

COMPLAINT STRATEGIES USED AS A RESPONSE TO CULTURE SHOCK: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF INDONESIAN DIASPORA

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Abstract

This study explores the complaint expressions as an initial response to the cultural shock by an Indonesian diaspora in America. In cross-cultural pragmatics, complaining can be an adaptive strategy for adjusting to different communication norms. The study highlights how an Indonesian diaspora from Java uses this strategy to adapt to the American environment. The complaints are conveyed in two ways: direct and indirect strategies. These strategies are reflected in 7 expressions, namely: criticizing, annoyance, expressing disappointment, no explicit reapproach, blaming, requesting, and asking for responsibilities. The data were collected from an Instagram account under the username @pretypuri in 2023. This account is managed by an Indonesian-Javanese descendant living in America, named Puri Vierra. This study uses a qualitative method to describe the outcome comprehensively. The result shows that from 33 complaint utterances, direct complaint appears 29 times, and expressing disappointment appears 16 times. It indicates that direct complaint is the most dominant strategy employed and demonstrates an immediate and straightforward response to cultural divergencies. Furthermore, the numerous expressions of disappointment feature the emotional challenges during the adaptation process, leading to the early step forward and adapting to the new cultural environment. In brief, this study promotes the comprehension of how the use of language relates to the psychological and cultural alteration of diaspora communities.

Keywords: *Development of Teaching Materials, Conversation, Boarding, E-Learning*

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Studi ini mengeksplorasi ekspresi keluhan sebagai respon awal terhadap guncangan budaya oleh diaspora Indonesia di Amerika. Dalam pragmatik lintas budaya, mengeluh dapat menjadi strategi adaptif untuk menyesuaikan diri dengan norma komunikasi yang berbeda. Studi ini menyoroti bagaimana diaspora Indonesia dari Jawa menggunakan strategi ini untuk beradaptasi dengan lingkungan Amerika. Keluhan disampaikan dalam dua cara: strategi langsung dan tidak langsung. Strategi-strategi tersebut tercermin dalam 7 ungkapan, yaitu: mengkritik, mengganggu, mengungkapkan kekecewaan, tidak ada pendekatan ulang eksplisit, menyalahkan, meminta, dan meminta tanggung jawab. Data tersebut dikumpulkan dari akun Instagram dengan nama pengguna @pretypuri pada tahun 2023. Akun ini dikelola oleh keturunan Indonesia-Jawa yang tinggal di Amerika, bernama Puri Vierra. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif untuk mendeskripsikan hasil secara komprehensif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dari 33 ucapan pengaduan, pengaduan langsung muncul 29 kali, dan mengungkapkan kekecewaan muncul 16 kali. Ini menunjukkan bahwa keluhan langsung adalah strategi paling dominan yang digunakan dan menunjukkan respons langsung dan langsung terhadap perbedaan budaya. Selain itu, banyak ekspresi kekecewaan menampilkan tantangan emosional selama proses adaptasi, yang mengarah pada langkah awal ke depan dan beradaptasi dengan lingkungan budaya baru. Singkatnya, penelitian ini mempromosikan pemahaman tentang bagaimana penggunaan bahasa berhubungan dengan perubahan psikologis dan budaya komunitas diaspora

kata kunci: *Pengembangan Bahan Ajar, Percakapan, Boarding, E-Learning*

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Introduction

Javanese are strongly associated with communal life, which can be illustrated by the observance of cultural customs and showing respect to others (especially elders) in specific forms and degrees that are reflected in daily life. The concept of “*unggah ungguh*” or etiquette in Javanese culture plays a significant role in structuring communication, guiding individuals on maintaining politeness, hierarchy, and cultural modesty (Mujaki et al., 2024). These values serve as foundational frameworks that guide individuals in navigating their existence and shaping their worldview (Arya & Sokowati, 2024). The series of customs inherent in Javanese culture also shapes the communicative characteristics of its people. When individuals with a Javanese character’s background migrate abroad, the differences in values and social norms they face often trigger cultural shock. This situation frequently poses challenges in adapting quickly to a new environment. Such an experience is faced by an Indonesian diaspora from East Java named Puri Viera, who married an American and moved to settle with her husband in San Diego, California.

As an Indonesian diaspora, she experiences cultural shock while adapting to her new circumstances. Culture shock is a multifaceted experience that emerges from the changes and stressors associated with adapting to a new cultural context (Winkelman, 1994). Puri shares her daily life in America on her Instagram account, @prettypuri17, in the form of roleplays. The accessibility of digital access platforms contribute to the diversity of creative works (Hidayatulloh et al., 2025). It is reflected on her reel videos which frequently discuss Java and America's cultural, normative, and habitual differences. Her video contents portray the different cultures and habits that are potentially experienced by other individuals with a Javanese cultural background who settle in America. Her videos are also delivered engagingly and humorously. Both directly and indirectly, the subject of this study, as a native Javanese Indonesian now living in America, interacts with the local community, armed with Javanese values she has always believed in.

The cultural values inherent in oneself, including language and ethnicity, function as accessible assets that facilitate the adaptation process. This is in line with (Karim Suryadi et al., 2023) who stated that these values serve as fundamental resources individuals can utilize when adjusting to new circumstances. Moreover, culture is understood not as a fixed guideline that is passed down from generation to generation, but rather as a dynamic construction that is continuously negotiated through various social interactions (Peranginangin et al., 2023). For Puri, living as an Indonesian diaspora in American society with diverse social interactions presents challenges.

The term diaspora comes from Greek word “to scatter”, referring to the phenomenon of a particular population across geographical and cultural boundaries. In this context, individuals experiencing diaspora often retain a sense of emotional attachment and nostalgia for their homeland (Sabbah & Ayuningtyas, 2022). In addition, diaspora by (Fitria et al., 2023) refers to the mixing of two cultures or more that occurs where individuals or groups of people with a particular cultural background voluntarily move to a new country with very different cultural values, customs, and environment, often more advanced than their country of origin. This process involves the blending of two cultural identities, shaping the migrants' adaptation to a contrasting socio-cultural environment (Turistiati et al., 2023). For individuals like the subject of this study, language navigates the complexities of maintaining cultural heritage while adapting to the dominant culture and social norms of her host country. In America, she adapts to new situations by communicating her opinion or point of view

based on her previous cultural beliefs and producing utterances. This action is confirmed as a speech act.

Speech act, as a deliberate linguistic operation used in communication, plays a crucial role in practical use and interaction (Alghazo et al., 2021). (Searle, 1979) classified speech acts into three main categories, namely locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts. Furthermore, Searle groups illocutionary speech acts into five fundamental categories, namely assertive, directive, commissive, declarative, and expressive. Expressive speech acts are utterances that reflect or express the feeling and emotional condition of the speaker explicitly (Astika et al., 2021). It is a psychological statement from the speaker to the hearer (Royanti, 2019). This speech act facilitates the exposure of the speaker's true intention because emotion often conceals meaning. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding and careful interpretation are essential (Rini et al., 2024). The essence of expression lies in reflecting certain psychological conditions, which are visible verbally and through facial expression. In communication, understanding expressive speech acts is important to capture the emotional meaning of the speaker and minimize misunderstanding (Kurniasih & Mulatsih, 2022) that leads to communication failure.

These failures have the potential to threaten another person's self-esteem. All communication, both verbal and non-verbal, has this potential, although the actual threat depends more on the listeners' perception than the speakers' intention (Nasution et al., 2013), or Face-Threatening Acts (FTA). These differing conceptualizations influence their response to conflict. In this context, "face" represents an extension of an individual's self-identity (Turistiati et al., 2023). Face-Threatening Acts are communicative actions that have the potential to damage the self-image of the interlocutor in interaction. In cross-cultural pragmatics, FTA reflects how a threat to social identity and self-esteem can emerge through verbal and non-verbal expressions. Perception of these threats is strongly influenced by cultural norms and the social context in which the interaction takes place. Therefore, understanding FTA is important in examining politeness strategies used to minimize conflict and maintain communication harmony.

To reduce the negative impact, speakers generally apply politeness strategies in everyday interactions (Vinola & Taufik, 2023). The proper strategy and politeness in conversation play an important role in reducing conflict, maintaining cooperation, and showing respect for the person you are talking to (Aporbo, 2022). FTA can damage the self-image of the interlocutor and potentially trigger conflict, depending on the listener's perception of the message delivered. Therefore, politeness strategies are used to minimize

negative impacts, maintain cooperation, and show respect in everyday interaction. One action that may trigger communication failure is a complaint.

Discussing complaint strategies in pragmatics, (Trosborg, 1995) divides complaint speech acts into several categories; namely criticizing, annoyance, expressing disappointment, no explicit reapproach, blaming, requesting, and asking for responsibilities. In their research entitled “*An Analysis of the Expressive Speech Acts in 'THE WILLAUGHBYS' Movie*”, (Aritonang & Ambalegin, 2023), based on Searle's theory, classified his data into 11 expressions, namely thank, congratulate, complain, condole, lament, protest, deplore, praise, boast, compliment, and greet. Meanwhile, (Nazrah, 2024) in her research entitled “*Analyzing Expressive Speech Acts in The Late Show with James Corden*” removed ‘praising’ expression, but added ‘apologize’ and ‘welcome’ expressions. This demonstrates that complaining expressions often appear in research on expressive speech acts. Furthermore, in their study entitled “*Expressive Speech Acts Strategies for Complaining in the Japanese Comedy Drama 'Joshi Kosei No Mudazukai'*”, (Sari & Soelistyowati, 2024) identified four main types of complaining speech acts: hints, annoyance, ill consequences, and blaming.

This study focuses on exploring complaint strategies in speech acts used by the Javanese-Indonesian diaspora, as the limitation of the study, and found seven types of strategies, viz. criticizing, annoyance, expressing disappointment, no explicit reapproach, blaming, requesting, and asking for responsibilities. The analysis is directed at how the subject, with a Javanese cultural background, adapts and maintains her existence in a new social environment that is culturally contrasting, namely American society. This phenomenon is interesting considering the stereotype of Javanese society, which is known to tend to avoid conflict. Still, the research subject showed adaptive abilities through various communicative adjustment strategies, which can be seen on her social media account.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the adaptation strategies of a Javanese Indonesian diaspora through speech act analysis. This method is applied since it allows an in-depth examination of how linguistic patterns reflect cross-cultural adaptation in digital communication settings. The data collected were in the form of words, phrases, clauses and sentences from @pretypuri17's Instagram account on reel videos, focusing on how her speech acts change in different contexts. Her Instagram interaction with both

Indonesian and American audiences was analysed to identify linguistic adaptation strategies. Additionally, supplementary data were gathered from followers who engaged in discussion with the subject, providing insight into the pragmatic adjustments necessary for intercultural communication. Data collection was conducted through a systematic observation of @prettyhuri17's Instagram reel video posts from January to Desember 2023. The study focused on the complaint strategy speech acts found in textual and audio-visual content. The collected data were transcribed, categorised, and thematically analysed to identify patterns in speech act usage. This study uses pragmatic and thematic coding as the main instrument. Speech act categories refer to (Searle, 1979), while the complaint strategy is explained through (Trosborg, 1995) to denote the approach used by Puri as a diaspora.

Results and Discussion

Results

Referring to the classification proposed by (Trosborg, 1995), this study identified seven types of complaint expressions; namely criticizing, annoyance, expressing disappointment, no explicit reapproach, blaming, requesting, and asking for responsibilities. The following table describes the frequency of the occurrence:

Table 1. Frequency of Complaint Expression

Expressions	Number	Percent
Criticizing	1	3%
Annoyance	7	21.1%
Expressing disappointment	16	48.5%
No explicit reapproach	4	12.1%
Blaming	1	3%
Requesting	2	6.1%
Asking for Responsibilities	2	6.1%

The table illustrates the frequency and percentage of the seven expressions of complaint that arise in this study. The expressions are uttered in 33 utterances, and nearly half of the utterances are illustrated in expressing disappointment in 16 utterances, or 48.5% of the total data. Annoyance expression is the second most common expression, with 7 data, or 21.1% of the total cases. Furthermore, no explicit reapproach expression or hint appears in 4 utterances or 12.1%. Other expressions, including requesting and asking for responsibilities, occur in 6.1% of the total cases, or 2 utterances for each. On the other hand, criticizing and blaming are the least expressed in this research, with 1 utterance each or only 3% each of the total cases.

In the analysis of complaining expression, two of the most well-acknowledged strategies are direct complaint and indirect complaint. In pragmatics, direct speech acts reflect explicit communicative intention, where the speaker openly states his or her intentions and strategically directs the utterance to achieve the conversational goals (Balik & Alinda, 2022). It is often adjusted to social norms and expectations to ensure the achievement of interaction goals. Conversely, indirect strategies in speech develop as a result of an individual's interaction with their social environment, pragmatic learning processes, and the influence of the media consumed, which collectively form polite and contextual communication patterns (Amri et al., 2023). All three play a role in shaping pragmatic sensitivity, including maintaining politeness, mitigating potential face-threatening acts, and adjusting meaning to context. The speaker usually performs this to gain approval or sympathy, not to solve the problem.

Table 2. Frequency of Strategies

Strategies	Number	Percentage
Direct Strategies	4	12.1%
Indirect Strategies	29	87.8%

In this study, the direct strategy used by Puri appears 29 times, or reaches 87.9% of the total data. She rarely promotes an indirect strategy since it only appears 4 times, or 12.1%. These findings indicate that Puri has begun to adapt to American culture, which tends to be outspoken and straightforward in expressing opinions without abandoning the typical communication patterns of Javanese society, which prefer an indirect form of speech in everyday communication.



DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the main finding of the analysis of video reels uploaded which represent experiences living in the United States. The materials of the video provide authentic depiction of the communication strategies she uses to respond to cultural differences, especially in the context of cultural shocks. Pragmatics analysis shows that the direct strategy is mostly used to convey complaints or dissatisfaction with situation that are considered to deviate from the previous cultural values.

a. Criticizing

Criticizing is a form of direct complaint, where the speaker explicitly conveys dissatisfaction to the other person. In this strategy, the speaker not only shows the existence of a problem, but also directly criticizes the actions, behaviors, or decisions of others that are considered not as expected (Trosborg, 1995).

This expression is employed the least in the data. Puri was going to meet her American prospective mother-in-law, and she had to greet her. She asked her fiancé about what she should do based on their culture, and she was shocked by the man's answer since the information was dissimilar from Puri's culture. The data appears in the following conversation:

Puri : Flowers? Ok, I can bring her flowers. And what do I say? "Hello, Mom, how are you?"
Puri's fiancé : She's not your mom, her name is Victoria
Puri : Ok, Victoria, but what do I call her?
Puri's fiancé : Victoria
Puri : **I call her by her name? That's a sin!**

Puri could not agree with the information that she was allowed to address her future mother-in-law only by name. The expression "**I call her by her name? That's a sin!**" clearly shows the different beliefs in which the older person must be addressed. In the pragmatic framework, the principle of politeness in Javanese society regulates forms of verbal politeness based on age and status, which are reflected in polite and hierarchical communication patterns (Adisti & Rozikan, 2021). Therefore, calling an older person only by name is considered impolite and unacceptable. The phrase ". **That's a sin!**" explicitly refused her fiancé's idea to call his mother by name.

The direct strategy of the expression "**I call her by her name? That's a sin!**" reflects a direct criticism that explicitly refuses the change in the addressing norms, and it refers to the Javanese values that uphold politeness and respect for parents or older

people. Puri directly criticizes the idea and explicitly complains about the different norms from a cultural point of view. She did this without any hesitation by considering her degree of closeness. The man was Puri's fiancé, so she wanted to express her criticism.

b. Annoyance

Annoyance expression comes up as the second most common expression in this research. The complainer avoids direct blaming when expressing a negative feeling about a situation. It appears when Jane, a neighbor, invites Puri to her house. She informed Puri that she cooked Indonesia dishes, that is, rice and roasted chicken. Jane was certain that Puri was going to like her meals. In fact, Puri was shocked by the way Jane cooked the rice. She put the instant rice in the microwave. The different methods of cooking rice create a mismatch with traditional Indonesian cultural values. The conversation was going as follows:

Puri: What are you doing?

Jane: Making you rice.

Puri: **In the microwave?**

Jane: Yeah, I got this instant rice from Walmart

The utterance “**In the microwave?**” used by Puri can be suggested as an expressive speech act that functions to convey dissatisfaction indirectly through the type of rhetorical question. This speech act shows a strategy of disagreement wrapped in a negative impression, because Puri does not explicitly hypnotize her interlocutor but rather focuses on the inconsistency of carrying out the cooking practice with the traditional culinary values that she adheres to. In this context, Puri's utterance reflects a mitigation strategy against FTA, where criticism is delivered subtly to maintain harmonious interactions across cultural situations. In FTA, a speaker is required to carefully consider what aspects are conveyed, in what context, when, and in what situation the utterance is made (Nuraeni & Wibowo, 2018). Carelessness in adjusting the utterance to the context has the potential to produce a meaning that deviates from the communicative intent expected by the speaker or writer.

In another video, the indirect strategy is reflected when Puri complained about a sluggish woman blocking her way to the parking lot. In a conversation with Jane, Puri conveyed her complaint:

Jane: Just be patient!

Puri: **Look at her! she's walking in the middle of the parking lot like it belongs to her grandpa! Parkirane Mbahe opo?**

Jane: (her grandpa? What is she talking about?)

Expression that are often perceived as annoying usually include lexical forms borrowed from foreign languages, and speech that contains elements of impoliteness (Priiki, 2023). The utterance “*Parkirane mbahe opo?*” was a rhetorical question in this context that not only sought clarification but also functioned as subtle criticism and was uttered in Javanese, not English. Through this question, Puri directly stated that the way the woman walked was considered too casual, as if the area was private property, which must be maintained in terms of decency.

In Javanese culture, the term “*mbah*” literally refers to grandparents. However, the pragmatic use in this situation, the mention of “*mbah*” is not intended as a familial reference. It is used metaphorically to satirize actions that treat public space as if it were private property or ancestral heritage. This expression reflects social criticism of behaviour that is considered to exceed the boundaries of collective ownership.

Instead of confronting the woman directly, Puri chose to convey his frustration to Jane. This strategy fell into the category of indirect complaint, which allowed Puri to vent his frustration without causing direct conflict. Puri conveyed her complaint indirectly through a rhetorical question. By stating “*Parkirane mbahe opo?*”, she expressed criticism of behavior that was considered inappropriate without mentioning names or directly targeting the doer. This approach reduced the potential for conflict (face-threatening acts) and maintained social relationships. Intercultural pragmatics emphasizes how differences in communication norms between cultures can lead to differences in interpreting speech acts (Sztencel, 2020) In this study, Puri expressed her dissatisfaction not only as a personal emotional reaction to inconsistent communication practices with her native cultural views.

c. Expressing Disappointment

Among the identified strategies, expressing disappointment emerges as the most frequently employed. It appears 16 times, which means almost half of the total data. This finding highlights the research subject’s dissatisfaction with the circumstances that did not align with her expectations. The following conversation describes one of the disappointing expressions:

Puri	: One dollar for spinach, ok, <i>ya?</i>
Seller	: We don’t do bargain
Puri	: Why not? In my country, we bargain everything
Seller	: It’s two dollars per pound

Bargaining is a common thing in Indonesia. Most Indonesians bargain in traditional markets to fulfill their daily necessities. The expression “**Why not? In my country, we bargain everything**” shows that Puri was dissatisfied because her expectations were not met. This statement reinforced her sense of disappointment because she had expected a more responsive and negotiable form of interaction. In Indonesia, bargaining is an important part of transactions in traditional markets, so the refusal to bargain is the source of disappointment since Puri considered this value to be part of the cultural identity.

According to (Brown & Levinson, 1978) in politeness theory, acts of complaint are often related to “face” or self-esteem violation. In the context of Puri, the refusal to bargain was seen as threatening its traditional values, reflecting differences in the management of “face” between Indonesian and American cultures. Intercultural pragmatics emphasizes that deep-seated cognitive and cultural values often shape intercultural communication strategies. (Kecskes, 2016) revealed that differences in cultural values can produce different responses to complaints, especially in a diaspora context.

d. No Explicit Reapproach

This type of expression refers to a hint where the complainer does not state the problem or mention the issue. In this context, it was situated in a restaurant when Puri ordered an egg with tomato sauce as the condiment. The different concept about tomato sauce and ketchup between Puri and the waitress triggered her to complain. After showing her disappointment directly to the waitress, she continued her complaint by explaining her concept of these two things.

Waitress: That’s ketchup, you know

Puri: **Kecap is black, this is clearly tomato sauce**

In this situation, Puri had previously expressed disappointment over the cultural differences in food presentation. After the waiter stated that ketchup was being served, the waitress clarified and Puri responded with “**Kecap is black, this is clearly tomato sauce**”. This expression shows that Puri does not accept the waiter’s explanation. The statement continues Puri’s frustration with the cultural differences between traditional

Indonesian values and American food preparation practices. Puri uses his cultural knowledge to explain the difference between soy sauce (which is generally dark in color) and tomato sauce (which is red), implying that the waitress' explanation did not match his expectations. By stating that “**this is clearly tomato sauce**”, Puri not only expressed disappointment but also disapproved of the food serving system in the new environment.

The statement conveyed Puri's frustration because the standard of the norm of serving did not match the expectations. This shows that the expression of disappointment is a consistent emotional response to the discrepancy between cultural expectations and existing reality. According to Brown and Levinson (1997), grievances often arise as a response to the violation of “face” or self-esteem, especially when cultural norms are not adhered to.

Puri chose to express her criticism by explaining the conceptual differences between soy sauce and tomato sauce, rather than directly blaming the waiter. This indirect complaint reduced the potential for direct conflict (face-threatening act) while still showing dissatisfaction. This way of complaint also reflects Javanese values, where respect for traditional norms is crucial.

e. Blaming

In this expression, the complainer subtly guilt the interlocutor to lessen the harshness, even though the responsibility is still required. The blaming expression appears to have the least data in this study for the criticizing expression. It only appeared once in the whole dataset. The context surrounding this expression happened in a restaurant when Puri needed to add a condiment to make her fried egg more delicious. In the conversation between Puri and the waitress, there is a difference in perception regarding the product served. The waitress stated that they did not have tomato sauce, but rather ketchup in the bottle.

Waitress: No, we don't. We do have ketchup, though, in a bottle

Puri : Oh, you have *kecap* here? *Kecap sama telur enak juga*. Ok, I'll try *kecap*

Waitress: Here you go

Puri : ***Lah! This is tomato sauce, you said you didn't have tomato sauce***

Waitress: That's ketchup, you know

Puri thought it would be a bottle of tomato sauce commonly served in Indonesia's restaurants or stalls. The waitress brought and offered her a can of tomato sauce at an extra charge and informed her that the condiment in a bottle was ketchup. Puri refused

the can and accepted the offer. Yet, Puri was surprised when she received the bottle of ketchup that Puri thought was a bottle of tomato sauce. Puri, who is familiar with the term and flavors in the context of Indonesian cuisine, assumes that the “ketchup” referred to by the waitress should have a certain quality. As a result, Puri stated “**Lah! This is tomato sauce, you said you didn’t have tomato sauce**” where she asserted the discrepancy between what the waitress communicated and her expectations. The common Indonesian interjection “**Lah!**” indicated that the speaker was shocked by certain conditions.

The whole statement belongs to an indirect complaint that criticizes the information conveyed, without explicitly stating that the waitress is at fault from Puri’s point of view. In the context of intercultural communication, managing “face” is very important. Puri, as Indonesian diaspora, tries to maintain her cultural values and identity by rejecting inappropriate information. She then continues her interjection by informing her perspective about the tomato sauce she means to the waitress. The difference between “sauce” and “ketchup” becomes the source of Puri’s disappointment because she thinks that the waitress has lied to her. Puri delivered her disappointment directly with confused expressions by saying, “**This is tomato sauce, you said you didn’t have tomato sauce**” with an Indonesian accent. This direct strategy has potential to threaten the face of the waitress. Puri’s statements showed that she felt disappointed because the information given by the waitress was inconsistent with her experience and knowledge of traditional Indonesian cuisine. In addition, the practice of complaining can be a factor that hinder the continuation of harmonious interpersonal relationship (Putri, 2024). Therefore, Puri uses her cultural knowledge to subtly correct and criticize the information provided, which is an attempt to maintain cultural identity and values in the context of intercultural interaction.

f. Requesting

Request complaint refers to an act to do or not to do something as a response to a speaker’s complaint. In one of her reel videos, Puri shares information in the caption that medical costs in America are high. So, people sometimes force themselves to do their own treatment without medical help. In this context, accidentally, Puri fell and sprained her leg while using the treadmill. When Jane offered to help call an ambulance or call 911, Puri refused and asked Jane to call no one. The following conversation describes the situation:

Jane: Wooh, are you okay?

Puri: *Aduh*, my leg, I think I broke my leg.

Jane: I am gonna call 911.

Puri: **Hah? 911? no no no no, no 911. I'm okay, I'm okay, *aduh!***

Jane worried about Puri's condition after the incident, so she intended to call 911 or ambulance for some help. Puri explicitly rejected the offer with the refrain "... **no no no no, no 911 ...**". Although this is a rejection, Puri's response implicitly conveyed a complaint that emergency calls like 911 are undesirable because of the high cost associated with them. The use of the interjection "**Hah!**" and the repetition of the word "**no**" indicate that Puri feels surprised and disappointed by the offer given. This feeling of discomfort arises because of Puri's expectation based on Puri's cultural values or personal experiences regarding medical costs.

Yet, by saying "**no 911**" Puri refused the idea. She thought that it would be very expensive, so she requested seriously to Jane not call any parties for help. She did not want to do that, so she tried to convince Jane that there was nothing wrong with her leg by saying "**I'm okay, I'm okay!**". The way she convinced Jane that she was fine strengthened Puri's request not to call 911. In fact, she was not fine and it was reflected by her spontaneous exclamation "***aduh!***" which signified that she was not fine. She only did not want to pay the high cost of her medical treatment. Puri conveyed her request in a direct strategy as a complaint to Jane's idea to call for help.

g. Asking for Responsibilities

Traffic jam only happens at certain times or occasions in America. In a reel video uploaded on January 27, 2025, Puri described a situation when there was an accident in America when a car hit her car. In the video, Puri explicitly asked the owner of the car, a lady, responsibility. The following conversation describes the situation:

Puri : *wah wah wah*, you hit my car?

The car's owner: Yeah but, you stop suddenly, I had no time to react.

Puri : **Hah.. lady! Do you see the traffic? hah? Don't blame me, yah! Can I have your insurance card, and driver's license, and your phone number too, just in case. *Ngrepoti!***

Asking for responsibility belongs to a complaint expression since this expression involves a direct or indirect request to the interlocutor to take certain action to improve the complaint situation. In this context, Puri not only complained but also asked the lady to be responsible for the accident by taking a picture of her identity card and asking for

her phone number to make sure that the woman took responsibility. In the situation, Puri did not accept for being blamed by the woman for breaking suddenly. She then criticized the woman's complaint by rhetorically saying **“Hah.. lady! Do you see the traffic? hah?”**. She then strengthened her dissatisfaction by directly refusing the woman's complaint and said: **“Don't blame me, yah!”**. She then used this statement to build the foundation for the request.

The next expression she made was explicit requesting the woman's driver's insurance card, license, and phone number as a form of responsibility. She expressed, **“Can I have your insurance card, and driver's license, and your phone number too?”** indicating that she not only complained but also demanded concrete action from the owner of the car as a solution to her complaint. She asked for legal documents as a response to the inconvenient situation. The word **“Ngrepoti!”** is a Javanese word that is usually used to express annoyance, which means “bothering” or “troublesome”. The existence of this word in Puri's utterance emphasized that Puri was really disturbed by that incident. This clear, direct strategy was bold in her intention to ask the woman for her responsibility for the accident.

In short, expression of disappointment emerged as the most dominant form of speech act in their interaction, indicating that the initial response to difference in values and practices is often manifested through explicit complaints. This indicates that complaints are not only a channel for expressing discomfort, but also function as an adaptive mechanism in the context of intercultural communication. These findings strengthen the view that verbal expressions in media can reflect the process of identity negotiation and cultural adjustment by diasporic individuals, and highlight how communication strategies are influenced by cultural background and personal experiences.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the expression of complaint is used as a pragmatic adaptation strategy by the Indonesian diaspora of Javanese descent in America. The pattern of complaint found on the video described the different cultures and habits between Javanese culture and American culture in general. Of the 33 data points analyzed, the direct complaint strategy is the most dominant (29 times), with the expression of disappointment

appearing 16 times. This finding confirms that complaints do not always have negative connotations, but rather function as a mechanism for dealing with culture shock and maintaining cultural identity in cross-cultural communication. The limitation of this study lies in the focus on data from one social media account, so it does not fully represent the diversity of the diaspora. Further research is recommended to involve more varied data sources and participants from different diaspora cultural backgrounds. Overall, this study contributes to the study of intercultural pragmatics by showing that the form of complaint expression can reflect psychosocial dynamics in the cultural adaptation process.

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Conflicts of Interest

No conflict was interest was reported.

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