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## Compliment Responses by Indonesian Lecturers of English

**ABSTRACT:** This paper analyzed the CRs (Compliment Responses) performed by Indonesian lecturers of English at the English Department UNIBRAW (University of Brawijaya) in Malang City, East Java, Indonesia, when interacting with their colleagues in the workplace based on sex differences. This research used qualitative approach to analyze the compliment responses performed by the lecturers. The compliment responses were analyzed based on Robert K. Herbert (1986)'s theory. It was shown that the responses given are various. The lecturers are most likely to accept compliments by appreciation token, both in verbal and non-verbal responses. Moreover, most of the responses are combination of two or more types of CRs. In relation to gender, male and female participants give similar responses, yet male tend to use question preceding or following the responses, while female tend to use comment avoidance. Regarding the L2 (Second Language) competence, this study found out that the lecturers still retain their L1 (First Language) culture in appreciating a compliment, regardless their competence in English, both linguistically and culturally. In conclusion, the variety of compliment responses given by lecturers of English at the English Department UNIBRAW might be caused by their habit of expressing themselves freely without too strictly bound to the norm in which they are related. Complimenting events for them can be used as media to create feeling of solidarity.

**KEY WORD:** Compliment Responses; Indonesian Lecturers; English; Gender; Culture.

**RESUME:** "Respon Pujian yang Diberikan oleh Dosen Indonesia Pengajar Bahasa Inggris". Studi ini menganalisis respon pujian yang dilakukan oleh dosen Indonesia pengajar Bahasa Inggris di Program Studi Sastra Inggris UNIBRAW (Universitas Brawijaya) di Kota Malang, Jawa Timur, Indonesia, saat berinteraksi dengan rekan-rekan mereka di tempat kerja. Pemilihan responden didasarkan atas perbedaan jenis kelamin. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif untuk menganalisis tanggapan pujian yang diberikan oleh para dosen. Respon pujian dianalisis berdasarkan teori Robert K. Herbert (1986). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa respon yang diberikan itu beragam. Para dosen cenderung menerima pujian dengan menggunakan tipe "appreciation token" (bentuk apresiasi), baik dalam respon verbal maupun non-verbal. Selain itu, sebagian besar respon pujian merupakan kombinasi dari dua tipe respon pujian atau lebih. Berkaitan dengan jenis kelamin, responden laki-laki dan perempuan memberikan respon yang serupa, namun laki-laki cenderung menggunakan pertanyaan sebelum dan setelah respon pujian, sementara perempuan cenderung menggunakan "comment avoidance" (menghindari komentar). Dalam kaitannya dengan kompetensi L2 (Bahasa Kedua atau Bahasa Asing), penelitian ini menemukan bahwa para dosen masih mempertahankan budaya L1 (Bahasa Pertama atau Bahasa Ibu) mereka dalam menghargai pujian, terlepas dari kompetensi mereka dalam bahasa Inggris, baik dalam bahasa maupun budayanya. Dari penelitian ini dapat disimpulkan bahwa berbagai respon pujian yang diberikan oleh dosen bahasa Inggris di Program Studi Sastra Inggris UNIBRAW mungkin disebabkan oleh kebiasaan mereka untuk mengekspresikan diri secara bebas tanpa terlalu terikat pada kriteria tertentu. Memberikan pujian bagi mereka dapat digunakan sebagai media untuk menciptakan rasa solidaritas.

**KATA KUNCI:** Respon Pujian; Dosen Indonesia; Bahasa Inggris; Jenis Kelamin; Budaya.

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## INTRODUCTION

Stating a compliment is a part of human activity, when interacting in everyday life with others. It is intended to show one's appreciation on one's success and accomplishment, to show someone's solidarity, and to convey many other purposes. Expressing compliments is regarded as something crucial as everyone sometimes needs appreciation or acknowledgements for what he or she has done.

Janet Holmes (1992) defines a compliment as 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 (Holmes, 1992:485). A proper complimenting behavior can make relationship among people more harmonious.

A compliment generally consists of two parts: the compliment and compliment response; and those two coexist as an adjacency pair. Sometimes, a person being complimented accepts the compliment given happily by giving acceptance response. On the other hand, there are some who do not feel easy to regard a compliment, thus a rejection might occur.

When talking about compliments, there is always a link with culture as compliments vary greatly across cultures. In this way, it can be said that expressing compliments in one culture can be quite different from other culture. For example, Indonesians, typically Javanese, are likely to down-grade themselves; thus, they might reject a compliment. This happens because Indonesian people in general also regard the values of modesty as part of Indonesian culture. No wonder they might even say "no" instead of "thank you" when complimented.

Some studies have shown that different cultures may have different preferential topics for compliments. For example, compliments on someone appearance or possessions are the most common type of compliments in American English (Wolfson, 1983:99). Different from American English, for the Japanese, the most common topics

deserved for a compliment are those dealing with work, act, and study, because Japanese tend to judge others on formal attributes (Daikuhara, 1986:118).

In relation to gender, Janet Holmes (1995) asserts that women give and receive more compliments to each other than they do to men or men do to each other (Holmes, 1995). Cai Ying (2012)'s study confirms that females tend to accept compliments, while males tend to opt out. She found that female shows a much stronger preference to explicit acceptance than male, while male tends to employ implicit acceptance, no verbal acknowledgement and rejection (Ying, 2012).

As stating a compliment is a part of daily conversation, it also occurs in the interaction among Indonesian lecturers of English in English Department at UNIBRAW (University of Brawijaya) in Malang City, East Java, Indonesia. Those lecturers come from many different backgrounds of culture. Some of them have studied abroad and stayed there for at least a year. It is interesting to investigate whether those lecturers who have learnt English as their L2 (Second Language) might be influenced by English culture which regards compliments given by others.

This study focuses on the responses to L1 (First Language) compliment by Indonesian lecturers of English. There are three research questions formulated in this study: (1) How do the Indonesian lecturers of English at the English Department UNBRAW, or University of Brawijaya, respond to compliments?; (2) Do gender differences affect the response strategies?; and (3) Does L2 competence influence Indonesian lecturers of English at the English Department UNIBRAW when giving responses to compliments?

Researchers have presented different frameworks of CR (Compliment Response) classification, but as stated by Nafise Razi (2013), it can be said that the classic framework of CR categorization is suggested by Robert K. Herbert (1986) and his categorization applies to a number of different culture (Herbert, 1986; and Razi, 2013).

Therefore, this study adopts Robert K. Herbert (1986)'s taxonomy of CRs as shown in table 1.

**Table 1:**  
Robert K. Herbert (1986)'s Taxonomy of CRs

Response Type	Example
<b>A. Agreement:</b>	
I. Acceptances:	
1. Appreciation Token.	Thanks; thank you; [smile].
2. Comment Acceptance.	Thanks, it is my favourite too.
3. Praise Upgrade.	Really brings out the blue in my eyes, doesn't it?
II. Comment History:	I bought it for the trip to Arizona.
III. Transfers:	
1. Reassignment.	My brother gave it to me.
2. Return.	So's yours.
<b>B. Non Agreement:</b>	
I. Scale Down:	It's really quite old.
II. Question:	Do you really think so?
III. Non-Acceptances:	
1. Disagreement.	I hate it.
2. Qualification.	It's all right, but Len's is nicer.
IV. No Acknowledgement:	[Silence].
<b>C. Other Interpretations:</b>	
I. Request:	You wanna borrow this one too?

Source: Herbert (1986:79).

The aims of this article are in line with the need of developing speech acts theory applied in lecturer communication. Furthermore, the readers will have better understanding about compliment responses phenomena, not only from theory but also from its application in everyday life, especially in the communication among lecturers. In addition, it is expected that this study can show whether male and female Indonesian lecturers of English perform the same strategies of compliment responses, and whether their L2 (Second Language) competence is influential.

Nessa Wolfson (1989) classified a compliment into two categories: that which has to do with appearance and/or possessions, and that which deals with an ability or accomplishment (Wolfson, 1989). Compliments on appearance and possessions appear to be more generally given than those on ability or accomplishment. Almost anyone in American society feels free to offer a compliment on an item of a hairstyle or a car, for example. However, when it comes to ability, apparently higher-status people are in a better position to offer compliments as a positive reinforcement to lower-status people.

Robert K. Herbert (1990), in his study of compliment behavior among Americans and South African English speakers, found that compliment acceptance is far less common among the former than the latter. The American speakers accepted only slightly more than one-third of the compliments offered (36%), but acceptance was the dominant response among South African Speakers (76%). These findings lead to his conclusion that "*American compliments are vehicles for the (re) negotiation of solidarity*" (Herbert, 1990:220).

Compliments have various functions and they are very culture specific. Research has shown that complimenting involves a variety of linguistic functions (Yu, 2005:91). It is argued that the main function of compliments is to establish solidarity between speaker and addressee (*cf* Manes, 1983; Wolfson, 1983; Herbert, 1986; Holmes, 1992; and Yu, 2005). Meanwhile, J. Manes (1983) and Ming Chung Yu (2005) also stated that praise in American English functions to both establish and reinforce solidarity between speaker and listener (Manes, 1983; and Yu, 2005:94).

Nessa Wolfson (1983) and Ming Chung Yu (2005) also mentioned similar point

that by offering compliments, the speaker in effect expresses approval or admiration toward the listener, and that solidarity between interlocutors thus emerges or is established. In other words, compliments can be considered social lubricants that serve to create or maintain rapport (Wolfson, 1983; and Yu, 2005:91).

This is in line with what Janet Holmes (1992) says that compliments function as social lubricates which increase the solidarity, the speech acts of complimenting can be complicated only cross-culturally but even within the same cultural group (Holmes, 1992). Hence, how to pay appropriate compliments, identify them, and give appropriate responses are important aspects of communicative competence (*cf* Knapp, Hopper & Bell, 1984; Sims, 1989; and Payne, 2013).

As compliments vary across culture, responses to them may also vary. For Indonesians, the response "thank you" might be regarded as the only response, when accepting compliments given. This happens due to the fact that Indonesians are not accustomed to elevate themselves. Most of the time, Indonesians would reject the compliments given by downgrading their own quality on the things complimented. As stated by Jusuf Ibrahim & Theophilus J. Riyanto (2000), in learning English, Indonesian learners of English can be subject to the influence of Indonesian culture which values modesty. This can cause them to resort to their own rules of speaking. When complimented, they may reject rather than accept it. Thus, instead of saying "thank you", they may say "oh, no" (Ibrahim & Riyanto, 2000).

Another research by Khung Hee Suh (2010) concluded that Korean and Chinese use more Evade and Reject, and less Accept to show modesty than the Australians do. This suggests that the Korean and Chinese speakers tend to be reluctant to accept compliments in a direct manner (Suh, 2010). This is supported by Chung Hye Han (1992)'s study stating that in the Korean situation, Korean tend to reject the compliments given (Han, 1992).

Studies on compliment responses have been done by many researchers in Indonesia, which two of them are being reviewed in this study. The first is "A Sociolinguistic Study of Compliment Responses among Americans and Indonesians and its Implications for Teaching English" by Jusuf Ibrahim & Theophilus J. Riyanto (2000), which tried to find out whether there is any difference between Indonesians and Americans in responding to compliments. This study also attempted to discover whether both the Americans and Indonesians show a preference for certain types of compliment responses, and tried to see if a certain variable like status can play a role in determining the types of compliment responses chosen. The research found out that both the Indonesians and Americans show differences in responding to compliments. They are different in terms of both the types of compliment responses chosen and the frequencies made. The findings also revealed that status is an important variable affecting the choice of a particular response (Ibrahim & Riyanto, 2000).

The second previous study is "Compliment Responses Used by Indonesians Learning English Based on Compliment Topics and Social Statuses" by Yustika Sari (2009). She analyzed the responses on compliment given by Indonesians who learn English based on compliment topics (appearance and ability) and social status of the addressor (higher, equal, and lower). The data were collected using DCT (Discourse Completion Test) questionnaire given to the respondents (Sari, 2009). Differently, this present study analyzes the responses given by Indonesian lecturers of English instead of students, by using different method in data collection by recording casual conversation to obtain natural data. The research results of Yustika Sari (2009)'s study revealed that appreciation token was the most frequently used in all situations given. In addition, the subjects' background (academic year cohort) did not give significant effect on the preference of the types of compliment responses (Sari, 2009).



## METHOD

This study, used qualitative approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; and Miles & Huberman, 1994), aiming at describing the strategies of compliment responses of Indonesian lecturers of English at the English Department UNIBRAW (University of Brawijaya) in Malang City, East Java, Indonesia. It focused on the lecturers' responses upon given compliment. The data were the responses to compliments which are uttered by the participants as they are investigated on casual conversations.

The data were collected by recording the natural or casual conversation with the subjects of the study to elicit compliment responses. It is important to ponder that compliments were not the topic of the conversation. The participants were given compliment on their appearance, possession, and achievement, as mentioned by Nessa Wolfson (1989) that the topics of compliments generally covers those three aspects. Then, the context of situation was described when the interaction happened after the conversation was done (Wolfson, 1989).

Regarding the ethical conduct of the research, the participants' (the lecturers) were requested for consent as for them to agree to have their responses on compliment used as data (*cf* Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994; and Somekh & Lewin, 2005). They completed the consent form once they agreed to have their responses published.

Based mainly on the study by Robert K. Herbert (1986), this paper analyzed 12 main strategies of CRs (Compliment Responses): appreciation token, comment acceptance, praise upgrade, comment history, reassignment, return, scale down, question, disagreement, qualification, no acknowledgement, and request (Herbert, 1986). The lecturers that have been researched are those teaching English at the English Department UNIBRAW, with a total number of 19 persons, i.e. 4 males and 15 females. The data collected 35 responses altogether.

## FINDINGS

***Distribution of CR Strategies.*** In this section, results of CRs (Compliment Responses) are presented. Responses are categorized into CR strategies, divided into the responses of males and that of females. The table 2 shows the strategies used by the male participants.

Comment avoidance is the type of CR (Compliment Response) formulated based on the findings of this study. For the Indonesian lecturers teaching English at the English Department UNIBRAW (University of Brawijaya) in Malang City, East Java, Indonesia, some do not merely accept or reject a compliment but they avoid the compliment.

The table 3 shows the strategies used by the female participants.

***Gender and CR (Compliment Response) Strategies.*** Appreciation token is the most common type of responses used by both male and female participants. Most of the participants use it in the form of verbal thanking in Indonesian language. They also use verbal thanking in English before they give further comment, which also means as an acceptance to the compliment. The token of saying "thank you" is mostly done in Indonesian language. The reasons are two-fold: first is because they feel more convenient with it; and, second, when they thank in Indonesian language, it serves as a strategy of being polite that is they do not want to show their arrogance of being too pleased of being complimented.

There is also a similarity in the types of CRs (Compliment Responses) used, in relation to comment avoidance. Male and female lecturers use this type of CR for the reason that they do not want to accept the compliment, yet they do not want to explicitly reject the compliment.

However, the response types given by male and female participants are also different to some extent. In this study, it is found out that male participants tend to have more "questioning" preceding the acceptance or rejection. Meanwhile, female participants have greater tendency to use more various strategies, and some of them

**Table 2:**  
Summary (1) of the Data of CRs

Response Type	Example (by Male Participants)
<b>A. Agreement:</b>	
I. Acceptances:	
1. Appreciation Token.	<i>Makasih; Terima kasih</i> (Thank you); [smile].
2. Comment Acceptance.	---
3. Praise Upgrade.	---
II. Comment History:	---
III. Transfers:	
1. Reassignment.	<i>Dikasi mahasiswa bu ini. Aku bilang wah kebetulan saya lagi cari batik, eh diberi. Alhamdulillah.</i> (This was given by my student. I said "what a coincidence, I myself am looking for a batik at the moment" and there it is. Grateful)
2. Return.	---
<b>B. Non Agreement:</b>	
I. Scale Down:	<i>Rata darimana apanya bu, besar gini.</i> (It's not a six-pack stomach, it's a big belly)
II. Question:	<i>Oooo selamat apa ini bu? (tertawa)</i> (Why do you congratulate me?) [laughing]
III. Non-Acceptances:	
1. Disagreement.	---
2. Qualification.	---
IV. No Acknowledgement:	---
<b>C. Other Interpretations:</b>	
I. Request:	---
II. Comment Avoidance:	<i>Ahhh ibu gosip dari mana, masih lama bu.</i> (Where do you get that rumor? It won't be in the near future)

are not used by the male participants. Those types of CRs not used by the male are comment acceptance, praise upgrade, comment history, and return.

**L2 (Second Language) Competence and Response Strategies.** Reflected in the data, male and female Indonesian lecturers of English at the English Department UNIBRAW (University of Brawijaya) in Malang City, East Java, Indonesia are in the process of biculturalism for they use various strategies for accepting compliments. Acceptance strategies in a number of data are firstly acknowledged by stating "*makasih* or *terima kasih*" (thank you), which is in their L1 (First Language), followed by further explanation in their L1.

Meanwhile, fewer data shows the phenomenon of using English responses by stating "thank you" to respond to a compliment. But still, they further switch into their L1 when explaining things using Indonesian language, which is their L1, to give related comments on the compliment given and sometimes to doubt

the compliment. The explanation of the complimented thing, its history, and the appropriateness of the compliments presents their mimic in their L1 culture.

Responses from both male and female participants are also dominated by acceptance; thus, it can be assumed that they are aware of the choices of using the culture of the L2. Nevertheless, the choice for following the culture in the L2 does not seem to follow their awareness of choices. As the cultural competence varies according to the level of L2 competence, both male and female participant seem to employ the strategies of accepting compliments like what the culture of L2 suggests.

However, they do not employ the common strategies like the English natives do, which is thanking (the main form in appreciation token type of CR). Most of the participants prefer to accept the compliments by smiling, laughing or showing other paralinguistic behavior that function as acceptance.

**Table 3:**  
Summary (2) of the Data of CRs

Response Type	Example (by Female Participants)
<b>A. Agreement:</b>	
I. Acceptances:	
1. Appreciation Token.	<i>Terima kasih; Thank you; [smile].</i>
2. Comment Acceptance.	<i>Makasih. Iya cin tapi yang baru kalung nya aja, ni baju lama. Kalung nya asli kalimantan punya lho.</i> (Thank you. Yet, only this necklace is new, the dress is quite old. The necklace is originally from Kalimantan, you know)
3. Praise Upgrade.	<i>Tau gak jenk, memang iya ni karena ingin slalu trendy. Jadi semangat ni untuk slalu jaga penampilan. Tunggu edisi berikutnya ya, yang batik itu aku ada dua lho.</i> (You know, this is because I always want to look fashionable. I always want to look great. Wait for the next, I still have that batik style)
II. Comment History:	<i>Gak, ini batik sini2 aja, bukan dari Semarang.</i> (No, this batik is not from Semarang, I bought it here)
III. Transfers:	
1. Reassignment.	---
2. Return.	<i>Podo ae, situ juga.</i> (So do you)
<b>B. Non Agreement:</b>	
I. Scale Down:	<i>Kemarin nyoba-nyoba aja keterima. Alhamdulillah</i> (I just gave it a try. And I passed. Grateful)
II. Question:	<i>Masak to dik?</i> (Do you think so?)
III. Non-Acceptances:	
1. Disagreement.	---
2. Qualification.	---
IV. No Acknowledgement:	---
<b>C. Other Interpretations:</b>	
I. Request:	---
II. Comment Avoidance:	<i>Halah, ora ora. Wek e lin ki tak silih.</i> (No, no. It is lin's, I just borrowed it)

## DISCUSSION

From the results of data analysis, the types of responses used by male participants are: (1) appreciation token; (2) reassignment; (3) scale down; (4) question; (5) comment avoidance; and (6) joking. However, most of the responses given are the combination of two or more types of CRs (Compliment Responses).

The general preference for both male and female participants is appreciation token, in which they use "*terima kasih*" (thank you) to express their appreciation. This type of CR (Compliment Response) strategy may occur alone, accompanied by reassignment, and sometimes even precedes or follows question as shown by the following:

*Dikasi mahasiswa bu ini. Aku bilang wah kebetulan saya lagi cari batik, eh diberi. Alhamdulillah.*

(This was given by my student. I said 'what a coincidence, I myself am looking for a batik at the moment' and there it is. Grateful).

This response by a male participant uses reassignment, in which the participant actually agrees on the compliment given, yet he transfers the complimentary force to the third person (a student). Given a compliment on the batik shirt he was wearing, he gave response (1).

Comment avoidance is the type of CR (Compliment Response) formulated based on the findings of this study. For the Indonesian lecturers teaching English at the English Department UNIBRAW (University of Brawijaya) in Malang City, East Java, Indonesia, some do not merely accept or reject a compliment but they avoid the compliment.

As can be found in the following:

*Ah tidak bu, begini pertimbangannya, saya beli itu kan untuk bisa dipakai keluarga, jadi ya sekalian yang agak besar. Saya pikir waktu itu sekalian bareng-bareng kita jenguk bu W.*

(No, no. This was my consideration: I bought it for me to wear it with my other family members, so I bought quite a lot of it. I thought that would be nice because I could buy the fabric and visited Mrs. W at once).

In this context, the participant does not reject the compliment explicitly, but tends to avoid the compliment by clarifying the matter being complimented. Moreover, the types of responses used by female participants are as the following: (1) appreciation token; (2) comment acceptance; (3) praise upgrade; (4) comment history; (4) return; (5) comment avoidance; (7) scale down; and (8) returning. Similar with the responses given by the male participants, most of the responses of female participants are also in combination of two or more types of CRs (Compliment Responses).

The occurrence of thanking in English is generally shown by appreciation token, yet some are shown in the comment acceptance strategy, such as in the following response:

*Makasih. Iya cin, tapi yang baru kalungnya aja, ni baju lama. Kalungnya asli Kalimantan punya lho.*

(Thank you. Yet, only this necklace is new, the dress is quite old. The necklace is originally from Kalimantan, you know).

Comment acceptance is used to let the conversation flows. Moreover, the reason why they give related comment about the complimented thing is that they want to explain the reason or the cause for being so. Comment acceptance is also one way to show modesty for it is a mean of an excuse for having the complimented object.

Comment avoidance is one way to mitigate the compliment and to limit self-appraisal. In comment avoidance, the compliment is shifted by using culture-specific words or expression (*halah*), which might be interpreted as “well yes, you are right, but now I am embarrassed and I do not know what to say” – seen from their paralinguistic behavior.

This response is very culture specific and hard to translate into English. The participants who choose this type of response are usually aware of the object that has been complimented to the extent that they imply the complimenter envies them in some way or would like something belonging to the complimentee. The following is an example of comment avoidance by a female participant:

*Halah, ora ora. Wek e lin ki tak silih.*  
(No, no. It is Lin's, I just borrowed it).

This response is provided when a female lecturer is asked regarding her good-looking clothes. Instead of accept or reject the compliment, she tends to avoid the compliment by stating that that it is borrowed from her sister.

Scale down strategy occurs in female responses, which show that the participants are surprised for being complimented since the complimented object is not worth-complimented. Due to that condition, the participant then responds to compliment by showing that the compliment is over-stated. Take a look at the following:

*Makasih ya. Kemarin nyoba-nyoba aja keterima. Alhamdulillah.*

(Thanks. I just gave it a try. And I passed. Grateful).

The complimentee gets the compliment after she is successful to become a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) candidate in a reputable university, then she responds by saying “*nyoba-nyoba*” (gave it a try) to limit her being grateful for the enrolment for her PhD.

Regarding L2 (Second Language) competence, it can be assumed that the participants' competence of English as their L2 does not highly influence their responses to compliments. Their understanding on L2 culture is also not very influential to their given responses for the downgrading (scale down) is still found quite frequently used by the lecturers. There are responses which do not account for Eastern, especially Indonesian culture, namely: appreciation token, praise upgrade, comment acceptance,



comment history. They are types of responses that are not commonly heard in the Eastern community. Yet, this study reveals that acceptance is the strategy used by the majority of both groups.

One feature from the avoidance or non-acceptance formulas in the Indonesian lecturers of English's responses is what the participants deny or mitigate is only the quality of the object or the content of the compliment, but not the act of complimenting itself. It shows that even though the participants may have well been influenced by their English competence, the awareness of following their culture of L1 (First Language) still exists.

The results of this study show that the lecturers teaching English at the English Department UNIBRAW (University of Brawijaya) in Malang City, East Java, Indonesia use various types of compliment responses which are proposed by Robert K. Herbert (1986), and they prefer to take a positive CR (Compliment Response) behavior (Herbert, 1986). Appreciation token is found to be adopted more frequently than other strategies, which takes 30% of the total responses. The expression of appreciation token used in responding to compliments is mostly "*makasih*" or "*terima kasih*" (thank you).

This finding is consistent with Yustika Sari (2009)'s study, in which she also found that appreciation token was the most frequently used in all situations given. Moreover, comment acceptance, reassignment, and comment history as the indication of agreement towards a compliment are found dominantly. Meanwhile, praise upgrade as well as return are only used once by the participants (Sari, 2009).

As revealed by Ade Mulyanah (2013), the culture of Javanese, which is one of the largest groups in Indonesia, influences most of Indonesians. This applies to making and acknowledging compliment. Javanese tend to be reluctant to accept a compliment directly. However, the participants are influenced by Western culture, so that they are more likely to accept a compliment instead of explicitly provide a rejection

response. It needs to point out that the acceptance are not only in the form of verbal acknowledgement but also in the non-verbal responses, which mostly are some expressions like "smile", "laugh", which rarely happens in Western languages (cf Brown & Levinson, 1987; Kartomiharjo, 1987; and Mulyanah, 2013).

In terms of the non-agreement, this study found that questions are used in responding to a compliment. This might occur for the complimentee wants to ensure the compliment, or because they feel that the compliments are insufficient. Comment avoidance is a type of CR (Compliment Response), in which the complimentee is in the mid position between delivering an agreement or a disagreement towards a compliment. She/he might agree with the compliment, yet she/he does not want to explicitly acknowledge it, or she/he disagrees with the compliment, yet she/he wants to show her/his politeness. Therefore, the complimentee chooses to use an avoidance to manage her/his response.

It can be seen from the data findings that most of the participants do not give one type of CR singly. They tend to combine more than one response type. For instance, a complimentee responds to a compliment by saying "*terima kasih*" (thank you); then, she provides some information about how she gets the object being complimented or clothing (appreciation token + comment history). Another example is a combination of comment avoidance and returning in which the complimentee says "*halah*" (oh, no); but, then, returns the praise to the complimenter by saying "*podo ae, situ juga*" (so do you).

Male participants mostly use thanking (appreciation token) followed by explanation (whether in the form of reassignment or scale down). They also use question since male participants tend not to directly accept compliments. In this study, males also do not use comment acceptance strategy, in which they accept the compliment then offers a relevant comment on the appreciated topic. A strategy of joking is used once in responding to a compliment, as follows:

*Wah ibu ada-ada aja [...] senang Mahabharata ya bu? Apa saya tidak seperti Shahrukh Khan, bu?*

(You're so funny. You like *Mahabharata*, don't you? And don't you think I look like Shahrukh Khan?)

This is a response toward a compliment given to a male participant's appearance. The response contains a joke in which he says that he looks like the Bollywood superstar, Shahrukh Khan. Meanwhile, female participants use most of CR (Compliment Response) types proposed by Robert K. Herbert (1990). Praise upgrade, which is considered rare in Indonesian society, and return strategy, are also found in one datum each.

This research confirms Janet Holmes (1995)'s theory, which mentions that women tend to deny the compliment more often than men, while men accept them readily (Holmes, 1995). It can be seen from the data that female responses to compliments are accompanied by reasons in the form of denial or avoidance and scaling down. Meanwhile, male participants readily accept the compliments given, which takes about 50% in total.

This research also aims at investigating the relationship between L2 (Second Language) competence and CR strategies. The lecturers teaching English as the participants of this study have the competence of English, in terms of both language and culture. Therefore, in responding to compliments, they tend to thank, either in the form of verbal or non-verbal response (smile). However, in appreciating compliments, they tend to use their L1 or First Language (saying "*terima kasih*" rather than "thank you") and retain Indonesian culture, particularly Javanese culture, in which downgrading still occurs. Scale down, as termed by Robert K. Herbert (1990), is still used by the participants, reflecting that they disagree with the complimentary force, by pointing to some flaw in the object or claiming that the praise is overstated (Herbert, 1990).

The findings of this research strengthen the previous study conducted by Jusuf

Ibrahim & Theophilus J. Riyanto (2000I), in which they revealed the fact that Indonesians produce more than the Americans in types like comment acceptance (34:19), reassignment (11:4), scale down (11:1), promise (9:0), and hope (9:0). It indicates different behavior in responding to compliments (Ibrahim & Riyanto, 2000). This may suggest that Indonesians are still under cultural constraint to show modesty. Meanwhile, promise and hope, two compliment response types not produced by the Americans, look very typical of Indonesians.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigates the compliment responses used by Indonesian lecturers teaching English at the English Department UNIBRAW (University of Brawijaya) in Malang City, East Java, Indonesia. It has been found that the lecturers respond to compliments in various ways. They are most likely to accept compliments by appreciation token in the form of verbal and non-verbal responses. However, nearly all of the responses are combination of two or more CRs (Compliment Responses), and they might be in the form of combination of two or more types of agreement, or combination of agreement and non-agreement types.

This study also tries to relate CRs with gender, and it is found out that the responses given by male and female participants are similar, since both use thanking most of the time. However, there are also some differences. Males tend to use question preceding or following the responses, while females more likely use comment avoidance.

Another variable used in this study is the L2 (Second Language) competence. It results in a condition that the lecturers still retain their L1 (First Language) culture in appreciating a compliment, regardless their competence in English both linguistically and culturally.

To sum up, the responses used by lecturers of English in responding to the compliments given are various, which might be caused by their habit of expressing themselves freely without too strictly

bound to the norm in which they are related. For lecturers, the speech event of complimenting is probably not simply a compliment-response in a real life. It can appear in a multiple round conversation since complimenting may serve to build a sense of closeness and a way to break the ice for not meeting so often. In other words, complimenting events for Indonesian lecturers of English at the English Department UNIBRAW can be used as media to create a feeling of solidarity.

Due to the limited amount of data and range of participants, generalizing to all lecturers teaching English would be inappropriate. Yet, the study benefits the cross-cultural communication studies of speech act, as it reminds us to take a dynamic view in investigating communication behavior, particularly in the real-life situation.<sup>1</sup>

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