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Z B O R N I K U Č A S T

*Draginji Pervaz*

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**ENGLISKI JEZIK  
I ANGLOFONE KNJIŽEVNOSTI  
U TEORIJI I PRAKSI**



**Novi Sad  
2014**

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Ovaj zbornik objavljuje se u sklopu  
obeležavanja 60-godišnjice Filozofskog fakulteta.  
*60 godina širimo znanje!*

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AUTORSKI  
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## **COMPLIMENT RESPONSES – A STUDY OF THE PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE OF ADVANCED EFL STUDENTS IN SERBIA**

The paper presents the results of a study on compliment responses (CRs) produced by advanced L2 learners of English whose L1 is Serbian. The paper has three main goals: (1) to establish the similarities and differences between the CRs used by speakers of Serbian and speakers of English, (2) to explore the extent to which advanced Serbian L2 learners produce target like CRs in English and (3) to determine whether pragmatic transfer is shown to occur. Written discourse completion tests (WDCTs) were used to study the strategies employed when responding to compliments in the students' L1 and L2 (English). The findings suggest that Serbian expressions and strategies were sometimes used in English (L2), suggesting that due to lack of explicit instruction, learners do transfer some of their L1 pragmatic norms to L2, believing these to be universal among languages.

Key words: pragmatic competence, compliment responses, advanced EFL students, interlanguage pragmatics

### **1. Introduction**

Bachman (1990) uses the term 'pragmatic competence' to refer to the knowledge of communicative action/ speech acts and how to carry them out (illocutionary competence) on the one hand, and the ability to use language appropriately according to context (sociolinguistic competence) on the other. Put differently, pragmatic competence is the ability to use language forms in a wide range of environments, affecting the relationship between the language users and the social and cultural context of the situation (Gass & Selinker 2001; Lightbown & Spada 1999, as cited in Yuan 2012).

Research into the pragmatic competence of adult foreign and second language learners has shown that grammatical development does not necessarily go hand

in hand with a corresponding level of pragmatic development (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei 1997, as cited in Kasper 1997) and that even advanced learners may fail to comprehend or to convey the intended intentions and politeness values (Eslami-Rasekh 2005). And while learners often get a considerable amount of L2 pragmatic knowledge “for free”, either because it is universal or because it may be transferred from the learner’s L1, pragmatic ability still requires special attention in language teaching given that learners often fail to use their universal or transferable L1 pragmatic knowledge in L2 contexts.

Numerous studies of speech acts have established that speech act behaviour and realization is heavily influenced by sociocultural norms and constraints, which may result in significant differences between two cultures’ interactional style. It is not surprising then that speech acts in different social contexts are but one area where advanced EFL students typically show poor command. In this paper, we focus on the speech act of compliments, more specifically compliment responses. Compliments have been claimed to have an ambiguous interpretation (Brown & Levinson 1987). On the one hand, they are considered a positive politeness strategy and on the other hand, they also present a face threatening act against the hearer because they (may) express a desire of the speaker towards the hearer or his/her possessions. In other words, the speech act (compliments) is used as a way to be polite (politeness strategy) and at the same time as an act which can reverse their hearer-based framework (Karafoti 2007). Similarly, compliment responses are certainly among the more difficult speech acts to perform in L2, given that they are restricted by two conflicting conditions, “agreeing with the complimenter to be polite, and disagreeing with the complimenter to avoid self-praise” (Pomerantz 1978; Herbert 1989).

There is a substantial body of research in interlanguage pragmatics dealing with cross-cultural differences in the content of compliment responses (CRs). This phenomenon has been extensively investigated both by comparing CRs of native speakers of English with CRs of non-native speakers of various L1 backgrounds (American and Chinese in Chen 1993; British and Spanish in Lorenzo-Dus 2001; American and Thai in Cedar 2006; Australian and Chinese in Tang & Zhang 2009, as cited in Boonkongaen 2011, see also Al-Humaidi 2006 and Al Falasi 2007 for American and Arabic), as well as by studying the similarities and differences in the content of CRs produced by English learners of various L1 backgrounds, such as Korean (Han 1992), Chinese (Liu 1995; Qu & Wang 2005; Yu 2003, 2004), Turkish (Bulut & Ozkan 2005), Vietnamese (Tran 2007, 2008), among others (Phoocharoensil 2012). As pointed out by Cheng (2011: 2204), corpus studies have shown native English speakers to “apply multiple types of compliments in a wide range of contexts, such as initiating conversation, greetings, farewells and expressing gratitude. Responses to compliments usually mirror the social-cultural values and politeness varieties of the speakers. While acceptance of the compliment was shown

to be most commonly adopted by native English speakers (Chen 1993; Herbert 1986; Holmes and Brown 1987), downgrading and rejections were usually used by speakers of other languages, especially those from Asian regions such as China, Taiwan, Japan and Vietnam (Chen 1993; Baba 1996; Tran 2006; Yu 2004). This distinctive difference in CRs produced by speakers of different L1s was given as one of the main reasons for difficulties faced by L2 learners in producing target-like compliment responses (Baba 1996; Tran 2006; Yu 2004)”. Thus, in the majority of cases, speakers transferred their L1 pragmatic and discourse knowledge to L2, which, according to Tran (2002), is likely to occur when L1 and L2 cultural norms differ noticeably. Since English and Serbian both belong to the common European culture, the CR strategies employed by advanced EFL learners whose L1 is Serbian were not expected to differ dramatically either from their CRs in English or from the typical CRs of native speakers of English. However, the expectation was that due to lack of explicit instruction and very limited exposure to real-life communication in English, EFL learners’ CRs will largely reduce to *Thank you!* and that even in the rare cases where the CR production of the research participants was more extensive, it was expected to show very limited variation with respect to the strategies employed. The pragmatic production of the advanced EFL learners who participated in this research was thus predicted to be the result of pragmatic transfer and to be at a significantly lower level than their linguistic development.

The paper is structured in the following way: Section 2 gives a brief overview of Speech act theory, focusing on the speech act of compliments and compliment responses and presents the taxonomy of CRs which will be adopted in this research. Section 3 presents the research methodology employed, including the participants, the data collection instruments and the procedures, while Section 4 brings the results and findings of the research. Section 5 briefly recapitulates the main findings of the paper and gives pedagogical implications. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper and suggests directions for future research.

## **2. The speech act of compliments and compliment responses**

Speech act theory aims to account for how speakers use language to accomplish intended actions and how hearers infer intended meaning from what is said. Building on Austin’s (1962) and Searle’s (1969) theories, Cohen (1996) classifies speech acts into five groups based on the functions assigned to them. These are (1) representatives (assertions, claims, reports), (2) directives (suggestions, requests, commands), (3) expressives (apologies, complaints, thanks, compliments), (4) commissives (promises, threats, offers) and (5) declaratives (decrees, declarations). Clearly, there are other classifications of speech acts, but what most authors agree on is the important distinction

between direct and indirect speech acts, a distinction based on whether the speaker actually says what he means or whether he “communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer.” (Searle 1975: 60-61)

As already pointed out, CRs are an expressive speech act, in which the speaker has to balance two conflicting constraints, namely (1) to agree with the speaker and (2) to avoid self-praise. If the recipient of a compliment responds by agreeing with the speaker, the response goes against the sociolinguistic expectations of the speaker because it will contain self-praise. If, on the other hand, the speaker does not accept the compliment in order to avoid self-praise, the response will be face threatening for the speaker as it will violate the first condition (Pomerantz 1978). To mediate this conflict, recipients of compliments may resort to a variety of solutions. The taxonomy of CRs that will be employed in this paper was put forward by Holmes (1988, 1993), based on Pomerantz’s (1978) discussion. It involves three macro strategies (Accept, Reject and Deflect/Evade) and ten micro-strategies, as shown in Table 1.

Macro level CRs	Micro level CRs	Examples
Accept	Appreciation token	“Thanks”; “Thank you”; “Cheers”; “Yes”; “Good”
	Agreeing utterance	“I know”; “I am glad you think so”; “I did realize I did that well”; “Yeah, I really like it.”
	Downgrading/ Qualifying utterance	“It’s nothing”; “It was no problem”; “I enjoyed doing it”; “I hope it was ok”; “I still only use it to call people”; “It’s not bad.”
	Return compliment	“You’re not too bad yourself”; “Your child was an angel”; “I’m sure you will be great”; “Yours was good too.”
Reject	Disagreeing utterance	“Nah, I don’t think so”; “I thought I did badly”; “Nah, it’s nothing special”; “It is not”; “Don’t say so.”
	Question accuracy	“Why?”; “Is it right?”
	Challenge sincerity	“Stop lying”; “Don’t lie”; “Don’t joke about it”; “You must be kidding”; “Don’t, come on.”

Evade	Shift credit	“That’s what friends are for”; “You’re polite”; “No worries”; “My pleasure.”
	Informative comment	“It wasn’t hard”; “You can get it from [store name]”; “It’s really cheap.”
	Request reassurance	“Really?”

Table 1: Holmes’ (1988) taxonomy of compliment responses

In Section 4 (Results and discussion), the analysis of the CRs will be presented both with respect to the macro level and the micro level.

### 3. Research methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

The overall aim of the present paper is to contribute to attaining a clearer picture of advanced EFL students’ pragmatic competence by examining the compliment responses they produce, specifically (1) by establishing the similarities and differences between the CRs used by speakers of Serbian and speakers of English, (2) by exploring the extent to which advanced Serbian L2 learners produce target-like CRs in English and (3) by determining whether pragmatic transfer is shown to occur. In line with these aims, there were two groups of research participants: group 1 consisted of 39 third-year students of humanities (29 female, 9 male, mean age: 21.63) whose L1 is Serbian and who completed the Serbian version of the questionnaire, while group 2 totalled 35 fourth-year students (31 female, 4 male, mean age: 22.71) of the English Department at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad, Serbia and they were given the English version of the questionnaire.

#### 3.2. Data collection

The participants’ responses were elicited using a three-part questionnaire. In the first part, the respondents were required to state their sex and age. The aim of the second part of the questionnaire was to determine how often the research participants compliment others, what they most often compliment on (interlocutor’s appearance, ability/achievement or possession), as well as who they most often address compliments to. For all three questions a list of items was provided (see Appendix) and the respondents were asked to indicate their answers using the numbers 1 (often), 2 (sometimes) or 3 (never).

The participants' pragmatic competence was tested in the third part of the questionnaire, in the form of an open-ended written discourse completion test (WDCT), i.e. a questionnaire containing written prompts (brief descriptions of real-life situations) followed by a space in which the respondent was required to produce a response to a compliment.

This part of the questionnaire involved nine situations in which the situational setting was intertwined with the sociopragmatic variable of social power.<sup>1</sup> The first variable concerns the topic of complimenting (appearance, ability/achievement and possession), while the second one is related to the power of the complimenter over the complimentee (more power, equal power or less power). Previous research (Manes 1983; Holmes 1986; Creese 1991) has shown that Americans tend to compliment most on appearance, but that ability is the largest category of compliments with the British (Creese 1991).<sup>2</sup> A great majority of compliments have been found to be addressed to people of similar age and status to the compliment giver (Knapp, Hopper, & Bell 1984). Given that to the best of the author's knowledge no research has been conducted in Serbian (but see Ivanetić 1999 on compliments in Croatian), in order to find out whether there is transfer to L2 it was necessary to learn more about the habit of complimenting in the research participants' L1.

An example of a WDCT used in the questionnaire is given below:

1. You are wearing a new Rolex watch. You meet a friend at your office.  
Friend: Wow! What a nice watch! I wish I had one like that!  
You: \_\_\_\_\_

Although WDCT, as a method of data collection has received criticism due to the fact that some situations may put the informants into roles with which they are unfamiliar and thus create unnatural utterances, as well as because the space provided on the sheets may constrain the length of the informant's response, it is also true that WDCTs are an effective means of gathering large amounts of data quickly and are fairly easy to administer.

### **3.3. Procedures**

Research participants were asked to complete the questionnaire in order to determine their pragmatic competence in responding to compliments in their L1, Serbian (group 1) and in English (group 2), as their L2. For the responses collected in the second part of the questionnaire, the mean value was determined for each item

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the situations were replicated from Yuan (2012).

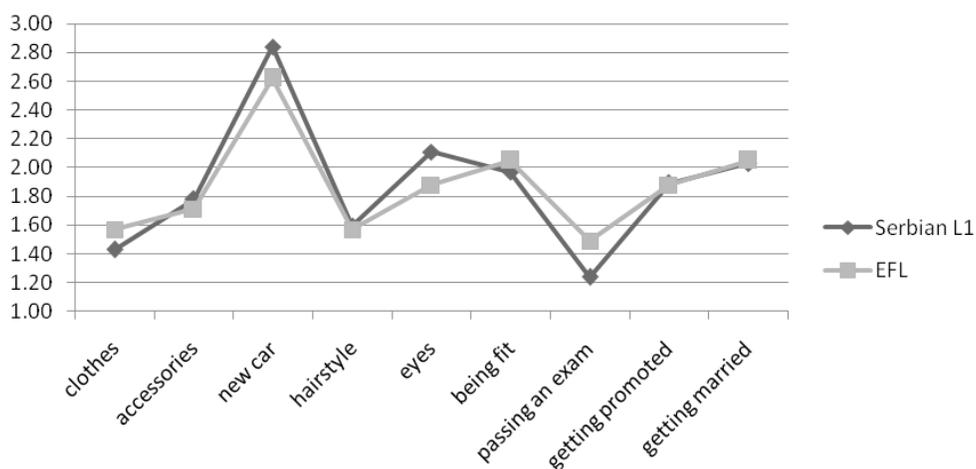
<sup>2</sup> In a corpus of 73 American compliments and 138 British compliments, Creese (1991) identifies 65.8% vs. 53% compliments pertaining to appearance, 32.9% vs. 54.3% concerning ability and only 1.3% vs. 7.3% of the compliments have to do with possession.

and the results of the two groups were compared. The participants' responses in the WDCTs were classified in line with Holmes' (1988) taxonomy of CRs given above in Section 2. Then, the total frequency and percentage of both the macro and the micro strategies used by the participants were calculated, both for Serbian and for English. Finally, these were compared with the findings reported in the literature on CRs in English (Creese 1991; Lorenzo-Dus 2001; Cheng 2011).

In the next section, we present the results along with a description and comparison of the results between the two groups of respondents.

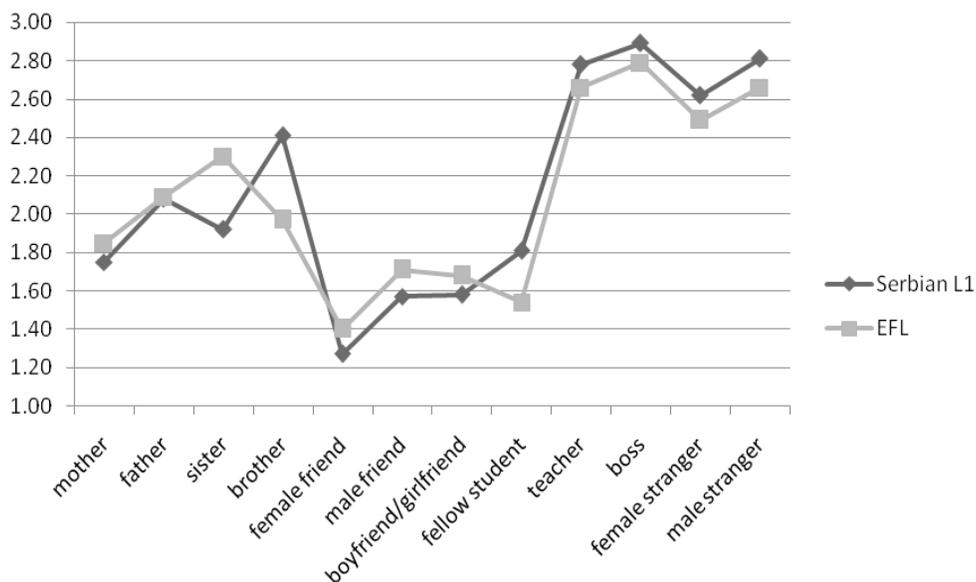
#### 4. Results and discussion

The analysis of the complimenting behaviour of the two groups of respondents suggests that compliments are paid slightly more frequently in Serbian (1.53) than in English (1.8). It appears that in Serbian, achievements are the largest category of compliments (1.72), followed by appearance (1.77) and possessions (2.31), while in the participants' L2 appearance is complimented on most often (1.77), followed by achievement (1.80) and possessions (2.16). It has to be noted that the top four topics in both languages are passing an exam (which is understandable, given the population), hairstyle, clothes and accessories. An overview of compliment topic scores is given in Graph 1 below, where the vertical axis corresponds to the frequency of complimenting, ranging from 1 (often) to 3 (never) while the categories of compliments are listed on the horizontal axis.



Graph 1: Compliment topics in L1 and L2

Graph 2 shows the scores of the compliment addressees listed in the questionnaire for both groups of research participants. It is clear from the graph that in many cases the trend line for English follows the trend line for Serbian. Friends of both sexes, partners and fellow students are the typical recipients of compliments for both groups of research participants.



Graph 2: Compliment addressees in L1 and L2

Moving on to the WDCTs and the analysis of CRs, Table 2 shows the general patterns of CRs (macro strategies). Columns 2 and 3 give the data for Serbian (group 1) and and EFL (group 2), as established in the research presented here. The last two columns give comparative data for American and British NSs, as recorded in Creese (1991).

	Serbian	EFL	American	British
Accept	76.55%	73.95%	54%	45.9%
Deflect	21.68%	25.39%	29%	40.6%
Reject	1.77%	0.66%	17%	13.5%

Table 2: Comparative results of CRs in Serbian NS, EFL speakers and two English NS populations

Clearly, the CR production of the EFL students shows a striking similarity to the production of the participants in group 1, in their Serbian L1. Though there

is a significant difference in the distribution of macro strategies between the two English NS populations, too, especially with respect to the frequency of the evade/deflect strategy, it is obvious that the results of the EFL group show pragmatic transfer from L1.

Following Chen (2011) and Cheng (2012), the data obtained in the questionnaires were submitted to an analysis of the micro strategies used by the two groups of research participants. As mentioned earlier, the nine situations in the WDCTs varied with respect to the situational setting (i.e. the topic of complimenting) and the sociopragmatic variable of social power (which will, due to lack of space, not be commented on here). In what follows, we give an overview of the CRs for each compliment situation. Note that while the expected number of CRs should equal the number of participants multiplied by the number of situations (i.e. 342 for group 1 and 315 for group 2), the participants sometimes combined the micro strategies (e.g. appreciation token followed by an informative comment) and these were counted as two separate CRs,<sup>3</sup> resulting in a larger total number of responses (452 for group 1 and 453 for group 2, respectively).

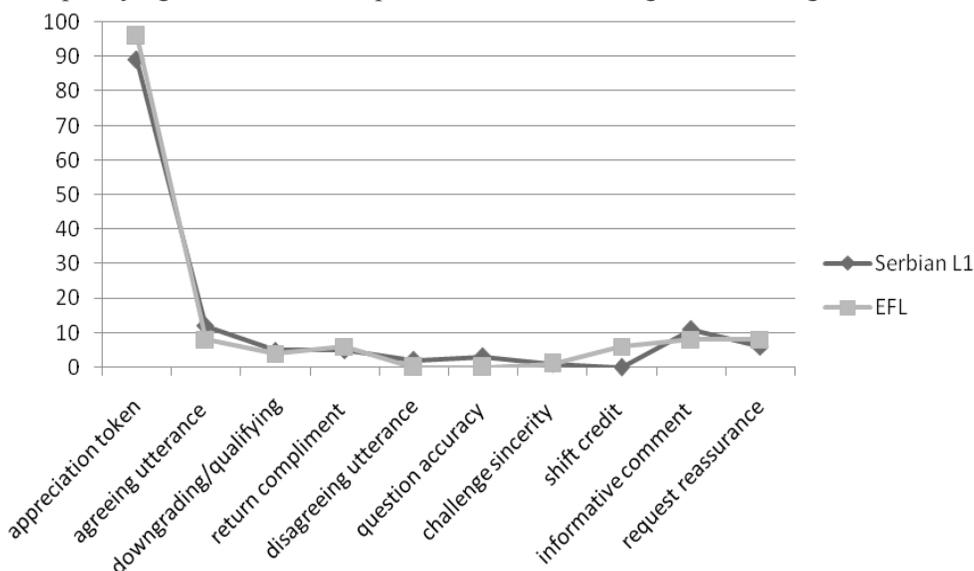
#### ***4.1. Responses to compliments on appearance***

In responding to compliments on appearance, the majority of both groups of research participants showed appreciation (*Hvala! Thanks./Thank you.*), while other strategies were used fairly infrequently. In the Serbian data there are 12 examples of agreeing (e.g. *Hvala, i meni se sviđa!* ‘Thank you, I like it, too!’ in situation 5), and 11 instances of using an informative comment as a compliment evading strategy (e.g. *Hvala, kupila sam ga u second-hand prodavnici, jeftino.* ‘Thank you, I bought it at a second hand shop, it was cheap.’ in situation 3), while other micro strategies were few and far between, as shown in Graph 3. The second group of participants, whose EFL pragmatic competence was being tested, also used appreciation almost to the exclusion of all other micro strategies: there were only 8 examples each of acceptance (e.g. *Thank you, I think so too!* in situation 3, or *Thanks, everyone says that!* in situation 5), informative comments (e.g. *Thanks, I’ll give you the number of my hairdresser if you want.* in DCT 5) and requesting assurance (e.g. *You think?* or *You really think so?* in situation 5).

In Cheng’s (2011) data, the distribution of the micro strategies observed in the CRs of American NSs are approximately as follows: appreciation tokens 40%, in-

<sup>3</sup> Cheng (2011:2207) treats such cases as the Combination macro strategy, which refers to a situation in which both Acceptance and Evasion are adopted in a single compliment response sequence. Note also that this author modifies Holmes’ (1988, 1993) and Yu’s (2004) categories of CR strategies and uses an adapted CR strategy framework, which consists of three macro strategies (Accept, Evade and Combination) and 11 micro strategies (for details see Cheng 2011).

formative comments and return compliments each about 20%, with downgrading and qualifying utterances and request reassurance totaling the remaining 20% of CRs.



Graph 3: CR micro strategies for appearance

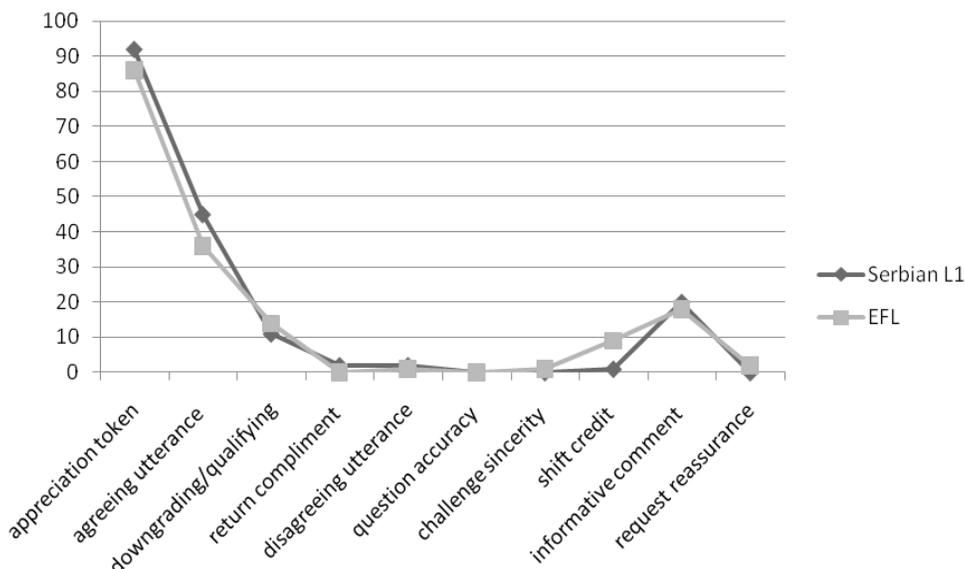
#### 4.2. Responses to compliments on achievement

The trend lines representing the use of CR micro strategies in responding to compliments on achievement show a similar tendency for the two groups of participants. Though here, too (Graph 4), appreciation tokens are by far the most widely used strategy, a relatively large number of agreeing responses are found in the CRs of both groups of participants. Also worth mentioning is the occurrence of informative comments (mostly in situation 6 in both Serbian and English) and the occasional use of downgrading and shifting credit (the latter is only found in the EFL data). Note that there are only two examples of rejection strategies per language, which is unexpected given Creese's (1991) data.<sup>4</sup>

Cheng's (2011) results of the ability/work situation are comparable to the achievement situation tested here. According to this author, American NSs will use appreciation tokens just as frequently as qualifying utterances (each accounting for about 23% of the total CRs), followed by informative comments (15%), downgrading utterances and request reassurance (each about 12%), while agreeing utterances

<sup>4</sup> Note that in the CR strategy framework put forward in Cheng (2011) the macro strategy of rejection does not figure at all.

and offering (an evasion strategy which does not exist in Holmes' (1988) taxonomy) are used even less frequently.



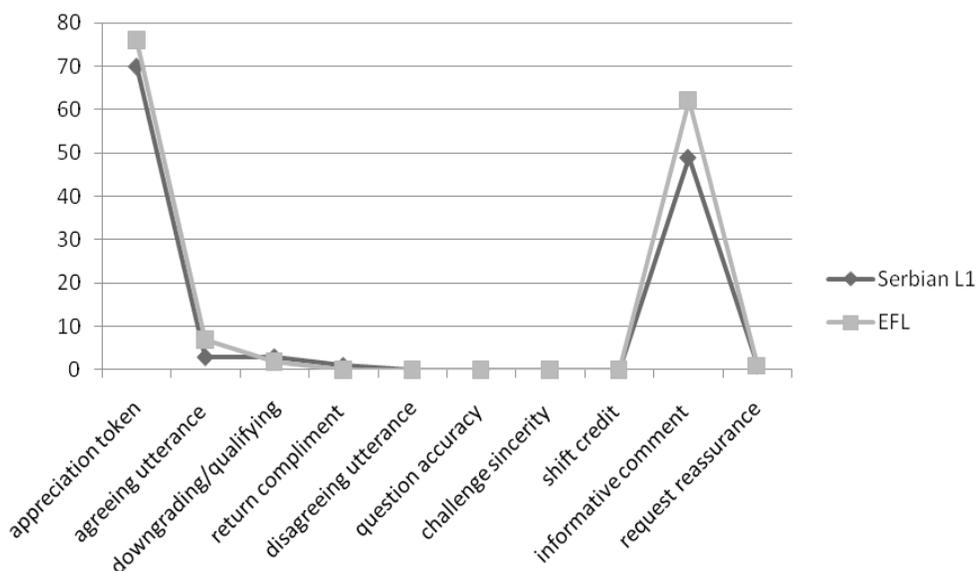
Graph 4: CR micro strategies for achievement

In this research, apart from appreciation, among the most frequent CRs on achievement were *Drago mi je da vam se sviđa!* ('I'm glad you like it') in Serbian and *I'm glad you liked it* in English – obviously, this is another instance of pragmatic transfer from the participants' L1 to their L2. Downgrading was most frequent in situation 2 in Serbian (complimenting on delicious cakes), with the usual CR being (variations of) *Jako ih je lako napraviti.* ('They are very easy to bake.').

### 4.3. Responses to compliments on possessions

This last group of data also shows a strong tendency towards using appreciation as the major CR strategy in both groups of research participants. In addition to this strategy, informative comments are used with considerable frequency in both languages, e.g. *Kupila sam ih u Beogradu* ('I bought them in Belgrade', referring to the boots in situation 4) or *Dobio sam ga na poklon* ('I got it as a present', in reference to the Rolex in situation 7) in Serbian. With the EFL respondents, the typical comments include e.g. *It is my father's* in situation 9 or *I got/You can buy them/it ...* in situations 4 and 7.

The trend line for the two languages under consideration shows a striking similarity, once again suggesting that the English data are the result of pragmatic transfer from the respondents' L1. Comparing the results in Graph 5 with the data reported in Cheng (2011) confirms this assumption, since American NSs are claimed to employ appreciation token, informative comments and agreeing utterances each in about 25% of the CRs analysed, whereas the EFL results obtained in this research replicate the Serbian compliment responding practice and make less use of informative comments (though strikingly more in this situational setting than in the other two) and employ agreeing utterances extremely rarely.



Graph 5: CR micro strategies for possessions

All the results presented here suggest that advanced EFL learners mostly rely on transferring their L1 pragmatic competence to their L2. It is clear that very little attention is paid to developing the communicative competence of EFL learners. And though it is true that some features of the EFL context hinder pragmatic learning, such as the narrow range of speech acts and realisation strategies, typical interaction patterns which restrict pragmatic input, large classes, limited contact hours and little opportunity for intercultural communication (Alcon-Soler 2005), this results in advanced EFL learners attaining a fair degree of linguistic competence but with little awareness of how to use language appropriately in various situations. In order to improve this situation, EFL learners must clearly receive explicit pragmatic instruction, some guidelines for which are suggested in the next section (see also Halupka-Rešetar 2014).

## 5. Pedagogical implications

The results of the analysis of CRs in the pragmatic production of NSs of Serbian and advanced EFL learners whose L1 is Serbian reveals that in the overwhelming majority of the cases, the CR either contains or reduces to an appreciation token while other CR micro strategies are employed significantly less frequently. Namely, in the Serbian data, appreciation tokens represent over 70% of the total accepting strategies, followed by agreeing (18.49%), whereas the other two strategies occur only occasionally. Among the evading strategies, informative comments are used almost to the exclusion of the other two strategies (i.e. in over 90% of the cases). The results of the second group (EFL) mirror these data: here, too, appreciation tokens top the list of compliment accepting responses (77%), agreeing is employed in just over 15% of the cases, whereas most deflecting responses contain an informative comment (76.52%), credit shifting and request assurance being used fairly infrequently (in 13% and 10.43% of the cases, respectively). The occurrence of all the other strategies in both groups of participants' responses can be attributed to chance.

The results of the research presented sharply contrast with the CR behaviour of native speakers reported in the literature (for a recent study, see Cheng 2011). Thus, it is clear that the results obtained in the current study confirm that the pragmatic competence of the advanced EFL learners who participated in this research is significantly below their linguistic competence and is the result of transfer from their L1. The pedagogical implications of the present study are obvious: the amount and type of materials contained in most syllabi for (advanced) EFL learners need to be supplemented with explicit instruction regarding the pragmatics of English (specifically, speech act behaviour and realization, with special focus on the differences between L1 and L2). This may be achieved by using authentic audiovisual input (video, films and TV) for various tasks, e.g. discussing, interpreting, analysing the input (and comparing it with the students' L1), role play, various discourse completion tasks (DCT), etc. (cf. Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003).

## 6. Concluding remarks

The present study examines the use of CR strategies in two populations: NSs of Serbian and advanced EFL learners whose L1 is Serbian. The data analysed in the paper were elicited using a questionnaire, in which, in addition to general questions and three questions aimed at exploring the complimenting behaviour of the participants, there was also a Written Discourse Completion Test with 9 situations in which the variables of situational setting and social power were varied. The data were categorized using Holmes's (1988) taxonomy of CRs and the results were

compared to the CR behaviour of American NSs of English reported in Cheng (2011).

The results of the research confirm the initial hypothesis that the CR production of advanced EFL learners will show very limited variation and will mainly reduce to the appreciation token *Thank you!* Other strategies are rarely used, whether alone or in tandem with an appreciation token, though the sum of CRs representing the macro strategy evade/deflect adds up to a quarter of EFL CRs (which is actually quite close to the 29% of such responses reported in Creese (1991) for American NSs). However, a closer comparison of the micro strategies used by the two populations in this research reveals almost identical distribution, which means that even though strategies other than appreciation tokens do occur in the CRs of the EFL learners (agreeing utterances in 11.26% and informative comments in 19.43% of the total number of CRs), this happens most probably due to the fact that it is exactly these two strategies that speakers of Serbian tend to use in their L1 CRs (agreeing utterances in 14.16% and informative comments in 19.91% of the total number of CRs).

All the data presented in this small scale research point to the dire need to devote more attention to developing (advanced) EFL learners' pragmatic competence. While this is clearly not an easy task, it is hoped that the conclusions arrived at in this paper will help researchers, EFL teachers, educators and curriculum developers alike focus on the numerous areas of interlanguage pragmatics that are still understudied and thus bring considerable benefit to the realm of cross-cultural communication.

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire on EFL pragmatic competence

Instructions: as part of a research project, I would like you to complete the following questionnaire about your pragmatic competence in using English. Your answers will help me ensure the accuracy of the data. You do not need to write down your name. The information obtained will only be used for the purposes of academic research. Thank you very much for your help.

Sex: M / F      Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your answer to the questions below using the following scale:

1 – often

2 – sometimes

3 – never

How often do you compliment people in English? \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following are you most likely to compliment people on?

\_\_\_\_\_ clothes

\_\_\_\_\_ accessories

\_\_\_\_\_ new car

\_\_\_\_\_ hairstyle

\_\_\_\_\_ eyes

\_\_\_\_\_ being physically fit

\_\_\_\_\_ passing an exam

\_\_\_\_\_ getting a promotion

\_\_\_\_\_ getting married

\_\_\_\_\_ other (please list: \_\_\_\_\_ )

Which of the following people do you address compliments at?

\_\_\_\_\_ mother

\_\_\_\_\_ father

\_\_\_\_\_ sister

\_\_\_\_\_ brother

\_\_\_\_\_ female friend

\_\_\_\_\_ male friend

\_\_\_\_\_ boyfriend/girlfriend

\_\_\_\_\_ fellow student

- \_\_\_\_\_ teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ boss
- \_\_\_\_\_ female stranger
- \_\_\_\_\_ male stranger
- \_\_\_\_\_ other (please list: \_\_\_\_\_ )

Now read the following 9 situations and write a response in the blank after “you”. The questions are meant to investigate how you respond to a compliment in the real world in your daily conversations.

1. You have given a presentation in an English class. After the presentation one of your classmates comes to you.  
Classmate: You did an excellent job! I really enjoyed your presentation.  
You: \_\_\_\_\_
2. You are a teacher at a language school. You have invited a group of students to your house for coffee and cake that you baked.  
Student: I didn't know you were such a good cook! This cake is delicious!  
You: \_\_\_\_\_
3. You work at an international company. After a business meeting with clients your boss approaches you.  
Boss: This jacket looks amazing on you!  
You: \_\_\_\_\_
4. You are a teaching assistant at a university department. One of your students approaches you after class.  
Student: Your boots are absolutely gorgeous! I wish they were mine!  
You: \_\_\_\_\_
5. You have just had your hair cut in a fashionable style and you bump into a friend in the street.  
Friend: That haircut makes you look great! You look a lot younger!  
You: \_\_\_\_\_
6. You started a computer course three months ago. At the end of a lesson your teacher comes up to you.  
Teacher: You seem to be very intelligent and you certainly have a flair for computers. And I have noticed that you show a lot of interest in what we do in the lessons.  
You: \_\_\_\_\_

7. You are wearing a new Rolex watch. You meet a friend at your office.  
Friend: Wow! What a nice watch! I wish I had one like that!  
You: \_\_\_\_\_
8. You have been appointed sales manager of a large department store recently. You are out of office with a group of colleagues. One of your employees says:  
Employee: You've got beautiful eyes.  
You: \_\_\_\_\_
9. The company you have just started working for has arranged an outing for employees. You arrive at the meeting point driving your father's Porsche. Your boss is surprised.  
Boss: Now that's a car! I wish I had one like that!  
You: \_\_\_\_\_

### **REAKCIJE NA KOMPLIMENTE – ANALIZA PRAGMATIČKE KOMPETENCIJE STUDENATA ENGLSKOG JEZIKA KAO STRANOG U SRBIJI**

#### *Rezime*

U radu se predstavljaju rezultati istraživanja reakcija na komplimente (RK) kod dve grupe ispitanika: studenata čiji je maternji jezik srpski i studenata engleskog jezika. Cilj rada je višestruk: (1) da se ustanove sličnosti i razlike u reakcijama na komplimente na srpskom i na engleskom jeziku, (2) da se istraži da li je (i u kojoj meri) reakcija na komplimente kod studenata engleskog jezika u skladu sa očekivanim reakcijama (izvornih govornika engleskog jezika), te (3) da se odredi da li se uočava pragmatički transfer. Analiza je zasnovana na podacima koji su prikupljeni pomoću testa nadopunjavanja diskursa, koji je obuhvatao devet situacija u kojima smo varirali vrednosti za promenljive situacionog okruženja i društvene moći. Rezultati istraživanja potvrđuju početnu hipotezu da će produkcija reakcija na komplimente kod studenata engleskog jezika na naprednom nivou biti veoma ograničena u pogledu raznovrsnosti mikrostrategija koje se koriste (kako za prihvatanje, tako i za izbegavanje komplimenta). Obe grupe ispitanika su najčešće koristile izražavanje zahvalnosti, dok je distribucija ostalih strategija prilično ograničena i gotovo u potpunosti se poklapa kod dve grupe ispitanika. Iz ovoga sledi da je pragmatička produkcija studenata engleskog jezika na naprednom nivou u potpunosti rezultat pragmatičkog transfera iz maternjeg jezika i da je na znatno nižem nivou u odnosu na opšti jezički razvoj ovih studenata.

Ključne reči: pragmatička kompetencija, reakcija na komplimente, studenti engleskog jezika kao stranog, međujezička pragmatika

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