

Disagreement in Hungarian

Helga Vanda Koczogh

University of Debrecen

To date, the majority of research carried out on disagreement has focused on the English language (e.g. Angouri, 2012; Harris, 2001) and they have predominantly investigated the linguistic manifestation of disagreement while ignoring its functional spectrum. More significantly, in comparison to studies on other speech acts (e.g. apologies, requests, compliments), research on the act of disagreement carried out in Hungarian is extremely limited. This study is an attempt to fill these gaps by exploring both the functions and expression of disagreement in mixed-sex verbal interaction of Hungarian undergraduate students.

In the literature of conflict talk, various types of disagreement have been identified by different researchers (e.g. Bándli, 2009; Locher, 2004; Muntigl and Turnbull, 1998; Rees-Miller, 2000; Scott, 2002) based on different criteria. However, the major limitation of most of these studies is that instead of applying a single consistent criterion, disagreements are categorized on the basis of a combination of semantic, pragmatic and structural criteria and often result in fuzzy categories.

Based on the (acoustic) analysis of approximately 7.5 hrs of task-based speech, I set up a categorization scheme that is capable of analyzing disagreement from both a functional and a structural point of view. In my presentation, I will demonstrate that the model distinguishing between pre-sequences, disagreement functions (*strategies*) and two groups of (linguistic) devices (*pragmatic force modifiers*) that either mitigate (*mitigators*) or aggravate (*aggravators*) the force of the opposing utterance serves as a suitable analytical tool for providing us with a comprehensive analysis of disagreements. In addition, this framework allows for an analysis of utterances that contain a combined use of disagreement strategies. I will also highlight the importance of certain prosodic features (especially intonation) in the expression of disagreement, since at times disagreement is “communicated more by tone of voice than lexical choice” (Edstrom, 2004: 1505). Therefore, I also employed acoustic analysis to identify disagreement strategies and pragmatic force modifiers. The research also sheds light on some disagreement strategies (e.g., *implied contradiction*, *stating disagreement*) that have not been identified in previous literature and others (e.g., *disbelief*) that have been noted in Hungarian literature exclusively.

References

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