

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COMPLIMENTS IN CELEBRITIES' INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK COMMENTS

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the complementing strategies employed in celebrity Instagram and TikTok comments, as well as the differences between these strategies. This research used qualitative methods. The researchers selected 150 comments on Instagram and 150 comments on TikTok. Then, the researchers analyzed it using Ye's theory to analyze the compliments strategy and used Manes & Wolfson's theory to analyze the syntactic pattern. Furthermore, the researchers compared the use of compliments on Instagram and Tiktok. The findings from this research showed that direct compliments tend to be used on both Instagram and TikTok. The study also discovered seven different types of direct compliments, including *NP {is/looks} (really) ADJ*; *I (really) {like/love} NP*; *PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP*; *You V (really) (a) ADJ NP*; *You V (NP) (really) ADV*; *You have (a) (really) ADJ NP*; and *ADJ NP!* the use of form *ADJ NP!* is more likely to be used on Instagram. Meanwhile, the form *NP {is/looks} (really) ADJ* is more likely to be used on TikTok.

Keywords: *compliment strategy; linguistic form; social media*

1. Introduction

A compliment is a way for someone to show their appreciation for something. A compliment is described as a speech act in which the speaker and the listener favorably regard some "good" (possession, characteristic, ability, etc.) that is attributed, either explicitly or implicitly, and which has positive value for both the speaker and the listener (Holmes, 1988, cited in Liao & Zhang, 2023). In an engagement, praises help maintain social ties as a part of phatic communication (Handayani, 2015; Mokoginta, 2023).

Furthermore, complimenting others is one of the most popular ways to be courteous; it fosters a pleasant atmosphere that draws people closer together (Al-Oudat & Mahfouz, 2023). Thus, mastering complimenting tactics is essential as part of communication skills. In the current digital age, social media has developed into a channel for communication. TikTok and Instagram are examples of social media. One way of interacting on TikTok and Instagram is through comments. Celebrities are people who dominate social media. Therefore, there are many interactions from the content they post on both TikTok and Instagram. Ariana Grande (380 million Instagram followers and 34.6 million TikTok followers), Selena Gomez (429 million Instagram followers and 58.7 million TikTok followers), and Justin Bieber (292 million Instagram followers and 27.3 million TikTok followers) were the celebrities selected

by the researchers. They are people with specific talents, like singing. Therefore, it seems to be the reason that they will get a lot of supportive comments and accolades.

The study with regard to compliments had been conducted in many fields, such as culture (Derakhshan et al., 2020; Fattah, 2020; Rahmayani, 2020), school or university environment (Al-Shboul et al., 2022; Ariani et al., 2021; Handayani, 2015; Manipuspika & Sudarwati, 2016), and movie (Puspitasari & Fauziati, 2023; Widyanita & Pasaribu, 2019).

Furthermore, several studies have investigated the behavior of compliments on social media. Chairani and Subiyantoro (2022) reported that these studies revealed differences between men and women in whom they compliment, the types of compliments given, and how they express gratitude. Their research found that women compliment each other more often than men. Additionally, compliments directed at celebrities tend to be same-sex oriented rather than cross-sex. Similarly, Al-Rickaby and Mohammed (2020) examined how Iraqi Facebook users respond to compliments based on gender, focusing on compliment-giving behavior according to gender. They found that the most common acceptance strategy among men was appreciation, whereas women most frequently returned the compliment. Ulfa et al. (2023) explored various types of compliments used online and how people respond to them in YouTube comments. Their study found that ability compliments were the most frequently observed.

While extensive research has been conducted on the behavior of compliments, there has been little comparison of compliments across different social media platforms. To address this gap, this study aims to compare how praise is used in comments on celebrities' posts on TikTok and Instagram. Specifically, the researchers plan to investigate: (1) What complimenting strategies can be found in TikTok and Instagram comments on celebrities' posts? (2) How do the use of compliment strategies differ between TikTok and Instagram? The purpose of this study is to explore the complimenting techniques used in comments on celebrities' TikTok and Instagram posts and to identify variations between these techniques. The researchers hope this study will serve as a valuable resource for future investigations into complimenting strategies. Additionally, it may help readers better understand how complimenting strategies function in an online environment.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Speech Act

Speech act is the epitome of everything done and conveyed by way of speech that uses language to convey meaning (Izar et al., 2021). In other words, speech acts not only produce sound without any purpose, but they have meaning behind them. When delivering a speech, speakers take into account the situation, the addressees, the location, and the time (Kartika & Riza, 2022). The speech act is typically used to express an apology, a greeting, a request, an opinion, a compliment, a rejection, or an invitation (Sintamutiani et al., 2019). Speech acts are important in the process of learning a foreign language because language learners should be able to recognize appropriate vocabulary and linguistic structures for a given situation (Husna et al., 2022; Wulansari, 2019). Therefore, learning speech acts can help people to communicate effectively in various situations. According to Austin (1955), there are three types of speech acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. Locutionary act refers to repeating a statement from a language or explaining what the speaker says, for example, "the cat is on the mat". Illocutionary act category includes statements, promises, apologies, threats, forecasts, orders, and requests,

for example, "Could you please turn on the lamp?". On the other hand, a perlocutionary act is when a speaker manipulates their listeners with words. Persuasion, embarrassment, intimidation, boredom, annoyance, and inspiration are among the outcomes; for instance, "your teacher will get upset with you if you don't complete your homework." Meanwhile, a compliment is a form of illocutionary behavior in which the speaker expresses gratitude for quality about themselves (Zahro & Sudarwati, 2021).

In a compliment, the speaker or listener expresses their direct and unwavering recognition of another person—typically the one being addressed—for an attribute or quality that they both find desirable (Bibi & Sartini, 2023). According to Holmes (1988), referenced in Liao & Zhang (2023), a compliment is also described as a speech act in which the giver and the recipient positively regard some "good" (a characteristic, ability, or other attribute) that is attributed, either explicitly or implicitly, and has benefits for both the giver and the recipient.

2.2 Compliments

Ye (1995) asserts in (Miranda & Hamzah, 2018) that there are three categories of compliments: non-compliments, direct compliments, and indirect compliments. Direct compliments are those that are given to someone without any background information and that are expressed clearly, such as "You have a beautiful voice." Indirect compliments, on the other hand, are the reverse of direct compliments and are given when there is no background information. For example, "I can hear you singing every single day" indicates that the person giving the compliment likes the recipient's voice and that they can hear them sing on a daily basis. It could be taken as coercion when someone provides a non-compliment. The person who is giving the compliment speaks back to the situation, although their remarks are rarely.

In addition, Manes & Wolfson's (1981) study on direct compliments showed nine syntactic patterns in American English compliments given in face-to-face interactions, followed by:

- (1) NP {is/looks} (really) ADJ (Your dress looks beautiful)
- (2) I (really) {like/love} NP (I like your style)
- (3) PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP (This is really a nice video)
- (4) You V (really) (a) ADJ NP (You did really a great job)
- (5) You V (NP) (really) ADV (You did the assignment well)
- (6) You have (a) (really) ADJ NP (You have a really good talent)
- (7) What a ADJ NP! (What a beautiful performance)
- (8) ADJ NP! (Good job!)
- (9) Isn't NP ADJ! (Isn't that music nice!)

4.3 Instagram and TikTok

This study analyzed the compliments in celebrities' Instagram and TikTok comments using the theories of Manes & Wolfson (1981) and Ye (1995). Instagram and TikTok are well-known social networks. Apps and websites that prioritize social interaction and information sharing and exchange are referred to as social media. By using these platforms, people may create online communities in which they can share news, ideas, and personal stories in addition to other kinds of material, including pictures, videos, and stories.

Additionally, Instagram and Tiktok are social media that have a comment feature

where people can socialize or comment about what they see on the content. Therefore, this study analyzed compliments in celebrities' TikTok and Instagram comments, where celebrities are people who dominate social media. Aside from that, TikTok and Instagram are well-known social media platforms these days.

Users of the mobile social networking software Instagram can post images and videos to a variety of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, Tumblr, and Instagram. Picture filters and Direct Messages (DM), which let users share movies and images with just the people they want to, are two other functions this program offers. Mike Krieger and Kevin Systrom created Instagram, which debuted on October 6, 2010. Instagram is a widely used social networking platform globally.

Since its inception in 2016, TikTok—formerly known as Musical.ly—has remained the most downloaded app through 2020. Users of the entertainment-focused software TikTok can choose to record a video with a maximum duration of ten minutes or fifteen. TikTok offers a plethora of capabilities for editing and personalizing films. Users can specifically add messages, voiceovers, music, filters, and other elements—much like Instagram—to their videos.

3. Research Method

This study analyses compliments in celebrities' TikTok and Instagram comments. Accordingly, this study employed a qualitative research methodology since the data were comments from social media, which are expressed in words and phrases as opposed to numerical amounts. The comments left on celebrity posts on Instagram and TikTok are the focus of this study. The data source includes comments on celebrity posts on social media; hence, the celebrities need to have both an Instagram and a TikTok account. The individuals chosen by the researchers were Justin Bieber (292 million Instagram followers and 27.3 million TikTok followers), Ariana Grande (380 million Instagram followers and 34.6 million TikTok followers), and Selena Gomez (429 million Instagram followers and 58.7 million TikTok followers). The study's data set consists of English comments that contain compliments. The information was chosen from 150 remarks on TikTok and 150 on Instagram.

Upon examining the data, the researchers identified 50 positive comments on each of Selena Gomes, Justin Bieber, and Ariana Grande's Instagram and TikTok accounts. Next, using Ye's theory (1995), it was determined whether the remarks were direct, indirect, or non-compliments. The theory of Manes & Wolfson (1981) is then applied to the analysis of direct comments. Next, compared and contrasted the positive commenting patterns on Instagram and TikTok. Afterwards, discussed the key findings and drew a conclusion from the analysis that had been carried out.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Compliments Strategy

In the present study, Ye's theory (1995) is used to analyse the compliments strategy. The table below shows the findings of the compliments strategy used in celebrity TikTok and Instagram comments.

Compliments Strategy	Instagram		TikTok		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Direct	107	71.33	108	72.00	215	71.67
Indirect	38	25.33	35	23.33	73	24.33
Non-Compliment	5	3.33	7	4.67	12	4.00
Total	150	100	150	100	300	100

Table 1.1 Comparison of Compliments Strategy on Instagram and TikTok

It is evident from Table 1.1 above that there is little to no difference in the application of the compliments method on TikTok and Instagram. Direct compliments are TikTok and Instagram's most commonly utilized complimenting strategy, followed by indirect compliments and non-compliments.

4.1.2 Compliments Strategy on Instagram

107 direct compliments, 38 indirect compliments, and 5 non-compliments were identified on Instagram out of 150 data points. On Justin Bieber's posts comments, there are some compliment strategies were found, such as:

(C1) *"Your fashion is so cool."*

(C2) *"Justin Your songs save lives on sad days."*

(C3) *"I really want what you are wearing on your head!"*

Direct praises, like the one in C1 from the phrase, were found in Justin Bieber's Instagram post, stating that his fashion sense is outstanding; this can be seen in the word "cool". Furthermore, there are indirect praises, such as in C2, where the phrase carries hidden meanings, making it an indirect compliment. The homage to Justin Bieber, a singer with a large discography, suggests subtly that the singer's work is so excellent that it might uplift the person giving the compliment when they are feeling down. Although the non-compliments in the sentence, like C3, do not indicate that the speaker is offering compliments, when viewed pragmatically, the speaker is indirectly comparing the speaker to something Justin Bieber wears on his head.

On Selena Gomez's Instagram comments were found compliments strategy such as:

(C4) *"I like your music!"*

(C5) *"Whoever styled you need to stay ur stylist."*

Directly positive remarks were discovered, as shown in C4. As the word "like" makes clear, the speaker in this statement expresses her liking for Selena Gomez's music. Then, an indirect compliment can be seen in the comments on Selena Gomez's post. For example, C5's sentence implies that Selena Gomez has a very attractive appearance, leading the speaker to state that anyone who styles her needs to be Selena Gomez's stylist. Nonetheless, Selena Gomez's Instagram post did not find any non-compliments strategy on the comments section.

Meanwhile, compliments strategies comments were found on Ariana Grande's Instagram, such as:

(C6) *"Love this photo."*

(C7) *"had to come back and confirm this was real."*

(C8) *"I need the sparkly eye makeup tutorial pls."*

Direct compliments were evident in comments on Ariana Grande's Instagram, such as in C6, where the commenter explicitly expressed love for the picture using the word "love." Indirect compliments were also observed, as in C7, where the commenter indirectly conveyed admiration by expressing disbelief at the post's reality. Non-complementary comments were found in C8, where no explicit compliment was given; the commenter merely requested a sparkly eye makeup tutorial. However, pragmatically, this can be interpreted as admiration for Selena's eye makeup.

4.1.3 Compliments Strategy on TikTok

On TikTok, from 150 data, 108 direct compliments were found, 35 indirect compliments, and 7 non-compliments. In Justin Bieber's TikTok comments, compliments strategies were found, such as:

(C9) *"the performance is great"*

(C10) *"Your music is a band-aid for my heart and I am grateful that you share your talent."*

(C11) *"Where can I buy these"*

In Justin Bieber's Instagram post, comments that contained direct compliments were found. For instance, the adjective "great" in C9 indicates that the speaker expressed her admiration for Justin Bieber's performance. Then, subtle confirmations like C10 were found. The speaker complimented Justin Bieber's song and referred to it as a "band-aid" for their shattered heart. Then there are the non-compliance remarks, such as the one in C11, when the speaker just asked where the speaker could buy what Justin Bieber was wearing on the post. However, when viewed pragmatically, the speaker compliments what he wore on the post.

In Selena Gomez's TikTok comments, compliments strategies were found such as:

(C12) *"Her voice is just beautiful."*

(C13) *"She wears orange as she has invented the color."*

(C14) *"Which shade for the lip?"*

There were comments on Selena Gomez's TikTok post that were direct compliments, like in C12. The adjective "beautiful" indicates that the speaker explicitly mentioned how much he appreciated Selena Gomez's voice. Then, certain remarks, like in C13, have overt indirect compliment parts. With this statement, the speaker subtly affirms that Selena Gomez looks great in orange clothing. Afterward, it was discovered that several of the comments had C14 non-compliance elements. This line only inquires about Selena Gomez's lipstick shade—it is not meant to be complimented.

Meanwhile, on Ariana Grande's TikTok comments, compliment strategies were found, such as:

(C15) *"oh my god this song was really good! I can't stop listening"*

(C16) *"I could watch her producing her own songs for hours"*

(C17) *"when does the album drop?"*

There were overt compliments in Ariana Grande's TikTok remarks. The word "good" in C15 indicates that the speaker specifically praises the music that Ariana Grande posted. Subsequently, it was found that a number of comments contained indirect compliments, as in C16. Based on this statement, it appeared as though the speaker was quietly praising

Ariana Grande for making her songs. Like with C17, comments containing non-compliment were also found in Ariana Grande's TikTok videos. In this statement, the speaker makes no compliments and instead asks when the record will be released.

4.1.4 Syntactic Pattern

Manes and Wolfson (1981) were employed in this study to analyze direct compliments from the gathered data. The following is a comparison of the syntactic patterns of direct compliments on Instagram and TikTok.

No.	Syntactic Pattern	Instagram		TikTok		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1.	NP {is/looks} (really) ADJ	13	12.15	27	25.00	40	18.60
2.	I (really) {like/love} NP	22	20.56	21	19.44	43	20.00
3.	PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP	3	2.80	8	7.41	11	5.12
4.	You V (really) (a) ADJ NP	-	-	1	0.93	1	0.47
5.	You V (NP) (really) ADV	-	-	1	0.93	1	0.47
6.	You have (a) (really) ADJ NP	1	0.93	-	-	1	0.47
7.	What a ADJ NP!	-	-	-	-	-	-
8.	ADJ NP!	41	38.32	25	23.15	66	30.70
9.	Isn't NP ADJ!	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.	Other	27	25.23	25	23.15	52	24.19
Total		107	100	108	100	215	100

Table 1.2 Syntactic Pattern Comparison on Instagram and TikTok

According to Manes & Wolfson's (1981) theory, form (8) *ADJ NP!* is the form that is most frequently utilized on social media, followed by form (1) *NP {is/looks} (really) ADJ*; and form (2) *I (really) {like/love} NP*, as can be seen in table 1.2 above.

4.1.5 Syntactic Pattern of Compliments on Instagram

107 direct compliments were left on Instagram; of those comments, form (1) *NP {is/looks} (really) ADJ* is used 13 times (12.15%), form (2) *I (really) {like/love} NP* is used 22 times (20.56%), form (3) *PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP* is used 3 times (2.80%), form (6) *You have (a) (really) ADJ NP* is used only once (0.93%), form (8) *ADJ NP!* is used 41 times (38.32%). However, no comments are used form (4) *You V (really) (a) ADJ NP*, form (5) *You V (NP) (really) ADV*, form (7) *You V (NP) (really) ADV*, and form (9) *Isn't NP ADJ!* Furthermore, the following is some examples of the syntactic pattern of compliments on Instagram.

Compliments	Syntactic Patterns
(C18) Your eyes are beautiful *	NP {are} ADJ
(C19) I LOVE THIS SONG SM *	I V NP
(C20) U are the amazing artists, Please don't pay attention to the hate. You are the best!	You {are} ADJ NP
(C21) You are so sweet! You have such a good soul and heart! ****	You {are} INT ADJ! You V (such) a ADJ NP
(C22) Gorgeous giiirl!!!	ADJ NP

Table 1.3 Syntactic Pattern of Compliments on Instagram

Note: (*) represents emoticon

4.1.6 Syntactic Pattern of Compliments on TikTok

Out of 108 direct comments on TikTok, of those comments, form (1) *NP {is/looks} (really) ADJ* is used 27 times (25%), form (2) *I (really) {like/love} NP* is used 21 times (19.44%), form (3) *PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP* is used 8 times (7.41%), form (4) *You V (really) (a) ADJ NP* and form (5) *You V (NP) (really) ADV* are used only once (0.93%), form (6) *You have (a) (really) ADJ NP* is used only once (0.93%), form (8) *ADJ NP!* is used 25 times (23.15%). However, no comments used form (6) *You have (a) (really) ADJ NP*, form (7) *You V (NP) (really) ADV*, and form (9) *Isn't NP ADJ!* Furthermore, the following are some examples of syntactic patterns of compliments on Instagram.

Compliments	Syntactic Patterns
(C23) the performance is great	NP {is} ADJ
(C24) I love this song!!!	I V NP
(C25) This is such a good song! I love it	PRO is (such) a ADJ NP! I V PRO
(C26) This album is perfect, you did the best job Ari**	You V ADJ NP (Ari)
(C27) U SING AMAZINGLY*	You V ADV
(C28) beautiful tattoos *	ADJ NP

Table 1.4 Syntactic Pattern of Compliments on TikTok

Note: (*) represents emoticon

4.2 Discussion

The purpose of this study is to explore complimenting techniques on TikTok and Instagram and to identify the differences between these two platforms. Researchers utilized Ye's (1995) hypothesis, which categorizes compliments into three groups: non-compliments, direct compliments, and indirect compliments. The findings reveal minimal differences between the complimenting methods on Instagram and TikTok. The study indicates that the most frequently used complimenting technique is the direct compliment.

Common verbs and adjectives used in direct compliments include "cool," "like," "love," "great," "beautiful," and "good," as shown on C1, C4, C6, C9, C12, and C15. This study discovered that on C18, C19, C21, C26, C27, and C28, as well as on Instagram and TikTok, intensifiers and emoticons are used as suppressants of such compliments. Emoticons are typically in the forms of fire, hearts, and thumbs up.

This study's intensifier and emoticon findings for emphasizing positive semantic information in online compliments are similar to those of Placencia & Lower (2013) and Indah & Rifana (2017). Placencia & Lower (2013) studied praises on Facebook, whereas Indah & Rifana (2017) studied compliments on Instagram. They discovered that suppressing compliments was a prevalent practice while using intensifiers and emoticons. This implies that other social media sites like X, YouTube, and others may also allow the use of intensifiers and emoticons.

Manes and Wolfson (1981) classified complimenting behavior into nine types based on the syntactic aspect of the conduct in American English. This concept is used to study direct compliments. The following are the nine direct praise forms according to this theory: (1) *NP {is/looks} (really) ADJ*, (2) *I (really) {like/love} NP*, (3) *PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP*, (4) *You V (really) (a) ADJ NP*, (5) *You V (NP) (really) ADV*, (6) *You have (a) (really) ADJ NP*, (7) *What a ADJ NP!*, (8) *ADJ NP!*, (9) *Isn't NP ADJ!* On TikTok, form (1) is used more frequently—27 times, or 25%—while on Instagram, form (8) is used more frequently—41 times, or 38.32%.

There are some parallels between the findings and earlier studies (Mandalasari & Hamzah, 2018). This study examines complimenting strategies on social media that are based on gender. Mandalasari and Hamzah's (2018) study found that straightforward compliments were offered more frequently. This is undoubtedly consistent with recent research indicating a higher frequency of direct praise on Instagram and TikTok. In addition, Chairani & Subiyantoro (2022) studied Instagram comment complimenting behavior and found that the *ADJ NP!* form is utilized more frequently since it is acceptable and fit for usage in online interactions like Instagram. This is in line with the current study, which demonstrates a stronger inclination towards the *ADJ NP!* form on Instagram. Apart from that, the most commonly used version on TikTok is *NP {is/looks} (truly) ADJ*.

Nevertheless, this research has certain limitations: (1) it examines only post-comments from three celebrities, Justin Bieber, Ariana Grande, and Selena Gomez; (2) it only examines comments written in English; and (3) it only examines the theories of Ye (1995) and Manes and Wolfson (1981).

5. Conclusion

This study looks at how compliments are used on TikTok and Instagram. Celebrity comments from their TikTok and Instagram accounts are used in this study. In addition, 300 comments, 150 of which were on TikTok and 150 on Instagram, were collected. These remarks were chosen from posts made prior to January 27, 2024.

According to this study, direct compliments are used more frequently on TikTok and Instagram than indirect or non-compliments. Additionally, seven categories of direct compliments were found in this study: (1) *NP {is/looks} (really) ADJ*; (2) *I (really) {like/love} NP*; (3) *PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP*; (4) *You V (really) (a) ADJ NP*; (5) *You V (NP) (really) ADV*; (6) *You have (a) (really) ADJ NP*; and (8) *ADJ NP!* Using form (8) on Instagram is becoming more and more prevalent. On the other hand, form (1) is more frequently used on TikTok.

This study offers recommendations for future research as well as for educators and lecturers who work with students. Students can use this research as a resource to learn more about pragmatic study, particularly with the usage of compliments on social media. This research can serve as a resource for educators and lecturers when creating lesson plans. It can broaden the knowledge students have of how to utilize compliments on social media. Then, for further research on this research, of course, there are still many shortcomings. Therefore, improvement is still needed, especially in this research, which only focuses on compliments. In future research, researchers can examine the comparison of the use of compliments on various social media along with the responses. Apart from that, other theories can be used, not only using Ye's theory (1995) and Manes & Wolfson (1981).

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