

Palestine and Israel Conflict: Disagreement Strategies on Social Media X Discussion

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, social media has become a profound place for people to express their opinion and ideas, one of them is X social media (formerly known as Twitter). This study analysed how people expressed their opinion specifically on their disagreement strategies in X post. Thus, the focus of this research is to examine the types of disagreement found in the X corpus based on the linguistic used. There are 176 tweets taken from disagreement comments on 4 postings about recent Palestine and Israel conflicts. It was analysed manually by codifying on the types of disagreement. The finding revealed that the major type of disagreement is mitigating disagreement reaching 65%. While 10% of unmitigated disagreements expressions were categorized as aggravated. Furthermore, there were found types of employed mitigated disagreement including: Adding support (43%), Sarcasm (25%), Indirect (23%), Modulation (5%), and Delay (3%). The finding showed that people on social media tend to mitigate their disagreements using explanation and sarcasm. The mildest way to convey disagreements gained the least numbers of frequency. Therefore, it can be said that people in social media tend to openly express their disagreements by strong statements. This research can be a reference on how people digitally interact in social media.

Keywords: Disagreement Strategies, Palestine-Israel, Social Media, Tweeter X, Applied Linguistics

INTRODUCTION

The presence of social media provides a great opportunity for people to express their feeling and assumptions on a topic. In social media, people do not meet directly face to face, so less regarding power, status etc in the dialogue. so, they can freely express their ideas (Barnidge, 2017). When one idea might contradict another idea, which then raises conflict. This field is closely related to linguistics, how language is used to convey ideas which includes

the expression of disagreement. As a result, there are many arguments, clashes between one idea and another. An identification of language use in everyday discussion is needed to comprehend and contrast how actual discussion is held compared to the theories (Siah, 2023). It can improve one's understanding of the manifestation and identification of the details of daily action and social interaction (Morand, 2000). Furthermore, the changing aspect and

behaviour can be identified through language use.

Disagreement

Because expressing disagreement doesn't mean conflict, thus analysis on this topic can lead to deeper understanding in disagreement, why it is arising conflict. This research is intended to find out the disagreement landscape, and how people use their language to convey disagreement. However, limitation on this scope is important to make the focus narrowed. And the discussion is not biased. However, it is undebatable that disagreement brings a big chance to bring conflict, such as the way how people convey the disagreement (Chen & Lu, 2017). This is interesting, but disagreement on politics and religion tend to bring resentment that lead to conflict, as it is claimed that discussion on politics

tends to be impolite (Yang et al., 2017).

The theory of politeness argued that politeness is a way to avoid conflict by the use of language. It showed the idea of avoiding conflict. One of the ways to avoid conflict based on the politeness theory is disagreement. The disagreement disrupts the harmonious social relationship. As leech (1978) in the pragmatic system classified politeness into 4 categories, one of which is agreement. The disagreement for example is threatening and swearing is considered as illocution of conflict where the audience intention is different with the social intention. To find out how the landscape of language used by humans to convey disagreement on the internet, related to the conflict between two countries with two different religions.

Table 1. Disagreement strategies adapted from Alzahrani (2020)

Disagreements	Sub-types	Explanation	Example
Mitigated	Delay	stalling the disagreement act by a pause, a discourse marker, a qualifier, token agreement, appreciation or apology, hesitation, or by being displaced over more than one speaking turn.	<i>"the only thing HERE I mean it's a very nice display but I'm not sure what the licenser of hello kitty will tell us "</i>
	Added support	Justifying or explaining the disagreement	<i>"yeah but the danger of DANGER is quite near(er) . (.) look (1) the westbound is now okay? (.) but the eastbound e:r as we all know rates are whhhh @@ (.) and (.) you see this IMBALANCE (.) is getting closer to the the break EVEN more and more because the (.)"</i>
	Modulation	Using a modal verb to disagree	<i>"but this would be better not to be the same color like the the this" (PBmtg463)</i>
	Indirectness	Disagreeing using indirect ways by, for example, shifting the focus of the topic	<i>"we actually handling so many different products"</i>

Unmitigated	Disagreement expressions not containing a mitigation device	"no"
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Different types of disagreement which might imply different types of consequences. Communication can be called disagreement when they do not have a similar point of view with strong disagreement and criticism. Or who argues with one opinion but does not admit, just tends to argue another way of confession. Disagreement can also show when others try to persuade others with other views. Disagreements also means that without certain conflicts, they just do not show in the same direction and don't care. Thus, it is different from genuine disagreement and 'merely apparent disagreement'.

Communication in X Social Media

Disagreement in X social media communications is a written form of opinion or ideas that is incompatible with the original thread of replies. It usually focuses on either all or parts of the original post. Therefore, to establish a clear and direct link between the disagreement and the specific post being addressed, it is necessary to reply to reference or @username. The detection of disagreement on twitter mostly focusses on an explicit statement of disagreement without counting on image, videos, emoticons etc. (Khoo & Knobe, 2018; Nathalie, 2015; Vraga et al., 2015)

Studies about language analysis on social media have been conducted by previous researchers. Related to this research is research on politeness, (Adel et al., 2016; Anwar, 2019) states that disagreement is one of the face-threatening acts (FTA) because this is an expression of an opposing

opinion to other speakers. In contrast, agreement is considered as a strategy with better maintaining a positive face. So, speakers tend to use strategies to save others' faces because continuing to express disagreements (Rahmawati et al., 2019). otherwise, it will look confrontational, violent, so it must be reduced. Other research related to disagreement which is related to politeness is under pragmatic study that proposes disagreement does not always display conflicts. As nowadays, disagreement does not necessarily result in an emerging conflict. People tend to accept the disagreement, as the result of free speech. Moreover, in educational or business context disagreement led to deeper and comprehensive discussion and more productivity. It can be applied when someone conveys the disagreement in a good language.

Regarding the discussion, this study is intended to explore how people express their disagreement in social media X (formerly known as Twitter), and whether there are strategies employed. To improve the understanding of the nature of disagreement in social media interaction, the current study examined disagreement expressions in twitter posts. Therefore, there are two research questions formulated in this study:

1. How are the disagreement strategies employed in X social media?
2. What are the mitigation strategies used in expressing disagreement in the context?

METHOD

The present study employed a corpus-based conversation analytic technique referring to (He & Yang, 2018; Marra, 2016). This method enables analysis of expression of disagreement extensively and captures the pattern of the dataset. The analysis of conversation was utilized to analyse the corpus-based data, considering the context of disagreement. Another reason to use this approach is that it is important to scrutinize the data from the standpoint on what topic that the interaction occurred, therefore, the researcher enable to identify the explicit and implicit signals of disagreement (Firth, 1996, in Alzahrani, 2020).

176 tweets expressing disagreement from 4 postings in X social media were gathered. The postings were about Palestinian – Israel conflicts during October-November 2023. So, the postings regard the political and religious conflicts. The researchers chose tweets with more than 1000 comments, so that more disagreement comments could be retrieved. However, researchers limit the disagreements to only 50 comments in each posting. By Chance one posting has only 26 disagreements, and other 3 postings gather 50 comments in each post. Therefore, it was gathered 176 twits from all 4 postings there. The researcher limits the number of data due to the necessity to examine the context and meaning of the disagreement expression for manual analysis. The expression was carefully analysed and grouped by its type of disagreements.

For the second research question, the researcher classified types of

mitigated disagreements act which categorize the mitigated disagreements into three categories: (1) Delay, (2) added support, and (3) Modulation/ Indirectness. In contrast to previous research, the researcher added another category which is (4) sarcasm, and distinct the (5) indirectness and modulation. So, there are five different types of disagreements under the mitigated type. The datasets that have been coded than were calculated and described.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the 4 posts analysed, there are 176 disagreements. The sixth post is randomly chosen based on the number of comments and issues being posted. The sixth posts are overall related to political posts, from two different views. Each of the posts gained more than 1000 comments. the author limits to analyse 50 disagreement comments from each post, however, in posts C, from overall 1100 comments, only 26 comments. it showed that the initial post is mostly agreed by the audience or reader. But still in every political news, there are other perspectives that people might disagree. The posts are named post A, B, C, D, E and F. The composition of the disagreement's comments analysed in this paper as shown in table 1.

Table 2. Data Composition

Post	Count of Type
A	50
B	50
C	26
D	50
Total	176

Disagreement strategies in X social media

The results showed overall tendency in the comments on using the type of disagreement strategies. There are three two main types of disagreements, including mitigated and unmitigated. Mitigated types of disagreements outrun the number of unmitigated, as it acquires 65% of the total disagreement's comments. While unmitigated occurred 61 times,

which are 35% of the total disagreements. Gather the data of disagreement strategies as shown in Table 1 Among the number of unmitigated disagreements, 10 or as many as 6% of the total disagreements or 16% of the total unmitigated disagreements. The aggravated disagreements, as it is, include the tones of furious.

Table 3. Disagreement strategies in term of mitigation

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Mitigate	115	65
Unmitigated	61	35
Total	176	

There is preference of how people convey their disagreement, which tends to be mitigated. Mitigated disagreement brings hope that consolidation on the topic among the speakers can be reached. This is in line with the previous research conducted by (Alzahrani, 2020). The most occurrence of disagreement in the research is mitigated. However, the mitigated in this research is lower in percentage. In the research it was 69 % r, while in this research it is 65%. It might be due to the topic of discussion being different. Al Zahrani's research was investigating business context, while this research is about politic-religious. This may confirm that the disagreement on political discussion triggered impoliteness (Prayitno et al., 2019).

Mitigated strategies used in expressing disagreement

Under the mitigated types of disagreement, there are subtypes. The mitigated disagreement strategies are grouped into 5 strategies, including Delay, Explanation, Indirect, modality, and sarcasm. The finding showed that the highest frequency of expressing the mitigated disagreements is in the form of explaining, which gains as many as 50 occurrences or 43% of overall mitigated disagreements strategies. It is then followed by sarcasm as many as 25%, and indirect disagreement as many as 23%. Meanwhile the type of delay is as many as 3% and the second last is the use of modality is 5%. The result of mitigation disagreement strategies is shown by table 3.

Table 4. Mitigated Disagreement Sub-types

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Added Support	50	43%
Delay	3	3%
Indirect	27	23%

Modality	6	5%
Sarcasm	29	25%
Total	115	100%

a. Added Support

This type of disagreement is conveyed by supplying supporting statements that explain the disagreement. This disagreement is found to be the highest frequency, 50 occurrences or 43% of the total disagreement comments. It means that this type of disagreement is the most used in the discussion. An example of added support disagreement in the data is a comment below.

I wonder how many know that Palestinians are Arabic and semitic and ashkenazi Jews are mostly European and Sephardic Jews who a treated like second class citizens in Israel are more legitimately semitic. Just worth knowing.
(Mp23)

The writer of the statement above tries to explain that Palestinian is also a semitic, correcting the initial posts about antisemitism. The comment was addressing that Palestinians is also Semitics which it is incorrect the pro-Palestinian are antisemitic.

b. Delay

The type of Delay occurred only three times or 3% of the total mitigated disagreements. The Delay type is considered soft disagreement, as the person initially agrees to the statement but then conveys their disagreements. The example of delay type of disagreement on the data is:

Erm, sorry, 105, 372! I counted them!
(MI12)

In the sentence, the disagreement is initiated with *erm*, and *sorry*, before the commentator conveys the disagreement: *105, 372! I counted them!*. This disagreement is addressed to a post about a group of people marching in London on November 26th 2023 supporting Israel. Before criticizing the number, the comment uses these words in the beginning. Other example of a Delay disagreement is the following comment:

I don't know what kind of reaction Hamas expected from Israel after October 7th. It's like me picking a fight with 10 armed gang members from the hood & expecting to come out alive.
(MP45)

Commenting on posting about the mass death of Palestinian people, this comment shows disagreement by initially writing a delay sentence: *"I don't know what kind of reaction Hamas expected from Israel after October 7th".* The delay sentence then continued with a statement illustrating disagreement to the posting: *"It's like me picking a fight with 10 armed gang members from the hood & expecting to come out alive."*. The last sentence showed a disagreement to the post which was about victims of Palestinian death on Palestine-Israeli' conflicts.

c. *Indirect*

An Indirect disagreement includes statements without clearly rejecting a topic but rather shifting to other topics. The indirect disagreement in this study is found as many as 23% of all the mitigated disagreement. It gained the third highest occurrence in the data. An example of indirect disagreement is a comment below.

*Middle east problem should
solved in middle east not in
Europe.*
(M113)

The Comments M113 was on a post about European people gathered and supporting one of the parties in Israel-Palestine's conflict. The comments showed indirect type of mitigated disagreement strategy, as it convey disagreement without clearly stated rejection on the event (demonstration).

d. *Modulation*

Modulation is the second rarest used strategy in expressing disagreement after delay. It gained as many as 5% or 6 occurrences. This finding is slightly different from the previous studies that was the lowest in frequency. Modulation is marked with the usage of modules in expression of disagreement. The example of found disagreement in this study is a comment below.

*"Can you do some features
of Israelis who's family
members were killed by
Hamas? You won't cuz you
probably get paid by the
Sheikhs."*
(M118)

The comment above showed disagreement strategy by using positive module 'can' and negative module 'will' (will not).

e. *Sarcasm*

Sarcasm is known as verbal irony. It is a strategy where one says something that appears nice on the surface, but when being analysed deeper, it shows impoliteness or a kind of verbal attack. So, the assessment on this disagreement stems from the implied meaning that was created. The finding of sarcasm in the dataset showed that sarcasm gained 29 utterances or as many as 25% of all mitigated disagreement. It made the disagreement conveyed in the form of Sarcasm being in the second highest place after adding support. An example of sarcasm of disagreement comment is:

*Hey, I registered, but was not
able to make it. Can I still get
my \$250?*
(M128)

Without putting a context, the sentence above does not bring any sense of disagreement. However, this sentence is a comment on an X post about a group of people marching in London on November 26th, 2023, supporting Israel. By that context, it implied that the commenter disagreed with the content of the post and accused the people to be paid for doing the march.

In the mitigated disagreement, the response varied covering the delay, explanation, indirect, use of modal and sarcasm. The use of delay is the least number of used disagreement expressions. It is in line with (Alzahrani, 2020). However, the

finding in this research is lower than the finding from the previous research. It might be due to the difference in the medium where the expression is conveyed, in (Alzahrani, 2020), it is analysing spoken discussion, where the speakers meet synchronously in real time. Therefore, the delay is clearly recognized. However, in a written discourse, the speakers use less delay represented in words. There might be delay when the speaker conveyed their argument into written form, however, it cannot be recognised once the argument is written.

The findings of this study suggested that the people in social media have a willingness to soften their disagreement, lessen its effect, and eventually prevent further conflict. This strategy might not only be used to maintain good relationships or avoid further debate with the other social media users, but also for persuading other users toward the speaker/writer's ideas. This finding is consistent with previous research on disagreement strategies (Lim, 2017), with a slightly new shift. The shift is shown by the percentage of mitigation disagreement compared to unmitigated disagreement which is less than the previous findings. Thus, it can be said that although netizens have an effort to maintain conflicts in twitter discussion, the employed mitigated disagreement is bolder and stronger as people in social media are privileged to express their disagreements more freely.

CONCLUSION

Two key conclusions emerged from this research. The first conclusion is that the mitigated type of disagreement is found to be higher in frequency than the unmitigated strategy of expressing disagreement. It showed that people in social media are willing to explain and soften their disagreement. Secondly, the subtype of mitigated disagreement dominated with strong disagreements gaining a higher percentage than in the previous findings. It means that in social media people are bolder and stronger in telling their arguments. Some limitations regarding this research is the fact that social media corpus is such huge data which is impossible to be analysed wholly manually. Therefore, these findings might cause deviations. So, this research cannot be generalized to represent the actual whole situation in social media discourse. However, it can serve as additional information for further research that might be employed in the execution of computational analysis covering bigger data. The data compiled in this study is based on actual comments found in the X social media. The authors have discussed the embedded strategies in the comments without justifying whether the conveyed content or message are true or false, as the comments were expressions of opinions and assumptions of the netizens.

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