

An Evaluation of the Pragmatics in the "Cutting Edge" Intermediate Textbooks

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ABSTRACT

Regardless of the prodigious impacts of today's technologies and the substantial influence of language learning through the mediation of computers the world over, coursebooks undeniably have an important role in ESL settings. Accordingly, regular evaluation of textbooks' materials is a vital task for experts in the field. The evaluation not only can contribute to the learning and teaching process, it also warrants its suitability for the contextual and individual usage. Evaluation is regarded as an inherent section of the teaching and learning procedures. As such, the current study intends to evaluate the pragmatic content of Cutting-Edge intermediate text books (Sarah & Peter 2007), which are currently used in most ESL language colleges. Specifically, it analyzes the conversation sections of all Cutting-Edge intermediate books based on the two pragmatic variables: language functions and speech acts. , The study also investigates the provision of sufficient data with regard to context and meta-pragmatics included in these textbooks. The pragmatic taxonomies, Halliday's (1978) and Searle's (1976) models were employed in data analysis. The findings illustrated that pragmatic materials were not sufficient to develop learners' second language pragmatic features. Furthermore, the conversation parts were not efficient and functional from the pragmatic point of view.

Keywords: Cutting-Edge intermediate series; Development; ESL textbooks; Evaluation; L2 pragmatic competence

INTRODUCTION

The globalization and its succeeding world impacts such as the growing communications among members of different communities with diverse socio-cultural backgrounds has resulted in the need for the development of L2 pragmatic knowledge. The pragmatic competence is the most important component of communicative knowledge (Backman & Palmer 2000, Eslami-Rasekh 2005, Farashaiyan et al. 2017). Having this knowledge, a speaker can express his/ her intentions and meanings via communicative or speech acts in proper forms in a special social and cultural setting of interaction. To put it in another word, this feature of language proficiency comprises mutually possessing linguistic tools for communicating communicative acts and identifying the social and cultural restraints to use the tools communicatively (Kasper & Rose 2002, Eslami-Rasekh 2005, Tan & Farashaiyan 2016).

It should be mentioned that a good number of language learners may not identify the socio-cultural proper features of L2 in the context of interaction. Accordingly, for the development of their L2 pragmatic knowledge, learners must be catered for materials (Paramasivam et al. 2014). These materials should present learners with authentic and real examples of speech act strategies or semantic formulas in order to convey their intended

meanings (Ekin 2016, Vaklifard et al. 2017). Therefore, the importance of the language textbooks as a significant input for the teaching and learning of these types of communicative acts has been considered vital given that communicative functions are significant components (Diepenbroek & Derwing 2015). This is due to the rational that books are very important for pragmatic knowledge to be developed (Chapelle 2013).

Therefore, it is claimed that to teach and learn the L2 pragmatic facet of the second language, textbooks play a significant role. It is owing to this truth that in addition to instructors, textbooks are very central in second or foreign language classrooms (Riazi 2010). In addition, learner's purposes can be directed by textbooks because they can pay more attention to their learning procedure. They can be utilized as a curriculum. If there is no text book in classrooms, students do not focus truly on the given lessons, therefore it might bring about classes in which teachers are at the core of the activities. Finally, novice instructors can make use of textbooks as a patron and adjuvant (Poupari & Bagheri 2015).

There are numerous motives to evaluate textbooks. The prime major goal is that there is a need for the adaptation of innovative ones. The next one as Cunningsworth (2010) stressed is the recognition of special advantages and disadvantages in textbooks which teachers make use of them. The third one is the usefulness of the textbook evaluation in instructors' progress and proficient development. Therefore, these tasks allow instructors to utilize their potent areas and reinforce more feeble points through conforming and swapping information from another books (Rea-Dickins & Germaine 2016). Moreover, textbook evaluation both assists instructors to promote and help themselves to attain useful insights with regard to the materials. An additional aim is that all textbooks cannot be appropriate for all language learners. Consequently, instructors are required to have the ability to evaluate, amend and create materials appropriate for their specific classrooms (Sheldon 2015).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The remarkable expansion and developments in technology in recent decades fail to deny the fundamental place of books in ESL settings. This calls for an ongoing appraisal of textbooks materials which are of particular importance for practitioners. This matter is of significance from two viewpoints. On one hand, they contribute pedagogically to the process of learning and teaching. On the other, they ensure the appropriate contextual and individual use (Riazi & Mosallanejad 2015). In relation to the issue, it is proclaimed that in the teaching and learning process, textbook evaluation is its central part (Rea-Dickins & Germaine 2016).

Besides, the common credence is that there is no ideal textbook for language learning in all circumstances (Grant 2015). Consequently, evaluation of instructional materials and provision of its suitability in language classroom contexts to meet learners' needs is a crucial (Ellis 2010, Hutchinson & Torres 2015, Lee & Bathmaker 2017).

Given that the field of the CLT (communicative language teaching) has given more value during these last decades, consequently SLA practitioners have accentuated more on the evaluation of textbooks from communicative viewpoint. Since pragmatic competence is the most central component in communicative teaching, therefore it should be taught efficiently to ESL learners. As a result, pragmatic significance is part of the key basis for assessment of ELT textbooks. However, fewer studies have concentrated on the association between language forms and their functions and the existence and distribution of communicative devices such as speech acts and language functions since they have roots.

It is generally agreed that the chief facet of L2 pragmatic competence are speech acts and language functions (Farashaiyan & Muthusamy 2017, Kasper 2006). For example, when somebody aims to suggest a thing to another person, request forgiveness, express regret, request for a favor, make an invitation for a party, decline or acknowledge something, agree

or disagree on an issue and etc, she/he performs speech acts which should be chosen in an appropriate way by the speaker in the given context (Diepenbroek & Derwing 2015, Malarvily et al. 2015). Therefore, learners should be exposed to sufficient input or materials by the course books in order to develop L2 pragmatic competence, and employ it in the reality practically.

Taking into consideration the previous claims, SLA practitioners have been inspired to explore the status of L2 pragmatic information in ELT textbooks. They have recently called for the evaluation of ELT textbooks in both EFL and ESL contexts. However, since textbooks play a significant role in developing L2 pragmatic competence since they are the main resource next to tutors in ESL contexts, there is a lack of comprehensive studies on the evaluation of textbooks, particularly in ESL contexts. In other words, textbooks have a key role in developing ESL learners' communicative competence (e.g., Delen & Tavail 2013, Akbari Kelishadi & Sharifzadeh 2014, Baleghizadeh & Rastin 2015, Bocu & Razi 2016, Al Harbi 2017). Furthermore, the majority of researchers examined the speech act formulas in the production of some communicative acts. As a result, there is a need for the evaluation of pragmatic materials in ESL textbooks.

In order to bring together the above-mentioned split, this research assesses the pragmatic materials of *Cutting Edge* intermediate textbooks which are currently utilized in many ESL language colleges. Specifically, this study analyzed the conversation sections of all Cutting-Edge intermediate textbooks from two pragmatic viewpoints; language functions and speech acts. In addition, it investigated whether these textbooks included sufficient contextual and meta-pragmatic materials. The following section first states the theoretical framework of the study and then reviews some of the studies with regard to textbook evaluation from the pragmatic point of view.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Speech acts are the core concepts in the study of language use (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). The concept of speech act also includes the analysis of language in a variety of contexts such as child language, literature, discourse analysis and of course, inter-language pragmatics. The fundamental visions were proposed through works of theorists like Austin (1962), Grice (1975) and Searle (1976). The underlying assumption of this theory is that the smallest units of human communication are some acts like apology, request and etc. In fact, a speech act is the fundamental element of interactions (Cohen 2006).

Prominent linguists like Austin (1962 & 1965) and Searle (1969 & 1976) are among the first few who did a number of researches on speech acts. In 1962, John Austin introduced the speech act theory in his well-known book. He developed the speech act theory, though he did not utilize the term "speech act". He pointed out that a person carries out specific acts in addition to making an utterance. According to Nguyen (2005, p. 34), this viewpoint has been regarded as a triumph in linguistics since "according to logical positivists, many daily utterances aim to do some special acts like compliment, make a request and so on.

In fact, statements were first classified into two types by Austin (1962): constative and performative. Constative statements are those utterances utilized for the description of situations which can be either true or false. For instance, "It is raining". On the other hand, performative utterances are not used to describe situations, but they are employed in certain situations calling for a performance. For example, when a person says "I do" during a marriage ceremony. So, the verb describes the action performed by saying the statement. As a matter of fact, Austin (1962) puts forward the "performative hypothesis", that is, the idea that

some utterances are actions not statements or questions. As a result, he coined the word “performative verbs”. He intended to show that the act itself is performed in uttering the word. For example, if a person utters “I disagree” or “I apologize”, he/she is performing the act of disagreeing and apologizing. In this regard, one of the significant contributions of Austin was the classification of utterances into three categories.

Austin (1962) classified the utterances into three types: 1) locutionary, 2) illocutionary, and 3) perlocutionary. A locutionary act is concerned with the verbal meaning of a statement; an illocutionary one is related to special societal meaning and a perlocutionary act or effect, is the effects of an utterance on hearer. When a speaker says, “I am cold”, for example, he/she performs the locutionary action of saying a thing which reflects the current corporal mood of the person. For instance, by requesting a jacket or other things, the speaker may act illocutionarily. Furthermore, it is likely that hearer performs the perlocutionary act in a way that speaker intended. Austin (1962) was of the opinion that terms do in excess of making an utterance. Among the three acts, the illocutionary act is considered as the core and the intended act of the speech act theory.

Based on the general functions of speech acts, Austin (1962) categorized illocutionary acts into five types: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, expositives. Searle (1976, p. 9) criticized his classification and classified it in another way. He categorized speech acts into five types.

- 1) Assertives: speech acts that show an actual state or affair. For example, informing, asserting, reporting, announcing, claiming and son on are included in this category.
- 2) Directives: The ones which are attempts to require the listener to do some future action. For example, ordering, inviting, advising and requesting.
- 3) Commissives: In this act, the speaker is perpetrated to perform a few actions in future and he/she is committed to do that action. For example, promising, warning, guaranteeing, refusing and offering.
- 4) Expressives: They show the person's approaches, feelings or his/her psychological feelings or state towards the proposition. For example, apologizing, congratulating, thanking, complimenting and so on.
- 5) Declaratives: speech acts which propose the connection between the propositional content and the reality and cause changes by means of sentences. For example, declaring war, marrying a couple, firing from employment, sentencing, dismissing, and so on.

Some years ago, speech act theory was utilized as a conceptual framework for the inter-language or L2 pragmatic studies. In order to relate communicative purposes and its forms, the communicative acts were valuable tools in this regard. Related to speech acts, later, Halliday (1978) introduced the language function theory. He claimed that in addition, communicative intentions which are produced by means of speech acts, language functions are also important in L2 pragmatic studies. He introduced seven language functions which are stated below.

- a) Instrumental : For meeting a desire, this function can be used.
- b) Regulatory : To affect others' reactions, this function is employed such as making a request, convincing and etc..
- c) Interactional : To advance interactions, this one is employed.
- d) Personal : To state emotions, ideas and outlooks
- e) Representational/Informative: To ask for information
- f) Heuristic : To detect, discern and acquire things
- g) Imaginative : To make artificial concepts and say something

This research made use of these two theories; speech act and language function theories, in order to investigate the extent that the speech acts and language functions are distributed in *Cutting-Edge* textbooks.

REVIEW OF PAST STUDIES

Different researchers have investigated ELT textbooks all over the world from diverse viewpoints. According to Tomlinson (2001), a good number of the investigations conducted on materials development has focused on an evaluation of materials. In this part, a few past researches done on textbook evaluation are reviewed. In this regard, questionnaires or checklists were employed by the researchers to assess a number of the broadly utilized textbooks; they also made use of some famous frameworks or models to evaluate the textbooks among of which (Delen & Tavid 2013, Akbari Kelishadi & Sharifzadeh 2014, Baleghizadeh & Rastin 2015, Bocu & Razi 2016, Al Harbi 2017) are typical examples.

Delen and Tavid (2013) evaluated eleven EFL coursebooks regarding requesting, rejecting and complaining. The results showed that though request was well distributed, but the other two acts were not sufficiently distributed. The course books also had a paucity of various strategies. Akbari and Sharifzadeh (2014) conducted a study to assess the Top-Notch books according to Littlejohn's (1998) framework. The results indicated that the books fulfill all of the aims. Baleghizadeh and Rastin (2015) examined the Top-Notch (1st and 2nd editions) teachers' books to detect cases of meta-pragmatic materials. The findings illustrated that all books catered for the aforementioned materials while the book's last edition catered for additional information.

In another study, Bocu and Razi (2016) investigated the elements pertinent to communicative competence from the inter-cultural viewpoint in the textbooks named *Life at A1 and A2* levels. The tasks were examined according to the four skills. To do so, a checklist was used which focused on source, target and international cultural elements. The findings showed that the textbooks were quite rich in terms of covering a variety of cultures except for direct references to the source culture, which is Turkish.

In addition, Al Harbi (2017) carried out an evaluation of EFL textbooks with regard to some speech acts. His findings showed that the two speech acts were not equally distributed in the books. Therefore, the EFL textbooks need more modifications to be more efficient in learning the target language.

Examining the past studies showed that more researches have conducted with regard to the textbook evaluation in EFL contexts; however, there is a lack of such studies ESL settings. In addition, most of the textbook evaluations have considered just some limited dimensions such as two or three speech acts. Hence, in order to track the previous studies, this research set out to evaluate the conversation sections of the *Cutting-Edge* intermediate books from the two pragmatic viewpoints.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

In line with the abovementioned statements, the main aim of the study is to analyze the conversation sections of *Cutting-Edge* intermediate textbooks from the pragmatics view. It also investigates the preparation of ample data with regard to context and meta-pragmatics included in these textbooks. Accordingly, this research endeavors to respond to the below subsequent queries.

1. What are the kinds and frequency of language functions in the conversation sections of *Cutting-Edge* intermediate textbooks?
2. What are the kinds and frequency of speech acts in the conversation sections of *Cutting-Edge* intermediate textbooks?
3. Are sufficient contextual and meta-pragmatic information included in these textbooks?

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The methodology of this research comprises three parts, namely, materials, data gathering and data analysis. A mixed-methods scheme was used in the present research. It is explained as an amalgamation of qualitative and quantitative methods and a procedure of gathering both types of data within one research (Creswell 2009, Dörnyei 2007).

MATERIALS

The materials utilized in this research consisted of three intermediate *Cutting-Edge* textbooks. In general, the new *Cutting-Edge* series comprises twelve books in general, written by Sarah Cunningham and Peter Moor. This study has focused on the intermediate books of the *Cutting-Edge* series. Each textbook contains 12 modules or units and as a whole, 36 units for three textbooks. The books merge the plenary curriculum and consistent educational sources that have popularized with their unique features.

The reason to choose the intermediate textbooks is that the intermediate level is believed to be the best level for L2 pragmatic acquisition and development (Kasper 2012). Moreover, Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) and Hadley (1993) claim that L2 pragmatics is best taught and learned at the intermediate level of EFL or ESL. Each textbook consists of twelve units. Every unit or module is commenced with a language focus section followed up with some other sections such as analysis, practice, pronunciation, vocabulary, reading, and task, writing or real life. However, this order may not be the same throughout all the units of each textbook.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The documents were gathered from the conversation or speaking parts of all intermediate levels cutting-edge textbooks. Therefore, the researchers examined some of the conversation sections in three books in order to achieve a measure in terms of the objectives. By implementing appropriate sampling procedure to select a smaller number of instances for investigation, a noticeable amount of time, fee, and power can be saved and more accurate results can be obtained. As Guerin (2014) claimed, to analyze the conversations (conversation analysis) in order to gain an appropriate sample size, some instances of dialogues according to the subjects should be analyzed, or recalled if it is essential. To collect the samples, social topics should be selected more than any other themes or subjects.

According to the above statement with regard to the sampling of conversations, the researchers followed purposeful sampling which should be based on more social themes or topics. Consequently, 21 conversations from 36 conversations in 18 topics were selected among the three intermediate text books. All the 21 conversation were based on social themes. Another rationale for the selection of the number of conversation sampling is based on Tsui (2015) sampling size in conversation analysis. He recommended to employ 50% of the

entire conversations. So, any concern concerning the sampling size can be solved. Therefore, the present research has considered approximately 60% of the entire ones in three textbooks.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

Having selected the required data, the quantitative and qualitative analyses were carried out to retort the questions. The quantitative data were subjected to descriptive statistics. The conversations of *Cutting-Edge* intermediate textbooks were inspected carefully based on the two taxonomies, Searlee's (1976) and Haliday's (1978). The conversations were examined to search for the kind and frequency of two pragmatic features in each selected conversation. The frequency and percentage of each type of speech act and language functions are illustrated in different tables.

The justification for the use of these linguistics models is that these models are considered as the most comprehensive framework or models to analyze the pragmatic features in L2 pragmatic studies (Martinez-Flor 2016, Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan 2012)

RESULTS

The questions of the research are answered in this section. The frequency and percentage of each language function and speech act were calculated. Table 1 to 4 show the distribution of two pragmatic features in the conversation sections of the intermediate *Cutting-Edge* textbooks, respectively.

1. What are the kinds and frequency of language functions in the conversations of *Cutting-Edge* intermediate textbooks?

In order to track the first question, the frequency and percentage of all the language functions were calculated. The following table shows results of the analysis.

TABLE 1. Total Percentages of Language Functions

Number	Functions	Frequency	Percentage
1	Instrumental	10	8.26%
2	Regulatory	7	5.78%
3	Interactional	19	15.70%
4	Personal	14	11.57%
5	Heuristic	20	16.52%
6	Imaginative	0	0
7	Informative	36	29.75%
8	Attention-getting	15	12.39%
Total	Total	121	100%

As table 1 shows, the whole number of functions included in *Cutting-Edge* intermediate text books is 121. This contains 10 instrumental, 7 regulatory, 19 international, 14 personal, 20 heuristics, 0 imaginatives, 36 informatives, and 15 attention-gettings. With regard to the percentage, 8.26% encompasses instrumental, 5.78% regulatory, 15.70% international, 11.57% personals, 16.52% heuristics, 0 imaginatives, 29.75% informatives, and 12.39% attentions. As a result, it can be concluded that the least used language function is imaginative one with 0%, while the most used language function in the textbooks is informative function with 29.75%. Therefore, no imaginative function can be observed in the conversations which is a main flaw of the textbooks.

Regarding further kinds of functions, they were included in the conversations with changeable frequency and percentage. Heuristic function with the frequency of 20 and the percentage of 16.52%, International with the frequency of 19 and the percentage of 15.70%, Attention-getting with the frequency of 15 and the percentage of 12.39%, Personal with the frequency of 14 and the percentage of 11.57%, Instrumental with the frequency of 10 and the percentage of 8.26%, and Regulatory with the frequency of 7 and the percentage of 5.78% constitute the other utilized language functions in the textbooks, respectively. It can be recognized that there are some discrepancies in the distribution of the functions in the selected dialogues. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct the Chi-square for these variations among the language functions. The following chart demonstrates the findings of the chi-square test.

TABLE 2. Results of Chi-square test

	Frequency
Test	35.028 ^a
Difference	6
Asymp. Significance	.000

As Table 2 illustrates, there is significant and meaningful differentiation amid the frequencies of the language functions. It means that these pragmatic features in *Cutting-Edge* intermediate textbooks do not have equal distributions and they are not at the identical degree as the significance should be less than 0.05.

2. What are the types and frequency of speech acts in the dialogues of *Cutting-Edge* intermediate textbooks?

To answer the above question, the number and percent of all the acts found in the dialogues of *Cutting-Edge* intermediate textbooks were calculated. The subsequent table displays the findings.

TABLE 3. Total Percent of Speech Acts

Number	Functions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Representative	34	30.90
2	Commissive	10	9.09
3	Directive	29	26.36
4	Expressive	37	33.63
5	Declarative	0	0
T	Total	110	100

The above chart illustrates the findings regarding the overall number and percent of pragmatic feature. The overall frequency is 110. More specifically, the frequency of representative is 34, commissives 10, directives 29, expressives 37, and declaratives 0. Consequently, it can be concluded that the speech act with the least frequency (0) and percentage (0) denotes to declarative, i.e. zero, and the most employed one with the highest frequency (37) and percentage (33.63%) pertains to expressives .

Other used speech acts include representative with the percentage of 30.90 %, directive speech acts with 26.36 % and commissives with 9.09 % in the conversations of *Cutting-Edge* intermediate textbooks. This finding illustrates number and percent of the acts are not equal in conversations. On the other side of the coin, the declaratives do not exist among them. In addition, another acts, are very differently and unequally distributed in the selected texts. Consequently, conducting the Chi-square is necessary to determine the

differences amongst the speech acts. The following table illuminates the finding of the test in this regard.

TABLE 4. Chi-Square Results

	Frequency
Chi-Square	19.570 ^a
Difference	4
Asymp. Significance.	.000

According to the above table, there is significant and meaningful alteration among the frequencies of the speech acts. In other words, they are not parallel scattered in the texts and therefore, they do not have similar repetition. The significance level shows this issue better.

3. Are sufficient contextual and meta-pragmatic information included in these textbooks?

Concerning the information with regard to the context and meta-pragmatics incorporated in the textbooks, the results showed that there is not enough data regarding the context and meta-pragmatics of speech acts and language functions in the studied textbooks. For instance, the pre-intermediate textbook presented the agreement/disagreement and request speech acts in the speaking part as illustrated below.

Example 1

Task: Speaking

1a Pay attention to the occupations on page 28 and consider some opinions. Recommend some occupations for each group. Complete the Possible Jobs and Reasons columns in the table below.

b Make a comparison with each other. Do you agree/disagree about the occupations? Give your reasons.

► Useful language a and b

2 Present your ideas to the class. Do other groups agree?

3 Listen to each person talking about the job they want to do in real life. Are you surprised by any of their answers?

Useful language
<p>a Comparing your ideas I think (Morgan) should become a (nurse) because she can... I (don't) think Carmen will be a good (librarian) because... Jong is very (hard-working) so he'll be a good (accountant) or perhaps he should...</p>
<p>b Agreeing and disagreeing What do you think? Do you disagree/agree? I'm not certain. I cannot recognize ... Maybe he should be a</p>

(Intermediate book, student's book, pp. 72-73)

Example 2

Real life

Making requests and asking for permission

1 a Look at the conversations below. What are the people? What does each person want? Can you guess the missing phrases in each gap?

1A: Yes?

B: Hi..... lower the voice, please? It's two o'clock and I am asleep.

A: Oh, I do apologize. Is it ok?

B: Of course, I will sleep. Have a good night.

2A: Anna, Have you brought your cell phone?

B: yes. What do you want?

A: it, please? I have forgotten to bring it and I should call somebody urgently.

B: sure, here you are.

(Pre-intermediate book, student's book: 30)

All of the above examples show that the speech acts under study are introduced and presented without any explanations with regard to the context. In other words, there is no clear and obvious information about different forms of each speech act, the formality/informality of each strategy or semantic formula, the social relationship and power between speaker and hearer or between interlocutors and the amount of burden. Therefore, all three textbooks appeared to present little effort to implicitly or explicitly make learners' heed to the contextual or situational factors.

In addition, no data exists concerning the meta-pragmatics aspect in all three studied textbooks. Meta-pragmatic information is the matter of performing a given speech act in appropriate time, place and person. In addition, it includes the appropriateness of a statement in a culture-specific and situation-specific. The point worth mentioning is that the meta-information is only negligible in the case that there is a limited list of speech act strategy or semantic formulas for a number of speech acts as it was shown in the above example. No more explanations are presented in terms of usage of the strategies in or towards any particular place, time and person. In addition, with regard to the inter-cultural pragmatic information, there does not exist any explanations about the different performance of speech acts in each culture and the politeness issues.

DISCUSSION

This study tried to examine three points: First, it investigated the different types and frequency of language functions in the conversation sections of *Cutting-Edge* intermediate textbooks. Second, it examined the types and frequency of speech acts in the conversation sections of mentioned textbooks. Third, it examined whether sufficient contextual and meta-pragmatic information are included in these textbooks. The first objective of this research was to determine the type and number of the pragmatic variable; language function in a number of conversations in all intermediate *Cutting-Edge* textbooks. The results demonstrated that there is significant and meaningful differentiation in the number of the studied functions. It means that they do not have equal distributions. Out of the eight, one of them (imaginative) was not observed but other types did exist. It can be said that if somebody intends to have an improvement in the conversation skill, these books may not satisfy his/her demands in this regard.

Sheldon (2017) declared that one of the most important and efficient functions in interactions is the imaginative one. This one can be served for forming a person's self-universe or expanding his/her surroundings for other targets. In addition, *Cutting-Edge* developers claimed that *Cutting-Edge* textbooks are based on communicative language

teaching. Therefore, the findings of the current probe are opposed to this assertion since the conversations do not have interactional and functional worth.

Furthermore, an unrivaled trait regarding the L2 pragmatics is meticulous examination of the distribution of its factors (Corwin 2015). Concerning to what Cutting also (2012) states, the entire functions with similar number should be inserted in all of conversation sections. Unfortunately, Cutting-Edge intermediate textbooks lack one (imaginative) throughout the books. Consequently, learners will not have sufficient pragmatic knowledge to perform the speaking skill competently.

The results also showed that there is a significant discrepancy in the number of speech acts in the dialogue parts of all intermediate *Cutting-Edge* textbooks, i.e., they do not have equal distributions. In addition, the declarative one was not observed at all. It can be mentioned that the series suffer from some deficiencies since they do not have the declaratives at all. Cutting (2014) declares that declaratives have frequent usage in daily conversations. They are taken for granted as very important acts since when they are uttered, they may alter the universe. As such, there will be a need for its use even though some learners do not have the knowledge to employ it in the context.

According to Vellenga (2014), all individuals are inclined to possess sufficient communicative knowledge to form their outlooks and interactions, therefore, it is vital to know all kinds of acts. The findings point to this issue that all acts are not inserted in the series. It can be said that the findings of this research are partially in line with speech act and language function theories because not all acts and functions are not inserted in the studied textbooks.

Regarding the third objective, the results showed that there is not enough data with regard to context and meta-pragmatics in the studied textbooks. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), learners must be provided with necessary information in terms of context, meta-pragmatics, politeness and appropriateness so that they can understand a variety of limitation in employing the acts in diverse cultures. Otherwise, learners would encounter substantial problems to adjust to interaction which cannot be forestalled. This issue is more important in ESL contexts where there are many inter-cultural interactions among speakers from diverse cultures (Ellis 2008, Nguyen 2017).

CONCLUSION

The results showed that all three intermediate *Cutting-Edge* intermediate textbooks are not pragmatically rich and effective in terms of type and frequency of speech acts and language functions. Therefore, this weakness of *Cutting-Edge* Intermediates will certainly cause learners to meet numerous problems. In fact, they perform the speaking skill poorly in actual interactions. The reason is that since these textbooks have just focused on some speech acts, they learn some of them and become proficient in them while they will not be exposed to other ones and as a result, they perform weakly.

In conclusion, the current research has proved that books do not permanently show a real and ample foundation of L2 pragmatic data and they cannot be considered as authentic or valid of input from the pragmatic viewpoint. So, in the pragmatic domain, *Cutting-Edge* Intermediates are considered as feeble books, and they should be reconsidered in the pragmatic area. It is disputed that realistic models of L2 pragmatic in ESL settings should be provided. In addition, there should be an adequate explanation of rules of use and accompaniment of the models because learners can facilitate their L2 pragmatic development. Consequently, textbook developers and teachers should pay instant attention to this mission.

since students have rather restricted contact with L2 reliable pragmatic input and they are frequently dependent on books to learn the second language (Burns 2016).

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Considering the findings, a number of implications are mentioned. First, the current research can have some implications for instructors as they will know better regarding amount of pragmatic information in *Cutting-Edge* Intermediates, so that they are able to redeem some deficiencies. In addition, the research can cater for essential information for experts with regard to the pragmatic aspect of the conversation parts of the intermediate textbooks. For example, book designers can consider the pragmatic drawbacks as a valuable foundation to amend and review other textbooks.

In addition, it is recommended that the editors of *Cutting-Edge* textbooks embrace all sorts of functions and acts at the similar level. This research also makes a suggestion for the explicit instruction of all kinds of pragmatic features to compensate for the pragmatic shortcomings in all intermediate level textbooks as the semantic-syntactic construction of statements does not typically disclose their actual purposes particularly in terms of indirect speech acts.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

A number of additional studies are suggested in relation to this study. The present research only examined the conversational parts. Other studies can venture into other parts of the *Cutting-Edge* intermediate series. Other books can be examined from the L2 or inter-cultural pragmatic point of view as well. Finally, future research can investigate ESL textbooks from a different perspective such as teachers and learners' perspectives in terms of the L2 pragmatic information included in books.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The publication of this paper is made possible by the sponsorship of the UKM Research Grant KRA-2017-021

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