

# (In)Directness, Upgrading and Mitigation in Complaints in Lombok, Indonesia

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# Definition of Complaint

- expression of displeasure or annoyance as a reaction to a past or on-going action, the consequences of which affect the speaker unfavorably, and for which the speaker holds the hearer responsible

(Olshtain & Weinbach 1987)

# Strategies of Complaint

- expression of annoyance
- statement of the offensive act
- request for an explanation as to why the hearer committed the act,
- justification for the speaker's making the complaint
- request for repair of the offense, which could be done as a request, suggestion, imperative, threat or warning,
- request for forbearance

(Hartley 1998)

# Questionnaire

- A - a fellow student borrowed your class notes and failed to return them;
- B - your next door neighbor leaves washing to dry on the fence of your yard;
- C - someone cuts in front of you in line while you are waiting to pay the electric bill;
- D - your father, who often scolds you for wasting electricity, falls asleep with the television still on;
- E- you receive a low exam grade from your (male) professor in a subject which you have previously done well in;
- F - you are waiting for a bus to campus with your notes and books for a presentation you have to give, when an older man runs into you and knocks all your material to the ground.

# Subjects

## Gender

60 male

44 female

1 unspecified

## Age

2 under 17

87 between 17 and 25 years old

10 in their late 20s

3 in their 30s

1 50 year old

# Not complaining

Reinterpreting the situation as speaker's fault

Situation D (father) – 7

Situation E (professor) - 34

Utterance not done as a complaint

Situation A (classmate) 22 (21%)

Situation B (neighbor) 11 (11%)

Situation C (stranger) 3 (3%)

Situation D (father) 3 (5%)

Situation E (professor) 4 (7%)

Situation F (stranger) 2 (2%)

- Opting out

	A	B	C	D	E	F
<u>Conditions of the act</u>						
No offense committed	2			20		16
Not addressees fault				2	4	3
No right to complain			1			
<u>Speaker's goals</u>						
Not worth it	7	3	2	1	2	2
Another method better		2				
Silence most effective		5		3		
<u>Social goals</u>						
Could damage relationship	2					
<u>Contextual factors</u>						
Power/status differential				18	4	
<u>Other</u>						
Overcome by emotion		1	1		6	
	11	11	4	43	16	21

# Level of Directness

- 1 hint

*Dik, apa bukunya sudah selesai dipakai? (Have you finished using my book?)*

- 2 expression of annoyance/assertion of complainable

*Ini bukan tempat menjemur pakaian (this is not a place to dry clothes)*

- 3 expression of negative consequences/assertion that complainable is bad

*Maaf bu...! ini pagar halaman, bukan tempat jemuran pakaian, bukan kah tidak enak, kalau dilihat sama orang lain. (Sorry, ma'am, this is a fence, not a place to dry clothes, don't you know it's not nice if it's seen by others)*



- 4 indirect accusation/question or statement implying that addressee caused complainable (complainable not mentioned directly)

*Pak, rendah sekali saya punya nilai, padahal saya pikir pada waktu mengerjakan tidak ada yang sulit. (Sir, my grade is very low, but when I was doing it I didn't think there was anything difficult.)*

- 5 direct accusation/asserting that addressee caused complainable / question or imperative that presupposes that addressee caused complainable (complainable mentioned directly)

*“Ayah, mengapa ayah nonton televisi sampai ketiduran, padahal kemarin ayah memarahi Andi karna tidak mematikan televisi kalau mau tidur.” (Father, why did you watch tv until you fell asleep, when yesterday you got mad at me for not turning off the tv when I went to sleep.)*

- 6 modified blame/asserting that complainable is bad and that addressee caused it, question or imperative that presupposes addressee caused complainable and assertion that complainable is bad/ stating a preference for a different behavior

*Jangan begitu caranya, soalnya kita ini dari tadi antri, masa kamu yang belakangan duluan. (That's not how it's done. The thing is, we've been waiting for a long time, how can you come from the end and go to the beginning.)*

- 7 explicit blame of behavior/asserting that addressee's causing of the complainable is bad

*Bapak ini taunya hanya marahin saya saja, padahal bapak sendiri juga lupa matikan televisi (All you do is get mad at me, when you yourself also forget to turn off the tv)*

- 8 explicit blame of the person/asserting that addressee is bad

*Kamu ini bagaimana sih, janji meminjam buku dua hari, malah molor sampai dua minggu! (What's the matter with you, you promised to borrow the book for two days, but you delayed for two weeks.)*

# Level of Directness

	A	B	C	D	E	F	total
1	3 4%	1 1%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	4 1%
2	1 1%	4 5%	3 3%	0 0%	2 4%	1 1%	11 3%
3	0 0%	4 5%	1 1%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	5 1%
4	9 13%	3 4%	1 1%	4 8%	26 51%	3 4%	46 11%
5	13 19%	12 15%	6 6%	24 45%	19 37%	1 1%	75 17%
6	20 29%	31 38%	69 72%	9 17%	1 2%	49 61%	179 42%
7	7 10%	10 12%	8 8%	9 17%	0 0%	6 8%	40 9%
8	17 24%	16 20%	8 8%	7 13%	3 6%	20 25%	71 16%
	70	81	96	53	51	80	431

# Internal Modification

all situations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
N	4	11	5	46	75	179	40	71	431
hedge		1 (9%)		3 (7%)	5 (7%)	3 (2%)		2 (3%)	14
politeness formula		2 (18%)		4 (9%)	10 (13%)	24 (13%)	3 (8%)	2 (3%)	45
agreement marker				5 (11%)	4 (5%)	8 (4%)		6 (8%)	23
respectful pronoun	1 (25%)		1 (20%)	16 (35%)	38 (51%)	30 (17%)	18 (45%)	19 (27%)	123
all mitigated	1 (25%)	4 (36%)	1 (20%)	20 (43%)	46 (61%)	80 (45%)	19 (48%)	35 (49%)	206
cursing								4 (6%)	4
vocabulary				5 (11%)	1 (1%)		1 (3%)	9 (13%)	16
intensifiers		2 (18%)		14 (30%)	21 (28%)	38 (21%)	13 (13%)	23 (32%)	111
emphatic particles	1 (25%)	2 (18%)		22 (48%)	28 (37%)	104 (58%)	20 (50%)	39 (39%)	216
commitment upgraders				1 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (3%)		4
disrespectful pronoun	1 (25%)	1 (9%)		2 (4%)		4 (2%)	6 (15%)	14 (20%)	27
all upgraded	1 (25%)	5 (45%)		31 (67%)	52 (69%)	139 (78%)	33 (83%)	69 (97%)	330

# Respectful Pronoun

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Situation A				1 (11%)	1 (8%)	2 (10%)			4
Situation B	1 (100%)		1 (25%)		3 (25%)	10 (32%)	3 (17%)	10 (63%)	28
Situation C		1 (33%)		1 (100%)		21 (30%)	3 (38%)	3 (38%)	29
Situation D				3 (75%)	19 (79%)	6 (67%)	7 (78%)	6 (86%)	41
Situation E				9 (35%)	14 (74%)	1 (100%)		3 (100%)	27
Situation F				2 (67%)	1 (100%)	11 (22%)	5 (83%)	4 (20%)	23

# Intensifiers & Emphatic Particles

Intensifiers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Situation A				2 (22%)	6 (46%)	2 (10%)	3 (43%)	6 (35%)	19
Situation B					1 (8%)	5 (16%)	1 (10%)	5 (31%)	12
Situation C		1 (33%)			1 (17%)	16 (23%)	1 (13%)	4 (50%)	23
Situation D					8 (33%)	2 (22%)	7 (78%)	3 (43%)	20
Situation E		1 (50%)	12 (46%)	5 (26%)	1 (100%)			2 (67%)	20
Situation F						13 (27%)	1 (17%)	10 (50%)	24

Emphatic particles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Situation A				2 (22%)	3 (24%)	10 (50%)	6 (86%)	10 (59%)	31
Situation B	1 (100%)			1 (33%)	3 (25%)	10 (32%)	4 (40%)	6 (38%)	25
Situation C		1 (33%)			2 (33%)	45 (65%)	4 (50%)	4 (50%)	56
Situation D				2 (50%)	11 (46%)	6 (67%)	3 (33%)	7 (100%)	29
Situation E		1 (50%)	15 (58%)	10 (53%)	1 (100%)			2 (67%)	28
Situation F				2 (67%)	1 (100%)	33 (67%)	3 (50%)	10 (50%)	49

# External Modification

All	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
N	4	11	5	46	75	179	40	71	431
polite initiator					1 (1%)	6 (3%)	2 (5%)		9
apology		1 (9%)	2 (40%)	6 (13%)	12 (16%)	20 (11%)	2 (5%)		43
solidarity marker	1 (25%)	1 (9%)		3 (7%)	4 (5%)	20 (11%)	3 (8%)	4 (6%)	36
deference marker		4 (36%)	4 (80%)	23 (50%)	29 (39%)	63 (35%)	5 (13%)	4 (6%)	132
preparator				2 (4%)	2 (3%)	1 (1%)			5
disarmer					1 (1%)	4 (2%)			5
all mitigated	1 (25%)	5 (45%)	4 (80%)	26 (57%)	35 (47%)	93 (52%)	8 (19%)	8 (11%)	180
offensive initiator					2 (3%)	3 (2%)		3 (4%)	8
offensive address term									
exaggeration									
repetition				1 (2%)	7 (9%)	7 (4%)	7 (18%)	8 (11%)	30
lack of consideration						2 (1%)	1 (3%)	2 (3%)	5
breach of contract				2 (4%)	5 (7%)	9 (5%)	3 (8%)	11 (15%)	30
no excuse									
nuisance						4 (2%)	1 (3%)	2 (3%)	7
deceived expectations					2 (3%)		7 (18%)	2 (3%)	11
moral consciousness			1 (20%)	2 (4%)		11 (6%)	5 (13%)	3 (4%)	22
sarcasm	1 (25%)	1 (9%)		5 (11%)	9 (12%)	16 (9%)		17 (24%)	49
preaching				3 (7%)	13 (17%)	37 (21%)	14 (35%)	10 (14%)	77
all upgraded	1 (25%)	1 (9%)	1 (20%)	12 (26%)	29 (39%)	66 (37%)	27 (68%)	47 (66%)	184

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