

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Introduction

The present study focuses on the language use of assertiveness among male and female respondents. It is inspired by the study on speech acts in Indonesian society (Aziz 2000) and assertiveness language proposed by Hermes (1999). The aim of this present study was to investigate the assertiveness in male and female language of Indonesians learning English as a foreign language. Therefore, the questions established for the purpose of the investigation were as follows:

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?

Answers to the research questions have been given in the previous chapter. This chapter sums up the findings of the study and points out the relevant implications of these findings.

5.2 Major Findings of The Study

The study was designed to investigate the assertiveness in male and female language of EFL Learners' when they are confronted with the situations that force them to give opinions.

5.2.1 The Realizations of Assertiveness in Giving Opinions

Previous studies on speech acts in Indonesians' society (for example Aziz 2000) verify directness and indirectness as basic norm in Indonesians' speech act. In this sense, directness is in line with assertiveness behavior, which proposed by Hermes (1999).

This study revealed six strategies of assertiveness responses in giving opinions. The six strategies classified following Hermes (1999), such as: "I" statement, statement of personal reference and personal meaning, statement of request, statement offering compromise, asking for clarification instead assuming, and broken records.

The present study found that the most frequently used strategy is statement of request, with rate of recurrence 69 of 208 utterances (33,17%). The second rank is occupied by asking for clarification instead assuming, with the occurrences 42 of 208 utterances (20,20%). The third is "I" statement, with frequency 41 of 208 utterances (19,71%). The fourth rank is occupied by statement offering compromise with frequency 40 of 208 utterances (19,23%). The fifth is

statement of personal reference and personal meaning, with rate of recurrence 9 of 208 utterances (4,33%). And the last, the least used strategy is broken records, with rate 7 of 208 utterances (3,36%).

5.2.2 Influence of Social Variables

Social variables involved in the present study are social distance (D) between a speaker and hearer, relative power (P) of a speaker over a hearer, and ranking of imposition (R) involved in giving opinions.

These social variables influenced the realizations of assertiveness. Yet, the influence is not dominant. These three social variables were interrelated to each other, in the sense that one social variable needs at least another social variable to affect the respondents' realizations of assertiveness.

In D-close and D-distant situations, the most frequently used strategy is statements of request. Meanwhile, in D-casual situation, the most frequently used strategy is "I" statements. In this situation, respondents hesitated to express their thought honestly and directly. Also, the speakers are able to establish good relationship with others

In P-high situations, the most often used strategy is statement of request, while in P-low situations, the most frequently used strategies are "I" statements and asking for clarification. Uses of asking for

clarification strategy in P-low situations are knowledgeable, in the sense that the speakers tried to avoid stating “negative” assertion by using something said by allusion in order to teases the hearers. Mostly male respondents use statements of requests in P-equal and P-high situations. In this case, male used their status as powerful people by giving orders just to maintain their dominance.

In R-low and R-high situations, the most frequent strategy is statements of request. Meanwhile, in R-equal, the most frequently used strategy is “I” statements. Uses of “I” statements in R-equal situations may indicate speakers’ hesitance in expressing honest feeling.

5.2.3 Gender Contribution to Such Realization

The present study attempted to reveal gender contribution to such gender realizations given by the respondents in relation to the contextual variables on which a situation is set. As explained in previous chapter, the respondents of the study were equal to gender, that was 12 male and 12 female respondents.

The distribution of male responses, of the total 94 of 208 responses (45,19%) appeared to the DCT. The most frequently used strategy is statement of request, which holds 39 utterances (41,49%).

On the other hand, the least frequently used strategy is broken records, with 5 responses (5,32%).

The distribution of female responses is surprisingly more than male responses with occur 114 of 208 responses (54,81%). The strategy that most appeared in DCT is statement of request with the frequency 30 responses (26,32%). Similar to the male respondents, the least used strategy is broken records, with 2 responses (1,75%). These findings signify that females are more likely assertive than males.

When communicating to an interlocutor of the same gender, in this case, male-to-male communication, particularly in giving opinions, males tend to place the conversation on relationships and intimacy. A fact found from the present study is that male mostly used asking for clarification instead of assuming strategies with frequency 6 of 9 responses in situation #1 (asking opinion about new hairstyles).

Similar with male-to-male conversation, because of the emphasis that women and girls place on relationship and intimacy, women create feelings of closeness by conversing in female-to-female communications. Female respondents mostly used statement of request and "I" statement in situation #6 (disturbing your reading time). Female respondents revealed assertiveness strategies to reduce the force of an utterance.

Mixed-gender conversations are considered by some as cross-culture in the nature, with men and women speaking different genderlects (Tannen, 1990, 1992, 1994). In this case, the frequency of using assertiveness strategies is found more in male-to-female than male-to-male communication with 33 utterances which holds 20 responses in situation #4 (having a look your girlfriend in disgraceful dress) and 13 utterances in situation #6 (disturbing your reading time). From both situations, most male respondents used statement of request. On the other hand, the percentage of using assertiveness strategies in female-to-male communication is 33 utterances. When communicating with male interlocutor, females tend to use asking for clarification strategy in situation #1 (asking opinion about new hairstyles).

With regard to the use of assertiveness strategies, result of present study revealed that both male and female express assertiveness differently.

5.2.3 Factors beneath the Realizations of Assertiveness

Factors beneath the realization of assertiveness include the social variables. Social variables involved in the present study are social distance (D), relative power (P), ranking of imposition (R), and absolute the weightiness (Wx) between the speaker and the hearer in

giving opinions. The greater influences in the realization of assertiveness are social distance (D), relative power (P), ranking of imposition (R). Therefore, the writer only explained D, P, R factors.

The present study disclosed that these social variables, to a certain extent, influence the realizations of assertiveness. Yet, the influence is not dominant. These three social variables are interrelated to each other, in the sense that one social variable needs at least another social variable to affect the respondents' realizations of assertiveness.

In the D-close and D-distant situations, the most frequently used strategy is statement of request with the occurrences 36,37% and 38,64%. When the social distance is casual, the respondents used strategy mostly is "I" statement with the occurrence 27,27%.

In P-equal and P-high situations, the most often used strategy is statement of request which holds 36,47% and 42,62% occurrences. While in the P-low situations, the most frequently used strategy is "I" statement and asking for clarification with same result, that is 20,97% occurrences.

In R-low and R-high situations, the most frequent strategy is statement of request with 36,37% and 38,57% occurrences. On the other hand, R-middle interlocutor used assertiveness strategy less than R-low and R-high interlocutors with occurrences 30,77%.

5.3 Conclusions

1. EFL learners realized assertiveness in six strategies: "I" statement, statement of personal reference and personal meaning, statement of request, statement offering compromise, asking for clarification instead assuming, and broken records. The most frequently used strategy is statement of request. These findings suggest that respondents' realizations of assertiveness are similar with those theories of assertiveness, which proposed by Hermes (1999).
2. Realizations of each strategy by respondents have different implications towards the hearer. These were to some extent, influenced by three factors which are interrelated to each other: 1) social distance (D), 2) relative power (P), and 3) ranking of imposition (R). Data shows that the influence of social variables is not consistent. Data shows that social distance appears to be more influential than hearer's power and ranking of imposition. These findings suggest that the closer the distance between communicants is the higher the use of assertiveness strategies will be. On the other hand, P-high does not always give respondents the chance to use assertiveness strategies, or R-high is not always a guarantee that the respondents will use assertiveness strategies. From this framework of thinking, the inconsistent pattern indicates the respondents' inability to assert appropriately based on the contexts.

3. Data show that 33,17% (or 69 of 208 utterances) of respondents' responses was classified into statement of request strategy. Most males used this strategy, which holds 39 of 69 utterances than female responses with the frequency 30 of 69 utterances. These findings suggest that males more often attain higher leadership position than females do. Male give orders just to maintain their dominance, status, and power. Meanwhile, females' communicating is more egalitarian.
4. The distribution of female responses surpasses the male responses with occurs 94 of 208 male responses (45,09%) and 114 of 208 female responses (54,81%). These findings indicate that females are likely more assertive than males.

5.4 Pedagogical Implication

Use of appropriate utterances is fundamental for a communication to run smoothly and harmoniously. This is especially important in an interpersonal communication, which involves people from different cultural backgrounds, who have limited understanding of the other's norms and values.

As the findings in the present study have indicated, EFL learners tend to use more statement of request strategy to show assertiveness. The respondents used assertiveness in order to reduce the force of the utterance. The result of present study revealed that both women and men are assertive

but they express assertiveness differently. From the data, it can be concluded that females are more likely assertive than males.

Consequently, integrating the two aspects of language are needed in the English teaching and learning, such as formal and social aspects. In this sense, pragmatic competence needs to be taken into account in English teaching and learning in schools and universities. While mastery of grammar will enable to EFL learners to produce grammatical correct sentences.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This study has investigated the patterns of assertiveness responses in giving opinions performed by Indonesians learning English as a foreign language. The obvious weakness of the study lies on the instruments for data collection. The instruments used in this study were DCT and interview. Although these two are not ideal instruments for linguistic research, they were employed on the basis of practicality, concerning the time and the fact that the speech act being studied may not occur naturally very often. Yet, naturally occurring data are still the most ideal ones. These kinds of data can be obtained by observation combined with note taking and or taping. If DCT is still favorable to be used, there is necessity to test the instrument in a wider pilot study in order to see the validity and readability of the instrument.

Furthermore, further research may extend the area of investigation. While the present study focuses on the realizations of assertiveness responses in giving opinions, future studies can take the realizations of assertiveness responses to other types of speech acts such as commissives: promises, pledges, threats and vows.

