

SPEECH ACT TYPES IN CONVERSATIONS IN THE “NEW INTERCHANGE” SERIES

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Abstract: This is a study of speech acts in the conversations of *New Interchange 1, 2, and 3*. The aim of the study is to examine *speech act types* in the conversations investigated. Both *quantitative* approach and *qualitative* approach are employed with the assistance of *descriptive, contrastive, analytic, and synthetic* methods to help work out the best possible findings. The data consist of a total of 784 turns comprising 8126 words in 97 conversations of *New Interchange 1, 2, and 3*. The study shows interesting results concerning *speech act types*. To be more specific, although there is a strong tendency for combination of different speech act types, *single speech act* groups are preferred with the predominance of *representatives*.

Keywords: speech act types, New Interchange series, conversations

1. Introduction

Let's begin with “*Hello*”, which can be performed in the three following ways:

- (1) *Hello.*
- (2) *Hello!*
- (3) *Hello?*

It can be easily realized that there are three different punctuation marks after “*Hello*” (and of course three different tunes), possibly leading to different classifications of speech acts. For example, as regards speech act types, (1) and (2) are greetings, belonging to the larger group of *expressives* with (2) expressing the speaker's stronger emotion, while (3) shows the signal of an offer to help which can be classified as a *commissive*.

As a matter of fact, studying speech acts is one of the core issues in studying languages. According to Nguyễn Quang Ngoan and Nguyễn Tiến Phùng (2007: 26-29), there have been a number of studies on speech acts,

following several trends. The first trend is concerned with studies of a single speech act across cultures, such as: greeting, requesting, or apologizing from different aspects, including indirectness, politeness strategies, and so on. There have also been studies in which several speech acts such as requesting and refusing a request are investigated at the same time. The second trend is distinguished by studies of speech acts from the perspective of conversational analysis which are less common than the first trend. Those studies have helped language researchers, teachers, learners and users have better insight into language in use, especially the speaker's meaning or pragmatic meaning in different contexts across cultures.

However, there has been a lack of studies, especially those conducted in Vietnam, focusing on all speech acts in a single textbook or a textbook series to facilitate teachers and learners in their teaching and learning language. It is for this reason that the researchers have decided to conduct a study

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of “*Speech act types in conversations in the ‘New Interchange’ series*”.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Speech acts and relevant concepts

According to Austin (1962), speech acts are actions intended to perform by a speaker on saying something. That means when a speaker produces utterances, he/she often intends to perform actions via those utterances. Typical speech acts are greeting, apologizing, disagreeing, thanking, complimenting, and so on. For example, when a speaker utters “*I’m sorry for being late*”, not only does he/she produce a meaningful utterance but he/she also intends to do the act of apologizing. Austin’s (1962) definition was later accepted and clarified by his followers, including Searle (1969, 1976), Yule (1996), among others. To some extent, they all seemed to agree that speech acts are actions intended to do by a speaker through utterances he/she performs in conversations with others.

According to Austin (1962), clarified by Searle (1969), and Yule (1996), a speech act could be analyzed on three different levels, namely: *locution*, *illocution*, and *perlocution*. The first level of analysis is *locution*, which is the act of saying something meaningful. To be more specific, when one makes a meaningful utterance in terms of lexis, grammar, and pronunciation, he/she performs a *locutionary act*. In other words, it is concerned with what is said by a speaker. The second level, *illocutionary act*, lies in what is intended by the speaker, or in other words, the intended meaning of the utterance. Eventually, one utterance can be used to convey different illocutionary forces. The last level of analysis is the result of the words. This is known as the *perlocutionary act*, which means what is done by uttering words. To be more exact, it is effects of an utterance on the hearer or the hearer’s reaction to an utterance. The three

levels of speech act are, however, closely related because according to Bach & Harnish (1979: 3), “*S says something to H; in saying something to H, S does something; and by doing something, S affects H*”. The authors completely agree with the concise comment made by Clyne (1996: 11) that *locution* is the actual form of an utterance, *illocution* is the communicative force of the utterance, and *perlocution* is the communicative effect of the utterance.

Of the three dimensions, as stated by Yule (1996: 52), the most essential act that counts is the *illocutionary act* because the same utterance can potentially have quite different *illocutionary forces*. For instance, the utterance, “*I’ll come back soon*” can count as a *prediction*, a *promise*, a *statement*, or a *warning* in different contexts. At the same time, the same *illocutionary force* can be performed with various utterances. Take *directives* for example. If you want to ask somebody to close a door, you may say “*Close the door, please!*”, “*Could you please close the door?*”, “*Would you mind closing the door?*”, and so on. That helps to explain why Yule (1996: 52) stated that the term “*speech act*” is “*generally interpreted quite narrowly to mean only the illocutionary force of an utterance*”.

2.2. Classification of speech acts as speech act types

One popular way of classifying speech acts among others is doing that by function. Searle (1976) introduced one of the most influential and widely-accepted classification of speech acts. Searle’s classification mentions five broad types: *commissives*, *declarations*, *directives*, *expressives*, and *representatives*. They can be summarized as follows:

- **Declarations:** These are words and expressions that change the world by their very utterance. They usually need to be uttered by a speaker of a special institutional

role. Examples include: “*I hereby pronounce you man and wife*” or “*This court sentences you to ten years in prison*”.

- **Representatives:** These are acts in which the words state what the speaker believes to be the case. These allow the speaker to assert, confirm or describe something. Typical functions of this group include *describing, claiming, hypothesizing, insisting, and disagreeing*.

- **Commissives:** This group includes acts in which the speaker commits him/herself to doing something with words. Typical functions of this group are *promising, offering, threatening, refusing, vowing, and volunteering*.

- **Directives:** This category covers acts in which the words uttered by the speaker are aimed at making the hearer do something. For example, directives can be used to perform *commanding, requesting, inviting, forbidding, suggesting, advising, and questioning*.

- **Expressives:** This last group includes acts in which the words state what the speaker feels. In other words, it is used to express the speaker’s strong emotion. Representatives of the group include *apologizing, praising, congratulating, regretting, accepting, rejecting, and so on*.

2.3. Recent studies of speech acts related to the “*New Interchange*” series

Internationally, a study which the authors could get access to was conducted by Moradi (2013) at Islamic Azad University in Iran for the purpose of evaluation of language functions in high school English textbooks, as compared to those in *New Interchange* series. The series, thus, just served as a source of comparison, while the focus was on the high school textbooks for evaluation and adjustment. It is for this reason that only little quantitative information concerning the types of single speech acts in the series was found.

In Vietnam, Nguyễn Thị Phương Loan (2010) examined the language in “*New Interchange Intro*” to adapt it for flexible use in her teaching. However, only the first book of the *New Interchange* series with very simple, artificial language was investigated, leaving the other textbooks of the series uninvestigated.

Recently, Nguyễn Thị Ngọc Dung (2014) examined types and structures of speech acts in the conversations in the “*New Interchange*” series for her M.A. Thesis. It was a thorough study of speech act types and structures with the detailed, processed data attached to the appendix. This article is written to publish part of the results of her study.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Aim and research questions

The study aims at investigating speech act types in the conversations presented in the student’s books of *New Interchange 1, 2, and 3* from the pragmatics perspective for better understanding, teaching and learning of the textbook series.

The research question to be answered is: What types of speech act are frequently used and how are they realized in the conversations of the *New Interchange series*?

3.2. Data sources and samples

The source of the data is the *New Interchange series*, written by Richards et al., first published in 1997 and introduced to Vietnam in 2005. The version in Vietnam is printed and distributed by the system of Fahasa Bookshops.

The course components include the Student’s Books, Teacher’s Editions, Workbooks, Videos, and so on. However, only the Student’s books were used and only *New Interchange 1, 2, and 3* were selected since the language in *New Interchange Intro* is too simple, artificial, and unnatural.

From the three student’s books selected, only the parts of conversations were chosen for

investigation. According to the introduction in those textbooks, “*the conversations introduce the new grammar of each cycle in a communicative context and present functional and conversational expressions*” (2005: iv).

The samples of the study consist of 97 conversations comprising a total of 784 turns and 8126 words all together, with *New Interchange 1* having 33 conversations and *New Interchange 2* and *3* having 32 each. *New Interchange 1* consists of 33 conversations, of which two (conversations 2 and 3) are performed by three speakers and the rest by two. The total turns are 280 (35.71%) and words are 2369 (29.15%). *New Interchange 2* consists of 32 conversations, of which one (conversation 44) is performed by four speakers, five (conversations 38, 40, 54, 58, and 60) by three, and the rest by two. The total turns are 242 (30.87%) and words are 2720 (33.47%). *New Interchange 3* consists of 32 conversations, all performed by two speakers. The total turns are 262 (33.42%) and words are 3037 (37.38%).

As a matter of fact, the number of turns in *New Interchange 1* is the biggest, accounting for 35.71% as compared to 30.87% in *New Interchange 2* and 33.42% in *New Interchange 3*, but it is *New Inter change 3* and *2* that have more words in conversations than the first (33.38 and 33.47 versus 29.15, respectively).

The language functions used in the *New Interchange* series are varied in each textbook and across the series. The language proficiency

levels range from low-intermediate to high-intermediate level, covering conversations for various communicative purposes in a variety of contexts. The speech acts in each textbook are investigated separately for comparison and contrast of their speech act types in the three textbooks of the series.

3.3. Data Analysis

Studying speech acts, Yu (1999: 15-16) discussed some major concerns. First, the classified types of speech acts fail to cover all the communicative functions of an utterance in different contexts. Second, speech act analysis is normally of isolated utterances taken out of context, so it fails to fully explain the illocutionary act(s) of an utterance. Third, speech act theory seems to ignore the fact that utterances are inherently ambiguous and might convey more illocutionary forces as it places special emphasis on assigning a single act to each isolated utterance.

These concerns for studying speech acts have lead the authors of this research to the final decision of studying speech acts by *turn* with the speaker’s complete thought and in context, especially the linguistic context, of the investigated conversations to interpret the speech acts thoroughly with supplementary functions added to Searle’s (1976) framework.

3.3.1. Analytical framework

The analytical framework for the analysis of speech act types is presented in Table 1

Table 1. Framework for the analysis of speech act types

Single speech act types					Combined speech acts
Declarations	Representatives	Expressives	Directives	Commissives	
Declaratives	Assertives	Apologize	Requestives	Promises Offers Predictives	Rep+Exp
	Descriptives	Condole	Questions		Rep+Dir
	Ascriptives	Congratulate	Commands		Rep+Com
	Informatives	Greet	Requirements		Exp+Dir
	Confirmatives	Thank	Prohibitives		Exp+Com
	Assentives	Bid	Permissives		Dir+Com
	Dissentives	Accept	Advisories		Rep+Exp+Dir
	Disputatives	Reject	Suggestives		Rep+Exp+Com
	Responsives				Rep+Dir+Com
	Supportives				...

The analytical framework employed in the study is based on the one suggested by Searle (1976) with adjustment to cover more communicative functions or sub-types of speech act.

3.3.2. Analytical methods

analyzing the speech act types in the present study, speech acts are classified as two groups, namely: *single speech acts* and *combined speech acts*. The percentages of the given groups in each textbook as well as in the whole series are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of single and combined speech act types in total

	Single speech act types		Combined speech act types		Total of speech act types	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
New 1	175	63.2	102	36.8	277	100
New 2	139	57.7	102	42.3	241	100
New 3	166	64.8	90	35.2	256	100
Total	480	62.0	294	38.0	774	100

In our study, a combination of different methods for data analysis was applied, and they include the *analytic*, *synthetic*, *descriptive*, and *contrastive* methods. Among them, analytic method is used to clarify and justify certain linguistic features of speech acts; contrastive method is to compare and contrast different types and structures of various categories of speech acts in each book as well as across the series; descriptive method is to describe the key features of the speech acts investigated; and synthetic method is to help the researchers synthesize the findings and draw out conclusions of the study.

4. Findings and discussion

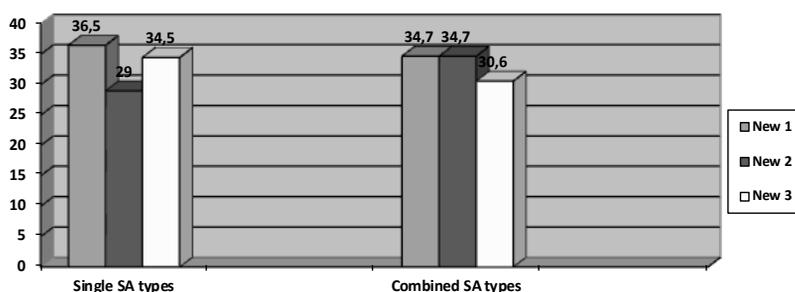
4.1. Single speech act types versus combined speech act types

Based on the analytical framework for

As shown in Table 2, in the whole series, single speech acts account for a much higher percentage than combined ones, with 62.0% compared to 38.0%, respectively. Besides, in each textbook of the series, this tendency can also be observed.

Specifically, as regards single speech acts, *New Interchange 1*, *2*, and *3* in turn make up 63.2%, 57.7%, and 64.8%. The corresponding rates for combined speech acts are 36.8%, 42.3%, and 35.2%. It can obviously be seen that the biggest difference lies in *New Interchange 3* where the rate of single speech acts is almost twice as much as that of the combined ones.

Overall, the results show that single speech acts are preferred in the textbook series although there is a strong tendency for the combination of speech act types in the conversations investigated.



Graph 1. Percentages of single speech act types and combined speech act types in the series

Turning now to the proportion of single speech acts in each textbook of the whole series, among the 480 single speech acts under investigation, *New Interchange 1* contributes the biggest part at 36.5%, closely followed by *New Interchange 3* at 34.5% and *New Interchange 2* at 29%. As regards the combined group consisting of 294 combinations, *Interchange 1* and 2 share the same proportion at 34.7%, while the other 30.6% goes to *New Interchange 3*. As all shown in Graph 1, an almost equal distribution of the two groups of speech act types can be observed.

4.2. Realizations of single speech act types

It is now time to take a closer look at the single speech act group which is further divided into *Rep*, *Exp*, *Dir*, *Com*, and *Decn* which in turn represent *representatives*, *expressives*, *directives*, *commissives*, and *declarations*.

Table 3 reveals the distribution of rates of different single speech acts in the whole series as well as in each textbook.

For the second most frequently-used speech act, *directives*, the items contributed by *New Interchange 1*, 2, and 3 to the total of 152 items are in turn 61, 42, and 49. Not being used as frequently as the first two types of single speech acts, the 72 items of *expressives* are divided into 28 for *New Interchange 1*, 21 for *New Interchange 2*, and 23 for *New Interchange 3*.

If single speech acts are examined in each textbook separately, as shown in Table 3, in *New Interchange 1*, the highest percentage goes to *representatives* at 48.6%, followed by *directives* at 34.8% and *expressives* at 16%. The other two textbooks follow a similar fashion with the corresponding rates being 53.2%, 30.2%, and 15.1% for *New Interchange 2*, and 54.9%, 29.5%, and 13.9% for *New Interchange 3*. Eventually, just a very small percentage of *commissives* and no percentage of *declarations* are found in each of the three textbooks.

Following is the discussion of each single speech act type in detail with the functions it

Table 3. Distribution of single speech act types in detail

	Rep		Exp		Dir		Com		Decn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
New 1	85	48.6	28	16.0	61	34.8	1	0.6	0	0	175	100
New 2	74	53.2	21	15.1	42	30.2	2	1.5	0	0	139	100
New 3	91	54.9	23	13.9	49	29.5	3	1.7	0	0	166	100
Total	250	52.0	72	15.0	152	31.7	6	1.3	0	0	480	100

As can be seen from Table 3, the whole series of *New Interchange* is realized with the predominance of *representatives* accounting for 52%, followed by *directives* and *expressives* at 31.7% and 15.0%, respectively. *Commissives* are just rarely used at 1.3% and, as predicted, *declarations* are even not used.

As regards *representatives*, the most frequently-used single speech act in the series, among 250 items in total, *New Interchange 3* contributes 91, while *New Interchange 1* and 2 comprise 85 and 74, successively.

performs illustrated by the examples sorted out from the collected data of the study.

4.2.1. Representatives

As a matter of fact, throughout the *New Interchange* series, *representatives* are used to perform a variety of functions. All the underlined utterances in the following examples are for the emphasis of the categories under discussion.

a. To perform an informative

A *representative* can be used to provide the hearer with necessary information. Paulo

in (4) informs Tom about where his parents are from and why they are in Paulo's place.

(4)

- Mrs. Tavares: *Nice to meet you, Tom.*

- Paulo: *My parents are here from Brazil.*

They're on vacation.

(New Interchange 1, Unit 1, p. 3)

b. *To perform a confirmative*

A *representative* can be used to confirm whether some information is right or not. In (5), for instance, it is used by Paulo to confirm that he is studying English.

(5)

- Sarah: *Oh, are you studying English?*

- Paulo: *Well, yes, I am. And engineering,*

too.

(New Interchange 1, Unit 1, p. 5)

c. *To perform an assertive*

A *representative* can be employed to state firmly that something is true, good, valid, and so on. This is illustrated by example (6) where Soo Mi asserts her point of view, emphasizing that in Korea, most couples stay together.

(6)

- Ryan: *Is it the same in Korea?*

- Soo Mi: *I don't think so. In Korea, some marriages break up, but most couples stay together.*

(New Interchange 1, Unit 5, p. 31)

d. *To perform a descriptive*

Describing things, people, or states is another key function of a *representative*, which is illustrated in example (7) concerning Sarah's description of a person.

(7)

- Raoul: *Judy? Which one is she? Is she the woman wearing glasses over there?*

- Sarah: *No, she's the tall one in jeans.*

She's standing near the window.

(New Interchange 1, Unit 9, p. 57)

e. *To perform an assentive*

To assent is to show approval of or agreement on something. The *representative* is used in (8) to show Sue's agreement with

Dave on David Copperfield's ability to do incredible things.

(8)

- Dave: *Yes, I have. I saw his show in Las Vegas last year. He's terrific.*

- Sue: *Yeah, he does some incredible things.*

(New Interchange 1, Unit 10, p. 62)

f. *To perform a supportive*

A *supportive* is a subtype of *representative* used to show the speaker's encouragement, sympathy, or approval to another speaker. To illustrate, in (9), Sam supports Lynn's question on the bus frequency.

(9)

- Lynn: *Why is there never a bus when you want one?*

- Sam: *Good question. There aren't enough buses on this route.*

(New Interchange 2, Unit 2, p. 8)

g. *To perform a dissentive*

To dissent is to disagree with somebody on something. The *representatives* used in (10) is to show Ron's disagreement with Laura, the previous speaker in the adjacency pair of the investigated conversations.

(10)

- Laura: *Maybe it means he doesn't understand you.*

- Ron: *No, I don't think so.*

(New Interchange 2, Unit 14, p. 86)

h. *To perform a responsive*

A *representative* can be used as a response to a previous question, and in this case it is named *responsive* which is demonstrated with example (11) in which Laura's response to Ron's question is "No, I haven't".

(11)

- Ron: *Have you met Raj, the student from India?*

- Laura: *No, I haven't.*

i. *To perform a disputative*

To dispute is to argue and disagree with somebody on something. Example (12)

describes how Mrs. Dean and Jenny use a *disputative* to argue and disagree with each other on the apartment they want to hire.

(12)

- Mr. Dean: *What do you think?*

- Mrs. Dean: *Well, it has just as many bedrooms as the last apartment. And the living room is huge.*

- Jenny: *But the bedrooms are too small. And there isn't enough closet space for my clothes.*

(New Interchange 2, Unit 3, p. 14)

j. To perform an ascriptive

An *ascriptive* is a *representative* used to claim that something is caused by a particular person or situation. For instance, in example (13), Andy blames the factory outside their town for discharging chemicals into the river.

(13)

- Andy: *You know, there's factory outside town that's pumping chemicals into the river.*

- Carla: *How can they do that? Isn't that against the law?*

(New Interchange 3, Unit 7, p. 43)

4.2.2. Expressives

Expressives are used in the conversations investigated for expressing people's various psychological states and feelings. They include people's likes and dislikes, joy, surprise, pleasure, excitement, and so on.

a. To express one's likes/dislikes

As shown in the following examples, an *expressive* is used in (14) to express Brad's dislikes of working on Saturdays and Sundays. Other expressions in use are "want", "be interested in" "be fond of", "be keen on", "dislike", "can't stand" "be crazy for", and so on.

(14)

- Sue: *Well, there are a lot of retail jobs – selling clothes and stuff. But you have to work Saturdays and Sundays.*

- Brad: *Hmm. I hate working on weekends.*

(New Interchange 2, Unit 10, p. 60)

b. To express one's pleasure

One's pleasure to meet somebody, to be somewhere, or to do something can be well expressed by an *expressive*. One example is Tom and Mrs. Tavares's pleasure to be introduced to each other in (15).

(15)

- Paulo: *Mom and Dad, this is Tom Hayes. Tom, this is my parents.*

- Tom: *Pleased to meet you, Mr. and Mrs. Tavares.*

- Mrs. Tavares: *Nice to meet you, Tom.*

(New Interchange 1, Unit 1, p. 3)

c. To thank

Another function of an *expressive* is to express one's thanks or gratitude to others by expressions like "thanks", "thanks a lot", "many thanks", "thanks a million", "thank you", and so on. This is clearly demonstrated with example (16).

(16)

- Rod: *Um, yeah. That's OK, I guess. I don't think I'll need it for anything.*

- Jack: *Thanks a million.*

(New Interchange 3, Unit 3, p. 14)

d. To express one's surprise

How one is surprised is usually expressed by "wow!", "really?", or a word or phrase repeated from the previous speaker's with a rising intonation in the end, such as: "A barber shop?" in (17).

(17)

- Woman: *By the way, there's a barber shop in the shopping centre, too.*

- Jack: *A barber shop?*

(New Interchange 1, Unit 8, p. 46)

e. To accept

An *expressive* is also used to accept something made by a previous speaker. It can be used to accept an invitation, an offer, a suggestion, or a request. For example, an *expressive* is used in example (18) by Rod to accept a request.

(18)

- Jack: *Yeah, a couple of times. Would it be OK if I picked it up on Friday night?*

- Rod: *Fine. No problem.*

(New Interchange 3, Unit 3, p. 14)

f. To greet

Greeting somebody is another function of *expressives* realized with common expressions like “hi”, “hey”, “hello”, “good morning”, and so on with a comma, a full stop, a question mark, or an exclamation mark in the end, depending on the speaker’s intention. These are clearly illustrated with examples (19).

(19)

- Secretary: *Good morning, Parker Industries.*

- Mr. Kale: *Hello. May I speak to Ms. Graham, please?*

(New Interchange 1, Unit 15, p. 94)

g. To say goodbye

Similar to greeting, saying goodbye is another common function of *expressives* realized with “bye”, “bye bye”, “good bye”, “good night”, and so on. Example (20) is just one of the many examples of this function.

(20)

- Mr. Kale: *Thank you. Goodbye.*

- Secretary: *Good-bye.*

(New Interchange 1, Unit 15, p. 94)

h. To reject

Contrary to accepting, rejecting is a function of *expressives* used to express a speaker’s decline of an invitation/offer or refusal to a suggestion or a command/request made by a previous speaker. To illustrate, in example (21) Eric declines the previous speaker’s invitation.

(21)

- Alice: *Exactly! Do you want to go some night?*

- Eric: *I thought you’d never ask!*

(New Interchange 3, Unit 12, p. 75)

i. To apologize

Expressives in English are also used to express a speaker’s psychological state

of feeling ashamed, unhappy, regretful, or uncomfortable to do or to have something. Take (22) for example. Amy apologizes to Jeff for calling him by a wrong name.

(22)

- Amy: *All right, Peter. I’ll give her the message.*

- Jeff: *No, this is Jeff, not Peter.*

- Amy: *Oh, I’m sorry.*

(New Interchange 3, Unit 3, p. 17)

j. To express one’s interest/excitement/admiration ...

Finally, an *expressive* can be used to express a speaker’s strong feelings, such as: great joy, interest, excitement, or admiration. Common expressions for these are “Great!”, “Wow!”, “Fantastic!”, “Terrific!”, “How + Adj + (...)!”, “What + N + (...)!”, and so on. (23) is just a typical example among many of this function.

(23)

- Kim: *Yeah. That’s me in front of my uncle’s beach house. When I was a kid, we used to spend two weeks there every summer.*

- Jeff: *Wow, I bet that was fun!*

(New Interchange 2, Unit 1, p. 5)

4.2.3. Directives

Directives in our data are realized to perform various functions, including asking for information, commanding, requesting, suggesting, inviting, and advising.

a. To ask for information

The most common function of *directives* is, perhaps, asking for information. This is usually realized in the form of questions of all types, ranging from *yes-no questions*, *statement questions*, *tag questions*, *alternative questions*, to *wh-questions*. They are, of course, indirect speech acts partially illustrated with examples (24).

(24)

- Jason: *Where do you work, Andrea?*

- Andrea: *I work for Thomas Cook Travel.*

(New Interchange 1, Unit 2, p. 9)

b. To command

To command is a major function of *directives* usually in form of direct speech acts with the general format being “*Do something*” or “*Don’t do something*”. At the end of this type of *directive* is either a full stop or an exclamation mark. Example (25) illustrates this function.

(25)

- Ryan: Look at this headline, Soo Mi.

- Soo Mi: *Wow! So many people in the United States get divorced!*

(New Interchange 1, Unit 5, p. 31)

c. To request

Making a request is also a main function of *directives*. However, to ask somebody to do something, a speaker usually makes a polite request instead of a direct command. Common expressions include “*Can/Could/Would you do something?*” and “*Would you mind doing something?*”. These are illustrated with example (26).

(26)

- Jeff: And would you ask her if she’d like to go with me?

- Amy: *All right, Peter. I’ll give her the message.*

(New Interchange 3, Unit 3, p. 17)

d. To suggest

Directives are also frequently used for making suggestions. These suggestions are normally realized with such expressions as “*Let me/us do something*”, and “*Let’s do something!*”, “*How/What about (doing) something?*”, “*Why don’t we/you do something?*”, or “*You can/could do something*”. A typical example of suggestion can be observed in (27).

(27)

- Kim: Hey. Let’s trade places one weekend!

- Dan: *OK. Great idea!*

(New Interchange 1, Unit 8, p. 49)

e. To invite

As shown in example (28), *directives* used to make invitations are usually realized

in several structures, including “*Would you like to do something?*” “*Do you want to do something?*” and “*How/What about (doing) something?*”

(28)

- Sandy: Say, do you want to go out to dinner tonight?

- Bob: *Sure. Where would you like to go?*

(New Interchange 1, Unit 13, p. 80)

f. To advise

To advise somebody to do something is one more function of *directives*. Advice can be realized with several structures, such as: “*You should do something*”, “*You’d better do something*”, “*If I were you, I would do something*”, or “*It’s helpful/important/necessary/essential/advisable/a good idea to do something*”. (29) is given as an example of this function.

(29)

- Mom: And you’d better talk to your father first.

- Lucy: *I already did. He thinks it’s a great idea. He wants to come with me!*

(New Interchange 2, Unit 5, p. 31)

4.2.4. Commissives

Commissives are speech acts which a speaker uses to commit himself to doing something like a promise, a plan, a prediction, or a pledge. In the conversations of the *New Interchange* series, two functions of *commissives* which are realized as single speech acts are making a *predictive* and making an *offer*. Other functions appear in the combined speech act types.

a. To make a predictive

In (30), Kathy and John make predictions of what the world and life will be like in the next twenty years.

(30)

- Kathy: *Within 20 years, I bet all our news and information will be coming through computers.*

- John: By then, maybe even newspapers will have disappeared!

(New Interchange 3, Unit 10, p. 63)

b. *To make an offer*

An offer to help or to do something is a common function of *commissives*. As can be seen, in example (31) the clerk offers to help the other speaker, Helen.

(31)

- Clerk: *Can I help you?*

- Helen: *Yes, I'd like to return this jacket.*

(New Interchange 3, Unit 6, p. 34)

4.2.5. Declarations

As predicted, no *declarations* can be found in our data. It is, perhaps, because they are a special speech act type that not only requires the speaker to have some sort of institutional role but also calls for special felicity conditions for which an utterance can be realized as it is intended.

4.3. Realizations of combined speech act types

Apart from the group of single speech acts, as stated, the utterances in the data are also divided into the other group of combined speech acts realized as five sub-groups *Rep+Exp*, *Rep+Dir*, *Exp+Dir*, *Rep+Exp+Dir*, and *others* illustrated in Table 4.

directives, *representatives* plus *directives* plus *expressives*, *expressives* plus *representatives* plus *directives*, *expressives* plus *directives* plus *representatives*, *directives* plus *representatives* plus *expressives*, and *directives* plus *expressives* plus *representatives*.

The *others* group consists of all the other minor ways of combining speech acts realized in the conversations investigated. They represent *Rep+Com*, *Exp+Com*, *Dir+Com*, *Rep+Exp+Com*, and *Rep+Dir+Com*. Similar to the major combinations discussed above, each minor one is used to cover all the possibilities for combination. For example, *Exp+Com* stands for not only *expressives* plus *commissives* but also the reverse.

Turning now to the distribution of combined groups of speech acts, in the whole series, as possibly seen from Table 4.3, *Rep+Dir* ranks the first at 36.1%, followed by *Rep+Exp* at 24.8%, *Exp+Dir* at 23.8%, and *Rep+Exp+Dir* at only 6.8%. The last 8.5% goes to *others* comprising all the five minor combinations of speech acts in the study.

Table 4. Distribution of combined speech act types in detail

	Rep +Exp		Rep +Dir		Exp +Dir		Rep+Exp +Dir		Others		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
New 1	21	20.5	38	37.3	27	26.5	9	8.8	7	6.9	102	100
New 2	26	25.5	35	34.3	20	19.6	7	6.9	14	13.7	102	100
New 3	26	28.9	33	36.7	23	25.6	4	4.4	4	4.4	90	100
Total	73	24.8	106	36.1	70	23.8	20	6.8	25	8.5	294	100

Rep+Exp stands for *representatives* plus *expressives* as well as *expressives* plus *representatives*, *Rep+Dir* for both *representatives* plus *directives* and *directives* plus *representatives*, and *Exp+Dir* for both *expressives* plus *directives* and *directives* plus *expressives*.

Rep+Exp+Dir comprises all the possibilities for combination in any order. It includes *representatives* plus *expressives* plus

As far as combined speech acts in each textbook are concerned, a similar trend to the whole series can be observed. To be more specific, in *New Interchange 1*, *Rep+Dir* takes the first position at 37.3%, leaving 20.5% for *Rep+Exp*, 26.5% for *Exp+Dir*, and only 8.8% for *Rep+Exp+Dir*. *Rep+Dir* also ranks the first in *New Interchange 2* and 3, at 34.3% and 36.7%, followed by *Rep+Exp* at 25.5% and

28.9%, *Exp+Dir* at 19.6% and 25.6%, and *Rep+Exp+Dir* at only 6.9 and 4.4%, respectively. In all the three textbooks, *others*, comprising five minor combined groups, accounts for very small percentages with just 6.9% going to *New Interchange 1*, 13.7% to *New Interchange 2*, and 4.4% to *New Interchange 3*.

Following is a specific investigation into each combined group with all the possibilities for combination illustrated by examples sorted out from the collected data.

4.3.1. *Rep+Exp*

Rep+Exp representing *representatives* plus *expressives* occurs very often in the conversations investigated and, as described, takes the second highest percentage (24.8%) of combined speech act types in the series. The reverse order, *expressives* plus *representatives*, is also recognized and illustrated with example (32).

(32)

- Tom: *The Cranberries. I love their music. How about you? Do you like them?*

- Liz: *No, I don't. I can't stand them!*

(New Interchange 1, Unit 4, p. 21)

4.3.2. *Rep+Dir*

Standing for *representatives* plus *directives*, *Rep+Dir* takes the highest rate (36.1%) of the combined speech act type in the series. The order can be reversed with *directives* plus *representatives* and realized in (33) as a typical example.

(33)

- Jason: *Maybe. What are they offering?*

- Paula: *Well, here's the course catalog. Take a look.*

(New Interchange 3, Unit 8, p. 46)

4.3.3. *Exp+Dir*

Representing *expressives* plus *directives*, *Exp+Dir* appears quite often in our investigated data of the whole series (23.8%). The reverse order, *Dir+Exp* standing for *directives* plus *expressives*, is also popular and can be observed in examples (34).

(34)

- Carol: *When I was a kid, I was kind of rebellious.*

- Alan: *You? Really? What was the turning point?*

(New Interchange 3, Unit 11, p. 66)

4.3.4. *Rep+Exp+Dir*

Example (35) is a typical example of the combination *Rep+Exp+Dir* referring to *repressives* plus *expressives* plus *directives*.

(35)

- Daniel: *Oh, hi. How are things?*

- Albert: *Just fine, thanks. Uh, are you doing anything on Saturday night?*

(New Interchange 2, Unit 16, p. 100)

4.3.5. *Others*

a. *Rep+Com*

Rep+Com representing *representatives* plus *commissives* is the first sub-type of the *others* group. The combination is also realized in the reverse order, *Com+Rep*, demonstrated by (36) as a typical case.

(36)

- Rod: *Well, all right. I'm not very good.*

- Keith: *No problem, Rod. I won't play too hard.*

(New Interchange 1, Unit 6, p. 37)

b. *Exp+Com*

Representing *expressives* plus *commissives*, *Exp+Com* is realized in the series with just this order without being reversed. It can be demonstrated with example (37).

(37)

- Jeff: *And would you ask her if she'd like to go with me?*

- Amy: *All right, Peter. I'll give her the message.*

(New Interchange 3, Unit 3, p. 17)

c. *Rep+Exp+Com*

The third sub-group of the *others* is *Rep+Exp+Com* representing *representatives* plus *expressives* plus *commissives*, realized in example (38).

(38)

- Mr. Kale: *And would you ask her to call me this afternoon? My number is 356-4031.*

- Secretary: 356-4031. Yes, Mr. Kale. I'll give Ms. Graham the message.

d. Rep+Dir+Com

Rep+Dir+Com is the last sub-group of the *others* illustrated with example (39).

(39)

- Julia: *I'm so excited! We have two weeks off! What are you going to do?*

- Nancy: I'm not sure. I guess I'll just stay home. Maybe I'll catch up on my reading. What about you? Any plans?

(New Interchange 2, Unit 5, p. 28)

5. Implications

5.1. To designers of English textbooks

It is expected that designers of English textbooks can take advantage of the results of the study in designing textbooks. For example, they can pay more attention to a variety of aspects, such as: the number of participants, turns, and words, the topics and situations, as well as the speech act types in the *New Interchange* series when design a new series of textbooks concerning conversations.

Alternatively, similar studies can be conducted by textbook designers to help them compare and contrast speech act types in some existing textbooks of English in Vietnam with those in the present study for necessary adjustment.

5.2. To teachers of English

Teachers of English are expected to be aware of the important role of speech act analysis in their teaching job, especially their teaching of conversations. It is because good knowledge and skills of speech act analysis are believed to help English teachers do a better job in teaching English in general and teaching conversations in particular.

Analysis of speech acts should be done in class with respect to *speech act types*. Especially the significant role of context

should be taken into consideration when speech acts, especially indirect speech acts, are analyzed and interpreted. It is because the same utterance in different contexts may convey different intended meanings which may be far different from its literal meaning.

The analyzed conversations of *the New Interchange* series and the discussion of the realizations of speech act types in the study can be applied to teaching conversations in English. Alternatively, similar analysis of speech act types can be assigned to learners on conversations of other textbook series.

5.3. To learners of English

Learners of English are suggested bearing in mind that good knowledge of and regular practice in speech act analysis certainly help them better their understanding, interpretation, and performance of speech acts in English.

It is for this reason that the researchers suggest they study the analysis of speech act types and practise applying them to interpreting and performing speech acts in their study and communication in English.

6. Conclusions

Following is the summary of major findings in our study:

- To begin with, the distribution of speech act types in each separate textbook almost follows the same fashion of the whole series, reflecting the unity of this set of textbooks.

- Overall, it is shown by the results that single speech acts (62.0%) are preferred in the textbook series although there is a strong tendency for the combination of speech act types (38.2%) in the conversations investigated.

- As regards the proportion of speech act types in each textbook compared to the whole series consisting of 480 single speech acts and 294 combined ones, an almost equal contribution of each volume to the whole can be observed.

- Turning now to the group of single speech acts, the whole series of *New Interchange* is realized with the predominance of *representatives* (52%), followed by *directives* (31.7%) and *expressives* (15.0%). *Commissives* are just rarely used (1.3%) and *declarations* are even not used.

- More specifically, *representatives* are used to make *informatives, confirmatives, assertives, descriptives, assentives, supportives, dissentives, responsives, disputatives, and ascriptives*. *Expressives* are used to express *likes/dislikes, pleasure, surprise, and interest/excitement*. They are also used to *greet, thank, accept, reject, apologize, and say goodbye*. *Directives* are used to *ask for information, to command, request, suggest, invite, and advise*. And *commissives* are used to make *predictives and offers*.

- With regard to the distribution of combined groups of speech acts in the whole series *Rep+Dir* ranks the first (36.1%), followed by *Rep+Exp* (24.8%), *Exp+Dir* (23.8%) and *Rep+Exp+Dir* (only 6.8%). The last 8.5% goes to *others* comprising all the five minor combinations of speech acts in the study. In each sub-group there are various possibilities of combination in different orders.

From the findings, certain things should be considered when speech acts are studied, taught, performed, and interpreted.

First, a variety of sub-types of speech acts are realized in different contexts expressing different language functions. This proves that supplementary types of speech acts should always be added to the ones suggested by Austin (1962) or Searle (1976) when speech acts are studied in different contexts. In other words, the system of speech acts should be an open-ended system to be developed.

Second, as the tendency of combining different speech acts to express the speaker's multiple intended meanings is so common, studying speech acts by *turn* seems to be a

suitable choice as it allows researchers to cover all the speech act types performed in any turn of speaking. Studying separated speech acts may fail to interpret all the speaker's intended meanings in context.

Third, it is essential that teaching conversations include teaching speech act types expressing different language functions as it is of great importance for students' success in performance and interpretation of speech acts in real communication. Nguyễn Thị Ngọc Dung (2014) with detailed analysis of the speech act types and structures in conversations of the *New Interchange* series can serve as a good reference for this.

Last but not least, context plays a crucial role in interpreting speech acts. It is for this reason that speech acts should be studied and interpreted with sufficient context clues, including all the socio-cultural context, physical context, and linguistic context.

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HÀNH VI NGÔN NGỮ TRONG CÁC HỘI THOẠI TỪ BỘ GIÁO TRÌNH “NEW INTERCHANGE”

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Tóm tắt: Bài báo trình bày kết quả nghiên cứu kiểu hành vi ngôn ngữ trong hội thoại từ bộ giáo trình *New Interchange 1, 2 và 3*. Mục đích của nghiên cứu là nhằm khảo cứu các kiểu hành vi ngôn ngữ trong các hội thoại được nghiên cứu. Nghiên cứu tiếp cận theo cả hai hướng định tính và định lượng với sự vận dụng các phương pháp thống kê, mô tả, đối sánh và tổng hợp. Dữ liệu nghiên cứu gồm 784 lượt lời chứa đựng 8126 từ trong 97 mẫu đàm thoại thu thập từ bộ giáo trình *New Interchange*. Kết quả nghiên cứu đã chỉ ra rằng dấu khuynh hướng kết hợp các kiểu hành vi ngôn ngữ là phổ biến thì nhóm hành vi ngôn ngữ đơn lẻ vẫn được sử dụng nhiều hơn, với sự vượt trội của hành vi mô tả.

Từ khóa: hành vi ngôn ngữ, bộ giáo trình *New Interchange*, hội thoại