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The Sounds of Conflict:
Lexical Representation of Anger
in Listening Activities from
Modern ELT Coursebooks

Abstract

Modern coursebooks serve a fundamental function in contemporary ELT practice. This paper discusses the problem of the lexical representation of anger in listening activities from selected ELT coursebooks issued by leading publishing companies. Twelve coursebooks from three internationally recognized ELT series for adult learners of English were analysed for the conflictive dialogues presented in their audio materials, as well as for the ways in which the anger of the Speaker(s) was expressed. The result of the analysis shows that Speakers' anger was primarily represented by exclamations followed by a much more limited use of nonverbal vocalisations. No instances of swearing and expletive interjections, a common way of expressing negative emotions in everyday informal communication, were found in the dataset. The analysis confirms some of the observations and criticisms concerning the global ELT coursebooks. While understanding publishers' caution and refraining from advocating unrestricted use of taboo language in recorded ELT materials, this paper points to the importance of realistic representation of conflictive and argumentative interpersonal communication, not just for the aim of presenting different contexts of English use, but also for the practical applications beyond the realm of foreign language learning.

Keywords: ELT coursebooks, listening activities, conflictive dialogues, representation of anger, exclamations, nonverbal vocalisations

In contemporary ELT practice coursebooks issued by global British and American publishers take a primary position. Bolitho (2008) stresses their status of representative "tools of the trade" for English teaching practice and symbols of what happens behind foreign language classroom doors in the public mind.

Contemporary ELT coursebooks produced by major publishing corporations, such as Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Pearson, Pearson Longman, Macmillan, have gained international recognition by many teachers and learners as essential and indispensable sources of English.

At the same time, modern ELT coursebooks are much more than just classroom instructional and educational materials. Skela & Burazer (2021) point out that they exist very much in the public domain, where they are often discussed, examined and evaluated by teachers, learners, and administrative bodies. Gray (2000, 2010) has argued that the coursebooks published in Great Britain and the USA have acquired the status of powerful cultural artefacts, as they present different elements of contemporary English-speaking culture to a wide range of non-native English speakers and learners. This is connected with the transfer of certain social and cultural norms and expectations, including the attitudes of political correctness, the expression of positive interpersonal beliefs and the drive towards the entertaining aspects of learning (Medgyes, 1999). The apparent uniformity in contents and design of moderns coursebooks has been criticised on numerous grounds, including the overrepresentation of polite, agreeable, and cooperative language exchanges at the expense of conflictive communication and argumentative dialogues (Timmis, 2013).

The aim of this paper is to perform a short analysis of how the emotion of anger is expressed in the listening materials from selected ELT coursebooks for adult learners. In order to achieve that, this paper takes several steps. Firstly, the main characteristics of the modern ELT coursebooks for adult learners are briefly discussed in connection with their overall structure, contents, and mode of presentation. Secondly, the issue of anger is introduced and different lexical ways of its representation in language are characterised, including the categories of swearing, exclamations, and nonverbal vocalisations. Thirdly, the results of a short practical analysis are presented and discussed. For this purpose, the author has conducted an exploratory analysis drawing on a dataset of conflictive recorded dialogues from twelve ELT coursebooks included in three internationally recognized ELT series. Finally, the paper is concluded with a summary of results and a few brief remarks concerning the importance of authentic representation of conflictive interpersonal exchanges in contemporary ELT materials.

The Global ELT Coursebook—A Brief Characterisation

Contemporary ELT coursebooks issued by major publishing corporations, such as Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Pearson, Pearson Longman, and Macmillan, have gained worldwide recognition due to their ubiquity, solid

methodological foundations, well-designed contents, and attractive presentation of language materials. Of no lesser significance is the fact that for many teachers who tend to be overworked and underpaid these publications provide convenient and ready-to-use classroom materials (Gray, 2000). The pervasiveness and convenience of "the global ELT coursebook" (Skela & Burazer, 2021, p. 390) is also matched by its structural and thematic uniformity.

As Skela & Burazer (2021) point out, the global ELT coursebooks are structured around a few overarching and commonly accepted criteria. Apart from the course rationale, guiding methodological approach and professional preparation of language materials, the internal cohesion of chapters and sections, and coherence among different levels in each series of coursebooks is of noteworthy consideration for editors and publishers. The same level of cohesion is also expected to operate on the microlevel of individual activities and exercises aimed at presenting, drilling, and testing different aspects of language. Stranks (2013), Masuhara (2013), Hyland (2013), and Hill & Tomlinson (2013) stress that the activities for grammar, reading, writing, and listening reveal considerable similarities in their organisation, form, content and presentation in different ELT coursebooks. In the case of listening activities, for instance, the most common format seems to be listening to dialogues or monologues presented alongside related comprehension questions. Although often preceded with listening for gist, the activities are largely focused on listening to—and subsequent recalling of—specific detailed information. Although a prevalent trend in many coursebooks, this bottom-up approach has been criticised for the apparent lack of global approach to listening, which instead of facilitating learner's engagement and enjoyment in performing listening activities, focuses on recalling and testing specific language elements (Hill & Tomlinson, 2013).

Apart from the issue of the form, a central question for ELT materials development is the one of its contents (Skela & Burazer, 2021). The contents of the global ELT coursebooks are systematically subject to extensive processes of selection, analysis, evaluation, and editing (Tomlinson, 2013b). This is matched with the tendency to edit out potentially offensive, disturbing, or embarrassing materials (Tomlinson, 2013a). Legal restrictions, commercial requirements, and socio-cultural pressures often result in publishers leaning towards the presentation of safe and non-controversial topics, largely excluding possibly disturbing or disruptive elements.

These trends, although understandable to a large degree, have been criticised on the grounds of excessive caution in censoring out potentially controversial, but otherwise possibly engaging, stimulating or discussion-inducing materials (c.f. Wajnryb, 1996; Tomlinson, 2001; Saraceni, 2013). As Skela & Burazer (2021, p. 390) put it: "the advent of the 'global' ELT coursebooks conceived in the 1990s, attempting to capture international appeal, has unfortunately re-

sulted in many coursebooks containing very bland, safe, sanitized, superficially interesting and neutral 'zero-content' topics."

Another area for criticism against the global ELT coursebooks is expressed, for instance, by Carter (1998), Tan (2003), and Mukundan (2008), who point to the attitude of politeness, agreement, and cooperation, which dominates in dialogues and language exchanges included in modern ELT coursebooks to a large extent. On the one hand, this is understandable and expected, as publishers tend to lean towards safe topics and non-controversial materials. On the other hand, however, this ubiquitous culture of positivity in ELT coursebooks points to the possible underrepresentation of impolite, conflictive, and argumentative exchanges, which are likely to occur in real-life interactions and, thus, deserve a place in ELT representation and linguistic research (Bousfield, 2008).

Representation of Anger in Language

Anger, alongside fear, disgust, sadness, happiness, and surprise, belongs to basic human emotions and particular ways of expressing and recognizing these emotions through different human modalities appear to be reasonably universal across cultures (Ekman & Friesen, 1971; Ekman, 1994; Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002). Anger is often described as one's emotional reaction to an event of provocation. Wierzbicka (1999) describes two scenarios of anger in English. In the first scenario (X is angry (with Y)), anger is an individual's emotional reaction to a negative action performed directly by an offender, as in a mother being angry with her child for breaking a precious vase. In the second scenario, Wierzbicka considers the sense of X being angry at Y in a situation when "something bad happened because someone did (or didn't do) something," as in a situation including a cancer patient being angry at God (Wierzbicka, 1999, pp. 87–89). In both scenarios, an individual's anger is directed towards the party responsible for the perceived offense, although the second one (X is angry at Y) typically implies a lower level of control over the situation on the part of X. In both scenarios, however, the emotion of anger urges X to perform a certain action to address the perceived injustice of the situation.

In a similar model, Jay (2000) considers anger as a natural emotional response to an event of provocation. His model of verbal aggression, which—incidentally—does not reference Lakoff's (1987) scenario of ANGER, includes the stages of PROVOCATION, DEGREE OF ANGER, INHIBITION, DISINHIBITION, RETRIBUTION. In Jay's scenario, an event of provocation is experienced and evaluated by the Speaker. The provocation event triggers the rising degree of anger. Under normal conditions, the Speaker attempts to inhibit one's anger, as a result of one's

psychological make-up, cultural conditioning or fear for possible negative consequences. When the rising degree of anger exceeds a certain limit, the stage of DISINHIBITION is reached. At this stage, the Speaker decides on the exact realisation of their retaliatory response. This retaliation constitutes an act of RETRIBUTION for the event of provocation. The retribution is commonly realised by swearing (cursing) or another form of emotional verbal response.

Swearing

Swearing is defined as the use of emotive language in order to express and reflect the Speaker's (usually negative) emotions (Jay, 2000; Ljung, 2011). Swearing may take different forms, including abusive swearing (cursing at someone), cathartic swearing (cussing to let off steam), emphatic swearing (highlighting certain information), and emotive swearing (communicating one's emotions) (Pinker, 2008; Ljung, 2011). Swearing is realised by breaching one or more of cultural taboos, including taboos related to religion, body parts, bodily effluvia, sexual actions, death, and disease. These taboos appear to be universal across cultures. In some languages, however, certain taboos are more explicitly utilised than in others (Allan & Burridge, 2006). Most swearing is formulaic in nature, as it often disregards the standard rules of morphology and syntax, as in *Absobloodylutely!*, *Screw you!*, *What the fuck do you mean?* (Ljung, 2011, pp. 18–20). In the context of alleviating one's negative emotions, Ljung (2011) discusses the category of expletive interjections. These often consist of short linguistic forms used to show speakers' anger or give vent to their emotions, as in *Shit!*, *Damn!*, *Fucking hell!*.

As a use of taboo language, swearing is subject to both external censorship and internal (self-)censoring. External censorship refers to different forms of authoritative actions to eliminate certain elements of language from the public discourse. Self-censoring pertains to speakers' individual psychological inhibitions resulting from the practices of parenting, education, cultural conditioning, and fear of possible negative consequences for engaging in taboo topics (Allan & Burridge, 2006). Thus, on the one hand, there is considerable external and internal negative selection against the use of taboo in language. On the other hand, swearing serves an array of important emotional purposes. In consequence, while taboo speech is routinely censored out of formal written materials, it is of common occurrence in everyday informal communication.

Exclamations

According to Crystal (1995), exclamations are statements which reflect strong emotional reactions on the part of the Speaker. The term refers to a broad area of linguistic expressions. Exclamations may take the form of single words or short phrases, as in *Gosh!*, *Oh, dear!*, *Oh, no!*. However, they may also refer to fully formed sentences conventionally used to express certain emotions, such as a *You must be joking!*, *You're kidding!*, *That's outrageous!* (Wells, 2006, p. 50).

Crystal (2004) also refers to a specific category of exclamatory sentences involving *what-* or *how-* phrases followed by inversion of the subject and the main verb, as in *What a fool he was!*, *What on earth is he doing?*. Such sentences often appear in their abbreviated forms, where the first element is retained, for example, *What a lovely day!*, *What a mess!*, *How nice!*. These forms may serve as substitutes for, respectively, *What a lovely day it is!*, *What a mess they have made!*, *How nice they look!* (Crystal, 1995, p. 219). Finally, Crystal (1995) mentions the category of exclamatory questions, that is, a special type of interrogative sentences which possess the function of exclamations. They express strong (typically positive) emotions on the part of the Speaker and are often used to elicit a specific reaction from the Hearer, for example, *Hasn't she grown!*, *Wasn't it marvellous!*, *Was he angry!* (Crystal, 1995, p. 218).

It is important to recognize that for successful representation of emotions, exclamations must be pronounced with appropriate prosodic features corresponding to a given emotional state. Wells (2006) notes that English emotional exclamations are typically marked by relative high pitch of voice followed by an abrupt fall of tone (*the exclamatory fall*). Other authors report that angry speech in English is commonly correlated with high mean pitch, increased pitch variability, intensified volume and rate of speech, and a reduced number of pauses (Frick, 1985; Bachorowski, 1999; Johnstone & Scherer, 2000; Scherer, et al., 2003; Simon-Thomas et al., 2009). Thus, these prosodic correlates should be expected in the acoustic profile of anger-related exclamations in English for the successful conveying of their emotional significance.

Nonverbal Vocalisations

Goffman (1978) characterises response cries as a form of one's emotional self-talk, aimed not at direct communication with the Hearer, but at reflecting the Speaker's emotional state and serving one's emotional needs by relieving one's psychological pressure or alleviating one's physical pain. Goffman (1978) considers two forms of justifiable self-talk. One of them is expletive interjections (a form of swearing), which are realised by fully-formed, typically short, lexical forms referring to a certain cultural taboo (Ljung, 2011). The other

category of self-talk is realised by nonverbal vocalisations, namely response cries which are not fully-fledged words. Instead, they constitute ritualized and conventionalised emotional expressions in a given language. Since non-verbal vocalisations are used mainly in speech, many of them do not have a single canonical representation in writing. Goffman (1978) provides the following categories of nonverbal vocalisations: the transition display (*Err!*, *Ahh!*, *Phew!*), the spill cries (*Oops!*, *Whoops!*), the threat startle (*Eek!*, *Yipe!*), revulsion sounds (*Eeuw!*), the strain grunt (*Uh!*), the pain cry (*Oww!*, *Ouch!*). Nonverbal vocalisations may also represent a wide range of emotional states, including joy or laughter (*Ha, ha!*), surprise (*Wow!*), disgust (*Yuck!*), awe (*Woah!*), realisation (*Ohhh!*), confusion (*Huh?*). Curzan (2015) discusses the vocalisation *Argh!* as a conventionalised expression for anger and frustration in English. *Ugh!* is commonly connected with the expression of distaste or disgust, but—depending on the context of conversation—it can also be used to express irritation, frustration and anger.

Jay (2000) stresses that nonverbal vocalisations must be matched with the appropriate prosodic features of speech for the successful expression and interpretation of emotions. Thus, angry nonverbal vocalisations in English must be produced with the acoustic profile congruent of the prosodic corelates of anger for the successful conveying of their emotional load.

Practical Analysis

Methodology

The aim of this paper is to perform a brief practical study of how the emotion of anger is expressed on the lexical level in recorded dialogues from selected ELT coursebooks for adult learners of English. The coursebooks under analysis belong to internationally recognized series issued by the leading publishing companies. They include *English File 3rd edition* (Oxford University Press), *Navigate* (Oxford University Press) and *Speakout 2nd edition* (Pearson).

From each series the author chose the coursebooks between the levels of Elementary and Upper-Intermediate, thus focusing on twelve publications in total: *English File 3rd edition* (4 publications: *Elementary*, *Pre-Intermediate*, *Intermediate*, *Upper-Intermediate*), *Navigate* (4 publications: *Elementary*, *Pre-Intermediate*, *Intermediate*, *Upper-Intermediate*), *Speakout 2nd edition* (4 publications: *Elementary*, *Pre-Intermediate*, *Intermediate*, *Upper-Intermediate*).

The empirical study was performed by means of content analysis on official recordings from the coursebooks listed above. Therefore, any audio materials

from related workbooks, teacher books, online activities and other supplementary sources were excluded from the analysis. Each of the dataset coursebooks was studied twice. Firstly, to check if the coursebooks provided appropriate data for the analysis. Secondly, to identify—and subsequently analyse—those audio recordings where the emotion of anger was conveyed.

In order to distinguish the audio samples where anger was expressed by lexical elements, the author selected the recordings of dialogues representing conflictive interpersonal exchanges in which the categories of either swearing, exclamations or nonverbal vocalisations were present. There were three specific research questions that the author aimed to answer in the analysis:

– Which of the three categories for the lexical representation of anger, i.e., swearing, exclamations and nonverbal vocalisations, were present in the dataset audio samples?
– What was the number of samples where each of the above categories was represented in the dataset?
– Which particular lexical expressions were used in the dataset to express angry emotions in the audio recordings?

The contexts of conflictive communication present in the coursebooks under analysis include unhappy customers complaining about a service or a product, personal and business phone calls and meetings, interpersonal arguments and disagreements and emotional reactions over malfunctioning equipment. For each sample cited below a short context and the source of the dialogue is provided. In citing the dialogues, the author relied mostly on the audio scripts included in the coursebooks. Wherever the audio script was not available, it was provided by the author. The added elements are marked by square brackets "[]." Non-essential fragments of dialogues omitted from the conversation were marked with three dots closed in square brackets "[…]."

Results and Discussion

In the analysis of the twelve ELT coursebooks the author identified 20 audio dialogues which included different anger-related exclamations and nonverbal vocalisations for communicating anger. There were nine dialogues in four coursebooks from *Speakout 2nd edition* series, seven dialogues in four coursebooks from *English File 3rd edition* series, and four dialogues in four coursebooks from *Navigate* series. When proficiency levels of the coursebooks were taken into account, the dataset revealed four samples in the coursebooks from Elementary level, four samples from Pre-Intermediate level, six samples from Intermediate level and six samples from Upper-Intermediate level.

Table 1 presents the number of audio samples including exclamations, non-verbal vocalisations and swearing as means of expressing angry emotion in the dataset. The figures in the table are presented in relation to the proficiency levels of the coursebooks they were taken from.

Table 1

The Number of Samples for Different Means of Expressing Anger in Relation to Proficiency Levels of the ELT Coursebooks

	Exclamations	Nonverbal vocalisations	Swearing
Elementary	4	0	0
Pre-intermediate	2	2	0
Intermediate	3	3	0
Upper-intermediate	5	1	0
Total:	14	6	0

It must be noted that the figures provided in Table 1 refer to the amount of audio samples where a particular category for expressing anger was present. They do not refer to the number of particular linguistic expressions showing angry emotions (e.g., the total number of exclamation or nonverbal vocalisations). In the dataset it is possible for a particular audio sample to reveal more than one expression of a given category, as in numerous instances of exclamations in Sample 1, Sample 2, and Sample 3, or multiple occurrences of vocalisations in Sample 5 and Sample 8 below. Moreover, it is possible for one audio sample to include more than one category for expressing angry emotions, as evident in the presence of exclamations and nonverbal vocalisations in Sample 6 and Sample 7.

The dataset analysis revealed two categories for expressing anger: exclamations and nonverbal vocalisations. The category of swearing was not represented in the dataset, as no instances of swearing or taboo expletives were found in the audio samples. This is hardly surprising. Although swearing is of common occurrence in everyday informal speech, it is routinely censored out of formal written materials. This is particularly true for international ELT coursebooks, where the processes of content selection, evaluation, and editing are particularly demanding and extensive. Thus, materials which are potentially offensive, disturbing or insulting tend to be edited out. Swearing, due to its negative emotional load and taboo nature, meets precisely the criteria prompting editors to exclude this kind of language from official ELT materials. Moreover, swearing, as a blatant breach of politeness norms, stands in stark contrast to the attitudes of politeness, agreement, and cooperation, which, as Carter (1998),

Tan (2003), and Mukundan (2008) report, dominate in interpersonal dialogues presented in contemporary ELT materials. Therefore, publishers' preference for polite, non-controversial materials may be a factor adding to the exclusion of elements containing strong negative emotions from official ELT content.

Table 1 revealed that in 14 out of 20 audio samples (70% of the dataset) the emotion of anger was conveyed through the use of different exclamations. Thus, exclamations proved to be the most significant category for the lexical expression of angry emotions in the dataset. The author believes that there are several reasons for this fact. On the one hand, exclamations constitute fully-fledged, grammatically and syntactically well-formed expressions conventionally used for the expression of emotions. On the other hand, due to their non-taboo nature, they are not subject to the same editing constraints as swearing and taboo expletives. Therefore, they provide a viable and convenient way of expressing emotions applicable in official ELT materials.

Exclamations in ELT coursebooks may take various forms, ranging from simple exclamatory expressions to fully-formed grammatical sentences. Consider the following samples:

Sample 1
[Situation on a plane. The flight attendant (S1) brings a meal to a passenger (S2).]
S1: Your meal, sir.
S2: Thank you. Um, excuse me.
S1: Yes, can I help you?
S2: Hope so! I'm sorry, but there's a small problem here. I ordered a vegetarian meal, but this is meat.
S1: Oh, just a moment. I checked and we don't have a record of your order.
S2: **What?!** But I always order vegetarian. I'm a frequent flyer.
S1: I understand, sir, but we don't have any more vegetarian meals.
S2: **I don't believe it!** You always have extra meals in business class.
S1: Yes, but this is economy class.
S2: You don't understand. Let me explain one more time. I don't eat meat. I ordered vegetarian. I can't fly to Tokyo without dinner. It's your job to bring me a meal. A business class vegetarian meal is fine.
S1: Just a moment. Here you are, sir. A vegetarian meal.
S2: Thank you – but this is already open. And it's cold! Can I speak to the person in charge, please? I mean, **this is ridiculous!**
[*Speakout 2nd edition Elementary*: R.9.9]

Sample 2

[Situation at the train station. S1 is a passenger. S2 is the station employee.]
S1: Excuse me. Do you work here?
S2: Yes.
S1: Do you know when the next train will be arriving? I mean, I've been here for over an hour.
S2: I'm sorry but there's nothing we can do at the moment. Everything is delayed.
S1: And you don't know when the next train is coming?
S2: No.
S1: Or why there's a delay?
S2: Snow.
S1: **What**?
S2: Snow on the track. It was the wrong type of snow.
S1: What do you mean 'the wrong type of snow'? **You're kidding, right**?
[*Speakout 2nd edition Pre-Intermediate*: R.10.5, Conversation 3]

Sample 3

[S1 and S2 are a couple visiting S1's parents for dinner. They have arrived late for the occasion]
S1: I can't believe we got here so late.
S2: I'm sorry, Jenny. I had to finish that article for Don.
S1: Don't forget the chocolates.
S2: OK. **Oh no!**
S1: **I don't believe it.** Don't tell me you forgot them!?
S1: I think they're still on my desk.
S2: **You're kidding!**
[…]
[*English File 3rd edition Intermediate*, R. 1.29]

Sample 4

[A heated discussion between S1, S2 and S3 about new parking regulations]
S1: Have you heard about the new parking meters they're bringing in? Apparently, the more pollution your car causes, the more you pay. I think it's a great idea, don't you?
S2: Well, that's not really how I see it. My car is quite old, so I'll have to pay more. I can't afford to buy a new car, so how is it fair to make me pay more for parking as well?
S3: I'm with you here. Everyone should have to pay the same for the same service, or it isn't fair.

S1: **You can't be serious!** Haven't you seen how bad the pollution is these days? We need to encourage people to buy cars which are better for the environment. Or maybe you should just use your cars less in the first place?
S2: Come off it! You use your car all the time ….
[*Navigate Upper-Intermediate*: R.7.4]

The exclamations found in the dataset are of different syntactic structures, ranging from single words (*What?*), through short exclamatory forms (*Oh no!*), to fully-fledged exclamatory statements, as in: *I don't believe it!*, *You're kidding*, *This is ridiculous!*, *You can't be serious.*

As illustrated by Sample 1, Sample 2, and Sample 3, in a single dialogue more than one exclamations may be used by one or more Speakers. Thus, the total number of exclamatory phrases used in the dataset is as follows: *I don't believe it!* (5 instances), *Oh no!* (4 instances), *You're kidding/joking!* (4 instances), *What?!* (4 instances), *This is ridiculous!* (2 instances) followed by single instances of *It's outrageous!*, *You can't be serious!.* Therefore, the exclamatory expressions in the dataset appear to draw from the standard collection of exclamations used by speakers of English in emotion-inducing interpersonal situations.

The dataset analysis revealed that in six out of 20 conflictive dialogues (30% of the dataset) the emotion of anger was expressed through nonverbal vocalisations. The particular response cries for this purpose in the dataset included the use of *Argh!* (in three samples) and *Ugh!* (in three samples). Consider the following examples:

Sample 5
[A couple are talking about their latest expenses.]
S1: I haven't seen those shoes before. Are they new?
S2: Yes, I've just bought them. Do you like them?
S1: They're OK. How much did they cost?
S2: Oh, not much. They were a bargain. Under £100.
S1: **[Ugh]**, You mean £99.99.
S2: **[Ugh].**
S1: That isn't cheap for a pair of shoes. Anyway, we can't afford to buy new clothes at the moment.
S2: Why not?
S1: Have you seen this?
S2: No. What is it?
S1: The phone bill. It arrived this morning. And we haven't paid for the electricity bill yet.
S2: Well, **[ugh]**, what about the iPad you bought last week?

S1: What about it?

S2: You didn't need to buy a new one. The old one worked perfectly well.

S1: But I needed the new model!

S2: Well, I needed some new shoes!

[*English File 3rd edition Intermediate*, R 1.41]

Sample 6

[S1 is calling her friend (S2), with whom she has agreed go to a party together.]

S1: Adrian, where are you? It's nearly half past nine!

S2: Sorry, Tina. Listen, I've changed my mind! I'm not going to go to the party.

S1: **I don't believe it!** You are the most indecisive person I've ever met!

S2: Well, I suppose I could go…

S1: **Aargh!**

[*English File 3rd edition Pre-Intermediate*, R 4.49]

Sample 7

[Conversation at a cash machine]

S1: **Argh! Oh no.**

S2: What's the matter?

S1: Oh. This cash machine's not working. Do you know if there's another machine somewhere? I really need to get some money.

S2: Hmm … I'm not sure. There might be one in the shopping centre.

S1: Thanks.

[*Speakout 2nd edition Intermediate*: R.5.5, Conversation 1]

Sample 8

[Situation at the airport. S1 is the airport assistant. S2 and S3 are a travelling couple]

S1: Yes, sir?

S2: Could you tell us what's happening with flight IB3056?

S1: Flight IB3056 …

S2: Yes, we've been waiting for over an hour and we've heard nothing. All it says on the screen is 'delayed'.

S1: Erm, … I'm afraid the plane has been delayed coming in from Amsterdam, sir…

S2: **[Ugh!]**

S1: Bear with me a minute. I'll just check the latest information on the computer. Erm …

S3: Thank you.

S1: The plane is due to arrive at, er, 10.30 … at the earliest.

S2: But that's over three hours' time!

S1: I'm sorry, sir. And it's likely to be later than that.

S2: **[Ugh!]** This isn't good enough. We've only got a weekend and …

S1: I'm sorry, sir. There's nothing I can do.

S3: And is there any way you could get us onto another flight? We're only going for two days and we've really been looking forward to it. It sounds as if we won't get to Seville till the afternoon.

S1: I'm sorry, madam. Our nine o'clock flight to Seville is full.

S3: What about another airline? Maybe we could transfer to another flight?

S1: I'm really sorry, but that's not possible. It's not our policy except in an emergency.

S2: This is an emergency.

S3: Bill! Oh dear. Couldn't the airline at least pay for our breakfast?

S1: Well, here are two vouchers for free coffee, courtesy of the airline.

S3: Oh … thank you. Come on, Bill, let's go and get some breakfast.

S2: I can tell you, this is the last time I use your airline.

S3: Come on, Bill.

S2: This is the worst experience I've ever had .…

[*Speakout 2nd edition Upper-Intermediate*: R.4.3, Conversation 2]

Anger-related nonverbal vocalisations constitute the minority of the lexical means for the expression of angry emotions in the dataset. The reasons for that may lie in the fact that nonverbal vocalisations do not constitute fully-fledged words. Instead, they are ritualized and conventionalised emotional expressions used mainly in informal speech. Many of them do not have a single canonical representation in writing and their spelling and lexical representation is less rigid than in the case of exclamations. These factors, in connection with demanding and extensive procedures of contents editing and preparation, may lead to them being largely edited out of official ELT materials (Porter & Roberts, 1981).

The practice of editing out certain nonverbal vocalisations may be further substantiated by the fact that in Sample 5 and Sample 8 the vocalisation *Ugh!*, although perfectly discernible in the audio files, had been edited out in the official coursebook transcripts. However, the vocalisation *Argh!*—present in Sample 6 and Sample 7—was consistently represented in the transcripts in writing.

Sample 8 presents an interesting case. The context refers to a conversation between an airport assistant (S1) and an angered passenger (S2). However, S2's spouse (S3) attends the conversation as well. The presence of S3 introduces a significant dynamic whereby S3 tries to mitigate S2's anger in the conversation and prevent S2 from engaging in further violent verbal acts towards S1. Thus, Sample 8 presents not only a conflictive interpersonal context—based

largely on S2's attitude—but it also shows possible and applicable conflict-minimising strategies, as exemplified by S3's involvement.

Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to perform a short study of how the emotion of anger is expressed in recorded dialogues from contemporary ELT coursebooks for adult learners. The analysis was based on listening activities from twelve coursebooks representing three internationally recognized ELT series issued by the leading publishing houses: *English File 3rd edition* (Oxford University Press), *Navigate* (Oxford University Press) and *Speakout 2nd edition* (Pearson). The research was based on conflictive interpersonal audio exchanges wherein the lexical categories of either swearing (taboo expletives), exclamations or nonverbal vocalisations were present. The aim of the study was to identify which of the three categories were present in the dataset, what the number of audio samples for each category was and what particular language expressions were used to convey the emotion of anger. In total, 20 dialogues were identified for the dataset study. The context of these dialogues included interpersonal arguments, complaints about a product or service, personal and business phone calls, and emotional reactions over malfunctioning equipment.

The lexical category which constituted the most significant means of expressing angry emotions in the dataset was exclamations, present in 14 audio samples (70% of the dataset). These included simple exclamatory forms and fully grammatical sentences. The most common exclamations were *I don't believe it!* (5 instances), *Oh no!* (4 instances), *You're kidding/joking!* (4 instances), *What?!* (4 instances). Another way in which anger was represented in the dataset was through the use on nonverbal vocalisations, that is, emotional response cries which constitute conventionalised vocal forms for the expression of emotions. Angry nonverbal vocalizations were distinguished in six dataset samples. *Argh!* was identified in three dialogues, while *Ugh!* was present in three conversations. It must be noted that both exclamations and nonverbal vocalisations must be produced with appropriate prosodic features of speech for the successful conveying of their emotional significance.

The more frequent representation of exclamations in the dataset may be explained by the fact that, in contrast to nonverbal vocalisations, they constitute fully-fledged words and grammatical sentences. Therefore, they provide viable lexical and syntactic forms for expressing emotions and are not subject to the extensive and demanding processes of content preparation and editing.

The category for expressing anger which was conspicuously absent from the dataset were instances of swearing and taboo expletives. This is hardly surprising. Although taboo-based swearing appears to be one of the primary ways of expressing one's emotions in informal speech (Allan & Burridge, 2006; Ljung, 2011), the legal, social, and educational expectations and requirements for global ELT coursebooks exclude this type of language from being represented in ELT materials.

The results of the analysis show that the dataset coursebooks expressed anger in a rather restrained way, with explicit use of exclamations, followed by a limited set of nonverbal vocalisations, without the presence of taboo expletives.

The author believes that these editing decisions should hardly be put into question. Modern ELT coursebook play a central role in contemporary ELT practice. They are expected to uphold certain social, cultural, and commercial standards. With respect to the representation of interpersonal dialogues, they tend to avoid criticism resulting from the inclusion of controversial, disturbing or conflictive materials. On the one hand, this attitude seems reasonable, responsible, and expected. The authors, editors, and publishers of ELT materials are under constant pressure to follow certain legal, social, and cultural requirements. Unrestrained expression of emotions may lead to negative social and legal consequences. On the other hand, conflictive situations constitute an inescapable part of learners' everyday lives. Thus, it seems that the presence interpersonal exchanges showcasing possibly realistic means of expressing anger in modern ELT coursebooks is fully justified. Not only does it serve the purpose of presenting the use of English in argumentative or conflict-inducing contexts, but it also may provide some practical and educational benefits beyond the realm of foreign language learning. For instance, faithful representation of customer complaints may fulfil the educational function of presenting the legal framework of such situations in a specific country. An authentic portrayal of unsolicited business phone calls may educate the listener on one's rights for privacy protection and customer regulations. The context of a personal argument may be presented alongside a psycho-pragmatic analysis depicting the psychological mechanisms of conflict and advising the reader on possibly respectful and conflict-minimising courses of action in a similar scenario. Thus, responsible, and non-offensive, but at the same time vivid and realistic presentation of conflictive and argumentative interpersonal exchanges in modern ELT materials may facilitate learning the standards of behaviour and expressing one's emotions in different social, cultural and legal contexts.

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