

## **Greeting Speech Act Forms in Iranian Junior High School Textbooks: *Prospect Series vs Four Corners Series***

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### **Abstract**

The present study is an attempt to compare the use of different forms of greeting speech acts presented in Iranian junior high school textbooks, i.e. *Prospect series* (I, II, III) and *Four Corners series* (1, 2, 3 and 4) which are quite popular in Iranian high schools and institutions. To this end, greeting forms in the language function and conversation sections of these two series were analyzed to see how they were presented on the basis of a modified version of Searle's (1967) greeting speech act classification introduced by Hang (2010). The obtained results indicated that 'greeting by using questions' was the most frequent form of all greeting forms in both series. In addition, the results of chi-square revealed that there was no significant difference between the occurrence frequencies of greeting forms of speech act in the two series. The findings of the study have some implications for textbook designers in terms of incorporation of speech acts in upcoming textbooks.

**Keywords:** Greeting Speech Act, Hang's classification of speech acts, communicative competence, textbook evaluation

### **Introduction**

Since English has become the lingua franca for global communication, communicative competence in English has become an essential skill in the 21st Century which implies that Foreign and Second Language Learners (henceforth, FLL and SLL) need to be able to use English fluently to fit international communication (Poolsawad et al., 2015).

Moreover, textbooks have become main sources in the teaching and learning process. It is in line with the statement coming from Miller-Sadker and Zittleman (2007) who state that students spend 80 to 95% of their time in the classroom using textbooks and teachers in general use textbooks as the source of teaching. This indicates that textbooks play a very essential role in the teaching and learning process. One point to be considered regarding the features of text books is the content of the book. The aim of using a textbook is to transfer the knowledge to the student as part of the learning process and help realize the objectives of education (Arik & Kezer, 2010). In Iran like many other countries, school books play an important role in teaching; therefore it is necessary to analyze the textbook as an integral element in teaching SLL or FLL.

To fulfill the students' needs, textbooks evaluation is needed. textbook evaluation is an applied linguistic activity through which teachers, supervisors, administrators and materials developers can "make judgments about the effect of the materials on the people using them" (Tomlinson, Dat, Masuhara, & Rubdy, 2001, p.15). McGrath (2002) believes that textbook evaluation is an important value for the development and administration of any language learning program.

Textbooks have always been considered as the second most important factor in EFL classrooms, with teachers being the first (Riazi, 2003). This is because they can play a very important role in language classrooms in all types of educational institutions - public schools,

colleges, and language schools - all over the world. What adds to the importance of textbooks, according to (Garinger, 2001), is that in many parts of the world teachers are not free to choose their own textbooks. The vast majority of teachers, he states, have textbooks suggested, prescribed, or assigned to them.

Based on what was stated above, the present study has focused on the forms of speech acts used in *Prospect and Four Corners* series, taught in Iranian English language institutes and high schools, in order to make a comparison between the two and to make sure of the presence of appropriate materials for the students in this respect. Thus, the following three research questions were addressed:

### **Research Questions**

Q1. What are the greeting speech act forms in *Prospect series* (I, II, III)?

Q2. What are the greeting speech act forms in *Four Corners series*?

Q3. Is there any significant difference between *Prospect series* (I, II, III) and *Four Corners series* in terms of greeting speech act frequency of use?

### **Literature Review**

This section provides a brief explanation of the most relevant issues of greeting speech acts. To this end, Politeness Principle strategies and Face, Speech Acts theory, studies on different speech acts, and more specifically, studies on different forms of greetings are presented. Also, the issues related to content analysis and textbook and material evaluation are briefly discussed and finally, some previous studies on local and international textbook evaluation are mentioned.

### **Politeness Principle Strategies and Face**

The idea of politeness was inspired the cooperative maxims which were suggested by (Grice, 1975). When two interlocutors are having interaction, they are actually stepping into each other's ground; therefore, each participant in the conversation might assume this as a threat to their face (Widdowson, 2007). Politeness strategies were developed through the influential work of Brown and Levinson (1987). They divided the politeness strategies into two categories of positive and negative strategies. Their model revolves around the concept of face (Goffman, 1967) which is defined as the public self-image that all members of the society have and seek to claim for themselves. Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest that this image consists of two related aspects: negative face (freedom from imposition i.e. the desire for freedom from impingement) and positive face (the desire to be appreciated and approved of, i.e. the desire to be wanted). Positive politeness strategies address other's positive face wants, whereas negative politeness strategies address their negative face by showing distance and impersonality. Brown and Levinson define positive politeness strategy in the following:

Positive politeness is redress directed to the addressee's positive face, his perennial desire that his wants (or the actions/acquisitions/values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable. Redress consists in partially satisfying that desire by communicating that one's own wants (or some of them) are in some respects similar to the addressee's wants (p.101).

Brown and Levinson also state that all participants in communicative interaction tend to use the same types of strategies in similar circumstances. The authors posit fifteen sub-strategies of politeness addressed to the hearer's positive face. These sub-strategies are grouped in three broad mechanisms: (1) the speaker claiming 'common ground' with the addressee, (2) the need to convey that the speaker and the addressee are cooperatively involved in the relevant activity, (3)

the speaker's decision to redress the addressee's face directly by fulfilling some of addressee's wants.

### **Speech acts**

Speech acts theory is established on the notion that language is a form of behavior, and it is controlled by a strict set of rules (Searle, 1969). A speech act can be defined through a range of features, including:

a) the linguistic utterance used to perform it, b) the physical setting during the communicative event, c) the action sequences in which the speech act is embedded (i.e., actions preceding and following the speech act), and d) the intentions and assumptions of communicating partners (Asher & Vieu, 2005; Austin & Urmson, 1962; Bateman & Rondhuis, 1997; Fritz & Hundsnurscher, 1994; Fritz, 2013; Searle, 1969; Van Dijk, 1977).

Austin distinguished three layers of speech act: locutionary, which is uttering a sentence physically, Illocutionary, which is the contextual function that the act performs and perlocutionary acts, which are the effect that the expression of a person may have on others (Austin, 1962).

Searle (1969) criticizes Austin's work and states that this is a classification of illocutionary verbs and not acts. He presents five classifications of speech acts as follow:

1. Representatives, which represent statements that may be judged true or false because they describe a state, like asserting and concluding.
2. Directives, which intend the listeners to do something, like requests.
3. Commissives, which commit the speaker to a course of action as described by the propositional content, like promising.
4. Expressive, which express the speaker's feelings or attitude, like apologizing and thanking.
5. Declaratives, which result in the affairs they name, like marrying and declaring. These kind of speech acts can cause a change.

The Austin (1962) and Searles' (1969) speech act theories with notions of politeness shape the framework in interlanguage pragmatic studies (Trosborg, 1995). Leech (1983) who stated that it was impossible to form a classification of illocutionary acts, identified speech acts by the verbs that express them. Leech's speech acts categories are assertive verbs, directive verbs, commissive verbs, interrogative verbs, and expressing verbs.

Cohen (1996) provided a classification of 14 speech acts classified into 5 main groups. They are;

1. Representatives, which include speech acts like assertions, claims, and reports;
2. Directives, which include suggestions, requests, and command;
3. expressive, which include complaint and thanks;
4. Commissives, which include promises, threats, and offers;
5. Declaratives, which include decrees and declarations.

### **Studies on different speech acts**

Farnia and Suleimani (2009) conducted a pilot study to examine the speech act of expressing gratitude among Iranian EFL learners. Data were collected from 2 groups of Iranian EFL learners using a written Discourse Completion Tasks. L1 and L2 data were also collected from a group of Iranian native speakers of Farsi and a group of American native speakers of English. The findings suggested that Iranian and American respondents used the same type of strategies in responding to the questionnaire; however, they differed in the frequency of the use of these strategies. The use of thanking and appreciation as the first and second most frequently

used strategies by native speakers of English can be attributed to respondents' cultural values. In addition, it was found that there was no correlation between language proficiency and the use of strategies. Besides, there were no statistically significant differences between EFL learners' and Americans' responses and this could mean that EFL learners' pragmatic competence was towards L2 norms.

Also, Pishghadam and Zarei (2011) investigated the strategies Iranian English learners employed for expressing gratitude in different situations and if there was a difference between males' and females' uses of these strategies. The results showed that Iranian learners felt obliged to show gratitude to others in every form possible for the favor they receive, and they used mostly thanking and positive feeling strategies. The findings also suggested that female Persian speakers used gratitude more often than the male ones.

Ghobadi and Fahim (2009) studied the effect of explicit teaching of English “thanking formulas” on Persian EFL intermediate level students at English language institute. They found out that explicit instruction had an impressively positive effect on raising students' sociopragmatic awareness as well as their hindrance of L1 pragmalinguistic transfer to L2.

Afghari (2007) examined the range of strategies utilized in performing the speech act of apologizing in Persian. Also explored in his study was the investigation of the effect of the values assigned to the two context-external variables of social distance and social dominance on the frequency of the apology intensifier. To this end, Persian apologetic utterances were collected and analyzed. The findings of his study indicated that Persian apologies are as formulaic in pragmatic structures. Also, the values assigned to the two context-external variables were found to have significant effect on the frequency of the intensifiers in different situations.

### **Different forms of greeting**

Salmani-Nodoushan (2007), divided English greetings into two forms as follows:

#### **I. Time-free greetings:**

1. How do you do?
2. Hello. How are you?
3. Hi. How are you?
4. Glad to meet you!
5. (It's) Good to see you (again)!
6. (How/Very) Nice to see you (again)!
7. Long time no see you!
8. (Ah, X [any first name or honorific]) just the first person I wanted to see/was looking for/was after.
9. etc.

#### **II. Time-bound greetings:**

##### *A: Daily formal greetings*

1. Morning: Good morning.
2. Afternoon: Good afternoon.
3. Evening: Good evening.
4. Day: Good day.
5. Night: Good night.

##### *B: Seasonal (in) formal greetings*

1. Happy New Year!
2. Happy Anniversary!
3. Happy Easter!

4. Happy birthday (to you)!
5. Many happy returns (of the day)!
6. (A) merry Christmas (to you)!
7. Many happy returns (of your birthday)!

Following Krivonos and Knapp (1975), Nodoushan (2007) and Jibreen (2010) have classified greetings into verbal and non-verbal forms. The more frequent verbal greetings consist of verbal salute, topic onset and interlocutor nomination. Hand shake, eye contact, head gesture, nods, kisses, and smiles are most routine non-verbal greetings. These non-verbal gestures are the most obvious signals for recognizing the degree of intimacy between interlocutors. Choosing different types of verbal and non-verbal greetings indicate the formal and informal interaction between speaker and addressee (Jibreen, 2010).

Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) have divided greetings into eight forms with their examples, as follows:

- 1) Greeting on the run: The interlocutors have a close relationship; they visit each other accidentally and don't have enough time to talk more. For example: A: how are yadoin? B: hi! Gotta run, I'm late for a bus.
- 2) Speeding greeting: The interlocutors greet and exchange the information shortly. For example: A: hi, how are things going? B: not bad and you? A: so-so.
- 3) Chat greeting: It is somehow similar to the previous one but interlocutors have topic for their conversation. For example: A: good morning, Mr. Brown. B: good morning Mr. Naylor. A: did you watch baseball match previous night? B: what exiting! CM won the game.
- 4) Long greeting: It consists of both greeting and conversation in order to persuade interpersonal connection after a long period of time. For example: A: Katy! B: Sara! (They kiss and huge each other) A: how are you baby girl? B: God! Look at you, you're glowing! A: thank you.
- 5) Intimate greeting: The interlocutors know each other very well; using emotional words or non-verbal greetings are frequent and sometimes they initiate their conversation without greeting. For example: A (mom): (he kisses and hugs her daughter.) here she is! B (daughter): oh! I missed you mom. A: oh honey! I love you so much. How was your shift? B: oh guess what!
- 6) Business greeting: The interlocutors don't have social and emotional relationship; they behave respectfully and focused on their business. For example: A: Mr. Ford. B: yes? A: I need your registry list. B: ok.
- 7) Introductory greeting: The interlocutors meet each other for the first time. The main function of this form is for starting communication. The first phase is usually be comment rather than greeting. For example: A: beautiful day! B: no, not really. A: I suppose so. Too hot for me. Are you enjoying your book?
- 8) Re-greeting: The interlocutors see themselves repeatedly and often greet each other; this form includes non-verbal gestures or a short words. A: Jack! Feel better? B: ya, thank you.

### **Greeting studies in Iranian EFL context**

Gharaghani, Rasekh and Tohidian (2011) are Iranian researches who did a comprehensive study on politeness strategies in greetings. This study was a contrastive study among native English, native Persian and English as a foreign language learners. Gharaghani et al. (2011) utilized Searle (1969) speech act definition as well as Austin, Brown, and Levinson definition. Searle emphasized on the 'primary' and 'secondary' notions of illocutionary acts of utterances. In other word, they insisted on indirect (primary) and direct (secondary) intentions of an utterance. This assumption focused on covert meaning of speech act that could be elicited from superficial meaning of an utterance. Searle believed that people could be elicited from superficial meaning

of an utterance. Searle believed that people could elicit various illocutions of indirect speech act by using cooperative principles (1969).

Relying upon above theories, Gharaghani et al. referred to empirical studies and focused on greeting perception and production by different language learners in social communication and various cultures. They believed that theoretical studies should be accomplished with empirical studies of speech acts, especially those speech acts that generated by native speakers (2011). Gharaghani et al. considered greetings as the early speech acts, that children learned them quickly in their native language. They indicated the universality of greeting speech act through all cultures has salient function in establishing and enhancing social interactions (2011).

Another study was carried out by Salmani-Nodoushan (2007) which follows a socio-pragmatic dimension. He has examined different greeting forms in English and Persian languages and specified the role of social situation on the function and use of language in socio-pragmatic studies. Nodoushan has proposed three different functions for greeting speech act. The first function is referred to speaker's recognition of addressee status. The second function refers to the manner of greeting that revealed different social standings, and the last function determines the indirect meaning of greeting in social interactions. He concludes that greeting supports the consistency of individual relationship and determines the speaker and addressee's recognition of each other (2007).

Afghari and Karimnia (2007) did a contrastive study between English and Persian conversation. They focused on language diversity that was one manifestation of cultural diversity. They pointed to the cultural dependent behavior of greeting. Although greeting functions did not serve strange or odd functions in English and Persian languages, its usage had some nuance diversity. They came up with the findings that good morning, good afternoon and good evening are more frequent time-bounding greetings in English, while good noon and good night do not serve a function of greetings. In Persian, good morning and good evening are utilized but not good noon and good afternoon. In addition, good time is one super ordinate term in Persian greetings.

### **Greeting studies in foreign context**

Hang (2010) focused on English greetings and drew out some differences in terms of syntax, semantic, content and lexis. He emphasized on the importance of illocutionary acts in social intentions. Although the researcher defined greeting notion as the tool for initiating, strengthening and continuing conversation in human communication, he asserted "the basic functions of greetings are also to identify the presences of communicators and to show their concern" (p.2). The diversity of greeting notion also was the considerable factor in his study. He believed that various notions were not the same in different languages (Hang, 2010).

Jibreen (2010) in her theoretical study accounted for difference between American and British greetings according to different cultural customs. She stated that American greeting were full of informal expression; American people usually ignored social ranks. Yet, they had to carry out different social rules in certain official setting. They considered hierarchical order in their conversations and utilized formal greeting when the addressee was in high social rank. She added that while American people were frequently informal and direct in their greetings and also were more artificial in their convivial relationship, British people utilized more formal and indirect greetings and applied different politeness strategies.

Finally, Wei (2010) in his study did a theoretical investigation about function and use of greetings. He explained the pragmatic functions of greetings and claimed that greetings were specific utterances that were produced in certain occasion and they conveyed something more

than direct messages. He identified greetings as speech acts for attainment of social communicative intentions.

### **Textbook evaluation**

School textbook is one of the most important resources for students' learning in any educational system. In Iran, like many other countries, the school textbooks play important roles in language learning and therefore, deserve detailed analysis.

According to Cunningsworth (1995), four criteria should be considered in textbook evaluation, 1) text should correspond to learner's need, 2) they should reflect the present or future uses learners will make of the language, 3) they should facilitate learners' learning processes, without dramatically imposing a rigid method, and 4) they should have a clear role as a support for learning. But as Ansary and Babayi (2002) believe, no textbook is perfect. Thus, instructors should have the option of evaluating complementary materials according to their own particular requirements in their own specific instruction contexts. Farhady (1995) believes that examination of the existing EFL materials employed in Iranian context deems to be essential to assess their correspondence to the (ideal) model. He believes that most of the EFL textbooks in Iran are some sort of patchwork of cut and paste type. He suggests that in order to prepare a faultless and beneficial EFL course, it is better to count the particular requirements, attitude, and belief of instructors and learners in developing of EFL course book.

### **Research on textbook evaluation**

In the realm of textbook evaluation, different researchers have conducted a vast body of studies in different contexts. Here, some local and international studies are mentioned in brief.

Chadran (cited in Zamani & Rezvani, 2015) studied English teachers in over thirty schools in Malaysia in informal interviews about their feelings, perceptions, values, attitudes and beliefs about the textbooks prescribed to them by the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Results showed that, in general, teachers preferred commercially produced materials available in the market over the prescribed textbooks developed by the Ministry, that they do not engage themselves in producing materials of their own, that they consider textbooks outdated and dull, and that textbooks were not suitably graded in terms of difficulty.

Ansary and Babayi (2002) conducted a research using 10 course book checklists and 10 course book reviews to find out the universal characteristics of ESL/EFL course books with the goal of systematizing course book evaluation. They concluded that both course book content and system of its evaluation and the attitudes and competence of educators are important in utilizing course books in classrooms, and however perfect a textbook is, it is just a simple tool in the hands of teachers. And that what is more important than a textbook is what we, as teachers, can do with it. Also, Jahangard (2007) tried to evaluate four EFL textbooks used in Iranian public high schools and employed a 13-item checklist to investigate the merits and demerits of the textbooks. He came to the conclusion that Book Four had more merits than the three other textbooks and suggested that EFL materials taught in high schools need to be examined more attentively by a group of experts in the field.

Riazi and Mosalanejad (2010) using Bloom's taxonomy, evaluated the types of learning objectives represented in Iranian senior high school and pre-university English textbooks. After doing the data analysis, the researcher concluded that the main objectives of the textbooks were the development of lower-order cognitive skills.

In the area of pragmatics, Soozandehfar and Sahragard (2011) ran a study on language functions and speech acts in Top-Notch series. In this regard, 14 conversations from the entire 14

units of the books were selected randomly and the two pragmatic models of Halliday's (1978) language functions and Searle's (1976) speech acts were applied. As a result of this evaluation, it was observed that the conversations in these textbooks are not pragmatically efficient and functional. Moreover, in this field, using Searle's (1976) model of speech act for analyzing dialogues, Tavakoli (1995) too did a research to investigate whether different forms of speech acts were correctly employed and how frequently each function was used. He asserted that representative, directive, and expressive functions were mentioned in the textbooks, while commissives and declarations were not introduced at all.

Sahragard, Rahimi, and Zaremoayeddi (2009) conducted an in-depth evaluation of Interchange series with a focus on the real application of communicative and task-based approaches applied in the materials of the text book. The result suggested that the communicative skills were emphasized in the textbook. In contrast, the textbook had the limitations in providing opportunities for the learners and the teachers in order to decide on the content of the tasks. Also, Riasati and Zare (2010) attempted to evaluate the overall pedagogical value and suitability of the Interchange series from the Iranian EFL teachers' perspectives. The findings demonstrated that most teachers agreed on the effectiveness and suitability of the series. Despite these merits, some shortcomings were mentioned for this series, i.e., lack of supplementary teaching materials, too many testing exercises, and inadequate number of Teacher's Manual.

According to what Rahimi and Nabilou (2009) indicated, studies concerning materials evaluation in Iranian context have probed into the inefficiency of English textbooks from the instructors' point of view. They have mentioned the problems with these books such as, inappropriate teaching content, high load of information, discrepancy between the content and learning objective, ignorance of students' cognitive development, lack of entertaining materials, incomplete explanation for vocabulary, lack of authentic materials, ignoring communicating language teaching, ignorance of oral skills, and lack of scientific approaches to teaching pronunciation.

Iraji (2007) conducted a research and made a careful analysis on New Interchange series based on the principles of communicative and task-based approach to investigate to what extent the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT) approaches have been regarded. In this regard, she employs Ellis's model (2003). Iraji (2007) criticizes New Interchange because the series do not follow the principles of communicative and task-based approaches as the author claimed. It has no frequency of meta-pragmatic information.

Finally, Gordani (2010) explored different types of learning objectives inherent in Iranian junior high school English textbooks from the viewpoint of Bloom's taxonomy. The primary data in this study were the English textbooks taught in Iranian junior high schools at the present time. The study used Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (1956) in analyzing the material found in Iranian junior high school English textbooks. The results showed that all of the items were concentrated in the first three levels of Bloom's taxonomy which are referred to as the lower levels of cognitive skills. In addition, a significant difference was found between the textbooks in their inclusion of different levels of cognitive skills.

## Methodology

### Materials

For the purposes of this study, *Four Corners series* written by Richards, used in Asian countries for teaching English as second/foreign language, and *Prospect series* (I, II, III) compiled by Iranian teachers were selected. Each book in the *Four Corners series* consists of

twelve units. Each unit consists of a conversation and a speaking section, along with a perspective grammar structure and the related exercises, listening comprehension tasks and pronunciation, reading and writing activities.

*Prospect series* (I, II, III) consist of eight, seven and six lessons respectively. *Prospect I* begins with a welcome and presents some words, letters, numbers, colors and writing activities for preparing students. In *Prospect I*, the lessons begin with a conversation and some exercises related to it for speaking, then listening comprehension and reading exercises, then speaking and writing practice in the form of group work and at the end of each lesson there are pair work for conversation. After two lessons there are reviews for the reinforcing of the materials of that lesson. Finally, at the end of the book there are photo dictionaries for each lesson. In *Prospect II*, the lessons begin similar to those in *Prospect I*, followed by spelling and pronunciation exercises, these in turn are followed by listening and writing exercises, then reading, speaking and the writing tasks. At the end of each lesson there is role play with group work. Similar to *Prospect I*, there are reviews and a photo dictionary. In *Prospect III*, the lessons begin with some exercises for speaking, then language melody exercise for listening and practice intonations, followed by grammar with related exercises, after which come listening, reading, and writing exercises. At the end of each lesson there is a role play. Similar to *Prospect I* and II there are reviews and a photo dictionary in *Prospect III*.

### **Model of the study**

The model employed in this study was a modified version of Searle's (1969) 'greeting speech act' classification introduced by Hang (2010). Hang divides greeting speech acts into the following five categories:

#### 1) Greetings by using questions

Using questions is a common way Vietnamese people show their concerns in the different level which is up to intimacy between parties. For example:

A: what are you doing? B: I'm reading magazine.

#### 2) Greetings by using exclamations

Accompanying with happiness or surprise, such greetings in the form of exclamations usually occur when an addressee turns up. For example:

A: wow! My God! B: oh, it's you?

#### 3) Greetings by using compliments

It occurs when an addressee has good news such as a promotion and a speaker knows it. Usually they have a close relationship with each other. For example:

A: drinking? B: scotch and water.

#### 4) Greetings by using offers

The hospitality is the important function of this form. For example: A: you look wonderful! B: oh. Thanks.

#### 5) Greetings by using comments or compliments

The comment is used to topic initiating; the interlocutor's relationship is based on politeness behavior, the compliment supports the relationship maintaining. For example:

A: you go to be the flower man. B: that's right. Jack Byrnes, Pam's father.

## Procedures

First, speech acts of greeting in the conversational section of the *Four Corners* series and speech acts of greeting in the language function section of each lesson of junior high school English textbooks (I, II, III) were collected. Since this study was a quantitative/qualitative study, the data were collected according to categories proposed by the model of the study and then, they were analyzed quantitatively.

To analyze the collected data, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, 20) was used. To answer the first and second research questions, frequencies and percentages of greeting acts were calculated in the language function parts of junior high school textbooks and conversation parts of each unit of *Four Corners* series based on the model of the study. To answer the third research question, chi-square was run to compare the results of the quantitative data.

## Results

As mentioned above, the model based on which the data were collected categorized was Hang's (2010) classification of speech acts. Thus, instances of speech act of greeting were counted according to the five categories introduced in the model. This was done for each of the series separately. In other words, greetings lying in each category of the classification were first counted for *Prospect series* (I, II, III) to address the first research question and then, the same was done for *Four Corners series* to answer the second the research question. The obtained results are presented below.

### Presentation of greeting speech act in *Prospect series*

After a review of the data related to greeting speech act in *Prospect series*, it was seen that in the 21 units of the series, there were 21 conversations. All the units started with a conversation and all the conversations started with one form of greeting. Moreover, sometimes there were more than one type of greeting in a single conversation and so, the total number of greetings was 34 in this series. Table 1 below shows the distribution of these greetings according to Hang's classification.

**Table 1.** Frequency and Percentages of Greeting Forms in *Prospect Series* Based on Hang's Model

Forms of greeting	Greeting by using questions	Greeting by using exclamations	Greeting by using compliments	Greeting by using offers	Greeting by using comments or compliments	Total
Frequency	23 (67.6%)	2 (5.8%)	4 (11.7%)	3 (8.8%)	2 (5.8%)	34 (100%)

As can be seen in Table 1, 67.6 % of all the greetings contained *questioning*. After greeting by using question, there were 4 instances (11.7%) of greeting by using *compliment*. Next, there was greeting by *offer* with frequency of 3 (8.8%) and finally, there were greeting by

*exclamation* and greeting by *comments and compliments* with frequencies of 2 (5.8%). Greeting by using questions was far more frequent than other forms of greeting.

### **Presentation of greeting speech act in *Four Corners series***

The frequency and percentages of greeting speech act was then calculated in *Four Corners series*. The results showed that in the 36 units of this series, there were 58 forms of greeting. Moreover, unlike the *Prospect series*, greetings could be seen in other sections and sub-sections of the units rather than in conversations. Table 2 below shows the distribution of these greetings in terms of form.

**Table 2.** *Frequency and Percentage of Greeting Forms in Four Corners Series Based on Hang's Model*

Forms of greeting	Greeting by using questions	Greeting by using exclamations	Greeting by using compliments	Greeting by using offers	Greeting by using comments or compliments	Total
Frequency	33 (56.8%)	10 (17.2%)	5 (8.6%)	7 (12%)	3 (5.1%)	58 (100%)

According to Table 2, 56.8 % of the greetings used in this series were used through *questions* and 17.2% through using *exclamation*. Also, there were greetings used through *offer* with frequency of 7 (12%). Finally, there were greetings through *compliments* and greetings through *comments and compliments* with frequencies of 5 (8.6%) and 3 (5.1%), respectively. Similar to *Prospect series*, greetings used through *questions* were the most frequent forms of greeting.

### **Difference between presentations of greeting forms in both series**

Chi-square was run on the data obtained from both series for each category of the model. This was done to find if there were significant differences between presentations of greeting forms of speech act in the two series. The results can be seen in Table 3 below:

**Table 3.** *Results of Chi-Square*

Forms of greeting	Greeting by using questions	Greeting by using exclamations	Greeting by using compliments	Greeting by using offers	Greeting by using comments or compliments
<i>Prospect series</i>	67.6%	5.8%	11.7%	8.8%	5.8%

<i>Four Corner series</i>	56.8%	17.2%	8.6%	12%	5.1%
Asymp. Sig.	0.808	0.204	0.741	0.821	0.982
$X^2$	.059	.065	.075	.066	.089

Table 4.3 indicates that the difference is not statistically significant for any of the categories. This means that regarding the classifications under study, both series have almost similar accounts of greeting speech acts. In other words, none of the series enjoy a higher occurrence of one form of greeting speech act than the other. This is shown in the Asymp. Sig. values of table 3 below. As it is evident, all the values related to categories of the model were higher than 0.05 ( $0.808 > 0.05$ ,  $0.204 > 0.05$ ,  $0.741 > 0.05$ ,  $0.721 > 0.05$ , and  $.0982 > 0.05$ )

### Discussion

Discussion of the obtained results is presented here based on the order of research questions. In addition, the findings for each research question are compared with those obtained in previous studies investigating different speech acts across different languages or textbooks.

#### Addressing the first and second research questions

As the results indicate, majority of greetings started using a question in both *Prospect* and *Four Corners series*. This means that these series did not enjoy a fair and equal distribution of the speech act of greeting. In fact, they prepare their readers to use greeting forms using questions. This finding is in agreement with that of Nourdad and Roshani Khiabani s (2015) investigation which revealed that the conversations in the newly published *Prospect series* (1&2) have a number of significant shortcomings such as the lack of *declaration* speech act. It also revealed that conversations in these two textbooks must include all types of speech acts which were all used in the real-life communications.

Findings of Shams (2015) also lent support to the findings obtained in this study. After carrying out an investigation on *Prospect series* based on Searle's (1967) model, she came to the conclusion that the most frequent speech acts were those of '*representative*', while no '*declarative*' speech acts were observed. She also found that '*imparting*' and '*seeking factual information*' accounted for 54.28 percent of language functions and only 0.71 percent referred to '*structuring discourse*' ones. The results indicated that these pragmatic factors were distributed unequally throughout the conversation section.

Similarly, Moradi, Karbalaeei, and Afraz (2013) support the findings of the present study. They compared the language functions in two *New Interchange series* and Iranian High School series and concluded that there were a variety of language functions used in the New Interchange series while in the high school English textbooks they were presented unequally and some of them recurred throughout the books which followed no specific pattern. Similar findings were also obtained by Pishghadam and Zarei (2011), showing that Iranian learners felt obliged to show gratitude to others in every form possible for the favor they receive, and they used mostly thanking and positive feeling strategies.

Finally, although in the literature related to textbook evaluation in terms of greeting speech act, some studies have investigated greeting speech act in *Prospect series*, to the researchers' knowledge, no study has been so far carried out on *Four Corners series*. Nevertheless, greetings by using questions were also far more frequent than other forms of greetings in Hang's (2010) classification of greeting speech act.

### **Addressing the third research question**

With regard to this question, it was revealed that there was no significant difference between both series in terms of five categories of the greeting forms introduced in the model. This means that as far as the model employed by the present study was concerned, both series enjoyed an equal distribution of greeting speech act. This finding lends support to findings of Tavakoli (1995) who studied the language functions in the dialogues inserted in the English textbooks of Iranian senior high schools, from a textbook evaluation viewpoint. The findings of his study indicated that out of five different kinds of language functions, only three of them, i.e. *representative with high frequency*, *directive*, and *expressive* were used in the texts. However, *commissive* and *declaration* functions have been ignored. In addition, findings obtained by Farnia and Suleiman (2009), which examined the speech act of *expressing gratitude* among Iranian EFL learners, are in line with those of the present study. The present study was concerned with two textbooks, while their study was carried out to investigate Iranian and American learners' difference in using one speech act. Their results revealed that there was no correlation between language proficiency and the use of strategies. Besides, there were no statistically significant differences between EFL learners' and Americans' responses and this could mean that EFL learners' pragmatic competence was towards L2 norms.

In a Korean context too, findings similar to the findings of the present were obtained by Han (1992) who found that in Korean English as a Second Language (ESL) learners responded to the compliments with "thank you" because they learned from Korean ELT material that this was the only correct way to respond to a compliment. Like the presented study, a more equal distribution of forms of a compliment was required for her participants.

Iraji (2007) conducted a research on *New Interchange series* based on the principles of communicative and task-based approach to investigate to what extent the principles of CLT and TBLT approaches have been taken into consideration. The study indicated that the series do not follow the principles of communicative and task-based approaches as the author claimed and it had no frequency of meta-pragmatic information. In the same manner, Razmjoo (2007) investigated the extent to which the Iranian high school and private institute textbooks represented the CLT principles. This study revealed that while high school textbooks are not conducive to CLT implementation, private institute textbooks represent the CLT principles to a great extent. Furthermore, in a study on *Top Notch series*, Soozandehfar and Sahragard (2011) analyzed the conversation sections of *Top Notch (Fundamental)* textbooks from the pragmatic dimension of language functions and speech acts. They showed that the conversations in these newly-arrived textbooks were not pragmatically efficacious and functional. Koosha and Dastjerdi (2012) also investigated the use of request forms presented in Richard's *Interchange Series*, Books I, II, and III, widely used in Iranian foreign language teaching Institutes. The results of the study indicated that the series failed to include materials which are needed for meaningful and face-saving communication when resort to different kinds of requests were required

Finally, Ahmadi and Derakhshan (2015) findings revealed that *Prospect 1* followed a communicative language teaching approach and fulfilled students' needs. Conversely, they

claimed that the old version of textbooks used in Iranian junior high schools did not follow communicative language teaching approach because speaking and listening skills were neglected.

### Conclusion

General findings of the present study were two-fold. Thus, the first conclusion is that neither of the Iranian junior high school textbooks, i.e. *Prospect series* and *Four Corners series* pay attention to an equal distribution of greeting speech acts. This gain more importance when we see that these series are currently growing in extreme popularity in Iran. In addition, *Four Corners series* are very well-liked in Asian countries.

The second conclusion is that no specific difference exists between the series in terms of aspects and forms of greeting. The reason is quite manifest, i.e. both series neglect the four forms of greeting proposed in Hang's (2010) classification of greeting speech act.

These findings of this study and the conclusions thereof enclose implications for Iranian junior high school teachers as well as Asian EFL teachers who teach *Four Corners series* in the sense that they can gain more insight about the series they are teaching. In this sense, to mitigate against the drawbacks, they can include greetings of other forms than 'greeting by using questions' in their classroom discourse and steer their students toward using and learning them. They can also make them aware of not using only 'greeting by using questions' form in their talk. In addition, experts in the field of textbook designing can make use of the present findings to include a more diverse range of speech acts in their products to help out Iranian EFL learners who have very little contact with Western countries. They should actually incorporate more authentic and realistic forms of speech act when designing textbooks, since English Language is more easily learnt if it is presented to EFL learners by real-life and equally-distributed instances of speech act forms.

A final word here is to advise Iranian teachers of junior high schools to analyze the *series* so as to form a general idea about other speech acts absent in them. In fact, based on the findings of this study, EFL teachers and educators can choose the *series* with more caution so as to render better output in the classrooms where the *series* are taught, and to train more communicatively and pragmatically competent students.

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