

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Communication is most productive when people understand and respect each other's styles and ideas. In communication, language is a tool for doing things. People use language to ask questions, request favors, make comments, report news, give directions, offer greetings, and perform hundreds of other ordinary verbal actions in daily life. In face-to-face conversations, telephone calls, interviews, notes scribbled to friends and a multitude of other speech events; which performs verbal of different types. Actions that are carried out through language are called speech act, which concentrates on Semantics (Finegan, Besnier, Blair, and Collins, Language and It's Structure, 1990).

Searle has concentrated his work on speech act on how a hearer perceives a particular utterance to have the force it has, what he calls the 'uptake' of an utterance. In the same way, speech acts are what they are because saying something counts as something if certain conditions prevail. As Schiffrin (1994) says, 'Language can do things – can perform acts – because people share constitutive rules that create the acts and that allow them to label utterances as particular kinds of acts'.

In contrast to Austin, who focused his attention on how speakers realize their intention in speaking, Searle focused on how listeners

respond to utterances, that is, how one person tries to figure out how another is using particular utterance. Is what is heard a promise, a warning, an assertion, a request, or something else? In both perception of Austin and Searle is recognition that people use language to achieve a variety objectives. The way in understanding what they hope to accomplish is that preparing to take into account factors that range far beyond the actual linguistic form of any particular utterance. A speaker's intent is also important, as the social circumstances and gender apparently determined that. In this case, gender is not just a synonym for sex but it also the term to describe socially constructed categories based on sex (Coates, 1993).

Cameron in 1992 indicates that gender specific linguistic differences lead to gender specific conversational strategies. Keeping in mind that linguistic exchange is the result of the relationship between interlocutors, and males and females have disparate social statuses, conversational patterns between males and females have been found to reflect social inequalities existing between them (Stern, 1994).

Wilson and Gallois' (1993) study revealed the gender differences in communication. They define assertiveness, where men tend to use power and control of others whereas women tend to offer compromises and suggestions. According to Mind (2000), assertiveness is an attitude and a way of relating to the outside world, backed up by a set of skills for effective communication. Assertiveness was found to be the most often

defined as involving self-expression. Other common themes were directly and honestly stating one's views, defending one's rights, using competent forms of communication, making strong statements and open expression of a contradictory point of view.

Assertive behavior involves standing up for personal rights and expressing thoughts, feelings and beliefs in direct, honest, and appropriate ways which do not violate another person's rights. The characteristics of an assertive person are confident, independent, honest, and open. He/she evaluates the situation before acting on it and respects others with whom she/he is in contact with, not out to win every conversation, fair to one's self and others, willing to make compromises (Mc Carron, 1999).

In this respect, this study investigated the language use of assertiveness among male and female students in the context of Indonesia. It was aimed to find out assertiveness realization in the speech of male and female, the differences and the factors beneath the realization of assertiveness by male and female. It is expected that this study would reinforce previous studies on the subject and contribute to the material development of pragmatics, sociolinguistics, cross-cultural understanding, and English teaching in general.

1.2. Problems of The Study

The study is guided by the following questions:

1. How is assertiveness realized in the context of giving opinions by Indonesians learning English as a foreign language?
2. How does gender contribute to such realization?
3. What are the factors beneath the realization of assertiveness by male and female?

1.3. Aims of The Study

The study is aimed to:

1. find out how assertiveness is realized in the context of giving opinions by Indonesians Learning English as a Foreign Language;
2. find out the gender contribution to such realization; and
3. find out the factors beneath the realization of assertiveness by male and female.

1.4. Method of Investigation

The present study is qualitative. The study was conducted at The English Education Department of Indonesia University of Education. The respondents were 24 English students year 2002 involving 12 males and 12 females. They were chosen based on judgment sampling method

because the data were viewed to have linguistic and communicative competence (Milroy 1987).

Two different procedures employed in collecting data for this study were questionnaires and interview. The questionnaire, which is in the form of Discourse Completion Test (DCT), contains a number of situations. For every situation, the respondents filled in the blank space that requires them to express their opinion.

Another procedure was interviewing selected respondents. The interview was conducted in respondents' first language, that is Bahasa Indonesia, to make them more comfortable in expressing their ideas or opinion towards the questions in the interview.

1.5. Procedures of The Study

The writer conducted the study based on the following procedures:

1.5.1 Collecting data

To achieve the goal of this study, the writer conducted the study by administrating questionnaires and interviewing the respondents. In addition, the questions were made in various types.

1.5.2 Analyzing data

Data from questionnaires and interviews were identified, categorized, and analyzed into tables according to gender of the respondents.

1.5.3 Interpreting data

The data from male and female groups were compared to the assertiveness language in order to have the result, which were then followed by descriptions and also supported by figures.

1.6 Organization of The Paper

This paper is organized into five chapters:

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This section contains introduction that discusses background of the study, problems of the study, aims of the study, and methods of investigation, population and sample, organization of the paper.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Chapter two contains theoretical foundation, which serves as a basis for investigating the problems of the study.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

It contains method of the study, population and sample, data collection, and data analysis.

CHAPTER 4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter reports the data. The data gained from questionnaires and interviews will be presented in the form of the table and diagram. The data then are identified, categorized, and analyzed according to the gender of respondents.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

It contains conclusions of this study and suggestions for further study.

