

**A STUDY OF COMPLIMENT RESPONSE STRATEGIES AMONG  
MALAYS AND IRANIANS**

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## Abstract

This study investigates and compares compliment response strategies (CRS) among Malays and Iranians with the aim of performing a semantic and pragmatic analysis of complimentary speech acts among Malays and Iranians. The data were collected through the use of interview and Discourse Completion Task (DCT), using eight complimentary sentences. Two were on appearance, two on character, two on ability and two on possession. A total of thirty university-students of the University of Malaya and University Putra Malaysia participated in the study over a period of three months. The findings demonstrated that all Malays and Iranians accepted most of compliments but Malays tended to reject more than Iranians. Although both groups accepted compliments, their strategies for acceptance were different from each other; Malays used more evade strategies than Iranians. Also Iranians used "*taarof*" strategy as a specific strategy related to Iranian culture for accepting a compliment. The most interesting thing was that "Thank you" was used for accepting compliments as the most frequent strategy among both groups.

## Abstrak

Kajian ini mengkaji dan membandingkan penggunaan strategi strategi tindakbalas pujian “CRS” dalam kalangan orang Melayu dan Iran dengan matlamat untuk menganalisa bagaimana setiap penerimaan pujian secara lisan berlainan dari segi konsep diantara kedua-dua kumpulan ini. Ia juga bertujuan untuk mencari pengaruh kebudayaan di sebalik penggunaan setiap CRS bagi setiap kumpulan. Data-data yang dikumpul adalah melalui temubual dan soaljawab bertulis “DCT”, yang menggunakan lapan (8) soalan berkaitan pujian. Dua daripadanya adalah berdasarkan wajah atau rupa, dua soalan berdasarkan tingkahlaku, dua lagi tentang kebolehan dan dua soalan seterusnya tentang barang-barang kepunyaan. Sejumlah 30 orang pelajar dari Universiti Malaya dan Universiti Putra Malaysia mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini selama tempoh tiga bulan. Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan daripada orang Melayu mahupun orang Iran menerima pujian, namun orang Melayu lebih menolak pujian kalau dibandingkan dengan orang Iran. Walaupun kedua-dua kumpulan ini menerima pujian, setiap kumpulan mempunyai strategi tersendiri untuk menerima pujian yang diberikan. Orang-orang Melayu lebih menggunakan strategi mengelak kalau dibandingkan dengan orang-orang Iran. Orang Iran pula menggunakan strategi ‘taarof’ sebagai strategi kebukaan khusus untuk menerima penghargaan. Sesuatu yang menarik sekali ucapan “terima kasih” digunakan oleh dua kumpulan ini sebagai tanda menerima penghargaan.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

**CRS:** COMPLIMENT RESPONSE STRATEGY

**DCT:** DISCOURSE COMPLETION TASKS

**ESL:** ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

**EFL:** ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

