

## ACKNOWLEDGING PEERS DURING DISAGREEMENTS

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**Abstract:** This article describes strategies to promote collaboration applied by students when expressing disagreements. By using Conversational Analysis (CA), the researcher collected and analyzed data from fourteen doctorate classroom discussions. The results show that the students applied four ways of acknowledging peers during disagreements. Suggestions are put forward at the end of the article.

**Key words:** acknowledging peers, disagreements, discussions.

Expressing disagreement is one way of showing one's intellectual stance which is different from others' position. In academic settings, students are trained to evaluate other people's arguments, disprove them and then offer their own stance. Without doing this, others hardly see their contribution and their intellectual ability. To show the participants' independence, disagreements and verbal attacks are encouraged at meetings. (Tannen, 1998:269).

However, a number of studies show that disagreement is dispreferred by the addressee (Mori, 1999; Pomerantz, 1984; Sack, 1973; Waring, 2000 & 2001). Disagreements may threaten another person's face and may cause a dispute which prevents participants from further collaboration. Therefore, discussion participants are often put in a dilemmatic position when they should express their disagreements during discussions (Tracy & Baratz, 1993:309-310).

To solve this, disagreements are expressed strategically to minimize the challenge to the other's face and to avoid barriers for more collaboration in seeking for understanding. The speaker expresses disagreements with two features—delaying the disagreement and stating the disagreement weakly and partially (Pomerantz, 1984; Mori, 1999; Waring, 2000 & 2001). In Pomerantz's (1984) study, disagreements are shown through rhetorical questions, questioning repeats and statements.

Waring's (2000 & 2001) findings show that participants express their disagreements by employing two strategies, i.e. peer referencing and asserting vulnerability.

The conclusion of the previous studies that a disagreement is a dispreferred response is challenged by two other studies by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (2002) and Kakava (2002). The two studies attempted to prove the reverse. However, their findings do not present adequate evidence to their arguments. In both studies, in addition to the direct expressions of disagreements and strong disagreements, a mitigation action can still be found, which shows that the speakers do not intend to be in a direct opposition to the addressees. The speakers express their disagreements weakly and partially. Blum-Kulka *et al.*'s (2002:1576-1579) study reports three kinds of disagreements: ungrounded disagreement, grounded disagreement, and downgraded disagreement. In addition, Kakava (2002) also reports three big clusters of disagreeing strategies: strong disagreements, strong yet mitigated disagreements, and mitigated disagreements.

Thus, the two studies just strengthen the conclusion of the previous studies that a disagreement is a dispreferred response. This is in line with Brown and Levinson (1987). They considered a disagreement as one of the face threatening acts (FTAs). Disagreeing, intrinsically, may threaten positive face-want—if it is spoken blatantly, it shows that the speaker does not care about the addressee's feelings and wants.

To promote collaboration in search for a shared understanding during classroom discussions, the speaker may consider the following three desires suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987:68):

In the context of mutual vulnerability of face, any rational agent will seek to avoid these face-threatening acts, or will employ certain strategies to minimize the threat. In other words, he will take into consideration the relative weightings of (at least) three wants: (a) the want to communicate the content of the FTA  $x$ , (b) the want to be efficient or urgent, and (c) the want to maintain H's face to any degree. Unless (b) is greater than (c), S will want to minimize the threat of his FTA.

The question as to how the discussion participants in doctorate classrooms apply verbal strategies in expressing critical thinking through disagreements while still maintaining collaboration to search for understandings is important. Different positions and understandings expressed in a manner which does not consider the

addressee's condition may cause a deadlock in a discussion. To avoid this, strategies which can break the stone wall of communication need to be applied.

The present article reports a cluster of strategies applied by doctorate students in an Indonesian university setting to promote collaboration while expressing disagreements, that is, acknowledging peer.

## **METHOD**

This study applied Conversational Analysis (hereafter, CA). CA was used to describe disagreeing strategies used by students during classroom discussions. With CA, the researcher tried to find kinds of disagreeing strategies through detailed examination of the turn-taking and sequential structure of the discussions (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Heritage & Atkinson, 1984; Hutchby & Wooffit, 1998; Levinson, 1983; Sack, 1984; Schegloff, 1984; Wei, 2002). However, not all strategies are displayed in this article; the researcher focuses only on acknowledging peers during disagreement.

The study was conducted at an English Education Program at a state university in East Java. The data were in the forms of the utterances of seven doctorate students during classroom discussions. The data collection was done along a semester course on 'Topics in Foreign Language Teaching'. The main instrument was the researcher, equipped with field-notes and an audio-tape recorder. The researcher observed and recorded the data from fourteen classroom discussions.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings show that to promote collaboration, the students acknowledge their peers during disagreement. Acknowledging peers during disagreements as a strategy is applied to express disagreements politely. This strategy resembles to that of Brown and Levinson's (1987:101) positive politeness strategy. This strategy is applied to redress the positive face of the addressee, that is, the want that his/her desires, values, actions or belongings are thought to be desirable, or at least accepted. Redress action can be communicated by showing that one's wants are similar to the addressee's wants in one way or another.

There are four ways applied by the students in acknowledging peers during disagreements. The four strategies are assuring desirability of hearer (H)'s wants, asserting commonality, promoting cooperation, and fulfilling H's wants.

### Assuring Desirability of H's Points

There are three ways applied by the speaker to assure the desirability of H's wants: attending to H's want, intensifying the speaker's interest to H, and seeking agreement.

### Attending to H's Point

By applying this type of strategy, the speaker aims at conveying that he/she understands H's desire. This is realized by using the following expressions 'as you explained', 'you have just mentioned' and 'it's quite right'. These expressions are placed either prefatory to or parenthetically inside the disagree-ment talk to convey that the speaker notices the points of the preceding speaker. This strategy has been referred to in the communication literature as "naming," "referencing" (Barness & Todd in Waring, 2001:32) and "idea crediting" (Tracy in Waring, 2001:32).

'It's quite right' in Excerpt 1 is used to show the speaker's attention to the addressee's point and acknowledgment to the accuracy of his opinion.

#### Excerpt 1 (6/9)

- Adi: Yes, the world get the, what is here, get the size of let's say the size of the world can be what is here reduced into the small one. ... This is the first comment from me that it's quite hard, I think, to minimize the world. ... 8
- Tia: Okay, thank you. A:: I have a rather different opinion, Pak Adi. It's *quite* *right* that the world is getting smaller, but it doesn't mean that later we will have one culture. What I can conclude from this article is that how can we understand each other. And then how can language teacher can play an important role, a: can give the students insight that actually we have to understand each other, to live harmoniously in this smaller world. That's what what I can I can have. ... 9

Excerpt 1 shows that Tia expresses her disagreement with Adi's conclusion of the presentation that there will be only one culture in the world because of the fact that the world becomes 'smaller'. Tia has a different conclusion of the article entitled *Cross Cultural Attitudes as a Goal of Language Teaching*. She conveys her disagreement this way, "I have a rather different opinion, Pak Adi." Her disagreement is shown further through the following expression, "... *but it doesn't mean that later we will have one culture.*" The word 'but' is applied to acknowledge that

the addressee is correct in one sense; however, he is also incorrect in another sense. Thus, the disagreement is shown partially.

Although Tia has a different stance from Adi, she tries to find a good point in Adi's statement, that is, that the world is getting smaller. Again, although Adi's understanding of 'the world is getting smaller' is somewhat peculiar—he says that the world is reduced into a smaller one, it means that geographically it becomes smaller—she does not consider this peculiarity problematic. Instead, she raises the good, acceptable aspect of it before expressing her different opinion by acknowledging it: "*It's quite right that the world is getting smaller...*" The words 'It's quite right' are expressed to show her acceptance of and praise to Adi's statement. It is an assurance of her attention to Adi's opinion, despite the existing difference in another aspect of their opinion. Every person who states his/her opinion must have a desire that his/her opinion is accepted, or at least, considered. Based on this understanding, Tia shows that she considers, approves, and praises his opinion before actually expressing her disagreement with his conclusion of the paper.

### **Intensifying Opinions to H**

This is done by the speaker to show the addressees that he/she shares some of his/her wants by intensifying his/her own expressions during the discussion. The speaker tries to draw the addressees as the participants into the discussion. Among the utterances used to attract the addressees' greater attention to the speaker's points are 'of course' and 'quite' (both are intensifiers), 'story telling', and 'direct quotation'.

'Of course' is used in the data to intensify the speakers' expressions, just like Holmes' (1990:200) 'of course'. 'Quite' is also applied by the speaker to intensify the speaker's expressions and involve the addressee in his argument by exploiting his skeptical feeling. The word 'quite' is used to represent the meanings of 'very', 'totally', 'extremely' or 'absolutely' and not 'fairly', 'rather', 'somewhat' or 'moderately'.

Another way to intensify opinion is by telling a story. It can attract the audience closer to the point of disagreement. It is illustrated in Excerpt 2.

#### **Excerpt 2 (9/25)**

Ais: ...it is not easy to introduce the all basic features or knowledge of all over 14  
the world, ya, because there are so many non-native varieties of English all  
over the world. So, I think how can they introduce all?

...  
 Adi: For example, I ( ) when I studied in S1. My friend was from Situbondo, in 25  
 which there was a Maduranese school there. His name is Ahmad Rusdi at  
 that time. ... One thing that is focalized in Ahmad Rusdi's English is the  
 ac, the accent, ya. The accent. A: he:: cannot, we cannot repeat the way  
 how he speaks using Maduranese a:: accent. So, for example, in once a  
 while, he says like this one, "*Oh, speaking English is,*" ((Using  
 Maduranese accent)) like this ((laughter)). <So, the accent of a: particular  
 can be> >what is here< we can learn that the:: correct way of pronouncing  
 or the correct way of speaking like what is done by native speakers. So, if  
 we cannot teach English, we cannot teach the students by using the teacher  
 from Malaysia, >I think< fo::r the first time, for the initial step we can  
 teach them or we can teach our students with a:: different varieties of our  
 local English, such as from Bataknese, and also from Maduranese=

In the data, Ais's statement, "...it is not easy to introduce the all basic features or knowledge of all over the world...", is disagreed by Adi through this statement, "...for the initial step we can teach them or we can teach our students with a:: different varieties of our local English..." at the end of his turn. Excerpt 2 shows how Adi uses a story to support his argument that they do have local varieties of English and that these varieties can be used to introduce non-native varieties of English to the students without spending much money to pay the foreigners to teach English of non-native varieties. With the story, Adi is successful in drawing not only the addressee's, but also the audience's attention to his point.

Direct quotation can also be used to intensify the speaker's opinion to the listener. This is similar to that of Brown and Levinson (1987:107). In Excerpt 2, Adi quotes directly and imitates his friend's way of speaking English with Madurese accent "*Oh, speaking English is*". A burst of laughter is heard when this is quoted by Adi during his story telling. Hence, the quotation involves the audience more intensively in the discussion.

### Seeking Agreement

In Brown and Levinson (1987), the speaker seeks agreement by choosing a safe topic for the conversation and repeating part or all of what the preceding speaker has said. The data show that the speaker uses repetition, question and claim of non-understanding to promote agreement while expressing a disagreement with another party.

Repetition is used to stress the availability of an agreement between the current speaker with the earlier speaker during a disagreement expression. The disagreement is softened by accurately repeating some words of the preceding speaker or repeating the words with slight modification. For example, the repeated words 'a good language program' are modified slightly into 'some good quality of language program'. Thus, repetition maybe used to cover a disagreement with an agreement so that it does not put any challenge on the addressee.

Besides, a question is used to seek an agreement from the addressee when the speaker himself expresses a disagreement. In expressing a different stance from the previous speaker, the current speaker ends his disagreement by asking a question. A question may imply that the speaker himself is not so certain with his position of disagreeing with the precious speaker and needs an agreement from him/her. With this strategy, the speaker puts himself and the addressee in a safer situation. It is safe for the speaker because he does not put himself and the addressee in an oppositional stance, but rather in a collaborative stance. By concluding his expression with a question, he lets the addressee know that he needs assurance from him. If he gets the assurance and agreement from the addressee, his position is stronger. However, if the agreement he is seeking is not given by the addressee, he will not lose face, because he does not show his stance in direct opposition to the addressee.

The last expression of agreement seeking during disagreement is by claiming non-comprehension (Excerpt 3). Waring (2002:1712) defines non-comprehension as a state of knowledge that ranges from uncertainty to complete lack of understanding of the materials under discussion. In the present study, the strategy of claiming non-comprehension is applied to promote an agreement rather than a disagreement and to avoid or reduce the challenge within the disagreement.

Excerpt 3 (9/45)

Koko: ... So, I think, the the questionnaire lead the students' answer, in this case, to what the researcher's (want). That's why, what I want to say is one of the weaknesses why he says that, why not comparing together non-native varieties, not Dutch, non, non, not Dutch, non-native varieties of English. 44

Adi: *I don't know why this article comparing this one.* A:: (.) The questionnaire, I think, is already enough to be employed here. If the purpose of the research is trying to dig the students' comment on the Dutch lesson and also the understanding and ( ). So, this is already enough. For example, I ask you after English lesson, what's your comment on my English, for example. That's Pak S ((the professor))'s >what is here< evalua- 45

tion sheet, at that time. I think it is enough. This kind of question does not lead the students into a specific answer, but trying to expose only his or her own meaning, it is comment on what already been accepted by the students. So, this is, for the questionnaire, I think, a.: the questionnaire is already enough. The questionnaire is already enough for getting the data, >screening the data< for the research. ...

In turn 44, Koko states his opinion that the questionnaire used by the researcher and the author of the article being discussed is not good because it can direct the students' answer, "*I think, the the questionnaire lead the students' answer.*" However, Adi, as the presenter of the discussion the topic of which is *Students' Responses to Content-based Instruction Conducted in Non-native Varieties of English*, has a different opinion. Adi states, "*The questionnaire, I think, is already enough to be employed here.*"

In expressing his disagreement to Koko, Adi does not state it forthrightly. Instead, he delays the disagreement and prefaces it with a certain strategy to seek an agreement. Before conveying his different stance, he claims his non-comprehension of some parts of Koko's ideas. His sentence, "*I don't know why this article comparing this one*" prefaces his upcoming disagreement. This is in line with Tracy's (in Waring, 2002) finding that non-comprehension expression is performed without delay and it marks higher institutional status. Adi shows his non-comprehension as a preparation before stating his disagreement so that Koko will not feel his disagreement strongly because Adi has shared his feelings of ignorance with Koko. Thus, he expects to achieve more agreement than disagreement from Koko.

### **Asserting Commonality**

In the data, commonality is asserted during disagreements by raising a common ground and through joking.

### **Stressing A Common Ground**

A common ground is asserted by sharing problems or points of view with the addressee. Excerpt 4 exemplifies the use of 'we', 'our' and 'suppose' to stress common ground among the discussion participants.



Excerpt 4 (6/71)

- Tia: Well, I think, that's why it's a problem. ((three students speak simultaneously so that it cannot be understood). 69
- Koko: We can learn from this finding, we can learn from this finding. 70
- Tia: I think it's also a problem when *we* teach English, how can *we* teach their culture to our students. This is *our* difficulties. How can *a: we* conduct a language club, language games. Language game is okay, but what about language club, language camps, ya. 71

In the data, Koko and Tia disagree with one another. In turn 69, Tia supports the previous speaker—Ovi—who responds to the article by stating that it is difficult to explain their culture to students of different cultural background without understanding the culture of the students. Tia shows her support to Ovi by stressing that it is a problem for them. Unlike Tia, Koko does not support Ovi's statement.

In expressing their different stances, Tia and Koko try to stress their common problem as well as position using 'our' in "*This is our difficulties*," and 'we' in "*how can we teach their culture to our students*," "*We can learn from this finding*," and "*when we teach English...*" These 'we' and 'our' put them in a common position, thus, reduces the degree of the disagreement among them. The disagreement becomes partial and weak.

**Joking**

Another way of asserting commonality is joking. A joke can only be understood by another party as a joke when the speaker and the addressee share common knowledge. Therefore, a joke can also be used to show closeness among the interactants because of the shared understanding among them.

Excerpt 5 (12/4)

- Joni: ... A: the::n another topic for globalization is cross-cultural ...There must be a review of the English position in Indonesia. The position of English is ( )in Indonesia. 1
- Adi: ☞ But, there is something missing, Pak. 2
- Joni: Ya? 3
- Adi: ☞ One more is missing. *Sumpah Pemuda must be deleted*. ((laughter)). 4

In the data, Adi expresses his disagreement with Joni. In the first turn, Joni proposes to review the position of English in Indonesia. He appears to suggest that if they want the students to master English well, they should change the current position of English as a foreign language into a second language, just like Indonesian. Adi disagrees with his proposal because Indonesian has been declared as the only national language since *Sumpah Pemuda* (Youth Pledge) was vowed in 1928. When Adi disagrees with Joni's proposal, he states it in two turns (2 and 4). In the second turn, he states it in a 'but...' statement, and in the fourth turn, he expresses it in a joking mode. He disagrees with Joni by saying that if they want English to stand side by side with Indonesian, *Sumpah Pemuda* must be annulled first. This is because *Sumpah Pemuda* is considered as something sacred across the nation—this is one of the national identities of all people in Indonesia. As a national identity, *Sumpah Pemuda* is not supposed to be changed wishfully any time. Changing a national identity may be considered a subversive action. In the discussion, however, Adi proposes cheerfully to change the national identity. Therefore, it creates a joke because it is impossible to annul the sacred national identity in such an easy way in a meeting of only 8 persons. Since the disagreement is stated in a mockery, it results in acceptance signaled in a burst of laughter of the audience, and no comment emerges afterward. The joke and its response in the form of laughter indicate that they share some commonality, that is, that they come from one nation and that they share the same identity.

### **Promoting Cooperation**

During the discussion, the participants promote collaboration to seek better understanding of the topic of discussion, even when they disagree with another party. The cooperation is endorsed during disagreements by indicating understanding of H's wants, offering a solution, including both S and H in the proposed activity, and giving or asking for reason.

### **Indicating Understanding of H's Points**

The words 'know' and 'understand' are used to indicate the awareness of the speaker to the addressee's want. This is more than just attending to the speaker's point discussed previously.

Excerpt 6 (11/16)

- Ovi: Excuse me. I have two questions. ... 2
- Ais: So, if I have to answer your question number 1, maybe it is not right or wrong, but acceptable or 15
- Joni: *Yes, I think a:: we all know that there is a good use of language, formal language, and informal use of language. Informal use is in the society. But I think this is not what we are going to deal, but we discuss about the simple one. I don't think the a: the society maybe is true use formal language, informal language. But, I don't mean the society use formal language. I mean in every day communication. So, asking which one is correct language, I think is ( ) ...* 16

In the data, Joni expresses his disagreement to Ais who, as Joni believes it, is going to the wrong direction. Joni notices that Ais's response to Ovi's question goes the wrong way. This can be seen from the fact that Ovi asks her in turn 2, yet, Ais cannot find a way to answer it until turn 15. Joni finds that she is beating about the bush. Therefore, he puts his critique, "*But I think this is not what we are going to deal, but we discuss about the simple one.*"

Although Joni has a different opinion from Ais, he does not express it straightforwardly. He prefaces his disagreement by showing that he—and other participants—understand her way of thinking. "*Yes, I think a:: we all know that there is a good use of language, formal language, and informal use of language. Informal use is in the society.*" These utterances function to display an understanding of Ais's want to be listened to and understood. Hence, by showing an understanding to the addressee's want using 'we all know that', Joni maintains collaboration with Ais during his disagreement. Therefore, his disagreement can be perceived properly by Ais and collaboration can be supported.

### Offering

Excerpt 7 shows how the speaker offers an alternative which is different from the previous solution.

Excerpt 7 (11/4)

- Ais: ... Maybe they cannot use a: a: >what is that< multiple choice items, because it will confuse. So, maybe better use subjective answer tests. 3

So, we can see from the varieties of ( )=  
 Adi: =Or maybe with this one, Bu. We can modify the multiple choice 4  
 ☞ format as we have already understood that a: multiple choice has,  
 one of them is the principle of the number one correct answer. It says  
 that the number of correct answer should be one, only one, not more  
 than one. ...

Adi offers another form of test which can be used to accommodate the varieties of non-native speakers of English in language testing. In turn 3, the presenter, Ais, proposes to use a subjective format, because multiple choice test cannot be applied. However, her proposal of applying subjective format is without any supporting reason. Therefore, Adi offers a different solution—that is by modifying the multiple choice format.

Adi offers another alternative by using “=Or maybe with this one, Bu.” ‘Maybe’ constitutes an offer. By putting ‘maybe’ in his utterances, Adi shows his different alternative in an offer mode, hence, he leaves to Ais whether she will take the alternative or not. By leaving the decision to her, he stresses that he prefers collaboration to dispute. Therefore, ‘maybe’ as an offer can be used to promote cooperation while disagreeing with another party.

### Including both S and H in the Activity

Another way of expressing disagreements while maintaining cooperation is including both S and H in the activity.

#### Excerpt 8 (6/63)

Joni:	So, >he, he< he’s not talking about certain language, but all, any lan-	55
	guage? Malaysian, English, or Chinese?	
Ovi:	I think yes,	56
Tia:	Ya. (.) ((The presenter seems to be knowing nothing to answer Joni)	57
Koko:.	English (soft and low voice, but with certain tone).	58
Joni:	English?	59
Ovi:	When we learn a language, we also learn that culture?	60
Tia:	Ya. Only in this case, the subject and the situation in the research, ya, is	61
	limited. They are like English but they come from different nationalities,	
	and interests, and also ( ).	
Joni:	What I mean is, who knows people some day, they are coming to Indo-	62
	nesia for example from (Africa), from Australia (.) they are going to, and	

- they will be taught Indonesians, for example, that's why I said that it's not only English, but any language.
- Tia: Ya, ya. But, here is English, it may, it will happen, maybe our people is not only Indonesians, *just like us that we are not English, then we teach English.* 63

In the data, Tia disagrees with Joni who uncertainly concludes that the language talked about in the article is all languages or any language in the world (turns 55 and 62). Tia expresses her different conclusion, "*But, here is English.*" As the presenter, she thinks that the article talks about English only. When expressing her different point, she includes all the discussion participants by including them in the activity, that is, the teaching of English in Indonesia. She recalls that they all are involved in the teaching of English, "*...just like us that we are not English, then, we teach English.*"

### Giving or Asking for Reasons

Giving or asking for reasons can be used as a strategy to promote collaboration. By giving reasons, the speaker provides an account on why he/she disagrees; thus, it gives an opportunity to the addressee to think over the explanation of the disagreement and consider the possibility of receiving, modifying or refusing the different opinion. Similarly, when a party shows a different opinion by asking the addressee's opinion, he/she provides enough room for himself/herself to have a dialogue with the addressee. The dialogue can promote further cooperation which is important in the discussion.

#### Excerpt 9 (13/13)

- Ovi: *No, writing essay first.* <They ask the students> they ask the students to write essay, and after that, they make the essay, they develop 11
- Koko: Sssorry, maybe your (concern) is different from what Pak Adi's question, Pak Adi asks about the: the the good teacher characteristic, so you can read on page 86. 12
- Ovi: Ya, first they ask the students to write essay on good teacher. So, a:: free response, free response and then after that they develop, maybe they develop this free response into questionnaire. Then, they give the questionnaire to the students, and then, this, this, I think this's the real sample who has to choose from the questionnaire, maybe. Maybe, it's like that. The essay:: These essays were then analyzed to find out how 13

frequently different factors were mentioned for each of these three aspects of culture of learning ((reading from page 86)).

Excerpt 9 exemplifies the strategies applied by the students to maintain further collaboration by providing an account for her/his disagreement. The disagreement in this example stems from the difference in the participants' perception of the procedure and technique of data collection applied in the research article. Koko, as the presenter, argues that the instrument used to gather data related to Adi's question in the preceding turn (turn 2) is a questionnaire using the Likert scale. Dissimilar to Koko, Ovi persists saying that the data is collected from an open ended questionnaire which requires the students to answer it in the form of an essay. Therefore, when Koko explains that the data is collected from the Likert scale questionnaire, Ovi states her disagreement with, "*No, writing essay first*" which is then explained directly within the same turn. This explanation provides a chance for Koko to think and express that what Ovi considers and explains is not the point asked by Adi in turn 2. Because of Koko's refusal, Ovi provides further account for what she understands from the book about the point asked by Adi. To support her account, she reads directly from the article, especially page 86 to which Koko's argument is also referring to.

By providing an account, Ovi gives an opportunity to Koko to have a dialogue and come up with a shared meaning and understanding of the article. Hence, an explanation and reason can promote further collaboration among the participants of the discussion.

### **Fulfilling H's want**

Excerpt 10 shows how the students express their disagreement by fulfilling H's want, more specifically, by showing an appreciation to the addressee.

Excerpt 10 (6/9)

Adi: ... I think this kind of attempt is quite difficult, because each nation, each 8  
people a:: will preserve their own culture without being interfered by other  
culture from another county. ...

Tia: Okay, thank you. A:: I have a rather different opinion, Pak Adi. It's quite 9  
☞ right that the world is getting smaller, but it doesn't mean that later we will  
have one culture. What I can conclude from this article is that how can we  
understand each other. And then how can language teacher can play an  
important role, a: can give the students insight that actually we have to un-

derstand each other, to live harmoniously in this smaller world. That's what what I can I can have. ...

In the data above, Tia expresses her different opinion from Adi, "*I have a rather different opinion, Pak Adi,*" by first expressing gratitude to Adi. In this example, just like in the other data of the present study, 'thank you' is always used to appreciate the earlier speaker. Being appreciated is one of the speaker's wants. Thus, by giving credit to the addressee, the speaker acknowledges his/her peer and fulfills his/her want which in Brown and Levinson's (1987:101) theory constitutes the application of positive politeness strategy.

## CONCLUSION

Different stances can broaden students' understanding on a certain point. However, careless expressions of disagreements may challenge others' face which may end up in a communication breakdown. The research shows that to promote further collaboration in search for better comprehension, the students acknowledge their peers during disagreements by assuring desirability of H's wants, asserting commonality, promoting cooperation, and fulfilling H's wants. Since the students appreciate the positive self image of the addressees while expressing different points, the discussions run well. Therefore, it can be recommended that the four strategies in acknowledging friends are applied during discussions. However, the use of the strategies should not be excessive, since an excessive use of the strategies will result in inefficiency of the discussions—too much cost to spend.

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