
Interlinguistic Variation and Similarity in Second Language Speech Act Behavior

MING-CHUNG YU

National Chengchi University

64 Zhinan Road, Section 2

Taipei 116

Taiwan

Email: hgse@nccu.edu.tw

This study investigates the compliment response behavior of 2 groups of Chinese learners of English, one living in the United States and the other in Taiwan. The present study compared the behavior of these learner groups with that of native Chinese and English speakers in order to determine how they respond to compliments in different situations when two contextual variables, addressees' status and gender, vary.

Compliment responses by the Chinese using Chinese and the learners in Taiwan were more likely to be rejections than acceptances, whereas responses to compliments by the Americans and the learners in the United States were more likely to be acceptances than rejections. Furthermore, although there were substantial differences between the 2 learner groups, the performance of both reflected native language (L1) communicative styles and transfer of L1 sociocultural strategies in their second language behavior.

SPEECH ACT BEHAVIOR HAS BEEN A CENTRAL concern for researchers in the field of interlanguage pragmatics in which a major focus of study is the pragmatic difficulties that distinguish the behavior of second language (L2) learners from that of target language speakers. Although successfully learning a new language does not mean that learners, when employing the L2, have to forego their native language (L1) norms completely and adopt the culture of that new language, the differences in the behaviors of L1 and L2 speakers has engaged researchers in interlanguage pragmatics. Lack of mastery of grammar, combined with sociolinguistic confusion, can make learners appear improper or incompetent. It can also cause misunderstandings or create offense when learners can understand only the literal meaning of words and do not know the rules of use for interpreting those words (Rintell & Mitchell, 1989). Such differences often

contribute to unexpected pragmatic failure and possibly to serious trouble for L2 learners.

The present study focused on the interlanguage behavior of adult Chinese learners of American English and how they respond to the speech act of "compliments" in their L2, English.¹ Two groups of learners, one living in the United States and the other in Taiwan, participated.² The study focused on linguistic contexts for which Chinese (the speakers' L1) and English (their L2) had different pragmatic constraints. It therefore compared how learners responded to compliments in different situations with interlocutors from various backgrounds. The study thereby detected the learners' L2 pragmatic difficulties that might relate to features of their L1.³

Research concerning L2 pragmatic competence often has as its focus the speech act performance of nonnative and native speakers. The present study dealt with "compliment responses," a much used, yet intricate act. Research has shown not only that responding to compliments involves a complex relationship among linguistic forms, meanings, and pragmatic prerequisites, but also that high social stakes shape speakers' be-

havior, which, thus, permits a variety of linguistic options and strategies (e.g., Pomerantz, 1978; Wolfson, 1989; Ye, 1995).

Chinese and English are pragmatically and culturally very different. There are two main reasons why responding to compliments in English may be difficult for the Chinese. First, people from the United States compliment in a much wider variety of situations than do the Chinese. Praise in some situations could be seen as inappropriate or impolite by the Chinese (Yang, 1987), who may, therefore, have great difficulties responding appropriately in such situations. Second, in many situations in which the Chinese respond to compliments, they prefer routinized denials (e.g., "I'm not"), rather than appreciation tokens (e.g., "Thank you"). From the Western point of view, such routinized denials may appear to be impolite, or even rude (Chen, 1993; Yang, 1987).

Given that there appears to be great divergence between Chinese and American rules of speaking and social conventions and given that speech act behavior has been shown to relate closely to speakers' linguistic and cultural norms (e.g., Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989), the compliment response behavior of Chinese learners of English is worth studying. However, little research so far has focused specifically on how the Chinese respond to compliments in a L2. The present study, then, served to extend inter-language pragmatics research by examining the L2 compliment response strategies of a relatively understudied speaker group.

BACKGROUND

It is a well-known fact that language and culture usually relate to each other in such an intricate way that culture can never be treated lightly if language learners want to use the target language well. In general, the embodiment of Chinese speech act behavior has to do with the Chinese tradition of feudal hierarchy and order following Confucian political philosophy, which stresses respect and subordination to authorities, and is, thus, often characterized by a tendency to denigrate oneself as a way to show respect for others (Oliver, 1971). Gu (1990) and Mao (1994) correctly identified this tendency as part of the Chinese value of placing communal needs over individual preferences. In contrast, the speech act performance of native English speakers frequently relates to their cultural tradition, "which places special emphasis on the rights and on the autonomy of every individual, which abhors interference in other people's affairs (*It's none of my*

business), which is tolerant of individual idiosyncrasies and peculiarities, which respects everyone's privacy" (Wierzbicka, 1991, p. 30). Thus, it comes as no surprise that research reveals native Chinese speakers' speech act behavior that is very different from the behavior of native English speakers. Take requests for example. English speakers are consistently reported to show a great preference for conventionally indirect strategies, such as "Could you do me a favor?" (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Kasper & Dahl, 1991); however, Chinese speakers appear to be inconclusive in terms of directness level (cf. Lee-Wong, 1994; Zhang, 1995). Whereas Lee-Wong's (1994) participants strongly preferred direct forms, such as "Take a picture for us," combined with such lexical politeness markers as 請 *qǐng* 'ask,' Zhang's (1995) participants preferred conventionally indirect strategies. Despite this difference, native Chinese speakers in both studies, compared to English speakers studied in the scholarly literature, adopted more direct strategies and fewer conventionally indirect forms.

A similar result also emerged in Yu's (1999) study, in which requests made by both the Chinese using Chinese and the Chinese learners of American English, especially the former, were much more direct than requests made by the native English speakers. Such a difference, as suggested above, closely relates to the speaker's native sociocultural norms. With a cultural belief that places special emphasis on individuals' rights and autonomy and abhors interfering in others' business (Wierzbicka, 1991), the English speakers adopted conventionally indirect requests in most situations, whereas the Chinese, with a cultural tradition that attaches a high value to sincerity and clarity in speech and stresses respect and subordination to others (Lee-Wong, 1994), tended to use direct strategies.

In fact, the directness level of the speaker's speech act performance, some contend, is primarily politeness-motivated (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987; Searle, 1969, 1975, 1979). Brown and Levinson's (1987) formulations of politeness are among the most influential in investigations of politeness phenomena in human interaction. Central to Brown and Levinson's politeness framework is the concept of face, "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (p. 61). These scholars assume that the speaker comes into any conversation with two seemingly conflicting "face wants" (p. 13): the "negative face" (p. 61) want, which is the desire to act unimpeded by other people, and the "positive face" want, which is the desire to be liked by oth-

ers. Accordingly, politeness for native English speakers is basically associated with negative politeness, whereas Chinese cultural norms place greater emphasis on positive politeness.

For compliment response behavior, studies have also shown that there are substantial differences between native Chinese and English speakers. The Chinese appear to adopt nonacceptance strategies more often than the English speakers, whereas the latter much more often use acceptance strategies (cf. Chen, 1993; Herbert, 1989, 1990; Holmes, 1988; Knapp, Hopper, & Bell, 1984; Ye, 1995). However, given the available research findings for this category of speech act in the scholarly literature to date, the preferred strategies of native Chinese speakers and English speakers, like the Chinese requests noted previously, cannot be definitely described (cf. Chen, 1993; Ye, 1995, for Chinese speakers; cf. Chen, 1993; Herbert, 1989; Knapp et al., 1984, for Americans). On the one hand, Chen's (1993) study indicated that the Chinese highly preferred nonacceptance forms, whereas Ye's (1995) study revealed that they preferred amendment strategies.⁴ On the other hand, Knapp et al.'s (1984) and Chen's (1993) American participants showed a great preference for acceptance strategies, but Herbert's (1989) participants preferred amendment forms. Notwithstanding the seeming inconsistencies, the Chinese indeed adopted many more nonacceptance and fewer acceptance strategies than did the American English speakers.

Research concerning Chinese L2 learners to date has seldom used L1 control data from Chinese speakers. Because all interlanguage studies with L1 data, as compared to those without such controls, are reportedly more informative in finding out how learners' behavior may relate to L1 strategies or differ from the L2 (Kasper & Dahl, 1991), the present study included L1 comparison data to investigate the compliment response behavior of Chinese English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners.⁵ Given the fact that to date there has been little interlanguage research specifically targeted at L2 learners' compliment response behavior, it is unclear whether Chinese learners' performance of this speech act in English would be similar to that of speakers of their native or their target languages. However, because L2 studies of communicative competence have indicated that both active involvement with and positive affect toward the target language and culture may be at the root of adult language acquisition or nonacquisition (e.g., Brown, 2000), it seems reasonable to hypothesize that increased cultural ex-

perience of the target language norm and increased exposure to its speakers may reduce the possibility of L1 transfer and support the acquisition of more "native-like" L2 compliment response styles. The present study provided a test of this hypothesis by comparing the compliment response strategies of Chinese learners of English who resided in the United States (ESL learners) with the strategies of Chinese learners of English who resided in Taiwan (EFL learners) and by determining whether and, if so, how the interlanguage-specific behavior of these two types of learners might relate to their L1.

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

The specific research question for the present study was: How do the compliment response strategies in English by Chinese ESL and EFL learners compare to strategies used among native American English speakers and those used among native Chinese speakers in situations in which two contextual factors, the addressees' social status and gender, vary?

Participants

Four groups of college students participated in the study. For the two native-speaker groups, 32 native Mandarin Chinese speakers from Taiwan provided the Chinese data, and 32 native American English speakers from the United States provided the English data. The nonnative data were in two sets: One set came from 32 native Mandarin speakers who were EFL learners residing in Taiwan; the other set comprised 32 native Mandarin speakers who were ESL learners living in the United States. The sample thus consisted of 128 college undergraduates.⁶

The participants in the two native language data groups were from their native countries; that is, the native Chinese group was from Taiwan, and the native English group was from the United States. Cross-cultural communication research (e.g., Clyne, Ball, & Neil, 1991) has shown that, under the influence of the target language and culture, proficient nonnative speakers living abroad may no longer abide by their home culture norms in using their L1. Thus, in order to ensure the reliability of both sets of L1 data, the present study excluded speakers who had lived outside their country of origin.

The data for the nonnative speakers permitted exploration of the pragmatic performance of

Chinese EFL learners in the Taiwanese educational system and that of ESL learners in the United States. Hence, the participants in the former group were from Taiwan, but any of them who had spent much time in the target language culture (e.g., through study in the United States) were excluded; the participants in the latter group included only students who had completed high school education in Taiwan and had been studying in the United States for at least 2 years.

In Taiwan, English is mandatory in school (3 years in junior high school, 3 years in senior high, and in the first year of college); thus, most Chinese participants in the present study had studied it for at least 7 years. In order to reduce possible effects of English proficiency, the participants in the native Chinese group were students who had scored 525 or lower on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), which reflected low-to-medium L2 proficiency (Omaggio Hadley, 1993). In contrast, the participants in both learner groups were those who had scored higher than 575 on the TOEFL, which reflected intermediate-to-advanced L2 proficiency (Omaggio Hadley, 1993).

In order to achieve optimum comparability among these four participant groups so that the differences detected could not be attributed to variables other than those being studied, all participants completed a background survey in addition to the Discourse Completion Task (DCT), the written questionnaire used to collect data for the present study. All groups consisted of college students, who were similar in age, parental education, urban or suburban residence, and representation of men and women (see Appendix A).

Instruments and Procedures

As noted previously, data for this study came from a DCT questionnaire, which is among the most frequent forms employed in interlanguage studies (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Cohen & Olshtain, 1994). The questionnaire consisted of a number of situational descriptions, followed by a space in which the participants had to provide the appropriate linguistic form of the speech act studied—as though they were the speakers in real-life interactions. In order to avoid biasing the participants' response choice, the word *compliments* was not used in the descriptions (Beebe & Takahashi, 1989). Also, given that studies have shown that sometimes a speaker's preference is to forego a face-threatening act in a given situation (e.g., Bonikowska, 1988; Brown & Levinson, 1987), the participants had an opportunity in each situation to indicate whether they would like

to say nothing; that is, they could opt out so they would not be forced to respond unrealistically.

The DCT was devised to reveal systematic variation of two contextual variables, the addressees' status and gender, both of which appear to be important factors in affecting compliment response behavior (e.g., Wolfson, 1989). Each variable was binary; hence, either the interlocutors were equal in status, or the addressee was higher in status, and the addressee was either male or female. This variation allowed for four combinations of the two variables. Because research has indicated that the great majority of compliments occur between interlocutors who are already acquaintances, rather than intimates or total strangers (e.g., Manes, 1983; Wolfson, 1989), the situations described in the DCT all specify mutually acquainted interlocutors. Although pilot testing suggested that individuals use very similar main strategies across situations that have the same combination of addressees' social status and gender, in order to increase reliability of the data, the DCT included two situations for each combination of variables (See Appendix B).

In addition, efforts were made to ensure that the situations devised were as culturally plausible and as parallel as possible for both Chinese and American participants. The reason for doing so was that the DCT has been criticized for two main shortcomings. First, studies have indicated that both native and nonnative speakers may feel unsure whether their responses in the DCT are appropriate—if they have no previous experience in questionnaire situations (e.g., Eisenstein & Bodman, 1993; Rose, 1992). Second, research has also suggested that native speakers' intuitions about others' language use may not be reliable (e.g., Blom & Gumperz, 1972; Wolfson, D'Amico-Reisner, & Huber, 1983).

All situations were discussed with a number of native Chinese and American undergraduates, who not only confirmed that these situations were very likely to occur in their respective cultures but also indicated that they could indeed picture themselves in these situations. Because most interviewees, especially the Chinese speakers, pointed out that compliments about possessions or appearance, or both, were mostly improper if the recipients of the compliments were higher in status, the DCT situations included compliments only about ability or performance, or both. Due to the fact that it is difficult to find cross-culturally appropriate contexts in which college students are socially dominant in both Taiwan and the United States, speaker-dominant situations did not appear in the DCT. Simply put, in

all the situations, the participants were not to report what they thought others would say; they were to remain in their own roles, as students, and respond to the given compliments.

There was one concern that related to the validity of the data collected in the study, that is, whether a group's response preferences could be captured in one-turn written responses. As Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) noted, when it comes to cross-cultural comparability for speech act behavior, research requires the stereotyped aspect of language use, and "using written elicitation techniques enables us to obtain more stereotyped responses" (p. 13). Thus, the strong demand for the cross-cultural comparability in the present study made the use of the DCT method appropriate for capturing the stereotyped response preferences of a given speech group.

In order to avoid the possible effects of order of item administration, there were two versions of the DCT questionnaire, in which the order of situations varied. Each version had a parallel translation in both English and Chinese. The English questionnaire went to native American English speakers and to the two Chinese L2 learner groups, whereas the Chinese questionnaire went to the native Chinese group.⁷

Data Analysis⁸

Coding Scheme. In order to identify compliment response strategies, the instrument was a coding scheme based mainly on the previous classifications of this speech act in empirical research (Herbert, 1989; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1989; Pomerantz, 1978; Wolfson, 1989; Ye, 1995). There were six mutually exclusive main strategies for situations in which responding to praise could be seen as socioculturally appropriate: *Acceptance*, *Amendment*, *Nonacceptance*, *Face Relationship Related Response*, *Combination*, and *No Acknowledgment*. Each and every response of the participants to a given DCT situation could be evident in only one specific category.⁹

Given that the investigator grouped the participants by language-learning background and then compared the groups' compliment response performance after giving them the DCT, language-learning background was the independent variable in the present study, and the four groups were levels of the independent variable. In contrast, performances on the DCT were the dependent variables, that is, the six mutually exclusive strategies.

Quantitative Analysis. After the participants' responses were identified and classified into one of

the above-noted six main categories, frequencies of response within each strategy could be obtained for each participant group. Because the data obtained for the present study were nominal and categorical and, thus, do not meet parametric assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance, a nonparametric test using the χ^2 statistic was employed to compare the four groups on a nominal variable with six categories. The specific null hypothesis is that there is no difference in the compliment response performance for the various levels of language-learning background. A .01 alpha level of significance was chosen as the cutoff point for testing the null hypothesis.

Qualitative Analysis. In addition to the quantitative analysis, in order to ascertain whether the learners' behavior could relate to features of their L1 or whether their behavior approached that of the target language speakers, the responses of both learner groups were qualitatively compared to those of the Chinese using Chinese and the Americans using English. Given that the statistical findings focused on the participants' use of main strategies, specific attention in the qualitative analysis was paid to their choice of substrategies. The purpose of this attention to substrategies was to illuminate the quantitative findings by examining whether different groups, while statistically showing a similar tendency to adopt the same main strategy for their compliment responses, might enact substrategies of that main strategy differently. We may thus achieve a better understanding of whether and, if so, how the learners' behavior in varying situations deviated from the target language norm or was influenced by their L1.

Reliability of Coding. From each group, 20% of the data were randomly selected to be independently coded by a second rater (Cohen, 1960). A native American English speaker coded the three sets of English data, and a native Chinese speaker coded the native Chinese data. A corrected-for-chance level of kappa of at least .85 was considered acceptable. The interrater agreement coefficients were 89%, 92%, 89%, and 90% for the native English data, the United States learner data, the Taiwanese learner data, and the native Chinese data respectively.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Table 1 shows the overall distribution of the six main compliment response strategies across all situations for each group.

As Table 1 indicates, across all situations, (a) the Americans adopted the most acceptance strate-

TABLE 1
Percentages (and Raw Frequencies) of Compliment Response Strategies for Speaker Groups

Compliment Response Strategies	Group			
	Americans	U.S. ESL	Taiwan EFL	Chinese
Acceptance	.55 (140)	.42 (108)	.21 (54)	.13 (34)
Amendment	.22 (57)	.17 (43)	.32 (81)	.40 (102)
Nonacceptance	.05 (14)	.14 (36)	.19 (49)	.24 (61)
Face Relationship	.02 (4)	.004 (1)	.03 (7)	.04 (9)
Combination	.14 (36)	.26 (66)	.22 (56)	.18 (45)
No Acknowledgment	.02 (5)	.009 (2)	.04 (9)	.02 (5)
Totals	100.00 (256)	100.00 (256)	100.00 (256)	100.00 (256)

Note. Most numbers were rounded to two decimals with the result that the total for a speaker group might exceed or be less than 1.00.

gies, whereas the Chinese using Chinese enacted the fewest; (b) the Chinese using Chinese adopted the most amendment, nonacceptance, and face relationship related strategies, whereas the Chinese ESL learners in the United States enacted the fewest amendment and face relationship related strategies, and the Americans adopted the fewest nonacceptance strategies; (c) the ESL learners in the United States adopted the most combination strategies, whereas the Americans enacted the fewest; (d) the EFL learners in Taiwan chose the most frequently not to respond to a given compliment, whereas the ESL learners in the United States chose not to respond the least often.

These descriptive statistics appeared to be consistent with the research finding mentioned earlier that when responding to compliments, native English speakers tend to adopt acceptance strategies more often than native Chinese speakers; however, the latter tend to enact nonacceptance strategies more often than the former. In the present study, the χ^2 test of homogeneity was used to determine whether there was any significant difference in the level of compliment response performance among the four participant groups. The expected cell frequencies were calculated and appear in Table 2.

Given that the computed χ^2 value (165.59) exceeds the critical value (30.578), the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that the participants in the various groups adopted different compliment response strategies. In other words, they were not homogeneous regarding the enactment of these strategies. In general, the

data of Table 2 indicate that the percentages of the American participants and the ESL participants in the United States who adopted acceptance strategies were higher than those of the Chinese using Chinese and the Taiwanese EFL learner groups, whereas the percentages of the latter who adopted amendment and nonacceptance strategies were higher than those of the former.

Because the χ^2 value was computed over all cells, a significant χ^2 value did not indicate which cells were major contributors. That is to say, we would not know exactly which participant group's enactment of what compliment response strategies has to do with the overall strategy-adopting differences among the four speaker groups. Thus, the standardized residuals (R) were computed for each of the cells to reveal how various participant groups differed in their enactment of the six main compliment response strategies. These residuals appear in Table 3.

When a standardized residual for a category is greater than 2.00 (in absolute value), researchers can conclude that it is a major contributor to the significant χ^2 value. From Table 3, we can see the standardized residuals for cells 11 ($R_{11} = 6.11$), 13 ($R_{13} = -4.11$), 15 ($R_{15} = -2.07$), 21 ($R_{21} = 2.62$), 22 ($R_{22} = -3.30$), 25 ($R_{25} = 2.14$), 31 ($R_{31} = -3.27$), 41 ($R_{41} = -5.46$), 42 ($R_{42} = 3.72$), and 43 ($R_{43} = 3.32$) were greater than 2.00; thus, these were major contributors to the significant χ^2 value. These residuals indicated that, in comparing the observed frequencies with the expected frequencies:

TABLE 2
Raw (and Expected) Frequencies of Compliment Response Strategies for Speaker Groups

Compliment Response Strategies	Group				Totals
	Americans	U.S. ESL	Taiwan EFL	Chinese	
Acceptance	140 (84)	108 (84)	54 (84)	34 (84)	336
Amendment	57 (70.75)	43 (70.75)	81 (70.75)	102 (70.75)	283
Nonacceptance	14 (40)	36 (40)	49 (40)	61 (40)	160
Face Relationship	4 (5.25)	1 (5.25)	7 (5.25)	9 (5.25)	21
Combination	36 (50.75)	66 (50.75)	56 (50.75)	45 (50.75)	203
No Acknowledgment	5 (5.25)	2 (5.25)	9 (5.25)	5 (5.25)	21
Totals	256	256	256	256	1024

1. There were more American participants adopting acceptance strategies ($R_{11} = 6.11$) and fewer enacting nonacceptance and combination strategies ($R_{13} = -4.11$ and $R_{15} = -2.07$ respectively).

2. There were more ESL participants in the United States adopting acceptance and combination strategies ($R_{21} = 2.62$ and $R_{25} = 2.14$ respectively) and fewer enacting amendment strategies ($R_{22} = -3.30$).

3. There were fewer Taiwanese EFL participants adopting acceptance strategies ($R_{31} = -3.27$).

4. There were fewer Chinese using Chinese participants adopting acceptance strategies ($R_{41} = -5.46$), and more enacting amendment and nonacceptance strategies ($R_{42} = 3.72$ and $R_{43} = 3.32$ respectively).

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The statistical findings seemed to indicate that, in many respects, the compliment response performance of ESL learners in the United States,

compared with that of their Taiwanese counterparts, was more similar to native English speakers' behavior, but less similar to that of the Chinese using Chinese. In other words, the ESL learners in the United States appeared to have approximated the target language norms better than did the EFL learners in Taiwan. This finding was not unexpected and seems patently obvious in the scholarly literature suggesting that extended, meaningful exposure to cultural and linguistic life of the target language will have a positive effect on the learning of a L2 (e.g., Brown, 2000). Empirically, in order to account for learner-specific speech act behavior, attempts have been made from both intralingual perspectives, such as overgeneralization and simplification of L2 pragmatic knowledge (e.g., Blum-Kulka & Levenston, 1987), and interlingual perspectives, such as pragmatic transfer from the learners' L1 (e.g., Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). As is the case with all language-learning tasks, intralingual phases are indeed likely to occur in the process of speech act acquisition; in contrast, given that there is much speech act research

TABLE 3
Standardized Residuals for Compliment Response Strategies for Speaker Groups

Compliment Response Strategies	Group			
	Americans	U.S. ESL	Taiwan EFL	Chinese
Acceptance	6.11	2.62	-3.27	-5.46
Amendment	-1.63	-3.30	1.22	3.72
Nonacceptance	-4.11	-.63	1.42	3.32
Face Relationship	-.55	-1.85	.76	1.64
Combination	-2.07	2.14	.73	-.81
No Acknowledgment	-.1	-1.42	1.64	-.1

showing that speakers' native sociocultural norms exert influence on their behavior (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), it is particularly intriguing from cross-cultural perspectives to examine how learners' L1 and culture may affect their L2 pragmatic performance.

Obviously, the quantitative analyses in the present study can provide no definitive answers. The following section addresses the issue of L1 influence on the two learner groups via a qualitative examination of the participants' actual compliment response utterances. Specific attention is on the respects in which the learners' strategies for responding to compliments differed from those of the L2. The analyses reported offer further insights into whether these learners' interlanguage-specific behavior relates to their native cultural norms. These insights, in turn, are useful for bettering our understanding of L2 pragmatic development. The discussion focuses only on amendment, nonacceptance, and combination strategies because examining participants' production of these main strategies provides clear examples of native sociocultural influence that illuminate a seeming approximation of L2.

Amendment Strategies

Although the quantitative analysis showed no significant differences in the use of this main strategy between the Americans and the EFL learners in Taiwan, the percentage difference between these two groups (22% vs. 32%) seemed to suggest that this L2 group had not really approached the native English norms.¹⁰ The qualitative examination of the participants' responses confirmed this supposition. For example, 40% of the amendment strategies used by these learners were of the *downgrade* substrategy variety (32 downgrade utterances out of 81 amendment responses), such as in Example 1.

Example 1

"It's just so-so."¹¹
(S3¹²: presentation; Chinese EFL learner in Taiwan)

However, only 14% of the Americans' amendment forms revealed this substrategy (8 downgrade utterances out of 57 amendment responses), such as in Example 2.

Example 2

"Oh, I think it's only okay."
(S8: project; native English speaker)

In contrast, this substrategy was frequently evident among the Chinese using Chinese, being

used 36% of the time (37 downgrade utterances out of 102 amendment responses), such as in Example 3.

Example 3

"*mǎnqǐang*¹³ *hái guò dé*
force still pass (complex stative con-
qù *la!*"
struction) go¹⁴ (phrase-final particle)

勉強還過得去啦。(It's barely okay.)
(S2: basketball; Chinese using Chinese)

With regard to the ESL learners in the United States, although they reportedly adopted a percentage of amendment strategies more similar to that of the Americans (17% vs. 22%), the possible relatedness to their L1 could still be easily observed. That is, this learner group also adopted many more downgrade substrategies than did the Americans, with a usage rate of 30% (13 downgrade utterances out of 43 amendment responses), such as in Example 4.

Example 4

"Oh, I think I'm only doing okay."
(S7: conference; Chinese ESL learner in the United States)

This finding again indicated that a similar quantitative result for the ESL learner and the native English groups did not necessarily mean that these learners had actually approached the target language norms.

As mentioned earlier, the embodiment of Chinese politeness behavior generally relates to their tradition of feudal hierarchy and order and, thereby, may be characterized by a tendency toward self-denigration as a way to show respect for others (Gu, 1990; Mao, 1994). As far as compliment responses are concerned, this tendency appears to be substantiated by a norm of modesty (Chen, 1993; Yang, 1987). Observing this norm, the complimenter usually would not expect an agreement response from the target. By not accepting the compliment given, the Chinese try to convey the message that they are projecting humility. Behaving modestly is important for native Chinese speakers because it is one of the most critical constituents of self-image. Accordingly, lowering themselves, in their view, helps to maintain or even enhance their image, and more important, doing so attends to others' face needs and, in turn, protects their own so that their behavior can be regarded as polite (e.g., Gu, 1990; Pan, 1995). In fact, the norm of modesty will often make the Chinese withhold expressions of delight or gratitude, even when they feel pleased at

(S4: cookies; Chinese ESL learner in the United States)

Example 11

"I think my nervous presentation must have bored lots of people."

(S8: project; Chinese EFL learner in Taiwan)

As mentioned earlier, native Chinese speakers generally believe that behaving modestly can help them appear polite in front of the addressee, whereas English speakers believe that it is through agreeing with the addressee that they can show their politeness. Hence, we see that in the present study, the Chinese using Chinese adopted acceptance strategies much less often than did the Americans, but the former enacted nonacceptance and amendment strategies much more often than the latter. In view of the fact that it has been amply shown that speech act behavior closely relates to a speaker's linguistic and cultural norms (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), the ESL learners' self-denigrating utterances, like their downgrade responses, suggested that they might still have transferred appropriate politeness strategies from their L1—even though the percentage differences indicated that they seemed to have approached the target language norms more closely than their Taiwanese EFL counterparts. Furthermore, the *no* responses might even signal that these ESL learners in effect translated their L1 norms into the target language forms, because this kind of *no* utterance had a very low frequency for the native

English speakers in the present study. Accordingly, we can see how qualitative analyses could be used to illuminate the differences shown in quantitative results.

Combination Strategies

Although the results indicated that the enactments of combination strategies by the American participants and by the ESL learners contributed only marginally to the overall group difference (i.e., $R_{15} = -2.07$ and $R_{25} = 2.14$, respectively), a closer examination of their responses again suggested a different picture. There were substantial qualitative differences between the native English speakers on the one hand and the Chinese using Chinese and the two learner groups on the other. Table 4 shows the percentages and raw frequencies of the types of combination strategies adopted by the four speaker groups.

From this table, two clear differences can be observed. First, the acceptance strategy was adopted in 100% of the English speakers' combination responses (36 out of 36), such as in Example 12.

Example 12

"Thank you! I put lots of thought into it."

(Acceptance + Amendment)

(S8: project; native English speaker)

However, this strategy appeared in the combination forms only 36%, 48%, and 65% of the time

TABLE 4
Percentages (and Raw Frequencies) of Types of Combination Strategies Used by Speaker Groups

Compliment Response Strategies	Group			
	Americans	U.S. ESL	Taiwan EFL	Chinese
Acceptance + Amendment	97% (35)	50% (33)	32% (18)	27% (12)
Nonacceptance + Amendment	0% (0)	27% (18)	48% (27)	58% (26)
Nonacceptance + Acceptance	3% (1)	15% (10)	16% (9)	9% (4)
Face + Acceptance	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Face + Amendment	0% (0)	3% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Face + Nonacceptance	0% (0)	5% (3)	4% (2)	.7% (3)
Totals	100% (36)	100% (66)	100% (56)	100% (45)

Note. For this and the other combination types, the combination "A + B" refers to either "A + B" or "B + A," e.g., "Acceptance + Amendment" refers also to "Amendment + Acceptance." Most numbers were rounded to two decimals with the result that the total for a speaker group might exceed or be less than 1.00.

for the Chinese using Chinese, the EFL learners in Taiwan, and the ESL learners in the United States, respectively (16 out of 45; 27 out of 56; and 43 out of 66). Second, only 3% of the English speakers' combination utterances (1 out of 36) contained some kind of nonacceptance form, such as in Example 13.

Example 13

"I'm not sure, but thanks anyway!"
(Nonacceptance + Acceptance)

(S7: conference; native English speaker)

Yet, this strategy was adopted 74%, 68%, and 47% of the time in the combination utterances of the Chinese using Chinese, the EFL learners in Taiwan, and the ESL learners in the United States, respectively (33 out of 45; 38 out of 56; and 31 out of 66). See Examples 14–16.

Example 14

"*Méiyǒu la!* *Wǒ baogào*
no (phrase-final particle) I present
dé *bù hǎo. Nǐ*
(complex stative construction) not good you

de *cái zhēnzhèng bù cuò."*
(genitive) is really not bad

沒有啦。我報告得不好。你的才真正不錯。(No, my presentation was not good. It was yours that was very good.)

(Non-acceptance + Amendment)

(S8: project; Chinese using Chinese)

Example 15

"Thank you! But I think I did a poor job."
(Acceptance + Nonacceptance)

(S6: conference; Chinese EFL learner in Taiwan)

Example 16

"Thank you! You must be kidding!"
(Acceptance + Nonacceptance)

(S5: tennis; Chinese ESL learner in the United States)

This type of response was especially frequent for the Chinese using Chinese and the EFL learners in Taiwan when they responded to a compliment in unequal-status situations.

The examples cited demonstrate that the qualitative discussion can refine our understanding of whether the L2 learners' behavior drew upon L1

strategies, especially in areas where the quantitative analysis seemed to suggest that their performance was similar to that of the target language speakers.

The responses combining *thank you* with other expressions raise another interesting question as to what message this appreciation token conveyed in these compound responses. It appears that the *Thank you* in "Thank you! I put lots of thought into it" functions differently from the *Thank you* in "Thank you. But I think I did a poor job." In the former response, the speaker seems to employ *thank you* to signal that he or she first accepts or agrees with the compliment given and then chooses to amend its complimentary force. By contrast, in the latter response, the speaker seems to use the appreciation token only to show his or her acknowledgment of the compliment or gratitude for it, or both, for the good intention of the complimenter, rather than to express acceptance or agreement. After doing so, the recipient of the compliment then proceeds to make some self-denigrating remarks and, thereby, reveals his or her true intention—nonacceptance. That is, the subsequent nonacceptance demonstrates that the appreciation token is merely an expression to acknowledge the fact that praise has been given.

Seen in this light, the enactment of combination strategies among the four participant groups reveals a further qualitative difference. On the one hand, it appears that the native English speakers used the appreciation token more often than the other groups not only to acknowledge the compliment given, but also to signal their acceptance of or agreement with it. On the other hand, the Chinese using Chinese and the two learner groups employed this device more often than the native English speakers only to acknowledge a given compliment.

The qualitative analysis clearly provides another angle from which to view the issue concerning whether the learners' behavior had truly approached the target language norms. We can see that although the ESL learners in the United States, as compared with their Taiwanese counterparts, acted more like the Americans, their behavior can still be seen to reflect L1 communicative styles. Therefore, given that the participants' utterances were examined by taking into account the linguistic means employed and the contextual variables embedded, we might further determine in what respect the L2 learners' behavior approached the native English norms or still closely related to features of their L1. We can also

see how cultural norms and social factors may intervene in determining the distinctive patterns of compliment response behavior for a given speech group. Accordingly, although this study indicates that there are some general shared concepts and dimensions of compliment response strategies across all groups, the differences in the proportion of the strategies and linguistic forms adopted show what an important role culture plays in its speakers' strategies for responding to compliments. These differences have to do with a culture's ethos and its own specific way of speaking (Hymes, 1974).

Indeed, speakers of a given culture have mutually shared expectations about what the appropriate behavior is and what its social meanings are in different contexts (Blum-Kulka, 1987). As far as compliment responses are concerned, the practice in American culture, which places special emphasis on agreement in discursal activities, appears to be that the speaker will generally respond to praise with acceptance forms. In contrast, the practice in Chinese society, which attaches a high value to relative power and modesty in spoken interactions, seems to be that the speaker may often respond to compliments with nonacceptance forms. Thus, we can see that there is a need to link ways of speaking to broader patterns of social and cultural organization so that we can gain a better understanding of the observed cross-cultural variations. Such an understanding may in turn be of a great help to improving our grasp of L2 pragmatic development.

FURTHER RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The aim of this study was to investigate whether different language groups would manifest different compliment response behaviors at both the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic level in varying situations. The discussion centered mainly on the possible L1 influence on L2 learners. As this study has shown, responding to compliments appropriately and effectively in different contexts is a challenging task for L2 learners. In fact, it is an essential aspect of communicative competence that cannot be treated lightly, because the ability to respond properly can help learners create their own opportunities to engage in meaningful social interaction with native speakers. Such interaction, in turn, is likely to lead to some negotiated interaction that may be most relevant to L2 development (e.g., Billmyer,

1990; Pica, Doughty, & Young, 1986). Furthermore, this ability can assist learners in interpreting what is meant by what is said to them and in obtaining control over the ways in which they interact with speakers of their target language. In this way, it may help greatly to reduce the possibility of misunderstandings in intercultural communication.

Given that the crux of this study dealt with cross-cultural differences and similarities in strategies for responding to compliments, the focus in the report was restricted to the influence of the speakers' native cultural norm. It did not focus on the influence of the speakers' gender and status—even though these variables were embedded in the varying situations to which the participants had to respond. The difference in language use between women and men has long been an issue of interest in the field of language study. One focus for future research, therefore, may be the analysis of gender differences in compliment response behavior for different speaker groups.

Specifically, the findings of the present study have practical educational implications in L2 learning and teaching. First, L2 learners may need to understand pragmatic factors of the target culture better in order not only to speak grammatically but also to interpret appropriately what they hear and to interact effectively with members of the target culture. Second, L2 teachers may need to incorporate many cross-cultural pragmatic analyses into their teaching in order to address learners' possible communicative problems (Canale & Swain, 1980). In other words, through paying conscious attention to the relevant sociocultural factors in a given context, L2 teachers can better help learners avoid lapsing unconsciously into the norms of their native language and thus causing unintended offense. Third, the value of study abroad can be shown through the degree of contact between the L2 learning group and target language speakers. When determining the degree of contact, Krashen (1976) suggested that what is necessary for successful L2 learning is not only mere exposure to, but also active involvement with, proficient speakers of the target language. Given that Chinese ESL learners are current college undergraduates in U.S. colleges, it seems clear that they have much more active involvement, most of which may be based on schoolwork or extracurricular activities, with native English speakers than their counterparts in Taiwan.

The results of the present study appear to make

a strong case for the complex interplay of cultural conventions, social relationships, and communicative behavior. We have seen that in a broad sense, cultural influence plays a key role in L2 learners' understanding of the norms of social interaction and in their successful acquisition of communicative competence. One major contribution of this study is that by examining speech acts in the context where they occur, we are able to analyze patterns of social behavior, thereby providing insights into the forms and rules that speakers use and into the overall picture of the dynamics of social interactions. In addition, due to the fact that the area of pragmatic transfer, failure, and sociolinguistic miscommunication plays a critical part in the field of intercultural communication, the present findings contribute to our understanding of why and how communication may break down between L2 learners and speakers of their target language, and what pragmatic and sociopragmatic deficiency may cause these breakdowns. Although it seems unlikely that we will be able to eliminate completely all the intercultural misunderstandings, surely they can be reduced by well-planned, enlightened education that focuses much attention on the cultural meanings behind speech act behavior.

NOTES

¹Throughout this article, *Chinese* refers to Mandarin Chinese, which is based on the Beijing dialect and is the official language used in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China on Taiwan (ROC).

²In fact, we can consider the learners living in the United States as English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. Here ESL is used as an acronym to refer to the situation in which English is taught in countries where English is spoken natively and is already an accepted and widely used language for education, a language that students often hear outside the walls of their school environment. By contrast, we can consider the learners residing in Taiwan as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. EFL here refers specifically to the situation in which English is taught in countries where English is not a major language of education, and is a language that is rarely used within the environment of the learner's culture (Brown, 2001).

³Speakers of the target and native language refer to Americans and Chinese respectively. However, given that not all Americans are native English speakers and that not all native English speakers are Americans, the investigator would like to specify here that throughout this study, the use of *Americans* and *native English speakers* both refer to Americans whose mother tongue is Ameri-

can English. However, the Chinese in this study come from Taiwan. Thus, the claims made about Chinese speakers' behaviors are based on the Taiwanese data and may not fit the behavior of mainland Chinese speakers.

⁴It is likely that different research designs may lead to different findings. However, basically the research framework of Chen's and Ye's studies are similar to each other. This fact makes the substantial differences between their findings more interesting.

⁵Please refer to footnote 2 for what ESL and EFL mean in this article.

⁶In pilot testing, group differences in speech act performance showed medium-size effects. To detect such effects with statistical power of .80 requires a total sample size of 128 (Light, Singer, & Willett, 1990, p. 197).

⁷One concern might be raised for the appropriateness of the part of the questionnaire for the Taiwanese EFL learners because it might not relate to their experience. That is, because these learners were chosen from those who had not studied in the target language environment, the questionnaire they needed to fill out probably did not relate to speaking to their professors and fellow students in English. In fact, in order to ensure such appropriateness, only those who felt the questionnaire related to their experience participated in the present study. It was not difficult to achieve this end because most college students in Taiwan must take at least 1 year of a mandatory English course.

⁸Because the purpose of this article was to deal with cross-cultural differences and similarities in speech act behavior, the focus was restricted to the influence of the speaker's native cultural norm and did not include the influence of his or her status and gender. Therefore, the analyses reported in the present study were not specifically geared toward the influence of these two variables.

⁹The detailed coding scheme of the present study is in Appendix C.

¹⁰In the absence of a statistically significant difference in the use of a given main strategy between different groups (e.g., the difference in the use of amendment strategies between the Taiwanese EFL learners and the Americans), the discussion here comments on the percentage difference or the participants' actual use of words, or both. Admittedly, it may give the reader a feeling that the investigator is having "both ends"; that is, when one resorts to statistics to measure significance, one is implying that anything not statistically significant exists by chance. Therefore, it seems reasonable that one cannot go back on one's words to talk about a statistically insignificant difference as a difference. However, the point of this kind of discussion, a common practice in speech act studies (e.g., Holmes, 1988), is that, as argued in this section, the same apparent speech act performance between different speaker groups suggested by quantitative results may not be able to provide the whole picture of L2 learners' behavior. For example, the qualitative discussion here gives a better understanding of how learners' cultural norms affect their L2

acquisition, which cannot be seen from the quantitative analyses. Thus, only if we make an effort to examine the participants' actual utterances qualitatively is it possible for us to get a clear picture of the extent to which these learners acquire the target language.

¹¹The examples shown in this article were taken from the actual data, and each example was followed by a parenthesized note indicating the exact situation in which it occurred and the participant group producing it.

¹²"S1: essay," "S2: basketball," "S3: presentation," "S4: cookies," "S5: tennis," "S6: question," "S7: conference," and "S8: project" refer to Situations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 respectively in the discourse completion questionnaire.

¹³Throughout this article, all Chinese characters are transliterated following the *pinyin* system, which is the official transcription system used in the PRC and is widely adopted in scholarly writings on Chinese in the West (Li & Thompson, 1981).

¹⁴To help readers better understand the coding used in this study, a line (that is a morphemic, word-for-word translation) is included for all the Chinese examples.

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APPENDIX A

Summary Table of the Characteristics of the Four Participant Groups ($N = 128$)

Compliment Response Strategies	Group			
	Americans	U.S. ESL	Taiwan EFL	Chinese
Number	32	32	32	32
Male	16	16	16	16
Female	16	16	16	16
Age Range	19; 11 to 21; 7	20; 3 to 21; 9	19; 8 to 21; 5	20; 4 to 21; 8
Age Mean	21; 9	21; 5	21; 1	21; 7
TOEFL Range	N/A	577–670	587–643	483–520
TOEFL Mean	N/A	617	612	502
Socioeconomic Status	Middle Class	Middle Class	Middle Class	Middle Class

Note. In "Age Range" and "Age Mean," the first number in each pair (e.g., 19; 11) indicates "year," and the second number refers to "month." Thus, 19; 11 to 21; 7 means the age range for Americans was 19 years, 11 months to 21 years, 7 months.

 APPENDIX B
 Discourse Completion Task (English Version)

There are eight situations described in the following pages. Please read the description of each specific situation carefully and then write down how you would respond to that situation in the given space (option A) as much as possible—as in a real-life context. If you think you would not say anything in a given situation, feel free to indicate this by checking the option B provided.

Situation 1 (+ status, m)

A male professor whom you are studying with returns your essay to you, and he says, “Great job!”

A. You would say:

or

B. You would not say anything about it.

Situation 2 (+ status, m)

You bump into your male professor at the school gym. He notices that you are playing basketball very well and says to you, “You shoot pretty well.”

A. You would say:

or

B. You would not say anything about it.

Situation 3 (+ status, f)

You have given a presentation in the class. After class, you meet with your female professor to discuss it, and she says, “Your presentation was great.”

A. You would say:

or

B. You would not say anything about it.

Situation 4 (+ status, f)

You bring cookies you made yourself to class to share with your professor and classmates. After tasting one, your female professor says, “You’re really a good cook.”

A. You would say:

or

B. You would not say anything about it.

Situation 5 (–status, m)

You are playing tennis with a male friend. He says, “Wow, you’re such a good player.”

A. You would say:

or

B. You would not say anything about it.

Situation 6 (– status, m)

You and a male friend attend an academic seminar. After that, he says to you, “I like the questions you asked in the seminar.”

A. You would say:

or

B. You would not say anything about it.

Situation 7 (– status, f)

You are coordinating a school conference with a female friend. She says to you, “Wow, you are really handling things very well.”

A. You would say:

or

B. You would not say anything about it.

Situation 8 (– status, f)

After you present your final project in class, a female classmate says to you, “I think you really did a good job.”

A. You would say:

or

B. You would not say anything about it.

Note. The combination of the binary-valued contextual variables—addressees’ status and gender—is specified with parenthesized notes, which were intended only for readers’ information and were not shown to the participants. The notation “+ status” indicates that the addressee is higher status, whereas “– status” indicates that interactants are equal status. The notation “m” indicates that the addressee is a male, whereas “f” indicates that the addressee is a female. Because it is difficult to find cross-culturally appropriate contexts in which college students are socially dominant in both the United States and Taiwan, speaker-dominant situations were not devised in the DCT.

APPENDIX C

Coding Scheme for Compliment Response Strategies

Acceptance Strategies: Utterances that recognize the status of a preceding remark as a compliment. Generally, the following substrategies are regarded as subsumed under the main Acceptance strategy:

1. Appreciation Token: Utterances that recognize the status of a preceding remark as a compliment without being semantically fitted to the specifics of that praise. Generally, they are words showing gratitude, such as "Thank you."

Appreciation token can also be responses like smiles or nods. For example:

Chinese: *Xièxiè!*

thank, thank

謝謝! (Thank you!)

(S3: presentation; Chinese using Chinese)

2. Agreement: Utterances that agree with the complimentary force of the speaker by a remark semantically fitted to the compliment. For example:

English: Yeah, I think it went well, too.

(S3: presentation; native English speaker)

3. Pleasure: Utterances that show the complimentee is pleased. For example:

English: I'm glad you liked it.

(S4: cookies; native English speaker)

4. Association: Utterances that include more than one of the Acceptance substrategies above. For example:

English: Thank you! I'm glad you liked it.

(Appreciation Token + Pleasure)

(S6: question; native English speaker)

Amendment Strategies: In recognizing the status of a preceding remark as a compliment, the speaker tries to amend its complimentary force. Generally, the following substrategies are regarded as subsumed under the main Amendment strategy:

1. Return: Utterances that reciprocate the act of complimenting by offering praise to the complimenter. For example:

Chinese: *Nǐ yě dǎ de bùcuò*

you too play (complex stative construction) not bad

你也打得不錯。(You play very well, too.)

(S5: tennis; Chinese using Chinese)

2. Downgrade: Utterances that scale down the complimentary force of the praise. For example:

Chinese: *Hái guò de qù la.*

still pass (complex stative construction) go (expletive)

還過得去啦。(Just so-so.)

(S1: essay; Chinese using Chinese)

3. Upgrade: Utterances that increase the force of the compliment. For example:

English: Yeah, I really killed you today, eh?

(S5: tennis; native English speaker)

4. Question: Utterances that question the sincerity or appropriateness of the compliment. For example:

Chinese: *Shì ma? Nǐ zhēnde juéde wǒ dǎ de bùcuò?*

is (question mark) you really think I play (complex stative construction) not bad

是嗎? 你真覺得我打得不錯? (Is that so? Do you really think that I played very well?)

(S5: tennis; Chinese using Chinese)

5. Comment: Responses that, while accepting the force of a given compliment, do not accept credit for the accomplishment or attitude that is praised. Rather, the speaker impersonalizes the force of that compliment. For example:

English: I put a lot of work into it last night.

(S8: project; native English speaker)

6. Transfer: Utterances that switch the force or the focus of the compliment back to the complimenter. For example:

Chinese: *Laǒshī yào shì juéde hái kěyǐ de huà, qǐng duō chī yídiǎn.*

sir if think passably okay (nominalizer) speech please more eat a little

老師要是覺得還可以的話, 請多吃一點。(Sir, if you think it is okay, please have some more.)

(S4: cookies; Chinese using Chinese)

7. Association: Utterances that include two or more of the Amendment substrategies above. For example:

English: It's only O.K. I think yours is pretty good.

(Downgrade + Return)

(S8: project; native English speaker)

Chinese: *Māmāhūhū la! Shì nín bù xiàngqì.*

so-so (phrase-final particle) is you no reject

馬馬虎虎啦! 是您不嫌棄。(Just so-so! You're being too kind!)
 (Question + Comment)
 (S4: cookies; Chinese using Chinese)

Nonacceptance Strategies: Utterances that deny, question, or joke about the content of the compliment or avoid responding directly to the praise. Generally, the following substrategies are regarded as subsumed under the main Nonacceptance strategy:

1. Disagreement: Utterances that disagree with the assertion of the compliment, or responses showing that the compliment is undue or overdone. For example:

Chinese: *Méiyǒu la.*
 no (phrase-final particle)
 沒有啦!(No!)
 (S1: essay; Chinese using Chinese)

2. Qualification: Utterances that do not accept the full complimentary force of a given compliment by questioning the quality that is praised. For example:

English: Well, actually I think it sort of dragged out.
 (S8: project; native English speaker)

3. Diverge: Utterances that question the force of the compliment by suggesting other intended acts. For example:

Chinese: *Bíe nào le.*
 stop make scene (phrase-final particle)
 別鬧了。(Stop making fun of me.)
 (S7: conference; Chinese using Chinese)

4. Association: Utterances that include more than one of the Nonacceptance substrategies above. For example:

English: I don't think so. You've got to be joking.
 (Disagreement + Diverge)
 (S5: tennis; native English speaker)

Chinese: *Nǎ yǒu! Wǒ dǎ de bù hǎo. Méiyǒu nǐ dǎ de*
 where have I play (complex stative construction) not good. no you play (complex stative construction) good
 哪有! 我打得不好。沒有你打得好。(No! I don't play well. It's not as good as yours.)
 (Disagreement + Qualification)
 (S5: tennis; Chinese using Chinese)

Face Relationship Related Response Strategies: Utterances that do not appear to accept, amend, or reject the compliment given. In essence, this kind of metacommunicative response does not deal with the propositional content of the compliment; rather, it deals with the occurrence of the compliment within the interaction. For example:

Chinese: *Bùhǎoyìsi.*
 embarrassed
 不好意思。(I'm embarrassed)
 (S2: basketball; Chinese using Chinese)

Combination Strategies: The case in which the addressee's 沒有啦! 我常校我自己東西弄得很難吃: main strategies described above. For example:

English: Thank you! Did you really think it's good?
 (Acceptance [Appreciation Token] + Amendment [Question])
 (S8: project; native English speaker)

Chinese: *Méiyǒu la. Wǒ xiǎng wǒ jīntiān yùnqì hǎo.*
 no (phrase-final particle) I think I today luck good
 沒有啦! 我想我今天運氣好。(No, I think I'm lucky today.)
 (Nonacceptance [Disagreement] + Amendment [Transfer])
 (S2: basketball; Chinese using Chinese)

No Acknowledgment: The case in which the speaker chooses not to respond to the compliment bestowed upon himself or herself.

Note. As defined, the Combination main strategy refers to the situation in which more than one main strategy, such as Acceptance, Amendment, Nonacceptance, Face Relationship, is adopted in a single compliment response sequence. That is to say, only an utterance that combines more than one main strategy is coded as Combination. In contrast, in situations in which two or more of the substrategies of a certain main strategy are employed at the same time in a given compliment response, the response, as defined above, is coded as the Association substrategy that belongs to that specific main strategy. For example, "Thank you! Do I really look that great?" (Acceptance [Appreciation Token] + Amendment [Question]) is coded as a Combination main strategy, whereas "Thank you! I'm glad you enjoyed it" (Acceptance [Appreciation Token + Pleasure]), as an Association substrategy that is subsumed under the Acceptance main strategy.