

**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF EXPRESSING DISAGREEMENT IN
ELF ACADEMIC GROUP DISCUSSION**

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ABSTRACT

In many academic contexts in the United Kingdom, group work is an important site of English as a lingua franca (ELF) communication. Group work can involve challenging pragmatic acts, and chief among these is, arguably, disagreement. The need to disagree amicably is important for two reasons: (1) to achieve consensus on group tasks, and (2) to negotiate meaning around academic topics. There is, however, little known about how disagreement is realised in ELF academic group discussion tasks.

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the disagreement realisation of MA students from highly diverse linguacultural backgrounds interacting in academic group discussion. Specifically, the study aimed, firstly, to uncover the disagreeing practices of participants who were using English as a common means of communication; and secondly, to discover and explicate the factors which influence those practices. This study addressed these issues using a multi-method approach. Twelve students from ten different linguacultural backgrounds completed two discussion tasks (one targeting opinions, and the other consensus decision-making) and responded to follow-up questionnaires. The same students also took part in stimulated recall interviews (using the video-recording of each group discussion and self-completed questionnaires as stimuli).

Discourse analysis of the transcribed interactions revealed that they carefully select the appropriate and amicable way to express themselves in general and their differing ideas in particular and that disagreement in this context is multifarious. That is, the ELF participants employed a wide range of complex verbal and nonverbal strategies in realising disagreement and their disagreement is complicatedly managed. In particular, they appear to tend towards less explicit disagreeing practices such as the use of non-performative or pragmatic disagreement and other mitigating devices, ranging from sound/word and discourse levels to complex turn management. This is because the practices allow them both to achieve the tasks at hand and at the same time to maintain amicable interaction.

The stimulated recall data shows that their disagreement practices were influenced by both internal/prior and external/immediate factors (self-, others- and situation-oriented factors). What the participants bring with them to the group discussion—personality traits, beliefs, linguistic proficiency, cultural backgrounds, knowledge or experience on the topic, interactional goals—all exert a powerful influence on the way disagreement is realised. In

addition, their perceptions of their interlocutors' cultural backgrounds, personal traits and their concerns about their interlocutors' feelings as well as the immediate context in which the group discussion is taking place and what is emerging during the interaction all result in certain forms of disagreeing. The participants' attentiveness, flexibility and adaptability confirm the fact that ELF speakers are highly aware of diversity and possible clashes of interactional norms and expectations. They appear to enthusiastically anticipate, or even pre-empt, those challenges and they manage their language use accordingly. It also reveals that there were many different kinds of linguistic work underlying the disagreeing forms realised on the surface.

The convergence of findings indicates that what makes these group discussion sessions unique is that the participants from highly diverse linguacultural backgrounds clearly exhibit intercultural awareness. They are aware of, sensitive to, and even respectful for, cultural differences and, particularly in academic group discussion, they are evidently flexible and adaptable to the group dynamic. Also, the participants appear to aptly and subtly use both linguistic and non-linguistic resources to manage and achieve their communicative goals. In these ways the data support the view in the literature. However, given the fact that disagreement is contextually and functionally preferred in the present study and that the participants tend towards less explicit disagreeing, this challenges the existing notion that ELF interactions are inherently explicit, supportive and agreement-oriented.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Disagreement in ELF academic group discussion

Over the past decade, universities around the world have begun implementing English medium programmes of study (Haberland, 2011; Jenkins, 2014; Murata & Lino, 2017; Smit, 2017), particularly in Europe (Björkman, 2011; Kirkpatrick, 2014a; Sherman, 2017) and Asia (Baker, 2017; Hino, 2017; Kirkpatrick, 2014b). This reflects the significant role of English and the internationalisation of higher education (HE) globally. It is also evident that the countries where English is used as a first language, especially the US, UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, have become educational destinations for a substantial number of international students (Jenkins, 2014). According to figures provided by the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)¹, in 2016-2017, the UK alone received nearly 450,660 non-UK students. This greater internationalisation and diversity in the student body has led to greater heterogeneity of linguistic practices in academic settings. Many academic classroom interactions can now be characterised as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) interactions (Baker, 2009; Björkman, 2015; Jenkins, 2014; Kaur, 2009; Maíz-Arévalo, 2014; Mauranen, 2012; Smit, 2017), where ELF is broadly defined as the use of English for communication between interlocutors from different first language backgrounds (Seidlhofer, 2011; Widdowson, 2013) (see more detail in Section 2.2.1).

Despite the dynamic and complex nature of ELF interactions as well as the diverse sociocultural backgrounds of ELF speakers, with a consequent lack of shared knowledge and norms, some research has shown that ELF communication is relatively robust to miscommunication or communication breakdown. Miscommunication has been found to occur in ELF communication, as in other kinds of communication (Deterding, 2013; Jenkins, 2000; Knapp, 2011). However, studies have shown that interlocutors are aware of, and prepare for, possible miscommunication and tend to use and transform available linguistic and non-linguistic resources, especially a range of strategies to accommodate their interlocutors, to ensure mutual understanding, and, most importantly, to maintain smooth interaction

¹ <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Research--Policy/Statistics/International-student-statistics-UK-higher-education>

(Björkman, 2011; Cogo, 2010; Dewey, 2007; Firth, 2009; Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011; Kaur, 2009) (see also Section 2.2). In academic contexts, however, the situation becomes more complicated when ELF users need to interact in socially complex classroom situations, and need to produce communicative acts which might potentially give rise to offence or threaten their interlocutor's face. Disagreeing in academic group discussion is one such situation.

1.1.1 Academic group discussion

Academic group discussion is a common feature of learning within and outside the university classroom, particularly in postgraduate study contexts where seminars are more common than lectures and allow space for more student group-work (Jones, Connolly, Gear, & Read, 2006; Wisker, Robinson, & Shacham, 2007). Academic group discussion is 'a form of collaborative learning' (Alavi, 1994, p. 162), where more than two persons with 'some common characteristics' gather and work together to achieve a specific task objective, 'usually carried out through oral discourse' (Wagner & Arnold, 1965, p. 3). Academic group discussion can be perceived as part of small group work which, according to Bejarano (1987), involves two to six students collaboratively completing a learning task. Collaboration refers here to the way in which students share their own ideas, challenge those of others while at the same time establishing and maintaining a good working relationship (Beccaria, Kek, Huijser, Rose, & Kimmins, 2014). In other words, they are required to have critical thinking, problem-solving and social skills. Group discussion may have a range of functions, such as a method of brainstorming, of planning, of exchanging opinions or of reaching consensus e.g., in a group assessment task.

Disagreement is a crucial feature of academic group discussion. Opposing opinions allow students to verify their own ideas and question those of others. Most importantly, disagreement can be a means of mutually achieving a practical solution and group consensus (Blumenfeld, Marx, Soloway, & Krajcik, 1996). As such, it is ubiquitous in academic group discussion and useful for extending the edge of students' knowledge. Given the fact that academic group discussion is mostly conducted through oral communication and that it is vulnerable to challenges, controversy and conflicts, developing a particular set of verbal skills is key to effective interaction (Jones, 1999) e.g. conflict- or problem-solving ability, and communicative strategies. In addition, participating in academic group discussion allows students to become not only good speakers but also good listeners. They need to learn how to

send messages, receive criticism and especially defend their own ideas effectively (De Vita, 2000). Obviously, for students to work collaboratively and effectively in academic group discussion, it calls not only for interactants' transactional competence but also for their interactional competence. Academic group discussion thus becomes a fertile field for disagreement studies (see also Section 2.3).

1.1.2 Disagreement

The communicative act of disagreement has been perceived as a face-threatening act (Brown & Levinson, 1978/1987) which threatens interlocutors' positive face wants or need to be approved of. Moreover, it can be a form of confrontation which can lead to dispute and conflict and cause discomfort, threat or even offence (Heritage, 2005; Pomerantz, 1984). In contrast, at times, disagreement is perceived as an important process that is necessary to achieve practical solutions, that can also function as a sign of familiarity, intimacy and solidarity, and, through which, interactants can enhance their professional status and well-being (Georgakopoulou, 2001; Kakavá, 1993; Kotthoff, 1993; Schiffrin, 1984; Tannen, 1984) (see more detail in Section 2.4).

When it comes to academic group discussion which is goal-oriented in nature, despite its potential negative effects on interlocutors, disagreement becomes one of the practical means to the end of task completion. However, the ultimate goals of classroom interactions are not just to get tasks done. This kind of group work activity is also believed to help extend students' social networks (De Vita, 2000; Jones, 1999; Montgomery & McDowell, 2009). The challenge for postgraduate students is therefore how they can use academic group discussion to build up their academic knowledge and visibility while at the same time strengthening their group connections. However, with the internationalisation of education both in the UK and around the world, the situation becomes more complicated. The classroom context tends towards being a multicultural gathering which caters for students from different linguacultural backgrounds. When it comes to expressing disagreement, there is a strong possibility for students to encounter breaches in interactional perceptions, values and norms. Taken together, it is important to explore how postgraduate students from highly diverse backgrounds express their disagreement in academic group discussion where English is the only shared resource for communication.

1.2 Rationale of the study

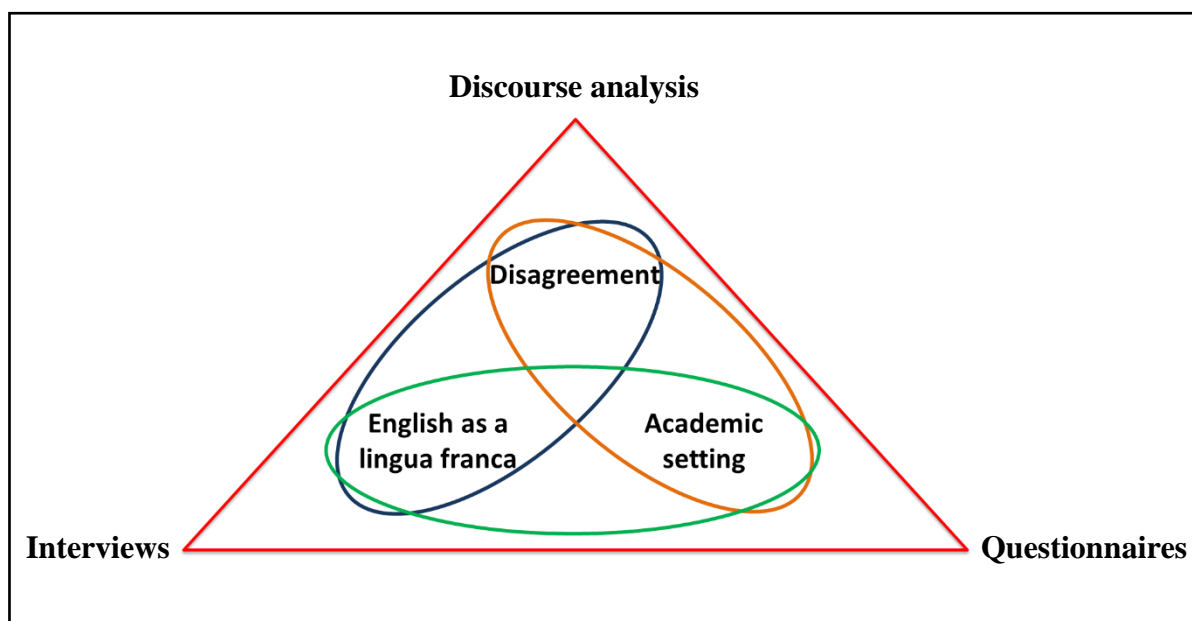
Although there have been a number of studies on disagreement in both first- and second-language settings, research on pragmatics among second language users has mostly been conducted in the paradigm of interlanguage pragmatics (Angouri, 2012; Angouri & Locher, 2012; Bardovi-Harlig & Salsbury, 2004; Behnam & Niroomand, 2011; Georgakopoulou, 2001; Habib, 2008; Kakavá, 2002; Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998; Ong, 2011; Rees-Miller, 2000; Sifianou, 2012; Zhu, 2014). However, there is benefit to be gained from taking an ELF perspective, which does not take for granted a set of native-speaker norms which function as a benchmark.

To date, there are very few studies, if any, that look specifically into disagreement in academic settings where English is used as a medium of interaction in its own right (Maíz-Arévalo, 2014; Walkinshaw & Kirkpatrick, 2014) without comparing it with native speaker norms. Moreover, in terms of research methods, most previous research has relied primarily on conversation or discourse analysis and/or data from corpora (such as ELFA or MICASE) without considering the pragmatic decision-making processes of ELF participants themselves (Bjørge, 2012; Björkman, 2015; House, 2008; Konakahara, 2016; Maíz-Arévalo, 2014). As a result, while many studies have developed taxonomies of disagreement, there is less known about the motivations for the expression (or non-expression) of disagreement in practice. The present study thus aims to fill these gaps in the field by offering insights from both researcher and ELF participants into the roles and functions of disagreement and the way it is expressed and achieved in the distinct context of ELF academic interaction.

The overarching goals of this thesis, therefore, will be to investigate the way Master's students from highly diverse linguacultural backgrounds, who use English as a common means of interaction, produce disagreement in academic group discussion. The present study prioritises the detailed analysis of interaction in context (e.g. turn-taking, pauses, nonverbal features and language users' metapragmatic comments) and the use of multiple research methods to investigate how language is used in a particular context. By adopting a multi-method approach which includes discourse analysis, questionnaires and retrospective reports on videoed interactions from discussants, the study aims to balance the perspectives of both researcher and participants (see more detail in Chapter 3). Given the fact that language use involves both cognitive and social processes, the use of a discourse analytic approach supported by the participants' own voices is expected to provide a more comprehensive insight into how

disagreement is realised in a dynamic ELF context. Based on the theoretical issues and research methods mentioned above, the present study is conceptualised as illustrated in Figure 1.1. It is hoped that by combining these three aspects, which interplay with each other in a dynamic and emerging discourse, and by using a multi-method approach this research study will contribute new insights into how disagreement is realised in an ELF academic context.

Figure 1.1: Conceptualisation of the study



1.3 Research aims

Because the study of disagreement in ELF academic contexts is still in its infancy, the present study aims to broaden the field by gaining more encompassing insights into the different practices of how disagreement is expressed in such a context. In this case, disagreement will be investigated in academic group discussion, where it plays a pivotal role in broadening participants' knowledge, maintaining participants' academic visibility and reaching group consensus. Furthermore, the study is expected to provide a clearer understanding of how disagreement is realised within a context where English is used as a lingua franca and where interactants come from highly diverse language and cultural backgrounds and have different interactional norms. This could enable the researcher to ascertain a more appropriate theory

that will explicate such a phenomenon in its own right. In so doing, the present study aims to uncover the practices of disagreeing that ELF speakers perform in academic group discussion and the factors that determine those practices.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organised into eight chapters. The structure and content of each chapter is summarised below.

Chapter 1 — Introduction

This chapter has situated the thesis within the context of research on the internationalisation of education and its impact on the importance of English used as a lingua franca. A brief overview of academic group discussion and a key feature—disagreement—has been presented, which provides a contextual frame for the study. The rationale and research aims have been articulated, and an outline of the thesis structure has been provided.

Chapter 2 — Literature review

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature to firmly ground the study in the field of up-to-date scholarship. The chapter aims to introduce the theoretical frameworks used in the present study and of previous studies on disagreement in ELF academic group discussion. More specifically, the definition and characteristics of academic group discussion, disagreement and English as a lingua franca (ELF) will be first discussed. Then, the theoretical background to the study of disagreement in ELF academic group discussion and previous research that investigates ELF communication will be explored. A review of data collection and analysis methods used in the present study will also be provided.

Chapter 3 — Research methodology

Chapter 3 presents, overarching research design, research questions and research methods, which attempt to incorporate and balance perspectives from both researcher and participants and to triangulate data from different sources. The chapter also gives information about the

research site and research equipment, demographic information of the participants, the research stages, the development of the questionnaires and the group discussion tasks and their procedures, and the methods of data analysis.

Chapter 4 — Disagreement realisation (Data analysis 1)

Chapter 4 presents the findings of Analysis One which explores participants' disagreeing practices performed in academic group discussion. Based mainly on discourse analysis and partly on stimulated recall interviews, the analysis involves both verbal and nonverbal realisations of disagreement. The analyses and results will be illustrated through different extracts taken from group discussion transcripts and partly supported by the participants' post-event interviews. Moreover, in this chapter, all disagreeing practices will be presented with reference to their explicitness and the possible threats that different practices may cause interlocutors.

Chapter 5 — Mitigation (Data analysis 2)

Chapter 5 presents the findings of Analysis Two which looks specifically at the mitigating devices employed by the participants to attenuate the perceived negative effects of disagreement. As in the previous chapter, selective extracts from transcriptions of the four group discussion sessions will be provided in order to explicate the phenomena under investigation. The chapter also presents some unique characteristics of mitigation in academic group discussion where the participants do not share mutual norms of perception and interaction.

Chapter 6 — Factors influencing disagreeing practices (Data analysis 3)

Chapter 6 presents the findings of Analysis Three which seeks to reveal the factors influencing the diverse disagreeing practices and mitigating devices found in Chapters 4 and 5. The chapter begins by explaining the data-coding process and provides an overview of salient themes and sub-themes found in the participants' post-event interview accounts given in stimulated recall interview sessions. Their accounts are analysed and discussed with reference to underlying communicative intents and the interactional motivations of different disagreement realisations.

Chapter 7 — Integration of findings and discussion

Chapter 7 integrates the analyses from Chapters 4, 5 and 6 and discusses their findings with reference to the complexity and unique characteristics of disagreement in an ELF academic context. The chapter begins with a discussion of the contextual and functional preference for disagreement in the context of the present study. It then discusses the most frequently employed disagreeing practices and the norms of expression of opposing stances in ELF academic group discussion. The chapter also discusses the reflexivity of diverse disagreeing practices and the factors influencing them.

Chapter 8 — Conclusion

The last chapter, Chapter 8, provides a summary of the whole thesis, beginning with a summary of the approach and methods employed in the thesis. Next, it summarises the key findings from the three analyses and discusses their contributions to the field. The limitations of the present study are then addressed and recommendations for future research are provided.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide an overview of theory and research related to the three main elements of the study: English as a lingua franca, academic group discussion, and the communicative act of disagreement. The literature review comprises eight main sections (2.1-2.8). To begin with, Section 2.2 discusses English as a lingua franca vis-à-vis its definitions, the characteristics of both interactions and interactants, and previous research. In Section 2.3, the characteristics of academic group discussion will be discussed. Section 2.4 involves the conceptualisation of disagreement and possible factors that play a role in determining the realisation of disagreeing practices. Section 2.5 sheds light on different views of politeness within interaction. Section 2.6 draws together these three strands to survey previous research in the specific field of disagreement in ELF academic contexts. Section 2.7 provides a justification of the research methods chosen in this study to investigate disagreeing practices and factors that influence those practices. Finally, Section 2.8 summarises what the present chapter has covered.

2.2 English as a lingua franca (ELF)

The internationalisation of higher education in the UK and around the world has attracted a large number of international students from highly diverse linguacultural backgrounds (Jenkins, 2014). It has therefore become a key responsibility of, and also an opportunity for, universities to prepare their students for the diverse communicative settings of the globalised world (Heuberger, Gerber, & Anderson, 1999). The situation has prioritised the role of the English language in transactions at any level in academic settings, especially as a common means of communication for teaching and learning (Mauranen, 2012) as well as the dissemination of knowledge and innovation. English is said to be used as a ‘lingua franca’ in such settings. In this section, the definitions and characteristics of English used as a lingua franca will be explored.

2.2.1 Defining ELF

The term ELF has been variously defined, particularly with respect to whether English native speakers should be included in what is perceived as ELF interactions (Jenkins et al., 2011). For example, according to Schneider (2012), ELF is the use of English as an auxiliary language spoken by participants who do not share the same first language. This is congruent with the view of Seidlhofer (2011), who defines ELF as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (p. 7). Similarly, according to Widdowson (2013), ELF interactions involve the use of “linguistic resources, by native as well as non-native speakers of English, when no other shared means of communication are available or appropriate” (p. 190). ELF, according to these definitions, thus includes English native speakers. In contrast, according to Firth (1996), ELF can be defined as a contact language for speakers whose L1 and culture are different, such that English is chosen as a foreign language of communication. Similarly, House (2013) characterises ELF interaction as one without those ‘who are native speakers of the language used’ (p. 57). A key feature of Firth’s and House’s definitions is thus to exclude native speakers of English. However, in many cases, English native speakers also engage in ELF interactions in which they are no longer perceived as experts (Jenkins, 2009) and they also necessarily adapt themselves to these interactions. The present study adopts Seidlhofer’s definition whereby ELF interactions embrace both those between native and non-native English speakers and between non-native and non-native English speakers.

At the very beginning of the development of research into ELF, researchers put much effort into identifying the core linguistic features of English when used as a common means of communication (Kimura & Canagarajah, 2017). Seidlhofer (2001, 2004), for example, created the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE) in order to investigate and conceptualise the lexicogrammatical features of English used by speakers with different linguacultural backgrounds and English linguistic proficiency. In addition, Jenkins (2002) proposed phonetic and phonological characteristics which can influence or affect mutual (un)intelligibility, the so-called ‘lingua franca (non)core’. However, the trajectory of ELF research since has been a move from these initial attempts to codify an ELF ‘variety’ to a view of ELF as a set of interactional resources which are used in fluid and dynamic contexts. For instance, Cogo (2010) suggests that the inherent characteristics of ELF encounters are that meaning is negotiated in situ and that ELF users creatively employ their linguistic and interactional resources to respond to their own communicative purposes. Moreover, Kalocsai

(2011) found that her ELF participants aptly and freely adjust their language use according to their own language proficiency and those of others as well as any intelligibility problems emerging over the course of the interaction. Zhu (2015) also suggests that ELF interactions go beyond linguistic forms and meaning and are more about the dynamic negotiation of interactants' cultural resources and the immediate interactional situation and the efficient manipulation of those resources to accommodate their interactional needs.

Instead of seeking an exact definition for this dynamic tool of communication, ELF has been said to have the following main characteristics: (1) it is a means of communication for people with different first languages; (2) it is an alternative for learners or speakers rather than a replacement for English as a foreign language (EFL) and it depends crucially on their needs and preferences; (3) ELF is a unique linguistic innovation shared by most ELF speakers; (4) because ELF forms and meanings are situated in context, it involves the use of various kinds of communicative skills and pragmatic strategies, such as accommodation and code-switching, to facilitate communication; (5) its codification can be drawn from the description of proficient ELF users (Jenkins, 2009, p. 143-145). ELF is thus a truly adaptive and complex system which is 'context-bound, usage-oriented' and 'goal-oriented' in nature (Jenkins et al., 2011).

2.2.2 Characteristics of ELF interactions

Canagarajah (2013) attempts to demonstrate some important characteristics of the English language when it is used in contexts where the speakers do not have shared norms. He illustrates the dynamic interactions between languages and communication, where communication plays a more pivotal role than the difference or similarity of individual languages and correct linguistic forms. Rather, the interactions involve different linguistic resources and ecological affordances; or as Cogo (2008) puts it, 'form follows function'. In these multi-ethnic contexts, meaning arises through negotiation practices in local situations, rather than from the use of correct grammatical norms, which are open to be negotiated and reconstructed by individual interlocutors in specific (new) communicative situations (Canagarajah, 2013). Languages used in this kind of interaction thus change over time, context and space to generate new grammars as well as discourse and pragmatic meanings. Successful ELF speakers therefore require "adaptive accommodation skills along with appreciation and acceptance of diversity" (Cogo, 2009, p. 270).

Against expectations, the diverse levels of English language proficiency of ELF speakers and their lack of shared knowledge, expectations and sociocultural background as well as the dynamic and complex nature of ELF interactions do not necessarily lead to disunity, non-understanding, miscommunication or even communication breakdown. Speakers have been found to depend on their interactional purposes, linguacultural backgrounds and situated context (Seidlhofer, 2011) in conjunction with their linguistic, cognitive and social resources (Mauranen, 2012) to ensure successful interactions. ELF speakers are aware of, and prepare for, those possible situations and tend to use and transform available linguistic and non-linguistic resources (Cogo, 2010; Dewey, 2007; Firth, 2009; Kaur, 2009; Mauranen, 2012) such as a broad set of lexico-grammatical, code-switching and, especially, interactional strategies (e.g. clarity enhancement, repetition, clarification request) to accommodate their interactions and to achieve mutual understanding. These strategies also provide the basis for efficient communication (Seidlhofer, 2011). Interactions in ELF contexts are therefore thought to be inherently ‘consensus-oriented, cooperative, and mutually supportive’ (Seidlhofer, 2001, p. 143). Pragmatic or discourse strategy practices and the processes of accommodation between ELF interlocutors thus become an integral focus of empirical investigation (Cogo, 2009; Cogo, Archibald, & Jenkins, 2011; House, 2010; Kaur, 2009; Mauranen, 2006).

Like many other kinds of interactions, ELF interactions are also oriented towards achieving transactional and interactional purposes (Seidlhofer, 2011). However, they are restricted in that interactants are, as mentioned earlier, deprived of mutual norms of interaction. To achieve those goals, according to Baker (2012), ELF interactants necessarily have a particular competence—intercultural awareness—which differs from the more ordinary interpersonal awareness activated when they are engaged in intracultural interactions. The distinct characteristics of interactants in intercultural interactions in general and in ELF interactions in particular are their awareness of the cultural divide between themselves and their interlocutors and the acceptance of these differences (Baker, 2017). Also, another important characteristic of ELF interactants is their ability to make use of their linguistic and (prior and situated) contextual resources to bridge any cultural gap between themselves and their interlocutors (Kecskes, 2014). Interactants attempt to appropriately and effectively get involved in a complex and dynamic verbal exchange which is, to a great extent, susceptible to a mismatch of interactional perceptions, values and practices. Apart from transactional and interactional competence, to be successful interactants in ELF interactions, speakers are required to have intercultural communicative competence, or intercultural competence in short.

As far as interactional (communicative) competence is concerned, there is inconsistency in its terminology, underlying concepts and components (Byram, 2012; Fantini, 2009, 2012; Schauer, 2016). For instance, according to Fantini (2009), intercultural competence is the “complex abilities that are required to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (p. 458). However, when it comes to appropriateness, Fantini tends to focus on norms prescribed by (English) native speakers and their perceptions. This gives rise to the question of whose norm should be the yardstick since in ELF interactions, on many occasions, native speakers (of English) do not get involved in the interaction and the compliance with those norms does not necessarily enhance or ensure mutual understanding, and lead to successful communication (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Kaur, 2011; Mauranen, 2006).

In fact, intercultural communicative competence is the result of the extension of the notion of communicative competence, which consists of grammatical and sociocultural knowledge (Hymes, 1972). However, communicative competence is static and mostly accounts for a monolithic view of interactions. It is likely to marginalise the notion of interactants’ flexibility, perceived as an important component for successful multicultural and ELF interactions (Baker, 2017). Particularly, it ignores the current role of English in global communities. In this case, Spencer-Oatey (2010) broadens the notion of intercultural competence to cover “all aspects of the competence needed to interact effectively and appropriately with people from other cultural groups, and to handle the psychological demands that may be associated with this” (p. 190). According to Byram (1997, 2010), apart from knowledge of language, intercultural communicative competence encompasses knowledge of cultural diversity and the willingness to accept cultural differences, as well as understanding the importance of a close-knit interrelationship between language and culture so that all these resources can be employed to interact successfully with individuals or groups with differing cultures and practices.

In order to be able to thoroughly account, in particular, for ELF interactions, Baker (2012) introduces the notion of *intercultural awareness* which itself relies on the notion of intercultural communicative competence. He argues that intercultural awareness should be broadened to include “an understanding of the fluid, complex and emergent nature of the relationship between language and culture in intercultural communication through ELF” (Baker, 2017, p. 33). With the departure from a focus on national culture while orienting towards the prioritisation of the present role of English on a global scale or when it is used as

a common means of communication and flexible engagement, ELF research differs from intracultural and intercultural communication research.

2.3.3 Community of practice

Within the distinct characteristics and practices of ELF interactions mentioned above, interactional behaviours are influenced by previous and situated experience of being a part of a social community. This stresses the importance of the social meanings and shared (expected and appropriate) interactional practices that are mutually formed by being a part of a certain community.

The notion of a ‘community of practice’ was proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991) to explain the social process of learning which starts from the periphery until learners become fully experienced members of a community. They assert that learning results from direct participation and mutual engagement. However, the concept of a community of practice does not limit itself to accounting only for learning but also for general social practices, particularly the complex and dynamic influence of context on linguistic and interactional routines (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999). As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet define it (1992),

A community of practice is an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations—in short, practices—emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor. As a social construct, a community of practice is different from the traditional community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages.

(Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p. 464)

This definition prioritises the regular participation of a group of people who gather together to achieve a mutual goal. According to Wenger (1998), the notion of a community of practice comprises three important characteristics—domain, community and practice. The domain is a network connecting a group of people with a shared interest, commitment and competence. Within the same domain, people interact and incrementally learn from each other in forming their own community. This becomes a platform for them to develop relationships among people in the same domain and community. Apart from the relationships which are formed through being a part of community, they build up a shared repertoire or practice e.g., of resources,

experiences, tools, stories etc. In other words, within a group of people with a shared goal or ‘joint enterprise’ through regular or ‘mutual engagement’, they will build up a ‘shared repertoire’ of their own community. Wenger maintains that as human beings, we are surrounded by and belong to different communities of practice such as at home, school, the workplace and many others. As such, on a daily basis, we gather and develop relationships and practices with different groups of people to achieve different interactional goals and this occurs throughout the course of our lives. This highlights the fact that we can belong to many different communities and experience diverse practices. The notions of a community of practice and of shared practice enhance our understanding of what interactional behaviours are appropriate in a particular context and the close interrelationship of prior experiences and immediate context in influencing interactants’ meaning-making process and practices.

This gives rise to the question of whether the notion of community of practice can explain ELF interactions, particularly the fact that interactants come into contact, only at times, for specific purposes and for a short time period. However, for some ELF interactions e.g. in ELF academic or workplace contexts, the interactants necessarily interact regularly and for a certain period of time. Even if they do not, it does not mean that the concept cannot be applied since the interactants can depend on and exploit their practices in the community to which they previously belong and adapt them to an actual situated interaction (Mauranen, 2012). This notion is supported by Canagarajah (2013) who puts it, “In the context of such language diversity, meaning doesn’t arise from a common grammatical system or norm, but through negotiation practices in local situations.” (p. 7). As far as academic contexts are concerned, appropriate practices are obviously those which comply with what is built up and expected by the community. This shared repertoire perhaps turns out to be an important resource for interactants whose expectations, interpretation and evaluation differ from each other like those in ELF interactions. ELF interactions stress the fact that there are inextricable relationships between prior and situated contexts in framing the way ELF interactants can adopt and adapt their existing repertoire in such a way that they can be appropriately engaged in certain interactions. Additionally, their efficient and appropriate use of different linguistic and non-linguistic resources characterises ELF interactants’ distinct competence—intercultural communicative competence—which enables them to successfully take part in interactions in which the participants are highly linguistically, culturally and interactionally diverse.

2.2.4 Previous ELF research and challenges

To date, apart from business gatherings, academic interactions have been a key site for ELF research (Jenkins et al., 2011) (e.g. Baker, 2011, 2012; Björkman, 2009, 2011, 2015; Jenkins, 2014; Kaur, 2009; Mauranten, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011; Smit, 2017 among others). Moreover, most, if not all, ELF research is oriented more towards formal settings or professional and institutional contexts (Jenks, 2017), and particularly more towards establishing the communicative strategies to co-construct meaning and achieve mutual understanding. As discussed above, previous research has tended to find that ELF interactions are inherently supportive, affiliative and consensus-oriented (Seidlhofer, 2001). However, this is not always the case since more recent research has shown the opposite trend.

Recent ELF research reveals that ELF is not always cooperative and agreement-oriented, and that there has been a lack of research on conflict/oppositional talk in ELF studies. Jenks (2012), for example, found from his study that ELF interactions are not, by their very nature, mutually supportive and consensus-oriented. Rather, they highlight problems and trouble if we carefully look at the functions of laughter, joking and ridicule in the interactions. The example below is drawn from Jenks' paper on ELF speakers' reprehension about communication problems. Two interactants (S4 and S5) are involved in a conversation in which S4 starts by asking S5 to introduce herself. The focus is on S4's turn where S4 draws attention to S5's incomprehensible pronunciation.

Example:

- | | | |
|------|-----|----------------------------------|
| 1 | S4: | so, can you introduce yourself |
| 2 | | (1.6) |
| 3 | S5: | eh? (0.4) me↑ |
| 4 | | (0.9) |
| 5 | S4: | ye↓ah↑ |
| 6 | | (0.8) |
| 7 | S5: | .hhhhhhh |
| 8 | | (1.6) |
| 9 | S5: | uhm (0.5) hi. (0.3) >hehe> |
| 10 | | .hhhh (0.7) |
| 11 | | (0.4) |
| 12 | S5: | eh- (0.2) uh::[m |
| → 13 | S4: | [yeah↓ (0.3) yeah |
| 14 | | don't be (say) yeah like (* * *) |

15 (0.5) let's↑ talk. let's o↑pen
16 your mouth

(Source: adapted from Jenks, 2012, p. 394)

Instead of letting the communication or understanding problem pass, in lines 13-16 S4 identifies and highlights S5's linguistic problem which, in this case, is S5's unintelligible pronunciation. This little argument is readdressed in Jenks (2017) where he maintains that like other interactions, ELF encounters can be both cooperative and uncooperative. He further suggests that any attempt to conceptualise ELF interactions as different from other interactions (in other English-speaking contexts) in terms of their cooperativeness, supportiveness and orientation towards agreement requires empirical evidence. This is in congruence with Ehrenreich (2017) who maintains that ELF communities of practice, like other communities, can be both cooperative and conflictual, and Konakahara (2016) who reveals that ELF interactions can be teeming with disagreement and even strong disagreement.

Kappa (2016) also found from her data that, through their use of laughter, her participants do not necessarily show "solidarity and consensus with one another" (p. 30). She further argues that early ELF research seems to marginalise conflict talk and oppositional or dis-affiliative interaction as well as their impact on interpersonal relations and their diversity. Also, it is limited in its scope in believing that ELF speakers need to interact in the same way across all interactional situations. This notion tends to oversimplify the complex nature of human interactions in general and those in ELF settings in particular, since it overlooks individual differences and the influence of prior contexts on interactional practices.

These studies obviously reveal that previous trends in ELF studies are limited in scope in that they overemphasise certain types of interactions e.g. casual conversation (Cogo & House, 2017). In addition, they are largely interested in how meaning is negotiated and the mechanisms that ensure successful communication rather than on communicative acts which might be challenging and lead to interpersonal conflict. That is, they focus on accommodating communicative strategies which pre-empt misunderstanding and ensure mutual understanding (Björkman, 2014; Cogo, 2009; Cogo & Dewey 2012; Jenkins et al., 2011; Matsumoto, 2011). This falls short of accounting for complicated ELF interactions and gives rise to research gaps and challenges. Therefore, while ELF research has transformed over time and now includes a

focus on what makes communication successful in fluid and dynamic contexts, there is still an emphasis on informal conversational contexts where co-operation may be expected.

2.3 Academic group discussion

One of the most common sites of ELF communication is academic institutions, and within such settings, group discussion provides a particularly challenging communicative context. Academic group discussion is a common feature of teaching and learning within and outside the university classroom, particularly in postgraduate study contexts where seminars are more common than lectures and allow space for more student group-work (Jones et al., 2006; Wisker et al., 2007). It may be used as a method of brainstorming, of planning, of sharing opinions or of reaching consensus e.g. in a group assessment task. Given that this kind of interaction involves people with similar characteristics (students) attempting to achieve mutual goals (to complete a certain task), this multiparty interaction has its own practices according to the type and context of interaction. The following section is dedicated to a discussion of the characteristics and practices of academic group discussion.

2.3.1 Definition and characteristics

Academic group discussion is ‘a form of collaborative learning’ (Alavi, 1994, p. 162) where more than two persons with ‘some common characteristics’ gather and work together to achieve a specific task objective, ‘usually carried through oral discourse’ (Wagner & Arnold, 1965, p. 3). This peer learning activity is aimed to enhance students’ social, intellectual, effective and attitudinal outcomes as well as their self-image and self-concept gains (Kumpulainen & Mutanen, 1999; Topping, 2005). Academic group discussion is thus, by its very nature, task- and rapport-oriented. According to Montgomery and McDowell (2009), strong social bonds are even more evident among international students who perceive friendship as a way to enhance their study and learning. It is an interesting point that international students use social networks for their academic, social and emotional support.

Academic group discussion can be perceived as a subset of small group work, which generally involves a group of students working collaboratively to complete an assigned learning task (Bejarano, 1987) while establishing positive interdependence and participation (Ädel, 2011; Topping, 2005). The typically small number of participants in a group task can

allow for “equal participation, synergy, and added value” (Topping, 2005, p. 632). Group discussion may be a method of brainstorming, of planning, of sharing opinions or of reaching consensus e.g., in a group assessment task. To participate, students must share their own ideas, challenge those of others, and at the same time establish and maintain good working relationships (Beccaria et al., 2014). In other words, participants in an academic group discussion are required to have critical thinking, problem-solving abilities and, particularly, social skills. However, these elements are expected to be more complicated when interactants are from highly diverse linguacultural backgrounds. In such situations, ELF academic group discussion calls for complex verbal and interactional skills (Mauranen, 2012).

2.3.2 Multiparty interactions and participant role

Given that the group discussion type of interaction must comprise more than two interactants, interactional roles are, of course, not limited to just speaker and hearer. Unlike dyadic interactions whereby interactants either play an active role as speaker/addresser/producer or hearer/address/receiver, in multiparty talk, the role of non-speaking participants particularly needs to be clearly differentiated and more finely elaborated, for example, as to whether they are ‘a hearer or an addressee’ or ‘an addressee or an intended addressee’. Once we understand different listener or receiver roles, then we can understand the different levels of participation and involvement in the interaction.

According to Goffman (1979, 1981), participation status or receiver role can be divided according to whether participants are ratified or unratified. Ratified participants are those who attend to participate and, to a certain extent, have responsibility in a talk while their counterpart does not. Ratified participants can be further subdivided into addressee and side participants depending on their direct involvement in the talk at hand. In contrast, those who are unratified can be either a bystander or an overhearer. A bystander is expected to hear as much as they happen to in the circumstances, while an overhearer might only be able to hear some parts of the interaction. Moreover, the overhearer role can be further divided into a listener-in, whose presence is known to the ratified participants, and an eavesdropper whose presence is unknown. Despite the many possible roles or statuses of receivers in a particular interaction, Traum (2003) suggests that in multiparty interaction in which participants have defined roles and specific responsibilities, there is a need to consider “who can receive (is intended to receive) an utterance, and who it is addressed to” (p. 202). In academic group discussion, these different

roles can influence the way participants are engaged in an interaction and express their opinions, particularly their opposing ones.

The number of participants involved in a particular interaction not only allows for the different roles participants can take in this multi-person interaction, but also results in different practices (e.g. a distinct design of conversational turns and the structure of sequences) and resources which are, according to Kangasharju (2002), distinct from dyadic or dialogue interactions. Also, what is unique to multiperson interaction, and especially to group discussion, is that the interaction allows for the alignment of groups or subgroups of interactants who have a similar idea or standpoint—whether of agreement or, particularly, disagreement. As she exemplified,

For example, participants in multiperson interaction can build up a majority which can vote down an individual participant. The possibility of forming alliances and majorities is, particularly in decision-making situations, a characteristic that greatly influences the social positions of the participants. Some further opportunities offered by a multiperson setting are the possibility of being silent for long periods, or participating in the interaction only through nonverbal actions, which can also be performed collectively.

(Kangasharju, 2002, p. 1448)

2.3.3 Group composition, tasks and practices

In addition to participant role and the number of participants involved which exert a powerful influence on the interactional practices and dynamics of conversation, group composition and group tasks can also play a key role. Regarding group composition, a group can consist of members with differences in race, ethnicity, age, gender, learning ability, verbal skills, etc. Blumenfeld et al. (1996) argue that effective group interaction necessarily needs students' active participation in sharing their ideas, taking risks, generating, disagreeing with and reconciling different points of view (p. 38). As such, to promote learning and good collaboration as well as to enhance group success and effective group interaction, there is a need to balance those different elements in any particular group composition. Group tasks themselves also play an important role in determining the dynamic of a group interaction and promoting students' learning, particularly problem-solving tasks which provide students with

the opportunity to share their own ideas while accommodating those of others as well as the opportunity to give and get help from others.

Disagreement is an integral aspect of academic group discussion. Disagreement or the expression of opposing opinions allows students to verify their own ideas and question those of others. In this way, disagreement can be a means to obtain a group consensus if the aim is to get a task done. As such, disagreement is ubiquitous in academic discussion and useful for extending the edge of students' knowledge. Given the fact that discussion is mostly conducted through oral communication (Mauranen, 2012) and that it is vulnerable to challenges, controversy and conflicts, verbal skill in expressing (opposing) opinions is key to effective interaction (Jones, 1999) e.g. conflict- or problem-solving ability, communicative strategies. Particularly, in academic group discussion which involves different parties, the way disagreement is expressed can be different from that found in one-to-one disagreement (Kangasharju, 2002). That is, group discussion allows participants to build up a collection of ideas—converging and diverging—or (oppositional) alliance forming. Performing disagreement in group academic discussion is thus more complicated, dynamic and challenging.

In addition, participating in academic group discussion allows students to become not only good speakers but also good listeners. As De Vita (2000) reported on his own experiences of, and reflections on, approaches to effective communication and active participation through discussion in the multicultural classroom, international students need to learn how to effectively send messages, receive criticism and especially defend their own ideas. Also, amicable interaction and active participation thus become a platform for international students to learn and celebrate cultural diversities. For students to work effectively and collaboratively in academic group discussion, it calls not only for interactants' transactional competence but also for their interactional. In fact, when it comes to academic group discussion in an international environment, according to Jones (1999), the situation seems to be more complex. It requires not only pragmatic competence—language users' ability to communicate and interpret an intended meaning (Fraser, 2010, p. 15)—but also knowledge of other cultures. He found that, in particular, Asian students approach group discussion differently from their English native speaker peers in an academic group discussion in which there is a combination of both native and non-native students. They are likely to be less participatory and to contribute less to conversation, and this results in a great deal of tension and pressure. With the internationalisation of education, classrooms are increasingly linguistically and culturally

diverse. Academic group discussion in a modern university is thus very frequently a site of ELF interaction.

2.4 Disagreement

Disagreement is a significant and complex communicative act which serves many functions and, at the same time, causes many different consequences because, in many cases, it indicates a flaw, knowledge gap or mistake on someone's part (Misak, 2004) or doubts over the claims or statements previously made (Sornig, 1977). Due to its having the particular features of delaying, hesitation, pauses and mitigating devices together with its possible negative effects on interlocutors, disagreement has long been described as a dispreferred communicative act. In this section, the definitions and characteristics of disagreement will be delineated.

2.4.1 Definitions and characteristics

Disagreement has been looked at from several different research traditions: conversation analysis, pragmatics and politeness theory, cross-cultural pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics research. Each of these uses different methodologies and each has highlighted different interesting aspects.

For example, conversation analysis (CA), which investigates interactional organisation (e.g. conversational turn designs and sequences) to uncover underlying social interactions (Seedhouse, 2004) (see more detail in Section 2.7.3), has determined that disagreement is a dispreferred act since it is usually delivered with delay and hesitation (Pomerantz, 1984), and it is likely to be prefaced by particular markers (e.g. *well*, *uh*) or appreciation/positive comments (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 24). Pragmatics and politeness theory, which focuses on speech acts and the notion of face, face wants and face threatening acts (see Section 2.5.1), has shown that disagreement is a face threatening act which needs mitigating devices to minimise its face-threat and that indirect disagreement is treated as appropriate and polite (Brown & Levinson, 1978/1987). Cross-cultural pragmatics, whose goal is to investigate similarities and differences of meaning making and negotiation in different cultures as well as possible breaches of interactional norms and interpretations, has shown that disagreement can vary across cultures (Kakavá, 2002; Stalpers, 1995). In contrast, interlanguage pragmatics is interested in the comparison of speech acts made by L2 learners and native speakers as well as

in how language teachers can bridge the gap between native speaker and L2 proficiency. Interlanguage pragmatics studies have thus attempted to account for how disagreement produced by language learners deviates from that of native speakers (Bardovi-Harlig & Salsbury, 2004).

As far as disagreement itself is concerned, there have been many different terms for the act of expressing differing opinions: opposition (Kakavá, 2002), arguing (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998), antagonism (Tannen, 2002), oppositional talk (Bardovi-Harlig & Salsbury, 2004) and conflict talk (Grimshaw, 1990; Gruber, 1998; Honda, 2002). Rees-Miller (2000) argues that disagreement is produced when a speaker “considers untrue some Proposition P uttered or presumed to be espoused by an Addressee A and reacts with an utterance the propositional content or implicature of which is not P” (p. 1088) which is a result of misunderstanding and/or dissent (Stalpers, 1995). By perceiving disagreement as an utterance, Rees-Miller’s definition evidently includes only that which is verbally produced. As far as verbal disagreement is concerned, it comprises at least two related turns (i.e. an adjacency pair): **a disagreement initiator or disagreement source turn** (the original utterance which the disagreement responds to and which could be directly previous to that utterance or much further back in the conversation) and **a disagreement-responding turn**.

Example:

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|--------------------------------|
| A: | This is a wonderful wine
we’re drinking. | → | ‘disagreement source turn’ |
| B: | No it’s disgusting. | → | ‘disagreement responding turn’ |

Disagreement itself can come in different forms; that is, it can be expressed both verbally and nonverbally, through gazes, facial expressions, head moves, smiling and laughter, and gestures (Bousmalis, Mehu, & Pantic, 2013). Kakavá (2002) broadens the possibilities for the realisation of disagreement when she perceives disagreement as an oppositional stance or reaction—either verbal or nonverbal—which “involves the negation of a stated or implied proposition” (p. 1539). Disagreement in this study is thus broadly defined as an interactant’s response or reaction to a previous prompt to show his or her opposing stance or opinion. This definition can cover situations in which participants agree with, or rely on, other-initiated disagreement to convey their differing opinions, or cases where oppositional alliances are

formed (Kangasharju, 2002). In this case, rather than being simply a speech act performing a particular illocutionary force (Searle, 1965)—the use of an utterance to perform a certain interactional purpose—disagreement, in the present study, is recognised as a communicative act. This is because the term ‘communicative act’ is broad enough to cover both the verbal and nonverbal realisation of disagreement and because it focuses more on communicative intent than on an utterance itself (Bavelas & Chovil, 2000; Bucciarelli, Colle, & Bara, 2003; Ninio, Snow, Pan, & Rollins, 1994).

Given the fact that disagreement is an interactant’s reaction to a preceding prompt to show his or her opposing stance or differing opinion, when it comes to verbal expression, it is, to a great extent, related to the structural connection between two utterances—one perceived as a disagreement-initiating utterance and the other as disagreement. Gruber (1998) argues that a disagreeing utterance or sequence between two (or more) opposing parties is connected by means of “specific types of cohesion between opponents’ utterances” (p. 475) such as the rejection of a propositional content by repeating a word or words of the preceding utterance or by repeating a whole phrase of the previous interlocutor’s turn.

In congruence with Gruber, Kotthoff (1993) also suggests that the disagreement initiator and its response “always connect locally to the preceding contribution, whose central point is turned into the extreme opposite from what the first speaker meant.” (p. 202). He further describes that for less aggravated disagreement, this can be done at word level and it will become more aggravated when it is done at the larger level of phrase and intonation. In early studies on disagreement based on a CA approach, researchers put an emphasis on the preference structure and turn shape of disagreeing and particularly how a dissent turn is dealt with (Bilmes, 1988; Kotthoff, 1993; Pomerantz, 1984; Sacks, 1973). Unlike its counterpart, agreeing, a communicative act of disagreeing is often performed with particular elements which allow an interactant to prolong or delay his or her communicative intent both in a single turn and over a series of turns, for example, ‘no talk, requests for clarification, partial repeats, and other repair initiators, turn prefaces’ (Pomerantz, 1984, p. 70).

As mentioned above, although disagreement can be investigated through different perspectives and approaches, these approaches can be mapped onto two broad perspectives which approach the communicative act of disagreement from different dimensions. In the following section, form- and content-oriented perspectives of disagreement will be discussed.

2.4.2 Perspectives on disagreement studies

The previous literature has demonstrated that disagreement can be approached in terms of both its form and its content. Looking at it formally, given the fact that disagreement, according to the CA approach, is a dispreferred communicative act, the act in question often comes with a part that helps mitigate its negative effect on interlocutors (Kakavá, 1993; Kotthoff, 1993; Kreutel, 2007; Pomerantz, 1984; Stalpers, 1995). In this case, disagreement consists of two elements: the disagreement part and an optional mitigating part or a communicative act set (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). Mitigation, that is a speaker's attempt to modify the strength of a communicative intent, reflects his or her awareness of possible threats that the proposition being made may cause his or her interlocutor (Holmes, 1984). On the other hand, disagreement can be classified through its content or pragmatic function (Gruber, 1998; Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998).

1. Form-oriented perspective

The study of disagreement from a form-focus perspective basically divides disagreement realisation into direct—indirect or strong—weak disagreement according to the linguistic form(s) used, in relation to its force or effect on interlocutors (Kakavá, 1993; Kotthoff, 1993; Kreutel, 2007; Pomerantz, 1984; Stalpers, 1995). The form-focus perspective on disagreement is more associated with the CA approach which puts the emphasis on the forms and structures of disagreement turns by considering the degree of aggravation and the explicitness of the communicative act in question. From this perspective, verbal disagreement comprises two different parts: a (core) disagreement part which shows the speaker's communicative intent to dissent, and an optional mitigating element which attenuates the undesirable effects or negative consequences of the disagreement part (Stalpers, 1995).

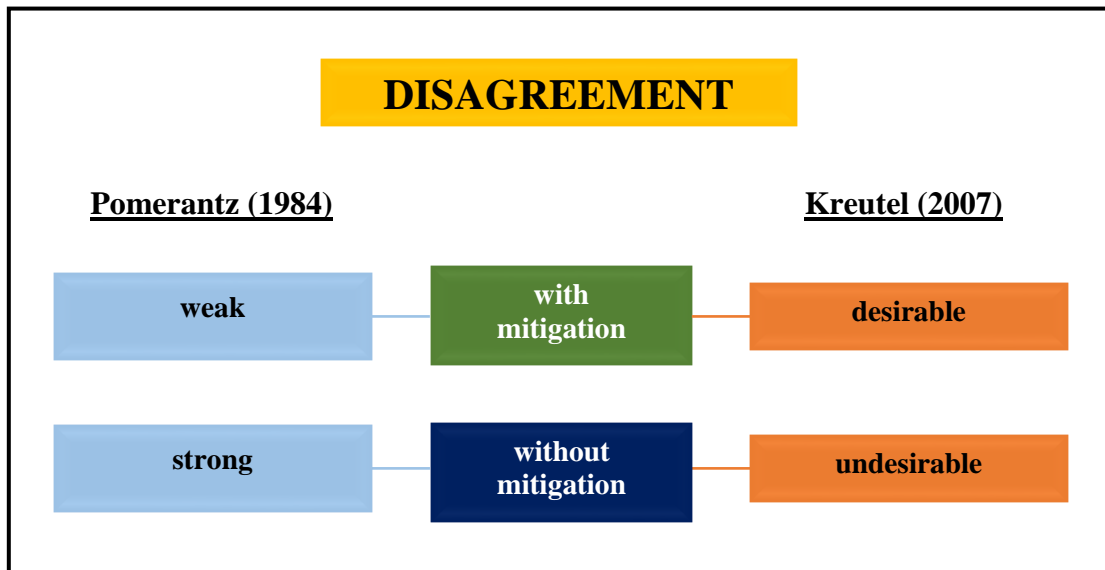
The core disagreement part involves a part which, according to Gruber (1998), clearly exhibits or implies that two different opinions are being formed, which can be done through particular types of cohesion i.e. the repetition of a word, phrase or proposition or the implied meaning of the disagreement initiator or disagreement source turn (as mentioned in the previous section). This main part carries the speaker's illocutionary force or communicative intent in order to achieve a certain effect (perlocutionary effect), which its counterpart (mitigation) does not (Fraser, 1980). As far as the mitigation of disagreement is concerned, according to Fraser (1980), it is related to the speaker's attempt "to ease the anticipated

unwelcome effect [...] the harshness or hostility of the force of one's actions" (p. 342) arising from a particular communicative act. When the mitigation part co-occurs with the disagreement main part, it helps make the communicative intent of disagreeing less explicit.

When it comes to mitigating devices used to attenuate the negative effect of disagreement, Stalpers (1995) differentiates between three categories of mitigation strategies. Category A includes strategies which prolong the disagreement act (e.g. a pause, a discourse marker, a token disagreement, the expression of apology or appreciation, a qualifier, hesitation features) while Category B involves strategies which accompany the act of disagreement (e.g. a statement to support an argument mostly in a form of an explanation or justification). The final category, Category C, involves disagreement, the explicitness of which is modified by the use of clause internal modulation (e.g. adverbs such as 'rather' or 'preferably', modal verbs) and the absence of obvious rejection.

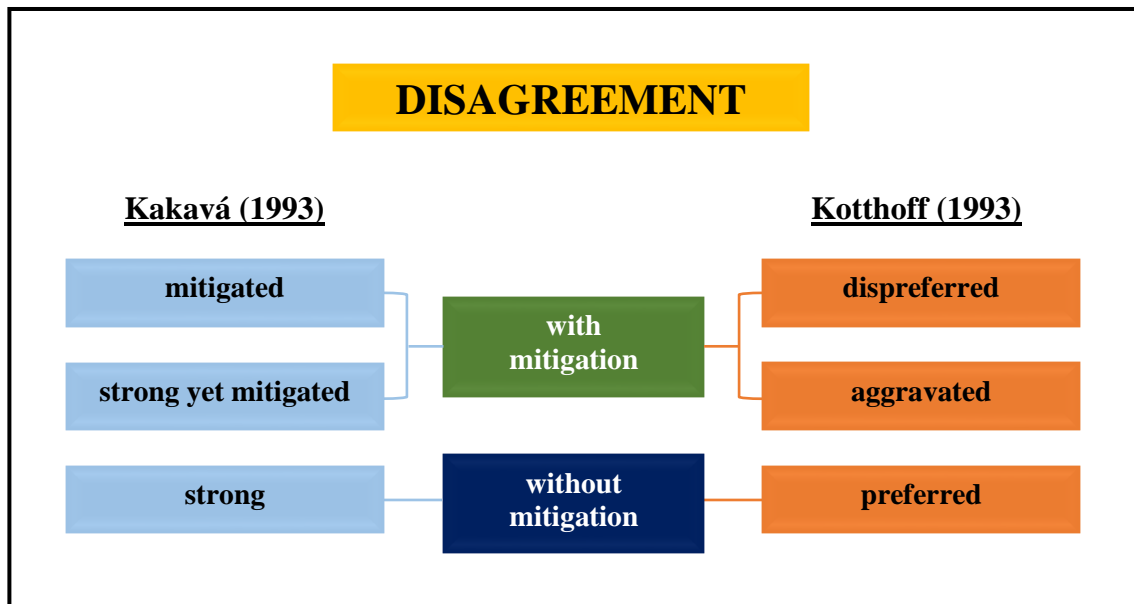
The strength or transparency of the illocutionary force and level of aggressiveness of the communicative act of disagreement therefore heavily depend on the presence or absence of mitigating devices. This group of studies focuses more on how disagreement is mitigated or delayed in a single turn and between turns. By considering the presence of mitigating elements, Pomerantz (1984), for example, proposes distinguishing between strong and weak disagreement. Disagreement is perceived as strong when it occurs only with the disagreement part or without the presence of an agreement component, while its counterpart, weak disagreement, will have a component of agreement and often co-occurs with delaying devices e.g. silence, hesitation, prefaces, pauses, laughter, and hedges. Relying on the existence of mitigation, according to Kreutel (2007), disagreement can be recognised as desirable or undesirable. Figure 2.1 illustrates two different types of disagreement.

Figure 2.1: 2-type categorisation of disagreement



Rather than dichotomising disagreement as strong or weak like Pomerantz, Kakavá (1993), based on her study on classroom discourse of students from different linguacultural backgrounds, further proposes three different types of disagreement: strong, strong yet mitigated and mitigated. While strong disagreement consists exclusively of a negated statement, strong yet mitigated disagreement is a combination of negated statement and accounts or personal analogies. Mitigated disagreement, conversely, occurs with partial agreement, questions with hedges and hesitations, or in a form of impersonalisation. This is in line with Kotthoff's study (1993) where disagreement is divided into three different types according to its turn shape (preferred and dispreferred assessment turn format) and the number and kind of mitigating devices used: dispreferred (with structural complexities e.g. prefaces, delays), aggravated (with the reduction of reluctance markers) and preferred disagreement (without mitigation). Figure 2.2 illustrates these three different types of disagreement.

Figure 2.2: 3-type categorisation of disagreement



It should be noted that the form-oriented perspective attempts to explain how disagreement is performed in a particular language and culture or to uncover the differences in disagreeing practices produced by native and non-native speakers or native and non-native language learners by recognising the native speaker norms as the standard of appropriacy (e.g. Kakavá, 2002; Pomerantz, 1984; Stalpers, 1995). In particular, indirect or weak disagreement is perceived as the more appropriate and polite form, any deviation from which can be perceived as impolite. However, the use of such a dichotomous categorisation into direct-indirect or strong-weak disagreement is likely to indicate a monolithic view predisposed towards native speaker norms. Categorisation in this manner seems to be problematic since it overlooks the diversity of English used by speakers from different linguacultural orientations and those with varying linguistic proficiency, which is the current trend in English used as a world lingua franca. Also, it seems to downplay the influence of individual differences and the contexts in which disagreement is performed. Given that the present study aims to uncover the disagreeing practices of participants who are from diverse backgrounds and who have different evaluations, interpretations and judgements on the directness or strength of disagreement, to avoid labelling disagreeing practices according to predisposed norms and subjective judgement, the data was approached in terms of the ‘explicitness’ of communicative intent displayed.

II. Content-oriented perspective

Alternatively, as opposed to the first group of disagreement studies above focussed on form, the group of disagreement studies focussed on content tends to take a pragmatics perspective on the functional relationship of a disagreement turn to the preceding statement (Gruber, 1998; Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998).

Within the content-oriented approach, disagreement can be classified according to its content or pragmatic function. This is achieved by investigating disagreement through its turn sequence, paying attention to the relationship between the disagreement source turn and the pragmatic function of the responding turn. To start with, Muntigl and Turnbull (1998), whose study extends beyond the use of CA by incorporating language users' perspectives (social psychological pragmatics), propose four types of disagreement based on content with different levels of aggressiveness: irrelevancy claim, challenge, contradiction and counterclaim as well as those appearing in combinations of the above. Irrelevancy is used when a speaker wants to assert that a previous utterance is not relevant to the immediate conversation while a challenge often comes in the form of a question which indicates the speaker's doubt about an addressee's claim, implying that he or she cannot provide evidence to support their claim. In contradiction, a speaker directly negates a previous claim. Finally, rather than contradicting or challenging a previous turn, by making a counterclaim, a speaker proposes an alternative claim which allows for further negotiation. To give examples of each:

Irrelevancy claim

A: This is a wonderful wine we're drinking.

B: *What are you talking about?*

Challenge

A: This is a wonderful wine we're drinking.

B: *How can you say that?*

Contradiction

A: This is a wonderful wine we're drinking.

B: *No it's disgusting.*

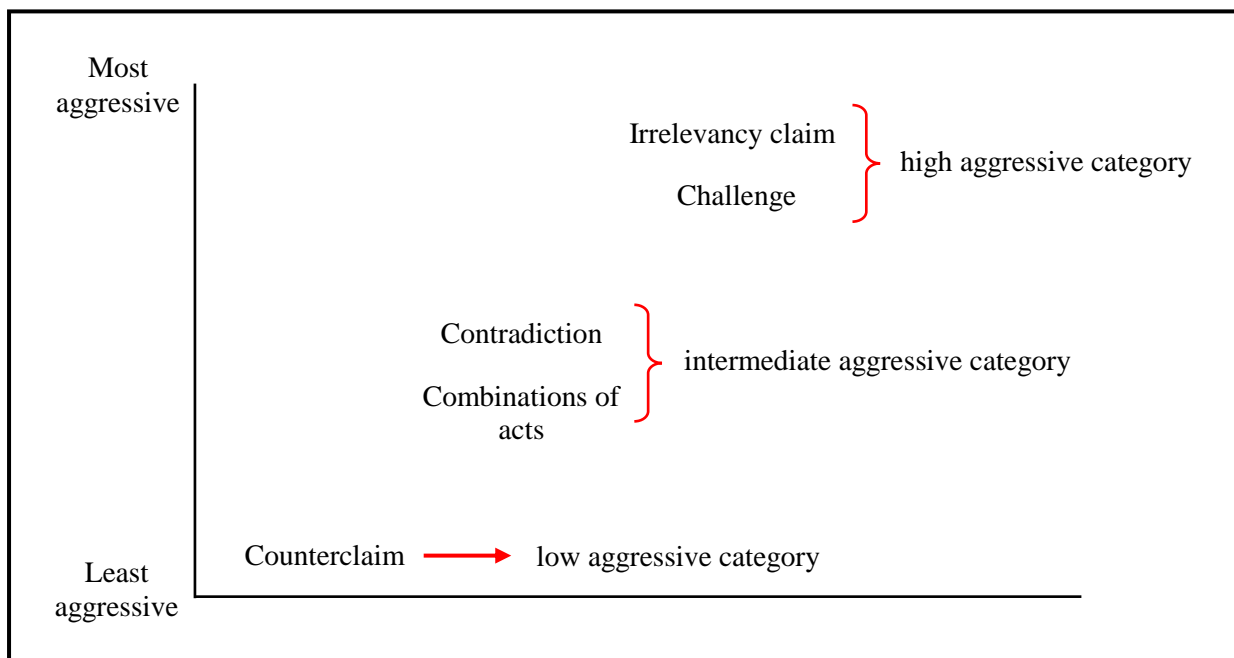
Counterclaim

A: This is a wonderful wine we're drinking.

B: *I preferred the one we had last night.*

These disagreement content types can also be found in combinations of these four acts. Moreover, in their study, 50 "message receivers" ranked these content types according to their level of aggressiveness as illustrated in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Content types and degree of aggressiveness (Source: adapted from Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998, p. 249-250)



Similarly, based on the investigation of the sequential placement, internal structure and cohesive ties of disagreement, Gruber (1998) proposes a distinction between overt and pragmatic disagreement. Overt disagreement, when compared to its counterpart, has a closer cohesive and thematic relation to its disagreement source turn. Given that there is a close connection between these utterances, it does not allow for an additional claim or argument. In contrast, when it comes to pragmatic disagreement, there is a more distant connection between the disagreement initiator and the disagreement responding turn. This is because new thematic aspects or alternative claims are raised, which at times result in a shift of conversational topic. Pragmatic disagreement thus helps deter two oppositional parties from an existing opposing view to focus on a new claim by leaving a previous conflicting view behind.

To gain a more encompassing insight into how disagreement is expressed in ELF academic discussion, the present study embraces both form- and content-focused approaches since they are expected to uncover, in particular, the mechanisms underlying implicit disagreement. In the following section, the perceived effects of disagreement will be explored.

2.4.3 Perceived effects of disagreement

Although disagreement is viewed as a dispreferred communicative act from a conversation analytic perspective since it is delayed and mitigated or even avoided, the effects of disagreement on interpersonal relationships are varied, particularly when it is differently contextualised (Gruber, 1998). According to Sifianou (2012), disagreement is inherently multifunctional as its effect on interlocutors can range from increased sociability to hostility.

I. Perceived negative effects

Locher (2004) argues that disagreement deals with the exercise of power and a clash of interests and can trigger a form of confrontation which, according to Kakavá (1993), can cause disputes and possibly lead to conflict. In the same vein, Pomerantz (1984) argues that because disagreement can lead to interlocutors' discomfort, threat or even offence, it is thus unfavourable or dispreferred. Agreement, on the other hand, builds up a comfortable and sociable atmosphere and shows interlocutors' supportiveness and like-mindedness.

Angouri and Locher (2012) argue that disagreement is negatively recognised, particularly in early conversation analytic and politeness research, since its analysis focuses solely on internal structure and the sequential organisation of conversational turns and what is achieved within single interactions without combining other contextual information into its analysis. In this case, disagreement has been seen as an unfavourable or dispreferred act that affects the interlocutors' face wants (Sifianou, 2012) and should thus be avoided or mitigated.

II. Perceived positive effects

However, in some social situations, disagreement is found to be common, necessary or even preferred since it helps strengthen relationships among those involved in the interactions or supports participants' visibility. Pomerantz (1984), for instance, asserts that disagreement in the form of self-deprecation to, for example, a compliment is preferable, particularly when it is done in an overt and immediate manner. Schiffrin (1984) also finds from her work that disagreement among friends could enhance sociability instead of being the cause of a breach of civility. It is also found that in certain contexts, such as discussions, disagreement is an important process in achieving practical solutions. Moreover, in a large number of studies, disagreement has been observed to be a sign of familiarity, intimacy and solidarity (Georgakopoulou, 2001; Kakavá, 1993; Locher, 2004; Tannen, 1984). In the same vein, Izadi (2013) and Leech (2014) argue that in academic discourse or debate, such as dissertation defences, departmental meetings, seminars, symposia or group meetings, the communicative act of disagreement is indispensable since it helps extend the edge of knowledge and enhances interactants' professional status. Moreover, when occurring in the classroom, disagreement allows teachers to ensure that their students comprehend what has been taught (Sornig, 1977, p. 362). This is also similar to Netz (2014) who finds that disagreement is necessary for developing student's critical thinking. Björkman (2015) also suggests that disagreement is a ubiquitous, and perhaps preferred, communicative act in PhD supervision since it ensures mutual understanding between students and their supervisors, correcting any misinterpretation on either side, and it enhances students' socialisation into an academic community. In this case, the communicative act of disagreement helps rather than hurts.

2.4.4 Factors influencing disagreeing practices

Research has shown that disagreement can encompass a range of acts that have different perceived effects on interlocutors in a given interaction. Differential effects have been shown to depend, to a great extent, on personalities or conversational styles, speech situations, the substance or topic of disagreement (controversial or non-controversial), interactants' relational histories and conflict management styles (e.g. obliging, avoiding, compromising, dominating) and particularly the communal or cultural norms of those involved in a certain instance of disagreement (Angouri & Locher, 2012; Kakavá, 1993, 2000; Locher, 2004; Sifianou, 2012). All of this research points to the notion that even if interactants have the same backgrounds, this does not guarantee that there will not be a clash of interactional frames (Locher, 2004). As such, whether disagreement is perceived as polite, impolite, appropriate or inappropriate, it needs to be construed in relation to its local context of interaction or the situation in which disagreement occurs. Disagreement can then be studied in terms of its forms, contents and effects on the relationships between interactants and on the interaction itself.

The way disagreement is perceived, valued and enacted relies on many factors. These factors involve, for instance, the medium of communication, different degrees of controversy and of tolerance of disagreement, and relational histories. In addition, Stalpers (1995) found that unmitigated disagreement is more frequently used in business talk when compared to casual conversation since business negotiations are more concerned with clarity and less focused on personal issues and politeness. Moreover, in an urgent situation where there is less time available for linguistic selection and clarity is of most significance, direct and blunt disagreement is preferable (Kreutel, 2007). Bjørge (2012) also stresses the importance of context in which she finds that in intercultural interactions, particularly those of ELF, interactants are likely to avoid using direct disagreement. Table 2.1 illustrates various factors which can influence the way a communicative act of disagreement is performed.

Table 2.1: Factors influencing disagreeing practices and examples of previous research

Factors	Examples of previous research
1. Channel of communication	Baym, 1996; Graham, 2007; Shum & Lee, 2013
2. Topic of conversation	Locher, 2004
3. Cultural background (different degrees of tolerance of disagreement)	Locher, 2004
4. Power relations or status	Jones, 1999; Locher, 2004
5. Age	Goodwin, 1983
6. Gender	Locher, 2004
7. Time constraints/urgency or stakes in a given situation	Kreutel, 2007
8. Interpersonal relationships or relational histories	Knapp, 2011; Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998; Walkinshaw, 2015
9. Institutional constraints or community of practice	Angouri & Locher, 2012; Bjørge, 2012; Kakavá, 1993; Kangasharju, 2002; Knapp, 2011; Kotthoff, 1993
10. Presence of English native speakers	Jones, 1999
11. Linguistic proficiency	Zhu, 2014
12. Face maintenance concerns	Walkinshaw, 2015
13. Private or public setting	Walkinshaw, 2015
14. Interactional goals	Baym, 1996
15. Type of interaction (inter- or intracultural interaction)	Bjørge, 2012
16. Number of people involved	Kangasharju, 2002

In fact, all of these factors can be categorised into two different types—internal and external factors. Internal factors encompass those which are directly relevant to the disagreement producers themselves e.g. cultural background, age, gender, status, interactional styles, personality, familiarity with the task at hand and their interlocutors, etc. External factors are about how disagreement producers perceive and interpret the world around them which, in this case, is their interlocutors and the immediate interactional situation. Disagreement is thus necessarily concerned with its producers' complicated psychological and emotional processes towards their interactional environments. However, according to Angouri and Locher (2012), this calls into question the proper research method which can dig deeper into disagreement producers' pragmatic judgments.

According to Bunt (1994), context can be perceived as any factors that influence the understanding and production of interactional behaviours. Bunt divides context into five categories, which are linguistic, semantic, physical, social, and cognitive context. Linguistic context involves both linguistic (both spoken and written) properties and paralinguistic features which co-occur with the main linguistic properties. Semantic context refers to underlying properties which form a certain task e.g. task goal, task domain, etc. While physical context is the physical surroundings in which interactions occur (e.g. channels of communication, presence of particular interactants, nonverbal expressions), social context involves the social aspects of situations (e.g. genre, discourse type, type of communicative event) and the social roles, rights and status of interactants. Finally, cognitive context refers to individual interactants' attitudes, attention, interpretation, evaluation, execution and perceptions towards a situated interaction. Each of these types of context can be further divided into two different kinds of aspects or levels—global and local. The global aspects of context involve the static variables which interactants bring with them to interactions while their counterpart, local aspects, concerns those which are dynamic and situated.

In congruence with Bunt, Kecskes (2014) broadly defines context as “any factor—linguistic, epistemic, physical, social, and so on—that affects the actual interpretation of signs and expressions” (p. 128). Unlike Bunt, Kecskes proposes two types of context—prior context (psychological) and actual situational context (physical). The former involves an interactant's cognition, background, prior experience, attitude, and evaluation among other things that the interactants have before they take part in interactions, while the latter refers to ad hoc experience generated in the interaction itself. Both types of context play an equally important role in specifying meaning, forming understanding and determining certain interactional practices.

However, at any particular stage of the interaction, prior context may play a more prominent role than actual situational context and vice versa. Kecskes (2014) asserts that prior context (individual's background and biases) and actual situational contexts mutually work in order for interactants to attend, interpret and (re)act in certain ways in a particular interaction. However, as far as intercultural interactions are concerned, he argues that interactants rely less heavily on context when compared to intracultural communication since they base their meaning-making and interpretation on their experiences of being a part of their own culture.

In addition, because in intercultural communication, interactants are functioning in one of several repertoires, they tend to be aware of their language use (Kecskes, 2014). This calls for investigating language users' or interactants' own reports or metapragmatic accounts which are indispensable for uncovering their communicative intentions and their (co-)constructions of meaning (Jenks, 2012; Knapp, 2011; Spencer-Oatey & Xing, 2003; Verschueren, 2000). This also becomes an opportunity for the researcher to incorporate insights from a surface linguistic realisation with those from the underlying perceptions and communicative intentions of language users. Moreover, in intercultural interactions in general and in ELF interactions in particular, interactants bring with them different interactional norms, perceptions and expectations, which can even differ from those of the researcher. The use of interactants' own self reports thus balances etic and emic perspectives and enhances the researcher's impartial interpretations.

When it comes to investigating the factors that influence the realisation of disagreement, it heavily depends on from who to whom, through which medium, and in what context disagreement is produced. Given that the way disagreement is produced depends on how disagreement producers perceive the interpersonal relationships between themselves and their receivers and involves the use of pragmatic strategies to achieve transactional and especially relational needs, the following section will look specifically at politeness and interaction.

2.5 Politeness and its development

The roots of the study of politeness can be traced back to the work of Lakoff (1973), Goffman (1982), Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1978/1987). At the very beginning of its development, the research, based on researchers' theorising, or second order politeness, what Locher and Watts (2005) call 'politeness 2', aimed to find a (universal) framework to explicate human language behaviour (see Section 2.5.1). However, this was later critiqued as oversimplifying the complex nature of human interaction which is dynamic, context-dependent and interactionally negotiated. This following current of politeness research has been further extended by taking the importance of the immediate interactional context and interactants' perspectives into its consideration.

From this perspective, Locher and Watts propose an alternative framework: the discursive approach. The framework focuses on meaning negotiated between speakers and hearers vis-à-vis the immediate local context of interaction and integrates interactants' perspectives (first order politeness or 'politeness 1') into its analysis. Although the discursive approach incorporates the notion of meaning in context, it has been criticised in terms of its static classification of the relational continuum (more detail in Section 2.5.2) and unclear research methodology (Spencer-Oatey, 2000). To address those issues, Spencer-Oatey (2000) and Haugh (2007) provide a more flexible framework and bring to the fore a clearer method to investigate the way politeness is interactionally, collaboratively and contextually negotiated (see Section 2.5.3). In the following section, these different perspectives on politeness research (Culpeper, 2011; Grainger, 2011; Shum & Lee, 2013) will be delineated and it will be established why the interaction-oriented framework is more compatible with the analysis of ELF interactions.

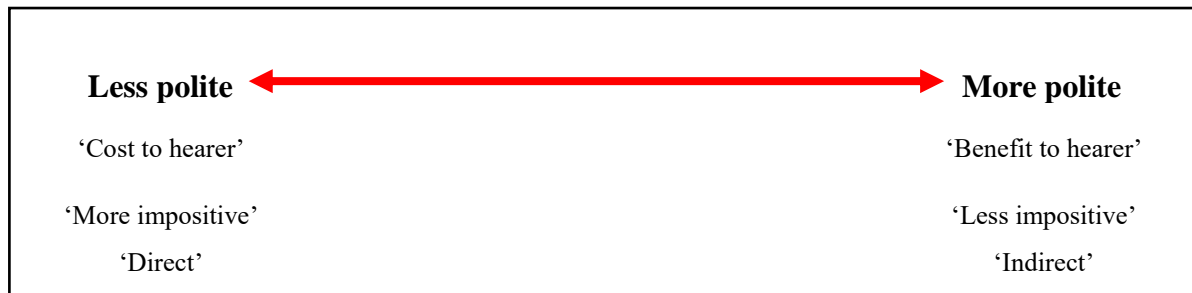
2.5.1 First wave/classic views: the politeness principle and face-saving views

The two most influential recent frameworks and approaches to account for politeness phenomena in different languages come from the work of Geoffrey Leech and the seminal works of Brown and Levinson (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014; Fraser, 1990; Kádár & Haugh, 2013; Spencer-Oatey, 2002; Yu, 2003). The classic views of politeness maintain that certain communicative acts such as requests and suggestions have the inherent characteristic of being face-threatening (Spencer-Oatey, 2005). Moreover, most of the work in these classic views equates indirectness with politeness and assumes that the notion can be applied universally.

Leech (1983) proposes a 'Politeness Principle' of which the key tenets are to avoid conflict and imposition. The Principle consists of different maxims: the Tact maxim, Generosity maxim, Approbation maxim, Modesty maxim, Agreement maxim and Sympathy maxim. Leech bases his ideas on the notion of the trade-offs or costs and benefits that are, in particular, invested in by, and paid to, hearers. The underlying assumption that underpins Leech's proposed Principle is for speakers to prioritise the hearer's benefit; that is, to minimise what hearers need to invest while maximising the benefit they will get from being involved in the interaction. In so doing, Leech places this notion on 'a pragmatic scale' and compares it in terms of cost-benefits, optionality (imposition), indirectness and politeness (p. 107) (see Figure 2.4). That is, an action or utterance is perceived as polite when it tends towards the hearer's

benefit rather than his or her cost. This can be done through providing the hearer with more options or through being less impositive or less direct. This, it is argued, accounts for the reasons behind the use of linguistic indirectness (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014).

Figure 2.4: Leech's cost-benefit scale (Source: adapted from Leech, 1983, p. 107)



Two other scholars who greatly contributed to the classic view or first wave of politeness were Brown and Levinson. Their work, *Politeness: Some universals in language usage* (1978/1987), focuses on the notion of face, face wants and face-saving or -threatening acts. The concept of face, according to Brown and Levinson, comprises two kinds of desire, negative and positive face wants. The former refers to one's desire not to be impeded or imposed on by others while its counterpart, positive face wants, is the desire to be liked and approved of. However, it appears that certain acts which run contrary to an individual's face wants can be face-threatening. This leads to attempts by speakers to save their face and those of their interlocutors. Brown and Levinson therefore mainly focus extensively on how to mitigate face threats caused to hearers. They claim that their framework, which is mainly based on the western notion of individual free will and autonomy (Culpeper, Marti, Mei, Nevela, & Schauer, 2010; Gu, 1990; Mao, 1994; Matsumoto, 1988; Meier, 1995), can provide a universal explanation for linguistic politeness whose function is to manage communication and avoid conflict in any given interactional situation.

However, these initial views of politeness have largely been challenged when they were applied to diverse contexts and cultures rather than western ones. In particular, the work of Brown and Levinson has given rise to many criticisms from many politeness scholars from Asian and other cultures, e.g. Japanese (Ide, 1989; Matsumoto, 1988); Korean (Hatfield & Hahn, 2011), Chinese (Gu, 1990; Mao, 1994), Thai (Panpothong & Phakdeephassook, 2014),

African (Nwoye, 1992), Greek (Sifianou, 1992) and Egyptian (Mursy & Wilson, 2002). Matsumoto (1988) and Watts (2003, 2010), for example, argue that Brown and Levinson's framework seems to overlook the importance of contextual information, the interpersonal or social aspects of face and the dynamics of interactions where politeness practices are happening and where interactional behaviours are dynamically planned and responded to. For example, to be polite (positive politeness), according to Brown and Levinson (1978/1987), is to claim common ground with a hearer, meaning that for a person to be polite, they need to avoid disagreement and seek agreement (p. 112-113). In fact, as mentioned earlier, in some contexts (e.g. close friend interactions, business meetings, academic conferences, group discussion), expressing disagreement is vital, praised and valued since it can be a sign of intimacy, ensure speakers' visibility, enhance their social status, extend the edge of knowledge or help find a practical solution.

In addition, Brown and Levinson's theory overemphasises the perspectives of speakers rather than balancing those of speakers and hearers; perspectives which are negotiated over the course of verbal interactions. It also heavily relies on means-to-ends rationality to calculate and theorise the way politeness strategies are required in a given interaction, rather than on empirical studies (Archer, Aijmer, & Wichmann, 2012; Kádár & Haugh, 2013), particularly the universalistic notion of individualistic orientation and the equation of indirectness to politeness and appropriateness. In this case, the framework calls into question its application and practicality to be used as a universal scientific concept to investigate and describe politeness across languages and cultures (Culpeper et al., 2010; Mao, 1994; Matsumoto, 1988; Meier, 1995; Pfister, 2010; Yu, 2003) and particularly in intercultural and ELF interactions where interactants have different values and judgements on interactional practices (Walkinshaw & Kirkpatrick, 2014; Zhu, 2014). As a result of these weaknesses, the classic views have more recently given way to the more dynamic and context-oriented approaches of the second wave of politeness studies.

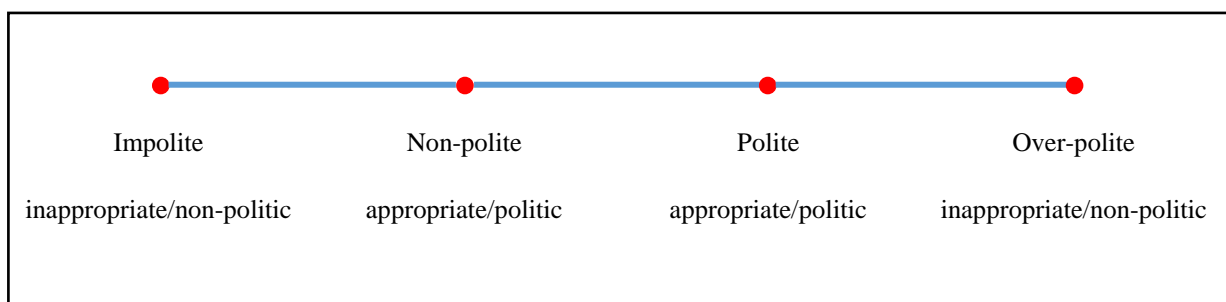
2.5.2 Second wave/interactional views: relational work or discursive practices

Given the restricted scope and application of the classic views of politeness, there is a need for an approach that balances both etic and emic perspectives and takes a non-predictive approach and the importance of interactional context into consideration. According to Culpeper et al. (2010), the second wave of politeness tends more to focus on interpersonal relations rather than

the achievement of politeness by the individual (p. 599). The influential frameworks in the second wave of politeness studies are relational work and rapport management.

Locher and Watts (2008) propose a new framework built on the concept of relational work or “all aspects of the work invested by individuals in the construction, maintenance, reproduction and transformation of interpersonal relationships among those engaged in social practice” (p. 96). The framework puts the emphasis more on the importance of interactional contexts and takes a more dynamic, discursive approach to interaction (Watts, 2003). This is because for a certain utterance to be perceived as polite or impolite, it is not down to the utterance itself but it also requires consideration of the interactants and the context in which the utterance is produced. Unlike Brown and Levinson’s politeness model (1978/1987), which dichotomises human linguistic behaviours into either polite or impolite ones and overrelies on researchers’ predetermined judgment, relational work classifies interactional behaviours in a more detailed manner with respect to the norms that are appropriate within a certain interactional environment (Locher, 2006). Behaviours that meet expectations will be recognised as appropriate and unmarked and usually go unnoticed. By contrast, those which breach interactional norms will be treated as negatively marked. As such, within the relational work framework, verbal behaviours can be perceived on a continuum from impolite (negatively marked), through non-polite (unmarked), to polite (positively marked) and over-polite (negatively marked) (Locher & Watts, 2005) as illustrated in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: Relational work framework and its continuum of verbal behaviours (Source: adapted from Locher & Watts, 2005)



Central to this framework is interactants’ assessment of their linguistic forms and their appropriateness in interaction (Locher, 2006). Despite its more dynamic approach to interaction, relational work has also attracted criticism with respect to its static and unclear

classification of negatively marked, positively marked and politic behaviour. Moreover, although the framework integrates the perspective of participants involved in the interaction, based on a participant observation approach, it still heavily relies on researchers' judgment and interpretation (Haugh, 2007). Moreover, to make sense of intercultural interaction, Kecskes (2014) calls for a multidimensional analysis of speakers' and hearers' intentions, cultural norms and the role of context and for a multi-layered analysis of both what appears in the discourse and what lies beneath those linguistic practices.

2.5.3 Third wave/balanced view: rapport management

Instead of the dichotomising of politeness into seeing it as governed by the politeness principle or discursive practices, alternatively, Spencer-Oatey (2000) proposes a more finely balanced model of how relationships are verbally and nonverbally managed and negotiated in interactions by combining key concepts from the politeness principle and relational work into an approach called 'rapport management' or the (mis-)management of interpersonal relations. Relational work is similar to rapport management in that both are approaches to politeness that investigate "the negotiation of relations and identities in interaction" (Locher, 2008, p. 533) and prioritise participants' perceptions. It should be noted however that they also differ because the former focuses on interlocutors' assessments of other participants' linguistic behaviours as polite, impolite or non-polite while the latter puts the emphasis on "the assessment of the affective quality they subjectively and dynamically experience in their relations with others" (Spencer-Oatey, 2011, p. 3567). The term rapport management stresses the fact that interactions involve at least two interactants who attempt to achieve transactional as well as interactional goals. In the rapport management perspective, no communicative act is inherently face-threatening or face-enhancing. It is more a case of how the message is sent, and of who sends the message to whom under what circumstances (Spencer-Oatey, 2011).

The rapport management framework is mainly concerned with the management of harmony and disharmony in interactions. This includes the management of three interconnected factors: face sensitivities, behavioural expectations (sociability rights and obligations), and the interactional goals that people aim to achieve, either in terms of a specific task or relational goals or both (Spencer-Oatey, 2005, 2011). If one or more of these factors are not responded to, this will negatively affect rapport. The concept of face in this framework, according to Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009), is not just about face-threatening acts but it

also includes the acts which maintain and enhance face. Unlike Brown and Levinson's face concept, they maintain that their concept of face sensitivities can cover those of both the individual and group or even a community.

To manage rapport in interactions, Spencer-Oatey (2000) suggests four types of orientation—rapport enhancement, maintenance, neglect and challenge. When people tend towards rapport enhancement, they desire to improve their relations. Unlike rapport enhancement, if they orient to rapport maintenance, they do not want to improve relations but just simply want to preserve the current quality of relationship. By contrast, when they neglect rapport, they are less concerned about their relationship, possibly resulting from task-focused or goal-oriented interactions. On the other hand, at times, people might want to actively impair their relationship which, in this case, they orient towards rapport challenge. Spencer-Oatey further maintains that interactants can have different motives underlying these orientations and that these orientations can dynamically change over the course, or even a series, of interactions (2005, p. 96).

Given that these orientations are underlying psychological processes, the challenge is how exactly to inspect and distinguish one from another. Spencer-Oatey suggests that the only way to know the motives behind rapport orientations is to make language users verbalise them explicitly. She supports the use of post-event interviews or, if possible, gathering playback comments to supplement discourse data (Spencer-Oatey, 2011). In addition, the framework provides more detailed information, particularly, about the contextual factors that can influence a certain use of rapport management strategies e.g. participants and their relational goals, message content, social/interactional roles of the participants, activity type. Particularly, Spencer-Oatey also sheds more light, apart from the importance of context in intercultural communication, on differences in interpretations and expectations of how language is appropriately used, and on breaches of those interpretations and expectations.

As mentioned above, because the function and effect of disagreement primarily depends on interactional context, this seems to become more complicated when interactants come from highly diverse sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds and bring with them their own norms of expressing and perceiving disagreement. This calls into question the way disagreement is expressed and perceived by those who do not share their first language but use the same medium, in this case English, for communication. This study will therefore address the issue of how disagreement is expressed in group academic discussion where English is used

as a common means of interaction by adopting an interactional approach to politeness. Not only does the framework prioritise the complicated and dynamic nature of ELF interactions, but it also provides a finer-grained research method which can tap into language users' psychological processes. This will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

Looking at a particular communicative act from an interactional perspective of politeness allows us to be more flexible when compared to the traditional approaches (Spencer-Oatey, 2011). For a certain communicative act to be labelled as threatening or non-threatening, or as appropriate or inappropriate, it is not because of the act itself. It largely depends on many factors and the context in which it occurs. This is also the case for disagreement because it can be as corrosive of as it is supportive to good working relationships. The negotiation of relationship should therefore be perceived as a discursive, interactional and emergent process (Haugh, 2009; Kecskes, 2014; Locher & Watts, 2005). To account for intercultural interaction in general and ELF in particular, the more dynamic and interactional framework is necessary (Zhu, 2014). Given that ELF interactions, by their nature, are dynamic and complicated, the present study supports the interactional views which no longer perceive interactional context as a static entity. In addition, these views support the use of a multi-method approach to the study of politeness in context. In particular, the rapport management framework encourages the researcher to obtain participants' own reflexive accounts of their linguistic choices.

Interactional perspectives on politeness help to explain how interactants interpret, value, and design their own linguistic choices to enhance, maintain or even worsen their relationships with others in a particular interactional situation. Investigating participants' motives underlying those linguistic practices is expected to provide a more encompassing insight into how interactions and interpersonal relationships are managed. Spencer-Oatey (2011) suggests that this is to allow for diverse true interpretations and to obtain a rich and thick description of the participants' concerns and evaluations. This seems to be indispensable especially in intercultural communication whereby the participants are deprived of mutual norms of appropriate interaction and depending only on researchers' interpretations could result in bias and misinterpretation. Culpeper et al. (2010), therefore, support the use of the rapport management framework to uncover how politeness and interpersonal relations are negotiated in intercultural encounters. As mentioned above, one important difference between intra- and intercultural communication is that, in intercultural communication, interactants are working on one of several repertoires. The interactants are thus more or less aware, or even cautious, of not only their own language production but also that of others (Kecskes, 2014).

This provides an opportunity for researchers to tap into their interpretation and evaluation processes to thoroughly explicate their actual linguistic practices.

2.6 Previous research into disagreement in ELF academic settings

Most early studies on disagreement focus primarily on that produced by speakers of different languages e.g., Greek, Spanish, German and that produced by native speakers of English contrasted with that produced by non-native English language learners or with speakers of other languages. In fact, there have been a large number of studies that focus on the speech act of disagreement produced by English language learners (Bardovi-Harlig & Salsbury, 2004; Edstrom, 2004; Georgakopoulou, 2001; Gruber, 1998; Habib, 2008; Maíz-Arévalo, 2014; Sifianou, 1992). These studies connect with the broader field of “interlanguage pragmatics” (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Kasper, 1992).

One of the most salient research findings within this paradigm is that L2 learners progress through distinct stages in their realisation of disagreement as their language proficiency and exposure to the target language increases. Bardovi-Harlig and Salsbury (2004), for example, investigated the longitudinal development of disagreement among L2 learners when interacting with English native speakers in conversational interviews. They found that English language learners display particular acquisitional stages, starting with expressing disagreement directly before they are able to express it in more complicated or elaborate ways including increases in the amount of talk, the use of responses which comprise a mixture of agreement and disagreement and the use of multiple turns to avoid expressing disagreement. That is, Bardovi-Harlig and Salsbury found that language learners develop their turn organisation of disagreement following these four main stages: ‘(1) Strong disagreements, characterised chiefly by the occurrence of “no.”; (2) Inclusion of agreement components with disagreement components; (3) The postponement of disagreement components within a turn; (4) The postponement of disagreement turns within a sequence of turns.’ (p. 218).

In line with this, Kreutel (2007), who examined how learners of English as a second language perform the speech act of disagreement, compared the differences in disagreeing practices performed by native and non-native English students, positioning disagreement which is similar to that produced by native speakers as the more desirable model. She found that, when compared to English native speakers, L2 speakers whose English proficiency levels

ranged from high beginner to low advanced less frequently employed mitigating devices, and tended to use undesirable features to express their disagreement e.g. performative disagreement. Desirable disagreement, according to Kreutel, appears mitigated with partial agreement, hedges, clarification requests, expressions of regret and positive remarks. In contrast, undesirable practices are those that occur without those mentioned elements and may also include the use of a blatant performative verb such as 'I disagree', and a blunt statement of the opposite, message abandonment, a total lack of mitigation, and the use of the bare exclamation 'no'. Moreover, learners' high lexicogrammatical proficiency did not guarantee their high pragmatic competence.

Most research conducted in the field of interlanguage pragmatics thus involves conversations between L2 users and native speakers and it aims to compare the communicative acts produced by non-native L2 learners with those produced by English native speakers in order to help L2 learners develop native-like pragmatic competence. This approach has some limitations, though, in explaining the complex dynamics of disagreements in settings where norms are fluid.

ELF research takes a different philosophical perspective from that of SLA and interlanguage pragmatics where the English native speaker norm is the yardstick or prescribed rule that is thought to govern the way interaction proceeds. From this perspective, there have been studies that focus on the way disagreement is performed in an ELF context (Bjørge, 2012; Björkman, 2015; Konakahara, 2016; Maíz-Arévalo, 2014; Zhu, 2014; Zhu & Boxer, 2013), particularly when the language is used as a business lingua franca (Nickerson, 2005; Pullin, 2013; Wolfartsberger, 2011).

Drawing on data from a conversation analytic study of simultaneous speech in two face-to-face group business meetings (IT strategy group meeting and editorial board meeting) of speakers of German, Dutch, Italian, Slovak and Swedish, Wolfartsberger (2011), for instance, found that strong disagreement is expected and was produced instantly in high-stakes business negotiations where interpersonal alignment was considered less important than clarity. In addition, based on his research findings, he also maintained that in business contexts, ELF speakers are efficient negotiators who can express and manage disagreement to achieve their particular communicative goals. In contrast, Pullin (2013), who conducted a study of linguistic features for expressing opinions, evaluation and affect in group meetings in a multilingual corporate setting (Swiss, Romanian, French, Armenian and Portuguese), found that stance

markers comprising a range of grammatical and lexical features play a pivotal role in contributing to the dynamic usage not only for interpersonal but also transactional functions. In particular, they were deployed in negotiating tasks, coping with disagreement and clarifying understanding. The study also revealed that interactants' personal histories and business conventions exerted a powerful influence on verbal exchanges.

Apart from business contexts, some ELF researchers have also investigated how disagreement is produced, perceived and negotiated in an academic setting. For example, in House's study (2008) of the ELF group interaction of participants from three different linguacultural backgrounds (Dutch, Hungarian and German), she found from corpus data of simulated group meetings that ELF interactants are likely to use direct disagreement. That is, they fail to use, for example, mitigating strategies, appealers or cajolers, and delay. However, House argued that because the participants have different interactional norms and orientations, this is not perceived as impolite. Rather, it is possible and appropriate to the context in which the interactants have diverse linguacultural backgrounds.

In a similar vein, drawing on her collected corpus of 25 simulated negotiations between international MA students in Business, Bjørge (2012) found, from her comparative study of the language produced by upper intermediate/advanced level business students in simulated ELF business negotiations and the language appearing in business English textbooks, that although the way ELF students express disagreement is different from what is recommended in the textbooks, the students still preferred mitigated disagreement. She argues that this is because the students are aware of the possible disruptive effects that may result from expressing a speech act directly and that these practices are a general trend in ELF interaction where mutual understanding and interpersonal relationships have to be maintained concurrently. Although the study reveals the realisation of disagreement, it does not clearly mention the function of disagreement in this context of study. With the same data set, Bjørge (2016) found that despite students' preference for mitigated disagreement, direct disagreement is also employed. She argues that although the use of mitigated disagreement was encouraged particularly by the English textbook to which the business students in her study were exposed, the use of unmitigated disagreement is also found and this does not necessarily lead to communication breakdown.

Moreover, Maíz-Arévalo (2014), who investigated academic written discourse, and, specifically, how disagreement is expressed in computer-mediated communication (e-forum),

found from her qualitative corpus analysis that the speech act in question can be produced in two different ways, mitigated or non-mitigated, depending primarily on learners' English language proficiency. Learners with high linguistic proficiency perform a wider variety of strategies to signal disagreement when compared to those with lower proficiency, who can only do it in a restricted way, especially in terms of mitigating strategies. Moreover, she argues that learners with high linguistic proficiency prefer to use mitigated disagreement and avoid blunt or strong disagreement. Despite the fact that Maíz-Arévalo's study is close to the present study, her argument gives rise to the question as to whether ELF interactions should be studied in their own right. This is because, although she claimed that her study was conducted within the ELF perspective, she still prioritised native speaker norms and used them as a reference point in her analysis.

One of the most relevant studies to the current investigation is that of Björkman (2015, 2017). She looked specifically at the dyadic interaction between PhD supervisors and PhD students. By adopting a mixed-method approach based mainly on the conversation analytic approach with naturally occurring data and quantitative analysis of disagreement frequencies, she found that disagreement is contextually and functionally preferred and thus not perceived as confrontational in PhD supervisory meetings regardless of both parties' asymmetrical institutional power. Her study also reveals that most disagreement instances involve supervisees responding to their supervisors' advice and suggestions on thesis or project related issues rather than personal ones and that despite their asymmetrical relative power, supervisees are likely to use direct disagreement especially in turn-initial position while, surprisingly, supervisors do so indirectly. Although Björkman attempts to provide emic perspectives in her most recent work (2017), she only focuses on supervisors' perspectives instead of all parties involved in interaction and the interview data is used only for complementing the interaction analyses rather than for the main analysis.

Finally, based on a conversation analytic approach, Konakahara (2016) investigated disagreement in casual conversation between international students at British universities. Her study reveals that her participants produce both direct and indirect disagreement and that the communicative act of disagreement is a dispreferred next action conforming to the conversation analytic approach of preference structure. Konakahara argues that unmitigated disagreement played an important role in maintaining mutual understanding since it allows speakers to repair misunderstanding and provide correct information. What is of particular interest in her study is the inclusion of nonverbal information (e.g. gazes, facial expressions

and gestures) to support the explanation of how disagreement is performed. However, it does not prioritise the perspectives of the participants.

All of these studies, again, highlight the fact that in ELF interactions, like intracultural and other interactions which can be full of conflicts and disagreement, disagreement has a functional role in constructing and co-constructing meaning and comprehension. Although there are several studies that look specifically at disagreement in ELF academic contexts, little is known about how the communicative act of disagreement is performed in academic group discussion and what factors influence its realisation. Table 2.2 provides a summary of studies which have worked on disagreement in an ELF academic context.

Table 2.2: Summary of research conducted on disagreement in ELF academic context

Research	Research focus	Research method(s) and data
Björge (2012, 2016)	Disagreement in ELF business negotiations	Corpus analysis of simulated negotiations between international MA students in Business Studies
Björkman (2015)	Disagreement in PhD supervisory meetings	Mixed methods: conversation analytic approach with audio recorded interactions and quantitative analysis
Björkman (2017)	Disagreement in PhD supervisory meetings	Conversation analytic approach with audio recorded interactions and unstructured, brief interviews
House (2008)	Disagreement in group meetings	Corpus analysis of simulated group interaction between international students
Konakahara (2016)	Disagreement in casual conversation	Conversation analytic approach with video recorded interactions
Maíz-Arévalo (2014)	Disagreement in asynchronous discussion online	Qualitative corpus analysis of online interaction

Academic group discussion is the focus of the present study since among classmates or in a peer group, power differentials will ideally be equal. As such, students tend to play an active role in voicing their opinions. As far as the study of disagreement in an ELF context is concerned, very few studies have explored disagreement through a relational/rapport management framework and employed a multi-method approach. Additionally, it is still restricted in that the majority of previous studies have relied heavily on conversation/discourse analysis alone or corpus analysis and the researcher's own interpretation. According to Jenks (2017), in examining conflict or uncooperative talk, there is a need to know not only "how the

interactants themselves create discord within a social encounter, but also [...] an awareness of the communicative norms and expectations that shape the context under investigation” (p. 283). This becomes a methodological challenge for studies of ELF uncooperative interaction. The present study thus aims to fill these gaps by investigating how ELF speakers express the communicative act of disagreement in group discussion and what factors influence their practices by employing a multi-method approach.

2.7 Review of data collection and analysis methodologies used in the present study

In order to provide an in-depth analysis of how ELF speakers signal and respond to disagreement in group academic discussion, the data in this study were collected from various sources: initial classroom observation, questionnaires, discourse analysis, simulated academic group discussions (audio- and video-recordings) and stimulated recall interviews.

2.7.1 Observation

Human interactions, by their nature, are physical, psychological and social activities. For their observation, which is a fundamental method in qualitative research, a researcher is expected to immerse him or herself in a setting where he or she can consciously notice and directly record a naturally occurring phenomenon e.g. interactions, events, actions, relationships, behaviours etc. (Cowie, 2009; Mason, 1996) to gain an encompassing insight into the event. This also provides the researcher with an opportunity to make initial sense of the research context, its atmosphere and dynamic as well as, possibly, to determine contextual variables (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Moreover, the research method will allow the researcher to closely and directly interact with the participants in order to gain their perspectives. Gold (1985) classifies observation into four different types according to the researcher’s roles and the extent of their participation or involvement as well as of the research participants’ awareness of the existence of a researcher, namely, ‘complete participant’, ‘participant-as-observer’, ‘observer-as-participant’ and ‘complete observer’. Researchers’ different roles and levels of involvement can result in different perspectives and frames of reference as well as relationships with the data under investigation.

2.7.2 Questionnaires

The use of self-report questionnaires is common in the social sciences (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010; Kasper, 2008). They allow a researcher to explore and focus specifically on a particular concept (Brown, 2009) and, at the same time, also allow each participant to report his or her own attitudes, opinions and beliefs (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Moreover, when compared to other research methods, they are more easily constructed, and while they are capable of gathering a large amount of data in a short period of time and with lower financial resources, they can also be quickly and straightforwardly processed (Dörnyei, 2006; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). Despite their advantages, questionnaires may be limited in terms of their ability to elicit research participants' information and perspectives rigorously as well as to provide in-depth analysis of the phenomenon under investigation (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). They should therefore be supported by the use of other research methods e.g. observation, interviews, and diaries (Brown, 2009). Questionnaires can be broadly divided into three different categories: factual, behavioural and attitudinal questions, and they can comprise open- and closed-ended questions and fill-in items depending on the types of data and research aims they are designed to achieve (Brown 2006; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010).

2.7.3 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis in Applied Linguistics as currently practised is strongly influenced by and has a considerable overlap with conversation analysis, particularly the landmark work of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) with its attempt to reveal the underlying norms and practices of social interaction through the investigation of adjacency pairs (paired utterances which are conditionally relevant), preference organisation¹, turn-taking and repairs (Seedhouse, 2004). In particular, conversation analysts focus on the detailed analysis of naturally occurring data by looking specifically at internal linguistic and non-linguistic clues (e.g. pauses, silence, intonations, interruptions and overlaps, head nods, attentive gaze, smiles, laughter) and at turn constructional and sequential units (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; Holmes, 2013) which is

¹ According to CA perspective, turn shape preference can be divided into two types: preferred and dispreferred action turn shapes. A preferred turn shape involves the minimisation of the gap between initiating and responding turns, while a dispreferred turn shape involves the maximisation of the use of delays (e.g. hesitation markers and mitigating devices) and of “nonexplicitly stated action components” (Pomerantz, 1984, p. 64).

expected to uncover how a communicative act emerges or is performed through those sequences (Schegloff, 1996).

In fact, the use of a conversation analysis approach is believed to be able to reveal underlying linguistic practices by building a bottom-up understanding of how language and language users produce social reality (Silverman, 2013) and achieve social and interactional goals. However, despite its detailed analysis of both internal linguistic and paralinguistic features and the design of conversational turns, when it comes to face-to-face interactions, conversation analysis is likely to limit itself to what can be obtained from or emerges in a transcript of conversation (Boxer, 2002). This may neglect the importance of contextual information, the social context in which language is used and participants' personal histories, not taking these into consideration and incorporating them into its analysis. Yet, language users bring with them their own norms, values, experiences and expectations to interaction, particularly in intercultural interactions. Related contextual information thus plays an important role in shaping certain interactions and how interactants behave. As such, the CA method is widely criticised for its restricted focus on linguistic and paralinguistic analysis alone, not taking account of the context in which a given conversation occurs.

In this case, the use of discourse analysis (DA) becomes another possible option for researchers wishing to examine how discourse shapes and is shaped by a particular verbal interchange. Discourse analysis primarily involves the detailed analysis of longer sequences of talk when compared to CA which is interested in 'small activities with big impacts' (Boxer, 2002, p. 11). It should be noted, however, that the way in which discourse analysis approaches interactional text seems, superficially, to be similar to that of conversation analysis (Holmes, 2013). More specifically, both approaches are concerned with the analysis of authentic everyday face-to-face interactional discourse by looking at what is achieved by the turn-taking of the speakers involved (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). However, DA extends its analysis by taking into account the extra dimensions of the wider sociocultural factors relating to where interactions occur. Table 2.3 summarises the differences between conversation and discourse analysis.

Table 2.3: Differences between conversation analysis and discourse analysis (Source: adapted from Gordon, 2011)

Characteristics	CA	DA
1. Examines actual social encounters	✓	✓
2. Involves recording conversation, a particular form of careful linguistic transcription, and the analysis of interactions	✓	✓
3. Outlines a systematics for conversations based on the basic organisational unit of the conversational turn	✓	✓
4. Considers the sense of context (discourse context) in its analysis and adopts a broader perspective as to what constitutes context and its effects on conversation		✓

The integration of contextual information about a given conversation and other research methods for obtaining participants' perspectives are expected to yield a better understanding of the phenomenon and also result in a balanced perspective of the two.

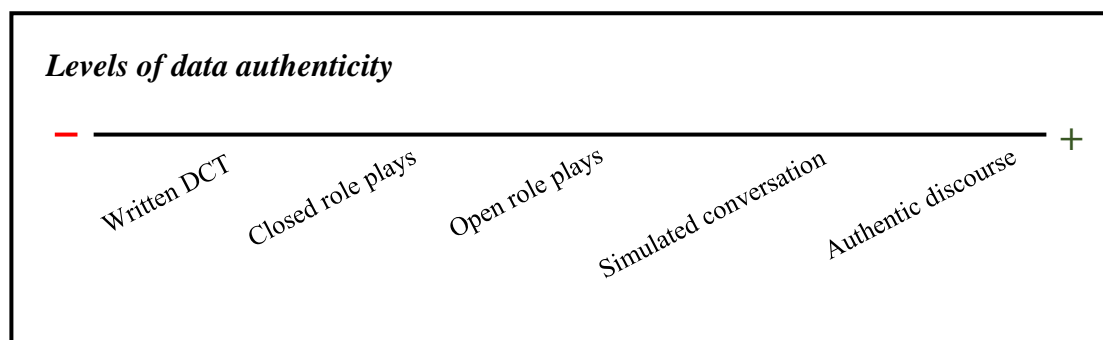
2.7.4 Simulated group discussion

As far as research into both naturally occurring and classroom interaction is concerned, a researcher may encounter many unforeseen circumstances and challenges in terms of data collection e.g. technical problems, disturbance from the surroundings, etc. (Dörnyei, 2007; Kasper, 2008). Also, the pursuit of a certain pragmatic phenomenon may be time-consuming. To derive sufficient instances of certain communicative acts or phenomena for investigation can be at times very difficult and strenuous. Moreover, to obtain authentic data might be impossible because of the restrictions of the chosen research method. Elicited conversation or simulated interactions with pre-designed tasks can thus be another feasible option for a researcher to conduct his or her research. According to Kasper (2008), data collection methods in the pragmatics field can be divided into three main categories: "interaction (authentic discourse, elicited conversation, role play), questionnaires (discourse completion, multiple-choice, scale response), and written or verbal forms of self-report not based on questionnaires (diaries and verbal protocols)" (p. 281). The focus of this section is particularly on elicited conversation and role play techniques.

Kasper (2008) defines elicited conversation as "any conversation staged for the purpose of data collection" (p. 287) and asserts that it mainly involves conversation around tasks e.g. discussion tasks in which participants need to have a conversation or interact according to an

assigned topic. However, the instructions for the interaction are not very specific when compared to role plays and discourse completion. The elicited conversation technique is mostly employed to investigate interactions between participants with equal status. Kasper suggests that the key difference between elicited conversation and role play is that only in the latter are participants requested to take on roles. In elicited conversation, a participant only has to take on the same social role he or she already occupies—that is ‘to be themselves’—while, for role plays, s/he is asked to take on a different social role from his or her own. According to Kasper and Dahl (1998), there are two types of role plays: open and closed. Closed role plays involve a single turn response to an assigned situation while, in its counterpart, open role plays, participants can respond to the situation in a series of turns. In addition to elicited conversation and role play, discourse completion is another common elicitation technique in pragmatics studies (Golato, 2003; Kasper, 2008), especially those in interlanguage pragmatics, the aim of which is to uncover L2 learners’ “competence in performing certain tasks” (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 5). However, unlike elicited conversation and role plays, discourse completion is restricted in the authenticity of the data produced since it is not interactive and consequential (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013; Kasper, 2008, Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Figure 2.6 illustrates the authenticity levels of data from different data collection techniques.

Figure 2.6: Data authenticity levels of different data collection techniques (Source: adapted from Bardovi-Harlig, 2013; Kasper & Dahl, 1991)



Given that elicited interactions and role plays are intentionally set up to achieve certain research aim(s), they call into question the authenticity of the interactions and data gained. Kasper and Dahl (1991) and Bardovi-Harlig (2013) argue that even if they are not genuinely consequential, data gained from role plays and simulated tasks can be still perceived as authentic in relation to the turn construction they generate and the spontaneity of participants’

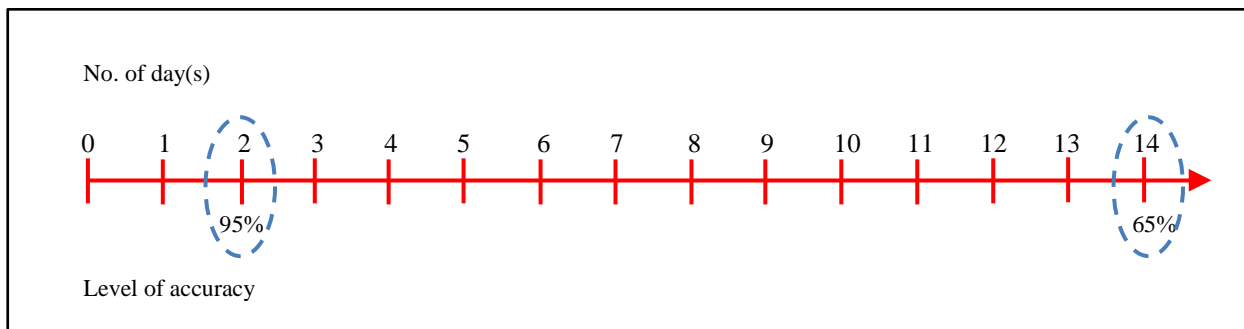
unplanned decisions and responses. However, Kasper (2008) suggests that a careful plan of data collection (e.g. in the selection of participants, promoting consequential interaction) can enhance the level of naturalness and the elicited data obtained “may resemble authentic ordinary conversation quite closely” (p. 287).

2.7.5 Stimulated recall interviews

Though the way a language is used can be revealed and inferred from analysing interactional discourse, the understanding of that is restricted since it depends solely on the researcher’s experience and perspective and the way he or she makes sense of data (Spencer-Oatey, 2011). Furthermore, “in using language to interact or communicate with others, participants must inevitably think about what others are thinking, as well as very often thinking about what others think they are thinking” (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014, p. 237), particularly when the participants use a common language as a lingua franca but lack full control of it (Kecskes, 2014) and they are less certain about shared grounds (Mauranen, 2012). In such a complex context, gaining access to participants’ pragmatic judgements or intentions will allow the researcher to learn more about language users’ motives and intentions behind how language is used in a certain way and especially what is left unsaid and does not appear on the surface of interactional discourse (Kasper, 2008). Spencer-Oatey (2011) argues that this can be done through analysing participants’ metapragmatic comments. However, tapping into participants’ cognitive processing or perspectives is challenging. In the current study, stimulated recall interviews were utilised. These are defined as interviews during which the recorded interaction is played back in order to prompt the participants to recall and verbalise their pragmatic judgements.

Although stimulated recall interviews have been employed to obtain post event comments on pragmatic phenomena (Spencer-Oatey, 2013), this method also raises a serious concern about the participants’ construction of or reflection on the given interactional event in which they were involved instead of reporting what they actually do in the interaction. Bloom (1954) argues that if an interview is conducted promptly within 48 hours, its accuracy is as high as 95%, but it drops to 65% if a participant is interviewed 14 days after the original event, as depicted in Figure 2.7.

Figure 2.7: The accuracy of stimulated recall interviews (Source: adapted from Bloom, 1954)



It should be noted however that despite this possible limitation, the use of stimulated recall interviews is very useful for the initial exploration and, particularly, the triangulation of the researcher's interpretation of authentic discourse data (Kasper, 2008).

2.8 Summary and concluding remarks

In this chapter, the related concerns identified in the introduction have been explored in greater detail. The first section surveyed the literature relating to English as a lingua franca which largely focuses on the communicative and accommodation strategies used to ensure mutual understanding. Next, it explored the characteristics of academic group discussion, perceived as a distinct feature of postgraduate teaching and learning which enhances the knowledge extension of students and collaborative learning. Also, in this section, the different roles of participants in multiparty interactions and the distinct practices which only occur in multiparty talks were discussed. Then, disagreement was discussed in terms of its definitions, and the differing perspectives, perceived effects and factors influencing disagreement practices. When it comes to disagreement, it is often explored in relation to politeness. In fact, most, if not all, research into ELF interactions, disagreement and politeness relies heavily on an etic perspective or researchers' judgment which can possibly result in bias. All of these issues were surveyed in the following section before moving on to the notion of a community of practice which, to a great extent, shapes and determines what is perceived as appropriate in a certain context. To ensure a successful interaction in ELF academic group discussion, the participants are required to have, in particular, intercultural competence and this was then discussed. The

present chapter ended with a survey of some previous studies on disagreement in ELF academic contexts and a review of the data collection and analysis methodologies employed in the present study.

This literature review has indicated, to a certain extent, that current ELF studies largely focus on uncovering the communicative strategies used to ensure mutual understanding in casual conversation (Cogo & House, 2017) while less attention has been paid specifically to conflict talk and disagreement. When looking at academic group discussion, few studies have considered it from an ELF perspective. Moreover, when it comes to disagreement studies, people have looked at disagreement but not necessarily in ELF contexts or in the context of academic group discussion. Apart from this theoretical gap, this review has also revealed some methodological challenges to how ELF interactions have been previously investigated. This is because most, if not all, ELF studies have employed conversation/discourse analysis and/or corpus analysis, which possibly results in a paucity of emic or disagreement producers' perspectives and an overreliance on etic or researchers' own perspectives. The present study aims to address those gaps by looking at how disagreement is produced in ELF academic group discussion by employing a multimethod approach in order to enhance both etic and emic perspectives. More specifically, the chief methodological innovation of this study is the transfer of the stimulated recall interview mostly used in SLA (e.g. Chamot, 2005; Egi, 2008; Gass & Mackey, 2000; Watanabe & Swain, 2007) and testing research (e.g. Ducasse & Brown, 2009; Isaacs & Thomson, 2013; May, 2009) to a Pragmatics study. The study will then contribute to developing theory in these three different areas: ELF, academic group discussion and disagreement generally.

The next chapter (3) will translate what is covered in the present chapter into research questions to fill the gaps found in the previous studies and present these together with discussing the methodology employed to address those research questions.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The current study aims to reveal disagreeing practices in ELF academic group discussion and the factors that influence those practices. Due to the fact that ELF academic discussion involves students from multilinguacultural backgrounds, it becomes, according to Maíz-Arévalo, “a pragmatic minefield and breeding ground for the study of intercultural pragmatics” (2014, p. 200).

Group discussion among classmates in a peer group was preferred in this study because in such groups, power differentials will ideally be equal. As such, students tend to actively voice their opinions. In fact, ELF interaction is, by its very nature, fluid and relatively unrestricted, so this needs “...a close attention to the details that make this talk *sui generis*” (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p. 31). Moreover, given the facts that disagreement can be conveyed nonverbally through, for example, facial expression, gesture and intonation, and that context plays a key role in how disagreement is expressed, and that the cause or source of disagreement can lie beyond the previous turns of talk or even in previous interactions (Sifianou, 2012), the incorporation of a multimethod approach is expected to yield a more encompassing insight into the way disagreement is expressed, valued and responded to in fluid and dynamic ELF academic contexts. In order to achieve this, the present study works with data from various sources including observations, questionnaires, discourse analyses and stimulated recall interviews. On the one hand, this will allow the researcher to obtain the richness of data to provide a thick description and to triangulate the data gained from different sources. On the other hand, the use of data from different sources will eliminate over-reliance on the researcher’s own interpretations and help balance the insights gained from both participants and the researcher (Spencer-Oatey, 2011).

This chapter consists of main five sections. In the following section, 3.2, the research aims and gaps are translated into three research questions. The three research stages (research preparation, main study and data analysis), the description of task development and participant recruitment, research equipment and how the main study was conducted are also considered in

detail in Section 3.3. At the end (Section 3.4), the data analysis (transcription conventions, coding process and the use of questionnaire and stimulated recall data) is described. Finally, Section 3.5 provides a summary of the chapter.

3.2 Research questions

The research aims and gaps indicated earlier can be translated into the following research questions:

- 1) How do Master's students from diverse linguacultural backgrounds express their disagreement in academic group discussion?
 - a. How do they verbally express their disagreement in academic group discussion?
 - b. How do they nonverbally express their disagreement in academic group discussion?
 - c. How do they mitigate their disagreement in academic group discussion?
- 2) What factors do Master's students from diverse linguacultural backgrounds report as influencing their disagreeing practices in academic group discussion?

3.3 Research stages

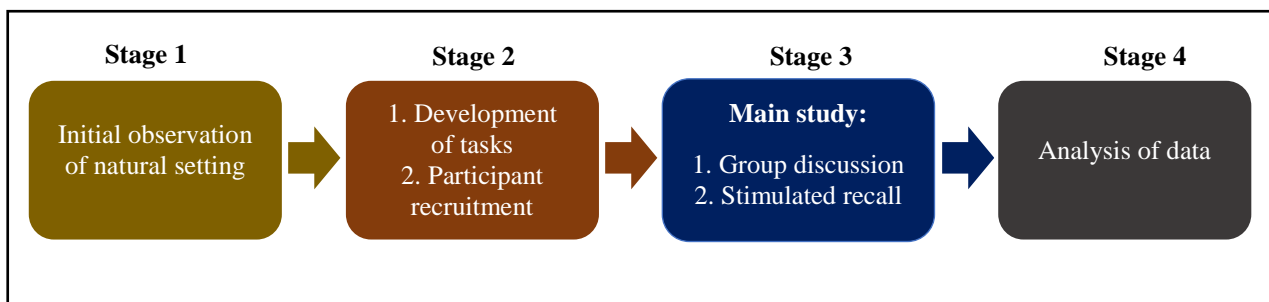
In accordance with Lancaster University research ethics guidelines, before the data collection procedures in the present study started, the detailed research plan was reviewed and approved by research ethics committees at both departmental and university levels. This was to ensure that the study would be conducted in such a way that participants' rights and privacy were protected and possible risks to the participants were minimised.

Data collection was conducted over a three-month period with participants from an academic skills class at a British university. Specifically, group work among a selected cohort of participants was recorded, stimulated recall interviews were conducted and questionnaires were completed. The study had two different groups of participants, each of which consisted of six participants from different language and cultural backgrounds. This section will describe the research stages and the detailed procedure of how data was collected in the present study.

The study involved three main stages: (1) research preparation, (2) data collection and (3) data analysis. Research preparation consisted of an initial observation of the natural setting,

and then the development of tasks and participant recruitment. Data collection involved recording the four group discussions, questionnaire completion and stimulated recall interviews. After these, the data from the different sources were analysed. In this section, the data collection procedures will be delineated. Figure 3.1 illustrates the stages of how the present study was conducted.

Figure 3.1: Research stages



3.3.1 Stage 1 — Initial observation

In this study, group discussion on a master’s degree scheme in a Language and Linguistics department at a UK university was chosen as the focus. An academic study skills course for MA students was selected, called PASS or “Postgraduate Academic Skills”. The course was designed to support Master’s students in developing their academic writing and study and learning skills through lectures and small group work. The course covered three different topics: ‘Academic Discourse Practices: Developing a Critical Approach to Study’, ‘Academic Discourse Practices and Research Planning’ and ‘Dissertation Writing’, all of which comprised a wide variety of subtopics depending primarily on which semester the course was taken (see Table 3.1). In order to achieve those goals, the course was primarily structured around group work and discussion.

Table 3.1: PASS course information: Available topics and subtopics in each semester¹

	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3
Course content	<p><i>Academic Discourse Practices: Developing a Critical Approach to Study</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing reading • Developing critical reading practices • Consciousness-raising about the writing process • Getting started on an assignment • Relating reading to writing • Argumentation • Revising your own writing 	<p><i>Academic Discourse Practices and Research Planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on the writing experience • Making use of feedback on writing • Organisation of academic writing • First thoughts about dissertation research • Writing your dissertation proposal • Critical thinking 	<p><i>Dissertation Writing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's in a dissertation? • Designing your Research Questions • Who are you, the dissertation writer? • Writing the Literature Review • Writing the Methodology chapter • Writing your Analysis and Discussion chapters • Making it all fit together • Presentation

The PASS course was chosen since its topics were already mostly related to research and academic writing, and therefore the researcher would not have any problems understanding its content. It was also the most promising research site to gain, and maintain, access to for the purposes of this study. Since it was run by a Department of Linguistics and English Language, permission to gain access to the research site and to record the interaction was more feasible. Moreover, there was a small enrolment of approximately 25-30 students, and the course was structured in the form of group discussion as opposed to other courses that may depend more on lectures. In addition, because all the participants had a symmetrical power relationship and equal discursive rights and obligations since they were all classmates (e.g. in relation to turn-taking management, topic development, and identity co-construction) (Kasper, 2008) and because it was a non-credit course, the students could be more relaxed, which would help them to freely and actively express their own opinions without being concerned about their academic performance or grade results. Apart from the inherent contents that were different, the students themselves also varied from semester to semester. For all these reasons, the PASS course was chosen as the initial focus.

¹ <http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/study/masters/modules/ling402.htm>

Originally, the researcher had intended to collect the data in the PASS course itself. However, when conducting a pilot, he found that for logistical reasons it was not going to be feasible. In this study, therefore, the PASS course was both a *reference point*, and a *recruiting ground*. It was a reference point in the sense that the researcher observed the classes and conducted the pilot there. It also allowed him to model the discussion tasks on the types of activity that the students were used to engaging in on the PASS course. Consequently, the PASS course provided a model of what group discussion typically looks like, and a reference point for the researcher to develop the simulated tasks. It then also served as a recruiting ground because the researcher was able to target participants from this class to obtain a pool of authentic speakers for the discussion task.

The data collection for the present study started from the first week of the PASS course (Term 2/2016) which altogether took 11 weeks from January—March 2016. For the first two weeks, two 2-hour PASS course sessions were observed and the research participants were recruited. After the class observation, the discussion tasks and questionnaires were developed. Then, the assigned groups of participants were asked to join a group discussion session every two weeks, while the stimulated recall interview sessions were conducted alternately, starting from weeks 4-7 for Group 1 and weeks 8-11 for Group 2 respectively. More specifically, to start with, their first two sessions of the PASS course were observed informally in order for the researcher to obtain some insights into the way the discussion groups were set up, the discussion group's characteristics, typical seating positions, and the dynamics of group discussion. Specifically, observation helped the researcher gain a clearer understanding of how to set up discussion tasks, research equipment and how to administer the questionnaires that were designed to uncover the factors that affected the participants' linguistic practices. Observation thus played an important role in justifying the initial choices of research method to be adopted in the current study. To observe the class, at the beginning of the first session, the participants were given the information sheets to inform them of the overall purpose of the study and the consent form to ensure that they were willing to be a part of the study (see Appendix 1). This first observation also helped the researcher to familiarise himself with the would-be participants.

3.3.2 Stage 2 — Task and questionnaire development and participant recruitment

1. Task and questionnaire development

In order to investigate how ELF speakers express their disagreement, naturally occurring data are indispensable. However, it should be borne in mind that disagreement is a dispreferred act and, as such, often mitigated or even avoided (Kakavá, 1993; Pomerantz, 1984; Sifianou, 2012). My pilot study clearly showed that communicative acts of disagreement were scarce in the 60-minute interaction period, and that the stimulated recall interview sessions, which took up to two hours, were long enough to apparently cause fatigue to the participants. Having tasks designed to produce disagreement thus shortened group discussion time while stimulating instances of disagreement. Also, in the stimulated recall interviews, time could be spent more effectively eliciting the participants' reasons or intentions behind their interactional practices. As such, with the restrictions on group discussion time and the time that would be spent on the stimulated recall interview sessions, all tasks in the present study were designed to encourage the participants to talk or, in this case, to express disagreement and enhance interaction while still maintaining the naturalness of the discussion. The participants were expected to alternately seek and provide information and actively participate in the group discussion until agreement or consensus was reached. In so doing, two discussion tasks were developed and extensively piloted. This might be considered problematic in terms of the authenticity or naturalness of the data if a conversation analytic perspective were used (Konakahara, 2016).

It should be noted, however, that although the group discussion was set up and planned rather than occurring naturally and the discussion tasks were used to elicit instances of disagreement, according to the interview and questionnaire data, most, if not all, participants reported that they were still relaxed and felt comfortable talking. A great deal of effort was made to develop a relaxed atmosphere and build up rapport among the group discussion members to ensure casual and natural interaction by serving snacks at the beginning and holding 5-minute ice-breaking pre-session talks. The purpose of these was to allow the researcher to gain data that was as *reasonably authentic* as possible.

Task A: Topic-based discussion task

Task A was designed to be a casual conversation-like task (elicited conversation) where friends or classmates could share their own experiences of living in the UK and studying in the

department. It involved the discussion of a wide range of topics which were prepared in advance according to their ability to elicit disagreement. All of the chosen topics were tested in a pilot study. The discussion topics in Task A thus included the separation of coursework assignments, the British way of politeness, the assistance provided by the university during recent severe power outages¹, the tuition fees for international students and educational systems in different countries and whether or not they put an emphasis on critical thinking. How many topics each group discussion would cover depended mainly on the time available (approximately 30 minutes) and group members' interests. In this task, there was a moderator who was responsible for assigning the topics for the participants to discuss and to ensure that there would not be any dead air during the discussion while the researcher was absent from the research site. However, during the session, the moderator, him or herself, would participate as little as possible in order to avoid intervening in the dynamic of the ongoing interaction (see Part III in Section 3.3.3 for more detail about the role of a moderator in the different tasks).

Task B: Decision-making task (disagreement-stimulating task)

The second task employed in this study was a decision-making task. It was also designed mainly to elicit argument and to maximise disagreement. In fact, tasks similar to Task B have been used for various purposes in the past, of which Révész (2011) is a good example. In this task, a moderator was responsible for explaining how the group discussion would proceed and how the participants could achieve their tasks. However, it differed from the previous task in that in this task the participants were asked to role play being on a university committee asked to make a decision on allocating £12,000 of funds to certain projects. Prior to the group discussion session, the participants were given a 3-page task pack which included (1) instructions and funding criteria, (2) a description and a list of university projects, the amount of money needed and with details of the way the money would be used, and (3) a response sheet (see Appendix 3 for an example of one complete task). Then, the participants were asked to write down their own decision(s) on a response sheet. For Task B, the response sheet eventually became another important instrument to show the influence of the situational context (interactional frame, group members, (un)convincing arguments, etc.) on the dynamic of the interaction and especially on the way disagreement would be expressed or not. More specifically, the response sheet would reveal when participants did not express their opinions

¹ Power outages relates to a recent event at that time.

because theirs were different from those of the majority and especially when they did not provide this information even in the interview sessions.

Questionnaires

There were two questionnaires. The first one was designed to elicit participants' background information including name, age, gender, nationality, English language proficiency (standardised test taken and its scores). This was given with the information sheet and consent form in the participants' recruitment process. This background information would help the researcher to interpret their interactional practices in a more accurate way (Chang & Haugh, 2011). This first part was completed and sent back to the researcher with the consent form in the initial process of research participant recruitment.

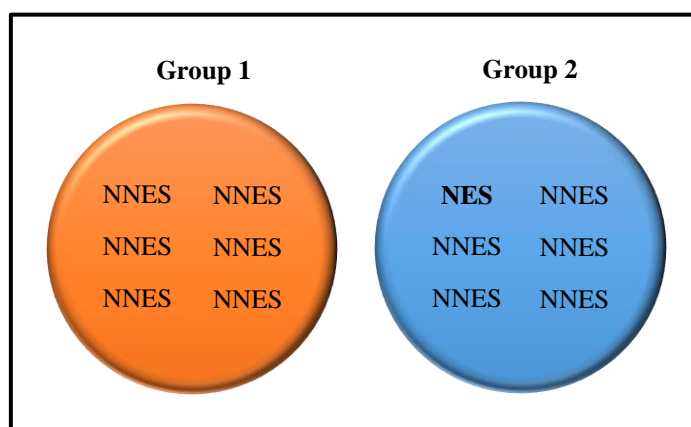
The second one, which consisted of questions about the factors influencing how disagreement is expressed and participants' perceptions about the success of their interaction, was given to the participants at the end of each discussion session. This means that each participant completed this second one twice, once for Task A and secondly for Task B. Based on the previous literature on disagreement (e.g. Angouri, 2012; Angouri & Locher, 2012; Kakavá, 2000; Locher, 2004; Sifianou, 2012) and initial observation, the second questionnaire was designed to be more like a checklist which consisted of the possible factors which could influence the way the participants expressed their opinions in academic group discussion. Its purpose was specifically to reveal the factors which exert an influence on the participants' diverse practices of disagreeing. This second questionnaire was also used as *one of the prompts* (apart from the video-recorded interactions) to stimulate the participants' memory so that they could recall and explain more about the factors influencing them. More specifically, the questions were designed to be a prompt to gain data on the participants' perceptions of the familiarity of their group peers, the factors that influenced the way the participants justified their interactional strategic choices and the success of their interaction. Through their answers it was hoped to gain an understanding about the factors that influence the way ELF speakers signal and deal with instances of disagreement in group academic discussion. This second questionnaire consisted of different closed-ended items where the participants need to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a statement by marking one of four responses on Likert scales comprising 'Not familiar', 'Slightly familiar', 'Quite familiar' and 'Very familiar' for the questions regarding familiarity and 'Not successful', 'Slightly successful',

‘Quite successful’ and ‘Very successful’ for those asking about the participants’ perception of the success of the interaction, and open-ended questions where participants could give further comments on a particular interaction (see Appendix 4).

Apart from uncovering the influencing factors, the responses given in the second questionnaire also allowed the researcher to check the accuracy of the responses provided and to probe further about other possible factors that lie beyond what was included in the questionnaires. Moreover, for the open questions, the responses given were to ensure that the participants had been interacting as naturally as possible and to reveal their attitudes towards showing disagreement. This was done to measure the relative authenticity of the data and the role of disagreement in academic group discussion. Accordingly, when combined with observation, discourse analysis and stimulated recall interviews, it was hoped they would provide rich data for an in-depth analysis of how disagreement is produced in a complex and dynamic setting such as ELF group academic discussion.

II. Participant recruitment

The next stage was to recruit participants to take part in simulated academic group discussions. The plan was to recruit two groups of six participants each (12 participants in total) who would each be involved in two separate discussions. Due to the fact that the study focuses on how the communicative act of disagreeing is expressed by students from multi-ethnic backgrounds, the selection of participants in this study is thus of utmost significance. To line up with the purpose of the present study, the participants were purposefully chosen according to their age, gender, English language proficiency and linguacultural background. Of the two groups of six participants the first group consisted entirely of non-native English speaker students while the other had one native English speaker among the non-native participants, as illustrated in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Discussion group members

To recruit the research participants, at the end of the second session of the initial observation period, all students were given the information sheets to inform them of the overall purpose of the study, the way it would be conducted, the reward of £20 and advantages they would receive, and also to reassure them that their participation would be kept confidential and any information that could lead to their identification would be anonymised. Those who were interested in being a part of the study were asked to sign the form and fill in a small questionnaire asking about nationality, occupation, place of origin and level of achievement in any standardised test(s) taken and send it back to the researcher. At this stage, altogether there were 20 students who wanted to take part in the study. However, only 12 participants were selected according to their age, gender, nationalities and IELTS scores to create two discussion groups of six students from highly diverse social, cultural and linguistic proficiency backgrounds. Altogether, the 12 participants came from 10 different linguacultural backgrounds, British, Chilean, Chinese, Dutch, Greek Cypriot, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Saudi Arabian and Swiss.

The first group of participants (Group 1) consisted of six participants, 1 male and 5 females, from China, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Japan, Korea and Saudi Arabia. Their ages ranged between 21-33 and language proficiency from 6.5-8.5 on their IELTS scores. In order to maintain the participants' privacy and anonymity, their names were anonymised by using pseudonyms. Table 3.2 shows the personal information of each participant in Group 1 together with their assigned pseudonyms.

Table 3.2: Group 1 participants' personal information and their pseudonyms

Nationality	First language	Gender	Age	English language proficiency	Previous work experience	Participants' pseudonym used
1. Cypriot	Greek	F	21	7.5	Student	Lexie
2. Japanese	Japanese	M	33	8.0	Teacher	Jiro
3. Dutch	Dutch	F	22	8.5	Student	Caroline
4. Saudi Arabian	Arabic	F	22	6.5	Teacher	Nourah
5. Korean	Korean	F	25	6.5	Teacher	Haeun
6. Chinese	Mandarin Chinese	F	24	6.5	Student	Mei

Like the first group, the second group of participants (Group 2) also comprised six participants but it included 2 males and 4 females who were Chilean, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Swiss and British. The last of these created a slight difference in terms of group composition, because the presence or absence of an English native speaker can influence non-native speakers' interaction (Jones, 1999). English proficiency in this group ranged from 6.5 to English native speaker competency. In Group 2, the participants' average age was also slightly higher when compared to those in Group 1. The combination of participants in the second group, including their personal information and assigned pseudonyms, is shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Group 2 participants' personal information and their pseudonyms

Nationality	First language	Gender	Age	English language proficiency	Previous work experience	Participants' pseudonym used
1. British	English	M	51	English native speaker	Teacher	Jimmy
2. Indonesian	Bahasa Indonesia	M	25	7.0	Student	Unyil
3. Japanese	Japanese	F	34	7.0	Teacher	Sukura
4. Swiss	Swiss German	F	23	8.5	Student	Roxane
5. Korean	Korean	F	44	7.5	Teacher	Yoonsuh
6. Chilean	Spanish	F	29	7.5	Teacher	Catalina

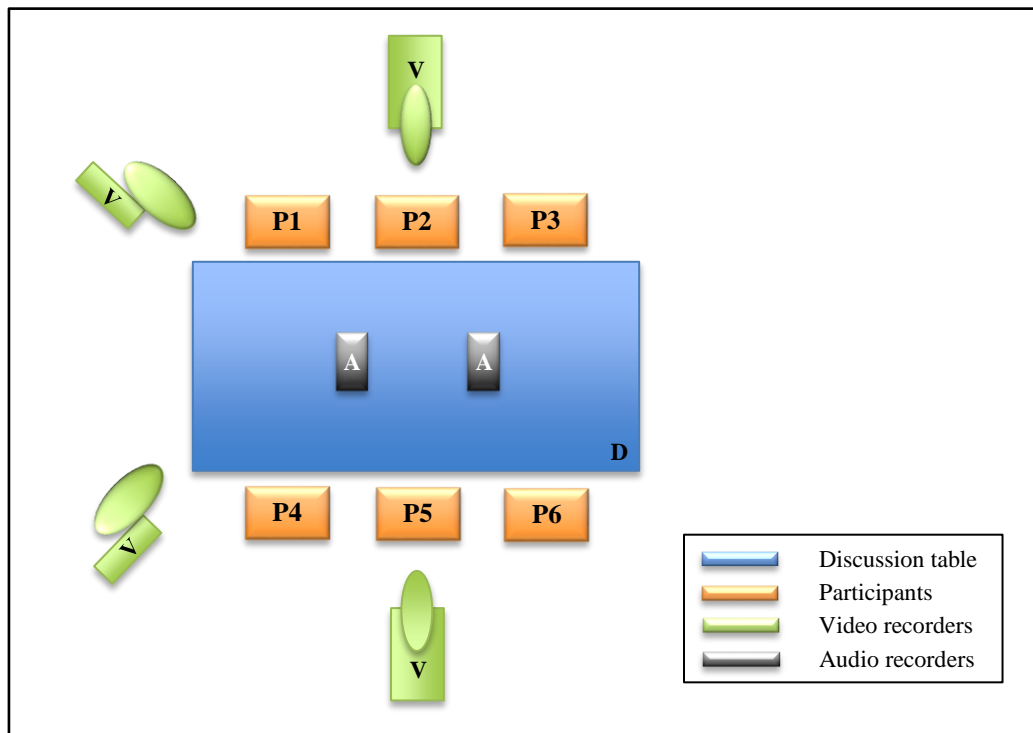
3.3.3 Stage 3.1 — Main study 1: Simulated group discussion

1. Research equipment

Because the communicative act of disagreement can be expressed both vocally and non-vocally and both audio and visual data are important to understand interactions, the use of video recorders to supplement the use of audio recorders helped the researcher to investigate the nonverbal cues (e.g. facial expression, gestures, etc.) that are used to express disagreement. Moreover, because both the strength and sharpness of the stimulus that was used for the stimulated recall interviews were important (Gass & Mackey, 2000), the video recorded interaction was expected to be a better prompt for eliciting the participants' interview comments. Also, given that there were many participants involved in the interaction, the use of video recorders was essential to help the researcher to identify each individual participant's conversational turn. In this study, two audio recorders were set up on the discussion table at which the six participants were seated and another four video recorders were used, two of which were placed at each side of the table while the other two were placed diagonally at each side of the moderator in order to capture the interactions from different angles. Four video recorders were necessary as this allowed the researcher to choose the best video file to play back to each

individual participant in his or her particular stimulated recall interview session. The position of the research equipment is depicted in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Research equipment position



II. Seating arrangement

The group discussion took place in a meeting room with a rectangular table. With Task A, a moderator sat at one end of the table while the six participants sat around the table in two rows of three facing one another, as depicted in Figure 3.4. The moderator needed to be at the discussion table because he needed to ensure that the discussion session would proceed continuously by throwing pre-prepared topics to the discussion group or even initiating further conversation if a long-drawn out pause developed in the interaction.

Figure 3.4: Group discussion seating positions for Task A



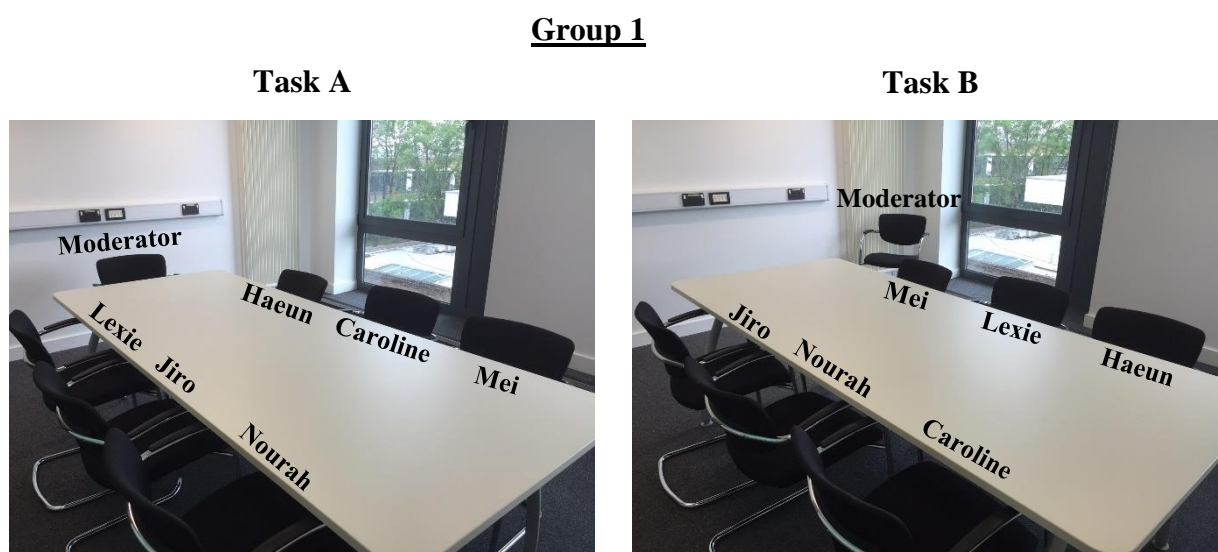
Unlike Task A in which a different moderator was responsible for providing the discussion topics and engaging in the interaction if necessary whenever there was a long silence or when other topics were needed, the moderator in Task B was present in the discussion just to explain the task before starting the group discussion off, and then only had to wait on one side until the consensus was achieved before instructing the participants how to complete the questionnaire. In this case, after the group discussion had started, she sat in the corner of the room instead of sitting at the discussion table. Figure 3.5 illustrates the group discussion seating positions for Task B.

Figure 3.5: Group discussion seating positions for Task B



To ensure, as far as possible given the small size of the groups, that the participants would not sit with their close friends, seats were randomly assigned for each participant and for each task. As such, their seats for these two tasks were different. Figure 3.6 shows each participant's seating position in the different tasks for Group 1.

Figure 3.6: Participants' seating positions in Task A and Task B



Group 2

Task A



Task B



To provide a clearer picture of how the data were collected, the following section will provide detailed steps of data collection.

III. Group discussion

After a period of initial observation and participant recruitment, followed by task development and piloting, the participants were asked to take part in two academic group discussion sessions, one for Task A and the other for Task B.

In the study, each group of participants with its different combination of nationalities as mentioned in Section 3.5.2 took part in two group discussion sessions and two stimulated recall interview sessions which were set up in a meeting room within the department. Each session lasted approximately 60 minutes and took place every other week. As mentioned above, two different moderators were used in this study in order to avoid their becoming over-familiar with the participants and perhaps influencing participants' interactions. The two moderators were the researcher's Thai friends pursuing their PhDs in the same department, one (male) responsible for Task A and the other (female) for Task B. Group 1 did Task A first, followed by Task B while these were done in reverse order by Group 2. This procedure was expected to counteract any influence that may result from the first stimulated recall interview session. Both tasks involved three stages: pre-discussion, discussion and post-discussion.

Task A: Topic-based task

The discussion sessions for Task A involved three stages: self-introduction, discussion and questionnaire completion as well as making the arrangements for the next interview as shown in Table 3.5. When all the participants had arrived at the meeting room and sat on the assigned seats, the moderator started the session by introducing himself and letting the participants introduce themselves as well as initiating some small talk. Because of the presence of research equipment, this pre-discussion phase was necessary to make the participants feel more relaxed and get familiar with the setting, the presence of research equipment and their discussion group co-members. After this preliminary phase, the moderator started the discussion with the first topic of British politeness and, second, the split of coursework assignments and, third, if time permitted, the assistance provided by the university during the power outages. Task A took 36 minutes for Group 1 and 33 minutes for Group 2, as illustrated in Table 3.4. Then, immediately after the group discussion session, the participants were asked to complete a small questionnaire (see Appendix 4), concerning various factors influencing their interactional practices and their perceptions of the success of a particular interaction.

Table 3.4: Structure of the group discussion sessions

Stages	Duration			
	Group 1		Group 2	
	Task A	Task B	Task B	Task A
1. Pre-discussion				
• Self-introduction	2 mins	----	2 mins	----
• Task-explanation	2 mins	3 mins	3 mins	2 mins
• Self-preparation	----	15 mins	15 mins	----
2. Group discussion	36 mins	24 mins	24 mins	33 mins
3. Post-discussion				
• Questionnaire completion and interview appointment	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins	15 mins
TOTAL	55 mins	57 mins	59 mins	50 mins

Task B: Decision-making task

To begin the task, all participants were asked to read through the instructions on a task sheet placed on the discussion table in front of them. The moderator then explained how the task would be conducted and the participants were allowed to read through a list of projects which provided information about the funding needed and the way the money would be used if allocated. The individual participants had 15 minutes to make a decision on their own and wrote it down on the provided response sheet before the start of the group discussion. During the group discussion session, the participants had to defend their own ideas until a group consensus was reached. The sessions took approximately 24 minutes. Immediately after the discussion, the participants were also required to complete a questionnaire about the factors that had governed the way they interacted in the group discussion and particularly the way in which they had expressed their disagreement. Also, they were asked to specify the day when they were available for the individual interviews which were normally held 3-7 days after the recorded group interactions. To achieve this, the interview timetable was passed around the table. The brief structure of the group discussion sessions for Task B is shown in Table 3.5 above.

Right after each group academic discussion session, the participants were asked to complete small questionnaires about their level of familiarity with the other participants, any possible factors that could influence the way they interacted in the group discussion, their perceptions towards the success of a given interaction as well as other comments related to their group discussion. As mentioned above, this questionnaire was used as a prompt, apart from the video-recorded group discussion, in the following stimulated recall interview sessions. Then they were informed about the appointment time for further interviews that would be arranged within two weeks of the recorded interaction. In the meantime, the interaction was transcribed to locate particular instances of disagreement and to do an initial analysis of how disagreement is avoided or mitigated. In addition, the information gained from the questionnaires was summarised to supplement the analysis of the recorded interaction. These would become important issues that the participants could tease out in the following interview sessions. At this stage of the study, linguistic features that might index disagreement were initially identified and their locations noted down for the purpose of being used in the stimulated recall interviews. Then, all transcripts were crosschecked by another PhD student who was also pursuing her degree in Linguistics in the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University and by my thesis supervisor. Furthermore, during the

analysis of the data, the transcripts were repeatedly revised in order to achieve maximum accuracy.

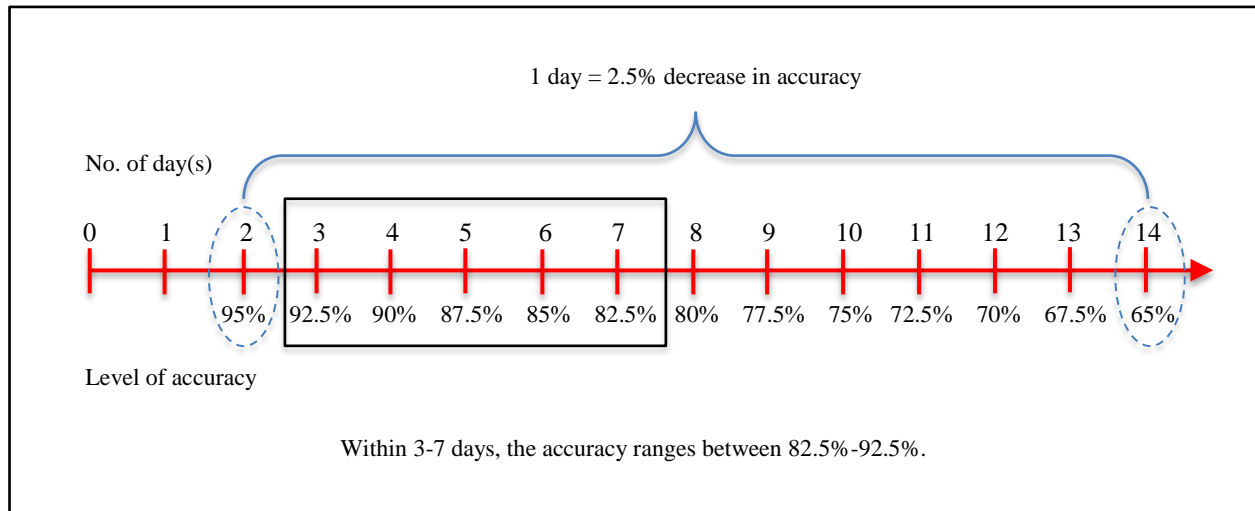
3.3.4 Stage 3.2 — Main study 2: Stimulated recall interviews

I. Preparation

As mentioned earlier, because short-term memory decays over time, the stimulated recall interviews were conducted as soon as possible after each group discussion session had been transcribed, the questionnaires had been summarised and initial instances of disagreement had been located. They normally took place 3-7 days after each group discussion. In order to stimulate the participants to verbalise what they were thinking at the time they were interacting with others in the group discussion, the recorded video of their own interaction, response sheets and completed questionnaires were used as stimuli. The video recordings of all the group discussion sessions used in these interviews helped uncover the participants' intentions behind their interactional practices at particular moments while the questionnaires were used as a prompt to stimulate the participants to provide more information about the factors that influenced their way of interacting. Moreover, given that group influence often plays a role in determining the dynamic of a discussion and the decisions made by group members, the response sheet was supplied to shed more light on the way participants' decisions were made and how and why the communicative act of disagreement was produced.

As mentioned above, the interview sessions were conducted as soon as possible after the simulated group discussion. This was to ensure the accuracy of participants' short-term memory and metapragmatic comments about their own interactional practices. As mentioned in Section 2.7.5, if stimulated recall interviews are conducted within 2 days after the original event, their accuracy can be up to 95%. However, this percentage decreases to 65% after 14 days. This means that each day that passes from day 2 to day 14 incurs a 2.5% decrease in accuracy. Consequently, to maintain high accuracy of the participants' comments towards the way they interacted in the group discussion sessions, the stimulated recall interviews were done within 3-7 days depending on the availability of the participants. Accordingly, within this period, the level of accuracy still ranges, highly approximately, between 82.5%— 92.5%, as depicted in Figure 3.7, which shows the relation between the number of days after the original event and the ability of the stimulated recall interviews to elicit the participants' accurate interview comments.

Figure 3.7: The estimated accuracy of stimulated recall interviews (Source: adapted from Bloom, 1954)

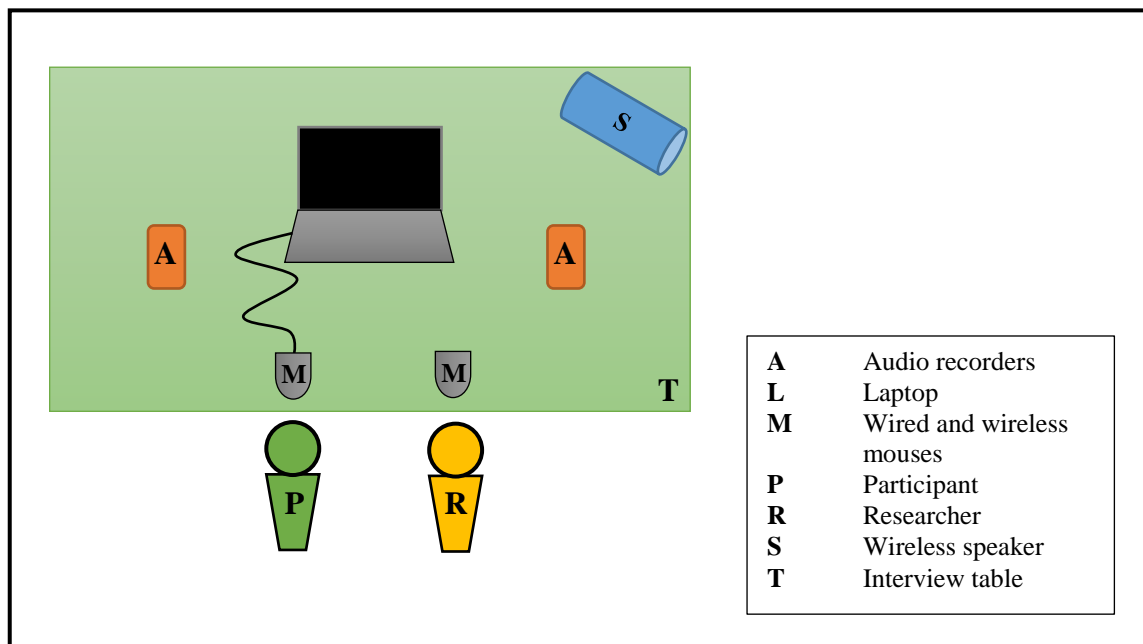


Given that there were 12 participants from 10 different first languages, the interview sessions were necessarily conducted in English. These individual interviews mostly took 60 minutes but this could be slightly different according to how much information the participants wanted to share and also their articulateness. The sessions were audio recorded and then transcribed in order to find salient themes and sub-themes vis-à-vis their disagreement strategies and why they were used in certain ways as well as the factors that influenced how they were employed.

II. Stimulated recall interview procedures

When the participants entered the meeting room which was set for the interviews, they were asked to sit next to the researcher. Before starting the stimulated recall interviews, the participants were briefly introduced to the equipment in front of them i.e. a laptop with two mice, speaker and two audio recorders (see Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8: Stimulated recall interview setting and research equipment

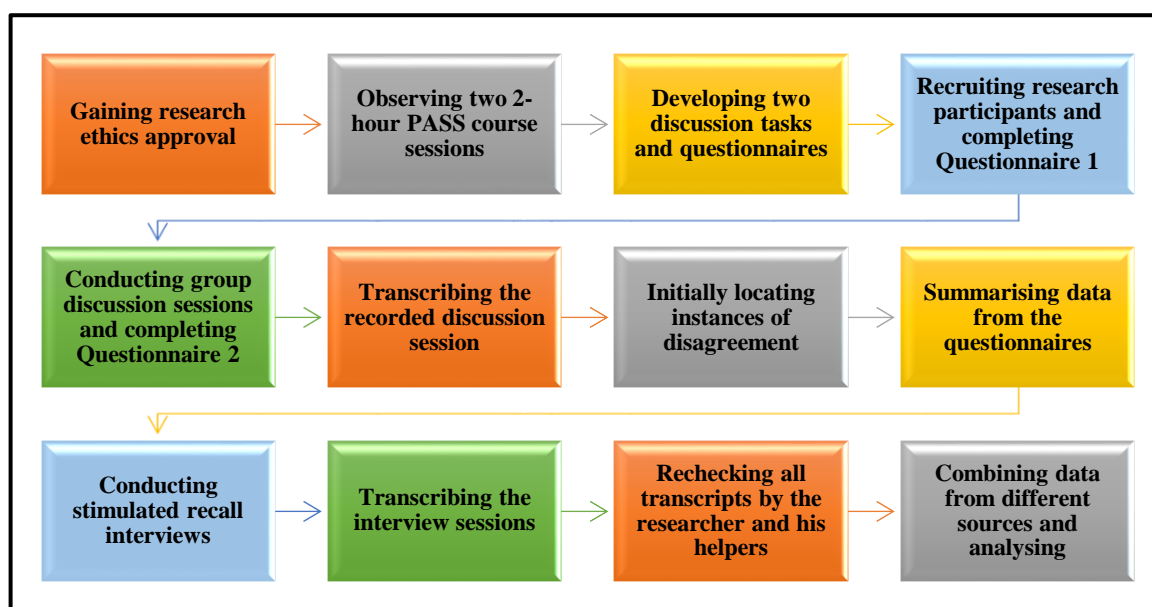


They were then informed of the purpose of the stimulated recall interviews and the way the interviews would be conducted. This stage took about 3-5 minutes. Next, the participants were asked to watch back their previously recorded group discussion session and verbalise what they were thinking at the time they were interacting in the group discussion. The verbalisation was initiated by both the participants themselves and the researcher. That is, during the stimulated recall interviews, the participants stopped the video whenever they wanted to talk about their thoughts or intentions towards their interactional practices at a particular moment. Like the participants, the researcher also stopped the video if he had questions about their interactions, for example, “What were you thinking at the time s/he was showing his/her idea/suggestion/comment?”, “Did you agree or disagree with his/her idea/suggestion/comment?”, “Why didn’t you say anything”, “Why did you use a particular disagreeing practice?”. Altogether, this phase took approximately 43-45 minutes. Finally, the participants looked at their own completed questionnaires and were asked to clarify their given responses e.g. “From your questionnaire data, you strongly agree with the influence of the age factor. How does it influence the way you expressed your different opinions in the discussion?”. This final stage of the interview session, which lasted about 10-15 minutes (see Table 3.4), allowed the researcher to learn more about the possible factors that influenced the way they expressed disagreement. All recorded stimulated recall interview sessions were then transcribed in order to find the main themes and sub-themes to answer the research question as

to what factors influence the way ELF speakers express a communicative act of disagreement in group academic discussion.

Figure 3.9 summarises all the data collection procedures. In the following section, the data analysis in the present study will be discussed.

Figure 3.9: Data collection procedures



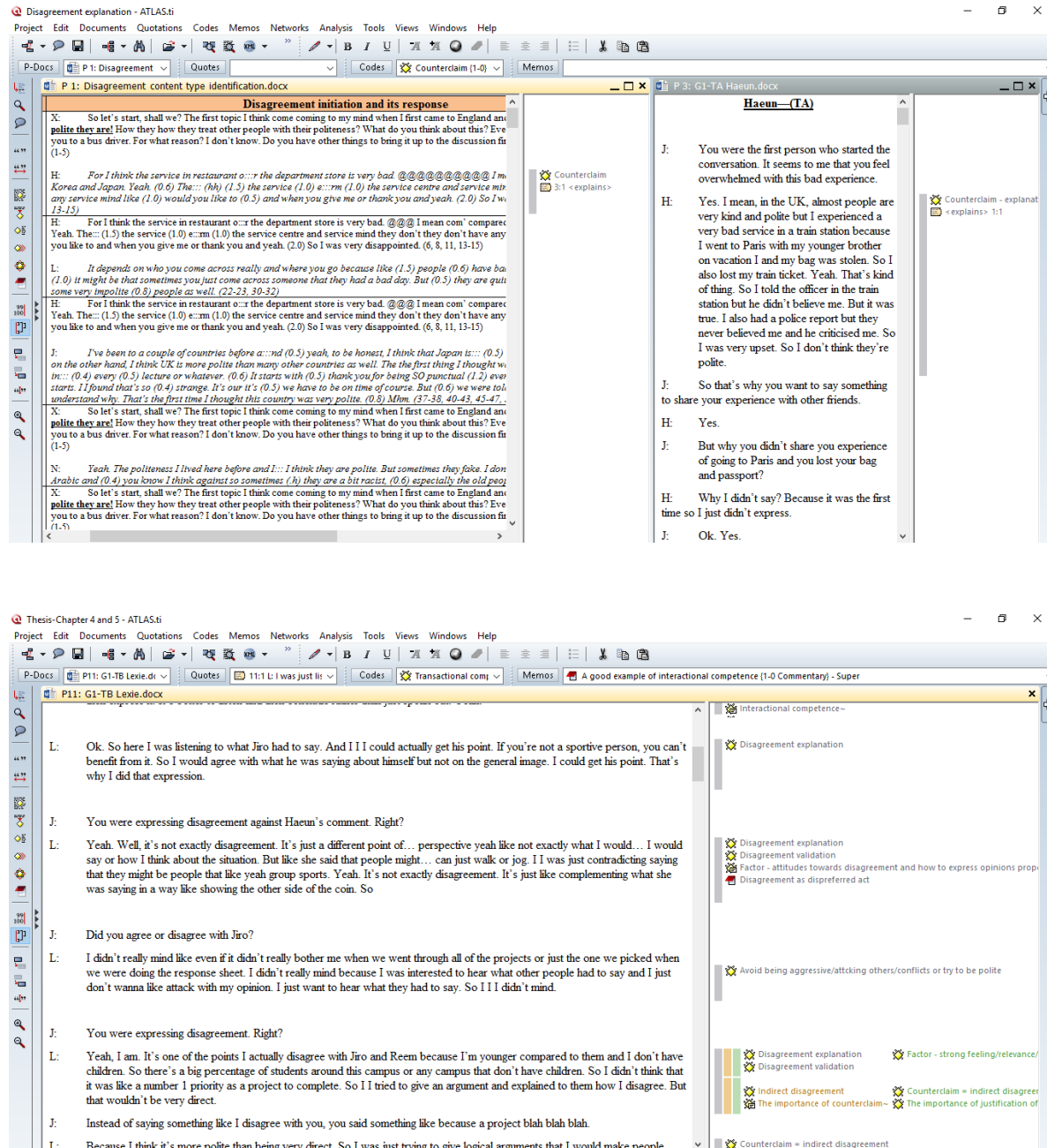
3.4 Data analysis

3.4.1 Simulated group discussion data

The data presented in this study were drawn from 117 minutes of recorded group discussion (173 pages of interaction transcripts) and 24 hours of stimulated recall interviews (259 pages of interview transcripts) of MA students in a language and linguistics department at a UK university who were taking a non-credit Postgraduate Academic Skills course in Term 2 during January—March 2016. The use of different research methods helps triangulate data from various sources and balance the perspectives of the researcher and the participants. The data in the form of transcripts were analysed by using qualitative data analysis software—ATLAS.ti, as illustrated in Figure 3.10. This software enables the researcher, for example, to count the occurrence of disagreement instances, group mutual or similar themes together or indicate the

relationship of those themes. In this section, detailed information of how this data was analysed will be provided.

Figure 3.10: The use of ATLAS.ti software to analyse the data



I. Transcription conventions

In order to reveal how the participants express disagreement in ELF academic group discussion, the very first step of data analysis needed was to listen very carefully to the way they produce utterances and certain paralinguistic features (e.g. intonations, pauses, laughter, overlaps, lengthening, latching, sighs, turn-taking) while they were interacting and negotiating meaning in the group discussion. By using discourse analysis, their group discussion sessions were all transcribed, mainly using the transcription conventions proposed by Du Bois, Schuetze-Coburn, Cumming, and Paolino (1993). More specifically, the study uses their basic transcription or so-called discourse transcription (DT) convention (see Appendix 2) which provides the following information:

...the words and who they were spoken by, the division of the stream of speech into turns and intonation units, the truncation of intonation units and words, intonation contours, medium and long pauses, laughter, and uncertain hearings or deciphering words.

(Du Bois et al., 1993, p. 46)

The details provided by the discourse transcription conventions are in between interactional and paralinguistic types of transcription in level of detail (Jenks, 2011). However, the conventions were, to some extent, adapted to suit the analytical aims of the study and to be reader-friendly. The symbols and their full descriptions can be found in Appendix 2.

II. Identifying and coding disagreements

The coding process was recursive. In this study, the interactional data of the group discussion transcripts and the stimulated recall interview data were coded and recoded by both the researcher and also a team of coders, consisting of three former or present PhD students in Linguistics, Applied Linguistics and Multicultural Education, as well as my thesis supervisor. The use of multiple coders was to establish and ensure the credibility and consistency of the coding. To uncover disagreeing practices, the first stage of the coding process was to check with a second coder whether all instances of disagreement identified by the researcher were actual communicative acts of disagreement. This was done by locating both disagreement source and responding turns. Then, the pragmatic function or content type of the agreed

instances was first coded by the researcher and all of them were verified by a second coder. More than 90% of all disagreement instances were agreed on. In problematic instances, they were further discussed. However, for those that were still undecided, the final decision would be made by the researcher and a third coder (researcher's thesis supervisor).

3.4.2 Stimulated recall interview data

In performing disagreement, the influence of language users themselves and the inter-relationship between the speakers and their interactional contexts all exert a powerful influence on the way the participants show their dissent. This creates a need to tap into the users' psychological processes. By using a prompt or prompts, the use of stimulated recall interviews helps the users to verbalise more accurately what they were thinking at the time they were using language.

Regarding the data analysis, the advantages of incorporating metapragmatic or stimulated recall interview data to support discourse analysis are the following: (1) for clear instances of disagreement, the data will support or explain more about that disagreement; and (2) for ambiguous disagreement, the metapragmatic data will help provide evidence as to whether they are instances of actual disagreement. To uncover how disagreement is verbally realised, a communicative act of disagreement will be investigated vis-à-vis its production and the way it is mitigated both within a single turn or through a series. In the case of non-verbal expressions, the analysis is mainly based on what the participants reported when they watched back their recorded interaction. These reports encompass the description of facial expressions, gazes, head nods and postures. In order to thoroughly understand how ELF participants in this study express their opposing opinions, extracts of the interactions will be provided.

As mentioned above, after each group discussion session, the participants were asked to attend an individual interview session which was audio-recorded and transcribed. The transcripts from the stimulated recall interviews were analysed by using thematic analysis. This was done by searching for, identifying and reporting repetitive patterns or themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006) from what the participants verbalised when they watched back their own recorded interaction.

I. Transcription conventions

There are different ways in which audio data can be transformed into written text, depending on the approach used, and research aim(s) and question(s) (Coates & Thornborrow, 1999; Jenks, 2011). Unlike the group discussion transcription in which the more detailed notation of participants' intonations, lengthenings, pauses, overlapping and other paralinguistic features were included and represented by special symbols (see Appendix 2), only basic transcription was carried out on the stimulated recall interviews. This is because, for thematic analysis, the focus is on the content or message of the talk rather than the way the message is produced during the interaction. The recorded stimulated recall interview data was thus simply transformed into written text excluding any notation of paralinguistic and nonverbal features. In the present study, participants' interview accounts are shown in double quotation marks in italics and different font type, and their sources (participant's name, group and task) are provided.

II. Thematic analysis

The thematic analysis of the stimulated recall interview data was carried out through a similar process to that used in coding the disagreement practices and their pragmatic functions. This was to make sure that the transcripts accurately represent what was verbalised in the interview sessions. Firstly, 25% of the interview transcripts were rechecked in terms of their accuracy. The thematic analysis was first conducted by the researcher in order to find salient themes and sub-themes. After they had been coded and the coding scheme was further developed by the researcher, they were then all recoded and rechecked by a second coder who was not involved in the data collection procedures. This was to avoid bias and subjectivity emerging from being involved in data analysis process (Barbour, 2011). Any problematic codes arising were discussed with and finalised by a third coder. The coding of the interview transcripts was done several times until most of them were agreed on. However, for those sections that were disputed, the final decision was made by the researcher and his supervisor. The multiple coding was conducted to facilitate the audit trail and validation of the theme development and to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings and the research study as a whole (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, the established themes and sub-themes as well as the chosen examples were reviewed in order to ensure that they accurately represented each other.

3.5 Summary and concluding remarks

In order to address the research questions as to how MA students express their disagreement in academic group discussion and what factors influence those practices, the use of a multimethod approach (i.e. discourse analysis, questionnaires and stimulated recall interviews) was employed in this study. Twelve MA students in a language and linguistics department at a UK university, who were from a wide range of backgrounds and differed in gender, age, linguistic proficiency and first language, were asked to join two simulated group academic discussion sessions with two different tasks. Task A involved discussing different assigned topics which were based on the participants' own experiences of living and studying in the UK, such as British politeness, the split of coursework assignments and the assistance provided by the university during power outages. In Task B, which was designed to stimulate instances of disagreement, the participants were assigned the task of allocating a limited amount of funding to different projects. All of their interactions were both audio and video recorded. Their group discussion sessions were then transcribed and analysed.

The analysis of discourse was later supplemented with and triangulated by the use of questionnaires in order to elicit information about the factors that had influenced the way the participants interacted in certain ways. In addition, the use of stimulated recall interviews was used to probe further their intentions or motives behind the way they expressed their disagreement and to ensure a balance between the perspectives of the participants and those of the researcher. To enhance the reliability of the study, the transcripts of interactional and interview data were recoded by a second coder or multiple coders. In the following chapter, the data analysis of how MA students express their communicative act of disagreement in academic group discussion where English is used as the common means of communication will be presented. Based mainly on discourse analysis of transcribed group discussion sessions and partly on stimulated recall interview data, the chapter will deal with an in-depth analysis of interactional discourse in order to reveal the wide range of strategies that the participants used to express their opposed views.

CHAPTER 4

DISAGREEMENT REALISATION

4.1 Introduction

The present chapter and the following two chapters report the findings on disagreeing practices and the factors influencing them. In this chapter, the data gained from four recorded academic group discussion sessions provides an answer to the first research question: How do Master's students from diverse linguacultural backgrounds express their disagreement in academic group discussion?

Chapter 4 centres on the linguistic and non-linguistic realisation of disagreement produced by 12 participants in ELF academic group discussion. The chapter is divided into seven sections. Section 4.2 describes the way all instances of disagreement were identified and how coding processes were conducted to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. Next, in order to help readers to get an initial sense of the findings in this chapter, Section 4.3 provides an overview of a number of disagreement instances and disagreeing practices across tasks and groups. Section 4.4 presents the verbal realisation of the core of disagreement. Given that disagreement can be both verbally and nonverbally produced, the following section, Section 4.5, presents the use of nonverbal cues (i.e. gazes, facial expressions, frowning, smiles/laughter, head nods, postures and silence) which the participants reported using as a substitute for verbal disagreement. Section 4.6 presents all disagreement practices in relation to their level of explicitness. The chapter ends with Section 4.7 which provides a summary of results and the introduction to the next chapter.

4.2 Identifying instances of disagreement

In this study, disagreement is defined as a response or reaction performed by an interactant to a preceding prompt to show his or her opposing stance. This working definition is broad enough to cover both verbal and nonverbal realisation of disagreement. To locate all 158 instances of verbal disagreement, I relied on data from four transcripts of 120-minute long academic group discussions. Given that disagreement is a reaction to a preceding prompt or utterance, to

identify each individual instance of disagreement, there needs to be an identifiable prior utterance and an opposing response(s), in which case a disagreement instance comprises at least two turns. In some studies, the analysis of disagreement is done through a 3-turn structure known as an ‘arguing exchange’ (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998, p. 227) or ‘conflict episode’ (Gruber, 1998, p. 476). Within this structure, turn 1 which is made by speaker A is disputed by turn 2 made by speaker B and followed by turn 3 which is produced by speaker A to either support his/her own claim or negate speaker B’s claim. The third turn made by speaker A is important since, according to Gruber (1998), it establishes a full conflict episode as exemplified in Example 1.

Example 1:

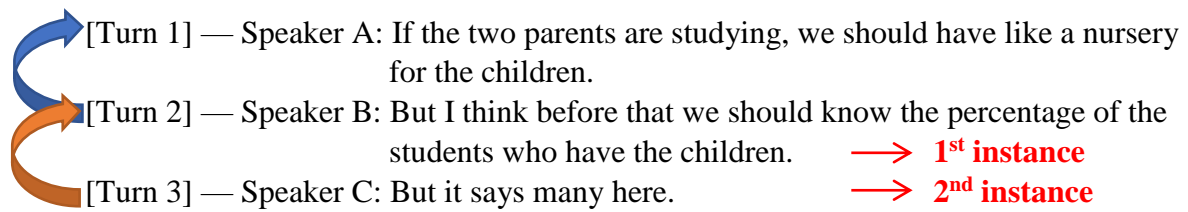
[Turn 1] — Speaker A: The guy was a jerk.

[Turn 2] — Speaker B: No he wasn’t Dad.

[Turn 3] — Speaker A: This, I met Andrew and too many of the other guys and there’s just no comparison.

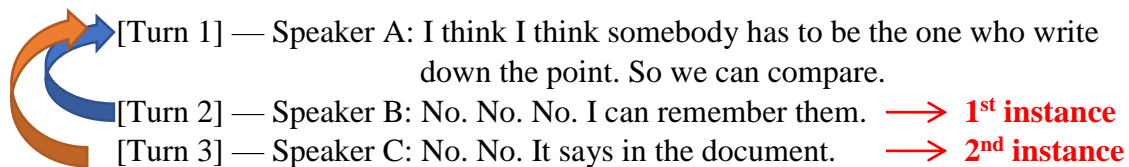
(adapted from Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998, p. 227)

The present study, however, involves multi-party talk where in each group six interactants exchange their (competing) ideas. In this case, the topics of conversation often change rapidly and overlaps occur continuously during the interaction and, most importantly, conversational turns are often randomly grabbed and relinquished. To investigate disagreement, the present study thus focuses on a 2-turn structure comprising a disagreement source turn and a disagreement response turn (one instance). If the following turn or statement is made by a different participant to show his or her opposing stance, the previous disagreement response turn can become a disagreement source turn of the next (Example 2) or they may both have a mutual disagreement source turn (Example 3). This means that ‘the next disagreement response turn’ would be counted as another instance of disagreement.

Example 2:

(Simplified transcription)

Example 2 has two instances of disagreement. The first instance involves disagreement between Speaker A and B. Turn 2 produced by Speaker B is perceived as a first instance of disagreement or a disagreement response turn which contradicts Speaker A's suggestion. The second disagreement instance is made in turn 3 by Speaker C to negate what is proposed by Speaker B in turn 2. In this case, Speaker B's action in turn 2 performs two functions: a disagreement response turn (to turn 1) and disagreement source turn (of turn 3).

Example 3:

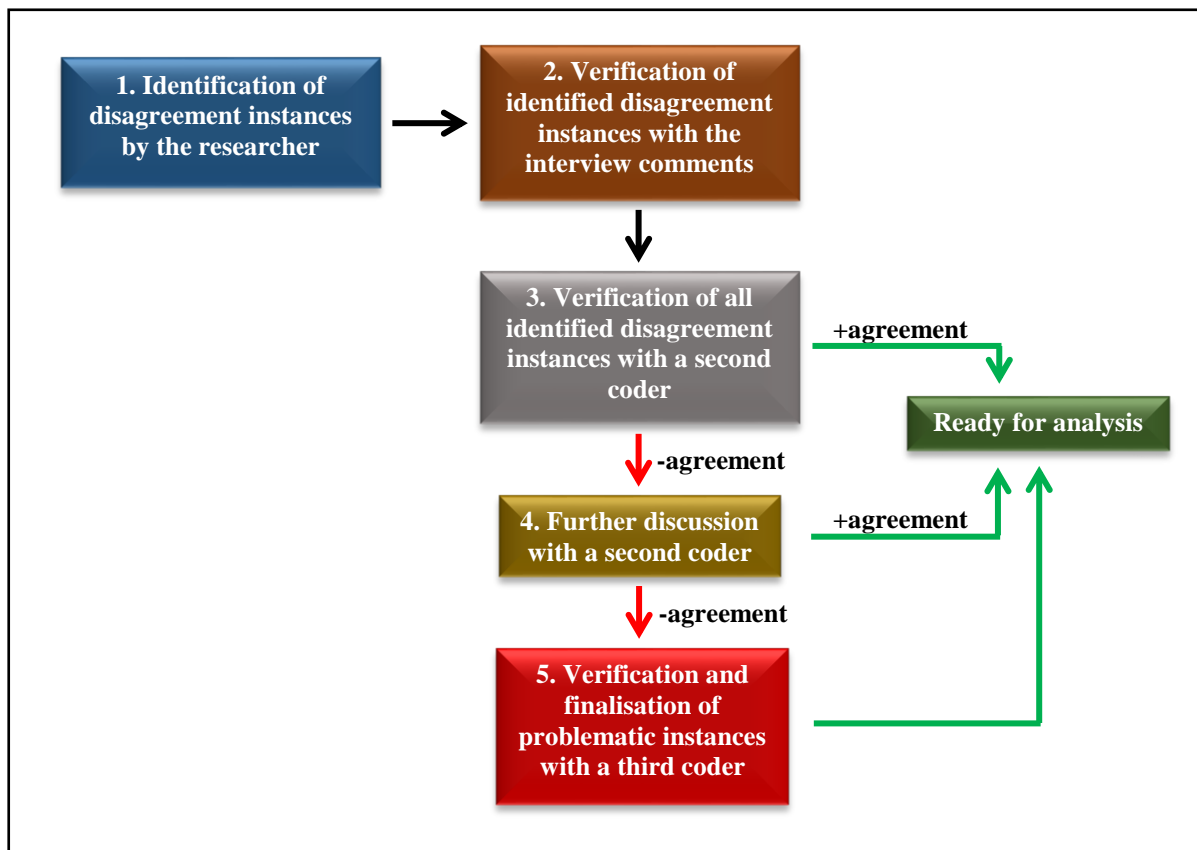
(Simplified transcription)

Example 3 also involves two instances of disagreement (turn 2 and 3). Unlike Example 2, the two disagreement instances have a mutual disagreement source turn (Turn 1). That is, both turn 2 and 3 contradict the same disagreement source turn made by Speaker A in turn 1.

Given that a communicative act of disagreement is an interactant's reaction to a previous claim to show his or her opposing opinions, to ensure that verbal disagreement is accurately located, both disagreement source turn and response turn(s) were first identified by the researcher. The instances located, especially those with unclear communicative intention, were then verified by the stimulated interview comments. Next, all of these were crosschecked and discussed with a second coder. However, those with conflicting views were further verified and finalised by a third coder. Figure 4.1 illustrates how the coding process was conducted.

The same process was also conducted with the identification of the content type of each disagreement instance. All of these processes were done to enhance the trustworthiness of how a communicative act of disagreement is analysed.

Figure 4.1: Verbal disagreement identification and coding process



Given that the data was collected from multi-party interactions, nonverbal expressions become another important means of showing opposing opinions, especially for those who at those moments were not playing the active roles of producer and intended receiver or addressee (see Participant status in Chapter 2). To locate nonverbal disagreeing practices, I relied on the data from the stimulated recall interviews whereby the participants watched back and talked about their own recorded interactions. The nonverbal disagreement identified in the present study thus includes only those instances reported by the participants. In fact, nonverbal cues can both occur independently and co-occur with verbal expressions. However, in this study,

only nonverbal disagreement reported as having been used as a substitute for verbal disagreement was included.

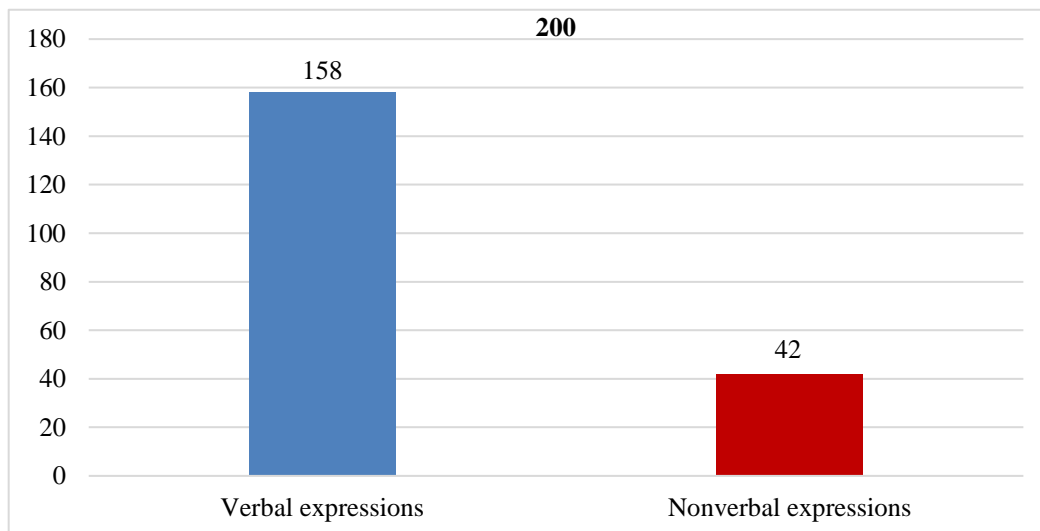
4.3 Overview of disagreement instances and disagreeing practices

In this section, an overview of the total number of disagreement instances found in the data will be illustrated. In so doing, the number of disagreement instances and their differences across groups and tasks will be delineated. Furthermore, an overview of disagreeing practices will be provided.

4.3.1 Number of disagreement instances

Altogether, there were 200 instances of disagreement. Having been verified with a second coder, 158 instances of verbal disagreement were located. For nonverbal expressions, based on participants' self-reports, there were 42 instances as illustrated in Figure 4.2 (see Appendix 6).

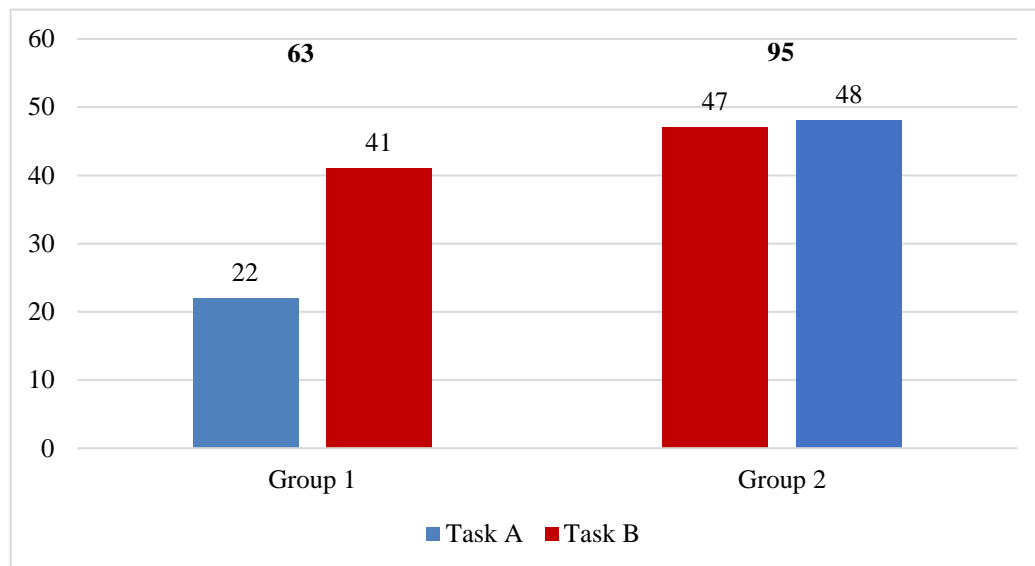
Figure 4.2: Number of disagreement instances



Among these 158 verbal disagreement instances, 63 instances were identified in Group 1 and 95 in Group 2 as illustrated in Figure 4.3. The difference is arguably because these two group discussion sessions were conducted in different time periods. That is, the group

discussion sessions for Group 1 were conducted in the first half of a semester while for Group 2 they were in the second half. The participants in Group 2 were therefore arguably more familiar with their group members compared to those in Group 1, having had more opportunity to do both in-class and out-of-class activities together, especially small group work in the PASS course. When we look more closely at the number of instances of disagreement in the different tasks, the participants in Group 1 produced more disagreement instances in Task B (41 instances) (the decision-making task) when compared to Task A (22 instances). In contrast, in Group 2, the number of disagreements is almost the same in both tasks: 48 in Task A and 47 in Task B.

Figure 4.3: Number of verbal disagreement instances across groups and tasks

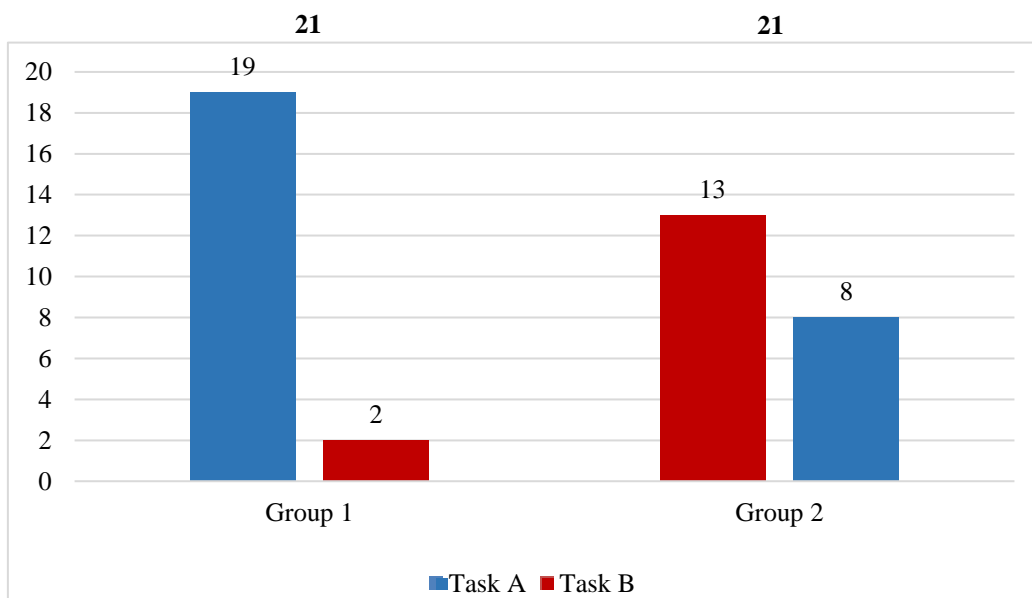


The number of disagreement instances found across tasks in each group stresses the fact that participants' familiarity with the tasks themselves and their group members appears to play a major role in whether or not they verbally express their opposing stance in ELF academic group discussion. More specifically, Group 1 started doing Task A (a topic-based task) followed by Task B (a decision-making task) which, in its nature, had the potential to elicit more instances of disagreement. Because of this potential together with the increasing familiarity among group members, in Group 1 there were more instances of disagreement in Task B. However, the tasks were done in reverse order for Group 2, with Task B followed by

Task A. Given the fact that Group 2 participants were doing the tasks in the second half of term when they were more familiar with each other, and that they were doing the more disagreement-stimulating Task B first, they were likely to feel more comfortable and familiar with expressing themselves and particularly their dissent. Therefore, it was not surprising that the number of disagreements found in Group 2's Tasks A and B was not different.

Apart from the use of verbal disagreement, participants also reportedly used nonverbal expressions to convey their opposing opinions. Altogether, based on the stimulated recall interview data, there were 42 instances of nonverbal disagreement reported, including facial expressions, gazes, postures, smiling/laughter, head nods and silence as depicted in Figure 4.4. Silence and smiling/laughter were the two most frequently used, accounting for 19 and 10 instances respectively. Participants appeared to report more use of nonverbal disagreement during the first task in which they took part. As such, for Group 1 which started from Task A, there were more nonverbal disagreements in Task A. This was the opposite for Group 2, which started from Task B.

Figure 4.4: Number of nonverbal disagreement instances across groups and tasks

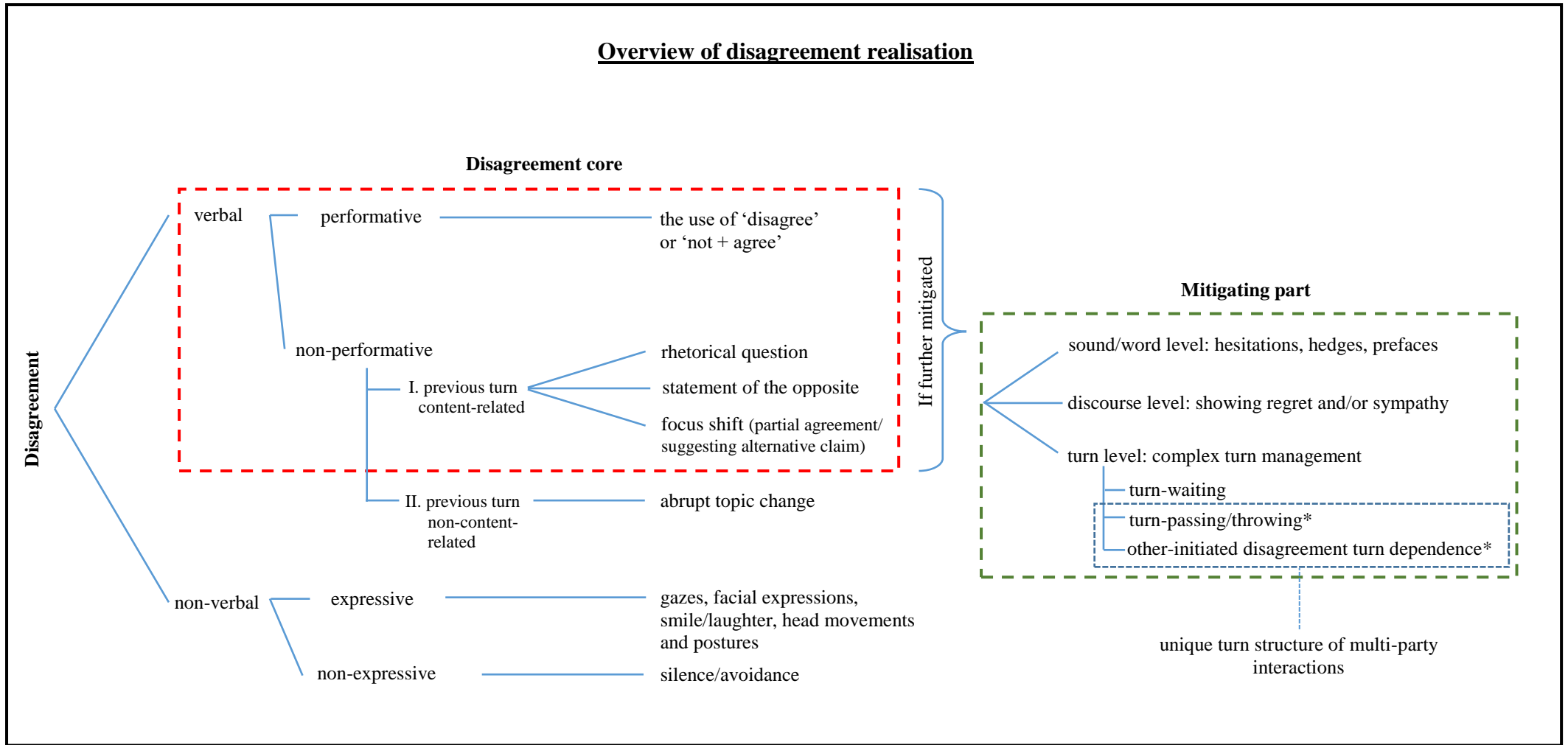


4.3.2 Disagreeing practices

Within an academic setting in general and in academic group discussion in particular, when disagreement is expressed, it can occur with or without a performative verb and/or with or without a supporting claim or a justification of the speaker's decision. For verbal disagreement, disagreeing practices are thus divided into two different types, one of which contains a performative verb and the other without it.

The way the participants structure their opposing stance and content structures will be investigated based partially on Muntigl and Turnbull's notions of disagreement content types (1998) and additional structures emerging from the data and other mitigating elements that co-occur with those structures will be separately examined. Regarding nonverbal practices of disagreement, the data reveals two different practices. The participants may use facial expressions and body movements to show their opposing stance. Alternatively, at times they choose to say nothing and keep silent in a group discussion session. As such, a communicative act of disagreement in the present study will be analysed and discussed according to its forms and pragmatic functions, including the use of the performative verb 'disagree' or 'not + agree', pragmatic disagreement, nonverbal expressions, and silence. Figure 4.5 illustrates an overview of the disagreeing practices found in this study. In the following section, each practice will be delineated and supported by the examples in context.

Figure 4.5: Overview of disagreement realisation



4.4 Verbal realisation of disagreement

Following the literature, verbal disagreement in the group discussion data always appeared with two key elements: a “disagreement core” (or “head act”), and a “mitigating part”, known as a communicative act set (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). The disagreement core or head act is the main element which displays the speaker’s intention or bears the illocutionary force that shows the speaker’s opposing stance or differing opinion. It is therefore the most important part in forming a communicative act of disagreement. When a speaker wants to show his or her opposing stance, s/he can do it either in an implicit or explicit way. This can be realised by the use of a particular performative verb such as ‘disagree’ or ‘not agree’ or the non-use of such a verb. In the present chapter, the focus is on the core of disagreement.

4.4.1 Performative disagreement

A speaker can clearly express his or her communicative force or intention by using a performative verb, that is, a verb that by its name specifies and accomplishes an action which, in this case, is ‘disagree’ or ‘not + agree’ (Fraser, 1990; Searle, 1989). The use of such a verb allows a speaker to explicitly show his or her emotional state and particularly an oppositional stance taking. Previous literature shows that direct disagreement is often used by low-proficiency language learners (Kreutel, 2007). Although the use of the performative ‘I disagree’ or ‘I don’t agree’ hardly occurs in the present study, when this marked form is used, it necessarily signifies speakers’ perceptions towards the content found in the previous turn and their understanding of that particular moment of the interaction.

Performative disagreement was the least frequently used by the participants. In fact, there are only two instances of performative disagreement found out of the 158 instances of verbal disagreement, one made by Group 1 member, Lexie, from Cyprus and the other by a Swiss participant, Roxane, in Group 2. An example is shown in Extract 4-1, which involves six participants from Group 1 on Task B: Caroline (Dutch), Haeun (Korean), Jiro (Japanese), Lexie (Cypriot), Mei (Chinese) and Nourah (Saudi Arabian). The extract begins with Jiro’s suggestion to the group that they consider providing funding for a wildlife walks project (lines 1-2). Immediately after Jiro finishes his turn, Haeun latches on (line 3) and shows her disagreement by asking for a reason, prompting laughter from Jiro and Mei. Caroline also expresses her feeling of opposition to the project (line 7), and then, after a long pause of 1.1

seconds, Jiro reverses his position, seemingly under pressure to change his mind. There follow overlapping turns between Jiro and Lexie in lines 10-11 where Lexie shows her opposing stance explicitly, and perhaps strongly, using the performative verb ‘I disagree’, followed by the intensifier ‘completely’. This was noteworthy because, at other times, Lexie usually verbalised disagreements by giving suggestions and not rejecting her interlocutors’ ideas outright.

Extract 4-1: Group 1—Task B (32:05.622—32:31.944)

1 J: =Yes. So we have kind of we have two and six. (1.5) So the last
 2 one we should look at is number three.=
 3 H: =Why? @@@@@@@@@@ I don't have any idea. @@@=
 4 J: [@@@
 5 M: [@@@
 6 L: [Mhm.
 7 C: =I found that it's a bit a strange idea. I don't know. [@@@@@
 8 J: [Right.
 9 (1.1)
 10 J: Yeah. °I don't think I need thi[s::°.
 11 L: [I disagree with this completely
 12 be[cause=
 13 M: [Yeah.
 14 L: =people have their own interests. You can't [force them=
 15 H: [You're right.
 16 L: =[to go an excursion or (0.6) wildlife (0.3) walk=
 17 J: [Mhm.
 18 M: [Yeah.
 19 J: [Mhm.
 20 L: =if they don't feel like it.=
 21 C: =Yeah.=
 22 J: =Mhm.

It is clear from the data that the use of performative disagreement is a marked form across the four academic group discussion sessions. It occurs only twice and only in Task B where the participants needed to build up a group consensus in a limited time and under pressure from their group members. In addition, it is likely that Lexie felt very safe in delivering the performative because she saw that the group in general were against the idea and that what she was doing did not reject any particular member's idea, but rather that it opposed an idea proposed by the project. Given the scarcity of performatives in the group discussion, it is worth further investigating any underlying motives of the speaker. In some previous studies, performative disagreement is related to lower proficiency learners. However, Lexie had an

IELTS score of 7.5 and her linguistic proficiency was thus not a likely reason. Also, when looking at the other instances of disagreement that Lexie produces, the use of the performative verb ‘I disagree’ is isolated to this instance. Data from her stimulated recall, however, provides insight into why Lexie chose this formulation in this instance:

“Yeah. For the change. It’s not usually very direct. But I had really strong feeling about this project and I found it not very useful. So I think I was trying to make people... oh my god it sounds horrible... I just to want to make people understand that I don’t think this is very beneficiary for peo’ for students or university.” [Lexie: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

The stimulated recall data therefore confirms that Lexie’s choice here was driven by her strength of feeling about the issue, even though she was consciously aware of the directness. Lexie was most likely bolstered by the preceding responses of her group members, who made it clear that they also would not support Jiro’s proposition.

In congruence with Lexie’s case, the use of the performative verb also occurs with Roxane from Switzerland while she and her members (Group 2) were also making a decision on allocating funding to the wildlife walks project (Task B). Unlike Lexie’s case where she expresses her opposing stance explicitly and directly to the description of the project, Roxane shows her opinion directly to Yoonsuh’s proposal. Extract 4-2 involves all six participants from Group 2: Catalina (Chilean), Jimmy (British), Roxane (Swiss), Sakura (Japanese), Unyil (Indonesian) and Yoonsuh (Korean). In line 1, Yoonsuh starts by proposing the wildlife walks project because she believes that the project would help international students with mental health problems. However, her group members do not think that the project is worth investing in and that it would not help the students in the way Yoonsuh mentions. In fact, earlier in the discussion she had tried to convince the group but had failed to do so. This extract shows her second attempt. At this particular moment, Roxane disagreed in a stronger and more explicit manner when compared to her first response against Yoonsuh’s suggestion and to other group members. What is of particular interest in this extract is the way the performative disagreement was produced. In contrast to Extract 4-1, in this extract, a communicative act of disagreement was explicitly performed by the use of the performative disagreement form ‘not + agree’ in conjunction with the mitigating elements (preface and modal auxiliary verb) ‘I’m not sure’ and ‘can’, in the form of a hedged performative (Fraser, 2010) *‘I’m not sure I can agree with you*

or not...’ as shown in line 17. In fact, drawing only on discourse data, Roxane’s turn in line 17 may give rise to the question as to whether this is a performative disagreement. However, the integration of her stimulated recall interview comments evidently shows that she has a strong emotional investment in the topic being discussed and that her opinion is similar to that of the group majority (see her interview comments below). Roxane’s use of a hedged performative thus not only allows her to explicitly express her opposing stance but also indicates her concern about her interlocutor’s face loss (Fraser, 1996).

Extract 4-2: Group 2—Task B (24:02.804—24:32.679)

1 Y: S’ so I think no. (1.0) Because I’ve been (0.4) because I know
 2 that that the students from the Lancaster University @@@ THEY:::
 3 have a lot of benefit from the wooden trail. I thought that.
 4 (0.8) So but=
 5 S: [Um. Um.
 6 Y: =somehow I think students need some kind of support (0.4) for
 7 their mental problem mental health. [So (0.5) maybe=
 8 S: [Um.
 9 Y: =[the wild walks can::: be::: (1.0) helpful.=
 10 J: [Mhm.
 11 S: [Help relieve.
 12 Y: =[Yeah. [So that’s=
 13 C: [Ok.
 14 S: [Mhm.
 15 Y: =[what I thought.
 16 J: [That that [you know
 17 R: [I’m not sure I can agree with you or not. [@@@ I
 18 don’t think=
 19 S: [@@@
 20 [@@@
 21 C: [No:::
 22 R: =wildlife walks are::: a good idea so.

Roxane’s stimulated recall interview comments again reveal the fact that when the assertion of performative disagreement, which is considered marked in this study, is used, it signifies a speaker’s strong emotion against a preceding prompt rather than resulting from any gap in his or her linguistic proficiency. Moreover, it is obvious from her comments that she was rather certain that most of the group members were against the project. With possible support from the group together with her own personal strong feeling against the wildlife walks project, it thus allowed her to disagree in a more explicit manner.

“Yeah. That was the moment where... That was the one I felt most strongly about not to have it in there. Because I thought it was just pointless and I didn’t think anyone was going to bring it up, to be honest. So as soon as someone brought up the wild walks wildlife walks, I was like ok... But I think this is interesting that I was more prepared to have ... I would have said something immediately if someone else hadn’t... I think I’ll do afterwards also disagree with it. But I’m quite happy to have someone else disagree with it first. It’s less confrontational I think. Yeah. I’m quite happy to agree with Jimmy on this like to have support in my counterargument.” [Roxane: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Despite Roxane’s use of mitigated disagreement, her response caused serious offence to Yoonsuh. This stresses the importance of the actual situation, particularly in a multi-party interaction and in a certain moment when an interactant finds him- or herself in the minority or an inferior position. The situation can be even more complicated when interactants have diverse norms of interpretation and interactional behaviours. Yoonsuh’s interview comment clearly shows that she felt seriously offended at that particular moment as she said,

“Actually, at that moment, I wasn’t thinking clearly enough. I wasn’t paying attention to who was saying what she was saying because she Roxane expressed strongly against my opinion. She said that, I wasn’t I can say that I don’t agree with you and she was saying so... I was very... personally I was kind of shocked actually. I mean, it can be it’s acceptable. Personally, it was kind of hard to accept. I mean listen to her strong voice against me so then I felt very upset. Yeah kind of upset. And then I think what am I doing here? I can’t... I was thinking about I should have I should have not I should have been just staying home. Why I was here like this?” [Yoonsuh: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

What is of particular interest with these two examples is that both the participants who used such a form have high scores on IELTS and they are very fluent English users. The integration of the stimulated recall interviews and discourse analysis provides counterevidence to the previous literature which shows that direct disagreement is mostly used by low linguistic proficiency users regardless of any other personal factors, particularly interactants’ feelings towards what is emerging during interactions and the influence of the group dynamic.

4.4.2 Non-performative disagreement

Apart from explicitly showing his or her opposing opinion, a speaker can do it implicitly. When non-performative disagreement is used, it entails the absence of the performative verbs ‘disagree’ or ‘not + agree’. However, without a performative verb, an interactant can still implicitly show his or her communicative intent when performing a disagreement act. When a speaker does not clearly express his or her differing opinion, this does not mean that s/he is unable to convey his or her communicative intent. Alternatively, s/he will express his or her opposing stance through the following options:

- expressing his or her doubt or disbelief in or uncertainty about the interlocutor’s claim or ability
- weakening the importance or credibility of the interlocutor’s claim while strengthening or emphasising the importance or credibility of their own claim
- negating the interlocutor’s claim
- ignoring the interlocutor’s claim

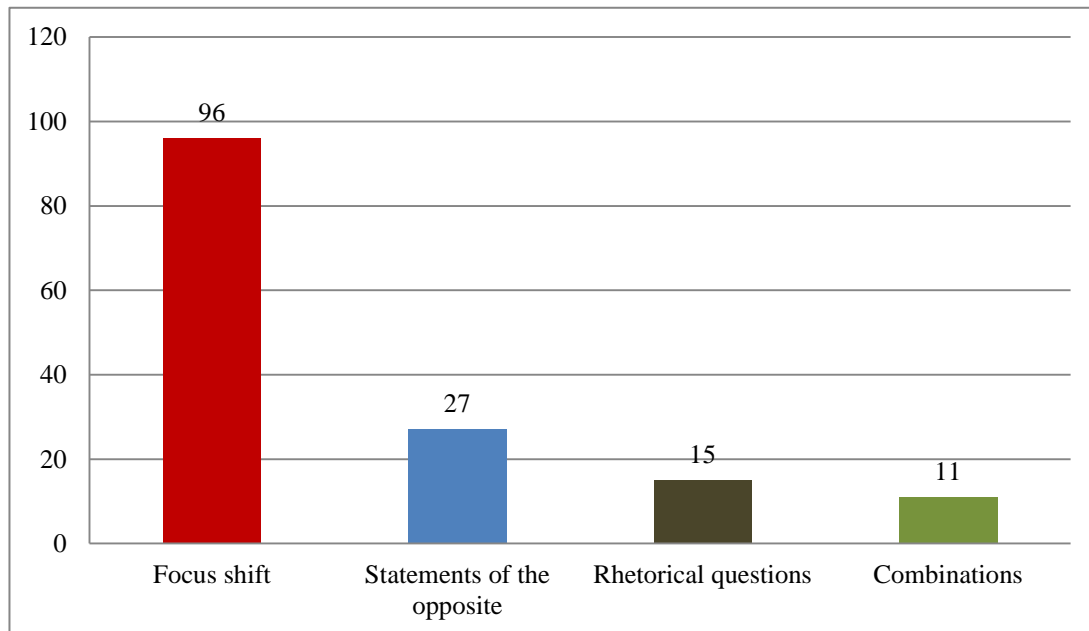
By not explicitly displaying his or her communicative intent to disagree, a speaker is still able to successfully convey his or her disagreement. There are mechanisms that bond these unclear intentions of disagreement response turns to a source of disagreement. This normally can be done through what I will call ‘previous turn content-related’ and ‘non-content-related’ practices.

1. Previous turn content-related (coherent)

Given that disagreement is a reaction to a preceding prompt, this means that there must be a relationship between a disagreement response turn and that which precedes it (Gruber, 1998; Kotthoff, 1993; Morris-Adams, 2016). This can be done through the repetition and/or modification of a word or phrase while maintaining the original meaning or content of the preceding turn. In so doing, an interactant can show his or her differing opinions by making a focus shift or an alternative claim, a statement of the opposite, a rhetorical question or any combination of these. Figure 4.6 illustrates the number of each type of previous turn content-related disagreeing practice. Out of 149 instances of previous turn content-related disagreeing practices, there are 96 instances of focus shift, 27 statements of the opposite, 15 rhetorical

questions and 11 combinations of different practices (or see Appendix 6). Examples of each type will be discussed in the sections below.

Figure 4.6: Number of each type of previous turn content-related disagreeing practice



A. Focus shift (partial agreement)

The most frequently observed disagreeing practice in this study is a focus shift from the content under dispute in which a speaker neither rejects nor accepts his or her interlocutor's previous claim. Rather, they suggest a new statement or claim to shift the focus from the statement previously uttered to the new claim being made by themselves (Georgakopoulou, 2001; Gruber, 1998; Osvaldsson, 2004). This alternative claim or statement allows for further negotiation. This can occur both with or without an acceptance of the previous claim. By shifting the focus, the participants take up their opposing stance in three different ways: using a '(yeah-)but' structure, ambiguation and showing an emotional reason.

The following examples show the most frequently used disagreeing practice in the present study, which is the use of the 'yeah-but' structure. Extract 4-3 mainly involves the conversation between the British and Chilean participants, Jimmy and Catalina. At this particular moment, Jimmy and Catalina are discussing the greater opportunity a native English

speaker has of getting a job as a university lecturer. To be an English teacher, Jimmy accepts in line 1-2 that being a native speaker of English would be advantageous. However, except in the case of teaching English language classes, Jimmy does not see any difference in being a native or non-native speaker. Conversely, in line 10-11, Catalina thinks that no matter whether English language or more specialised classes or subjects are in question, English native speakers are more eligible and have a better chance of getting the position. To express her opposing idea, Catalina uses the yeah-but structure. In so doing, the structure allows Catalina not to reject Jimmy's idea directly, and at the same time it can help her to propose her opposing idea in such a way that Jimmy should feel less offended, particularly when he is the only English native speaker there.

Extract 4-3: Group 2—Task A (59:56.152—30:18.329)

1 J: But yeah I I I see this a truth that in teaching English but e::rm
 2 (0.7) if it's small just like an academic world that [to me
 3 C: [U:::m.
 4 J: =that seems a bit more interna[tional.
 5 C: [Yeah.
 6 J: [I can't [get that that you know.=
 7 C: [Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.
 8 J: =If you specialise in a certain area, (1.3) then your nationality
 9 doesn't seem to matter that much.
 10 C: [Yeah but there there are
 11 ma' many native speakers that are (0.6) specialised also.

In addition to the use of the yeah-but structure, the participants can sometimes alternatively shift the focus of a conversation by focusing on or expressing their own emotional reasons or ambiguating their opposing stance. Extract 4-4 involves several cases where the participants deploy focus shift to express their dissent.

Extract 4-4: Group 1—Task A (2:00.988—4:22.550)

1 X: So let's start, shall we? The first topic I think come coming to
 2 my mind when I first came to England and I see the British
 3 people. How polite they are! How they how they treat other
 4 people with their politeness? What do you think about this? Even
 5 for example, we even say thank you to a bus driver. For what
 6 reason? I don't know. Do you have other things to bring it up to
 7 the discussion first? And then we'll go on that.
 8 H: For I think the service in restaurant o:::r the department store
 9 is very bad.=
 10 X: =Um.=

11 H: =@@[@@@@@@@@
 12 M: @[@@@@@@@@@@@@
 13 J: [@@@ Mei, [you're right.
 14 H: [I mean com' compared to South Korea and Japan.=
 15 J: =Mhm.=
 16 H: =Yeah. (0.6) The::: hh (1.5) the service (1.0) e:::rm (1.0) the
 17 service centre and service mind they don't they don't have any
 18 service mind like (1.0) would you like to (0.5) and when you
 19 give me or thank you and=
 20 X: =Um.=
 21 H: =yeah. (2.0) So I was very disappointed.=
 22 J: =@@[@
 23 L: [h::[:
 24 M: [@@@
 25 H: [@@@=
 26 L: =It depends on who you come across really and [where you [go=
 27 J: [Um.
 28 H: [U:::m.
 29 L: =because [like (1.5) people (0.6) have bad days unfortunately.=
 30 M: [Um. Yeah.
 31 N: =Y[eah.
 32 J: [@@@
 33 M: [@[@@@
 34 L: [So e:::rm (1.0) it might be that sometimes you just come
 35 across someone that they had a bad day. But (0.5) they are quite
 36 polite usually. But there're some very impolite (0.8) people
 37 [as well. (h:::)=
 38 J: [Mhm.
 39 N: =[Yeah.
 40 J: [We[ll,
 41 M: [U[m.
 42 J: [I've been to a couple of countries before a:::nd (0.5)
 43 yeah, to be honest, I think that Japan is::: (0.5) more polite
 44 [than (1.0) UK.=
 45 M: [Yes.
 46 J: =But (0.8) I, in on the other hand, I think UK is more polite
 47 than many other countries as well. The the first thing I thought
 48 was (0.5) in my EAP course (0.5) i:::n (0.4) every (0.5) lecture
 49 or whatever. (0.6) It starts with (0.5) thank you for being SO
 50 punctual (1.2) [every=
 51 H: [h:::
 52 J: =time a lecture or something starts. I I found that's so (0.4)
 53 strange. It's our it's (0.5) we have to be on time of course.
 54 But (0.6) we were told thank you all the time. I [don't
 55 understand why.
 56 M: [@@@@@@@@@
 57 @@[@
 58 N: [U[m.
 59 J: [That's the first time I thought this country was very
 60 polite. (0.8) Mhm.

The extract starts with the moderator's attempt to introduce the topic of British politeness in which he pretends to believe that the British are always polite by giving some

examples of the frequent use of *sorry* and *thank you*. Then, he asks for opinions from the group. There are three examples of focus shift in this extract. First, immediately following the moderator's turn in line 7, in lines 8 and 21, rather than directly contradicting the moderator's claims, Haeun articulates her differing opinion by shifting the focus of the contradiction to the expression of her personal emotional preference. By introducing a new focus of the conversation regarding the emotional claim that the level of service in the UK is not as good as in other countries, it allows her to save both her face and that of her interlocutor. According to Locher (2004), on the one hand, showing subjective emotional reasons as disagreement allows a speaker not to directly reject the addressee's claim. On the other hand, it is also not very easy for the speaker to be challenged because their opposing stance is based on his or her personal feeling. In Haeun's case, although her claim is later contradicted by Lexie and Jiro, their disagreement does not come out as direct or explicit.

A second disagreement in the form of focus shift occurs in line 26 when Lexie states "it depends on who you come across". Lexie delivers her disagreement by first ambiguating her stance ("*it depends*") which allows her not to fully reject or contradict Haeun's statement but to draw Haeun and perhaps other group members onto a new focus or claim. In addition, the use of ambiguation allows her not to display a clear stance either on the previous claim made by Haeun or the new claim made by herself. By suggesting a new claim or focus, it enables her to avoid direct confrontation and this also allows for further negotiation. Moreover, the use of "*it depends*", to a certain extent, also exhibits the speaker's critical thinking and non-extreme perspectives on things as well as her flexible and open-minded personality. The issue of personality will be discussed in Chapter 6, in which the participants reported the factors influencing their disagreeing practices in academic group discussion.

Finally, regarding the participants' use of focus shift in the present study, a closer look will be given to Jiro's turn in line 40 where he starts expressing his opposing stance against Haeun. In Jiro's case, he does not express his emotional reason as Haeun does ('... *is very bad*' in line 8 and '*I was disappointed*' in line 21) and neither does he ambiguate his standpoint as Lexie does ('*it depends*' in line 26). Rather, he shows his opposing stance by a positive comparison of the politeness he has experienced in the UK, Japan and other countries. With 'well', which indicates his hesitation and concern, he seems to signal what he perhaps found problematic in Haeun's claim. Then, in line 42, he starts showing his differing opinion not by rejecting her but by suggesting that although British people are not as polite as Japanese, they still are when compared to people from other countries. Using weakened agreement with

prioritising a newly asserted claim or a combination of agreement and disagreement, according to Pomerantz (1984), is to delay the expression of communicative intent and this helps attenuate the strength and explicitness of disagreement. What is also interesting in Jiro's turn is the use of a large number of mitigating devices e.g. hesitation (sound lengthening, pauses), hedges (*whatever, something*) and prefaces (*well, I thought, I found*). These elements, together with mitigation at different levels, will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Haeun's comment, shown below, confirms that fact that when an alternative claim, which in this case is an emotional reason, is given by not having an overt element of disagreement, it does not necessarily mean only that a speaker wants to be perceived as polite and does not want to attract their interlocutor's further disagreement. Rather, he or she just wants to reflect his or her actual state or attitude towards what is being said. In Haeun's case, she emphasises her bad experience rather than focusing on contradicting the moderator's belief and perception. From her stimulated recall interview data, she does not totally reject the fact that British people are impolite. The use of focus shift or partial agreement, on the speaker's part, reflects his or her prioritisation of what s/he will focus on, while, on the hearer's part, his or her claim is not directly rejected. Moreover, it also helps sustain a smooth interaction and further negotiation.

"Yes. I mean, in the UK, almost all people are very kind and polite but I experienced a very bad service in a train station because I went to Paris with my younger brother on vacation I and my bag was stolen. So I also lost my train ticket. Yeah. That's kind of thing. So I told the officer in the train station but he didn't believe me. But it was true. I also had a police report but they never believed me and he criticised me. So I was very upset. So I don't think they're polite." [Haeun: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

In congruence with Haeun's case, Lexie's stimulated recall data also demonstrates, through her use of 'it depends', that she does not reject that there are some British people who are impolite or that there are people who don't have a service mind either. Rather, Lexie suggests that it might be because Haeun just unfortunately came across people who were not ready to serve her or just simply because they had got a language problem. By using 'it depends', Lexie does not want to contradict Haeun's statement or belief but simply wants to provide her opinion or extend her claim to include another possibility.

"I both agree and disagree. It depends on who you're talking to as well in the discussion group. It really depends on who you're talking to and like how you're gonna express yourself because sometimes you will come across people who are rude and not rude. It might be just because of like language barrier so..." Yeah (I said it depends). It's true because you can't be very like absolute on something because just like one reaction of the person for example here for politeness and British people. If one person was rude to you, it doesn't generalise the whole thing. So it does depend like from person to person. I just don't like to be absolute on things because you can't be like sure of everything of person. [Lexie: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

When it comes to Jiro's case, he used the very frequently-used yeah-but structure or token agreement. The data from his interviews shows clearly that he uses this structure because he does not fully disagree or agree with Haeun's belief. This can be construed from his use of *'I agree to a certain extent'* and his acceptance that *'some shops are not so nice'*. As such, the use of these particular structures expressing partial agreement allows him not to explicitly show his opposing stance and not to directly offend his interlocutor and thus to preserve an equal and respectful relationship with his interlocutor.

"Well, that's a difficult thing to look at actually because... well, I remember what I thought at that time because what she said was quite funny and because I agree to a certain extent. Because obviously some shops are not so nice. But they're not bad as I thought." [Jiro: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The use of focus shift or partial agreement, a term widely adopted in the literature on disagreement e.g. Kreutel (2007), Locher (2004), Pomerantz (1984) etc., apart from preventing a speaker from directly attacking his or her interlocutor's idea, allows a speaker to suggest an alternative claim which enables another group members to join in. The practice thus helps sustain the interaction particularly in a group discussion where active participation is of significance.

B. Rhetorical question (challenge)

Apart from explicitly showing their communicative intent by using a performative construction, the participants can also use a question to express their differing opinion. By using a rhetorical question, the participants are expressing their distrust of or uncertainty over their interlocutors' statement and they seem to believe that their interlocutors cannot provide a satisfactory answer or explanation (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998). According to Pomerantz, (1984), to use a question construction which can be interpreted as a request for clarification enables participants to delay their opposing stance and cover their communicative intents. The rhetorical question is thus not a question in a general sense which needs an answer in response. Rather, in some cases, with the use of rhetorical questions, speakers are challenging their interlocutor's knowledge and their ability to provide a possible answer, possibly resulting in serious offence.

In Extract 4-5, Group 1 members were making a decision on whether they would give funding to a sports equipment project. The conversation mainly involves Mei from China and Nourah from Saudi Arabia. The extract begins with Mei who has been trying to convince her group members to give money to the project, by talking about the benefits that international students will receive, particularly for their physical and mental health. Also, the project does not require a large amount of money. In fact, based on information from the response sheet summary, only Mei chose the project (see Appendix 5). While Mei is trying to convince her group members, Jiro and Lexie from time to time use backchannelling devices¹ i.e. 'mhm' in lines 4, 11 and 14, 'um' in line 7 and 'right' in line 16. However, not until line 17, does Nourah, who does not include the project on her response sheet, start showing her doubts about Mei's claim by raising the issue of university reputation enhancement which is one of the criteria specified in the task descriptions. To show her oppositional stance, instead of explicitly displaying her communicative intent to disagree, Nourah uses a question form to reject Mei's proposal by implying that her proposed project fails to meet such criteria.

¹ Backchannelling devices are both vocal and nonvocal forms of interactants' feedback "in a conversation while the other is talking" (Ward & Tsukahara, 2000, p. 1177) to show, for example, attention, acknowledgement, understanding, reinforcement, agreement or disagreement (Heinz, 2003).

Extract 4-5: Group 1—Task B (17:35.650—18:29.537)

-
- 1 M: =Yeah. Because (1.0) u::m (0.5) 2 projects I picked e::r
 2 are::: concerned about the health. (0.5) I mean, physical health
 3 and mental health. [So=
 4 J: [Mhm.
 5 M: =I think e:::rm (1.2) maybe e:::rm (0.2) buy [purchase some
 6 (0.5) you =
 7 L: [Um::::::::::::.
 8 M: =know e:::rm s' sports equipment may (1.0) create some
 9 opportunities for the students to (0.5) do some exercise or
 10 (1.0) I don't know hold a mac match [no football=
 11 J: [Mhm.
 12 M: =match or basketball match. I thin:::k (1.2) most of the student
 13 are enjoy do, you know, doing::: sport.=
 14 J: =Mhm.
 15 M: So (0.8) and it won't take a lot of money, I think.
 16 J: Right.
 17 N: But but that add to the reputation of the university?↑ (0.5) If
 18 we can consider the things that he said before.
-

When she was asked to talk about the question she used in line 17, Nourah stated that she did not believe that the sports equipment project would help enhance the university's image. The use of a question allows Nourah to raise the issue of the university's reputation without directly contradicting Mei. Again, in this example, when using a rhetorical question, for a speaker, it becomes an indirect and polite way to show his or her differing opinion. As Nourah put it,

"Yeah. I... She was trying to convince us and her point. But I was thinking of the other side of that that they are just sports to higher the reputation... you know, the reputation of the university. So I was thinking how can this add because when I was back to Saudi and I was looking for the university, I don't really look at the university that provides sports. You know, it's not something nice. Yeah (I didn't express it directly). I thought, you know, to be polite. Instead of, you know, saying it straight away. So ok you said your point but let's see from another aspect, you know. That's why." [Nourah: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

In addition to using a rhetorical or clarification question which clearly shows in itself the disagreement producer's uncertainty and opposing stance, as illustrated in the last two examples, the participants at times use a rhetorical question as a pre-sequence to disagreement, particularly with the use of 'really?'. Superficially, the utterance 'really?' can perform many

functions depending on the way and where it is produced. It can be a sign of speakers' listenership, special interest, surprise, uncertainty or disagreement.

Extract 4-6 is drawn from the interaction between Group 1 participants when, in Task A, they are discussing the advantages of being graded by one final examination and small coursework assignments. It turns out that most of her group members prefer writing assignments while, in lines 3 and 4, Lexie thinks that examination is easier. Interestingly, the use of the indefinite pronoun 'some people' allows her not to show her own personal preference directly but rather conceal it within a generalisation. However, when Haeun, Jiro and Mei hear from Lexie that taking an examination is not as difficult as writing assignments, they almost abruptly respond to Lexie's utterance. In line 5, Haeun starts by saying 'Really?' as a signal of her differing opinion before explicitly showing her opposing stance in line 9. In a similar manner, Jiro in line 6 also uses the same utterance to signal his disagreement or as a pre-disagreement sequence. In Jiro's case, he later explicitly shows his opposing stance in lines 8 and 11 while Mei's 'Really?' performs disagreement in itself.

Extract 4-6: Group 1—Task A (10:30.805—10:45.008)

1 L: Ye[ah. Well,
 2 H: [Yeah.
 3 L: it's good that we don't have exams but at the same time some
 4 people find an exam easier than writing essays.=
 5 H: =[Really? @@@
 6 J: [Oh. Really?=
 7 M: =Really? @@[@@@@@@@@
 8 J: [No::[:::.
 9 H: [I don't think so:::. @@@@
 10 C: [Yeah. Me. I [think.
 11 J: [I haven't haven't taken an exam
 12 for a very [long time @@@@ except for IELTS. @@@@@@@@
 13 M: [@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@
 14 N: [Um.
 15 C: [Yeah.

As mentioned above, the utterance 'really?' can perform many functions in certain interactions. To know its real function, it is necessary to know its user's communicative intent. The stimulated recall data from Haeun, Jiro and Mei clearly shows that their rhetorical questions, whether 'Really?' used alone or 'Really?' as a pre-sequence, all indicate their opposing opinion rather than showing their listenership, interest or surprise:

“Yes. I didn’t agree. Because I don’t like exam. Bad experience? Not exactly. Just in undergraduate or my university grading system was competitive system. If I get 100 grade, Right. Right. And I don’t like exam. It is not related to my bad experience. Just I don’t like. And I like writing an assignment.” [Haeun: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

“No. I would never like to have an exam as I said. I haven’t taken an exam other than IELTS for over 10 years. So what I first thought was what I first thought the exam was like memorising many many kinds of things and then answer many fill-in-the-gap questions. For example, who who said this and that. Blah. Blah. Blah. I didn’t like this.” [Jiro: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

“Yeah. As you can see, I don’t like exam. I don’t know why I laughed. But I disagree with the exam because because we do a lot of exams in our undergraduate and I think that’s memories. I just memorise all the concepts from the books and write it down. Yeah. I didn’t learn something from that. Yeah (I didn’t share with the group). But Lexie said she’s kind of enjoy the exam. Yeah. That’s my problem. Yeah (I don’t want to be against her).” [Mei: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

These examples represent a weakly held view which is expressed as a rhetorical or clarification question. There is almost a grey area here between disagreement and a weakly oppositional stance. Moreover, they stress the fact that language use is always ambiguous and that to know its actual function, we need to know speakers’ underlying communicative intention.

C. Statement of the opposite (contradiction)

The third type of non-performative approach to expressing disagreement is a statement of the opposite (contradiction) whereby an interactant rejects or negates a previous claim, usually through ‘no’, ‘not’ or in the form of an antonym. The following extracts illustrate how disagreement is realised in the form of a statement of the opposite. Extract 4-7 mainly involves Unyil from Indonesia, Catalina from Chile and Jimmy from the UK (Group 2). In this conversation, in lines 1-2, Unyil is suggesting having someone to write down the chosen projects and the amount of money required for each one in order to make sure that the group would not overspend the money. However, Catalina in line 3 and Jimmy in line 4 do not think

that they need to do so. To express their opposition, they respond to Unyil's idea by using the blunt negative word 'no'.

Extract 4-7: Group 2—Task B (21:04.663—21:11.364)

1 U: I think I think somebody has to be the one who (0.4) write down
 2 the point. @@@ [So we can compare.
 3 C: [No. No. No. I can [remember them.
 4 J: [No. No. It says in the
 5 document.=
 6 U: =Ok.

Apart from the use of blunt negation with 'no', a statement of the opposite is also found, sometimes co-occurring with structural or lexical repetition together with the negative word 'not'. Extract 4-8 involves the interaction between Group 2 members making a decision on a disabled toilet. The conversation begins with Catalina's suggestion to her group to reduce the proposed amount of money by building a regular toilet instead of an environmentally-friendly one. By building a regular toilet, she says in line 1, the group could reduce the requested money by half. Sakura seems to agree with her. In contrast, Unyil does not think so and he expresses his opposing opinion later in line 13. While Catalina with 'maybe we can' suggests the group could reduce the money to half, Unyil says 'No, you can't'.

Extract 4-8: Group 2—Task B (21:49.579—22:00.250)

1 C: =maybe we can (0.4) I don't know reduce (0.9) the money to the
 2 HALF if it say regular toilet @@@
 3 J: [@@@@
 4 S: [Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. [Yeah.
 5 C: [for
 6 [disabled people.
 7 Y: [Ok. @@@
 8 S: [Um. Um. [Um. Um.
 9 U: [@@@@
 10 J: [E:::rm
 11 S: [Not en[vironmen[tally-friendly. @@@
 12 R: [I mean,
 13 U: [No, you can't.

It is interesting that these are cases where the participants are discussing the “rules” of the task. This possibly allows for more (acceptably) direct disagreement. It can be perceived as less face-threatening because they are enforcing someone else’s rules.

A statement of the opposite can sometimes occur without the presence of ‘no’ and ‘not’. Instead, it can be found in the form of using a particular phrase. Extract 4-9 mainly involves Unyil and his group members. Prior to the conversation in this extract, they were discussing whether to fund a musical instrument project or a food festival. Jimmy, Catalina and Unyil seem to support the music instrument project while Roxane wants to fund the food festival project. At this particular moment, Unyil is trying to show his opposing idea to Roxane by mentioning how he prioritises different projects. In line 1, he tells the group that his first priority is recreational projects, which in this case is a music instrument project and he further suggests that most people prefer music to food. When Unyil finishes his turn in line 4, everyone in his group responds to his idea almost simultaneously. While Unyil says that ‘not everybody likes food’, Jimmy says in line 6 that ‘everybody likes food’ which directly negates what Unyil says in the earlier turn. In congruence with Jimmy, in an overlapping turn in line 7, Roxane also shows what she thinks contradicts Unyil’s suggestion. Interestingly, instead of using a negative element such as ‘no’ and/or ‘not’, Roxane uses a particular utterance that clearly shows her opposing opinion, which in this case is ‘the other way round’ and which she elaborates further in line 16 by the use of ‘not’ and structural repetition. Then, in lines 20 and 21, Sakura and Yoonsuh, by repeating a part of Roxane’s previous claim, also express their disagreement.

Extract 4-9: Group 2—Task B (30:51.495—31:08.141)

1 U: But in my opinion, I’m not going to put that in first (0.4)
 2 priority for recreational THINGS because (0.7) not everybody
 3 like food. But for music I think everybody loves music.
 4 [Right?
 5 Y: [Huh!
 6 J: [Everyone likes food.
 7 R: [That I think goes the other [way round.
 8 Y: [What do you [think?
 9 C: [@@@@@@
 10 S: [@@@@@@
 11 J: [@@@ Who doesn’t like
 12 [food?
 13 U: [Oh. Really? Sorry. [@@@
 14 Y: [What are [you talking about? @@[@@@@@
 15 C: [Please:::
 16 R: [I think not
 17 everyone likes MU::sic. [But everyone=

18 J: [@@@ @@@
 19 R: =lik[es FOOD.
 20 S: [Like fo[od. @@@@
 21 Y: [Food.

As mentioned above, disagreeing practices in the form of a statement of the opposite do not always occur with the negation words ('no' and/or 'not'). The participants can also use a particular phrase to show their disagreement. Alternatively, it can be expressed by the use of a word (or words) which is an antonym or carries an opposite meaning. Extract 4-10 is drawn from Group 2's interaction when they were completing Task A. The interaction involves Jimmy, Roxane, Sakura, Yoonsuh and Catalina sharing their experience of politeness. The conversation has turned to American politeness. The focus of this interaction is a conversation between Roxane and Jimmy. For Roxane, Americans, especially those from New York, are polite and sometimes she finds them too polite or even fake (line 8). However, Jimmy does not find Americans fake as she does. Then, in line 12, he starts showing his disagreement. An interesting point occurs in line 14 where Jimmy negates what Roxane has said in line 8. In disagreeing, in line 17 Jimmy uses 'authentic' as an antonym, the meaning of which is opposed to 'fake' as uttered by Roxane.

Extract 4-10: Group 2—Task A (5:09.363—5:21.632)

1 J: Yeah. I think it's a polite (0.4) [country. Yeah.
 2 R: [It's almost [too=
 3 J: [Yeah.
 4 R: =polite.=
 5 J: =Yeah.=
 6 R: =I [feel like
 7 Y: [U::[::m.↑
 8 R: [it's a fake polite.=
 9 S: =[@@@@@@@
 10 C: [@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@
 11 R: [@@@[@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@
 12 J: [I've never been (0.5) I've never been to New [York.
 13 C: [I [I
 14 J: [And I I
 15 found [that (0.3) I=
 16 R: [Yeah.
 17 J: =actually found that authentic polite.

Extract 4-11 is another example that shows how antonyms are used to express participants' differing opinions. The conversation begins in line 1 with Jimmy who thinks that a childcare project would require a lot of money and it seems to be too expensive and not worth allocating money towards. So does Catalina, in line 8 with her use of *'but'*, who also finds it too expensive but she thinks it is still useful for students with children. However, Roxane does not think so because she thinks the required amount of £5,000 is not that much as Catalina thinks. In line 11, Roxane responds to Catalina by using an antonym 'too little' to contradict Catalina's 'too much'.

Extract 4-11: Group 2—Task B (18:35.635—18:48.947)

1 J: =So we're [assuming=
 2 S: [E:::r
 3 J: =this childcare is still gonna cost money.=
 4 S: =U[:m.
 5 Y: [U::m.=
 6 C: =Yeah. [I mean, five thousand=
 7 J: [E' even though
 8 C: =maybe too [much. But
 9 S: [U:::m.
 10 J: E:::rm=
 11 R: =I think it's too little to make any::: significant impact.
 12 [That's::: my=
 13 J: [Yes. [@@@
 14 S: [@@@
 15 R: =problem with it.

These three examples above reveal an interesting pattern regarding the statement of the opposite. Apart from its presence with the negative particles 'no' or 'not', it can occur in the form of a partial repetition of the other's disagreement source utterance without a negative particle or an antonym as in Extract 4-9 ("not everybody likes food—everybody likes food"), Extract 4-10 ("fake polite—authentic polite") and Extract 4-11 ("too much—too little"). That is, the formulation is the same, but an antonym is used. This becomes a way of quickly disagreeing. A point of interest is that repetition is a known feature in ELF communication purposefully employed to achieve effective communication (Björkman, 2011) since it provides textual coherence, enhances accuracy of understanding (Lichtkoppler, 2007) and emphasises an oppositional stance between two parties (Gruber, 1998). Additionally, by using partial repetition, according to Goodwin (1990), repetition allows two opponents to express their disagreement in a more playful manner.

II. Previous turn non-content-related (incoherent): topic change

For a conversation to proceed smoothly, participants are likely to be cooperative in the sense that they should talk about the same thing or something relevant. As such, there must be coherence which can be in the form of joint referents, lexis or content shared between turns throughout an interaction (Morris-Adams, 2016). In fact, in everyday encounters, interactants seemingly manage their interactions by not complying with this rule, which is Grice's Maxim of Relation (1975). In "flouting this maxim", a speaker is likely to convey a special communicative intent. Given the negative effect of disagreement which is likely to threaten an interlocutor's face, instead of expressing their views explicitly, a speaker at times chooses not to show his or her opposing stance or differing idea. Instead, s/he abruptly changes the topic of a conversation by proposing a claim that does not cohere with the discussion at hand.

The first example that exhibits the use of topic change as a form of disagreement is when Caroline is doing Task B (Extract 4-12). Prior to the talk shown in the extract, Group 1 members had been making their decision on the urgent financial aid fund project (with Lexie putting a great deal of effort into convincing them). However, Jiro did not find it convincing and he is trying to show and explain why the project should not be allocated anything. In so doing, in line 1 he explains the case in Japan in which Japanese might inherit money if their parents were to die while studying. The data from Extract 4-12 shows that Caroline lets Jiro talk about the topic of parents' dying for some time while she keeps silent. Then in line 22, Caroline no longer waits for Jiro to finish his turn (line 21). She interrupts Jiro's turn and directs the group to a new topic of conversation or, in this case, gets her group members back to the topic of whether or not the group should give the money to the project rather than talking about one's personal experience.

Extract 4-12: Group 1—Task B (26:59.673—27:32.380)

1	J:	Right? Right? My parents are almost seventy years old. But (0.5)
2		then (0.6) this is not something nice to say. But (1.0) so=
3	H:	[O:::r.
4	J:	=but when they when your parents die, you you usually (0.8) get
5		(0.5)
6	L:	Inherit.=
7	J:	=[Yeah.
8	H:	[Um. [Um. [Um.
9	M:	[Um.
10	L:	[Yeah.=

11 J: =An' and (0.7) maybe (0.6) n' it's not something nice to say
 12 @[@@@@=
 13 H: [@[@@
 14 M: [@@@
 15 J: =about @@@ [your (1.1) your=
 16 L: [Yeah.
 17 J: =your er tuition fees (0.3) maybe (0.7) e:::r pay pay for (0.8)
 18 from that. (0.5) That was the first thing that came up to my
 19 mind. [But
 20 M: [Um.=
 21 J: =[Do
 22 C: [I do really like the idea of a:: (0.3) a financial aid fund.=
 23 J: =Mhm.

Caroline's stimulated recall data reveals that she perceived that what Jiro was sharing would not help the group to finish the task. When she watched her Task B group discussion back, she explicitly explained that she could not see the connection between the death of parents and a financial aid fund project. Like other group members, she did not say anything and intentionally kept silent. The interview data shows that Caroline was afraid that if she had told him that he was straying off topic, that would have been rude. However, in line 22 in which there was an overlap between Jiro's and Caroline's turns, Caroline ignored what Jiro was talking about and abruptly changed the conversational topic in order to draw Jiro back to the discussion of whether or not a financial aid fund should be funded. As she said,

"I think I didn't really get the connection between this point and the financial aid. I don't really get why he was saying it. To me, it doesn't seem relevant like yeah if your parents die, you'll probably inherit money. But there're many people who need money because their parents haven't die and they haven't inherited a lot of money. You know what I mean? If your parents are without the job and you have to study, so you can't have the job. Then, you steal their money. No (I didn't say anything). That's true. Yeah. I thought I think that may be too rude. I just didn't want to say about it. Just wait till we moved to another topic... Yeah (I cut his turn and get him back). I think so. Yeah. That's probably true, like not spend more time on Jiro's story because we were there to make a decision. But from here, it just started being like a conversation like people just say something. But I mean I thought ok but we have to make a decision." [Caroline: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Extract 4-13 also shows the use of abrupt topic change in Group 2 as a means of showing an opposing stance. Prior to the moment when Yoonsuh starts talking in line 1, she had tried

to propose funding the wildlife walks project. Although her idea is not supported by her group members and they rather clearly show their disagreement with her choice, she tries to make her second attempt. In line 1, she rejects her group members' comments and keeps convincing them by talking about her own experience as a Lancaster University student. In later turns, the group members express their opposing stance in a stronger way, especially Roxane in line 17 with a performative disagreement and Catalina in line 21 with a contradiction. Rather than also explicitly showing his opposing stance against her, Jimmy chooses not to talk about the project any longer and continues the conversation by talking about something else, in this case a mental health project in line 23.

Extract 4-13: Group 2—Task B (24:02.804—24:37.531)

1 Y: S' so I think no. (1.0) Because I've been (0.4) because I know
 2 that that the students from the Lancaster University @@@ THEY:::
 3 have a lot of benefit from the wooden trail. I thought that.
 4 (0.8) So but=
 5 S: [Um. Um.
 6 Y: =somehow I think students need some kind of support (0.4) for
 7 their mental problem mental health. [So (0.5) maybe=
 8 S: [Um.
 9 Y: =[the wild walks can::: be::: (1.0) helpful.=
 10 J: [Mhm.
 11 S: [Help relieve.
 12 Y: =[Yeah. [So that's=
 13 C: [Ok.
 14 S: [Mhm.
 15 Y: =[what I thought.
 16 J: [That that [you know
 17 R: [I'm not sure I can agree with you or not. [@@@ I
 18 don't think=
 19 S: [@@@
 20 [@@@
 21 C: [No:::.
 22 R: =wildlife walks are:[:: a good idea so.
 23 J: [I I think the coun' having the counsellors
 24 like some have their names of somebody to approach if you're
 25 [under pressure.=
 26 S: [Um. Um. Um.

Jimmy's stimulated recall data reveals that with Yoonsuh's second attempt, he still thought that her reason was not convincing and it was not worth funding. However, although Jimmy had an opposing stance, he still paid attention to what she said but did not take part in the argument between Yoonsuh and Roxane. Not until line 23 did he close down the topic by

immediately changing the conversational topic of that particular moment from wildlife walks to the mental health project. This was done in such a way that he could move the discussion further. As he said,

"I mean, I thought Yoonsuh had a point, you know. But I think we come back to discuss it later on. And I didn't... I didn't particularly think it was a good use of the fund. I thought I listened to her and what she said. I just... I think I was thinking this point that we have just dive straight into people getting their opinions. I wanted to pull it to get everyone what everybody had written and get a summary, which Sakura then did. She does it at some point." [Jimmy: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Abrupt changes of topic often occur in conjunction with the interactants' silence or lower levels of participation. Although topic change can indicate a speaker's disinterest in the topic at hand within a conversation (Morris-Adams, 2016), topic changes also allow interactants to avoid threatening group members' face, or simply lead to more efficient task management within a limited time.

The examples above clearly show that ELF participants employ a wide range of verbal disagreeing practices to effectively and amicably convey their oppositional stance in academic group discussion. Evidently, they avoid using the performative verb 'disagree' or 'not + agree', and, instead, make use of a range of subtle linguistic and interactional resources. However, apart from verbal realisations of disagreement, the participants in the present study also reported the use of non-verbal disagreement, which will be investigated in the next section.

4.5 Nonverbal realisation

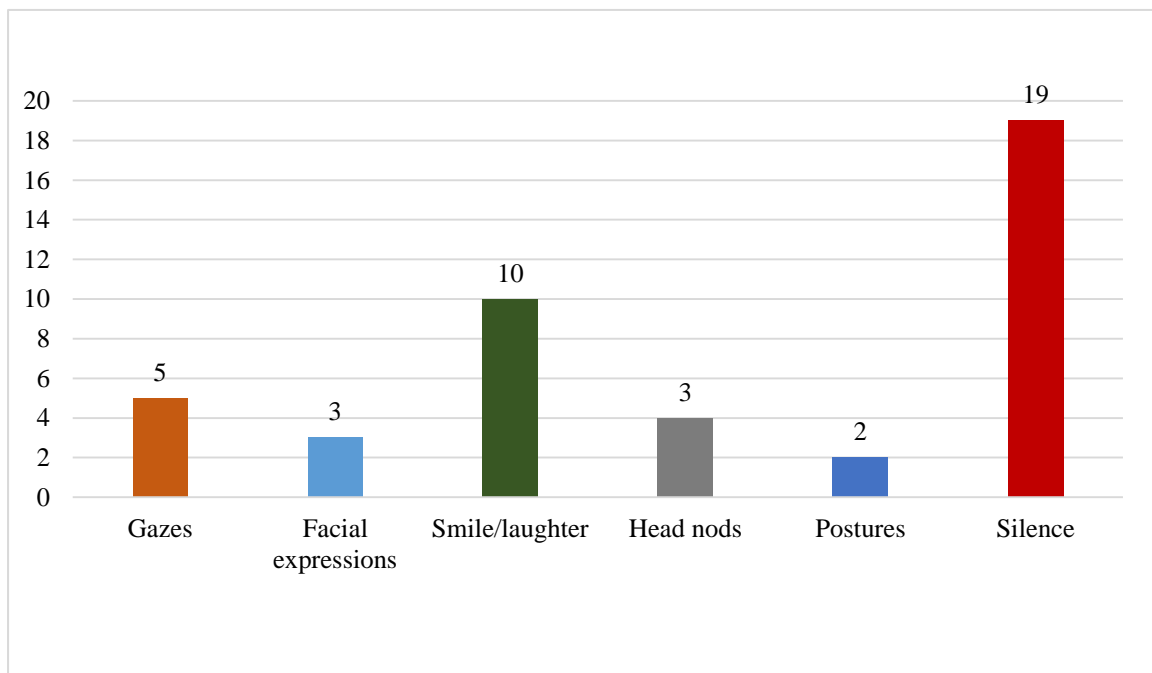
Apart from verbal expressions of disagreement, the participants also reported the use of nonverbal reactions to show their opposing opinions. According to Bousmalis et al. (2013) and Seiter, Kinzer and Wenger (2006), disagreement can be conveyed through frowning, eye rolling, and head shakes, and very often these reactions occur in a combination or cluster of expressions (Kar & Kar, 2017). Using nonverbal expressions enables the participants to ambiguate their communicative intents. This is because, by their very nature, nonverbal responses are ambiguous and accurate interpretation necessarily relies on discourse context (Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003; Ochs & Pelachaud, 2013). Their ambiguity allows the interactant

not to offend his or her interlocutors directly and strongly. Non-verbal disagreeing practices include only nonverbal expressions the use of which is *reported* by the participants and that are used as *a substitution* or *a means* of showing disagreement. In the present study, the participants reported that they used two types of nonverbal practices: one classified as expressive and the other as non-expressive.

4.5.1 Expressive

This section will look only at the intentional nonverbal expressions that the participants reported they used to convey their opposing opinions: gazes, facial expressions, head moves and posture. Figure 4.7 illustrates the number of each nonverbal disagreeing practice reported. There were 42 instances of the reported use of nonverbal disagreement, of which 23 are expressive and 19 non-expressive. Out of 23 instances of expressive practices of nonverbal disagreement, there are 3 instances of facial expressions, 5 gazes, 2 postures, 10 smile/laughter, 3 head nods and 19 of silence (see also Appendix 7).

Figure 4.7: Number of each type of reported nonverbal disagreeing practice



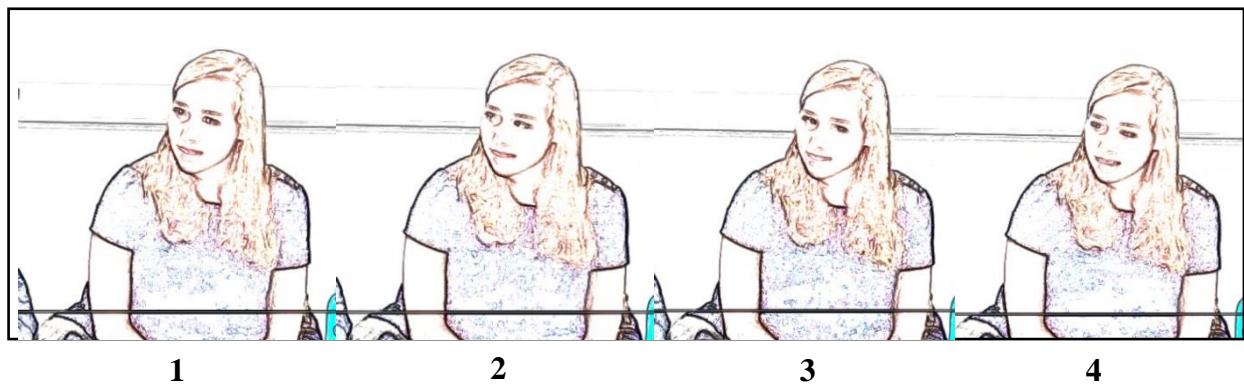
I. Gaze

Among visible nonverbal disagreeing practices, the participants report using gaze to convey their differing opinions. When disagreeing gazes were used, the participants performed an intentional look, mostly, by the avoidance of eye contact with the initiator of the disagreement source turn or cut-off gaze (Haddington, 2006). Instead, the disagreeing group members would give a steady look specifically at other participants with whom they expected they shared common ground. This practice may be unique to multi-party interaction since this kind of gaze not only allows an interactant to show his or her opposing stance to selected participants but this may also become a signal for the gaze recipients to form oppositional alliances.

The first comment was made by Roxane while she was watching herself back. She observed herself making a particular gaze while Unyil was talking about British politeness and indirectness. At a particular moment, he is explaining to the group his bewilderment about the comments he received on his coursework assignments which he found were not straightforward or even truthful. Although Roxane disagrees with what Unyil is saying, she does not say anything and keeps silent. However, her stimulated recall interview comments reveal that while Unyil is talking, she performs an intentional gaze to show her opposing stance. In doing so, she rolls her eyes and looks around, before directing and holding her gaze at Jimmy, as illustrated in Figure 4.8, implying that she wants Jimmy to say something to respond to Unyil's claim. It is evident from her stimulated recall comment that when she gives this particular look, she is experiencing an awkward moment where she wants to express her differing idea but she cannot or does not want to do it verbally.

"I can see myself. I didn't really agree with what Unyil was saying. So I was just sort of like I can see myself sitting there kind of looking down, looking over Jimmy who would be in my sort of on my side and just sort of waiting for someone to maybe disagree with Unyil. I didn't do it myself. But... To say in certain that thing, but because it's his opinion sort of coming into a culture from a different culture so different experience from mine. So I can't really judge on what his experience is. So just I kind of let what he said stand on its own." [Roxane: G2-TA—stimulated recall interview]

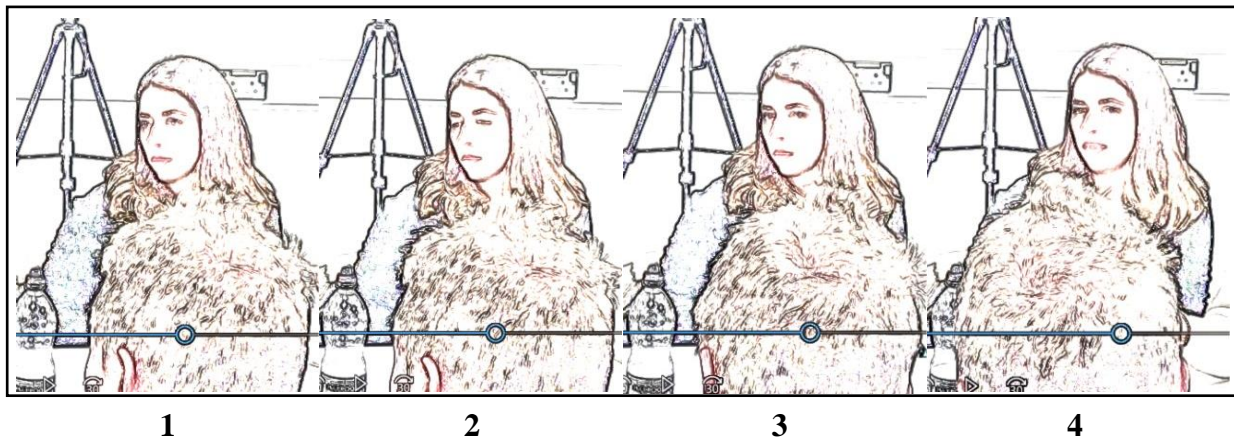
Figure 4.8: Roxane’s reported use of disagreement gaze



Another situation where an intentional gaze use is reported is when Group 2 members were discussing whether or not they would fund the wildlife walks project. Yoonsuh was trying to convince the group by claiming that the project could help students with their mental health. The first time she mentioned this to the group, Catalina expressed her opposing idea to Yoonsuh but when she raised this again for a second time, Catalina said nothing. And instead of having eye contact with Yoonsuh, Catalina cast a particular look at Jimmy and held her gaze for a certain moment as shown in Figure 4.9. According to her stimulated recall comment, she knew that Jimmy also did not want the project to be funded. Her intentional look at Jimmy thus becomes, on the one hand, a sign of disagreement but, on the other, a sign of the oppositional alliances being formed at that moment:

“Yeah (I looked at Jimmy for a while). We were laughing at her. We were terrible people, I know. No. It’s just that... not laughing at her but just laughing about the walk... (long pause) which we think is stupid. Do you understand? Sorry.”
[Catalina: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Figure 4.9: Catalina’s reported use of disagreement gaze



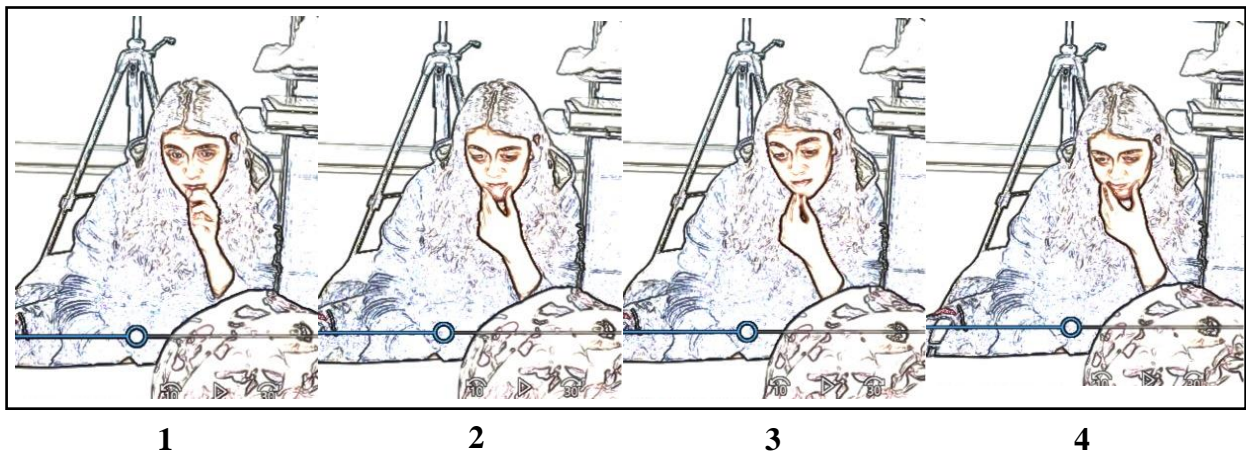
II. Facial expressions

In addition to gazes which indicate uncertainty or a lack of belief towards a preceding prompt or statement, the participants also reported that they performed a particular facial movement when they had differing opinions: eye-brow raising and frowning.

The first example comes from Lexie’s comment when she watched herself completing Task B. In that particular moment, Jiro was expressing his ideas against Mei who was proposing the sports equipment project. In rejecting her idea, he explained that he hardly went to the gym so he would not get any benefit from funding the project. However, Lexie did not agree with him since even though Jiro was not a sports person, it did not mean that new sports equipment was not necessary for other students. Nevertheless, she did not verbally respond to what Jiro said. Instead, she was sitting with her hand to her chin, looking down at the project description, scratching her chin intermittently, pulling her lips down, shaking her head and most importantly raising her eyebrow as depicted in Figure 4.10.

“Ok. So here I was listening to what Jiro had to say. And I I I could actually get his point. If you’re not a sportive person, you can’t benefit from it. So I would agree with what he was saying about himself but not on the general image. I could get his point. That’s why I did that expression (eyebrow raising).” [Lexie: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

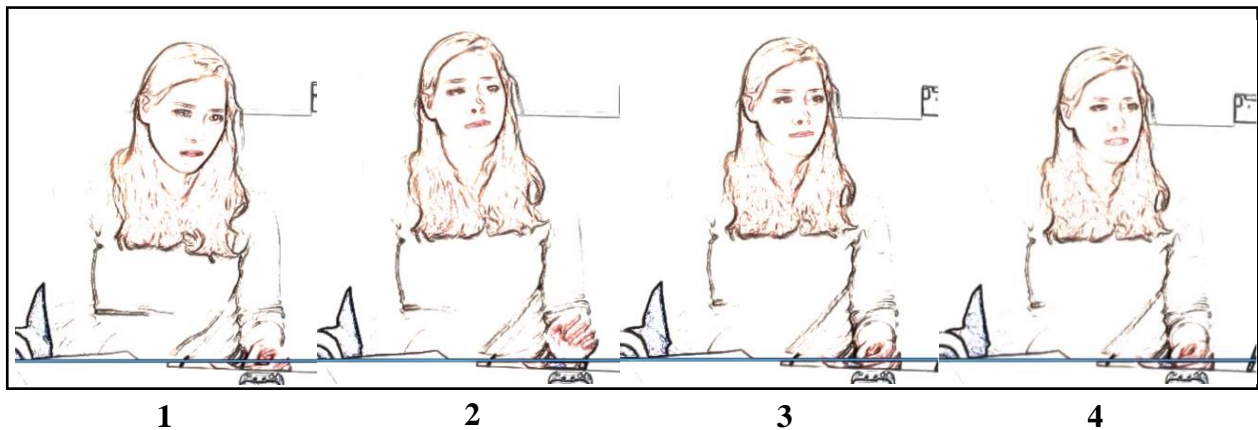
Figure 4.10: Lexie’s reported use of disagreement facial expression



In addition to an eyebrow raise, Roxane reported the use of frowning (see Figure 4.11) to show her opposing stance when she and her group members were making a decision as to whether or not they would fund the urgent financial aid for students project. Roxane supported the project because it was an interest-free loan and very flexible in terms of payment. However, it turned out that Unyil did not think that the project would help enhance the reputation of the university. He also further suggested that if the students were in an urgent financial crisis, they could borrow from a bank. When Roxane heard his suggestion, she responded very explicitly by looking down at her response sheet and frowning. This is because she strongly disagreed with Unyil. As she put it,

“You can see my face and expression (frowning and looking down) there that I’m very strongly disagreeing with that. I’m just actually frowning at Unyil’s statement. I thought the statement about getting money from the bank. I strongly disagree with that.” [Roxane: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Figure 4.11: Roxane’s reported use of disagreement facial expression



III. Smiling/laughter

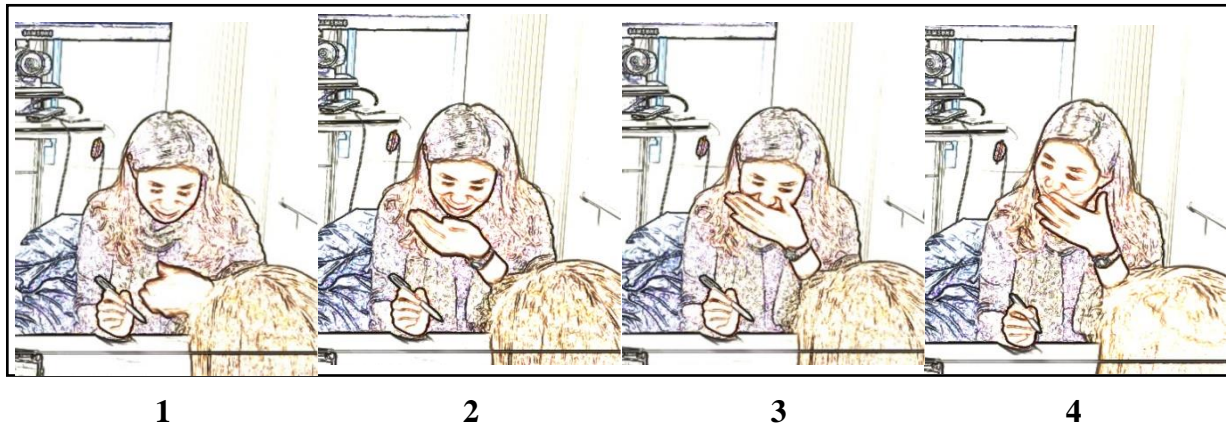
The function of smiling and laughter is ambiguous since they can convey both positive and negative emotions (Ekman, 2000; Johnston, Miles, & Macrae, 2010; Oswaldsson, 2004) e.g. either can express rapport, polite disagreement, delight, favour, sarcasm, and empathy (Hoque, McDuff, & Picard, 2012). In this study, the data shows that when laughter co-occurs with verbal disagreement, it becomes a softener which helps attenuate the strength of the communicative act. However, in this section, the focus will be on instances where smiling/laughter is used to convey disagreement. Whenever a smile and/or laughter is used, it can at times imply that the person doing so finds their interlocutors’ ideas ridiculous or even absurd, or show the interactants’ doubt or distrust.

The first example comes from Yoonsuh’s report. At a particular moment, Jimmy was telling the group that he wanted to give money to a musical instrument project because he was a musician and it was the only project that suited his preference. When he mentioned the project, Yoonsuh covered her mouth with her right hand, laughed and said nothing as depicted in Figure 4.12. She reveals that, with that laughter, she did not agree with Jimmy’s idea and found it absurd. The reason why she avoided verbally expressing her idea against him is that she did not want to attack and offend him. As she said,

“The laughing itself shows that I wasn’t I wasn’t agreeing with him because I thought it was absurd to pick. We should consider. Because it was... the money will go to only the specific group but the main thing I choose the budget for the whole student body. That was my point. And then but maybe Jimmy might be

offended. But I was kind of what were you thinking?" [Yoonsuh: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

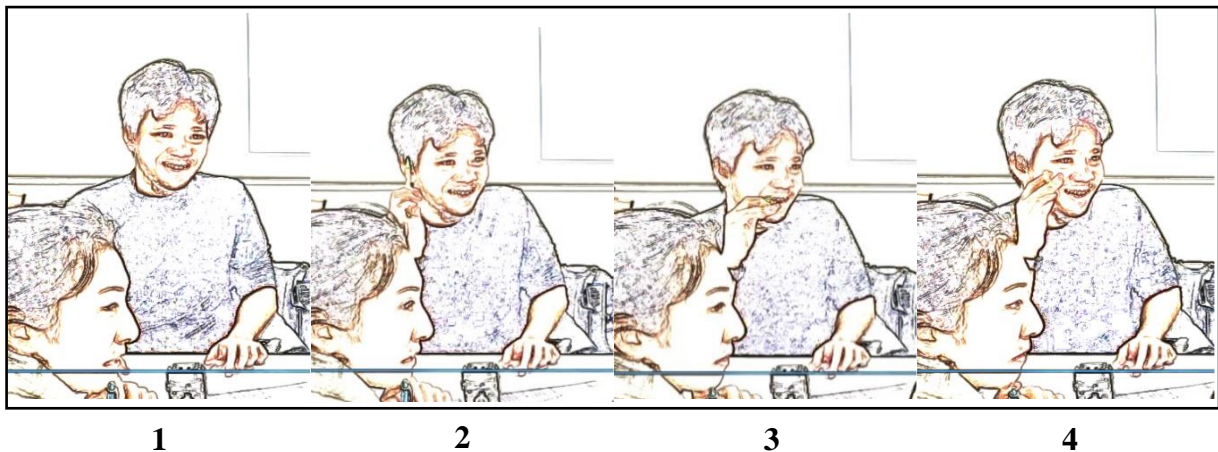
Figure 4.12: Yoonsuh's reported use of disagreement smile/laughter



In the second example, Unyil also reported that he used laughter when he had an opposing idea. In his case, this occurred when Catalina proposed to reduce the specified amount required for setting up an environmentally-friendly disabled toilet (see Figure 4.13). To do so, she suggested the group cut the requested amount by half to build just a regular toilet instead of an environmentally-friendly one. However, Unyil thought that this was impossible, especially if he and his group members were working for an international university.

"So I laughed not because I laughed for the disabled people but I laughed for the way she thought. It's like (sigh) how come? This is an international school. We're pretending you know for international school. Right? And then she said it's just the only one to build one toilet. Right? Do you remember that? How come? So I just like alright. That's the second thing. So I laughed not because I laughed about disabled people but I laughed that the way she think." [Unyil: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

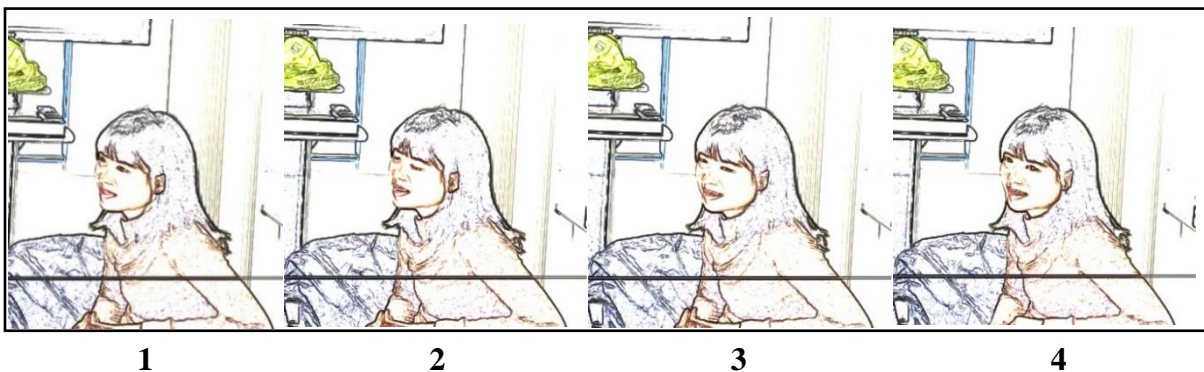
Figure 4.13: Unyil's reported use of disagreement smile/laughter



By means of laughing (Figure 4.14), Mei reported that she disagreed with Lexie who found exams easier than writing assignments. For Mei, doing exams did not help her to build up her knowledge. In the interview session, she explained that when she was an undergrad student, she did a lot of exams and that she just had to memorise things and just answer what she had prepared. As such, doing exams was not conducive to learning as she put it,

"I don't know why I laughed. But I disagree with the exam because because we do a lot of exams in our undergraduate and I think that's memories. I just memorise all the concepts from the books and write it down. Yeah. I didn't learn something from that." [Mei: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

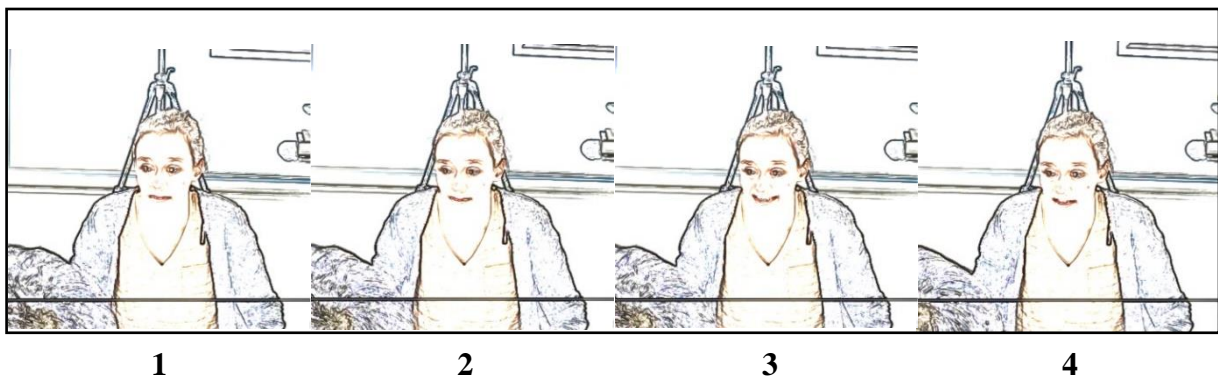
Figure 4.14: Mei's reported use of disagreement smile/laughter



The last example of a reported disagreeing smile was drawn from Caroline's interview comments when she watched her own recorded interaction. Her interview account reveals the communicative intent of her smile when she heard Nourah, a Muslim participant from Saudi Arabia, telling the group that she had had a bad experience of being discriminated against, especially by old British people. When Caroline heard Nourah's comment, she smiled (see Figure 4.15). Caroline explained that she had neither had the same experience as Nourah nor did she feel that she—Caroline—had been discriminated against because of nationality differences. Although her idea was opposed to Nourah's, she did not verbally show her opposing stance but only a tiny cue of a smile. As she put it,

"Yeah (I was smiling). I don't really feel that I'm being left out because of my nationality. But I think I don't know I think that can be small thing that makes you aware that you are an outsider. So they talked about I don't know like TV at first sometimes or maybe shows that probably specific to this country and they sort of assume that everyone in the room would know about that. That's obviously yeah if you didn't grow up here, so you didn't watch their TV shows or something. You wouldn't know about that context." [Caroline: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

Figure 4.15: Caroline's reported use of disagreement smile



Because of the multifaceted functions of smile and laughter (Hoque et al., 2012) and especially that they can signal both positive and negative connotations, they allow the participants to conceal their real communicative intentions and invite their interlocutors to interpret them slightly differently, tending towards more positive readings. Moreover, because when participants' intents are expressed in such a way that their interlocutors cannot recognise

their oppositional stance, the participants can avoid offending or attacking them, particularly in front of other group members.

IV. Head nodding

The movements of an interactant not only enhance the continuation of the interaction but they can also perform certain communicative act functions such as disagreeing (Pelachaud, 1996). Like other nonverbal disagreeing practices, a head nod can ambiguously convey both affiliative and disaffiliative meanings. As generally understood by most people, a head nod or nodding signifies interactants' acceptance or their engagement in the conversation. However, at times it can be a means to show one's aversive stance or disagreement (Bousmalis et al., 2013; Poggi & D'Errico, 2011).

For example, Caroline reported that she performed a head nod even though she disagreed with her group members' claims. In the conversation, her group members were talking about the separation of coursework assignments. Lexie tried to share her experience of having both coursework assignments and final exams. At a particular moment, all the group members actively interacted and exchanged their ideas on their experience, especially Haeun who found doing exams difficult for international students, while Lexie seemed to prefer doing exams. At this moment, Caroline said nothing except performing a slight head nod as shown in Figure 4.16. In the interview session, she reported that she did so because she did not think that there was any difference between exams and coursework assignments and particularly that it was their personal preference.

"Neither I think. It's yeah I think for international students maybe both exams and course are a bit harder. But I don't think that coursework are easier than exams for international students. So I don't think there's a difference really. Yeah (That's why I kept silent and nodded). I think I don't know I just probably thinking about what she said and thinking about do I agree, or what do I think about this. And yeah like again that's just her feeling about the course and yeah how easy it is. But I don't feel that there's a difference." [Caroline: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

Figure 4.16: Caroline’s reported use of disagreement head nod

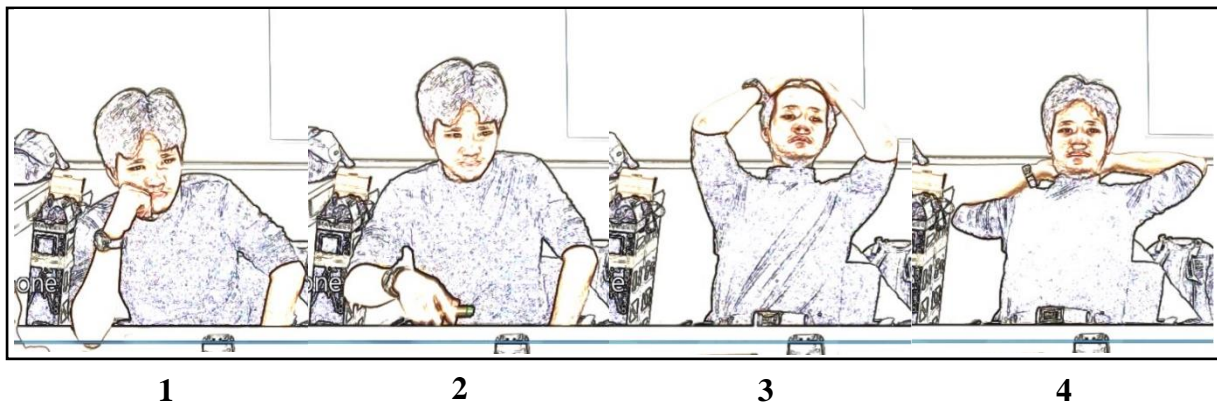


V. Postures or angle of the body

Despite its infrequent use, one of the participants reported the use of leaning back and forward to show his disagreement. The way this particular participant moved while interacting in the discussion group can be explained in terms of physical distance or proximity. When leaning back and forward, apart from physical distance, a participant spontaneously indicates a psychological distance between him- or herself and his or her interactant. More specifically, this space is meaningful because it can convey the participant’s certain attitudes (positive-negative, interest-disinterest or affiliative-disaffiliative) towards the interactional context and particularly towards his or her interlocutor (Kar & Kar, 2017; Muñoz, 1977).

When it comes to posture, only Unyil from Indonesia reported his use of a backward lean to signify his opposing stance. At a particular moment when he was doing Task B, Catalina tried to propose a childcare project. She kept sharing her own ideas about taking care of her daughter and the difficulty she encountered while doing her MA. Although the project was one of those to be allocated funding, he did not think that Catalina should focus only on the benefit that she would get. However, he said nothing. Rather, he leaned backward and put his arms to the back of his neck as illustrated in Figure 4.17.

Figure 4.17: Unyil's reported use of disagreement posture



“Yeah (I just leaned back). Indicating that I disagree. Yeah. It happens. I tried my best. Yeah (to listen to Catalina). I tried my best even though I dis... it doesn't mean that I 100% disagree but there's something that I cannot actually accept. Maybe that's it's like natural body language. I didn't recognise it but it happened.” [Unyil: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

4.5.2 Non-expressive: silence

Silence is an absence of speech in the context of conversation (Ephratt, 2008). It can happen both intentionally and unintentionally (Dyne et al., 2003; Kurzon, 1997, 2007). When it is used intentionally, an interactant may be having trouble understanding and need to have time to process information, avoid conflict and confrontation or even agreement and disagreement (Jaworski, 2005, Nakane, 2006; Pomerantz, 1984). Given silence can perform many functions, it becomes an important means for the participants to conceal their opposing stance. Based on Nakane's taxonomy of silence (2006, p. 1814), silence in the present study occurs when a participant temporarily and noticeably relinquishes or suspends his or her right to hold the conversational floor in order to avoid a certain speech act. In this section, only intentional or purposeful silence reported by the participants when disagreeing will be discussed.

The first example is drawn from Haeun's interview account of when she and her group members were talking about the assistance provided by the university during the severe power cuts it had recently suffered in Lancaster (Task A). The majority of the group seemed to be satisfied with the help they received. They enthusiastically shared their experiences, especially of how they had coped with the difficulties. However, this was not the case for Haeun who did not think that the university took good care of their students. Given that she was the only one at that time who had had a different experience, she kept quiet and was less participatory in the

group discussion. In Haeun's case, she felt pressured by the group consensus. Silent disagreement thus became her only choice:

"And or actually later we had conversation about the blackout in Lancaster. I was surprised a lot because I thought the reaction of university was really bad but many other people think the university tried their best. So I was very surprised. But I didn't express because except me. Others look like or they support the university." [Haeun: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

Another example of silence being used intentionally for disagreeing was provided by Mei when she was doing Task A. At a particular moment, Nourah was sharing her idea of being discriminated against by old British people. Based on Mei's interview account, she reveals that she did not find them discriminatory but seems to understand Nourah's situation. Because it was a sensitive topic when it comes to talking about religion, Mei decided not say anything even though she had an opposing opinion.

"I don't think British will be racist. So I didn't nod. (I didn't say anything) Because I respect Nourah's religion belief. You know, some people will recognise oh they're Muslims or something. Yeah. But I didn't experience that so I can't can't say anything. Yeah." [Mei: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

Jiro's interview account also shows that he uses silence when he has an opposing opinion. He reveals that he disagreed with Caroline who believed that British people were impolite. However, because Jiro was not familiar with Caroline, and as his disagreeing might be perceived as threatening or attacking her face, he did not share his different experience. As he explained,

"I would say I would be against Caroline's opinion saying that she said that British people are not polite absolutely. Right? Something like that. I would I would I would be against that. So do you want to know why I didn't say that? That's a good question. Why I didn't say that? Because I couldn't have said something like... to many people because British people are very kind to my son whereas in Japan, I wouldn't say they're not kind. But maybe just because like we live in a very small town, not so busy. But I'm not sure. I couldn't have said that here. I

remember thinking about that at here. I think I just wanted to save her face. Because I didn't know Caroline really much. I always knew her face but never talk to her before. So I was unable to say. [Jiro: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

It is also found in Nourah's stimulated recall interview comments that if she thought that her opposing idea could strongly threaten the face of or possibly humiliate her interlocutor, intentional silence would be her preferred choice. In her case, it occurred when Lexie shared her experience of the number of words of an MA dissertation required for the degree completion. She said that in Cyprus, students were required to only submit one 3,000-word dissertation, which, according to Nourah, was just a small project when compared to her experience in Saudi Arabia. However, she did not express her opinion because she was afraid that if she had done that, it would have become a criticism and hurt Lexie's feelings. Being aware of the negative effect that would have on Lexie, Nourah chose to keep silent.

"Seventy. Yeah. Seven zero. That's a lot I think. It's comparing it to what she was saying 3,000 words like 10 pages. I was thinking where did she come from? So I was comparing them. But I thought, you know, if I jumped in here, I thought it's not good to say oh your country is like giving 3,000. So not to be, you know, like attacking her like laughing at her country, you know, that kind of thing. It's just like looking down to them. Yeah. Because that's so easy I think. Three thousand words comparing it to what we're doing here. Yeah (That's why I kept silent). I thought ok. Yeah not talking because this will... may hurt her. That's why." [Nourah: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

As far as silence is concerned, when compared to other verbal disagreeing practices and especially other nonverbal expressions, it is the least explicit practice. This is because it does not explicitly show an interactant's communicative intention and his or her oppositional stance. Given the fact that silence by its very nature is multifunctional, it allows for different interpretations between an interactant and his or her interlocutor. As such, silence allows the participants not to reveal their opposing stance. It is obvious from the participants' interview accounts that they mostly use silence when they find that their opposing opinions will strongly threaten or attack their interlocutors' face, particularly when they concern a sensitive issue. Moreover, silence is also most frequently used when the participants find themselves in an inferior position, if they need or prefer not to show an oppositional stance or ideas which are opposed to the majority of the group. Silence thus functions as a means on the one hand to

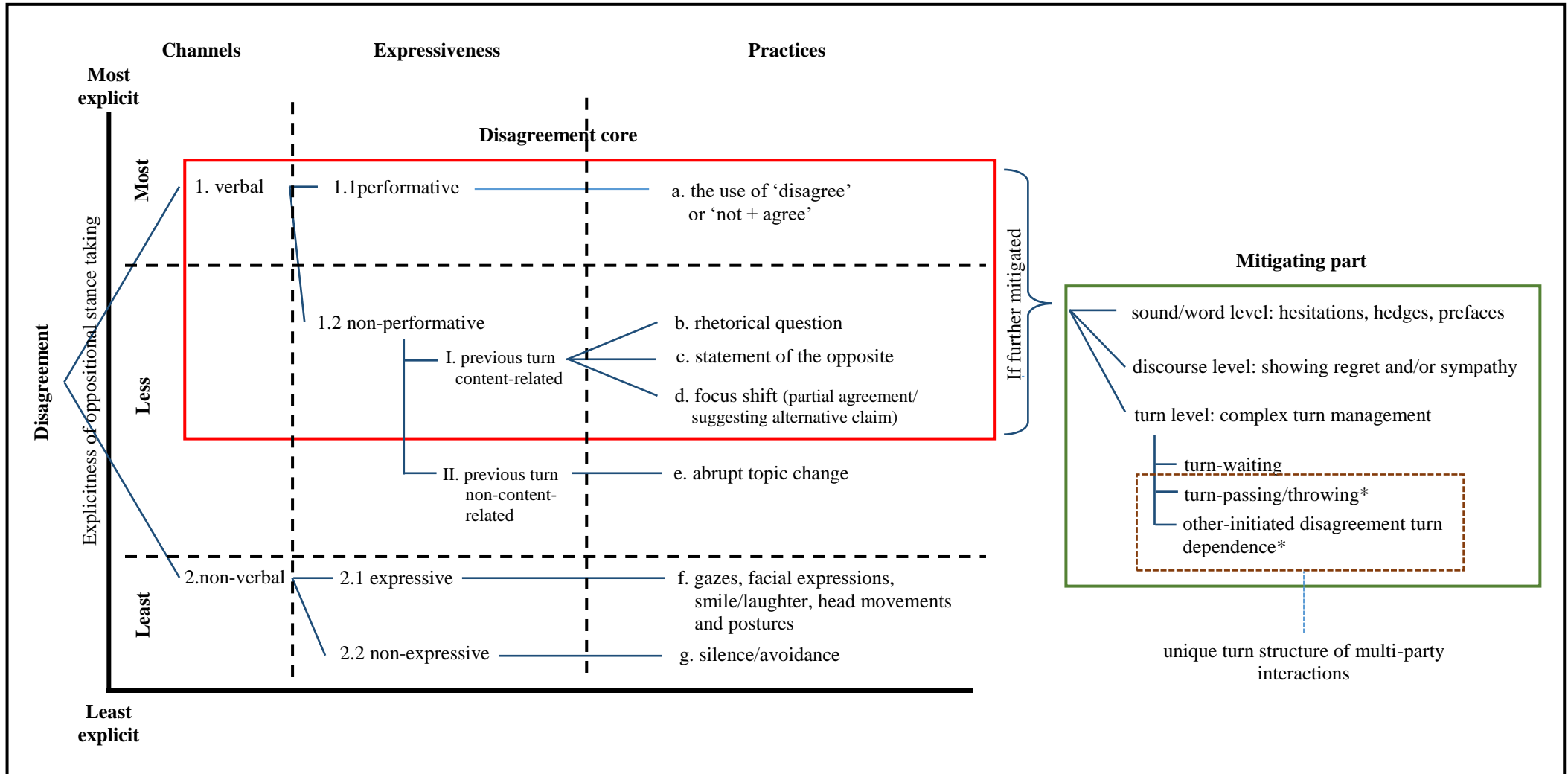
show the participants' concern about their interlocutors. On the other hand, it also reveals their concern about themselves, their status and how they will be perceived in group discussion.

4.6 Disagreeing practices and level of explicitness

As clearly seen from the extracts above, the ELF participants in the present study tend towards less explicit disagreement. They deploy both verbal and non-verbal reactions to show their opposing stance. The data shows that when the participants used non-performative disagreement structures, they were likely to use a combination of practices, especially with clarification requests. The data also apparently reveals that participants select from a wide repertoire of disagreement options which can encode different forms of explicitness and which mostly depend on group consensus as well as other factors which will be further investigated in Chapter 6.

Figure 4.18 displays all the disagreeing practices found in the present study. It shows that disagreement generally consists of two different parts, which are the disagreement core and mitigating parts. As far as the disagreement core is concerned, horizontally, the practices of disagreement can be conveyed through different *channels*—verbal or nonverbal, through different levels of *expressiveness* or noticeability/recognisability (being heard or seen) of communicative intention—with or without a performative verb, and when it comes to nonverbal disagreement, as both expressive and non-expressive. Moreover, the communicative act of disagreement is realised through different *practices*: a. the use of performative verb 'disagree' or 'not + agree'; b. rhetorical question; c. statement of the opposite; d. focus shift or suggestion of an alternative claim; e. abrupt topic change; f. nonverbal expressions; and g. silence. Vertically, the figure reveals that a disagreeing practice will be perceived as more explicit when disagreeing intent is verbally expressed and it tends towards being less explicit in terms of communicative intent when it is nonverbally performed.

Figure 4.18: Realisation of disagreement, level of explicitness and mitigating devices



When approaching the figure and the disagreement core in particular, it is obvious that the expression of disagreement is directly related to its explicitness. As such, when all disagreeing practices are placed on a scale of explicitness, disagreement with a performative verb is placed at the top of the scale because it explicitly shows a speaker's communicative intent and disagreement tends toward being less explicit when the speaker's intent is more ambiguous. In the middle of the scale are located the verbal disagreement practices in which the performative verb is absent. Moreover, when it comes to verbal disagreement, apart from a careful selection of certain disagreeing practices, the participants in the present study also employ a wide range of mitigating elements. However, when disagreement is nonverbally produced, silence is placed at the bottom of the scale. This is because nonverbal disagreeing practices are very often ambiguous and go unnoticed especially in a multi-party interaction. This will be presented and discussed in the following chapter.

4.7 Summary and concluding remarks

The analysis of transcripts of the four recorded academic group discussion sessions reveals that the participants in the study employ a wide range of disagreeing practices to express their opposing stance. For verbal disagreement, it appears that an opposing stance can be expressed in an explicit form by using performative disagreement ('disagree' or 'not + agree') or in a less explicit manner by the use of pragmatic disagreement, that is, without a performative verb. In this study, the participants tend towards less explicit disagreeing practices. From the total number of 158 verbal disagreement instances, 98% of the instances are non-performative ones. Apart from verbal disagreeing practices, the participants also report on the use of nonverbal disagreement. Their stimulated recall data show that they can alternatively use facial expressions, gazes, head nods, postures, laughter or even silence to convey their opposing stance in group discussion. When it comes to verbal disagreement, apart from the use of less explicit verbal disagreeing practices, what is also of prominence in the discourse data is the presence of a large number of mitigating devices. In the following chapter, how the participants mitigate the way they express their opposing opinions will be presented and discussed.

CHAPTER 5

MITIGATION

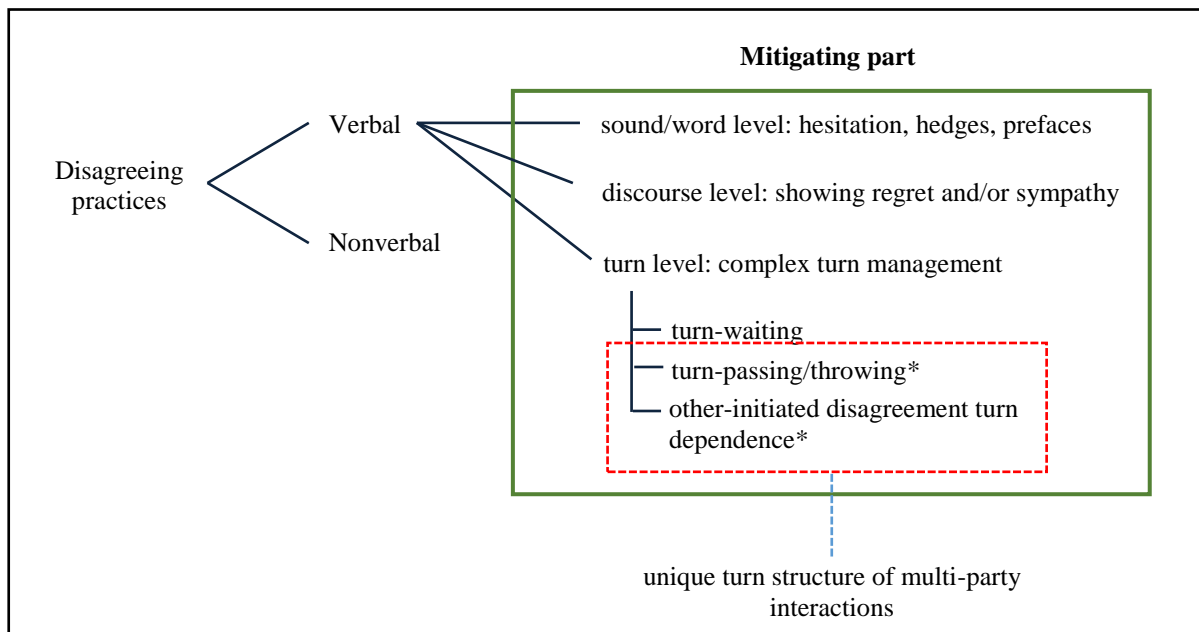
5.1 Introduction

The present chapter focuses on the mitigating part of disagreement used by the participants when interacting in ELF academic group discussion. The chapter is divided into three main sections. Section 5.2 describes the use of mitigating devices found at different levels, ranging from sound and word level, through discourse level to the management of complex turn taking. At sound and word level, Section 5.2.1 presents the use of sound lengthening, repetition, laughter and pauses. Next, Section 5.2.2 turns to the use of mitigating elements at discourse level, particularly the use of apology to attenuate the effect of disagreement. Regarding mitigation at turn level, Section 5.2.3 presents the different turn-taking strategies employed by the participants, including turn-waiting, turn-passing/throwing and other-initiated disagreement turn dependence. Section 5.3 provides a summary of the whole chapter.

5.2 Mitigation

In addition to very carefully and selectively using non-performative disagreement to avoid attacking his or her interlocutor, the speakers in this study deployed mitigation elements to delay expressing an oppositional stance and, at the same time, scale down or attenuate the threatening effect of the act of disagreement (Fraser, 1980; Holmes, 1984). In the present study, the term ‘mitigation part’ includes both linguistic and non-linguistic elements which can range from sound to the higher levels of word, discourse and turn-taking. Figure 5.1 illustrates the variety of mitigating elements at different levels which can often simultaneously occur in a single disagreement utterance or turn. The present study also reveals that some mitigating strategies, particularly at turn level, are unique to multi-party interaction. In the following section, mitigating elements occurring at each level will be identified and discussed.

Figure 5.1: Mitigating elements at different levels for verbal disagreeing practices



5.2.1 Sound or word level

The most prominent and frequently used forms of mitigation displayed by the participants were pauses (a short period of absence of a single interactant's speech within a single turn), sound lengthening, laughter and repetition at sound and word levels, which mostly function to convey participants' hesitation. To disagree, the participants made a great effort to delay showing their communicative intent and scale down the explicitness of his or her opposing stance. This stresses their attempt to mitigate the strength and aggressiveness of disagreement.

The data also indicates their use of hedges and prefaces. Hedges often appear in the form of pronouns, adverbs or sentence modifiers which are employed to show an interactant's uncertainty or attenuate the illocutionary force of an utterance or statement (Johnson, 2006). This vagueness also helps prevent speakers from making a full commitment to the truth-value of a proposition (Channel, 1994) by lessening the degree of certainty and completeness of an utterance (Cutting, 2012) and intentionally increasing its vagueness (Fraser, 2010). On these grounds the following list includes some pronouns such as *everyone* and *everything* that are not normally considered to be hedges, for instance, "*everyone, everything, nobody, almost, something, sometimes, seem, sort of, kind of, just, like, and so on, whatever, a bit, maybe, probably, right?, can/could, will/would, should, may/might*". Prefaces are also found

frequently used in this study. They generally occur at the very beginning of a turn or when the participants start expressing their opposing stance. They indicate the user's hesitation and particularly his or her awkwardness or discomfort (Pomerantz, 1984). Moreover, they enable the participants to distance themselves from 'taking full responsibility for the truth of his utterance' (Brown & Levinson, 1978/1987, p. 164), for example, "*I think, I don't think, I thought, I don't know, I'm not sure, I mean, I just wonder, to be honest, for me, well, you know, I guess, I assume, actually*". The following examples will clarify how disagreement was (further) softened by these mitigating elements, apart from using non-performative disagreement and less explicit disagreement content types.

I. Pausing

Pausing was one of the most common methods of mitigation within turns. Examples include

- (1) Unyil: But but we have to consider the allocations of the money **(0.4)**, its balance. I mean, **(1.0)** we have to consider how many people how many students are **(0.7)** parents, how many students are single.
-

- (2) Lexie: But I **(0.3)** don't think we should be spending money on that either. **(0.6)** Because like Caroline said **(0.6)** they can just join any sports society that already exists rather than creating a:::: international student.
-

II. Sound lengthening

Participants used sound lengthening at several points prior to, or during, a disagreement turn:

Example:

- (1) Jimmy: ***E:::rm*** I well, maybe (0.4) that exists. I mean, you're you're allocating money. It doesn't mean they don't have (0.3) some money already.
-

- (2) Lexie: Yeah. But some students might prefer (0.5) like (0.7) GROUP sports like football, basketball. Because they might be good at it o:::r they wanna try something differe:::nt. O:::r it helps them express themselves.
-

- (3) Mei: But I think before that we::: should know::: e:::rm the percentage of (0.4) the students who (0.5) have (0.5) the children.
-

III. Laughter

Quite often, the participants also used laughter when expressing their opposing stance:

Example:

- (1) Jiro: To be honest, I don't think I can benefit from (1.2) this project. @@@@@@ Don't really want. @@@
-

- (2) Haeun: Why? @@@@@@@@@@@@ I don't have any idea. @@@
-

IV. Word repetition

At times, word repetition was also found within a disagreement turn, especially when the participants attempt to justify their decision:

Example:

- (1) Unyil: ***But but*** we have to consider the allocations of the money (0.4), its balance. I mean, (1.0) we have to consider ***how many people how many students are*** (0.7) parents, ***how many students are*** single.
-

- (2) Nourah: Yeah. Because ***if if we we*** choose the childcare, we'll have profit like every month. But the food festival is only once.
-

V. Hedges

Hedges mostly appear in a form of an adverb and the use of indefinite pronouns, and they were found to occur frequently throughout a disagreement turn:

Example:

- (1) Roxane: I'm assuming that (0.8) parents will still have to pay::: for it (0.9) for this service. It would probably go towards like sub (0.4) sidise. Maybe certain parents are more in need. A NICE thing would be (1.0) a good fund to set up maybe even specifically for that. But it would get sort' sort of go into the urgent financial aid fund as well.
-

- (2) Caroline: I think it just for creates filling up the community because probably students will be involved and organising it then like everyone every' (0.6) everyone can come and organs'
-

VI. Prefaces

Like hedges, prefaces are also frequently used by the participants when they want to show their opposing opinions:

Example:

- (1) Catalina: Ye:::ah. I think I mean I do think it's to (0.5) maybe I I maybe I s::: sounds like a jerk. But I I do think that (1.2) to to make it fully sustainable a:::nd environmentally-friendly I mean (0.8) I love environment. It's good and everything. But (1.0) that that maybe too expensive::: (1.0) f' for this university.
-

- (2) Jimmy: Erm I I think it's pro' definitely true in if you're teaching English. Let's say e:::rm but like the kind of subjects that I think lecture in here I'm not quite sure it's true.
-

With these characteristics, the mitigation strategies used were very much in line with those recorded by other disagreement studies (e.g. Bjørge, 2012; Kreutel, 2007, Locher, 2004).

5.2.2 Discourse level

At discourse level, the data shows that an interactant may occasionally show his or her regret after s/he has expressed his or her opposing stance. This highlights the fact that the ELF participants are concerned about their interlocutors and their working relationship. To apologise, according to Kreutel (2007, p. 10), speakers seem to perceive that they have possibly done something wrong to their interlocutors and they are hoping to attenuate such an effect.

In Extract 5-1, for example, Mei is convincing her group members to allocate funds to the food festival project by proposing that the project could make some profit. However, Lexie does not agree with her. In so doing, she expresses her opposing stance by challenging Mei's suggestion in line 3. Lexie then realises that this could possibly offend Mei. In line 8, she thus apologises to Mei.

Extract 5-1: Group 1—Task B (28:15.587—28:21.550)

1	M:	=Yeah. (0.7) Take some money back.=
2	C:	=Mhm.=
3	L:	=But then what if it doesn't?=-
4	N:	=@ [@@
5	J:	[@ [@@
6	C:	[@@@ [@@@@@@@
7	M:	[Um. Ye[ah. @@@
8	L:	[Sor[ry. @@@@@@
9	N:	[No problem.

Extract 5-2 is taken from the interaction of Group 1 members when they are discussing whether or not they will give money to the sports equipment project. Prior to Extract 5-2, Mei has been proposing to fund the project. However, it turns out that her group members, including Jiro, do not want it. The extract begins with Jiro who starts expressing his opposing opinion to Mei's idea of funding the sports equipment project. After waiting for some time or until he knows what the other group members' decisions are, in line 1 he finally reveals his decision which, in this case, is opposed to Mei's. Then, there is a long pause of 1.6 seconds before Mei responds to Jiro's idea with an awkward and unwilling acceptance 'ok' in line 7 which was signalled by her fall-rise intonation. Jiro seems to notice this and makes an intervention in line 11 followed by another long 1.7 second pause and then an expression of sympathy which he does again in line 15. What is interesting here is that after he has hidden and delayed his opposing stance for a long series of turns before he expresses it in line 1, to lessen the level of

confrontation he also shows his concern about how Mei will feel about his opinion. Jiro's disagreeing practice sheds light on the fact that he is very cautious about the potential negative effects that disagreement may cause to his interlocutor whose statement he is rejecting.

Extract 5-2: Group 1—Task B (19:00.562—19:28.491)

1 J: The reason I didn't choose was because (1.5) I don't even (0.8)
 2 if if (1.2) I don't go to sports centre or (0.4) whatever anyway
 3 so (0.7) to be honest, I don't think I can benefit from (1.2)
 4 this project. @@@@ Don't really want. @@@
 5 H: [Yeah.
 6 (1.6)
 7 M: Ok~
 8 J: @@@@=
 9 M: [@@@@@
 10 H: [@@@
 11 J: [Oops! (1.7) But I did understand your point of physical
 12 health.=
 13 N: [Um.
 14 M: =Yeah.=
 15 J: =Yeah. °That it's important °. (1.3) Um.

5.2.3 Turn level (turn management)

Given the fact that disagreement is a dispreferred act, in addition to being mitigated and delayed in a single turn, to mitigate its adverse effects, it can appear in the form of inter-turn delay. Apart from (non-)linguistic elements that are used to lessen the aggressiveness of disagreeing, complicated turn management is also evidently used by the participants to delay expression of their opposing stance. The function of turn management is likely to be to buy time and to check the group consensus and this, according to Stalpers (1995), allows a speaker to process the information and to select a proper response to a preceding prompt. Given that the participants were asked to specify their decisions on a response sheet before they started doing Task B, their response sheets help explain how they manage their turn until their stance is revealed. Polyadic interaction allows for unique and complex turn-taking (Kangasharju, 2002; Traum, 2003), enabling the participants to exploit this complexity.

The characteristics of complex turn management in a group discussion result from the fact that the participants need to show their decisions and defend them with their group members. Those who have similar ideas are likely to form collective agreement and disagreement. In fact, quite often, some participants may not want to explicitly show their

opposing stance at the very beginning of a conversation since they will be trying to assess the situation as to whether or not they should express themselves, especially when they are in an inferior position. When disagreement is performed over a series of turns, it allows a speaker to assess and ascertain his or her group members' decisions or group consensus. This also enables a speaker to ascertain whether, and/or how strongly, s/he will express his or her opposing stance. In this section, three types of turn management found in this study will be explained: turn waiting, turn passing/throwing and other-initiated disagreement turn dependence.

1. Turn-waiting

The first complex turn management strategy is used when an interactant waits for his or her turn to directly express an opposing stance to a preceding prompt without any intention to pass his or her turn on to other interactants. In this case, an interactant delays his or her expression of an opposing opinion over a series of turns. Turn waiting seems to be the most common practice for dyadic and polyadic interactions. For turn-waiting to be deployed, participants who have differing opinions and wish to show their opposing stance are inclined to wait for the 'right time' to speak out their opposing ideas. That is, they choose not to respond opposingly to a disagreement source turn, preferring instead to save their differing opinions until later. In multi-party talk, participants may wait for their turns or just simply to make sure that their ideas are not alien to the majority of the group. Turn waiting frequently occurs with silence or small cues of backchannels and sporadic laughter from an oppositional stance taker while a certain speaker holds the conversational floor and does not relinquish it. Once the floor permits or the turn is relinquished, if the group consensus does not differ from the idea of the currently active participant(s), it will be possible for them to express disagreement.

Extract 5-3 is drawn from a longer episode when Group 2 members are making their decision on the wildlife walks project. The focus is on how Sakura manages her conversational turn to express her opinion which is opposed to Yoonsuh's. According to the information from her response sheet, the project is not one of Sakura's allocated projects. After Yoonsuh proposes her idea in line 1-3, Sakura responds in the following turn with a backchannel, 'um', in line 4 and laughter in line 11 and 14, while other group members are expressing their disagreement to Yoonsuh's idea. At a particular moment (in line 7-18), Yoonsuh becomes the target to be attacked. Not until line 19, does Sakura start saying something by trying to ask Yoonsuh to explain why she prioritises the project. Given the fact that Sakura's turn in line 19

overlaps with that of Jimmy in line 18, she decides to relinquish her turn. Later, in line 25, she has not yet disclosed her idea except for the ‘um’ in line 25 and 39 and a laugh in line 31. Finally, in line 42, she reveals her opposing stance to Yoonsuh. However, when she expresses it, she does so in a very careful manner. Her use of *‘I don’t know I did’* allows her not to fully commit to her opposing idea.

Extract 5-3: Group 2—Task B (23:21.371—24:03.299)

1 Y: =But I I was thinking that (1.1) in my views of through:: we
 2 set up if we set up wild walks like a programme for the whole
 3 student body, then might be all benefit [all=
 4 S: [Um. Um.
 5 Y: =benefit all the students. [It sounds t’ too good to be true.
 6 Right? Yeah.
 7 J: [It set up a project like [wildlife
 8 walks and nobody goes=
 9 C: [That
 10 would be [too expensive.
 11 S: [@@@
 12 J: =[for it. @@@ I mean,
 13 R: [No. I [think I don’t think=
 14 S: [@@@@@@@
 15 U: [°Right. Right.°
 16 R: =it’s a very popular thing at all.=
 17 U: =[Yeah. Yeah.
 18 J: [The wildlife [people can go=
 19 S: [Could you share
 20 J: =for wild[life walks=
 21 C: [No:::
 22 J: =walks by themse[lves. Whenever e:::r=
 23 R: [Ye:::ah.
 24 Y: [Ok.
 25 S: [Um. [Um. Um.
 26 C: [E::r
 27 J: =[always you did say things like that, and people say it’s a=
 28 C: [and and the weather is so crappy indeed. Why would you want
 29 outside? It’s raining. @@@@ I mean, @@@@@@@@ No:::
 30 J: =good idea. Nobody would never say no. Yeah. [@@@
 31 S: [@@@[[@
 32 R: [And the
 33 reasoning for it is very [dodgy=
 34 J: [Yeah.
 35 R: =[like the::[:y hold too=
 36 Y: [Really?
 37 C: [It IS. Right.
 38 R: =much time [on computers and mo[bile=
 39 S: [U:::m.
 40 J: [Ye:::ah.
 41 R: =devices [that
 42 S: [But I have I don’t know I did. (0.4) Or (0.8) how do
 43 you do prior’ prioritise things?

The comment made by Sakura in her stimulated recall interview session reveals her motive for delaying the expression of her opposing idea. In academic group discussion, to wait for other group members to share their ideas is very important because it allows a speaker to monitor to the views of others and also allows them to make a better decision about whether or not they will agree or disagree. As Sakura explained,

“But they didn’t ask why Yoonsuh prioritise the natural walk. But they give their opinion on that point. So... but for me if I... if I ... yeah... show disagreement, I don’t think so that this is a very good service. But why do you think? So I asked it her first. But... so... in this moment, I didn’t... I’m not... I were not ready for show my disagreement. Because she didn’t... she don’t have a chance to show the reason. But after that maybe she will. Right? So it’s not... I’m not ready for showing disagreement. It’s kind of readiness. Yeah (I need to listen to her reason first). I asked their reason.” [Sakura: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Apart from helping lessen the negative effect which disagreement causes to interlocutors, based on the participants’ interview comments, the delay of disagreement in academic group discussion also enables the participants to make the right choice or a better decision on whether or not they will change their mind according to their group members’ convincing arguments and group consensus.

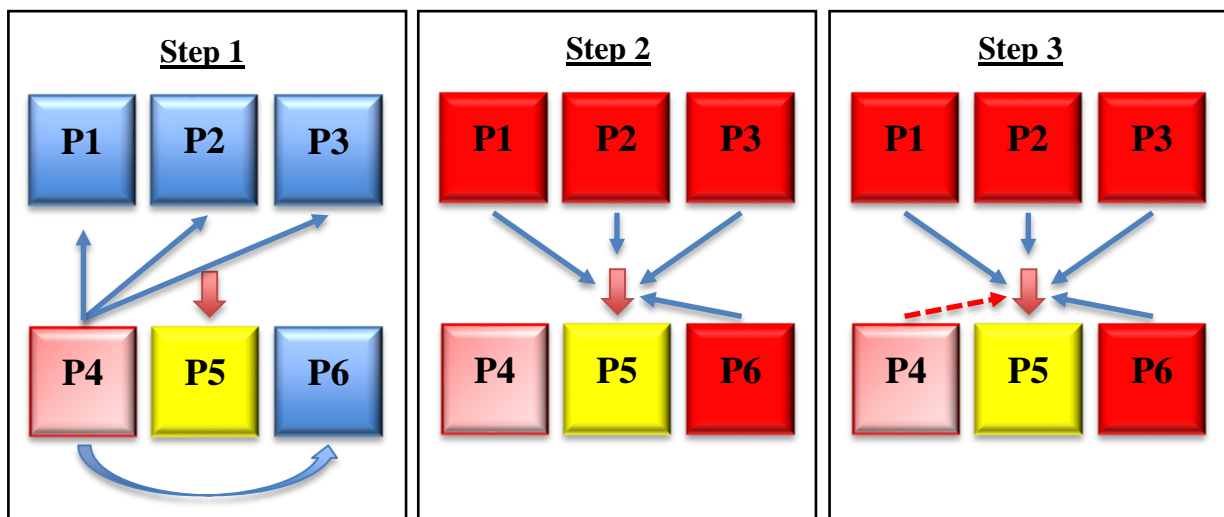
II. Turn-passing/throwing

As mentioned earlier, because disagreement is a dispreferred communicative act which may cause offence and threaten both a speaker’s and his/her interlocutor’s face, a speaker tends to delay his or her disagreement response turn. Unlike turn-waiting, what is termed in the present study as turn-passing or throwing emerges as a distinctive form of turn construction in the data and it is a unique characteristic of multi-person interaction. When a speaker passes or throws a turn, s/he will not instantly show his or her opposing stance right after a preceding prompt. Instead, s/he will intentionally take a particular turn to ask for other group members—other than the interlocutor who initiated the disagreement source turn—to share their ideas before displaying his or her own.

As shown in Figure 5.2, turn passing/throwing starts when Participant 5 says *P* (disagreement initiator or disagreement source turn) but Participant 4 thinks it is not *P*. Instead

of showing his or her opposing stance or idea directly and instantly to Participant 5, Participant 4 intentionally throws his turn to other group members (Step 1). Then, the other group members who disagree with Participant 5 will take their turn and express their ideas against him/her (Step 2). In particular, if it appears that a majority of the group disagrees with the same group member, it will be a suitable time for Participant 4 to show his or her own oppositional stance against 5 (Step 3). In so doing, disagreement turn-passing not only allows a speaker to delay and mitigate the aggressiveness of a disagreement and distance him- or herself from the disagreement source turn but also enables him or her to check group consensus and make a proper response.

Figure 5.2: Turn-passing/throwing



The following extract will show how a complex turn management of turn-passing is performed. Extract 5-4 involves 6 participants making their decision on the possibility of allocating the £5,000 budget to buy new sports equipment. Based on the information from the response sheet summary (see Appendix 5), Mei, the Chinese participant, was the only person who chose this project. The focus of this extract is on the way Jiro displays his opinion against Mei. The extract starts in line 1 with Jiro who asks the group members to say if they have chosen their project. However, when Nourah hears the word 'sports', she interrupts him in line 2 by saying no, followed by Mei confirming she had. Jiro's interjection '*a::h*' in line 4 seems to show surprise at Mei's choice. This reaction can also give rise to interest in how he thinks about the project and, based on other participants' interview accounts, it seems to the group

that at that point he expresses no apparent sign of disagreement. Mei, then, in line 5 further explains the advantages that she thinks the international students will get from having the project. In fact, Nourah raises a rhetorical question in line 21 to show her doubt as to whether the project will enhance the university's reputation. While Mei is sharing her idea with the group, Jiro also repeatedly backchannels. The use of backchannelling here shows his listenership and encourages Mei to go on with her explanation until line 25 where Jiro starts to speak at greater length. Still, even though he does not find Mei's explanation convincing and he disagrees with her, Jiro does not express his oppositional stance. After he realises that Nourah also does not support the project, rather than simply telling the group whether he agrees or disagrees, Jiro still wants to know the other group members' decisions. Through his question 'Does someone else choose sport?', he then intentionally throws his turn to other group members by asking them to share their decisions rather than showing his own and this also could possibly be paving the way for him to express his own.

Because of the use of "else", other group members (except Mei) have an opportunity to express their opinions without directly attacking Mei. This is because the expression of others' ideas will appear more like a neutral opinion or a simple answer to Jiro's question. That is to say, his question provides an opportunity to his other interactants to distance themselves from the conflict or confrontation that might be caused by directly showing an oppositional stance to Mei's proposal. At this time, it is obvious in line 28 that it is not just himself and Nourah but also Caroline who disagrees with having the project funded. Not until line 48, where he is certain that most of the group disagree with the sports equipment project, does Jiro clearly display his differing opinion to Mei's idea. However, it is also noteworthy that although he starts showing his opposing idea after delaying for a considerable series of turns, he still does so very cautiously. That is, by saying 'the reason I didn't choose', he makes his statement sound more like he is sharing his own preference rather than his disagreement because he shifts the focus from the benefit that the students will get to his not being a sports person. This allows him to distance himself from strongly attacking Mei who is the only person who has chosen the project.

Extract 5-4: Group 1—Task B (17:29.124—19:16.537)

1	J:	Sports. (1.7) If someone (0.8) [prefers sports.
2	N:	[No.
3	M:	Yeah, I am.=
4	J:	=A::H!↑ You do.=

5 M: =Yeah. Because (1.0) u::m (0.5) 2 projects I picked e::r
6 are::: concerned about the health. (0.5) I mean, physical health
7 and mental health. [So=
8 J: [Mhm.
9 M: =I think e::rm (1.2) maybe e::rm (0.2) buy [purchase some
10 (0.5) you =
11 L: [Um::::::::::::.
12 M: =know e::rm s' sports equipment may (1.0) create some
13 opportunities for the students to (0.5) do some exercise or
14 (1.0) I don't know hold a mac match [no football=
15 J: [Mhm.
16 M: =match or basketball match. I thin::k (1.2) most of the student
17 are enjoy do, you know, doing::: sport.=
18 J: =Mhm.
19 M: So (0.8) and it won't take a lot of money, I think.
20 J: Right.
21 N: But but that add to the reputation of the university?↑ (0.5) If
22 we can consider the things that he said before.=
23 J: =Mhm.
24 M: Um.=
25 J: =Does someone else choose (0.7) sports?
26 N: NO.
27 J: No?↑ @@@@
28 C: I didn't. Be[cause @@@@
29 M: [@@@@@@@@@@ Ok.=
30 C: =I [thought=
31 J: [Yeah.
32 C: =that (0.8) this focuses only on international students.=
33 J: =U[m.
34 C: [And I don't really see why (1.1) this=
35 J: [Um.
36 C: =is to be the case because I think if international student want
37 to play sports, (0.7) they can join just a sports socie[ty
38 instead of=
39 J: [@@@@@@
40 C: =join[ing=
41 H: [Um.
42 C: =an international student society to play sports.
43 J: A:[::r.
44 C: [So that's [what=
45 M: [Um.
46 C: =my think[ing was. So
47 N: [Um.
48 J: The reason I didn't choose was because (1.5) I don't even if if
49 (1.2) I don't go to sports centre or (0.4) whatever anyway so
50 (0.7) to be honest, I don't think I can benefit from (1.2) this
51 project. @@[@@@@ Don't really want. @@@
52 H: [Yeah.

Jiro's interview comments reveal that he intentionally withheld his expression of disagreement and also intentionally passed on his turn to others. This is because he thought that there might be other people who wanted the project and if he revealed his preference right after Mei's turn, those people might not want to share their opinions. In the interview session, he

also reveals that he always uses turn-passing in group discussions when he wants to show his oppositional stance.

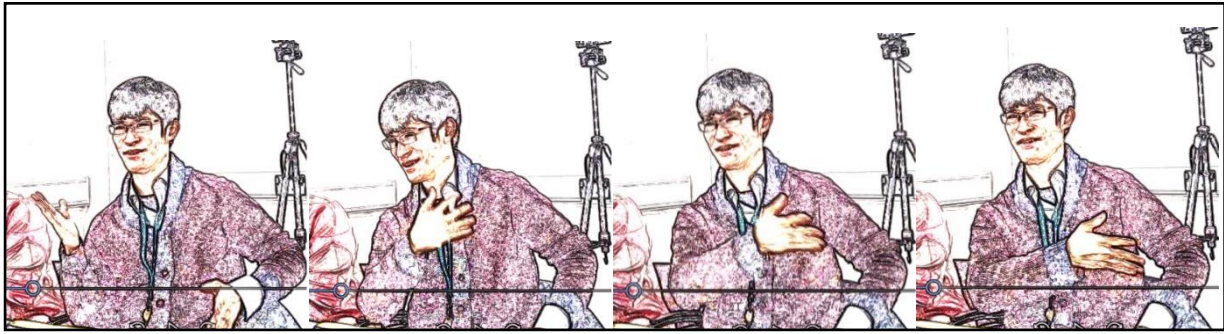
“Yeah (I disagree). To be honest, I thought no one would agree with sport but Mei agreed. (laugh) I don’t agree with sport. Yeah (I don’t say it first). If I said it, maybe someone would like to say that they would like to have sport. So that person might feel offended (Yeah if I say it first). I always do this thing (pass on my opinion). (laugh)” [Jiro: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

In addition, while Jiro is withholding his disagreement by delaying it over a series of turns, nobody realises that he disagrees with Mei. His question, apart from distancing himself from a direct confrontation, instead becomes an opportunity for other group members to take part in a conversation. From Caroline’s point of view, Jiro’s strategy of turn-passing thus helps the group members to equally play an active role in the group discussion.

“And also because Jiro he kind of really has this open question like what did anyone else think or did someone else say we should say? So then I think maybe he created some opportunity for someone to jump in and say something. Yeah.” [Caroline: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

As Jiro said earlier that he always uses turn-passing in a discussion group, it is not surprising that the same practice is also found in the other task while he and his group members are discussing the different deadlines for coursework assignments. In Extract 5-5, when the moderator throws the topic to the group, Nourah is the first person to talk about her preference. In this extract, in line 1, Nourah tells the group that she prefers small assignments to a big project of 5,000 words and she tries to explain why she does not like to have several assignments. However, Jiro has a differing opinion. Instead of showing his preference after Nourah finishes her turn in line 8, in line 11, Jiro chooses to pass his turn to the participants sitting right in front of him (Haeun, Caroline and Mei) by looking at and opening his right palm to those people to ask for their opinions (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3: Jiro's turn-throwing and his gesture



Extract 5-5: Group 1—Task A (8:37.359—13:35.146)

- 1 N: =I think it's not good to have five thousand words (0.4) without
 2 seeing the doctor all the time. [I mean=
 3 J: [Mhm.
 4 N: =like in my country, we used to have (0.7) the doctor guide us
 5 like all the way (0.6), yeah you know, you have to do the thing
 6 and then you have to see see everything by yourself. That's very
 7 different from (0.3) what I used to do (0.5) before. I don't
 8 [know about it. [Yeah.
 9 M: [Um.
 10 C: [Ye[ah.
 11 J: [Yeah. I want I want I actually want to know
 12 how YOU feel (0.6) @@@@ about {open palm to Haeun, Caroline and
 13 Mei}
 14 M: [Um.
 15 C: [@@@@ [Yeah.
 16 M: [@@@@ [@@
 17 J: [about (0.3) be honest.
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
 213 J: =How how many hours is it for one test?
 -
 -
 -
 -
 248 J: I think having (0.8) four assignments in one co' one module is a
 249 bit too much.

Jiro's interview account indicates that he intends not to reveal his opposing stance to Nourah. He thinks that being the first person to show one's own firm opposing stance is not polite. Consequently, he relinquishes his turn and passes it to others. In so doing, it allows him to listen to and check others' preferences. Moreover, once he knows his group members'

opinions, this will enable him to properly—not too strongly or too weakly—express his opposing stance or idea. As he said,

“Yeah (I have something to say) .That’s an interesting point. I thought you would ask me. (laugh) I remember saying this though .Why I said that? You mean... Not really I think (for or against separation of coursework assignment). That’s not for or not... but whether I prefer the split of assignment or not, I would be for. Yes . Because... yeah oh now I can remember I remember why I said that. Thank you for the prompt. I was completely for for that. But the reason I asked was because... what I might have said was I’d like to have a split so that I can know the process of getting better in a clearer way. But because the others they were not able to experience that process. I found it rude to say that explicitly. So I thought I should listen to what they say and adjust it a little bit so that I won’t hurt them all or make them feel bad or embarrass them or something like that.”

[Jiro: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The data from the discourse analysis and stimulated recall interviews reveals that, in a multi-person interaction or group discussion, the participants have a unique way of taking part in the interaction. In particular, collective ideas—aligned or misaligned—are likely to influence how participants interact and contribute to the group discussion. The concern about group consensus, according to Paramasivam (2007), highlights the fact that disagreement producers are “receptive, accommodative and adaptive” (p. 112) to others’ opinions and, particularly, group’s decisions. These particular characteristics are thus necessary for successful multiparty interactions, especially in intercultural encounters where the participants need to be aware of, respectful of and adaptable to diversities (Baker, 2012, 2017; Nair-Venugopal, 2003). In addition to the deliberate attempts of interactants to pass on their turns to others, the data also shows another means which is employed to delay and mitigate the negative effect of disagreeing. In the next section, reliance upon other-initiated disagreement turns will be discussed.

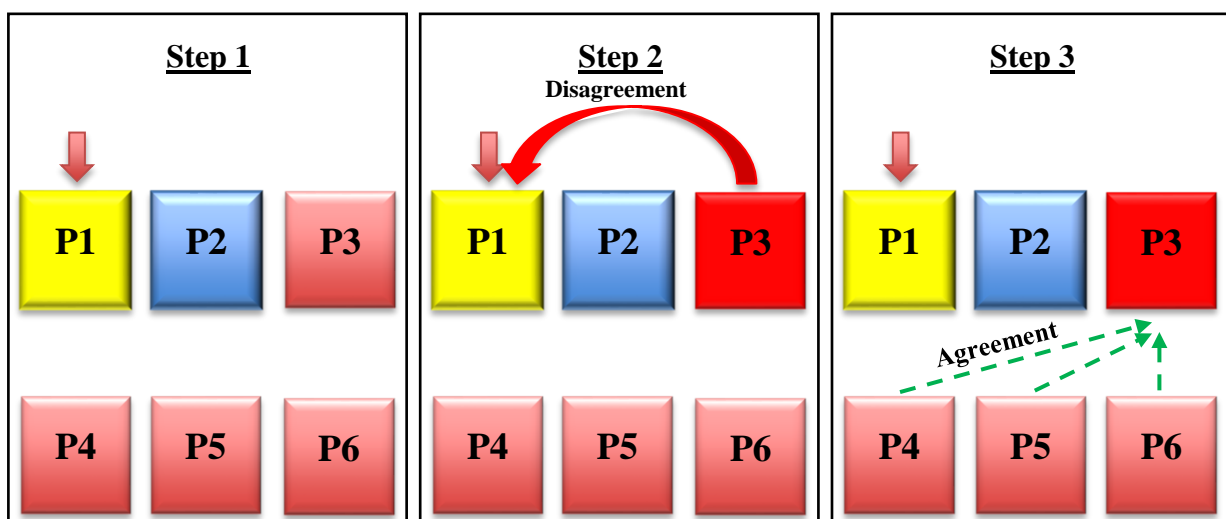
III. Other-initiated disagreement turn dependence

This disagreeing practice can only occur in a multi-party interaction in which an interactant can depend on an other-initiated disagreement turn or s/he can make use of the prior turn(s) of his or her interlocutor as a means of disagreeing with another interlocutor. An interaction where

there are more than two interactants allows speakers to build up a group of those who have similar and different ideas or to form alliances or oppositional alliances (Kangasharju, 2002).

Multi-party talk allows its participants to align themselves to previous statements made by other participants by repeating elements, contents or intentions expressed in the previous turn(s). In this case, for oppositional alliances to be formed, the participants can just simply agree with the dissenting turns formed by others. The reliance on other-initiated disagreement allows participants not only to indirectly contradict the initiator of a disagreement source turn but also to legitimise their decisions as being among those from the majority of the group. By depending on disagreement initiated by others, interactants can also delay or withhold their oppositional stance over a series of turns to ensure that collaborative disagreement has already been formed and the possibility of direct confrontation has been lowered. To depend on an other-initiated disagreement turn, an interactant first has an opposing idea but s/he does not show it immediately. S/he will wait until other group members have expressed theirs and then s/he just simply agrees with them. More specifically, Participant 1 proposes an idea (disagreement source turn) but Participants 3, 4, 5 and 6 do not agree with him or her (Step 1). However, Participant 3 is the only participant who explicitly shows his or her disagreement towards Participant 1 (Step 2). Instead of expressing their own disagreement directly to Participant 1, the rest of those who have differing opinions (Participant 4, 5 and 6) choose to support or agree with Participant 3's opposing idea (Step 3) as illustrated in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4: Other-initiated disagreement turn dependence



To clarify how disagreement is mitigated over a series of turns by depending on the practice of following an other-initiated disagreement turn, this will be considered in the context where Group 1 members are discussing whether or not they will fund the urgent financial aid funding project. In Extract 5-6, Lexie supports the project and in line 1 she is trying to convince the others by showing that the fund would help international students with paying their tuition fees and accommodation. Also, the project could prevent them from quitting the university because of financial problems and it would also show that the university is concerned about its students' well-being. However, Caroline's use of *'but'* in line 49 signals that what follows will be different, or contradict the preceding turns. Then, in line 51, Caroline explains that on the amount requested for the project it would not be possible to pay for tuition fees. Mei also disagrees with Lexie's proposal but she does not express it directly to Lexie. Instead, by saying *'Yeah. I think so'* in line 54, she is aligning with Caroline's idea.

Extract 5-6: Group 1—Task B (23:33.723—25:30.232)

1 L: Yeah. (1.3) I think that a very important project is the urgent
 2 financial aid fund.=
 3 J: =M[hm.=
 4 N: [Yeah.=
 5 L: =E:::rm (1.0) I thou:::ght that it's very important because
 6 (0.3) e:::rm you know with the::: (1.2) e:::conomic crisis now
 7 [around [the=
 8 J: [Mhm.
 9 M: [Um.
 10 L: =world is being going on for a couple of years.=
 11 J: =Mhm.=
 12 L: =One more more than a couple actually. (0.4) E:::rm people
 13 struggle A LOT like there're a lot of students that had to (0.4)
 14 quit be[cause they couldn't af' [yeah=
 15 J: [OH↑ really?
 16 M: [Um.
 17 L: =they couldn't af[ford being=
 18 J: [Oh, NO:::..
 19 L: =here (0.4) especially non-European students, they pay like
 20 (0.4) double (0.4) tri[ple the=
 21 M: [Yeah.
 22 J: [Yeah.
 23 L: =the amount amount of money. (0.4) So (0.7) erm when you need
 24 help (0.4) like financially and you can't find it [some (0.8)
 25 some=
 26 J: [Um.
 27 L: =students have to make really drastic decisions [like=
 28 J: [Mhm.
 29 L: =dropping out or any (0.4) or something like that. (0.7) So
 30 (0.4) I think that's a very important project because::: (0.5)
 31 then you show your students that (0.2) they can trust you and
 32 that (0.4) you'll be there::: for them if even they don't have
 33 the money to (0.4) pay for their fees o:::[r

34 J: [Mhm.=
35 L: =their accommodation at that specific time. (0.8) An:::d I think
36 it will (0.4) bring a lot of students to the university as
37 well.=
38 J: =Mhm.=
39 L: =Erm because it shows that it's e::rm (0.7) it's the uni that
40 (0.4) cares [and then [all the=
41 N: [Um yeah.
42 C: [Um.
43 L: =students from different backgrounds (0.5) or=
44 J: [Mhm.
45 L: =different cultures or necessities (0.5) can get the fund (0.4)
46 if they meet (0.8) certain criteria that we'll (0.3) set up
47 (1.0) [like
48 J: [Um.
49 C: B[ut
50 L: [What do you think?
51 C: or I think that (0.9) something like helpi::ng (0.6) or help with
52 paying fees, (0.5) it's not really feasible with six thousand
53 pounds.
54 M: [Yeah. I think so.
55 C: [And five [thousand pounds will go to an administrator.=
56 H: [U:::~::~:m.
57 C: =And [then=
58 L: [Yeah.
59 C: =helping like really attracting students (0.4) with that money
60 because six thousand that's like (0.7) nothing. You can help
61 (0.3) a few people pay their rent but not like FEES or
62 something. (0.6) I mean that's not (0.3) like nearly enough to
63 even help one person I think pay their=
64 N: =[Yeah.
65 M: [Ye[ah.
66 H: [Yeah.
67 J: [Yeah. Not to help me.
68 C: [pay their fees.

Doing so enables Mei to form an alliance with Caroline and collaboratively disagree with Lexie. As she put it,

"I disagree with her opinion for, you know, put a large amount of money for the financial aid." [Mei: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Although 'um' can perform multiple functions, in Haeun's case, supported by her stimulated recall interview account, both her lengthening 'um' in line 56, and 'yeah' in line 66 clearly indicate her agreement with Caroline and, again, indirect disagreement with Lexie.

"I was just curious about what is the standard. I mean...what kind of standard can judge the urgent situation or just or just normal situation? And who decides? Because I don't want to express my opinion to unfamiliar group members. Yeah (but I'd do in if I were with close Korean friends). Right. Of course. So later I expressed the... if some students use this programme in the bad way, and then who knows? But Caroline already talked. The money is just few. I mean it's a small amount of money. So we cannot have the urgent students." [Haeun: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

After line 63 in which Caroline attempts to deter her group members from choosing the project, interestingly, oppositional alliances are obviously being built up. Although Nourah uses backchannels from time to time during the conversation in lines 4 and 41, they do not perform any special functions other than just showing her listenership. However, in line 64 another 'yeah' of Nourah occurs in an overlapping manner, this time, based on her interview comment, signalling that she agrees with Caroline. By agreeing with the dissenting turn initiated by Caroline, Nourah is also able to disagree with Lexie. As she put it,

"I agree with that (the amount of money is not much). But I don't I don't really remember I said something about it." [Nourah: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Then, in line 67, Caroline's idea, which is opposed to that of Lexie, is again supported by Jiro's agreement. At this particular moment, it is apparent that most of the group do not think that the particular amount of money available will be sufficient to help students with their tuition fees as Lexie is trying to tell the group.

"No, it wasn't. It wasn't a good amount that you have to try. So it has more emphasis than wildlife walks and musical instruments. But basically it's very low. But I think I remember saying something like... I just want to listen." [Nourah: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

After Caroline shows her opposing idea, starting in line 49, the alignment of the rest of the group (Mei, Haeun, Nourah and Jiro) gradually comes round to Caroline's idea. This is done through a small linguistic marker, 'yeah', and a more explicit stance taking expression 'I

think so'. By forming an alliance, this allows the turns after those of Caroline to be in agreement with her, and at the same time this allows Mei, Haeun, Nourah and Jiro to express their disagreement with Lexie's statement. In so doing, the participants can distance themselves from a direct attack and confrontation and legitimise their ideas. The previous extracts reveal that disagreement in academic group discussion is performed by complicated turn taking and turn management.

5.3 Summary and concluding remarks

The present chapter has presented the way mitigating elements are employed at different levels from sound to turn level. The widespread use of mitigation elements in a disagreement turn stresses the fact that the participants are aware of the possible negative effects of disagreeing and that they evidently attempt to delay making such a turn and attenuate its threatening effects. At sound level, mitigation can be in a form of pausing, sound lengthening, laughter, word repetition, hedges and prefaces. At discourse level, the participants can mitigate the effect of disagreement caused to their interlocutors by the use of apology. Moreover, the study also reveals that the participants employ complex turn management in which they may wait their turn to express their conflicting opinions. Alternatively, they at times deliberately pass on their turn to other interlocutors to check other group members' decisions. Also, they can rely on others' disagreement in which case they can express their opposing stance agreeably. Complex turn management indicates the unique characteristics of multi-party interactions and of participants who are flexible, accommodative and adaptive to group consensus. In the following chapter (Chapter 6), the self-reported comments of the participants will be explored further in order to analyse their motivations and rationales behind the particular disagreeing practices which have been outlined in the previous and the present chapter.

CHAPTER 6

FACTORS INFLUENCING DISAGREEMENT REALISATION

6.1 Introduction

In the last two chapters, the microanalysis of the linguistic and non-linguistic elements of how disagreement is produced and managed in group academic discussion illustrates that ELF speakers employ a wide variety of strategies, ranging from the explicit expression of opposing views to silence. For a certain strategy to be used, the participants work hard by considering the negative effect disagreement can have on hearers, how to achieve interactional goals, and at the same time how to maintain a good relationship. The present chapter reveals possible reasons that govern the way the MA students in this study produce their communicative acts of disagreement or manage their particular ways of expressing them. Given that the expression of disagreement is a cognitively demanding practice, drawing on the data from the stimulated recall interviews together with the questionnaire data (used as one of the prompts or stimuli for the stimulated recall interviews) will enhance the insights gathered into personal attitudes, interactional conditions and interactional practices as well as how complex the communicative act in question is in the dynamic, emergent and fluid context of ELF academic group discussion.

Drawing mainly on the data from 24 hours of stimulated recall interview comments, the present chapter investigates diverse factors which influence ELF speakers' practices of disagreeing. To do this, a thematic analysis was conducted in order to identify the salient main themes and sub-themes. The data show that the ELF participants in this study put great effort into achieving both transactional and interactional goals. In other words, the participants enthusiastically and cautiously search for the most appropriate communicative resources to ensure mutual understanding and at the same time to minimise possible conflicts caused by disagreement. This chapter consists of six main sections. Section 6.2 provides an overview of the salient themes and sub-themes found in the stimulated recall data. There are both internal and external factors related to the speakers themselves (self-oriented) (Section 6.3), their perceptions of, or attitudes towards, their interlocutors (other-oriented) (Section 6.4) and the interactional situation in which they are participating (situation-oriented) (Section 6.5). Then,

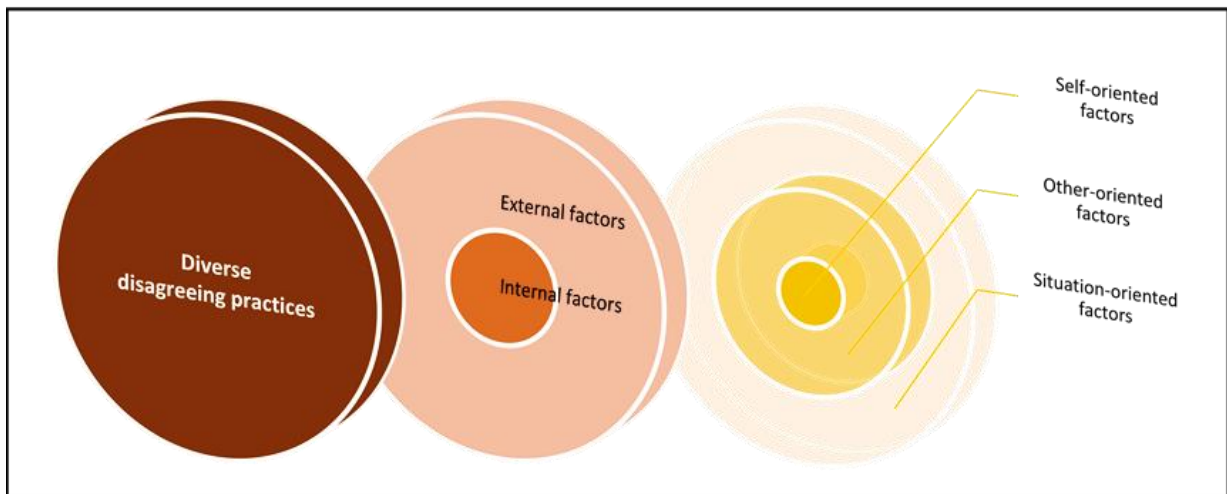
in Section 6.6, a summary of the chapter is provided. In what follows, I will report on each of these factors in turn.

6.2 Factors influencing disagreement realisation

As clearly seen in the last chapter, disagreement can be produced in various ways, ranging from more or less explicit verbal practices, to nonverbal expressions to opting out or silence. It is obvious that in disagreeing, participants necessarily take into account a wide range of factors. In this section, the data from the stimulated recall interviews and questionnaires will be incorporated to explicate why and when they express their conflicting views as well as why participants may sometimes abstain from expressing disagreement. When speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds come into contact, they may also bring their own norms of interaction.

These dynamic interactional behaviours result from a vast array of factors both a priori and in situ. In this case, speakers themselves and the interactional context, including interlocutors and what is emerging over the course of their interactions, exert a powerful influence on not only whether or not disagreement is produced but also how disagreements are expressed. Drawing on interview comments, two factors emerge as disagreement influencing factors, as illustrated in Figure 6.1. Internal factors involve speakers' own perceptions towards themselves or their personal backgrounds, and are therefore self-oriented. In contrast, external factors are those concerned with other speakers' emotions, perceptions and/or attitudes towards themselves vis-à-vis their interlocutors and the situation or interactional context in which they are engaging. External factors are thus, in their nature, other- and situation-oriented.

Figure 6.1: Diverse practices of disagreeing and influencing factors



In this section, the different factors that ELF participants report as influencing their practices of disagreeing will be listed and described, and each will be supported by the evidence of their own stimulated recall interview data. Table 6.1 lists all the factors and sub-factors that were reported as influencing the realisation of disagreement.

Table 6.1: Factors influencing the expression of disagreement

Factors		Sub-factors	Descriptions
Internal	Self-oriented	1. Cultural background	The influence of speaker's own cultural background
		2. Linguistic proficiency	The influence of speaker's own English linguistic proficiency (e.g. on how well s/he can understand his/her interlocutors or how well s/he can express him-/herself in the group discussion)
		3. Group member familiarity	The influence of speaker's own familiarity with his/her group members (e.g. because of task sequence or in/out of classroom activities)
		4. Strength of feeling or necessity	The influence of speaker's own strong feeling or necessity for disagreement to take place
		5. Personality or interactional style	The influence of speaker's own personality or interactional style
		6. Previous life or work experience	The influence of speaker's own previous life, work or study experience
External	Other-oriented	1. Cultural background	The influence of interlocutor's cultural background
		2. Sharedness or common ground	The influence of interlocutor's and speaker's sharedness or common ground (e.g. power, MA students, linguistic proficiency)
		3. Perceived negative effects of disagreement	The influence of possible perceived effects of disagreement on an interlocutor (e.g. being hurt/offended/attacked) which results in speaker's attempt to avoid them or to be polite
		4. Strength of feeling	The influence of interlocutor's strength of feeling
		5. Previous life or work experience	The influence of interlocutor's life, work or study experience
		6. Personality or interactional style	The influence of interlocutor's personality or interactional style
		7. Age	The influence of interlocutor's age
		8. Gender	The influence of interlocutor's gender
	Situation-oriented	1. Context where discussion takes place	The influence of the context where group discussion takes place (e.g. academic context, in a British university)
		2. Group influence or consensus	The influence of group decisions or emerging group consensus on a speaker's decision to express disagreement
		3. Particular interactional situation or moment	The influence of a particular interactional situation (e.g. repetition of disagreement source utterance, whether or not disagreement has already been expressed, preference to listen, availability of a conversational floor, stage of the interaction, e.g. beginning, middle, or end.)
		4. Presence of a particular interlocutor	The influence of a particular interlocutor (e.g. English native speaker, concerned interlocutor)
		5. Nature of task or topic of conversation	The influence of a task characteristic (e.g. whether there's a need for direct disagreement or not to complete a decision-making task) or topic of conversation
		6. Seating position	The influence of the seating position of a speaker and his/her interlocutor

6.3 *Self-oriented factors*

The way a speaker interacts in a particular interaction depends heavily on their own personal characteristics and those of their background. From the stimulated recall interview comments, supported by questionnaire data, self-oriented factors include six sub-factors: (1) cultural background, (2) English language proficiency, (3) group discussion or task familiarity, (4) personal emotional investment, (5) personality or interactional style and (6) previous life, work or study experience.

6.3.1 **Speaker's cultural background**

One of the most salient subthemes to emerge in the data was the role of a speaker's sense of their own cultural background. This is more evident when interactants from different cultural backgrounds participate in the same group discussion sessions. For example, Roxane, one of the Group 2 members, perceived the influence of how she was educated in Switzerland as affecting the way she behaved in interaction. She explained that schoolchildren in her home country are encouraged to voice their own opinions from a very young age and outspoken children are more encouraged in her context:

"Yeah. I think it's very simple because I'm from Switzerland and there we are encouraged to be quite outspoken from the very young age I think like... throughout school, we're very much encouraged to voice our opinions I was always kind of one of the like I guess like smart little kids and I was always be taken everywhere. So I'm someone who is quite used to voicing their opinion and voice it very clearly." [Roxane: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

The influence of culture on practices of disagreeing is supported by Lexie's comment when she describes characteristics of Greek interactional behaviour claiming that this was reflected in the way she expressed her opposing opinions in the group discussion.

"Um... yeah. But Greek people tend to be quite direct and quite... not not aggressive in a bad way. But when they have a discussion and they come to a contradiction, they will be very loud and very and they're strong in their opinions." [Lexie: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The interview comments of Mei, the Chinese participant in Group 1, also demonstrated the connection between self-perceived cultural background and the expression of disagreement. In interaction, Mei rarely showed her conflicting opinions explicitly. Rather, she often used a non-performative disagreement in the form of a rhetorical question or a clarification request to express her opposing stance. According to her comments, she mentioned the use of mitigating devices to make her way of expressing disagreement less aggravating. Mei attributed this to her Chinese culture, in which, she believes, she is not allowed to directly articulate her different ideas, and, therefore, sometimes silence is her preferred choice:

“Yeah. No. Sometimes I would have this opinion but I won’t speak it out because, you know, Chinese would hedge. You know, they can hedge their language. They won’t express their opinion directly. Just sometimes yeah I agree. If I disagree, I would just listen. You know?” [Mei: G1-TA— stimulated recall interview]

The interview comment below was extracted from the interview data of Sakura, the female participant from Japan. Her account indicates the influence of her beliefs about her own culture on the preferred choice of disagreeing. To show her opposing stance in group discussion, Sakura always did it in an implicit way by using a combination of agreement and disagreement (token or partial agreement) and mitigating elements. This can be checked back by her use of the ‘yeah-but’ structure, one of the non-performative disagreeing practices where a speaker can show his/her acceptance in the first part of his or her utterance, followed by his/her counter-argument e.g. *“I think yeah British people tend to use sorry not excuse me sorry sorry in any occasion. But I don’t think it’s very polite. It’s it’s kind of the habit to say sorry.”* (simplified transcription, for more examples see Chapter 4). When looking specifically at the use of the two Japanese participants, Sakura together with Jiro, there is a strong connection between the presence of partial agreement in speech and being Japanese participants.

“Yes (Japanese people are always indirect). Maybe we don’t show only disagreement. We put some disagreement, not only disagreement but also agreement. So which aspect can be acceptable in this situation? Maybe the main aspect of that idea should not be accepted in that way. But maybe we try to or at least I try to find some room to accept, I think.” [Sakura: G2-TA— stimulated recall interview]

In Haeun's case, she cited her Korean culture as being likely to constrain her from sharing her opposing opinions. The comment was given when Haeun explained why she did not respond to Mei's idea of funding the sports equipment project even though she did not agree with Mei's idea. Haeun stated that because of her culture, she was "suppressed" and felt uncomfortable showing her conflicting idea.

"(Disagreement is) Not bad. But for me it's difficult to express the disagreement. Because of the culture. I think I was suppressed that kind of that kind of culture. I was affected and I was suppressed." [Haeun: G2-TB— stimulated recall interview]

The selected interview accounts of these participants from five different cultures introduced above prove useful in explaining the key role of a speaker's identification with the norms of a particular source culture in determining the way they express themselves, and particularly the way they express their disagreement in the group discussion. It reveals that cultural background is a complex factor as sometimes it is seen as facilitative and sometimes constraining. From the comments, it seems that interactants from different cultures have different ways of expressing their opposing stance. Interactants from some cultures may feel comfortable showing their different ideas explicitly while in some other cultures, this could be done only if the speakers could show them in a less explicit way. However, in some cultures, interactants find it challenging even to express their conflicting viewpoints. Nevertheless, cultural influence is not the only factor and it should be considered in relation to other factors both particular to the speakers themselves and the contexts in which the interaction occurs.

6.3.2 Speaker's linguistic proficiency

The perception of participants towards their own English language proficiency also exerts a powerful influence on the way they express their disagreement. Most participants were noticeably aware that they were not native speakers of English and this might result in the possibility of miscommunication. Even though some participants have high IELTS scores (see Chapter 3), this does not guarantee that they would feel confident with their language use in real interaction.

This is exemplified by the case of Lexie from Cyprus who had a 7.5 IELTS score. Although she had a high degree of proficiency, she was still concerned about how she expressed herself and how her interlocutor would perceive her speech:

“That’s why I said in... oh well... I did it very indirectly. I think... I’m just used to not being very direct when it comes to that because sometimes you might offend someone or... like because my first language is not English. I might express myself in the wrong way, let’s say. So I might come across very weirdly. So I just would prefer to just a bit indirectly and see what other people would say.” [Lexie: G1-TA— stimulated recall interview]

The case of Sakura also displays the importance of a speaker’s perception towards his or her linguistic command of English to express disagreement. In her account, Sakura, who received 7.0 in IELTS, explained that at a particular moment she did not agree with what Yoonsuh was saying about the similarity between Korean and Japanese culture. She found these two cultures different but she was concerned that she would fail to explain the differences to the group.

“Also, my language skill is a reason. Because after maybe when Yoonsuh said something about the Korean culture and the Japanese culture, so she said somewhat Korean and Japanese culture share kind of the same notion. Actually, I really think... it’s some part is in the case the case but from other aspects it’s not true I think. But I can’t explain this point because it’s really complicated to explain. So I... it may be... it all depends on my language. Not all but it depends on my language skill and then the background knowledge, how to compare we’re doing Japanese and the Korean culture.” [Sakura: G2-TA— stimulated recall interview]

The same holds true in Yoonsuh’s case when she was in the Task B (decision-making task) group discussion. In the stimulated recall interview session, Yoonsuh, with her 7.0 IELTS score, reported that she did not say anything but laugh when she heard that her British group member, Jimmy, wanted to choose the musical instrument project which she did not think would benefit a large number of students. However, because she was not confident with her linguistic proficiency and her debating skills, laughter was her only choice.

“The laughing itself shows that I wasn’t I wasn’t agreeing with him because I thought it was absurd to pick. We should consider. Because it was... the money will go to only the specific group but the main thing I choose the budget for the whole student body. That was my point. And then but maybe Jimmy might be offensive. But I was kind of what were you thinking?... (sigh) Yeah (I didn’t say anything). Because he was... I’m not good at debating and then I told you that my... I do have some linguistic proficiency problem.” [Yoonsuh: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

The participants’ caution reflects the complex nature of disagreeing which, if the goals of group discussion are both transactional and interactional, needs not only a certain level of linguistic proficiency but also good interpersonal skills. In the following section, the issue of familiarity between speakers and their group members will be discussed.

6.3.3 Speaker’s familiarity with group members

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, all participants were asked to join two group discussion sessions. For Group 1, they started by doing Task A, which was a topic-based task, followed by Task B which was a decision-making task. For Group 2, these were done in reverse. Despite the fact that the research participants came from different majors and were in the same department or in the same course, for some participants, mostly in Group 1, this was the first time that they had had an opportunity to talk to each other. The stimulated recall interview comments stress the influence of the degree of speakers’ familiarity with their group members on how they express themselves in general and their disagreement in particular. This can be clearly seen in Chapter 4 which shows the different number of disagreement instances found across the four group discussion sessions and how they are produced.

Lexie, for example, was less careful and at the same time felt more comfortable expressing herself in the second group discussion session. This is because it was the second time that she had met the same group of people, which resulted in a higher level of familiarity. Her account given in the interview session is congruent with the way she expressed her opinions and with the data from her questionnaires in which she changed her familiarity level to a higher level in the second group discussion session.

"I think it was more comfortable because this is a second one. Yeah. I mean it doesn't have to do with the topic. It has to do with... because it was a second time that you were with the same group of people and you know what people are like. So it doesn't feel like wait I should be a bit more careful. I think for me personally at the first session I was a bit holding back not to... what I was thinking or what I was saying but the way I would express it although usually that's my style of expressing my opinions." [Lexie: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

In contrast, in the case of Roxane from Group 2, even though it was her second time with her group members, she did not feel that close with them and this directly influenced the way she interacted throughout the group discussion. From her account, she clearly stated that because she was not familiar with the group members she needed to be more careful with her expression. She therefore mostly used non-verbal expressions—smiles and head moves—in order to ensure that she would not be perceived as being rude to her interlocutors:

"Yeah. If they were my friends, I would probably be a bit more louder, maybe a bit more rude if I can say that. But because I don't know them. I try to be quite polite. I can also see kind of the way that I just look and smile and nod at people doing their interaction. That's quite right the general polite things to do." [Roxane: G2-TA—stimulated recall interview]

In Sakura's case, a higher level of familiarity did not only result in a higher number of disagreement instances and more aggravated disagreement but also in higher levels of tolerance for strong disagreement. This can be clearly seen from Sakura's comments after completing Task B.

"Oh, yeah (I was expressing disagreement). Yeah. So she... he said... the childcare... maybe the only postgraduate students need a childcare. Right? But it's not true. So... and then maybe as... unsimilar to Yoonsuh, Unyil and I are the classmates. So maybe I... easy to show my disagreement to Unyil. It's not polite, my disagreement. It doesn't become kind of... not threaten... Um. Yeah (it depends on familiarity). I think so. Or the way of disagreement... the showing disagreement is really depends on familiarity. Yeah, definitely." [Sakura: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

From the excerpt below which was extracted from Catalina's interview comments following Task B, she clearly stated that Yoonsuh's proposed project was not eligible to get the funding. However, she did not show her disagreement to Yoonsuh and kept silent. She further explained that she would have expressed her opposing view if her interlocutor had been Jimmy who she was more familiar with.

"But now she's talking about the mental health. I was thinking it's bullshit, to be honest. No. But I didn't say anything because Roxane did it. Roxane was sort of giving her point. No. Yeah (I didn't say it). Because, for example, if it was Jimmy, I would have said all that's bullshit. Because Jimmy... I think it has to do with the relationship because I don't know Yoonsuh and Roxane. Neither of them."
[Catalina: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Speakers' familiarity with their interlocutors appears to be a clear factor which contributes to a different number of instances of disagreement and various strengths of disagreement practices. It is evident that the level of aggravation varies according to the level of familiarity between a speaker and his or her interlocutor. The greater the familiarity the easier it is to express disagreement. Disagreement in this study can thus be characterised as a sign of intimacy between speakers and their interlocutors.

6.3.4 Speaker's strength of feeling or necessity

Various statements given by the participants highlight the influence of their own strong feelings, needs, or sense of connectedness on how they show their different opinions. The effect of personal emotional investment on disagreement is evident in the case of Roxane, a Group 2 member. She explicitly stated that how she expressed her opposing opinions heavily depends on her feelings. Roxane's stimulated recall data reveals that she will disagree if she has a strong personal interest in the topic, but if it is someone else's personal opinion, even if she does not agree, she will "go with the flow". This is interesting because it suggests that she is also mindful of the personal investments of her interlocutors. It is likely that she is weighing up whether or not it is worth disagreeing in each instance depending on her strength of feeling, and her perception of others' strength of feeling.

“It depends on how strongly I feel about the thing again. If it’s something that I feel like I’m right about, then I think I will get quite defensive. But if it’s something that’s more like someone’s personal opinion, then I can be quite agreeable with it. And I can also be quite like my opinion can be changed quite easily if it’s something that I don’t feel strongly about. Because I don’t like conflict. So I will just like, ‘Oh yeah. No. I’m ok.’, like in the first group discussion as soon as I saw that people were sort of going a different way from what I initially thought. I will say, yeah. I can be fine with this.” [Roxane: G2-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The same holds true in Catalina’s case in which she mentioned the effect of strong feeling or weighing up whether it was worth responding in a group discussion. To show her opinions, especially those opposed to other group members, Catalina had to consider whether it was worth doing so because she did not want to become the cause of any trouble. And when she found it was worthwhile to show her conflicting viewpoints, despite being aware of her blunt personality trait, she would do so in a clear and polite or, in her words, respectful way.

“If it’s worthy to respond... but if it’s not worthy, I wouldn’t. I just let the person be. Because I don’t want to get complicated over things that I don’t even care. But if I do care... I’m quite straightforward and blunt but every time I would work I think. I try to make myself clear in the most respectful way I can find in the limited words I’ve got in English because it would be different in my own language. But I always try to be very honest.” [Catalina: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

Although the expression of disagreement can be affected by a variety of factors, the above examples illustrate the strong interrelationship between the strength of speakers’ feelings or needs and disagreement realisation. In this section, the factors which are directly relevant to speakers result in the presence or absence of disagreement and also influence the way it is produced. However, the stimulated recall data reveals that it is not so much about the disagreement producers in themselves but it is more about the interconnectedness between them and their interlocutors as well as the interactional contexts in which they are engaged.

6.3.5 Speaker’s personality or interactional style

Although culture plays a role in determining speakers’ interaction and their interactional behaviours, it is obvious that speakers from the same culture do not necessarily have the same

interactional and disagreement practices, which, according to the participants' stimulated recall interview accounts, can be explained by individual differences in personality.

In this account, although Caroline did not reject the idea of cultural influence on her disagreement practices, she did not fully claim that her Dutch culture drove her to behave in a particular way. She pointed out that it was because her personality was shy and quiet, rather than "being Dutch", that she did not abruptly express her disagreement.

"Maybe it does but I feel like it's just more my personality and the fact that I'm maybe a bit hesitant to be the first to answer something or to say that I disagree. I think that's not typical of the Dutch culture. So I think in the Netherlands there're probably a lot of people who would be more opinionated than me. So yeah I think it's just more something specific to my personality than to culture. I think I'm just it may be my personality thing. I'm a bit a quiet and a shy person usually. I think that may be. That's it." [Caroline: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The influence of personality is also mentioned by Lexie. In her account, she defined herself as an 'overthinker' who always sees and evaluates things from both sides. What she revealed in the interview session truly reflected her way of disagreeing. It can be clearly seen from Chapter 4 that, when disagreeing, Lexie mostly used ambiguation or the phrase 'it depends' to express her opposing views which allowed her not only to indirectly deny her interlocutor's claim but also to suggest a possible alternative.

"Yeah. I'm like a lot and I overthink too much in general. And before making decisions, I usually think of the positive that can come from it and the negative and then I'm like weighing it. And like ok is this decision gonna make me have a more negative or positive impact. And then I'll make a decision. So I need to... you can't just take decision simultaneously like yeah let's do this. Or no, it doesn't sound good. You need to think about it. Because if other people have something to say and they actually make sense, then why not consider it or why not just leave it out. So... yeah (this is my personality). Yeah. I think it's mainly just something to do with personality I think. Yeah. I'm just a bit a very shy person I think. So I usually just listen to what people have to say and it's easier to say that you agree with them or to add something than to say, no I think you're wrong." [Lexie: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

The influence of personality on how disagreement is realised is also stressed by the Saudi Arabian participant, Nourah. Having watched her own recorded interaction back, she came to realise that although she had ideas to share with the group, her shyness prevented her from participating and expressing her opinions in the interaction. Despite the fact that she did not mention such influence on the realisation of her disagreement in particular, it appears to affect the way she express her opinions. She stated that her shyness prevented her from showing her opinions and this could be traced back to when she was an undergraduate student. Although she said that she was less shy and more expressive, she still chose not to actively express her opinions in the group discussion.

“You’ve just made me realise this. I’m used to not really expressing my opinion even if I have the idea even if I know what I’m going to say but even in classes... I mean, in my university before when I studied my bachelor. I used to stay calm and don’t really react. I don’t know (why). I think it’s ok. I know what I’m, you know, believing and how I would express it to others as far as I thought before. No .No .No (it’s not because of cultural influence). Because of shyness. I used to be a lot of... shy. Now I’m getting better. I don’t really like to express my opinion especially when I’m certain about it. You know, I would not talking about at that time.” [Nourah: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

In addition to cultural background which constrains the way disagreement is produced, speakers’ personality or interactional styles can exert a powerful influence on the number, form and explicitness of disagreement. Shy or quiet participants tended to be less expressive and less direct in the group discussion. In contrast, for those who are confident and outspoken, they tended to produce more instances of disagreement.

6.3.6 Speaker’s previous life or work experience

Whether actively or inactively participating in the group discussion, one of the influential factors that determine how the interactants express their conflicting views is their previous life or work experience.

When completing Task B, Lexie enthusiastically participated and freely displayed her stance on different projects, whether agreeing or disagreeing. She explained that this is because she is now working for a student society at Lancaster University and she had had a similar

experience in the last two weeks. However, even though she was certain about her experience as a student representative and it seemed to her that she was more knowledgeable, she still expressed her conflicting viewpoints politely. As she said,

“Yeah (I was expressing disagreement to Nourah and I was doing it in a polite way). I think. I think. Right now, I’m a part of a society at the university. And we’ve done something similar 2 weeks ago and I was thinking about that in my head although probably I shouldn’t. I know that it costs a lot of money and it takes a lot of preparation. So when I had that in my head, when Nourah said it’s too much money, I thought actually it’s not because preparing all of these things and get everything sorted for everybody can cost a lot. So I wasn’t sure that’s my disagreement but in a polite way.” [Lexie: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

The last account which exemplifies the importance of personal experience is extracted from the interview comments of Nourah. She mentioned her negative experience when she was a tertiary school student in Saudi Arabia where showing disagreement with her teachers was disapproved of and could result in failing a course. As such, Nourah still tried not to show her disagreement particularly in a similar academic context. In Nourah’s case, her past experience had formed a negative attitude towards expressing disagreement.

“I just to avoid (attacking other group members) because in my country before when you have like an opposing you know view to what our teacher is saying. Sometimes some of our teachers really get upset. And some of them can really get you... you know, you may fail in one subject. So yeah. It’s good to keep away because you know in a third level we had a teacher like that. So ok that’s it. I had this experience before. Now I should keep silent in academic life. But in real life, no I interact with others.” [Nourah: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

Speakers’ disagreeing practices can be influenced by their own experience in two different ways. Firstly, the participants were likely to express more in the group discussions if they could apply their previous life, work or study experience to defending their decision. With this, they would have a firm ground or argument to support their disagreement. Also, having more experience allowed the participants to be confident and strongly express their opinions, especially those which were different from the group, as in Lexie’s case. Secondly, if the participants had had previous negative experiences with expressing disagreement itself as in Nourah’s case, purposeful silence or silent disagreement was likely to be their preferred choice.

In the following section, the focus will turn to different factors which are related to interlocutors' side.

6.4 Other-oriented factors

When it comes to human interactions, it is not the sum of an individual speaker's characteristics (Arundale, 2006) that matters, but it is the close-knit interrelationship between speakers and their interactional contexts. This section focuses on the influence of interlocutors' factors or speakers' perceptions towards their interlocutors on the way speakers interact and express themselves in the group discussion.

6.4.1 Interlocutor's cultural background

Given that the two discussion groups were composed of participants from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, this resulted in highly different interactional norms and styles. Apart from the cultural backgrounds of speakers themselves which determined their interactional practices in general and disagreement realisations in particular, their perceptions of their interlocutors' cultural backgrounds could also affect the way a communicative act of disagreement was produced.

In Catalina's account, she explained that when she wanted to show her different opinions, she needed to take into account information about the cultures of her group members she was not familiar with. Catalina's interview comment shows that she was afraid that due to cultural distance she might make her interactant, in this case Yoonsuh, feel uncomfortable.

"(When I want to express my opinions, especially argument or disagreement, I need to consider) The cultural background of each participant, I think. Because I'm thoughtful. I wouldn't put in another way because maybe I didn't master. I wouldn't. But I think mostly, to be honest, I just considered Yoonsuh's background rather than the other participants'. Because I've done this testing thing with them beforehand. Because I do know what is comfortable and uncomfortable for them according to what they say. Maybe they lied. I don't know. But with with Yoonsuh, I don't know her so much. So and she's from Korea and that's the country I've never known anybody from this country. So you'll never know. It's just like you. You're from Thailand. You're the first person from Thailand. I'm never too sure if

you're going to feel uncomfortable with something. Or if you I don't know you react badly with something I say." [Catalina: G2-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The influence of an interlocutor's cultural background was also of great concern for Lexie who was from Cyprus. From her account, it is evident that she was very careful with interacting with her group members who were from five different cultures. As she said, each individual participant had his or her own way of expressing and, especially, perceiving ideas. She thus needed to be very careful when she expressed her opinions because she did not want to find herself attacking or offending others and put herself in a conflict situation. Moreover, she did not want to be misperceived as rude and "sneaky" because of different cultures and norms of interpretation. She thus used a particular linguistic form of disagreement which could provide her interlocutors with room for both agreeing and disagreeing which, in her case, was ambiguation (see Chapter 4).

"Like I mentioned before when we were watching the video, I'm trying not to be very direct because of... that like different cultures have different ways of perceiving language. And you don't want your opinion to come across very strong to people because in some cultures, that might be rude or offensive or it might start a fight. So you just... I just try to hold back a bit. I expressed what I wanna say but I do it indirectly... just to make sure that people will get my point and they can they understand that they can either agree or disagree with me. I'm not like you should agree with me because otherwise I will get mad or something like I'm trying to be very like not sneaky but like trying to compromise on my language use because you just need to be considerate of maybe the level of language that the other person is using or the way they think because of their culture or like different like cultural... what's the word?... customs they have. So you need to be careful with what you're saying. Yeah." [Lexie: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The following account was given by Roxane from Switzerland when she watched her recorded Task B group discussion. She is another participant who was aware of the influence of the cultural diversity of her group members and she also revealed that this affected the way she expressed herself in the interaction and especially her different opinions. She explained that she would adjust her language according to her interlocutors. As she said, if they came from a less reserved culture like those of Europe, with which she was familiar, she could be more expressive and direct in her way of expressing disagreement. In contrast, if they were

from a more reserved culture, she would necessarily be more careful with her response. This was obvious especially when she had to show Yoonsuh her opposing point of view. She reported that she had to make her disagreement less aggravated or threatening and more pleasant for Yoonsuh who was from an indirect culture.

“Yeah. I think I do act quite differently with different cultures. I kind of my behaviour is definitely influenced by it. Because if I speak with people let’s say from like sort of Central European backgrounds that are very close to where I am all with, I will be quite outspoken. I will be quite happy to be loud and affirmative about my opinions and where if I speak with people that are from... I guess more reserved backgrounds, I find that people from different cultures can sometimes be quite reserved and very polite and so I feel like I will also not as openly disagree with them but say it in a more like kind of sugar-coated way, kind of match their level of politeness and their level of holding back. So I would probably not very openly disagree with Yoonsuh who is quite timid about her opinions. But someone like Jimmy or Catalina who I feel like they are outspoken themselves, probably because of their cultural background, I feel quite comfortable with.” [Roxane: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

As can be seen from the accounts above, how disagreement is realised can heavily depend on speakers’ perceptions or attitudes towards their interlocutors’ cultural backgrounds. It appears that when speakers’ and their interlocutors’ cultures greatly differ from each other, the speakers are likely to adapt their way of expressing themselves and their conflicting opinions to adapt to their group members’ interactional cultures. It tends to be easier for speakers when they are with those who have similar norms of interaction or with those who come from a more direct culture. However, this is not the case when speakers interact with those who are from a more reserved culture.

6.4.2 Interlocutor’s sharedness or common ground

In amicably disagreeing in ELF academic group discussion, Caroline mentioned the influence of what she shares with her other group members on her practices of disagreeing. She stated that because she and the other participants are students they all have similar experiences. Moreover, she perceives the group discussion as an opportunity in which she can build up a social bond, especially in her first group discussion where the group members were asked to share their own opinions on certain topics. Also, because she and her group members still have

a class together, she finds no reason to express her true feeling or opinions against other participants which, she thought, can help her more with the maintenance of good working and longer-term relationships. As she explained,

“Mhm. Yeah (I’m aware of attacking others when I disagree with someone). Because I think this is you’re all students and you all share the same experiences. And you’ll see them in your courses. Those people are sitting around you. So I think it’s also just an opportunity to hear what they have to say to get to know them rather than it will be like a debate where you have to say no this is your opinion that’s wrong. Now I’ll tell you my reason while my opinion is right. So it was just to er kind of create social bonds and that’s why you don’t want to say that you disagree. That’s why I say, that’s interesting or I have to say I agree with you. That’s kind of thing.” [Caroline: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The practices of disagreeing can also be constrained by what speakers and their interlocutors have in common. Being a student on the same module, having similar interactional practices all influence how disagreement is produced and how it can be mitigated.

6.4.3 Perceived negative effects of disagreement on interlocutors and/or how to prevent them

The perceived negative effects which may result from a communicative act of disagreement are found to be the most prominent factor in the present study. Most participants articulated as their main concern the perceived negative effects of a communicative act of disagreement. Obviously, according to Chapter 4 and 5, they put a lot of effort into decreasing or even avoiding disagreement. Their attempts can be construed from their comments while they were watching back their own interactions.

The first account was made by Unyil. He stated that in disagreeing he needed to take into account the possible effects of disagreement on his group members’ feelings. As a result, when disagreeing, he would produce it in such a way that his interlocutors could not perceive that he was angry or irritated.

“Make sure that when you’re explaining your arguments, nobody feels like disrespected or being attacked or being violated by your words. And if you say that, for example, you can’t bear with it anymore try to say but try to express it

your disagreement but in a way that they are not going to be able to recognise that you get angry, for example, even you really angry at them totally. Something like that. I think that's really important." [Unyil: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

In Jiro's case, because he found direct disagreement rude and it could offend or hurt his hearers, he needed to be very cautious. In this interview comment, he explains how he adjusted his words in order that his interlocutors would not feel bad or embarrassed.

"I found it rude to say that explicitly. So I thought I should listen to what they say and adjust it a little bit so that I won't hurt them all or make them feel bad or embarrass them or something like that." [Jiro: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

Lexie also mentioned what she needed to consider if she had to express her disagreement. When disagreeing, she explained that she tried not to be perceived as attacking or aggressive.

"Probably yeah... because I don't wanna be aggressive or to attack like passive-aggressive or attack people in the way I talk. I would just let them finish what they had to say and then disagree in my own way. And whether they would understand the way I'm disagreeing or agreeing with them, that's they are their problem. Not mine. So..." [Lexie: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

Like other participants, Sakura also prioritised her interlocutors' feelings. She said that to disagree with someone, she would not do it directly. This is because she was concerned about her interlocutors and she seemed to believe that the appropriate way to express disagreement was to do it in an indirect way or by combining agreement and disagreement making sure positive comments came first. She also noticed this similar strategy with her group members. In this case, she often used pragmatic or non-performative disagreement in which partial agreement (yeah-but structure) was employed.

"Yes (I need to think about my interlocutor). Maybe... it's a very unconscious process. So I can't say clearly. But maybe when people say something not bad thing not a good thing including disagreement or some bad comments, I think yeah the people should think about their listeners. That's why we share the

strategy that puts something, good things first. Not tell bad things straightforward.” [Sakura: G2-TA—stimulated recall interview]

Caroline’s comment stresses the unfavourable effect of disagreement on interpersonal relationships. She reported that a communicative act of disagreement itself was not always unpleasant but it should be made at the right time and it should also be produced in the right way. In order to maintain good working relationships, according to Caroline, disagreement should be made in an indirect and friendly way.

“Yeah. I think it’s maybe because like other people they’re participants. They’re quite nice people and I’ll see them more often as well. And so you want to maintain a good relationship with them. So you have to be friendly. So that’s why you don’t want to really attack them directly on their opinions but you try to be cooperative and.... Well, I think for some because like of course you always have your own opinions and I don’t think it’s necessarily bad to disagree with someone. But if you do all the time or if you do it in very direct way, maybe they will like you less.” [Caroline: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The above accounts highlight participants’ awareness of the potential negative effects of disagreement on their interlocutors and the relationship of both parties. Despite differences of culture and interactional norms, to minimise its unpleasant effects especially on interpersonal relationships, participants purposefully and consciously chose appropriate forms to express disagreement at an appropriate time.

6.4.4 Interlocutor’s strength of feeling

From the following accounts, a clear preference for not expressing disagreement or mitigating the strength of disagreement depends on the strength of feeling with which an interlocutor may hold a given opinion.

When it comes to the influence of interlocutors’ strong feelings or their needs, Caroline also mentioned their influence on the way she expressed her opposing views in the group discussion. The following account was given when she talked about her own interaction while completing Task B, the decision-making task. In the group discussion, it was obvious that Lexie strongly supported the financial crisis project. However, Caroline thought that the scheme was

not practical because the proposed amount of money was not enough for paying tuition fees. Because Lexie had clearly and firmly showed her preference for the project, describing it as “very important”, when she finished her turn, Caroline abruptly expressed her conflicting opinions:

“I think maybe because Lexie was really kind of really strongly in favour of this. So I thought if I don’t say something maybe like very quickly, we will agree to spend the money. Because people said yeah yeah yeah financial crisis you’re right. So I think I found like maybe I can prevent her from spending the money on this because I thought it was maybe not a good idea. And I think Lexie she did very well in convincing everybody. She spent the money like she had a lot of arguments. Yeah, exactly. And I thought maybe yeah if I say something now, then we can talk about it more or maybe come to a conclusion that it’s not a good idea. So I think maybe that’s fine.” [Caroline: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

This was also clear in the Group 2 data. The childcare project was not Roxane’s choice to be allocated funding. However, Catalina strongly expressed that she needed the project. Roxane explained that when her group members exhibited their personal experience or needs, she could not overlook it and say no. In this case, she had to hold back and find an appropriate way to express her different point of view.

“It’s just the same thing again as with the childcare at the beginning, if someone recalls that personal kind of experiences and quite personal strongly opinion. Because their opinions will be stronger if they talk about something that personally affected by and which here Catalina is talking about then you can’t really go in and say your problems are not worth spending money on. It’s quite sensitive so decided to hold back. I said my things that I thought and I did hold back.” [Roxane: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Many of the comments above stress speakers’ attention to and concerns over the possible negative effects caused by a communicative act of disagreement on their interlocutors’ well-being. By doing so, when disagreeing, the ELF participants necessarily take into account their hearers’ personal information and reactions which emerge over the course of the interaction in order that they can adjust or tone down the strength of the way they defend their opinions.

6.4.5 Interlocutor's previous life, work or study experience

In addition to the influence of speakers' experiences of their own life, work or study, those of their interlocutors could also drive the way ELF speakers show their opposing ideas.

Caroline, for instance, even though she did not agree with what her interlocutors were saying, could not express her feeling because she felt her interlocutors' experience overrode her own judgment. As such, her choice was to keep silent.

"Not really. Just like what I said before. I didn't know what to say. And yeah I mean it's an experience so that that's always right I think. It's not something to disagree with. That's just how she feels here." [Caroline: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The same holds true for Roxane who thought that even when her experience differed from others in the group, she did not necessarily show her different point of view. This account was given by Roxane when she was commenting on how she completing the Task A group discussion. As she said, Catalina had to both take care of her family and study while she, Roxane, was only responsible for her studies. At a particular moment in group discussion, the group members were discussing the split of coursework assignments. Catalina preferred having it separated into small pieces of 2,500 words. With a small daughter, she said she could not spend a whole day or night writing a long paper. Her preference was thus to have several small assignments. However, this was not Roxane's favoured choice. Because she had a plan to get a PhD, she thought that a longer assignment would better prepare her to do more serious research. As Roxane said, given these different preferences resulting from the different life experiences of individual members, she had to remind herself not to judge Catalina's different experience.

"Well, it's kind of difficult to... I guess disagree or even agree with someone else's perspective if it's so different from your own because Catalina was talking about her like very specific situation of caring for a child while she was still doing her MA, which is something that... it's completely foreign to me because I just focus on my MA. So all the considerations that she kind of how about why she likes something different than I do is don't apply to me. So... Yeah. I try to think why... I'm probably referencing something kind of in that experience... sometimes to think... I think it has to do with the fact that people are older than me. Like most of the participants are in quite different stages of life so I found it quite hard to

kind of over sympathise with their problems because I have like especially the MA thing. I'm like I have just this and this is kind of my life at the moment. I don't do anything else that I need to worry about. So that kind of influenced the way that I would maybe have to hold myself back a bit from disagreeing with them. Because I would have to like remind myself, 'No. You have to consider that they have other things to think about. Because they're in a different stage in life.'
[Roxane: G2-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The speakers seem to prioritise and value their interlocutors' personal experience. From the comments above which were given when the participants shared their experience of living in the UK and studying in the department, even when the speakers and interlocutors had opposing opinions, when it came to revealing personal experience, speakers were aware that it was not a thing that could be judged and disagreed with.

6.4.6 Interlocutor's interactional styles

Drawing on participants' stimulated recall interview comments, the interactional styles of their group members were reported as another factor which can determine how disagreement is produced.

In this example, which was extracted from Haeun's comments on her Task A interaction, she mentioned Lexie's interactional style was to enthusiastically and confidently express her opinion. In this case, she did not want to express hers which was opposed to that of Lexie. She thus opted not to express her disagreement since she avoided being a part of a conflict situation.

"She strongly expressed her idea. So I couldn't. Yeah (her interactional style affected me). I think she's just expressed strongly her opinion so I couldn't express my opinion because it's too like against to her. Yeah (I was aware that I might offend her). So I don't want to be in that situation." **[Haeun: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]**

The comment given by Haeun in Task A supports her perception towards the influence of her interlocutor's interactional style on whether or not she would express her disagreement. In her account, if her interlocutor was very direct and aggressive, she would not say anything because she wanted to avoid conflict. Haeun's comments on both tasks are good evidence for

confirming the influence of group members' interactional practices on how the participants express themselves in group discussion.

"I would not talk anything if they're too direct or too aggressive. I just don't tell anything because I don't want to join that confliction. So I wouldn't tell anything. Just keep silent and listen." [Haeun: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

In another account, Caroline reported that her reactions in the group discussion would vary in relation to her group members' interactional styles. That is, when she realised that her group members were expressing themselves strongly and there was a possibility of confrontation, she would be less participatory and this would result in silent disagreement.

"Maybe if they were more direct, I would probably say less. Yeah. I don't think I'm a very kind of confrontation person. So if they were just really going into a heavy debate about stuff, I think I would maybe keep out of it a little bit. Yeah. So I think it can have an influence." [Caroline: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

Jimmy's account reveals that how he expresses his opinions heavily depends on the way his group members interact in the group discussion. However, in Jimmy's case the response was the reverse of Haeun and Caroline's. He explained that although direct disagreement is not common for British people, in some situations in which he found his interlocutors arrogant, overly talkative or unpleasant, he would express himself and his opinions in a more aggravated way.

"I couldn't really say. I'm not sure. And they maybe... there're certainly British people would say, 'I disagree. I don't.', you know, in certain situations. It may... it may depend... who's saying it. Again, it's hard to know consciously. So if it was someone possibly who I didn't like or I thought was speaking too much or was a bit arrogant, I might come with more direct language and say, 'No. You're completely wrong. That's not true.' You know, so what I sent I didn't feel anything like that." [Jimmy: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Like Jimmy, Roxane would adjust her way of expressing disagreement in accordance with her group members' interactional behaviours. She explained that if she found her group

members direct, she would raise up the strength of how she expresses herself in the group discussion. In the other way around, if they were reserved or indirect, she would tone down the way she defends her ideas.

“Yeah (I strongly agree with the influence of my group members’ interactional styles on the way I express my disagreement). Yeah. So Jimmy and Catalina who were themselves quite outspoken. I definitely like would be more comfortable with being direct with them as well whereas Yoonsuh and Sakura, I would be maybe more timid because they are less direct.” [Roxane: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

It is evident from the above comments that ELF speakers are likely to adjust the way they show their opposing opinions in accordance with their interlocutors’ interactional styles. In doing so, they could either: (1) increase or decrease the strength of the way they show their opposing ideas in order to fit in with their interlocutors or; (2) be less participatory or even say nothing in order to avoid conflicts among group members.

6.4.7 Interlocutor’s age

The influence of age difference between speakers and their interlocutors is also a prominent factor for Asian participants—Jiro, Mei, Nourah, Haeun, Sakura, Yoonsuh and Unyil—while such a factor is not mentioned by the participants from European and South American countries. The following accounts highlight the influence of group members’ age on speakers’ realisation of disagreement. In the first account, Haeun from Korea explicitly stated that her Korean culture prevents her from expressing disagreement particularly with, or in front of, those who are older than her:

“Really (because of Korean culture, I hardly express disagreement), especially in front of older people. Never. It never happen really, especially in front of teacher or professor or just older than me older person.” [Haeun: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

Unlike Haeun, according to her comments on questionnaire responses during the stimulated recall session, Yoonsuh, who was also from Korea, did not realise the role of her

interlocutors' age in her disagreement practices even though she admitted that her Korean culture prioritises this factor. This might be because she was the second oldest in the group (younger only than Jimmy who was in his 50s). In addition, based on Yoonsuh's interview, age would be taken into account by her only if the discussion group consisted of members from the same country. But in this case, she was interacting with those who were from Chile, Japan, Indonesia, Switzerland and the UK. As she put it,

"Yes (if there had been older group members), I would (have changed the way I interacted). Because in Korean culture, the age is very important but I was talking with the westerners and other students from Indonesia. And then I think Chile? So age factor wasn't yeah influential. This would be different if I had talked with the Korean people." [Yoonsuh: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Unyil from Indonesia was another participant who explicitly reported the influence of interlocutor's age on the way he expressed his opposing opinions. In the group discussion, Yoonsuh was describing Korean women, stating that she thought they were submissive and polite. However, this was not convincing to Unyil who believed that Korean women were not as polite and submissive as what Yoonsuh was telling the group. Although Unyil disagreed with Yoonsuh, he chose not to say anything because he did not want to offend her and because he realised that Yoonsuh was older than him.

"(laugh) It's not. Right? Her statement is completely different from what I experienced. (laugh) Not really like that include South Korea women are bullshit. No (I didn't say anything), I couldn't. (laugh)... she's older than me. Something like that." [Unyil: G2-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The influence of interlocutors' age on interactional practices was again mentioned by Unyil when he was watching himself completing Task B back. He positioned himself as being like a son interacting with his father when he was with Jimmy and like a nephew interacting with his aunt when he was talking with Sakura.

"Yeah. I tried to put that aside to put that variable aside. But I can't. Jimmy is 52 years old. Oh. He's like my father. (laugh) Sakura is 34. She is like my auntie. Oh my god. (laugh) It comes up within my mind. How can I cope? Yeah (I need to be

a bit considerate). I don't know whether it's a good or bad attitude." [Unyil: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Although some Asian participants did not directly mention the influence of their interlocutors' age on their interaction, they did not deny such influence especially if a group member component is altered. For Jiro, for example, interlocutor's age has no effect on his way of expressing disagreement because of the fact that he did not know their age details and he also perceived that his other group members were younger than him.

"(I strongly disagree with the influence of age on the way I expressed disagreement because) I don't know their age. (laugh) Right? I can guess that they're younger than me but I didn't how young they were. (But if there were older Japanese) Yes, I will (change the way of interacting). Definitely, it will affect my interaction. Yes." [Jiro: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The data from the stimulated recall interviews reveals that the influence of interlocutor's age on disagreement practices is likely to be prominent among Asian participants. In particular, the young Asian participants, according to their comments, are more aware and cautious of expressing themselves in front of older Asian group members. However, the questionnaire data reveals that the older group members from Asian backgrounds did not realise the influence of age difference and they did not modify their own disagreements because of the age difference. However, when this issue was proven further in the stimulated recall interview sessions, they admitted that age could be influential only if there were older participants from the same country.

6.4.8 Interlocutor's gender

Gender is another factor that influenced the level of aggressiveness of disagreement. The stimulated recall data from the Swiss participant, Roxane, reveals that she was likely to adapt her interactional style to suit her interlocutors' gender. She stated that when she talked to Catalina, she tended to comply with Catalina's ideas. On the contrary, when she interacted with a male group member who, in this case, was Unyil, she was more likely to express her opinions explicitly, and when she needed to show her opposing opinions, she would do so in a more

direct way. This raised the issue of whether gender solidarity was a factor which led to more agreeable interactions between women in the group. As Roxane put it,

“I think you mostly have to do with when I speak with women, I’m quite inclined to... how do I phrase it better?... I like to agree with them on things that we are both supposed to care about. So something like that came up here like childcare, I would be quite like, ‘Oh yes I can see your problem and I’m willing to agree with you on this’. That comes up with in various other things, kind of throughout life and I don’t know when you talk with someone about maybe feelings they have about something then goes that quite, ‘Oh yes. No, I can see your point.’ And that’s kind of how I interacted with especially Catalina here with the childcare situation where I would be quite.... Like with Unyil, I would quite direct in disagreeing with him because I found like I don’t know the dynamic that is different.” [Roxane: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

In a similar manner, Unyil also found gender influencing his interactional behaviours especially when he perceived his female group members going off topic. He evoked the common stereotype that “women are talkative”. Instead of saying something to draw them back to the topic of conversation, he said nothing.

“Yeah. Woman talks much. (laugh) Yeah (if women talk, I’ll let them talk). Let them talk. There’s no point to interrupt there. (laugh)” [Unyil: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

The issue of interlocutors’ gender lays stress on the fact that ELF interactions are highly complex. Contextual information, which in this case involves the interlocutors’ awareness of each other’s’ personal characteristics, is indispensable to make sense of how interactants interact in certain interactions and needs an analysis of *in situ* evidence.

6.5 Situation-oriented factors

In addition to speakers’ personal and interpersonal factors that influence the realisation of disagreement in academic group interactions, localised features that emerge ad hoc in the interactions can also shape the different forms of disagreement. When it comes to situation-oriented factors, they include the group discussion context, group influence, a particular

moment in the interaction, the presence of a particular interlocutor, seating position, task characteristics and the topic of conversation.

6.5.1 Context where discussion takes place

The participants' stimulated recall data illustrates the influences of the particular interactional context on how the participants show their dissent. For instance, Nourah reported in her interview session that practices within an academic context can also govern the way ELF participants dissent. In this first example, she could show what she really thought since completing the tasks was not being evaluated or graded. However, because the context itself was, in this case, still an academic context, it made her feel she had to provide logical reasons to justify her choice when disagreeing.

"Yeah. You know, in this kind of context that we were in, you know, allows me to speak because we're not really assessed. We're not really, you know, something that you can interact easily with others. But if I see my... it's sometimes I don't really have a logic disagreement, you know, behind logically based on logic things. So I keep on not saying. Yeah silent." [Nourah: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

In congruence with Nourah's comment, Jimmy also found the context in which the group discussion occurred influencing how he dealt with his opposing opinions. In the interview session, Jimmy was asked to clarify his use of the phrase 'it depends' to express his different point of view. He explained that this was not typical of British people. Rather, it was the difference of the speakers' educational level and also the context of a university where the interaction occurred that made him use it. From Jimmy's stimulated recall data, because all of the participants were MA students, they were educated and able to justify their choice. The use of 'it depends' thus not only allows a speaker to indirectly disagree with his or her interlocutor but also shows the speaker's critical thinking and their level of education. As he put it,

"I think maybe that's the difference in people's level of education. Or... maybe not their education but level of critical thinking because some questions they answer, 'It depends on other things.' So it's very difficult to always be categorical, especially here in the university environment, you know. You know, because there'll always be different interpretations. And... so do you think this is better or

that's better? Well, I can't answer it because it depends on that." [Jimmy: G2-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The participants' views on the influence of the context of interaction highlight the common practices of the interactional context which is, in this case, an academic setting where indirect disagreement is more preferable and the justification of speakers' decisions is required, as mentioned in Chapter 4.

6.5.2 Group influence or consensus

Group influence emerges as another prominent factor which evidently plays an essential role in not only the presence or absence of disagreement expressions but also the level of aggravation with which they are conveyed, particularly when the participants were in the Task B group discussion where they were required to defend their decisions on their chosen projects. More specifically, if speakers get more support from the group, it is likely that they will enthusiastically show their conflicting views and that they will possibly express them in a more aggravated way. This stresses the importance of gathering *in situ* information on speakers' practices of disagreeing.

Catalina's account, for example, clearly illustrates the influence of the group's decision on how she expressed herself and her opinions in the discussion. She said that in the group discussion, she needed to estimate the opinions of the other group members and also the opportunities for her to get actively involved in discussing her opinions, especially when those she had were different from those of other group members, in which case she might opt out of expressing them. According to her comment, she tried to avoid coming into conflict. As she explained,

"(When I have to express my disagreement I need to think about) Maybe what the other people think. So if more people agree with your opinion, then you can kind of collaborate in an argument. So yeah maybe person next to me say something that I agree with. Then, I can say another argument for this standpoint. So I think you have to take into account what the other people think. So you try to estimate what are their opinions... I think because if I feel like most people don't share the opinion that I have, I want to be a bit hesitant with saying it. And yeah. I don't know. I don't want to be very confrontational, especially since

like the other people they weren't very directly to each other as well. They were all really... (compromising)" [Catalina: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Nourah's account also stresses the important role of group influence on her interactional behaviour in the group discussion. She said that when she was doing Task B, despite the fact that she had her own chosen projects, especially the childcare project, she opted out of voicing her own preference since the other four group members were agreed on not allocating the very limited money to the project.

"Sometimes when they all agree about something, I can't really disagree. But and sometimes I want to say, for example, their point of the childcare centre thing. I wanted to say my opinion that we really need it. But you know, I tried to bring it another way like in not a really straightforward manner to say ok what about this? What about if you see it that way? You know, I tried to convince them in opening other doors. I think it could be impolite (to be straightforward). That's number 1. Number 2 being... you know, you have to have reasons. You have to tell others of your points without really saying it straightforward. Ok what about this? And I used to have, you know, because my family my dad always do that to us. Ok. He doesn't really say it straightforward. He comes from another way." [Nourah: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Nourah's account of giving up on the childcare project is in line with that of Jiro. Jiro was another person who included the project on his funding list. Even though he got support from Nourah, they were still in the minority of their group. In his account, he needed to draw back and listen to other group members' responses before he would decide as to whether and how he would express his own.

"I like the point of your question (Why I didn't say anything even I knew that Nourah was on my side"?). I don't know. Maybe... to feel comfortable about ...to make myself feel more comfortable expressing my opinions. If I know what others think, I can choose the strength of how I express my opinion... probably because... I'm just making it about maybe... to say what comes into my mind. Maybe maybe it's because... I don't really know the others so well. Yeah (I was waiting for maybe 2 or more people). Yeah. Maybe I were waiting for 2-3 people to back me up. That's the case that happens every time. There'll be something interesting to talk about." [Jiro: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Similarly, when Haeun was in the Task A group discussion, she was the only person who thought the university had failed to provide quick enough assistance during the worst power outages in almost a century in Lancaster. Because the majority of the group were satisfied with the assistance they got from the university as opposed to Haeun who thought that she had been badly treated during this hard time, she then let her voice go unheard. As she put it,

“Yes. And or actually later we had conversation about the blackout in Lancaster. I was surprised a lot because I thought the reaction of university was really bad but many other people think the university tried their best. So I was very surprised. But I didn’t express because except me. Others look like or they support the university.” [Haeun: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

The influence of the group decision can also be construed from Mei’s account. She explained that because she was in a group discussion, the group consensus should determine the final decision as to whether a particular project could be allocated funds. In this case, she had to comply with the group consensus even though she had a different opinion. Moreover, she explicitly stated that her decision needed to be the same as that of the group majority.

“Yeah. Because we are using limited money for the different projects. So we should make good use of the money. So I think during the interaction, people are not make their decision on their own because we’re in the group. So sometimes, you know, you know something that you think oh it’s... I disagree with your opinion but we’re in the group so I shouldn’t you know split it directly. Because what I’m concerned about is based on my stance, not other people. But if most of the participants are not agreed oh not agree with your opinion, that’s it. Because we’re a group. So I don’t think I have to say oh why you disagree with my suggestion. That’s not necessary to do that.” [Mei: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Another interesting account which exhibits the importance of group influence or group consensus on a particular speaker’s disagreement realisation is Unyil’s account of Group 2’s Task B discussion about which project to fund, given while he was watching his own recorded interactions back. The interview account was about a moment when most group members were disagreeing with Yoonsuh and her proposed wildlife walks project. This resulted in a situation in which Yoonsuh became the group’s target for disagreeing. In fact, investigation of the Group

2 members' response sheets showed that Yoonsuh was not the only one who chose the project. It turned out from the summary of the Group 2-Task B (see Appendix 5) response sheets that Unyil also wanted the project to be funded. Instead of also expressing his opposing opinion to support Yoonsuh, Unyil was almost completely silent. Even in the interview session, he did not say anything about that particular moment until he was shown his own response sheet. He admitted that he had wanted the project as well. However, because he did not want his idea to be perceived as absurd among the group members as that of Yoonsuh was being, he chose to keep silent. This was also the case in the interview session where he burst into laughter when asked about the project and felt awkward talking about the situation.

“Which one? Oh, wildlife walks. Yeah (I chose it). (laugh) I just don’t want to make a trouble. I thought like maybe I didn’t have any power to actually to impose what I think. So it’s better to just like stay low stay low. Actually I’ve seen the pattern. Ok. You said the instructions. You have to think about other people and then as well as like it should be balanced. Right? And then I try to organise and I spread it into 3 kinds if I’m not mistaken. Three kinds of categories Right? Something recreational. Something for psy’ something for health. And the last one about budget things. And in my opinion, it’s really better if we distribute within that 3 categories. But because nobody actually thinks in that way like ok let’s discuss about it if you find something interesting, we will fund it. It’s like ok maybe they have different way of thinking.” [Unyil: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

The above accounts shed light on the fact that speakers are likely to follow the group majority and conceal their own preference if they find their points of view different from others in the group discussion. In this case, they are unlikely to express them and, instead, take to silence as the best alternative. On the contrary, if they find that their opinions are similar to others, they tend to firmly express their opinions and there is a strong possibility that they will show their disagreement more explicitly or intensely. Such practices reveal that, in a multiparty interaction such as academic group discussion, group consensus evidently has a great influence not only on whether, but also on how, disagreement is expressed, particularly the use of the “oppositional alliance” strategy. These data therefore become evidence of why forming oppositional alliances is such a powerful strategic choice.

6.5.3 Particular interactional moment or situation

As mentioned earlier, disagreement practices can vary according to each individual speaker and his or her perceptions towards their interlocutors and the interactional situation. The issue here is what counts as an interactional situation. The participants mention a wide range of different situations that they perceived as important particular interactional moments.

The first account below, from Roxane, reveals that the conversational turn order in the group discussion can affect how the participants express their disagreement. Roxane stated that at a certain moment even though she had a different opinion, she could not express it fully and comfortably because she did not want to be the first person to show her opinion, in this case, disagreement. She thus needed to hold back and wait until other group participants started sharing their views.

“If I had been the first person to speak, then I would be a bit uncomfortable because I probably would have... Yeah. But that’s why I kind of held back and let other people speak first to get sense of where the discussion was going. And then see how strongly I can voice my opinion.” [Roxane: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

The influence of a particular interactional moment was also important for Unyil where he found that the stage of an interaction, especially if it was at the beginning of the interaction, affected whether or not he would express his different perspectives. This is because he needed to learn more about what other group members thought before revealing his own opinions.

“When usually in the beginning of conversation, I always try to think about what is happening around me. So that therefore even when somebody said something, I... it doesn’t mean I actually questioned him or her. I just want to see what is actually behind of their reasons. I usually try to think how I can involve myself within that. That’s basically what I was doing at that time maybe.” [Unyil: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

Apart from taking into account the particular stage of the group discussion, to make sense of how disagreement is formed, especially its level of aggravation, the analysis of what precedes a particular disagreement response turn is also indispensable. The following account was also given by Roxane when she was commenting on her Task B group discussion. In that

moment, she was strongly expressing her opinion opposing Yoonsuh who had proposed the wildlife walks project. From Roxane's account, she did this in a more aggravated way because this was not Yoonsuh's first attempt at persuading the others to fund the project even though the majority of the group members did not support the idea and had already rejected her proposal. At Yoonsuh's first attempt, her other group members, especially Roxane, had showed their disagreement in a mitigated way. However, when she brought this issue up again, Roxane responded to her proposal almost instantly and in a more aggravated way. As she reported,

"Yeah (this time it's a bit direct). I think well everyone voiced that disagreement kind of first time round in a more tentative way in saying that I don't think it would be. And then when Yoonsuh brought it up again, that's why so I make it more direct this time and just flare out say, no I don't think so. Because the first time you tried, I'm just kind of sugar-coated a bit and then at least I'm more confrontational then to just say no." [Roxane: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

This was also the case for Lexie who also realised the influence of a particular moment of an interaction on how and when she expressed her disagreement. In her account, when she wanted to show her conflicting opinions, she needed to wait for the right time, which in her case was when other group members had finished their turns. She would then choose to disagree in a way she thought was not attacking and aggressive.

"Probably yeah... because I don't wanna be aggressive or to attack like passive or aggressive or attack people in the way I talk. I would just let them finish what they had to say and then disagree in my own way. And whether they would understand the way I'm disagreeing or agreeing with them, that's they are their problem. Not mine. So" [Lexie: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

As in Lexie's case, when disagreeing, Jiro also needed to find the right time when he had plenty of information and when he could get in by not interrupting others. As such, he was waiting for the right moment in which to take the floor to join the conversation and express his opinions.

“Right. I disagree with that. Yeah (I didn’t say anything). Maybe it was still my listening time. I’m waiting for my turn. I’m waiting for the right time to say what I think.” [Jiro: G1-TA—stimulated recall interview]

In Caroline’s interview comment which is in congruence with Lexie’s and Jiro’s, to show her disagreement, she had to make sure that she understood her group members’ argument and that she would not interrupt others’ conversation. She thought that interruption was not a pleasant thing to do especially if she and her group members wanted to complete the task and end the interaction with a group consensus.

“I thought it was not the best idea to spend the money on the sport. I think maybe for her to finish the explanation and to listen to her argument. Because it may be interrupting. Yeah. That I don’t think that’s a good thing. If you try to come up with the solutions together, I think it’s best to wait and hear what they said before you. That’s all. Yeah.” [Caroline: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

The factor of a particular interactional moment underscores the fact that to make sense of complex and dynamic ELF academic group discussion, all information available about the speakers, interlocutors and especially situations in which meaning is being negotiated is necessary. This is because this information mutually plays an important role in establishing comprehensive insight into how interactants from highly diverse cultural backgrounds come into contact and why they perform certain disagreeing practices, especially the use of different levels of explicitness in disagreeing and the use of complex turn management (‘turn-waiting’, ‘turn-passing’ or ‘other-initiated disagreement turn dependence’).

6.5.4 Presence of a particular interlocutor

An individual speaker has his/her own beliefs and experiences which can be either similar to or differ from those of their group members. There would be no problem if they all shared the same or similar beliefs or experiences. However, in group discussion, quite often, they have conflicting viewpoints and whether or not they will decide to express their own point of view relies on many factors. The presence of a particular interlocutor, according to the participants’ stimulated recall interview comments, is another important issue that a speaker reported necessary to influence his/her way of expressing disagreement.

This is quite evident with Yoonsuh's case when she had to interact with Jimmy who was a native speaker of English. In her account, she perceived herself to be in an inferior position when it comes to debating. Superficially, this theme seems to overlap with her interlocutor's English language proficiency. In fact, in her group, there are some group members who are more proficient than she is but she never appears to be aware of that difference except in the presence of Jimmy, the British participant. She seemed to be anxious and thought that if she had expressed her idea which contradicted Jimmy, instead of being able to convince him, she herself would have been persuaded. Her decision in this particular interactional episode was thus to nonverbally show the awkwardness she felt through laughter. As she put it,

"Jimmy is a native speaker... and know what... If he if he started debating with this kind of, I thought that I might be convinced by you know his opinion. I didn't want that to happen. So I didn't so that's why I didn't start. I didn't I didn't say anything, I just laughed. Yeah (I'm afraid of debating or fighting with a native speaker). He's a native speaker. So eventually, or even if I have an argument reasonable I mean rational... rationale for my reason... Since he's a native speaker, I could be convinced. I could be persuaded. That so I was kind of yeah afraid it." [Yoonsuh: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

The next example is also extracted from Yoonsuh's report but from a different task (the topic-based Task A). In the interaction, Catalina from Chile was talking about Japanese politeness which she thought was more polite than British politeness. However, Yoonsuh, who was from a neighbouring country, Korea, was also very familiar with Japanese culture and interactional norms. She thought that Japanese people were not as polite as others might have experienced. Because of the presence of the Japanese group member, Sakura, rather than showing her opinion against what Catalina was saying to prove that Catalina's thought was not totally right, Yoonsuh chose not to say anything. When she watched her interaction back, she reported the following,

"I did (agree) and actually I was but if Sakura wasn't there, I would I would have said something that sometimes Japanese doing some... I mean even if they're polite but it's not a genuine politeness. I would say. But Sakura was there. I didn't want to upset her somehow. I was thinking about it actually. Japanese they are really polite but they're not actually... even though they're smiling but in the like a mind they might criticising you at the moment at the same time as they're

smiling. But they're smiling or something. I wasn't... so I didn't say that."
 [Yoonsuh: G2-TA—stimulated recall interview]

This is in congruence with Roxane's comment below, where she explains that the way she would verbally express her disagreement also depends on whether or not the relevant person is right there in the interaction. According to her interview comments, if the person concerned is present in the interaction, she may express her opinions unwillingly and if she does, she would do so in a mitigated manner.

"You have to kind of scale back your disagreement because you might be more willing to disagree like I would probably be more willing to disagree with someone if nobody in the room has been affected by the particular situation." [Roxane: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

From the interview comments above, obviously, it is not only interlocutors whom speakers necessarily take into their consideration when expressing their opposing ideas but they also have to think about the presence of 'third party' or other group members who might be affected by their opinions.

6.5.5 Nature of tasks at hand or topic of conversation

As mentioned earlier in the previous chapter, the sequence of tasks and their nature, which in this case were either topic-based or decision making-based, and the nature of conversational topics themselves can result in different forms of disagreement. The following accounts illustrate the characteristics of the tasks and topics which can affect the way the participants behave and interact in group discussion interactions.

Caroline, for example, clearly explained the reason why she was less participatory in her first group discussion (Task A or topic-based task). In the task, the participants were asked to talk about specific topics including British politeness, educational systems in their home country and/or the assistance provided by the university during the power outages if time permitted. In the discussion session, Caroline did not express much disagreement because of the nature of the task itself which was more like a casual conversation rather than a group discussion.

“Maybe I think in the first session, it was not as much a discussion but more a conversation. So we weren’t actually disagree with each other. We just, you know, told each other our experience such as our essay or the flood. Something like that. And I think when you when you have to really debate something or disagree about something, maybe it matters more if other people are really confrontational or if they’re kind of calm.” [Caroline: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

The fact that the nature of a task determines how disagreement practices are produced is also mentioned by Roxane, who found her first task, which in her case was Task B, inherently more debate-provoking and confrontational, because to complete the task, all group members had to come up with a group consensus. Regarding the characteristics of Task B, Roxane not only produced more instances of disagreement but also produced them in a more aggravated manner when compared to her following Task A group discussion session where she was only required to talk about the prescribed topics, so that the discussion tended more towards sharing personal experience.

“I think mainly that in the first we had to arrive at something at the end. So we had to reach a consensus like everyone had to agree and if you wanted your opinion to be represented in the final project, you had to kind of go strongly and then say I want this, I don’t want this whereas in the second one it’s more like everyone shared whatever experience they had or whatever opinion they had on the topics. So it’s more like having your opinion heard but nobody had to eventually agree with it.” [Roxane: G2-TA—stimulated recall interview]

Concerning Task B’s characteristics, Jiro’s comment also portrays how they moved the discussion in a particular way and, more importantly, how he interacted in his verbal exchange. He reported that with Task A where all group members were asked to share their opinions or experiences on certain topics he thought there was no need for him to agree. In contrast, with Task B where the group were required to reach consensus, even when he had a different opinion and he did express his disagreement, he could not insist on his standpoint, particularly if he wanted to complete the task.

“I think I wrote something like that on the questionnaire. This one we have to come to a conclusion. But the last one, we don’t have to so. It didn’t really matter

what we were actually thinking about. It didn't really matter if I was against someone else's opinion. But this one, I had to come to a conclusion. So if I wanted a childcare, I knew it would not work. So I just had to change my mind and gave up. If I don't agree, the task wouldn't be finished. Now I think that came into my mind was if I just keep on stating I want a childcare, the task will never end. I just should give up. Not about how, what others think or not looking at other people's faces as I said at that time. Childcare was not going to be at the front." [Jiro: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

In addition, from the participants' comments on their own recorded interactions, they also show that the topic of conversation can result in different realisations of disagreement. In the first quote from Lexie, she mentioned the influence of her knowledge of a specific topic on how she actively and defensively expressed her opinions. She said that if she knew more about the topic being discussed, she would strongly defend her opinions and she would not adjust the way she interacted with others.

"No. Because if it's a topic that I know what I'm talking about, I won't let other people step on my opinion or like influence my opinion or the way I will talk with them because I know what I'm talking about so why you should I like you to change the way I talk to you or the way I think." [Lexie: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

The importance of the topic of conversation also influences how Lexie opposes her group members, particularly when she finds it sensitive. She explained this with the case of Jiro when he talked about the effects of parents dying. Although Lexie found it irrelevant to the talk at hand, she chose not to say anything except showing her listenership.

"It's a sensitive topic. I was just trying to get Jiro's point when he explained it extensively afterwards. I did get it but I still disagree because you don't have to like your parents don't need to die to have a problem financially. I mean, some students struggle anyway whether their parents are alive or not because of the situation or because of the income that their household has. If you don't have a job, you can't really earn your own money. And if your parents don't send you money, then there's no way out. So I was trying to understand what he was saying, to be honest." [Lexie: G1-TB—stimulated recall interview]

These three accounts elicited from the participants while completing different tasks shed light on the fact that the tasks themselves also create their own proper ways of how conflicting views should be performed. In Task A where the participants are required to share their experience according to the topics provided, they are not likely to express their opposing opinions much, while in Task B where the participants are encouraged to debate and required to reach a group consensus, the participants thus need to show and strongly defend their decisions. From the above accounts, the topic of conversation can also influence the way speakers express their opinions. On the one hand, if speakers are knowledgeable about certain topics of conversation, they are likely to strongly and enthusiastically show their opinions, including their opposing ones. On the other hand, if the participants find the topic sensitive, they would opt out expressing their opinions.

6.5.6 Seating position

Although the seating positions of two parties—the disagreement source turn initiator and his/her respondent—in group discussion is not a prominent factor in this study, surprisingly, it reveals the fact that the proximity between a speaker and his/her interlocutor can be another factor that determines how an opposing view is performed.

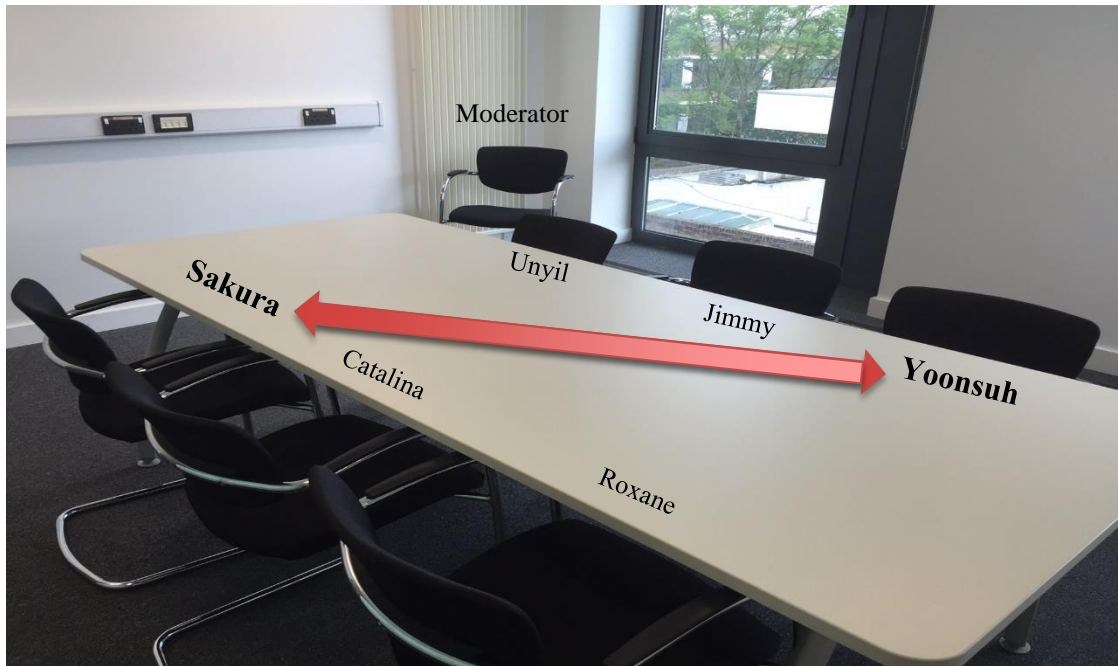
The following excerpt is taken from Sakura's interview comment on her interaction when she and her group members were making their decision on the childcare project. She clearly mentioned the importance of distance between herself and Yoonsuh as the following,

"Yeah. And then the position is also important. Maybe. Because there Unyil and I that's the most closer. The opposite and the closer, not Yoonsuh. If I sit... if I sat... opposite to Yoonsuh, maybe I would have said something at the point. Sort of actually, the physical condition... so the distance between the people also really affected our interaction.... yeah... in discussion and communication. Maybe I can easily to say something this area but not that." [Sakura: G2-TB—stimulated recall interview]

In the group discussion session for Task B, Catalina had proposed allocating the budget to the childcare project. Yoonsuh did not find the project beneficial for a large number of students except the small group of people who were parents and she expressed this in the group discussion. However, when Sakura watched her interaction back, she revealed that she had also

wanted the childcare project, but she had done nothing to respond to Yoonsuh's ideas. She explained that because she sat across from Yoonsuh at the other end of the discussion table, as illustrated in Figure 6.2, she thought that it was too far for her to feel comfortable responding.

Figure 6.2: Seating position of Sakura, Yoonsuh and her other group members



Interestingly, Sakura's comment given in the stimulated recall interview session shed light on the influence of physical distance between an initiator of a disagreement source turn and his or her interlocutor. The expression of disagreement would be less intense when speakers and their interlocutors are physically and/or psychologically distant. Put simply, when the sitting positions of both parties are far apart and especially if they are not familiar with each other, the expression of verbal disagreement is almost impossible.

The present study reveals that, in most cases, the participants generally tend towards less explicit disagreeing practices, especially when they do not have a strong attachment to the situated conversational topics. This is because the less explicit practices allow the participants to achieve the ultimate goals of academic group discussion which are to ensure their active participation, task completion and, at the same time, amicable interaction. However, the most explicit or performative disagreement is also found being used especially when the participants have certain personalities (e.g. outspoken, confident) and a strong attachment to the immediate

topic of conversation. The data also shows that the least explicit disagreement is generally influenced by the situated context of interaction which is unique to multi-party interaction and academic group discussion in this case. That is, the least explicit practices (both expressive and non-expressive) tend to be used when certain participants find their own ideas differing from those of the group majority.

At this point, it should be clear that, to perform certain disagreeing practices requires combining many diverse factors. On the one hand, through the participants' perspectives and perceptions, the participants reflect on the complex nature of disagreement and the underlying mechanisms which lead to its diverse surface forms. It is evident that disagreeing practices are related, to a large extent, to disagreement producers' personal traits and their perceptions towards their interlocutors (disagreement receivers) and the context in which the discussion takes place as well as the conversational situation that changes over the course of the interaction. The producers may explicitly show their opposing stance if they have a direct personality, a strong attachment to or feeling against a particular topic or they know a lot about the topic they are discussing. Moreover, they clearly display their concerns about their interlocutors' cultural differences, age, personality traits and especially their feelings.

In addition to people engaging in the conversation, the situation itself also determines how disagreement should be expressed. Group discussion in an academic institution has its own distinct norms of conversation. It is made up of group members with both converging and diverging ideas and they need to defend them to prove that their own ideas are more logical and acceptable than those of their counterparts. Quite often, group consensus becomes an important factor that prevents the participants from explicitly showing their opposing position especially when they are in the opposite position to the group consensus. All of these factors are very influential in whether or not and how disagreement is expressed. From another perspective, the practices themselves are revealing because they provide information about who their producers are, where they are from and what their attitudes towards disagreement are. Moreover, to a certain extent, they can specify the relationship between a disagreement producer and his or her receiver(s). Finally, through the regular use of certain practices or forms in the context of this study, particularly non-performative disagreement or less explicit disagreeing practices, the disagreement realisation can display the interactional norms or specific practices that are perceived as required and appropriate in a specific genre or community.

6.6 Summary and concluding remarks

This chapter has focused on the analysis of the factors influencing disagreement realisation. In the analysis of the influential factors, the focus is on the participants' accounts of how disagreement is produced. Based on stimulated recall interview comments and supported by questionnaire data, it is found that how disagreement is expressed heavily depends on many factors, ranging from those concerned with each individual participant, and those which are related to speakers' interlocutors to those which emerge during the interactions. The present chapter can now establish that the ELF participants' cultural and personal backgrounds as well as their perceptions towards a communicative act of disagreement vis-à-vis their interlocutors and the interactional situation in which they are participating all exert a powerful influence on their practices of disagreeing. The findings from the participants' metapragmatic comments reflect how they interacted in the group discussion in which English is used as a common means of communication.

The comments given by the 12 participants from 10 different language and cultural backgrounds underscore the complex nature of ELF disagreement practices. Their comments suggest that when disagreeing, ELF participants necessarily take into account a wide range of factors, both about themselves and the context in which the group discussion takes place. It is reported that speakers' different cultural backgrounds, familiarity with group members, English language proficiency, personality, previous experience and their feelings all determine how they express their opposing opinions. In addition to speakers' personal factors, their perceptions towards the interlocutors and their backgrounds—age, cultural backgrounds, negative effects, gender, interactional styles, experience, the amount of shared experience or common practice and feeling assumed—can also affect how disagreement is realised. Moreover, their disagreement practices are clearly governed by the interactional environment which includes the interactional context, group influence, a particular moment in the interaction, seating position, task characteristics and topic of conversation.

In ELF academic group discussion, the participants are highly conscious of the negative effects of disagreement and they enthusiastically select the most pleasant way to express their opposing opinions. The data clearly show that the ELF speakers in the present study work very hard on not only achieving interactional but also transactional goals. They enthusiastically and cautiously evaluate themselves, their interlocutors and the situation in which they are engaging. This is because they want to minimise such effects and at the same time maximise their good

working relationship. The following chapter, Chapter 7, brings together the findings from the discourse analysis of the realisation of disagreement and the stimulated recall data through which the influencing factors are revealed. Furthermore, the conceptualisation of disagreement in ELF group academic discussion will be discussed. Finally, the findings and the contributions of the present study will be explored in the light of the wider context of ELF communication.

CHAPTER 7

INTEGRATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

In the present chapter, the results from Chapter 4, 5 and 6 will be integrated as a single analysis and discussed to uncover the complex nature of the expression of disagreement in ELF academic group discussion. The chapter consists of five main sections. Section 7.2 summarises the findings of Chapters 4, 5 and 6 and relates these back to the original research questions. Section 7.3 then seeks to discuss these findings, suggesting that a theoretical understanding of both prior and situated context is vital for understanding the nature of disagreement realisation. In Section 7.4, the implications for theorising ELF interactions in general, and ELF spoken academic discourse in particular, will be discussed, with a focus on how the current findings challenge the long-held notion that ELF interactions are by their very nature “consensus-oriented, cooperative, and mutually supportive” (Seidlhofer, 2001, p. 143), and clarity-oriented (Björkman, 2011; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Dewey, 2007; Kaur, 2012, 2017; Mauranen, 2010). Finally, Section 7.5 summarises the present chapter.

7.2 Summary of findings

In this section I summarise the findings of the study as they relate to the two main research questions.

7.2.1 How do Master’s students from diverse linguacultural backgrounds express their disagreement in academic group discussion?

Drawing mainly on discourse analysis and partly on stimulated recall interviews, a total of 200 instances of disagreement were identified across the four academic group discussion sessions. It is likely that the developing familiarity among group members played a more important role in determining the number of disagreement instances than the task characteristics. That is, in carrying out the second task of each group, the participants seemed to be more relaxed and

comfortable expressing themselves and sharing their (opposing) ideas. In this case as the tasks were done in the opposite order in each of the two groups', for Group 1, there were more disagreement instances in Task B while they were nearly the same for Group 2. In contrast to the prevalence of disagreement, the *explicitness* of disagreement practices, to a large extent, relied on the task characteristics. That is, more explicit practices were identified in Task B, which was specifically designed to generate more conflict talk as participants needed to reach a group consensus in order to complete the task.

The data showed that the participants employed three main ways of expressing their opposing stance: most, less and least explicit (for full detail, see Chapters 4 and 5). By using the most explicit type of disagreement, the participants showed their differing opinions through the use of the performative verb 'disagree' or 'not + agree'. Use of the most explicit type of disagreement was, however, rare. More typically, participants showed their opposing stance by using less explicit disagreeing practices, which included previous turn non-content-related and previous turn content-related disagreement. With respect to previous turn non-content-related disagreement realisation, the participants conveyed their opposing stance through abrupt topic change. However, this was a relatively uncommon strategy. On the whole, participants typically performed previous turn content-related disagreement. More specifically, they expressed their opposing opinions by using statements of the opposite, rhetorical questions or – commonly – focus shift, which accounted for the majority of verbal disagreement instances observed.

In addition, the participants employed a wide range of mitigating devices, ranging across sound, word, discourse and turn levels, to further attenuate the possible negative effects of the communicative act of disagreement. At sound and word levels, the data show that the participants use pauses, sound lengthening, laughter, word repetition, hedges and prefaces. At discourse level, participants sometimes expressed regret and apologised after they had shown their opposing opinion. At turn level, the participants managed their disagreement turns through turn-waiting, turn-passing or throwing and other-initiated disagreement turn dependence (oppositional alliance forming).

Alternatively, drawing mainly on stimulated recall accounts, under certain circumstances (e.g. in seeking group consensus or when interlocutors demonstrate strong emotional investment with a topic), the participants sometimes opted not to show their divergent ideas verbally and, instead, drew upon least explicit practices or nonverbal

expressions, including gazes, facial expressions, smiling/laughter, head nodding, postures and silence. The participants in this study were likely to more frequently employ those nonverbal disagreeing practices which are ambiguous or which can convey multiple meanings or communicative intents i.e. smiling/laughter, head nods and silence. This is because the practices can be understood as either agreeing or disagreeing. These non-linguistic behaviours thus become another interactional resource for the participants to effectively manage disagreement within their group discussion.

In summary, then, the participants were shown to use a wide variety of strategies to express their opposing stance in academic group discussion contexts in which group members do not share linguacultural norms. Also, to complete the discussion tasks and build up and maintain rapport with their group members, the ELF participants in the present study tended towards less explicit disagreeing practices, and the use of complex and diverse mitigating strategies.

7.2.2 What factors do Master's students report as influencing their disagreeing practices in academic group discussions?

To account for what factors influenced interactants' disagreeing practices, the participants' stimulated recall accounts were analysed and presented (for full detail see Chapter 6). Given that disagreement is a necessary communicative act to obtain a group decision or mutual solution, it is indispensable. The discourse analysis presented within this thesis has demonstrated that disagreement in such contexts is likely to be carefully performed. It is evident from the stimulated recall interviews that the participants were highly aware of their disagreement production and its possible negative effects on interpersonal relationships.

From the participants' stimulated recall interview accounts, there were two main types of factors: internal and external or, according to Kecskes (2014), prior and situated context. These two main types of factors can be further divided into three sub-types—self-, other- and situation-oriented—which are found to influence the way speakers performed certain disagreeing practices. Internal factors (prior context) are, by definition, all self-oriented factors, while external factors (situated context) can be either other- or situation-oriented factors.

Self-oriented factors involve what the producers bring with them to the group discussion. In the current study, these included personality traits, beliefs, linguistic proficiency,

cultural background, knowledge or experience of the topic and interactional goals, and emotional investment or strength of feelings and needs. Other-oriented factors are those which are concerned with disagreement producers' perceptions of their disagreement receiver(s). The other-oriented factors which emerged through stimulated recall in this study included receivers' cultural background, sharedness or common ground, emotional investment, previous work or life experience, personal traits or interactional style, disagreement producers' concerns about their receivers' feelings, age and gender. Finally, situation-oriented factors involved the disagreement producers' perceptions of the immediate situation in which the group discussion was taking place and what was emerging during the interaction. The factors observed in the stimulated recall data include the context of interaction, group influence or consensus, the particular interactional moment, the presence of a particular interlocutor, task characteristics, and seating position.

Although all of these factors can be categorised into the three sub-types of factor described above, it should be kept in mind that, in any actual interaction, they are all interconnected and mutually determine the surface realisation of disagreement. For example, more explicit disagreement is likely to be used when the participants prioritise their own self needs and immediate group support while paying less attention to the threatening effects that greater explicitness may cause to their disagreement receivers (for more detail see Section 7.3.3). To maintain amicable and successful group discussion, the interview accounts indicate that the participants need to be attentive, flexible and adaptive. They appear to enthusiastically anticipate, or even pre-empt, those challenges and they manage their language use accordingly. These characteristics are likely to be unique to interactions where the participants are from diverse linguacultural backgrounds but share a common means of communication.

As such, to answer the second research question, the participants were shown to be influenced by diverse factors which are related to the disagreement producers themselves, their interlocutors (disagreement receivers) and interactional situations. Also, these factors are interconnected and they are dynamically negotiated over the course of the interaction.

7.3 Discussion of findings

This section aims to discuss the significance of the findings of the two research questions, dealing with the significance of the findings of each in turn, before integrating the discussion in 7.3.3.

7.3.1 Disagreement practices in academic group discussion

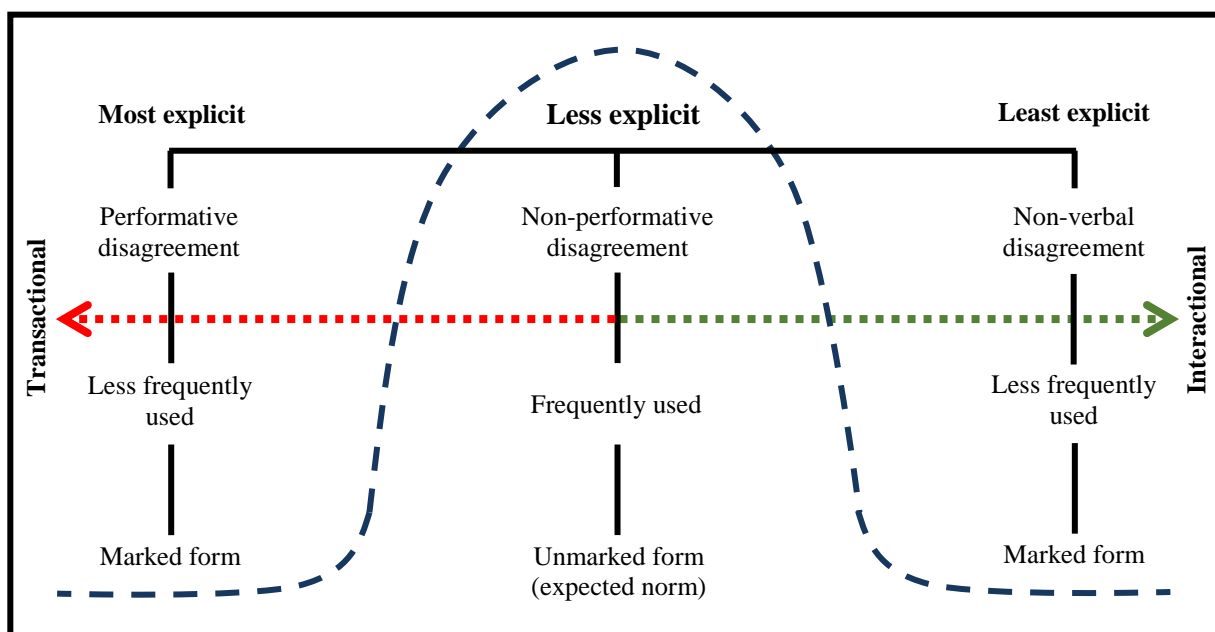
As mentioned in Chapter 4, there are 200 verbal and nonverbal disagreement instances across four academic group discussion sessions. The number of disagreement instances found in the present study is further evidence confirming the fact that disagreement can be an integral element of academic discourse (see Björkman, 2015), in which ELF academic encounters are no exception. As far as politeness is concerned, the high number of disagreement instances and diverse disagreeing practices in the present study is incongruent with the classic view of politeness, particularly the equating of (positive) politeness with avoiding disagreement and seeking agreement (Brown & Levinson, 1978/1987; Leech, 1983). It is evident from the data that in academic group discussion, disagreement becomes an important mechanism that leads to the achievement of group consensus, a mutual solution and task completion. This may be because for the first wave or classic view of politeness, the diversity of contexts and types of interaction as well as of cultural values towards the communicative act seems to be restricted.

Drawing on Spencer-Oatey's rapport management framework, the large number of disagreement instances (as well as the clear orientation towards disagreement in the participants' stimulated recall data) indicates that the communicative act was evaluated as behaviourally and contextually expected (Spencer-Oatey, 2005). The findings of this study provide more evidence of the need for a dynamic interactional perspective on politeness in order to be able to explain how disagreement is performed, especially in contexts where interactants are highly diverse. The data demonstrate that, in contrast with Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, no communicative act is inherently face-threatening (Spencer-Oatey, 2005; Watts, 2003). Rather, politeness is determined by the unique features of the immediate context. This approach is in keeping with the tenets of ELF, which sees every communicative situation as fluid and dynamic, and where norms of interaction are established *in situ*.

In addition to considerations of disagreement frequency, however, the study also provided insight through its exploration of the type of disagreement practices participants drew on most commonly. Figure 7.1 illustrates the three categories of disagreeing practices which emerged from the data: most explicit, less explicit and least explicit. At each end of the figure are situated the categories of most and least explicit disagreement, which were the most infrequently used disagreement types in the study. As such, they are perceived as marked forms (Locher, 2008; Locher & Watts, 2005; Watts, 2010) or unexpected practices (Spencer-Oatey, 2000) in the context under investigation. Despite their infrequent use, what is of interest here is that when they are used, these forms appeared to reflect the immediate conditions of the disagreement producers. That is, the **most explicit** practices were likely to be used when the producers had a very strong emotional attachment to a specific topic or issue of the discussion, especially when they were supported by others in the group. Interestingly, despite its less frequent use, most explicit disagreement did not appear to be face-threatening. Rather, it can be a means to enhance facework and rapport in interaction (Zhu, 2014) or even a sign of solidarity, especially in a multiparty interaction in which it is clear that such opposing views are endorsed by most of the group members. It is noteworthy, however, that for a disagreement receiver this can become seriously offensive, as actually happened with the Korean participant, Yoonsuh, when she came under attack for being the only person who wanted to allocate funding to the wildlife walks project (see Extract 4—2).

In contrast, the **least explicit** disagreeing practices appear to be used when the disagreement producers are more concerned about the interactional goals or where they perceive themselves to be in a vulnerable position and do not want to explicitly show their opposing stance. This suggests that participants are highly aware of their social/group rights and obligations. The choice of certain disagreeing practices thus reflects how the participants perceive their relationship with their interlocutors and group members as well as with the immediate interactional context. The appropriate practices can be understood as a reflection of the disagreement producers' needs to protect themselves and maintain good rapport with the others.

Figure 7.1: Disagreeing practices in academic group discussion and their markedness



In the present study, the participants tended towards using the **less explicit** practices. Such practices allow interactants to balance the achievement of both transactional and interactional goals. The use of less explicit disagreeing practices further highlights participants' sensitivity, attentiveness and ability to manage rapport in the interaction (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009) which is vulnerable to breaches of interactional norms and conflict. The data shows that, as far as less explicit practices are concerned, the use of focus shift, often embedded within partial agreement, is most frequently used (see Section 4.4.2). With respect to the latter, the data may provide a challenge to Brown and Levinson's argument (1978/1987, p. 113) that by the use of token agreement, interactants aim to pretend to agree. In the present study, token agreement becomes an important means for the participants to provide what is perceived (by disagreement producers) as correct information, and at the same time it allows them to convince other group members and build up group consensus (see Section 4.4.2). Also, at times, when token agreement is used, disagreement producers might want to convey that they do not totally reject the previous claim or idea but they want to provide a more practical idea or solution. In this case, by not totally rejecting the previous claim, the use of token agreement not only helps to attenuate the threatening effect of the communicative act but also to enhance the possibility of achieving group consensus. Moreover, it can also show the malleability of the participants' opinions. In these discussions, some stances are quite flexible, and not firmly held. Therefore, partial agreement can signify genuine partial agreement, and not just appear as a delaying

strategy. The use of less explicit disagreeing practices thus confirms the fact that academic discourse is inherently transactional (information-oriented) and interactional (rapport-oriented) (Ädel, 2011).

The study showed clearly that, apart from using less explicit disagreement, the disagreement producers also employed a wide range of mitigating devices. The use of mitigating devices together with less explicit disagreeing practices allowed the producers to further attenuate possible threats or offence which might be incurred by disagreement receivers, and simultaneously enhanced others' perceptions towards the producers themselves. The latter seems to be a unique characteristic of a multi-party interaction whereby disagreement producers do not want to be perceived as aggressive or offensive and even, perhaps, an obstacle within a group. Rather, the interactants in this study wanted to be evaluated positively, and they wanted others to perceive their good qualities rather than their negative ones (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, p. 14). Thus, to perform certain disagreeing practices, the considering effects on disagreement receivers and producers as well as other group members appear to be equally important.

Given that the ultimate goals of peer learning in academic group discussion are to help students develop their critical thinking and oral communicative skills and to extend their social networks (Beccaria et al., 2014; Bejarano, 1987; Topping, 2005), the use of most and least explicit disagreeing practices may be viewed as the least useful disagreement strategies. The use of most explicit disagreement might allow participants to achieve transactional goals efficiently, but at the risk of compromising interactional goals. By contrast, despite supporting the maintenance of amicable relationships, the use of least explicit disagreement appears not to be conducive to task completion, and does not serve to enhance self-expression.

7.3.2 Factors influencing disagreeing practices

The findings from this study suggest that participants were conscious that less explicit disagreeing practices were necessary to ensure smooth and amicable interaction. This is supported by House (2002), who suggests that participants in intercultural interactions are typically aware of possible linguistic and pragmatic problems resulting from a lack of shared interactional conventions or norms. The challenges thus become an opportunity for the present study to tap into how participants manage, monitor and regulate their language to express their opposing stance.

The stimulated recall interview data indicates that the participants appear to be linguistically and psychologically active in pursuit of the most effective and appropriate disagreeing practices for a particular situation and context of interaction. The data—mostly from stimulated recall interviews and partly from questionnaires—reveals that the realisation of disagreement is largely determined by three different factors, self-, other- and situation-oriented. The factors are related to the disagreement producers themselves, as well as their perceptions of their receivers and of the immediate situation in which they are engaged. This convergence of factors is illustrated in Figure 7.2. The stimulated recall data highlights the important role of what particular interactants bring to the interaction (internal or prior context), whom they are interacting with, and what is happening moment-by-moment over the course of the interaction (external or situated context). The data also shows that within group discussions, self-, other- and situation-oriented factors are constantly overlapping as they are dynamically negotiated *in situ*. There is no suggestion that one factor is more important than the others; rather, there is a complex interconnectedness of various factors. The prioritising of any one factor depends to a large extent on which aspects of interaction, whether transactional or relational, certain participants want to orient towards at any particular moment of the interaction (Spencer-Oatey, 2000).

Figure 7.2: Factors influencing diverse disagreeing practices



What is also of particular interest about the stimulated interview accounts is the revelation of diverse factors, including both those which can appear in “general” or “regular” interactions and those which are likely to be inherent to ELF interactions. The expression of disagreement in “regular” interactions can be influenced by interactants’ personality, age, gender, group member familiarity, strength of feelings, knowledge about the topic being discussed, possible negative impacts of disagreement, particular interactional situation, and other physical contexts of interaction (seating position, presence of a particular interlocutor). Unlike their counterpart, in addition to such factors, the expression of disagreement in ELF group discussion is uniquely influenced by interactants’ different levels of proficiency, and cultural knowledge as well as their different levels of exposure to intercultural communication where English is used as the only means of communication. These reported factors evidently exhibit the specific characteristics of ELF interactants who tend to be highly sensitive and adaptable to linguacultural diversity (Jenkins et al., 2011; Mauranen, 2012; Pullin, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2004; Wu & Lei, 2017).

Moreover, based on the stimulated recall data, the participants were evidently aware that they were in a particular community of practice, which, in this case, is in an international university, and that they are required to interact in a certain way. Institutional interactions as in this study, therefore, to a certain extent guide what is perceived as appropriate or expected ways or practices of communication and interaction (Spencer-Oatey, 2005). However, this is not to say that the participants need to follow this unwritten rule strictly. Rather, it is only a broad frame that helps guide the participants, particularly when there is a lack of mutual interactional norms. Given that it is a broad frame, it is not restrictive and allows for individual differences, the characteristics of interlocutors and immediate situational negotiation. What is of most prominence in the present study, thus, is that the appropriate practices are very fluid and that they very much depend on the particular characteristics of the participants themselves, the group (power relations, familiarity among group members, linguacultural differences), the type of interaction (group discussion), the setting (academic context), and at the same time also the situated context. The participants are constantly reading, or even anticipating, each other. For example, they may change to more explicit practices when supported by the majority of their group members. Conversely, they may opt out of saying anything or just display micro-cues such as frowning or smiling. This stresses the importance of both transient and context-specific influences on the participants’ use of particular disagreeing practices or the fact that the

participants are constrained by unwritten rules of conduct in the immediate situation (Hynninen & Solin, 2017).

The incorporation of disagreement producers' pragmatic judgment extends our understanding about the factors that can influence how disagreement is produced in a complex and fluid context such as ELF interaction. Drawing on the stimulated recall data, the expression of disagreement, particularly with the use of those at the two opposite ends of the explicitness scale—most explicit (disagreement with performative verb 'disagreement') and least explicit practices (silence)—is not simply influenced by interactants' low linguistic proficiency as found in the previous literature (Bardovi-Harlig & Salsbury, 2004; Edstrom, 2004; Bjørge, 2016; Maíz-Arévalo, 2014). Moreover, silence should not be superficially and negatively perceived as non-participation or inactive participation. Rather, silence itself can be a very valuable and meaningful non-linguistic resource which disagreement producers intentionally choose to show their opposing stance and at the same time to show their concern over rapport management. That is, disagreement producers prioritise their disagreement receivers' face sensitivities as much as their own self-effacement, rather than only to avoid the face-threat or offence that can be caused to disagreement receivers. This helps to dispel all the commonly-held myths about silence in relation to certain cultures which are very indirect (Firth 1996; Park, 2012). Also, as far as the use of less explicit disagreement is concerned, the previous ELF literature has accounted for such usage as a result of ELF interactants' exposure to English native speaker norms of disagreeing via formal learning (Maíz-Arévalo, 2014) or the English textbooks disagreement producers are exposed to (Bjørge, 2016). However, this is not always the case. Participants' stimulated recall interviews evidently show that this can also be a result of their work and intercultural interaction experiences or the interactional norms in their home culture. Interestingly, apart from the psychological factors that can have a powerful influence on how disagreement is produced, the physical factor of the distance in seating position between disagreement producers and receivers can also affect the expression of disagreement. That is, the more distant the seating position is, the more likely that silence will be employed as a substitution for disagreement.

For the participants in this study, there is a huge amount of thinking and strategy work going on behind the scene of what appears to be quite smooth and gentle disagreement in the groups. The findings about the influencing factors, again, highlight the importance of interactants' perspectives which help to account for the highly complicated underlying process more thoroughly. They also stress the fact that the conversation analytic approach alone cannot

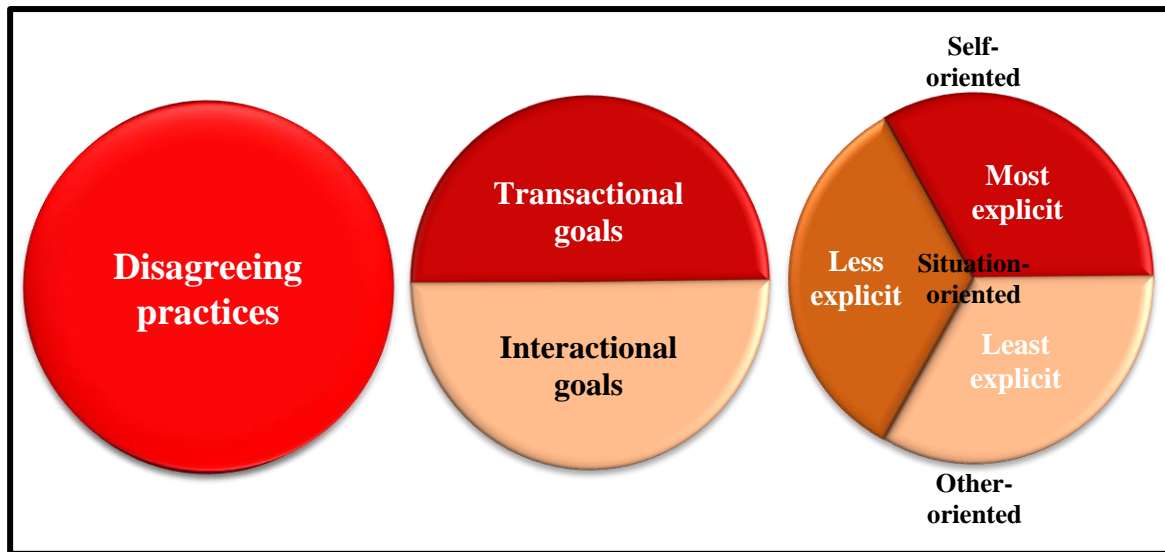
provide valuable insights into factors outside the linguistic context or what is being achieved turn by turn. To gain disagreement producers' judgments and motives behind those disagreeing practices is thus indispensable, especially if researchers' cultural values, interpretations and interactional norms are different from those of participants. Considering the factors influencing different disagreeing practices reported by the disagreement producers themselves and categorising those factors according to their orientation can provide a more tangible way to understand the contextual influences in ELF interactions. These complex underlying processes seem to be another inherent characteristic of ELF interactants who need to equally monitor their common means of communication together with prior and situated interactional contexts.

In this section, all factors which were reported by the participants as influencing their realisation of disagreement in academic group discussion have been discussed. They reveal the important role of both previously existing and immediate factors on their disagreeing practices. This section has also highlighted the reflexivity of the disagreeing practices of disagreement producers and their perceptions in relation to their receivers and the situated context in which the group discussion occurs. In the following section, 7.3.3, how these factors influence the way the participants perform certain disagreeing practices will be discussed.

7.3.3 Interrelationship between disagreeing practices and factors influencing them

Based on the discussion above, the findings therefore suggest that in a typical ELF group discussion encounter, as evidenced in this study, we would typically expect to see less explicit disagreement, however the range of disagreement types, and the manner in which those types are realised, will be influenced by self-, other- and situation-related factors. Moreover, the participants will be highly attuned to intercultural awareness (Baker, 2009). This is because the participants' awareness of how they are operating and their choice of disagreeing practices are directly related. Figure 7.3 depicts the interconnectedness between different realisations of disagreement and goals of interaction and the way this is determined by three key factors, namely, self-oriented, other-oriented and situation-oriented factors.

Figure 7.3: Interrelationship between disagreeing practices, goals and their influencing factors



Based on circles of convergence of findings, despite highly fluid and dynamic negotiation of how disagreement is expressed in academic group discussion, the participants still exhibit three possibilities or “typical profiles” of how and why disagreeing practices are performed in certain ways:

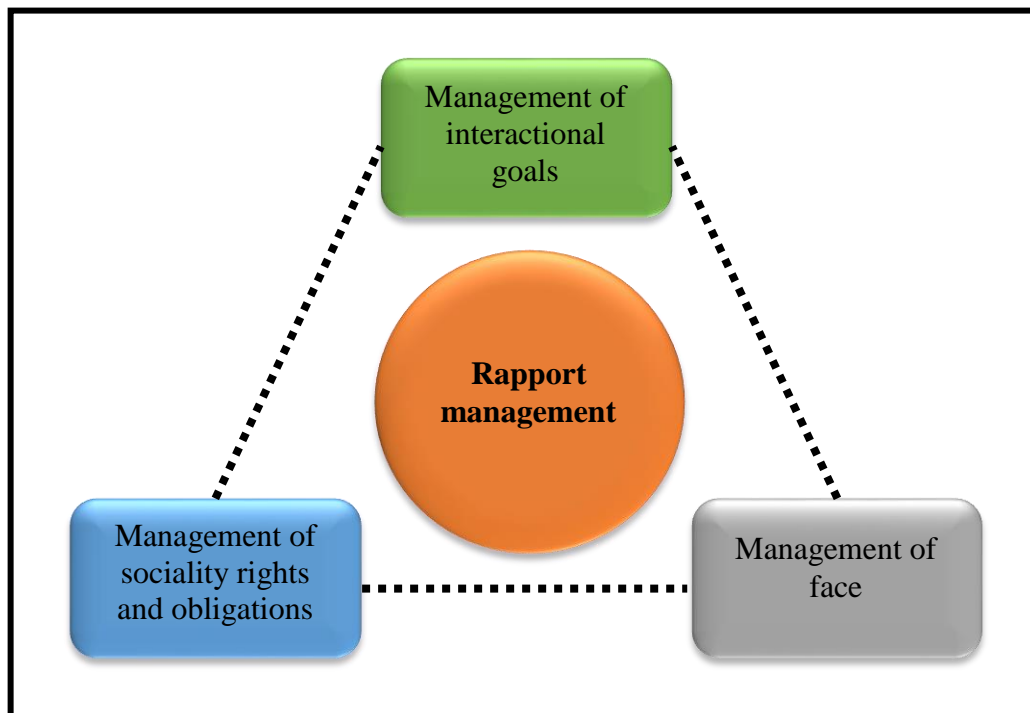
- The use of most explicit disagreeing practices — *transactional goals*
 - likely to be used when the disagreement producers orient towards themselves (the expression of their own stance) and/or when their stance is supported by a majority of the group members, or
 - unlikely to be used if the disagreement producers orient towards their interlocutor(s);
- The use of least explicit disagreeing practices — *interactional goals*
 - likely to be used when the disagreement producers orient towards their receiver(s) (the perceived negative effects that can be caused to them) and/or when their stance is not supported by a majority of the group members, or
 - unlikely to be used if the disagreement producers orient towards the expression of their own (opposing) stance; and

- the use of less explicit disagreeing practices — *transactional and interactional goals*
 - likely to be used when the disagreement producers orient towards a combination of diverse factors and attempt to balance their communicative goals

What also emerges prominently from the data is that although the participants are highly diverse in relation to their personalities, cultural backgrounds and interactional norms, they seem to have a shared set of beliefs or expectations. It is evident that in academic discourse what is perceived as polite and appropriate in this type of encounter concerns the use of appropriate disagreeing practices, which, in this case, is those practices which allow the participants not to straightforwardly uncover their communicative intention of disagreeing and/or not to focus on their interlocutors' false or opposing claims/statements. Rather, the aim is to successfully and amicably show their divergent viewpoints through the provision of a practical alternative or rational justification. This is because the appropriate disagreeing practices not only allow the disagreement producers to save their interlocutors' image but also to enhance their own acceptance in the group. From the perspective of the others, the use of the right practice will also result in the enhancement of the disagreement producers' visibility and community acceptance.

The main findings regarding these factors therefore support the core concept of Spencer-Oatey's rapport management approach (2000), that to protect harmonious and smooth relations involves the management of face sensitivities, sociality rights and obligations, and interactional goals as depicted in Figure 7.4. That is, the participants are required to follow what is behaviourally expected in a particular context by being concerned both about their face sensitivities and those of others in the interaction in order to achieve their interactional wants, all of which are dynamic and fluid according to the types of interaction, the individual interactants, and any particular moment of the interactions.

Figure 7.4: Key components in rapport management framework (Source: adapted from Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 2008)



The question is how the rapport management framework can account for the generally smooth and amicable interaction found in the ELF academic group discussion under investigation. This can be answered through the management of the three key interconnected components of rapport management (Spencer-Oatey, 2000). In academic group discussion in which the ultimate goals are to enhance students' social, intellectual, effective and attitudinal outcomes as well as their self-image and self-concept gains (Kumpulainen & Mutanen, 1999; Topping, 2005), the first is **the management of interactional goals**. In academic group discussion, all interactants are eligible to actively and freely express themselves and their own (opposing) opinions, and respond to those which are different in accordance with their roles and relationships, all of which entails **the management of sociality rights and obligations**. To achieve the interactional goals of academic group discussion, which in this case involved completing the tasks at hand while maintaining good working relationships, and to properly exercise their rights and comply with the obligations of academic group discussion, disagreement producers are required to use disagreeing practices that enhance or maintain their own and others' face, as well as how they will be positively perceived by their group members, requiring **the management of face sensitivities**. Of course, in the ELF interactions in this

study, where the participants bring with them diverse sets of interactional norms, values and have different interactional interpretations, which are the unique characteristics of intercultural communication (Spencer-Oatey, 2000), the expression of their opposing stance is mostly done through the use of less explicit disagreeing practices. By incorporating the notion of the dynamicity of the interactional contexts and interactants involved, and by not predisposing value or judgment onto certain communicative acts and the proper ways to perform them as in the classic view of politeness (e.g. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory), the framework can thus provide more encompassing insights into why a certain communicative act such as disagreement can be differently expressed, perceived and interpreted in ELF interactions and other different contexts of investigation.

In sum, the findings of this study provide further confirming evidence that, to fully understand how disagreement is expressed in a context where interactants are linguaculturally diverse, there is a need for a more dynamic theoretical approach. The participants' interview accounts support Spencer-Oatey's claim (2005) that they make a decision based on their face sensitivities, behavioural expectations and obligations, and interactional goals. That is, they are likely to employ disagreeing practices which are the expected norms of conduct of a certain interactional type, which in this case of academic group discussion is a behavioural expectation. Such practices not only enhance their fellow group members' face but also their own face (e.g. through not being perceived as an aggressive or offensive person) (face sensitivities). Their careful selection of practices to express their opposing stance is aimed to achieve both transactional and interactional goals (interactional wants) which are the ultimate goals of academic group discussion.

7.4 Implications for theorising ELF academic discourse

To fully understand how relationships are negotiated especially in lingua franca communication in academic contexts (Bjørge, 2007; Jenkins, 2014; Mauranen, 2003) we need a more dynamic approach which considers the importance of context and values the diversity of interactants and interactions as a priori (Nickerson, 2005; Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Zhu, 2015). Also, given that participants from different cultures have different linguistic judgment and interactional values, norms and expectations, there is a need for certain research methods which can tap into their thinking processes in order not to over-rely on the researcher's own expectations, values, norms and judgment.

The present study supports the use of the more dynamic approach of Spencer-Oatey's (2000) rapport management approach as a framework for the study of disagreement in ELF encounters. Compared to previous frameworks, the approach has been broadened to cover not only politeness, which deals with face-threatening acts (Planken, 2005) but also face enhancement as well as face effacement (Spencer-Oatey, 2000), that is, the expression of disagreement should be performed in such a way that it maintains and/or enhances disagreement producers' face sensitivities as equally as those of their receivers and unintended hearers (other group members).

Moreover, the rapport management approach has also attempted to gather and combine language users' perceptions, which, in this study, the stimulated recall interviews were employed to capture, to support the researcher's interpretation (Spencer-Oatey, 2000). Because the factors that determine how disagreement is performed can lie beyond the immediate interactional context (Sifianou, 2012), the use of conversation or discourse analysis with the support of language users' own interactional intentions and interpretations can be more revealing. The incorporation of participants' interactional judgment can also enhance the accuracy of researchers' interpretations and balance the perspectives of the two parties (Angouri & Locher, 2012). Given that the approach prioritises the dynamics of the interactional context and incorporates language users' emotions, intentions and evaluations, it can give more encompassing insights into how communicative acts are performed in the encounters where participants are from highly diverse linguacultural backgrounds (Culpeper et al., 2010; Schauer, 2017; Spencer-Oatey, 2000).

What is particularly striking about the ubiquity of disagreement in this study is that it challenges the long-held belief that ELF interactions are inherently supportive and agreement-oriented (Seidlhofer, 2001). Moreover, it also gives rise to questioning the classic view of politeness that equates politeness with agreement rather than disagreement. This is because the study clearly indicates that disagreement is functionally and contextually preferred and that the appropriate expression of disagreement can even enhance familiarity among discussion group members. In fact, disagreement is not generally a preferred communicative act (Pomerantz, 1984), so it is not a unique feature of ephemeral encounters e.g. chit-chats, general social gatherings etc. where good rapport is more important than the need to argue for correct information. Previous ELF research also seems to have a limited scope in that it has tended to focus only on casual conversation and has not looked specifically at how controversy or argument is dealt with in ELF contexts (Jenks, 2012, 2017; Kappa, 2016). As in intracultural

interactions, those of ELF can also consist of argument and conflict talk, and, of course, disagreement, but the study indicates that what lies beneath the disagreeing practices is the interactants and the processes or mechanisms (their linguistic work) which make ELF encounters unique and which should be approached in their own right.

In addition, even though existing ELF studies characterise ELF interactions as inherently tending towards clarity and explicitness (Björkman, 2011; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Dewey, 2007; Kaur, 2012, 2017; Mauranen, 2010), the present study reveals the opposite trend. That is, the previous studies tend to focus on the transactional goals of interactions or mutual understanding, which is, of course, not the only or ultimate goal of human interactions, while overlooking the interpersonal aspects of interactions, particularly in academic discourse where both transactional and relational goals need to be achieved. The participants' use of less explicit disagreeing practices and strategic ambiguity indicates that ambiguity and implicitness/indirectness can also play a facilitative role in maintaining smooth and amicable interactions. Unlike goal-oriented interactions where the clarity and explicitness of the message is of most significance, when it comes to academic group discussion where participants need to express and account for their own stance and at times negate or even challenge other interactants' ideas or beliefs, and where transactional and interactional goals are equally important, they are likely to be intentionally and strategically ambiguous (through the use of less explicit disagreeing practices). However, this is by no means to suggest that previous ELF studies have failed to reflect genuine characteristics of ELF interactions. Rather, the conflicting research findings confirm the fact that ELF interaction is fluid and context-dependent (Jenks, 2012) (e.g. types of interaction, types of communicative act, where an interaction takes place, channels of interaction, goals of interaction, and interactants involved). The study thus provides further confirming evidence for such characteristics of ELF interactions.

As far as disagreement research in ELF academic discourse is concerned, the present study extends knowledge of how disagreement is produced in academic contexts in that the communicative act in question is not always perceived as a face-threatening act and should not be studied only in respect to its linguistic forms or the presence or absence of mitigating elements, such as in Konakahara's study (2016) or Bjørge's (2012). Such an approach is likely to overlook the importance and dynamics of context and the practical function of a communicative act of disagreement in a certain context such as academic group discussion in which disagreement is both expected and appropriate. Rather, the pragmatic functions of different disagreeing practices should also be investigated. However, the findings of the study

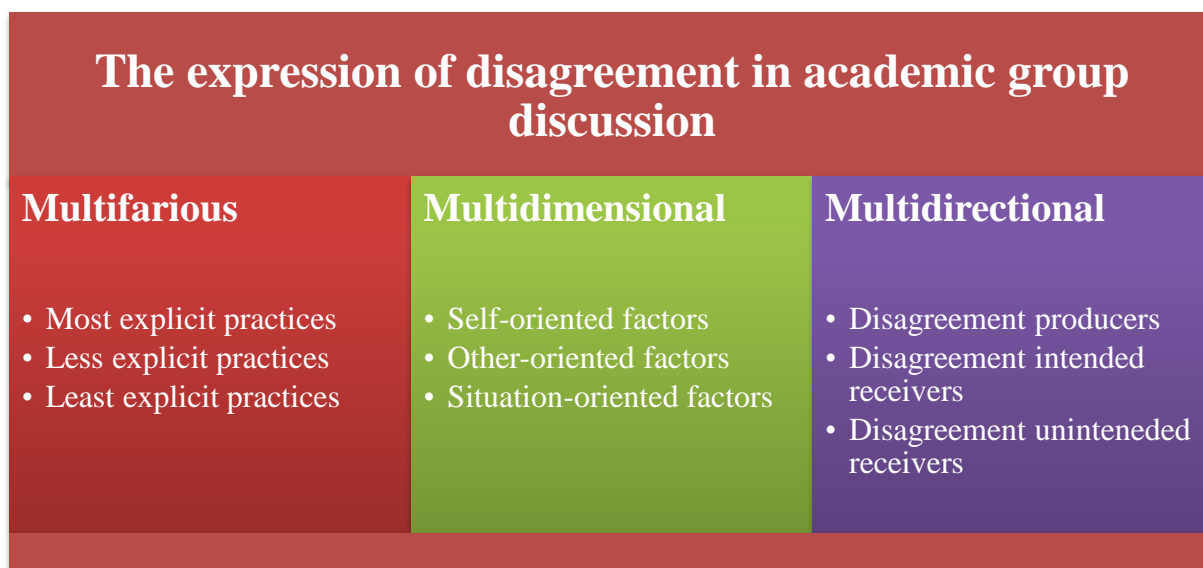
are similar to those of Konakahara in that the use of focus shift is not the way to attenuate face-threatening effects. Rather, the practice is expected and perceived as appropriate as it allows participants to “supply the correct information” (p. 84) and also to justify their opposing views and, most importantly, to convince other group members.

When it comes to mitigating devices, the findings from the present study are incongruent with those of House (2008) who found that her participants failed to use mitigating devices. However, this present study which incorporates participants’ linguistic judgments clearly shows that the presence or absence of mitigation and the use of different levels of disagreement explicitness largely depends on the goals of interaction. It also depends on the situated context of interaction e.g. disagreement producers’ and receivers’ emotional investment in the topic of conversation or the influence of the group, especially if their opposing stance is endorsed by the majority of the group, rather than the attempt to comply with or stick to English speaker norms of disagreeing or the models in the English textbooks to which ELF speakers are exposed (Bjørge, 2016). Neither does it depend on the different levels of English language proficiency (Maíz-Arévalo, 2014). This is congruent with Björkman’s study (2015) which reveals that under certain circumstances, for example, when the participants prioritise transactional rather than interpersonal goals or when they are knowledgeable about certain topics of conversation, they are likely to use explicit disagreement.

According to Sifianou (2012), a communicative act of disagreement, in general, is inherently ‘multifunctional’ and ‘multidirectional’ (p. 1555). That is, disagreement itself can have both positive and negative effects. It can be a sign of sociability and hostility, and it can affect both disagreement producers and its receivers. However, the present study evidently shows that a communicative act of disagreement in academic group discussion is more complex and dynamic when compared to dyadic interaction, particularly in the context where the interactants do not share linguacultural backgrounds. In order to complete the discussion tasks and to maintain rapport, the appropriate expression of disagreement in ELF academic group discussion is therefore ‘*multifarious*’ in that it involves the apt use of diverse verbal and nonverbal practices, ‘*multidimensional*’ because it concerns the complex negotiation of self-, other- and situation-oriented factors and ‘*multidirectional*’ since the (in)appropriate use all affects the disagreement producers themselves as much as their intended disagreement receivers and other unintended receivers, as illustrated in Figure 7.5. Again, what is unique to the participants in the present study is the display of their intercultural awareness, rapport

management competence and ability to exploit linguistic and interactional resources to regulate their language in order to manage their tasks and good working relationships as well as the dynamics of the interaction in which they are being actively engaged.

Figure 7.5: Characteristics of the expression of disagreement in academic group discussion



7.5 Summary and concluding remarks

The focus of the present chapter has been on the integration of the findings and the explanations of the use of diverse disagreeing practices of 12 participants from 10 different linguistic backgrounds. The data clearly shows that disagreement is ubiquitous in the academic group discussion and the participants employ a wide range of disagreement practices to achieve the tasks at hand. Disagreement in this study is contextually and functionally important. The participants evidently tend towards less explicit disagreeing practices since they allow the participants to express themselves and complete the tasks while still maintaining amicable interactions and good working relationships. The appropriate practices for this academic group discussion are therefore those which can enhance both transactional and interactional goals. The data also shows that participants' disagreeing practices are influenced by the dynamic and complex combination of self-, other- and situation-oriented factors. Moreover, what makes these group discussion sessions unique is that the participants from highly diverse

linguacultural backgrounds clearly exhibit intercultural awareness in which they are aware of, sensitive to, and even respectful of, cultural differences and that, particularly in academic group discussion, they are evidently flexible and adaptable to the group dynamic. Also, the participants appear to aptly and subtly use both linguistic and non-linguistic resources to manage and achieve their communicative goals. To gain more encompassing insights into how disagreement is produced in ELF encounters, the present study also stresses the need for a more dynamic approach which prioritises the interactional context and language users' judgment. What also emerges prominently from the findings is that ELF encounters, like other kinds of interactions, can be full of conflict and disagreement. In the following chapter, the summary of the whole thesis together with contributions, limitations and recommendations for future research will be provided.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study by first providing a summary (8.2). This encompasses the restatement of the research aims and the research questions. Then, a summary of the research methods and main research findings will be provided. Next, the theoretical, methodological and practical contributions of the study (8.3) are discussed. Section 8.4 discusses the limitations of the research followed by Section 8.5 which provides recommendations for further research. In the final section (8.6), I provide some concluding remarks.

8.2 Summary of the study

8.2.1 Review of approach and methods

The internationalisation of education in the UK and around the world has resulted in diverse linguistic practices in academic contexts. Many academic classroom interactions can now be characterised as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) interactions (Baker, 2009; Björkman, 2015; Jenkins, 2014; Kaur, 2009; Maíz-Arévalo, 2014; Mauranen, 2012). Despite the dynamic and complex nature of ELF interactions as well as the lack of shared knowledge, sociocultural backgrounds and norms between ELF speakers, some research has shown that ELF communication is relatively robust to miscommunication or communication breakdown (Deterding, 2013; Jenkins, 2000; Knapp, 2011). However, the situation is theoretically more complicated when ELF users who come from diverse linguacultural backgrounds and have different interactional and politeness norms need to produce a communicative act which could potentially lead to offence or threaten their interlocutor's face. This study focused on one particular communicative act which threatens to disrupt talk: disagreement.

Academic group discussion in many university contexts is a key site—and a very rich one—of English as a lingua franca communication. Nevertheless, little attention has been given to disagreement in academic group discussion where English is used as the medium of

interaction. Moreover, most of the existing ELF research heavily relies on researchers' judgment. Incorporating insights from different data sources including discourse analysis, stimulated recall interviews, questionnaires and a multi-layered analysis, this study set out to reveal the complex nature of how disagreement is produced, and what factors influence its realisation in contexts where interactants do not share a linguacultural background.

Based on the literature on disagreement, academic group discussion and English as a lingua franca, the present study aimed to address the following research questions:

- 1) How do Master's students from diverse linguacultural backgrounds express their disagreement in academic group discussion?
 - a. How do they verbally express their disagreement in academic group discussion?
 - b. How do they nonverbally express their disagreement in academic group discussion?
 - c. How do they mitigate their disagreement in academic group discussion?
- 2) What factors do Master's students from diverse linguacultural backgrounds report as influencing their disagreeing practices in academic group discussion?

To answer the research questions, data was collected in a UK university with 12 postgraduate students (three male and nine female) from ten diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, Chile, China, Cyprus, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia Switzerland and the UK. The data used for the present study consisted of approximately 120 minutes of video- and audio-recorded simulated academic group discussion (180 pages of transcribed of spoken interaction), 24 hours of participants' stimulated recall interviews (250 pages of transcribed interviews) and 24 questionnaires.

In order to address the first research question—to understand how ELF participants express disagreement in academic group discussion both verbally and non-verbally—two groups of six participants were formed and asked to join two simulated academic group discussion sessions. Their interactions were video- and audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed using the conventions of discourse analysis.

To address the research question regarding the influencing factors, the participants then took part in another two sessions of stimulated recall interviews. In the interview sessions, they were asked to watch their own recorded interactions back and verbalise what they were thinking at the time they were interacting in the group discussion, with a specific focus on the

episodes of disagreement. At the end of the sessions, they were also asked to talk about their responses given in the questionnaires. Next, the interview sessions were transcribed and a thematic analysis was conducted. In order to enhance the validity and reliability of the study, the transcripts were cross-checked and all codes were rechecked by multiple coders.

8.2.2 Key findings

The data from the discourse analysis and the stimulated recall interviews showed that the participants used a repertoire of verbal and nonverbal expressions, as well as complex interactional behaviours, to express their disagreement. Participants' disagreeing practices were also found to be influenced by a wide range of factors.

On the first point, discourse analysis revealed that disagreement realisation could be divided into three categories in relation to the explicitness of communicative intent—most explicit, less explicit and least explicit (Chapter 4). Most explicit and less explicit disagreeing practices consisted of two main parts: the disagreement core and the mitigating part. The most explicit disagreement involved the use of the performative verb 'disagree' or 'not + agree' while less explicit disagreement appeared either in the form of previous turn content-related, including rhetorical questions, statements of the opposite and focus shifts, or non-content-related, involving an immediate topic change. Least explicit disagreement involved the use of nonverbal expressions as a substitution of disagreement. From the stimulated recall interviews, the participants reported on their use of gazes, facial expressions, head nods, smiling/laughter, postures and silence.

Apart from a tendency to carefully select less explicit practices to show disagreement, the participants also attempted to reduce the potential threatening or offending effect further by making the disagreement even less explicit and more attenuated by using a large number of mitigating devices (Chapter 5). The mitigating devices observed in the study occurred on different linguistic levels ranging from sound level to turn level. At sound level, the participants employed pauses, sound lengthening, and laughter while at word level, they used word repetition, hedges and prefaces. These strategies mostly served to delay the expression of disagreement within a turn. At discourse level, the participants at times provided an apology or showed sympathy after they expressed their disagreement. Apart from displaying intra-turn delay, the participants also demonstrated more extensive delays over a series of turns. This was sometimes managed through complex interactional behaviours such as turn-waiting, turn-

throwing, and other-initiated disagreement turn dependence (oppositional alliance forming). Often, these turn-taking strategies were achieved in conjunction with non-verbal behaviour such as gazes.

To answer the second research question as to what factors influence disagreeing practices in ELF academic group discussion (Chapter 6), data from the stimulated recall interviews revealed that there are two main factors, internal and external. These two factors can be further divided into three different categories in relation to direction or orientation: that is, those practices can be self-, other- and situation-oriented. Self-oriented factors are those which are directly related to the disagreement producers themselves. This includes reports of one's own personality or interactional style, cultural background, strong feeling about the subject matter, English linguistic proficiency and familiarity with tasks or with other group members. The interview accounts also revealed that how the participants express their opposing opinions depends on others; more specifically, consideration of their interlocutors and the evaluation of the possible negative effects that their expression may have on their interlocutors. The other-oriented factors encompassed other interlocutors' cultural backgrounds, age, gender, interactional styles, previous life or work experience, degree of sharedness or common ground, strength of feeling and potential negative effects on message receivers. As far as situation-oriented factors are concerned, the participants reported the influence of the context in which the group discussion sessions took place, the particular interactional situation, the presence of a particular interlocutor, seating positions, the nature of the tasks, the topic of conversation, and, most importantly, the emerging group influence or consensus.

Given the prevalence of disagreement in the study, the data evidently indicates that disagreement in ELF occurs as a necessary condition of academic group discussion, and that participants change the manner in which they disagree according to the principles of rapport management, and depending on the balance of self-, other- and situation-orientation. The integration of the findings (Chapter 7) reveals three typical profiles of how and why certain disagreeing practices are used in the ELF academic group discussions. Most explicit disagreement is used when the participants are oriented towards their selves and/or their transactional goals, or when there is strong group support or consensus around a particular stance. Conversely, the participants are likely to use least explicit disagreement when they are more concerned about interpersonal relationships or achieving relational goals, and particularly when they are not supported by other group members. In the middle of the scale of explicitness, less explicit disagreement allows the participants to achieve both transactional and relational

goals. The preferred norm of using less explicit disagreeing practices stresses the importance of indirectness or ambiguity in lingua franca communication in enhancing transactional and relational achievement.

8.3 Contributions and implications for the field

In previous ELF research carried out so far, little has been found out about how practices of disagreeing are realised in academic group discussion, especially taking into account the insights of the participants themselves. In this study, the integration of findings at the analysis stage helps to reveal how disagreement is verbally and non-verbally produced as well as the reasons underlying those diverse visible surface practices and those which are not visible at the discourse level. The use of the multi-method approach reveals a considerable amount of rich and detailed evidence of academic group discussion practices that can significantly extend the study of ELF interaction. In the following section, the contributions of the present study will be discussed vis-à-vis its theoretical, methodological and practical value.

8.3.1 Theoretical contributions

The present study challenges the prevailing view that ELF interactions are inherently ‘cooperative and agreement-oriented’ (Seidlhofer, 2011) which may have arisen as most previous literature has focused more on casual conversation and ignored conflict talk (House, 2008; Jenks, 2012; Kappa, 2016; Knapp, 2011). Given that disagreeing, by its nature, can threaten interlocutors and even the communicative act producers themselves, disagreement does not occur very frequently or emerge as a prominent feature of casual conversation or in temporary social gatherings and transitory encounters. If it does, a researcher may require a large amount of naturally occurring data in order to study it. As such, with the large quantity of data researchers need to identify instances of disagreement a view has emerged that disagreement or conflict is not a distinct characteristic of ELF interactions. This has also been the case in the study of intracultural and other intercultural interactions. The lopsided focus on casual conversation possibly leads to this knowledge gap concerning ELF interactions. The study also challenges the existing ELF studies which characterise ELF interactions as inherently tending towards clarity and explicitness (Björkman, 2011; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Dewey, 2007; Kaur, 2012, 2017; Mauranen, 2010). The frequent use of less explicit

disagreeing practices stresses the importance of implicitness or ambiguity in allowing the participants to achieve both transactional and relational goals in ELF academic group discussion.

In addition, the study provides insights into how context is conceptualised in ELF interactions. In previous ELF studies, the dynamicity of the interactions is always mentioned, particularly when the researchers try to differentiate ELF interactions from other kinds of interactions. The problem is that researchers have been likely to overemphasise the importance of situational context (e.g., academic genres or registers) rather than what interactants bring with them to interactions. The results from the interviews clearly show that what the participants bring with them to the interactions (external/prior context) is equally important as what emerges over the course of the interactions (external/situated context). This cannot be ignored if the ultimate aim is to explicate the influence of context in a more tangible way. Based on the empirical data in the present study and evidence from the previous literature, it is evident that the notion of context in ELF interactions is multifarious and dynamic. The previous context consisting of the participants' backgrounds or experience together with the actual situational context mutually frame the way they construct and co-construct their meaning and the selection of appropriate choices to express their disagreement. As such, context in ELF interactions should be reconceptualised in such a way that it is broad enough to include these different kinds of context. That is, it should cover both psychological and physical or previous and situated contexts. In so doing, the notion of 'dynamicity' or 'context of interaction' of ELF interactions is expected not to be too elusive to be explainable.

8.3.2 Methodological contributions

Although the study of politeness in its second wave has started to prioritise participants' perspectives, particularly that which investigates relational work, it seems to limit itself to an interpretive approach in which researchers are seen as part of the data (Locher, 2004, 2006; Shum & Lee, 2013; Watts, 2003). Despite its more dynamic approach to politeness, this calls into question the potential for overreliance on researchers' interpretations and bias.

This study has highlighted the use of a multimethod approach in revealing how a communicative act of disagreement is expressed. Among the methods, in particular, it has incorporated the use of stimulated recall interviews in ELF pragmatics studies which hitherto have mostly depended on conversation/discourse analysis (House, 2009; Jenks, 2012; Kaur,

2011; Konakahara, 2016) or have been partly supported by semi-structured interviews (Björkman, 2017) and corpora (Bjørge, 2016; Mauranen, 2003; Mauranen, Hynninen, & Ranta, 2010; Seidlhofer, 2011). The use of stimulated recall interviews helps balance the perspectives of both the researcher and those of the participants. This is important because researchers cannot rely solely on their own conceptualisations influenced, as they are, by the culture to which they belong, to judge or interpret others from different cultures who have different conceptualisations of what is perceived as appropriate. Unlike intracultural communication, in intercultural communication where interactants are functioning in one of several repertoires, participants are likely to be aware of their linguistic practices (Kecskes, 2014). This claim has been confirmed by the ability of non-native English speaker participants to verbalise about these in the interview sessions. In contrast, the only native English participant in the study was less able to do so. Based on his interview accounts, this would appear to be because for a native speaker of English this is an unconscious process. Employing stimulated recall interviews to complement discourse analysis becomes an opportunity for researchers to dig deeper into speakers' thinking processes in order to uncover the reasons or motifs underlying their own interactional practices in general and those of disagreeing in particular.

8.3.3 Practical contributions

Apart from theoretical and methodological contributions, the results from this study are expected to help university teachers in general and English language teachers in particular to understand that disagreement is a very complex sociolinguistic skill. For one thing, setting up tasks where people need to disagree, we cannot necessarily interpret a student being very quiet as someone who has nothing to say. In this study, disagreement has been shown to be a particularly complex pragmatic act, with a great deal of strategic behaviour operating under the surface. The understanding of how and why disagreement is produced in certain ways will create better awareness because university education greatly depends upon fostering a gentle disagreement style in debate. Furthermore, the choices people make in those groups can have a big impact on the dynamic of the interactions. Therefore, for people who teach English for academic purposes or for academic entry in EMI contexts, raising awareness of the full range of pragmatic resources—both linguistic and interactional—through which disagreement may be realised is such an important part of preparing people to enter university—not just a case of learning some key phrases.

8.4 Limitations of the study

Although the study has been carefully designed and conducted, it still has some limitations. In this section, its limitations in terms of methodology and the scope of discussion will be addressed.

A clear challenge of the present study seems to be the issue of the authenticity or naturalness of the data. Given that the data was collected from simulated academic group discussion sessions with specially-designed disagreement-eliciting tasks, this gives rise to the question as to whether this produces true naturally occurring data, according to the conversation analytic approach. I was aware of this challenge and put a considerable degree of effort into making the interactions as natural as I could. To a certain extent, the issue was addressed by the attempt to make all participants feel very relaxed and comfortable. This was done from the beginning and throughout the research process. The initial observation, apart from familiarising the researcher with the research site and providing an initial sense of how group discussion was being conducted there and could be conducted in the research project data collection sessions, also allowed me to introduce myself to the participants. This was expected to make both the researcher and the participants more familiar with each other. During the data collection process, especially in the group discussion sessions, there was an attempt to ensure a relaxing, friendly and enjoyable atmosphere. This was done by providing the participants with snacks and drinks, and a pre-discussion session in which the participants could introduce themselves and talk briefly about their long day studying. Given the researcher was greatly aware of the need to produce as natural as possible data, this became one of the interview questions which was aimed at confirming that the participants felt they could still interact naturally. However, conducting the same study in a real classroom setting might yield different results.

Apart from the issue of the degree of authenticity of the data, the simulated group discussion sessions also led to the issue of the stakes raised by the tasks and the discussion sessions themselves. The stakes of the discussion are expected to affect the dynamics of interaction and, of course, interactional behaviours—strong actions or reactions and disagreement. Future research could address this issue by investigating the production of disagreement in a real academic group discussion which occurs in a classroom or perhaps when the participants' interaction is being graded. This would increase the stakes of the tasks, which could possibly result in a more frequent use of explicit disagreement and less frequent use of

both mitigating devices and nonverbal expressions. Alternatively, if similar research were conducted in a business context in which the stakes are very high, it would perhaps arrive at different results.

The second limitation is related to one of the research methods used in the present study. Despite its advantages in uncovering the psychological processes underlying participants' linguistic and non-linguistic choices as well as their interactional behaviours, stimulated recall interviews need a high-quality prompt. In the present study, four video recorders were placed at different angles to the discussion tables. To a certain extent, the participants were distracted and felt self-conscious and awkward, particularly in the first task and at the very beginning of the group discussion session. However, the data from the questionnaires and post-event interview accounts shows that a short time after the session started, they began to do the discussion tasks more naturally. Furthermore, because memory decays over time, to best reap the benefits of the stimulated recall interviews, they should be conducted as soon as possible after the original phenomenon under investigation is recorded. Although this was done within 3-7 days after the recorded group discussion sessions and the accuracy of the verbal reports was reasonably high (see Figure 3.12 in Chapter 3 for more detail), the participants at times were unable to retrieve their memories. This might be because they produced their original turn or nonverbal behaviour unconsciously and/or they had forgotten what they thought during a particular moment in the group discussion. Also, because of the time constraint of the research method, which meant that the researcher had to work under great time pressure both transcribing and making initial sense of the transcripts (locating instances of disagreement), he possibly missed some details which should have been probed further in the interview sessions. Additionally, we should bear in mind, however, that because stimulated recall interviews, to a certain extent, rely on meta-perceptions or what the participants thought of or felt about themselves or the interactional situation in which they were engaging, their interview accounts might not thoroughly or accurately uncover what they actually did in the interaction.

The third limitation concerns the issue of the participants in the study. All of the participants were linguistics students and most of them were English language teachers so they were possibly more aware of their linguistic choices and interactional behaviours when compared to students from other fields of study e.g., engineering, economics, medicine, physics. Moreover, based on their English language proficiency (6.5-8.5 on IELTS scores and one native speaker), they were perceived as proficient language users. Students with different educational backgrounds and lower language proficiency would provide different results.

Moreover, when it comes to the issue of research participants, one issue that needs to be addressed here is the diversity present in the group of participants. As mentioned in Chapter 3, there were two groups of six participants and even though there was an attempt from the researcher to build up groups with highly diverse backgrounds, it appears that there was still an imperfect balance of participants in terms of their age, gender, and, most importantly, linguacultural backgrounds. This issue is also worth being taken into account and addressed for future research. Given that there were a limited number of recruited participants who voluntarily took part in the study and most of them were Asian (Chinese) female students who were in their early 20s, there was an imbalance in terms of the composition of participants in each discussion group. Although the researcher tried to very hard to balance the group composition, it was often changed to suit the participants' availability. This is because some participants were unable to attend the discussion group they had been assigned to. The compositions of the groups were thus necessarily changed at short notice in order that the group discussion and data collection process could occur.

Finally, the present findings may not be generalisable to other types of ELF interactions and, perhaps, to other contexts in which a similar type of interaction occurs. This is because there were a limited number of 12 participants from 10 nationalities, and amount of data (approximately 2 hours of group discussion) which were produced in a simulated situation and examined in the specific context of a university in the UK. However, the aim of the study was not to provide a set of findings generalisable to all academic ELF contexts, but to explore this rich dataset in order to build theory about ELF communication which could be applied in other contexts according to the principles of qualitative research.

8.5 Recommendations for further research

The present study has now established various categories of disagreement in terms of their explicitness and certain devices that attenuate their threatening effects. Of particular interest for future research on ELF disagreement would be to have prolonged engagement in a naturalistic environment such as a classroom whereby the researchers could immerse themselves to look at disagreement more longitudinally. It would be very interesting to see how students' disagreement practices develop over time and with different interlocutors. This would be a possible project and one, of course, that would require, to a certain extent, the project being

funded generously enough to use the very sophisticated technology needed to capture this kind of talk.

Secondly, given that the present study was looking at disagreement on a very small scale and in a contextualised nature, future research could be extended to include a larger sample. For example, it would be beneficial to take the findings of the discourse analysis and of the mitigating devices used and apply them to corpus research e.g., a learner corpus, an EFL corpus or an academic discourse corpus. A study of this kind would look at how disagreement changes or takes different forms according to level of language proficiency. Although the ELF paradigm prioritises functions rather than correct forms of language use, we can still talk about proficiency in ELF in terms of a person's need to have a certain level and type of proficiency to be able to engage in discussion and debate or to have a rich enough repertoire to be able to communicate, particularly in the contexts where the interactants are vulnerable to breaches of linguacultural values and norms of interactions. However, what is unique to ELF interactions is a broadened notion of competence required to enhance and ensure efficient and successful communication in addition to interactants' linguistic competence, which in this case is intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997) or intercultural awareness (Baker, 2011).

Thirdly, because the present study focuses on disagreement produced by students pursuing their MA in a UK university in which the participants were perhaps highly aware of its British context, future research could be extended to examine disagreement in other EMI institutions such as in non-dominant English speaking contexts. Changing the context of study would result in very different results because in the present study, the participants were orienting towards British English norms and they were largely aware of that. Future research should attempt to answer, for example, how ELF speakers from different linguacultural backgrounds (e.g. Taiwanese, German, Indonesian, Burmese) disagree in academic group discussion in Thai EMI universities and what norms they think they need to orient towards in those circumstances and how they make sense of these. This could be fascinating because the context of the study could have profoundly influenced the participants' expectations and if these expectations were taken away or changed, they would result in different practices of disagreeing.

8.6 Concluding remarks

This research has revealed to me as a researcher that disagreement in conflict talk is an extremely valuable, rich and very important site for ELF research to focus on. If anyone suggests that there is no more research to be done in this area, ***I will politely disagree.***

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics documents



Information Sheet

Title: An exploratory study of expressing disagreement in ELF academic group discussion

Researcher: Anuchit Toomaneejinda (a.toomaneejinda@lancaster.ac.uk)

You are invited to take part in this research. Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of this research?

I am carrying out this research as part of my PhD research in the Department of Linguistics and English Language. The aim of the research is to examine how students from different linguistic backgrounds manage their communication in group academic discussion. The research will focus on communicative strategies for politeness and for managing the interactions.

What does the research involve?

My research will involve observing classroom and both video and audio recording simulated group academic discussion sessions as well as interviewing participants.

Why have I been invited to participate in this research?

I have approached you because I am interested in the way postgraduate students from different first language backgrounds use English language to manage communication in their group academic discussion.

What will happen if I take part?

If you decide to take part, this will involve the following: your two PASS course sessions will be observed and you will be asked to join two simulated group academic discussion sessions which will be both video and audio recorded. Then, you will be invited to be interviewed and answer two questionnaires.

What are the possible benefits from taking part?

If you take part in this research, your insights will contribute to our understanding of how postgraduate students from different first language backgrounds manage their communication in group academic discussion.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is unlikely that there will be any major disadvantages to taking part. However, taking part in this research will mean that you may need to invest 45-60 minutes for two interview sessions, and answering two questionnaires about personal information and the success of each group discussion session.

What will happen if I decide not to take part or if I don't want to continue being involved in the research or if one of the group withdraw from the research?

If you decide not to take part in this research, this will not affect your studies and the way you are assessed on your course. You are free to withdraw from the research at any time and you do not have to give a reason. If you withdraw while the research takes place or 2 weeks after your participation in the research has ended, I will not use any of the information that you have provided. You may withdraw from the research after this time, but I may not be able to delete any information you have shared with me as it may have been anonymised/analysed.

If one of the group withdraws from the research, I will not make use of that part of the data to protect the confidentiality of the participant, in which case I will explain the situation in the limitation section of research design in my PhD thesis.

Will my taking part in this research be kept confidential?

All the information collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and such information will be accessible only to me and my thesis supervisor, who might need detailed information about any aspects of the data for cross-verification. Any identifying information, such as names and personal characteristics, will be anonymised in my PhD thesis and any other publications of this research.

The data I collect will be kept securely for 10 years in line with Lancaster University policy. Any paper-based data will be kept in a locked cupboard in my office at the

University. Audio and video recorders will be encrypted, and once data has been transferred to a password protected computer, it will be deleted. Other electronic data to be managed by myself, including transcripts of interviews I have transcribed and questionnaires, will be stored on a password protected computer and files containing personal data will be encrypted.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The results of the research will be used for academic purposes only. This will include my PhD thesis and other publications, for example journal articles. I am also planning to present the results of my research at academic conferences.

What if there is a problem?

If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the research, please contact me: Anuchit Toomaneejinda (a.toomaneejinda@lancaster.ac.uk).

Alternatively you can contact my supervisor:
Dr Luke Harding
Department of Linguistics and English Language
C65 County South
Lancaster University
Lancaster
LA1 4YL
l.harding@lancaster.ac.uk
01524593034.

Or the Head of Department:
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g.myers@lancaster.ac.uk
01524592454.

This research has been reviewed and approved by members of Lancaster University Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for considering participating in this research.



Consent Form

Research title: An exploratory study of expressing disagreement in ELF academic group discussion

1. I have read and had explained to me by Anuchit Toomaneejinda the Information Sheet relating to this research.
2. I have had explained to me the purposes of the research and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the research at any time. If I withdraw within **2 weeks after my participation in the research has ended**, any data I have provided will not be used. I may withdraw after that time, but any data relating to me may be used in the research.
4. I understand that all data collected will be anonymised and that my identity will not be revealed at any point.
5. I understand that all data collected will be retained for 10 years in line with Lancaster University policy.
6. I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Participant Information Sheet.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 2: Transcription conventions

The transcription conventions used in this present study is adapted from Du Bois et al. (1993). The researcher attempts to minimise the number of symbols used to fit the research aims and a phenomenon under scrutiny. Still, it is sufficient to answer the research questions. In so doing, the study is expected to be more comprehensible to wide audience from different academic fields.

[To indicate overlap
=	To indicate latching
'	To indicate cut-off of word or sound
@ @ @	To indicate laughter
°----- °	To indicate whisper
:::	To indicate lengthening sound
(h)	To indicate audible exhalation
CAP	To indicate emphatic or increased stress
(number)	To indicate lapsed time/pause in second
↑	To indicate rising intonation
↓	To indicate falling intonation
~	To indicate fall-rise intonation
.	To indicate an end of an utterance
Number	To indicate line numbers to discuss points of interest
{ ___ }	To indicate other non-linguistic features (e.g. gestures, facial expressions)

Appendix 3: Task pack (Task B)

Student union funding scheme

Instructions:

- You are a member of a committee made up of student representatives.
- The task of the committee is to allocate student union funds to different projects. There is a set of criteria to help guide your decision-making.
- on the next page, and decide which projects should be funded. Do this first individually. Once you have made your own decisions, meet as a committee and come to a consensus on which groups should receive funding.
- Please note: you can only spend up to the total amount available. You can fund as few or as many projects as you like provided the cost will not exceed the total amount available.

Criteria:

There are three main criteria that should be used in judging which projects will be funded:

1. The project has a positive impact on students at the university
2. The project will enhance the reputation of the university
3. Diverse communities within the university should be catered for

Funding:

Total amount available: **£12,000**

List of projects	Amount requested	Description
1. New sports equipment for the international student society	£2,500	The international student society wishes to purchase footballs, goals, badminton rackets, shuttle-cocks and a range of outdoor fitness equipment to cater for international students. This project is important because participation of international students in sporting clubs at Northern University is currently lower than for other student populations.
2. Mental health support for postgraduate research students	£5,000	Mental health problems are common among PhD and MA level students yet there is not sufficient support in place to provide counselling and referral services. This project will fund three telephone counsellors over the course of one year specifically for the purposes of supporting postgraduate students.
3. Wildlife walks	£1,000	Many students spend a lot of time on computers or mobile devices, and this has led to less participation in outdoor activities. This project will fund monthly "wildlife walks" around the Northern University campus. Trained wildlife experts will guide groups of up to 30 students at a time on nature walks explaining local plants and spotting wild birds and other animals.
4. Urgent financial aid fund	£6,000	Throughout the course of their studies, students may find themselves in financial difficulties with nowhere to turn for emergency assistance. For example, rental fees might be due when there is no money in the bank. This fund will be used to provide no interest loans to students in clear need of urgent financial assistance. £500 of the amount requested will be spent on paying an administrator for the fund.
5. Musical instruments for music society	£2,500	The Northern University music society provides numerous free events for students and staff at the university, but the society is in urgent need of new musical instruments, particularly brass instruments and a drum-kit. We would request £2,500 in funding to purchase new instruments, and in return we will offer two additional lunch-time concerts during the year.
6. Disabled toilet in university library	£1,500	There is currently only one disabled toilet in the university library, and this has been causing problems over the past year. We would request £1,500 to install a second disabled toilet which will also be a fully-sustainable toilet using environmentally-friendly materials and grey water recycling technology.
7. Food festival	£4,000	This project will fund the first ever Northern University student-run food festival. Stalls will be set-up in Central Square, and the fund will be used to provide cooking facilities, food, drinks and other initial costs. This festival is expected to make a profit, and any proceeds made will go back to the student union fund.
8. Child-care for student parents	£5,000	Many students require short-term child-care during classes or research meetings, but currently there is little provision. For this project, funds will be used to rent a space to set up a nursery, and to employ trained early-years practitioners to care for children aged 3-months to 4 years. Additional funding will be sourced to cover ongoing costs if the service proves popular.

Response sheet

Projects	Comments

Projects	Comments

Appendix 4: Questionnaires

Background questionnaire

Name:

Email:

Age:

Gender: FEMALE MALE

Nationality:

City/Local region(s) where you lived in your home country:

.....

First language(s):

.....

Other languages spoken fluently:

.....

How long have you been living in the UK?

.....

Have you ever lived for more than 3 months in another country? (excluding the UK)

YES NO

If "yes", where?

For how long?

Did you take a standardized English proficiency test (e.g., IELTS, TOEFL, Pearson PTE Academic) before starting your MA degree?

YES

NO

If "yes", which one?

What were your scores?

Overall:

Speaking:

Listening:

Questionnaire (Task A)

Name:

Part 1: Prior to the session, ...

1. How familiar were you with taking part in academic group discussions?

Not familiar

Slightly familiar

Familiar

Very familiar

2. How familiar were you with the topic? (Write N/A if topic not covered)

a. The separation of coursework assignments

Not familiar

Slightly familiar

Familiar

Very familiar

b. The British way of politeness

Not familiar

Slightly familiar

Familiar

Very familiar

c. The educational systems in different countries

Not familiar

Slightly familiar

Familiar

Very familiar

d. The assistance provided by the university during the power outages

Not familiar

Slightly familiar

Familiar

Very familiar

e. The tuition fees for international students

Not familiar

Slightly familiar

Familiar

Very familiar

3. How familiar were you with interacting with group members from different cultures?

Not familiar

Slightly familiar

Familiar

Very familiar

Part 2: During the session, ...

1. Did your group members' gender influence how you interacted during the session?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

2. Did your group members' interactional style influence how you interacted during the session?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

3. Did your cultural background influence the way you interacted with other group members?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

4. Did your linguistic proficiency influence the way you interacted with other group members?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

5. Did your professional/work experience influence the way you interacted with other group members?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

6. Did your knowledge about the topic of conversation influence the way you interacted with other group members?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Did your group members' age influence your interaction?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. How familiar were you with the different members of the group prior to the session?
(Please fill in the name, and answer, for each group member)

Name:

Not familiar	Slightly familiar	Familiar	Very familiar
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name:

Not familiar	Slightly familiar	Familiar	Very familiar
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name:

Not familiar	Slightly familiar	Familiar	Very familiar
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name:

Not familiar	Slightly familiar	Familiar	Very familiar
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name:

Not familiar	Slightly familiar	Familiar	Very familiar
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Did the research equipment affect your behaviour during the discussion?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

10. How successful do you feel the group interaction was in this session?

Not successful

Slightly successful

Successful

Very successful

Please briefly explain the reasons for your choice:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

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.....

11. Is there anything else which you think influenced the way you interacted with the other group members?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Questionnaire (Task B)

Name:

Part 1: Prior to the session, ...

1. How familiar were you with taking part in academic group discussions?

Not familiar

Slightly familiar

Familiar

Very familiar

2. How familiar were you with the topic/task?

Not familiar

Slightly familiar

Familiar

Very familiar

3. How familiar were you with interacting with group members from different cultures?

Not familiar

Slightly familiar

Familiar

Very familiar

4. Did your group members' gender influence how you interacted during the session?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

5. Did your group members' interactional style influence how you interacted during the session?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

6. Did your cultural background influence the way you interacted with other group members?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

7. Did your linguistic proficiency influence the way you interacted with other group members?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Did your professional/work experience influence the way you interacted with other group members?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Did your knowledge about the topic of conversation influence the way you interacted with other group members?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Did your group members' age influence your interaction?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. How familiar were you with the different members of the group prior to the session?
(Please fill in the name, and answer, for each group member)

Name:

Not familiar	Slightly familiar	Familiar	Very familiar
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name:

Not familiar	Slightly familiar	Familiar	Very familiar
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name:

Not familiar

Slightly familiar

Familiar

Very familiar

Name:

Not familiar

Slightly familiar

Familiar

Very familiar

Name:

Not familiar

Slightly familiar

Familiar

Very familiar

12. Did the research equipment affect your behaviour during the discussion?

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

13. How successful do you feel the group interaction was in this session?

Not successful

Slightly successful

Successful

Very successful

Please briefly explain the reasons for your choice:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

14. Is there anything else which you think influenced the way you interacted with the other group members?

Appendix 5: Summary of participants' response sheet

Group 1-Task B response sheet summary

Participants	1. Caroline	2. Haeun	3. Jiro	4. Lexie	5. Mei	6. Nourah
Projects						
1. Sports equipment					✓	
2. Mental health support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
3. Wildlife walks						
4. Urgent financial aid fund	✓			✓		✓
5. Musical instruments						
6. Disabled toilet	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
7. Food festival	✓	✓			✓	
8. Childcare	✓	✓	✓			✓

Group 2-Task B response sheet summary

Participants	1. Catalina	2. Jimmy	3. Roxane	4. Sakura	5. Unyil	6. Yoonsuh
Projects						
1. Sports equipment						
2. Mental health support	✓	✓				
3. Wildlife walks					✓	✓
4. Urgent financial aid fund			✓	✓		
5. Musical instruments		✓	✓		✓	
6. Disabled toilet	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
7. Food festival			✓			
8. Childcare	✓	✓		✓	✓	

Appendix 6: Summary of all disagreeing practices found in the present study

Practices Group-Task	Verbal disagreeing practices								Non-verbal disagreeing practices		
	Most explicit	Less explicit							Least explicit		
	Performative disagreement	Non-performative disagreement							Total of verbal practices	Total of non-verbal practices	TOTAL
		Focus shift	Statement of the opposite	Rhetorical Question	Combination	Oppositional alliance	Topic change				
G1—TA	---	17	---	2	3	---	---	22	(19)	41	
G1—TB	1	27	3	5	1	3	1	41	(2)	43	
G2—TA	---	25	14	4	3	1	1	48	(8)	56	
G2—TB	1	27	10	4	4	---	1	47	(13)	60	
TOTAL	2	96	27	15	11	4	3	158	(42)	200	

Appendix 7: Summary of each type of reported nonverbal disagreeing practice

Practices Group-Task	Nonverbal disagreeing practices						
	Expressive practices					Non-expressive practices	
	Facial expressions	Gazes	Postures	Smile/laughter	Head nods	Silence	TOTAL
G1—TA	1	---	---	3	2	13	19
G1—TB	---	---	---	2	---	---	2
G2—TA	1	4	---	1	---	2	8
G2—TB	1	1	2	4	1	4	13
TOTAL	3	5	2	10	3	19	42