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台灣國中英語教科書中抱怨與讚美語言行為之分析  
An Analysis of the Speech Act of Complaints and Compliments  
in Junior High School English Textbooks in Taiwan

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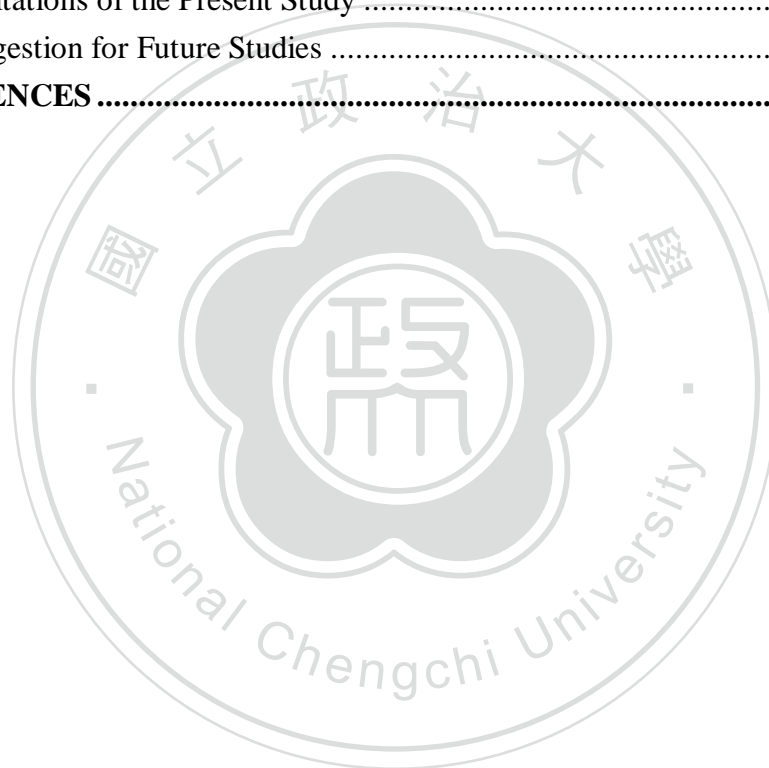
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## Chinese Abstract

國立政治大學英國語文學系英語教學碩士在職專班

### 碩士論文提要

論文名稱: 台灣國中英語教科書中語言行為之分析

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論文提要內容:

根據教育部所頒發的十二年國民基本教育課程綱要，溝通能力已成為台灣英語教學的重點。而在溝通能力中，語言行為的使用更扮演著關鍵角色。有鑑於教科書為台灣國中生學習英語的主要來源，檢視教科書如何呈現語言行為的相關知識有其必要性。因此，本研究的目的為分析「抱怨」與「讚美」在台灣國中英語教科書的次數分布及呈現情形，是否與美國人的使用習慣一致。納入分析的三個版本的國中英語教科書為翰林、康軒、南一。本研究以研究美式語言行為的相關文獻為基礎，計算並分類三個版本中「抱怨」與「讚美」的表達策略，另以百分比及卡方檢定進行資料分析，試圖比較三個版本的教科書與美國人在「抱怨」與「讚美」的「使用頻率」及「表達策略」上是否有顯著差異。研究結果發現，在次數方面，僅翰林、南一兩版本在使用「抱怨」及「讚美」的頻率上符合美式習慣。在表達策略方面，雖然三個版本皆採用美式習慣表達「讚美策略」，但在其他的表達上，如「抱怨策略」及「讚美主題」，三個版本並未完全採取美式習慣。甚至，在「回應讚美」上，三個版本皆未採取美式表達。本研究也進一步探討此研究結果的形成因素，如西方文化的影響、編輯者的文化背景、以英語為外語環境的文化教學、世界英語的趨勢、教師對於教科書的觀點。

關鍵字: 教科書評鑑、語言行為、抱怨、讚美

## Abstract

According to the Curriculum Guidelines in Taiwan, communicative competence has become the focus in English teaching. Research has suggested that the employment of speech acts plays a critical role in one's communicative competence (Austin, 1975). In the light of the fact that textbooks are the main English input for Taiwanese junior high students, it is necessary to examine how the English textbooks presented the speech acts. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the presentation of the speech acts of complaints and compliments in Taiwan junior high English textbooks to see whether the textbooks presented the two speech acts in American styles. There were three series of textbooks examined, Han Lin, Kang Hsuan, and Nan I. Based on the previous literature on American speech acts, the present study counted the frequencies of complaints and compliments shown in the three series of textbooks and then categorized them into main strategies. Those data were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics to compare whether there were any significant differences between the ways these two speech acts are presented and the American conventions in terms of the frequency and main strategies. There were two major findings in the present study. In terms of the frequency, Han Lin and Nan I series corresponded to the American conventions. In terms of the main strategies, the three series of textbooks did not fully present the two speech acts in American styles. The present study further discussed the possible factors for such findings, including the influence of the Western culture, the cultural background of the editors, cultural teaching in EFL countries, the trend of World Englishes, and teachers' perspective on textbooks.

**Keywords:** *Textbook evaluation, Speech Acts, Complaints, Compliments*



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background and Motivation

For many years, textbooks have been serving as a primary educational resource in foreign language teaching and learning . In EFL contexts like Taiwan, textbooks are even regarded as a manifest framework for English curriculum. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the content of textbooks. Among the various aspects of evaluation on textbooks, it seems that the inclusive of speech acts in textbooks should be seriously taken into consideration, especially in EFL contexts where learners lack authentic interactions with native English speakers and need more instructions for the use of speech acts to communicate in an appropriate way.

Fortunately, the issue of communicative competence has been recently raised in Taiwan due to the Curriculum Guidelines for junior high English courses. According to the core competencies listed in the Curriculum Guidelines, improving communicative competence has become an essential task in teaching and learning English. For example, it is hoped that learners are able to use vocabulary and sentence patterns to carry on daily conversations (E-B1, Master Framework for the 12-Year Basic Education Curriculum Guidelines for English course, 2019). Besides, learners are expected to apply communicative strategies to achieve effective communication (J-A1, Master Framework for the 12-Year Basic Education Curriculum Guidelines, 2019). Most important of all, learners are required to communicate with others appropriately in different contexts (S-U-B1, Master Framework for the 12-Year Basic Education Curriculum Guidelines, 2019). With the support of the concerns of

communicative competence in the Curriculum Guidelines, the issue of speech acts seems to be raised due to its deep connections with one's communicative competence. As Hymes (1972) has asserted, communicative competence is not only supported by linguistic rules but also by choosing appropriate speech acts in different contexts. In order to acquire communicative competence, it is crucial for second language learners to get familiar with the speech acts of the target language (Saville-Troike, 1996). Therefore, it is of vital importance to evaluate whether the textbooks in Taiwan covered the elements of speech acts.

In fact, some research has been done on textbook evaluation from the perspective of speech acts. Many of the studies have shown the significance of evaluation on the elements of speech acts in textbooks since speech act has its root of communicative competence (Boxer & Pickering, 1995). For instance, Delen and Tavil (2010) assessed the frequency of occurrences of three speech acts focusing on requests, refusals, and complaints in four textbooks used in University of Economics and Technology Preparatory School, Turkey. Alemi and Irandoost (2012) also investigated the proportions of speech acts of compliments and complaints in the textbooks adopted in some English institutes in Iran. And Limberg (2016) further assessed how EFL textbooks approved in Germany presented the speech act of apologies. The purpose of these studies is to scrutinize whether EFL textbooks incorporate authentic instructions for speech acts. All expected that second language learners would gain the ability to communicate effectively in real life through the aid of textbooks.

In Taiwan, some researchers have also conducted the studies on textbook evaluation from the viewpoint of speech acts because of the deficiency in

sociolinguistic information in the Taiwanese textbooks (S. H. Chen, 2010; C. Y. Huang, 2011; Ku, 2015; Lai, 2017; C.-Y. Lin, 2005; Pai, 2009). Currently, previous studies in Taiwan have examined the coverage of speech acts in the textbooks of elementary, senior high and vocational high schools (S. H. Chen, 2010; C. Y. Huang, 2011; Ku, 2015; Lai, 2017; C.-Y. Lin, 2005; Pai, 2009). It was found that textbooks in Taiwan failed to provide learners with complete contexts and cross-cultural explanations for the employment of the speech acts. In the light of this weakness, it was expected that the publishers and the teachers in Taiwan would notice the limitations of the textbooks and call for attention to the teaching of speech acts after reading the studies.

Although there have been some studies focusing on the evaluation of speech acts in textbooks, one part still has remained untouched—the junior high English textbooks. There are two reasons why it is a must to scrutinize how speech acts are presented in the junior high English textbooks. First of all, previous studies have not analyzed junior high English textbooks in Taiwan from the viewpoint of speech acts. From elementary, senior high to vocational high school, previous researchers have examined textbooks from the pragmatic viewpoint of speech acts (S. H. Chen, 2010; C. Y. Huang, 2011; Ku, 2015; Lai, 2017; C.-Y. Lin, 2005; Pai, 2009). However, junior high school textbooks have been omitted. Second of all, according to the Curriculum Guidelines for junior high English courses, it is required to instruct second language learners to utilize the target language appropriately in different contexts. To help learners achieve this goal, offering them the input of speech acts through textbooks should be treated seriously. To sum up, based on these two reasons, evaluating the

speech acts in junior high English textbooks has become an urgent issue.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the two speech acts of complaints and compliments in the conversation sections in the three sets of junior high English textbooks, published by Han Lin, Kang Hsuan, and Nan I. And the present study aims to evaluate whether the frequencies and the presentations of the two speech acts correspond to the American conventions or not. The selection of the two target speech acts is based on their distinguished communication functions and on their great difference between American and Chinese cultures. And the selection for American expressions is based on its popularity in Taiwan's English learning and the expectation to help students communicate appropriately in the American society. Although the issue of World Englishes encourages speakers to express in an indigenized way, it is still necessary to introduce American speech act conventions and thus students are able to communicate in a more appropriate way. As the major resource for English learning, textbooks are supposed to provide knowledge about American speech act conventions.

### **Significance of the Study**

Given the fact that speech acts play a critical role in one's communicative competence and textbooks are the major input for English learning, there is a growing need to evaluate the elements of speech acts in junior high English textbooks.

Through this study, it is expected that the Ministry of Education are able to examine whether all the junior high textbooks in Taiwan meet the requirement of improving learners' communicative competence. Besides, it is also hoped that the present study

may motivate junior high teachers and textbook developers to put emphasis on the instructions of speech acts and help learners acquire the ability to use the target language appropriately in various contexts. Last but not least, it is anticipated that the coding schemes used for analyzing the two speech acts of complaints and compliments may be helpful for future research.





## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of six sections. The first three sections give a historical overview of textbook evaluation, speech act theory, and the research on the two speech acts of complaints and compliments. By going over previous literature, the current study promotes the necessity of evaluating textbooks from the viewpoint of speech acts. For the next two sections, they review previous studies on speech acts in textbooks from other countries to Taiwan. In these two sections, it is hoped that the gap in this line of research in Taiwan is pointed out. Finally, the issue of Standard English and indigenized Englishes is explored to explain why the present study aims to focus on American norms, rather than other variations, in the use of speech acts.

#### Textbook Evaluation

It is acknowledged that textbooks need to be seriously evaluated as long as they are chosen as the support materials for language courses (Breen & Candlin, 1987; H. D. Brown & Lee, 1994; Cunningsworth, 1995; Ellis, 1997; McDonough & Shaw, 2012; Mukundan & Ahour, 2010; Sheldon, 1988; Skierso, 1991; Williams, 1983). The reasons for the necessity of textbook evaluation are quite simple and apparent. First, since textbooks are the most basic and common form of target language input for language learners, the content of textbooks should be seriously taken into consideration (H. D. Brown & Lee, 1994). Second, the evaluation assists teachers to choose appropriate textbooks which meet not only teachers' teaching goals but also learners' needs and proficiency level (Sheldon, 1988). Last but not least, through textbook evaluation, teachers are able to explore the strengths and weaknesses of a textbook

and then are able to make appropriate adoptions and adaptations to the textbooks in their future courses (Mukundan, Hajimohammadi, & Nimehchisalem, 2011). Based on these reasons, it is obvious that textbook evaluation is an indispensable component in language courses.

Now that textbook evaluation plays an important role in language courses, this field has certainly drawn a great deal of attention. In this line, several researchers have distinguished some types of textbook evaluation (e.g., Cunningsworth, 1995; Ellis, 1997) and have also developed numerous textbook evaluation checklists and guidelines (e.g., Breen & Candlin, 1987; Cunningsworth & Tomlinson, 1984; McDonough & Shaw, 2012; Skierso, 1991). Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997) proposed that textbook evaluation can be categorized into three types, namely pre-use, in-use, and post-use evaluation. Pre-use evaluation, or predictive evaluation, is designed to assist teachers to select appropriate textbooks regarding potential performance before use. In-use evaluation is intended to help teachers to analyze the merits and demerits of textbooks in use. Post-use evaluation, or retrospective evaluation, is aimed to aid teachers to scrutinize the quality of textbooks after use. Alternatively, these three types of textbook evaluation can be completed with the aid of systematically designed checklists. And the available checklists for textbook evaluation may be either qualitative or quantitative. (Mukundan et al., 2011). To conduct a better evaluation, some researchers have even assessed the validity, reliability, and practicality of the checklists. For instance, Mukundan and Ahour (2010) reviewed the available textbook evaluation checklists within three decades, from 1970 to 2000. Besides, Williams (1983) also suggested the generalizable criteria for the



items in the checklists for textbook evaluation. Referring to the above studies, it is implied that textbook evaluation is actually a rigorous procedure and a prominent issue in language teaching and learning.

In addition to the methods of textbook evaluation, from which viewpoint to evaluate a textbook is another popular issue to discuss in this field. In the light of the abundant content and information a textbook may cover, researchers have stood on different viewpoints to evaluate textbooks. Some evaluated textbooks from the cultural viewpoint and others analyzed the linguistic input of target language. For instance, Alptekin (1993) discussed the presentation of target language culture content in EFL materials in order to examine the interference between learners' native culture and target language culture. On the other hand, Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) focused on the linguistic input of target language and scrutinized five sections of textbooks in Iran, including vocabulary, reading, grammar, language functions, and pronunciation practice. Biria and Mehrabi Boshrabadi (2015) further evaluated a series of English textbooks in Iranian senior high school through the multi-aspectual framework. This multi-aspectual framework is composed of three domains: content and sequencing of a textbook, format and presentation of a textbook, and monitoring and assessment of a textbook. Through the multi-aspectual model, different sections and aspects of the textbook were evaluated, such as vocabulary frequency, the sequencing of language development, knowledge for language strategies, exercises of four-skills, and so on.

In Taiwan, studies on textbook evaluation have focused on different sections and aspects as well. H. C. Chen (2014), Kao (2014), Wu (2016) and H. T. Hsu (2017)

aimed at analyzing the vocabulary sections of textbooks from elementary, junior high to senior high school. Most of the studies were corpus-based, investigating vocabulary frequency, word distribution, word repetition, and vocabulary overlap between different series of textbooks. Meanwhile, not only the vocabulary section but also the grammar section has drawn attention in the field of textbook evaluation in Taiwan. For example, T. Huang (2016) scrutinized whether English textbooks in senior high schools met learners' needs and the requirements of curriculum guidelines in grammar learning. Hsieh (2018), for another example, evaluated the practicality of three series of textbooks by comparing the grammar patterns in published textbooks with authentic paragraphs. In addition to vocabulary and grammar, the four skills sections are also one of the focuses in the field of textbook evaluation. Chou (2012), Chu (2013), H. W. Yu (2013) and Y. H. Tsai (2018) examined the sections designed for the training of four language skills in textbooks. Those studies have one purpose in common—to make teachers have a better understanding of the features and the focuses of the textbooks and thus to arouse teachers' awareness of what their students will receive from the textbooks.

Although previous research has evaluated textbooks from various aspects, little work has devoted to the coverage and presentation of speech acts in the English textbooks for junior high schools in Taiwan. Given that textbook evaluation may force teachers to make appropriate adoption and adaption to textbooks in their future instructions, it is necessary to present a thorough textbook evaluation in language teaching and learning (Ellis, 1997). Therefore, to present a more complete knowledge and input of the target language in language courses, there has been a necessity to

carry out textbook evaluation from the pragmatic viewpoint of speech act behavior.

### **Speech Act Theory**

Speaking to the acquisition of communicative competence, the issue of the appropriateness of a learner's utterance in specific situations has always been raised in language teaching and learning. And whether one can achieve smooth communication is integral with the successful use of speech acts, which represent one's understanding of values, attitudes, and conventions of the target language (Hymes, 1972). Therefore, to help learners operate appropriate communication with other speakers, instructions for the repertoire of speech acts of the target language should be seriously taken into consideration.

A speech act performs the functions of a language, allowing speakers to deliver not only the literal meanings of the words but also the underlying intentions beyond the utterances, such as greeting, apologizing, requesting, complimenting, refusing, and thanking. (Searle, Kiefer, & Bierwisch, 1980). Just as Austin (1975) claimed in the title of his lecture, *How to do things with words*, a speaker may successfully accomplish things they aimed to do through the appropriate use of language functions, which are realized as speech acts. Based on the philosophy of using language as performative functions, Austin (1975), the pioneer of speech act theory, divided speech acts into three types: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. A locutionary act is made up of literal meanings of the utterances, presenting ostensible messages to the hearers. On the other hand, an illocutionary act is the underlying meaning and intended significance of the locutionary act. As for a perlocutionary act, it is the actual effect of the illocutionary act on the hearer.

Undertaking Austin's (1975) speech act theory, Searle (1976) further classified illocutionary acts into five types: (1) assertive acts: utterances which claim one's opinions toward something, such as averring and assertions, (2) commissive acts: utterances which commit one to taking some actions in the future, such as promises and threats, (3) declarative acts: utterances which change the state of events in the world, such as appointing and marrying, (4) directive acts: utterances which ask someone to do something, such as requests and commands, and (5) expressive acts: utterances which express the speaker's affections and attitudes toward something, such as thanks, apologies, and welcomes.

Having known that one's utterances may involve in not only literal locutionary acts but also underlying illocutionary acts, it is necessary for both teachers and learners to be aware of the existence of speech acts and to understand how to deal with them appropriately. Therefore, after Austin (1975) and Searle (1976) gave the definition and taxonomy of speech acts, researchers in this field have subsequently steered their attention to explore the presentation and corresponding responses of speech act behaviors.

### **Speech Acts of Complaints and Compliments**

Despite the widespread recognition of the importance of the acquisition of speech acts, there are still some burdens for second language learners to acquire the repertoire of speech acts of the target language. That is, speech acts may vary across different cultures and thus lead to cross-cultural misunderstandings (e.g., Clancy, Thompson, Suzuki, & Tao, 1996; A. D. Cohen & Olshtain, 1993; Wolfson, 1989). To compensate for cross-cultural misunderstandings, it is necessary for both teachers and

learners to be aware of the cultural differences between the target language and the native language in the use speech acts.

The following describes previous literature on the speech acts of complaints and compliments, including complaint strategies, compliment topics, compliment strategies, and compliment responses. Since the relationships between the speakers may influence how the speakers use the speech act of complaints and the information on the characters' relationships in the textbooks were not provided, the review focuses less substantially on complaints than compliments. For example, complaint topics and complaint responses are not included in this part of literature review. On top of the descriptions of the two speech acts, the American conventions of these two speech acts are reviewed particularly. Lastly, the comparison of the frequencies of complaints and compliments in the American culture are discussed as well.

### **Complaint**

A complaint is an expression of displeasure, disappointment, disapproval, or grievance by a speaker (Clyne, 1994; Edmondson & House, 1981). Meanwhile, a complaint usually includes either explicit or implicit directives to request the complainees to do something to compensate for the perceived offensive action (Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Trosborg, 2011). Since the act of complaining is potentially face-threatening, this speech act behavior needs to be conducted more carefully (P. Brown & Levinson, 1987). Some empirical research has pointed out that social status has great influence on the severity of complaints (Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Trosborg, 1995, 2011). If the participants are unfamiliar with each other, they tend to use less severe complaint strategies.

In order to make sure that learners in Taiwan are exposed to the input of complaint strategies used in American society, the present study analyzed the complaint strategies in the three series of textbooks in Taiwan. The following demonstrates all the classifications of complaint strategies. And Americans' preferences for complaint strategies are introduced as well.

### ***Complaint Strategies***

Complainers adopt different complaint strategies to intensify or remedy the confrontations of offensive events. The selection of complaint strategies depends on the complainers' intention to make the complaint explicit or implicit. Therefore, previous research devoted to defining different complaint strategies and to making an order for those strategies according to their severity level (e.g., Murphy & Neu, 1996; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Trosborg, 2011).

The severity level of complaints is based on how strong the connection is the illocutionary act to its goal (Leech, 1983). In other words, if the complainer explicitly expresses dissatisfaction with the offensive event, the goal to complain is straightforwardly achieved. On the other hand, if the dissatisfaction is conveyed implicitly, the connection with the goal to complain is weak and indirect. To sum up, the severity level of a complaint is determined by whether the complainer explicitly conveys negative evaluation toward the complained behavior (Trosborg, 1995, 2011). Olshtain and Weinbach (1993) further established a scale consisting of five complaint strategies based on their severity level, including below the level of reproach, expression of annoyance or disapproval, explicit complaint, accusation, and immediate threat. Later, Trosborg (1995) categorized five complaint strategies

according to her investigations on the preference of native English and Danish speakers in utilizing complaint behavior. The five complaint strategies are: *Hints*, *Expression of Annoyance or Disapproval*, *Requests*, *Explicit Complaints*, and *Accusations*.

Certainly, native speakers of English have their own preference for complaint strategies. According to previous literature (Trosborg, 2011), native English speakers tend to use severer complaint strategies in daily conversations. This may result from the core value of individualism in American cultures (Du, 1995; Mao, 1994). With the value of individualism, native speakers are less sensitive to face-threatening situations and are prone to directly express their negative feelings. According to Trosborg's (1995) study, Americans are prone to use severer complaint strategies such as requests, explicit complaints, and expressions of annoyance or disapproval.

### **Compliment**

According to P. Brown and Levinson (1987), complimenting is a positive politeness strategy which displays admiration and approval toward one's past or present behavior. Neglecting the routines of complimenting may cause awkward or embarrassing moments for the participants. In order to have rapport with others, the speakers need to understand the purpose and timing for offering their compliments. In American culture, compliments are usually given to show admiration or approval toward other's appearance, taste, possessions, accomplishment, and personality traits (Herbert, 1990; Manes, 1983), to establish and affirm the solidarity of social relationships (Manes & Wolfson, 1981a; Wolfson, 1989), to trigger or maintain a conversation, which is regarded as one of the conversation strategies (Billmyer, 1990;

Dunham, 1992; Wolfson & Judd, 1983), to substitute greetings, thanks, apologies or congratulations (Wolfson, 1989; Wolfson & Judd, 1983), to mitigate face-threatening acts and embarrassing situations such as apologies, requests, and criticisms (P. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Wolfson & Judd, 1983), and to achieve the desired anticipations or behaviors (Manes, 1983).

The act of complimenting is worthy of study because of its ubiquity in daily conversations, multifunction for social interactions and variations across different cultures. In fact, numbers of studies have analyzed the act of compliments from different perspectives, such as compliment topics, compliment strategies, and compliment responses (e.g., Herbert, 1989; Holmes, 1986, 1988; Manes & Wolfson, 1981b; M. C. Yu, 2005). First, for compliment topics, three main topics has been classified, including *Appearance or Possessions*, *Performance or Abilities*, and *Personality Traits* (e.g., Herbert, 1990; Holmes, 1988; Knapp, Hopper, & Bell, 1984; Wolfson, 1989). Second, for compliment strategies, the expression of compliments can be either explicit or implicit (Holmes, 1988). *Direct compliments* can be understood literally, while *Indirect Compliments* need to be interpreted by the addressee. Besides, different cultures have their own preference for using direct or indirect compliments (Holmes, 1988; M. C. Yu, 1999). Hence, to have smooth communication with others, a speaker needs to be familiar with the routine of compliment strategies in the target language. Finally, since it is inevitable to encounter the condition of giving feedbacks to the complimenter in daily conversations, compliment responses have also become one of the research topics in this field (e.g., R. Chen & Yang, 2010; Herbert, 1989; Holmes, 1986). Basically, several types of



compliment responses have been identified, including *Acceptance, Amendment, Non-Acceptance, Face Relationship, Combination, and Non-Acknowledgement* (Herbert, 1990; Nelson, Al-Batal, & Echols, 1996). And certainly, different culture has its own conventions and rules for responding to a given compliment (Yang, 1987; M. C. Yu, 2005).

In terms of the multiple aspects of compliments, the following parts respectively present compliment topics, compliment strategies, and compliment responses. Furthermore, in the light of the issue of culture-specificity, how American employ the speech act of compliments is introduced as well.

### ***Compliment Topics***

Previous studies pointed out that compliment topics can be classified into three general categories, including *Appearance/Possessions, Performance/Abilities, and Personality traits* (Herbert, 1990; Holmes, 1988; Knapp et al., 1984; Manes & Wolfson, 1981b).

According to previous research, Americans are inclined to compliment one's *Appearance and/or Possessions* (e.g., Holmes, 1986; Holmes, 1988; Knapp et al., 1984; Wolfson, 1989) It is also found that the topic of *Personality traits* occurs less frequently than those on *Appearance and/or Possessions* in American culture (Holmes, 1988). Such cultural variation is actually the reflection of particular culture values and attitudes. For native speakers of English, the primary function of compliments is to create solidarity with others (Wolfson, 1989). And noticing newness of the addressee is highly valued in American society (M. C. Yu, 2005). Thus, Americans have the tendency to praise one's appearance and possessions in order to show their

friendliness (Holmes, 1988). Furthermore, with the support of the compliment function as conversation openers, it is also common to give compliments on appearances or possessions to strangers and naturally start a conversation (Billmyer, 1990; Dunham, 1992; Wolfson, 1989; Wolfson & Judd, 1983).

### ***Compliment Strategies***

Speaking to compliment strategies, the directness level of a given compliment is usually discussed. Furthermore, based on the directness level, compliment strategies have been categorized into two distinguishing types as direct compliments and indirect compliments (e.g., Knapp et al., 1984; Ye, 1995; M. C. Yu, 2005). Direct compliments are accompanied with explicit linguistic forms and can be inferred literally. On the other hand, indirect compliments are implicit linguist forms and needed to be further interpreted by the addressee.

According to previous literature, Americans are prone to use direct compliments in real conversations (e.g., Manes & Wolfson, 1981b; M. C. Yu, 2004; M. C. Yu, 2005). Again, such preference can be traced back to American cultural norms to give compliments to affirm solidarity and to show friendliness. Thus, Americans are used to giving their compliments straightforwardly. Meanwhile, with this particular norm, it is also observed that native English speakers use compliments more frequently than speakers from other cultures (Herbert, 1989; Wolfson, 1989; M. C. Yu, 2005). Some researchers even pointed out that Americans may regard silence or indirect compliments as inappropriate behaviors (M. C. Yu, 2005).

### ***Compliment Responses***

As for compliment responses, due to the inherent issue of different preference for

compliment responses across cultures, numbers of studies have sought to figure out universality and to identify culture-specificity between American and Chinese cultures, which are typically thought to have great divergence in cultural values and social norms (e.g., R. Chen, 1993; Yang, 1987; Ye, 1995; M. C. Yu, 1999, 2004, 2005). M. C. Yu (2004) identified six mutually exclusive types of compliment responses to investigate compliment response behavior between English and Chinese speakers. The taxonomy is as follows: acceptance strategies, amendment strategies, non-acceptance strategies, face relationship related response strategies, combination strategies, and no acknowledgement strategies.

According to previous studies, native speakers of English tend to adopt more acceptance strategies and fewer non-acceptance strategies (Tang & Zhang, 2009; Yang, 1987; M. C. Yu, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2005). And this particular performance on compliment responses actually can be attributed to the ingrained cultural norms and social conventions. Generally, native speakers of English are affected by the special emphasis on the autonomy of individuals and thus are able to naturally accept the given compliments (Wierzbicka, 1991). Besides, from the viewpoint of politeness behavior, the variation of preference in compliment response behavior has something to do with a particular interpretation for self-denigration in American cultures (P. Brown & Levinson, 1987). For native speakers of English, self-denigration may be concerned as self-humiliation and probably causes the situation of losing face. As a result, native speakers of English are prone to agree with the compliments rather than deny the given compliments.

## **The Frequencies of Complaints and Compliments in American Society**

The frequency of compliments might be more than that of complaints in American daily conversations. Since the speech act of compliments serves more functions than the speech act of complaints, the opportunities for using compliments are more than those for complaints.

Numerous researchers (Billmyer, 1990; P. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Dunham, 1992; Herbert, 1989; Manes & Wolfson, 1981b; Wolfson & Judd, 1983; M. C. Yu, 2005) have pointed out that the speech act of compliments serves multiple functions in American culture. To name a few, a compliment can be given to show admiration toward others, to substitute thanks, congratulations, or apologies, to achieve the desired anticipations or behaviors, to mitigate face-threatening situations. Among the many compliment functions, one of the particular functions is to use compliments as conversation openers (Billmyer, 1990; Dunham, 1992; Wolfson & Judd, 1983). In American culture, one can even give compliments to a stranger to show their friendliness and then naturally start a conversation. However, compared to compliments, the opportunities for using complaints are relatively limited. The speech act of complaints serves fewer functions than compliments in real conversations. Besides, the use of complaints is affected by the social distance between the participants in real conversations (Boxer, 1993; Hong, 2008; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Trosborg, 2011). Due to the face-threatening features of complaints, speakers tend to complain with acquaintance rather than strangers.

Based on the comparison of the two speech acts, it reveals that the frequency of compliments is higher than that of complaints in American daily conversations. Since

the opportunities for using complaints are more restricted than those for using compliments, the American conventions of using these two speech acts is to give more compliments than complaints.

### **Studies of Speech Acts in Textbooks**

Given the fact that the textbooks are the major resource of the target language (e.g., Breen & Candlin, 1987; H. D. Brown & Lee, 1994; Cunningsworth, 1995; Ellis, 1997; McDonough & Shaw, 2012; Mukundan & Ahour, 2010; Sheldon, 1988) and the acquisition of speech acts can improve one's communicative competence (e.g., Austin, 1975; Hymes, 1972; Searle, 1976), the textbooks are supposed to provide instructions for the use of target language speech acts. Thus, some researchers have devoted to evaluating the elements of speech acts in the textbooks (e.g., Alemi, Bemani, & Roodi, 2013; Boxer & Pickering, 1995).

Most of the studies in this research line found that there are some common problems with the instructions of speech act in textbooks (e.g., Alemi et al., 2013; Alemi & Irandoost, 2012; Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Moradi, Karbalaei, & Afraz, 2013; Nguyen, 2011; Soozandehfar & Sahragard, 2011). First, the distribution of different kinds of speech acts is unequal, failing to provide learners with a vast repertoire of speech acts in the target language. Second, some textbooks offered proper amount of speech acts but fewer variations in strategy types. Thus, learners may inappropriately express their meanings in different contexts due to insufficient knowledge about speech acts. Finally, because little information was given about the contexts or relationships between the speakers in the textbooks, there may be some influences on learners' accuracy of utilizing speech acts.

Despite the different results and conclusions, all the previous studies in this line were in the hope of improving the published textbooks to provide sufficient knowledge of speech acts and of assisting learners to communicate appropriately.

### **Studies of Speech Acts in Textbooks in Taiwan**

Though previous research has pointed out the importance of textbook evaluation, few studies are conducted to evaluate the speech acts in textbooks for in Taiwan. The following paragraphs review some of the available studies of speech acts in the Taiwanese textbooks.

S. H. Chen (2010) and Lai (2017), for example, conducted research on speech acts in three series of senior high school English textbooks, published by Far East, San Min, and Lung Teng. These two studies investigated the frequencies and proportion of the five speech acts, including compliments, requests, apologies, complaints, and refusals. Besides, cross-cultural differences of the employment speech acts between Americans and Chinese were compared in order to evaluate how the textbooks and their corresponding teachers' manuals presented those speech acts in the target language. The results indicated the problems with unequal distribution of the five speech acts in the Taiwanese textbooks. Moreover, not all the speech acts were presented in the American way. Last but not least, the three series of textbooks and teachers' manuals failed to provide explanations for cultural preference of utilizing speech acts, limiting learners to acquire the complete knowledge about speech acts. However, since these two studies merely focused on senior high school English textbooks and the junior high textbooks were omitted, it would be difficult to see the big picture of speech act education in Taiwan.

Now that the Curriculum Guidelines emphasize the acquisition of communicative competence, the instructions of speech acts can never be neglected in any education stage. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the English textbooks for junior high school in Taiwan, which have been omitted in the past years.

### **The Issues of Standard English and Indigenized Englishes**

In the light of the main focus of the present study on evaluating whether the three sets of textbooks adopted American conventions in the use of speech acts, the issue of the Standard English and the Indigenized Englishes is probably raised. There may be some concerns for why the textbooks in Taiwan are suggested to adopt American Norms instead of other varieties of English, especially under the trend of World Englishes. Thus, the following paragraphs review some literature on the Standard English and the World Englishes.

Standard English is a variety of English which refers to the regular forms of the language and is supported by official institutions (Trudgill & Hannah, 2008). And the American and British English are associated with the Standard English where their spellings, grammars, and cultural ways of using the language are regarded as the norm of English (Milroy, 1999). Although both American and British English are regarded the Standard English, the present study mainly focused on the American norm to evaluate the speech acts in the three series of textbooks. In fact, American English is the most common English in Taiwan (e.g., J. Chang, 2016; Y. F. Chang, 2008; Ren, Chen, & Lin, 2016). W. Zhang (2012) interviewed two hundred university students in Taiwan and found that many English learners in Taiwan considered the American English as their learning goal. J. Chang (2016) further conducted Critical Discourse

Analysis to examine the teaching materials in Taiwan. It is found that American English is the prevalent culture in those textbooks. In the case of English learning environment in Taiwan, the American English seems to be the focus in the present study.

On the other hand, the issue of indigenized English is another limelight to discuss. In fact, the debate between preserving the Standard English and embracing the indigenized Englishes has been discussed for decades (B. B. Kachru, 1992a; McArthur, 2001; McArthur & Macarthur, 1998). Due to the global spread of English, the English language has become a lingua franca, allowing people with different cultural backgrounds to communicate through this language. With this trend, the English language has integrated with the regional and local linguistic forms or cultural conventions and then developed into indigenized varieties of English (B. B. Kachru, 1992b; B. B. Kachru & Nelson, 1996). Singlish, which integrate the English language with particular expressions in Singapore, is one of the common examples of localized English. The emergence of World Englishes leads to the arguments on Standard English and the indigenized varieties of Englishes. Some considered the Standard English as the preservation for the fixed forms of the English language (e.g., Crowley, 2003; Quirk, 1981; Seidlhofer, 1999; Strevens, 1981). Some argued that the existence of indigenized English provides a broader view for communication and makes English learning more accessible to speakers from different cultures (e.g., B. B. Kachru, 1986; Y. Kachru, 1997).

Certainly, the debates of these two opposite positions have brought up numerous studies on the varieties of English across different cultures (e.g., Wong, 2004; Yong &



Campbell, 1995; H. Zhang, 2003). Rather than focusing on the cultural divergences of speaking conventions, it seemed that research in this line has focused merely on the linguistic forms such as accents, intelligibility, and speech accommodation (Wolf & Chan, 2016). However, as previous literature has pointed out, intercultural communication needs not only the surface knowledge of linguistic rules but also the deeper understandings for cultural conventions (Wolf, 2014; Wolf & Polzenhagen, 2006). Since the employment of speech acts is actually involved with deeper cultural conventions which assist speakers to communicate in a polite and appropriate way, the understanding of the target culture should be taken into considerations in English learning (P. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Clancy et al., 1996; Wolfson, 1989). In other words, the differences between the native and the target culture may hinder intercultural communication and finally cause some misunderstandings for the speakers. Thus, the acquisition of the speech acts in the target culture cannot be treated lightly.

Base on the abovementioned rationale, it seems that the Standard English still plays a critical role in appropriate communications across different cultures. In order to prevent learners from the offensive situations, it is necessary for textbooks to present how speech acts are employed under the context of American cultures.

### **Thesis / Hypothesis**

With the support of previous literature, the present study aims to verify the following research hypotheses regarding the frequencies and presentations of the speech acts of complaints and compliments in the Taiwanese textbooks:

1. The frequency of compliments would be higher than that of complaints in the textbooks since the opportunities for using complaints are more restricted than those for using compliments in daily conversations.
2. The presentation of complaints and compliments in the textbooks would follow American conventions to provide learners with appropriate ways to communicate in the American society and to help learners avoid cultural misunderstandings. In the case of complaint strategies, it is expected that the textbooks would mainly adopt *Requests*, *Explicit Complaints*, and *Expressions of Annoyance or Disapproval*. In the case of compliment topics, it is expected that the textbooks would focus on *Appearances or Possessions*. In the case of compliment strategies, it is expected that the textbooks would use more *Direct Compliment*. As for the case of compliment responses, it is expected that the textbooks would use more *Acceptance*.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the rationale of evaluating the frequencies and the presentations of the two speech acts of complaints and compliments in the three series of junior high English textbooks in Taiwan, the present study explores the following two questions:

1. What are the frequencies of complaints and compliments in the three series of junior high textbooks, published by Han Lin, Kang Hsuan, and Nan I? Are the frequencies of the two speech acts correspond to the American conventions?
2. How are complaints and compliments presented in the three series of junior high school textbooks in Taiwan? Are they presented in American ways?

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter demonstrates the research methodology adopted in the present study. Generally, it consists of four sections. Section one focuses on the introduction of the research materials. Section two displays the analyzing procedures. Section three presents data analysis and the coding schemes for the examination of complaints and compliments in the three series of textbooks.

#### Materials

The present study examined the conversation sections in the three series of English textbooks in Taiwan, published by Han Lin, Kang Hsuan, and Nan I. All of the three series of textbooks were edited on the basis of Curriculum Guidelines, where communicative competence is regarded as one of the core competencies.

The selection of materials was based on the following four reasons. First of all, the three sets of textbooks are usually adopted by most of the junior high school in Taiwan. In other words, the three sets of textbooks are the major English input for junior high school students in Taiwan. Therefore, it is important to examine the content of these three series of textbooks. Second, there are six volumes in each set of the textbooks and each volume has nine dialogues. In other words, the present study analyzed at least 162 dialogues in total for their presentation of the two speech acts of complaints and compliments. Lastly, according to the introductory section of each textbook, all the editors and writers of the three sets of textbooks were non-native English speakers. In the three series of textbooks, most of the editors were the current teachers from junior and senior high schools. Some native English speakers were

merely the consulting editors, but not the chief editors of the textbooks. Thus, it leaves space to investigate whether the speech acts were presented in American styles.

And the reasons for choosing the conversation sections as the examined material is that only dialogues are valid to demonstrate the operation of speech act behaviors. Furthermore, in terms of the design of the conversation section, the three series of textbooks have their own features. There were two features worth mentioning: the settings and the characters. First, all the three series provided the settings for each dialogue through various ways like words and pictures. Second, except for Nan I, Han Lin and Kang Hsuan offered the introduction of the characters. In Han Lin, the information about the characters was displayed with explicit words on the opening page. The introduction includes the relationships of the characters. Then, in Kang Hsuan, only the names of the characters are provided.

### **Procedures**

There were five steps in the present study. They were listed as following:

1. Extract the utterances of complaint and compliments from the conversation sections in the three sets of textbooks.
2. Compare the frequencies of complaints and compliments in each set of textbooks by percentages. This step aimed to investigate the proportions of the two speech acts in each set of the textbooks.
3. Categorize the extracted utterance based on the coding schemes of the variations of complaints and compliments. The variations of complaints and compliments include complaint strategies, compliment topics, compliment strategies, and compliment responses. And the coding schemes were adapted from the relevant

existing studies. This step aimed to examine which variation of complaints and compliments the extracted utterances belonged to. The categorized data were regarded as the observed frequencies.

4. Multiply the total of observed frequencies in the textbooks and the percentage of each variation of complaints and compliments in the literature. This step aimed to get the value of expected frequencies. The expected frequencies were based on the existing literature and treated as the American Norm.
5. Compare the observed frequencies in the three series of textbooks with the expected frequencies in the literature by descriptive statistics of  $\chi^2$  analysis. This step aimed to investigate whether there was significant differences between the observed frequencies and the expected frequencies in the use of the speech acts of complaints and compliments.

### **Data Analysis and Coding Scheme**

The collected data were analyzed based on the two research questions. For the first research question, the frequencies of complaints and compliments in each set of textbooks were compared by percentages. As to the second research question, the presentation of complaints and compliments were analyzed by the  $\chi^2$  statistics to see whether the two speech acts corresponded to American ways of using the two speech acts. Each utterance was classified based on the coding schemes adapted from relevant studies.

### **Research Question 1**

#### **Frequency of Complaints and Compliments in the Textbooks**

To answer the first research question, the utterances and their corresponding

responses were extracted from the conversation sections in the three series of textbooks. The coding schemes for determining which speech act the utterance belongs to were based on the definitions of complaints and compliments adapted from the relevant studies. The occurrence of a speech act and its response were counted as one instance. After the extraction, the frequencies of complaints and compliments were compared by percentages to examine the proportions of these two speech acts in each set of textbooks. If the frequency of compliments is more than that of complaints, it represents that the textbooks are consistent with American daily conversations in the use of the two speech acts of complaints and compliments.

## **Research Question 2**

### **Presentation of Complaints and Compliments in the Textbooks**

To answer the second research question, the extracted utterances were further categorized based on the coding schemes for the variations of the speech acts of complaints and compliments. The variations of the two speech acts included complaint strategy, compliment topics, compliment strategy, and compliment responses. And the coding schemes were adapted from the relevant studies on the two speech acts. After the categorization, all the data were analyzed by descriptive statistics of  $\chi^2$  analyses to see whether there were significant differences between the observed frequency and the expected frequency. The observed frequency refers to the categorized data found in the three series of textbooks. And the expected frequency refers to previous studies on how native English speakers employ the two speech acts of complaints and compliments. In other words, the expected frequency was treated as the American Norm of the use of the two speech acts. If there is a significant

difference between the observed and expected frequency, it means that the speech acts in the textbooks were not presented in American ways. On the contrary, if there is no significant difference, it means that the speech acts in the textbooks were presented in American ways.

### Coding Scheme

The coding schemes for determining which speech act the utterance belongs to are based on the definitions of the speech acts of complaints and compliments adapted from the relevant studies (for complaints: Clyne, 1994; Edmondson & House, 1981; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Trosborg, 1995; for compliments: Billmyer, 1990; Dunham, 1992; Herbert, 1990; Manes, 1983; Manes & Wolfson, 1981; Wolfson & Judd 1983; Wolfson, 1989). As for the coding schemes for the variations of complaints and compliments, it included complaint strategies, compliment topics, strategies, and responses. Each data was categorized based on the coding schemes adapted from the following relevant studies: (1) Complaint Strategies: Trosborg's (1995) study on interlanguage pragmatics: requests, complaints, and apologies, (2) Compliment Topics and Compliment Strategies: Yu's (2005) study on *Sociolinguistic Competence in the Complimenting Act of Native Chinese and American English Speakers*, and (3) Compliment Responses: Yu's (2004) study on *Interlinguistic Variation and Similarity in Second Language Speech Act Behavior*. The taxonomies of the above studies were treated as the American norm.

The reason for choosing the taxonomies of Trosborg's (1995) and Yu's (2004, 2005) studies is that they respectively provided the clear and detailed classifications for complaint strategies, compliment topics, compliment strategies, and compliment

responses. Also, those studies conducted both quantitative and qualitative observations on how Americans employed these two speech acts of complaints and compliments. Although no single research study can represent the American Norm of employing the two speech acts of complaints and compliments, the taxonomies adopted in the present study provided clear definitions for each category.

### ***Complaint***

A complaint is an expression of displeasure, disappointment, disapproval, or grievance by a speaker (Clyne, 1994; Edmondson & House, 1981). Meanwhile, a complaint usually includes either explicit or implicit directives to request the complainees to do something to compensate for the perceived offensive action (Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Trosborg, 1995).

### ***The variations of complaints***

The present study adopted Trosborg's (1995) scale of complaint strategies to evaluate the three series of textbooks in Taiwan. The explanations of these five complaint strategies are listed as follows, with the severity level increasing from (1) to (5).

#### ***(1) Hints:***

The complainer tries to minimize the possibility of face-threatening on the complainees by implicit mention of the complained behavior. In this case, neither the negative feelings nor the complainees is explicitly mentioned in the utterances.

For example, "*My notebook was clean last time I read it.*"

#### ***(2) Expression of Annoyance or Disapproval:***

The complainer expresses negative feelings such as grievance and dissatisfaction of the complained behavior but still avoid explicitly mentioned the complainees.



Neither the offensive event nor the complaine is straightforwardly mentioned but general annoyance of the violation is expressed. On top of that, the complained behavior is generally directed toward the third unknown party. For instance, “*Look at this mess all over the place.*”

(3) *Requests:*

The complainer requires the complaine to compensate for previous offensive action and ask the complaine to promise that the complained behavior will never happen again. For instance, “*Could you please never take my things away without asking again?*”

(4) *Explicit Complaints:*

The complainer explicitly expresses the negative evaluation referring to the complaint behavior and/or the complaine. There is an open confrontation with the complaine but no threats and sanctions in the utterances. The reason why the complaint strategy of requests is lower than explicit complaints is that requests actually offer the complaine the chance to remedy the damage. The following is an example of explicit complaint strategy: “*You shouldn't take others' things without asking! I'm angry about that.*”

(5) *Accusations:*

The complainer conveys an open confrontation and future sanctions in the complaint. Direct insults and immediate threats are straightforwardly geared toward the complaine. For instance, “*Now, give what you've stolen from me or I'll call the police.*”

### ***American conventions of complaints***

Based on Trosborg's (1995) study, there are five complaint strategies, including *Hints*, *Expressions of Annoyance or Disapproval*, *Requests*, *Explicit Complaints*, and *Accusations*. Americans use 15% of *Hints*, 16% of *Expressions of Annoyance or Disapproval*, 31.5% of *Requests*, 20.6% of *Explicit Complaints*, and 16.9% of *Accusations*.

### ***Compliment***

In American culture, compliments are usually given to show admiration or approval toward other's appearance, taste, possessions, accomplishment, and personality traits (Herbert, 1990; Manes, 1983), to establish and affirm the solidarity of social relationships (Manes & Wolfson, 1981a; Wolfson, 1989), to trigger or maintain a conversation, which is regarded as one of the conversation strategies (Billmyer, 1990; Dunham, 1992; Wolfson & Judd, 1983), to substitute greetings, thanks, apologies or congratulations (Wolfson, 1989; Wolfson & Judd, 1983), to mitigate face-threatening acts and embarrassing situations such as apologies, requests, and criticisms (P. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Wolfson & Judd, 1983), and to achieve the desired anticipations or behaviors .

### ***The variations of compliments***

The present study adopted Yu's (2004, 2005) observations on native English speakers in the use of compliment topics, compliment strategies, and compliment responses.

The explanations of each compliment issue are listed as follows, starting with compliment topics, then compliment strategies, and compliment responses.

1. *Compliment topics:*

- (1) Appearance and/or Possessions: Compliments on one's appearance and/or possessions. For example, *You have pretty eyes.* or *Your coat looks nice.*
- (2) Performance and/or Abilities: Compliments on one's performance and/or abilities. For example, *You did a good job.* or *You're such a good player.*
- (3) Personality traits: Compliments on one's personality traits. For example, *That's so kind of you.* or *You're so sweet.*

2. *Compliment strategies:*

- (1) Direct Compliments: Compliments with explicit linguistic forms and can be inferred literally. For example, *You did a good job.*
- (2) Indirect Compliments: Compliments with implicit linguist forms and needed to be further interpreted by the addressee. For example, *I'm sure you can get the admission from any university you choose.*

3. *Compliment responses:*

- (1) Acceptance Strategies: Utterances that recognize the status of a preceding remark as a compliment, including appreciation token, agreement, pleasure, and association. The substrategies are listed as follows:
  - a. *Appreciation Token:* Utterances that recognize the status of a given compliment without being semantically fitted to the specifics of that compliment. Appreciation tokens are usually words that express appreciation, such as "*Thank you.*" In addition, appreciation tokens may be delivered in the form of smiles or nods as well.
  - b. *Agreement:* Utterances that agree with the complimentary force and in a

respond of a remark semantically fitted to the praise. (e.g., “Yeah, I think I did a good job, too.”)

c. *Pleasure*: Utterances that show the addressee is pleased by the given compliment. (e.g., “I’m glad that you like this idea.”)

d. *Association*: Utterances that contain more than one of the *Acceptance* substrategies above. (e.g., Thanks! I’m glad that you like this idea, too.)

(2) *Amendment Strategies*: Utterances that recognize the status of a given compliment and the addressee tries to amend the complimentary force, including return, downgrade, upgrade, question, comment, transfer, and association.

a. *Return*: Utterances that reciprocate the given compliment by paying praise back to the complimenter. (e.g., “Your idea is good, too.”)

b. *Downgrade*: Utterances that downgrade the complimentary force of the praise. (e.g., “It’s just doing okay.”)

c. *Upgrade*: Utterances that upgrade the complimentary force of the praise. (e.g., “I always have many good ideas.”)

d. *Question*: Utterances that question the sincerity of the given compliment. (e.g., “Do you really think it is a good idea?”)

e. *Comment*: Utterances that do not accept credit for the accomplishment or attitude which is praised. Instead, the addressee impersonalizes the force of that compliment. (e.g., “I made a lot of efforts into the project last night.”)

f. *Transfer*: Utterances that switch the focus of the compliment back to the

complimenter. (e.g., “Without your help, I couldn’t finish this great work.”)

- g. *Association*: Utterances that contain more than one of the *Amendment* substrategies above. (e.g., “It’s just doing okay. Your report is amazing, too.”)

(3) *Non-acceptance Strategies*: Utterances that deny, question, or joke about the content of the compliment or avoid directly responding to the praise, including disagreement, qualification, diverge, and association.

- a. *Disagreement*: Utterances that disagree with the content of the compliment, showing that the given compliment is undue or overdone. (e.g., “Not really.”)
- b. *Qualification*: Utterances that deny the full complimentary force of a given compliment by questioning the quality of the given compliment. (e.g., “Well, actually I think it’s not that good.”)
- c. *Diverge*: Utterances that question the given compliment by suggesting other intended acts. (e.g., “Stop making fun of me.”)
- d. *Association*: Utterances that contain more than one of the *Non-acceptance* substrategies above. (e.g., “I don’t think so. You got to be joking.”)

(4) *Face Relationship Related Response Strategies*: The response deals with the occurrence of a compliment within the interaction, not with the propositional content of the compliment. (e.g., “I feel a little bit of embarrassed.”)

(5) *Combination Strategies*: Utterances that contain two or more of the

aforementioned strategies.

- (6) No Acknowledgement: Cases in which the addressee choose not to respond to the given compliment.

### ***American conventions of compliments***

According to the two studies of M. C. Yu (2004, 2005), Americans prefer to give compliments on *Appearances or Possessions*, use *Direct Compliments*, and respond with *Acceptance*. For compliment topics, Americans compliment on *Appearance or Possessions* for 49.7%, on *Performance or Abilities* for 38.4%, and on *Personal Traits* for 11.9%. As to compliment strategies, American used 91.89% of *Direct Compliments* and 8.9% of *Indirect Compliments*. Finally, according to Yu's (2004) study on compliment responses, American used 55% of *Acceptance*, 22% of *Amendment*, 5% of *Non-Acceptance*, 2% of *Face Relationship*, 14% of *Combination*, and 2% of *No Acknowledgement*.

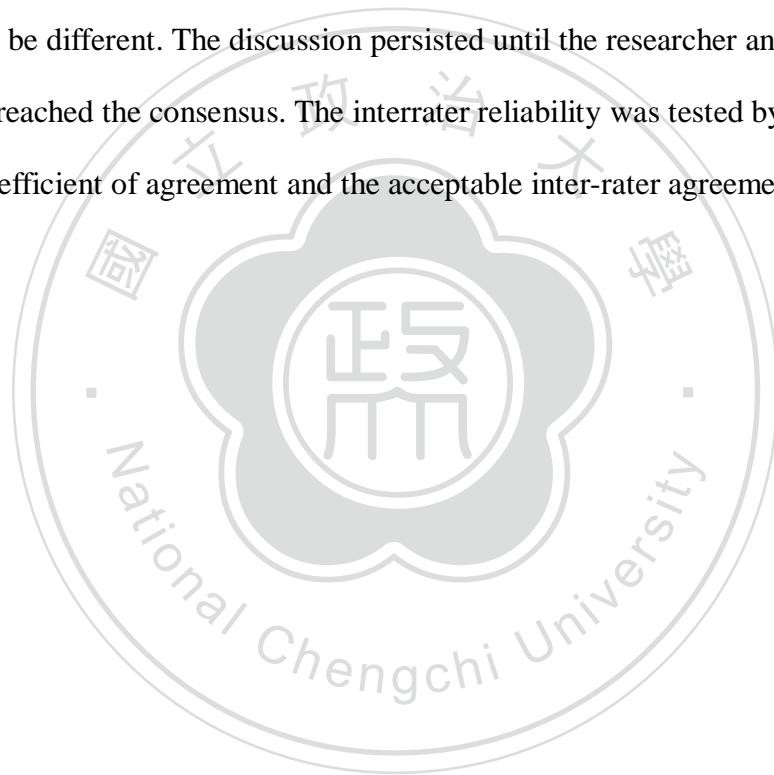
### **Interrater Reliability**

To achieve interrater reliability, 20% of the data will be randomly selected to be independently coded by a second-rater (J. Cohen, 1960). There are two sections of the second coding in the present study. The first section is the procedure of extracting the utterances of the two speech acts from the dialogues. The second section is the procedure of distinguishing the cultural preference of the two speech acts.

The second rater is a native speaker of Chinese who is now teaching in a junior high school in New Taipei City in Taiwan. She has taught English in junior high for nine years. Meanwhile, since the second-rater does not have any background knowledge of speech act behaviors, some bias of speech act performance may be

avoided within her coding.

Before presenting the real data to the second-rater, the explanations for the definition of each category and the corresponding examples were provided. Then, some rating practices were done in order to make the second-rater more familiar with the ratings. After the second rating, a discussion was provided if the coding is considered to be different. The discussion persisted until the researcher and the second-rater reached the consensus. The interrater reliability was tested by calculating the Kappa coefficient of agreement and the acceptable inter-rater agreement is at least 85%.







## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study, and it comprises two sections. Each section answers to the two research questions raised in chapter two. First, section one reports the frequencies of the two speech acts, complaints and compliments in the three series of textbooks, Han Lin, Kang Hsuan, and Nan I. Then, section two displays how the two speech acts were presented in the three series of textbooks. The cultural preferences of the two speech acts in the three series of textbooks were analyzed to see whether the two speech acts in the three sets of textbooks followed the American Norm.

#### **Frequency of Complaints and Compliments in the Textbooks**

To answer the first research question, the utterances of complaints and compliments were extracted from the conversation sections in the three series of textbooks. Each utterance was categorized and counted in the frequency table. The categorization was based on the coding schemes adapted from the relevant studies (for complaints: Clyne, 1994; Edmondson & House, 1981; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Trosborg, 1995; for compliments: Billmyer, 1990; Dunham, 1992; Herbert, 1990; Manes, 1983; Manes & Wolfson, 1981; Wolfson & Judd 1983; Wolfson, 1989). And the frequencies of complaints and compliments in each set of textbooks were compared by percentage. The results are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1 reports the frequencies of complaints and compliments in the three series of textbooks published by Han Lin, Kang Hsuan, and Nan I (also see Figure 1 below). Generally, Han Lin and Nan I had more frequencies of compliments than that of

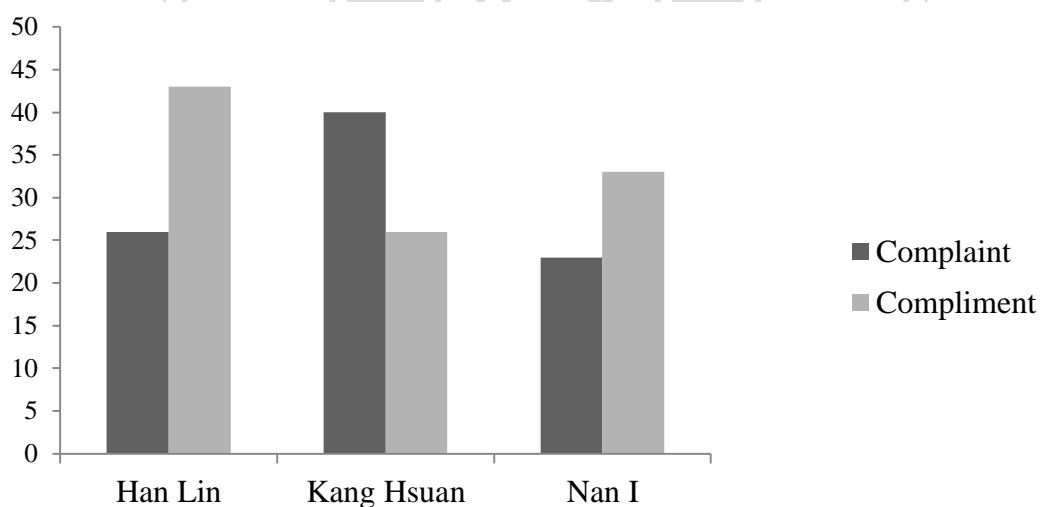
complaints. On the contrary, Kang Hsuan had more frequencies of complaints than that of compliments. In Han Lin, 26 complaints and 43 compliments were observed. The proportion of complaints accounted for 37.7% and the proportion of compliments accounted for 62.3%. In Kang Hsuan, 40 complaints and 26 compliments were observed. The proportion of complaints accounted for 60.6% and the proportion of compliments accounted for 39.4%. Finally, in Nan I, 23 complaints and 33 compliments were observed. The proportion of complaints accounted for 41.07% and the proportion of compliments accounted for 58.93%.

The frequency of compliments was higher than that of complaints in the textbooks of Han Lin and Nan I, while the situation was opposite in the textbooks of Kang Hsuan. Based on the previous literature, the opportunities for using compliments are higher than those for complaints in American daily conversations (Billmyer, 1990; P. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Dunham, 1992; Herbert, 1989; Manes & Wolfson, 1981b; Trosborg, 1995; Wolfson & Judd, 1983; M. C. Yu, 2005). In other words, the textbooks of Han Lin and Nan I were more consistent with the American daily conversations in terms of the use of these two speech acts.

Table 1

*The two speech acts in the three series of the textbooks*

Speech Act	Textbook					
	Han Lin		Kang Hsuan		Nan I	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Complaint	26	37.7	40	60.6%	23	41.07%
Compliment	43	62.3	26	39.4%	33	58.93%
Total	69	100%	66	100%	56	100%



**Figure 1**

*The speech acts of complaints and compliments in the three series of the textbooks*

## Presentation of Complaints and Compliments in the Textbooks

To answer the second research question, the speech acts of complaints and compliments in the three series of textbooks were categorized and counted based on the coding schemes presented in chapter three. The results of how the two speech acts were presented in the three series of textbooks are shown in Table 2-14.

### Complaint

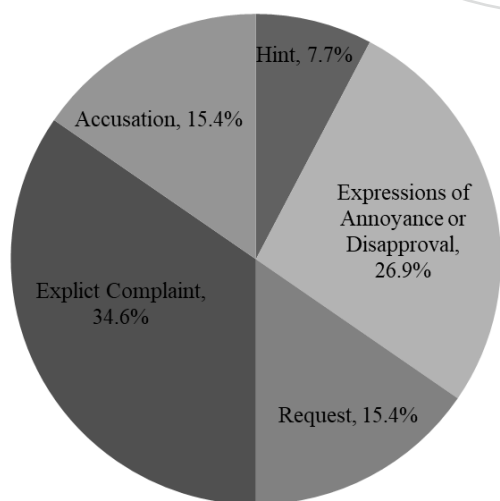
Table 2 displays all the complaint strategies in the three series of textbooks. All the three series of textbooks adopted *Explicit Complaints* most frequently, where 34.6% of that was observed in Han Lin, 42.5% of that was observed in Kang Hsuan, and 43.5% of that was observed in Nan I. Also, the three textbooks had discrepancies in the second frequently used complaint strategy. The second high frequently used complaint strategy in Han Lin and Kang Hsuan was *Expressions of Annoyance or Disapproval*, while it was *Requests* in Nan I (See Figure 2, 3, and 4).

According to previous literature, *Requests* is the most dominant complaint strategy (30.7%), and the next is *Explicit Complaints* (20.7%) for Americans (Trosborg, 1995). Based on the Chi-Square analyses in Tables 3, 4, and 5, they revealed that Han Lin and Nan I had no significant difference from the results of Trosborg's (1995) study in terms of complaint strategy. However, Kang Hsuan had a significant difference from the results of Trosborg's (1995) study. That is to say, the textbooks of Han Lin and Nan I presented complaint strategies in American styles while the textbooks of Kang Hsuan did not.

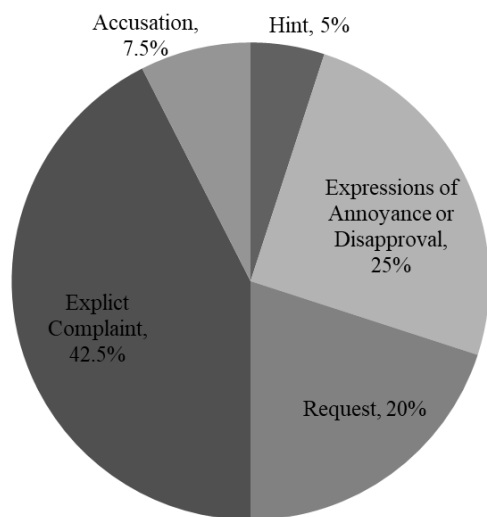
Table 2

*Complaint Strategies in the Three Series of Textbooks*

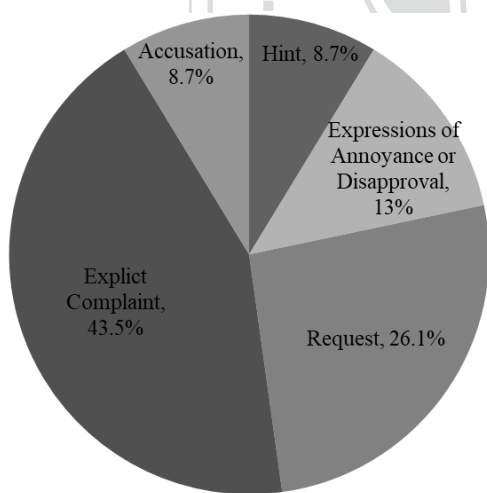
Complaint Strategy	Textbook					
	Han Lin		Kang Hsuan		Nan I	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Hints	2	7.7%	2	5.1%	2	8.7%
Expressions of Annoyance or Disapproval	7	26.9%	10	25.6%	3	13%
Request	4	15.4%	8	20.5%	6	26.1%
Explicit Complaints	9	34.6%	17	43.6%	10	43.5%
Accusation	4	15.4%	2	5.1%	2	8.7%
Total	26	100%	39	100%	23	100%



**Figure 2** *Complaint Strategies in Han Lin*



**Figure 3** *Complaint Strategies in Kang Hsuan*



**Figure 4** *Complaint Strategies in Nan I*

Table 3 displays all the complaint strategies observed in Han Lin. Among the 26 complaints, there were 2 *Hints* (accounted for 7.7%), 7 *Expressions of Annoyance or Disapproval* (accounted for 26.9%), 4 *Requests* (accounted for 15.4%), 9 *Explicit Complaints* (accounted for 34.6%), and 4 *Accusations* (accounted for 15.4%). And the

Chi-Square analysis showed that there was no significant difference between Han Lin and Trosborg's (1995) study,  $\chi^2=7.345 < 9.49$ . In other words, the dialogues in Han Lin corresponded to the results of Trosborg's (1995) study and adopted the American convention in the use of complaint strategies.

Table 3

*Observed (O) Frequencies, Expected (E) Frequencies,  $\chi^2$ , and Standardized Residual (R) of Complaint Strategies in Han Lin*

Complaint Strategy	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	R
Hint	2 (7.7%)	3.9 (14.6%)	.926	-0.962
Expressions of Annoyance or Disapproval	7 (26.9%)	4.16 (15.6%)	1.939	1.392
Request	4 (15.4%)	8.19 (30.7%)	2.144	-1.464
Explicit Complaint	9 (34.6%)	5.54 (20.7%)	2.161	1.470
Accusation	4 (15.4%)	4.93 (18.5%)	.175	-0.419
Total	26 (100%)	26.72 (100%)	$\chi^2 = 7.345$	

\* *The Expected (E) Frequencies refers to Trosborg's (1995) study on how Americans use complaint strategies.*

Table 4 displays all the complaint strategies observed in Kang Hsuan. Among the 39 complaints, there were 2 *Hints* (accounted for 5.1%), 10 *Expressions of Annoyance or Disapproval* (accounted for 25.6%), 8 *Requests* (accounted for 20.5%), 17 *Explicit Complaints* (accounted for 43.7%), and 2 *Accusations* (accounted for 5.1%). And the Chi-Square analysis showed that there was a significant difference between Kang Hsuan and Trosborg's (1995) study,  $\chi^2 = 19.514 > 9.49$ . In other words, the dialogues in Kang Hsuan did not correspond to the results of Trosborg's (1995) study and failed to present complaint strategies in American styles. Furthermore, the value of standardized value was tallied to find out the main contributors of this significant difference. It pointed out that the significant difference was attributed to *Explicit Complaints* ( $|3.165| > 2.00$  in absolute value).



Table 4

*Observed (O) Frequencies, Expected (E) Frequencies,  $\chi^2$ , and Standardized Residual (R) of Complaint Strategies in Kang Hsuan*

Complaint Strategy	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	R
Hint	2 (5.1%)	5.85 (15%)	2.534	-1.592
Expressions of Annoyance or Disapproval	10 (25.6%)	6.24 (16%)	2.266	1.505
Request	8 (20.5%)	12.29 (31.5%)	1.497	-1.224
Explicit Complaint	17 (43.7%)	8.03 (20.6%)	10.020	3.165
Accusation	2 (5.1%)	6.59 (16.9%)	3.197	-1.788
Total	39 (100%)	39 (100%)	$\chi^2 = 19.514$	

\* *The Expected (E) Frequencies refers to Trosborg's (1995) study on how Americans use complaint strategies.*

Table 5 displays all the complaint strategies observed in Nan I. Among the 23 complaints, there were 2 *Hints* (accounted for 8.7%), 3 *Expressions of Annoyance or Disapproval* (accounted for 13%), 6 *Requests* (accounted for 26.1%), 10 *Explicit*

*Complaints* (accounted for 43.5%), and 2 *Accusations* (accounted for 8.7%). And the Chi-Square analysis showed that there was no significant difference between Nan I and Trosborg's (1995) study,  $\chi^2 = 4.571 < 9.49$ . In other words, the dialogues in Nan I corresponded to the results of Trosborg's (1995) study and adopted the American convention in the use of complaint strategies.

Table 5

*Observed (O) Frequencies, Expected (E) Frequencies,  $\chi^2$ , and Standardized Residual (R) of Complaint Strategies in Nan I*

Complaint Strategy	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	R
Hint	2 (8.7%)	3.45 (14.2%)	.609	-0.781
Expressions of Annoyance or Disapproval	3 (13%)	3.68 (15.2%)	.126	-0.354
Request	6 (26.1%)	7.25 (29.9%)	.216	-0.464
Explicit Complaint	10 (43.5%)	5.98 (24.7%)	2.702	1.644
Accusation	2 (8.7%)	3.89 (16%)	.918	-0.958
Total	23 (100%)	24.25 (100%)	$\chi^2 = 4.571$	

\* *The Expected (E) Frequencies refers to Trosborg's (1995) study on how Americans use complaint strategies.*

The following are some examples of complaint strategies observed in the three series of textbooks.

1. *Hints*

e.g. Textbook Han Lin Book 2 Unit 6 How Much Sugar Do You Need? (p. 75)

→ Patty: Three bags, please. By the way, do you have pumpkin?

Kevin: **What!?**

(Patty wanted to make a pumpkin pie, but she didn't prepare anything, such as sugar, flour and eggs. And Patty asked Kevin to borrow every ingredient for the pumpkin pie, including a pumpkin. According to the sound track of this dialogue, Kevin started to feel annoying, raised his tone and finally burst out "What!?" in the end of the dialogue.)

e.g. Textbook Kang Hsuan Book 2 Unit 8 How Much Pork Do We Need? (p. 97)

→ Mrs. Brown: OK, but you can't buy any chocolate.

Peter: **Oh, Mom...**

(Peter and Mrs. Brown went shopping in a supermarket. Peter asked Mrs. Brown to buy some snacks for the field trip. Mrs. Brown thought that sugar is bad for Peter's health, so she asked Peter to buy everything he wants except for the chocolate.)

e.g. Textbook Nan I Book 4 Unit 9 I Smelled Something Burning (p. 103)

→ SpongeBox: Something burning? ...Oops!

Patrick, Mr. Shark, and Ms. Dolphin: **Oops?**

(SpongeBox thought someone had eaten his hamburger without asking. He was very angry about it and started to question his friends. Suddenly, they

smelled something burning in the kitchen. At this moment, SpongeBox finally realized that he had the hamburger cooked earlier in the morning and actually nobody had eaten his hamburger.)

## 2. Expressions of Annoyance of Disapproval

e.g. Textbook Han Lin Book 2 Unit 4 What's the Date Today? (p. 47)

→ David: I have a gift box!

Gina: **But I don't see anything in it.**

David: Well... you have a card, and Patty has a watch. I can put them in the box first and then wrap it. See? It's our gift for Mom!

(David and his family were preparing a gift for Mother's day. Gina and the other family members had prepared a card and a watch. But David didn't prepare anything except for an empty box. According to the sound track of this dialogue, Gina raised her tone when she saw the empty box.)

e.g. Textbook Kang Hsuan Book 1 Unit 3 Where Are You From? (p. 36)

→ Ted: **Hey, that's my hamburger.**

Amanda: Oh, no, Cody! I'm sorry.

e.g. Textbook Nan I Book 2 Unit 6 How Often Do They Meet? (p. 64)

→ Dog: **Hey, that's my food.**

Cat: I'm sorry. I'm just curious about your food. Can I taste it?

## 3. Requests

e.g. Textbook Han Lin Book 1 Unit 5 Don't Run in the Museum (p. 84)

→ Meg: Are you OK, sir?

The Thinker: I'm fine. **Please don't touch me!**

e.g. Textbook Kang Hsuan Book 1 Unit 5 Be Quiet and Sit Down, Please (p. 60)

→ Linda: Let's hurry. The movie is on.

Man: **Be quiet and sit down, please.**

Peter: I'm sorry.

e.g. Textbook Nan I Book 1 Unit 5 Be Quiet, Please (p. 53)

→ Miss Wang: **Denny, be quiet. The film is on.**

Michelle: **Turn off your cellphone, Denny.**

Denny: But it's my mom.

#### 4. *Explicit Complaints*

e.g. Textbook Han Lin Book 3 Unit 1 What Did You Do at the Camp? (p. 3)

→ John: You asked a good question. A drop bear is like a big kola bear, but it eats meat. It drops from trees and attacks you.

Patty: **You're pulling my leg!**

e.g. Textbook Kang Hsuan Book 3 Unit 4 I Was Sleeping When You Called (p. 40)

→ Linda: **I called you for my comic book last night, but you didn't answer.**

Peter: I didn't? When did you call?

e.g. Textbook Nan I Book 5 Unit 9 Never But Things You Don't Need (p. 118)

→ Michelle: **Hey, Jason. Why do you always drink bottled water? Don't you know it's not good for the earth?**

Jason: What do you mean? I recycled the bottles. How can it be bad for the earth?

#### 5. *Accusations*

e.g. Textbook Han Lin Book 3 Unit 4 She Was Doing the Dishes Then (p. 40)

→ Dad: **Hey, why were you in the kitchen at a quarter after one? You lied!**

Amy: Cool down. I was drinking water at that time. See?

e.g. Textbook Kang Hsuan Book 4 Unit 7 Kevin Is Doing Quite Well (p. 78)

→ Gary: Guys, stop being so mean. Kevin is doing quite well. **You're taking away his dream just because you don't like him. That's not nice at all.**

e.g. Textbook Nan I Book 2 Unit 9 The Cookies Were There Five Minutes Ago (p. 109)

→ Emma: **Where were you? Weren't you the only person here just now?**

Jason: Yes, I was the only one here.

### Compliment

The examination of compliments included three parts – compliment topics, compliment strategies, and compliment responses. First, Table 6 displays all the compliments topics in the three series of textbooks. And the Chi-Square analyses of the compliment topics in each set of textbooks are presented in Table 7, 8, and 9. Second, Table 10 displays all the compliments strategies in the three series of textbooks. And Chi-Square analyses of the compliment strategies in each set of textbooks are presented in Table 11, 12, and 13. Finally, Table 13 displays all the compliments responses in the three series of textbooks. And the Chi-Square analyses of the compliment responses in each set of textbooks are presented in Table 14, 15, and 16.

### *Compliment Topics*

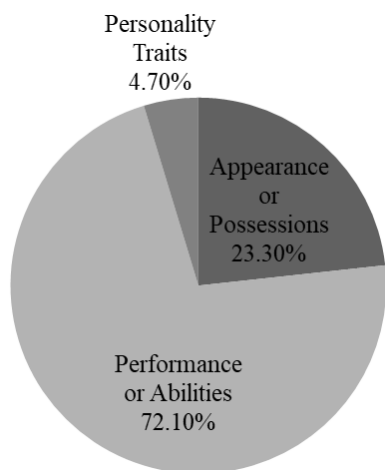
Table 6 displays all the compliment topics in the three series of textbooks. All the three sets of textbooks gave compliments on *Performance or Abilities* most frequently, where 72.1% of that was observed in Han Lin, 53.8% of that was observed in Kang Hsuan, and 66.7% of that was observed in Nan I. It is worth noting that the proportions of *Appearance or Possessions* and *Performance or Abilities* in Kang Hsuan were relatively equal than those in Han Lin and Nan I, where *Appearance or Possessions* accounted for 46.2% and *Performance or Abilities* accounted for 53.58% (See Figures 5, 6, and 7).

According to previous literature, *Appearance or Possessions* is the most dominant compliment topic (49.7%) for Americans (M. C. Yu, 2005). Based on the Chi-Square analyses in Tables 7, 8, and 9, they revealed that Kang Hsuan had no significant difference from the results of M. C. Yu's (2005) study in terms of compliment topics. On the other hand, the textbooks of Han Lin and Nan I had a significant difference from the results of M. C. Yu's (2005) study. That is to say, only the textbooks of Kang Hsuan presented compliment topics in American styles while the textbooks of Han Lin and Nan I did not.

Table 6

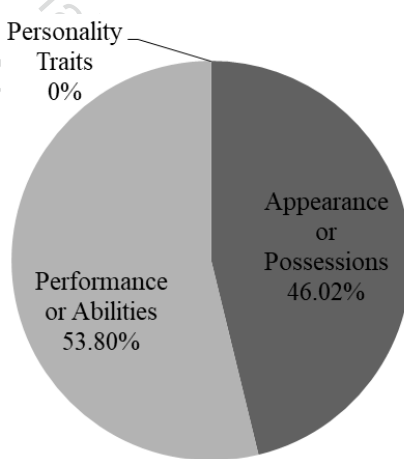
*Compliment Topics in the Three Series of Textbooks*

Compliment Strategy	Textbook					
	Han Lin		Kang Hsuan		Nan I	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Appearance or Possessions	10	23.3%	12	46.2%	11	33.3%
Performance or Abilities	31	72.1%	14	53.8%	22	66.7%
Personality Traits	2	4.7%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	43	100%	26	100%	33	100%



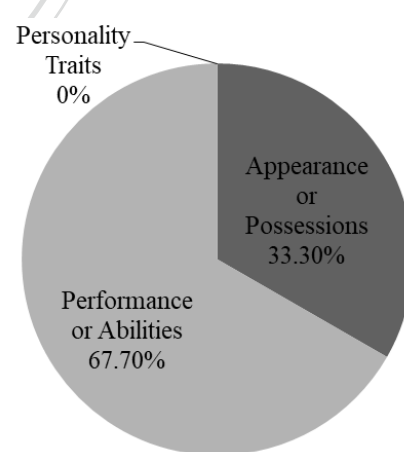
**Figure 5**

*Compliment Topics in Han Lin*



**Figure 6**

*Compliment Topics in Kang Hsuan*



**Figure 7**

*Compliment Topics in Nan I*



Table 7 displays all the compliment topics observed in Han Lin. Among the 43 compliments, there were 10 compliments given to *Appearance or Possessions* (accounted for 23.3%), 31 given to *Performance or Abilities* (accounted for 72.1%), and 2 given to *Personality Traits* (accounted for 4.7%). And the Chi-Square analysis showed that there was a significant difference between Han Lin and M. C. Yu's (2005) study,  $\chi^2 = 20.667 > 5.99$ . In other words, the dialogues in Han Lin did not correspond to the results of M. C. Yu's (2005) study and failed to present compliment topics in American styles. Furthermore, the value of standardized value was tallied to find out the main contributors of this significant difference. It pointed out that the significant difference was attributed to *Appearances or Possessions* ( $|-2.460| > 2.00$  in absolute value) and *Performance or Abilities* ( $|3.566| > 2.00$  in absolute value).

Table 7

*Observed (O) Frequencies, Expected (E) Frequencies,  $\chi^2$ , and Standardized Residual (R) of Compliment Topics in Han Lin*

Compliment Topics	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	R
Appearance or Possessions	10 (23.3%)	21.37 (49.7%)s	6.049	-2.460
Performance or Abilities	31 (72.1%)	16.51 (38.4%)	12.717	3.566
Personality Traits	2 (4.7%)	5.12 (11.9%)	1.901	-1.379
Total	43 (100%)	43 (100%)	$\chi^2 = 20.667$	

\* *The Expected (E) Frequencies refers to Yu's (2005) study on the compliments topics in the American culture.*

Table 8 displays all the compliment topics observed in Kang Hsuan. Among the 26 compliments, there were 12 compliments given to *Appearance or Possessions* (accounted for 46.2%), 14 given to *Performance or Abilities* (accounted for 53.8%), and none was given to *Personality Traits* (accounted for 0%). And the Chi-Square analysis showed that there was no significant difference between Kang Hsuan and the results of M. C. Yu's (2005) study,  $\chi^2 = 4.775 < 5.99$ . In other words, the dialogues in Kang Hsuan corresponded to the results of M. C. Yu's (2005) study and adopted the American convention in the use of compliment topics.

Table 8

*Observed (O) Frequencies, Expected (E) Frequencies,  $\chi^2$ , and Standardized Residual (R) of Compliment Topics in Kang Hsuan*

Compliment Topics	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	R
Appearance or Possessions	12 (46.2%)	12.92 (49.7%)	.066	-0.256
Performance or Abilities	14 (53.8%)	9.98 (38.4%)	1.619	1.273
Personality Traits	0 (0%)	3.09 (11.9%)	3.090	-1.758
Total	26 (100%)	25.99 (100%)	$\chi^2 = 4.775$	

\* *The Expected (E) Frequencies refers to Yu's (2005) study on the compliments topics in the American culture.*

Table 9 displays all the compliment topics observed in Nan I. Among the 33 compliments, there were 11 compliments given to *Appearance or Possessions* (accounted for 33.3%), 22 given to *Performance or Abilities* (accounted for 66.7%), and none given to *Personality Traits* (accounted for 0%). And the Chi-Square analysis showed that there was a significant difference between Nan I and M. C. Yu's (2005) study,  $\chi^2 = 12.578 > 5.99$ . In other words, the dialogues in Nan I did not correspond to the results of M. C. Yu's (2005) study and failed to present compliment topics in American styles. Furthermore, the value of standardized value was tallied to find out

the main contributors of this significant difference. It pointed out that the significant difference was attributed to *Performance or Abilities* ( $|2.621| > 2.00$  in absolute value).

Table 9

*Observed (O) Frequencies, Expected (E) Frequencies,  $\chi^2$ , and Standardized Residual (R) of Compliment Topics in Nan I*

Compliment Topics	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	R
Appearance or Possessions	11 (33.3%)	16.4 (49.7%)	1.778	-1.333
Performance or Abilities	22 (66.7%)	12.67 (38.4%)	6.870	2.621
Personality Traits	0 (0%)	3.93 (11.9%)	3.930	-1.982
Total	33 (100%)	33 (100%)	$\chi^2 = 12.578$	

\* *The Expected (E) Frequencies refers to Yu's (2005) study on the compliments topics in the American culture.*

The following are some examples of compliment topics observed in the three series of textbooks.

1. *Appearance and/or Possessions*

e.g. Textbook Han Lin Book 3 Unit 3 What Did They Sent to the Kids? (p. 26)

→ Patty: **What a cool robot!** Whose robot is it?

Kevin: It's mine.

e.g. Textbook Kang Hsuan Book 2 Unit 9 We Were in Different Classes (p. 108)

→ Sam: **You were chubby and cute before.**

Mr. Chen: I was.

e.g. Textbook Nan I Book 5 Unit 5 Let's Find Out What Virtual Reality Is (p. 60)

→ Richard: **Wow! What is this cool looking?** It looks like a pair of glasses.

Stacy: It's not a pair of glasses. It's my VR headset.

## 2. *Performance and/or Ability*

e.g. Textbook Han Lin Book 1 Unit 7 She Is Making a Christmas Card (p. 98)

→ Amy: Wrong again. I'm making a Christmas card.

Meg: **Wow! It's pretty.** Who is it for?

Amy: It's for Santa Clause.

e.g. Textbook Kang Hsuan Book 2 Do You Play Dodge Ball? (p. 21)

→ Peter: **You're a good dodge ball player.** Do you play every day?

Sam: No, I don't. I only play on weekends.

e.g. Textbook Nan I Book 5 Unit 3 We Should Think Before We Act,  
Shouldn't We? (p. 34)

→ Denny: My favorite story is "The Fox and the Goat." It shows us one thing:

People do not always tell the truth.

Matthew: **That's a good point!** And we should think before we act,

shouldn't we?

## 3. *Personality Traits*

No compliments on personality traits were found in the textbooks of Kang Hsuan and Nan I. And there was only one compliment on personality traits found in the

textbook of Han Lin.

e.g. Textbook Hang Lin Book 3 Unit 3

→ John: Then why are you donating it?

Kevin: I have many toys, but the kids at the children's home don't.

Patty: **That's very kind of you!**

### *Compliment Strategies*

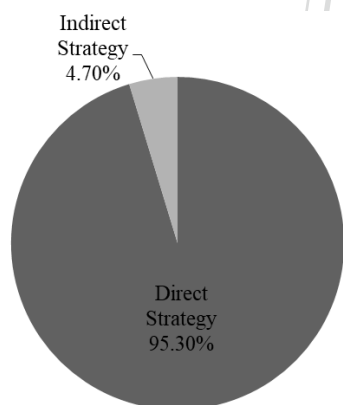
Table 10 displays all the compliment strategies in the three series of textbooks. All the three sets of textbooks mainly used *Direct Compliment*, where 95.3% of that was observed in Han Lin, 96.2% of that was observed in Kang Hsuan, and 90.9% of that was observed in Nan I (See Figure 8, 9, and 10).

According to previous literature, *Direct Compliment* is the most dominant compliment topic (91.1%) for Americans (M. C. Yu, 2005). Based on the chi-square analyses in Table 11, 12, and 13, they revealed that all the three series of textbooks had no significant difference from the results of M. C. Yu's (2005) study in use of compliment strategies. That is to say, all the three sets of textbooks presented compliment strategies in American styles.

Table 10

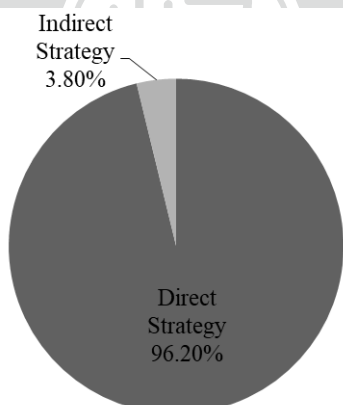
*Compliment Strategies in the Three Series of Textbooks*

Compliment Strategy	Textbook					
	Han Lin		Kang Hsuan		Nan I	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Direct Compliment	41	95.3%	25	96.2%	30	90.9%
Indirect Compliment	2	4.7%	1	3.8%	3	9.1%
Total	43	100%	26	100%	33	100%



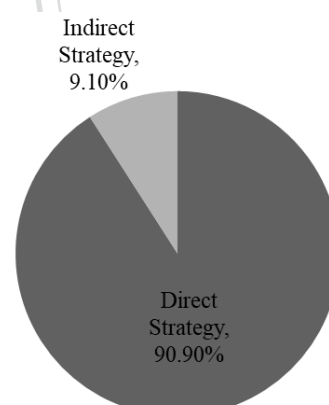
**Figure 8**

*Compliment Strategies in Han Lin*



**Figure 9**

*Compliment Strategies in Kang Hsuan*



**Figure 7**

*Compliment Strategies in Nan I*

Table 11 displays all the compliment strategies observed in Han Lin. Among the 43 compliments, there were 41 *Direct Compliments* (accounted for 95.3%) and 2 *Indirect Compliment* (accounted for 4.7%). And the Chi-Square analysis showed that there was no significant difference between Han Lin and the results of M. C. Yu's (2005) study,  $\chi^2 = .959 < 3.84$ . In other words, the dialogues in Han Lin corresponded

to the results of M. C. Yu's (2005) study and adopted the American convention in the use of compliment strategies.

Table 11

*Observed (O) Frequencies, Expected (E) Frequencies,  $\chi^2$ , and Standardized Residual (R) of Compliment Strategies in Han Lin*

Compliment Strategy	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	R
Direct Compliment	41 (95.3%)	39.17 (91.1%)	.085	.2920
Indirect Compliment	2 (4.7%)	3.83 (8.9%)	.874	2.979
Total	43 (100%)	43 (100%)	$\chi^2 = 0.959$	

\* *The Expected (E) Frequencies refers to Yu's (2005) study on compliment strategies in the American culture.*

Table 12 displays all the compliment strategies observed in Kang Hsuan. Among the 26 compliments, there were 25 *Direct Compliments* (accounted for 96.2%) and 1 *Indirect Compliment* (accounted for 3.8%). And the Chi-Square analysis showed that there was no significant difference between Kang Hsuan and the results of M. C. Yu's (2005) study,  $\chi^2 = .815 < 3.84$ . In other words, the dialogues in Kang Hsuan corresponded to the results of M. C. Yu's (2005) study and adopted the American convention in the use of compliment strategies.



Table 12

*Observed (O) Frequencies, Expected (E) Frequencies,  $\chi^2$ , and Standardized Residual of Compliment Strategies in Kang Hsuan*

Compliment Strategy	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	R
Direct Compliment	25 (96.2%)	23.69 (91.1%)	.072	.2690
Indirect Compliment	1 (3.8%)	2.31 (8.9%)	.743	-0.861
Total	26 (100%)	26 (100%)	$\chi^2 = 0.815$	

\* *The Expected (E) Frequencies refers to Yu's (2005) study on compliment strategies in the American culture.*

Table 13 displays all the compliment strategies observed in Nan I. Among the 33 compliments, there were 30 *Direct Compliments* (accounted for 90.9%) and 3 *Indirect Compliment* (accounted for 9.1%). And the chi-square analysis showed that there was no significant difference between Nan I and the results of M. C. Yu's (2005) study,  $\chi^2 = .001 < 3.84$ . In other words, the dialogues in Nan I corresponded to the results of M. C. Yu's (2005) study and adopted the American convention in terms of compliment strategies.

Table 13

*Observed (O) Frequencies, Expected (E) Frequencies,  $\chi^2$ , and Standardized Residual of Compliment Strategies in Nan I*

Compliment Strategy	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	R
Direct Strategy	30 (90.9%)	30.06 (91.1%)	0	-0.011
Indirect Strategy	3 (9.1%)	2.94 (8.9%)	.001	.035
Total	33 (100%)	33 (100%)	$\chi^2 = 0.001$	

\* *The Expected (E) Frequencies refers to Yu's (2005) study on compliment strategies in the American culture.*

The following are some examples of compliment topics observed in the three series of textbooks.

1. *Direct Compliment*

e.g. Textbook Han Lin Book 3 Unit 5 I Want To Be a Teacher (p. 52)

→ Patty: Well, not really. I'm not good at memorizing things. Maybe I can be a writer. I like to write stories, too.

David: **That's wonderful. Your stories are interesting.**

e.g. Textbook Kang Hsuan Book 2 Unit 9 We Were in Different Classes (p. 108)

→ Mr. Chen: Yes, I was. I was the captain of my school team 30 years ago.

Sam: **Wow! You're handsome.**

Mr. Chen: You bet... Wait! What about now?

e.g. Textbook Nan I Book 5 Unit 4 The Dish Was Made with All Natural  
Ingredients (p. 46)

→ Host: And yours, Tracy?

Tracy: Mine is garden vegetable rolls.

Host: **Well done.** Now, let's welcome our three judges to taste the dishes and  
tell us their decisions.

## 2. *Indirect Compliment*

e.g. Textbook Han Lin Book 5 Unit 7 Studying is Important, and So Is Taking Up  
a Hobby (p. 96)

→ Amy: Do you remember the pumpkin pie? Everybody likes your pumpkin  
pie! **I couldn't stop eating it!**

e.g. Textbook Kang Hsuan Book 2 Unit 1 He Can Do a Lot of Things (p. 8)

→ Amanda: He can sit and nod. He can catch a ball. And he can jump rope!

Ms. Li: **Wow, he can do a lot of things.**

e.g. Textbook Nan I Book 6 Unit 2 Try on the Jeans (p. 15)

→ Stacy: What do you mean? I'm wearing what I have on.

Michelle: Really? **You'll stop traffic and hear people talking about you  
when you walk on the sidewalk.**

### *Compliment Responses*

Table 14 displays all the compliment responses in the three series of textbooks.

All the three sets of textbooks use *Non-Acknowledgement* most frequently, where

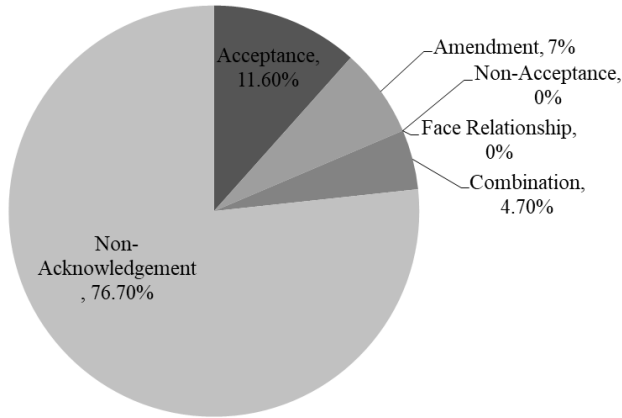
76.7% of that was observed in Han Lin, 65.4% of that was observed in Kang Hsuan, and 87.9% of that was observed in Nan I (See Figure 11, 12, and 13).

According to previous literature, *Acceptance* is the most dominant compliment response (55%) for Americans (M. C. Yu, 2004). Based on the chi-square analyses, they revealed that all the three series of textbooks had a significant difference from the results of M. C. Yu's (2004) study in the use of compliment responses. That is to say, all the three sets of textbooks failed to present compliment responses in American styles.

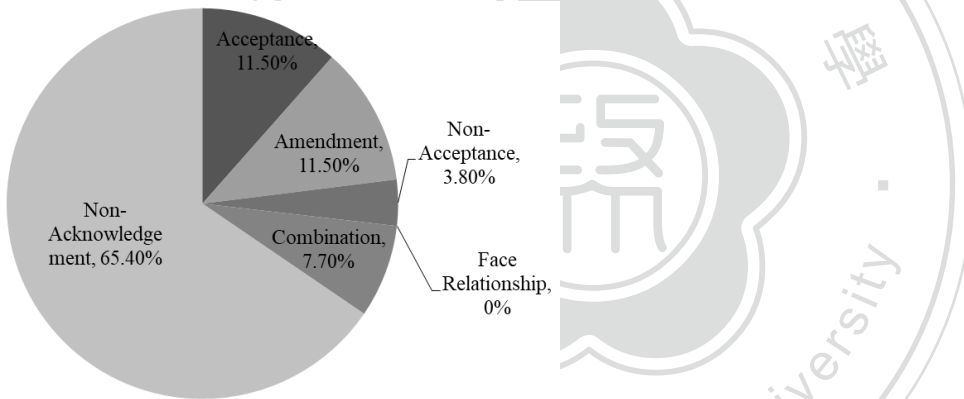
Table 14

*Compliment Responses in the Three Series of Textbooks*

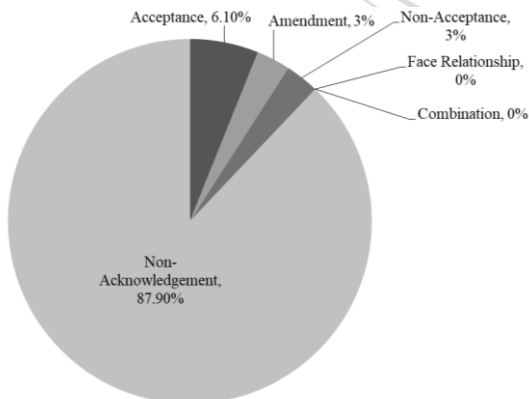
Compliment Strategy	Textbook					
	Han Lin		Kang Hsuan		Nan I	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Acceptance	5	11.6%	3	11.5%	2	6.1%
Amendment	3	7%	3	11.5%	1	3%
Non-Acceptance	0	0%	1	3.8%	1	3%
Face Relationship	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Combination	2	4.7%	2	7.7%	0	0%
Non-Acknowledgement	33	76.7%	17	65.4%	29	87.9%
Total	43	100%	26	100%	33	100%



**Figure 8** *Compliment Responses in Han Lin*



**Figure 9** *Compliment Responses in Kang Hsuan*



**Figure 10** *Compliment Responses in Nan I*

Table 15 displays all the compliment responses observed in Han Lin. Among the 43 compliment responses, there were 5 *Acceptance* (accounted for 11.6%), 3 *Amendment* (accounted for 7%), no *Non-Acceptance* (accounted for 0%) and *Face Relationships* (accounted for 0%), 2 *Combinations* (accounted for 4.7%), and 33 *Non-Acknowledgement* (accounted for 76.7%). And the Chi-Square analysis showed that there was a significant difference between Han Lin and M. C. Yu's (2004) study,  $\chi^2 = 1225.951 > 11.07$ . In other words, the dialogues in Han Lin did not correspond to the results of M. C. Yu's (2004) study and failed to present compliment responses in American styles. Furthermore, the value of standardized value was tallied to find out the main contributors of this significant difference. It pointed out that the significant difference was attributed to *Acceptance* ( $|-3.835| > 2.00$  in absolute value), *Amendment* ( $|-2.100| > 2.00$  in absolute value), and *Non-Acknowledgement* ( $|34.657| > 2.00$  in absolute value).

Table 15

*Observed (O) Frequencies, Expected (E) Frequencies,  $\chi^2$ , and Standardized Residual (R) of Compliment Responses in Han Lin*

Compliment Response	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	R
Acceptance	5 (11.6%)	23.65 (55%)	14.707	-3.835
Amendment	3 (7%)	9.46 (22%)	4.411	-2.100
Non-Acceptance	0 (0%)	2.15 (5%)	2.150	-1.466
Face Relationship	0 (0%)	.86 (2%)	.860	-0.927
Combination	2 (4.7%)	6.02 (14%)	2.684	-1.638
Non-Acknowledgement	33 (76.7%)	.86 (2%)	1201.139	34.657
Total	43 (100%)	43 (100%)	$\chi^2 = 1225.951$	

\* *The Expected (E) Frequencies refers to Yu's (2004) study on compliment responses in the American culture.*

Table 16 displays all the compliment responses observed in Kang Hsuan. Among the 26 compliment responses, there were 3 *Acceptance* (accounted for 11.5%), 3

*Amendment* (accounted for 11.5%), 1 *Non-Acceptance* (accounted for 3.8%), no *Face Relationships* (accounted for 0%), 2 *Combinations* (accounted for 7.7%), and 17 *Non-Acknowledgement* (accounted for 65.4%). And the Chi-Square analysis showed that there was a significant difference between Kang Hsuan and M. C. Yu's (2004) study,  $\chi^2 = 533.107 > 11.07$ . In other words, the dialogues in Kang Hsuan did not correspond to the results of M. C. Yu's (2004) study and failed to present compliment responses in American styles. Furthermore, the value of standardized value was tallied to find out the main contributors of this significant difference. It pointed out that the significant difference was attributed to *Acceptance* ( $|-2.988| > 2.00$  in absolute value) and *Non-Acknowledgement* ( $|22.854| > 2.00$  in absolute value).



Table 16

*Observed (O) Frequencies, Expected (E) Frequencies,  $\chi^2$ , and Standardized Residual (R) of Compliment Responses in Kang Hsuan*

Compliment Response	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	R
Acceptance	3 (11.5%)	14.3 (55%)	8.929	-2.988
Amendment	3 (11.5%)	5.72 (22%)	1.293	-1.137
Non-Acceptance	1 (3.8%)	1.3 (5%)	.069	-0.263
Face Relationship	0 (0%)	.52 (2%)	.520	-0.721
Combination	2 (7.7%)	3.64 (14%)	.007	-0.860
Non-Acknowledgement	17 (65.4%)	.52 (2%)	522.289	22.854
Total	26 (100%)	26 (100%)	$\chi^2 = 533.107$	

\* *The Expected (E) Frequencies refers to Yu's (2004) study on compliment responses in the American culture.*

Table 17 displays all the compliment responses observed in Nan I. Among the 33 compliment responses, there were 2 *Acceptance* (accounted for 6.1%), 1 *Amendment*

(accounted for 3%), 1 *Non-Acceptance* (accounted for 3%), no *Face Relationships* (accounted for 0%) and *Combinations* (accounted for 0%), and 17 *Non-Acknowledgement* (accounted for 87.9%). And the chi-square analysis showed that there was a significant difference between Nan I and M. C. Yu's (2004) study,  $\chi^2 = 1242.206 > 11.07$ . In other words, the dialogues in Nan I did not correspond to the results of M. C. Yu's (2004) study and failed to present compliment responses in American styles. Furthermore, the value of standardized value was tallied to find out the main contributors of this significant difference. It pointed out that the significant difference was attributed to *Acceptance* ( $|-3.791| > 2.00$  in absolute value), *Amendment* ( $|-2.323| > 2.00$  in absolute value), *Combination* ( $|-2.149| > 2.00$  in absolute value), and *Non-Acknowledgement* ( $|34.884| > 2.00$  in absolute value).

Table 17

*Observed (O) Frequencies, Expected (E) Frequencies,  $\chi^2$ , and Standardized Residual (R) of Compliment Responses in Nan I*

Compliment Response	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	R
Acceptance	2 (6.1%)	18.15 (55%)	14.370	-3.791
Amendment	1 (3%)	7.26 (22%)	5.398	-2.323
Non-Acceptance	1 (3%)	1.65 (5%)	.256	-0.506
Face Relationship	0 (0%)	.66 (2%)	.660	-0.812
Combination	0 (0%)	4.62 (14%)	4.620	-2.149
Non-Acknowledgement	29 (87.9%)	.66 (2%)	1216.902	34.884
Total	33 (100%)	33 (100%)	$\chi^2 = 1242.206$	

\* *The Expected (E) Frequencies refers to Yu's (2004) study on compliment responses in the American culture.*

The following are some examples of compliment topics observed in the three series of textbooks.

### 1. *Acceptance*

e.g. Textbook Han Lin Book 5 Unit 6 They Asked Me If I Like Taiwan (p. 80)

→ Ethan: Mr. Evans, thank you for meeting us. Many students loved your article in the school newspaper. It was interesting to read.

Mr. Evans: **I'm happy to hear that.**

e.g. Textbook Kang Hsuan Book 2 Unit 9 We Were in Different Classes (p. 108)

→ Sam: You were chubby and cute before.

Mr. Chen: **I was.**

e.g. Textbook Nan I Book 3 Unit 8 The Lunch Smells Good and Tastes Delicious (p. 93)

→ (*Sakura is teaching Michael the right way to use chopsticks*)

Michael: Great. Now I can pick up food. Thanks.

Sakura: **My pleasure.**

### 2. *Amendment*

e.g. Textbook Han Lin Book 2 Unit 4 What's the Date Today? (p. 47)

→ Patty: Look at my gift for Mom.

Gina: Wow! A pretty purple watch!

Patty: **Do you have a gift for Mom?**

e.g. Textbook Kang Hsuan Book 3 Unit 6 My Mom Enjoys Baking (p. 64)

→ Ted: Mm...They're really great. And the soup is also delicious.

Amanda: **Try the steak. It's my specialty. My family and friends love it.**

e.g. Textbook Nan I Book 5 Unit 2 Running Is Exciting to Me (p. 16)

→ Sakura: I saw your picture on Facebook. You looked great in your running uniform.

Michelle: **I went on a quick run with my mom. We are going to run in the Taipei International Marathon.**

### 3. *Non-acceptance*

No examples of non-acceptance were found in the textbooks of Han Lin. And there was only one example of non-acceptance respectively found in the textbooks of Kang Hsuan and Nan I.

e.g. Textbook Kang Hsuan Book 4 Unit 5 You May Have a Good Chance of Winning the Biggest Prizes (p. 52)

→ Nancy: Believe in yourself. You are the best.

Nick: **Of all the subjects, English is the easiest for me. But I have problems with science.**

e.g. Textbook Nan I Book 5 Unit 2 Running Is Exciting to Me (p. 16)

→ Sakura: You must be satisfied with yourself.

Michelle: **I'm not satisfied yet. I'm still training. We have two months before the marathon.**

### 4. *Face-Relationship Related Response*

There were not any examples of face-relationship related response found in the three series of textbooks.

### 5. *Combination*

There was no example of combination found in the textbooks of Nan I. And there

were two examples respectively found in the textbooks of Han Lin and Kang Hsuan.

e.g. Textbook Han Lin Book 5 Unit 2 Seeing Is Believing, Isn't It? (p. 23)

→ Kevin: Wow! The circles started to turn when I moved! You've got a cool report.

Patty: **Thanks. I got the ideas from a TV program.** In fact, it's on later at 7 p.m. Want to watch it together?

(i.e., the combinations of *Acceptance* and *Amendment*)

e.g. Textbook Kang Hsuan Book 2 Unit 1 He Can Do a Lot of Things (p. 9)

→ Amanda: Your English is very good.

Ms. Li: **Thank you. I'm an English teacher in a junior high school.**

(i.e., the combinations of *Acceptance* and *Amendment*)

#### 6. *No Acknowledgement*

e.g. Textbook Han Lin Book 1 Unit 7 She Is Making a Christmas Card (p. 99)

→ Meg: Everyone is so busy.

Grandpa: Yes. And everyone is having a good time.

Meg: Not the turkey in the kitchen.

Grandpa: That's funny, Meg.

e.g. Textbook Kang Hsuan Book 3 Unit 7 How Can We Get to Chi-Kan Tower?

(p. 79)

→ Seedi: Let me check... Here's the map. Go down Zhongsgan Road. Then go straight and Chih-Kan Tower is on your right.

William: Cool.

e.g. Textbook Nan I Book 4 Unit 3 The World's Tallest Building (p. 27)

→ Michelle: How about this one?

Emma: It's the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest.

Michelle: Wow! Collecting postcards is a good way to learn about the world.

All in all, the results answers the two research questions on the frequencies and the presentations of the two speech acts of complaints and compliments in three sets of textbooks, Han Lin, Kang Hsuan, and Nan I. The first research question aimed to examine whether the proportions of complaints and compliments in the three sets of textbooks were consistent with American daily conversations. And the second research question aimed to see whether the three sets of textbooks adopted American conventions in the use of complaints and compliments.

In terms of the frequencies of complaints and compliments, Han Lin and Nan I were consistent with the American daily conversations, where the frequency of compliments are more than that of complaints. On the other hand, Kang Hsuan was inconsistent with the American daily conversations. In terms of the presentations of the two speech acts, the three series of textbook did not fully present the two speech acts in American styles. First, Han Lin and Nan I were significantly different from the expected frequencies in the use of compliment topics and compliment responses. In other words, the textbooks of Han Lin and Nan I did not adopted American conventions in the use of compliment topics and compliment responses. Second, Kang Hsuan was significantly different from the expected frequencies in the use of complaint strategies and compliment responses. In other words, the textbooks of Han

Lin and Nan I did not adopt American conventions in the use of complaint strategies and compliment responses. The overall results of the present study were displayed in Table 18. O means that the item corresponds to the American styles and X refers to means that the item did not correspond to the American styles.

Table 18

*The Overall Results of the Present Study*

	Han Lin	Kang Hsuan	Nan I
Frequencies of Complaints and Compliments	O	X	O
Presentation of Complaint Strategies	X	X	X
Presentation of Compliment Topics	X	O	X
Presentation of Compliment Strategies	O	O	O
Presentation of Compliment Responses	X	X	X



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

This chapter discusses the results of the present study and it consists of two sections. Section one compares the results of the present study with those of existing studies. The comparisons are divided into two parts to discuss the two research questions raised in previous chapter. Section two discusses some possible factors for the results of the present study. The possible factors are the culture background of the editors, the culture teaching in EFL contexts, the tendency of world Englishes, and teachers' perspectives on textbooks in Taiwan.

#### **Discussion of Research Results**

This section compares the findings of the present study with those in the previous literature. There are two parts in this section. Each part discusses the two corresponding research questions. It is hoped that the findings of the present study are supported by the previous literature.

#### **Research Question 1**

##### **Frequency of the Two Speech Acts in the Textbooks**

In terms of the frequencies of complaints and compliments, the results of the present study show that the conversations in Han Lin and Nan I are more consistent with American daily conversations than those in Kang Hsuan. This finding is supported by those of the existing studies on these two speech acts of complaints and compliments (e.g., Billmyer, 1990; P. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Dunham, 1992; Herbert, 1989; Manes & Wolfson, 1981b; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Trosborg, 2011; Wolfson & Judd, 1983).

According to previous literature, it is indicated that the frequency of compliments may be higher than that of complaints in the American daily conversations (Billmyer, 1990; Boxer, 1993; P. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Dunham, 1992; Herbert, 1989; Manes & Wolfson, 1981b; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Trosborg, 1995; Wolfson & Judd, 1983; M. C. Yu, 2005). There are may be two main reasons. First, compliments serve more functions than complaints. Second, the occurrence of complaints may be more restricted than that of compliments and thus results in the less opportunities to employ the speech act of complaints. The following two paragraphs elaborate more on these possible reasons.

In terms of functions, the speech act of compliments can be used in many different contexts, while complaints can only be used in some certain situations. Numerous researchers have observed many functions of compliments, including affirming solidarity with others (Manes, 1983; Manes & Wolfson, 1981a), expressing approval toward others (Herbert, 1989), softening embarrassing situations (P. Brown & Levinson, 1987), starting a conversation (Billmyer, 1990; Dunham, 1992; Wolfson & Judd, 1983), achieving desired behavior (Manes, 1983), replacing thanks, apologies or congratulations (Wolfson, 1989; Wolfson & Judd, 1983). However, the speech act of complaint can only be used to express annoyance (Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Trosborg, 2011) and to start conversations with specific topics (Boxer, 1996).

As for the contexts where these two speech acts may occur, the conditions for using complaints may be more restricted than those of compliments. According to previous studies, people tend to complain with acquaintances instead of with strangers (Lee, 1999; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Trosborg, 2011). Furthermore, the social

status between the speakers has some influences on the severity levels of complaints and the length of utterances (Lee, 1999). However, in the case of compliments, they can be used in many different contexts. For example, Americans are used to giving compliments to strangers (M. C. Yu, 2005). In order to show friendliness or to establish solidarity, it is common to start conversations with compliments in American society. Furthermore, not giving compliments in some situations may be regarded as inappropriate in the American society (M. C. Yu, 2005).

Based on the different functions and contexts aforementioned, the probability of using compliments in everyday conversation is much higher than that of complaints. To meet the requirements of authenticity, the textbooks are thus supposed to have higher proportions of compliments than complaints. However, it seems that the textbooks of Kang Hsuan did not take this into consideration.

## **Research Question 2**

### **Presentation of the Two Speech Acts in the Textbooks**

In terms of research question two, it is found that all the three series of textbooks did not fully present the two speech acts of complaints and compliments in American styles. For example, the textbooks of Han Lin and Nan I failed to present compliment topics and compliment responses in American styles. And the textbooks of Kang Hsuan failed to present complaint strategy and compliment responses in American ways. The result is actually similar to the results of other studies.

Some researchers in Taiwan even pointed out the presentation of speech acts in textbooks may be influenced by the editors' cultural backgrounds. For instance, S. H. Chen (2010) examined five speech acts of compliments, refusals, requests, apologies,

and complaints in two sets of senior high textbooks and found that one of the set of textbooks was inclined to use Chinese conventions instead of American conventions in the presentation of these five observed speech acts. Lai (2017), another example, evaluated the three speech acts of compliments, refusals and requests in the three series of senior high school textbooks in Taiwan and contended that only the *Direct Compliment* strategy was presented in American conventions in all the three sets of textbooks.

Given the fact that the acquisition of speech acts of the target language plays a critical role in avoiding cross-cultural misunderstands, it was assumed that the three series of textbooks examined in the present study might adopt American norms in complaints and compliments. However, the research findings showed that the three series of textbooks did not completely present the two speech acts in American ways, especially in the case of compliments.

#### **Discussion of Possible Factors of the Results of the Present Study**

There are two main findings in the present study. First, the frequencies of complaints and compliments in one of the evaluated textbooks were found inconsistent with those in American daily conversations. Second, the presentation of complaints and compliments in the textbooks was found incompletely correspond to the American conventions in the use of the two speech acts. This section provides some possible accounts for these research results.

The discussion of the possible factors is divided into two parts. Part one discusses the factor why the textbooks adopted American conventions in some of the uses of the two speech acts. The possible factor is attributed to the influences of the

Western culture on Chinese society. On the other hand, part two discusses the possible factors for why the textbooks failed to fully present the two speech acts in American styles. The possible factors include culture background of the editors, culture teaching in EFL contexts, the trend of World Englishes, and teachers' perspectives on textbooks in Taiwan.

### **The Influences of Western Culture on Chinese Society**

Despite the fact that the three textbooks did not fully present the speech acts in American styles, they still followed American conventions in some of the presentations of the two speech acts. This finding may be attributed to the influences of the Western culture on Chinese society, changing the expressions into a more direct and explicit way (C. Y. Lin, Woodfield, & Ren, 2012; J. Zhang, 2011; W. Zhang, 2012).

Previous literature has pointed out that Americans tend to express themselves in a more direct way. For example, Americans tend to use severe complaint strategies such as requests, explicit complaints, and expressions of disapproval or annoyance (Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Trosborg, 1995). Besides, Americans give direct compliments on others' appearances or possessions very often (Holmes, 1986; Knapp et al., 1984; Wolfson, 1989; M. C. Yu, 2005). And they are used to accepting the compliments from others (Tang & Zhang, 2009; Yang, 1987; M. C. Yu, 2004). In fact, many researchers have attributed this convention to the emphasis on individualism in the Western culture (P. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Du, 1995; Mao, 1994; Wierzbicka, 1991). Due to the emphasis on the autonomy of individuals, Americans are less sensitive to face-threatening situations and are prone to express their feelings

straightforwardly.

According to some investigations on the expression styles in the contemporary Chinese society, it is found that native Chinese speakers tend to express themselves in a more straightforward way now (Hong, 2008; C. Y. Lin et al., 2012). In Hong's (2008) study, native Chinese speakers tend to use severer complaint strategies such as requests and explicit complaints. Similarly, in Lin's (2012) study, native Chinese speakers in new generations prefer to give compliments more often in explicit forms. With the support of previous literature (H.-C. Chang, 2001; Yuan, 2001), both of the studies concluded that the young generations may be influenced by the Western cultures of communications which reflect English individualistic culture. And thus, the young generations tend to express their feelings in a direct way.

### **Culture Background of the Editors**

Culture and language use are intricately interwoven and the way of how people express themselves may be the reflection of their native culture (Boroditsky, 2001; H. D. Brown, 2000; Hunt & Agnoli, 1991). Based on this rationale, the culture background of the textbook editors may have some influences on the employment of speech act behaviors.

Since the editors of the three sets of textbooks are non-native English speakers, it is possible that the speech acts of complaints and compliments were not fully presented in American styles. The list of compilers showed that most of the editors are native speakers of Chinese. And there were only one or two native English speakers found in the list of consulting editors. In other words, the three series of textbooks were mainly compiled under Chinese culture backgrounds. Specifically, the

reflections of Chinese culture can be found in some expressions of the speech acts in the evaluated textbooks. For example, Han Lin and Nan I preferred to compliment on one's performance or abilities instead of appearances or possessions. All the three sets of textbooks tend to respond compliments with no acknowledgement strategy. Those observations reveal Chinese cultural values for emphasis on one's virtue and modesty (e.g., Mao, 1994; Oliver, 1971; Yang, 1987; M. C. Yu, 2005).

Actually, the issue of cross-cultural variations of speech acts has been discussed for many years. Among the multiple variations, the comparisons between the two cultures of American and Chinese are popular due to their divergent cultural values (e.g., P. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983; Manes & Wolfson, 1981b; Ye, 1995; M. C. Yu, 2005). Generally, American culture puts special emphasis on the autonomy of individuals, leading to an easier access to compliments (Wierzbicka, 1991). Thus, Americans regard compliments on appearance as friendliness and then naturally accept them. However, Chinese culture holds the tradition of feudal hierarchy, where subordination to authorities and self-denigration are regarded as respect to others (Oliver, 1971; M. C. Yu, 2003, 2004). As a consequence, in contrast with Americans, Chinese regard compliments on appearance as an uncultivated behavior and tend to reject or deny them (Ye, 1995).

Overall, there has been a close bond between culture and language (Boroditsky, 2001; Gumperz & Levinson, 1991). And the differences in the choice of speech acts are actually the reflection of disparate cultural values and attitudes, leading these two cultures of American and Chinese to present speech acts in a divergent way. Based on this rationale, it is indicated that the editors of these three series of textbooks may be

influenced by their native culture. And thus, they may unconsciously employ the speech acts in the Chinese way.

### **Culture Teaching in EFL Context**

Culture teaching is sometimes omitted in foreign language courses (Chlopek, 2008; Guest, 2002; Llorca, 2004). Thus, the speech acts, which have their roots in culture, might be treated lightly in the design of textbooks. The possible reasons for the absence of culture teaching could be attributed to the overemphasis on linguistic knowledge, teachers' unfamiliarity of the target culture, and difficulties in changing students' attitudes toward English culture (H. D. Brown, 2000; Guest, 2002; Han & Li, 2011; Sercu, Méndez García, & Castro Prieto, 2004; Young & Sachdev, 2011).

Several studies have pointed out the imbalance of linguistic practices and culture awareness in English textbooks in Taiwan (C. c. Hsu, 2018; Kuo, 2017). C. c. Hsu (2018) analyzed culture content in junior high textbooks in Taiwan. It revealed that grammatical practices accounted for more proportions than culture components. Kuo (2017), for another example, found that the cultural content in junior high textbooks was embedded in the optional sections and was merely used as supplement materials to add some pleasure for class. Therefore, both teachers and students did not pay attention to the target cultural content in the textbooks.

Teachers' unfamiliarity of the target culture may also lead to the ignorance for integrating culture issues in language teaching. Han and Li (2011) conducted a survey on how English teachers in China conceptualized culture teaching. Although the teachers expected to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence, they provided limited cultural content in their classes due to their unfamiliarity with the



target culture. In addition, Y. J. Tsai (2002) conducted the study on how secondary English teachers in Taiwan conceptualize culture. The results showed that most teachers in Taiwan considered culture a rough and vague idea to acquire. Therefore, it is difficult for teachers to conceptualize a comprehensive picture of the target culture and thus lose the confidence in offering students with cultural instructions.

Students' attitudes toward the target culture may be other challenges in culture teaching. Since culture learning is a process of internalizing different values and thoughts, it usually involves the changing of attitudes and even the conflicts of identity (Benson, Barkhuizen, Bodycott, & Brown, 2013; Tsui & Tollefson, 2017; Wodak, 1989). On top of that, when the disruptions between the native and target culture become severe, learners may have negative attitudes toward learning the language (Gonen & Saglam, 2012). However, with the overwhelming schedules of English courses in Taiwan, dealing with the negative feelings is considered to be a waste of time. Some teachers even believe that this problem could be solved once students master in the linguistic forms of the target language (Seelye, 1984).

In spite of the numerous studies on how culture is related to language learning, culture teaching has still been neglected due to the many factors mentioned above. As a consequence, the instructions for speech act behaviors in textbooks might be reduced.

### **The Trend of World Englishes**

Since English has served as an international language and used by people from different cultures, the idea of world Englishes has been raised recently (Dogancay-Aktuna, 1998; B. B. Kachru & Nelson, 1996; McKay, 2011). In other

words, the original forms of the English language have been integrated with the local culture and extended to more indigenous forms. With this tendency of world Englishes, editors of English textbooks might not strictly follow the paradigm of Standard English. Therefore, the speech acts in the textbooks might not be presented in American styles.

Several studies from other countries have found the localized varieties of English used in the textbooks. For example, Matsuda (2002) analyzed a series of textbook published in Japan. It was found that the culture of outer-circle countries was incorporated in some of the chapters. This series of textbooks tried to cover the issue of World Englishes by adding characters from outer- or expanding circle countries in the dialogue and reading sections. Tjong (2014), another example, examined the cultural elements in the textbooks published in Indonesia. Some chapters of the series of textbooks directly introduced the Asian cultures.

To sum up, under the influence of World Englishes, the editors of the analyzed textbooks may tend to provide the concept of cultural diversity for the learners. It is hoped that the diversity of cultural components in the textbooks may develop learners' capability of communicating with English speakers from different cultures.

### **Teachers' Perspectives on Textbooks in Taiwan**

Teachers' perspectives on textbooks may affect how they present the content of textbooks to their students. To be more specific, if teachers regard textbooks as the resources of target culture teaching, they will focus on the cultural elements in the textbooks. However, according to previous literature, most teachers in Taiwan mainly used textbooks as the materials for vocabulary and grammar teaching and failed to

focus on the cultural components in the textbooks (Chan, 2004; Liao, 2007).

Liao (2007) investigated junior high school teachers' perceptions on textbooks in Taiwan. It revealed that teachers in Taiwan spent more time on vocabulary and grammar sections in their classes. As for dialogue sections, the teachers focused more on the review of linguistic rules rather than the introduction of the target culture. Besides, the teachers mentioned that they primarily took the arrangement of grammar sections into consideration when choosing textbooks. Those signs have pointed out that the teachers mainly used textbooks as a tool of teaching linguistic knowledge instead of cultural issues. Chan (2004), another example, further explored senior high school teachers' professional knowledge on textbook selection in Taiwan. In the meetings of textbook selection in the analyzed schools, the content of vocabulary and grammar sections was mainly concerned while the cultural elements were mentioned less frequently. In other words, the teachers did not put much attention on the cultural elements, not mentioning the speech acts in the textbooks.

Since teachers in Taiwan mainly focused on the instructions of linguistic rules and considered the promotion of target cultural awareness was less important, the editors of textbooks may focus more on the training of four language skills. The generalized cultural values and customs have been treated lightly in the textbooks, not mention to the more specific speech acts.

In conclusion, the above mentioned factors may be possible reasons for the incomplete arrangement of speech act content in the three series of textbooks. These factors included the culture background of the editors, the culture teaching in EFL contexts, the tendency of world Englishes, and teachers' perspectives on textbooks in

Taiwan. Based on the two findings of the present study, it is suggested that the three series of textbooks, Han Lin, Kang Hsuan, and Nan I, can focus more on the content of speech acts. If the three textbooks adopted American conventions in the use of the speech acts, they may assist English learners in Taiwan to communicate appropriately and to avoid cultural misunderstandings in the American society.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

This chapter consists of four sections. Section one summarizes of the major findings of the current study. Section two considers pedagogical implications of the current study. Section three offers the limitations of the study. Section four provides suggestions for future studies.

#### Summary of the Major Findings

The current study originated with the goal of evaluating the textbooks in Taiwan from the viewpoint of speech acts. And the evaluation focuses on two aspects. First, this study examined the frequency of the two speech acts of complaints and compliments in the three series of textbooks published by Han Lin, Kang Hsuan and Nan I. Second, this study also analyzed whether the three series of textbooks adopted American conventions in the use of the two speech acts.

In terms of the frequencies of the two speech acts, The textbooks of Han Lin and Nan I were more consistent with the American daily conversations than those textbooks of Kang Hsuan. In Han Lin and Nan I, the frequency of compliments is more than that of complaints. On the other hand, in Kang Hsuan, the frequency of compliments is less than that of complaints. According to previous literature, it is assumed that the frequency of compliments is more than that of complaints in American daily conversations. In terms of the presentations of the two speech acts, the three textbooks did not fully present the two speech acts in American ways. The textbooks of Han Lin and Nan I failed to present compliment topics and compliment responses in American styles. And the textbooks of Kang Hsuan failed to present

complaint strategy and compliment responses in American styles.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

Based on the findings of this study, some pedagogical implications are provided for the textbooks in Taiwan.

Given the fact that the textbooks are the main resource for English learning and speech acts play an important role in one's communicative competence, it is necessary to provide information on the speech acts of the target culture in the textbooks. First, it is suggested that the editors pay attentions on the inclusive of speech acts. By doing so, learners may get familiar with the particular expressions in the American culture and may be able to communicate in a more appropriate way. Meanwhile, with the many demonstrations for the American speech acts in the textbooks, teachers can easily create some contexts for students to practice authentic conversations in the classroom. Second, it is suggested that teachers consider including the viewpoint of speech acts when they choose textbooks. Due to the cultural-specificity of speech acts, the way how Americans and Chinese use speech acts are different. If the teachers ignore these differences, the students may make offensive mistakes when they communicate with others. Even worse, students may have negative attitudes toward the target culture when they encounter embarrassing situations in the real world.

### **Limitations of the Present Study**

First, the present study originated with the goal to evaluate the three series of textbooks from the viewpoint of speech acts. However, the present study only analyzed two speech acts of complaints and compliments. In fact, there are many other speech acts worth to analyze, such as refusals, request, and apologies. Second,

the present study evaluated the three series of textbooks published before the launch of the 12-Year Basic Education Curriculum Guideline. However, due to the new Curriculum Guideline, textbooks in Taiwan actually have been experiencing a sweeping new revision. Therefore, the new versions of the three series of textbooks are still left undiscussed. Third, the corresponding teachers' manuals of the textbooks can be also examined in the future to make sure whether the textbooks presented complete instructions of speech acts. Lastly, the present study did not interviewed with the editors of the three series of textbooks. Therefore, the rationales for compiling the content of the textbooks were not fully revealed. It is possible that the editors had other concerns for the content of the textbooks, so the inclusive of American speech acts were not one of the focuses in the textbooks.

### **Suggestion for Future Studies**

Concerning the limitation mentioned above, there are some suggestions for the future study. The evaluation on textbooks can be extended to the inclusive of other speech acts in the new versions textbooks and their corresponding teachers' manuals of the 12-Year Basic Education Curriculum Guideline. Furthermore, interviews with the editors can be done to get a more complete picture of the content of textbooks.





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