

A Study of Filipino Complaints in English and Tagalog

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ABSTRACT

In order to document Filipino use of complaints in both English and Tagalog, the study sought to analyze their occurrence and relationship between likelihood to complain with regard to gender, perceived level of language proficiency, and status. The study then proceeded with the identification of the semantic formulae of the complaints, and the differences of formulae between females and males when complaining in English and Filipino. The qualitative method revealed that there is no relationship between likelihood to complain and gender and likelihood to complain and self-perceived language proficiency, and that the level of status—superior, equal and inferior does not affect the likelihood of the Filipinos to complain. In addition, this study showed that Filipinos complained in a different manner depending on the language that they used. Filipino males are assertive in complaining in English language while females choose indirect strategies. Both, however, use different semantic formulae in complaining in English and Filipino.

Keywords: speech acts; complaints; semantic formulae; WDCT; politeness theory

INTRODUCTION

Speakers perform various speech acts in communicating and these acts can be non-threatening or threatening. Searle (1989) classified the different speech acts — assertives, directives, commissives, expressive, and declaratives and he posited that these speech acts are performed when a person compliments, apologises, invites, complains, and so on. All utterances may have at least one face-threatening act, may it be positive or negative. This cannot be helped as face-threatening acts may be verbal, non-verbal or paraverbal. Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness strategies should also be taken account when face-threatening acts are inevitable. The goal, therefore, is to minimize negative threats by considering several factors in a conversation. Such factors may be social status, gender, or the relationship between the interlocutors and culture.

Several studies with regard to speech acts have been the focus in the last decade because of their versatility from one language to another. Speech acts in Jordanian English, Malay English, Polish-English, Irish and Chilean, Egyptian, Arabic, and Romanina, (Bayat 2013, Yasser, Marlyna Maros & Yassin 2012, Fahey 2005, Demeter 2000, Nelson, Bakary & Batal 1996, Bielski 1992), to name a few, have been explored in comparison with native English. These studies have investigated apologizing, complaining, refusing, and thanking, but very few investigated complaints. Similarly, most of these studies are EFL students' production, and none deals with ESL speakers/learners, specifically in the Asia context.

A possible argument as to why the act of complaining is seldom studied in the Asian context is due to its ability to threaten the receiver's face because of negative evaluation of some aspect of the hearer's face (Brown & Levinson 1978). Cohen and Olshtain (1993) also stated that complaints consist of different speech acts or speech act sets that are sensitive to a lot of factors such as power, distance, and rank of imposition. Olshtain and Weinback (1993)

also stated that certain preconditions should be met for a complaint to take place. These preconditions were clearly illustrated by Brown and Levinson (1978, as cited in Yian 2008):

1. Hearer performs a socially unacceptable act (SUA) which is contrary to a social code of behavioral norms shared by S and H.
2. Speaker perceives the SUA as having unfavorable consequences for him/her, and /or for the general public.
3. The verbal expression of S relates post facto directly or indirectly to the SUA, thus having the illocutionary force of censure.

Thus, it is not surprising that face-to-face complaints are avoided, unless absolutely necessary.

The present study acknowledges the need to fully understand speech acts in different cultures, and the researchers are aware that there still seems to be limited research on speech act of complaint and most cross-cultural studies put more attention on apologies and requests (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989), compliments (Jaworski 1995, Chen 1993, Maine & Wolfson 1981), and refusal (Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz 1990, Al-Kahtani 2006). Of the few studies, Olshtain and Weinbach's (1993) seem to be the mostly quoted in the speech act of complaint. They claim that in performing the speech act of complaint, the speaker shows displeasure or annoyance about something as a reaction to a past or ongoing socially unacceptable act, the consequences of which are perceived by the speaker as being undesirable (Tabatabaei 2015, p. 127). However, the limited studies almost always dealt with strategies used in complaints and other factors, such as gender, status, or proficiency, were not explored.

One example is Moon (2001) who dealt with 'severity of the complaint' between native (N) and non-native speakers (NNS). Prykarpatska (2008), on the other hand, investigated implicit and explicit strategies between Americans and Ukrainians when giving a complaint, with the former using mostly implicit strategies. This is similar with the study of Eslami-Rasekh (2004) who compared the use of face-keeping strategies between Persians and American native speakers and it was revealed that Americans use mostly just one strategy compared to the several of Persians. Farnia, Buchheit, and Salim (2010) dealt with a more abstract factor, which is the difference in behavior, between American English and Malaysian and just like other studies, there was also a difference in how these two cultures exhibit significantly different behaviors (as cited in Tabatabaei 2015).

The only study which dealt with semantic formulas, the core interest of this research, was the study of Trenchs (2000). Her study compared not just NS and NNS but she tried to find out the difference in the production of complaints by American speaking English, Catalans speaking Catalans, and Catalan EFL students. She concluded in her study that the EFL speakers do not show negative pragmatic transfer and that Catalans use jokes as downgraders in complaining. This conclusion raises a question as to whether NS of English will accept this type of semantic formula in the acts of complaining. However, the study mentioned previously failed to identify how gender and status affect the likelihood to complain. Coulmas (2005), for example, claimed that genders do not have similar linguistic patterns since males and females may have different concerns, such as males prioritizing status and self-assertion more than females who value involvement and understanding. Similarly, social status and gender, among others, are said to affect language choices and strategies. Since complaints are speech acts which are commonly strategized to lessen face-threatening situations, then it is but normal for the mentioned factors to intervene (Ayu & Sukyadi 2011). In addition, Coulmas (2005) posited that language varies across social

dimensions, and he used Japanese speakers who were investigated to use different reactions on people coming from different social classes and regions. He therefore concluded that language behaviors can mostly be dictated by social stratification.

The study, aside from addressing the limited literature on complaints by ESL speakers, also attempted to identify how gender and social status affect the likelihood to complain and the ways of complaining when involved in an annoying situation. To veer away from a comparison on NNS and NS, and to analyze complaints made by Filipinos in both Tagalog and English, this paper sought to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a significant relationship between likelihood to complain and gender?
2. Is there a significant relationship between likelihood to complain and self-perceived level of language proficiency?
3. What is the likelihood of Filipinos to complain to people with different level of status?
4. What are the semantic formulae used by Filipino females and males in complaining in English and Filipino and how do they complain?
5. Are there differences in the type of semantic formulae used by Filipinos in complaining in English and Filipino?

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS AND INSTRUMENTS

The study is descriptive in nature since Trenchs (2000) believes that controlled elicitation methods obtained from written questionnaires could highly assist responses when presented with similar linguistic situations. Similarly, since the study sought to analyze Filipino college students likelihood to complain and to identify various semantic formulae found in the complaints of Filipinos in English language and Filipino language, written questionnaires could provide “the prototype of the variants occurring in the individual’s actual speech” (Hill et al. 1986, as cited in Trenchs 2000, p. 274).

In order to realize the present objectives of this study, a questionnaire and written discourse completion test (WDCT) were employed. The 7-point Likert scale questionnaire had 10 situations wherein the participants had to indicate their likelihood to complain while the WDCT had three prompts representing three different situations. A WDCT is a type of questionnaire that depicts situations wherein participants are expected to write their responses as if they are involved in the given situation. Both the Likert scale questionnaire and WDCT have situations that represent superior, equal, and inferior status of the interlocutor. In addition, this study has two types of questionnaires - English language questionnaire and Filipino language questionnaire. The reason is to primarily investigate whether there is a difference in complaints when there is a difference in the use of language. The WDCT was personally designed by the researchers with the guidance of two experts in Syntax and Sociolinguistics. This is to ensure that each situation will not overlap with the others and that all sentences adhere to the pragmatic competence of the respondents. In addition, the situation was specifically composed to elicit negative pragmatic responses/reactions from the respondents.

120 college students participated in the study. All the participants are bilinguals with Filipino as their mother tongue. The proficiency level of the participants was identified based on their Grade Point Average (GPA) for the earlier term. Initially 131 were randomly chosen, but only 120 remained as the other 11 had a GPA lower than 2.5 (85-88). According

to Pariña (2011), non-L2-specific language-processing factors need to be taken into account when considering learners' performance on language tasks. Thus, L2 knowledge should not only be measured using language scores or tasks as cognitive resources play a central role in the success of language learning.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire was first analyzed using descriptive statistics. The means of the likelihood of the participants to complain depending on the status of the interlocutors, the correlation of the likelihood to complain and the gender of the participants, and the correlation of the likelihood to complain and the participants' self-perceived language proficiency were computed using SPSS. The next to be analyzed were the responses from the WDCT. The responses were categorized and tallied based on the semantic formulae of complaints.

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The categories of semantic formulae employed in this study came from the work of Trenchs (2000) on complaints in Catalan and English. Trenchs (2000) took categories from Giddens's, Innoue's and Schaeffer's (1981, as cited in Trenchs 2000) study. These were **Opener** which were subdivided into *Names*, *Formulaic Adjuncts*, *Salutation*, *Attention-Getters*, *Addressings* and *Combinations* of two or more of the subdivisions of the Openers; **Act Statement and Justification** which were subdivided to *Justification of the Speaker* and *Justification of the Addressee*; **Remedy** which was subdivided to *Threat*; **Closing** which were categorized into three—*Expression of Appreciation*, *Expression of apology* and *Good-bye*. These categories were complemented by Trench by adding the following: **Valuation**, **Preaching**, **Cursing**, **Non-linguistic Sounds**, and **Silence**. Opener was also subdivided into *Names*, *Formulaic adjuncts*, *Salutations*, *Attention-Getters*, *Addressings*, and *Combinations*.

The semantic formulae and their categories serve as the framework of the study and these were defined with accompanying examples from the data, as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Categories of Semantic Formulae By Giddens (1981)

Definition	Categories of Semantic Formulae	Examples:
“An utterance made by the complainer which initiates the speech act set and does not provide information about what has gone wrong, why the wrong merits a complaints or how to remediate the wrong”	Opener <i>Name</i> <i>Formulaic Adjunct</i> <i>Salutation</i> <i>Attention getter</i> <i>Addressing</i> <i>Combination of two or more of the above</i>	<i>Brad...</i> <i>Please...Excuse me...</i> <i>Hello..</i> <i>Uy... hoy!</i> <i>Miss...Sir...</i> <i>Hello, sir...</i>
“An utterance which states the problem”	Act Statement	<i>I do not understand the grade that you have given to me.</i>
“Justification constitute moves supportive of the central act of complaining“	Justification	
“An utterance made by the complainer that explains why he personally is making the complaint”	<i>Justification of the speaker</i>	<i>I got high grade in the final exam.</i>
“An utterance made by the complainer that gives a reason for the addressee's having committed the wrong”	<i>Justification of the Addressee</i>	<i>I know that you are just tired.</i>
“An utterance that call for an action to rectify the wrong”	Remedy <i>Threat</i>	<i>If you don't do your part, I'll tell your parents</i>

“An utterance made by the complainer which expresses her feeling about either the addressee or the wrong that has been committed”	Valuation	<i>You've caused so much delay.</i>
“An utterance that reflects a rule of what the speaker considers to be “proper” behavior in that situation. It may take the form of scolding or of moralizing”	Preaching	<i>You need also to sacrifice some time to help us do the work.</i>
	Cursing	<i>Hell..</i>
“A word or phrase which is used in the data as a marker of courtesy. It may appear alone or as part of the semantic formulas”	Formulaic Adjunct	<i>Please..</i>
“In which the hearer chooses not to address any verbal complaint”	Non-linguistic sound	<i>Ssshhh</i>
“An utterance made by the complainer at the end of the speech event which concludes his turn at speaking”	Closing	
	<i>Expression of appreciation or gratitude</i>	<i>Thanks!</i>
	<i>Expression of apology</i>	<i>Sorry</i>
	<i>Goodbyes</i>	<i>Bye!</i>

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

LIKELIHOOD TO COMPLAIN AND GENDER

From the gathered data, the following values were attained with the use of statistical tools. Findings are presented in the Tables 2 and 3.

TABLE 2. Correlation between likelihood to complain and Gender

ENGLISH		Likelihood	Gender
Kendall's tau_b	Likelihood	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.125
		N	60
Gender	Likelihood	Correlation Coefficient	.125
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.248
		N	60

TABLE 3. Correlation between likelihood to complain and Gender

FILIPINO		Likelihood	Gender
Kendall's tau_b	Likelihood	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.020
		N	60
Gender	Likelihood	Correlation Coefficient	.020
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.853
		N	60

As can be seen in Tables 2 and 3, the p values of the pairs *likelihood to complain* and *gender* are greater than the level of significance which is 0.05. This implies that there is no significant correlation between the two. By theory in Sociolinguistics, it is assumed that females are more polite their communication, thus resulting in a less likelihood to complain. However, results from this study show that gender has nothing to do with complaints. This affirms the hypothesis of Coulmas (2005) that there is no constant relationship between gender and language use.

TABLE 4. Correlation between likelihood to complain and English proficiency

		ENGLISH		Likelihood	English
Kendall's tau_b	Likelihood	Correlation Coefficient		1.000	-.026
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.	.805
		N		60	60
	English	Correlation Coefficient		-.026	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.805	.
		N		60	60

TABLE 5. Correlation between likelihood to complain and Filipino proficiency

		FILIPINO		Likelihood	English
Kendall's tau_b	Likelihood	Correlation Coefficient		1.000	.214*
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.	.039
		N		60	60
	English	Correlation Coefficient		.214*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.039	.
		N		60	60

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Tables 4 and 5, show the p values of the pairs' *likelihood to complain* and the self-perceived language proficiency, are greater than the significance level 0.05. These results indicate that there is no relationship between likelihood to complain and self-perceived language proficiency when using English, However, the likelihood to complain is statistically significant when using Filipino. Even if Filipinos are bilinguals, the results imply that the use of first language could trigger Filipinos' likelihood to complain when an annoying situation surfaces.

LIKELIHOOD TO COMPLAIN OF FILIPINOS

TABLE 6. Likelihood to complain using English

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Seniors	60	3.9958	1.00264
Peers	60	4.4222	1.30025
Juniors	60	4.8444	1.59857
Valid 6 (listwise)	60		

TABLE 7. Likelihood to complain using Filipino

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Seniors	60	4.0708	.98408
Peers	60	4.5944	1.19335
Juniors	60	4.9556	1.46326
Valid N (listwise)	60		

Note: 1—unlikely 2—less likely 3—somewhat less likely 4—not sure 5—somewhat likely 6—likely 7—highly likely

Tables 6 and 7 show that the likelihood to complain of Filipinos using English and Filipino towards authority somewhat less likely based on the 7-point Likert scale. The results of the two groups imply that Filipinos are somewhat hesitant to complain to a person who has higher status than them. One of the probable reasons for this is politeness. In the Philippines, complaining to a person in authority is considered impolite. This holds true in other cultures as posited by Baxter (1984) that people in higher power situation would likely to use face-threatening acts. The Philippines have a lot of honorific markers (*po, opo, ho, oho*) and politeness enclitics, required when talking to an older or more powerful person. Pariña (2011) supports this when she claimed that younger people in authority still expect older people of lower status to use Filipino politeness enclitics. That is how power is deemed

important in the Philippine culture. Coulmas (2005) also claimed that speech communities and culture, and not languages, dictate politeness.

In the likelihood to complain to peers, there seems to be a small difference in means, with the use of English garnering 4.42 and the use of Filipino garnering 4.59. The means fall under ‘not sure’ and ‘somewhat likely’ respectively. The narrow gap between the figures shows that language is irrelevant when complaining to peers. The likelihood to complain to juniors, both in English and Filipino, only has a .1 mean difference under the scale of ‘somewhat of likely’. This means that complaining to junior is likely to occur whatever language is used. In addition, among the three status level, complaining to juniors has the highest mean. Without the presence of power (seniors) and camaraderie (peers), Filipinos are more likely to complain. According to Trench (2000), a complain is a ‘confrontative act’ where the speaker holds the hearer responsible for the offensive action. The complainant being older and having the entitled right to complain is surely not going to hold back, at least in the Philippine context.

SEMANTIC FORMULAE OF COMPLAINTS

From the WDCT, the following data are the results of the analysis of the three different situations wherein the respondents have to complain to people with different level of status—superior, equal and inferior.

TABLE 8. English Complaints of Filipinos in Percentage

Categories of Semantic Formulae	Situation 1		Situation 2		Situation 3		TOTAL		TOTAL AVERAGE
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	MALE	FEMALE	
	Opener								
• Name			1.77	1.14	2.78		0.38	1.52	0.95
• Formulaic			0.88	1.14	0.93		0.38	0.60	0.49
• Salutation			1.77		0.93		0.00	0.90	0.45
• Attention getter			7.50	11.50	3.41	4.63	3.64	5.38	4.51
• Addressing	20.24	13.08	8.75	0.88	1.14	0.93	10.04	4.96	7.50
• Combination		8.41	6.25	2.65	5.68	1.85	3.98	4.31	4.14
Act Statement	10.71	15.89	20.00	9.73	13.64	8.33	14.78	11.32	13.05
	Justification								
• Justification of	20.24	19.63	3.75	8.85	3.41	3.70	9.13	10.73	9.93
• Justification of the Addressee						3.70	0.00	1.23	0.62
	Remedy								
• Threat			6.25	2.65	9.09	5.56	5.11	2.74	3.93
Valuation	2.38	1.87	3.75	3.54	7.95	6.48	4.70	3.96	4.33
Preaching				0.88	7.95	3.70	2.65	1.53	2.09
Cursing			1.25%				0.42	0.00	0.21
Formulaic Adjunct	9.52	7.48	7.50	11.50	12.50	15.74	9.84	11.57	10.71
Non-linguistic sound				0.88	1.14	0.93	0.38	0.60	0.49
	Closing								
• Expression of	1.19	4.67	1.25	1.77	0.00	1.85	0.81	2.76	1.79
• Expression of							0.00	0.00	0.00
• Goodbyes							0.00	0.00	0.00
	OTHERS								
Question	16.67	16.82	7.50	23.89	4.55	12.04	9.57	17.58	13.58
Request	11.90	12.15	7.50	1.77	5.68	1.85	8.36	5.26	6.81
Self-blame	4.76						1.59	0.00	0.79
Command	1.19		7.50	6.19	3.41	6.48	4.03	4.23	4.13
Plead	1.19		5.00	5.31	6.82	12.04	4.34	5.78	5.06
Use of pronoun “us”							0.00	0.00	0.00
Suggestion			6.25	2.65	1.14	1.85	2.46	1.50	1.98
Sarcasm				0.88	3.41		1.14	0.29	0.72

Assistance	3.41	1.85	1.14	0.62	0.88
Wish/hope	2.27	0.93	0.76	0.31	0.53
Apology	1.14	0.93	0.38	0.31	0.34
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

As can be seen in Table 8, there are categories that are not from Trenchs (2000) framework. The researcher added these categories to suit the patterns that were found in the analysis of the data.

Situation 1:

You got a final grade of 1.0 in your favorite subject. You know that you studied very hard and submitted all of the requirements. Your score in your final exam is 3.0, so you don't understand why you have a grade of 1.0. You approach your professor in your grade consultation day.

In this situation, males used more semantic formulae compared to females. They even resort to pleading, commanding and blaming themselves on why they have a low grade which the females did not do. In approaching the professor, males used an address like sir or ma'am more often than the female. However, the females use a combination of two *Opener* such as *hello, ma'am* or *hi, sir* while the male did not use even a single combination in their *Opener*. The way the females approach their professors are more amicable because of the greeting or the salutation that they added in opening their complaint. However, males use more formulaic adjunct like *please* when they start stating their complaint. This also shows that even males approach the professors by just addressing them but then they make sure that they sound polite by using formulaic adjuncts. The way the males and females state their complaints reveals that males' act of statement is lesser than the females' act of statement but they make use of justification on why they complain as twice as their act of statement. This implies that they are not so direct in stating their complaint to their professor and that they try to justify why they are complaining by giving reasons on why they should have a higher grade. The formulae that both males and females commonly used and have almost the same percentage of usage are *Question* and . They ask their professors why they receive a lower grade or make a request to have their grades recomputed or rechecked. Examples of Male Responses (MR) and Female Responses (FR) are given below.

MR7: Sir [*addressing*], why is that my final grade is just 1.0 despite my final exam was 3.0? [*questioning*] What part did I mess up? [*self-blame*]

MR30: May I see the computation of my grade so I may understand how I got such grade? [*request*]

FR23: Sir/miss [*addressing*], can I please see how you computed my grade? [*request*]

FR19: May I ask why I got a 1.0 in my final grade? [*questioning*]

Situation 2:

You are sharing a condominium with your friend and you notice that he/she is not doing the chores that are assigned to him/her and he/she is making a lot of mess in your condominium. You've put up with him/her for couple of days already, but today you feel that you should talk to him/her.

Situation 2 elicits responses on how a complaint will be addressed if the interlocutor is a peer; this means that ‘complainer’ and ‘complainee’ have the same status. In this situation, females used more semantics formulae compared to males, which is the other way around in situation 1. Females’ use of different semantic formulae may due to ‘solidarity’. They tend to be more careful in complaining to their peers for the reason that the complaint is a face-threatening act that could compromise the friendship of the interlocutors. As can also be seen in the table, females use more justification than males. They try to give reasons to the complainer on why there is such a complaint happening. Additionally, women use more questions in complaining. They ask their roommate whether “it is okay” to clean the room or the reason why the roommate cannot be cleaned. The speech formulae they used in the complaint demonstrates that women are cooperative as stated by Tannen (1991 as cited in Coulmas 2005) and geared to involvement and understanding (Coulmas 2005). If females use more justification and questions in complaining, males are more direct. The males use *act statement* and *threat* more than twice as much as the females. They state their complaints directly and they even threaten their peers. The difference can be observed in the responses given in this situation:

MR8: Dude! [*addressing*] Are you crazy? You are not doing your shares of chores anymore[*valuation*]. Go get your job done! [*command*]

MR14: Do something now[*command*] or God knows what I’ll do to you. [*threat*]

MR16: Hey bro. [*addressing*] I’ve been bothered with your irresponsibility towards the chores that I wished you do. [*act statement*] Please start doing the chores that I asked you to do [*plead*] before I really get annoyed. [*threat*]

FR27: I think [*mitigation*]it’s better if you will find a room for yourself. [*suggest*]

FR 34: Hey[*attention getter*], uhm[*mitigation*], lately I’ve noticed that you don’t do the chores you’re assigned to do [*act statement*], could you please[*formulaic adjunct*] try to do them? [*plead*] Or at least explain why you’ve been making such a mess?[*act statement*] After all, this is both our condo. [*involving*]

In the example above, FR27, the female who gave threats still mitigates her complaint by using *I think* which shows hesitation on the part of the complainer while the MR14 sample of male’s threat is direct though he did not state what he really wanted to happen. This implies that males are more rough and tough in stating their complaints compared to females.

Situation 3:

You are assigned by your professor to be a project leader for your subject’s final requirement. When it’s almost the deadline of your project, one member keeps on missing the deadlines and keeps on coming late. You’ve been very patient with this member, but today you think that you should say something to him/her

This situation gives the complainer higher status than the complainee. Table 8 above shows that both males and females use different types of opener in approaching the receiver of the complaint. However, the way males and females state their complaints differ. Males use act statements, threats, and preaching twice as much as the females while females use

questions and pleading almost thrice as much as males and twice as much as males, respectively. Again this supports the discussion above that men are more direct and this shows that men are more dominating compared to women. The examples are below:

MR3: If you don't want to cooperate, you can kindly get out of here. [*threat*]

MR8: Hey [*attention getter*], dude! [*addressing*] I think [*mitigation*] I should tell you that you should refrain from being late [*act statement*]. Our final requirement's deadline will take place in a couple of days [*justification*].

FR12: Hi [*attention getter*], I just want to ask why you keep on missing the deadlines and always late? [*questioning*]

FR20: Please [*formulaic adjunct*] do submit your part early and please [*formulaic adjunct*] do not be late next time because we are doing our part in the best way we can so please [*formulaic adjunct*] make an effort next time.

FR 23: Can you please [*formulaic adjunct*] cooperate because this is our grade? [*request*]

Overall, males use the semantic formula 'addresses' more in their 'opener' and state their complaints directly through the use of 'act statement'. They also have greater number of threats and requests in their acts of complaining compared to females. The females, on the other hand, use more questions and formulaic adjunct in their complaints. The results prove that Filipino men and women use different strategies in complaining in English; the strategies Filipino men used made their complaints explicit while it is the other way around for women. For both gender, they commonly used semantic formulae *act of statement, questions, formulaic adjuncts and request* and this could imply that even if Filipino males are aggressive in giving complains, the overall semantic formulae used in complaining geared toward the implicit act of complaining and the strategies they used do not have any influence on whether the participants are competent in English language. Moon (2001), however posits that native speakers of English complain in an implicit manner.

FILIPINO COMPLAINTS

Table 9 show the semantic formulae used by Filipinos in complaining in Filipino language.

TABLE 9. Filipino Complaints in Percentage

Categories of Semantic Formulae	Situation 1		Situation 2		Situation 3		TOTAL MALE	TOTAL FEMALE	AVERAGE
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female			
Opener									
• Name			1.08		1.06		0.71	0.00	0.36
• Formulaic Adjunct	1.54		2.15	1.18	3.19	2.35	2.29	1.18	1.73
• Salutation				1.18		1.18	0.00	0.78	0.39
• Attention getter			5.38	10.59	5.32	2.35	3.57	4.31	3.94
• Addressing	23.08	21.62	11.83	3.53	9.57	1.18	14.83	8.78	11.80
• Combination				1.18		2.35	0.00	1.18	0.59
Act Statement	4.62	8.11	7.53	9.41	9.57	12.94	7.24	10.15	8.70
Justification									
• Justification of the	27.69	21.62	6.45	5.88	7.45	9.41	13.86	12.31	13.08
• Justification of the			5.38	9.41			1.79	3.14	2.46
Remedy									

• <i>Threat</i>			6.45		10.64	8.24	5.70	2.75	4.22
Valuation	1.35	9.68	3.53	5.32	9.41		5.00	4.76	4.88
Preaching		3.23	7.06	5.32			2.85	2.35	2.60
Cursing		1.08		1.06			0.71	0.00	0.36
Formulaic Adjunct	1.54	2.15	1.18	3.19	2.35		2.29	1.18	1.73
Non-linguistic sound			1.18	2.13	1.18		0.71	0.78	0.75
			Closing						
• <i>Expression of</i>		1.08	3.53		2.35		0.36	1.96	1.16
• <i>Expression of apology</i>	1.35						0.00	0.45	0.23
• <i>Goodbyes</i>							0.00	0.00	0.00
			OTHERS						
Question	21.54	21.62	6.45	5.88	4.26	22.35	10.75	16.62	13.68
Request	20.00	18.92	6.45	10.59	6.38	8.24	10.94	12.58	11.76
Self-blame		4.05					0.00	1.35	0.68
Command	1.54		13.98	5.88	11.70	3.53	9.07	3.14	6.11
Plead		1.35	1.08	2.35	2.13	1.18	1.07	1.63	1.35
Use of pronoun “us” and			3.23	5.88	7.45	3.53	3.56	3.14	3.35
Suggestion						2.35	0.00	0.78	0.39
Sarcasm			4.30	9.41	5.32		3.21	3.14	3.17
Assistance				1.18	1.06	1.18	0.35	0.78	0.57
Wish/hope			3.23	1.18	1.06	2.35	1.43	1.18	1.30
Apology						2.35	0.00	0.78	0.39
TOTAL	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	100.00	100.00	100.00

As shown in the table above, Filipinos use the same semantic formulae in complaining in English and in Filipino. They only differ in the percentage of their usage.

In situation 1, same pattern of usage can be identified with their English complaints; males have higher usage of ‘addressing’ as an opener and females have higher usage of ‘act of statement’ in complaining. However, there is one difference that is noticeable and that is the use of justification of the speaker and requests. In English complaints, female use more justification and requests in complaining while here in Filipino complaints, male use more justification and requests in complaining. Below are examples:

MR9: Sir [*addressing*], mataas naman grado ko sa mga test at palagi naman ako pumapasok [*justification*]. Pano ako nakakuha ng 1.0? [*questioning*]
Sir, my test grades are high and I always come to class. Why is it that I get 1.0?

MR17: Sir [*addressing*], ba’t ganito lang po ang grade ko? [*questioning*] Pwede ko ba malaman yung computation? [*request*]
Sir, why is my grade just like this? May I know the computation?

FR11: Sir [*addressing*], bakit po 1.0 lang ang aking grado? [*questioning*] May mga pagsusulit po akong mataas at maipapakita ko po sa inyo ang aking resulta ng mga nakuha. [*justification*]
Sir, why is my grade 1.0? I have high quiz scores and I can show you the results of my quizzes.

FR25: Maari po bang ipakita or paki-explain ang breakdown ng grading system [*request*]. Baka po kasi may mali sa kompyutasyon. [*justification*]
May I know or may you explain the breakdown of the grading system. There might be something wrong with the computation.

In Situation 2, the percentage of the usage of ‘act statement’ of males and females in Filipino complaints and English complaints are not similar. If in English complaints, males employ

‘act statements’ in their complaints two times greater than the females in Filipino complaints, females have more usage than the males although the difference is not that wide. Additionally, ‘valuation’ in Filipino complaints of males increased but the ‘formulaic adjunct’ decreased in both males and females. This is because ‘please’ and ‘excuse’ are only borrowed words from English when they use it in Filipino. Thus, the researcher counted the words ‘pak’ ” a honorific that shows respect to the other interlocutor. However, the overall total that was found not just in situation 2 but also in situation 1 and 3 is 15, with 7 coming from males and 8 coming from females. This does not make up for the number of formulaic adjuncts that is a ‘marker of courtesy’ (Trenchs 2000). Moreover, the use of command of males in Filipino increased almost two times from 7.50% in English complaints to 13.98% in Filipino complaints. This can be attributed to the concept that language is culture bound. Aside from this, ‘justification of the addressee’ is employed in this situation and only in this situation where the respondents made use of this type of semantic formula. The participants tried to justify why their roommate could not clean the room. This is probably because they tried to avoid conflict since they are living in the same roof.

Another notable usage of semantic formulae in this situation is the increased of usage of ‘sarcasm’ of males and females. It seems that Filipinos are more sarcastic in complaining in Filipino compared to English and females use more sarcasm than males. According to Tepperman, Traum and Narayanan (2006) on their study on sarcasm, females often use sarcasm in contrast with males.

MR3: Uy [*attention getter*], galaw-galaw din baka ma-stroke.[*sarcasm*] Ang hirap kaya maglinis dito araw-araw! [*valuation*]
Hey, you have to move around or you might get a stroke. It's too hard to always clean here everyday.

FR17: Seryoso [*sarcasm*] dude!!! [*addressing*] (turo sa kalat) WOW [*sarcasm*] ah kadiiri ka naman grabe ah [*valuation*], kanino ka nagmana sa iskwater [*sarcasm*]. Ayusin mo naman sarili mo, hati yung kondong hindi lang sayo kaya matuto ka mahiya! [*preaching*]
Seriously, dude!!! (pointing at the mess) WOW ah you are so gross. Who did you inherit this from? From the squatter. You fix yourself. This condo does not only belong to you, so learn to be ashamed.

FR18: nakikita mo ba ito? [*question*] Hindi ko ito kalat [*act statement*], at sigurado ako na hindi ito sa kapitbahay at sa mga bisita na pumupunta dito, malamang ay sayo ito, [*sarcasm*] paki linis naman itong mga kalat mo [*request*], isama mo narin linisin ang mga grado mo [*sarcasm*]. Di puro t.v. ang ginagawa mo [*preaching*]. Salamat ng marami. [*gratitude*]
Do you see this? This is not my mess, and I'm sure this is not from our neighbors or our guests who came here. Probably, this is yours. Could you clean your mess? And include your grade as well. Don't just always watch T.V. Thank you very much.

FR37: Girl [*addressing*], Ano meron sa messy couture? [*sarcasm*] Darating kasi parents ko today. [*justification*] Dapat maayos ang condo para goodshot tayo. [*suggestion*] Tara ayusin na natin ang kwarto. [*involving*] Now na. [*command*]
Girl, what with messy couture? My parents will be arriving, so we have to have an organized condo so that we will be "good shot". Let's organize/clean our room. Now.

In situation 3 of Filipino complaints, the usage of semantic formulae is quite different from the English complaints. Some of the differences is the use of ‘act statement’ with males have a lower percentage of act statements than females and ‘plead’ and ‘preaching’ are rarely applied by males and females compared to English complaints. However, the employment of ‘questions’ in females’ complaints doubled and ‘threat’ gained a higher percentage of usage. The way females complained in Filipino to a member of their group was indirect. They usually ask questions about things or the situation that they want to complain about and they use justification to validate their complaints. Examples are given below.

FR11: Pwede mo bang paki-agahan ng konti sa susunod? [*request*] Medyo namomroblema na kasi tayo sa project e. [*justification*]
Could you make it earlier next time? It seems that we are having problems with our project.

FR19: Kumusta kaibigan? [*combination—attention getter and addressing*]
Napapansin ko na palagi ka nalang late sa mga ginagawa natin [*act statement*], may problema ba? Kung mayroon ay sabihin mo lang sakin at tayo ay magtulungan, bigyan natin ng solusyon ang iyong pagiging “late”. [*assistance*]
How are you, my friend? I notice that you are always late with our work. Do you have a problem? If you have, you can just tell me about it, and we can help each other. Let’s have a solution regarding your tardiness.

Aside from justification for the addressee that is solely used in situation 2, the use of pronoun ‘us’ or ‘we’ or in Filipino ‘tayo’ can only be found in situations 2 and 3. This shows that that the both gender used these pronouns in complaining as ‘softener’ or ‘downtoners’ of their complaints in order not to seriously offend the complaine. The complainer tried to make a positive face in these two situations. The use of the pronouns such as ‘us’ and ‘we’ or ‘tayo’ in Filipino could not be found in the English complaints. If Filipino culture has to be considered in these situations, it could be easily said that Filipinos like other Asian cultures try to avoid confrontations; thus, they are likely to use implicit strategies in complaining but then based on English complaints this is not the case. The reason for this might be due to the language that the Filipinos use. It is probable that Filipino males and females use strategies that suit the language that they are using and another probable reason is that they are more comfortable in complaining in Filipino since it is their first language. Although when they are asked to scale their proficiency in English and Filipino, most of the participants’ answers were average in both or more proficient in English than Filipino. Examples of pronoun usage of Filipinos in Filipino complaints are below:

In addition, threats in situations 2 and 3 increased in both gender. They are now more assertive in their complaints, as opposed to when it was done in English. Threats were almost doubles in these two situations. Examples are showed below:

Situation 2

MR17: Sasapakin kita pag di ka naglinis. [*threat*]
I will hit you if you are not cleaning.

FR24: Hello! [*salutation*] Kung ayaw mong sundin yung mga rules dito sa condo lumipat ka na lang. [*threat*]
Hello! If you don’t want to follow the rules of this condo, you better move out.

Situation 3

MR10: Dude [*addressing*], ayusin mo naman [*plead*] o itatangal kita sa grupo. [*threat*]

Dude, try to fix this or I will remove you from our group.

FR21: Pagwala ka pang ipapass sa akin, hindi ka na part ng group. [*threat*]

If you cannot submit [it] to me, you will not be part of the group.

The overall results of Filipino complaints showed that males are more aggressive in complaining in Filipino language compared to English language. The reason for this could be that Filipinos might be very at ease in using Filipino in complaining because it's their first language; therefore, they could express themselves well.

For the Filipino complaints, the common semantic formulae commonly employed are *address*, *act of statement*, *justification of the speaker*, *questions* and *request*. The semantic formulae used in different situations demonstrate that Filipinos complain implicitly. This could not be totally claimed as cultural because native speakers also complain implicitly.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study revealed that there is no significant relationship between likelihood to complain and gender and likelihood to complain and self-perceived language proficiency, and that the level of status—superior, equal and inferior does not affect the likelihood of Filipinos to complain. There is significant difference, however, when the complaint is done in the native language as opposed to the second language. Filipinos, who are ESL speakers still prefer to complain in Filipino. This can be partially explained by the politeness phenomenon present in the language of Filipino. As mentioned previously, Filipino has politeness enclitics, and since a complaint is considered impolite, devices, such as the use of Filipino enclitics are used to maintain the polite face of the complaine. This was first established by Pariña (2010) that different cultures have different rheorics style and this is manifested in language use. In addition, the results also manifest that Filipinos are somewhat likely to complain when the person is inferior in status compared to when the complanee is a person in authority or is simply equal in status. What is interesting in the study is that Filipinos complained differently, depending on the language that they used. Filipino males are assertive in complaining in English language but they are more assertive in complaining in Filipino language. If males choose direct strategies in complaining in English and Filipino, females, on the other hand, choose indirect strategies. Both, however, use different semantic formulae in complaining in English and Filipino. Moreover, the results of this study further revealed the difference of males and females in communicating which supports that theory of Tannen (1991 as cited in Coulmas 2005) on gender differences.

As aforementioned, Filipinos employed different semantic formulae in complaining but there are semantic formulae that are prevalent when they complain and these are *address*, *act of statement*, *question* and *request*. The formulae may be to cushion the face-threatening acts present in complaints as Trosborg (1995, p. 312) pointed out that “causing offense is part of the conflictive functions, and complaints are by definition non-polite.” Thus, these strategies lessen the impact of a complaint to the complaine. This is again supported by (Place 1986, as cited in Trosberg 1995) who claimed that the complainer uses mitigating devices to provide the potential victim with loopholes and excuses so the complaine can avoid the blame.

For further studies, the researcher recommends a comparative study on the way Filipinos and native speakers' complaints to know the differences and similarities of semantic formulae used. In addition, in conducting bilingual research on complaints, it would be better if a proficiency test would be also included in gathering a data. In addition, a triangulation of this study has to be done to strengthen the results and claims of Filipinos way of complaining in English and Filipino. Pedagogically, Cohen and Olshtain (1993) claim for speech acts in general, they have to be a part of the curriculum because only through this will L2 learners expedite their acquisition of the target language. Nativelike production will of course take longer than some L2 skills, but that may not be a concern anymore with regard to speech acts. It is recommended, therefore that metapragmatic ability be included in ESL/EFL teaching to expose students in authentic situations that will allow them to be conscious of semantic formulae that accompany each speech act, specifically complaints.

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