

A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF DISAGREEMENT ACT IN *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS* MOVIE

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Abstract

This research aims to examine and describe the types of disagreement acts employed in *The Fault in Our Stars* movie, identify the way certain types of disagreement acts are expressed, and reveal the reasons for using certain types of disagreement acts in the movie. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. The data of the research were in the form of utterances that were spoken by the characters in *The Fault in Our Stars* movie. The context of the research was the dialogs of the movie. Meanwhile, the main data source of this study was a movie script of *The Fault in Our Stars*. The primary instrument of this study was the writer herself who was involved in the whole process of data collection and data analysis. The researcher conducted note-taking to collect the data and employed content analysis to analyze the data. The results of this research are as follows. First, there are two types of disagreement acts found in the movie. They are mitigated disagreement acts and unmitigated disagreement acts. The mitigated ones become the main type of disagreement acts performed by the characters. Second, each type of disagreement act is realized in some ways. Mitigated disagreement acts are realized by (1) the use of hedges, (2) the use of modal verbs, (3) question objection, (4) objective explanation, (5) personal emotion, (6) changing topic, (7) shifting responsibility, (8) in-group identity marker, and (9) token agreement. Meanwhile, unmitigated disagreement acts are realized in the form of (1) a short direct of opposite orientation, (2) sarcastic remark, and (3) a short rude question. Objective explanation becomes the most used realization because the characters want to minimize biased information. Third, there are eight reasons for performing certain disagreement act strategies in the movie. Those reasons are categorized by analyzing the setting and the situation of the conversations depending on their contexts. The reasons that can be found are because the character is (1) showing uncertainty about his/her own idea, (2) respecting the first speaker, (3) refusing the first speaker's judgment, (4) showing off authorities, (5) prohibiting the first speaker to do an action, (6) making an excuse of the initial statement, (7) avoiding the topic of conversation, and (8) criticizing the first speaker's statement. The most appeared reason is because the characters are refusing the first speaker's judgment as a result of entirely different arguments between two speakers.

INTRODUCTION

People use language in everyday's life because it is one of people's ways to express their minds, feelings, ideas, and emotions. When two or more people communicate and express their opinions, it is inevitable that they may have different opinions and say their disagreement. Disagreement can cause problem and make the relationship between speakers broken. This paper employs pragmatic approach as one of language aspects to study the phenomena of disagreement through utterance.

Pragmatics can be described as the study of contextual meaning (Yule, 1996: 3). To study pragmatics, people need to not only understand the language as a communication tool but also

consider the context and conditions in which the language is used. Pragmatics has some topics of discussions. One of them is a study of dispreferred respond which is an unexpected answer. Disagreement is one of forms of dispreferred second part which is initiated by assessment.

Sifianou (2012: 1554) states that disagreement can be defined as the expression of a view that differs from that expressed by another speaker. According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 66), disagreement belongs to acts that threaten the positive face-want by indicating that the speaker does not care about the addressee's feelings or wants.

According to Locher (2008: 113), there are two types of disagreements. They are mitigated disagreement and unmitigated disagreement. Mitigated verbal disagreements are disagreements whose potential face-threatening force has been softened or minimized (Panic-Kavcic, 2013: 449). Meanwhile, unmitigated disagreement acts are the ones which omit the mitigation tools in the sentence.

There are several ways of expressing mitigated disagreement acts. First, the use of hedge which is defined by Yule (1996: 130) are cautious notes expressed about how an utterance is to be taken or used when giving some information. Second, the use of modal verbs which are used as markers of putative and tentative meaning (Panic-Kavcic, 2013: 450).

Third, question objection by giving requests for clarification to the previous speaker's statement is a strategy to help 'buying time' (Kreutel, 2007: 4). Fourth, objective explanation is used to provide unbiased information on relevant causes. Fifth, giving personal or emotionally colored reasons for disagreeing to indicate that the speakers 'cannot help feeling the way they do' (Locher, 2004: 127). Sixth, changing topic is shown by shifting the other issue which is unrelated or irrelevant to the previous issue that is discussed by the previous speaker.

Seventh, shifting responsibility that forces the interactants being not responsible for what they are reporting (Locher, 2004: 130). Eighth, the use of in-group identity marker or address term are used to indicate a degree of relationship between the first and second speakers and to increase the degree of

friendliness (Panic-Kavcic, 2013: 451). Ninth, down-toning the effect of any statements means giving a lower degree of the intensity or importance of the statements.

Finally, people use token agreement which means combining agreement and disagreement components that are presented in the same turn (Pomerantz, 1984: 75). Moreover, there are three ways of expressing unmitigated disagreement acts. They are a short direct of opposite orientation, sarcastic remark, and a short rude question. In delivering disagreement acts, people have certain reason which can influence the choice of types of disagreement acts they make.

Movies reflect real life. Thus, observing the phenomenon of disagreement acts can be conducted through movie. One of movies that represent the phenomena is *The Fault in Our Stars*. It is an American romantic comedy-drama that centers on Hazel Grace Lancaster, a girl teenager who is diagnosed having thyroid cancer, and Augustus Waters, a boy teenager who has lost one of his legs from bone cancer, who meet in a cancer patients' support group. They travel to Amsterdam to meet Hazel's favorite mysterious author, Peter Van Houten who writes *The Imperial Affliction*. During the trip, the relationship between Hazel and Augustus grows from friendship to lover.

The objectives of the research are to describe the types of disagreement acts employed in *The Fault in Our Star* movie, to identify the way certain types of disagreement act are expressed, and to reveal the reasons that influence the characters use certain types.

data sheet, and coding each datum in the data sheet.

Data analysis is conducted after the whole data are collected and it should determine the focus and strategies used in data collection (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009: 190-191). Thus, in analyzing the data, the researcher conducted some steps in the following.

1. Categorizing the data into each type and realization of disagreement acts based on Locher's categorization in the data sheet.
2. Analyzing and describing the data.
3. Applying the trustworthiness of the data to reach its credibility.
4. Making conclusions and suggestions of the analysis based on the results.

To reach trustworthiness of the data, the researcher used triangulation technique by verifying to the expert lecturers and other students about the relevant theories and the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to the findings, there are two types of disagreement act strategies found in *The Fault in Our Stars* movie; they are mitigated disagreement act and unmitigated disagreement act. Each type of strategies is performed in different realizations.

The mitigated disagreement acts are realized by the use of hedges, the use of modal verbs, question objection, objective explanation, personal emotion, changing topic, shifting responsibility, in-group identity marker, and token agreement. However, not all realizations of disagreement acts which have presented in the literature review are found in this movie. The

This research is expected to give some contributions. Theoretically, this research could be beneficial to enrich knowledge for the development of linguistic study for students within the same major. Practically, the results of the research are expected to show many kinds of disagreement responses to be used in daily life.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach because it describes and analyzes the phenomena of the study in narrative descriptions. Qualitative research is an interpretative research since it identifies reflexively biases, values, and personal background that should be interpreted by the researcher (Creswell, 2009: 177). Thus, the focus of this research is to get a deeper understanding of disagreement acts based on certain contexts found in *The Fault in Our Stars* movie.

The data of the research were in the form of utterances that were spoken by the characters in *The Fault in Our Stars* movie. The context of the research was the dialogs of the movie. Meanwhile, the main data source of this study was a movie script.

The primary instrument of this study is the writer herself who is involved in the whole process of data collection and data analysis. The secondary instruments are a data sheet and some writing equipment such as a notebook and a pen.

The researcher did some steps to collect the data. They are watching the movie and observing the objective of the research, reviewing related literature, taking a note on the disagreement acts based on the script and the movie, collecting and classifying the data in the

type which is not found is down-toning the effect of statement and the most used type of mitigated disagreement is the realization of objective explanation.

Meanwhile, the occurrence of unmitigated disagreement act is realized in three ways. They are a short direct of opposite orientation, sarcastic remark, and a short rude question. A short direct of opposite orientation is considered as the main realization of unmitigated disagreement act.

Furthermore, there are eight reasons for performing certain disagreement act strategies. The reasons that can be found are because the character is showing uncertainty of his/her own idea, respecting the first speaker, refusing the first speaker's judgment, showing off authorities, prohibiting the first speaker to do an action, making an excuse of the initial statement, avoiding the topic of conversation, and criticizing the first speaker's statement. Those reasons are categorized by analyzing the setting and the situation of the conversations depending on their contexts.

From the findings, the characters in the movie produce disagreement acts mostly because they are refusing the first speaker's judgment which seems contradictory with their own opinions or realities.

For further explanation, each type of disagreement acts with its realizations and reasons will be presented one by one.

In *The Fault in Our Stars* movie, mitigated disagreement act is realized by the use of hedges, the use of modal verbs, question objection, objective explanation, personal emotion, changing topic, shifting responsibility,

in-group identity marker, and token agreement. The example of hedges can be seen in the following dialogue.

Hazel : So how are your eyes, Isaac?
Isaac : They're good. They're not in my head is the only problem. Besides that...

Augustus : **Well, umm, it appears my entire body is made out of cancer now. So, sorry to one-up you, dude.**

(Datum 32)

Augustus' utterance is considered as the use of hedges since he performs three kinds of hedges. They are 'well', 'umm', and 'it appears' in his disagreement expression. Augustus uses a hedge 'well' as a preface to indicate a topic change. He does not want Isaac feel sad only because he has lost his sight as he himself suffers a worse condition that his entire body is attacked by cancer which will make him dead soon.

The next example is taken to show the occurrence of modal verb.

Hazel : Maybe there is no point.

Augustus : **I won't accept that.**

(Datum 24)

Modal verb is used by Augustus in his expression 'I won't' to indicate that he disagrees with Hazel for her opinion. In this context, Augustus asks Hazel what is the point of believing Heaven and Hazel says that maybe there is no point. Thus, Augustus answers her using a modal verb 'will not' in his expression to mitigate his disagreement in responding Hazel's answer.

The other type of mitigated disagreement act is the realization of question objection.

Hazel : I know. It is rather abrupt.

Augustus : **"Rather abrupt"? Are you kidding?** It's evil! I mean, I understand that she dies but there's an unwritten contract

between author and reader. And I feel like ending your book in the middle of a sentence violates that contract, **don't you think?**

(Datum 13)

Augustus performs three kinds of objection that he says in question forms. First, he says 'rather abrupt?' repeating Hazel's initial assessment that refers to the novel. He does not think that when the novel ends in the middle of sentences and the main characters of the story are unknown is appropriate enough. Therefore, he adds 'are you kidding' to Hazel and continues with his own explanation about Peter Van Houten who has violated the unwritten contract. He also ends his statement by questioning Hazel 'don't you think' to emphasize his disagreement.

An example of giving objective explanation can be seen in the dialogue below.

Hazel : Yeah, no, it's just a metaphor. He puts the killing thing in his mouth but he doesn't actually give it the power to kill him.

Flight Attendant : **Well, that metaphor, it's prohibited on today's flight.**

(Datum 23)

Hazel tries to explain to the flight attendant that Augustus does not really smoke by describing the metaphor. However, the flight attendant does not agree with the action and prohibit Augustus to put the cigarette in his mouth by giving an objective explanation 'it's prohibited on today's flight' which means that people are not allowed to smoke in every airplane even only putting the cigarette; it is the general rule that all passengers should obey.

The example below is one of the examples of stating personal emotion as a disagreement act.

Augustus : No. No.

Hazel : **No? I like it.**

(Datum 22)

Hazel employs personal emotion in delivering her disagreement as she directly confesses what she feels toward the title she has written by saying 'I like it' as a response to Augustus who says 'No' regarding the title.

The next example is a disagreement act by changing topic of conversation.

Hazel : Well, that is the kind of thing I would know with a fake ID.

Frannie : **Can you just get in the car, please?**

(Datum 8)

Frannie's response 'can you just get in the car, please?' does not correspond with the initial statement which is stated by Hazel who talks about a fake ID she should have. It means that Frannie does not want to talk about a fake ID anymore as she disagrees if Hazel owns that kind of thing only for night clubbing. Her strategy works quite well as Hazel does not talk about it anymore.

An example of the occurrence of shifting responsibility is shown in datum 35 below.

Hazel : You are special, Augustus.

Augustus : **Yeah, I know. But... you know what I mean.**

(Datum 35)

In this conversation, Augustus employs shifting responsibility which can be seen in the expression 'you know what I mean'. It indicates that Augustus tries to make Hazel understand the real meaning of his sentence. Augustus wants to be meaningful and special to everyone in this world so that he can die in peace. That is why Hazel tries to convince Augustus that he is

special to her and there is no need to make a big effort to be special. However, Augustus wants more and he knows that Hazel understands this.

The next example is using in-group identity marker that can be seen in the following.

Frannie : She just eats like a bird, she barely leaves the house.

Hazel : **I am not depressed, Mom.**
(Datum 1)

This conversation happens when Frannie is talking to Dr. Maria in a hospital about Hazel's strange behavior these days. When Frannie is describing her behaviors which lead into depression toward Dr. Maria, Hazel directly objects her mother's judgment by directly saying that she is not depressed. She adds her statement with the identity-marker 'Mom' right after that as an indication of a close relationship.

The last type of mitigated disagreement act is token agreement which is stated below.

Hazel : Yes. I'm so glad that you liked it.

Augustus : **Yes, I did. But the ending.**
(Datum 12)

'Yes, I did. But the ending' is an example of token agreement because it employs an agreement plus a disagreement within one set of utterance. At first, Augustus agrees with Hazel's statement that he likes the book by saying 'Yes, I did'. However, he directly adds his disagreement statement which is contrary with his agreement. By saying this, he wants to express that he actually likes the whole story but he does not really agree with the ending which seems absurd to him.

In addition, there are several ways to realize unmitigated disagreement acts in *The Fault in Our Stars* movie. They are a short direct of opposite orientation, sarcastic remark, and a

short rude question. An example of a short direct of opposite orientation can be seen as follow.

Dr. Maria : She's depressed.
Hazel : **I'm not depressed!**
(Datum 2)

Hazel directly expresses her disagreement toward Dr. Maria and Frannie's judgment by yelling at them. The expression 'I am not depressed' is considered as a strategy of opposite orientation as Hazel only uses a simple utterance which is contrary with Dr. Maria's assessment.

The next example is presented to show the use of sarcastic remark.

Dr. Simmons: It would increase some risks.

Hazel : **But so does going to the mall.**

(Datum 16)

Dr. Simmons, who takes the biggest responsibility for Hazel's medication, thinks that it is too dangerous for Hazel if she still intends to leave. In addition, Amsterdam is far enough from Indiana. As a response of disagreement, Hazel answers that going to the mall would be dangerous too. She intends to insult Dr. Simmons' way of thinking sarcastically because he lets Hazel go to the mall before.

The last type of unmitigated disagreement act is a short rude question which is stated in the following example.

Frannie : Well, then you've got to stay healthy. Come on, just eat something, honey.

Hazel : **"Stay healthy"?** Okay, I'm not healthy, and I'm gonna die. **Do you realize that?** I'm dying, and you're gonna be here and you're not gonna have anyone to look after, or hover around and you're not gonna be a mother anymore, and I'm sorry

but there's nothing I can do
about that. So, can I please go?

(Datum 42)

Hazel, who disagrees with Frannie's judgment directly shouts at Frannie by giving a rude question. The expression 'Stay healthy?' is a repetition of Frannie's initial statement 'You've got to stay healthy'. She disagrees with this statement because she herself and her parents know that Hazel is not healthy due to the fact that she has cancer in her body. She wants to remind her parents by adding another rude question 'Do you realize that?' in her expression.

Moving to the next discussion, there are eight reasons of disagreement acts employed by the characters which are analyzed by considering the context of the conversation. Among the eight reasons which are found in the movie, the characters often express their disagreements because they are refusing the first speaker's judgment as a result of entirely different arguments between two speakers or characters. The example is stated in the following dialogue.

Frannie : Hazel, you have to be hungry.
 You didn't even eat lunch.

Hazel : **I'm just not hungry.**

(Datum 36)

This datum shows an occurrence of disagreement acts which is performed by Hazel by giving an opposite orientation of the initial statement. In this context, Frannie assesses that Hazel must be angry looking at the fact that Hazel has not had lunch today. This expression indicates that Frannie asks Hazel to eat first before going out. Hazel, who feels no hunger, does not accept Frannie's assessment by saying that she is not hungry. In this case, Hazel utters a disagreement act because she refuses her mother's judgment.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and discussions, the researcher draws the conclusions as presented in the following paragraphs.

There are two types of disagreement acts found in *The Fault in Our Star* movie. They are mitigated disagreement acts and unmitigated disagreement acts. The mitigated disagreement acts become the main type of disagreements which are performed by the characters. They prefer to express mitigated disagreements since they want to emphasize their politeness strategies to others. It is due to the fact that they are aware of the effect of face saving act in disagreements that could maintain their social relationship.

Each type of disagreement acts is realized in some ways. From ten realizations of mitigated disagreement acts, only nine realizations are performed by the characters. They are the use of hedges, the use of modal verbs, question objection, objective explanation, personal emotion, changing topic, shifting responsibility, in-group identity marker, and token agreement. Objective explanation becomes the main realization because they want to minimize biased information to make the others believe in what they say. It appears as the speakers need to defend their arguments.

In addition, the characters in the movie use unmitigated disagreement acts in three ways. They are a short direct of opposite orientation, sarcastic remark, and a short rude question. A short direct of opposite orientation becomes the most used realization because the characters want to show their disagreements directly. This strategy is also the shortest one to deliver

disagreement expression especially when the characters are arguing.

Based on the findings, there are eight reasons for performing certain disagreement act strategies in the movie. Those reasons are categorized by analyzing the setting and the situation of the conversations depending on their contexts. The reasons that can be found are because the character is showing uncertainty about his/her own idea, respecting the first speaker, refusing the first speaker's judgment, showing off authorities, prohibiting the first speaker to do an action, making an excuse of the initial statement, avoiding the topic of conversation, and criticizing the first speaker's statement. The characters in the movie often express their disagreements because they are refusing the first speaker's judgment as a result of entirely different arguments between two speakers or characters.

Furthermore, the researcher proposes some suggestions for further research. Students majoring in linguistics are suggested to conduct research about disagreement acts. They can use their own theories in analyzing the reasons or functions to provide a deeper understanding.

Other researchers who are interested in conducting a research about disagreement are suggested to investigate other aspects besides the types, realizations, and reasons such as functions and responses to disagreement acts. They can choose other subject of analysis like novels that contain several problems that represent disagreement acts such as arguing, debating, and protesting.

The last but not least, the readers are suggested to understand more about the aspects

of disagreement such as awareness of disagreement acts toward themselves and how to deliver their disagreements in society. They will know what strategy to be chosen so that they can maintain their politeness in society.

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