

# CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

In conducting this study, I was inspired by Holmes (1995) who says that there are differences of speaking styles between men and women. Holmes discovered that women tend to be more polite than men in the way they speak. I was interested in investigating the realizations of complaining acts among EFL students in Indonesia. I was curious to discover whether there are such similar differences in speaking styles between male students and female students.

This study aims to describe the differences of men and women's realizations in complaining acts. This research was expected to spawn new findings in terms of the social stereotypes between men and women. The questions posed for the purpose of the investigation are as follows:

1. What are the realizations of complaining between Indonesian EFL male and female learners?
2. What aspects of gender effect the differences of complaining acts between Indonesian EFL male and female learners?

The answers to the research questions have been given in the previous chapter. This chapter summarizes the findings of the study and presents the relevant implications of these findings.

## **5.2 Major Findings of The Study**

The study is designed to investigate the speech act differences between men and women, especially when they are confronted with complaint situations that force them to convey complaints.

### **5.2.1. Realizations of Speech Act of Complaining between Men and Women.**

Forty EFL learners were chosen for my subjects where they were confronted with three complaint situations. The study revealed that EFL learners used eight complaint strategies classified as following Trosborg (1994): Hints, Annoyances, Ill Consequences, Indirect Accusation, Direct Accusation, Modified Blame, Explicit Blame (Behavior), and Explicit Blame (Person).

The present study found that there are different strategies used between men and women in the complaining speech act. In men's findings, the most often used strategy was Direct Accusation, with rate of occurrence 48 of 120 utterances (40%) while in women's utterances, the most often used strategy was Indirect Accusation, with a rate of occurrences 39 of 120 utterances (32.50%).

This study found that Direct Accusations were the most frequently preferred strategy used by men to express complaining speech acts. Men used 48.33% direct accusations to men and 31.67% to women. In addition to the Direct Accusations, Indirect Accusations were also favorite ways for men to complain. It was shown that the second rank 18.38% of men's utterances also comprised indirect accusations to complain to men and 30% to women. It was concluded that men chose softer ways to complain if they want to complain to a different gender.

Women were reported to have an opposite result. Women used Indirect Accusation the most. Women used 35% of indirect accusations when they expressed complaints to women, while when they expressed them to men, it amounted to 30%. Direct Accusations were in the second rank as favorite complaint strategies. The study showed that 16.67% of women used direct accusations when they complained to the same gender and it amounted to 25% when they complained to a different one.

The uncommon strategies were annoyances and ill consequences. The chart (Figure 10: Distribution Chart between Men and Women) in chapter four showed that annoyances and ill consequences were the least rank complaint strategies. It was concluded that expressions of annoyance or disapproval were not commonly used by the respondents to complain, even when it was women to women. Only 1.67% of the women used annoyances and ill consequences in complaining to women. However, when women complained to men, annoyances strategies had more users (8.3%).

### **5.2.2 The Influence of Gender Differences.**

The findings revealed that men were the highest users of Direct Accusations while women used Indirect Accusations the most. The reason for this phenomenon is that men are more likely to express themselves in a straightforward manner. The use of direct accusations appears to facilitate their expressions of accusations. In general, men directly speak to the person and hope that their expression can function to improve the condition. Therefore, direct accusations are often chosen as the best way for them to communicate their

complaining. Focusing on the agent of complainables as the main purpose of a Direct Accusation is suitable for men's intention to mention directly the person as the guilty party and then to repair the condition when a problem happens.

Women have proved to be the most users of indirect complaining. It is understandable for women who wish to avoid breaking a relationship. It is based on the common women's characteristic that tries to make a good relationship with other people. Using indirect accusations is also acceptable because another women's characteristic is that they have a propensity to use their feelings. Women tend to think about the result of their speaking, especially for them and their interlocutors. The purpose of a indirect accusation is a softer way than a direct accusation although it has the same meaning as an device for expressing complaints.

This present study also found that the use of complaining strategies was more frequently employed by women than by men. The logic behind this occurrence is that women often seem to love complaining more than men. This argument is in line with Boxer (1996) who states that complaining is discussed as a positive interaction for women (for instance, complaining to communicate solidarity or empathy with another's problems), women are still perceived as complaining more than men (Boxer, 1996). The fact that women are higher users on blaming strategies can be counted as supporting evidence to this theory.

By describing each group, it was revealed that Men to Men (M-M) was more direct than Men to Women (M-W). It is related to the previous explanation that men tend to be more direct than women. As for complainees, M-M had more

users in direct accusations than in the M-W; it is acceptable because of the gender characteristic that states people speak more freely to the same gender than to a different one.

Another fact that was shown in this study is that Women to Women (W-W) interaction used more Hint strategies than Women To Men (W-M). It is logical because women's characteristics are apt to attempt to make a good relationship with others and are remote from the tendency to disturb their relationship, especially with the same gender.

In the case of directness, women are more direct in complaining to men than to women. It is reasonable because of the agent of complainables and feelings of the initiator. Men who are considered to have tougher feelings than women is the reason why women more directly complain to men rather than to women. The focus here is the agent of complainables, how the complainees know the purpose of proposing the complaining act itself.

In blaming strategies, women are more explicit to men than to the same gender, however, in the overall blaming distribution, women use soft blaming as their preferred blaming strategies. It is acceptable because of the general women's characteristic that love to complain but still in the path to avoid disturbing the relationship. Therefore, the use of soft blaming is the best way in complaining.

### 5.3 Conclusions

1. EFL learners realized the speech act of complaining in eight complaint strategies: Hints, Annoyances, Ill Consequences, Indirect Accusation, Direct Accusation, Modified Blame, Explicit Blame (Behavior), and Explicit Blame (Person). The most frequently used strategy was Accusation. There is a different way between men and women in employing the complaining act. Men used Direct Accusations as their major strategy while women used Indirect Accusations.
2. Regarding the Gender, the use of complaining strategies was influenced by the gender of the complainer and complaine. Men to Men (M-M) interaction was more direct than that of Men to Women (M-W). It is supported by M-M which had more users in direct accusations than in the M-W. While the women, Women to Women (W-W) group used more Hints strategies than the Women to Men (W-M) group. Women tend to be more direct in complaining to men rather than to women. However, in blaming strategies, women tend to be more explicit to men than to the same gender, however, in the overall blaming distribution, women tend to use soft blaming as their preferred blaming strategies.

### 5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

The present study has investigated the differences of complaining strategies between EFL male and female students. From this study, there are a number of issues, which could be useful for future research.



The present study involved 40 students of the English Department of the Indonesian University of Education. From 40 students, 20 were females and 20 were males. Although the number was ideal, if more subjects had been used, however, the study might have produced more convincing results. It would be better for future researchers to use more respondents.

The techniques for collecting data used in this study were DCT and interviews. Although these two techniques are not perfect for linguistic research in the sense that the results would appear to be superficial, they were employed based on practicality; considering the time constricticon and the fact, that the speech acts being studied may not occur naturally often in real life. However, natural data are still the ideal ones. These kinds of data can be obtained by observation combined with note taking or taping. DCT was still used because of the necessity to test the instruments in a wider pilot study in order to examine the validity and the readability of the instruments.

The situations provided in this study were limited. There were only three situations. It was raised by the problem of the representativeness of situations that possibly happened in real-life situations. Therefore, future research is expected to consider this problem in order to obtain plentiful data. Hence, the influence of social variables, such as: social distance, relative power and ranking of imposition towards the realizations of the speech act can be more distinctive and clear. Relating to the situations, the cultural background also needs to be a consideration of the analysis of situations.