HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
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PRAGMATIC MEANING IN CUSTOMISED GLOBAL COURSEBOOKS: EVIDENCE FROM UZBEKISTAN'S GRADE 5–11 ENGLISH SERIES

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Doi: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23696654

Abstract: Pragmatic competence, the ability to choose language that suits a purpose, a listener, and a situation, is now a stated goal of communicative English teaching. Yet textbook studies keep finding that coursebooks model language use without explaining it. This article examines how pragmatic meaning is presented in the Uzbekistan editions of two Cambridge series adopted for all state schools from the 2022–2023 school year, *Guess What!* (Grades 5–6) and *Prepare!* (Grades 7–11). In a directed qualitative content analysis, 849 activities from 21 units (three per grade, from the beginning, middle, and end of each book) were coded for speech acts, implicature and inference, and register, politeness, and genre, each marked as explicit, implicit, or not present, and for whether the activity linked pragmatic and structural features. Pragmatic content appeared in 227 activities (26.7%), nearly all of it implicit speech-act practice in pair work, model dialogues, and stories. Only 13 activities (5.7% of pragmatic activities) made a pragmatic feature explicit, against 10.5% of structural activities. Explicit treatment came mainly in writing guidance from Grade 7 and in functional phrase boxes in Grades 10 and 11, and even there the reasons for choosing between forms, such as the greater tentativeness of *Could I have …?*, went unstated. Implicature was coded in only two activities and politeness explained in one. The share of pragmatic content did not rise across the seven grades. The customised editions thus contain the same gap in explicit pragmatic information that earlier studies found in global coursebooks, and the findings point to specific places where teachers and textbook reviewers could fill it.

Keywords: pragmatics; speech acts; ELT textbooks; customised coursebooks; content analysis; Uzbekistan; secondary school

1. Introduction

Knowing the form of a request is not the same as knowing how to make one. A learner who can produce *Can I have the book?*, *Could I have the book?*, and *I'd like the book, please* also has to know that these forms differ in directness and that the right choice depends on who is being asked, and where. That knowledge is pragmatic. Ever since Canale and Swain (1980) built sociolinguistic competence into their model of communicative competence, using language appropriately in context has counted as a core goal of language teaching, and a failure here can cause misunderstandings that grammatical errors do not (Thomas, 1983).

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ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
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Second language pragmatics research has shown that pragmatic features are teachable and that instruction helps, especially explicit instruction (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Taguchi, 2011). It has also shown that exposure alone often falls short, since learners can meet a form many times without noticing what it does socially (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). In foreign-language settings, where learners meet little English outside the classroom, the textbook is usually the main source of input from which such knowledge could be built (McGrath, 2002; Tomlinson, 2012). So what the textbook says, or leaves unsaid, about language use matters.

Studies of ELT textbooks have found a consistent pattern. Coursebooks contain plenty of dialogues and speaking tasks but seldom explain the pragmatic choices those dialogues involve, and the language they model often differs from what speakers actually say (Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991; Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Vellenga, 2004; Ren & Han, 2016). Most of these studies looked at global coursebooks published for an international market. Much less is known about the customised editions publishers now produce for national school systems, where a global series is adapted to a national curriculum and sent to every state school.

Uzbekistan is one such case. A series of reforms introduced English from Grade 1 (President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2012), linked foreign-language standards to the CEFR (Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2013), and created a national body to coordinate textbooks (President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2021). From the 2022–2023 school year, customised editions of two Cambridge series were then introduced in all state schools: *Guess What!* for Grades 1–6 and *Prepare!* for Grades 7–11 (RTI International, 2023). A national survey found that most teachers welcomed the books and felt they had changed their teaching (RTI International, 2023; Iannuzzi & Vyortkina, 2024). What the books teach about language use, however, has not been analysed in any published study.

This article takes up that gap. It reports one part of a larger study of how the structural, cognitive, and pragmatic dimensions of meaning are represented in the Uzbekistan editions, concentrating on the pragmatic dimension. Three research questions guide the analysis:

RQ1. Which pragmatic aspects of meaning (speech acts, implicature and inference, and register, politeness, and genre) are presented in the Uzbekistan editions of *Guess What!* (Grades 5–6) and *Prepare!* (Grades 7–11)?

RQ2. How explicitly are these aspects presented, and are they linked to the forms that express them?

RQ3. How does the presentation of pragmatic meaning change from Grade 5 to Grade 11 and between the two series?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Pragmatic competence and the case for instruction

Pragmatics studies meaning in use, that is, what speakers do with utterances and what listeners infer from them. Speech act theory showed that saying something is also doing something, such as requesting, promising, or apologising (Austin, 1962), and it classified the kinds of acts utterances perform (Searle, 1976). Grice (1975) explained how listeners infer unstated meanings by assuming that speakers are cooperative, and Relevance Theory recast that inference as a cognitive search for the most relevant interpretation (Sperber & Wilson, 1995). Politeness theory describes how speakers

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ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
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protect each other's face through indirectness, hedging, and other strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983). Systemic Functional Linguistics, for its part, links choices of wording to the relationship between speakers and to the type of text being produced (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

For learners, the upshot is that grammatical knowledge does not guarantee appropriate use. Thomas (1983) separated pragmalinguistic failure, where a learner uses the wrong linguistic means to perform an act, from sociopragmatic failure, where a learner misjudges the social situation. Either can make a learner sound rude or odd even when every sentence is grammatical. Reviews of instructional studies conclude that pragmatic features can be taught, and that explicit instruction, drawing learners' attention to a form, its function, and its social conditions, generally works better than exposure alone (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Taguchi, 2011). Bardovi-Harlig (2001) adds that uninstructed learners may take many years to notice pragmatic features, even in second-language settings with rich input. Taguchi (2015) brings together 58 instructional studies to ask which teaching methods work best. Takimoto (2009) reports gains in pragmatic proficiency from input-based tasks. Cohen (2008) and Rueda (2006) both make the case for explicit instruction, which, as Rueda notes, classrooms often neglect. Ishihara and Cohen (2010) carry this research into the classroom and argue that teachers need materials that state, as well as model, how language use varies with context.

2.2 Pragmatics in ELT textbooks

Textbook research has found again and again that materials give less pragmatic information than learners need. Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991) showed that the closings of conversations in ESL textbooks were often truncated or unrealistic. Boxer and Pickering (1995) compared textbook presentations of complaints with naturally occurring data; the textbooks focused on direct complaints and left out the indirect complaining that speakers use to build rapport. Vellenga (2004) examined eight ESL and EFL textbooks with their teachers' manuals and found explicit metapragmatic information, such as comments on politeness or register, to be scarce, with the manuals rarely making up the shortfall. Crandall and Basturkmen (2004) evaluated a set of pragmatics-focused materials and argued that materials should make learners aware of how requests vary with context instead of handing them lists of phrases. More recently, Ren and Han (2016) analysed ten ELT textbooks and found that speech acts were common but that explanations of when and why particular forms are used were limited and unevenly spread. Diepenbroek and Derwing (2013) found that few popular integrated-skills ESL textbooks consistently include pragmatic content. Closest to the present study is work on national school series. Nguyen (2011) asked whether a new series of Vietnamese upper-secondary textbooks gives enough contextual and metapragmatic information about speech acts, and Ton Nu and Murray (2020) found explicit pragmatic content on only about 5.5% of the student book pages in Vietnam's national upper-secondary series and in none of its teacher manuals.

A related line of work concerns authenticity. Gilmore (2007) reviewed evidence that textbook dialogues differ from natural conversation in turn-taking, hesitation, and the use of softening devices, which gives learners a simplified picture of how speakers manage interaction. What these studies describe, then, are materials in which pragmatic meaning is present as practice and missing as explanation.

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2.3 Customised global coursebooks and the Uzbek context

Global coursebooks are written for an international market and carry assumptions about their users, their settings, and English itself (Gray, 2010). When a series is customised for a national system, the publisher can adapt content, names, and topics to local learners. In principle, the same customisation could add explanations for learners whose first language organises social meaning differently. Whether it does is an empirical question, and studies based on international editions cannot answer it.

In Uzbekistan the question carries particular weight. English teaching there inherited a grammar-translation tradition from the Soviet period, which produced strong formal knowledge but limited communicative practice (Hasanova, 2007). Communicative language teaching was endorsed after independence but proved hard to implement in large classes with grammar-focused teacher training (Hasanova & Shadieva, 2008), and recent work shows teachers' beliefs shifting under the latest reforms (Hasanova & Vokhidova, 2025). Uzbek also encodes social distance differently from English, for instance through the choice between familiar and polite second-person forms and through verb morphology (Bodrogligeti, 2003). An Uzbek learner meeting *Could I have …?* has no familiar category onto which to map its politeness, and if the book does not explain what the past modal does, the learner has to work it out alone.

2.4 Analytical framework

The analysis draws on the Tripartite Model of Meaning (TMM), developed for the larger study. The model treats meaning as having structural, cognitive, and pragmatic dimensions and asks whether materials make the connections between them visible; this article reports the pragmatic dimension and its links with structure. Three pragmatic categories were coded. *Speech acts* covered any act that is labelled, modelled, or practised (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1976). *Implicature and inference* covered tasks asking what a speaker or writer means or intends beyond what is said (Grice, 1975; Sperber & Wilson, 1995). *Register, politeness, and genre* covered formal and informal contrasts, politeness strategies, and the conventions of text types (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Following the distinction the textbook literature draws between modelling and explaining (Vellenga, 2004; Ren & Han, 2016), each category was coded explicit when the book states the pragmatic point in words and implicit when the book models or practises it without explanation.

3. Method

3.1 Research design

The study used qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012; Krippendorff, 2019) in its directed form, in which an existing framework supplies the initial categories and the analysis tests and extends them (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The coding frame was applied deductively, with categories refined where the data did not fit, following Elo and Kyngäs's (2008) combined deductive–inductive procedure. Frequencies are reported to show patterns across grades and series, and typical and exceptional activities are discussed in detail.

3.2 Materials and sample

The data were the Uzbekistan editions of the two series used in general secondary schools. They were chosen because they are officially adopted for all state schools, have been the editions in use

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since 2022–2023, and contain explicit presentation of grammar, vocabulary, and language use. Grades 1–4 were left out because their books rely mainly on songs, chants, and picture-based oral work.

From each of the seven grades, three units were sampled: the first, the middle, and the last unit of the book. Because the Grade 7 and Grade 8 Student's Books divide one level of *Prepare!* between them, this gave Units 1, 4, and 8 for Grades 5 and 6; Units 1, 5, and 10 for Grade 7; Units 11, 15, and 20 for Grade 8; and Units 1, 10, and 20 for Grades 9, 10, and 11. Within each unit, every activity in the Student's Book and in the linked Workbook pages was analysed. Cross-curricular (CLIL) and Culture pages were treated as supplements and excluded. An activity was defined as one numbered exercise or task; the unnumbered *About you* questions in *Prepare!* and the *Your turn* prompts in *Guess What!* were also counted. The final corpus contained 849 activities: 207 from *Guess What!* and 642 from *Prepare!*, of which 495 came from the Student's Books and 354 from the Workbooks. The Teacher's Books were read for their stated aims and for any notes on language use in the sampled units, but were not coded activity by activity.

3.3 Coding

All three pragmatic categories were coded for every activity, whatever its section heading, so the analysis did not assume in advance that pragmatic content appears only in speaking sections. Each category was marked Explicit (E), Implicit (I), or Not present (N). A speech act was coded implicit when an activity asked learners to perform it, for example "Ask and answer" or "Talk to a friend", or when a model dialogue or story contained it without comment, and explicit when the book named the function and gave guidance on how to perform it. Register, politeness, and genre were coded explicit when the book stated a convention or a reason, such as how to begin and end an email or how to take turns in a discussion, and implicit when a genre was named or modelled without its features being explained.

Each activity was also coded for its structural content, so that the relation between the pragmatic and structural dimensions could be recorded. Where both were present, the activity was coded as showing a *partial link* if the book explicitly connected a form to a pragmatic function or effect, and as separated if the two were present without a connection. Where ambiguity remained, the more conservative code was assigned and the alternative noted. Every code was recorded with the grade, unit, book, page, and activity number.

3.4 Coding procedure and reliability

First-pass codes were produced with the assistance of an AI tool, working from the text of the sampled pages and the written coding manual. The author then checked every code against the textbook pages, looking at the page images wherever layout or a picture affected the decision, and corrected codes where needed. The codes reported below are the author's checked codes.

For an inter-coder reliability check, a random sample of 169 activities (about 20% of the corpus), stratified by grade, has been drawn for independent coding by a second coder, an experienced English teacher trained in the coding manual. This check was still in progress when the article was written, so the results reported here rest on the author's coding. Agreement is to be calculated for each pragmatic category and for the link code using Cohen's kappa, with percentage agreement reported alongside it because kappa is unstable for rare categories; values from .61 upwards are interpreted as substantial

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agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Disagreements are to be discussed and the coding manual revised where needed.

3.5 Analysis

Counts were calculated for each category by grade and series, both as raw numbers and as proportions of the activities in each grade, since units differ in length. The explicit activities and those with partial links were then examined one by one to see what they make explicit and what they leave unstated, and typical implicit activities were chosen to illustrate the dominant pattern in each series.

4. Results

4.1 The pragmatic profile of the materials

Pragmatic content was coded in 227 of the 849 activities (26.7%). Table 1 shows the distribution by grade. Speech acts were by far the most frequent category, present in 208 activities, followed by register, politeness, and genre (47) and implicature and inference (2). In 125 of the pragmatic activities, pragmatic content was the only dimension present; in the other 102, it appeared together with structural content.

Table 1. Pragmatic content by grade (number of activities)

Grade	Series	Activities coded	Pragmatic activities (%)	Speech acts E / I	Register, politeness, genre E / I	Implicature I	Pragmatic explicit	Pragmatic only / with structure
5	*Guess What!*	102	30 (29.4)	0 / 29	1 / 3	0	1	9 / 21
6	*Guess What!*	105	28 (26.7)	0 / 27	0 / 4	0	0	9 / 19
7	*Prepare!*	126	24 (19.0)	0 / 23	2 / 5	0	2	13 / 11
8	*Prepare!*	126	32 (25.4)	0 / 30	0 / 6	0	0	21 / 11
9	*Prepare!*	115	34 (29.6)	0 / 30	3 / 7	0	3	24 / 10
10	*Prepare!*	144	38 (26.4)	3 / 32	1 / 6	0	3	22 / 16
11	*Prepare!*	131	41 (31.3)	3 / 31	2 / 7	2	4	27 / 14
Total		**849**	**227 (26.7)**	**6 / 202**	**9 / 38**	**2**	**13**	**125 / 102**

Note. E = explicit (the book explains the feature); I = implicit (the book models or practises it without explanation). An activity can be coded for more than one category, so category counts do not sum to

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the number of pragmatic activities. “Pragmatic explicit” counts activities in which at least one pragmatic category is explicit.

What stands out in the profile is how rarely pragmatic content is explicit. Only 13 of the 227 pragmatic activities (5.7%) make any pragmatic feature explicit (Figure 1). That is about half the rate for the structural dimension in the same corpus, where 50 of 476 structural activities (10.5%) state a rule or explanation. Just 9 activities, about 1% of the corpus, explicitly link a pragmatic function to the forms that express it.

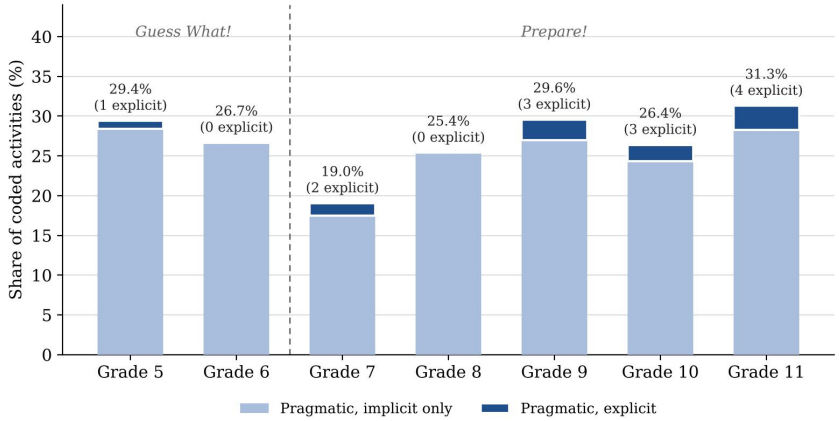


Figure 1. Share of activities with pragmatic content, implicit and explicit, by grade (N = 849)

4.2 Speech acts: practised but not explained

Most pragmatic codes come from activities in which learners perform speech acts with no attention to how they are performed. Grammar and vocabulary exercises in both series often end with an instruction such as "Ask and answer", "Talk to a friend", or "In pairs, discuss". Each *Prepare!* unit opens with *About you* questions asking learners to discuss a topic, and speaking lessons have them role-play situations such as ordering food (Grade 8, Unit 11). Such activities give practice in asking, describing, giving opinions, and agreeing.

In *Guess What!*, the illustrated stories model a wider range of acts: requests ("Can you help us?" "Of course."; Grade 5, Unit 1), suggestions ("We should camp here"; Grade 6, Unit 1), instructions ("Let's go quietly"; Grade 6, Unit 4), and thanks and praise (Grade 6, Unit 8). The skills pages carry a *Functional language* label and supply sentence frames for asking about family, making plans, or giving opinions. Grammar lessons end with model dialogues in which forms such as *So did I* (agreement) and *Can I see your photographs?* (a request) appear without comment (Grade 5, Units 4 and 8).

In none of these 202 activities does the book comment on the function, the choice of form, or the relationship between the speakers. Pragmatically significant forms also turn up inside grammar exercises, where they are tested as form only. In Grade 10, Unit 1, learners choose between *I write* and *I'm writing to you about a trip* as a test of tense, and in Grade 11, Unit 10, they complete the advice formula *If I were you, I would …* as a conditional. Each time, a form with a conventional pragmatic function is practised while the function itself goes unnamed.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
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4.3 The explicit cases

Table 2 lists the 13 activities that make a pragmatic feature explicit, and they cluster in two places. One is the writing guidance in *Prepare!* from Grade 7 onwards, where *Prepare to write* steps name features of a genre: linking words that organise the events of a story (Grade 7, Unit 10), the opening and closing of an email (Grade 9, Unit 10), and the paragraph structure of a biography, including when a writer uses a person's full name, first name, or pronoun (Grade 9, Unit 20). The other is speaking in Grades 10 and 11, where *Prepare to speak* boxes group phrases by function. These cover ordering food, with separate phrases for server and customer (Grade 10, Unit 10); expressing surprise and disbelief (Grade 10, Unit 20); taking part in a discussion (Grade 11, Unit 10); and agreeing and disagreeing (Grade 11, Unit 20). The single explicit case in *Guess What!* is a Workbook note that an exclamation mark is used to shout or to make a sentence "stronger and more exciting" (Grade 5, Unit 4).

Table 2. The 13 activities that make a pragmatic feature explicit

Grade, unit, book, activity	Section	What is made explicit	What remains unstated
5, U4 (Gadgets), WB 13	Reading	Exclamation mark used to shout or make a sentence "stronger and more exciting"	—
7, U10 (Buying things), SB W1	Writing	Sequencing words (*after that*, *finally*) named as organising the events of a story	How sequencing differs across genres
7, U10, WB W3	Writing	Linking words used to connect events in a story	As above
9, U10 (Useful websites), SB W1	Writing	Email conventions: begin *Dear Sal*, end with your name; vary sentence openings	Why these conventions suit the reader
9, U20 (Life changes), SB W1	Writing	Biography: when a writer uses the full name, first name, or *he*; paragraph topics	—
9, U20, WB W2	Writing	Four-paragraph structure of a biography	Purpose of each paragraph

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
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Grade, unit, book, activity	Section	What is made explicit	What remains unstated
10, U1 (All about me), SB W2	Writing	Phrases listed for functions in an online profile (introducing yourself, describing personality, hobbies)	Register of a public profile
10, U10 (Taste this!), SB S3	Speaking	Ordering phrases sorted by role (server / customer)	Differences in politeness among *Could I have …?*, *I'll have …*, *I'd like …*
10, U20 (Seeing is believing), SB S3	Speaking	Phrases for surprise and disbelief (*You're joking!*, *No way!*)	Informality of the phrases
11, U1 (Going shopping), SB W3	Writing	Answer all questions, add extra information, vary tenses	Why the task genre requires this
11, U10 (Animals in danger), SB S1	Speaking	Turn-taking and politeness in discussions (apologise if you interrupt; let others join in)	—
11, U10, SB S2	Speaking	Discussion phrases matched to functions (asking for explanation, changing topic)	How the phrases manage face
11, U20 (Making plans), SB S3	Speaking	Phrases for agreeing, disagreeing, and asking for agreement	Softening in *That's quite a good idea, although …*

Note. SB = Student's Book; WB = Workbook. A dash means the activity states the relevant point.

Even these activities leave the pragmatic reasons for choosing a form unstated. The ordering box offers *Could I have …, please?*, *I'll have …, please*, and *I'd like …, please* as equivalent options, although they differ in directness and *Could I have …?* uses a past modal to make the request more tentative. Among the phrases for disagreeing is *That's quite a good idea, although …*, a softened disagreement whose softening goes unremarked, and the surprise phrases *You're joking!* and *No way!* appear without any mention of their informality. So the boxes name the function and supply the forms, a partial link between the structural and pragmatic dimensions, but they do not explain the social conditions that would guide a choice among the forms.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
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http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

4.4 Register, politeness, and implicature

Register, politeness, and genre were coded in 47 activities, 38 of them implicit (Figure 2). Most implicit codes come from writing tasks that name a genre, such as a report, a story, an interview, or an email, without describing its features. In Grade 6, Unit 8, learners write an email with the frame *Dear …* and *Love, …* supplied but not explained; in Grade 9, Unit 1, they write an introductory email from a frame (*Hi! I'm …*, *Best wishes*) with no comment on why these openings and closings suit a message to a friend. No activity in the sampled units was coded as contrasting formal and informal language.

Politeness is explained in a single activity. In Grade 11, Unit 10, learners decide which pieces of advice for discussions are true, among them "Apologise if you interrupt someone, and allow them time to speak" and "Make sure you give the other person enough opportunities to join in". No other activity in the corpus states a rule of interaction management.

Implicature barely appears. Its only two codes are reading questions in the Grade 11 books, one asking why a writer wrote an article (Student's Book, Unit 20) and one asking what a person's attitude to an event is (Workbook, Unit 10). No activity asks what a speaker means without saying it, or how a hint, an indirect refusal, or an understatement works.

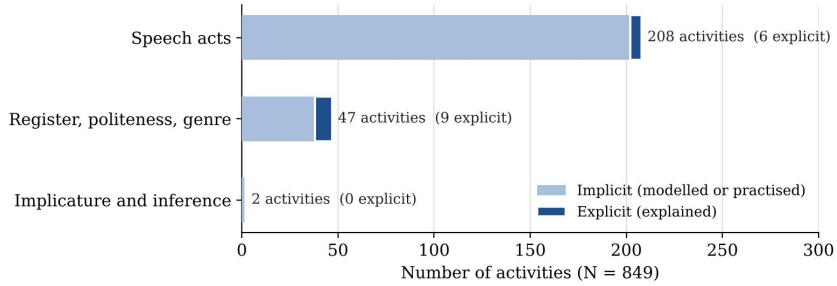


Figure 2. Pragmatic categories by explicit and implicit treatment (N = 849)

4.5 Change across grades and between the series

Across the grades, the share of pragmatic content did not increase (Figure 1). It stood at 29.4% in Grade 5 and 26.7% in Grade 6, fell to 19.0% in Grade 7, and then ranged from 25.4% to 31.3% in Grades 8–11. Overall the two series had almost the same share (28.0% in *Guess What!* and 26.3% in *Prepare!*).

What did change was the form pragmatic content took. In *Guess What!* it more often appeared alongside structure (40 of 58 activities), because most grammar and vocabulary lessons end with a short speaking game in which a new form is used to ask and answer. In *Prepare!* it more often stood alone (107 of 169 activities), in openers, speaking lessons, and writing tasks that practise a function or a genre with no reference to grammar. Explicit treatment, nearly absent in Grades 5 and 6 (one activity), rose slightly in *Prepare!* (12 activities), concentrated in the writing sections of Grades 7 and 9 and the speaking boxes of Grades 10 and 11. Explicit links between functions and phrases in speaking first appear in Grade 10.

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4.6 The Teacher's Books

The introductions to the Teacher's Books describe the series as communicative, aiming to develop learners' "overall language ability, not just their ability to know grammar rules or vocabulary definitions". The unit notes for the sampled units, though, are mainly procedural. They come closest to pragmatic explanation in the ordering-food lesson, where teachers are asked to "point out the use of *I'll have* and *I'd like* when ordering food" and to praise good intonation (Grade 10, Unit 10), with no guidance on what should be pointed out. None of the notes in the sampled units explains politeness, register, or indirect meaning. The Teacher's Books therefore do not supply what the learners' pages leave out, which matches Vellenga's (2004) finding for the teachers' manuals of global coursebooks.

5. Discussion

The central finding is that the Uzbekistan editions model pragmatic meaning but do not explain it. Learners get many chances to perform speech acts, and the stories, dialogues, and phrase boxes contain forms with clear social functions. Yet the books almost never say what those functions are, how the forms differ, or when a speaker would choose one over another. Vellenga (2004) and Ren and Han (2016) found the same pattern in international coursebooks, and the present study adds two observations.

One concerns customisation. The Uzbekistan editions were adapted for a national system, yet as they stand they contain the same gap in explicit pragmatic information that earlier studies found in international editions. Since the international editions were not analysed here, the study cannot say whether customisation removed, kept, or added pragmatic content, only that the result gives Uzbek learners little explicit guidance. That matters because the learners the books were customised for are the ones who most need such guidance. Uzbek marks social distance through forms that do not correspond to English modals and politeness formulae (Bodrogligeti, 2003), and the grammar-translation tradition in which many teachers trained gives them little practice in explaining language use (Hasanova, 2007; Hasanova & Shadieva, 2008). In this setting, an ordering box that presents *Could I have …?* and *I'll have …* as interchangeable leaves entirely to the learner the pragmalinguistic choice that Thomas (1983) identified as a source of pragmatic failure. Research on instructed pragmatics suggests that learners in this position are unlikely to notice the difference from exposure alone (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Taguchi, 2011).

The other concerns progression. Explicit pragmatic content might be expected to grow as learners move from the primary-style *Guess What!* to the teenage *Prepare!* series and on through Grades 7–11. It did not. The overall share of pragmatic content stayed level, and the rise in explicit treatment was small and late, with the first functional phrase boxes in speaking appearing in Grade 10. Moving between the series changed where pragmatic content appears, from speaking games attached to grammar lessons to separate speaking and writing lessons, but not how it is presented. So the structure of the books keeps form and use in different places, the separation of dimensions that the TMM was designed to detect.

The explicit cases hint at what better practice could look like within the same materials. The *Prepare to speak* boxes already organise phrases by function, and the *Prepare to write* steps already name genre features. What is missing is one more step: a statement of why one phrase is more polite, more formal, or more tentative than another, and a task asking learners to choose among phrases for

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ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
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listeners of different status. Crandall and Basturkmen (2004) and Ishihara and Cohen (2010) describe exactly this kind of awareness-raising task, and several activities in the sample could be extended this way with little change. In the Grade 10, Unit 10 ordering lesson, learners could be asked which customer phrase sounds most polite and why. A *Guess What!* model dialogue could carry one question about how a character asks for help. And the discussion advice in Grade 11, Unit 10 could come earlier and be linked to the agreeing and disagreeing phrases in Unit 20.

For teachers and textbook reviewers, the findings reduce to a few questions that can be asked of any unit. Does the unit name the function of the phrases it teaches? Does it say how they differ in directness, formality, or politeness? Does it ask learners to choose a form for a particular listener or situation? Is there any task on what a speaker means but does not say? In the sampled units, the first question sometimes gets a yes; the other three almost always get a no.

6. Conclusion

This study examined how pragmatic meaning is presented in the national English textbooks used in Grades 5–11 of Uzbek state schools. Pragmatic content appeared in about a quarter of the 849 activities analysed, mostly as implicit speech-act practice. Only 13 activities made a pragmatic feature explicit; politeness was explained once and implicature appeared twice, and the share of pragmatic content did not rise across the grades. Even the functional phrase boxes of Grades 10 and 11, the most developed pragmatic material in the corpus, named functions without explaining the social reasons for choosing among forms. The customised editions, then, reproduce the pattern found in earlier studies of global coursebooks, modelling pragmatic meaning without explaining it.

The study has limitations. Because it did not compare the Uzbekistan editions with the international editions of the same series, it describes the customised books as they are, not what customisation changed. It analysed three units per grade and may have missed features found only in other units, though the stability of the pattern across 21 units and seven grades suggests a property of the materials as a whole. It analysed materials as texts and cannot show how teachers use them; teachers may add explanations the books lack, as the RTI survey's reports of changed teaching practice might suggest. Coding involves judgement, especially in telling implicit from explicit treatment, and the first-pass coding was AI-assisted. Every code was checked by the author, but the inter-coder agreement figures from the second-coder check described in Section 3.4 were not yet available, so the frequencies should be read with this in mind. Future research could observe how teachers present the functional language in these books, test whether short explicit additions of the kind proposed here improve Uzbek learners' pragmatic choices, and extend the analysis to the Grade 1–4 books and to other customised national editions.

Declarations

Funding. This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of interest. The author declares no conflict of interest.

Data availability. The coding record for all 849 activities, with the book, page, and activity number for every code, is available from the author on reasonable request.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

Use of AI tools. An AI assistant (Claude, Anthropic) was used for language editing and for first-pass coding of the sampled activities. The author checked every code against the textbooks and takes full responsibility for the content of the article.

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