



## **GENDER-BASED COMPLIMENTS USED BY JUDGES IN AMERICA'S GOT TALENT 2019**

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### **Abstract**

The study's analysis of the judges' complimenting styles during the 2019 season of *America's Got Talent* is its main focus. The study examines the subject, methods, purposes, and syntactic structure of compliments. A qualitative descriptive methodology used in this study. The information was the praise the judges gave to each finalist in their comments. 72 compliments were gathered from *America's Got Talent*. The results indicate that male judges were more likely to give compliments than female judges. Regarding compliments, the performances of the finalists received more compliments, from male and female judges than from them on other topics. In their delivery of compliments, male judges tended to employ explicit techniques than female judges, but females were more likely to use implicit techniques. In the context of compliments, male judges typically use them to show admiration or approval for someone's work, appearance, or taste, whereas female judges typically use them to replace thanks, greetings, congratulations, and apologies. Finally, judges who were male or female were more likely to compliment others using the phrase PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP and PRO is/are/was/were more often when making compliments. They are more likely to use impersonal compliments. In conclusion due to the topic, techniques, purpose, and grammatical structure of compliments, there are some variances and similarities in the praising behavior of men and women.

**Keywords:** *Compliments, Gender, Talent Show*

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Humans use a variety of communication methods to convey their messages, including apologies, requests, complaints, and compliments. A speaker who delivers a compliment is one who expresses appreciation for their listeners. Different communication traits apply to men and women. The majority of females, according to Wu (2008, p. 14), avoid making direct remarks and instead

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show reluctance or uncertainty. However, most males speak clearly and directly without hesitation or ambiguity. The ways in which men and women communicate differently, and this includes how they express compliments, also varies. There are two in-depth studies on how men and women use compliments, they were conducted by Holmes and Herbert in 1988 and 1990.

Culture and language are inseparable. Culture is a component of a language, and vice versa, according to Brown (2007, p. 189). The compliment is inextricably linked to culture as a component of language. Their cultural background has a significant impact on compliments (Othman, 2011, p. 87). Different people may interpret compliments differently depending on the culture they are receiving them from. As a result, compliments and compliment reactions differ depending on the culture.

This study needs to be looked into for two different reasons. First, this study reviews recent compliments to demonstrate the validity of Holmes' pioneering research from 1988 and 1990, which contrasted with the findings from Rees-Miller 2008 and 2010 studies.

The second reason is that this research is being done to fill a knowledge gap left by earlier studies. There have been fifteen studies on compliments that have used questionnaire-interviews as the source of data. These studies have been conducted by Al-Rousan et al. (2016) and (2014), Suteerapongsit (2020), Lorenzo-Dus (2001), Tang and Zhang (2009), Masykuroh (2021), Ariani and Purwanti (2021), Wang and Tsai (2003), Chansongklod (1994), Ebadi et al. (2015), Paris (2019). Yusof et al. (2014), Chairani et al., Miranda (2018), Jannah (2018), and Jannah (2018) have all conducted studies on compliments on social media (2022). Three studies on praise for movies have been completed by Sartika (2019), Widyanita et al. (2019), and Arimbi (2020). (2021). The following four researchers—Mandalasari (2018), Purnama (2017), Agustiyani (2020), and Jamaluddin (2018)—have conducted four studies on praises on talent shows.

The majority of earlier studies on compliments gathered data and elicited responses from participants using questionnaires or interviews. There was, however, little research done on talent shows. Although there have been studies about compliments in talent shows, they have only focused on studies based on gender or culture. Two of them talked exclusively about compliments based on gender, and two others only talked about compliments based on culture, according to the previous study on talent shows. In order to get a better understanding of gender-based and cultural-based compliments in talent shows, the researcher combines these two research strands.

Nearly all local and international television stations have recently broadcast numerous talent shows. One example of an international television station is such as *America's Got Talent* programs. Simon Cowell, Julianne Hough, Howie Mandel, and Gabrielle Union are the judges for *America's Got Talent*. They are all well-known and renowned American musicians and performers. The histories, experiences, and tastes of each judge are distinctive. They undoubtedly stand out when speaking to the finalists and may even compliment them based on their cultural background. As a result, the talent show is an appropriate venue for presenting data on compliments based on backgrounds that span genders and

cultures. The study compared the compliments made by the male and female judges of *America's Got Talent* in 2019. Additionally, the researchers address the subject of compliments, compliment strategies, compliment functions, and the syntactic structure of compliments.

## B. RESEARCH METHOD

A qualitative descriptive methodology was used in this study. The goal of qualitative research is to examine and comprehend the significance that individuals or groups attach to a social or human problem, according to Cresswell (2018, p. 41). The Golden Buzzer and Final Video comments made by the male and female judges of *America's Got Talent 2019* served as the research's source of data. Based on the subject, approaches, purpose, and syntactic structure of compliments, the data was analyzed. The 2019 season of *America's Got Talent* judges' scripts of their speeches served as the data's primary sources. The researcher downloaded *America's Got Talent 2019* videos from the YouTube channel and transcribed the comments made by judges. *America's Got Talent* YouTube channel, a video downloader, a video player, Office 365, and Microsoft Word 2019 are some of the tools that researchers used to gather the data.

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Research Finding

72 compliments from judges of *America's Got Talent* were discovered by researchers after they had gathered the data. Thirteen videos from *America's Got Talent* were used to gather all of the data. Researchers examined the subject of compliments using Rees-Miller's (2011) theory, Yuan's (2002) theory on compliment strategies, Wu's (2008) theory on compliment functions, and Wolfson's (1984) theory on the syntactic structure of compliments.

**Table 1. Topic of Compliments**

No		Male		Female	
		F	%	F	%
1	Appearance	0	0%	1	3%
2	Performance/skill	36	92%	27	82%
3	Possession	0	0%	3	9%
4	Personality	3	8%	2	6%
5	Others	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

Rees-Miller (2011) defined an appearance complement as a remark about someone's physical attributes, hairdo, attire, or jewelry. A performance complement is a remark made in reference to the addressee's skill or expertise in a particular action. A possession complement can be made about any object the recipient has in their possession. A personality compliment is an

expression of admiration for an abstract, general, or specific personal attribute possessed by the receiver.

*America's Got Talent* has received 39 male compliments and 33 female compliments, according to categorization data. There are 2 judges, 1 of whom is men and the other is a woman. Holmes (1988) asserts that women complimented each other more frequently than men do. In other words, Holmes' theory is in conflict with these research results. Males actually gave more compliments than females in this study.

Male and female judges gave more compliments for performance than on other topics during data collection. All four compliment-related topics can be found in these talent shows on *America's Got Talent*. Male judges did not offer any compliments, while there was 1 (3%) compliment about appearance made by female judges. There were 27 (82%) compliments from women and 36 (92%) from men regarding performance. Furthermore, there are no compliments (0%) from men, and 3 (9%) compliments were received on the subject of possession. Researchers discovered almost the same number of compliments on personality: 3 compliments (8%) from men and 2 compliments (6%) from women.

In *America's Got Talent*, in comparison to male judges, female judges are more likely to compliment appearance when comparing the proportion of comments made about appearance. There were 3% of compliments from female judges and 0% from male judges in *America's Got Talent*, indicating that female judges tend to give more positive feedback on appearances than male judges. When it comes to possession, female judges are more complimentary than male judges. In *America's Got Talent*, female judges provided 9% of the compliments, while male judges provided 0%. Male judges tend to compliment personalities more than female judges; on *America's Got Talent*, male judges complimented personalities 8%, and female judges complimented personalities 6%.

**Table 2. Compliment Strategies**

No		Male		Female	
		F	%	F	%
1	Explicit	29	74%	22	67%
2	Implicit	9	23%	7	21%
3	Explanation	0	0%	4	12%
4	Information and Question	0	0%	0	0%
5	Future Reference	1	3%	0	0%
6	Contrast	0	0%	0	0%
7	Advice	0	0%	0	0%
8	Request	0	0%	0	0%
9	Non-compliment	0	0%	0	0%
10	Opt-Out	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

Yuan (2002) defined an explicit comment as a general statement with at least one positive semantic component that directly refers to the addressee. When the addressee is not specified but the positive meaning may still be inferred from the context in which it is used, a generic statement that has or does not have a positive semantic content is deemed implicit. Positive inference is followed by an explanation to make an explanation. The query is followed by information and a positive inference before the question itself, regardless of the context or the presence of a positive semantic carrier. The inquiry is followed by a positive inference regardless of the context or the presence of a positive semantic carrier. Positive inferences regarding the future are followed by allusions to the future. The speaker's assertion of a comparative circumstance contrasts a positive conclusion. The speaker's remarks are followed by a positive inference known as advice. Request occurs when the speaker asks for something after drawing a firm conclusion.

The collection revealed that the male and female judges of *America's Got Talent* delivered their compliments using explicit, implicit, explanation compliment delivery strategies. Regarding the first strategy, Explicit, there were 22 (67%) compliments from female judges and 29 (67%) compliments from male judges. Male judges frequently use this form compared to female judges, according to the percentage. 9 compliments (23%) were made by male judges during the second strategy (Implicit), while 7 (21%) were made by female judges. Male judges on *America's Got Talent* tend to employ these techniques more frequently than females.

In the third strategy, there were 4 (12%) compliments from female judges and none from male judges (0%) respectively. Female judges frequently employ these techniques more than male judges do, according to the percentage. The next strategy, Future Reference, just 1 compliment (3%) from the male judges and none (or 0%) from the female judges. This strategy is often used by male judges more often than by female judges.

**Table 3. Function of Compliments**

No		Male		Female	
		F	%	F	%
1	To express admiration or approval of someone's work/appearance/taste	36	92%	29	88%
2	To establish/ confirm/ maintain solidarity	0	0%	0	0%
3	To replace gratitude/ greetings /congratulations/ apologies	3	8%	4	12%
4	To soften a face-threatening act such as apologies, requests, and criticisms	0	0%	0	0%
5	To open and sustain conversation (conversation strategy)	0	0%	0	0%
6	To reinforce desired behavior	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

Regarding the first function, there were 29 (88%) compliments from female judges and 36 compliments from male judges. This function is often used by male judges more often than by female judges, based on the percentage. There were 4 compliments (12%) from female judges at the second function compared to 2 (8%) from male judges. In *America's Got Talent*, female judges frequently use these features more than male judges do.

**Table 4. Syntactic Pattern of Compliments**

No		Male		Female	
		F	%	F	%
1	NP {is/looks} really ADJ	2	5%	0	0%
2	I (really) {like/love} NP	5	13%	2	6%
3	PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP	6	15%	2	6%
4	You V (a) (really) ADJ NP	0	0%	0	0%
5	You V NP (really) ADV	0	0%	0	0%
6	You have (a) (really) ADJ NP	0	0%	3	9%
7	What (a) ADJ NP!	1	3%	0	0%
8	ADJ NP!	0	0%	0	0%
9	Isn't NP ADJ!	0	0%	0	0%
10	PRO is/are/was/were (really) ADJ	15	38%	13	39%
11	NP V NP	0	0%	1	3%
12	You V NP	0	0%	1	3%
13	ADJ!	0	0%	1	3%
14	You are/were NP	1	3%	2	6%
15	You ADV ADJ NP	0	0%	1	3%
16	Not identified/others	9	23%	7	21%
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

Regarding the first form, only 2 compliments (5%) of the judges' comments were made by men, while none compliments (0%) were made by women. This form is often used by male judges more often than by female judges. The second form, 5 compliments (13%) were made by the male judges and 2 compliments (6%) were made by the female judges. Male judges frequently use this form compared to female judges. The third form, there were 6 compliments (15%) from male judges and 2 compliments (6%) from female judges. This form is often used by male judges more often than by female judges. In the following form, You have (a) (really) ADJ NP, there were 0 compliments (0%) from male judges and 3 compliments (9%) from female judges. Female judges frequently use this form compared to male judges. In the next form, What (a) ADJ NP!, there was 1 compliment (3%)

from male judges and 0 compliments (0%) from female judges. This form is often used by male judges more often than by female judges.

In the next form, PRO is/are/was/were (really) ADJ, there were 15 compliments (38%) from male judges and 13 compliments (39%) from female judges. Female judges frequently use this form compared to male judges. In the next form, NP V NP, You V NP, ADJ!, and You ADV ADJ NP, there were 0 compliments (0%) from male judges and 1 compliment (3%) from female judges. Female judges frequently use this form compared to male judges. In the next form, You are/were NP, there was 1 compliment (3%) from male judges and 2 compliments (6%) from female judges. Female judges frequently use this form compared to male judges. The final form, which was unidentified, had 9 compliments (23%) from male judges and 7 compliments (21%) from female judges. This form is often used by male judges more often than by female judges on *America's Got Talent*.

## 2. Discussion

The discussion of the study's findings related to the distinctions between the topics, approaches, purposes, and syntactic constructions of compliments made by male and female judges on *America's Got Talent 2019* were explained.

There are two judges, one male and one female in *America's Got Talent*. According to the data collection, male judges offered 39 compliments, and female judges offered 33. Holmes (1988) asserts that women compliment one another more often than men do. This implies that the research's findings are at odds with Holmes' theory. In fact, men complimented more people in this study than women.

Table 1 reveals that the performances of the contestants received more compliments from the judges on *America's Got Talent 2019* than any other subject. Since *America's Got Talent* was a talent competition, all of the finalists showcased their skills in a variety of performances; consequently, nearly all of the positive comments the judges made about the finalists' performances were directed at them. The study did uncover additional compliment-related topics in addition to the main one.

In *America's Got Talent*, the statistics comparing the number of comments given regarding appearance by male and female judges reveals that female judges offered more praises about appearance than male judges. In contrast, male judges on *America's Got Talent* offered more positive feedback on performances than female judges. According to Holmes' research from 1988, females tend to compliment others more often when they think they look well. So, compared to male judges, female judges were more focused on attractiveness

Additionally, the findings indicated that personality and possessions were more important than the issue of appearance. Regarding personality, it appears that in *America's Got Talent*, male judges complimented contestants' personalities more frequently than female judges. On the subject of

possession, it was recently discovered that female judges on *America's Got Talent* complimented possession more frequently than male judges.

Table 2 demonstrates that male judges on *America's Got Talent 2019* used explicit and implicit strategies to deliver compliments more frequently than female judges. Contrarily, the percentage of female judges who used explanation strategies in *America's Got Talent* was higher than that of male judges. In contrast, Wu (2008) asserted that males often speak openly without hesitation or ambiguity whereas females typically avoid making direct statements and display doubt or uncertainty. In fact, men were more likely than women in American society to implicitly congratulate someone.

Table 3 demonstrates that on *America's Got Talent 2019*, compliments only served two purposes: to express admiration or approval of someone's work, appearance, or taste, and to take the place of gratitude, greetings, congratulations, and apologies. Male judges tend to compliment people more than female judges do in the first function. In the second role, female judges frequently utilize this function of compliments.

Table 4 shows that on *America's Got Talent*, men judges were more likely than female judges to commend someone by saying I (really) "like/love" NP. On *America's Got Talent*, male judges utilize PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP more frequently than female judges, making it the next syntactic pattern of compliments. However, on *America's Got Talent*, both the male and female judges used the same grammatical pattern of compliments, PRO is/are/was/were (really), almost equally. In contrast to Holmes' (1988) research, which found that men utilize both the personal and impersonal forms, females frequently use the personal form.

#### D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

First, the researcher's conclusions regarding the frequency of compliments. Male judges on *America's Got Talent* complimented contestants more frequently than female judges. Second, due to the fact that *America's Got Talent* was a talent show or competition program, all of the finalists showcased their skills in any kind of performance. As a result, the majority of the compliments the judges gave the contestants at *America's Got Talent* related to performances. However, when analyzing the number of times both sexes brought up remarks about attractiveness, it was shown that female judges did so more frequently than male judges. Third, compared to female judges, the male judges on *America's Got Talent* employed explicit methods more often when providing compliments. The number of times that remarks about implicit techniques were made by judges of both sexes were compared, men judges on *America's Got Talent* employed implicit techniques more frequently than female judges. Fourthly, how this study's results serve as a complement. In the role of expressing respect or approval of someone's work, attractiveness, or taste, the male judges frequently utilize compliments in *America's Got Talent*. In addition, female judges seem to utilize this feature



more frequently than male judges in *America's Got Talent* when it comes to replacing thanks, greetings, congrats, and apologies.

As of this research's final results, three major syntactic patterns have been identified in *America's Got Talent*: I (really) "like" or "love" NP; PRO is (actually) (a) ADJ NP; and PRO is/are/was/were (really) ADJ. According to the research, second and third personal emphasis are frequently employed by male and female contestants on *America's Got Talent*. Second- and third-person perspectives fall under the impersonal form, but the first-person perspective belongs to the personalized forms. In fact, it can be inferred from this research that judges, both male and female, frequently employ impersonal compliments rather than personal ones.

The main objective of this research is to compare the compliments given by male and female judges on 2019 editions of *America's Got Talent*. The results of the study only make up a small part of all studies. Other concerns that still need to be addressed include the use of praises in settings involving different ages, relationships, or contexts based on gender. In the meanwhile, more research on the impact of praises to the hearer may be done. Additionally, if the students are aware of cultural differences and are able to decipher hidden meanings, the use of gender-based praises can be linked to the study of different languages.

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