



**AN ANALYSIS OF SPEECH ACT OF PRAISING AND FIGURATIVE
LANGUAGE USED BY THE JUDGES OF AMERICAN IDOL
SEASON 15th**

THESIS

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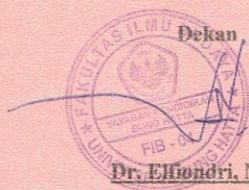
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ORIGINALITY STATEMENT

“I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been accepted for the award of any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis.”

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Abstract

The study aims at describing speech act of praising used by the Judges of American Idol music television program Season 15th. The writer analyzed the speech acts by using pragmatic approach. The writer focuses on the forms of praising in literal and non-literal expressions and positive politeness strategy used by the Judges. From the analysis, the Judges often praise literally praising by using direct praising, repetition of certain word and maximizer. Meanwhile in non-literal praising the Judges used figurative language such as *simile*, *metaphor*, *personification*, *oxymoron*, and *imagery*. In addition, the writer found the communication strategies used by the Judges to express the admiration by using positive politeness, for example exaggerate, intensify interest to hearer, use in-group identity markers, show common ground, joke, show speaker's knowledge and concern for hearer's want.

Keywords: *speech act of praising, literal and non-literal expressions, positive politeness strategies*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

Music entertainment on television becomes more various in singing talent search. One of the pioneers of talent show on television is American Idol. Most people like to watch American Idol, the singing competition television program series created by Simon Fuller, produced by Fremantlemedia North America and 19 Entertainments, and distributed by Fremantlemedia North America. According to <https://www.youtube.com/user/americanidol>, it began airing on Fox on June 11, 2002 and ended on April 7, 2016. It started from an addition to the American Idol format based on the British series pop idol, and became one of the most successful shows in the history of American television.

The concept this singing show is to find recording stars from unknown singing talent, the winner decided by the viewers in America through telephones, internet, and text voting. Winner is chosen by viewers in all of its fifteen seasons. This music program becomes success trendsetter. Many countries around the world adopt by replacing the word 'American' becomes the country's name, such as Indonesian Idol.

Furthermore, there are three Judges who give comment about performance. In fact, the contestants who are mostly amateur singers have amazing voice. Even they can sing better than professional singers. If they win the competition, they will get some awards and become new rising star in American music industry. So there are many dialogues between judges and contestants that

can be analyzed by using linguistic study especially speech act of praising. Speakers use speech act to express the speakers' feeling and respond to something.

Speech act can be found in many kinds of communication. One of them is in electronic media such as television. Television as one of mass communication media is used to convey information and entertainment. The most popular television program among teenager is music program. This program is the one of music television program that famous among people around the world, especially in America. American Idol becomes new music television program that attracts and influences many people become the next idol as popular singer.

In American Idol, Judges will give praise to the contestant that contains a speech act. According to Yule (1996) speech act is action which is made as the result of utterance. It means someone should know or understand the meaning behind the word, it is more than word but how hearer gets more message than speaker said. Austin (1962) identifies that there are three types of speech act, they are locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary.

Moreover, Searle in Huang (2007) classifies five types of speech act: they are representative, directive, expressive, commissive, and declaratives. In addition, Searle also writes in Huang's (2007) that praising is part of an expressive speech act. In the American Idol, the judges spontaneously express their comments after a contestant finish singing.

Talking about speech act of praising, when the Judges give praise to performers they use utterance in the form of speech act. To know about what form they use the writer applies Searle theory. Besides, when giving comments, the

Judges have communication strategy to express their feelings. To know about what strategy is used by the judges the writer applies Brown and Levinson theory.

Furthermore, Wolfson (1983) explains that there are many types of praising in some language context. But some praising only suitable with some language situation. He also adds that the relationship between the speaker and hearer also influence the type of praise that is considered appropriate. Wolfson (1983) classifies two types of praising such as appearance and ability.

Here the writer takes an example to support the explanation above as follow:

- (1) *Your daughter is very nice. She has the same beautiful eyes her mother has.* (Wolfson, 1983)

In example (1), it can be assumed from the tone of the sentence that the speaker and hearer have good relationship. In the first utterance, the speaker praises the hearer's daughter. Then in the second utterance, the speaker comments on the beautiful eyes belong to the daughter and mother. It means that the speaker praises both the hearer and her daughter although the daughter is not present with them. In other words, the second addressee of the praise is hidden. The praise is about the physical look that is the beautiful eyes. To express this praise, the speaker uses certain strategy that begins with praising the daughter. This is a polite way to start a praise. In positive politeness strategies, this example is related to strategy number 2: Exaggerate (interest, sympathy, and approval to hearer). The speaker shows his/her interest and approval to hearer. In one expression, he praises two people in the same time. In addition, the context used in example (1) is the social context that can be seen through the relationship between the speaker and hearer.

Furthermore, based on the discussion above the writer is interested in analyzing the speech act of praising used by the Judges in American Idol music television program. Some of the praises about contestants' performance in American Idol are:

- (2) *Hi, Manny. Listen, I love your voice. I like that you worked the stage and all that. You sounded really good and it was a good song choice for you, I think.*
- (3) *I thought it was a good performance. I think you look great. I think you sound great. You're very comfortable. The interesting for me is going to be how you stack up to everyone else. But all around, I thought it was a good performance.*
- (4) *I'm loving you, Dalton. You are kind of like this dark horse that's coming to the surface right now right at the right time, with amazing blue eyes. (<https://www.youtube.com/user/americanidol>).*

It can be seen that the praise given by the Judges are various. They give comment in different values such as the voice quality, song choice, the physical look, performance on stage, etc. The praises use the words love, really good, great, comfortable, interesting, and amazing.

The Judges say their praise in certain strategies which all of them in polite way. Besides, they also speak by using figurative language such as *You are kind of like this dark horse that's coming to the surface*. The figure of speech in this example is simile because the judge compares the contestant with dark horse.

It can be concluded that to study speech act of praising can give better understanding about the comment given by the Judges in this program. The writer chooses this topic based on consideration that speech act of praising is called as one of linguistic phenomena. In this research, the writer wants to analyze speech act of praising in the forms and strategies used by the Judges of American Idol.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

There are many aspects that can be analyzed in American Idol music television such as giving comment, critique and suggestion, expressing dissatisfaction and disappointment, idioms, slang language, figurative language and speech act. Besides that, there are many types of speech act that writer can study such as representatives, assertives, directives, expressives, commissives, and declaratives. But the writer focuses on speech act of praising. The writer focuses on the forms of praising and the communication strategies to express the praising.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

There are many aspects that the writer can analyze in American Idol music programs. In linguistic aspects, there are idioms, slang language, sociolinguistic analysis, figurative language, and speech act theory. In this research, the speech act is chosen. There are also many kinds of speech acts that can be analyzed, such as apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise, request, commanding, asking question, praising and so on. But in this research the writer limits on analyzing speech act of praising because in the American Idol there are many forms and strategies of praising used by the Judges. The writer tries to find speech act of praise and communication strategies used by the Judges of American Idol music television program.

1.4 Formulation of the Problem

The writer formulates the problems into the following questions:

1. What are the forms of speech act of praising used by the Judges of American Idol?
2. What are the communication strategies used by the Judges?

1.5 Purpose of the Research

Based on the research questions, the purpose of this research are formulated as follows:

1. To find the forms of speech act of praising used by Judges of American Idol.
2. To explain the communication strategies used by the Judges.

1.6 Significance of the Research

The writer expects this research will be useful and give the contribution both theoretically and practically for the readers who are interested in studying and knowing more about speech act of praising. Theoretically, the findings of this study are expected to provide the theories about speech act of praising. Practically, the writer hopes this research can also increase the curiosity of the readers to study more about speech act. In short, writer hopes this research can help the writer and readers to understand about speech act especially for speech act of praising.