



## PRAGMATIC TRANSFER IN COMPLIMENT RESPONSE STRATEGIES OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS OF STATE UNIVERSITY OF SEMARANG.

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### Abstract

This thesis is a pragmatic study about the pragmatic transfer in compliment responses strategies applied by the students of Semarang State University based on the compliment types, language difference, and English proficiency level. The participants of this study were 40 students, 20 students of undergraduate and postgraduate. The data were collected by implementing the naturalized role play conductors which is proposed by Tran (2010). Then, The data collected were analyzed based on the Tran's (2007) compliment responses continuum hypothesis classification. After that, the data collections were analyzed based on the Kasper (1992) classification of pragmatic transfer; pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer. The result of this study showed that the students of Semarang State University compliment responses strategies are eligible to Tran's compliment responses framework classifications. The most frequently strategies used either in English and Bahasa is *Appreciation token*. This strategy was the most frequently used in both English and Indonesian version. In Bahasa Indonesia version it shared the top position with the *compliment downgrade* strategy. The language difference had influenced their response strategy. They are influenced by their L1 pragmatic awareness in responding the compliment of their L2 communication. It means that pragmalinguistic and socio-pragmatic transfer occurred in their responses strategies.

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## INTRODUCTION

Learning English means the learners have to understand not only about the structure of English as the language, but also they have to understand about English language behavior such as norms, rules, and cultural background. It makes learners in many countries, especially non-English countries face misunderstanding in responding or gaining a conversation. In cross-cultural communities the gap between the language behavior of the first language (L1) and second language (L2) always happen. Kasper (1992) proposed the pragmatic transfer in order to facilitate the bridge in connecting between L1 and L2. He stated that the pragmatic strategies could be transferred positively or negatively. It depends on the level of proficiency, strategies applied, and the background of the culture. The study of learning strategies is a significance value to language teaching and learning. If those strategies are crucial for learning, it can be identified. It may prove possible to train the students to use them. In order to describe the realization of pragmatic transfer in compliment responses strategies applied in cross-cultural communities, this study is conducted.

### Reason for Choosing the Topic

There are some reasons drawing to choose this topic as the underlying issue. They are described follow. First, the issue of pragmatic transfer cross cultural understanding still be the current discussion in many EFL cross cultural learning in many countries especially in Asia which has a significant cultural and pragmatic transfer. English as the target language of the learners need to be aware in term of language behavior, norms, and value so that the communication happened does not produce a bias.

For Indonesian learners, it contributes significances for the development of their language learning system. Some students of Indonesia are not aware with the difference of language behavior, norms, and values. It is expected that by applying this study the development of language behavior awareness of

them will gain a well transferred between first language (L1) into second language (L2).

### Research Question

The research question that is discussed in this study are: (1) What are the differences between compliment responses in English and Bahasa Indonesia in term of strategy selection? (2) What is the type of compliment responses most frequently used by the students of English Department? (3) How do the pragmatic transfer strategies interfere the compliment responses both in English and Bahasa Indonesia?

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

The participants of this study are the 40 students of English Department of Semarang State University as the Naturalized Role-play informants. These 40 students are divided into two groups, 20 students of undergraduate and 20 students of postgraduate. From these 40 informants, it is expected that there are 240 expressions of compliment response strategy both in Indonesia and in English of that will be conducted by the role-play conductors. There are three role-play conductors that will conduct compliment to the informants. Each of them compliment them based on their appearance, work, and belonging. The undergraduate students were taken from the fifth semester, seventh, and ninth semester. They are chosen randomly based on the consideration that students in this level have been given the speaking III classes and they have a good proficiency in English. The postgraduate students were taken from the first and the third semester with the assumption of the level of English proficiency is in advance level.

### Instruments

In this research, the data compiled was classified, analyzed and interpreted. In the observation section, the attitude and the habit of English students in their academic daily communication such as how they respond to compliment given by their friends and what type

of compliment employed in their response expressions were observed. After that, Tran's Naturalized Role-played method were applied in collecting the data of compliment responses strategies. Then, the data was classified and organized in form of the table. The last, based on the data description, the data are going to be analyzed and interpreted.

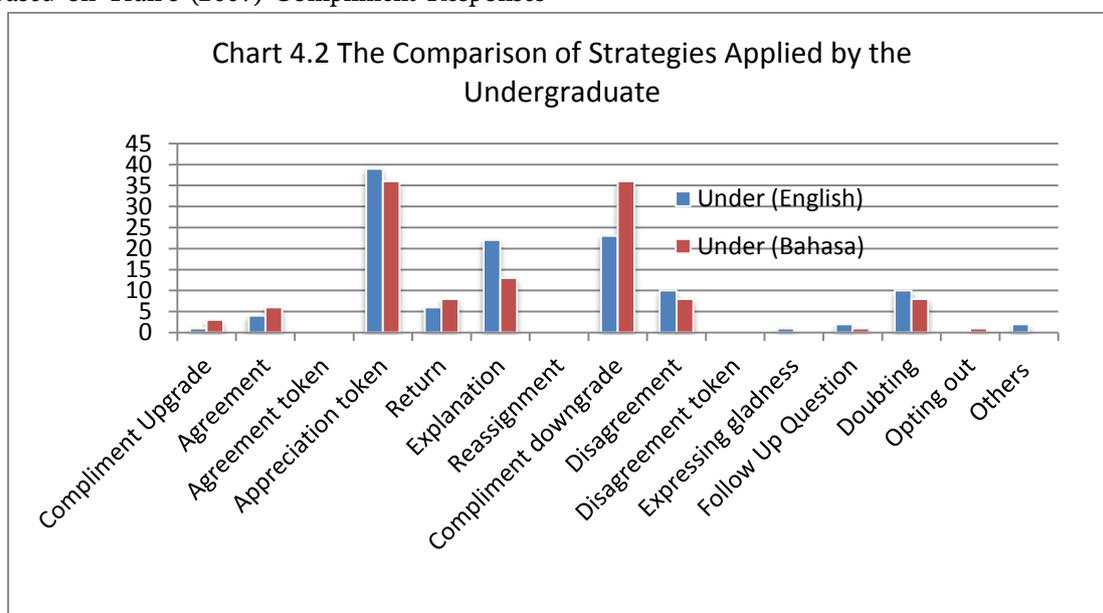
The type of data is the result of Naturalize Role-play. The data was collected by the Role-play conductors. They took notes and records any responses realized by the informants. They conducted this method in two ways, in Bahasa Indonesia and in English. After compiling this data, it was classified into several categorization based on Tran's (2007) Compliment Responses

framework. Then, I compared between the compliments responses which were delivered in Bahasa Indonesia and in English.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### The difference of strategies in term of language difference

Besides the students had realized the strategy applied differences based on the compliment type given, they also realized these differences based on the language used. Some of them responded the compliment differently and some of them responded by using similar strategy both English and Indonesia version



### The difference of undergraduate students responses

#### Situation 1 & 2 (compliment of appearance)

There is no significant difference in using responses strategies in both using English and Bahasa Indonesia in situation 1. The students of undergraduate applied the similar strategies in responding the compliment given both in English and Indonesia. The only different placed on the frequency of application each of strategy. In situation 1 which is delivered in English, there are two most frequently applied strategies. They appreciation token and explanation, but in Indonesian version, there is a dominant strategy

which is applied in responding the compliment. It is appreciation token with amount 7 students.

The significant different is appeared in situation 2. The strategies applied in English version situation 2 are agreement, appreciation token, return, follow up question, and doubting. The appreciation token is the most frequently applied. In other side, the strategies applied in Bahasa Indonesia version are compliment upgrade, agreement token, expressing gladness, follow up question, and doubting question. The most frequently strategy applied here is compliment upgrade with amount reach 16 students. The Appreciation token is not

presented in Bahasa Indonesia version, and the Compliment Upgrade is not presented in English version.

#### **Situation 3 & 4 (compliment of belonging)**

In situation 3, the difference strategies applied by the students in responding the compliment given is presented in two models. The first model is the absence of some strategies in each version, the second is the amount of the strategy applied. In English version, the students applied the strategy of appreciation token, return, explanation, compliment downgrade, disagreement, and disagreement token. The compliment downgrade is the most frequently strategy applied with amount 7 students.

In Indonesian version, the strategies applied are compliment upgrade, agreement, appreciation token, explanation, and compliment downgrade. The compliment downgrade is the most frequently applied in this situation. The disagreement and disagreement token are not presented in Indonesia version, and the compliment upgrade and agreement are not presented in English version.

The strategies applied in situation 4 are mostly presented the similar type of response strategies. The strategies which include to continuum hypothesis and denial continuum are fulfilled by the students. In English version, the response strategies applied are agreement, appreciation token, return, explanation, compliment downgrade, disagreement and follow up question. The most frequently response strategy of English version is explanation and disagreement, whether in Indonesian version is the appreciation token.

#### **Situation 5 & 6 (compliment of ability/performance)**

In situation 5, both English and Indonesian version applied similar strategies such as appreciation token, explanation, and compliment downgrade. The amount of English version for appreciation token is 7 students, explanation 5 students, compliment downgrade 5 students. Whether in Indonesian version, the appreciation token is 3 students, return 1

student, explanation 4 students, and compliment is 3 students. In English version, the appreciation becomes the most frequent strategy applied.

The strategies which are not shown in English version but shown in Indonesia version are agreement, and doubting question. The agreement is the most frequently response strategy applied in Indonesian version. In other side, several strategies that are not presented in Indonesia version but presented in English version are disagreement, expressing gladness, and doubting.

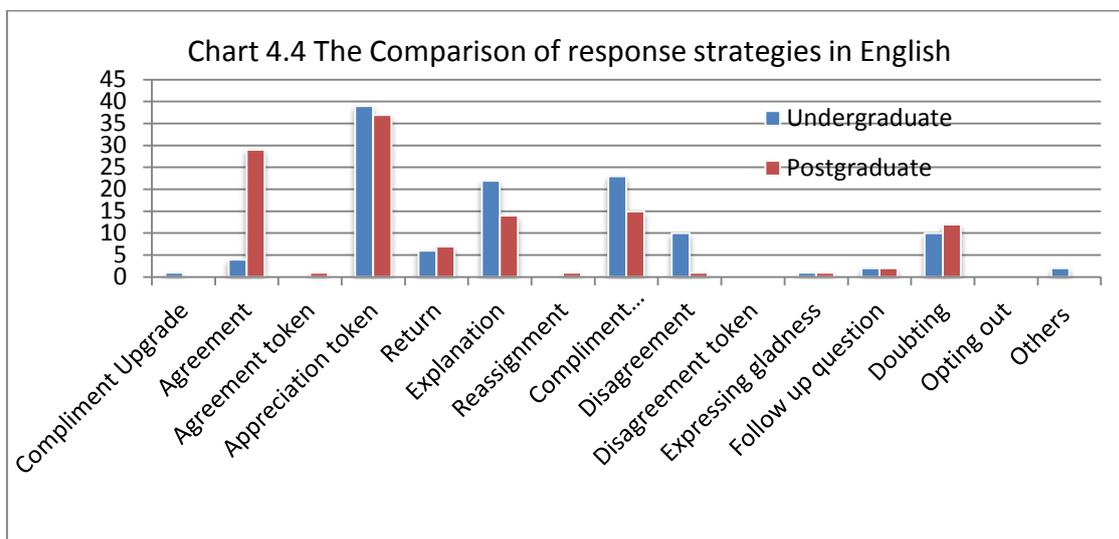
In situation 6, the applied strategies both English and Indonesian version in similar strategies are in the strategies of explanation, compliment downgrade and doubting question. The strategies of explanation of English version amount is 3 students, and in Indonesian version just only 1 student. Then, the compliment downgrade of English version is 6 students. It is the most frequently response strategy applied. Whether in Indonesia version, the amount of compliment downgrade is 8 students. It also becomes the most frequently strategy applied in this situation.

The other result, the strategies which are not presented in English version are agreement, appreciation token, and return. Whether in Indonesia version, the strategies which are not presented are agreement token and disagreement strategy.

#### **The compliment responses applied by the students of English Department**

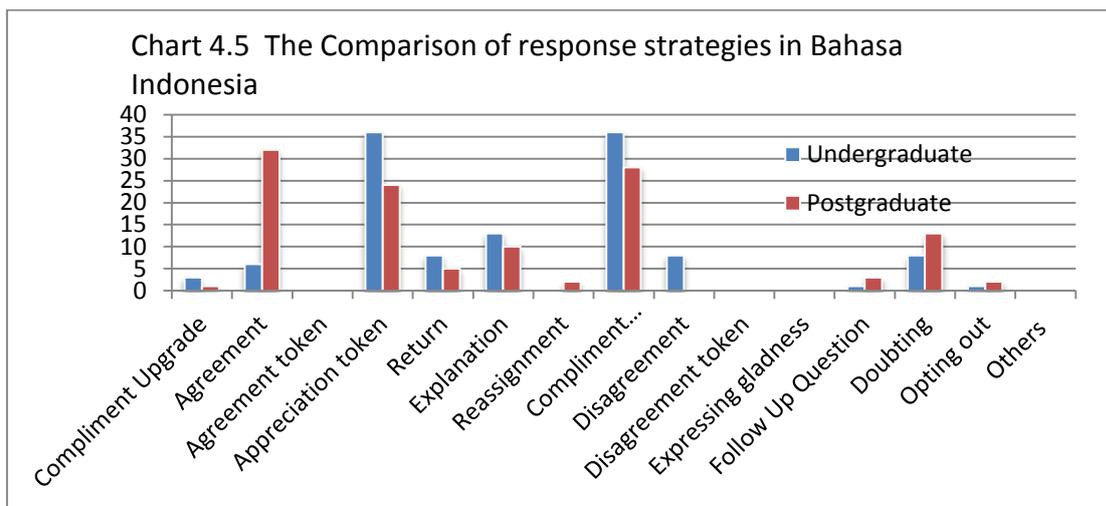
Based on the Tran's (2007) compliment responses framework analysis, it can be concluded that both undergraduate and postgraduate students had applied the strategies which are fit to Tran's compliment responses framework. The compliment responses had applied in two languages, English and Indonesia. Although they deliver their response to the compliment sing two ways of language. The language behavior in term of pragmatic transfer between the first languages (L1), in this case is Indonesia and target language (L2), in this case is English, plays important role in

developing the L2 understanding applied of the strategies of compliment responses communication. The chart below shows the both English and Indonesia.



The chart above is the distribution frequency of the strategies applied. The compliment given was delivered in English. Based on the chart above, the most frequency strategies applied is the appreciation token. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students applied these strategies in responding the compliment. The different point is the gap of using agreement strategies in responding the compliment. The postgraduate students are mostly applied this strategies in responding the compliment with amount **24,16%** rather than the undergraduate students with only **3,33%**. It is the indication that the students of postgraduate have target language behaviour awareness than the

students of undergraduate. In other side, the undergraduate students are still influenced by the first language behaviour in responding compliment. It can be seen by the lack of using agreement and the more using of disagreement strategies in responding the compliment. That's behaviour is an Indonesian behaviour in responding the compliment. For the undergraduate students, although they used English as the communication, but their language behaviour is very close to Indonesian language behaviour. The same pattern of the compliment response strategies applied also can be seen in the complimentary language delivered in Indonesia. Please look at the chart below,



The pattern of compliment responses strategies applied in Bahasa Indonesia shows the difference frequency distribution. From the pattern above it can be concluded that the students of undergraduate still influenced by the language behaviour of first language (L1) rather than students of postgraduate. It can be seen from the distribution frequency. The undergraduate students respond to the compliment by using some strategies such as appreciation token and compliment downgrade as the most frequently strategies applied. It is different with the students of postgraduate. They applied some strategies in various ways. The agreement strategy is the whole point that it can be concluded that the pragmatic employed there is evolved from the first language (L1) into second language (L2).

#### **The interfere of pragmatic transfer in the compliment responses**

In responding the compliment given, these students both undergraduate and postgraduate reflect their first language (L1) behaviour to some extent. As the EFL students, they transferred their L1 language behaviour in this case Bahasa Indonesia to L2 language in this case English both negative and positive transfer. In some responses realization, they also transferred the language behaviour of L2 to their L1. They developed their L2 and they combined their L1 language behaviour with L2.

#### **The Pragmalinguistics**

The following strategies are the example of the pragmalinguistics transfer in this response strategies applied by the students,

C: "Amazing, your English is so fluent, a native like"

R: "Haha, stop it. You're overrate"

People in Indonesia are common to downgrading their self performance or ability. This strategy always applied in Indonesian daily communication. In this response strategy, the students applied the pragmatic of his/her first language behaviour in their L2 communication. This strategy, "haha, stop it. You're overrate" is common conducted in Indonesian daily communication, but in English it could be a prohibition to compliment his/her performance. The subtext in English could be, "*Your compliment is too much for what I've done, it's just little bit communication.*" The students' strategy here is pragmatically appropriate in Bahasa Indonesia context but inappropriate for the native English.

#### **The Socio-pragmatics**

Qu and Wangli (2005) stated that different cultures underlying different languages will have different perceptions of the same linguistic action, which will usually result in the sociolinguistic transfer in the use of second language of the learners. This difference is called socio-pragmatic transfer. The following

strategies are the example of pragmatolinguistic transfer in this response strategies applied by the students,

C: "Hey you look so happy today, got a good luck?"

R: "Yeah, Alhamdulillah, thanks to Allah"

Indonesian people which Muslim is the most population, this kind of strategy is common used. People are always associate their luck and their good news as the destiny form the god that should be gratitude by reciting *hamdalah*. This pragmatic awareness is appropriate applied in Indonesian context, but in English native speaker, this kind of strategy could not be acceptable. Because of the communities in the western country is not dominated by the moslem. The text sub that can replace this strategy is, "Yeah, thanks to God"

C: "Hey you look so happy today, got a good luck?"

R: "No, it's just things are looking good for me."

## CONCLUSION

In term of language used, the difference of response used is clearly shown. The most frequently response strategy used both in English and Indonesian version are different. In English version, the most frequently responses strategy used is the *appreciation token* strategy with amount 32,5% for the students undergraduate and 30,84% for the students of postgraduate. The assumption of this strategy used is because of the simple of this response type. For Indonesian people, it is good to have a safe way in conducting a communication rather than conducting a complex communication and contributing mistakes or misunderstanding. In the Bahasa Indonesia version of compliment responses, the most frequently response used are shared into two types of responses strategy, *appreciation token* and *compliment downgrade* with amount 30% of students each. In this version, compliment downgrade reach the same amount with the appreciation token. It can be assumed that, Indonesian people are prefer downgrading the compliment because of their cultural background.

The difference of strategy used in this study is influenced by the pragmatic awareness of the students. Both undergraduate and post-graduate are Indonesian students which have a cultural background of Indonesian language behaviour. In responding the compliment especially in English, they had transferred their Indonesian language behaviour into English. This kind of transfer constructs misunderstanding and doubt for English native speaker. As Kasper stated, there are two types of pragmatic transfer, they are pragmatolinguistic transfer and socio-pragmatic transfer. In this study, this pragmatic transfer categorization is found in several response strategies. The pragmatolinguistic expressions used such as "don't mention it" and "stop, you're overated", for Indonesian people this sentence is commonly used to downgrading the compliment, but for the English native speaker, it makes them a bit confused. The socio-pragmatic strategies are found in this study. The expressions of "I buy it in Johar," to respond the compliment of belonging and "No thanks, I have a lot of practice" to respond the compliment of ability show the cultural awareness had influenced the students. For Indonesian people especially Semarang people, this kind of expression are commonly used to downgrading the compliment. It has meaning that the things belong with is just the ordinary thing, so that it is not worth to give the compliment. Then, the expression of "No thanks, I have a lot of practice" has a meaning that he/she needs a lot of practice to do such kind of activity, so it is not worth complimenting. These two examples show that the socio-pragmatic transfer had occurred in this study.

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