EXPRESSIONS OF DISAGREEMENT IN THE TEXTBOOK AND CORPORA

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Abstract

This study aimed to check whether expressions of disagreement used in the business English textbook occur in BNC (British National Corpus) and COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English). Furthermore, it investigated other possible expressions and how the speakers minimize positive face threatening acts in BNC and COCA. This study applied corpus methods. The expressions were checked in the corpora. Then, the concordance lines were analyzed to see any patterns. It was found that some adverbs such as *strongly* and *completely* tend to occur in the expressions of disagreement. Expressions in the textbook are only built by the word *disagree* such as *I disagree*. However, there are expressions developed by the phrase *not agree* such as *I do not agree* in BNC and COCA. The expressions in the textbook and corpora show that the speakers used *I'm sorry* and *I'm afraid* to show politeness. In BNC and COCA, the speakers also used contrastive conjunctions such as *although*, *even though*, and *but* to show politeness to the interlocutor as in *I respect his views although I did not agree with them*. They, moreover, gave opinions when they used expressions of disagreement.

Keywords: disagreement, corpus, face threatening acts

INTRODUCTION

One of the needs in the workplace is ability to use English for communication. English is an international language in which people with different mother tongues can communicate with it. The use of English helps people to do business. To equip the university students to deal with this situation in their future, business English class is offered. The textbook was developed for this class.

A textbook plays a prominent role in learning. It contains learning materials to be used by the students. The students were exposed to the texts in the textbook. From the texts, the students get the model of language use. Giving model is important to enable the students for using English. For most Indonesian students, English is a foreign language. They are hardly exposed to English. The textbook is the main source to get the model of language use. Therefore, the textbook needs to contain language models that represent the language use in the real life. It helps the students acquire language that is really used in real life. In the real world, the students will understand the language used by others. They also will produce language that is naturally used.

To check the language use in the textbook, a comparison of language in the textbook and a corpus can be conducted. A corpus consists of a number of texts. It is saved electronically (Conrad, 2005). A corpus can be divided into several sub-corpora (corpora is the plural form of corpus). The sub-corpora can be spoken or written language. They also can be differed based on the genre such as news, fiction, and academic. To choose which sub-corpus is appropriate, it is necessary to suit it to the goal of corpus investigation.

One of the language functions given in the textbook is expression of disagreement. Some expressions can be used to disagree are presented. The students get the language model by being exposed to this material. Then, the students should give responses showing disagreement to some statements given in dialogues.

Expressing disagreement should be done carefully to maintain the relationship with the interlocutors because it is an act of rejecting one's ideas and thought. The owner of the ideas and thought can feel being threatened. Brown and Levinson (1992) mentioned it as a face threatening act. Every participant in communication has a face. He tries hard to create a good image of his face. The face is what he wants others see from him. When his face is threatened, he was loose his face. The image that he built is threatened. In order to save interlocutor's face

144

in interaction, language use needs to be considered. This is a part of politeness theory. Politeness can be seen through his language.

Based on the explanation above, the study sought to answer the research questions as follows:

1. Do the expressions of disagreement in the textbook occur in BNC and COCA?
2. What other expressions of disagreement can be found in BNC and COCA?
3. How do the speakers reduce positive face threatening acts in disagreement in the textbook, BNC, and COCA?

LITERATURE REVIEW

A textbook is a source of learning materials. Tomlinson (2011, p.2) stated what it means by a material as *"anything which is used by teachers or learners to facilitate the learning of a language."* Linguistic is one of the aspects of material for learning a language. It can be evaluated to provide helpful insight for learning. Corpus linguistics can play a role in materials evaluation especially in linguistic aspect of the materials.

Fligelstone (1993) mentioned that corpus linguistics also can be useful for materials development. The phraseology of the texts can be studied using corpus linguistics. In the context of word use, collocation and n-gram (lexical bundle) can be studied. Collocation focuses on what word tends to occur with other words. In learning materials, it gives model of how language works. For instance, it gives example that the word *lunch* may collocate with verbs *have* and *take*. The collocations become *have lunch* and *take lunch*.

N-gram (lexical bundle) shows how three or more words can occur as a chunk such as in the phrase *the study aims at*. This phrase consists of four words so it is called 4 gram. Furthermore, corpus linguistics can be used to investigate how particular structure works or what particular structure becomes the salient feature of particular genre. For example, Biber (1999) explored that complex noun phrases are more frequently used in academic texts and news than other genres because they are used to deliver much information. Such finding can be accommodated in developing learning materials for academic language. In the level of discourse, structure of the texts in particular genre can be studied by using keywords in the text (Thornbury, 2010).

Corpus linguistics can used to compare or contrast two types of the texts. It focuses on particular elements. In learning materials evaluation, it studies the element in learning materials and corpus. Then, it scrutinizes whether language in the materials and corpus are similar or different. Based on the result, it suggests what should be improved in learning materials.

A study that focuses on expressions of agreement in the textbook and corpus was conducted by Seto (2009). It used 54 expressions from 5 textbooks. Those expressions were checked in Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English (HKCSE). Those expressions were classified into mild, normal and strong. Those expressions were used in the meetings, discussions, and tutorial. There are only seven expressions that can be found in HKCSE. Some single words such as *agree*, *hmm*, *okay*, and *right* were found to be the potential expressions to show agreement. The occurrences of those words that function to show agreement were found in the textbooks. The expressions of agreement in the textbook contains of one up to ten words. However, the expressions in the textbook commonly appear as one word. The language in the textbook does not reflect the real use of language. Moreover, there is no explanation about the different function of each expression. The previous study only examined the expressions of agreement.

The expressions of disagreement in the textbook and corpus have not been dealt with. Disagreement is an action that might threaten positive face of the speakers (Brown and Levinson, 1992). Positive face consists of image that the speaker wants to be acknowledged and respected in interaction. Threatening one's face would break the relationship among the participants. It is possible that the speakers try to minimize positive face threatening act with several ways. To be able not to threat interlocutor's face, the participant needs to use language as appropriate as possible while stating disagreement. The ways the speakers reduce the possible face threatening acts in stating disagreement were explored.

RESEARCH METHOD

Linguistic corpus was applied in this study. Its main concern is to investigate the patterns of language in a corpus by using

computer technology. The patterns that are difficult to find manually would be found more easily. The patterns reflect how the speakers usually use language in order to convey specific functions.

The data that are expressions of disagreement were taken from the textbook used in Business English class, British National Corpus (BNC), and COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English). The corpora consists both spoken and written language.

The language in the textbook used in this study appears in the conversation settings. It means it represents the use of spoken language. Therefore, the sub-corpus of spoken language was chosen in this study to make the comparison balanced.

The expressions in the textbook were checked in the BNC and COCA to see their occurrences. If those expressions occur, they are used in real communication. To find other possible expressions, the collocates of the keywords were studied to find any possible patterns. The collocates are 4 words to the left and right of the keywords. Studying the collocates helps to recognize patterns.

To see how the speakers reduce the potency of positive face threatening acts, the collocates and the concordance lines were explored. The ways were analyzed based on politeness theory (Brown and Levinson, 1992).

DISCUSSION

The expressions in the textbook were checked in BNC and COCA. There are four expressions that can be found in the textbook as follows:

- *I'm sorry, I have to disagree.*
- *I'm sorry, I can't agree that.*
- *I'm afraid I disagree.*
- *I tend to disagree.*

It is only the last expression that can be found in BNC and COCA. To find more suitable results, the main phrases of the expressions were used as the basis for query in BNC and COCA. The phrases and their frequencies are as follows:

Table 1: Frequency of expressions of disagreement in BNC and COCA

Phrases	BNC	COCA
I have to disagree	2	67
I can't agree	0	257
I disagree	20	1453
I tend to disagree	0	4

The most frequent expression in BNC and COCA is *I disagree*. *I can't agree* is in the second place based on the frequency in COCA. This expression does not exist in BNC. However, the expression of *I cannot agree* occur in BNC as in *I am afraid that I cannot agree with you that all rivers … .* *I have to disagree* is in the third position based on the frequency in COCA. *I tend to disagree* is in the last position. There is no occurrence of this expression in BNC.

The phrases that were built by the keywords *disagree* and *not agree* were set to find other possible expressions. The collocates of *disagree* were found in BNC and COCA. *With* is one of the collocates of *disagree*. *Disagree* tends to occur as *disagree with*. This is different from the examples given in the textbook. All examples never occur as *disagree with*. Therefore, the examples in the textbook should be given in more complete way as in *I have to disagree with …*, *I disagree with …*, and *I tend to disagree with … .* For the phrase *not agree*, it also collocates with *with*. *Not agree with* occurs for 16 times in BNC and 328 times in COCA. Phrases *not agree with* tend to occur with *auxiliary* such as *do*, *would*, *might*, *could*, dan *did*. The occurrences can be seen as in the table below.

Table 2: Frequencies of expressions of collocation+*not agree with*

Phrases	BNC	COCA
I may not agree with	1	16
I do not agree with	28	52
I would not agree with	0	6
I might not agree with	0	2
I could not agree with	0	7
I did not agree with	4	7

Adverbs are collocates that tend to occur with *agree*. It can be on the left or right side. The following is the information about the frequency of adverbs on the left side of *agree*.

146

Table 3: Adverbs on the left side of *disagree*

BNC	COCA
totally (7)	respectfully (87)
	totally (77)
	strongly (73)
	completely (45)
	obviously (29)
	certainly (25)

The adverbs occur as in the following sentences:

- *Well, I strongly disagree with both of them*. (COCA)
- *Let me say this, I respectfully disagree with my colleague Mr Friedman for the following reasons*. (COCA)

Adverbs that tend to appear on the right side of *not agree* can be seen in the table below.

Table 4: Adverbs on the right side of *disagree*

BNC	COCA
strongly (1)	strongly (39)
completely (1)	completely (30)
	totally (18)
	entirely (15)
	profoundly (12)

The following is the examples of sentences in which the adverbs were used.

- *Sorry, George, I must disagree with you completely on that*. (COCA)
- *Well, I disagree with that totally*. (COCA)

The adverbs show to what extend speakers disagree. Most of them such as *strongly, completely, totally*, and *entirely* show the maximum point of disagreement stated by the speakers. Some adverbs such as *certainly* and *obviously* represent how sure the speakers are. The collocations of such adverbs with *disagree* and *not agree with* should be accommodated in the textbook to represent the real use of language.

Several ways were used to minimize positive face threatening acts in the textbook. Phrases *I am sorry* and *I am afraid* were given as the examples. The phrase *I am sorry* tends to appear with other phrases that show disagreement such as *I disagree* or *I do not disagree*. The contraction form of *I'm* is more common in spoken language. To consider the nature of spoken language, the contraction form is better to use in the examples given in the textbook.

The phrase *not agree* never collocates with *sorry* in BNC and COCA. The keyword *disagree* does not collocate with *sorry* in BNC. However, the collocations can be found in COCA as in the following sentences.

- *I'm sorry to disagree with you too, Lou*. (COCA)

The phrase *I'm afraid* occurs with expressions that show disagreement in BNC and COCA. *Afraid* never collocates with *disagree* in BNC. The following sentences are the examples of how minimizing face threatening acts were done in giving disagreement.

- *I'm afraid we could not agree over certain ...* (BNC)
- *Well, I'm afraid I disagree with most of the discussion that's go on so far*. (COCA)

Based on the discussion above, the contraction form of *I'm* appears rather than *I am*. Therefore, *I'm sorry* and *I'm afraid* are more natural to use because they occur in BNC and COCA. The phrases *I'm (am)* and *I'm afraid (afraid)* are common expressions in English used to show politeness.

Some expressions to show disagreement are begun with particle *well*. It was found that *well* collocates with *disagree* in BNC and COCA. *Well* was used to soften speakers' disagreement. Therefore, the listeners did not feel that their faces were threatened.

The keyword *disagree* collocated with *even though* and *although*. The following sentences show how they occur in sentences.

- *I supported the president even though I disagree with him*. (COCA)
- *So even though we may disagree on some of the details of it, I am very encouraged ...* (COCA)
- *I think they did a good job although I disagree with their decision not to include Ross Perrot*. (BNC)
- *Although I disagree with you about the capability of our Medjays, I respect your judgement*. (BNC)
- *I respect his views although I did not agree with them*. (BNC)

Both *even though* and *although* carry contradiction. The speakers contrasted the ideas of disagreement and positive values. In

147

the first example, the speaker still gives support. In the second example, the speaker gives positive effect that he was very encouraged. In the third example, the speaker gives compliment by acknowledging it as a good job. In the fourth and fifth examples, the speaker shows respect. Moreover, *not agree* collocates with *but* which also shows contradiction. It can be seen in COCA as in the following example.

- *And, so you know, I may not agree with the President but I respect the office. (COCA)*

This case never occur in the textbook. It is necessary to include it in the textbook because it makes the conversation represents the way speakers maintain relationship with others.

Disagree collocates with *think* and *because* in COCA. However, the collocations cannot be found in BNC.

- *Well, I would disagree. I think that the movement that Sarah Palin has brought is real.* (COCA)
- *Well, I disagree a little bit because I don't think we've forced vaccine manufactures out.* (COCA)

It shows that the speaker gives more explanation in the form of opinion towards his disagreement. The phrases *I think* and *I don't think* soften speakers' disagreement. Providing reasons makes their disagreement becomes more logic. It gives impression that disagreement is not only a rejection. The speaker gives their views that might improve interlocutor's ideas. Therefore, the speakers do not directly feel threatened.

The speakers give opinions (*I think* and *I don't think*) to show reasons. It can be seen that expressions of disagreement is related to giving opinion. The implication to language teaching is giving both expressions of disagreement and giving opinion in one dialogue in modeling language use in the learning materials.

The study provides some expressions of disagreement that can be used in modeling language use. The basic expressions were given in the textbook. The ones that are provided here is the modification of the basic expressions. The first modification is by giving adverbs such as in the following expressions.

1. *Respectfully*
   - *I respectfully disagree ... .(COCA)*
   - *I regretfully and respectfully disagree with ... . (COCA)*

- *Well, I just happen to respectfully disagree with ... . (COCA)*

2. *Strongly*
   - *I disagree strongly with ... . (COCA)*
   - *We disagree quite strongly ... . (BNC)*

3. *Completely*
   - *I must disagree completely with you. (COCA)*
   - *I completely disagree with your thoughts … . (BNC)*

Other expressions can be used is to show politeness by using *I'm afraid* and *I'm sorry*. The contraction forms were used as follows:

1. *I'm afraid*
   - *I'm afraid I disagree … . (COCA)*
   - *I'm afraid that I disagree ... . (BNC)*

2. *I'm sorry*
   - *I'm sorry to disagree with ... . (COCA)*
   - *I'm sorry, but I disagree ... . (COCA)*
   - *I'm sorry to disagree with you, because ... . (COCA)*

Other expressions can be built by using *although*, *even though*, and *but*.

- *... although I would disagree with ... .(COCA)*
- *Although I disagree with ... about ... , I respect ... . (BNC)*
- *Even though we may disagree, … . (COCA)*
- *… but I totally disagree with that (BNC)*

Furthermore, the expressions can sound more like spoken language by using *well*.

- *Well, I disagree with ... . (COCA)*
- *Well, I do not agree with ... . (COCA)*

Moreover, *I think* can be the element of the expressions of disagreement to give reasons.

- *I think ... I disagree. (COCA)*

CONCLUSION

Main phrases of expressions of disagreement presented in the textbook occur in BNC and COCA. However, the construction form of *I'm* tend to occur rather than *I am*. The contraction form is the characteristic of spoken language.

Studying data in BNC and COCA results in expressions of disagreement that are built by auxiliary+*not agree*. Besides, the speakers also used adverbs such as *totally*, *obviously*, and *completely*.

To minimize the positive face threatening acts, the textbook only presents the

phrases *I am sorry* and *I am afraid*. Those expressions occur in BNC and COCA in contraction forms *I'm*. The findings from BNC and COCA show that the speakers show respects, gives compliments, and give reasons. The speakers give effort to maintain relationship by reducing the potency of interlocutors' positive face threatening acts.

Further studies can use more corpora as the source of comparison. In addition, it might use more specific corpus such as spoken language in business corpus. It can also be extended by exploring participants' responses when the interlocutors disagree with them. Studying the responses will be useful for developing learning materials. Therefore, the dialogues presented in learning materials will represent what happen in real communication. Giving such kinds of model equips the students to communicate with others in English.

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