

Politely Responding to Compliments in Chinese

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Just Saying “Thank you”

Just like in English, you can reply to a compliment simply by thanking the person for their kind words. The most direct and simple way is saying 谢谢, thank you.

You can also simply say:

(Zhēn de ma? Xièxie!)

真的吗? 谢谢!

Really? Thank you!

(Duōxiè kuājiǎng, wǒ huì jìxù nǔlì de.)

多谢夸奖, 我会继续努力的。

Thank you for the praise, I will continue to work hard.

e.g.

A: 你的衣服真好看! (Nǐ de yīfú zhēn hǎokàn!)

Your clothes are so beautiful!

B: 真的吗? 谢谢! (Zhēn de ma? Xièxie!)

Really? Thank you!

A: 做得好! (Zuò de hǎo!)

Good job!

B: 多谢夸奖, 我会继续努力的。(Duōxiè kuājiǎng, wǒ huì jìxù nǔlì de.)

Thank you for the praise, I will continue to work hard.

This kind of response is really common among younger people because it is casual and you don't have to pretend that it's not true.

Politely Denying It

As you might already know, modesty is an important part of Chinese culture. If someone pays you a compliment, it's the Chinese way to be humble. Instead of accepting the compliment, you should refuse it first!

Politely Denying It (I)

In a more formal setting, such as at work, you should use more official-sounding phrases:

(Bù gǎndāng.)

不敢当。

I don't deserve your praise

(Nǎlǐ nǎlǐ, wǒ hái chà de yuǎn.)

哪里哪里，我还差得远。

No no, I'm still really far off.

(Méiyǒu méiyǒu, dōu shì yùnqì.)

没有没有，都是运气。

No no, pure luck.

(Cánkuì cánkuì, hái yǒu jìnbù de kōngjiān.)

惭愧惭愧，还有进步的空间。

Ashamed, there is still space to get better.

(Hái bùgòu hǎo, xūyào jìxù nǔlì.)

还不够好，需要继续努力。

It's still not good enough. I need to keep working hard on it.

e.g.

A: 你是最好的医生! (Nǐ shì zuì hǎo de yīshēng!)

You are the best doctor!

B: 不敢当。(Bù gǎndāng.)

I don't deserve your praise

A: 你的汉语太好了! (Nǐ de hànyǔ tài hǎo le!)

Your Chinese is so good!

B: 还不够好，需要继续努力。(Hái bùgòu hǎo, xūyào jìxù nǔlì.)

It's still not good enough. I need to keep working hard on it.

A: 你的发音比中国人还好! (Nǐ de fǎ yīn bǐ zhōngguó rén hái hǎo!)

Your pronunciation is better than Chinese!

B: 哪里哪里，我还差得远。(Nǎlǐ nǎlǐ, wǒ hái chà de yuǎn.)

No no, I'm still really far off.

Politely Denying It (II)

There are also several casual phrases you can use to refuse a compliment, like:

(Nǎ yǒu!)

哪有!

Not at all!

(Hái xíng ba.)

还行吧。

It's alright.

(Hái chà de yuǎn ne.)

还差得远呢。

I'm still really far off.

(Wǒ méi nàme hǎo.)

我没那么好。

I'm not that good.

(Hāi! Yùnqì hǎo bàle.)

咳! 运气好罢了。

I'm just very lucky.

e.g.

A: 大家都说你很厉害! (Dàjiā dōu shuō nǐ hěn lìhài!)

Everyone says you are great!

B: 哪有! (Nǎ yǒu!)

Not at all!

A: 这次你表现得不错啊! (Zhè cì nǐ biǎoxiàn de bùcuò a!)

You performed well this time!

B: 还行吧。(Hái xíng ba.)

It's alright.

A: 恭喜你又赢了! (Gōngxǐ nǐ yòu yíng le!)

Congratulations on winning again!

B: 咳! 运气好罢了。(Hāi! Yùnqì hǎo bàle.)

I'm just very lucky.

Politely Denying It (III)

Another way to show modesty when receiving compliments is to say that they're just flattering you. These kinds of phrases focus mainly on the person giving you the compliment, instead of focusing on you. For example:

(Nǐ guòjiǎng le.)

你过奖了。

You flatter me.

(Nǐ guòyù le.)

你过誉了。

You're exaggerating.

(Nǐ tài kuāzhāng le.)

你太夸张了。

You're exaggerating too much

e.g.

A: 你真的太美了! (Nǐ zhēn de tài měi le!)

You are really so beautiful!

B: 你过奖了。(Nǐ guòjiǎng le.)

You flatter me.

A: 你怎么那么聪明! (Nǐ zěnmē nàme cōngmíng!)

Why are you so smart!

B: 你太夸张了。(Nǐ tài kuāzhāng le.)

You're exaggerating too much.

Returning the Compliment

If you'd like to accept the compliment, but don't want to focus only on yourself, you can repay their kindness by returning the compliment, just say:

(Nǐ yě bùcuò a!)

你也不错啊!

You are good too!

(Wǒ hái yào xiàng nǐ duō xuéxí.)

我还要向你多学习。

I still need to learn from you more.

e.g.

A: 你穿这身衣服美极了! (Nǐ chuān zhè shēn yīfu měi jíle!)

You look beautiful in this dress!

B: 你也不错啊! (Nǐ yě bùcuò a!)

You look good too!

A: 你的演讲精彩极了! (Nǐ de yǎnjiǎng jīngcǎi jíle!)

Your speech is wonderful!

B: 我还要向你多学习。(Wǒ hái yào xiàng nǐ duō xuéxí.)

I still need to learn from you more.

Sharing the Credit

Another way to accept a compliment and still be humble is sharing the credit with others. These slightly more advanced responses are extremely useful in business contexts and truly show your appreciation for those who help you.

多亏了 XX。

Thanks to XX.

e.g.

A: 你又是第一名，真优秀! (Nǐ yòu shì dì yī míng, zhēn yōuxiù!)

You take the first place again, so outstanding!

B: 多亏了王老师。(Duō kuī le Wáng lǎoshī)

Thanks to teacher Wang.

这是大家的功劳。

The credit belongs to all of us.

e.g.

A: 恭喜你又赢了，真棒! (Gōngxǐ nǐ yòu yíngle, zhēn bàng!)

Congratulations, you won again. Awesome!

B: 这是大家的功劳。(Zhè shì dàjiā de gōngláo.)

The credit belongs to all of us.

是 XX+Verb+得好



是 XX 教得好。

It's just because XX taught really well.

e.g.

是老师教得好。(Shì lǎoshī jiāo de hǎo.)

It's just because teacher taught really well.

是 XX 配合得好。

It's just because XX contributed so much.

e.g.

是同事配合得好。(Shì tóngshì pèihé de hǎo.)

It's just because the coworkers contributed so much.

是 XX 领导得好。

It's just that XX lead really well.

e.g.

是经理领导得好。(Shì jīnglǐ lǐngdǎo de hǎo.)

It's just that the manager lead really well.

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