

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Conclusion

The study aimed to analyze the compliment responses of eleventh-grade male and female students at SMA Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan, focusing on responses among male and female students at senior high school in Medan. It was aimed to provide answer from the research problems. Based on the analysis of the data, the conclusion is stated as the following:

1. The study concludes that Agreement is the foundational response type for both genders, representing 87.2% of male responses and 86.1% of female responses. This overwhelming preference indicates that the 11th-grade students prioritize "positive face" and social harmony, adhering to the cultural norm of accepting praise to maintain rapport. Non-Agreement was the secondary choice, used more frequently by females (11.1%) than males (9.5%), often as a tool for modesty. Other Interpretation remained the least utilized category. The complete absence of "No Acknowledgement" across all data points leads to the conclusion that ignoring a compliment is deemed socially unacceptable within this high school peer group, reflecting a strong cultural mandate for verbal reciprocity.
2. The realizations of these responses demonstrate a shift toward elaborate communication over simple brevity. While "Appreciation Tokens" (e.g., "thank you") were common, "Comment Acceptance" emerged as the most frequent realization, particularly among female students. This suggests that

students feel a pragmatic obligation to provide context or additional information when praised, rather than ending the interaction abruptly. Female students significantly favored "Return" and "Scale Down" realizations, reinforcing their use of language as a "rapport-building" tool. Conversely, male students utilized "Request" interpretations and "Comment History" more frequently, particularly in material possession contexts, suggesting a gendered tendency to redirect praise toward external factors or communal utility to mitigate personal awkwardness.

3. The gender and situational context are critical determinants in how compliment responses are realized. In appearance-based scenarios, female students agreed almost universally (95.5%), whereas males showed significant hesitation (73.3%), likely due to perceptions of appearance-based praise as "face-threatening" to masculine identity. Furthermore, the study concludes that while many male responses are "automatic reflexes" driven by habit, female responses are more strategically nuanced and dictated by the interpersonal status of the speaker. The "Modesty Maxim" serves as a primary motivator for both genders to avoid conceit, but it is applied differently: females use it to maintain relational symmetry, while males use it to shift focus toward the functional history of an object. Ultimately, the choice of response is a complex negotiation between individual gender identity and the overarching cultural values of politeness and social solidarity.

5.2 Suggestion

It is suggested that those who are concerned with compliment responses should do as follows:

1. The findings suggest that while students have a strong foundational grasp of "Agreement" strategies, their pragmatic realizations are often limited by cultural scripts or automatic reflexes. It is suggested that English language educators incorporate explicit instruction on sociopragmatic competence within the curriculum. Rather than focusing solely on grammatical accuracy, pedagogy should emphasize the functional use of language in diverse social contexts. For instance, classroom activities could include role-playing the four situational categories appearance, character, ability, and possession to help students move beyond "Appreciation Tokens" (e.g., "thank you") toward more sophisticated "Comment Acceptance" or "Return" strategies.
2. This study highlights the significant role that gender and interpersonal status play in shaping communicative strategies. Future research should expand the scope of this analysis to include broader demographic or different regional contexts within Indonesia to determine if these patterns are consistent across various sub-cultures. Academically, it is suggested that future studies utilize a mixed-methods approach, combining the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) with naturalistic observation or recorded spontaneous conversations. Such an approach would provide deeper insight into whether the "automatic reflexes" identified in this study

persist in real-time, unscripted social interactions. Furthermore, investigating the impact of social media and digital communication on complimenting behavior would provide a contemporary layer to the understanding of modern pragmatic realizations.

3. For students, the research underscores the importance of awareness regarding "face-saving" acts and the social implications of their verbal choices. Learners are encouraged to consciously practice varied compliment responses to enhance their social solidarity and rapport-building skills. Specifically, male students may benefit from exploring realizations that go beyond "Other Interpretation" or deflection, especially in appearance-based contexts, to foster more direct social engagement. Conversely, all students should remain mindful of the "Request" strategy in possession-based contexts; understanding that a compliment can be a subtle social negotiation for sharing can help learners manage material status with greater grace and generosity. Developing this pragmatic sensitivity is essential for achieving fluency that is not only linguistically correct but also socially appropriate and effective.