

## Introduction

Speech act theory is one of the most dominant areas in pragmatic research in L2 studies (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Kasper, 2006, Levinson, 2017). Functions of language or speech acts such as *requesting*, *inviting*, *offering*, or *requesting* often require the concept of 'politeness' (Arai, 2005). The use of speech acts introduced in ELT textbooks is not necessarily accompanied with proper exercises to practise communicative functions although the importance of practicing the pragmatic information provided in the textbooks has been emphasised (McGroarty & Taguchi, 2005; Shimizu et al., 2007, 2008).

The current study takes an approach to evaluate the learners' opportunities to practise the politeness sensitive speech acts of *giving advice*, *giving offers*, *inviting*, and *requesting* provided in ELT textbooks by investigating the following questions:

**(1) How 'communicatively' are the speech acts of *giving advice*, *giving offers*, *inviting*, and *requesting* practised in beginner-level ELT textbooks?**

**(2) Do ELT textbooks provide learners with the opportunities to practise linguistic forms of these speech acts according to the speaker-hearer relations?**

## Methods

### (1) Textbook Selection

Five most popular international ELT textbooks, and 7 most popular Japanese high school ELT textbooks were selected to be analysed based on the publishers' information.

### (2) Data Analysis

The tasks/exercises which provide learners with the opportunities to practise speech acts were categorised into different levels of communicativeness according to 'a scale for assessing communicative workouts' developed by Dubin and Olshtain (1986).

Figure 1  
Scale for Assessing the Communicativeness Potential of Workouts (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986, p.98-99)

#### Most interactive / communicative

1. Negotiation of information (information gap, discussion)
2. Creative expression (speech, roleplay, dialogue creation)
3. Application of information (summarising information, describing pictures, giving directions)
4. Selective transfer of information (listening for detail, interview for detail)
5. Communication with physical response (listen and follow directions)
6. Mechanical operation (cloze dialogue practice, cloze listening practice, dialogue pattern practice)
7. Exposure to information (comprehension with retrieved information)

#### Least communicative

Further investigation was undertaken as to the linguistic forms of each speech act to be practised with the categorised tasks according to the speaker-hearer relations.

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## Outcomes

### 1. Communicativeness of Tasks to Practice Each Speech Act in Textbooks

These four speech acts are commonly practised in more than half of the textbooks investigated in this study. Across the set of international ELT textbooks these speech acts for the most part are treated communicatively in the tasks.

Table 1  
Levels of Communicativeness of Tasks in International ELT Textbooks

Speech acts	Interchange	Headway	Cutting	Global	Time	Average
Giving advice	1	2		2	2	1.8
Giving offers	2	2	2	4	4	2.8
Inviting	1	4			4	3.0
Requesting	2	2	2	4	4	2.8

### 2. Linguistic Forms of Each Speech Acts to be Practised and Speaker-Hearer Relations

*Giving advice* is typically practised with direct forms or imperatives. The information about the speaker and hearer is not provided for most of the tasks. Indirect forms are practised as grammar exercises in some of the Japanese high school ELT textbooks.

The linguistic form of interrogatives is mainly used to practise *giving offers*. Most of the tasks in the international ELT textbooks are provided with the communicative contexts of service encounters.

Table 3  
Communicativeness, Linguistic Forms, and Speaker-Hearer Relations in International ELT Textbooks

Speech Act	Communicativeness	Linguistic Form	Speaker-Hearer Relation
Giving Advice (18)	Communicative	Direct	6 None
		Softened	3 Close-Equal, Distant-Equal
			Distant-Equal
			None
Giving Offers (19)	Communicative	Indirect, Direct	1 None
		Direct	7 Distant-Unequal
			None
			None
Giving Offers (19)	Less Communicative	Softened, Direct	1 None
		Question	5 Close-Equal
			Distant-Equal
			None
Inviting (23)	Communicative	Question, Appeal	1 None
		Question	12 Close-Equal
			Distant-Equal
			None
Inviting (23)	Less communicative	Question, Appeal	1 None
		Question	4 None
			None
			None
Requesting (36)	Communicative	Conventionally Indirect, Direct	1 Distant-Equal
		Direct	4 Close-Equal
			Distant-Equal
			None
Requesting (36)	Less Communicative	Conventionally Indirect	18 Close-Equal
			Distant-Equal
			None
			None

Table 2  
Levels of Communicativeness of Tasks in Japanese High School ELT Textbooks

Speech acts	Progress	Treasure	Crown	Vista	Vivid	Select	Quest	Average
Giving advice	2	3	6	2		6	2	3.5
Giving offers		3		6	6	6	4	5.0
Inviting				6	6	6	2	5.0
Requesting		6	6	6	6		4	5.6

The majority of tasks to practise *inviting* involve linguistic forms of persuasion or question. The information about the speaker and hearer provided for these tasks is friends or family members.

The speech act of *requesting* is practised mainly with conventionally indirect forms. Similar to *giving offers*, this speech act tends to be practised in the dialogues for service encounters. More polite forms of "Could/Would you...?" is practised only in the Japanese high school ELT textbooks as grammar exercises.

Table 4  
Communicativeness, Linguistic Forms, and Speaker-Hearer Relations in Japanese High School ELT Textbooks

Speech Act	Communicativeness	Linguistic Form	Speaker-Hearer Relation
Giving Advice (12)	Communicative	Direct	2 Close-Equal
			None
		Indirect, Softened	1 None
		Softened	2 Close-Unequal
Giving Offers (7)	Less Communicative	Direct	3 None
		Indirect	1 None
		Indirect, Softened, Direct	1 None
		Softened	1 Close-Equal
Giving Offers (7)	Communicative	Softened, Direct	1 None
		Persuasion	1 None
		Persuasion	1 None
		Question	5 Distant-Equal
Inviting (4)	Less Communicative	Question	1 None
		Persuasion	1 None
		Question	1 None
		Question, Persuasion	1 Close-Equal
Requesting (11)	Less Communicative	Conventionally Indirect	8 Distant-Equal
			None
			None
		Direct	3 Distant-Equal

## Conclusion

Communicatively designed tasks for speech acts may be beneficial to learners for developing their fluency, but their pragmatic competence is unlikely to improve if they keep practicing a single form without information about the speaker and hearer.

Pedagogical linkage between speech acts and grammar, which was suggested by Vellenga (2004), could be employed to raise learners' awareness of appropriate use of language.

In order to adapt the textbooks to pragmatic instruction, the internal characteristics of materials can be changed by adding, modifying, etc. (McDonough et al. 2013)

## Discussion

As the outcomes show, the speech acts of *giving advice*, *giving offers*, *inviting*, and *requesting* are treated as functionally or grammatically important elements for language learning in the ELT textbooks according to the pedagogical goal of each set of the textbooks.

The speech acts of *giving advice*, *giving offers*, and *inviting* are performed at the advantage of the hearer and at the cost of the speaker, but the hearer's personal space and freedom of action could be threatened (Leech, 2004). Likewise, *requesting* may encroach on the hearer's action (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984).

As a whole, these textbooks rarely provide learners with the opportunities to practise appropriate use of speech acts with regards to speaker-hearer relations although these speech acts should be performed with the concept of politeness according to the speaker-hearer relations of the imposition.