

Social Class Differences in Complaining Strategies Used by Customers of Central Santosa Finance

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Abstract

This study deals with complaining strategies in different social class. The objectives of this study were to find out the types of complaining strategies used by customers as the complainers and the reasons of the customers used complaint strategies. To achieve the objectives, this study was conducted by applying qualitative research. It is a kind of multi-case study. The subjects of this study were the customers of Central Santosa Finance with different social class, namely working class and middle class. And the objects of this research were the utterances which contained complaining strategies uttered by the customers. The data were collected by using content analysis technique. The data were analyzed based on the theory of complaining strategies proposed by Trosborg (1995) and the interview was conducted to get the answer of the reasons why customers used complaint strategies. Based on the results of this study, the customers from working class dominantly used Explicit Blame and Modified Blame as their complaint strategies. While the customers from middle class tended to use Hints as their complaint strategy which meant that customers from working class were more direct in saying their complaints than customers from middle class.

The reasons of they used complaint strategies were Situation and Problem.

Keywords: Complaining Strategies, Complaint, Social Class, Pragmatic

1. Introduction

In our daily life we use language for many purposes to communicate the proposition or the utterance to others. People use their language as they want depending on the particular context. Sometimes they use positive language when they are happy or formal situation, and they use negative language when they are unhappy or feel disadvantaged. Especially in complaining something, when people are having interaction to show their complaints, most of people can't control their emotion in uttering the languages that sometimes it emerges miss understanding.

This expression of negative language is called a speech act of complaining. The act of complaining happens when the speaker expresses the negative feeling towards the other (hearer). In expressing complaint, someone shows his/ her disapproval or disappointment to the hearer. The utterances of complaint also vary from the most indirect to the most direct according to speaker's intention. As the result, the hearer may also give a response or answer to apologize, deny, or promise to fix what he has done. Social factors, gender, relationship between the interlocutors and the complexity of situations are the social variables that influence the speakers' way of speaking. This study focuses on social class differences of complaining strategies used by consumers of Central Santosa Finance which takes place in Kisaran (Asahan-North Sumatra). Central Santosa Finance is a company that covers selling-buying belongings and it also provides credit to the customers.

Complaining strategies always used by the customers of Central Santosa Finance, whether they are happy or not. The costumers of this company complain their problems with the customer service. They look different in saying or uttering their complaint depending on their social class. There are some related researches have been done previously. Among other are: the first study about complaint was done by Ardiana Nuraeni in 2005 which entitled "Strategies of Complaining among Characters in the Movie 10 Things I Hate about You". The aims of the study are to find out the kinds of complaining strategy used by the characters, the speaker's in using such strategy, and to identify the responses of the hearers towards the complaints.

The second study about complaint was done by Widiasari in 2009 which entitled "Complaint Expression used by the Characters in the Film Entitled "Runaway Bride". The aims of the study are to describe the strategies of complaint found in the film, the functions of the complaining act uttered by the speakers, and the responses of the complainees in the film.

Both of those researches have each problem, but they are different with this study. Those studies have an implication for the researcher to find a new finding in complaining strategies. In this study, the researcher is interested in conducting a research related to the complaint strategies in customers with social class differences in Central Santosa Finance. The researcher aims to find out the types of complaining strategies used by customers and the reasons of why they complain such the way they do. Based on the problem that exists in this study, there are two questions of problem of the study will be answered in result and discussion, they are:

What types of complaining strategies used by customers with different social class of Central Santosa Finance?

Why do the customers complain the way they do?

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Pragmatic

Pragmatics according to Levinson (1983:9) is the study of the relation between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of language. It is the study of the relation between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding. Meanwhile, Leech states that pragmatics is study of utterance meaning in relation to speech situation (1983:6). From this definition, it can be said that language cannot be separated from the context of situation. Pragmatics is also a study about meaning of utterances in regarding to the situation.

2.2 Complaint

According to Trosborg (1995:331-312) a complaint is defined as an illocutionary act in which the speaker (the complainer) expresses his/ her disapproval, negative feelings, etc. towards the state of affairs described in the proposition (the complain-able) and for which he/ she holds the hearer (the complaine) responsible, either directly or indirectly. The speech act of complaint belongs to the category of expressive functions. When complaining, the speaker passes a moral judgment on something which (he/ she believes) the complaine has already done or failed to do, or is in the process of doing (Trosborg, 1995:331). From those definitions, a complaint can be defined with the expression of disapproval, disappointment, or negative feeling of the speaker towards certain behavior, action, or person and it contains moral judgment.

Trosborg (1995:316-319) set up certain complaint strategies: no explicit reproach, expression of annoyance or disapproval, accusation, and blame. Altogether, eight sub-categories are established, strategy 1 is the most indirect, and strategy 8 is the most direct.

1. No explicit reproach

The complainer does not directly state that something is bad, the complaine does not know whether an offence is referred to or not. This strategy is a weak complaint strategy but it might be used successfully to prepare for more forceful strategies.

Strategy 1: Hints

Example: It was quite here before you turn on the radio.

2. Expression of Annoyance or Disapproval

A complainer can express his/ her annoyance, dislike, disapproval, etc. concerning a certain state of affairs he/ she considers bad for him/ her. The complainer implies that he/ she holds the complaine responsible but avoids mentioning him/ her as the guilty person.

Strategy 2: Annoyance

Example: What kind of sound is out there? I am studying, and I can't concentrate.

Strategy 3: Ill Consequences

Example: Oh no! Now I can't concentrate on this paper.

3. Accusations

The complainer can ask the hearer questions about the situation or assert that he/ she was in some way connected with the offense and thereby tries to establish the hearer as a potential agent of the complainable (indirect accusation). Alternatively, the complainer can directly accuse the complaineed of having committed the offense (direct accusation).

Strategy 4: Indirect Accusation

Example: Is that you that turn the radio on loudly?

Strategy 5: Direct Accusation

Example: You have just turn on the radio loudly, right? I'm studying.

4. Blaming

An act of blame presupposes that the accused is guilty of the offense. The complainer passes a value judgment on the complaineed. This is the most direct complaint strategy.

Strategy 6: Modified Blame

The complainer expresses modified disapproval of an action for which the accused is responsible.

Example: You should be more empathizing to other people. Honestly, you should pay attention to other's privacy.

Strategy 7: Explicit Blame (behavior)

The complainer explicitly states that an action held by the accused is bad.

Example: That's too bad, bothering me when I am studying. How could you do that stupid thing when I try to concentrate to read?

Strategy 8: Explicit Blame (person)

The complainer explicitly states what is implicit at all others level, namely that he finds the accused as a non-responsible social member.

Example: How dare you are, turn the radio loudly as though you're living alone?

Damn! I can't concentrate, turn the radio off!

2.3 Social Class

According to Chambers (2003:42), the main social division in industrialized nations is between people who earn their living by working with their hands and those who earn their living by pencil-work services (the well-known blue and white-collar distinction). Furthermore, he asserts that by historical accident, the manual workers have become known as the 'working class' and the non-manual workers as the 'middle class' (Chambers, 2003:42). Ash (2004:49), however, also suggested that on its own occupation is not a sufficient indicator of social class. Levels of education and income also need to be considered as important indicators.

This research is guided by the following specific questions: what are the realizations of complaining strategies used by customers based on their social class and why they complain such the way they do. This research is limited on utterances uttered by customers (complainer) to the customer service (complainee) which contain complaining strategies. There two kinds of social class, which are working class and middle class. Those who fall into the middle class category are the customers with holding university degrees. And the customers who have low levels education are categorized as the working class.

3. Methodology

This study was conducted by using qualitative research, Bogdan and Biklen (1992) stated that qualitative design refers to the researcher's plan how to proceed. This study was conducted as a case study, which is multi-case study. The data analyzed by using content analysis technique Weber's theory. According to Weber (1990) content analysis refers to look at documents, text, or speech to see what themes emerge. Start by reading all way through, then specify rules.

The subjects of this research are the customers (complainers) of Central Santosa Finance in Kisaran. There two kinds of social class in this research, namely working class and middle class. Those who have university degree are categorized as middle class, and those who have low education are categorized as working class. There are six persons as the subjects of this research, three persons as the middle class with s1 degree and three persons as the working class with Senior high school degree, with the age around 25-30 years old. The objects of this research are the utterances which contain complaining strategies uttered by the customers. The data is taken during they are working until the data is collected enough.

The supporting instruments of data collection in this research are tape-recorder, Transcription and interview. The tape recorder is used to record the conversation between customers (complainers) and customer service (complainee). The data is taken naturally, and then the researcher transcribes the conversation into written data. And the interview is used to find out the reasons of customers use complaining strategies the way they do.

4. Results and Discussion

The realization of complaining strategies by customers with social class differences in this study were analyzed by the theory proposed by Trosborg (1995). The eight complaint strategies classified by Trosborg (1995) are Hints, Annoyance, Ill Consequences, Indirect Accusation, Direct Accusation, Modified Blame, Explicit Blame (Behavior), and Explicit Blame (Person). And the interview is also conducted by the researcher to get the answer of the question number two in research questions.

In this section, the description of the obtained data is firstly presented and then followed by the data analysis. Table 4.1 and 4.2 present the overall distribution of the complaining strategies used by customers of the study based on Trosborg's theory.

Table 4.1 Complaining strategies used by customers with working class

Cat	Strategy	Frequency
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1	No Explicit Reproach	
	Hints	1
2	Expression of Annoyance or Disapproval	
	Annoyance	1
3	Blaming	
	Modified Blame	3
	Explicit Blame (behavior)	3
	Explicit Blame (person)	1
4	Accusation	
	Direct Accusation	2

Table 4.2 Complaining strategies used by customers with Middle class

Cat	Strategy	Frequency
1	No Explicit Reproach	
	Hints	3
2	Expression of Annoyance or Disapproval	
	Consequences	1
3	Accusation	
	Indirect Accusation	2
	Direct Accusation	1

The tables above show that the most dominantly of complaining strategy used by customers (complainers) is Blaming, which are modified blame which occurs 3 times, explicit blame (behavior) also occurs 3 times and explicit blame (person) only 1 frequency. The second strategy dominantly used by customers is Accusation, which is direct accusation that occurs 2 times. No explicit reproach with hints strategy occurs 1 frequency and also Expression of Annoyance or Disapproval with 1 frequency. From this analysis, it can be concluded that customers with working class are direct in complaining. Because Blaming is the most direct of complaint strategies.

In the middles class of customers (complainers), the most often used strategy is No Explicit Reproach which is Hints with a rate of occurrence 3. The second is Accusation with 2 frequencies in Indirect Accusation and 1 Frequency in Direct Accusation. The last rank is Expression of Annoyance or Disapproval which is Consequences with 1 frequency. It means that the customers from middle class do not directly say something to the complaine.

In data analysis below, the complaint strategies will seems clearly in the conversation between customers (complainers) and customer service (complaine). These are the conversation between customers (complainers) form the working class with customer service (complaine). The complainers are symbolized with c1 and the complaine is symbolized with c2.

Data 1 :

- c1 : Mbak, kenapa saya mendapat denda? Gak bisa gitu donk! /“Miss, why do I get the fine? you can’t do that!” (**Annoyance**)
- c2 : Iya mas, karena kamu sudah telat bayar 5 hari. /”Yes sir, because you pay late the credit for five days”
- c2 : Hanya 5 hari, tidak beres. /”Only five days, it’s so bad”. (**Explicit blame-behavior**)

- c1 : Mas bisa lapor langsung sama kepala kami. /"Sir, you can tell your problem to our head"
- c1 : Tidak perlu. Lain kali tolong kabarin saya jika sudah dapat denda. /"no need. In another time please let me know if I pay late the credit". (**modified blame**)
- c2 : Iya pak, kami akan kabarin. /Yes sir, we'll tell you.
- c1 : Iya harus. Kalau dikabarin kan saya tahu kesalahan. /yes, you must to. If you tell me, instead I know my fault". (**modified blame**)

The customer (complainer) above named Aji Batiah, 28 years old. The complaint strategies that he used directly show in the brackets, they are annoyance, explicit blame-behavior and modified blame. This conversation occurs in the morning at 8.30 am. The complainer directly says his complaints to the complaine. After the researcher having the interview with this complainer, the reason of this complainer complains the way he does is the Situation. The complaine didn't give news until he get the fine for his credit.

Data 2 :

- c1 : Kalian gak ada otak ya. Bisa-bisanya deep collector datang dan mengambil kereta saya. /"you guys have no brain. How can the deep-collector come to me and take my motorcycle". (**Explicit blame-person**)
- c2 : Duduk sebentar mbak. /"please have a seat".
- c1 : Gak usah sok baik. Saya kemari mau mengambil kereta saya. /"don't pretend to be nice. I come here to bring back my motorcycle". (**Explicit blame-behavior**)
- c2 : Mbak sudah tidak membayar selama 2 bulan. Jadi wajar kalau kami ambil. /"you didn't pay the credit in 2 months. We have to take it.
- c1 : Tapi tak harus seperti itu. Berilah waktu 1 bulan lagi, pasti kulunasi. /"you shouldn't do that. Give me 1 month more, I'm sure can pay it all" (**modified blame**)
- c2 : Begini saja mbak, saya gak mau ada keributan. Jika mbak ada uang, berikan pada saya, dan saya berikan kembali keretanya. /"I don't wanna have some noises, give me your money and I give your motorcycle back".
- c1 : Ini saya bawa uangnya. Tolong jaga kualitas kalian. /"I bring the money, but please keep your quality".

The customer (complainer) above named Rina Suryati, 26 years old. The complaint strategies that she used also directly show in the brackets. This conversation occurs in the afternoon at 12.30 pm. The complainer directly says her complaints to the complaine. After the researcher having the interview with this complainer, the reason of this complainer complains the way she does is the Situation.

Data 3 :

- c1 : Berapa lama lagi saya mengantri? /"how much longer I stand here?". (**Hints**)
- c2 : Maaf pak, ada kerusakan sistem. /"sorry sir, the system is error".

- c1 : Harusnya kalian perhatikan lagi. Jadi nasabah tidak mengantri berjam-jam. /"You should care more. So, the customers do not stand long time for hours here". (**Direct Accusation**)
- c2 : Iya pak. /"yes sir".
- c1 : Waktu saya terbuang untuk ini saja. Gak ada cara manual? /"My time wasted for this. Do you have manual way? (**Direct Accusation**)
- c2 : Tidak ada pak. /"we don't have sir".
- c1 : Kalian buat saya kecew. /"you make me disappointed" (**Explicit blame-behavior**)

The customer (complainer) above named Surya Atmaja, 26 years old. The complaint strategies that she used also directly show in the brackets, which are Hints, Direct Accusation and Explicit Blame-behavior. This conversation occurs in the afternoon at 03.13 pm. The complainer directly says his complaints to the complaine. After the researcher having the interview with this complainer, the reason of this complainer complains the way she does is the Situation.

Data 4 :

- c1 : Masalahnya begini, saya sudah masukkan berkas dari sebulan lalu, tapi kenapa belum ada panggilan? /"I Got a problem, I have sent my files since a month ago, but why there's no calling for me?" (**Hints**)
- c2 : Mungkin ada berkas yang kurang bu? /"Probably your files are less mam?"
- c1 : Saya rasa tidak. Karna sejauh initidak ada panggilan telepon pada saya. /"I don't think so, because there's no calling for me as far" (**Hints**)
- c2 : Kalau begitu, saya Tanya langsung pada salesnya ya bu. /"If so, I'll ask the salesman for this problem".
- c1 : Iya, terima kasih. /"Yes, thank you".

The customer (complainer) above named Putri Maya Sari, 25 years old. The most dominant complaint strategy that she used also is Hints. This conversation occurs in the morning at 09.42 am. The complainer doesn't directly say her complaints to the complaine. After the researcher having the interview with this complainer, the reason of this complainer complains the way she does is the Problem. She thinks that her problem is not so serious, so she keeps using indirect complaint.

Data 5 :

- c1 : Saya sudah mencoba 3 kali membayar kredit melalui transfer ATM, tetapi gagal. /"I have tried 3 times to pay the credit through ATM transfer, but I got failed". (**Hints**)
- c2 : Iya pak, akhir-akhir ini ada kerusakan. /"Yes sir, lately we have any error systems".
- c1 : Tolong diperkaiki ya, karena kan susah tiap kali membayar ke kantor ini. /"Please repair it as soon, because I have no time if I have to pay the credit in this office". (**consequences**)

c2 : mohon maaf pak atas ketidaknyamanan nya. /"sorry sir for the uncomfortable".

The customer (complainer) above named Adi Purnomo, 27 years old. He uses two kinds of complaining strategies, which are Hints and ill consequences. This conversation occurs in the morning at 11.02 am. The complainer doesn't directly says his complaints to the complaine. After the researcher having the interview with this complainer, the reason of this complainer complains the way he does is the Situation.

Data 6 :

c1 : Semalam saya sudah telpon salesnya, tetapi tidak ada jawaban, gimana dengan pesanan saya? /"I had called the salesman yesterday, but there was no answer. How about my order?" (**Indirect Accusation**)

c2 : Iya pak, pesanan bapak akan tiba 1 minggu lagi. /"Yes sir, your order will arrive in one week more".

c1 : Oh begitu. Kenapa selama itu? Tidak bisa dipercepat? Saya perlu sekali. /Oh so. Why so longer? Can't you send faster? I really need it as soon as possible. (**Indirect Accusation**)

c2 : Kami usahakan ya pak. /"we'll try sir".

c1 : Iya mbak, kalau bisa 2-3 hari ini sudah tiba dirumah saya. /Yes, If could 2 until 3 days my order arrive at home".

c2 : Oke sir. /"Okay sir".

The customer (complainer) above named Riadi, 28 years old. The most often complaint strategy he use is Indirect Accusation. This conversation occurs in the afternoon at 03.33 pm. After the researcher having the interview with this complainer, the reason of this complainer complains the way he does is the Situation.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of this research displayed above, it is concluded that the complainers from working class are more direct in saying their complaints. While the complainers from middle class are indirect in saying their complaint. It clearly seems that the complainers from working class tend to use Blaming as their complaining strategy. Beside they also use No explicit reproach and Accusation as their complaining strategies. It is different from the complainers from middle class who tend to use Hints as their complaining strategy, and they also use Expression of Annoyance or Disapproval and Accusation as their complaining strategies. And the result of the interview that researcher conduct with the complainer, the Situation is the reason they use complaint strategies such the way they do. And one person says that the Problem is the reason of she complains the way she does.

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