
Compliment Response Strategies of English Pre-Service Teachers

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Abstract

Learning English goes beyond merely memorizing English words and grammar rules. Instead, understanding the socio-cultural background is essential as an important part of successful communication. As a part of politeness strategies, responding appropriately to an English compliment is an urgent skill to master especially by English teachers as they play an important role for their students in the process of English learning. This article therefore is aimed at investigating how English pre-service teachers at Jambi University respond English compliments. The design of this study is descriptive qualitative. The data collection tool is an interview which then be analyzed using Thematic Analysis. Based on the data, three major findings have emerged, they are: the variations of students' responses toward English compliments, the influences of Indonesian language system in students' responses and students' lack of ability in producing appropriate compliment responses.

Keywords

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Introduction

Compliment is one way to express positive politeness. Therefore, the primary task of complimenting is to give a convenience feeling in the hearer's part. It is a part of the first speaker to recognize that the addressee has something that is worth acknowledging for its good or fine quality. Thus, by complimenting others, the first speaker gives a high position to the addressee. In this case, Holmes (1995) explains,

A compliment is a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some 'good' (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer (p. 117).

Compliments come from several reasons. As quoted from Masita (2021), one of the general reasons of people giving compliments is because of their wish to express positive evaluation, appreciation or praise. In addition, they might also complement each other because they want to express solidarity. However, sometimes compliments are expressed as the speaker's envious behavior towards the addressee because there is a thing in the addressee that the speaker does not have. Apart from the previously addressed reasons, there is a more extreme reason of giving a compliment; that is compliment as an irony. As further explained by Holmes (2006), the irony in a compliment act as a clue that there is no positive quality in the aspect that is being complimented. Instead, the compliment is given as a verbal harassment. In this case, compliments are sometimes used by people to express sexual innuendo. Dendenne (2021) explains this phenomenon that it might happens when the speaker and the addressee hardly know each other meanwhile their interaction only happens by accident, for example the cat calling or street remark '*hi sexy!*' by a gang of people toward a woman passing by. Although the uttered word appears to look like a compliment, it is not intended as a positive appreciation or showing solidarity. In contrast, this utterance is a sexual harassment.

Along with the reasons of compliment, it may have positive functions to express solidarity and positive evaluation or negative function to envy and even act as verbal harassment. Thus, the compliment is used for both integrates a relationship between the first speaker and the addressee, and to show a gap between them as it can be inferred that when a speaker compliments, she or he does not have the thing that is being complimented (Dendenne, 2021, Masita, 2021, Deveci & Midraj, 2021).

As a politeness strategy, a compliment enables people to seek appreciation and avoid humiliation. Then, to acknowledge a compliment that has been uttered, there is a social obligation in part of the addressee to respond to the compliment, whatever the reason and the function of a compliment being uttered. Masita (2021) states that compliment response acts, as a part of politeness strategies, become the indicator that the linguistics act runs appropriately. Ideally, the response should show that the compliment is accepted and agreed. However, the way people respond to compliments may vary from one to another. One kind of compliment might have different way of response when it is uttered by a different person. As other speech acts, the politeness factors of solidarity-social distance, power and formality levels might contribute to the way a compliment response being done. For example, how

someone would respond to a compliment from his close friend might be different from the way he would respond to the same compliment uttered by an acquaintance. Another example is a university lecturer might have different responses to his colleague's compliment if it is uttered in front of his students as his class.

Holmes (2006) claims that in response to a compliment, three social politeness elements of power dynamics (more power, same power, or less power), distance (close relationship or acquaintance), and formality (formal or informal situation) all play a role in shaping the interaction. These factors might influence whether someone will accept the compliment directly, offer a mitigating response, or deflect it, depending on their relationship with the speaker and the context of the conversation. For example, when there is a strong sense of solidarity (close relationship) between the speaker and the addressee of the compliment, responses tend to be more relaxed and may involve shared understanding or inside jokes. Conversely, with individuals who are not as familiar, responses might focus on acknowledging the compliment with gratitude and maintaining a degree of distance. At the same track, people in positions of power may use different politeness strategies when responding to compliments than those with less power. For example, a professor might respond to a student's compliment with a polite but formal "thank you" while using a more casual tone with a colleague they are close to. However, the social distance of how well the speaker and listener know each other significantly impacts how compliments are responded to as well. Close friends might respond with lighthearted banter or self-deprecating humor, while strangers might stick to more formal expressions of gratitude. At the same path, responses are often more carefully constructed in formal settings, including expressions of gratitude and potentially mitigating language to acknowledge the compliment without appearing overly effusive while informal settings allow for more spontaneous and casual responses, which might include lighthearted agreement or self-deprecating humor.

Despite the varieties of politeness elements, Holmes (1995, 2006) classifies three general politeness strategies of how people respond compliments. They are accepting, rejecting and deflecting or evading compliments. The types of response as suggested by Holmes are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Politeness strategies in responding compliment*

Accept	Reject	Deflect/Evade
Appreciation/agreement token e.g. thanks, yes	Disagreeing utterance e.g. I'm afraid I don't like it much	Shift credit e.g. my mother knitted it
Agreeing utterance e.g. I think it's lovely too	Question accuracy e.g. is beautiful the right word?	Informative comment e.g. I bought it at that Vibrant Knits place
Downgrading utterance e.g. it's not too bad is it?	Challenge sincerity e.g. you don't really mean that	Ignore e.g. it's time we were leaving, isn't it?
Return compliment e.g. you're looking good too		Legitimate evasion e.g. You know the shop in North Street Request reassurance e.g. do you really think so?

The first type of the accepting response toward a compliment might include a verbal or non-verbal appreciation or agreement for example by thanking the speaker or even by showing a gesture such as smiling or nodding. Additionally, the addressee might respond to the compliment from the first speaker through an agreeing utterance by accepting the complimentary force and offering a relevant comment on the appreciated topic such as *I think it's lovely too*. Another kind of response as suggested by Holmes is through what is called as a “downgrading utterance” by asking for a clarification from the first speaker for example by asking *it's not too bad, is it?* Besides that, the addressee might also respond to the compliment by shifting or returning the praise to the first speaker, for example by stating *you're looking good too*. Otherwise, an addressee might also respond to the compliment by rejecting it. For example, by using a disagreeing utterance such as *I'm afraid I don't like it much* or questioning the accuracy of the first speaker's compliment by asking *is beautiful the right word?* Another type of responding the compliment is by challenging the sincerity of the first speaker through as question such as *you don't really mean that?* Apart from either accepting or rejecting a compliment, the addressee might also use a deflecting or evading response toward the compliment, for example by shifting the credit to some other person *e.g. my mother knitted it*. In addition, the addressee might also offer a comment to shift the strength of the compliment from the addressee, for example by giving an informative comment toward the thing that has been appraised *e.g. I bought it at that Vibrant Knits place* or just ignore the compliment by giving an irrelevant comment or even just keeping silent. The last two strategies are by legitimating evasion as well as requesting reassurance such as by asking *do you really think so?*

Apart from the politeness factors and strategies, how someone responds to a compliment might also vary due to different cultural backgrounds. Although the basic theories of compliment response usually are in the context of English compliment used by the native speakers of English, numerous studies have examined compliment responses across cultures and languages. One of the focuses of politeness strategies in complimenting inter-culturally is whether the response is considered as a polite utterance and in a proper manner. This raises a question of whether the response will be the same in Indonesian context as the non-native speaker of English. More specifically, the research problems of this article are: (1) how do Indonesian pre-service English teachers at Jambi University respond a compliment in a proper manner? and (2) what might cause the response? The reasons why it is considered important to investigate the pre-service English teachers since the they have focused they university time learning English language and its pedagogy. In addition, as prospective teachers, they will teach English for their students. Therefore, it is an urgent thing for them to have a good mastery of English and how to use the language properly in communication. The research in this article, then, tries to critically fill in this research gap.

Methodology

The design of this study was descriptive qualitative research. The data collection tool was a semi-structured interview to identify how the students respond to several elicited situations in which the compliment responses were supposed to be expressed. During the interview, they were provided with six elicited situations of compliment to respond. The

rationale of the chosen situations was to represent three different solidarity-social politeness factors namely power, distance and formality. The prompts are as follows:

Table 2. *Compliment prompts*

Situation 1	You wear your quite a bit expensive the latest fashion dress at your birthday party. One of your hangs around friends' whispers to your ear: "You're just terrific!"	Level of power: same level Level of distance: close Level of formality: informal
Situation 2	You met one some of your classmates in the way upstairs to your class while you were on the phone. One of them recognized that your mobile phone is the latest and the most expensive one for most of the students and told you: "Wow, that's the craziest thing I could dreamed of!"	Level of power: same level Level of distance: acquaintance Level of formality: informal
Situation 3	At the end of your assigned secretarial duty in your club before the campaign for the new committees, the head person asked you to run a proposal. You had only three months to do it. Fortunately, you keep your lobby and network very neat. It is finished just in time. Your head person thanked you and said: "That's crazy! You must run for the head!"	Level of power: higher Level of distance: close Level of formality: formal
Situation 4	You were a fresh student in campus orientation week. In day three every fresh student must bring a certain thing that was not stated directly. It was a riddle and to bring the right thing in day three, you and your friend must find out. Everyone is confused, including you. Just before you got on KPN Bus on day three, suddenly you realized it was a very cheap chocolate cover which had a picture of a rooster. Soon you bought it. In campus, not many of your friends brought it. One of your seniors took a glance at your chocolate and said: "Finally, there is someone that smart enough!"	Level of power: lower Level of distance: acquaintance Level of formality: formal
Situation 5	In an individual assignment, your lecturer gave a difficult task. All your friends said that they were afraid that they could not make it. After the class at due date, your lecturer made your paper as an example of the perfect paper in front of your friends. Your lecturer said: "Your paper is excellent. You give your paper consistent arguments to support your opinion. That's very good work. Your friends should learn from you about that!"	Level of power: lower Level of distance: close Level of formality: formal
Situation 6	Your team won the English debate competition held by provincial ministry of education. However, one of the juries that is well recognized as a lecturer from another faculty in your university gave you a special remark about your contribution to the team and said:	Level of power: lower Level of distance: acquaintance Level of formality: formal

“Your team won the debate, but you won the audience by keep asking them to think and re-think about the subject matter. It is difficult to make other people affected by our speech. But your approach made them aroused. I could see that in their faces and whispers.”

Five pre-service English teachers in Jambi University became the participants of this study. The participants were selected based on some criteria: (1) had finished all required subjects except for the final thesis, (2) had a TOEFL Score of 400 or higher, and (3) were willing to participate in this study. The interviews were conducted in English in which each student was interviewed once for more less thirty minutes. First, the student was guided to respond to every elicited compliment situation from Situation 1 to Situation 6. The next phase of the interview was directed for clarification to investigate why those responses were chosen. The interviews were conducted offline with every student responding orally. All interviews were video recorded under students' written consent. Some essential notes were also taken during the interviews.

The data collected from the responses were then analyzed using Braun and Clarke's approach to thematic analysis. At the first stage of analysis, the familiarization with the data process was conducted. Each video recording was watched carefully while generating an initial code to identify the compliments' responses along with the reasons for doing so. Accordingly, the foregoing notes were cross-checked with the video as well. At the next stage, the findings were then categorized using thematic analysis into some emerging themes. Then, each theme was discussed more comprehensively. Because of this, the results of previous studies were taken into accounts. Finally, some conclusions were drawn.

For ethical consideration, all data was collected through voluntary participation of the students. Before agreeing to participate, each of them should read and approve a written informed consent confirming any potential risks and benefits. To protect their safety, privacy and confidentiality, all identities were protected under pseudonyms while their personal data were kept confidential.

Findings

In general, the main pattern of the responses towards the compliment of provided situations mainly falls into the politeness strategies of accepting responses, mostly through the appreciating utterance of *Thank you*. This is different from Holmes's classification of the politeness strategies in responding compliment as addressed earlier. According to Holmes (2006), the shifting credit falls into the deflection strategy to turn aside from the praise while in this study, it is used along with the thanking utterance as the accepting strategy of responding compliment. On the other hand, the other two remaining strategies of rejecting and evading compliment as suggested by Holmes (2006) were not considered as the options for many pre-service students to use. These strategies were chosen by some students only, for instance the rejection strategy of challenging sincerity (*e.g. so?*). In contrast, the deflection strategy emerged in this study is to ignore the compliment by just keeping silent. However,

another interesting finding in this study is the presence of responses that do not appear to suit the level of “adequate appropriateness” to the compliment situations.

The setting of Situation 1 is an informal birthday party with friends. The elicited situation is that the first speaker plays a role as a close friend who has commented on student’s expensive and latest fashion birthday by whispering “**You’re just terrific!**”. This is an informal setting with equal power and high solidarity among hang around friends. The research finding shows that there are significant acceptance responses of almost all situations where responding compliments are present such as in Situation 1. The results of interviews among the students show different responses. In general, most of the responses are quite informal. Three out of five students respond to the compliment by saying *thank you*, however, there is also a tendency to combine the thanking utterance to downgrading utterances (*it does not look cheap, doesn’t it?* or even shifting credit to other part (*I’ve got it from Internet*). On the other hand, the remaining two students do not choose acceptance strategies, instead, they use deflection strategies by saying: *What do you mean?* and *I don’t care whatever you say, this is my style*.

At first glance, some of the responses are quite surprising and seem quite improper to respond to the compliments politely. However, further interviews with the students indicate a contradictory conclusion. None of them has the tendency of being rude or inappropriate. In contrast, they chose the responses as they consider them as the English translation of what they think as appropriate responses in Bahasa Indonesia. For instance, one of the students explains that her reason behind the utterance of *what do you mean?* in Situation 1 is because she considers it as the English translation of a statement in Bahasa Indonesia: *maksud loh?*, a common and acceptable expression among friends. At the same track, the statement of *I don’t care whatever you say, this is my style!* is a free translation of *emang gue pikirin?*, another common expression among close friends in Indonesian context. Even the short response of *so?* uttered by the student, which can be considered adequately inappropriate for responding such compliments, has a totally different reason behind it. At the interview, the student explains that he has chosen the response because the of high solidarity level between him and the speaker, with the intended meaning of “*jadi?*” as an informal and acceptable expression for a friend.

Different from Situation 1, the dialogue at Situation 2 happens between two acquaintances. The elicited setting is “You met one some of your class in a way upstairs to your class while you were in the phone. One of them recognized that your cell phone is the latest and the most expensive one for most of the students and told you: **Wow, that’s the craziest thing I could dreamed of!**” In contrast to the common response of *thank you* at Situation 1, only one student thanked the first speaker for the compliment while the other two choose to just keep silent and smile as their responses for Situation 2. Further questions during the interview reveal that the decision to say nothing is considered as a safe response. The social distance between two acquaintances makes them feel uncertain about what to say. So, both believe that the best way to respond to such compliment on that situation is just to smile without saying anything. In contrast, two other participants chose to deflect the compliment. One of them responds “*come on, you can buy it sometimes* while the other chose to say *whoa, that’s a pity of you!*. The last response seems quite unusual and rude. However, when the reason behind this utterance is asked, the student states that he does not mean to be rude at all. Instead, he wants to be friendly and being chill by saying this. He further explains that what he has tried

to say is what he thinks as the translation of *kasian deh loh!* as a common expression in Bahasa Indonesia used as an acceptable joke between friends.

Situation 3 is about how a junior student assigned in a secretarial duty should respond to a compliment from a senior who is also the head person of a campus club regarding student's success in running a program before the campaign for the new club committees. The compliment is: **"That's crazy, you must run for the head!"**. One of them uses the short response of *thank you* while three out of those five students choose to just keep silent and smile as the response to show their respect for someone who has more rank of social power (senior, head person) than them. They feel quite uncomfortable saying anything to respond to the compliment. Only one student gives a different response by saying: *Well, what supposed I be?* During the interview, the student further explains that her response is the English translation of Indonesian sentence of *maunya saya gimana?* This kind of response falls to the request of assurance strategy uttered by the addressee to the head person asking for opinion whether or not she should run for the upcoming election.

Similar power relationship happens at Situation 4 between senior and junior university students with the context of campus orientation week in which all junior students must guess a riddle of something to bring and show to the seniors. In this elicited setting, the addressee has successfully found the answer to the riddle. As the result, one of the seniors says **"Finally, there is someone that's smart enough!"** to compliment them. Two students chose to use the thanking strategy, and two others chose to respond to the compliment by keeping silent and smiling. However, different of the reasons behind the silence at Situation 3, the students in this latter situation say their decision to just smile and say nothing is more due to they are afraid of making the senior get angry with them considering that they are newcomers in campus, not to mention this is the orientation week in which senior have more power to bully their juniors, especially the ones considered as junior with "unacceptable behaviour". So, they believe that those responses are much safer to avoid further problems. Interestingly, one student responds the compliment in Situation 4 by saying: *What do you think of me, then?* which is an English translation of Indonesian statement *Maksud loh?* This is a very interesting response so far, specifically since the student feels that her response is still adequately appropriate to answer her senior's compliment.

Both elicited settings in Situation 5 and Situation 6 are in formal academic settings where the compliments are given by lecturers toward addressees' excellent achievements. In Situation 5, the lecturer makes the participant's assignment paper as an example of perfect paper and says: **"Your paper is excellent. You give your paper consistent arguments to support your opinion. That's very good work. Your friends should learn from you about that!"**. To respond this compliment, three students think that the best way is say "thank you" to their lecturer. Among them, one student combines this appreciation strategy with shifting credit to his friends by saying *we discuss the paper together my friends, me and my friends*. Interestingly, when it is asked by the students who choose to just keep silent, all of them give similar answers that they don't feel it is appropriate to say anything and better just smile even deep in their heart they are very happy and feel very proud. They are afraid that any statements to respond to such compliments might harm their classmates' feelings or even make the classmates feel offended.

In contrast to the five situations, Situation 6 has merely a single response from all students, i.e. keep silent and smile. The elicited setting in Situation 6 is an English debate competition organized by the provincial ministry of education. In this context, the participant is a team member of the winner. One of the juries who is also participant's lecturer gives a special credit to the participant by saying: **"Your team won the debate, but you won the audience by keep asking them to think and re-think about the subject matter. It is difficult to make other people affected by our speech. But your approach made them aroused. I could see that in their faces and whispers."** In accordance with this compliment, all students just smile and say nothing to respond to the lecturer. This is because they are not sure how to respond to such a statement. The fact that the first speaker plays two roles, as the jury and as lecturer from other faculty in their university, makes them even more afraid of making wrong responses. Consequently, all of them choose to use evading strategy by just keeping silent and smiling to show their respect toward the person who has given them the compliment.

Discussion

Based on the thematic analysis of the data, three major themes emerged, they are: the variations of students' responses toward English compliments, the influences of Indonesian language system in students' responses, and students' lack of knowledge in producing appropriate compliment responses.

As noticed from the findings, almost all the compliment responses in this research are the accepting strategy with the most favorite one is by thanking the first speaker for the compliment. This *thank you* utterance is identified in all the three solidarity-social politeness factors (power, distance, and formality). Therefore, it can be stated that those three politeness factors have a causal effect for students to respond to the compliments by accepting them. This finding indicates that it might be the manifestation of their understanding of English culture and politeness factor. From the interview for clarification, the students mention that according to them, the utterance of *thank you* is the most appropriate response toward the stated English compliments. Additionally, the decision to use the thanking utterance is generated since they are not so sure what other utterances to say as giving and responding English compliment in a real life is not something very familiar to them.

This finding is along the same lines as previous research claiming the acceptance strategy of saying *thank you* is also considered as the safest strategy to respond a compliment, specifically among non-native speakers of English (Al-Shboul, et.al., 2022; Dirgayasa, 2022; Karagöz-Dilek, 2020; Zang, 2025). The reason behind this choice is quite similar as well; they do not know what to say after the *thank you* utterance. In addition, some students combine the responses with other micro-strategies, for instance, by trying to make joke from what they think as the English translation of ridiculous but funny yet still acceptable acceptable Indonesian statements such as *I don't care whatever you say, this is my style!* (in Bahasa Indonesia: *emang gue pikirin?*) or "whoa, that's a pity of you!" (in Bahasa Indonesia: *kasian deh loh!*). Another compliment response strategy used by the students in this research is the combination of acceptance strategy of "Thank you" with another strategy of downgrading the utterance by saying *it does not look cheap, doesn't it?* or even shifting credit to other party through the statement

of: *I've got it from Internet*. This phenomenon also occurred in other studies conducted in some other non-speaking countries such as research on EFL University student in Turkey (Karagöz-Dilek, 2020) and Saudi Arabian EFL University students (Alharbi, et.al., 2024). In contrast, another study with the participants of university students of English and American native speakers proposes that the most frequent strategies used are acceptance and positive elaboration as well as appreciation token and comment acceptance (Alsuhaibani, 2020).

Another finding emerged is the keeping silent response. The finding shows that the tendency of thanking the first speaker for the praise decreases when the first speaker is an acquaintance or people with higher level of power. Instead of responding to the compliment with the accepting strategies, students comply with the compliment with other strategies such as evading strategy by keeping silent. The students smile but without saying a word at all to respond to the compliment. This is interesting since in Holmes (2006) this response is categorized as evading in which the addressee uses this strategy to ignore the compliment. However, the research in this article shows that the students do not have any intention of ignoring the praise. In contrast, the students state during the interview that the reason for their silence and smiles is to show their respect to the first speakers. There are two main reasons revealed regarding students' choices to respond in this way. The first is that the students believe that there is no other response considered as something more appropriate to say considering the relationship between them as the addressee and the acquaintance as the first speakers is not so close. In some cases, the relationships between them and the first speakers are not equal in power (lecturer–student; chairperson–member; senior student–junior student). These politeness factors lead the students to play safe by keeping silent. Even if they know several alternative responses toward the compliments, they are not sure whether those responses are suitable enough for such more powerful people than them or people they do not think they know well. The strategy of keeping silent as a compliment response in this research attests previous research findings from other researchers such Alqarni (2020), Al-Shboul et al. (2022); Deveci and Midraj (2021), Haugh and Chang (2019), Malyuga and McCarthy (2021), and Masita, (2021). The findings confirm the tendency of being silent and smile is mostly used by native speakers of English to show their respects to the person delivering the compliments or when they cannot think about any other suitable responses.

An important issue derived from this research is the presence of several compliment responses which are not adequately appropriate based on politeness values. For example, the statements of what *do you mean?* and *I don't care whatever you say, this is my style!* as the responses to the situation in which a close friend had praised the expensive dress worn during the birthday party. Another situation is the *Whoa, that's a pity of you* when an acquaintance has made a positive comment on the latest and very expensive mobile they used. During the interview, however, it is disclosed that the students have no attention at all to be rude or impolite. Those responses are mainly be derived from Indonesian cultural contexts. It means that whenever the students confront with certain politeness factors, the answers are not in adjacent as the response's realizations suggested by Holmes (2006) but more as the free translation of what they might say in Bahasa Indonesia in those situations. The response of *what do you mean?* in situation is what the students considered as the English version of *Maksud loh?* while *I don't care whatever you say, this is my style!* is the free translation of *emang gue pikirin?* and *whoa, that's a pity of you* is translated from *kasian deh loh* In Bahasa Indonesia. Those three utterances are very

common expressions among Indonesian teenagers and young adults which are nor rude or impolite in Indonesian context specifically in informal settings and for people with the same level of power.

The significant influence of first language as exposed from the findings of this research confirm the results of previous studies in regards of culture-specific features in responding compliment. For instance, people from Spanish people tend to welcome the compliment with a meaningful comment and try to play it down (Iraheta, 2024). In contrast, people with Indian cultural background might use utterances of rejection or disagreement to respond a compliment (Geçkin, 2023) while Japanese speakers might consider avoiding self-praise, denying or even say nothing with a smile (Matsukawa, 2024). On the other hand, people from New Zealand accept compliment and most American people consider that a simple thank you utterance is a sufficient compliment response (Trye, et.al., 2023).

Despite the varieties of indicators toward adequate appropriateness in responding a compliment among cultures, the findings in this article raises a concern of the inadequate competence of the students in producing appropriate and acceptable English compliment responses. This is quite surprising considering that the participants of this research are pre-service English teachers that have finished all the required university subjects at the English Study Program. It implies that they should have learnt about all aspects of English language and its pedagogy. Moreover, as prospective English teachers, they are expected to have a very good mastery of English specifically for communicative purposes. This must be a red flag for the institution to ensure the teaching learning process. There also equip students with adequate skills of the usage of English and its socio-cultural background because if the teachers themselves do not know how to respond a compliment in a polite and acceptable manner, how can we expect the school students to be able to do so?

Conclusion

From the results of this research, it can be concluded that the pre-service English teachers' competencies in responding English compliment are still low, partly because they have very limited chances to be familiar with such English politeness strategies. This has negatively impacted their abilities in selecting specific responses to use other than *thank you* or even just keep silent. Apart from that, there is a considerably interference of Bahasa Indonesia for the participants in producing the responses toward the compliments. The influences of the politeness strategies in responding Indonesian compliments into the production of the English compliment responses might impede the communication as some of the responses seemed quite inappropriate or even rude for the native speakers. However, due to the limited time provided, this article has used elicited situations as the setting of the research with a limited number of participants. Therefore, a broader scope of research with more participants and longer time allocation is strongly suggested to achieve more comprehensive results.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest.

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