congratulating the addressee for some achievement or traits.	Congratulations!
8	Noticed change	ntc	Explicitly expressing the change on the part of the addressee.	You look different!
9	Metaphor	met	Praising the complimentee via an unordinary description.	You are a real star!
10	Invocation	inv	Wishing the complimentee by the name of God.	Allah bless you!
11	Comparison	cpr	Explicitly comparing some relevant affairs.	Yours is better!
12	Exaggeration	exg	Admiring the complimentee's affairs via exaggeration.	She has a magic hand!
13	Questioning	que	Making an interrogative utterance as a compliment.	What have you done to remain so young?
14	Gratitude to God	grg	Expressing gratitude to God for the complimentee's achievement.	Thank God.
15	Appreciation	apc	Expressing a direct gratitude to the complimentee for an achievement.	I am grateful for you!
16	Pride	prd	Explicitly expressing pride of the addressee.	I am proud of you
17	Happiness	hpp	Explicitly expressing happiness of the addressee's affairs.	Happy for that!
18	Expectation	exp	Showing expectation of what has been achieved by the complimentee.	I expect you would get it!
19	Advice	adv	Giving a piece of advice for the complimentee.	You should be very happy about that!
20	Silence	sln	Leaving the scenarios blank without giving a compliment.	(Silence)
Praise Response (Herbert, 1986)				
No	Strategies	Coding	Definitions	Examples
1	Appreciation Token	apc	A verbal or non verbal acceptance of the compliment	Thanks; thank you.
2	Comment Acceptance	acc	Addressee accepts the compliment and offers a relevant comment on the appreciated topic.	Thanks, it's my favorite too.
3	Praise Upgrade	pup	Addressee accepts the compliment and contributes to the force of the compliment.	Really brings out the blue in my eyes, doesn't it?
4	Comment History	cmh	Addressee offers a comment on the object of the compliment, usually some information about how s/he has acquired it.	I bought it from the trip to Coney Island.
5	Reassignment	rsg	Addressee agrees with the compliment, but the complimentary force is transferred to some third person.	My brother gave it to me.
6	Return	rtn	The praise is shifted or returned to the addresser.	So is yours.
7	Scale down	scd	Addressee disagrees with the complimentary force, pointing to some flaw in the object or claiming that the praise is overstated.	It's really quite old.
8	Questioning	que	Addressee questions the sincerity or the appropriateness of the compliment.	Do you really think so?
9	Disagreement	dsg	Addressee asserts that the object of the compliment is not praiseworthy	I hate it.
10	Qualification	qlf	Addressee merely qualifies the original assertion, usually with though, but, well etc.	It's alright, but hers is nicer.
11	No Acknowledgement	noa	Addressee gives no indication of having heard the compliment. The addressee either responds with an irrelevant comment or gives no response.	(Silence)
12	Request	req	Addressee interprets the utterance as a request rather than a simple compliment.	You wanna borrow this one too?

The coding process is based on the semantic formula taxonomy done by Enssaif's (2005) 20 praise

strategies and Herbert's (1986) 12 praise response strategies.

Table 3.3. Deductive Coding Scheme

Coding Scheme	Excerpt (order of data)_Language Learner/Type of Speech Act-Scenario/Strategy
	Example: Excerpt 1/AL/PS-1/aw
Codes	Meaning
AL	Arabic Learner
EL	English Learner
PS	Praise
RP	Responding to Praise

The data analysis used descriptive statistics, in which the researcher coded and presented the summary of the results through tables and charts. By referring to these theories as the predefined set of codes, the coding process is done deductively (Table 3). The data coding is then re-checked and validated by a research assistant, who is qualified as a data enumerator.

To find out the forms of praise strategies and praise response strategies used by English and Arabic sixth-semester students at the Adab and Humanities Faculty of UIN Alauddin Makassar, this study asked 70 English learners and 70 Arabic learners to provide praises and responses to a praise based on twelve unique scenarios (Table 1). The responses from each group of students are categorised based on Enssaif's (2005) classification of praise and praise response strategies.

4. Results

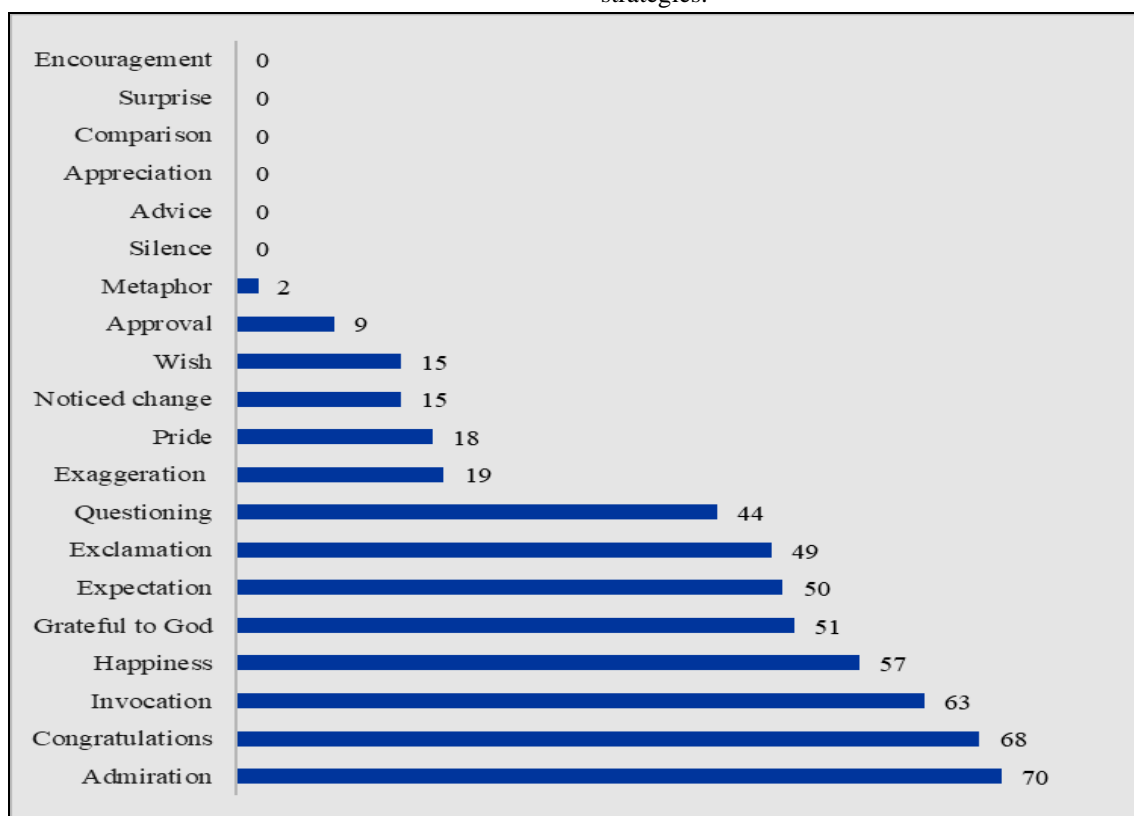


Chart 4.1. Arabic Learners' Strategies to Praise Someone

This study found that Arabic learners unanimously (N=70) tend to give praise by showing their admiration. More than 50 participants out of the total number of Arabic learners selected in this study also use the praise strategies of congratulating, making an

invocation (mostly known as praying), showing happiness, and being grateful to God when they intend to give praises. The following excerpts are some examples of their responses.

ما اجمل سترتك يا صديقتي

Maa ajmala sutrataki yaa shadiiqatii.

Your clothing is so beautiful.

Excerpt 1_AL/PS-1/adm

ماشاء الله يا أستاذي انت تستحق بذلك

Maa syaa Allaahu, yaaa ustadzii anta tastahiuqqun bidzalika.

Masya Allah, duhai my ustadz you deserve it.

Excerpt 2_AL/PS-2/grg

بارك الله فيك، انا فخورة بإنجازتك

Baarakallaahu fiika, anaa fakhuuratun bi'injaazika.

Allah bless you, I am proud of your achievement.

Excerpt 3_AL/PS-5/prd

واو، السطرة جدا لأن سترتك وحدة من سترتي المفضلة التي ترتديها جيدة

Waw, assutratul latii tartadiihaa jayyidatun jidda lianna sutrataki waahdatan min sutratiil mufadhdhalah.

Wow, the clothing you wear is very great. Because your clothes are better than my best clothes.

Excerpt 4_AL/PS-1/exg

كنت جمالا ماشاء الله

Kunta jamaalan maa syaa Allahu.

You are strong, maa syaa Allah.

Excerpt 5_AL/PS-6/adm

يبدو انك مختلفة اليوم

Yabduu annaki mukhtalifatul yauma.

You are truly different today.

Excerpt 6_AL/PS-6/ntc

The excerpts above showed Arabic learners' praising using the various strategies, some in very short sentences and some in longer ones. An interesting observation in Chart 4.1 is the distinct preference of using certain kinds of strategies with >40 responses and avoidance of others. This means that out of the 20 kinds of praise strategies, Arabic learners tend to use only eight of them (admiration, congratulations, invocation, happiness, grateful to God, expectation, exclamation, and questioning), rarely use six of them (exaggeration, pride, noticed change, hope, agreement, metaphor) and do not use the other six kinds of strategies (giving advice, appreciation, comparison, surprise, encouragement and being silent).

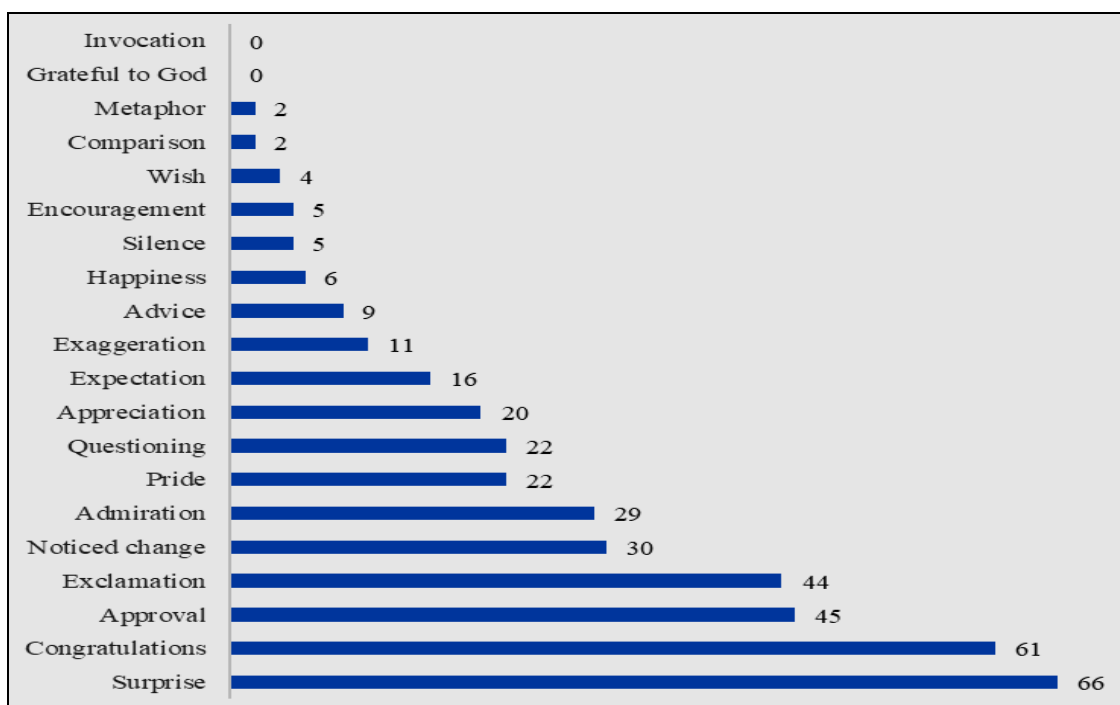


Chart 4.2. English Learners' Strategies to Praise Someone

On the other hand, this study found that English learners have a more widespread option of praise strategies. Two of the most dominant strategies that they tend to use are being surprised (N = 66) and giving congratulations (N = 61). This is followed by

two more strategies that English learners tend to use to compliment someone, approval (N = 45) and exclamation (N = 44). The following excerpts are some examples of their responses.

I hope you can be comfortable with your new job.

Excerpt 7_EL/PS-5/hpp

Congrats. You are so amazing there. I am really proud of you.

Excerpt 8_EL/PS-2/prd

Wow you look great tonight uncle, let's get some drink.

Excerpt 9_EL/PS-3/sur

Wow is that your home? I didn't even know.

Excerpt 10_EL/PS-4/sur

That is so cool. Can you also buy me one?

Excerpt 11_EL/PS-1/exp

You look more beautiful, now. It's unusual thing you wear this stuff. But I appreciate your changing.

Excerpt 12_EL/PS-3/ntc

A comparison of Chart 4.1 and Chart 4.2 reveals the difference between the repertoire of strategies to praise used by Arabic and English learners. Out of the database of 20 kinds of praise strategies, only 2 strategies were not used by any of the 70 English foreign language learners when presented with the scenarios in the discourse completion task. It is interesting to note that the 2 praising strategies that were excluded are being grateful to God and saying an invocation, which are some of the most dominant strategies used by Arabic learners to compliment someone.

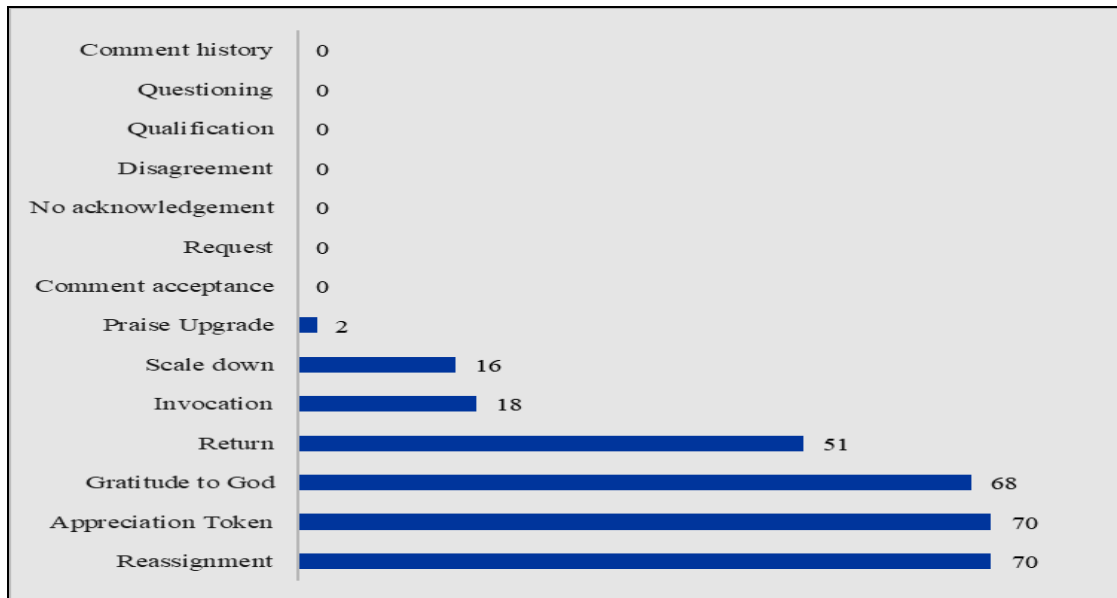


Chart 4.3. Arabic Learners' Strategies to Respond to Praises

When it comes to responding to praises, this study found that Arabic learners use 8 strategies out of the total 12 kinds of praise response strategies. All 70 participants who learned Arabic as their foreign language always reassigned the praise or give their appreciation for the praise. Aside from the twelve praise response strategies made by Herbert (1986), this study found that UIN Alauddin Arabic foreign language learners also employ two praise strategies as well. Arabic learners tend to convey their gratefulness to God (N = 68) and invocation (N = 18). This pattern mirrors the data in Chart 4.1.

شكرا على كل مدحك

Syukran 'alaa kulli madhika.

Thank you for all of your compliments.

Excerpt 13_AL/RP-7/acc

شكرا لك هذا ايضا بسبب دعاء من العم

Syukran laki hadza aidhan bisababid du'aai minal ummi.

Thanks to you as well, this is also because of the prayer of a mother.

Excerpt 14_AL/RP-10/scd

شكرا لكم هذه هدية من الله بسبب تأييدكم

Syukran lakum, haadzihi hadiyyatun minalaahi bisababi ta'diikum.

Thank you, this is all a gift from Allah due to your support.

Excerpt 15_AL/RP-12/grg

شكرا على كل مدحك، و هذه حقيبة رخيصة

Syukran 'alaa kulli madhika, wa haadzihi haqiiBATun rakhiishatun.

Thank you for your compliment, and this bag is a cheap bag.

Excerpt 16_AL/RP-7/scd

شكرا يا مديري

Syukran yaa mudiiri.

Thank you, my leader.

Excerpt 17_AL/RP-8/acc

شكرا لك و هذا أيضا بفضل التشجيع والحماس الذي علمتني يا معلمي

Syukran laki wa haadza aidhan bifadhliT tasyji' wal hammaasil ladzii 'allamtanii yaa mu'allimatii.

Thank you and this is from the guidance and encouragement that you have taught to me.

Excerpt 18_AL/RP-8/rtn

There are one more strategy of praise response that Arabic learners frequently use in this study, namely returning the praise (N = 58). Rather unexpectedly, under 20 participants used the strategies of prayer and scaling down (also known as being humble) to respond to praises. Praise upgrade strategy is only done by 2 participants. Meanwhile, none of the Arabic learners responded to the praises given in the scenarios with the strategies of comment acceptance, request, no acknowledgement, disagreement, qualification, questioning or comment history. Observing Chart 4.1 and Chart 4.3, Arabic learners seem to have a definite preference for certain kinds of strategies in the speech act of praising.

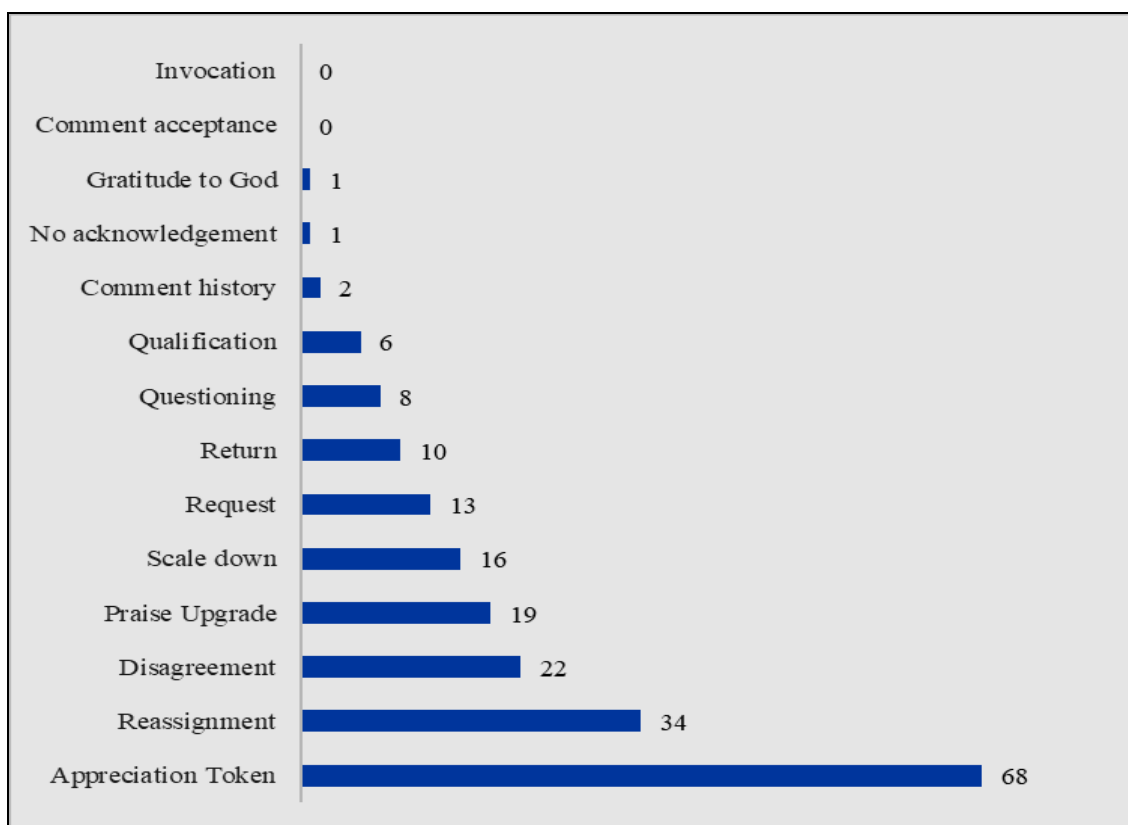


Chart 4.4. English Learners' Strategies to Respond to Praises

In the same vein, English language learners have a wider range of strategies to respond to praise much like how they also use many different kinds of strategies to give praise. However, Chart 4 shows that at least one strategy dominated other kinds of strategies, namely using appreciation tokens (N = 68). The second most used strategy to respond to praises is reassigning them to a third person (N = 34).

Thank you so much. It's the result of you all. And for all of things you have done for me.

Excerpt 19_EL/RP-12/rtn

Thank You. I am working really hard on this.

Excerpt 20_EL/RP-8/qlf

Oh, thank you. You too look beautiful.

Excerpt 21_EL/RP-9/rtn

Ohahaha thanks babe, I have saved my money to have this.

Excerpt 22_EL/RP-7/qlf

I feel glad that you like it.

Excerpt 23_EL/RP-9/hpp

Thank You very much. You too, look so beautiful with that dress.

Excerpt 24_EL/RP-11/rtn

Aside from appreciation and deflection, English learners wield twelve other strategies to respond to

praises, which include disagreeing, upgrading praise, scaling down, returning the praise, questioning, accepting, giving a qualification, commenting history, being grateful to God and not giving any acknowledgement. Based on the data obtained from the discourse completion task, only two praise response strategies are not used by any of the 70 English learners, namely comment acceptance and invocation.

Table 4.1. Comparison of the Most Dominant Strategies Employed by Both Group of Learners

Most Dominant Praise Strategy	Arabic Learners	English Learners
Admiration	100%	41%
Surprise	0%	94%
Most Dominant Praise Response Strategy	Arabic Learners	English Learners
Appreciation	100%	97%
Reassignment	100%	49%

Table 4.1 presents the strategies that are most dominantly used by each group, and the data shows that there is at least one stark difference in the speech acts between both language learners. When prompted to give praises based on the given scenarios, it seems that Arabic Learners unanimously employed the praise strategy of admiration, while only 41% of English language learners employed this strategy. Instead, English learners dominantly give praise by showing their surprise (94%), which is a strategy that is completely absent among the data of praises made by Arabic language learners. In contrast, both Arabic and English language learners dominantly use two of the same strategies to respond to praises, namely giving appreciation and reassigning praise.

As can be seen across all four charts of the results and Table 4.1, this study found that Arabic and English learners sometimes share the same strategies or use entirely different strategies when they are praising and responding to praises.

5. Discussion

This research is set to answer the research questions of how Indonesian learners of Arabic and English language perform the speech acts of praise and praise response. The focus on praise and responses to praise in this study is because these speech acts reflect the cultural values embedded in the language, and scientific investigation of the linguistic corpus of data can reveal the uniqueness of the

languages. Where previous studies often compare the compliment speech acts of these two languages from native Arabic speakers and native English speakers or EFL learners whose native language is Arabic, the novelty of this study is the draw of data from students of the only university in eastern Indonesia that offers a Foreign Language Intensification Development (PIBA) program for both English and Arabic Department students, making them a unique batch of participants.

In summary, of the 70 Arabic learners were found to unanimously use the praise strategy of admiration, followed by congratulating, praying, showing happiness, and being grateful to Allah. This group of learners showed a preference for a small number of strategies of the total 20 praise strategies. Their choices for praise response strategies are similarly few, with reassigning praise, appreciating, and being grateful to God being the most dominant ones. On the other hand, data obtained from the 70 English learners indicated that their strategies for both giving praise and responding to praise are more diverse. Also, the students who learn English as their target language preferred strategies to give praise are very different with Arabic learners. English learners dominantly use the praise strategies of being surprise and congratulating, and only one of the participants used the praise strategies of saying gratefulness to God and none made an invocation, which are Arabic learners' frequent, though not the most dominant, praise strategies. Despite this different, both English and

Arabic learners dominantly employ the same strategies to respond to praises, namely appreciation and reassessment.

The results on the frequency of participants who used the praise strategies of praying and being grateful to God is quite unexpected, as they are the third and fifth most used strategy instead of being the most used by the 70 Indonesian learners of Arabic in this study. This finding is very different from Almansoob et al. (2019), whose 30 Yemeni native speakers of Arabic students dominantly use the praise strategies of exaggeration, gratitude to God, followed by metaphor. In this study, only 19 out of 70 Arabic learners used the praise strategy of exaggeration, and only 2 participants used metaphor to compliment someone in Arabic. Moreover, giving gratitude to God and praying are also the third and fifth most frequently used strategies to respond to compliments by Arabic learners in this study. Considering how the religion of Islam seems tightly intertwined with the language of Arabic, it is surprising to note that the two most religious strategies are actually not the most dominantly used by the participants. Al-Ghamdi (2019), who compared three datasets from Yemeni EFL speakers, Yemeni Arabic native speakers and American English native speakers' speech acts of compliments, also only obtained a small amount of data on the praise strategy of giving gratitude to God; instead, all three groups of speakers dominantly respond to praises by using the strategy of appreciation token (e.g., "Thanks so much").

However, when all of the strategies that Arabic and English learners use are considered instead of just the one or two strategies that they most frequently employ, the results do point out that Arabic learners tend to use strategies that serve as a form of prayer. In contrast, English learners' praises tend to have the function of encouraging people or the interlocutor/conversation partner.

This study did not observe significantly large differences in regards to the length of the compliments. The data collected from this study's discourse completion task primarily yielded short, one- or two-sentence compliments from both Arabic and English foreign language learners from the Indonesian university. Meanwhile, other studies who analysed speech acts of complimenting have noted comparisons between simple and complex compliments. For instance, Almansoob et al. (2019) study on Arabic native speakers from Yemen and English native speakers from America found that compliment in Arabic tend to be longer, using two-fold (e.g. "شكلك اعجبني" [translation] I like your style! You look completely different!), three-fold to four-fold semantic formulas, while American compliments tended to be shorter with two-fold order being the longest they usually use. The data in this present study, in contrast, are mostly mono-strategic utterances of the one-fold semantic formula

and the two-fold formula; the foreign language learners of both groups did not provide praises or responses to praises with four-fold semantic formulas. A possible factor of the shorter responses may be attributed to the students' fluency, as they are still learning these languages in their university years and do not grow up with them as their mother tongues. However, the students may have also deliberately chose to use short compliments because simple sentences possess a stronger flattery impact, which has been noted by Solodka & Perea (2018).

Regarding the compliment lengths, the longer compliments prevalent in the database of Arabic compliments seem to indicate Yemenis perception that "longer expressions show more politeness" (Almansoob et al., 2019, p. 10). The correlation between more words and more politeness has been pointed out recently by McCulloch (2019), that as people become more fluent in writing or typing, they increase the amount of words that they use, thereby increasing their facility to be politer. A study on offensive language has mentioned that language teachers can take advantage of this phenomenon as a way to decrease the likelihood of students using witty, yet aggressive, one-liners (Hamuddin et al., 2020).

A previous study has analysed the speech acts of complimenting more than two languages. Solodka & Perea (2018) collected data from native speakers from the United States, Russia and Ukrania and collected 445 Russian, 231 Ukrainian and 245 English compliments given by people from different backgrounds, mostly middle class between ages 15-70 years old. Instead of collecting the data of compliments by presenting scenarios, the researchers of this previous study interviewed the participants to request for the last compliment they gave to someone and ask about the circumstances in detail, such as the recipient of the compliment, the relationship between the two speakers, the kind of tone was used when the compliment given, so the data of this study relied on the participants' recollection. One of their findings is the recurrent pattern of adjectives that American speakers tend to use when complimenting (e.g., "the best," "great," and "nice"), which is juxtaposed by Ukranian and Russian speakers' tendency to both praise people primarily with the adjectives "pretty" and "smart." This observation of English native speakers' tendency in the speech acts of complimenting is echoed in the results of this present study. The data of praises given by the Indonesian English learners also often feature the adjectives "great" and "nice." This finding shows light on a pattern that may be unique to English speakers of this time, whether they are natives or foreign language learners.

Overall, this study contributes in revealing the nuance differences of the kinds of praise and praise response strategies used by Arabic and English foreign language learners from Indonesia, and showed

how these data compare with previous studies which are more focused on Arabic and English native speakers' speech acts of praising. Compliments are an interesting subject to study because it is one, if not the most, effective way to ensure smooth communication. As stated by McGee (2019, p. 78), "traditionally, students and teachers tend to focus on grammatical awareness, and this means that general awareness of pragmatic violations (another word for pragmatic failures) is not very high." This study responded to this problem by showing how the students of UIN Alauddin Makassar produce their speech acts as students who went through an innovative language intensification program that is designed to emphasise students' awareness of being pragmatically appropriate.

6. Conclusions

The base results of this study are the identification of the preferred praise strategies used by Arabic foreign language learners (e.g., awe, congratulations, prayer, happiness, grateful to God, expectation) and English foreign language learners (e.g., excited, agreement, congratulations, surprise), as well as the preferred praise response strategies of the Arabic learners (e.g., reassigning praise, appreciation, grateful to God, acceptance, returning praise) and English learners (e.g., reassigning praise, appreciation). In contrast to the researcher's expectation, the strategies of grateful to God and prayer are not the most dominant kinds of strategies employed by Arabic learners, and it is also interesting that these two strategies are completely absent from the data of praises performed by English learners. Some of the patterns of this study are echoed in other studies of complimenting speech acts made by native speakers, and some findings are new observations that seems to have not been noted in previous studies. This study contributes in exploring this area of pragmatic research with a novel source of data: Arabic and English foreign language learners of UIN Alauddin Makassar which is the only university in Indonesia that offers the unique Foreign Language Intensification Development (PIBA) program.

References

Al Kayed, M., & Al-Ghoweri, H. (2019). A sociopragmatic study of speech act of criticism in Jordanian Arabic. *European Journal of Scientific Research*, 153(1), 105-117.

Al-Ghamdi, N., & Alrefaee, Y. (2020). The role of social status in the realization of refusal speech act: A cross-cultural study. *The Asian ESP Journal*. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3570553>

Al-Ghamdi, N., Almansoob, N., & Alrefaee, Y. (2019). Pragmatic Failure in the Realization of the Speech act of Responding to Compliments among Yemeni EFL Undergraduates. *3L*,

Language, Linguistics, Literature, 25(4). 1-14
<http://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2019-2504-14>

- Alghazo, S., Zemmour, S., Al Salem, M. N., & Alrashdan, I. (2021). A cross-cultural analysis of the speech act of congratulating in Kabyle and Jordanian Arabic. *Ampersand*, 8, 100075. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amper.2021.100075>
- Al-Khateeb, S. M. I. (2009). The speech act of thanking as a compliment response as used by the Arab speakers of English a comparative intercultural study. [Unpublished MA Thesis], An Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine.
- Almahameed, Y. S. & Al-Ajalein, M. M. (2019). Pragmatic Failure Committed by Jordanian Undergraduate EFL Learners. *International Journal*, 7(1), 54-60. <https://doi.org/10.15640/ijll.v7n1a7>
- Almansoob, N., Patil, K. S., & Alrefaee, Y. (2019). A Cross-cultural study of the speech act of compliments in American English and Yemeni Arabic. *LANGKAWI Journal*, 5(1), 1-12. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31332/lkw.v5i1.1271>
- Almegren, R. (2018). The speech act of apology for Saudi EFL students. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 7(4), 144-157. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.7n.4p.144>
- Alrefaee, Y. Alghamdi, N. (2019). Refusals among Yemeni EFL Learners: A Study of Negative Pragmatic Transfer and Its Relation to Proficiency. *Asian EFL Journal*, 25(5), 191-214.
- Alsalem, N. K. (2015). *Compliment responses: A comparison of Saudi English learners and native speakers of American English in an academic environment*. [Master's Thesis, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/85ee90738c63810ce251c50606e3a6fc/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>
- Ameur, M. S. H., Meziane, F., & Guessoum, A. (2020). Arabic machine translation: A survey of the latest trends and challenges. *Computer Science Review*, 38, 100305. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosrev.2020.100305>
- Bakhov, I., Byrkovych, T., Makarchuk, O., Varyvonchuk, A., Turchak, L., & Soichuk, R. (2021). Enhancing cross-cultural competence of students under conditions of limited social communication. *Ad Alta: Journal of interdisciplinary research*, 11(1), 51-56.
- Blum-Kulka, S. (1982). Learning How to Say What You Mean in a Second Language: A Study of Speech Act Performance of Learners of Hebrew

- as a Second Language. *Applied Linguistics*, 3, 29-59.
- Chikhi, M., & Chebli, B. (2021). *A Socio-Pragmatic Study of Speech Act of Criticism In Algerian Arabic* [Doctoral dissertation, Université Ibn Khaldoun-Tiaret]. Tiaret University Respository. <http://bibdspace.univ-tiaret.dz:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/1452>
- Ebadi, S. & Salan, A. R. (2015). Using compliment responses in Arabic and English: Focusing on male and female EFL learners in Iraq. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 2(7), 157-178
- Enssaif, Z. (2005). *Compliment behavior: Strategies and realizations in English and Arabic: A case study of female students of the English department, King Saud University*. [Unpublished Master's thesis]. King Saud University, KSA.
- Hamuddin, B., Rahman, F., Pammu, A., Baso, Y. S., & Derin, T. (2020). Cyberbullying among EFL Students' Blogging Activities: Motives and Proposed Solutions. *Teaching English with Technology*, 20(2), 3-20.
- Herbert, R. K. (1986). Say "Thank You" – or Something. *American Speech*, 61(1), 76-88.
- Herdi, H., & Handayani, T. (2020). Taking a Look into the Culture Shock Experienced by Foreigners at Rumbai, Pekanbaru. *Elsya : Journal of English Language Studies*, 2(3), 77-81. <https://doi.org/10.31849/elsya.v2i3.4939>
- Hosni, H. R. (2020). Advice giving in Egyptian Arabic and American English: A cross-linguistic, cross-cultural study. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 155, 193-212. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2019.11.001>
- Israwati, I. (2017). *Students' Perception toward Intensive Program of Foreign Language (PIBA) Roles in Developing Speaking Ability of Third Semester Student of Third Semester of Adab and Humanity Faculty*. [Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar]. Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar Research Repository. <http://repositori.uin-alauddin.ac.id/4937/1/Israwati.pdf>
- Luo, M., & Zhang, X. (2021). Research status about influence factors of international students' cross-cultural adaptation with different models. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(6), 51-63. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2021.96006>
- McGee, P. (2019). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Training, Language and Culture*, 3(1), 73-84. <https://doi.org/10.29366/2019tlc.3.1.5>
- Ogiermann, E. (2018). Discourse completion tasks. *Methods in pragmatics*, 10, 229-255. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110424928-009>
- Rasman, R. (2018). To translanguage or not to translanguage? The multilingual practice in an Indonesian EFL classroom. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(3), 687-694. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v7i3.9819>
- Rusydi, M., & Musgamy, A. (2021, December). 20 years of Arabic learning in the scientific tradition of UIN Alauddin Makassar: anthropological perspective from 2001 to 2021. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Social and Islamic Studies (SIS) 2021*.
- Sahadevan, P., & Sumangala, M. (2021). Effective cross-cultural communication for international business. *Shanlax International Journal of Management*, 8(4), 24-33. <http://https://doi.org/10.34293/management.v8i4.3813>
- Sembiring, E., & Sianturi, S. (2019). Politeness Strategies in EFL Classroom Context: Avoiding Future Conflict and Maintain the Harmony of Diversity. *Utamax : Journal of Ultimate Research and Trends in Education*, 1(3), 105-111. <https://doi.org/10.31849/utamax.v1i3.6257>
- Shadiev, R., Wang, X., & Huang, Y. M. (2021). Cross-cultural learning in virtual reality environment: facilitating cross-cultural understanding, trait emotional intelligence, and sense of presence. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 69(5), 2917-2936. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-021-10044-1>
- Shaheeb, M., & Jibreen, K. (2008). The speech act of compliment: A theoretical view. *Journal of Al-Qadisiya University*, 11(4), 7-20.
- Solodka, A., & Perea, L. (2018). The Speech Act of Complimenting as Part of the Ukrainian, Russian and English-Speaking Communities: Ukraine and the USA. *Arab World English Journal*, 9(4), 39-55. <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol9no4.3>