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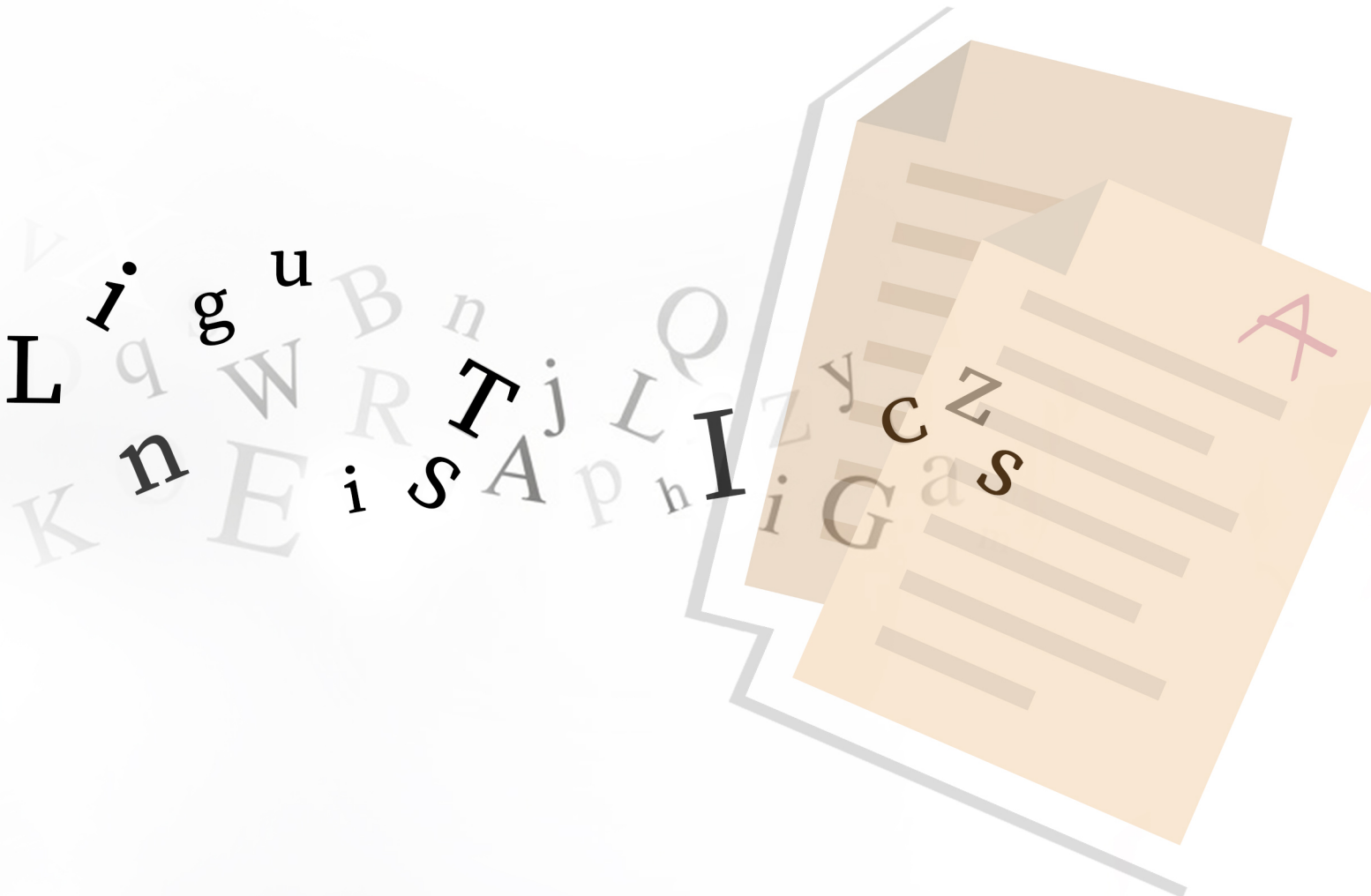
Journal of Linguistics and Education Research

ISSN: 2630-5097(Online)
Volume 4 Issue 2 December 2021



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Volume 4 Issue 2 · December 2021 · ISSN 2630-5097(Online)

Journal of Linguistics and Education Research

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ARTICLE

What' s the Context? Speech Acts Presentation in Oral English Textbooks

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history
Received: 23 Dec 2021
Accepted: 15 Feb 2022
Published: 28 Feb 2022

Keywords:
Pragmatic competence
Speech acts
the Speech act of apology
Evaluation of oral English textbooks

ABSTRACT

In this study, an evaluation of the presentation of speech acts in six oral English textbooks is conducted from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives to see how speech acts are presented and whether enough and explicit meta-pragmatic and contextual information are provided.

Results show that 1) there is a paucity of speech acts and the average percentage of the six textbooks including speech acts is only 28.3%. And some speech acts like 'threatening', 'warning', 'declaring', 'welcoming' are not presented at all. 2) Meta-pragmatic and contextual information is too general and far from enough. Among all the six textbooks, from Book 1 to Book 5, contextual information is deduced by learners through reading conversations. Only in Book 6, a contextual description is provided before the conversation begins. Contextual information such as the age, gender and social status of Speaker and Hearer is never presented. Contextual information like the relationship between Speaker and Hearer and the place where the conversation happens is inferred from reading the conversations. Meta-pragmatic information like the degree of formality, politeness strategy, indirect speech act strategy, and social norms are not at all involved. Only in Book 1, a cultural tip is provided.

Since oral English textbooks are one of the main sources for Chinese EFL learners to enhance their pragmatic competence, it is much expected that they should present a wide variety of popularly-used speech acts with rich contextual information as appropriate language input.

1. Introduction

Pragmatic competence is an important part of communicative competence, which means the ability to comprehend language and use language appropriately, accurately and successfully in various contexts to achieve communicative goals. "Pragmatic competence is the knowledge that enables a speaker to express his/her meanings and intentions via speech acts (e.g. requests, invitations, disagreements and so on) appropriately within a particular social and cultural context of communication" (Neguyen, 2011, p. 3).[14] Since speech acts are the highlight of pragmatic competence, this paper is focused on the evaluation of the presentation of speech acts in oral English textbooks. Specifically, the study tries to find out how many speech acts are presented in the selected books, what speech acts are presented, and whether enough and rich meta-pragmatic and context information is presented. And based on the findings, it will give some suggestions on the compilation of oral English books.

2. Previous Studies on Pragmatic Evaluation of Textbooks

Evaluation of textbooks can be conducted from different angles. Most studies on the evaluation of textbooks put emphasis on aspects like the difficulty, style, contents

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of textbooks and teaching methods while studies on the pragmatic evaluation of textbooks are relatively few (He 2003;[9] Xia 2003).[25]

Previous studies on pragmatic evaluation of textbooks can be classified into two types: 1) first evaluate the presentation of a certain speech act like direction-giving, complaint, etc., which is mainly for EFL/ESL learners in countries like Japan, Vietnam and Iran, then compare the conversations in the textbooks with naturally-occurring conversations reflecting the same speech act; 2) select telephone conversations from EFL/ESL textbooks and compare these conversations with naturally-occurring telephone interactions. Their findings are that the language input textbooks provide is inadequate and inauthentic. Teachers and teaching material developers should realize the mismatch between textbooks and natural language and try to incorporate more authentic and natural language samples into classrooms and teaching materials so as to ensure the input of pragmatic knowledge.

Scotton & Bernsten (1988)[19] make a study on the presentation of direction-giving and directive use of a speech act in service counters in TESOL textbooks. They find that the conversations in TESOL textbooks differ considerably from naturally-occurring ones. Natural conversations are more complex and variable across situations than many textbook conversations (p. 383). And they hold that "conversations in English textbooks should reflect more accurately the kinds of exchanges that naturally occur among native speakers of English" (ibid. p. 372).

Bardovi-Harlig et al (1991)[3] examine the presentation of closings found in conversations from twenty ESL textbooks. They find that the conversations are presented to "introduce a new grammatical structure and not to provide a source for realistic conversational input" (p. 8). In other words, the conversations in textbooks differ greatly from natural conversations.

Boxer & Pickering (1995)[5] survey seven ELT texts in order to explicate several problems evident in their presentation of speech acts. The focus of the analysis is a specific speech act sequence, that of complaint/commiseration. This speech behaviour is highlighted in order to demonstrate the mismatch between data from spontaneous speech, and data that is contrived through the native speaker intuitions of textbook developers. They identify two problems from the survey. First, intuition about speech act realization often differs greatly from the way in which naturalistic speech patterns out. Second, important information on underlying social strategies of speech acts is often overlooked entirely.

Cane (1998)[6] makes a study of conversations chosen in EFL textbooks with two purposes : 1) " to look at the ways in which conversation skills have been presented in EFL textbooks and courses; 2) to suggest some conversation sources for and approaches to the teaching of conversation skills" (p. 31). She finds that techniques for developing conversation skills in EFL textbooks remain remarkably crude and conversations contained in EFL textbooks differ remarkably from authentic conversations because EFL textbooks are lacking in important pragmatic and sociolinguistic features of everyday spoken English. Simply put, most textbooks do not provide language teachers what they need to help English learners attain communicative competence.

Grant & Stark (2001)[8] conduct a study of conversational closings in textbooks. Using Schegloff & Sacks' (1973) [16] description of native speaker conversational closings as a framework, they choose from fifty episodes of a New Zealand soap opera and make a comparison between the two kinds of closings. They find that although New Zealand soap opera materials are not authentic as natural conversations, they are better than many materials form EFL/ESL textbooks.

Wong (2001)[23] makes an investigation of telephone conversations chosen from eight ESL textbooks and telephone interactions in real life mainly from four aspects: 1) summons-answer sequence; 2) identification/recognition sequence; 3) greeting sequence; and 4) How-are-you sequence. Findings are that there is a mismatch between telephone conversations in ESL textbooks and real life telephone conversations. Elements like summon-answer, identification, greeting, and how-are-you sequences usually appear in real telephone conversations but are absent, incomplete, or problematic in telephone conversations in ESL textbooks.

Vellenga (2004)[22] surveys eight ESL and EFL textbooks and makes an analysis of the quantity and quality of pragmatic information included. The analysis is mainly focused on the use of meta-language, explicit treatment of speech acts and meta-pragmatic information. Results show that EFL/ESL textbooks include little explicit meta-pragmatic information. And suggestion is given that writers of English materials like EFL/ESL textbooks should incorporate enough authentic samples of speech acts and sufficient meta-pragmatic information into English material to help students acquire pragmatic competence.

Akutsu (2006)[1] makes an investigation of request strategies in oral communication textbooks which is one of the three subjects in Oral Communication course in Japanese High School English curriculum. The study aims to see "if the textbooks have enough amount of presentation and if the distribution of the sentences in the scale is appropriate as model materials" (p. 135). Results show that too many

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direct strategies, variations and sentences are presented in textbooks while indirect strategies are quite few.

Neguyen (2011)[14] conducts a study from the perspective of pragmatics on a currently developed set of textbooks intended for Vietnam's upper-secondary schools. "The textbooks analyzed in this study include three textbooks: English 10, English 11 and English 12" (p. 9). This study is conducted specifically from three aspects: "1) the range and distribution of the speech acts included in these textbooks; 2) the linguistic presentation of these speech acts and the kind of contextual and meta-pragmatic information accompanying them; 3) the extent to which these presentations consider English use in the globalized context as discussed earlier" (ibid. p. 7-8). Findings show that textbooks do not always contain an accurate and sufficient input of pragmatic information. The implications are that authentic and enough pragmatic information along with sufficient explanation of rules of use should be included in textbooks to help learners develop their pragmatic competence.

Koosha (2012)[12] conducts an investigation of the speech act of request presented in *Richard's Interchange Series, Books I, II* and *III* which are widely used in Iran's foreign language institutes. Findings show that textbooks fail to offer meaningful, authentic and enough materials for natural communication when various kinds of requests are resorted to. The series can hardly help learners master various ways of conducting the speech act of request.

Previous studies on pragmatic of textbooks in China are mainly focused on the presentation of a certain speech act in authorized course books designed for high school students or college students who major in English. Wu (2004)[24] makes an investigation on greeting structures based on 36 English conversations. These English conversations are collected from textbooks published at home and abroad in the past twenty years. 14 English conversations are selected from textbooks compiled by authors whose native language is English and the rest are from textbooks written by Chinese speakers. By making a comparison between English conversations written by Chinese speakers and those by native speakers, the paper finds that greeting conversations written by native speakers consists of three sequences: address, greeting and chatting while those written by Chinese speakers include one more sequence, that is asking about speakers' moving directions. The findings show that Chinese people adopt different politeness strategies from English native speakers.

Hu (2007)[10] makes an examination of a set of widely used comprehensive English course books for English majors in order to find out how these course books help raise learners' pragmatic awareness. And results show that the language input the set of course books provide is inauthentic and the compilation of the same speech act in different units is incoherent. The author also proposes a pedagogical model which consists of four aspects: 1) explicit teaching of pragmatic knowledge; 2) receptive skill awareness raising; 3) productive skill awareness raising; 4) productive awareness reflection. She conducts a review of relevant studies on acquisition and development of speech act competence of nonnative speakers and focus on the relationship of nonnative speakers' language proficiency and their speech act competence. To enhance the speech act awareness and competence of English learners in China, the author suggests that explicit instruction in class supplemented by implicit guide outside class should be adopted and more reliable pragmatic information should be presented in textbooks.

Ji (2007)[11] makes a page-by-page analysis of four College English (New) Listening and Speaking textbooks from the perspective of pragmatic information. This set of coursebooks (Book1-4) are designed for juniors at university level and written by a group of Chinese English professors. The author examines the pragmatic information according to six categories: "1) general pragmatic information; 2) meta-pragmatic information; 3) meta-language; 4) speech acts; 5) cultural information; 6) pragmatically oriented tasks" (p. 110). Results show that there is a dearth of pragmatic information contained in the Listening and Speaking textbooks and the variety of pragmatic information is limited. Most of the metapragmatic explanations are simple.

Yang & Zhuang (2008)[26] research on ten coursebooks from the perspective of cross-cultural teaching. These coursebooks are designed for college English teaching in classroom and widely used by teachers in colleges and universities. And results show that these coursebooks are not good enough to meet the requirement of cross-cultural instruction. Based on the results, the authors suggest that these coursebooks can be enhanced to facilitate more cross-cultural instruction from three aspects which are theme selection, question and task design.

Most recently, Ren & Han (2016)[15] report on a quantitative and qualitative study of ten English language textbooks used in Chinese universities with a particular focus on their coverage of pragmatic knowledge, specifically on the mention of pragmatic information, the treatment of speech acts, and the representation of intralingual pragmatic variation. The findings show that pragmatic knowledge is still under-represented in most textbooks. The range of speech acts included is rather limited, and the ways that speech acts are presented seem to be based on writers' intuition. There is a paucity of explicit metapragmatic information on speech acts. In addition, little attention is devoted to enhancing learners' awareness of

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intralingual pragmatic variation.

Li & Yu (2020)[13] examine the types, frequencies, and manners of pragmatic knowledge provided in the English textbooks published both at home and abroad. Results indicate that in terms of manners of information presentation, the textbooks published at home tend to focus on teaching students explicit pragmatic knowledge by a combined use of metapragmatic presentations, examples, and exercises, while those published abroad tend to concentrate on helping students develop practical pragmatic ability by employing mainly one specific presentation method of choice. The coverage of pragmatic knowledge in both groups of textbooks focuses mainly on traditional topics, such as contexts, speech acts, politeness, and culture, and hence exhibits a lack of enough scope and richness in content as well as a need for enhanced authenticity in the materials used. Besides, the frequency of coverage of pragmatic knowledge is relatively low in both groups of textbooks, though the frequency shown in the foreign textbooks appears to be significantly higher than that in the domestic textbooks.

In sum, previous studies have achieved much on the pragmatic evaluation of textbooks. However, most of the previous studies focus on the presentation of a certain speech act. This paper will discuss the presentation of speech acts as a whole in the selected oral English books from a macroscopic view by conducting a qualitative and quantative analysis. Based on the findings from the analysis, suggestions will be proposed.

3. Research Questions and Research Methodology

Learning a language not only means the acquisition of linguistic knowledge and skills but also the acquisition of pragmatic competence such as the ability to conduct different speech acts appropriately and successfully in real communication. In China where English is learned as a foreign language, learners have little chance of communicating with native speakers and English textbooks may be the primary source for them to learn English. Thus, it is necessary to conduct a pragmatic evaluation of textbooks to see whether they contain enough pragmatic knowledge for learners to acquire the ability to communicate with native speakers appropriately and effectively.

Based on Austin(1962),[2] Searle (1969, 1979) [20][21] divided speech acts into five categories:

Assertives (also called representatives): committing the speaker to something's being the case.

Directives: attempting to get the hearer to do something.

Commissives: committing the speaker to some future course of action.

Expressives: expressing the psychological state specified in the proposition.

Declaration: bringing about the correspondence between proposition and reality.

Based on Searle's classification, this paper intends to conduct a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the presentation of speech acts in six oral English textbooks. A quantitative evaluation seeks to find out how frequently speech acts are presented and how many kinds of speech acts are presented in the selected books. In order to make statistics reliable, we make the comparison of these six books based on the percentage of pages and sections/lessons presenting speech acts and mean number of pages containing speech acts of each book. As for the qualitative analysis, meta-pragmatic information will be analyzed to see whether the selected books contain rich and explicit meta-pragmatic information for learners to acquire the ability to perform various speech acts in various contexts.

In this paper, two research questions will be answered:

1) What kinds of speech acts are presented in the selected oral English books?
2) How are speech acts presented in the selected oral English books?

The books studied are:

Book 1. *JIUZHEJIUBAIJU WANZHUANKOUYU(Just Say These 900 Sentences).*

Book 2. *American English in a situational Context*

Book 3. *YINYUHUIHUAQUANCHENGTONGS (Learning English Conversations).*

Book 4. *Mastering Idiomatic English.*

Book 5. *XUEYINGYUKOUYUSHOUCE(A Manual of Learning Spoken English).*

Book 6. *Speak Freely: Conversational American English.*

An overall description of these six books regarding pages and units/chapters is given in Table 1:

Table 1 An Overall Description of Six Oral English Books

Six oral English books	Total number of pages	Total number of units/chapters	Mean number of pages (approximately)
Book 1	581	15	420
Book 2	386	7	
Book 3	186	3	
Book 4	729	5	
Book 5	403	31	
Book 6	232	6	

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4 Results and Discussion

4.1 A Quantitative Analysis of the Speech Acts in the Six Books

A quantitative evaluation of the presentation of speech acts in Book 1is shown in the following table .

Table 2 An Overview of the Presentation of Speech Acts in Book 1

Book 1	
Pages including speech acts	44
Total number of pages	581
Percentage	7.57% (approximately)
Sections including speech acts	10
Total number of sections	130
Percentage	7.69% (approximately)

From Table 2, we can see that Book 1 consists of 581 pages and 15 chapters which consist of 130 sections. However, among these 581 pages, only 44 pages contain the presentation of speech act and the percentage is as low as 7.57%. Among all the 130 sections, as few as 10 sections are about the presentation of speech acts and the percentage is 7.69%. All the statistics show that Book 1 fails to present an enough quantity of speech acts.

A quantitative evaluation of the presentation of speech acts in Book 2 is shown in the following table .

Table 3 An Overview of the Presentation of Speech Acts in Book 2

Book 2	
Pages including speech acts	215
A total number of pages	386
Percentage	55.6%
Lessons including speech acts	25
A total number of Lessons	35
Percentage	71.4%

From Table 3, we can see that Book 2 contains a total number of 386 while pages including speech acts are 215 accounting for 55.6%. And Book 2 contains 35 Lessons in total and Lessons including speech acts are 25 accounting for 71.4%. In terms of quantity of the presentation of speech acts, Book 2 does a better job than Book 1.

A quantitative evaluation of the presentation of speech acts in Book 3is shown in the following table .

From Table 4, we can see that Book 3 contains a number of 186 pages which consist of 3 chapters and 82 sections. Among the 186 pages, 35 pages contain speech acts which account for 18.8%. Of all the 82 sections, 17 sections carry speech acts and account for 20.7%. It shows that Book 3 has a paucity of speech acts presentation just as Book1does.

A quantitative evaluation of the presentation of speech acts in Book 4 is shown in the following table .

Table 4 A View of the Presentation of Speech Acts in Book 3

Book 3	
Pages including speech acts	35
A total number of pages	186
Percentage	18.8% (approximately)
Sections including speech acts	17
A total number of sections	82
Percentage	20.7% (approximately)

Table 5 An Overview of the Presentation of Speech Acts in Book 4

Book 4	
Pages including speech acts	79
A total number of pages	729
Percentage	10.8% (approximately)
Sections including speech acts	17
A total number of sections	105
Percentage	16.1% (approximately)

Table 5 shows that Book 4 contains 729 pages in total which is made up of 5 units which consists of 105 sections. Of all the 729 pages, a total number of 79 pages contain speech acts and the percentage is approximately 10.8%. And among all the 105 sections, a total of 17 sections carry speech acts and the percentage is 16.1%.The statistics show that like Book1 and Book 3, Book 4 also lacks adequate speech acts presentation.

A quantitative evaluation of the presentation of speech acts in Book 5is shown in the following table .

Table 6 An Overview of the Presentation of Speech Acts in Book 5

Book 5	
Pages including speech acts	107
A total number of pages	403
Percentage	26.6% (approximately)
Sections including speech acts	8
A total number of sections	31
Percentage	25.8% (approximately)

From Table 6, we can see that Book 5 contains 403 pages and pages including speech acts are 107 which accounts for 26.6%. And there are 31 sections in book 5 of which 8 sections contain speech acts accounting for 25.8% approximately.

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A quantitative evaluation of the presentation of speech acts in Book 6 is shown in the following table .

Table 7 An Overview of the Presentation of Speech Acts in Book 6

Book 6	
Pages containing speech acts	232
Pages in total	232
Percentage	100%
Sections containing speech acts	6
Sections in total	6
Percentage	100%

From Table 7, we can see that Book 6 contains 232 pages which are made up of 6 units consisting of 6 sections. And all the 232 pages contain speech acts and all these 6 sections contain speech acts. In terms of quantity, Book 6 is the best one among all the six oral English books in the presentation of speech acts.

Here, in order to make a contrast, an overall view of speech acts in all these six books is presented in Table 8 as follows:

Now a detailed presentation of speech acts in each book will be shown in Table 9.

As shown in Table 9, Book 4 and Book 6 include the most types of speech acts with a number of 19, while Book 2 includes only 5 types of speech acts. Not all speech acts are presented in each book. Speech acts such as 'asking for information', 'accepting' and 'persuading' only appear in Book 1 and the speech act of 'asking for permission' only appears in Book 3. Speech acts such as 'expressing sympathy', 'expressing regrets', 'giving opinions', and 'criticizing' only appear in Book 6. The speech act of 'apologizing' is presented in all six books while speech acts such as 'swearing', 'naming', 'declaring', 'appointing', 'threatening', 'warning' and 'welcoming' are not presented in these selected six books at all. As for the total pages of speech acts displayed, the speech act of 'making requests' is the highest and presented in 108 pages of the six books.

4.2 Discussion of Research Question 1

Firstly, there is an insufficiency of speech acts in the selected books. As shown above in Table 8, the average percentage of speech acts across the six books is in a small portion (28.3 % counted by page and 28.7% counted by section or Lesson). There is an uneven distribution of speech acts in these six books while counted by page, the highest percentage is 100% and the lowest percentage is 7.57%, while counted by section, the highest percentage is 100% and the lowest percentage is 7.69%. According to Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1990, 1993),[17][18] noticed input plays an important role in language learning and input must be noticed before being absorbed by language learners. Thus, to help learners enhance their pragmatic competence and the ability of performing various speech acts appropriately and effectively, enough speech act information should be incorporated into oral English books.

Secondly, as shown in Table 9, the amount of speech act is uneven. Among the total 40 popular types of speech acts listed in the scale, only 33 types in total are mentioned. Several speech acts like 'apologizing', 'greeting', 'making request' and so on are well shown and have a high frequency across the six books, while some speech acts which are also possibly performed in real life fail to get presented in each of the selected books, such as 'swearing', 'declaring' 'naming', 'appointing', 'warning', 'welcoming'. And what's more, some commonly used speech acts such as 'asking for information', 'accepting', 'asking for permission', 'giving opinions', 'expressing regrets' and 'persuading' only appear in one book of all six books. Although it is impossible to involve all the speech acts performed in real life, it is much expected that

Table 8 An Overall View of the Presentation of Speech Acts in These Six Books

Books	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Book 5	Book 6	Total
Pages including speech acts	44	215	35	79	107	232	712
Pages in total	581	386	186	729	403	232	2517
Percentage	7.57%	55.6%	18.8%	10.8%	26.6%	100%	28.3%
Sections/Lessons including speech acts	10	25	17	17	8	6	83
Sections in total	30	35	82	105	31	6	289
Percentage	7.69%	71.4%	20.7%	16.1%	25.8%	100%	28.7%

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Table 9 Weight and Distribution of Speech Acts Presented in These Six Oral English Books

Textbooks / Pages / Speech acts	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Book 5	Book 6	Total pages of speech acts presented
Giving directions	5		2	4			11
Giving opinions						20	20
Greetings		48	5	4		40	72
Partings			5	5		40	50
Making request		49	5	6	14	34	108
Asking for permission			2				
Making introduction	4	56	2	4		40	106
Offering				3			3
Making suggestions	5		4	5		38	52
Cautioning						38	38
Ordering				6		34	40
Promising						40	40
Swearing							
Complaining			1		16	59	76
Criticizing						59	59
Complimenting					10	59	69
Inviting	5		1	4			10
Persuading	5						5
Apologizing	4	57	1	5	16	40	123
Expressing regrets						40	40
Extending congratulations				5	13	59	77
Expressing gratitude	4		1	4	12		21
Expressing wishes				4	12		16
Agreeing	4		2	4		20	30
Disagreeing	4		2	4		20	30
Expressing belief	5			7			12
Expressing disbelief	5			7			12
Likes	4			5			9
Dislikes	4			5			9
Expressing sympathy						40	40
Naming							
Declaring							
Appointing							
Threatening							
Warning							
Welcoming							
Accepting	4						4
Refusing	4		2			34	40
Asking for information		61					61
Total types of speech acts	15	5	14	19	7	19	

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oral English books can present a wide variety of popularly-used ones, for oral English books are the main source for learners to acquire the ability to perform various speech acts.

4.3 Discussion of Research Question 2

Since the speech act of apology is the only one that is presented in all the six books, this speech act will be used to make a contrast among the six books. The discussion will be approached from the perspective of the presentation of contextual information and meta-pragmatic information.

Context is an inevitable feature in successful communication. The same speech act can be conducted by employing different linguistic forms in different contexts. And in different contexts, the same expression can have different meanings and different speech acts are conducted. In other words, the change of context may considerably affect learners' word and linguistic form choice in conducting speech acts. Here, contextual information mainly includes varieties of power, age, gender, conversational settings and relationship between Speaker and Hearer.

Meta-pragmatic information is about when, where and to whom it is appropriate to perform a specific speech act and what expressions would or would not be appropriate in a specific context. Thus, providing meta-pragmatic information will be helpful in the cultivation of learners' awareness of appropriateness about when, where and to whom to employ appropriate linguistic expression to perform a specific speech act in a particular context. Here, meta-pragmatic information mainly involves politeness strategies, face-saving as well as social and cultural norms.

For space limit, we will only offer a detailed analysis of Book 1 and Book 2 here.

4.3.1 The Presentation of Contextual and Meta-pragmatic Information in Book 1

Book 1 consists of 15 chapters and each chapter consists of several sections which follow the same structure. Every section contains three parts: a list of useful expressions, one conversation and cultural tips. The speech act of apology is presented in Section Four of Chapter Two.

For part 1, six lists of useful expressions regarding how to apologize and how to reply is provided.

As the table shows, the six lists regarding how to

Table 10 Six Lists of Expressions Regarding Apology in Book 1

Part 1		
	Expressions of apology	Expressions of reply
List 1 (My mistake)	It's my fault. I didn't mean to do that! That was my fault. I'm to blame.	Yeah, but it's okay. Don't stress about it.
List 2 (I'm sorry)	Oh, sorry. I'm very sorry. I'm awfully sorry. I'm sorry about that.	It's okay. Don't worry about it.
List 3 (Forgive me)	Please forgive me. My apologies. My sincere apologies.	It happens, don't worry.
List 4 (I don't know how to apologize to you)	I can't express how sorry I am. Any words can't express how sorry I am. I have no words to apologize to you.	It's no big deal.
List 5 (I'm sorry to have kept you waiting)	I'm sorry to be late again. Sorry, I'm late again.	It was nothing. I was about to go home.
List 6 (It's alright)		It's okay. Alright. Good
List 7 (Don't worry about it)		Never mind. It's not a big deal.

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make apologies are provided without any contextual and meta-pragmatic information at all. Learners may memorize these expressions but never know when, where, and to whom it is appropriate to employ which expression among so many expressions. And for the expressions themselves, they concern only two kinds of apology strategies among the five apology strategies proposed by Blum-Kulka (1989).[4] List 2, 3, 4 and 5 concern the first apology strategy that is IFID (illocutionary force indicating device) and List 1 concerns the second strategy "taking on responsibility". And all the expressions regarding reply are affirmative. No negative replies are provided.

For part 2, a conversation regarding apology and reply is provided. Now, the conversation will be cited as it is:

Kevin: I'm sorry for being such a hassle!
Debra: Don't worry about it, it's no big deal.
Kevin: I can't believe I lost my bag at the airport.
Debra: Hey man, it happens. Don't be so hard on yourself.
Kevin: I guess so. Thanks.
Debra: You're welcome. Sorry it took me a while to get here.
Kevin: Nah, it's okay. I understand.
Debra: Cool. Let's go find your bag.
Kevin: Okay. Thanks again.
Debra: No problem, dude. (Fang Zhenyu et al, 2011, p. 61) [7]

For the conversation above, no contextual and meta-pragmatic information is provided. After reading the conversation, we can know that the conversation happens between Kevin and Debra and that the conversation most probably happens at an airport. However, we have no way to know the relationship between Kevin and Debra, their ages, their genders, and their social statuses. The conversation concerns the first apology strategy and affirmative replies. What learners can get from the conversation are just two expressions which involve the first apology strategy and two affirmative replies. Learners cannot know when, where and to whom these two expressions can be employed to perform the speech act of apology successfully. They cannot acquire the ability of knowing how to behave politely and how to save face when making apologies to others in a specific context nor how to reply negatively. As a whole, the conversation above can hardly help learners acquire the ability to employ appropriate linguistic expressions to perform the speech act of apology appropriately and effectively.

Part 3 is about a cultural tip that in English-speaking countries like USA, Britain and so on, the expression "excuse me" is employed not only to make apologies but also to perform the speech act of order in a very polite way. For example, when someone is in the way, you may say "excuse me" to ask him or her to move away rather than say "get out of my way." Here, providing a cultural tip is beneficial for learners to know some social norms and principles lying behind linguistic expressions.

To sum up, although Book 1 provides lists of useful expressions and a conversation, it can hardly help learners acquire the ability to employ appropriate linguistic forms to perform the speech act of apology effectively and successfully, because it provides no contextual information or meta-pragmatic information at all. The only point that deserves praise is that it provides a cultural tip in part 3.

4.3.2 The Presentation of Contextual and Meta-pragmatic Information in Book 2

Book 2 contains six units and each unit consists of five lessons. Unit V which consists of Lesson 21-25 involves the speech act of apology. All the five lessons from Lesson 21 to Lesson 25 involve the presentation of the speech act of apology. And all the five lessons follow the same organization of ten parts. Part 1 to part 10 are respectively "content infusion", "commentary on content infusion", "pronunciation exercise", "commentary on pronunciation exercise", "grammar infusion", "commentary on grammar infusion", "reading exercise", "commentary on reading exercise", "writing exercise" and "commentary on writing exercise". The evaluation will be first conducted on the five Part 1s. Part 1 consists of two conversations. From Lesson 21 to Lesson 25, these conversations are respectively shown as follows:

Lesson 21
A
Salesman: Good afternoon, sir. May I help you?
Juan: Yes. I bought this radio here last week. It doesn't work very well.
Salesman: I can exchange it for you. Do you have the sales slip?
B
Salesman: what can I do for you?
Abdul: I would like to return this clock. I bought it yesterday.
Salesman: Look at the sign. All sales on those clocks are final. (Lou Guangqing, 1991, p. 218)

Lesson 22
A
Juan: Good morning. Mr. Jones.
Mr. Jones: Good morning. How are you?
Juan: Fine, I brought my paper. I'm sorry it's late, but I

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was sick last week.

Mr. Jones: That's quite all right. I can still accept it.

B

Mr. Smith: Well, good morning, Mr. Brown. What can I do for you?

John: Well, sir. I'd like to give you my paper.

Mr. Smith: But that paper was due last week.

John: I'm sorry, but I was sick. I couldn't finish it on time.

Mr. Smith: It's too late. I can't accept it. (Ibid. p. 228)

Lesson 23

A

John: Hi, Bill. I'm sorry that I missed the poker game last night.

Bill: Oh, that's ok. There is no need for an excuse.

John: Maybe we can get together at my house next time.

Bill: Great! How about this Friday?

B

Harry: Hi, Pete. I'm sorry that I missed our bridge meeting last night.

Pete: What happened?

Harry: My wife's car broke down. I had to pick her up.

Pete: I see. (Ibid. p. 239)

Lesson 24

A

Juan: Hey, John. Where were you last night?

John: I was at the library until eleven o'clock. Why do you ask?

Juan: You told me to drop by your house last night. Remember?

John: Oh, I'm really sorry. I forgot all about that.

B

Bill: Hi, Maria.

Maria: Good morning, Bill. How are you today?

Bill: Fine. Listen. I came to your apartment last night to study.

Maria: Sorry. Something came up. (Ibid. p. 250)

Lesson 25

A

Husband: I don't have any clean shirts. Did you do the wash today?

Wife: No, I didn't. I didn't have enough time.

Husband: So what should I do?

Wife: There are some clean shirts in your drawer.

Husband: I don't like those shirts.

B

Husband: Did you see the car key?

Wife: No. Don't ask me. You had them last.

Husband: But I can't find them anywhere.

Wife: Look in the pockets of your blue pants.

Husband: I already did. (Ibid. 262)

As the ten conversations shown above, we can conclude that there is not any contextual description or meta-pragmatic information provided before each of the conversations begins. All learners can do is to get some information through reading the conversations.

Since no contextual and meta-pragmatic information is provided before the two conversations begin, all learners can figure out is that a customer returns a certain item to a store where the item was bought some time before and he/she gets either an affirmative or a negative reply. Learners have no idea about the age, gender of the salesman and the customer in the two conversations. In conversation A, the salesman greets the customer Juan and politely asks "May I help you". And the customer Juan expresses her desire to return the radio and gives a reason for wanting it to be returned. In conversation B, the salesman is not as friendly as the one in conversation A. He merely utters a businesslike query "what can I do for you?" and the customer Abdul expresses directly her desire to return the clock. Learners cannot know why conversation A is conducted in a more polite manner than conversation B. Conversation A involves the use of the third apology strategy that is explaining cause and showing an affirmative reply. And Conversation B shows how to give a negative reply when there is a customer coming to return items. However, learners cannot infer when it is appropriate to employ such linguistic expressions to perform a negative reply or an affirmative reply.

There are no contextual and meta-pragmatic information provided before the two conversations in Lesson 22. Through reading the two conversations, what learners can get is that the two conversations are about handing in a late assignment. However, learners cannot know the age and gender of the students Juan and John. In conversation A, Juan comes to Mr. Jone's office with a late assignment. And Juan expresses her purpose of coming to Mr. Jone's office and explains why she hands in his paper so late. And finally Mr. Jones gives an affirmative reply and accepts her paper. However, learners cannot get any information about how old Juan is, what school Juan is studying in and whether Mr. Jones is an assistant professor or a senior professor. Conversation A concerns the first apology strategy IFID and the third apology strategy that is explaining cause. In conversation B, John enters Mr. Smith's office with his late paper. John hesitates outside the door of Mr. Smith's office until Mr. Smith notices

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and greets him. John expresses his purpose of coming to the office and gives reasons for the late assignment. And Mr. Smith gives a negative reply by saying "It's too late" and refusing to accept it by uttering "I cannot accept it". Learners have no clue to the identity of the conversants, like how old John is, what school John is studying in and whether Mr. Smith is always that strict with the students. Conversation B involves the first apology strategy IFID and the third apology strategy that is giving an account of cause.

Just like the conversations in Lesson 21 and Lesson 22, there is not any contextual description or meta-pragmatic information provided before the beginning of the two conversations in Lesson 23. Through reading the two conversations, learners fail to get any information about Speaker and Hearer. Learners cannot know the age and status of the people in the conversations nor their relationship. In conversation A, John apologizes to Bill for missing the poker game and Bill gives his forgiveness to John. John adopts the first apology strategy IFID by uttering "I'm sorry that I missed the poker game last night" and the fourth apology strategy by uttering "maybe we can get together at my house next time". In conversation B, Harry makes an apology to Pete for missing their bridge meeting. Harry adopts the first apology strategy IFID by saying "I'm sorry that I missed our bridge meeting last night" and the third apology strategy by uttering "My wife's car broke down and I had to pick her up". Pete gives his reply by uttering "I see", which can be an affirmative reply or a negative reply. If "I see" is uttered in an ironic tone, it means that Pete does not accept the excuse Harry gives. Without enough contextual and meta-pragmatic information, learners cannot decide the exact meaning of the utterance "I see".

Just like the conversations from Lesson 21, Lesson 22 and Lesson 23, for conversations in Lesson 24, no contextual and meta-pragmatic information is presented as to the age, gender, social status and distance of Speaker and Hearer, the relationship between Speaker and Hearer, the social norms, politeness strategies and so on. Thus, it is hardly possible for learners to acquire the ability to perform the speech act of apology effectively and appropriately in various contexts. In conversation A, after Juan reminds John of the assignment they had made to meet in an indirect manner, John remembers the missed assignment and utters an apology and an explanation: I'm really sorry. I forgot all about that. Here, the utterance "I'm really sorry" is an intensifying expression within the IFID by adding an adverbial to stress the emotion. In conversation B, Bill reminds Maria of the appointment they had made to get together at Maria's apartment in a polite and indirect way and Maria remembers the assignment and offers an apology and an explanation by uttering "Sorry" and "Something came up". By the reading the two conversations, learners cannot know at what place and time the conversations take place and the age, gender and social status of the people in the two conversations.

As the examples in Lesson 25 show, there is no contextual and meta-pragmatic information presented before the two conversations begin. Through reading the conversations, what learners can get is only the relationship between Speaker and Hearer. In conversation A, the husband looks into his closet and notices that he doesn't have any clean shirts to wear. Then he announces to his wife: I don't have any clean shirt. Did you do the wash today? The wife gives a negative reply and adds an explanation: No, I didn't. I didn't have enough time. The wife employs the third apology strategy by uttering "I didn't have enough time". In conversation B, the husband is searching for car keys and asking his wife to help. The wife refuses him and adds an explanation by uttering "No. Don't ask me. You had them last". Here, the wife adopts the third apology strategy by giving the reason for refusing to help the husband find the car key. Learners can deduce that conversation A takes place in their house but is not clear whether conversation B takes place in their house or in a parking lot.

In a word, these conversations in Book 2 are only exchanges without any contextual description or any meta-pragmatic information and only concern three apology strategies. All learners can acquire from these conversations is a set of linguistic expressions. However, learners cannot acquire the ability to employ these linguistic expressions to perform the speech act of apology appropriately in various contexts.

5 Conclusion

This paper conducts a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the presentation of speech acts in six oral English textbooks. The findings are as follows:

Firstly, in terms of quantity, there is a paucity of speech acts presented in the selected books and the distribution of speech acts is uneven. Several speech acts like 'apologizing', 'greeting' and 'making request' are well shown and have a high frequency across the six books. Some commonly used speech acts such as 'asking for information', 'accepting', 'asking for permission', 'giving opinions', 'expressing regrets' and 'persuading' only appear in one book of all six books, while some speech acts which are also frequently performed in real life , such as 'swearing', 'declaring' 'naming', 'appointing', 'warning', 'welcoming', fail to get presented in any of the selected books.

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Secondly, there is insufficient meta-pragmatic and contextual information provided in the presentation of speech acts. Meta-pragmatic information such as the degree of formality, politeness strategy, indirect speech acts strategy are not at all involved. Contextual information such as the age, gender and social status of Speaker and Hearer is never presented. Contextual information like the relationship between Speaker and Hearer and the place where the conversation takes place is inferred by reading through the conversations. Only in Book 6, some contextual information is provided in the form of a description before the conversation begins. Except Book 6 which presents all the five apology strategies, from book 1 to book 5, only two or three strategies are involved while the fourth strategy and the fifth strategy are never adopted. As such, these oral English books cannot provide enough and rich language input for learners to acquire the ability to employ proper linguistic expressions to perform various speech acts in different contexts and the ability to adopt different linguistic forms to perform a specific speech act in different contexts.

Oral English textbooks are one of the main sources for Chinese EFL learners to enhance their pragmatic competence, hence it is much expected that they should present a wide variety of popularly-used speech acts with rich contextual information as appropriate language input.

Since the study is based on the speech act evaluation of six books and only a specific speech act of apology is evaluated from a microscopic view, the findings are not fit and enough to draw conclusions about other speech acts like request, greeting, compliment and so on. Thus, for more useful insights and implications, further studies can be conducted on an analysis of other speech acts and involve a larger scale of materials.

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Journal of Linguistics and Education Research
https://ojs.bilpublishing.com/index.php/jler

ARTICLE

A Comparative Analysis between Walt Disney and DreamWorks Based on the Theory of Semantic Roles of Argument Nominals

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history
Received: 23 Dec 2021
Accepted: 20 Feb 2022
Published: 1 March 2022

Keywords:
Comparative analysis
Semantic roles
Cartoon movies

ABSTRACT

Anchored on Yule's categories of semantic roles, the present study examined the language of cartoon scripts with Chinese characters in Walt Disney's Mulan 1 and 2 and DreamWorks's Kung Fu Panda 1 and 2. Specifically it described the: (1) semantic features of the scripts in terms of semantic roles; and (2)similarities and differences in the language of the scripts semantically. Data analyzed were limited to 800 sentences which were randomly selected from the scripts of Mulan 1 and 2 and Kung Fu Panda 1 and 2. More specifically, 200 lines per film were analyzed by taxonomizing the utterances in terms of identifying the semantic roles of argument nominals in each utterance. Results revealed the roles of agent and experiencer in the subject positions are dominant in contrast with the frequency of occurrences of theme, goal, location and source. In conclusion, the language of animated film is relatively simpler, literal and direct to suit the level of the target audience who are generally children. Finally, this research suggests that more linguistic levels should be conducted to explore the language features on cartoon movies in the future.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Language which is the most significant medium of human activities in daily life is used as a means to communicate with others. Whether it be spoken or written, language works to convey human thoughts, ideas and emotion through sounds, gestures and signals. Therefore, language is irreplaceable.

Everyone has his or her own features in expressing thoughts. It is easier for the addressee to understand the addresser's idea if he or she is familiar with the addresser's language features. With the value placed on Semantic analysis and cartoons' language development, some researchers are beginning to realize the need for more attention that the producers of cartoons can make more befitting and splendid cartoons for children.

Referring to semantic analysis, which is considered the study of semantics, or the structures and meanings of the speech. What's more, emphasizing to the semantic analysis in cartoon movies, it comes to the theory of semantic roles.

Semantic roles generally refer to the roles of participants in events or activities described by predicates, both in syntactic and semantic research, this actor role has been given many different names, such as Thematic Relations

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.30564/jler.v4i2.4260

(Jackendiff, 1972),[10] Participant Roles (Allan, 1986),[1] Semantic Roles (Givone, 1990),[8] Thematic Roles (Dowty, 1986),[6] Thematic theory (Goldberg, 1995),[7] etc. Semantic role is more popular in recent research, especially in the field of generative grammar , and is more common in the corpus annotation, semantic role in view of this research corpus annotation study for children. For example, semantic roles labeling identifies the semantic relationships filled by constituents of a sentence within a semantic frame (Gildea & Jurafsky, 2002).[9] It is a process to assign WHO did WHAT to WHOM, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, HOW, etc. structures to sentences. It has been used in many applications, such as information extraction, question answering, and summarization. And for FrameNet (Baker, Fillmore & Lowe, 1998),[3] PropBank (Palmer, Gildea & Kingsbury, 2005),[17] and NomBank (Meyers, Reeves & Macleod, 2004),[16] we have seen considerable achievements in Semantic Roles Labeling tasks in the last decade. Pradhan (2004) improved the performance using an algorithm based on support vector machines. Semantic roles are also well known to be helpful in improving translation accuracy, because they tend to agree better between two languages than syntactic structures and constitute the skeleton of a sentence (Liu & Gildea, 2010).[13] There is also a significant difference caused by the roles of the noun phrase (NP) between different languages such as English and Chinese (Liu & Gildea, 2008).[14]

In recent years, the movie, a special form of drama, has been developing faster and faster, because of its great profits. In the meantime, scholars began to pay much attention to one of its main functions: entertaining. Therefore, there are some scholars who study filmic texts from the linguistic points of view. For example, Salt (2004) [18] applies the methods of statistical style analysis for the dimensions of average shot length, shot scale, camera movement, reverse angles, point of view and inserts, then made the conclusion that contemporary American films are made according to an increasingly restricted stylistic norm, characterized mainly by faster cutting and closer shooting. McIntyre (2008)[15] worked for integrating multi-modal analysis and the stylistics of drama from a multi-modal perspective on Ian McKellen's *Richard III*. He suggested that the multi-modal elements of the production contribute to the interpretation of the play as much as the linguistic elements of the dramatic text.

Accordingly, the study on cartoon movies seems not enough, especially those on linguistic study or even more specifically on semantic analysis. Cartoon movies are ones in which individual drawings, paintings, or illustrations are photographed frame by frame (stop-frame cinematography). The producer uses the film technique and it often contains genre-like elements rather than a strictly-defined genre category. Hence, cartoon has aroused much interest among researchers. Nevertheless, the recent study of cartoon was focused on the cartoon scripts and explanation of the humorous language. In other words, few studies focus on semantic analysis of the cartoon movie. Consequently, it is deemed relevant to conduct semantic analysis to fill the gap.

In China, Walt Disney and DreamWorks hold the important position in the field of cartoon movie. As the representative companies in the field of cartoon, both of them have brought a huge economic benefits and cultural dissemination. For example, in 2016, the growth of the global film markets was not satisfactory, but the 90-year-old Walt Disney performance was still eye-catching, winning nearly 6 billion dollars in the world. *Zootopia, Hansel and Gretel* and other works have achieved a good harvest with a good reputation and economic benefits. In the recent years, Walt Disney has owned Pixar and Marvel through a series of mergers and acquisitions. It is even more remarkable that the audience is no longer the little girl at the beginning, but a solid fan of an adult fan who loves anime. Around the world, Walt Disney has more than 3,000 licensees and sells more than 100,000 cultural and creative derivatives related to Walt Disney cartoons. At the same time, DreamWorks and Walt Disney have been in a parallel competition, but over time, DreamWorks suffered some setbacks. However, DreamWorks animation has always had a place in the animation industry and still brought a great economic benefits.

Nevertheless, the comparison between Walt Disney cartoon and DreamWorks cartoon is seldom explored in academic sector. Therefore, this study is designed to make a comparative analysis of the scripts of cartoon movie with Chinese elements between Walt Disney and DreamWorks semantically.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The study generally aimed to describe semantic features of Walt Disney and Dream Work scripts with Chinese elements. Specifically, it sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the semantic features of the cartoon scripts from Walt Disney and DreamWorks based on the theory of semantic roles of argument nominals?
2. What are the similarities and differences between Mulan and Kung Fu Panda in terms of semantic features?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

To determine the language characteristics of the scripts

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from semantic level, the study was anchored on the theory of semantic roles of nominals.

Semantic Roles

Semantic study in stylistics concerns itself with "linguistic effects involving something odd in the cognitive meaning of a certain linguistic unit, e.g., a word or phrase"(Leech, 1969).[11] More specifically, semantic roles refer to the roles fulfilled within the situation as described by a sentence when the situation is a simple event and the verb describes an action. The noun, pronoun and noun phrase in any given sentence may perform different thematic roles as dictated by the verbs used in the sentence.

According to the theory, the nominals may perform the following roles: (1) Agent, the individual initiating the action; (2) Goal, the recipient of the object of the action; (3) theme, the thing which is affected or moved by the action; (4) Instrument, the thing used to perform an action; (5) Experiencers, the noun phrase used to designate an entity as the person who has feeling, perception or state; (6) Location, the role designated to an entity where an event took place; and (7) Source, the entity where an object moves from.

For instance, in the sentence, *The man killed the cat*, the verb "kill" assigns the man the semantic role of AGENT, and the cat has the semantic role of theme. On the other hand, in the sentence, *Liz gave Mary an apple.*, "Mary" bears the semantic role of GOAL projected by the verb gave, and an apple act as THEME.

In the given two sample sentences, "kill" and "gave" are predicates describing the relationship between "the man" and "the cat," and "Liz," "Mary" and "an apple" are saying something about the entities. "The man", "the cat," "Liz," "Mary," and "an apple" are known as arguments which entities are concerned.

Semantic Criterion

According to Chomsky (1981),[4] arguments have one-to-one relationship. This means that one argument can have one and only one semantic role assigned to it.

The semantic criterion forms one part of semantic theory. Another part of semantic theory concerns the process of how semantic roles get from the lexical entry of a predicate to the arguments that bear them. The process of semantic roles transferring from a predicate to the arguments is known as 0-marking. According to Barriers, Chomsky (1986)[5] proposed that semantic roles are assigned by predicate to their sisters. There is a sisterhood condition on the assignment of semantic roles. Complements are sisters to heads to the principle of X-bar.

The semantic role assigned to constituents within the VP are called internal semantic role where the constituents are called internal arguments. The semantic role assigned to the subject is called the external role, and the subject of a sentence is called the external argument, on the assumption that subjects is external to VP, and their role in the syntax is called argument structure.

The lexical entry of a verb contains only information that is not predictable from general principles. Certainly, the meaning of a verb, and, in particular, the semantic roles assigned to the arguments, is not predictable.

2. Research Design

2.1 Objects

The study followed the qualitative research design since it aims to explore the semantic features of the scripts of four cartoon movies from Walt Disney and DreamWorks through semantic level. Moreover, the study provided a comparative analysis between Walt Disney and Dream Works according to the observed features.

2.2 Methodology

The study is data-driven and theory-driven. Descriptive method is a way to use different qualitative methodologies to collect and analyze the data (Lichtman, 2012).[12] The study explored the language of cartoon movies both on the semantic levels to identify the similarities and differences of the scripts of four cartoons between Walt Disney and DreamWorks.

2.3 Corpus of the Study

The corpus of this study is four cartoon movies from Walt Disney and DreamWorks. From Walt Disney, Mulan I and II were chosen. From Dream Works, Kung Fu Panda I and II were selected.

Mulan I was released in 1998. Based on the traditional Chinese folk tale in the North Dynasty, the film tells a story of a brave and smart girl Mulan, who disguised herself as a man and takes her ailing father's place in the emperor's army. Mulan is Americanized implicitly with individual spirit and American humor.

Similarly, Mulan II which is a 2004 American direct-to-video Walt Disney animated is a film directed by Darrell Rooney and Lynne Southerland. It is a sequel to the 1998 animated film Mulan. Much of the cast from the first film returned, excluding Mushu, the Matchmaker, little brother and so on. This film mainly tells that when Hua Mulan and Li Xiang are ready to marry, they suddenly receive a secret purpose to escort the three princesses to marry the minority affiliated countries to maintain peace in the frontier. So they immediately set off for departure. But on the way, Mulan found that the princesses were not

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willing to marry and had a loved one. Mulan, who has always advocated the free will of women, helped the princesses to escape. The occurrence of this incident and the provocation of Musu caused a quarrel between them. On the road, Li Xiang had an accident. In order to save Mulan and fall into the deep valley, Mulan thought that Li Xiang was dead. She was so painful that she decided to replace the princess to complete the task. On the day of the wedding, Mulan wore a dress to prepare and complete the mission. At this moment, Musu in the body of the gods pretend to be gods and the leaders of the country. At the same time, Li Xiang also appeared in the crowd to save Mulan. Although the pro-task was not completed, the two countries are still as good as ever. Mulan and Li Xiang, as well as the princesses and Musu have lived a happy life.

On the other hand, Kung Fu Panda was released in 2008 in America. It is an American action comedy movie featuring Chinese Kung Fu. The film is based on ancient China. Its landscape, scenery, clothing and even food are full of Chinese elements. The film tells the story of a clumsy panda who is determined to become a master of martial arts.

In addition, Kung Fu Panda 2 is a 2011 American 3D animated film, a sequel to the 2008 animated film Kung Fu Panda. It was released in North America on May 26, 2011. The story mainly tells that Kung Fu Panda has become a dragon Warrior together with the masters of Kung Fu and the five heroes of the world to protect the Peace Valley and live a quiet life. However, the good times are not long, the evil villain Shen is planning to conquer China with unguarded secret weapons and destroy Kung Fu. Kung Fu Panda faces a new challenge. The key point for him is to look back and uncover the mystery of his life before he can find the enemy and he got the success finally.

2.3 Data Collection

The data chosen for the analysis was from the scripts of four cartoon movies offered by the Internet website http://www.en580.com/. With the help of internet, a total of four scripts were gathered in the public website.

Due to the large number of texts, the study selected 200 sentences from each script of the animated film at random by choosing every fifth sentence. This means that a total of 800 sentences from the four movies were included in the study.

2.4 Data Analysis

The semantic analysis was done by identifying the semantic roles assigned by the verbs to the argument nominals used in each of the 800 sentences. Hence, arguments were coded as agent, goal, theme, instrument, experiencer, location and source. Coding was guided by the framework of Yule, which were deemed the similarities of the authors in preparing the scripts.

Finally, after coding the data semantically, simple frequency and percentage count was done to identify the patterns and then Walt Disney and Dream Works film were compared and contrasted for the similarities and differences.

3. Results

According to a comprehensive and rigorous reading, watching and analyzing the selected sentences from the four scripts of Mulan 1, Mulan 2, Kung Fu Panda 1 and Kung Fu Panda 2, the study identified *the features and search for the similarities and differences of cartoon scripts from Walt Disney and DreamWorks for the semantic level*.

Semantic features of the cartoon scripts from Walt Disney and DreamWorks were analyzed by identifying the semantic roles of argumental nominals.

The Cartoons from Mulan

Table 1 *Semantic Roles Used of Nouns, Noun Phrases and Pronouns in the Script of Mulan 1*

Type	Number in S	Number in O	Total	Frequency(%)
Agent	53	0	53	40.77
Theme	1	53	54	41.54
Instrument	0	4	4	3.08
Experiencer	9	0	9	6.92
Location	0	5	5	3.85
Source	0	2	2	1.54
Goal	0	3	3	2.31
Total			130	100

Table 1 shows that in Mulan 1, the semantic roles performed by nouns, noun phrases and pronouns are theme and agent. The least role performed by the nominals is source.

Table 2 *Semantic Roles Used of Nouns, Noun Phrases and Pronouns in the Script of Mulan 2*

Type	Number in S	Number in O	Total	Frequency(%)
Agent	71	0	71	40.80
Theme	0	63	63	36.21
Instrument	0	3	3	1.72
Experiencer	25	0	25	14.37
Location	0	7	7	4.02
Source	0	2	2	1.15
Goal	0	3	3	1.72
Total			174	100

Table 2 shows that in the Disney cartoon Mulan 2, the noun or noun phrase dominantly performed the semantic role of Agent, followed by Experiencer, and the rest is 0.

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The Cartoons from Kung Fu Panda

Table 3 *Semantic Roles of Nouns Noun Phrases and Pronouns in the Script of Kung Fu Panda 1*

Type	Number in S	Number in O	Total	Frequency(%)
Agent	49	0	49	42.61
Theme	1	41	42	36.52
Instrument	0	3	3	2.61
Experiencer	13	0	13	11.30
Location	0	1	1	0.87
Source	0	1	1	0.87
Goal	0	6	6	5.22
Total			115	100

Table 3 shows that the semantic roles performed by nouns, noun phrases and pronouns are dominantly Agent, followed by Experiencer and Theme. Other semantic roles are not evident. In the object part, the frequency of Theme is the most, the frequency of Goal is the second, then ranked Instrument, Location and Source, and the rest do not appear. In general, Agent is used most frequently, followed by Theme, Experiencer, Goal, Instrument, Location and Source. Goal is used more frequently than the last few, which indicates that DreamWorks focuses on the Goal expression in cartoon language.

Table 4 *Semantic Roles Nouns, Noun Phrases and Pronouns in the Script of Kung Fu Panda 2*

Type	Number in S	Number in O	Total	Frequency(%)
Agent	36	0	36	40.91
Theme	0	27	27	30.68
Instrument	0	0	0	0
Experiencer	14	0	14	15.91
Location	0	4	4	4.55
Source	0	1	1	1.14
Goal	0	6	6	6.82
Total			88	100

Table 4 shows that in the selected data of Kung Fu Panda 2, the semantic roles of noun, noun phrases and pronouns in the subject part are Agent followed by Experiencer. Other semantic roles are not evident. In terms of the use of semantic roles for the object part, the number of Theme is the largest, followed by Goal, Location and Source, and the remaining semantic roles are not present. On the whole, Agent is the most used, followed by Theme, and Instrument does not appear.

Scripts of cartoon movies with Chinese characters of Mulan and Kung Fu Panda were compared based on semantic features.

Similarities and Differences in the Scripts of Mulan and Kung Fu Panda on the Semantic Level

Figure 1 shows the similarities and differences in the scripts of Mulan and Kung Fu Panda in terms of semantic roles.

As shown in Figure 1, nouns, noun phrases and pronouns perform the semantic roles of Agent and Theme both in Mulan and Kung Fu Panda. In contrast, the semantic roles of nominals as instrument are evident in Kung Fu Panda but not in Mulan. Likewise, the frequency of nominals performing the roles of experiencer, location, source and goal are more evident in Kung Fu Panda than in Mulan.

4. Discussion

According to Arnheim, Teng and Zhu (1998),[2] the foundation of any art form is the ability to convey a certain meaning, and any form should convey a meaning beyond the form itself. Cartoon as an expression of art form, different cartoon output has its inherent characteristics.

4.1 Limitation of the Study

Though this study has, to some extent, analyzed data

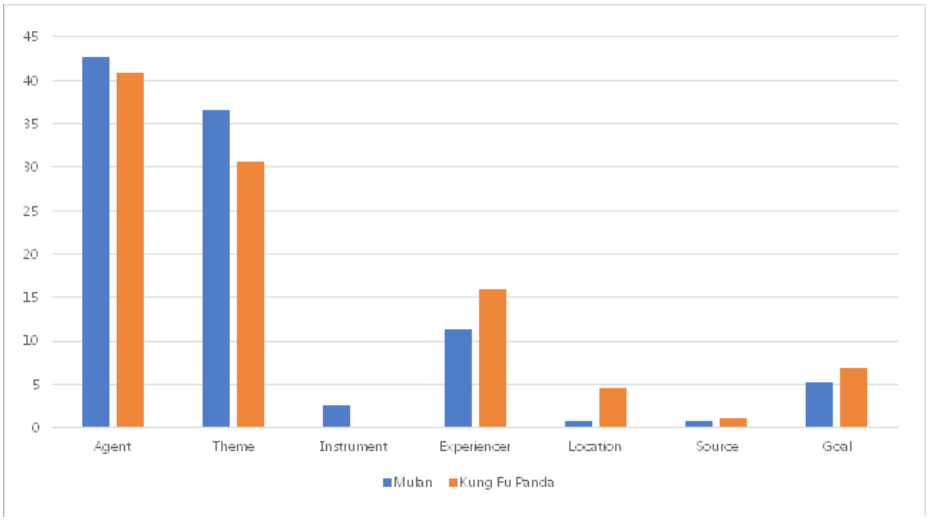

Figure 1. Semantic roles nouns, noun phrases and pronouns in the scripts of Mulan and Kung Fu Panda.

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from Walt Disney and DreamWorks, major findings of the study are very tentative and preliminary. Limitations of the study lie mainly in terms of data, linguistic features, theoretical underpinnings and use of ellipsis.

Firstly, only four movie cartoons were used as data. The quantity of the sentences chosen from these four cartoons was too limited to produce a more accurate analysis of the data.

Secondly, the linguistic features analyzed are limited to the theory of semantic roles which cannot give a relatively comprehensive linguistic description of the cartoon movies. On semantic levels, sounds and image were not included.

Thirdly, the semantic analysis of cartoons has not drawn enough attention from researchers in the past decades; hence, relevant theory has not been well established yet. Consequently, very few theoretical references were included in analyzing the data analysis. In addition, due to the limitation of theoretical reference, the analysis results may be partial, unable to fully express the meaning of the analysis results.

Lastly, oral language always use ellipsis which result in the absence of the literal meaning of the sentence, thus affecting the full semantic expression. Because of the particularity of animation language, most of them are presented in a colloquial form. As a result, during the analysis of animation text, the meaning of animation language were lost and the characteristics of animation language were not expressed more accurately.

4.2 Semantic Features of Cartoon Scripts of Mulan and Kung Fu Panda

Semantic roles are the roles performed by the argument nominals as dictated by the verb. They can be categorized as agent, theme, instrument, experiencer, location, source and goal. They may be in the subject or object positions in the sentence.

Both in Mulan and Kung Fu Panda, agent, experiencer and theme would appear in subject part. On the other hand, nominals which perform the semantic roles of and theme, instrument, location, source and goal are positioned in the object part.

In Mulan, the frequency of agent is 40.79%, theme is 38.49%, instrument is 2.30%, experiencer is 11.18%, location is 3.95%, source is 1.32% and goal is 1.97%. The researcher will discuss them by some examples.

Example 1. Shan-Yu is leading them.

Here the verb *leading* is an action in present progressive. The noun, *Shan-Yu,* which is the Mongolian name for tribal leader, performs the role of an agent. The pronoun, *them*, which is influenced by the action performer performs the semantic role of theme.

Example 2. Forgive me, Your Majesty, but I believe my troops can stop him.

The verb, *forgive*, is a word with personal feeling. Therefore, the noun phrase, *your Majesty*, performs the role of experiencer considering that is shows emotion. The pronoun *I,* likewise, performs the role of experiencer as assigned by the verb "believe." *My troops,* the action performer*,* acts as agent while the pronoun *him* performs the role of theme having been affected by the action.

Example 3. Let me hear you say "aaah"!

The sensory verb, *hear*, emphasizes the feelings of *me* which is offered as experiencer. *You* who is the person affected by *me* and *hear* acts as theme.

Example 4. We will become united through marriage.

The verb *become* assigns the semantic role of agent to *we*. The noun *marriage* performs the semantic role of instrument because of the use of *through*.

Example 5. We're needed at the front.

Needed is in the passive voice; therefore, *we* is the entity influenced by the action. *The front* refers to direction in the sentence; hence, it played the role of location as suggested by t the prepositions *at*.

Example 6. Yeah, just enough time to stop Mulan from making the biggest mistake of my...

Mulan, who is the protagonist, is affected by the action *stop*. Therefore, *Mulan* played the semantic role of theme. The use of *from* suggests that the entity after it is the source. Hence, the noun phrase *the biggest mistakes of my ...* played the role of source.

Example 7. I put my heart and soul into busting them up.

Put is an action verb which assigns the semantic role of agent to I. *My heart and soul* both perform the roles of theme having been influenced by the verb *busting.*

The examples cited show that in the scripts of Mulan, nouns, noun phrases and pronouns are frequently used as agent. On the contrary, their semantic roles as source were the least. Results suggest the simplicity of the language of animation language. Colloquial language tends to make the plot more life-like.

In Kung Fu Panda, the frequency of agent is 41.87%, theme is 33.99%, instrument is 1.48%, experiencer is 13.30%, location is 2.46%, source is 0.99% and goal is 5.91%. Several examples will be discussed as follows.

Example 8. I was dreaming about noodles.

I which is the action performer and does the action *dreaming* acts performs the role of agent. The entity which the person is dreaming about is noodles; hence, *noodles* as the affected entity plays the role of theme.

Example 9. One of the Five is gonna get the Dragon Scroll!

The noun phrase, *one of the five*, acts as the executor of the action. It performs the role of agent in the sentence.

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On the other hand, *the Dragon Scroll* performs the role of goal as assigned by the verb get.

Example 10. And believe me, citizens, you have not seen anything yet.

Believe is a verb which shows emotion. Hence, the pronoun *me* which is affected by this movement performs the role of experiencer. The noun *citizens* and the pronoun *you*, likewise, perform the role of experiencer. *Anything* is a pronoun which is assigned the role of theme as suggested by the verb *seen*.

Example 11. I see you have found the Sacred Peach Tree of Heavenly Wisdom.

I performs the role of experiencer as assigned by the verb *see*. The noun phrase, *the Sacred Peach Tree of Heavenly Wisdom* is the affected entity.

Example 12. Well, you see, son, baby geese come from a little egg.

See is a sensuous verb which assigns the role of experiencer to the pronoun *you*. The nouns, *son and baby geese*, as the entities performing the actions played the role of agent in this sentence. On the other hand, the expression *a little egg* acts as source because of the using of the expression *come from*.

Example 13. I think...

The expression is an ellipsis where the mental verb *think*. Hence, the pronoun *I* acts as an experiencer.

Example 14. We're coming for you, Shen!

We is an entity performing the action; hence, it plays the semantic role of agent.

Based on the data the language used in the animated Kung Fu Panda, the semantic roles of nouns, noun phrases and pronouns are polarized with the highest use frequency of agent and the lowest use frequency of source. Results, likewise, indicate that DreamWorks use a single semantic character to make the script easy to understand.

4.3 The Similarities and Differences between Mulan and Kung Fu Panda

In terms of semantic features, the semantic roles of agent and experiencer dominated the scripts of both Mulan and Kung Fu Panda. Agents and experiencer are evidently used in the subject position rather than object apparently to make the film easy to understand and to follow.

On the other hand, nouns, noun phrases and pronouns which perform the roles of instrument, location, source and goal are evidently placed in Object position of the sentence. Likewise, the said semantic roles were rarely used in the scripts possibly to avoid complexities. In some cases, however, they were used to supplement the amount of information or to provide details like methods, places and origins of each character.

On the semantic level, the use of nouns, noun phrases and pronouns as agent placed in the subject position is more evident in Kung Fu Panda. It suggests that the scripts in Kung Fu Panda paid more attention to the description of characters.

On the other hand, most of themes are placed in the Object position both in Mulan and Kung Fu Panda, though higher frequency was found in Mulan than in Kung Fu Panda. The semantic role of experiencer are more often used in Kung Fu Panda than in Mulan. This suggests that the scripts of Kung Fu Panda pay more attention to the description of character details or attached great importance to the characterization of the character to impress the audience.

4.4 Contribution of the Study

Because of the very limited studies exploring the semantic analysis of cartoon language, the present study which is deemed exploratory may humbly contribute to semantic analysis of the scripts of cartoons. Likewise, the study may be contributory in the description of language used in Walt Disney and DreamWorks which may provide preliminary view on the language of media intended for the young viewers.

Consequently, the study proposes the very tentative framework of analysis of cartoon language as presented below:

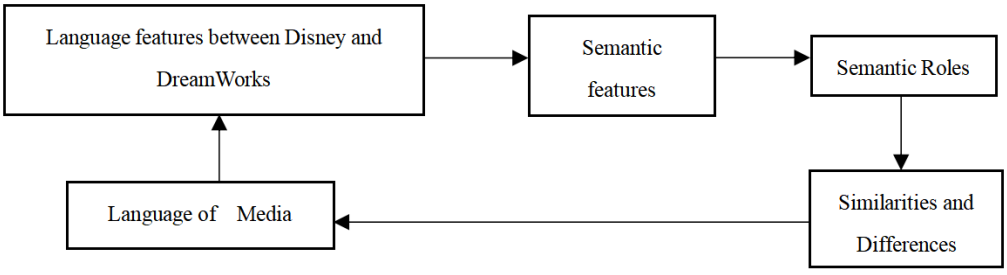

Figure 2. **semantic analysis of cartoon scripts with Chinese characters**

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The framework shows that the language of cartoon scripts may be analyzed semantically, the language of cartoon scripts may be analyzed by focusing on the semantic roles. Any given scripts may be compared or contrasted linguistically to describe the language of media evident in the scripts.

5 Conclusion

On the semantic level, nominals are generally performing the semantic roles of agent and experiencer to ensure actions which are easier to follow and to express emotions which shall have affective appeal to the audience. The roles of instrument, goal, location and source are rarely used because children at their young age might not be ready to understand the flow of events.

Obviously, regardless of the film company, the simplicity of the language of the scripts is evidently a matter of style for cartoon movies.

Considering the limitations of the study, the following are recommended:

Firstly, in order to give a relatively comprehensive linguistic description of the selected cartoons, a multi-modal analysis of cartoon films is recommended. This means paying attention to other levels of language like phonology, morphology and syntax which may display other important linguistic features not spotted due to the time limitation and lack of necessary analytical tools. In addition, other paralinguistic elements like gestures, lights, sound effects, movements and colors may be included in the analysis.

Secondly, since the semantic analysis of cartoons has not drawn enough attention from the researchers in the past decades, relevant theory has not been well established yet. The present study would be more theoretically sound if the theory of cartoons had been fully developed. Methods used in Corpus Linguistics are worthy of attention and more contrastive studies may be necessary if peculiar features are targeted at.

Lastly, since the data selected in the study is quite small to represent the deterministic animation language characteristics of the two companies, the inclusion of more animation films from different companies is recommended.

Project Funding:

Support received from Humanities and Social Science Research Project of Higher Education in Anhui Province (No. SK2020A0248) and Talent Support Program of Anhui University of Chinese Medicine (2020rcyb010).

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ISSN 2630-5097
02
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