Request Strategies in ‘Oral Communication A’ textbooks

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Summary

This study investigated request strategies appeared in Oral Communication A textbooks quantitatively using a directness scale adopted from a study by Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (1989b). The purpose of the study is to see if the textbooks have enough amount of presentation, and if the distribution of the sentences in the scale is appropriate as model materials. The result showed that textbooks used too many direct strategies, variations, and sentences. The most direct level of strategies (mood derivables) and the most direct level of variations (imperative) were presented by far the most, both in numbers and the proportion. On the other hand, indirect strategies and variations seemed fewer than they should be. Although query preparatory sentences were presented much, the most indirect formulas researched (“I’d appreciate” and “Do you mind if?”) were not introduced in many of the textbooks. Some problems in the distribution were also found. These results revealed that there is much room for improvement in the textbooks in terms of acquisition of speech act of request.

1. Introduction

Communicative competence comprises pragmatic competence, and it is difficult for a learner of a language to participate in the target language community successfully without the competence. Studies in interlanguage pragmatics and acquisition of pragmatic competence have shown that pragmatic knowledge and skills can be taught to some extent. On the other hand, they have shown that it should be taught explicitly to be acquired effectively, and improvement in other language skills such as reading or listening do not necessarily guarantees improvement in pragmatic skills. It is necessary for a language learner to have opportunities to be exposed to enough pragmatic strategies and situations and that in appropriate manners to acquire the competence.

This study investigated request strategies appeared in Oral Communication A textbooks quantitatively, using a direct/indirect scale adopted from a study by Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., &
Kasper, G. (1989b). In Akutsu (2001), the frequency of pragmatic formulas appeared in the previous version of Oral Communication A textbooks was investigated regarding ten speech act situations: request, refusal, apology, suggestion, gratitude, invitation, disagreement, complement, complaint, and correction. The purpose of the study was to see how much the speech act situations were presented in each textbook, and how effectively they were presented in terms of acquisition enhancement. The results showed that there were large differences among the textbooks regarding the amount of speech act situations, sentences, and the ways of presentation, and the author pointed out that there was much room for improvement in terms of the presentation suitable for acquisition of pragmatic skills.

Although analysis into the nature or the quality of formulas was not performed in the study above, during the examination, it was noticed that there was a characteristic tendency in request strategies in the textbooks: high frequency of direct strategies. It seemed to contradict the results from the previous studies on request strategies used by native speakers (NSs) of English. In many studies including Tanaka & Kawade (1987) and House & Kasper (1987), it was shown that NSs normally use indirect strategies to make a request with very few exceptions. If the contradiction is verified, it may suggest a problem for high school English learners because in reality, their almost sole source of material for oral communication is the textbook they are provided in the current English education system in Japan. This study will investigate the amount, variations, and characteristics of request sentences in Oral Communication A textbooks.

2. Background of this study

2.1. Studies on textbooks

The prior studies on textbooks suggest that there is much room for improvement for both Japanese textbooks of English and ESL textbooks. Akutsu (2001) which was mentioned earlier investigated Oral Communication A textbooks regarding speech acts presentations quantitatively. Oral Communication A was one of the three subjects in Oral communication course in high school English curriculum. The course was started in 1994 to foster communicative competence, and one of the main goals for the subject is to provide the students with English skills to “respond appropriately according to the situation or purpose” according to its contents, or “naiyo”, described by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. As the subject is the only one which is explicitly allotted to speaking aspect of oral communication, it is obviously important to include realistic and practical model conversations in the textbooks so that the learners can understand how to talk appropriately
in a given situation.

In the study, the sentences used in each speech act situation were counted and checked if they appeared in concrete contexts; if readers could tell who were using the sentences. The variations used in each speech act were also counted to see how many different formulas were presented for each speech act. The study revealed that presentation of speech acts differed greatly among textbooks. First, the number of speech act situations dealt in each textbook ranged from six to nine among the ten speech acts researched - request, refusal, apology, suggestion, gratitude, invitation, disagreement, complement, complaint, and correction. Most of the 17 textbooks covered request, refusal, apology, suggestion, gratitude, and invitation, about half offered disagreement and complement, and few presented complaint and correction. The total number of sentences used as speech acts were also different; from the least 51 to the most 215. Also, there was a large difference in providing information about the interlocutors using the sentences as well. Three textbooks provided the information all the time while seven textbooks lacked it in more than 30% of the cases, one of them more than half. As shown in the previous studies, information about interlocutors is one of the necessary conditions for effective input which leads to acquisition (e.g., Schmidt (1996)). The study also pointed out that some information in the textbooks could easily result in teaching-induced failures without proper instruction from the teachers. The study showed that although all the textbooks had been authorized by the Ministry, there are differences in them in terms of speech act materials, and that there may be some problematic presentations, too.

ESL textbooks have been examined by many researchers, and as a whole, the researchers claimed that the presentations and the contents, including pragmatic strategies, had some problems from acquisition-of-pragmatic point of view (Scotton and Bernsten, 1988; Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahn-Taylor, Morgan, and Reynolds, 1991; Bouton, 1996). The first problem pointed out was that the amount and contents of pragmatic strategies are not satisfactory. Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991) examined the presentation of closings in 20 ESL textbooks and found that very few included complete closings on a constant basis. The other problem is that the ways of presentation are not appropriate for acquisition. After reviewing the studies, they went as far as to say, “in general, textbooks cannot be counted on as a reliable source of pragmatic input for classroom language learners” (in Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; p25). Candall and Basturkmen who reviewed several major English for Academic Purposes textbooks pointed out that the conventional approach to improve pragmatic competence in many speaking textbooks is ‘present learners with lists of “useful expressions” for various speech acts’, and also noted that those lists typically present ‘explicit realizations of speech acts rather than
subtle and indirect ones,' and 'usually neglects to who when and for what purposes it is appropriate to make a speech act, and which expressions would be appropriate in a particular situation’ (in Candall and Basturkmen, 2005; p38-39).

2. 2. Request strategies by NSs and NNSs

According to the previous studies on contrastive analysis of request strategies used by NSs and NNSs, one of the characteristics of NNSs’ strategies was that they choose more direct strategies than NSs do. Tanaka and Kawade (1982) investigated perception of politeness by native speakers of English and advanced learners of English whose native tongue is Japanese. One of the findings was that learners tend to choose "less polite strategies in certain situations.” In the study, they found that 14.2% of advanced learners selected rather direct expressions or least polite strategies such as “I want to borrow your car” or “Lend me your pen” when speaking to his/her father and his/her girl/boy friend. Few native speakers (5.2%) chose those strategies. As a whole, the studies suggested that even advanced learners’ strategies were different from those by NSs, and it could be considered inappropriate in some situations.

House and Kasper (1987) investigated request realization strategies by 200 German and 200 Danish learners of English. The data were examined along three dimensions: directness level, internal modification, and external modification. They found that the learners used much more direct formulas, including mood directive (Do X), than native speakers of English did. On the other hand, NSs used the second most indirect form, query preparatory (Could you do X?), almost all the time (92%)

2. 3. Requests in classroom settings

Yates (2005) investigated and compared the directives and mitigation styles used by two groups of novice teachers; one with 9 people with Anglo-Australian background and the other with 9 people with Peoples Republic of China background. She collected the data of directives used in two class sessions, and compared them by group (Australian and Chinese, and male and female). The classes include ESL, business, math, music, science, and swimming. She found that in general, the groups’ data differed in the use of mitigation styles and directives. Although the paper’s primary focus was to discuss the individual differences among the participants, it also revealed that there were some characteristic tendencies for each group. She introduced some examples that the Chinese background teachers used very direct strategies to the students, and in some cases, Chinese teachers’ direct styles brought
unfavorable reactions from the students. She suggested that although lack of English proficiency might have something to do with the style, their cultural background which sees teachers as authority figures may have affected the style negatively.

3. Research Questions

This paper will analyze the requestive expressions in Oral Communication A textbooks published in 2002 in terms of the amount and characteristics in the distributions of the strategies, linguistic forms, and the sentences. The following were looked into to see if the textbooks have enough amount of presentation, and if the distribution of the sentences is appropriate as model materials, reflecting the frequency or pattern of the target language community.

The amount

(i) the total number of request sentences
   a. in all the textbooks
   b. in each textbook

(ii) the amount of request strategies
   a. the number of textbooks including each strategy
   b. the number of strategies in each textbook

(iii) the amount of linguistic forms (variations) and the sentences
   a. the number of textbooks including each variation
   b. the number of variations in each textbook
   c. the number of sentences of each variation in each textbook

The distribution

(i) distribution of sentences of direct strategies and conventionally indirect strategies

(ii) distribution of strategies and sentences
   a. distribution of strategies across the textbooks
   b. distribution of strategies in each textbook
   c. distribution of variations across the textbooks
   d. distribution of variations and in each textbook

4. Method

First, all the sentences of request in Oral Communication A textbooks were picked up, and the total number of request sentences in each textbook was counted. Expressions with illocutionary
force of request were chosen; for instance, a sentence "I'm sorry" was counted as a request if the meaning in the context was to ask the interlocutor to repeat him/herself. If it was used as an apology, it was not included.

Second, all the sentences were categorized according to the linguistic forms into a scale described below, and the number of the sentences in each category (strategy) and subcategory (linguistic form: variation) were counted. The number of textbooks dealing with each strategy or linguistic form shows how much the textbooks as a whole deal with speech act of request while the number of strategies or sentences in each textbook tells each textbook’s attitude.

The scale used in this study was adapted from CCSARP, a study by Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (1989b: 18), and adjusted as described later in this section. The original scale was made based on degrees of requestive transparency. They identified the request sentences with grammatical indicators signaling the illocutionary force. They categorized request strategies into three types, ‘direct strategies’, ‘conventionally indirect strategies’, and ‘hints’ according to the strategies’ illocutionary transparencies. ‘Direct strategies’ are most transparent or ‘direct’, and mood derivables (Do X), performatives (I ask you to do X), hedged performatives (I would like to ask you to do X), obligation statements (you will have to do X), and want statements (I want X) are included in this order of directness as its subcategories. The strategies in the next level of directness are called ‘conventionally indirect strategies’, and they derive their illocutionary transparency form the semantic content or conventional usage. The strategies in this category include suggestory (how about -?), stating preparatory (I’ll have…), and query preparatory (could you -?). Most indirect level of strategies are ‘hints’, and the requestive force comes from its context. ‘Hints’ are divided into two types; strong hints and mild hints.

Chart 1. shows the scale used in this study. Several changes were made to the CCSARP scale so that it fits better to this study. First, the original scale divided the strategies into three, direct strategies, conventionally indirect strategies, and hints. However, hints were omitted in the scale here because there were no hint strategies found in the textbooks. Also, performatives and hedged performatives were omitted form the chart for the same reason. Second, one or more sub-subcategories, or ‘variations’, were added to each category (strategy) to show distribution of the linguistic forms used, as shown in the chart 1. A total of 16 sub-categories (linguistic forms: variations) were added. Some of the different linguistic forms in different directness levels were categorized as one to comply with Blum-Kulka’s scale of strategies; imperative and you must, should and had better, how about, let’s, what about, and shall we, could you and would you, can I and could I. The higher a strategy or a linguistic form is in the chart, the more transparent the force is, and therefore, more direct.
The total number of request sentences appeared in the 15 textbooks was 1325. The number in each textbook differed much, from the least 44 to the most 157, and the average was 88.3 as shown in the chart 2. The difference between the most and the least is almost as much as three times. Though the number alone cannot be interpreted as small, it may not be too many as the total number includes repetitive appearances of each expression in “exercises” or “review” sections.

5. 1. 2. The amount of request strategies

a. The number of textbooks including each strategy

Out of the six strategies (mood derivables, obligation statements, want statements, suggestory, stating preparatory, and query preparatory) researched, all of the fifteen textbooks introduced mood derivables and query preparatory. Most introduced want statements (14 textbooks) and suggestory (12). Only seven presented obligation statements, and eight included stating preparatory.

b. The number of strategies in each textbook

The average number of strategies in each textbook was 4.7 out of six. Four textbooks included all six, while two textbooks introduced only three strategies.
5. 1. 3. The amount of linguistic forms(variations) and the sentences

a. The number of textbooks including each variation

No textbook introduced all 16 variations (imperative/you must, imperative + please, imperative + will you?, should/had better, want/need/I’d like, I’d like you to, Why don’t you?, How about/Let’s/What about/Shall we?, I’ll have, I’d appreciate, Will you?, Can you?, May I?, Could you/Would you?, Can I/Could I?, Do you mind?). 14 textbooks introduced “imperative + please”, “want/need/I’d like”, and “Could you/Would you?.” On the other hand, the least variation presented was “imperative + will you?”, and only one textbook, and a total of one sentence appeared in the 15 textbooks. “I would appreciate” was dealt in only two textbooks and “Do you mind?” appeared in four textbooks. All these three are very commonly used in daily situations, and especially, “I’d appreciate” and “Do you mind?” are obviously important expressions in making polite requests. The small number seems to be problematic.

b. The number of variations in each textbook

The number of variations of strategies in each textbook ranged from the least six to the most 15 out of the 16 variations researched, and the average was 10.0. As the variations were not at all difficult or rare, the number seems to be too small again.

c. The number of sentences of each variation

The variation with the most sentences was “imperatives/you must”, and 541 sentences were presented in total. “Could you/Would you?” (172 sentences), and “How about/Let’s/What about/Shall we” (123) followed “imperatives/you must.” The variations with the least number of sentences were “I would appreciate” (six sentences in total), “I’d like you to ” (nine sentences), and “Do you mind” (16 sentences).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Direct Total</th>
<th>Indirect Total</th>
<th>Mood Determinants Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preporyary strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May I?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'll appreciate you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would appreciate you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>why don't you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>why not you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>will you want</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>should you want</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'd like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'd like it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I'd like if you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mood total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. 2. The distribution of request

5. 2. 1. Distribution of sentences in direct/indirect strategies

As a whole, direct strategy sentences were used more than indirect ones. Only four textbooks presented indirect strategy sentences more than direct ones. Within the 1325 request sentences, 726 (54.7%) were categorized as direct strategies, and 599 (45.3%) as conventionally indirect strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Type</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mood derivables</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>imperative / you must</td>
<td>541 (40.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>imperative + please</td>
<td>101 (7.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>imperative + will you?</td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obligation statements</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>should / had better</td>
<td>19 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>want statements</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>want / need / I'd like</td>
<td>55 (4.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I'd like you to</td>
<td>9 (0.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conventionally indirect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suggestory</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>why don't you</td>
<td>46 (3.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How about / Let's / What about / Shall we?</td>
<td>123 (9.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stating preparatory</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>I'll have</td>
<td>16 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I'd appreciate</td>
<td>6 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>query preparatory</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>Will you?</td>
<td>43 (3.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can you?</td>
<td>72 (5.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May I?</td>
<td>57 (4.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Could you? / Would You?</td>
<td>172 (13.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can I? / Could I?</td>
<td>48 (3.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Do you mind?</td>
<td>16 (1.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<Chart 3. Distribution>

5. 2. 2. Distribution of strategies and sentences

a. Distribution of strategies across the textbooks

Among the direct strategies, mood derivables were used by far the most, a total of 643 sentences (48.5% of total request sentences), followed by want statements with 64 sentences (4.8%). Within the 599 conventionally indirect strategy sentences, query preparatory sentences were the most; 408 (30.8%), followed by suggestory with 169 sentences (12.8%). 96.9% of the request strategy sentences were composed of these four strategies.

Within the 726 direct strategy sentences, mood derivables sentences composed 88.5% (643 sentences), and want statement occupied 8.8% (64 sentences). Within the 599 conventionally indirect strategy sentences, query preparatory composed 68.1% (408 sentences), and suggestory 28.2% (169 sentences).
b. Distribution of strategies in each textbook

All the textbooks had mood derivables by far the most, ranging from the least 33.3% (29 out of 87) to the most 79.4% (50 out of 63) of request sentences in each textbook. The average was 48.5% (42.9 out of 88.3) of the total request sentences. The second most strategy was query preparatory in all of the textbooks except one, which had suggestory more. The average percentage of query preparatory was 30.8% (27.2 out of 88.3), and suggestory was 12.8% (11.3 out of 88.3).

c. Distribution of variations across the textbooks

Among the 16 strategies and the total of 1325 sentences, “imperative” sentences occupied 541 (40.8% of the total sentences). The next most used linguistic forms were “imperative + please” with 101 sentences (15.7%), followed by 172 (13.0%) of “Could you/Would you”, and “How bout/Let’s/What about/Shall we?” with 123 sentences (9.3%). The total of these four composed 78.8% of all the request sentences.

d. Distribution of variations in each textbook

14 textbooks had “imperative” the most, ranging from 73.0% to 28.2% of the total sentences. One textbook had “How about/Let’s/What about/Shall we” more than “imperative”, with 27.6% of the sentences. The second most strategies were not so unanimous among the textbooks; seven textbooks had “Could you/Would you?”, second most (27%-8.9%), three had “imperative + please” (17.3%-6.3%), another three had “How about/Let’s/What about/Shall we” (21.4-13.3%), and two had “May I” (18.2 and 14.0%) as the second most variation.

Most textbooks (12) distribute a large portion of the sentences to the most and the second most variations; the total of the two variations exceeded 50% of the total request sentences in each textbook. In one textbook, “imperative” occupied 73% of the total, and “imperative + please” (the second most) 6.3%; only about 20% of the sentences was given to the other variations. The average percentage of the portion of the most plus the second most variations was 57.7%.

6. Discussion

6.1. The amount

The total number may seem to be not so small, but as pointed out before, many of them appeared in review sections without any context. Also, many of the strategies or linguistic forms were not presented at all or presented very few in number. Especially, the fact that very important
forms such as “Do you mind?” or “I’d appreciate” were not included in most of the textbooks could be a big problem. It is true that these forms require more advanced grammatical knowledge, but they were both supposed to be covered in the high school grammar course. It should not be too difficult for them.

On the other hand, the large number of query preparatory and “Could you/Could you..?” concurred with the NSs’ data that “Could you/Could you?” are very frequently used in most of request sentences, and it can be considered as realistic. However, there were several problems in the presentation again. First, one textbook did not include “Could you/Would you?” variation at all. The variation is obviously one of the most important formulas in request as shown in the previous studies, and lack of these poses a big problem. Second, the number of “Could you/Would you?” was sometimes fewer than the other query preparatories, such as “Will you?” or “Can you?”, which are more direct than “Could you/Would you?” and used less often by NSs. Also, the choice of the variations seemed rather arbitrary because in many cases, there were no clear reasons found in the contexts for the choice. The degree of imposition or the relationship of the interlocutors sometimes did seem to have influence on the choice, but far from always. Most often, the readers cannot tell those pieces of information from the context anyway because context is not provided at all. The possibility that the students believe these variations are interchangeable seemed very high. Since the differences in illocutionary forces in query preparatory variations may difficult to understand for Japanese learners of English, the presentations as if they are interchangeable are all the more problematic.

The amount in each textbook differed much, and that seems to show the attitude and interest of each textbook toward teaching of pragmatic skills. Although not a single textbook presented all the variations or linguistic formulas, some presented most of them. Another several textbooks had conventionally indirect sentences much more than direct ones. However, as a whole, the amount did not seem to be enough for effective acquisition of request expressions. Each textbook seems to have its way of dealing with request strategies and sentences, and this may not benefit the students because the textbook is likely to be the only source of information for them and they may not have any other chances to learn those expressions in other courses. All the textbooks should, at least, include the very basic strategies and linguistic forms such as the ones in this study.

6. 2. Distribution

The huge percentage of mood directive strategies and especially “imperatives” in them stood out in the data. One of the reasons for the outstanding number may be “Classroom English” unit which nine of the 15 textbooks had. The unit usually listed “useful expressions” for classroom
communication, typically conversations from a teacher to students and from students to a teacher. The expressions were often requests and in most of the expressions of request from a teacher to students were mood derivables, and many of those were imperatives (see chart 4. Classroom English).

This imbalanced presentation seems to lead to both pragmalinguistic failures and sociopragmatic failures. The small proportion of the other request strategies may bring about pragmalinguistic failures. If they do not learn enough request strategies, they cannot tell the difference of pragmatic force in each request strategy, and therefore, they might use the most familiar request strategies, that is, mood derivables, when making requests. Sociopragmatic failures may occur because presentations like this signal that teachers (higher status people) normally use mood derivables or “imperatives” to students (lower status people) when making requests. This tendency concurs with the study by Yates that Chinese background teachers, authority figures, use many directives in classrooms. The huge proportion of the direct strategies in Classroom English also seemed to reflect the Japanese culture, and there is a high possibility that this cultural norm is understood as transferable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Imperatives in Classroom English (CE)</th>
<th>Imperatives in TS in CE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) total # of imperative (ims) sentences</td>
<td>(b) # of sentences in Classroom English (CE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>birdland</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crown</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>departure</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echo</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Street</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evergreen</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expressways</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interact</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>new start</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>On Air</td>
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<td>progressive</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>select</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speak to the world</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talk up</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<Chart 4. Classroom English>
7. Conclusion

The textbooks used too many direct strategies, variations, and sentences. The most direct level of strategies (mood derivables) and the most direct level of variations (“imperatives”) were presented by far the most, and the amount and the proportion of them were outstanding.

On the other hand, indirect strategies and variations seemed fewer than they should be. The most indirect formulas researched (“I’d appreciate” and “Do you mind?”) were not introduced in many of the textbooks. Also, in spite of the fact that they included many query preparatory sentences, which concur with the data of NSs, very important and common formula, such as “Would you/Could you?” was not included in a textbook, and some of the presentation could be misleading. Considering the results from the other studies on Japanese speaking English learners which suggest their English tended to be too direct, these characteristics of the textbooks should be paid more attentions and improved quickly.

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