

# A contrastive pragmatic study of speech act of complaint between arab and malay s...

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Background of Study Language is used as a tool to express thoughts, feelings and to communicate, in order to impress upon someone, either by expressing a verbal, mental or a given stimulus to seek response. Green (1989) accentuated that communication presupposes achievement of the intended effect of verbal action upon the addressee, of users being aware of using language not only for the sake of the utterance of words but also for taking actions or responding to them as well. The reaction someone produces in reaction to a particular situation may be caused by different interpretations. How should a listener perceive an utterance that levels with the intended meaning of the speech? If, for example A says to B " Those chocolates seem delicious", A may want B to buy the chocolate for him, or even he may not mean anything other than just giving blanks comments. This is one of the problems that people listen to everyday - miscommunication. Though it may seem as one simple problem, facts reveal that it has been complained throughout the globe as it touches aspects of cross-cultural communication.

Statement of ProblemThe increasing amount of non-Malays, especially Arabs as students of International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) postulates an intercultural issue of how Malays, i. e. the local students should communicate with them. Language, as denoted shapes people's lives, how to behave, do daily routines and interact with one another. Albeit the fact that both Malay and Arab students use the English language as the alternate medium in conversation, aspects of culture still play important roles in interpreting messages and thoughts one party tries to convey to the other.

The issue of cross-cultural communication should be emphasized in the context as both Malay and Arab students are living together in the campus, hence miscommunication may occur. This study aims to look into the aspect of complaints which in speech acts, is considered the most complex and face threatening (Brown & Levinson (1987), it would be interesting to note how this particular speech act is used by the Arabs and Malays in their attempt to express their dissatisfaction. Objective of Study This paper examines two main components which are complaints and level of indirectness both interpreted and perceived by speakers/listeners of two cultures; hence it is necessary to explain all of the three main aspects that are essential. As an introductory, any action that is performed via utterances are called speech acts and complaints are one of the common specific labels, together with requests, compliments and etc (Yule, 1996). Level of indirectness can be categorized into three, which are: indirect, somewhat direct and very direct.

Direct speech act is when there is a direct relationship between a structure and a function. For example, " I hate you" or " You look very ugly". On the other hand, indirect speech act is when there is an indirect relationship between a structure and a function. For example, " It's very cold in here" which can indirectly means to turn off the fan or to close the windows.

Research Questions In relation to aspects of speech act, this paper tries to answer two main questions: 1. How do Malay students speak out against Arab students related to certain issues? 2.

What are the levels of indirectness of both cultures in making complaints?