



Assessing the Realization of Speech Acts in the Conversation Section of “Interactive English 1” Textbook

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Abstract

Understanding speech acts and their functions is crucial for effective communication. Therefore, conducting research on the speech acts in English textbooks holds significant importance as it enables educators and curriculum designers to gain valuable insights into how language is used in real-life interactions. This study aimed to assess the speech acts realization in the English textbook entitled "Interactive English 1" for Seventh Grade of Junior High School. Qualitative study was employed for data collection, analysis, and drawing conclusions based on the findings of the analysis. The data were analyzed utterance by utterance by applying Searle's theory of speech act. This study analyzed 347 data (utterances) and found mostly stated in direct strategy with varying frequencies of speech act categories: assertive/representative (131 instances) as the most frequent with the functions of "informing", "introducing", "describing", "stating", "confirming", etc. Directive (107 instances) with the function of "inviting," "commanding," "requesting," and "advising" and "offering". Then, the speech act function of expressive (100 instances) observed in the conversations included "greeting", "parting", "stating pleasure", "thanking", etc. Followed by commissive (7 instances) with the function of "granting", "promising" and "offering". The least frequent was declaration (1 datum) in form of "declaring". Based on the result, it is recommended that future English language teaching materials should emphasize pragmatic competence and provide adequate opportunities for learners to practice different speech act types to enhance their communicative abilities.

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INTRODUCTION

The globalizing world has transformed societies into multilingual ones, with language exchange between native and non-native speakers becoming commonplace. Among other languages, English is seen as an essential tool for globalization, and as the world becomes increasingly interconnected. It is used as a common language for international communication and is the language of diplomacy, business, and science. As Fitriati and Rata (2021) stated that English is a tool for the development and spread of information and communication technology and science. In the education context, the English language is widely taught as a foreign language in schools and universities and is seen as a key tool for improving educational and employment opportunities

Since the English language is a mandatory subject in Indonesian schools, starting from primary school and continuing through high school and university level. The role of the English language in Indonesian education is significant hence the importance of effective English teaching and learning has been growing in recent years. According to Hernandez and Barons (2021), this reality emphasizes the importance of assisting foreign and second language learners in learning not only linguistic competence but also pragmatics competence to be able to apply the language used in the target language. Students must comprehend not only the teacher's words and explanations but also the implementation of language functions deserve by the textbooks.

Pragmatics is the study of the connections between language and context as defined by Levinson (1983). Similar to definition from Mey, pragmatics can be defined as the study of language use in human communication as influenced by societal conditions (2001). So, it is needed for students to have the ability to use language appropriately in a variety of social situations and to understand social and cultural communication norms. It includes linguistic features such as politeness, indirectness, sarcasm,

and figurative language. It can be called pragmatic competence. It assists us in comprehending the intended meaning of a message beyond the literal words used.

Pragmatic competence has emerged as the current English teaching process's primary focus. It is an essential component of communicative competence and applicable to speakers of all ages, as well as young language learners (YLLs) because the goal is to not only teach students the grammar and vocabulary of the language but also to provide them with the skills they need to communicate effectively.

Effective communication entails not only the production of language but also the performance of actions through the use of language. In pragmatics, the study of language in context is known as a speech act. The focus of pragmatics is on the use of language and how it functions in various situations to achieve specific purposes or goals. Understanding the concepts of speech acts and pragmatics can help speakers improve their ability to use language effectively to convey their message and achieve their communication goals. Thus, pragmatics is critical in assisting speakers in understanding the relationship between language, context, and meaning, as well as how to use language appropriately in various social and cultural contexts.

Several recent studies have focused on speech acts within the domain of pragmatics, both in spoken and written texts. For example, Xu (2015) examined dirty talk in sports and found that it negatively impacts athletes. Ahangar and Dastuyi (2016) categorized apology strategies in the Sarawani Balochi dialect. Muthusamy and Farashaiyan (2016) investigated apology and request mitigation strategies used by international postgraduate students. Basra and Thooyibah (2017) analyzed teacher talk in an EFL classroom. Barron (2017) compared speech act realization

of offers in Irish and British English. Alzebaree and Yavuz (2017) explored request and apology techniques of Kurdish EFL undergraduate students.

Other studies, Nikoobin and Shahrokhi (2017) focused on impolite complaint strategies used by Iranian EFL students and native speakers. Shofwan and Mujiyanto (2018) studied how EFL students realize speech acts of suggestion. Meanwhile Perdana et al. (2021) conducted an assessment of how assertive speech acts were utilized by both the government and opposition teams during the 2020 NUDC Grand Final.

Önalan and Çakır (2018) compared pragmatic language behavior in complaint situations between Turkish learners of English and native speakers. Azhari et al. (2018) investigated the types and frequency of speech acts in teacher-student interactions. Santoso et al. (2019) observed the prevalence of directive speech acts in an EFL context. Additionally, Vosoughi and Roy (2016) analyzed speech acts recognition on Twitter using multi-class classification.

The studies on speech acts have wide-ranging implications that extend beyond language teaching and communication strategies. From enhancing intercultural communication to aiding conflict resolution and advancing linguistic theory and research methodologies, the insights gained from these studies have far-reaching effects. As language plays a central role in human interactions, a deeper understanding of how speech acts are employed in various

contexts contributes not only to effective communication but also to fostering mutual understanding and cooperation among individuals and communities worldwide.

Since the English textbook also plays an important role in the teaching and learning process because they serve as the primary reference material for teachers in the classroom. These textbooks must contain practical and relevant information to help students build a strong foundation in the English language. Teachers can provide students with a more practical and hands-on approach to learning by including more pragmatic materials in English textbooks, which will help them better understand and use the language in real-life situations.

Some studies have been conducted by researchers from other countries, such as Iranian, Germany, and Chinese to investigate the English textbook focusing on pragmatics context, specifically in speech acts. Unfortunately, most of the results showed that the variation of speech act strategies is insufficient. A study was done by Alemi and Irandoost (2012), which investigated the frequency of occurrences and proportions of speech acts of complaints and compliments strategies in the four volumes of the English coursebook and the result showed that the books were reported to provide learners with an adequate amount of complaints and compliments, but with low variations in strategy types, which may result in learners not having sufficient conceptual and practical knowledge of speech acts to use them appropriately in different contexts.

In similar research with a different object, Mahdavian and Shahrokhi (2014) also found the book that they investigated cannot develop the pragmatic competence in the language learners or students much as required. Then, Ren and Han (2016), Farashaiyan et al. (2018), and Namaziandost et al. (2019) claimed that pragmatic knowledge is still under-represented in most textbooks and there is still a wide gap between what is needed for students in EFL

contexts and what recent ELT textbooks can offer. Mostly, pragmatic materials in the textbooks were not sufficient to develop learners' second language pragmatic features and the conversation parts were not efficient and functional from the pragmatic point of view.

It is possible for such occurrences to exist in English textbooks designed for Indonesian students due to the fact that the author may not be a native English speaker. Similarly, as stated by Natrio (2018), Indonesian students learning English as a foreign language often struggle with pragmatics skills as they are unaware of the inappropriateness of directly translating expressions from one language to another. These students face difficulties in comprehending the intended meaning of an expression in one language and transferring it to the target language with correct structure and appropriateness.

Based on the explanation above, the writer initiated to conduct the same topic but with different objects. This study focused on assessing the realization of speech acts in the conversation section of English textbooks entitled *Interactive English 1* for Seventh Grade of Junior High School as published by Yudhistira.

The choice of English textbooks entitled "Interactive English 1" for seventh grade of junior high school as published by Yudhistira because the materials served in this textbook can accomplish the language skill standardized by the government for the students. Furthermore, based on preliminary research that has been done, this book contains conversations and allows the students to practice the four skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing which eventually helps them to develop their pragmatic competence. Regarding the previous research above, no research can be found about speech acts in this English textbook.

Additionally, studying the speech acts in the English textbook is crucial. Since then, there has been much research into speech acts in various objects. By learning the speech act in the textbook, students knew the meaning of each conversation served in the textbook. This study contributes to the various study of pragmatics in the field of speech acts. Further, this study is

expected to improve students' pragmatics awareness in real life communication.

METHOD

This study applied a descriptive qualitative method to comprehend the data deeply. In general, it investigates the use of language in context, thus focusing more on what speakers or writers do, not on formal relationships between sentences or propositions. Discourse analysis requires texts to be studied, such as those contained in recorded conversation transcripts, written documents or computerized corpus of a particular language. It is often equated with conversational analysis and pragmatics with speech act theory. However, there are differences between discourse analysis and pragmatics. Discourse analysis is more text-centered, more static, and more interested in the product, whereas pragmatics is more user-centred, more dynamic, and more interested in the text production process.

This study is supported by implementing illocutionary force indicating devices (ifids) and felicity conditions. Additionally, to ensure the validity of the findings, investigator triangulation was employed, involving experts in the field of pragmatics. By incorporating these robust methodologies, the research gains a solid foundation, allowing for a comprehensive examination of speech acts and enhancing the credibility of its outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section focuses on the results and discussion of the speech acts realization in the conversation section of English textbook for seventh grade of Junior High School entitled "Interactive English 1" published by Yudhistira.

The Realization of Speech Acts in the Conversation Section of “Interactive English 1” Textbook

Table 1. The Speech Acts Realization in Interactive English Function

No	Types of Speech Acts	Frequency
	Representatives	131
	Directives	108
	Commissives	7
	Expressives	100
	Declarations	1
	Total	247

Table 1 above shows that there were five types of speech acts found in the conversation section of English textbook entitled Interactive English 1 for Seventh

Grade of Junior High School. From the table, the highest data was provided by representatives count of 131 data of the total. Following closely behind was the directive type, occupying the second position with 108 occurrences. Expressives ranked third with 100 instances and commissives with 7 data. Finally, declaration was the least frequent, only 1 time found of the total. In conclusion, this analysis reveals that the speech acts realization in the conversations section within the textbook predominantly utilized representatives, directives, and expressives.

Meanwhile in table 2 provides the functions of speech acts realization in the conversation section of “Interactive English 1”.

Table.2 Types of Speech Acts and Their Function in “Interactive English 1

No	Types of Speech Acts	Function of Speech Acts	Frequency
	Representatives (131)	Informing	71
		Introducing	20
		Describing	11
		Stating	7
		Confirming	7
		Explaining	3
		Guessing	3
		Spelling	3
		Agreeing	2
		Asserting	2
		Telling	1
		Evaluating	1
			Directives (108)
Inviting	5		
Commanding	4		
Requesting	4		
Advising	2		
	Commissives (7)	Promising	2
		Offering	1
		Granting	4
	Expressives (100)	Greeting	39
		Parting	17
		Stating Pleasure	12
		Thanking	6
		Complimenting	6
		Apologizing	5
		Forgiving	4
		Response of Thanking	2
		Surprising	1
		Sympathizing	1
		Regretting	1
		Wishing	1
	Declarations (1)	Declaring	1
	Total	247	

The analysis reveals that the most frequently observed type of speech act in the conversation section is the representative act, which aligns with the illocutionary force of "informing" or "reporting" (Searle, 1969). This act aims to convey factual information, express

beliefs, and provide evidence to support a claim. The high frequency of representative acts,

with 131 instances, suggests that the textbook emphasizes the importance of effective information sharing in communication. The most common function within this category is "informing," accounting for 71 occurrences. Additionally, other functions such as "introducing," "describing," "stating," "confirming," and "explaining" are also present, highlighting the diverse ways students are taught to express themselves in English conversations.

Directive Acts are associated with the illocutionary force of "directing" or "attempting to get the hearer to do something" (Searle, 1969) places as the second position which observed 108 times. The predominant function within this category is "asking," with 93 instances. This indicates that the textbook places significant emphasis on developing students' ability to ask questions and seek information in English. Other directive acts, such as "inviting," "commanding," "requesting," and "advising," are also observed, indicating a comprehensive approach to teaching students how to give instructions, make requests, and interact purposefully in conversations.

The analysis of the 347 data points revealed a total of 7 instances of commissive speech acts. Within this category, the most common function observed was "Granting," occurring 4 times. Following closely behind was the function of "promising," which appeared 2 times, while "offering" was observed only once.

The analysis of expressive acts revealed 100 instances out of 347 data points. Expressive acts ranked as the third most frequent type of speech act, just behind directive acts. These expressive acts were mainly observed in direct speech. Among them, "greeting" was the most common function with 39 occurrences, emphasizing the importance of teaching students how to initiate and respond to greetings appropriately. Additionally, other frequent functions included "parting" (17), "stating pleasure" (12), "thanking" (6), and "complimenting" (6), highlighting the significance of teaching students social conventions and politeness in their language use.

The last is declaration, it revealed only one instance out of the 347 data points analyzed. The specific function identified within the declaration act category was "declaring." This indicates that declaration acts are relatively infrequent in the conversations presented in the textbook.

The examples of each type of speech acts are as follows:

Representative (Informing)

Daughter : *Good Morning, Mom.*

Mother : *It's 6:30. (D3). You should take a bath now or you will be late for school.*

The **D3** above was classified as representative speech act with informing function since in her utterance, Mother state the time ("It's 6:30"), she establishes the temporal context and highlighting the urgency. This utterance is a direct speech act as it straightforwardly presents a statement without any underlying indirect intention.

The utterance "It's 6:30" does not contain any explicit IFIDs (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices). The statement itself, without any additional linguistic markers, does not inherently indicate a specific illocutionary force. However, the IFIDs can be implied based on the context and conventional understanding. In this case, the time reference "6:30" can imply an informing speech act, as the speaker is providing factual information about the current time. The illocutionary force of informing is inferred based on the conventional understanding that stating the time is typically meant to inform or provide information about the temporal aspect.

The utterance presented above satisfies the Felicities conditions, as explained below:

- 1) **Preparatory Condition:** The preparatory condition is satisfied in this context. The mother and daughter share a common understanding of the relevance and importance of time in managing daily routines, including getting ready for school. The information about the current time is relevant to the daughter's schedule and the need to avoid being late.
- 2) **Sincerity Condition:** the utterance in D3 assumes that the mother sincerely believes that it is indeed 6:30.
- 3) **Propositional Content Condition:** The statement "It's 6:30" represents the speaker's belief or knowledge about the current time. The proposition being asserted is that the time is 6:30.
- 4) **Essential Condition:** The mother, as a parent figure, is seen as having the authority and competence to convey information and provide guidance to the daughter. In this context, the mother's statement about the time and the need to take a bath to avoid

being late for school is within her role as a caregiver responsible for the daughter's well-being.

Directive (Questioning)

Lusi : *Hello. I'm Lusi. What's your name? (D97)*

Andre : *Hi! My name is Andre.*

The utterance in D97 can be classified as questioning of the directive speech act. It serves as a direct question by requesting information about the person's name since the context of the conversation above is an introduction between Lusi and Andre, After Lusi introduces herself, she asks Andre for his name. The utterance here is a direct speech act because it directly asks the listener for their name without relying on indirect or implied meaning.

The IFID in the utterance is the question word "What." It indicates the speaker's intention to inquire or ask for information. The utterance presented above in D97 is felicitous. Here the explanation:

- Preparatory Condition: The preparatory condition is satisfied as the question "What's your name?" is clear and appropriate for gathering information about the listener's name.
- 1) Sincerity Condition: The sincerity condition is met as the speaker genuinely intends to inquire about the listener's name.
 - 2) Propositional Content Condition: The propositional content of the question is the inquiry about the listener's name. It seeks factual information from the listener.
 - 3) Essential Condition: The essential condition is fulfilled as the question "What's your name?" serves its purpose of gathering information about the listener's name

Commissive (Promising)

Mother : *Lusi, the grade on your exam is bad, and that's because you played too much.*

Lusi : *I'm so sorry, Mom.*

Mother : *Okay. You must study hard from now on.*

Lusi : *Yes, Mom. I promise. (D45)*

The utterance in D45 can be classified as promising of commissive act based on the speech act theory. It represents the speaker's commitment or assurance to fulfill a future action or obligation. The utterance is a direct speech act.

It explicitly states the speaker's promise without employing any indirect or figurative language.

The IFID in the utterance is the explicit performative verb "promise" indicating the speaker's intention to make a promise or commitment. It also fulfilled the four felicity conditions as explain bellow:

- 1) Preparatory Condition: The preparatory condition is satisfied as the prior discourse involves the mother expressing her expectation for Lusi to study hard, and Lusi acknowledging the need to do so.
- 2) Sincerity Condition: The utterance is assumed to be sincere, expressing the genuine commitment of Lusi to study hard and fulfill the promise made to her mother.
- 3) Propositional Content Condition: The propositional content condition of the utterance is the promise itself, indicating Lusi's commitment to study hard from that point forward.
- 4) Essential Condition: The essential condition is fulfilled. The utterance serves its purpose of conveying Lusi's promise to her mother, indicating her intention to study hard.

Expressive (Greeting)

Mother : *Good Morning, dear. (D1)*

Daughter : *Good Morning, Mom. (D2)*

The utterance "Good morning" in D1 and D2 can be classified as a greeting of the expressive speech act. It is used to acknowledge and initiate a positive social interaction at the start of the day. The utterance is direct speech act. It directly conveys the speaker's intention to greet and acknowledge the recipient.

The IFID in this utterance is "Good morning," which serves as a direct greeting to the recipient and this utterance is felicitous.

- 1) Preparatory condition: The preparatory condition for the greeting speech act are satisfied. The context of the conversation involves the mother initiating the greeting by saying "Good morning, dear," and the daughter reciprocates with a similar greeting.
- 2) Sincerity Condition: The utterance is assumed to be sincere, expressing genuine well-wishes and a positive attitude towards the recipient.
- 3) Propositional Content Condition: The Propositional Content Condition of "Good morning" is the speaker's expression of a

- positive and polite greeting, indicating the start of a new day.
- 4) Essential Condition: The essential condition is fulfilled. The utterance serves its purpose of initiating a positive social interaction, acknowledging the start of the day, and maintaining a polite and friendly atmosphere.
 - 3) Propositional Content Condition: The propositional content condition of the utterance is the declaration that "This is for you," indicating that the speaker has a specific item or gift intended for the recipient.
 - 4) Essential Condition: The essential condition is fulfilled. The utterance serves its purpose of conveying the speaker's declaration or announcement that the item or gift is meant for Yuka.

Declaration (Declaring)

Mother : Happy birthday, Yuka. This is for you. (D39)

Yuka : Thanks, Mom.

Mother : You're welcome, dear.

The utterance in D39 can be classified as a declaration act based on the speech act theory. It represents the act of declaring that something is intended for the recipient. The strategy of this utterance is direct speech act which functions to declare the ownership or dedication of something. The utterance explicitly conveys the speaker's intention to give something to the recipient.

The IFID in utterance D39 above is the implicit performative verb "declare" than can be seen by using Hereby Test.

Hereby Test:

I (hereby) Vp you (that) U

Vp stands for Performative Verb

U stands for utterance

"I (hereby) declare you (that) this is for you."

From this test can be conclude that the word I in sample above represents Mother as a speaker, and the word you represents Yuka as the listener. The result of using the Hereby Test shows that utterance in sample 1 makes sense, so it can be concluded that the utterance above can be classified as a declaration act and the suitable performative verb is declare. This formulation retains its meaning and aligns with the characteristic of a declaration.

The felicity conditions of this utterance are met as explain in detail bellow:

- 1) Preparatory Condition: The preparatory condition is satisfied as the speaker, Mother, presents or offers something to Yuka, explicitly stating that "This is for you."
- 2) Sincerity Condition: The utterance is assumed to be sincere, expressing the genuine intention of the speaker to give something to Yuka.

CONCLUSION

Five types of speech acts are identified in the conversation section of the English textbook, "Interactive English 1" for Seventh Grade of Junior High School. Representatives stood out with the highest count of 131 instances, followed closely by directives with 108 occurrences. The third position is expressives, totaling 100 instances, while commissives amounted to 7 data points. Meanwhile declarations were the least frequent, found only once in the entire dataset.

In conclusion, the analysis provides valuable insights into the distribution and functions of different speech act categories in Interactive English 1 for Seventh Grade of Junior High School. The analysis indicates that the textbook primarily focuses on representative, directive, commissive, and expressive speech acts, with declaration acts being the least emphasized. To enhance students' language skills, language educators and curriculum developers can focus on providing a better balance and ensuring a more holistic approach to language instruction for learners to practice and comprehend the various speech acts, fostering pragmatic competence and effective communication abilities.

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