



The Depiction of Disagreements by the Qur'ān: A Linguistic Perspective

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Abstract

To disagree, the addressee – in his/her relative turn (T2) – needs to rebut the speaker turn's (T1) statement. Thus, disagreement initiates with T2. This article aims at investigating T2 disagreements in God's messengers' talks to disbelievers. The data, driven from Qur'ān and composed of 150 cases, were collected and categorized based on Muntigl and Turnbull's taxonomy of disagreement, namely, Irrelevancy Claim (IC), Challenges (CH), Contradiction (CT), Counterclaim (CC) and Act Combinations (ACs), to (1) determine the most frequent T2 type disagreement and the dominant Act Combination Type disagreement form and (2) specify the relative disagreement types used by people against God's and His Prophets' claims and vice versa and (3) justify their differences. The findings indicate that Challenges are the most frequent T2-type-disagreement and the Combination of Contradiction and Counter Claim is the most frequent AC and that people use challenges more while God and His prophets use more ACs. Comparatively, it was found that people's disagreements take the forms of Challenges and Counter Claims while God and His Prophets use more of Contradiction and Act combination. People were afraid of using Contradictions as they dared not to directly threaten the face of God's messengers. Instead, they showed more inclination towards challenges through which they cast doubts on the messengers' claims.

Keywords: Holy Qur'ān, Disagreement, Disagreement types, Turn 2, Act combination, Muntigl and Turnbull.

Introduction

Arguing, or disagreement, defined as “a fundamental human activity, perhaps the primary means of coming to new understandings” (Hample, 2008, 1), is such a familiar communicative practice that can be traced back to the creation of man in Heaven when Satan disagreed to bow for Man. The term disagreement is a collective term and includes arguing exchanges (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1996), quarrels (Antaki, 1994), disputes and disputing (Brenneis, 1988; Kotthoff, 1993), aggravated disagreements (Kuo, 1992), conflict talks (Grimshaw, 1990), oppositional arguments (Schiffrin, 1985), and adversative episodes (Eisenberg & Garvey, 1981). Linguistically, the forms and functions of disagreement have been dealt with in diverse disciplines such as sociolinguistics, pragmatics, speech act theory, (im)politeness (with special attention to face), discourse analysis, and conversation analysis. The name disagreement is not only a simple notion in which a speaker's opinion is set against another one's, but also “complex, multidirectional and multifunctional” (Sifianou, 2012) so much that there is lack of consensus among researchers on the definition of the term. For

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example, Wierzbicka (1987: 128) sees the act of disagreement as a dual act: (i) an act of saying “what one [Speaker 1] thinks” and (ii) an act of indicating “that one [Speaker 2] does not think the same as the earlier speaker.” It is what speaker 2 says that constitutes the speech act of disagreement, and as such it is much more important than the prior for disagreement realization (i.e., Speaker’s 1 utterance).” Kakava (2002: 1538, as cited in Harb, 2019: 3) defines it as “the negation of a stated or implied proposition.” Rees-Miller (2000: 1088) considers disagreement as “a Speaker (S) disagrees when s/he 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.” For Angouri and Locher (2012: 1550), “Disagreement is often used in the socio-pragmatic literature as an umbrella notion encompassing a range of acts, at the antipode of agreement, which vary considerably in relation to their perceived effect on interaction.” Putting it differently, Koczogh (2013: 211) believes that disagreement is “a situated activity whose function is to express an opinion (or belief) the propositional content or illocutionary force of which is – or is intended to be – partly or fully inconsistent with that of a prior (non-verbal) utterance.” More recently, Walkinshaw (2015) defines the term as “an oppositional stance to a preceding action or position taken by another speaker. We may say that speaker (S) disagrees when s/he considers untrue, unfounded, or objectionable 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)” (2015: 1).

Of the different taxonomies proposed for disagreement include Toulmin’s (1958) six part model (which includes the claim, the qualifier, the data, the warrant, the backing, and the reservation), Coulter’s (1990) four-turn description, Hutchby’s (1996) foundational action–opposition, Jackson and Jacobs’ (1980) adjacency pair organization, Ilie’s (1999) particular adjacency pair (question–response), and Muntigl and Turnbull’s (1998) five part model, the present article takes the last to follow. Muntigl and Turnbull’s (1998: 228-233) identified five types of disagreement, namely, Irrelevancy Claim (IC), Challenges (CH), Contradiction (CT), Counterclaim (CC), and Act Combinations (ACs). In line with, Antaki (1994, 1996), Coulter (1990), Maynard (1985), Muntigl and Turnbull (1996), Schiffrin (1984), Norrick and Spitz (2008), Muntigl and Turnbull (1998: 227) believed that disagreements, or “arguing exchanges” as they called them, “contain a minimum of three turns or moves.” These moves, they believe, consist of “Speaker A in Turn 1 (T1) making a claim that is disputed by Speaker B in T2, following which Speaker A in T3 disagrees with Speaker B’s T2 claim by either supporting the original T1 claim, or directly contesting the T2 disagreement” (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998: 227). Inasmuch as the disagreement starts with T2, it is regarded much more important than T3 since if the second speaker in his/her turn does not show any opposition, then T3 would be redundant. In other words, disagreements start with an opposing move (Eisenberg & Garvey, 1981).

Based on these premises, the present article aims to answer (1) which T2 type disagreement and what form of Act Combination disagreement is used most in the holy book of Qur’ān? (2) What T2 type disagreements are used by people against God’s and His Prophets’ claims and vice versa? (3) In what ways are the disagreement types of the two groups different and how are they justified? The data have been collected while looking for disagreements in the holy Qur’ān. Of course, one should bear in mind that the disagreements here are to some extent different from those that occur in the natural face to face conversations, as the Holy Qur’ān’s stories are narrated to Prophet Muḥammad (s) by God and sometimes they do not have the form of conversation; sometimes T1 is foregrounded or presupposed. Accordingly, the disagreements in the present article are not “delayed and

mitigated” (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990: 296), “accompanied by hesitations, repeat requests, and asking for clarification” (Pomerantz, 1984), or in the form of “questions, negation words, and partial repetition of previous utterances” (Leung, 2002: 5). The findings indicate that Challenges are the most frequent type of disagreement and the combination of contradiction and counter claim (CT+CC) was found to be the most frequent type of act combination disagreement. Because of the nature of the data, the frequency of irrelevancy type of disagreement was zero as God’s narration is free of being irrelevant. Moreover, the data relative to people’s disagreement types did not include any such irrelevancy claims.

God sent His messengers to aid human beings live such a truthful life in this world that will lead to prosperity in the one to come. In performing this mission, the messengers did not have a straightforward path; they faced either people who were stiffened and drowned deep in their ancestors’ obsolete and outdated customs and did not easily give in, or with tyrannical and despotic kings who ruled over the very identity of their people and severely opposed any reformation and change. In such environments, the authenticity and truthfulness of new propositions and promises of freedom were questioned and were viewed hesitantly and cautiously; therefore the linguistic data related to them are the most frequent.

The present article is composed of four parts, the first part of which was discussed. In section 2, it is tried to view the relative literature, though they seem not to be closely related to the current work, as this work is a groundbreaking one in its kind. Section 3 sheds light on the research methodology and the data. Section 4 discusses various types of disagreement found in the holy Qur’ān with the conclusion.

Review of literature

Due to the nature of the disagreements being discussed in this article, the studies that considered disagreement not necessarily dispreferred second pair part or not a priori negative act, be they in a current wave, were left aside. These include a huge number of studies including Sifinaou (2012), Tannen (1981, 1999), Tannen and Kakava (1992), Tjosvold (2008), Tjosvold et al. (2009), De Dreu et. al. (2004), Angouri and Locher (2012), Haggith (1993), Schiffrin (1984), Kuo (1992), Georgakopoulou (2001), Angouri and Locher (2012), Zhu (2014), and Angouri and Tseliga (2010) to name but a few. However, for a better understanding of what has been done, it is better to have a look at them categorically.

- *Disagreement in Preference Theory and (Im)politeness Theory*

Disagreement, regarded as “an umbrella notion,” is used interchangeably with arguments (Schiffrin, 1985), disputes (Brenneis, 1988), and quarrels (Antaki, 1994) and compared to other speech acts, the path of disagreements has been less trodden. However, early studies of disagreement started with preference theory which considered disagreement, compared to agreement, less preferred and thus to be avoided or at least mitigated. Pomerantz (1984) regarded disagreement as “dispreferred next action” (Pomerantz, 1984: 63). He accounts for some overall features of disagreements as: 1. “disagreements are often prefaced,” 2. They “may be accomplished with a variety of forms, ranging from unstated to stated disagreements. ... Disagreements ... are formed as partial agreements/partial disagreements; they are weak forms of disagreement,” 3. Disagreement components are frequently delayed within a turn or over a series of turns, 4. “Absences of forthcoming agreements or disagreements by recipients with gaps, requests for clarification, and the like are interpretable as instances of unstated, or as-yet-unstated, disagreements” (Ibid: 65). He considers “a strong disagreement” to be one in

which “a conversant utters an evaluation which is directly contrastive with the prior evaluation” (Ibid. 74). Kotthoff’s (1993) analysis of dyadic conversational disputes between German and Anglo American students and lecturers indicated a postponement of agreement much like Pomerantz’s disagreements. She found that during an emerging disagreement, people might move from mitigated disagreement to straightforward disagreement. Mulkay (1985, 1986) investigates agreement and disagreement in a set of letter exchanges among a group of scientists who carry out a technical debate. In the same vein as Pomerantz (1984), he considered “disagreements dispreferred and marked” (Mulkay, 1985: 201; 1986: 305). The disagreement he found were “varied in form and more complex in their infernal Organisation.” He attributes the complexity and variety of disagreements to their dispreferred character; he then concludes, “Strong disagreement is easier to declare in writing than face to face” (Ibid.). Kakava (2002: 650) defines conflict as “any type of verbal or nonverbal opposition ranging from disagreement to disputes, mostly in social interaction.” Goodwin (1983) analyzed urban black children’s disputes in the naturally occurred conversations and concluded that they tended to display their opposition with previous utterances instead of mitigating the disagreement expression. Maíz-Arévalo (2014: 199) classified disagreements into strong and mitigated disagreement. Her research showed a tendency “to avoid strong disagreement whilst favoring mitigated disagreement of different sorts” (e.g., use of hedges, asking for clarification, giving explanations, etc.).

Likewise, in (im)politeness theory, disagreement is viewed threatening to the face of the addressee and thus it was advised to be avoided or at least mitigated. In this line of research, researchers such as Brown and Levinson (1078/1987), Sacks (1987), Pomerantz (1984), Culpeper (1996), and Leech (1983) viewed disagreement as a negative, face threatening act that may damage the social relationship between the interlocutors and, therefore, should be avoided or mitigated. For Brown and Levinson (1987: 66) disagreement is a face-threatening act that jeopardizes the solidarity between speaker and addressee. In his Agreement Maxim, under Politeness Principle, Leech (1983: 132) requires interlocutors to “minimise disagreement between self and other.” Hardaker (2010) and Dynel (2015) draw similarities between disagreement and flaming and disagreement and impoliteness, respectively, and conclude that they are all face threatening. In anatomy of impoliteness, Culpeper (1996: 356) regards seeking disagreement as a Positive impoliteness output strategy. For Sifianou (2012), “Disagreement can be defined as the expression of a view that differs from that expressed by another speaker,” and since it is viewed as “confrontational,” she believes it “should ...be mitigated or avoided” (Sifianou, 2012: 1554). At the same time, they can be a sign of intimacy and sociability, hence face-enhancing; thus she contends that disagreements are “complex, multidirectional and multifunctional” (Ibid.). Furthermore, disagreement or conflict has been investigated with regard to individualism and collectivism (Triandis, 1995). Gruber’s (1996: 52, as cited in Kleinke 2010: 197) claim that any kind of propositional dissent between the interlocutors in confrontational discourse in natural conversation also has a negative effect on their social relationship. According to Gruber, the ultimate goal in confrontational discourse is not to find a commonly accepted solution for a problem, but rather to pursue and defend one’s own position. Thus, by focusing on structural violence such as turn-taking violations, Gruber (1996: 62, as cited in Kleinke 2010: 197) assumes that ‘polite’ behavior is often suspended in conflict communication, where ‘impolite’ behavior may well be felt to be appropriate by the parties involved. Some researchers believe that disagreements have to be studied in their relative culture and context. According to Upadhyay (2010), the interlocutors’ use of impoliteness, done through overtly face-aggravating comments, indicate interlocutors’ inclination to express their disagreement, to “argue against

an out-group's ideological views, or to discredit ideological opponents" (Upadhyay, 2010: 105). Upadhyay (2010) suggests that when people are faced with an opposing view, they frequently revert to personal attacks. In Hample's view, "Arguments challenge positive face by indicating that the interlocutor has wrong thoughts and affront negative face by trying to impose another view onto the listener's mental system. Trying to displace another person's views inherently involves some measure of aggression and dominance, leading sometimes to the perception that all arguing is agonistic" (Hample, 2008: 266).

- *Disagreement, culture, and context*

These groups of studies have set impoliteness in the context of its occurrence and showed culture to play a significant role. Locher (2004) considered culture, conversational style, and speech situation to be the influential factors in making a disagreement preferred or not. Paramasivam (2007) emphasized the role of culture in tolerating and handling opposing views in interaction. Sifianou (2012: 1555) and Angouri and Locher (2012: 1549) called for a context-based study of disagreement. Sifianou (2012) considered context necessary in specifying if an act was meant to be face threatening. Thus, she called for continual negotiation of contexts' requirements in the performance of agreement and disagreements that shape the social worlds, and are shaped by them. In Katthoff's words, "Preference structures are preshaped by institutional requirements, which are not necessarily shared by everybody, and in turn help to create the institutional setting" (Katthoff, 1993: 196). She observed, "The technical turn shape concept interacts with assumptions on normality – and every form of normality is culturally defined" (Ibid: 195). Langlotz and Locher (2012) emphasized that the interlocutors' opinions and intentions are crucial in determining whether a disagreement episode is impolite or not, and – according – they draw a link between "conflictual disagreements" and "negative emotional reactions, especially when one feels offended or treated rudely" (Langlotz & Locher, 2012: 1591). Locher and Graham (2006) prescribed studying disagreements in "their situated context through the lens of interpersonal pragmatics." Based on the relational view of interaction (Locher & Watts, 2005), Angouri and Locher (2012: 1550) proposed to investigate disagreement in "how disagreement is used to negotiate relationships."

- *Disagreements and handling them*

Different studies (e.g., Bousfield & Locher, 2008; Culpeper et al., 2003; Dobs & Blitvich, 2013; Grimshaw, 1990; Jay, 1992; Vuchinich, 1990) have dealt with how conflict begins, unfolds, and/or ends, and accordingly have proposed their own taxonomies related to these stages. Chi (2014) argues that disagreement strategies are highly idiosyncratic rather than culture-specific. The fact that multilingual couples' disagreement commonly terminates without consensus supports the main argument that sustaining oppositional stances does not damage their relationship. The terms were also subjected to close scrutiny with regard to face and impoliteness. Langlotz and Locher (2012) are of the belief that the less aggressive the potential disagreements are, the more the possibility of solving the dispute will be. In Vuchinich's (1990) study, disagreements terminate in one of the following 5 formats: (1) submission, (2) dominant third party intervention, (3) compromise, (4) stand-off, and (5) withdrawal. In line with Vuchinich (1990), Norrick and Spitz (2008) argue that humor could be a resource for mitigating and even ending a conflict, and claim that among the five formats of terminating conflict, only compromise offers an equitable resolution. In his view, the effectiveness of humor depends on five factors: "first, the seriousness of the conflict, second,

the social power relationship between the participants, third, the kind of humor, fourth, the reactions of the participants, and finally, who initiates the humor” (Norrick & Spitz, 2008: 1661). Eisenberg and Garvey (2009) propose compromise and countering moves to the resolution of disagreement between the opposer and the opposee. A famous and still applicable taxonomy of conflict handling was proposed by Thomas (1992: 265), which is comprised of “competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating,” which are classified by “two underlying dimensions of assertiveness and cooperativeness.” These resolution styles have been widely discussed (e.g. Rahim, 1983) and applied in conflict research (e.g. Brewer et al., 2002). Rahim (2011: 16) is rather different in that he defines conflict as “an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities” and views disagreement as a prelude or the starting point of conflict that has a long-term repercussion. Lustig and Koetser (2006: 38) believe that characters in U.S. action-adventure films “commit acts of violence to resolve interpersonal disagreements.” They further believe that a verbal disagreement between a manager and her employee will have greater potential to be perceived as face threatening than an identical disagreement among employee who are equal in seniority and status” (Ibid: 260).

- *Disagreement and gender*

Sheldon (1992: 94) takes the cultural stereotypes which considered “girls less forceful or less assertive than boys in pursuing their own agendas, particularly during conflict episodes” into question. Compared to boys, girls’ self-assertions “take a different, not deficient, form than the culturally mandated masculine form of self-assertion” (Sheldon, 1992: 114). This she attributes to girls’ making use of mitigation during conflicts and it is an indication that girls sacrifice their own self-assertion for the sake of communal interests. Studies have shown that children use direct and aggravated disagreement devices (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1990) as do adults (e.g., Kakava, 2002; Kuo, 1992).

- *Disagreement and non-English studies*

Although the scarcity of research on disagreement is generally felt, the case is scarcer when it comes to research on languages other than English. However, the studies that focused on other languages had an eye on English, too. In this line of research, one can refer to Angouri and Tseliga (2010) in Greek language, Georgakopoulou (2001), Koutsantoni (2005), Sifianou (1992) in English and Greek, Landone (2012) in Spanish, García (1989), Santamaría-García (2006) in English and Spanish, Kádár, Haugh and Chang (2013) and Shum and Lee (2013) as well as Zhang and Kramarae (2014) in Chinese, Bond et al. (2000) and Liang and Han (2005) in English and Chinese, Parvaresh and Eslami Rasekh (2009) and Mehregan et al. (2013) in Persian, Lawson (2009), LoCastro (1986), and Nakajima (1997) in English and Japanese, Kleinke (2010) in German and English, and Perelmutter (2010) in Russian languages.

- *Disagreement and taxonomies*

Rees-Miller’s (2000) taxonomy includes three types of disagreement, namely softened disagreements, strengthened disagreements, and neither softened nor strengthened disagreements. Kreutel (2007: 326)’s taxonomy of disagreement is dichotomized into “desirable features” (token agreement, hedges, requests for clarifications, explanations, expressions of regret, positive remarks, and suggestions) and “undesirable features” (message

abandonment, total lack of mitigation, the use of the performative *I disagree*, the use of the performative negation *I do not agree*, the use of the bare exclamation *no*, and blunt statement of the opposite). “To systematically approach the understanding of disagreement,” Angouri and Locher (2012: 1551) offer four observations: 1. “Expressing opposing views is an everyday phenomenon”; 2. “Certain practices are prone to contain disagreement so that this speech act is expected rather than the exception;” they believe that disagreement is quite natural in some situations such as “decision making and problem solving talk”; 3. “Disagreeing cannot be seen as an a priori negative act; communities and groups of people have developed different norms over time which influence how disagreement is perceived and enacted”; 4. “The ways in which disagreement is expressed ... will have an impact on relational issues (face-aggravating, face maintaining, face enhancing). Harb’s (2019) study provides a pragmatic taxonomy of asynchronous computer-mediated expressions of disagreement by Arabic speakers. Drawing on a corpus of fifty thousand words found in naturally posted comments and based on Locher and Watts’ (2005, 2008) relational interaction, he proposed “ten discursive strategies as underlying patterns of the pragmatic realization of disagreement among Arabic speakers,” which included “irrelevancy claim, contradiction, counterclaim, challenge, exclamation, verbal irony, argument avoidance, mild scolding, supplication, and verbal attack” (Harb, 2019: 1). He concluded that the strategies are “neither polite nor impolite, but rather appropriate” (Ibid).

As it is seen, the amount of research on disagreement in English is far much greater than other languages, let alone on a text in a language other than English. So far and to the knowledge of the researcher, no specific research has focused on the disagreement types found in the Holy Book of the Muslims, i.e., Qur’ān Karīm, let alone being based on Muntigl and Turnbull’s (1998: 228-233) taxonomy. Although the gap is too deep to be filled with so few studies, the present research tries to pave the way for future studies to bridge this gap.

Methodology

Theoretical foundations

As T2 is regarded as more important than T3, here types of T2 disagreements are discussed; however, T3 follows the same line of division, too. T2 disagreements happen in various ways as follows (Muntigl & Turnbull, 1998: 228-233):

- *Irrelevancy Claim (IR)*

IRs tend to immediately follow the T1 claim or are produced in overlap with Speaker A’s T1. IRs vary widely in form. Some examples begin with the discourse marker *so*, others have the form *It does not matter, you’re straying off topic*, and *It’s nothing to do with it*. In uttering an IR, a speaker asserts that the previous claim is not relevant to the discussion at hand. Asserting that the other party’s claim is irrelevant conveys a specific view of what is being argued about and what constitutes an allowable contribution to that argument.

T1 C: Yes it should be such a big deal because I’m moving in a week.

T2 D: So what.

- *Challenge (CH)*

CHs are often preceded by reluctance markers that display disagreement with the prior turn. They typically have the syntactic form of an interrogative, appearing with question particles such as *when, what, who, why, where, and how*. Although CHs do not appear to make a

specific claim (e.g., *Why* or *Like who*), they implicate that the addressee cannot, in fact, provide evidence for his/her claim.

D: Eh how often do you hear?

C: From [you'?

D. from me, yes.

C. From you?

D. Yes.

T1 C: On a weekly basis

D. Ah wait.

T2 D: Ah wait, ah when when was this.

- *Contradiction (CT)*

A speaker contradicts by uttering the negated proposition expressed by the previous claim; that is, if A utters P, then B utters -P. CTs often occur with a negative particle such as *no* or *not*, as in *No, I do not*, indicating that the contradiction of the T1 claim is true. CTs not containing negative contradiction markers contain positive contradiction markers, such as *yes* or *yeah*, which assert the affirmative form of a negated T1 claim; that is, if A utters -P, then B utters P.

T1 C: He thinks you guys hate him.

T2 M: I do not hate him. I think-

- *Counterclaim (CC)*

CCs tend to be preceded by pauses, prefaces, and mitigating devices. With CCs, speakers propose an alternative claim that does not directly contradict or challenge the other's claim. Proposing alternative claims allows further negotiation of the T1 claim.

T1 M: I have not got an objection to a ten-thirty phone and eleven-thirty come in (1.3) seems half way between your present curfew and your friends' some of your friends' curfew.

T2 C: Yeah but its its still not, hhhh (.8) what I like.

- *Act Combinations (AC)*

In this type of disagreements, two kinds of disagreement types are combined, and CT followed by CC was the most frequent form in Muntigl and Turnbull's (1998) data.

C: Is the fact that Joe earned the money himself important in this situation?

T1 M: I think it is important.

C: Yeah.

M: Be[cause

T2 M: [I do not think so. I think that's not important. What is important is is the agreement that the father made with him but if you earn the money, you will go on the trip.

M: See there's [a

D: [Actually it's a matter of yeah, but it's a matter of principle here. his father made an agreement with the son (.) it's a break or breech of an agreement (.8) its it does not really matter who earned the money.

Data and procedure

Although disagreement has not always been regarded as a negative or dispreferred stance and

many researchers have shown it to be a sign of intimacy and sociability and hence face enhancing (Sifinaou, 2012; Tannen & Kakava's, 1992), appropriate, beneficial (De Dreu et al., 2004; Tjosvold, 2008; Tjosvold et al., 2009), valued in helping to reach a solution or agreement in the workplace (Angouri, 2012), positive and a desirable characteristic of democratic debates (Haggith, 1993), and not dispreferred among family and friends (Georgakopoulou, 2001; Kuo, 1992; Schiffrin, 1984; Tannen & Kakava, 1992), in the present article, disagreement is found to be risky and lethal, and in the end it leads to severe punishment/ chastisement.

The data for the present study was collected while reading and looking for any type of disagreements in the Holy Qur'ān. They were recorded in a separate file and numbered. For their English translation, Arberry's (1995) translation was consulted. The total number of cases found was 234, but some of these disagreements (n=64) were non-verbal disagreements, which were left behind from the data. Therefore, the data were composed of the remaining 170 cases. These disagreements were different from the ones in previous studies, as they were mostly narrated by God to His last prophet, Muḥammad (s). Then, they were analyzed carefully to see to which type of disagreement, based on Muntigl and Turnbull's (1998: 228-233) taxonomy of disagreement, they belonged. The frequency of each type was calculated and the information found was used in discussion section.

Discussion

Descriptive analysis of the data

In this section, the disagreements are dealt with in two groups: 1) People's disagreement with God/prophets' claims and 2) God/prophets' disagreement with people's claims.

1. People's disagreement with God/prophets' claims

- *Challenge:*

- They said, 'Noah, thou hast disputed with us and make much disputation with us. Then bring us that thou promisest us, if thou speakest truly.' (Qur'ān 11:32)

T1 Noah: disputed with the disbelievers a lot and admonished them of God's chastisement.

T2 Disbelievers: bring us that thou promisest us, if thou speakest truly.

Here, Noah is shown to be engaged in a long discussion with his people to make them believe in God, otherwise, He would mercilessly chastise them. However, his addresses did neither believe in what he was saying and nor were they frightened of God's punishment. This is why they asked Noah to show the consequences if he spoke truly. In this type of disagreement, the disbelievers were used to challenging the prophets' claims; therefore they asked them for proof and to show them a testimony of their claims because they used to think the prophets are not able to provide evidence for their claims. There were found 35 instances of this type of disagreement.

- *Contradiction:*

- Say: 'What, though I should bring you a better guidance than you found your fathers upon?' They say, 'We disbelieve in that you were sent with' (Qur'ān 43:24).

T1 Prophet: I should bring you a better guidance than you found your fathers upon.

T2 Disbelievers: We disbelieve in that you were sent with.

Here, God's messenger claims in T1 that he has brought a better guidance for people but they contradicted his claim, saying, "We disbelieve in that you were sent with." In this type of disagreement, the addressee in Turn 2 openly contradicts what speaker 1 in Turn 1 has claimed. This Type of disagreement is much more threatening to the face of the speaker compared with the other types in that they openly disagree, which is in exact opposition to Brown and Levinson (1978/1987)'s decree to "avoid disagreement" as an output strategy of positive politeness, but in line with Culpeper's (1996) "seeking disagreement" output strategy as a sign of impoliteness. This type of disagreement occurred nine times.

- *Counter Claim:*

- When it is said to them, 'Do not [commit] corruption in the land', they say, 'We are only ones that put things right.' (Qur'ān 2:11).

T1 Prophet: Do not [commit] corruption in the land.

T2 Disbelievers: We are only ones that put things right.

In this example, God narrates people's counterclaim for His prophet Muḥammad (s). In T1, it is presupposed that people were doing corruptions and accordingly were asked to refrain but they made a claim that was in contrast to the one previously made in T1, "We are only ones that put things right." In this type of disagreement, the disbelievers make a claim that is in contrast to the ones made by God or His prophets. Normally, this type of disagreement is made when the addressees do not accept the claims made in T1, and therefore the speaker in T2 brings forth an opposing claim. This type of disagreement occurred 25 times.

- *Act Combination (AC):*

- And when Moses said to his people, 'My people, you have done wrong against yourselves by your taking the Calf; now turn to your Creator and slay one another. That will be better for you in your Creator's sight, and He will turn to you; truly He turns, and is All-compassionate.' And when you said, 'Moses, we will not believe thee till we see God openly'; and the thunderbolt took you while you were beholding (Qur'ān 2:54-55).

T1 Moses: My people, you have done wrong against yourselves by your taking the Calf; now turn to your Creator and slay one another. That will be better for you in your Creator's sight

T2 Disbelievers: Moses, we will not believe thee till we see God openly.

Here, disagreeing with Moses, his people made use of two types of disagreement (CT+CH) in combination. Moses remonstrates his people for talking a calf as their god and then invites them to turn to their Creator so as to be absolved in T1, but his people contradict him, saying, "We will not believe thee," and then challenged Moses into showing God to them openly. This type of disagreement occurred 30 times. This number is divided among the different subtypes found in the data, namely CT+CH (10 cases), CT+CC (7 cases), CH+CC (4 cases), CH+CT (4 cases), CC+CH (3 cases) and CC+CT (2 cases).

2. God/prophets' disagreement with people's claims

- *Challenge:*

- Or do they say, 'Why, he has forged it'? 'Then produce a sūra like it, and call on whom you can, apart from God, if you speak truly.' (Qur'ān 10:38).

T1 Disbelievers: He has forged it

T2 Prophet: Then produce a sūra like it, and call on whom you can, apart from God, if you speak truly.

As it was mentioned above, in this type of disagreement, the speakers – here God and His

prophets –disagree with people and disbelievers’ claims by challenging them. In this particular case, people said the Qur’ān has been forged and was not sent down on Prophet Muḥammad (s), but God told His prophet to challenge them and ask them to “produce a sūra like it” and call whomever they can to their help, if they are right. Here, the speaker’s claim in T1 is challenged because speaker 2 is sure that the speaker 1 has no proof or evidence for what he claimed. This type of disagreement occurred 15 times.

- *Contradiction:*

- Upon that day man shall say, ‘Whither to flee? ‘No indeed; not a refuge! (Qur’ān 75:10-11).
T1 Disbelievers: Whither to flee?
T2 God: No indeed; not a refuge!

Here, the disbelievers’ claim made in T1 is contradicted in T2 by God. When people ask about where to find a refuge to flee, they presuppose that there might be a refuge to escape to. However, God contradicts this claim and announces that there is no refuge. This type of disagreement occurred 12 times.

- *Counter Claim:*

- The Jews say, ‘Ezra is the Son of God’; the Christians say, ‘The Messiah is the Son of God.’ That is the utterance of their mouths, conforming to the unbelievers before them. God assail them! How they are perverted! (Qur’ān 9:30).

T1 The Jews / The Christians: Ezra/The Messiah is the Son of God.

T2 God: That is the utterance of their mouths, conforming to the unbelievers before them.

In this example of counterclaim, the Jews/ the Christians claimed that Ezra/Messiah was the Son of God. In a counterclaim, God proclaimed, “That is the utterance of their mouths, conforming to the unbelievers before them.” This type of disagreement occurred six times.

- *Act Combination (AC):*

- But when he tries him and stints for him his provision, then he says, ‘My Lord has despised me.’ No indeed; but you honor not the orphan (Qur’ān 89:16-17).

T1 Man: My Lord has despised me.

T2 God: No indeed; but you honor not the orphan.

In this case, speaker 2 combines 2 types of disagreement in what is called Act Combination. Encountered with a problem, Man claims that God despises him. However, God retorts that not only He does not despise man, but also it is he who does not honor the orphan. This type of disagreement occurred 18 times, which are distributed among the five subtypes of disagreements, as follow: CT+CC (9 cases), CT+CH (4 cases), CH+CC (2 cases), CH+CT (2 cases) and CH+ CC (1 case).

The findings can be presented in the following table and pie chart:

Table 1

	Irrelevancy (IR)	Challenge (CH)	Contradiction (CT)	Counter Claim (CC)	Act Combination (AC)						Frequency	Percentage
					CT+CC	CT+CH	CH+CC	CH+CT	CC+CH	CC+CT		
People to God/Prophets	0	35	9	25	7	10	4	4	3	2	99	%66.66
God/Prophet to People	0	15	12	6	9	4	2	2	1	0	51	%33.33
Total	0	50	21	31	16	14	6	6	4	2	150	
Percentage	0	%33.33	%14	%20.66	%10.66	%9.33	%4	%4	%2.66	%1.33		%100

N=48
P=%32

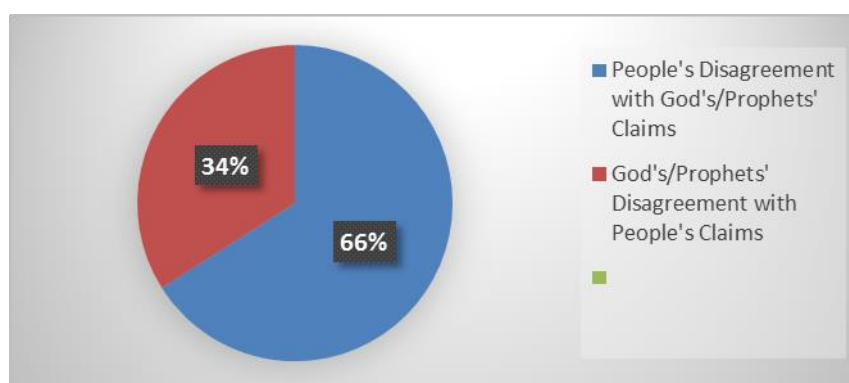


Figure 1. Percentage of the Two Groups' Disagreement Frequencies

Discussion and conclusion

Based on the data presented in Table 1, it is clear that the majority of the disagreement discussed in the Qur'ān were made by people against God's and His prophets' claims. The people here include disbelievers, despotic kings, the aberrant son of a prophet, etc. Out of 150 cases of disagreements found in the holy Qur'ān, people committed 99 cases. In other words, 66% of the disagreements are dedicated to the narration of the disagreements that people did. In order to disagree, people made use of Challenges, Act Combinations, Counter claims, and Contradictions, respectively. The total number of challenges made by people against God/prophets is 35 cases (36%). The second most frequently used type of disagreement by people is Act Combination, the cumulative number of which is 30 cases (30%); the most frequent Act Combination disagreement type, here, is a combination of Contradiction and Challenge (CT+CH). The third position belongs to Counter Claim with the frequency of 25 cases (26%), and finally stands Contradiction with a frequency of nine cases (9%). This is shown in the following pie chart.

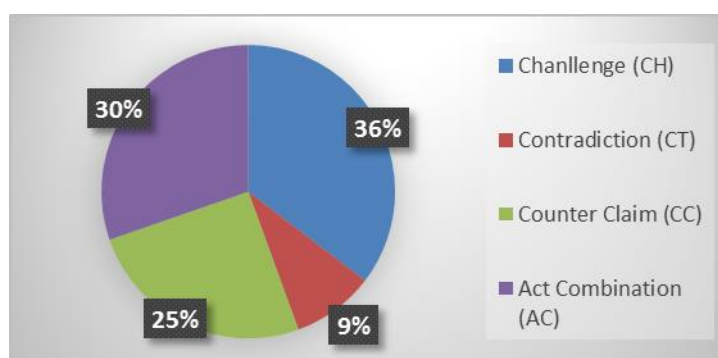


Figure 2. The Disagreement Types Made by Disbelievers Against God/ His Prophets

The number of God's/prophets' disagreement types is 51 cases out of 150 cases, which is about 34 percent of the corpus. Based on their frequency, God's/prophets' disagreement types are arranged as Act Combination (15 cases, 35%), challenging their claims (15 cases, 29.41%), Contradicting (12 cases, 23%), and counter claim (6 cases, 11.7%). The most frequent Act Combination disagreement type here is a combination of Contradiction and Counter Claim (CT+CC).

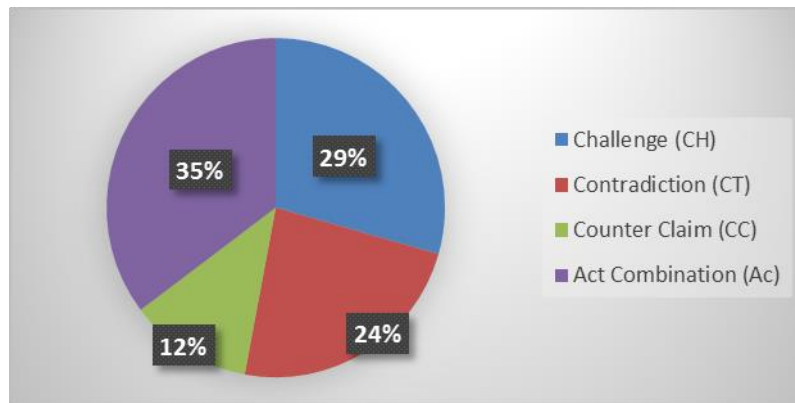


Figure 3. The Percentage of Disagreement Types Used by God and His Prophets Against Disbelievers

In general, the total number of the disagreements found in the Holy Qur'ān was about 150 occurrences. Challenges, with the frequency of 50 occurrences (33.33%), had the highest frequency in the corpus. The second is Act Combination type of disagreements (n=48) which builds about 32% of the whole corpus; among the different forms of this type, in line with Muntigl and Turnbull's (1998) study, the AC (CT+CC) was more frequent than the other forms. Its frequency was 16 out of 48; i.e., 33.33% percent of the Act Combination disagreement type is dedicated to Contradiction + Counter Claim. The third place goes to Counter claim (n=31) with the frequency percentage of 20.66%. It is Contradiction that stands in the last position (n=21), which is about 14% of the whole data. Based on this data, we can draw a pie chart as follows:

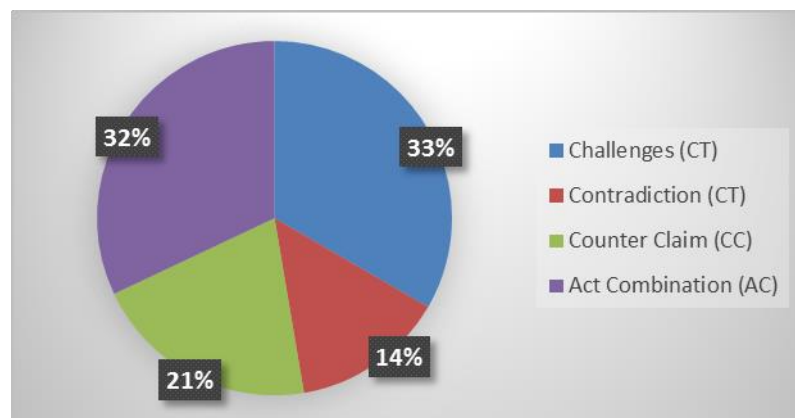


Figure 4. Percentage of Different Types of Disagreement in the Holy Qur'ān

When comparing the results of the two groups, interesting results are made apparent. Comparing challenges between the two groups, it is apparent that the first group (i.e., people in disagreement with God's and His prophets' claims) made more use of Challenges than the second Group (i.e., God and His prophets in disagreement with disbelievers' claims). The findings show the percentage of Challenge in the data related to the first group is about 35.35%, while that of the second group is 29.4%. Accordingly, the first group had made more use of challenges in their disagreements (about 6% more). Comparing the second type of disagreement, CT, the findings indicate more inclination of the second group to use contradiction than the first one (about 14%). The challenge percentage of the first group is about 9%, while that of the second group is about 23%. Furthermore, the findings indicate about 13.55% more use of Counter Claim (CC) on the part of the first group (25.25% vs

11.7%). Finally, with regard to ACs, the results indicate 5% more use of ACs by the second group compared to that of the first group.

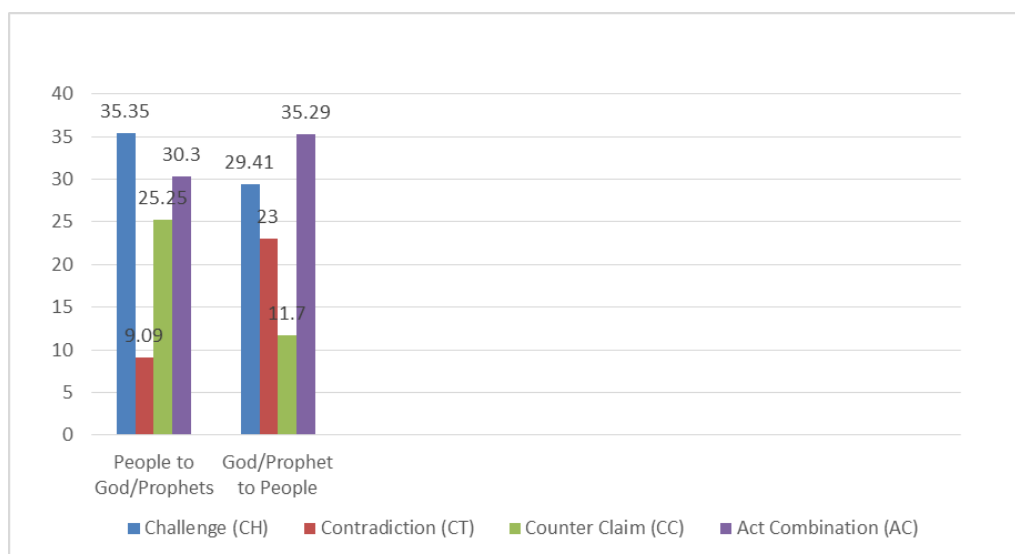


Figure 5. Different Types of Disagreements Made by God/Prophets and Disbelieving People in the Holy Qur'an

Therefore, in their disagreements with God's and His prophets' claims, people used much of challenges and counterclaims. This is indicative of the kind of apprehension on the part of disbelievers not to commit strong disagreements which might entail severe chastisements on the part of the messengers' God. People refrained from using many contradictions, as they are much more impolite than the other types of disagreements, for they directly threatened the face of the addressee, here God's messengers. Instead, they showed more inclination toward using a less frightening face disagreement, i.e., challenges. In challenges, people are dubious about the accuracy and validity of the claims made by the speaker 1; disbelieving people did not disagree directly and openly with what prophets said and indeed, they were casting doubts on their claims because they thought prophets did not have enough evidence. This outstanding difference between the two groups in using contradiction as disagreement shows the second group's more use of it. Face threatening ambience in contradiction is highly tense; that is, in contradictions the face of the addressee is threatened openly and directly. God and His prophets did not refrain from doing that probably because He Himself created people and he is the owner of the world and the people, and therefore, face has nothing to do in such kind of relationship.

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