A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION OF
(IM) POLITENESS USED IN COMPLAINT BY INDONESIAN
EFL STUDENTS

PUBLICATION ARTICLE

Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Getting Bachelor Degree of Education
in Department of English Education

Proposed by:
ENI RATNAWINATA
A 320100106

SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA
2014
Surat Persetujuan Artikel Publikasi Ilmiah

Yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini pembimbing skripsi/tugas akhir:
Nama : Agus Wijayanto, Ph. D (Pembimbing I)
NIK : 978
Nama : Dra. Siti Zuhriah Aryatmi, M.Hum (Pembimbing II)
NIK : 225

Telah membaca dan mencermati naskah artikel publikasi ilmiah, yang merupakan ringkasan skripsi (tugas akhir) dari mahasiswa:
Nama : Eni Ratnawinata
NIM : A320100106
Judul Skripsi : A Cross Sectional Study On The Perception Of (Im) Politeness Used In Complaint By Indonesian EFL Students

Naskah artikel tersebut layak dan dapat disetujui untuk dipublikasikan.
Demikian persetujuan ini dibuat, semoga dapat dipergunakan sepernya.

Surakarta, 29 Maret 2014

Pembimbing II

[Signature]
Dra. Siti Zuhriah Aryatmi, M. Hum
NIK. 225

Pembimbing I

[Signature]
Agus Wijayanto, Ph. D
NIK. 978
A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION OF (IM) POLITENESS USED IN COMPLAINT BY INDONESIAN EFL STUDENTS

by

English Department, A320100106
Email: aini.winata@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research is a cross sectional study that describe the perception of (im) politeness among three groups of level and between gender used in complaint by Indonesian EFL students with their reasons to judge (im) politeness. The aim of this study are to describe the perception of (im) politeness used in complaint among three groups of Indonesian EFL students and based on different gender and to explain the reasons provided by Indonesian EFL students to judge (im) politeness used in complaint. The study uses the descriptive qualitative research and cross sectional study approach in which the research participant were one hundred and fifty Indonesian EFL students in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. The data were the perception of (im) politeness used in complaint which represented in form of scale very polite, polite, impolite, very impolite and not sure. The writer employed documentation and questionnaire form of DCT (Discourse Completion Taks) scenarios in taking the data. The subject of this research were taken using proportional random sampling technique consisting seventy five male and seventy five female participants. They also consist of three group of students which are third semester, fifth semester and seventh semester. The writer analyzed the data by using complaint theory by Trosborg (1995), politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) and impoliteness theory by Culpeper (2010).

The research finding shows that there were different perception of (im) politeness used in complaint among three groups of level. SS as group who had higher level of study had better understanding about (im) politeness used in complaint than others groups (TS and FS). Furthermore, most of the participants regarded that indirect complaint as polite while direct complaint considered as impolite. The difference perception of (im) politeness used in complaint also happened between male and female. Female had better perception of (im) politeness on complaint than male because in most of DCT, female have more confidence to judge whether a complaint polite or impolite. While, male prefer to not judge the level of politeness a complaint. The writer found fourteen reasons to judge (im) politeness provided by Indonesian EFL students. They were word choice as 19%, complaint strategies used by complainer as 17.7%, habitual action as 16.4%, distance as 15.3%, intonation as 13.3%, type of sentences as 4.4%, modal as 2.5%, culture as 2.2%, emotion as 1.27%, right as 1.7%, attention getter as 1.2%, punctuation mark as 0.8%, condition or context as 0.2%, and gender as 0.1%. In some cases, there were found some of students who used more than one strategies to judge whether a complaint polite or impolite.

Keyword: A Cross Sectional Study, Perception, Complaint, (Im) politeness.
A. Introduction

In communication, how the listener catches the meaning or the goal of the speaker is called pragmatics (Yule, 1998: 3). According to Levinson (1983:9) pragmatics is the study of relations between language and context that are relevant to the writing.

Speech act is action performed via utterance which are generally called ‘speech’ and in English are commonly given more specific lables, such as apology, complaint, promise, or request (Yule, 1998:47). According to Leech in Trosborg (1995: 312) the complaint is a representative of the conflictive function, which includes acts accusing, cursing, and reprimanding. Complaint is interesting topic because there are many researches that discussed about this topic with the different focus which can not mention one by one.

Politeness can be defined as showing awareness of and consideration for another person’s face (Yule, 2006:119). If the speaker says something that represents a threat to another person’s self-image that is called a face threatening act. The opposite of politeness is impoliteness. According to Culpeper (2010) impoliteness is a negative attitude towards specific behaviors occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, desires and/or beliefs about social organization, including in particular, how one person’s or group’s identities are mediated by others in interaction.
Every person has different perception in complaining. They can say politely and impolitely to the same utterances. The researcher conduct the further research about complaint because the researcher is interested in continuing the study of Wijayanto (2012) in pragmalinguistic and sociolinguistic especially in complaint. Wijayanto (2012) discussed about Politeness strategy in complaint relating to the different status level and social distances. This research is expanding the perception of politeness and impoliteness of Indonesian EFL learners in different level of study and gender to make complaint. Then, it also classified various kinds of reasons provided by participants to judge (im) politeness used in complaint.

This study is a cross sectional study of the three level of study in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. The data of this research come from three groups of Indonesian EFL students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. They were one hundred and fifty Indonesian EFL students in the third, fifth and seventh semester of English department who are registered since 2012. This research focuses on the perception of (im) politeness used in complaint by Indonesian EFL learner. The researcher interested to this topic because the society assumed that level or education background and gender was influenced to the way of complaint and what complaint strategies are used by them.

B. Research Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative because the writer describes the perception of (im) politeness used in complaint by
Indonesian EFL students. This research also uses a cross sectional study approach which participant are the third, fifth and seventh semester of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta.

The subject of the study are one hundred and fifty Indonesian EFL learners in the third, fifth and seventh semester of English department who are registered since 2012, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. The object of this research is perception of (im) politeness based on background knowledge and gender used in complaint by Indonesian EFL learner and the reason provided by Indonesian EFL learner in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta to judge (im) politeness used in complaint.

The data of the research are perception of (im) politeness used in complaint by Indonesian EFL students in UMS which are represented in the form of scale very polite, polite, impolite, very impolite and not sure. The data source of the research are the answer of questionnaire contain complaint utterances. In collecting data the researcher employed documentations and questionnaire. The documentation is the data containing complaint act selected by Wijayanto. The questionnaire is in form of discourse completion task (DCT) consisting nine scripted situations.

In analyzing the data, the writer analyze based on language form. They are (1) calculating the responses of the participants to the complaint utterances. How many were very polite, polite, impolite, and very impolite
or they don’t know. (2) Compare the data of the perception of politeness among three groups of Indonesian EFL students in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. (3) Compare the data of the perception of politeness between male and female of Indonesian EFL students in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. (4) Describing the reason provided by Indonesian EFL students to judge (im) politeness used in complaint.

C. Research Finding and Discussion

According to the nine DCT in data analysis, the writer found the slightly different perception of (im) politeness among three groups of level in 14 from 18 tables of nine DCTs. The writer also found level of education or background knowledge is influenced to their perception of (im) politeness on complaint. It could be seen in the last choice provided by the writer. TS who have the lowest level of study have the highest frequency in most of DCT’s. Afterwards, SS who has the highest level of study often has lowest frequency than others.

They were word choice as 19%, complaint strategies used by complainer as 17.7%, habitual action as 16.4%, distance as 15.3%, intonation as 13.3%, type of sentences as 4.4%, modal as 2.5%, culture as 2.2%, emotion as 1.27%, right as 1.7%, attention getter as 1.2%, punctuation mark as 0.8%, condition or context as 0.2%, and gender as 0.1%. In some cases, there were found some of students who used more than one strategies to judge whether a complaint polite or impolite.
From the eighteen charts of nine DCTs above, the writer has strong evidence to state male and female have different perception of (im) politeness in complaint. It causes fifteen of eighteen charts showed that they are different. Mostly, charts above indicate female has lower percentage in not sure answer. It means female often confident to judge whether those complaints polite or impolite. From these reasons, the writer assumed that female has better understanding about (im) politeness on complaint than male.

In indirect complaint, both male and female often frequently considered these complaints as polite. It could be seen in seven of nine charts of each DCTs showed such was the case. Furthermore, the writer has not enough evidence to said that direct complaint as impolite answer. It caused five of nine charts showed most of participants regarded direct complaint as polite.

In discussion, the writer discuss research finding related to the some of theory and previous study. Level here means the different semester of three groups of students as TS, FS and SS. Normally, the knowledge of students increased as their time to study. It means higher level of study influenced to the student’s perception of (im) politeness. SS should be had better understanding about (im) politeness than both FS and TS. It caused SS have information and practice experience about the theory more than others. Therefore, level of knowledge influenced to the perception of (im) politeness.
The writer gave two kinds of complaint in each DCT which opposite. They were indirect and direct. The first sentence was indirect complaint which regarded as the polite one, while direct complaint was considered as the impolite. It related to the Leech theory in Culpeper (2003) said that indirect utterances tend to more polite. The second complaint was direct complaint as the impolite. The perception difference also found in DCT 3, DCT 4, DCT 6 and DCT 7 although in other DCT they mostly thin different. In other, the not sure frequencies indicated the same fact. In addition, the level of study reflected to the perception of (im) politeness. It proved by the frequency of not sure answer. Students who had higher level of study had lowest frequency.

Based on the previous chapter, the writer found many various reasons to judge (im) politeness used by Indonesian EFL students. They were word choice, complaint strategies that used by complainer, type of sentences, right, intonation, habitual action, relation (distance), culture, punctuation mark, gender, condition or context, modal, emotion, attention getter. Most of students judged a sentence polite or impolite based on the complaint strategy that used by the complainer. It was initiated by Trosborg (1995).

The writer divided into two sections. The first polite and the second was impolite. In polite, The reasons was most popular was word choice. Complaint utterances which has appropriate word choice and did not use any rude words such swearing, mocking, taboo etc. considered as the polite complaint, for examples, *Sangat menjaga bicara kotor.* (Do not use
mocking word) (A.1/SM3/13/F). The second is strategy that used by the speaker. For examples, “Karena sangat mungkin tanpa bertanya “why happen” saya langsung memarahinya. Mungkin dengan langsung tanpa bertele-tele lagi. Jadi kata “why happen” itu sangat sopan.” (Because it was possible without ask “why happen” I would angry directly. The sentence would be directly without any platitude. So, the sentence “why happen” was very polite) (A.1/SM7/15/F).

The other reason which used to judge politeness was type of sentence. Interrogative sentence regarded as the polite complaint, while imperative was considered as the impolite one. For examples, “Termasuk kalimat tanya. Jadi sopan-sopan saja”. (It as an interrogative sentence, so it is polite) (A.1/SM3/09/M). The intonation to pronounce utterances influenced to the level of politeness. It was appeared in the most of answer. Low intonation used deemed as the polite one, examples, “Tidak membentak” (Do not yell or shout) (A.1/SM3/14/M).

Relation of Interlocutor or Distance was reflected to the politeness. Close relation did not need more polite complaint, for examples, “Karena lawan bicaranya adalah adik dan tidak ada bahasa yang kasar dalam kalimat tersebut”. (Because the complainee was her younger brother and the language that used was not rude) (B.1/SM7/04/M). This reason appeared in nine DCT with various relations. The examples above drew the close-familiar relationship. It also found in DCT 8, for examples, Untuk orang yang tidak di kenal bahasa tersebut sudah sopan. (It was polite language to
the unfamiliar person) (H.1/SM7/20/F). The relation of interlocutor of the second sentences was unfamiliar-distance.

Intonation or pitch of the way utterances pronounced also include as the factor to make judgments. It was initiated the theory of Culpeper (2003) said that pitch operates as part of a conventionalized linguistic system (intonational phonology), and also paralinguistically to express, for examples speaker emotion. Low intonations tend to be more polite than high intonation. This factor was often appearing as the reason in judgments. For examples, “Tidak membentak” (Do not yell or shout) (A.1/SM3/14/M). Yell or snarl usually used high intonation so, the example above used low intonation because it did not yelled. This reasons happened frequently in each DCT.

The modal were considered as the reasons in judgments. It not only found in DCT 4, but also DCT 8 and DCT 9, examples:

*Karena menggunakan would* (Because it used modal “would”) (H.1/SM3/05/M).
*Menggunakan kata-kata could.* (It used the words could) (I.1/SM5/06/M)

The using of modal such would, could, can tend to be polite. It was rule of English that request or complaint which used modal regarded as polite. It was the rare reason provided by Indonesians EFL students.

Different genders include the factor reflected to level of politeness. Male and female had different language. As Mills (2005: 276) said that judgements are influenced by stereotypes of, among other thing, what is perceived to be gender appropriate. It was mostly rarely factor because it
just found in DCT 4. The words that used by male tend to be more rude that
female, for examples, *Karena menggambarkan situasi di kost pria, “are you
crazy” merupakan kalimat yang biasa digunakan dalam candaan para pria.*
(Because it had drawn in the male boarding house, “Are you crazy” was the
sentence used to male in their language) *(D.1/SM7/13/F)*

Habitual action was something which common in a society. They
always has rule due to follow everyone in that place. Complaint sentence
that used as the usual in a place considered as the polite complaint. Some of
students perceived it was one of factor to make judgments. It always
appeared in each DCT, examples:

Wajar. *(It was common)* *(A.1/SM5/13/F)*
*Sudah sewajaran dengan ayah sopan.* *(It was common
complaint to father)* *(C.1/SM5/01/F)*

The next reason which is given by participants was right. It was rare
factor because it just found in DCT 1, DCT 3 and DCT 4. The term right
here was the right of complainer to do complaint because of the interlocutor
act, for examples *Karena saya berhak komplain.* *(Because the complainer
had right to complaint)* *(D.2/SM5/07/M)*.

Culture of a society as identity a place should be maintained. The
participants were Javanese (one of ethnic group of Indonesia) which has
concepts of Javanese culture. As Sukarno (2010:59) stated that it is
impossible to conduct politeness in Javanese without comprehending and
applying Javanese concept culture. A person who did not keep culture in a
society would be reminding by thers. It found in some DCT 7, for examples,
Karena dia tidak mengantri. (Because the hearer did not queue) (G.1/SM5/07/M). Queue included as culture of Javanese, so it was polite if the complainee did not keep the culture.

Emotion of complainer can be seen of the sentence. It became the next reason provided by Indonesian EFL students. It occurred in some DCT, for examples, Menujukkan emosi. (It showed emotion) (A.2/SM7/17/M). Then condition or context also found as the reasons. It realized by Brown and Levinson (1987) context is crucial to politeness. For examples, Karena laporan tersebut sangat penting, maka saya rasa kalimat itu pantas diucapkan. (Because the report was important so it was polite) (E.2/SM5/04/F). It was polite complaint because it occurred in the rush condition. The last factor found was attention getter.

The using of attention getter such Miss, Sir etc indicated it was polite, for examples Ada kata sapaan Miss (There was attention getter miss) (F.1/SM3/04/M). It was conveyed by Pratiwi (2013) that attention getter used to open conversation and to soften conversation.

The impolite factors which found had more or less similar to the polite one. They were word choice, strategy of complainer, type of sentence, emotion, right, intonation, habitual action, and relation of interlocutor or distance, culture, condition or context, modal, gender, attention getter. The reasons to judge impoliteness was opposite of the reasons to judge politeness. For example word choice, the using of the soft or refine word as
the reason to judge politeness so the using of rude words was factors to make impolite judgments.

In impolite data, the writer found punctuation mark as the reasons impoliteness judgments which not found in polite factors. It indicated the speaker way to complaint. The type of punctuation mark such exclamatory mark, question mark implied the level of politeness. Exclamatory mark showed imperative sentence which usually utter impolitely. The using of question marker tends to be polite because it indicated the sentence was interrogative sentence which uttered politely. The examples, *Memakai tanda seru* (It used exclamatory mark) *(G.1/SM3/13/F)*.

The writer found the different perception on complaint between male and female. It related to the previous research by Sukyadi (2011) that there is a different between man and woman in proposing the complaining speech act. The writer also found unique data. Some of students use two or more reasons, for examples “*Terkesan menuduh. Mendingan memakai kata-kata how could this happened.*” (It was accused. It would better to use the words “how could this happened”) *(A.1/SM5/19/M) (Direct accusation)*. It used two reasons, the first is the strategy to complaint which the speaker used direct accusation. The second was the word choice, the complainer suggests to used polite word such “how could this happened”.

**D. Conclusion**

According to the research finding and discussion of the research, the writer derived some interesting data. The writer obtained that level of study
or background of study had perception of (im) politeness differently. The student which had higher level of study had better understanding than other. Different gender claimed had different perception of (im) politeness on complaint. Female had better understanding about (im) politeness than complaint because female who given not sure answer had lower frequency than male in most DCT.

Various reasons were founded in this research. They were 14 reasons of the participants. The first word choice, the using rude word as impolite and the using of refined words as the polite. The second was complaint strategies that used by the complainer. Accusation was the mostly happened in each DCT both direct accusation and indirect accusation.

The third was gender in which the male tend to be impolite than female. The type of sentence also reflected to the (im) politeness. The imperative sentence regarded as the impolite and the interrogative sentence as the polite one. The emotion of the complainer in certain situation influenced to the perception. Angry usually emerged impolite sentence but it considered as the polite one as the of the complainer act. Right to complain after got violence of hearer becomes the rare reason in this research.

The relation or well known social distance also affected to (im) politeness. There were many relations found here such close-familiar, lower-familiar which not need polite complaint, equal-familiar, higher-familiar and higher-unfamiliar need polite complaint. The using of the
common words which became habitual action often appeared as the factor to do judgment.

The perception of (im) politeness also influenced by the culture of Javanese people, punctuation mark such exclamatory mark (!) and question mark (?), attention getter such miss, sir etc, condition or context. The next were intonation in which low intonation deemed as the polite one and high intonation as the impolite one and the last was the using of modal such can, could, would in sentence reflected the perception of the participants. The detail number of the reasons were word choice as 19%, complaint strategies used by complainer as 17.7%, habitual action as 16.4%, distance as 15.3%, intonation as 13.3%, type of sentences as 4.4%, modal as 2.5%, culture as 2.2%, emotion as 1.27%, right as 1.7%, attention getter as 1.2%, punctuation mark as 0.8%, condition or context as 0.2%, and gender as 0.1%. In some cases, there were found some of students who used more than one strategies to judge whether a complaint polite or impolite.
Astika, Dheftya Cahya. 2013. Complaint Strategies Used By Indonesian EFL Learnars In Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta Viewed in From Social Distance, Status and Gender. Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta.


Maros, Marlyana. 2007. The Social Function of Complaint in a Malay Speech Community.


Sukarno, 2010.*The Reflection of the Cultural Concepts in the Politeness of Javanese*. Volume 12, Number 1


VIRTUAL REFERENCES