Dispreferred Responses in Arabic Political TV Programmes

Hakim Rosly[1], Abdulrahman Alfahad[*2]

[1,2]Arabic Department/College of Humanities and Social Sciences, King Saud University

hakimrosly@gmail.com, abalfahad@ksu.edu.sa

Abstract

Previous studies in Conversation Analysis (CA) have argued that the duration and structure of preferred responses differ from that of dispreferred responding actions, as the former is delivered more rapidly. Agreement responses, for instance, occur relatively quickly and take a simple form. In contrast, disagreement responses are characteristically delayed through audible breathing, silence, prefaced hesitations, appreciations, apologies, or justifications. Nevertheless, the paper focuses on a specific interactional environment where dispreferred responses are expressed directly and rapidly. It selects from a wealth of data, consisting of 12 recorded and transcribed Arabic TV programs drawn from 4 different Arabic broadcast channels. Our result shows that disagreement responses tend to be expressed explicitly and aggravatedly without alleviation or delay. The overall difference in time is insignificant and is therefore unaligned with the fundamental insight of preference organization in CA. The results can also be extended to understanding Arabic interactions, where agreement or disagreement may occur, such as in Arabic language classes, where students are expected to interact in Arabic.

Keywords: Analysis; Conversation; Dispreferred Actions; Disagreement; Preference; Arabic TV; Politics.

INTRODUCTION

The notion of preference organization in CA considers disagreements, rejections, and denials to be dispreferred actions, which are frequently delayed, hesitatingly expressed, prefaced by partial agreement, appreciation, or apology, and/or softened through mitigating devices (Pomerantz, 1984; Levinson, 1983; Schegloff, 2007). Moreover, in classical studies, disagreement is considered one of the kinds of Face-Threatening Acts (FTA) that are largely destructive of social solidarity (Heritage, 1984).

This view of disagreement as an FTA and a dispreferred action is commonly held by specialists in human communications (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Pomerantz, 1984). Nonetheless, in certain contexts disagreement may not have the common features described in the previous studies. The purpose of interaction, and specific topics in some political and religious contexts, might challenge the common generalization regarding the maximization of opportunities for constructive actions and the minimization of destructive ones. Speakers have many communicative strategies for expressing their views, such as increasing the use of interruptions and employing direct and aggravated disagreements (Kotthoff, 1993). Preference organization has been examined in several studies within a number of cultures and contexts, and this concept needs to be introduced before we present our data, discussion and findings concerning disagreements in Arabic political interactions.

The concept is essential in CA studies, which goes back to the early works of Sacks and his colleagues (1973; 1974). Preference organization is a characteristic of turn

design, action organization and sequential organization of turn, with these actions being termed 'adjacency pairs'. Some basic types of adjacency pairs are: question-answer, greeting-greeting, assessment-agreement and request-acceptance. The first turn of the two is called the First Pair Part (FPP), while the second one is called the Second Pair Part (SPP), with the latter often being divided into preferred and dispreferred social acts. The preferred social action is expected to be the next action, while the dispreferred action is an unexpected next action. When someone is invited by a friend to join certain activities, the responding action could be acceptance or refusal. Similarly, other speech acts like offers, requests, expressions of blame, compliments, suggestions and apologies may be followed by acceptance or decline (Levinson, 1983; Paltridge, 2012). If a speaker claims knowledge of that which he or she is assessing, the second part of the assessment will be either immediate agreement or slow disagreement (Pomerantz and Heritage, 2012).

A number of researchers have identified a specific characteristic of preferred and dispreferred responses. Preferred responses are produced significantly more quickly with positive assessment, and are expressed without a gap. On the contrary, dispreferred responses display the following types of reactions that delay the production of the relevant response: Gaps, silence, prefatory particles such as 'well' or 'uh' and in-breaths. Additionally, these may be prefaced by hesitations, hedging devices, partial agreements, apologies, initial expressions of appreciations, requests for clarification, the use of a 'yes...but' clause, repair initiators, the introduction of side sequences instead of disagreement, evasive statements, explanations, self-criticism and the inclusion of beginnings such as 'I don't think' (Atkinson and Drew, 1979; Davidson, 1984; Heritage, 1984; Levinson, 1983; Pomerantz, 1984; Schegloff, 2007, Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008). Nevertheless, Pomerantz (1984) mentioned some cases where disagreements are deployed quickly, such as compliment or accusation situations, as responses employed to minimize self-praise or to deny guilt. This, however, is not the whole story, as preference needs to be examined within the context of the interaction, as this may have an effect on preference organization.

Based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of politeness, disagreement is an FTA that needs to be redressed. Disagreement is perceived as an intrinsically dispreferred activity that affects the involvement and solidarity between the speaker and the hearer (Goffman, 2005; Leech, 2007; Wierzbicka, 1991). Unlike agreement, several researchers see disagreement as a complex speech act, and it has been investigated within the framework of several disciplines, like social psychological pragmatics (Muntigl and Turnbull, 1998), conversation analysis (Kotthoff, 1993; Sacks, 1987) and discourse analysis (Kakava, 2002; Schiffrin, 1984). Because of this high complexity "we may thus talk of degrees of constructive or destructive disagreement in context rather than of specifically face-threatening acts" (Sifianou, 2012: 1560).

The complexity of disagreements can be clarified if we take into consideration interactional goals and other circumstances. Disagreement can be a face-enhancing function that indicates the speaker's interest, by virtue of its being an act of engagement with the interaction, as opposed to showing indifference through the use of immediate agreements or even being silent (Sifianou, 2012). The speaker may also disagree in order to achieve his or her goal of becoming a skillful debater who is engaging in an intellectual discussion (Hernandez-Flores, 2008). In problem-solving groups, conflicting reactions increase micro-creativity by stimulating attention and group members' ability to develop their views from more perspectives (Chiu, 2008). Disagreements in these circumstances,

hence, become proper responses and "the production of disagreements is intimately linked with a process of negotiation, opinion expressing and debate" (Georgakopoulu, 2001: 1898). According to some cultural views, disagreement in modern Greek culture constitutes a social practice that is pervasive, preferred and allowed (Kakava, 2002). The pervasiveness of argument in Jewish American society is common; it is a sign of intimacy and does not ruin social cooperation (Schiffrin, 1984). In comparative observation between Australian and North American cultures, Renwick (1980) found that Australians are more accustomed to conflict and disagreement than North Americans.

Apart from cultural elements, relational histories, personal traits, speakers' beliefs and topics under discussion might lead to the emergence of disagreement in conversation (Locher, 2004; Schiffrin, 1984; Sifianou, 2012). The interactional context in televised programmes, characterized by controversial topics, different interactional goals, social distance and relationships between speakers, seems to affect the practice and preference of turn-taking in conversations (Zhu, 2019). The topics of debate and goals of interaction influence interactants' choice of communicative strategies, syntactic arrangement and lexical items (Migdadi et. al, 2013). By analyzing a corpus of recordings of British television and radio interviews which were broadcast between 1978 and 1985, Greatbatch (1992) argued that the news interview turn-taking system has a pervasive influence over the management of disagreements between interviewees. They rarely alleviate their disagreements, and in his words: "... they pursue and frequently intensify their disputes by moving out of their institutionalized footings and entering into direct, unmediated disagreement" (p. 297).

In some contexts, maintaining disagreement is an interactional necessity in order to preserve one's positive face, and overt disputation and disagreement preference are expected in debates (Patrona, 2006). TV discourse is one kind of institutionalized settings influenced by these features: exaggeration, aggressiveness, repetition, implicature, intertextuality, agonistic ability and metaphor (Chilton, 2004; Kenzhekanova, 2015; Partington, 2003, Honda, 2002). These main characteristics are on constant display in political TV shows, which makes these shows very interesting platforms for researchers to explore a wealth of resources pertaining to various disagreement structures. The effect of political topics, in particular, might challenge the position of agreement as a preferred act. In controversial situations, such as news interviews with government leaders and discussions of political topics with invited TV guests, disagreement and denial are more likely to be preferred than agreement is. The level of aggressiveness, and the use of a direct and unmitigated fashion of disagreement, are obviously preferred to maintaining harmony among speakers (Clayman et. al, 2007, Clayman, 2022; Greatbatch, 1992; Lerch, 2005). The issue of preference has been further discussed quantitatively in some recent studies, which helps to show a wider picture of the issue.

Some of the statistical results are in alignment with long-standing research in CA, which asserts that agreement actions are preferred over disagreement actions. Raymond (2003) studied 325 instances of agreement-disagreement in terms of yes-no responses within ten large corpora of naturally occurring British and American conversations. He argued that the grammatical structure of yes-no questions embodies a preference for yes-responses. In other words, type-conforming responses are much more common than non-conforming responses. Raymond found that around 243 samples were type-conforming answers, whereas merely 82 were nonconforming. By the same token, El-Zouka (2006) investigated British and American TV conversations and found that the total number of

agreements concerning various economic, social and political issues exceeded that of disagreements. The former appeared 402 times, while the latter appeared only 180 times. Concannon et al. (2015) confirm the politeness hypothesis and the preference for contiguity, finding that the percentage of agreement cases exceeded the percentage of disagreement cases, and that the timing of disagreement responses was slower than that of its counterpart.

With respect to the speed of agreement and disagreement responses, Rendle-Short (2015) analyzed 329 mobile texting interactions, concluding that agreements were preferred to be sent quickly, while rejection or disagreement responses were delayed. This study showed that "31.7% of preferred responses were sent within 1 minute or less compared to 9.8% dispreferred responses" (2015: 11). In other findings, by selecting a larger corpus of 20 hours of videotapes of interactions between native English adults and close friends, Robinson (2020) revealed that direct or simple disagreement answers (29%) were not significantly less frequent than direct agreement answers (34%), yet direct disagreement answers were delayed for a significantly longer time. Stivers et. al (2009: 10588) used a worldwide sample of ten languages drawn from traditional indigenous communities as well as major world languages to examine confirmations, which are a part of agreement responses. According to their results, confirmations were more common than disconfirmations, with confirmation or agreement responses making up 70% to 89% of total responses. A majority of the languages tested, as argued in this study, provided clear evidence for agreement preference: "confirmations are delivered faster than disconfirmations in all languages, between 100 and 500 ms faster on average". In a similar vein, Stiver's study (2010) has documented that responses in terms of providing confirmation or a type-conforming answer such as agreement were more frequent. On the other hand, a few researchers have revealed contrary results in some different contexts. Lerch (2005) found in a quantitative study that disagreements were preferred in the case of verbal conflicts. Kendrick and Torreira (2015) examined this issue in telephone corpora, and found that the timing between preferred and dispreferred responses mostly did not show any strong evidence that speakers delay dispreferred actions.

The results from both sides show that this topic needs to be examined further, especially in different contexts and cultures, as these might affect the systematics of preference organization. There are still only a very few indirect studies that have been conducted to examine disagreement in Arabic TV settings. Al-Ahmad and Wardat (2010) carried out a study with the aim of analyzing disagreement strategies in selected Arabic TV programmes, finding four types of disagreement that were identical to those presented by the study of Muntigl and Turnbull (1998), namely: contradiction, challenge, irrelevancy claim and counter-claim. Two other types of disagreement were also revealed, which are: insulting expressions and religious expressions. In the study of Migdadi et al. (2013), they concentrate on argumentative strategies in highly adversarial Arabic talk shows like 'The Opposite Direction'. Uncompromised disagreement was commonly realized using several strategies, such as aggravated impoliteness, negative structure and sarcastic questions. This study serves as an example of how opposition in controversial discourse can be a preferred activity. Dealing with the same genre, Al-Dilaimy and Khalaf (2014) studied opposition strategies employed by Arabic speakers, and concluded that aggravation and directness were sanctioned in the TV discussions they studied. Impolite interruptions were produced very frequently to show disagreement of views.

These Arabic studies dealt with different perspectives. Most of them have focused on the strategies of assertiveness and disagreements using qualitative methods, while analysis of agreement and disagreement actions using statistical comparisons in order to prove which of these types is preferred is still scant in the literature. As stated earlier, researchers have paid more attention to preference organization in English, and the current article therefore attempts to fill the gap by examining this issue in a different cultural context. The dataset, the selected Arabic TV programmes and their durations, as well as the method we employ, are all explained in detail in the following section.

METHOD

The data contains a collection of 12 Arabic recorded TV programmes, selected from 4 popular Arabic TV shows, namely *Ḥadīth Al-Sā'ah* (BBC Arabic), *Nīrān Ṣadīqah* (Skynews Arabic), *Ḥiwār Al-'Arab* (Al-Arabiyya) and *Al-Niqāsh* (France 24 Arabic). The selected data comprise approximately 8hr and 46min of conversation, and were transcribed according to the main transcript symbols developed by Jefferson (2004). Transcribed Arabic conversations with English translations are provided in each excerpt in our following analysis and discussion. The programmes chosen for the analysis were broadcast from to 2011 to 2018, and dealt with political topics, mostly in Middle East countries, including: Iraq, Libya, Iran, Syria, Egypt, Sudan, Palestine, Yemen and Gulf states. The discussed topics touched upon controversial political issues, such as the Arab Spring, street demonstrations, conflict between tribal-political parties, war between governments, armed rebellions and democratic or military solutions for post-war countries. All recorded versions with fully-indexed titles of discussions were retrieved from the Arabic channels' and YouTube websites. Although these programmes contain discussions of controversial political topics, making them appropriate for describing diverse responses of disagreements, we avoid programmes that have a hostile style which encourages disagreements, such as 'The Opposite Direction' show. The nature of the programmes we have selected tends to facilitate discussions and the expression of different opinions by a number of guests.

The analysis of the data focuses on the description of direct, aggravated and undelayed disagreement employed by Arabic speakers. Instances of language patterns pertaining to disagreement in term of lexical and sentence construction will be presented and analyzed, and then combined with a comparison of statistical findings to strengthen the reliability of the results. To classify the responses, a basic response of disagreement is "No" or other direct replies such as "I do not agree", whereas agreement response can be easily detected with a speaker's answer using "Yes" or "I agree". We also investigate the disagreement and agreement responses carefully by making use of the framework suggested by previous studies, i.e. (Blum-Kulka et al., 2002; Brown and Levinson, 1987; Kuo, 1994; LoCastro, 1986; Muntigl and Turnbull, 1998; Pomerantz, 1984; Rees-Miller, 2000). Some agreement strategies, therefore, apart from "Yes" or "I agree", are partial or complete repetition of a prior utterance, elliptical expressions, appreciation of assessment and stating of belief. For disagreement strategies, some of these are emphatic contradictions, rhetorical questions, irrelevancy claims, counter claims, sarcasm and negative remarks.

After considering these linguistic patterns, our research centers on analyzing the linguistic features of agreement and disagreement, as well as the relative timing of responses, as supportive proof of undelayed disagreements. All quick disagreement

responses selected in the present data were measured utilizing an online video editor (ytcutter.com). Through this application, the time interval can be slowed down and calculated in milliseconds for the response made by the speaker. Facial expressions like eye or head movements are not taken into consideration.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before presenting some specific results of agreement/disagreement responses, the general frequency of their occurrence is shown in Table 1. After calculating a variety of turn formats, including single lexical items (e.g. ok, yes, no), positive/negative assessments (e.g. I agree, we don't agree, your word is not precise) and more complicated sentences (e.g. sarcastic sentence, rhetorical questions), the result shows that there were 962 agreement responses used and repeated by Arab TV interactants, equal to 51.6%, whereas disagreement responses were 902 (48.3%), as shown in the following table:

Table 1. Overall Result Of Agreement And Disagreement Responses

Response Types	Frequency	Percentage
Agreement responses	962	51.6%
Disagreement responses	902	48.3%
Total	**1864**	**100%**

The overall result of the 8h 46 min of conversations in selected Arabic TV talks showed that comparison of the frequency of agreement and disagreement responses did not reach statistical significance: agreement responses were slightly more common than disagreement responses.

Aggravation

Similarly, a specific comparison between aggravated agreement and disagreement responses also showed a close result. Both of these responding actions were undelayed and expressed directly, as well as being emphasized with intensifying devices and certain linguistic structures. Examples of these actions include intensifiers (eg, absolutely, indeed) and the use of statements to challenge or mock other guests' responses (e.g. I challenge if .../ The person with his dignity says something like this, this is sad). The following extract shows an example from our data where aggravated agreement occurs:

Excerpt 1 *Ḥadīth Al-Sā'ah*, BBC Arabic, 3/9/2015, Host: Hilal Makki, Guest: AbdalBari Atwan

1   G   *Wa hunāka faṣāil Filiṣṭīniyyah haqīqiyyah tuqātil 'ala al-ardh mathalan*
1   There are real Palestinian factions fighting on the ground for example
2   H   *Ghayru mumaththilah fī Al-Majlis*
2   Not represented on the council
3   G   *Ghayru mumaththilah fī Al-Majlis 'ala al-iṭlāq*
3   Not represented on the council absolutely

Excerpt 1 show that the agreement made by the Guest in line (3) towards the previous statement is clear and emphasized by the following aspects: repetition of the statement with high intonation and use of an intensifier (*'ala al-iṭlāq/*absolutely).

Likewise, disagreements could be aggravated through the use of a variety of linguistic devices. The following extract shows how the second guest used a challenging statement for this purpose.

Excerpt 2 *Al-Niqāsh*, France24 Arabic, 24/7/2017, Guest 1: Nuah Al-Bijari, Guest 2: Majid Shankali

1 G1… *Min ghayri ma'qūl nushabbih Al-Quwwāt Al-Amrīkiyyah*

1 … It's unreasonable to analogize the American forces

2 *bi Al-Quwwāt Al- 'Irāqiyyah*

2 with the Iraqi forces

3 G2 *Awwalan anā mā shabbahtu ataḥaddā idzā kānat hunāk*

3 Firstly I didn't make an analogy I challenge if there is

4 *ḥarb nadzīfah fī kulli tārīkh idzā ra'ayti lī al-ḥarb nadzīfah*

4 a clean war in the entire history if you show me the war that is

5 *mi'ah bi Al-mi'ah anā asḥab kalāmī*

5 one hundred percent clean I withdraw my words

In this dialogue, Guest 2 responded to the previous criticism concerning an analogy he had made between the American and Iraqi forces, both of which had committed military violence during the war. His disagreement started by using negated phrase (*anā mā shabbahtu*/I didn't make an analogy), and it then was emphasized by a long conditional challenging statement (I challenge if there is ...). Challenges are among the upgraded disagreement strategies that are commonly used in conversation, where one speaker demands that supporting evidence be provided for the other speaker's claim (Muntigl and Turnbull, 1998). The second guest then did not only express disagreement with the other guest's statement, but went further to show that the latter's statement cannot be true by challenging him to provide evidence.

Table 2. Aggravated Agreement And Disagreement Responses

Response Types	Frequency	Percentage
Aggravated agreements	253	26.2%
Aggravated disagreements	269	29.2%

The frequency of aggravated disagreements in our study is somewhat higher than that of aggravated agreements (29.2%/26.2%). By comparing the aforementioned general result (Table 1) with slightly high proportion of aggravated disagreement as shown by Table 2, it can be concluded that the preference for disagreements and agreements is somehow similar from this perspective.

Explicitness

More interestingly though, another specific comparison that we made between agreements and disagreements is explicitness, and this revealed significant disparity. Explicit agreements and disagreements refer to any direct and clear response that indicates interactants' acceptance or rejection of a prior utterance. We identified a number of explicit types of agreement and disagreement actions used by Arabic guests. In any language, the main linguistic patterns of explicit agreement and disagreement can be identified from interactants' use of lexical items and structures such as "Yes/yeah/no", "It's true/this is wrong", "I agree/disagree with you", "I'm with you" etc. Simple agreement response in our Arabic data was uttered in various dialects with words such as "*Aywah*", "*Ī*", "*Īh*" and "*Ṣaḥ*". On the other hand, the disagreement expressions used by Arab guests were more various, including standard and colloquial Arabic Language; to mention some of them: "*lā*" (no), "*mush/mish/mā/mū*" (not), "*ghalaṭ*" (wrong), "*laysa ṣaḥīḥan*" (not true), "*ghayr daqīq*" (not precise), "*ghayr ṣaḥīḥ*" (not true), "*bi al-'aks/'alā al-'aks*" (it's the opposite), "*mā nattafiq shay' ma'ak*" (we do not agree with you at

Vol. 8 No. 2 / June 2025

all), "*naḥnu mukhtalifīn/niḥna ghayr muttafiqīn*" (we disagree), "*akhtalif ma'ak*" (I disagree with you).

The following two excerpts show some of the explicit agreement and disagreement responses found in our data: excerpt 3 *Al-Niqāsh*, France24 Arabic, 4/10/2016, Guest 1: Salihah Shatiwi, Guest 2: Zaynah Al-Imrani

1 G1 *Hujjirat madīnah kāmilah hujjirat Tawirgha' madīnah kāmilah*

1   An entire city was abandoned, Tawergha was abandoned, an entire city

2 G2 *Attafiq ma'ak*

2   I agree with you

Excerpt 3 relates to the effect of the war in Libya where the entire city of Tawergha was abandoned. Guest 2 directly agreed with the other guest's claim by using a very clear agreement sentence in line 2 (*Attafiq ma'ak*/I agree with you). Likewise, an explicit disagreement response expressed by Arab TV guests can be seen in Excerpt 4:

Excerpt 4 *Nīrān Ṣadīqah*, Skynews Arabic, 9/2/2016, Host 1: Abdulaziz Al-Khamis, Host 2: Fawwaz Jarjis

1 H1 *Iẓan lāzim tufa'il al-muṣālaḥah bihayth tatakhallā 'an asbāb al-azmah*

1   Then you must activate reconciliation to eliminate the causes of the crisis

2 H2   *'Abd Al-'Azīz 'Abd Al-'Azīz mush muṣālaḥah*

2   Abdulaziz Abdulaziz not reconciliation

3 H1 *Lā lā*

3   No no

In response to Guest 1's prior statement (then you must activate reconciliation...), Guest 2 disagrees instantly, using a negative particle in the colloquial Arabic form (*Mush*/Not). Guest 1 keeps maintaining his oppositional stance by using the short negative particle (*Lā*/No). The disagreements uttered by both interactants are direct and produced without justification, and the reaction is considered to be an example of explicit and straightforward rejection.

As indicated in Table 3, the proportion of explicit disagreements is significantly greater than that of its counterpart:

Table 3. Explicit Agreement And Disagreement Responses

Response Types	Frequency	Percentage
Explicit agreements	122	12.6%
Explicit disagreements	386	42.7%

As shown in Table 3, the frequency of the occurrence of explicit disagreements is 386 times (42.7%), whereas explicit agreements occur only 122 times (12.6%). Regarding this significant result with regard to explicit agreement and disagreement responses, one might wonder about the reasons behind the large percentage of explicit disagreements. The main possible explanation is that, in political TV shows that include controversial topics and various opposing and competitive parties, guests might be under pressure from their supporters and parties to display a clear stance and explicit disagreements with their opponents. Not showing an agreement in this context might be more tolerable than letting misinformation pass without a clear objection. This is in line with several studies which show that direct disagreements and aggressiveness are more common in this kind of interaction than are attempts to maintain closeness among speakers (Clayman et. al, 2007; Greatbatch, 1992; Lerch, 2005).

Timing

Another aspect of looking at preference is to investigate how quickly these agreement and disagreement responses are delivered. There are abundant samples of undelayed responses in our dataset, the average time of which needs to be determined in order to verify the fundamental insight of agreement inclination in human interaction, which is commonly examined in CA literature. The following two excerpts are discussed with the aim of verifying that disagreement responses, regardless of their direct or upgraded forms, were employed by Arab interlocutors in a rapid manner. This is similar to agreement responses or other face-saving acts, which tend to be expressed with no hesitation.

Excerpt 5 *Nīrān Ṣadīqah*, Skynews Arabic, 9/2/2016, Guest 1: Ghassan Ibrahim, Guest 2: Haytham Al-Sabahi

1	G1	*Al-hal huwa haqīqatan an ya'tī shurafā' Sūriyyūn min kulli al-aṭrāf*
1		The solution is actually that honorable Syrians have to come from all sides
2		*yaqulu da'ūnā nuzīl kull al-'aqabāt*
2		and say let's remove all obstacles
3	G2	(0.2) *Bimusā'adat Al-Wilāyāt Al-Muttaḥidah Al-Amrīkiyyah*
3		(0.2) With the help of the United States of America
4	G1	(0.3) *Lā lā bi al-musā'adat lā bi al-musā'adat lā Turkiyā wa lā Rūsiā*
4		(0.3) No not with the help not with the help no Turkey no Russia
5		*wa lā Amrīkā bi musā'adat bi musā'adat Al-Sūriyyīn*
5		and no America with the help with the Syrian help

This excerpt is part of a discussion about finding a solution to stop the war in Syria. In response to G2's prior statement in (line 3) "with the help of the United States of America", G1 disagrees in an instant (line 4) after approximately 300 milliseconds (ms) by using the negative particle (no) several times to reject G2's statement. The disagreement produced is fast, direct and without justification. No intensifiers are used except the particle "no", which indicates that this reaction should be considered a straightforward negative assessment.

The following excerpt shows one of the fastest disagreements produced in our data, which was 100 ms. Excerpt (6), shown below, demonstrates how the interactants produce explicit, fast and upgraded disagreements. Despite the fact that one of the interactants uses a longer statement to express his opinion, a quick rejection phrase still can be detected at the beginning of the following speaker's turn, which using a strong, repeated and rapid disagreement without providing a justification.

Excerpt 6 *Nīrān Ṣadīqah*, Skynews Arabic, 9/2/2016, Host 1: Fawwaz Jarjis, Host 2: Abdulaziz Al-Khamis, Guest 1: Haytham Al-Sabahi.

1	H1	*...Anna al-ḍaghṭ Al-Amrīkī sawfa yu'addī ilā waḥdah al-dākhil Al-Īrānī*
1		...The American pressure will lead to the unity of the Iranian interior
2		*wa waḥdah al-nukhbah wa bi al-fi'l-*
2		and the unity of the Iranian elite and indeed
3	H2	(0.1) - *Lā lā lā*
3		(0.1) - No no no
4	H1	*anā ashhad fi al-asābī' al-akhīrah anna al-nukhbah Al- Īrāniyyah*
4		I witness in recent weeks that the Iranian elite has
5		*bada'at tatawaḥḥad*
5		begun to unite

Several lines omitted due to the speaker G1's lengthy statement on the discussed issue

6   *... anna al-ḍughūṭ Al-Amrīkiyyah tu'addi tusā'id al-niẓām Al-Īrānī*

6   ... The American pressure leads helps the Iranian regime

7   *'alā imtiṣāṣ hādzihī al-ḍughūt al-dākhiliyyah*

7   to absorb these internal pressures

8   G1 (0.1) *Akhlatif anā anā akhtalif anā akhtalif ma'ak*

8   (0.1) I disagree I I I disagree I disagree with you

    As shown in Excerpt 6, disagreement responses start with a clear negative particle (*Lā*/No) in line 3. After 100 ms, the speaker H2 disagrees with a statement about a strong likelihood for the unity of the interior Iranian elite that will rise as a result of the American intervention. This oppositional stance did not affect H1, as he keeps maintaining his own view and elaborates upon it with a lengthy comment. Likewise, another speaker, G1, does not agree with H1's clarification, and rejects it with an obvious disagreement expression, and with the same rapidity. A clear disagreement sentence was used and repeated three times in line 8: (*Akhtalif...akhtalif...akhtalif*/I disagree...I disagree...I disagree). Repetition that takes place more than twice may be regarded as a useful linguistic tool for emphasizing a disagreement response, regardless of the absence of auxiliary tools and high intonation. In these two examples, the disagreement produced is fast, with only 100 ms. separating the assertions from the responses.

Table 4. Average Time Interval Of Explicit Agreement And Disagreement Responses*

Response Types	Average Time	Time Gap
Explicit agreements	213.33 ms	
Explicit disagreements	233.33ms	
		20 ms/0.02 second

    Table 4 demonstrates the average timing of responses for both agreements and disagreements. The time interval between prior utterances and following speakers' agreements is 213.33 ms, while the average time interval for disagreement reactions is 233.33 ms. The difference is clearly insignificant (only 20 ms/0.02 second). In other words, both types of response still occurred inside the range of one second, and this duration is actually very fast. Therefore, preference for agreement cannot be generalized to all settings, and long delays are not characteristic of dispreferred actions, such as disagreement, in political TV discussions. One potential explanation of this refers to the nature of political topics and TV conversations, as disputes are expected to be expressed quickly and directly, and there is insufficient time to delay expression of an opposite position to the opponent.

CONCLUSION

    The long-standing general argument with regard to preference organization suggests that speakers tend to produce responsive actions that are cooperative and expressive of affiliation, making agreement and disagreement responses inequivalent. Our results, however, revealed that each of these two kinds of responses were produced similarly without hesitation and delay, with the timing of both responses occurring within approximately one second on average.

    This finding is not in line with some previous studies that indicated that affirmation responses tend to occur faster than disaffirmations (Stivers et al.'s, 2009), that normal rejections occur after 700 ms. (Kendrick and Toreira's, 2015), or that confirmations are more common than disconfirmations (Stivers, 2010, Raymond, 2003).

It is, however, in line with other studies that dealt with dispute contexts like controversial political TV interaction. In terms of the general frequency of agreement and disagreement responses, our results have revealed a slight difference between the two types (51.6%/48.3%), and thus align with Robinson's study (2020), which showed that disaffirmation answers (i.e. disagreements) were not significantly less frequent than affirmation answers. Lerch's (2015) study, also, showed that disagreement is more likely to be more frequent than agreement, and our data showed that the percentage of explicit disagreements exceeded significantly the proportion of explicit agreements (42.7%/12.6%).

Disagreement acts in the Arabic data we used are preferred to the same degree as agreement, or even more, which challenges the basic perception of human tendency towards affiliation in interaction. Face-threatening acts can be quick and preferred acts when a conversation is carried out in a confrontational setting, such as political TV discussions. The current study, however, was conducted only for the effect of political context on the realization of the speech act of agreement and disagreement. Further studies on agreement and disagreement might investigate other social or contextual factors, such as gender, age, level of formality, power relations of the interlocutors or other contextual and external factors that may impact the use of agreement and disagreement strategies in Arabic language. Data obtained from various contexts, such as classroom interactions or Arabic language learning, can also be valuable for understanding how interactions are managed within Arabic culture. Findings from such studies would be more valid, reliable, and generalizable.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

REFERENCES

Al-Ahmad, Sayyah and Wardat, Mahmud. 2010. "Disagreement in Arabic Discourse as Exhibited in Unscripted Televised Debates." *King Saud University Journal of Arts* 22, no.2: 17-31.

Al-Dilaimy, Hazim and Khalaf, Abed. 2014. "A Pragmatic Analysis of Impolite Interruptions of Selected Debates in The Opposite Direction of Al-Jazeera Channel." *American Journal of Educational Research* 3, no. 12: 1570-1578.

Atkinson, Max and Drew, Paul. 1979. *Order in Court: The Organisation of Verbal Interaction in Judicial Settings.* (London: Macmillan).

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana, Blondheim, Menahem and Hacohen, Gonen. 2002. "Tradition of Dispute: From Negotiations of Talmudic Texts to the Arena of Political Discourse in The Media." *Journal of Pragmatics* 34, no.10-11: 1569-1594.

Brown, Penelope and Levinson, Stephen. 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage.* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press).

Chilton, Paul. 2004. *Analysing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice*. (London: Routledge).

Chiu, Ming. 2008. "Effects of Argumentation on Group Micro-Creativity: Statistical Discourse Analyses of Algebra Students' Collaborative Problem Solving." *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 33, no. 3: 382-402.

Clayman, Steven, Heritage, John, Elliott, Marc and McDonald, Laurie. 2007. "When Does The Watchdog Bark? Conditions of Aggressive Questioning in Presidential News Conferences." *American Sociological Review*, 72, no.1: 23-41.

Clayman, Steven. 2022. "Sequence and Solidarity." In: Shane R. Thye, ed., *Group Cohesion, Trust and Solidarity*, 19: 229-253.

Concannon, Shauna, Healey, Patrick and Purver, Matthew. 2015. "Shifting Opinions: An Experiment on Agreement and Disagreement in Dialogue." Paper presented at the *Proceedings of the 19th Workshop on the Semantics and Pragmatics of Dialogue*. Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, August 24-26, 2015: 15-23.

Davidson, Judy. 1984. "Subsequent Versions of Invitations, Offers, Requests and Proposals Dealing with Potential or Actual Rejection." In: J. Maxwell Atkinson, ed., *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis*: 102–128.

El-Zouka, Miranda. 2006. "Agreement and Disagreement Strategies in Television Talk Shows." *Majallah Al-Adab Wa Al-Ulum Al-Insaniyyah* 59, no. 1: 1-53.

Georgakopoulou, Alexandra. 2001. "Arguing About the Future: On Indirect Disagreements in Conversations." *Journal of Pragmatics* 33, no. 12: 1881-1900.

Goffman, Erving. 2005. *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behaviour*. (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers).

Greatbatch, David. 1992. "On the Management of Disagreement between News Interviewees". In: P. Drew, ed., *Talk at Work*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 268-301.

Heritage, J. 1984. *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*. (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Hernandez-Flores, Nieves. 2008. "Politeness and Other Types of Facework: Communicative and Social Meaning in a Television Panel Discussion." *Pragmatics* 18, no. 4: 689-706.

Honda, Atsuko. 2002. "Conflict Management in Japanese Public Affairs Talk Shows." *Journal of Pragmatics* 39, no. 8: 1436-1453.

https://www.alarabiya.net/programs/arab-conversation

https://www.bbc.com/arabic/tvandradio/2016/05/000000_hadith_new

https://www.france24.com/ar/النفاش/برامج/

https://www.skynewsarabia.com/program/niransadiqa-نيران-صديقة

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53x1AZzGRrI [Palestine political topic]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8m0U3ijmIDo [Iran political topic]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bu4ar6c4J1w [Gulf countries political topic)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lt7X92q9cz4 [Turkey political topic]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWxbFSa0gQI [Libya political topic]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLBibCA-gzQ [Yemen political topic]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDNMshUusM4 [Judiciary and political system in Arab countries]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0e_kSiIaFA [Sudan political topic]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TM73yQu75QI [Iraq political topic]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujpaTwk9Z0o [Arab springs political topic]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGXChZPZZ5w [Syria political topic]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xleM6iMyPmk [Islam and France political topic]

Hutchby, Ian and Wooffitt, Robin. 2008. *Conversation Analysis*. 2nd Ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Jefferson, Gail. 2004. "Glossary of Transcript Symbols with an Introduction." In: G. Lerner, ed., *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the First Generation*. (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing): 13-34.

Kakava, Christina. 2002. "Opposition in Modern Greek Discourse: Cultural and Contextual Constraints." *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34, no.10-11: 1537-1568.

Kendrick, Kobin and Torreira, Francisco. 2015. "The Timing and Construction of Preference: A Quantitative Study." *Discourse Processes* 52, no. 4: 255-289.

Kenzhekanova, Kuralay. 2015. "Linguistic Features of Political Discourse." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 6, no. 6: 192-199.

Kotthoff, Helga. 1993. "Disagreement and Concession in Disputes: On the Context Sensitivity of Preference Structures." *Language in Society* 22, no. 2: 193-216.

Kuo, Sai-hua. 1994. "Agreement and Disagreement Strategies in a Radio Conversation." *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 22, no. 2: 95-121.

Leech, Geoffrey. 2007. "Politeness: Is There an East-West Divide?." *Journal of Politeness Research* 3, no. 2: 167-206.

Lerch, Agnes. 2005. "The Concept of Preference and Its Manifestation in Hungarian Verbal Conflict Sequences." *Acta Linguistica Hungarica* 52, no. 1: 41-75.

Levinson, Stephen. 1983. *Pragmatics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

LoCastro, Virginia. 1986. "Yes, I Agree With You, But…: Agreement and Disagreement in Japanese and American English". Paper presented at the *Japan Association of Language Teachers' International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning*. Hamamatsu, Japan, November 22-24, 1986: 1-20.

Locher, Miriam. 2004. *Power and Politeness in Action: Disagreement in Oral Communication*. (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter).

Migdadi, Fathi, Badarneh, Muhammad and Abu Abbas, Khaled. 2013. "Conflict Talk and Argumentative Strategies in Highly Adversarial Talk Shows". In: P. Chilton, ed., *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics*, 9, no.1: 93-121.

Muntigl, Peter and Turnbull, William. 1998. "Conversational Structure and Facework in Arguing." *Journal of Pragmatics* 29, no. 3: 225-256.

Paltridge, Brian. 2012. *Discourse Analysis: An Introduction*. (London: Bloomsbury Academic).

Partington, Alan. 2003. *The Linguistics of Political Argument: The Spin-Doctor and The Wolfpack at The White House*. (London: Routledge).

Patrona, Marianna. 2006. "Constructing the Expert as a Public Speaker: Face Considerations on Floor-Claiming in Greek Television Discussion Programs." *Journal of Pragmatics* 38, no. 12: 2124-2143.

Pomerantz, Anita and Heritage, John. 2012. "Preference." In: J. Sidnell, ed., *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis*. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell): 210-228.

Pomerantz, Anita. 1984. "Agreeing and Disagreeing with Assessments: Some Features of Preferred/Dispreferred Turn Shape." In: M. Atkinson, ed., *Structure of Social Action: Studies in Conversational Analysis*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 57-103.

Raymond, Geoffrey. 2003. "Grammar and Social Organization: Yes/No Interrogatives and The Structure of Responding." *American Social Review* 68, no. 6: 939-967.

Rees-Miller, Janie. 2000. "Power, Severity and Context in Disagreement." *Journal of Pragmatics* 32, no. 8: 1087-1111.

Rendle-Short, Johanna. 2015. "Dispreferred Responses When Texting: Delaying That 'No' Response." *Discourse and Communication* 9, no. 6: 643-661.

Renwick, George. 1980. *Interact: Guidelines for Australians and North Americans*. (Chicago: Intercultural Press).

Robinson, Jeffrey. 2020. "Revisiting Preference Organization in Context: A Qualitative and Quantitative Examination of Responses to Information Seeking." *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 53, no. 2: 197-222.

Sacks, Harvey, Schegloff, Emanuel and Jefferson, Gail. 1974. "A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation." *Language* 50, no. 4: 696-735.

Sacks, Harvey. 1987. "On Preferences for Agreement and Contiguity in Sequences in Conversation." In: G. Button, ed., *Talk and Social Organization*. (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters): 54-69.

Schegloff, Emanuel and Sacks, Harvey. 1973. "Opening Up Closings." *Semiotica* 8, no. 4: 289-327.

Schiffrin, Deborah. 1984. "Jewish Argument as Sociability." *Language in Society* 13, no. 3: 311-335.

Scott, Suzanne. 2002. "Linguistic Feature Variation Within Disagreement: An Empirical Investigation." *Text-Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Discourse* 22, no. 2: 301-328.

Sifianou, Maria. 2012. "Disagreement, Face and Politeness." *Journal of Pragmatics* 44, no. 12: 1554-1564.

Stivers, Tanya et al. 2009. "Universals and Cultural Variation in Turn-Taking in Conversation." Paper presented at the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 106, no. 26: 10587-10592. Accessed October 23, 2021, doi: 10.1073/pnas.0903616106.

Stivers, Tanya. 2010. "An Overview of The Question-Response System in American English Conversation." *Journal of Pragmatics* 42, no. 10: 2772-2781.

Wierzbicka, Anna. 1991. *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: The Semantics of Human Interaction.* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter).

Zhu, Weihua. 2019. *Interaction in Mandarin Chinese and English as a Multilingua Franca: Context, Practice, and Perception*. (New York: Routledge).