TEACHING ORAL REQUESTS: AN EVALUATION OF FIVE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE COURSEBOOKS

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Abstract

Research in English language teaching has highlighted the importance of teaching communication skills in the language classroom. Against the backdrop of extensive research in everyday communication, the goal of this research was to explore whether current discourse analytic research is reflected in the lessons and communication examples of five English language teaching textbooks, by using spoken requests as the subject of investigation. The textbooks were evaluated on five criteria deriving from research on politeness, speech act theory and conversation analysis. These included whether and the extent to which the textbooks discussed the cultural appropriateness of requests, discussed the relationship of requests and other contextual factors, explained pre-sequences and re-requests and provided adequate practice activities. This study found that none of the coursebooks covered all of the criteria and that some coursebooks actually had very inadequate lessons. The results of the textbook analysis demonstrate that teachers using these five coursebooks and designers of future coursebooks must improve their lessons on requests by using pragmatics research and authentic examples as a guide.

Keywords: Pragmatic competence; Requests; ESL coursebooks; Pragmatics; Speech act theory; Conversation analysis; Politeness.

1. Introduction

With the development of English as an international language and the increase of migration and multicultural societies, knowledge of intercultural norms and rules of appropriateness has become essential for students of English as a Second or Foreign Language (EFL/ESL) to assist them in achieving effective communication. Recent research in the discourse analysis literature underlines the importance of teaching learners how to formulate speech acts to achieve successful real life communication (Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor 2003; Kasper 1997; Nguyen 2011).

Sadly, research on textbook analysis reveals that there is a gap between proposed discourse theory and textbook contents. Previous analyses of ESL/EFL textbooks have revealed that textbooks are inadequate in presenting not only sufficient pragmatic information but also lack authentic dialogues that resemble naturally occurring conversations (Bardovi-Harlig 2001; Boxer 1993; Bowles 2006; Nguyen 2011; Wong 2002). Previous evaluation of textbooks focused on a range of ESL and EFL textbooks; this included Nguyen's (2011) evaluation of Vietnamese EFL textbooks and Wong's evaluation (2002) of 1990s textbooks; textbook analysis research also

focused on assessing the pragmatic information included in the textbooks or employed a specific theory for analysing textbooks, such as conversation analysis (Bowles 2006) or focused on the authenticity of conversations (Wong 2002; Boxer 1993).

This research aims to extend the research on textbook analysis by evaluating current ELT textbooks which are popular in teaching ESL in Australia and in many EFL contexts. The textbooks are considered popular in the international market and are relatively recent, thus they have been chosen for investigation. It is important to examine the nature of pragmatic information in the current textbooks in an era which is characterised by international migration, intercultural exchanges, globalisation and pluralistic societies, and the use of English as a lingua franca. In addition, this paper analyses the textbooks using current research drawn from three different discourse analytic theories, which offer a comprehensive analysis. With this paper, it is also our intention to draw the readers' attention to the gap between theory and research plaguing many disciplines. In our case, if the division between the theory and practice is allowed to widen too far, theorists and teachers of ESL will become members of separate disciplines and future coursebooks may fail to take advantage of the invaluable information produced by researchers.

This paper focuses on the speech act of requests because they are commonly a topic of research in discourse analysis, and are complex face threatening acts that aim to get the hearer to do something for the speaker. With requests as the focus of the information derived from the literature review and textbook analysis, this project explores if and how the lessons on requests in five ESL coursebooks utilise the current literature and research on pragmatics available.

2. Research question

The purpose of the project was to answer the research question:

> To what extent is the current research on authentic requests reflected in five recent ESL intermediate level coursebooks?

This research question has been designed to determine whether the ESL textbooks contain authentic dialogues as well as provide students with cross cultural information about types of requests and their dependence on context. The study has implications for language teachers, materials designers and language teacher trainers. It is assumed that the depth and validity of example requests in the lessons will determine the success of the lesson.

The paper will begin with a summary of the research on native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) requests, deriving from three theories conducted on spoken interactions: Speech Act Theory, Politeness and Conversation Analysis. Following the review of literature, the methodology of the present research is explained including the criteria for evaluation, which originate in the literature review. As a final closing statement, future recommendations for coursebook writers and teachers are discussed.

3. Discourse analytic research on requests

The following section will discuss relevant research studies employing three main discourse analysis (DA) theories: Speech Act Theory (SAT), Politeness Theory and Conversation Analysis (CA) in the examination of requests.

3.1. *Requests in speech act theory*

Speech Act Theory (SAT) begins with the belief that "speaking a language is performing speech acts, such as making statements, giving commands, asking questions, making promises, and so on" (Searle 1969: 16). The framework of SAT has contributed to a deeper understanding of requests as direct and indirect speech acts. Direct requests are essentially imperatives; to differentiate, an example of a direct request would be "Give me that pen", whereas the indirect form might be "Could I have that pen, please?".

One of the most influential research projects was the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), which examined how requests and apologies are made by native speakers (NSs) in eight different languages, as well as how non-native speakers (NNSs) of those languages make requests (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989).

The CCSARP has revealed there is significant cross cultural variation in the directness/indirectness of requests. For example it was pointed out that Australian English (AE) is the least direct of the languages studied (English, German, French, Hebrew, Spanish), with more than 80% of requests being conventionally indirect (Blum-Kulka & House 1989). It is also important to note that AE speakers employ conventionally indirect forms, regardless of context (Blum-Kulka & House 1989). On the other hand, requests in American English vary depending on social distance and contextual situational factors. For example, requests between family and friends are more direct than those between strangers (Blum-Kulka & House 1989).

One of the most useful findings in SAT research is the evidence of pragmatic transfer from the first language (L1) of a NNS when performing the speech act of a request in the target language (L2) (Cohen 1998). Research by Economidou-Kogetsidis (2005) into telephone service encounters found that British English NSs tend to use far more indirect strategies when making requests than Greek NSs. Thus, pragmatic transfer of requests from a NNS's L1 to English often results in a failure of the speaker to convey the correct illocutionary force (Blum-Kulka 1989) and sometimes impolite requests and loss of face.

Another interesting linguistic finding in NS requests is favour asking; favour asking deliberately puts the speaker in debt to the hearer, to be repaid at a future date and it usually entails some action from the hearer that is "'outside' of [his or her] usual routine" (Goldschmidt 1998: 131). It is so entwined with the different elements of power, degree of imposition and relationship, that it may be difficult for a NNS to fully understand and successfully use (Goldschmidt 1998).

A common nonconventional indirect request form in English is a hint which presents difficulties for ESL learners (Weizman 1989). A hint is used when one wants to allow either the speaker or the hearer the choice of opting out of the request (Weizman 1989). Examples of hints include "it's cold in here" when uttered as a request

to close the window, or "I love this chocolate" indicating to the hearer that they want some more chocolate.

3.2. *Requests in the theory of politeness*

The theory of politeness has been credited to Brown and Levinson's work (1987). Requests threaten the speaker's 'face' because when making a request, "the speaker impinges on the hearer's claim to freedom of action and freedom from imposition" (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984: 201). *Face* is defined as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 61). There are two kinds of face: *Negative face,* which is an individual's right to privacy and self-determination, and *positive face*, or the public self-image that individuals determine for themselves (Harris 2003). The threat of imposition on the hearer means that mitigation is needed by the speaker to form a polite request; mitigation is also needed by the hearer if he or she refuses a request (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989).

It has also been demonstrated that highly indirect strategies do not necessarily imply politeness (Yu 2011). Research has shown that in English, negatively polite indirect requests are considered the most polite, more so than off-the-record requests or hints which are more indirect but are also nonconventional (Brown & Levinson 1987). In American English and British English, the highest ratings of politeness were given to conventionally indirect strategies and not to hints (Blum Kulka & House 1989). Brown and Levinson (1987) posit that the biggest influences on selecting the appropriate request form include social distance, power and the degree of imposition.

Another important feature regarding politeness is the intonation of a request; Bartels (1999) states intonation is a device that the speaker uses to fine-tune his or her politeness strategy. Therefore, if the intonation of a request is nonconventional, the hearer may perceive the speaker as impolite, regardless of the form of the request.

Recent data has revealed that NSs and NNSs have differing perceptions of requests. For example, NNSs are more sensitive to the grammatical forms involved with requests and thus perceive more distinctions of politeness in the act of requesting than NSs do (Brown & Levinson 1987). NNSs tend to choose more direct request forms than NSs use (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989) while conventionalised indirect requests are "so common that it is rare to hear a completely direct request even between equals" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 248), which they claim results from the egalitarian nature of Western societies and communication styles. This diversity of choice in the request form can lead to frustration for NNSs, since there are so many factors, such as power and imposition, on which the request form depends.

Non-native speakers, as well as young NS children, are often taught that the magic word "please" does wonders when requesting, and linguists agree that "please" is a politeness marker that is associated solely with requests (Brown & Levinson 1987; House 1989; Wichmann 2004; Sato 2008). However, research by Firmin, Helmick, Iezzi & Vaughn (2004) found that the effectiveness of "please" depends on the relationship between the speaker and hearer and the degree of imposition more than they had originally hypothesised.

3.3. *Requests in conversation analysis*

While SAT focuses solely on the speech act itself, CA moves beyond isolated sentences and analyses how requests are developed and negotiated between participants depending on the co-text (Goodwin & Heritage 1990).

Requests belong to the CA class of adjacency pairs; the request is the first pair part, whereas the response is the second pair part. CA focuses not only on the request act itself but also on what mitigating actions NSs take when complying with or rejecting a request. Thus CA research suggests that a second pair part that complies with a request is a preferred response, while a refusal is dispreferred and is delivered as a hesitant, mitigated response, often accompanied by hedges, fillers, explanations and delays (Goodwin & Heritage 1990). This information is useful for NNSs to understand not only requests, but also how to appropriately respond to a request, either positively or negatively.

As CA focuses on the turn by turn exchanges of an interaction, it suggests that requests are sometimes preceded by a *presequence,* like "Do you have a car?". This allows a speaker to abort a request if the answer to the presequence is dispreferred; so the response "No, I don't" indicates that asking for a ride would be a futile request (Goodwin & Heritage 1990). The pre-sequence helps both the speaker and hearer preserve face because it prevents the speaker from making a request that may be rejected. At times pre-sequences become so conventionalised that they serve as the request speech act itself, as in the example "Have you got a match?" (Goodwin & Heritage 1990). Bowles' (2006) study discovered that NSs use pre-sequences in telephone service encounters far more often than NNSs.

With the study of pre-sequences, one sees that requests can take more than two turns of talk, and can in fact be multi-turn requests. Another form of multi-turn request are re-requests, or second pair part expansions, which are often formulated to repair the original first pair part request if a dispreferred response is received (Liddicoat 2007). Kim, Shin & Cai (1998) demonstrate that NSs tend to use more direct forms for a re-request than in the original request, which makes a re-request difficult for NNSs from collectivist or Confucian cultures to construct, as members of these cultures tend to be indirect when issuing face threatening acts. As a result of these studies, it is clear that multi-turn requests in the form of pre-sequences and re-requests should be attended to in the ESL classroom.

There has been significant research on the use of word "please" which often accompanies requests. Based on Sato's (2008) research "please" performs different interactional functions depending on its position in the request. Initial position of "please" in a turn construction unit (TCU) indicates a directive act such as a demand or a plea; "please" in a medial position of a turn construction unit appears to have the widest functional variety, from a conventionally polite request form to a command; and final position "please" tends to be used in formulaic polite requests such as "Can I have the butter, please?", and its use is dictated by the situational context of a task-based request (Sato 2008: 1268). This research shows that the analytical tools of CA allow researchers to disassemble authentic talk and deconstruct how requests are actually formed by NSs, which can then serve as a model for NNSs.

4. Methodology and criteria for ESL textbook evaluation

The literature presented here has offered significant insight into the research on oral requests. This research was used to analyse and evaluate how well ESL coursebooks put the theory into practice.

This section describes the methodology used to analyse five current intermediate-level coursebooks. Our starting point was the Australian context; therefore, these textbooks were selected as they have been found to be very popular in Australian ESL classes. Discussions with other teachers have revealed that these textbooks are used internationally in various contexts, such as Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Indonesia and are published by international publishers. These books are: *Intermediate Matters* (IM) (Bell & Gower 1991), *Language in Use* (LU) (Doff & Jones 1994), *Landmark* (LM) (Haines & Stewart 2000), *New Headway* (NH) (Soars & Soars 2009) and *New Cutting Edge* (NCE) (Cunningham & Moor 2005). The choice of intermediate level textbooks was made because it was hypothesised that at this level students are expected to start learning more complicated aspects of language with a larger focus on functional or communicative competence. The coursebooks are analysed according to five criteria that have been identified as the most important contributions from the three theories reviewed previously. These five criteria assess whether and the extent to which the coursebooks:

1) raise students' cross-cultural awareness of requests
2) expose students to different request forms: direct, conventionally indirect and nonconventional indirect
3) adequately explore the contextual factors that affect the degree of politeness
4) emphasise second pair parts: i.e. preferred and dispreferred responses
5) expose students to multi-turn request forms: i.e. pre-sequences and re-requests.

The analysis was conducted both quantitatively and qualitatively to determine the extent to which the above features are included in each textbook. The quantitative analysis assessed if and how many times the textbooks attend to the criterion by counting the examples found in the textbook while the qualitative level discusses the depth and adequacy of the information provided to students. It is expected that the success of the lesson depends not only on the presence of these features in the coursebook but also the quality of the material presented. The analysis discusses the advantages or disadvantages these coursebooks offer to students. For each textbook, the analysis will include the teacher's and student's books as well as an analysis of the transcripts used for listening activities.

What follows is the analysis of the textbooks against the criteria above. First, the quantitative analysis is presented by means of a table which lists if and how many examples or notes on requests are presented against the five criteria in each of the textbooks. This is followed by the qualitative analysis which describes the way requests are presented and practiced in each textbook.

5. Textbook analysis and comparison of spoken requests

5.1. *Quantitative analysis of coursebooks against all criteria*

Table 1 displays whether and to what extent the coursebooks have met each criterion. The calculation is done primarily by counting the examples of requests presented in the coursebooks against this criterion. Sometimes, there is accompanied discussion of examples and sometimes there is insufficient discussion or explanation of examples, which is going to be the focus of the qualitative analysis of each criterion that follows this section. When there is an explicit reference of this criterion in a textbook but no examples, we add the word "note" to indicate that there is at least a mention of this phenomenon and to provide a clearer picture for the reader. It is also important to note that the numbers in each of the 13 categories of requests below do not suggest there are separate request examples for each category, but there are some examples in each textbook that address this criterion; in fact the examples in the categories overlap. In IM for example, there might be 9 types of request forms (direct and indirect forms) 5 of which are found to be in an interactional context and 4 in a transactional context. However, the number of requests in the textbooks can be found in the category titled 'Request forms', which have been highlighted for clarity purposes.

The quantitative data presented in the table suggest an overwhelming lack of examples of requests and responses in all of the textbooks. Many textbooks do not attend to many of the contextual factors that affect the way a request is formulated. The lack of dispreferred responses or attention to cross cultural awareness, for example, can be detrimental to students who may miss opportunities for authentic communication. More than that, the numbers presented here only indicate that students or teachers can find some examples of requests, but they do not indicate whether the example is clear, adequate or pedagogically appropriate. For this reason, the qualitative assessment will provide an elaborate discussion of how these examples are presented in the books and their appropriateness which will provide validity in our evaluation.

Table 1. Coursebook request examples against criteria

Criteria		Coursebooks				
		Intermediate Matters	Language in Use	Landmark	New Headway	New Cutting Edge
Cross-cultural awareness	1.Differences in request expression	0 (note)	0	0	0	0 (note)
Request forms	2.Direct forms	4	0	1	1	3
	3.Conventionally indirect forms	5	10	6	7	6
	4.Nonconventional indirect forms	0	0	0	1	0
Contextual factors that affect the degree of politeness	5.Transactional context	4	4	3	5	4
	6.Interactional context	5	6	4	4	5
	7.Relationship and face	2	0	0	0	0 (note)

	8.Degree of imposition	4	4	0	0	0 (note)
	9.Intonation	6	0	5	2	2
Emphasis on second pair parts	10.Preferred responses	5	3	2	5	6
	11.Dispreferred responses	4	1	2	6	3
Multi-turn request forms	12.Pre-sequences	0	0	1	1	0
	13.Re-requests	0	0	1	0	0

5.2. *Criterion 1: Cross-cultural awareness*

Of the five coursebooks analysed, only IM and NCE explicitly instruct students to think about polite requests in their L1. In IM, after students have seen and heard several examples of requests, they are asked: "Do you have a similar way of asking for things in your language?" (IM 1991: 81). In NCE, the lesson on requests begins by drawing attention to the ways of expressing politeness in grammatical forms, body language, intonation and language in their L1 (NCE 2005). Regardless of where in the lesson cross-cultural comparisons are made and awareness is raised, it is important that students recognise the differences between requests in their L1 and the target language.

The lack of cross-cultural awareness activities in LU, LM and NH can be very disadvantageous to students because previous research indicates that cross-cultural comparisons are extremely useful in alerting NNSs to potential pragmatic transfer, and can help them avoid miscommunication resulting from that transfer (Cohen 1998; Blum-Kulka 1989; Nguyen 2011).

5.3. *Criterion 2: Exposure to types of request forms*

Requests can be formed differently depending on whether the request is direct or indirect, and if it follows conventional or nonconventional patterns. Three request forms are analysed here: Direct request forms, conventionally indirect request forms and the nonconventional indirect request form of hints.

Direct request forms

Of the five coursebooks, only LU omits any examples of direct requests. Consequently, students using LU may transfer the directness of their L1 to the target speech act, and can unintentionally be impolitely direct when requesting.

Both LM and NH present a single example each of a direct request form; both are in transactional contexts and neither is expanded upon. The example from LM is a request made by a train conductor: "Tickets please" (LM 2000a: 143). Interestingly, in the activity this direct request is not identified as a request at all, so students may not notice how closely related an order and a direct request are, which may cause pragmatic transfer based on how orders and requests in their L1 are realised.

The example from NH is part of an exercise where students have to match a request with an answer and think about where it takes place "Two large cokes, please", (NH 2009:a 37). In the case of NH, awareness is directed to intonation, but there is no comment regarding the direct request form itself. In both LM and NH, the lessons involving direct request forms are incomplete because they lack explicit information and instruction for the students regarding the form of direct requests.

In IM, there are four examples of direct requests. The first two examples are identified by the coursebook as being the least polite requests amongst the total of six requests. The third example is from a listening exercise, where a customer says "I want to try on that black pair" (IM 1991: 81); this is another direct request form that is identified as "rude", not only because of the direct form, but also the intonation. However, IM then has students practice a fourth direct request, "Put the kettle on, please. (p*olitely*)" (IM 1991: 82), which demonstrates to students how a direct request can still maintain politeness if one uses the appropriate intonation and the magic word "please". Using the four examples, IM helps students draw a connection between direct request forms, intonation and politeness, and identifies the direct request as a form that should be avoided unless the appropriate intonation and "please" is used.

Similarly, NCE exemplifies direct requests as objectionable forms. Students are given a list of short dialogues which are extremely direct, and are instructed to "Rewrite the dialogues to make them sound polite" (NCE 2005: 73), the intended result being requests that are more indirect. However, although NCE illustrates that a direct request should be made more indirect, it does not help students understand that the elements of the request form, intonation and politeness are interconnected in requests.

Conventionally indirect request forms

Previous research has indicated that the most common request form in NS English is the conventionally indirect request form (Blum-Kulka & House 1989), and all five coursebooks accordingly present varieties of conventionally indirect requests. All have examples of common conventionally indirect request speech acts, including "Could/Can you…?", "Would you mind (if I)…?", "I was wondering if you/I could…?" and "Do you think you/I could (possibly)…?". Thus students have a wide variety of forms from which to choose, depending on the context, degree of imposition and relationship.

However, only four of the coursebooks, IM, LU, NH and NCE, address the differences in formality or politeness between conventionally indirect requests; this information is included in student activities, in the teacher's book, or in the supplementary grammar sections in the back of the students' book. In fact, NCE goes so far as to tell teachers to warn students that the most conventionally indirect request forms ("Would you be so kind as to…?" and "Do you think you could possibly…?") "are not used very often…and students may sound sarcastic or ridiculous to native speakers if they use them inappropriately" (NCE 2005: 56). In contrast to these books, LM has no information for either teachers or students about which conventionally indirect request forms are more polite or formal compared to others. This may result in students of LM using overly polite or formal conventionally indirect requests that are inappropriate for the situation at hand.

Nonconventional indirect request forms

The nonconventional form of a hint has been found to be one of the most indirect and difficult request forms for NNSs to correctly interpret and construct (Weizman 1989). Of the five coursebooks analysed, only NH meets the criterion of exposing students to a nonconventional indirect request form. This is only mentioned in the listening activity and no special attention is given to it. "A: I don't know what's gone wrong with my computer. The screen is frozen again. B: I'll try and fix it if you like. I'm quite good with computers" (NH 2009a: 123).The absence of hints in the coursebooks is troubling as they were found to be common among NSs, but often present a problem for NNSs (Weizman 1989).

5.4. *Criterion 3: Contextual factors that affect the degree of politeness*

DA research has concluded that there are many factors that affect the degree of politeness of a request: Degree of imposition; transactional contexts; interactional contexts; relationship and face; and within relationship and face, request intonation. Most of these factors are directly or indirectly related to one another, but this study examines the extent to which they are covered in the textbooks. Nguyen argues that "learning speech acts without opportunities to uncover relevant contextual information and differential operations of politeness in different cultures would cause L2 learners considerable difficulty adjusting themselves to unpredictable intercultural interactions" (2011: 23).

Degree of imposition

Of the coursebooks analysed, only IM directly addresses the level of imposition of a request in the students' book; students are advised that "when we think a request is difficult, unusual or inconvenient, it is often better to sound less confident and use a polite form" (IM 1991: 81). The inclusion of mitigating features by IM may result in students who are able to effectively acknowledge the degree of imposition.

LU and NCE have some notes in the teachers' books instructing teachers to alert students to the connection between the degree of formality and the level of imposition. "Casual" requests are used when "the speaker is asking for something that is quite unimportant, and which is easy for the other person to do" while "careful" requests are used "if we felt we were asking something difficult" (LU 1994b: 32). These instructions are incomplete, but if expanded upon, the teacher may be able to convey how the level of imposition affects the degree of politeness in request form.

The two coursebooks LM and NH do not address the degree of imposition and how that may affect politeness. Students using these coursebooks may be unaware that requests involving a larger imposition deserve mitigation, or may be reluctant to ask requests that involve larger impositions because they are not sure how to properly mitigate the request.

Transactional v. interactional context

Another determining factor in the politeness of a request is whether the context is transactional or interactional. Transactional contexts are those that involve institutions and the "transmission of information or the exchange of goods and services", whereas interactional contexts mainly involve language chosen to "shape and maintain social relations and identities" (Brown & Yule 1983: 2). While transactional contexts may provide an ideal setting for lessons on requests, it is important for NNSs to learn how to politely request in interactional contexts as well.

Of the five coursebooks, IM, LU and NH present the most balanced number of examples and opportunities for practice of requests in transactional and interactional contexts. Although all three books have activities that involve requests in both contexts, the sheer volume of IM's lesson results in a more thorough exploration of requests in interactional and transactional contexts than the lessons presented in LU or NH. The lessons in NH and LU are very short without any explanation on differences while LM and NCE both present examples of requests in transactional situations without any opportunity for practice. As a consequence, students may not be aware of the differences between transactional and interactional contexts and may be more prone to errors in either context.

Relationship and face

As pointed out previously, positive and negative politeness strategies are clear determinants of request efficiency and are dependent on the context of the request (Brown & Levinson 1987). Unsurprisingly perhaps, none of the coursebooks specifically address positive and negative face; nevertheless, the inclusion of conventionally indirect request forms means that students at least have requesting strategies that attend to negative face, even if they are not explicitly aware of face issues. However, only two coursebooks address how relationship can affect the level of politeness in the delivery of a request.

The three coursebooks LM, NH and LU neglect the issues of relationship and face while NCE and IM have one comment in the teacher's book, which leaves it entirely up to the teacher to explain. NCE suggests: "Asking for money is potentially quite embarrassing even between friends, so this very polite language is appropriate" (NCE 2005: 56). The absence of consistent focus on contextual issues may result in students being unaware of how their relationship with the hearer affects the request strategies and which relationships deserve more positive or negative face-saving strategies.

Intonation

As an addition to relationship and face, the role of intonation and how that affects the perceived politeness of a request is analysed. Gumperz's work (1997) demonstrates that even a slight deviation in the intonation of an utterance from the normally accepted intonation pattern can threaten the face and relationship between participants by its perceived lack of politeness.

LU completely fails to note the importance of intonation on the degree of politeness. Even a minor acknowledgement of the importance of intonation could allow teachers to expand upon the lesson so students could avoid the embarrassing possibility of using impolite intonation.

IM addresses intonation several times, and even goes so far as to present examples of polite, impolite and sarcastic intonation; furthermore, students are encouraged to express impoliteness, irritation and nervousness in roleplays. It is argued that by knowing exactly what various not-polite intonations sound like, students can avoid conveying the wrong message when requesting.

LM has a separate mini-lesson where students listen to a recording that compares examples of polite intonation and intonation where "your request can sound like an order" (LM 2000a: 151). While short, this mini-lesson provides comparisons of impolite and polite intonation, as well as a diagram model of the desired intonation pattern. Similarly, NCE has a separate mini-lesson on intonation, but presents only four examples of requests, three of which end with "please". Students of LM and NCE are at least provided with a model of polite intonation, but it is still possible that they may unintentionally produce the variations of inappropriate intonation that IM instructs students to avoid.

5.5. *Criterion 4: Emphasis on second pair parts*

With adjacency pairs, it is important to remember that, according to CA, the second pair part of a request may take two forms: A preferred or dispreferred response. Some of the coursebooks analysed here do not fully explore the form and delivery of second pair parts, which can be detrimental to students' communicative competence and confidence in making requests.

Preferred responses

It comes as no surprise that all five coursebooks present the preferred response to a request in the form of agreeing or complying with the action requested. Most of the direct and conventionally indirect forms require only "yes" to comply with the request. However, there is a conventionally indirect form that requires a bit of explaining in how to convey compliance: "Would/Do you mind (if I)…?". As any NS knows, "no" indicates compliance to this request form, as in "No, I don't mind if you…".

While both IM and NH have examples of the request form and response, the responses provided are inadequate in indicating that the hearer is complying, while LU does not show a response to this request form at all. In IM, the request: "Would you mind…?" is answered with "I'll try, sir, but…" (IM 1991: 81), which is very ambiguous and does not illustrate for students what the preferred response is. In NH, responses are attended to at the grammar section at the back of the book. There are options for positive and negative responses; however, they are quite limited:

"Sure/of course/Well, I'm afraid I'm a little busy right now/Well, I'm a little cold actually" (NHa 2009: 138).

The final two coursebooks, LM and NCE, both have examples of the request form and clearly show the preferred responses. The request in LM is answered with

"Not at all" (LM, 2000a: 143), whereas the request in NCE is answered "Of course not!" (NCE 2005: 167). Compared to the other coursebooks, NCE undoubtedly provides the best examples and explanations for the preferred response.

Dispreferred responses

Due to the face-threatening nature of dispreferred responses, one would anticipate that all five coursebooks would have extensive examples and exercises on how to properly mitigate and deliver this second pair part. However, this issue is not thoroughly covered in any of the textbooks.

IM shows the importance of dispreferred responses by advising students that "when we can't agree to a request it is often polite to apologise and give a reason, make an excuse or give some helpful advice", thus providing a face-repairing strategy with which to mitigate the dispreferred response (IM 1991: 81).

LU emphasises the second pair part in the form of a diagram which clearly outlines the possible responses, and even illustrates how a refusal can be overcome with a re-request. However, LU provides only a single example of a refusal and does not explain how a refusal is formed, mitigated or delivered while still maintaining an appropriate level of politeness.

LM presents only two examples of refusals without any explanation about the differences between preferred and dispreferred responses. At least LM elicits possible second pair parts from students by asking them to list the positive and negative request responses they already know.

NCE and NH have the best coverage of dispreferred responses of all the textbooks. NCE presents several examples of mitigated refusals and draws attention to second pair parts by asking in the listening activity if "the other person [says] yes or no to the request?" (NCE 2005: 72). Furthermore, students listen and record the reasons given for refusing the requests.

It is clear from the preceding analysis that four out of the five coursebooks do not properly explain dispreferred responses as thoroughly as NNSs require. Students would benefit from seeing and hearing more examples that have more variety in mitigating features, including apologies, hesitation, fillers, reasons and face-repairing strategies.

5.6. *Criterion 5: Multi-turn requests*

As mentioned previously, multi-turn requests such as pre-sequences and re-requests are commonly used by NSs and are therefore useful for NNSs to know. Pre-sequences are subtle devices that may achieve a desired action while avoiding going on-record with a request while re-requests are usually more direct than the original request form, but useful in some circumstances.

It should be noted that NCE and IM do not include any examples of either pre-sequences or multi-turn request forms while LU does not have any pre-sequence examples. Since neither book addresses multi-turn requests, students may be disadvantaged when confronted with a multi-turn request.

Pre-sequences

LM contains one example of re-request which is not expanded upon. The example in LM of a pre-sequence is prototypical; the elderly lady on the train says "Excuse me. I'm sorry to bother you [PRESEQUENCE] but could you possibly get my case down for me? [REQUEST]" (LM 2000a: 143). This example of a pre-sequence is very useful if the teacher decides to show students how one can predict that a request will follow the pre-sequence.

Re-requests

As mentioned previously in the section on dispreferred responses, LU has a diagram that illustrates the possible responses to a request. If the hearer responds with a refusal, the speaker may choose to either abandon the request or try to persuade the hearer with a re-request. Although the teacher is told to act out the possibilities in the diagram with improvised examples, there is no opportunity for guided practice where students practice the form themselves or the context in which they are used.

LM and NH each present an example of a re-request in the listening activities. In LM, the elderly lady asks: "Can you change the date on it? [REQUEST]", then re-requests with "Well, can't you just turn a blind eye? [RE-REQUEST]" (LM 2000a: 143). This example is quite good, as the re-request is more direct; the elderly woman does not want to pay for a ticket, but unfortunately for her, the conductor refuses both the original request and the more direct re-request.

Both LM and NH present some examples of re-requests in the listening tasks, one of which receives a refusal and the other compliance. However, as separate lessons, neither is complete, and both coursebooks omit any explanation of when to make a re-request and how direct it should be. As a result, students may still feel uncomfortable re-requesting.

6. Discussion

It is important to note that the preceding textbook analysis has not exhausted all the possible advantages and disadvantages of each coursebook's lessons on requests. The five criteria, which were selected based on the research employing politeness, conversation analysis and speech act theory, do not necessarily indicate whether or not a lesson will be successful. Instead, the five criteria were chosen so that an analysis and evaluation could be carried out as to how well coursebooks take into account the research data which is derived from some of the most important contributions of the three discourse theories.

The quantitative analysis has shown that these textbooks do not have adequate examples of all types of requests, nor do they present sufficient examples demonstrating differences in requests as influenced by face, imposition, transactional and international context. The qualitative analysis confirmed that most textbooks do not provide adequate explanations or offer students ample opportunities for practice. These results can contribute to instances of miscommunication, cultural shock and a lack of confidence in

interacting with other English speakers. This is supported by Boxer (1993) who maintains that the lack of such ability may deprive students of engaging in everyday interactions, maintaining friendships and further enhancing their ESL/EFL skills.

This study is consistent with the findings from other studies which have revealed that coursebooks are inadequate when compared to authentic NS interactions (Bowles 2006: 355; Wong 2002; Nguyen 2011). Reliance on inauthentic materials results in student errors, which in turn result in uncomfortable situations with NSs (Wong 2002: 54).These findings have important implications for ESL and EFL teachers as well as teacher trainers.

It can be seen from the above discussion that the effectiveness of the lessons in the coursebooks is entirely dependent on the teachers' expertise and willingness to draw on other resources to teach pragmatic competence. This can be quite difficult as not all teachers have the time and resources to supplement the coursebook material. This gap in the current coursebooks also places enormous demands on teacher education programs. Teachers need to develop skills in selecting, adapting, designing and supplementing material. Student teachers should be involved in textbook evaluation and materials design considering different scenarios and contexts. Teachers should be made aware of the textbooks' limitations and must develop skills in expanding the material and offering further explanations and more authentic material. It must be acknowledged that the teacher's role is changing as it is dynamic and adaptive according to the circumstances and student needs (Graves 2008).

Although teachers need to be trained in the development and design of materials appropriate for students, it goes without saying that coursebook designers need to work more collaboratively with researchers in refining and updating current ESL/EFL coursebooks. In order to improve the authenticity of textbook dialogues and students' pragmatic and strategic competence, different request forms, such as hints, favours or direct requests, should be better exemplified and explained. Additionally, students' awareness of cross-cultural differences between requests in their L1 and the L2 should be raised, and the different factors that affect politeness should be explored. Furthermore, students should be exposed to a variety of authentic examples of requests in multi-turn conversations to understand the context in which pre-sequences and re-requests are made. Given the spread of World Englishes and the need to develop intercultural communicative competence, material designers and teachers need to present students with opportunities for reflection and discussion of speech acts and the implications of language use in different cultures.

In addition to the above suggestions, it is imperative that coursebooks expand and improve their lessons on the second pair parts of requests, especially with regard to dispreferred responses. There needs to be more inclusion of the mitigating factors that are common in refusals, such as the formula for apology-reason-excuse-advice that IM presents for students. In addition to this strategy from IM, teaching students how to identify a potential obstacle in a request as a reason for refusal will allow them to feel more comfortable about delivering dispreferred responses that are considered more polite (Paulson & Roloff 1997). Closer synergies between researchers, course designers and teachers need to be created so as to improve the teaching of everyday communication.

7. Conclusion

This study has confirmed a gap between current research findings in pragmatics and ESL textbooks on the nature of requests. It is evident from the discussion that IM, *Intermediate Matters,* has met more criteria and has been evaluated more highly than any of the other coursebooks. This may be somewhat troubling for an ESL teacher, as IM is the oldest of the coursebooks reviewed; while thorough, it is unlikely that students or teachers will want to use a coursebook so outdated, no matter the quality of the lessons. On the other hand, a coursebook like LM that presents a lesson without proper instructions will undoubtedly disadvantage the students and teachers who use it. With this paper, we would like to argue for a closer connection between theory, practice and real life application, so that practitioners can benefit from the wide ranging research in pragmatics.

Despite the effort put forth here, we acknowledge there are some limitations to this project that may lead to further research. The findings of this analysis are influenced by the selection of the criteria drawn from the three discourse analytic theories. Furthermore, only intermediate-level coursebooks were examined. Future research should consider examining the ways in which different levels of textbooks incorporate pragmatic information and authentic conversations.

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