

# Investigating the coverage of speech acts in Hong Kong ELT textbooks

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## Abstract

In this investigation, speech acts targeted for instruction in ELT (English Language Teaching) textbooks commonly used in Hong Kong were examined using relational content analysis. The aim was to discover which speech acts are frequently presented or not evident, so that this information could be compared to that which has been found in prior studies in other locations. This is important because, from a pedagogical viewpoint, teachers need to ensure textbooks help students learn to use as wide a range of speech acts as possible. As textbooks also need to provide clear examples and information to help learners understand how and when to use speech acts, in this research, the presentation of the speech acts was examined to identify the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic information. It was found that there was a tendency to include certain speech acts much more frequently than others, and that some were not included at all. There was also a general lack of clear pragmalinguistic (such as the presentation of indirect speech acts) and sociopragmatic information (such as dealing with high degrees of social distance) presented. This suggests that these factors could be given further consideration and that there are improvements that could be made to both the way that textbooks are written and selected for use. Therefore, this study contributes valuable information about the speech acts in Hong Kong ELT textbooks to and has important implications for both textbook writers and English teachers regarding the field of pragmatics.

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## 1 Introduction

The primary areas of investigation in this research are the speech acts that are frequently targeted for instruction, or not evident, in English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks (or coursebooks), the types of pragmalinguistic description present, and the kinds of sociopragmatic description. As the author teaches English in Hong Kong, this research focused on textbooks which are commonly used at both local primary and secondary levels here.

### 1.1 Theoretical background

Prior to 1962, linguists who followed the logical positivist view had suggested that language was solely used to describe facts or truthful states of affairs (Paltridge, 2012). Austin (1962) and Searle (1976) offered that language could also be used to get things done, in similar ways to how we perform acts physically (Paltridge, 2012). This was the beginning of speech act theory, which is the

main theoretical basis of this study. According to Searle (1980, p. vii), speech act theory “starts with the assumption that the minimal unit of human communication is not a sentence or other expression, but rather the performance of certain kinds of acts...” Searle’s speech act theory was the basis for defining the speech acts identified in this investigation.

The theoretical rationale for this research also involves interactionist approaches, and particularly, the noticing hypothesis, which relates to how learners acquire L2 pragmatics. Schmidt’s (1990) noticing hypothesis is vital to the concept of learning how to use speech acts using ELT textbooks. The noticing hypothesis “... emphasizes the role of awareness and consciousness in promoting the entry of declarative knowledge into learners’ systems. Hence, the initial phase of input selection and attentional condition is the primary concern of the noticing hypothesis” (Taguchi & Roever, 2017, p. 100).

In accordance with the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990), all linguists agree that input, such as speech acts targeted for instruction in ELT textbooks, is required for learners to acquire an additional language. However, this input needs to become intake and be used by the learners, and this can only happen if the input is noticed (Schmidt, 1993). When it comes to pragmatics, Schmidt (1993) stated that input becoming intake through noticing needs to involve awareness of, not only the linguistic forms, but also functional meanings and details related to context (cited in Taguchi & Roever, 2017). Therefore, the “... primary concern of the noticing hypothesis is the initial phase of input selection and the attentional condition required for its selection” (Taguchi & Roever, 2017, p. 53). Choosing appropriate ELT textbooks for learners is a clear example of this input selection. Furthermore, Schmidt added that attention to necessary pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic information is required for the learning of pragmatics to occur (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993).

## ***1.2 Aim and research questions***

Part of the rationale for this research is that it is important for teachers because, from a pedagogical viewpoint, the quality of pragmatic description found in textbooks is an important consideration when preparing classes, as we need to present useful information and examples to help learners understand exactly how to use speech acts (Limberg, 2016). Although it is not straightforward to determine exactly what is the main priority of textbooks, their content can tell us a lot about how language teaching is approached in general, and in Hong Kong in particular, they need to meet the expectations of both parents and educators (H. Chan, 2021).

Textbooks are certainly useful for ELT, but the author has noticed a need for improvement of the content. Students (including those in Hong Kong) often struggle with pragmatics and using appropriate or clear speech acts, such as requests, and it is possible that inadequate presentation of speech acts in textbooks used in their prior studies may have contributed to this type of pragmatic failure. Inappropriate use of speech acts can have life-altering consequences for students, so it is in the best interests of all to make improvements in this field (Nguyen & Basturkmen, 2020). Focusing on speech acts ties in with both Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT), as “they focus on what language does in the real world rather than what language is” (Thornbury, 2011, p. 188).

Prior research has identified the need for improvement in the teaching of pragmatics in language learning (Seigel, Broadbridge, & Firth, 2018). Confucian principles have contributed to the situation where many ELT teachers tend to traditionally ‘teach the book’ (Wette & Barkhuizen 2009). This line of thinking is prevalent among many local teachers in Hong Kong (Wong 2017). Therefore, it is crucial that appropriate coursebooks are selected and used effectively. However, there have been relatively few comprehensive studies into speech acts in ELT textbooks (Ton Nu & Murray, 2020), particularly the textbooks used in Hong Kong, and many studies have only investigated particular speech acts or only a few aspects of them. Thus, this study looks to add to the previous research on speech acts by comprehensively investigating more recent developments and a wide range of aspects of all of the speech acts which are found, this time in textbooks commonly used in both primary and

secondary schools in Hong Kong. To the best of the author's knowledge, this is the first study to focus on all of the speech acts to be found in Hong Kong ELT textbooks.

This study investigates the following research questions:

Research Question 1: Which speech acts are targeted in the ELT textbooks?

Research Question 2: What kind of pragmalinguistic description do the materials provide?

Research Question 3: What kind of sociopragmatic description do the materials provide?

## 2 Literature review

### 2.1 Speech acts

Pragmatics has been defined as “the study of meaning in relation to the context in which a person is speaking or writing,” (Paltridge, 2012, p. 38) and the most frequently researched aspect of pragmatics is speech acts (Kasper, 2006, cited in Diepenbroek & Derwing, 2013). While developing the speech act theory model which is used in this study, Searle (1976) divided speech acts into five distinct categories (Flowerdew, 2012). Representatives (or assertives) are speech acts regarding the state of the world, (e.g., opinions or predictions). Directives (e.g., suggestions or requests) are attempts to get the hearer to do something. Commissives commit the speaker to doing something (e.g., promises or offers). Expressives (e.g., thanking or apologising) express the speaker's feelings about something. Finally, declarations are performatives which cause the state of the affairs that they declare to happen (e.g., ‘I baptize you...’). Therefore, speech acts are the “language used to perform actions” (Flowerdew, 2012, p. 79). Definitions and examples of the speech acts operationalized in this study are found in the coding scheme in Appendix 2.

#### 2.1.1 Pragmalinguistic knowledge

The first of two types of knowledge needed to acquire the pragmatic competence necessary to use speech acts is pragmalinguistic knowledge (Leech, 1983). This involves the actual linguistic realisations used to exercise strategies needed to use a speech act to achieve a pragmatic goal (Flowerdew, 2012). An example could be selecting appropriate modal verbs when making requests (*‘Can/Could you ...?’*).

Pragmalinguistic information also includes grammatical formulas, directness, and possible responses to speech acts which textbooks could present as part of model dialogues. Grammatical formulas could include using *‘modal verbs for giving advice’* between a subject and a main/full base-form verb. Linguistic realisations of speech acts can be more or less than a sentence in length, and a single sentence can realise more than one speech act (Flowerdew, 2012). An example of a linguistic realisation could be *‘You should explain ...’*. This could be presented merely as a discrete item or along with responses such as *‘OK’* or *‘No’* as part of model dialogues.

Strategies for speech acts are the different ways we can perform them, including directly or indirectly (Searle, 1976). Indirect speech acts are those where “one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another” (Searle, 1975, p. 60, quoted in Flowerdew, 2012, p. 82). Flowerdew (2012) explains that conventionalised indirect speech acts use forms which are commonly associated with that speech act, whereas non-conventionalised ones often require context to be identified as a particular speech act. Using the linguistic realization *‘Please pass the salt’* as a request would be considered a direct speech act. Flowerdew (2012) gives an example of a conventionalised indirect version *‘Can you pass the salt?’*, as this is also a question regarding the person's ability to pass it. A non-conventionalised speech act realisation could be *‘My meal isn't salty enough’*.

### 2.1.2 *Sociopragmatic knowledge*

The other type of knowledge needed for using speech acts is sociopragmatic - involving the social conventions which need to be applied to our use of the language (Leech, 1983). This involves the ability to choose appropriate strategies to achieve a pragmatic goal (Flowerdew, 2012). According to the noticing hypothesis and meaning-based theories, even perfect use of English grammar may not necessarily result in felicitous communication if it is not used in appropriate contexts. L2 learners may learn how to use different forms of speech acts but be uncertain about the subtle differences in appropriate moments to use each one (Limberg, 2016). Learners often need to try to guess which form to use (Nguyen, 2011), as information on this can be difficult to obtain (Vellenga, 2004).

Sociopragmatic failure is often the result of differing judgements about the social aspects of the context of communication or not being aware of socio-cultural norms (McConachy & Hata, 2013). While other errors, such as grammatical ones, are often judged to show that a user does not have native-like English proficiency, sociolinguistic inappropriacy is often taken as the speaker having breached etiquette in a rude or offensive manner (Boxer & Pickering, 1995). Therefore, sociopragmatic failure may have more serious effects than grammatical mistakes would (Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004).

Sociopragmatic information includes issues regarding context/settings, power/social distance, levels of imposition, and cross-cultural issues. Examples of different contexts/settings could include giving advice to people on how to deal with a difference of opinion or to people visiting a new place for the first time. These different settings may well require slightly different linguistic realisations to successfully perform the speech act. According to Kasper and Schmidt (1996), "In P. Brown and Levinson's (1987, p. 155) politeness theory, three contextual variables - social power, social distance, degree of imposition - act as universal constraints on linguistic action." Social/power distance depends on who the interlocutors involved in the communication are. Examples of students either making suggestions to their own classmates or to their local mayor involve not only power, but also social distance, as the classmates share classes together every week, whereas the students may not even know the mayor. Degree of imposition is "the degree to which they (the impositions) are considered to interfere with an agent's wants of self-determination or of approval ..." (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 77). For example, suggesting that someone gives up some of their money or time is asking a lot of that person, but suggesting that they might enjoy watching a certain film does not necessarily impose on the hearer at all. Cross-cultural issues can involve whether the interlocutors are using English as their L1 or L2. For example, it is fair to assume that interlocutors from New Zealand are likely to be native-English speakers, whereas those from Hong Kong may not be. All of these factors impact how we use speech acts.

## 2.2 *ELT textbooks*

As other opportunities to use English may be virtually non-existent in contexts such as Hong Kong, textbooks can be the principal source of pragmatics input (Usó-Juan, 2008). Textbook use in foreign language classes in public schools is common (Limberg, 2016). Prior research has suggested that ELT textbooks often fail to provide enough sociopragmatic information, including when we should use a certain speech act and which linguistic realisations would be most appropriate (Nguyen, 2011). Boxer and Pickering's (1995) study on complaints found that some textbooks tend to focus on direct speech acts rather than indirect and that they often do not include discussion on the actual functions of the speech acts. They also pointed out that more explanation could be included regarding the interlocutors and contexts involved with textbook model dialogues (Boxer & Pickering, 1995). A tendency to focus on one main linguistic realisation for each speech act and a lack of sociopragmatic information in ELT textbooks was found by Cohen (1996). Studies conducted by Salazar and Usó-Juan found that input from ELT textbooks can be unnatural, as they discovered that most of the requests (2001) and suggestions/advice (2002) that they analysed were conventionally

indirect (Usó-Juan, 2008). This may be due to textbook authors relying on their own intuition, rather than empirical research (Usó-Juan, 2008). Bouton (1993) also reported that there was a large discrepancy between the invitations presented in an ELT textbook and those found in a published corpus (cited in Rose & Kasper, 2001).

Vellenga's (2004) study on pragmatic content in ELT textbooks found that important speech acts (such as apologising) are under-represented in some university-level textbooks, and that limited varieties of linguistic items are often presented. If textbooks suggest strong links between a speech act and particular pragmalinguistic forms, learners may assume that there are no alternative forms to use (Vellenga, 2004). Other studies on speech acts in ELT textbooks after Vellenga's were carried out by Nguyen (2011) and Ulum (2015) and found a general lack of information presented. In another study involving speech acts in ELT textbooks, Diepenbroek and Derwing (2013) found that there was often a lack of information regarding when to use which expressions.

A study by Ren and Han (2016) showed that pragmatic content was under-represented in ELT textbooks used in China. They also found that there was a lack of context supplied, and that the intuition of the writers was often the basis for the way speech acts were presented. More metapragmatic information, reasoning, and information on intralingual variation could have been included (Ren & Han 2016). Other studies on pragmatic content, including speech acts, in ELT textbooks were carried out after Ren and Han's by Pérez-Hernández (2019) and Ton Nu and Murray (2020), and these found a general lack of pragmatic information as well.

### 2.3 *Hongkong context*

Cantonese is the L1 of most of the learners studying in public schools in Hong Kong and is commonly used for spoken communication there. However, the acquisition and use of English remains important in Hong Kong for government administration, the legal system, higher education, professional training, and globalised business due to the region's history of colonial rule (Evans, 2010).

Rose (2000, 2009) found little evidence of sociopragmatic development during his studies on Hong Kong school students. A study by Cheng and Warren (2007) compared language from the Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English (HKCSE) to that found in textbooks. They found that textbooks often feature language forms which are rarely used in everyday life. They concluded that textbook writers tended to use their own judgement and be influenced by academic genres, and that corpora may be a better source for the content of their textbooks (Cheng & Warren, 2007).

A Hong Kong speech act study by Cheng and Cheng (2010) had clear implications for determining which types of input should be presented in learning materials such as ELT textbooks. Following studies on various speech acts, it was concluded that the way they were taught in Hong Kong schools was limited and lacked contextual information. It was suggested that "textbook writers and teachers need to incorporate a more accurate and wider range of forms, strategies, and structural patterns into their teaching materials" (Cheng & Cheng, 2010, p. 462).

As students go on to join the workforce, they often speak in Cantonese but need to write mostly in English (Lam, Cheng, & Kong, 2014). Lam et al. (2014) found that textbooks in Hong Kong were also found to be limited in terms of their ability to make learners more aware of the importance of sociocultural variation when it comes to communicating in the workplace.

In evaluating the Hong Kong textbook *Longman Elect Senior Secondary Theme Book*, Wong noted that there was "insufficient language input and too few examples provided" (Wong, 2017, p. 175). Teachers who used the textbook suggested that the information it provided was "insufficient to enhance students' understanding" and gave an example where the learners were required to reply to a complaint letter in writing without being given enough language input to help them do this (Wong, 2017, p. 172).

In their study, Chan and Cheuk (2020) found that Hong Kong textbooks tend to focus heavily on reading and writing (as opposed to speaking and listening). However, H. Chan (2021) did add that they do often emphasise constructivist activities, such as presentations and group discussions when

compared with textbooks commonly used in mainland China. J. Chan (2020) found that textbooks published by Oxford and Pearson (those most commonly used in Hong Kong) could do more to include World Englishes. This suggests that more could be done in Hong Kong to promote the idea of a more global English, including when it comes to speech acts. It was later suggested that there had been relatively little change in Hong Kong ELT textbooks between 1975 and 2021, but that function-focused tasks were becoming more common (J. Chan, 2021).

Part of the purpose of this investigation is to uncover whether there has been any progress in this area and if the ELT textbooks commonly used in public schools in Hong Kong today have any notable differences from the textbooks previously analysed.

### **3 Methodology**

Lin, Chang, and Wang (2019) have stated that, to analyse speech acts, both qualitative and quantitative research are needed. This section contains information regarding the research design, data collection instruments, and the analysis of the materials.

#### **3.1 Research design overview**

This study used relational content analysis with an exploratory approach. To identify which speech acts were targeted for instruction conventional (inductive) content analysis was used. Following that, directed (deductive) content analysis was used to examine the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic information included. Therefore, overall, it was relational content analysis which was used. This was similar to the analysis used by Ton Nu and Murray (2020), as they also used both qualitative and quantitative research. This type of combined qualitative and quantitative content analysis of teaching resources was also used in Hong Kong by Lam et al. (2014 p.72).

The first step was the selection of the textbooks. It is important to code to reliably report the content of textbooks (Harwood, 2013), so a coding scheme was developed, and the codes were categorised, checked, and modified. Speech acts specifically targeted for instruction throughout the textbooks were identified and classified. Units/Chapters/Modules 3 and 4 of the textbooks were further analysed to identify the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic information included. The data were tabulated into percentages and descriptive statistical analysis was performed.

#### **3.2 Data collection instruments**

As stated above, the first step was the textbook selection. The chosen textbooks (cf. Appendix 1) were all published by Pearson (Hong Kong), who had previously purchased the Longman company, and Oxford University Press (OUP) China, “whose textbooks have traditionally been used in the local schools” (Chan, 2021, p. 735). The textbooks from these publishers for Senior Secondary School (Secondary 4 to 6) and Senior Primary 6 textbooks listed on the Hong Kong Education Bureau’s recommended textbooks list for the 2020/2021 school year were selected. These cover important years for students before they complete Key Stages 2 and 4 and graduate, and they were all published locally specifically for the Hong Kong market. All of the textbooks focused on integrating all four major language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). Limberg (2016) referred to studies which have reported that there appears to be more pragmatic input in textbooks targeting the early stages of language learning, so the inclusion of the primary school textbooks was justified.

Each textbook title had between eight and 16 units/modules/chapters in total, split over at least two separate books/volumes, for example ‘6A’/‘6B’. For each textbook, the average number of units was 12. Within the textbooks, Units/Modules/Chapters 3 and 4 were chosen at random and used as data for analysis for Research Questions 2 and 3. As the primary 6 textbooks had a Unit 3 and 4 in each of the two volumes (6A and 6B), Units/Modules/Chapters 7 and 8 from the senior secondary textbooks were also analysed to balance the number of units (two in each volume, giving four in

total for each textbook). Two units/modules/chapters per volume was the amount chosen to provide a substantial but manageable amount of data.

### 3.3 Analysis

Next, there was an initial review of the data. Searle's (1976) model of speech acts was used. The unit of analysis was decided to be the information provided about speech acts specifically targeted for instruction throughout each unit/module/chapter of the textbooks, primarily in the 'Language (Focus)/'Text Analysis' and 'Task'/'Practice' sections. Units/Chapters/Modules 3 and 4 of the textbooks were focused on in further detail using pragmatic analysis to evaluate the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic information included.

Following the initial review of the textbooks, a coding scheme was developed, which included definitions of the speech acts that were operationalised for this study. For example, the linguistic realisation "*I'm sorry to hear that*" (sympathising) was coded as 'Sy', whereas "*Thank you for your kindness ...*" (thanking) was coded as 'T'. This formed a basis for a coding scheme (cf. Appendix 2). Then an experienced researcher at a university in Hong Kong used the coding scheme to code 20% of the data. There was 91% agreement. Any disagreement was resolved through discussion, and the coding scheme was subsequently modified to account for those discrepancies.

The first task of the data collection was to record each occurrence of explicit presentation of a speech act. Each of the 24 different speech acts (cf. Appendix 2) which were found were identified through being the explicit focus of instruction. For example, in Unit 3 of *Longman Elect New Senior Secondary Theme Book*, the speech act of advice was clearly targeted for instruction, as advice regarding Chinese dining etiquette was modelled/elicited, letters of advice were modelled in the 'Text Analysis' section (and referred to specifically as '*letters of advice*' that '*should give advice*'), *should* was referred to as an example of '*modal verbs for giving advice*', conditionals were presented as being '*for giving advice*', the learners were instructed to write an '*email of advice*' in the *Task 2* section, and advice for people visiting Hong Kong was presented. Incidental inclusions of speech acts were not recorded. For example, the speech act of opining ('*You asked me if I think using Facebook is a bad idea. I don't think so*') appeared in the same unit mentioned above, but as the speech act of advice had clearly been the one targeted for instruction, opining was not recorded in this instance. *Advice* and *Suggestions* were coded separately, despite there being some incidences where a case could be made for either speech act. An example where the two speech acts were clearly separate was found in Unit 3 of *Longman Activate New Senior Secondary Theme Book*, where separate grammatical formulas and linguistic realisations were presented and labelled as being for either advice ('... *you should also show your mum ...*') or suggestions ('*How about organising a lunch...?*'). Once occurrences of each of the 24 speech acts had been counted, the frequency totals were compared.

Following that, Units/Chapters/Modules 3 and 4 of the textbooks (and 7 and 8 of the senior secondary school textbooks) were focused on, so the pragmalinguistic description provided for each speech act could be identified and systematically evaluated using pragmatic analysis. A tally was kept and recorded for the following categories; whether the information focused on the spoken or written forms of the speech act, whether specific grammatical formulas for the speech act were included, whether specific lexical expressions for the speech act were shown, whether the speech acts were direct/conventionally indirect/non-conventionally indirect, whether the speech acts were presented as discrete items or as part of model dialogues, and whether any information on structure or layout of a written text was provided or not. The totals were recorded and compared.

Finally, inclusions of sociopragmatic information in Units/Chapters/Modules 3 and 4 were identified. Regarding this, the following information was recorded; the number of different settings the speech act was presented in, the degree of power distance (high, low, or none) or social distance (high, mid, or low) displayed, the level of imposition (high, low, or none), and information on cross-cultural issues (only non-native English speaker interlocutors included, both non- and native speakers included, or unclear). If a unit displayed at least some use of a speech act involving a high degree

of power distance/social distance/imposition, it was coded as ‘High’. If a mid/low level was displayed, it was coded as ‘Mid’/‘Low’, and ‘None’ if none was displayed (see Appendix 2 for details).

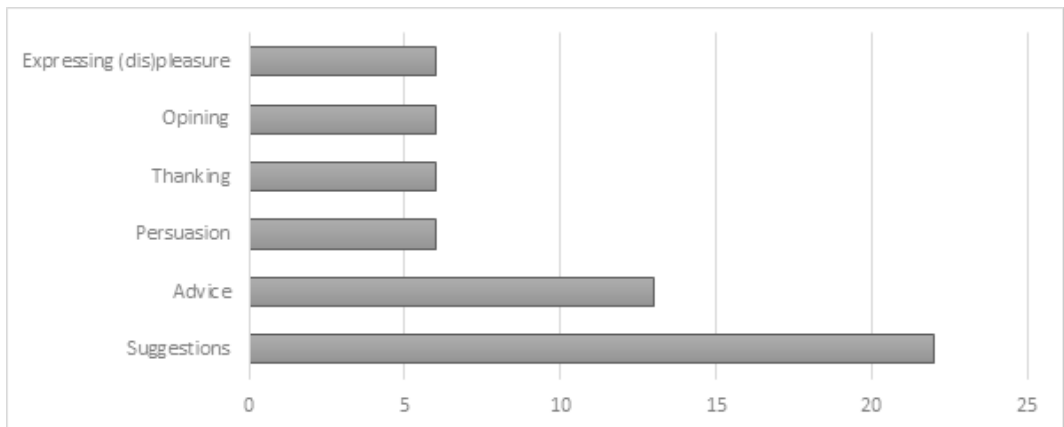
The qualitative data were converted to quantitative data using descriptive statistical analysis. For example, the total number of requests were calculated, and percentages were formulated. Thus, an exploratory approach was used to analyse the content of the textbooks. Next, the results are outlined.

## 4 Results

This section presents the most significant findings of the analysis, answering the three research questions. They are presented using figures and tables.

### 4.1 *Speech acts which were targeted for instruction*

There was a total of 24 different speech acts that were found to be targeted for instruction in the selected ELT textbooks. Five of these speech acts (complaints, criticism, enquiries, negotiation, and regret/reproach) were only presented (together with other speech acts) in Unit 16 of the *Progress Now* senior secondary school textbook, and only 16 different speech acts appeared more than one time in total. As these were included more than once, there was a total of 95 times that any speech act was targeted for instruction. As Figure 1 shows, the speech act of suggestions was by far the most-commonly targeted speech act with a total of 22 occasions across the set of textbooks.



**Fig. 1. Highest Frequencies of Speech Act Presentation**

Suggestions were followed by the similar speech act of advice. If we combine these related categories, they made up 37% of the total of 95 times that speech acts were targeted for instruction. There was quite a large gap between the frequency of advice (13 times) and that of persuasion, thanking, opining, and expressing (dis-)pleasure (6 times each). Requests and expressing preferences were targeted four times each.

At the other end of the scale, other speech acts rarely featured in the textbooks or did not feature at all. Speech acts which were found to be targeted for instruction in textbooks in previous studies (Pérez-Hernández, 2021; Vellenga, 2004) such as offers and invitations were not evident in this selection of textbooks. Greetings were also missing. None of the textbooks in this study featured the speech acts of asking for permission, correcting, making excuses, making introductions, promises, or threats. Predictions, wishes, and sympathising only featured once each. The speech acts of complaints, criticisms, enquiries, negotiation, and regret/reproach only appeared in Unit 16 of the *Progress Now* textbook. The number of speech acts targeted by each individual textbook varied from two to the eighteen different speech acts in the Senior Secondary textbook *Progress Now* (Textbook



C) (see Table 1 and Appendices 1 and 2 for details). The average was 7.3 per textbook. Nine of the ten textbooks targeted the speech act of suggestions at least once, and advice was also targeted by nine of ten.

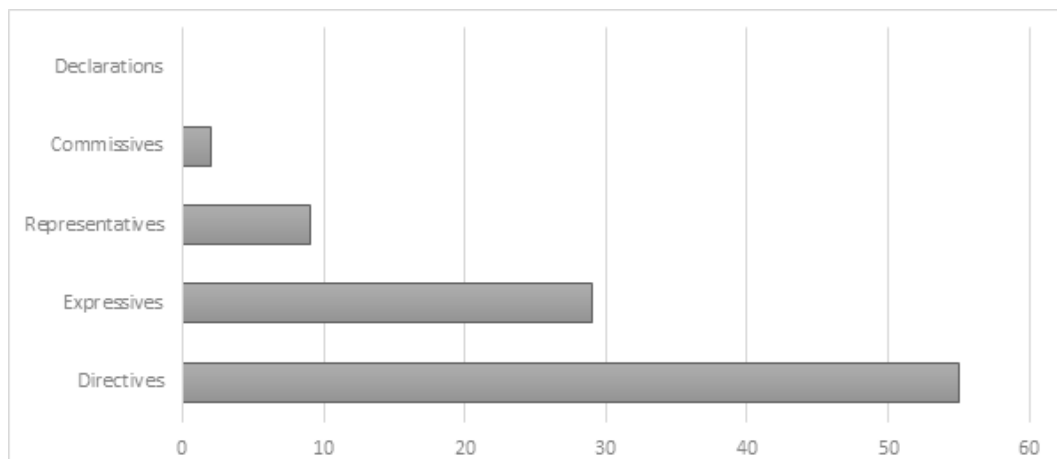
**Table 1. Appearances of speech acts in each individual textbook**

TEXTBOOK	Ad	Rq	Su	(D)A	Ps	Ap	T	I	Po	W
A	1		2		2				1	
B	1	1	4		2				1	
C	1	1	1	1	1		1		1	1
D	1	2	3				2	1		
E	1									
F			3			1	1			
G	1		2	1		1	1			
H	1		3					1		
I	4		2		1			1		
J	2		2			1	1			
	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

TEXTBOOK	RR	RC	Ce	Rc	O	Pd	EP	Sy	EDP	TOTALS	SAs
A		1		1	1				1	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
B		1		1	1				1	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>
C	1	1	1			1			1	<b>18*</b>	<b>18*</b>
D	1		1				1	1		<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>
E							1			<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
F					1				1	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
G					1					<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
H							1		1	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
I					1		1			<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>
J					1				1	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>95*</b>	<b>24*</b>

\* Total includes the speech acts of complaints, criticism, enquiries, negotiation, and regret/reproach which were only featured within Unit 16 of Textbook C Progress Now

Figure 2 shows that if we look at the speech acts in terms of Searle's (1976) five categories, we can see that directives were targeted for instruction far more frequently (55 times) than the other categories (40 times combined). There were a mere two instances where commissives were targeted and no occurrences of declarations.



**Fig. 2. Speech Act Presentation by Category**

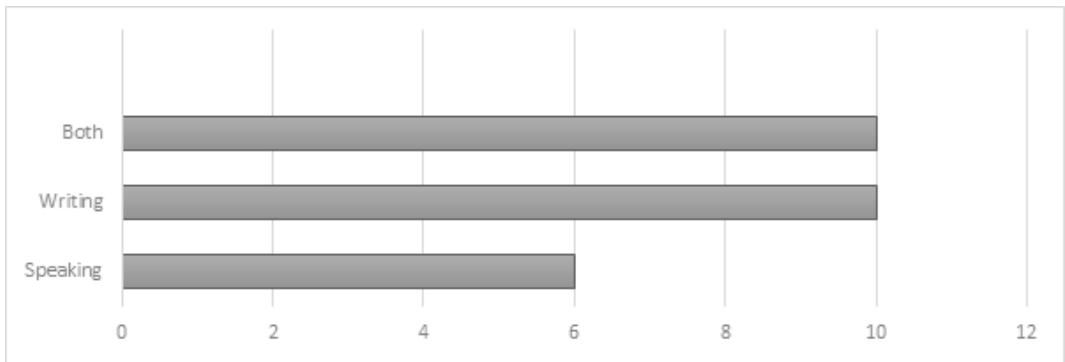
As can be seen in Table 2 (see Appendices A and B for more details), *Longman Elect New Senior Secondary Theme Book* (Textbook B) had the highest number of units with directives presented in them (10), followed by the Senior Primary 6 textbook *Living Oxford English* (Textbook I) with eight. The Senior Secondary textbook *Progress Now* (Textbook C) had the most units with expressives presented in them and was also the only textbook to feature four of the five categories.

**Table 2. Appearances of speech acts in each individual textbook by category**

TEXTBOOK	Directives	Expressives	Representatives	Commissives	Declarations	TOTALS
A	7	2	1			10
B	10	2	1			13
C	7	8	2	1		18
D	7	5		1		13
E	1	1				2
F	3	3	1			7
G	3	2	2			7
H	5	2				7
I	8	1	1			10
J	4	3	1			8
	55	29	9	2	0	95

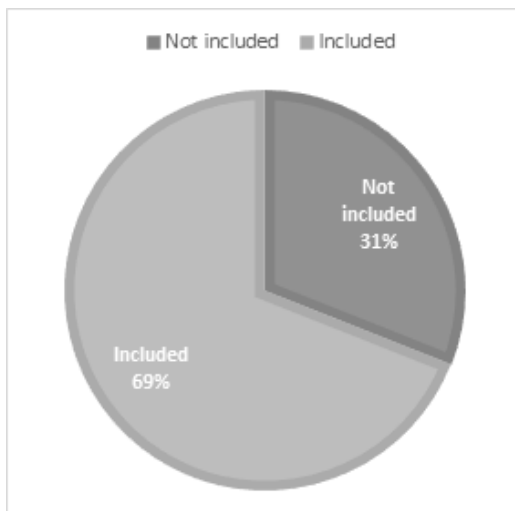
#### 4.2 Pragmalinguistic description the materials provided

In Units/Modules/Chapters 3 and 4 of the different textbooks, there was variety in the extent to which pragmalinguistic information was provided. Firstly, of the total of 40 units examined, only 26 of them explicitly focused on speech acts. The majority (77%) of these instructed the learners to produce the targeted speech acts in writing, and in 61.5% of the units the learners used the speech acts when speaking (see Figure 3).

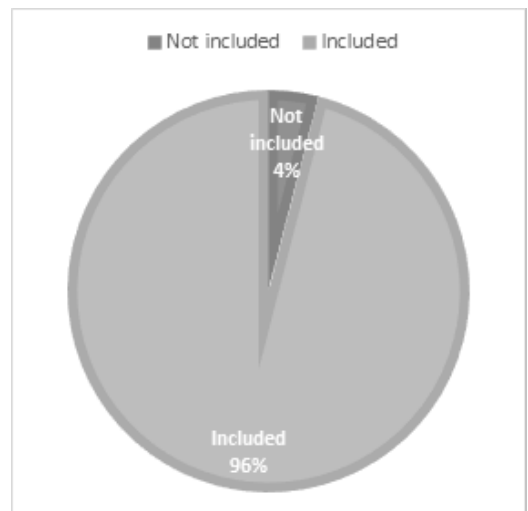


**Fig. 3. Number of Units which had learners produce SAs in Writing/Speaking**

18 of the units included grammatical formulas explicitly related to their speech acts, and eight did not (see Figure 4). Figure 5 shows that only one of the 26 units did not include lexical expressions clearly related to their speech acts, and this was a case where the lexical expressions displayed in the units were more general grammar points, rather than specifically for the use of that particular speech act.



**Fig. 4. Grammatical Formulas**

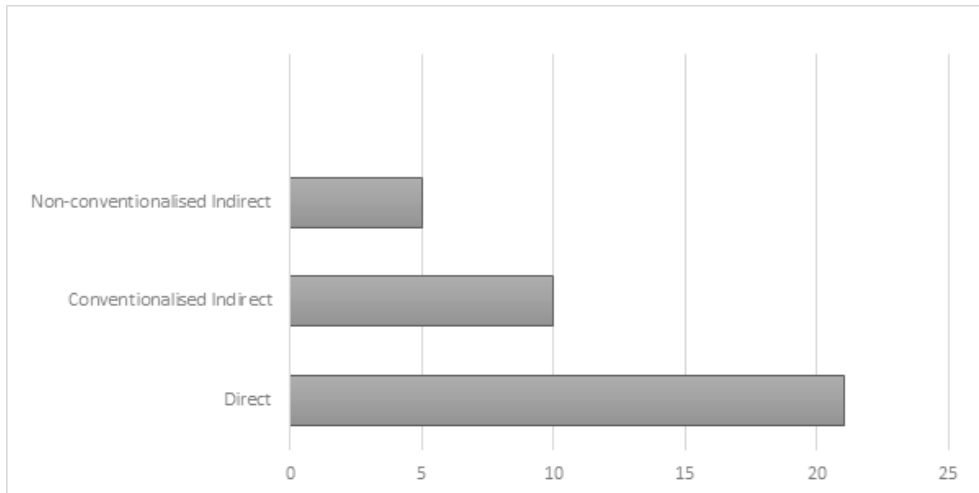


**Fig. 5. Lexical Expressions**

Of the 26 units, 10 (38.5%) presented both direct and indirect speech acts. For example, in Unit 3 of *Longman Activate New Senior Secondary Theme Book*, the direct linguistic realisation ‘... you should also show your mum ...’ and the conventionalised indirect ‘... if I were you, I would try to explain this to your mum’ were both presented for the speech act of giving advice. Therefore, in total there were 36 instances of presentations of speech acts, including the cases where both direct and indirect speech acts were presented in the same unit.

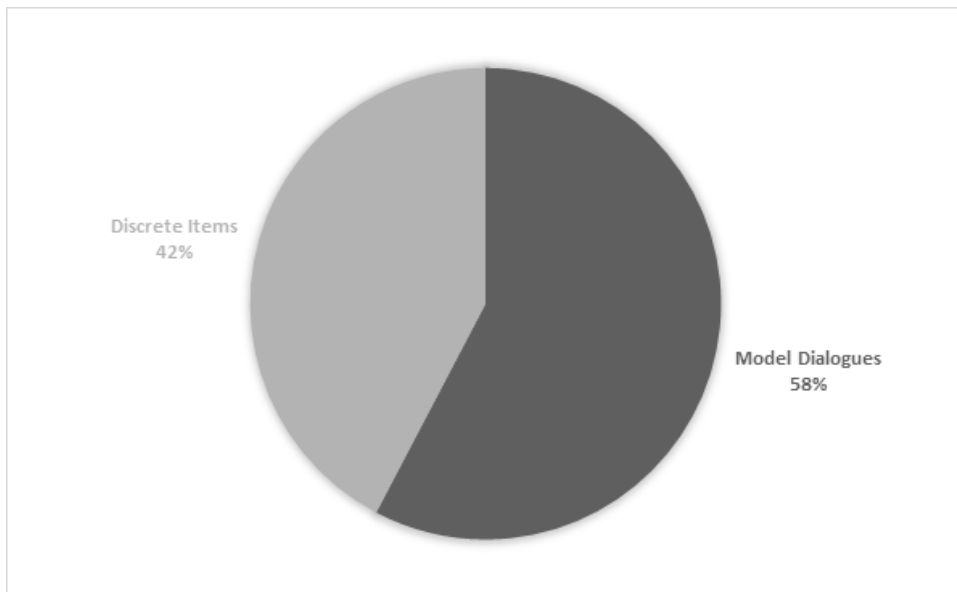
As shown in Figure 6, of the total of 36 presentations of linguistic realisations, the most common were direct speech acts (58%). To give an example, Module 4 of *Primary Longman Elect 6A* presented the linguistic realisation ‘*Shall we ...?*’ for the speech act of suggestions. In Module 4 of *Primary Longman Elect 6B*, the suggestions presented were far less direct. For example, ‘*Hunters*

*will keep killing elephants unless people stop buying ivory ornaments*' was a very indirect suggestion that people should not purchase those products.



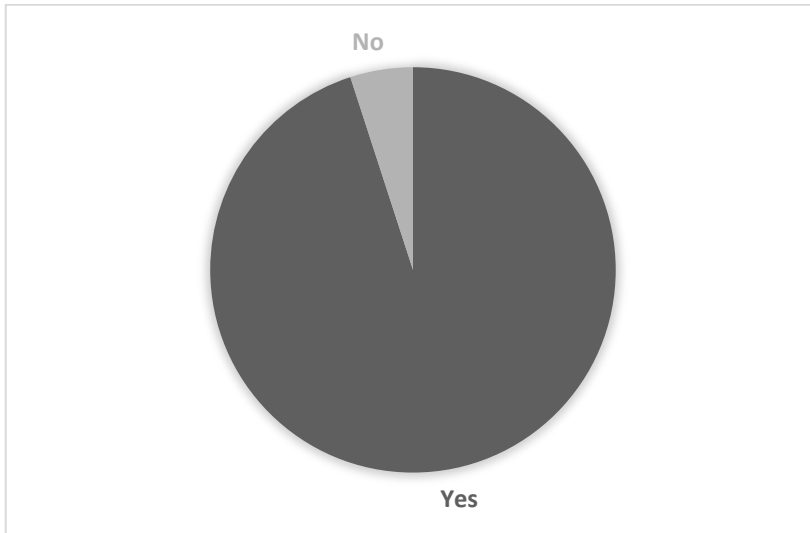
**Fig. 6. Direct / Indirect Speech Act Strategies**

Regarding the way that speech acts were presented in the textbooks, Figure 7 below shows that there were more units that presented their speech acts as part of model dialogues (with interlocutors responding to the initial speech acts) (15 units) than those that presented them as discrete items (11), though not by a very wide margin. The speech acts were classified as *discrete items* when no follow-up replies to the speech acts were included. Examples of the speech act of suggestions being presented as part of a model dialogue included in Chapter 4 of *Primary Longman Leap 6A* where suggestions were replied to with 'Sure' and 'That's a good idea'.



**Fig. 7. Presentation of Speech Acts**

There was a total of 20 units which had at least some focus on exposing learners to speech acts being used in written texts and required the learners themselves to use them in writing. Similar to the idea of speech acts being presented as part of model dialogues, learners need to be shown exactly how to present a speech act in written texts. For example, information regarding the structure (*Title, Introduction, etc.*) of a proposal was included in Unit 7 of *Longman Elect New Senior Secondary Theme Book*. This included where the actual speech acts of proposals should be presented within the proposal text. In other units, examples included the different parts of letters or emails being presented. Of those 20 units, only one did not include any information regarding the layout or structure of the written text (see Figure 8 below). This was clearly an exception, where the *Longman Welcome to English 6A* textbook featured suggestions as the targeted speech act, but then the *Task* section of the unit required the learners to write a list of promises without modelling any lexical expressions for promises, let alone providing any information on the layout or structure.

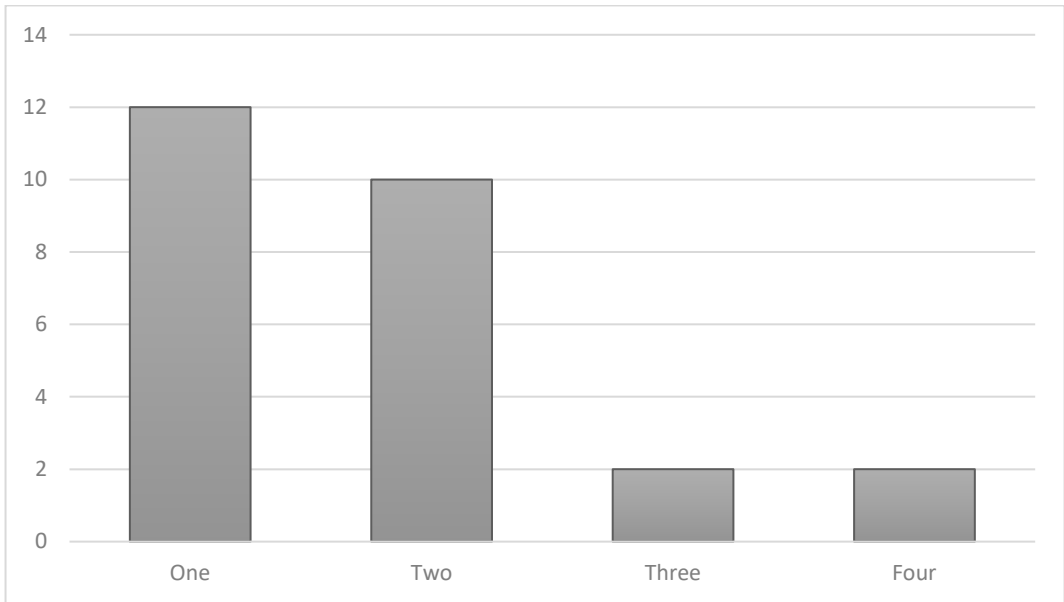


**Fig. 8. Information on Layout/Structure**

### **4.3 Sociopragmatic description the materials provided**

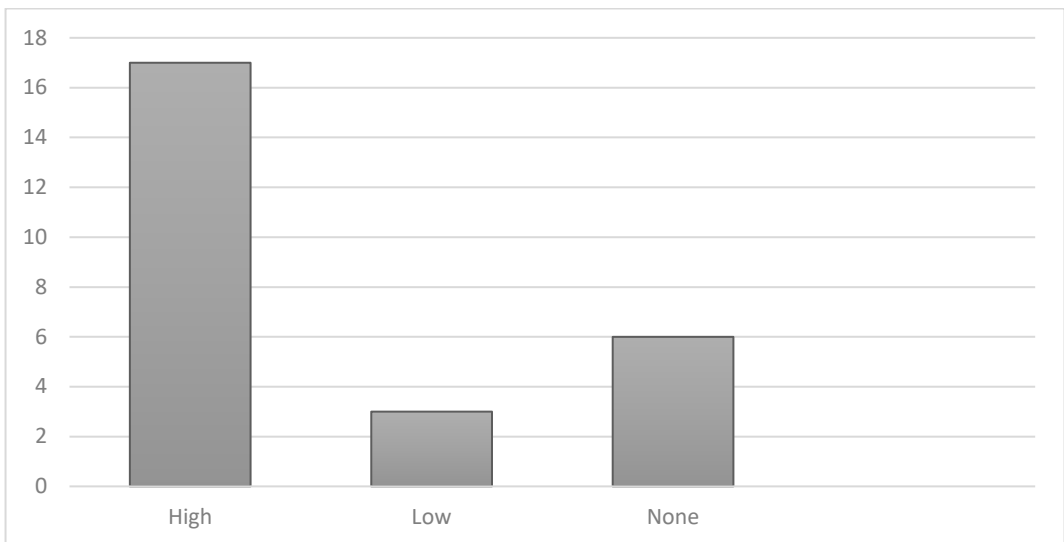
Prior research has indicated that pragmatic material is often presented in ELT textbooks without sufficient contextual information (Nguyen, 2011). In the 26 units in this study which explicitly focused on speech acts, there was wide variety in the sociopragmatic information which was provided. However, all of the units did use clear contexts for the presentation of the speech acts. For example, in Module 4 of *Primary Longman Elect 6A*, the learners were asked to make suggestions to each other on how they could raise funds for underprivileged children around the world, and then wrote a letter to their principal making suggestions.

Figure 9 below shows that most of the units (54%) used more than one setting to present use of the speech act in. For example, in Unit 3 of *Longman Elect New Senior Secondary Theme Book*, the speech act of advice was presented in the setting of a student giving advice regarding how to deal with a parent who disapproves of Facebook, then with students giving advice to visitors to Hong Kong. However, 46% of them presented the speech act in only one setting.



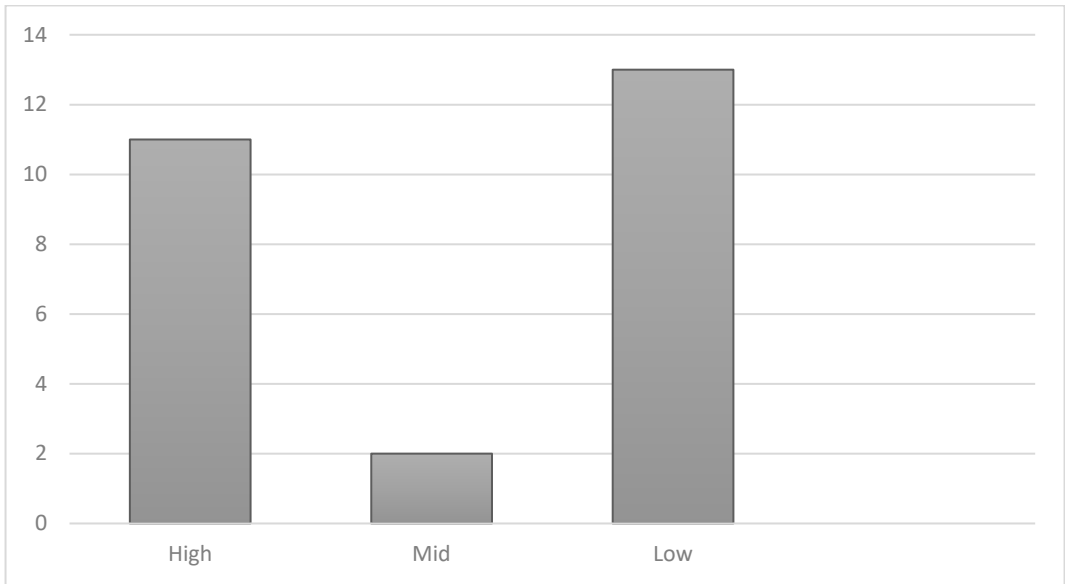
**Fig. 9. Number of Settings in which Speech Acts were presented**

Figure 10 reveals that 65% of the units displayed at least one situation with a high degree of power distance between interlocutors. For instance, in Unit 4 of *Primary Longman Elect 6A*, the speech act of suggestions was presented through young learners making suggestions to each other, and then again, to their principal. In this case, the principal has a clear degree of power over the students.



**Figure 10. Degree of Power Distance between Interlocutors**

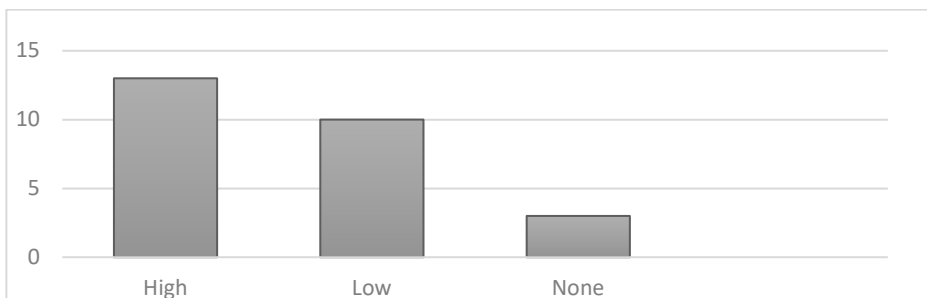
When it came to the area of social distance between interlocutors, Figure 11 shows that a smaller percentage (42%) of the units showed high degrees of distance.



**Fig. 11. Degree of Social Distance between Interlocutors**

Half of the units/modules/chapters displayed nothing more than a low degree of social distance. A lot of the contexts that the speech acts were presented in involved students using speech acts with their own classmates. For instance, in Unit 4 of *Primary Longman Elect 6A*, the speech act of suggestions was only presented through young learners making suggestions to other members of their own school, so that was a clear example where the degree of social distance was low. The levels of social distance tended to be higher in the senior secondary school textbooks. In Unit 3 of *Longman Activate New Senior Secondary Theme Book*, the speech act of giving advice was presented between friends or acquaintances, then between counsellors and readers of newspapers/magazines.

When we use speech acts, there is often a certain level of imposition involved. Figure 12 below reveals that the vast majority (88%) of the units contained at least some degree of imposition, with only three units containing none. To give an example of high levels of imposition, in Module 4 of *Longman English Leap 6A*, the interlocutors suggest that their classmates either donate money or volunteer to give up their time to help the needy. On the other hand, in units which focused on speech acts such as predictions, there was no real imposition placed on the people hearing or reading the speech acts.



**Fig. 12. Degree of Imposition**

As Figure 13 shows, regarding the cross-cultural issue of potential bias towards Native Speaker (NS) English Speech Act norms, nearly all of the units seemed to have included at least some non-native English speakers as interlocutors using the targeted speech acts.

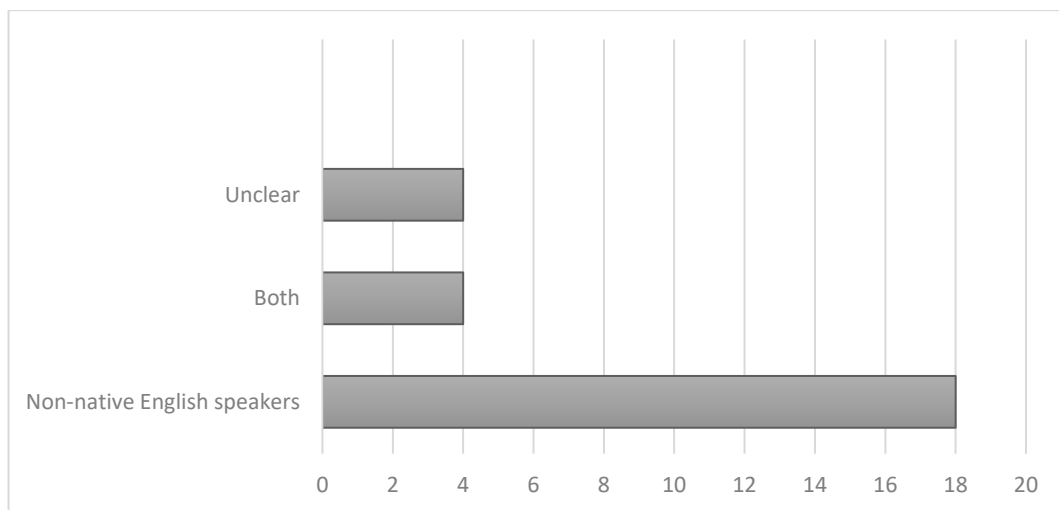


Fig. 13. Cross-cultural issues

Interlocutors with names such as *Dr. Li*, *Mrs. Lau*, and *Mr. Chan* did not suggest that they were intended to represent native English speakers. In Unit 3 of *Longman Elect New Senior Secondary Theme Book*, the learners (likely to be non-native English speakers) were asked to give advice to a girl in New York city (likely to be a native English speaker), Susan Jones, about visiting Hong Kong.

This section presented the results of the pragmatic analysis of the data collection materials. However, the data have just been reported objectively. Next, the findings will be discussed in depth.

## 5 Discussion

The results of this study suggest that there are strengths regarding the presentation of speech acts in Hong Kong ELT textbooks, but some potential areas for improvement as well. This study did not uncover any evidence that corpus data was used in writing these textbooks, and it appears that the objectives of the local curriculum are the major focus. Study in general in Hong Kong, including studying English, is widely acknowledged as being focused on exam performance, and anything without clear relevance to the local syllabus is often considered unfavourable (Rose, 2000). Therefore, learning a wide range of different speech acts or the most effective ways to use them may not be a major focus in Hong Kong classrooms.

In many of the textbook units, the grammar points included were not specifically tied to particular speech acts. Therefore, the textbooks only presented 24 different speech acts. On average, each textbook targeted 7.3 (with a standard deviation of 4.05). However, this number was due to the clear exception of 11 different speech acts being included in Unit 16 of the *Progress Now* textbook with the learning target of “using polite language” for writing business letters. Without that one unit, the highest number of speech acts targeted in one textbook would have been nine different speech acts and the mean 6.2 different speech acts per textbook (with a standard deviation of 1.94). Given that each textbook contained an average of 12 units/modules/chapters, this is a fairly low amount. The primary 6 textbook *New Magic* only targeted speech acts for instruction in two of its units. The fact that so few different speech acts were targeted for instruction suggests that these textbooks might



not provide comprehensive coverage of the wide range of speech acts required for effective communication. This limitation could potentially hinder students' abilities to express themselves appropriately in various situations.

Although there was some variation, suggestions and advice were clearly the speech acts most frequently featured across the data set. Some of the textbooks targeted suggestions and advice more than once, and even in consecutive units. Directives in general made up over half of the speech acts presented. If we add the similar directive speech act of persuasion to suggestions and advice, it makes up 43.6% of the total number of times speech acts were targeted. This might be because these speech acts tied in with grammar points that the authors wanted to cover, such as using second conditional. These findings resemble those from the studies on pragmatic content in ELT textbooks by Nguyen (2011), Ulum (2015), Ren and Han (2016), and Pérez-Hernández (2019), which also found that directives such were frequently presented. While making suggestions and giving advice are useful speech acts to learn, few would claim that they are so much more important than others such as offers or thanking.

Recommendations, proposals, negotiation, and responding to complaints were targeted for instruction in this selection of textbooks but not in those analysed by Vellenga (2004), Nguyen (2011), Ren and Han (2016), or Ton Nu and Murray (2020). Some of these speech acts may have been targeted to prepare learners for working or tertiary-level studies. In contrast to Ulum's (2015) study, representatives and particularly expressives (30.5% of the speech acts targeted) were found in this study.

Likewise, the fact that certain speech acts were not evident in this selection of textbooks was notable. Despite being featured in the textbooks analysed by Vellenga (2004), Ren and Han (2016), Pérez-Hernández (2019), and Ton Nu and Murray (2020), offers were not evident. Invitations were found by Vellenga (2004), Nguyen (2011), Ren and Han (2016), and Pérez-Hernández (2019) but not here. In fact, offers and invitations were the third- and fourth-most frequently targeted speech acts in Ren and Han's study (2016). This difference may have been due to textbooks for younger ages being analysed in this study. It could be argued that there is less need for younger learners to invite anyone or to offer to do things for others. On the other hand, according to Lenneberg's (1967) Critical Period Hypothesis, it could be advisable to teach learners a wider range of speech acts, including offers and invitations, at younger ages.

The speech acts of compliments, refusal, and promises were also not targeted in these textbooks but were found in several of the previous studies. It is possible that some of these speech acts may be taught at earlier levels before learners start to use the textbooks selected for this study, but they should probably be reviewed in these textbooks as well.

The senior secondary textbook *Progress Now* included by far the most expressives (eight), multiple representatives, and was one of only two textbooks to include a commissive speech act. While declarations not being evident in these textbooks may not be a surprise, commissives are speech acts that many would have expected to have been included more frequently than a mere two times in total.

It was notable that most of the textbook units analysed focused on using speech acts in writing (with only 23% of the units specifically focusing on speaking). This is in keeping with the fact that English is often used when writing in Hong Kong workplaces, whereas spoken communication is usually in Cantonese (Evans, 2010). The high frequency (96%) of units providing lexical expressions that were explicitly related to their targeted speech acts was encouraging. However, only half of the units included grammatical formulas to support these. This suggests that learners may be expected to simply memorise expressions rather than truly learn the grammar required to formulate their own personalised speech acts. As with Wong's (2017) findings regarding *Longman Elect Senior Secondary Theme Book*, the textbooks in this study (including the same one) often provided insufficient input to help learners use speech acts to complete tasks.

As in Boxer and Pickering's (1995) study on complaints, this investigation also found a tendency for direct speech acts. This contrasted the studies (2001, 2002) of Salazar and Usó-Juan, which found that most were conventionally indirect (Usó-Juan, 2008). The fact that only 38.5% of the textbook

units in this investigation presented both direct and indirect speech acts suggests a lack of balance. By providing limited exposure to indirect speech acts, these textbooks may not adequately prepare learners with the necessary understanding of the nuances required to communicate effectively in various social contexts.

Furthermore, the frequency of presenting the speech acts as part of model dialogues in these textbooks was not particularly high (57.7%). This could result in learners having trouble using, or certainly responding to, speech acts in conversation. However, there was a reasonably large amount of information provided regarding the structures needed to use speech acts in writing. This may be useful for learners when they use them in written communication once they enter higher education and the workforce.

In general, the textbooks presented clear contexts for use of the various speech acts, such as giving advice to a visiting American student. However, in many cases, there could have been more metapragmatic information provided regarding exactly when to use each linguistic realisation. This suggests that the coursebook writers focused more on purely linguistic input than on the various sociopragmatic factors, such as context, power distance, and level of imposition (Crandall & Basturkmen 2004).

Some sociopragmatic description was provided in Unit 4 of *Longman English Leap 6A*, including information for writing a letter making suggestions to the school principal. In accordance with Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987), this setting involved a high degree of power distance and a degree of social distance and imposition, so therefore, this information involved the concepts of formality and politeness. An alternative to using *shall* (*How about ...?*) was shown, as were various possible responses in a model spoken dialogue. Formal and polite written alternatives were also presented. While power distance was clearly a factor here, the difference between using a speech act while speaking or in written texts was also a key point. It is not very practical to use expressions such as '*Shall we ...?*' or '*How about ...?*' when writing a formal letter. However, similar to in Nguyen's (2011) study, no information regarding when to use which expressions was explicitly stated, and the learners were left to guess this as well as the reasons why.

In Unit 3 of *Longman Activate New Secondary Theme Book*, it was stated that "*We write letters of advice to give guidance to a friend or someone we know. Letters of advice are also found in newspapers and magazines, where counsellors help people with their problems*" (p. 70). While the two different settings were clearly described, no sociopragmatic information was included to help learners understand how the speech act should differ in each setting. As in the study of Pérez-Hernández (2019), there was a dearth of information regarding how to use speech acts in situations involving high degrees of social distance or imposition. The fact that only 42% of the units analysed showed high degrees of social distance suggests a potential oversight in addressing the complexity of interpersonal relationships. Social distance encompasses various aspects, such as familiarity, intimacy, and formality, which significantly impact communication. Failing to adequately cover different degrees of social distance limits students' exposure and could hamper their abilities to navigate various interpersonal relationships effectively. These are the types of situations where input enhancement is needed according to Schmidt's noticing hypothesis, and it is left to teachers to explain or for learners to use their own intuition to guess which linguistic realisations are appropriate in which settings.

However, these textbooks included a notable portion of interlocutors who appeared to be local Hong Kong people, and therefore, possibly non-native English speakers. This may give Hong Kong English learners the confidence to use speech acts and even critique each other. Language textbooks are not only useful for improving linguistic knowledge, but also for helping to promote ideas about multilingualism and multiculturalism in our current globalised world (Hu & McKay, 2014; Nguyen & Basturkmen, 2020).

### **5.1 Implications for textbook authors and publishers**

It seems clear that there are improvements that could be made to the presentation of speech acts in ELT textbooks. Textbooks should be written based on corpus data, rather than just the intuition of the writers themselves (Nguyen, 2011). This study did not uncover any information suggesting that this was the case with this selection of textbooks, and it appears the learning objectives of the local Hong Kong curriculum take precedence.

It seems that these textbooks focus more on certain speech acts (such as suggestions) than others (such as offers). More linguistic realisations should be included as options for each speech act, especially if learners seem to be inclined to only use certain formulaic expressions. Once a reasonable variety of expressions plus accompanying pragmalinguistic information have been included, sufficient sociopragmatic information must also be added, to help learners to understand exactly when and how to use each one. Textbooks need to provide learners with effective metapragmatic reflection if learners are going to acquire pragmatic competence (Usó-Juan, 2008).

However, printed textbooks cannot be expected to include every detail regarding all speech acts. Therefore, self-access pragmatics websites may prove preferable for students learning how appropriate certain linguistic realisations are in particular situations (Cohen, 2008). These types of interactive online forums where ideas for specific situations can be exchanged seem useful resources.

Activities where students could make observations or critique others' use of speech acts were not evident in this selection of textbooks. These types of activities could be useful for learners attempting to improve their abilities to use speech acts themselves, particularly in terms of when to use which linguistic expressions.

### **5.2 Pedagogical implications**

As can be seen, ELT textbooks do not always provide ideal pragmatic information, so plenty is required of teachers in terms of supplementing textbooks to ensure learners understand how to use speech acts. Teachers need to provide extra explicit guidance, including regarding sociopragmatic factors (Schmidt, 1993). In accordance with the noticing hypothesis, teachers may need to take an awareness-raising approach to their teaching of speech acts, as this can "facilitate learners' noticing and understanding of the form-context relationship" (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 113). Van Compernelle (see Compernelle) (2014) showed that concept-based instruction could be applied to pragmatics teaching, with power and social distance among the pragmatic concepts that were explained to learners through clear concept diagrams (Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

Textbooks are particularly important in Hong Kong, as secondary school English teachers rely heavily on them, and few teachers use a significant amount of self-developed teaching materials (Wong, 2017). Therefore, teachers should look to improve their abilities to evaluate and select research-informed textbooks (Ishihara & Paller, 2017). If teachers seek textbooks which make use of corpus data, they can teach learners the speech acts which are most-commonly used in everyday life. As some English is used outside the classroom in Hong Kong (to varying degrees in different contexts), teachers of pragmatics could aim to provide learners with linguistic input which is used in the community. At higher levels, learners could collect linguistic samples, or conduct surveys regarding people's use of English. If the learners analysed the linguistic features and sociopragmatic factors, this could be an effective awareness-raising exercise which could help promote autonomous learning (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010).

## **6 Conclusion**

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that ELT textbooks in Hong Kong tend to focus much more strongly on certain speech acts (such as suggestions and advice) than others (such as offers and invitations). There was a clear tendency to target directive speech acts for instruction. There could have been more pragmalinguistic information included, particular in terms of using spoken

speech acts, and the inclusion of more sociopragmatic information would increase the likelihood of helping learners to use speech acts. These future enhancements could include presenting more model dialogues involving high degrees of social distance and more indirect speech acts.

The limitations of this study included the fact that, although this study included ten different textbooks, some of them (particularly the primary 6 ones from Pearson) were just slight variations of others. This helped lead to results such as the high frequency of suggestions appearing, as the same speech acts were targeted at similar points in each textbook. Only the textbooks themselves were analysed, whereas other supplementary materials may have provided useful information regarding speech acts.

This study did not look at corpus data, and therefore, the authenticity and how useful the targeted speech acts are in everyday life remains unclear. The ways that teachers use the textbooks or any outcomes for learners were also excluded. However, a strength of this study was that it focused purely on speech acts, and that various speech acts were analysed, rather than just focusing on specific ones.

Future research may investigate a wider range of textbooks/levels, or the way textbooks are used by teachers and learners. This could include examining the ways that teachers can supplement their use of textbooks and/or the teaching of speech acts using approaches such as Task-based Language Teaching. It may also investigate exactly which textbooks had writers who used corpus data during the writing process. Just as it is for textbook producers, research data can be a great resource for teachers as they incorporate textbooks into their classes (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010).

Unquestionably, the average Hong Konger spends a large part of their life studying, and a significant portion of that time studying English. When the time comes to use speech acts in everyday life, it may become apparent that their English studies should have focused more the most-effective ways to use them. Improving the way Hong Kong ELT textbooks target speech acts for instruction could have wide-ranging and influential benefits for all of the relevant stakeholders.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Senior secondary textbooks:

- (C) Fried, K., Grant, R., Kent, J. C., & Williams, A. (2009). *Progress Now*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press (China).
- (A) Potter, J., Rigby, S., & Wong, K. (2009). *Longman Activate New Senior Secondary Theme Book*. Hong Kong: Longman Hong Kong Education; Pearson Education Asia.
- (B) Potter, J., Rigby, S., & Wong, K. (2009). *Longman Elect New Senior Secondary Theme Book*. Hong Kong: Longman Hong Kong Education; Pearson Education Asia.

#### Senior Primary 6 textbooks:

- (E) Arnold, W. (2017). *New Magic*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press (China).
- (D) Dallas, D., & Pelham, L. (2018). *Longman Welcome to English*. Hong Kong: Pearson Education Asia.
- (F) Gray, C., Jones, R., Wilson, A., & Gordon, T. (2021). *Primary Longman Elect*. Hong Kong: Pearson Education Asia.
- (G) Gray, C., & Jones, R. (2015). *Primary Longman Express* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Hong Kong: Pearson Education Asia.
- (J) Jenkins, K. A., & Chapman, R. (2018). *Longman English Leap*. Hong Kong: Pearson Education Asia.
- (H) Pozzoni, A., Cole, J. H., & Jarboe, S. (2017). *Ready*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press (China).
- (I) Swift, A., & Chan, K. (2018). *Living Oxford English*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press (China).

### Appendix 2

Code	Definition	Example
SA	Speech act Explicit presentation of a speech act Speech acts clearly targeted for instruction	'We should use paper on both sides.'
Ad	Advice	'I think you should also show Facebook to her ...'
Ap	Apologies	'I am sorry for being rude.'
Ca	Complaints	'I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the service offered by your company.'
Ce	Compliments	'Peter is good at the piano.'
Cr	Criticism	'Never have I seen such a poorly organized catering job.'
(D)A	(Dis-)Agreement	'I couldn't agree more.' / 'I completely disagree.'

En	Enquiries	'I would like to enquire about having a live jazz band perform at our party.'
EDP	Expressing (Dis-)Pleasure	'I felt really happy when I listened to it for the first time!' / 'I was disappointed with the result.'
EP	Expressing preferences	'I'd prefer to go to England.'
I	Instructions	'Stir the mixture gently after you add some flour.'
N	Negotiation	'If you agree to ..., I will agree to ...'
O	Opining	'... it is good that students can work independently on computers.'
Ps	Persuasion	'Implementing tighter controls on food safety has a number of possible advantages ...'
Pd	Predictions	'In the future, there will be very few sources we can trust.'
Po	Proposals	'We would like to put forward the following proposal ...'
Rc	Recommendations	'Schools should therefore make more facilities available for sports that students enjoy.'
Rg	Regret	'I regret to inform you that The Reid Rooms are fully booked for the whole of July.'
Rq	Requests	'Can you tell us the way to the dormitory, please?'
RC	Responding to complaints	'According to your letter, when you dined at our restaurant the service was not acceptable.'
RR	Responding to requests	'As requested, I have a few suggestions regarding the venue and the menu.'
Su	Suggestions	'We should use paper on both sides.'
Sy	Sympathising	'I'm sorry to hear that. Are you OK?'
T	Thanking	'Thank you for your kindness and patience.'
W	Wishes	'I wish I had more sushi on my plate.'

Cv	Commissives	Offering, promises
Dec	Declarations	Baptising, marrying
Dir	Directives	Requests, suggestions
Ex	Expressives	Apologising, thanking
Rp	Representatives	Predictions, opining

SW	Both speaking and writing focus	Unit had learners produce SA both while speaking and writing
S	Speaking focus	Unit had learners produce SA while speaking
W	Writing focus	Unit had learners produce SA while writing

GF	Grammatical formula	'You should (modal verb) respect (bare infinitive of main verb) your opponents.'
LE	Lexical expression	'Shall we sell raffle tickets?'

DSA	Direct speech act	'You should show your mum.'
CISA	Conventionally indirect SA	'If I were you, I would explain this.'
NISA	Non-conventionally indirect SA	'Hunters will keep killing elephants unless we stop buying ivory.'

DI	Discrete item	'Also, you should never turn over a fish.'
MD	Model dialogue	B: 'Shall we make cookies for a children's home?' A: 'Sure.'

IOSL	Information on structure/layout	'Title – explain what is being proposed. Introduction – state the aim of the proposal ...'
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NOS	Number of settings	Making suggestions to a visitor to Hong Kong.
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		Making suggestions regarding a parent who hates Facebook. (two)
PD	Power distance	High - Making suggestions to the school principal Low - Giving advice to a neighbour who is older than you None - Making suggestions to classmates
SD	Social distance	High - giving advice to strangers on the internet via blogs Mid - Making suggestions to students overseas that the interlocutors already know quite well Low - Making suggestions to classmates
DOI	Degree of imposition	High - Suggestions for people to donate money Low - Proposals to principal regarding a new school magazine which has already been approved None - Predictions which require nothing of the hearers
NNES	Non-native English speaker interlocutors	Dr. Li, Mrs. Lau
B	Both non-native & native English speakers	Alison Tam/Harry King
U	Unclear	Grandma, Karen

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### About the Author

**Liam D. Wilson** (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0463-6060>) is an assistant lecturer at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where he teaches courses in the English Language Teaching Unit. He has his MTESOL with First Class Honours from the University of Auckland. His research interests include pragmatics, teaching approaches and methods, teaching/learning materials, and EdTech. On top of more than five years of teaching experience in Hong Kong, he has taught EFL/ESL/EAP in locations as diverse as Japan, Canada, Mexico, and Turkey.