

Improving Students' Speaking Skills in Expressing Agreement and Disagreement Through Powerpoint Presentations

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ABSTRACT

The ability to speak and express agreement and disagreement is an important aspect of English communication skills, as accuracy in delivering and responding to opinions directly affects the effectiveness of daily and academic interactions. This activity aims to introduce and train the sixth-semester students of the Management Study Program at STIE Sultan Agung Pematangsiantar in expressing agreement and disagreement appropriately, in both formal and informal contexts. The phenomenon underlying this activity is the students' tendency to only use simple expressions such as "I agree" or "I do not agree" without knowing other richer variations, as well as their difficulty in expressing disagreement politely to avoid conflict in communication. This activity uses a qualitative descriptive method with a presentation and interactive discussion approach. The data source consists of documentation from the presentation activity conducted in the Morning Management B class, Semester VI, at STIE Sultan Agung Pematangsiantar. The instrument used is a PowerPoint-based presentation material prepared by the author, which includes the definition of agreement and disagreement, strong and neutral expressions of agreement, firm and polite expressions of disagreement, and practice questions. Data collection was carried out through direct observation during the presentation, while data analysis was conducted descriptively based on observation notes and audience responses. The results of the activity show that classmates were able to understand and practice various expressions of agreement and disagreement well, as demonstrated by their active participation in discussions and accuracy in answering practice questions. In conclusion, this PowerPoint-based presentation is effective in increasing students' understanding and confidence in conveying and responding to opinions effectively, clearly, and politely in English.

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INTRODUCTION

The ability to speak English is one of the important competencies needed by students in the era of globalization, both in the academic environment and the world of work (Sitepu et al., 2025; Herman et al., 2026). Among various speaking skills, the ability to convey and respond appropriately to opinions, including expressing agreement or disagreement, is a communication skill that is almost always used in discussions, presentations, negotiations, and daily social interactions (Agustin & Herman, 2026). This ability is not only needed in academic contexts such as class discussions and presentations, but is also very relevant for students of the Management Study Program who will later be faced with work situations that require the ability to negotiate, provide input, and respond to the opinions of colleagues and clients using English. The mastery of the right expression of agreement and disagreement also helps to shape the impression of one's professionalism, because the way a person expresses approval or disagreement can reflect the level of politeness and maturity of his communication.

In addition, many college students tend to use only simple phrases such as "I agree" or "I don't agree" without knowing the variations of other expressions that are richer and appropriate to the communication situation, including how to convey disapproval politely so as not to cause misunderstandings or conflicts in the interaction. This is in line with the view that disagreement is often understood as a form of confrontation related to Face and politeness, so it needs to be conveyed with the right language strategy so as not to damage social relations between speakers (Hunyadi, 2019).

The problem of low skills in expressing opinions to students in the learning process was also found in other studies, which showed that lack of confidence and lack of practice in public speaking are the main reasons why students find it difficult to convey their ideas orally (Mulyana et al., 2022). This condition is exacerbated by the limited opportunities for non-English Study Program students to practice speaking structured, so that the expression agreement and disagreement those that are mastered tend to be limited to the most common and less varied patterns. As a result, when faced with a discussion situation that demands a spontaneous response, many students choose to remain silent or simply nod in agreement despite actually having a different opinion, because they do not have enough expression to express their disagreement politely.

Therefore, interesting and structured learning media, such as the use of power points, are needed to help students understand and practice the expressions of agreement and disagreement more easily and confidently. This is supported by findings from a systematic review of the use of VoiceThread, an information and communication technology (ICT) based tool, which shows that technology-based learning media can have a positive impact on developing students' speaking skills of English as a foreign language (EFL) (Luh et al., 2023; Purba et al., 2026).

Visual media such as power point is seen as relevant because it can present the categories of agreement and disagreement expressions in a structured manner, equipped with examples of dialogue and exercises, so that students not only memorize expressions but also understand the context of their use directly. Based on these conditions, the author considers it necessary to share an understanding of the expression of agreement and disagreement with classmates through powerpoint-based presentation activities, in the hope of increasing students' understanding and confidence in conveying and responding to opinions using appropriate and polite English.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

Activity Design

This activity uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which is to explain and describe in detail the process of presenting agreement and disagreement material to students. The qualitative approach was chosen because the main purpose of the activity is not to measure statistically, but to understand and describe the phenomena that occur during the process of delivering the material, including the audience's response, interaction, and understanding of the expressions of agreement and disagreement conveyed. Through this approach, the author can narratively describe how the audience responds to each category of expression conveyed, starting from the concept introduction stage to the practice stage through practice questions.

Data Sources and Implementation Locations

The data source in this activity was 26 people who contained classmates from the Morning Class B Management Study Program Semester VI STIE Sultan Agung Pematangsiantar. Data was collected through direct observation of the audience's responses and participation during the presentation, including recording the audience's involvement in the Q&A session and the accuracy of the audience's answers to the practice questions given. The location of the activity is classroom B-101 on Monday, June 15, 2026 which is usually used for lectures, with auxiliary media in the form of a display screen to display power point slides that have been prepared by the author.

Phase 1: Preparation

In the preparation phase, the author compiles material on the meaning of agreement and disagreement, types of agree and disagree expressions (strong, neutral, firm, and polite), differences in the use of formal and informal language, examples of dialogue, and practice questions arranged in the form of power point slides with attractive visual nuances. The author also prepares examples of two-way dialogues that are relevant to everyday situations so that the audience can easily understand the context of each phrase. Before the presentation was carried out, the author first studied various reference sources related to agreement and disagreement expressions so that the explanations given to the audience were accurate and easy to understand.

Phase 2: Implementation

In the implementation phase, the material is delivered orally in front of the class by displaying power point slides, accompanied by the provision of examples of dialogue between two speakers to demonstrate the use of expressions agreement and disagreement contextually. The delivery of material is carried out in stages, starting from the general understanding agreement and disagreement, then continued with the categories of expressions, and ended with a comparison of the use of formal and informal language. This hands-on approach and hands-on feedback is in line with the training-based method experiential learning which has been proven to be effective in improving students' speaking skills and confidence (Safitri et al., 2025).

Phase 3: Evaluation

The evaluation phase was carried out through a question and answer session and practice questions to complete sentences (fill in the blank) given to the audience to measure the extent of their understanding of the material that had been delivered. The evaluation instrument used was direct observation of the audience's questions, comments, and answers, which were then used as reflection material for the author to assess the effectiveness of the material delivery. The observation data in this evaluation phase is also the basis for the descriptive analysis presented in the results and discussion sections.

IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS

Phase 1: Preparation

The preparation phase lasted for a few days before the implementation of the presentation. The author succeeded in compiling a comprehensive presentation material, including the definition of agreement and disagreement, a comparison of strong and neutral agree expressions, firm and polite disagreement expressions, and a comparison of the use of formal and informal language. Each phrase comes with a short dialogue example so that the audience can understand the context of its use firsthand. In addition, the author prepares practice questions to complement sentences (fill in the blank) as a means for the audience to practice their understanding of the material. Presentation slides are designed with a visually appealing look, using a combination of colors and icons so that each category of expression can be clearly distinguished by the audience. This systematic slide layout is intended so that the audience can follow the flow of explanations from one category of expression to the next without experiencing confusion. A summary of the material prepared in this preparation phase is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Agreement and Disagreement Expressions Submitted

Category	Example Expressions	Context of Use
Strong Agreement	I totally agree. / I couldn't agree more. / Absolutely.	Demonstrate strong and passionate consent
Neutral Agreement	I agree. / That's true. / I think so too.	Expressing general consent without overemphasis
Strong Disagreement	I disagree. / I don't think so. / That's not right.	Convey disapproval directly and clearly
Polite Disagreement	I see your point, but... / I'm afraid I don't quite agree. / I beg to differ.	Expressing disagreement without causing conflict, according to the principle of politeness (Hunyadi, 2019)

Phase 2: Implementation

The presentation on expressing agreement and disagreement went smoothly and received a positive response from classmates. The activity was opened with the presentation of the title and purpose of the material in front of the audience, then continued with an explanation of the meaning of agreement and disagreement in general. During the material delivery session, the audience looked enthusiastic and paid attention to each slide shown, especially in the example dialogue section that illustrates the use of the expressions agreement and disagreement in real situations. One of the sections that received special attention was an explanation of strong agreement expressions, such as I totally agree, I couldn't agree more, and Absolutely, accompanied by an example of an interactive dialogue, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. The speaker opened the presentation by conveying the title and purpose of the Expressing Agreement and Disagreement material

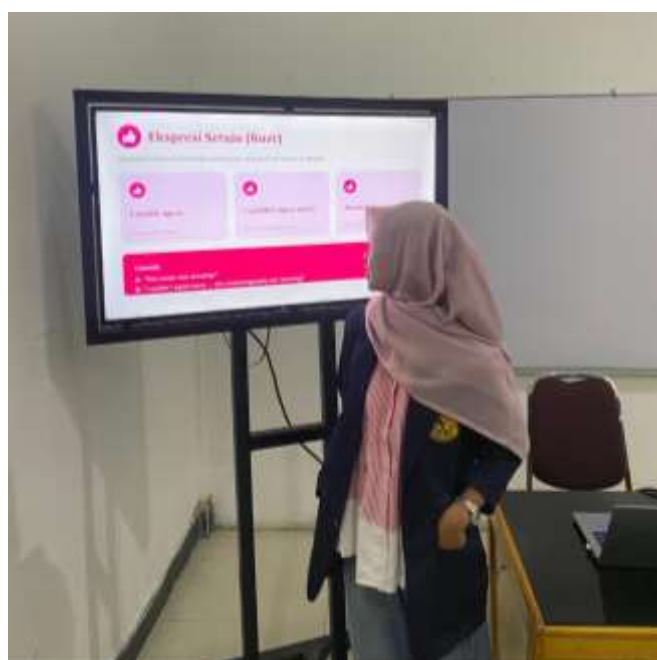


Figure 2. The presenter explained the expression of agree (strong) along with the example of the dialogue

The explanation is followed by a neutral agree expression, a firm disagreement expression, and a polite disagreement expression, each accompanied by an example of dialogue relevant to everyday conversation. The author also explains the comparison of the use of expressions in formal and informal contexts, for example the difference between I beg to differ in formal situations and I'm not really sure about that in informal situations, so that the audience can choose expressions that are appropriate to the interlocutor and communication situation. The audience seems to pay close attention to every comparison given, especially since these formal and informal differences are rarely explicitly discussed in everyday English learning.

Phase 3: Evaluation

In the question and answer session, several audience members actively asked about the difference between the use of formal and informal expressions. This shows the audience's interest and curiosity in the material presented. One of the questions that arises is how to convey disagreement without sounding too harsh in a group discussion, which is then answered by re-

explaining the use of polite disagreement expressions such as I see your point, but... or I'm afraid I don't quite agree. Another question that arises is when to use neutral agree expressions over strong agree in formal conversations, which are answered by explaining that the choice of expression depends on the level of familiarity and communication situation at hand.

Some of the questions that want to be answered through this activity are: (1) Why are the expressions of agreement and disagreement important for students, but they are still often simplified into the expressions "I agree" and "I don't agree"? (2) What variations of agreement and disagreement expressions need to be introduced to students for formal and informal contexts? (3) How can power point media be used to train students to express agreement and disagreement appropriately and politely?

Furthermore, in the practice question session, most of the audience was able to answer the expression agreement and disagreement correctly in accordance with the context of the sentence given, both for the categories of strong agree, neutral agree, firm disagreement, or polite disagreement. These results show that the audience has understood the differences in nuance and level of politeness of each of the expressions studied.



Figure 3. The audience enthusiastically raised their hands to answer the practice questions given

The results of this presentation are in line with research findings that show that learning based on visual and interactive materials can improve English learners' ability to express agreement and disagreement when speaking, with a percentage of ability improvement reaching 89.2% in learners who were given similar learning materials (Salih, 2024). In addition, the success of this presentation was also supported by a relaxed and non-judgmental learning atmosphere, as found in research on training public speaking that shows that a supportive environment can increase students' courage to speak out in public (Rijal et al., 2024).

Table 2. Summary of the Implementation of the Three Phases of Activities

Phase	Activities	Output
Phase 1 Preparation	Compile <i>agreement and disagreement materials</i> , dialogue, and practice questions; design power point slides	Ready-to-use presentation materials and power point slides
Phase 2 Implementation	Deliver material orally, demonstrating two-way dialogue in front of the class	The audience's <i>initial understanding</i> of the expressions of <i>agreement and disagreement</i>
Phase 3 Evaluation	Q&A session and practice fill <i>in the blank questions</i>	<i>The audience</i> is able to practice the phrase appropriately according to the context

DISCUSSION

Challenges in Implementation

The implementation of this presentation activity is inseparable from a number of challenges, both in the preparation phase and the implementation phase. The first challenge is the considerable diversity of agreement and disagreement expressions in English, so the author needs to choose and simplify the expressions that are most relevant and easy to understand by the audience who are not from the language study program. Not all expressions, such as I beg to differ or I'm inclined to agree, are familiar to the audience, so additional explanations are needed about the context of their use so as not to misinterpret their meaning.

The second challenge is to clearly distinguish the line between assertive disagreement and potentially disrespectful expressions. Some audiences initially perceive all forms of disagreement as risky for conflict, so they tend to be hesitant to express disagreement directly even in a reasonable academic context. This concern can be seen from the expression of the audience who looked hesitant when asked to try to practice the expression of disagreement directly at the beginning of the training session.

The third challenge is related to the limited presentation time, which requires the author to sort out the material so that all categories of expressions, namely strongly agree, neutral agree, firm disagree, and disagree politely, can still be delivered proportionally without reducing the quality of dialogue exercises and question and answer sessions. The fourth challenge is the varying levels of audience participation ; not all students are used to actively asking questions or trying to practice dialogue in person in front of the class, although in general the audience shows interest through expression and attention to the slides shown. This variation in participation levels is in line with the general characteristics of non-English Study Program students, who are generally more confident in answering in writing through practice questions than speaking spontaneously in front of the class.

Steps to Overcome Challenges

In general, this presentation on expressing agreement and disagreement shows that a power point-based approach that is structured visually and contextually can help non-English Study Program students understand the expressions of agreement and disagreement more systematically. Nevertheless, the implementation of this activity is inseparable from a number of challenges, both in the preparation and implementation phases, which need to be observed so that similar activities can be better designed on the next occasion.

To overcome the challenge of diverse expression variations, the author selects the material strictly in the preparation phase by prioritizing the most frequently used expressions and the most impactful on the audience's ability to communicate, as summarized in Table 1. Phrases that are less frequently used are still briefly alluded to as additional knowledge, without being the main focus of the exercise so that the audience is not overwhelmed by too much variation at once.

Regarding the audience's concern about the impression of disrespect in conveying disagreement, the author emphasizes the strategy of conveying disagreement politely through dialogue examples that show that disagreement can be conveyed without damaging social relations between speakers, as long as the right language strategy is used (Hunyadi, 2019). This approach has been proven to help the audience be more confident in trying to practice expressions of disagreement, both firm and polite, in practice sessions, as seen from the increase in the number of audiences willing to answer verbally towards the end of the session.

To overcome time constraints, the author compiles slides in a compact but still visual and easy to understand manner, so that all categories of expressions can be delivered in one presentation session without sacrificing dialogue and question and answer sessions. As for increasing audience participation, the author opened the question and answer session in a relaxed and non-judgmental atmosphere, and encouraged the audience to try to practice the expression directly through interactive question exercises. This approach is in line with the finding that lack of confidence is one of the main causes of students' difficulties in conveying ideas orally (Mulyana et al., 2022), so a supportive learning environment is an important key in overcoming these obstacles. All the challenges faced in the end became valuable lessons for writers in designing and delivering speaking materials more effectively at the next opportunity.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the presentations that have been carried out, it can be concluded that the presentation activity on expressing agreement and disagreement succeeded in increasing the understanding of classmates in Semester VI of the Management Study Program of STIE Sultan Agung Pematangsiantar regarding various expressions of agreement and disagreement in English, both in formal and informal contexts. The use of power point media that is arranged visually and systematically, accompanied by examples of dialogue and practice questions, has proven to be effective in helping the audience understand and practice the material presented.

Through three phases of structured implementation, namely preparation, implementation, and evaluation, this activity succeeded in conveying a variety of expressions of agreement and disagreement, ranging from strong and neutral expressions of agreement to firm and polite expressions of disagreement, in a systematic and easy-to-understand way for non-English Study Program students. Challenges faced during the implementation process, such as the diversity of expressions and the audience's doubts in conveying disagreement, can be overcome through the appropriate selection of materials, examples of contextual dialogue, and a relaxed and non-judgmental atmosphere of the question and answer session.

The activity also showed that speaking skills can be improved through interactive and participatory presentations, where the audience is given the opportunity to ask questions and practice in person. Therefore, continuous practice in expressing agreement and disagreement, whether through class discussions, dialogue simulations, or oral presentations, needs to be continued so that students are more confident and appropriate in conveying and responding to opinions using English.

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