Teaching Pragmatics in the Saudi EFL Classroom: An Analysis of Textbooks, Teachers' Perceptions, and Classroom Practices

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Abstract

Pragmatic competence is a crucial component of communicative competence and language knowledge (Cohen, 2012). The Saudi Ministry of Education includes the development of pragmatic skills as a central objective in the EFL school curriculum. However, recent research reports low pragmatic awareness and conversational difficulties among Saudi EFL learners (Almegren, 2022; Alqahtani, 2019). Furthermore, there is limited information available on the pragmatic content covered in English language textbooks, as well as the teachers' perceptions of and practices in pragmatics in the Saudi context.

Consequently, this study analyses the pragmatic content of a textbook series used nationwide in Saudi secondary schools. The study examines the type, frequency and distribution of speech acts, with the metapragmatic information covering topics of politeness, appropriacy, register, usage, illocutionary force, and culture. The study also investigates whether teachers follow or diverge from these textbooks when teaching pragmatics. The teachers' opinions on pragmatic content and the factors and challenges influencing their practices are also considered.

To achieve these aims, a mixed-research methodology is employed, which includes textbook analysis, classroom observations and stimulated-recall interviews. Quantitative and qualitative approaches are employed to analyse the data obtained from textbooks and classrooms. The findings indicate that the textbooks include a wide range of speech act types; that there is limited coverage of contextual and metapragmatic information; that there is a lack of a discernible pattern in the distribution of pragmatic information across textbooks; that teachers mostly rely on textbooks to teach pragmatics, with minor adaptations to speech act activities; and that all teachers are aware of the value of teaching pragmatics, despite having different understandings of the concept. Based on these findings, pedagogical suggestions are proposed to enhance learners' pragmatic competence through teaching materials and classroom instruction.

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Author’s Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this University or elsewhere. All sources used are acknowledged as references.

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The present study investigates the pragmatic content within English language textbooks used in Saudi secondary schools. It also seeks to examine the perceptions and practices of teachers regarding this content. This chapter begins by providing an overview of the background to the study. The research problem is then introduced, and the objectives of the study are presented. Following this, the rationale for the undertaking of the study is explained. The chapter concludes by presenting a roadmap that outlines the structure of the entire thesis.

1.2 Background to the Study

Effective linguistic communication requires more than the ability to construct grammatically correct sentences with suitable word choices. It also involves an awareness of how to use culturally and socially appropriate language in various communication contexts. This knowledge, for example, enables speakers to understand that while using ‘Good afternoon, sir’ to greet a superior in a formal business setting is appropriate, using the same greeting with a close friend would be highly irregular and likely to come across as awkward or insincere. The statement ‘Unfortunately, I have plans for tomorrow’ is another example of an utterance that requires a knowledge of social conventions. Responding to an invitation with these words is often perceived as a more polite way of saying ‘No.’

A knowledge of language conventions is referred to as *pragmatic competence*, and it constitutes a key construct of language proficiency and communicative fluency (Bachman, 1990; Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980). Pragmatic competence refers to the ability, in terms of both production and perception, to communicate appropriately in a social setting (Nguyen & Canh, 2019). It involves knowing what to say, how to say it and when to say it, depending on the situation and the interlocutors involved.

Pragmatic competence is an integral component of *pragmatics*, a subfield of linguistics that studies how people use language in context (Crystal, 1997). One of the central areas within pragmatics is *speech acts* (SA), a term introduced by philosopher J.L. Austin in 1962 which has since attracted a great amount of interest, both theoretical and empirical (Alston, 2000; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Cruse, 2011; Mey, 2006; Searle, 1969; 1975, 1979; Yule, 1996). As Searle (1979) explains, SA refers to the idea that utterances do not merely convey information, but they also perform actions, such as announcing, giving orders, making requests, giving advice, refusing, expressing opinions and more. These illocutionary acts are not always expressed directly; the speaker’s intentions can deviate from the syntactic form or the literal meaning of the words spoken (Yule, 1996). For example, when someone poses the question, ‘Can you close the door?’ they are likely making a request, not enquiring about the listener’s ability to close the door. Understanding implied meaning and responding appropriately requires an awareness of pragmatics in SAs, which, in turn, facilitates smoother and more meaningful communication.

The importance of pragmatic competence in second language (L2) acquisition and learning has been emphasised by many researchers (e.g. Cohen & Ishihara, 2012; Crystal, 1997; Eslami- Rasekh & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008; Fraser, 2010; Garcia, 2004; Kasper, 1997; Martinez-Flor, 2016; Nguyen & Canh, 2019; Rose & Kasper, 2001). This competence is particularly crucial in today's globally interconnected world, where English is used as a *lingua franca*, and where interactions are more likely to involve diverse native languages and cultures (see Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Nguyen & Canh, 2019; Sanchez-Hernandez & Martinez-Flor, 2022; Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018; Vu, 2017). Differences in cultural conventions and communication styles can lead to misunderstandings and even pragmatic failure, which can have serious repercussions in various domains, ranging from personal relationships to international politics (e.g., mistranslations can hinder diplomatic efforts) (Wyner, 2014). To avoid this outcome, language learners need to develop strong pragmatic skills to ensure that impolite or inappropriate expressions are not used. As Rose (2001) explained, pragmatic awareness enables learners to become skilful in expressing an idea in various ways, depending on the communicative situation, and this skill facilities adaptability in international discourse. Without it, learners may struggle to convey and interpret intentions accurately, inadvertently damaging their social relationships (House et al., 2003; Rose & Kasper, 2001). Conversely, choosing culturally appropriate linguistic expressions can bring about positive experiences that increase one's motivation to practice communicating in a variety of social contexts (Siegel, 2016).

Extensive research in interlanguage pragmatics has consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of instruction, especially explicit instruction, in developing the pragmatic competence of EFL learners (see Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019; Shakki et al., 2020; Taguchi, 2015 for reviews). The need for pragmatics to be taught is primarily due to the fact that many pragmatic features and relevant contextual factors tend to be non-salient for learners and often go unnoticed, even after prolonged exposure. Pragmatics is a complex field owing to cultural variations in social values, politeness norms, SA realisation patterns and communication styles (Cohen, 2010; Frenz-Belkin, 2015; Riley, 2007). Learners, unaware of these differences, may unintentionally apply pragmatic rules from their first language to the target language (Cohen, 2010; Frenz-Belkin, 2015), which is liable to result in pragmatic failure if the rules differ significantly (Thomas, 1983). Instruction can help learners recognise both the distinctions and similarities between their own linguistic culture and that associated with the target language, preventing inappropriate transfers in areas of substantial difference and facilitating positive transfers where similarities exist (Kasper, 1997). While it may be thought that technical fluency will mitigate or override these difficulties, research has shown otherwise: A high level of grammatical proficiency does not necessarily correlate with a high level of pragmatic competence (Al-Juraywi & Abdulaziz, 2021; Abduljawad, 2020; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Kasper, 1997). Devoting attention to pragmatics in the language classroom through appropriate materials is thus necessary to assist students in aligning their pragmatic competence with their linguistic proficiency (Abe & Suezawa, 2018; Kasper, 2001; Rueda, 2006).

Given its importance in language education, the ongoing neglect of pragmatics in the EFL classroom remains a significant concern (Almegren, 2022; Nguyen & Cahn, 2019; Mohammad-Bagheri, 2015). The outcome is that many EFL students struggle with the communicative aspects of language, even after years of language learning (Mohammad-Bagheri, 2015). This issue is particularly pronounced in the Saudi EFL context, which the following section addresses.

1.3 Research Problem

Teaching English in Saudi Arabia has become an integral part of the education system from primary to tertiary levels, owing to its growing importance for Saudi students. According to Alnasser (2022), proficiency in the English language and its appropriate use is essential for Saudi students to secure employment opportunities, pursue higher education and acquire cross-cultural understanding. It is *a fortiori* necessary for pursuing international studies or undertaking global travel. Consequently, the Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE) has invested significant resources and time into the development of new English curricula. The MoE has carefully selected new international textbook series that have been edited to align with the curriculum’s learning objectives and cater to students’ needs, which prioritise competent communication in the target language (Abahussain, 2016; SELF, 2014). According to the MoE guidelines, these textbooks are intended to provide students with comprehensive communicative content that covers an abundance of SAs and the issues surrounding them, including their politeness levels and appropriateness, given contextual and interlocutor factors (see Chapter 2 for further details on these guidelines). However, despite the MoE’s efforts, numerous empirical studies persistently report a lack of pragmatic awareness among Saudi students (e.g. Al-Juraywi & Abdulaziz, 2021; Al-Otaibi, 2016; Altheeby, 2018; Alzahrani, 2023; Qari, 2017), who often struggle with SAs, relying on their first language to determine contextual appropriateness in the target language. For example, Saudi EFL learners tend to be overly direct when making requests or refusals regardless of the social status and distance of addressee (Abualsamh, 2022; Altheeby, 2018). Such directness, typically considered impolite in English societies, especially in formal or asymmetrical power contexts, may inadvertently lead to impoliteness in intercultural conversations.

These pragmatic deficits raise concerns as they can hinder learners from using language to communicate intentions, thoughts and feelings accurately and to comprehend the communication of others, which are central goals for most language learners. Pragmatic errors can be particularly troublesome for learners because, unlike grammatical errors, they are often attributed to personal character traits such as rudeness or a lack of etiquette, rather than a lack of linguistic knowledge (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Frenz-Belkin, 2015; Li, 2018; Savić, 2014). Limited pragmatic knowledge can therefore lead to miscommunication or offense when learners engage in interactions with others, whether it be through social media, during travel for study/leisure, for business purposes, or in other contexts. This issue was encountered first-hand by the researcher while working as an EFL instructor in Saudi Arabia. One incident involved a student submitting an assignment with the request, ‘Teacher, check this and return it to me soon, please.’ Despite being grammatically correct, the sentence seemed inappropriate and impolite due to its direct and imperative tone. Only the inclusion of the word ‘please’ indicated that the student was not attempting to exert power over the teacher. A response of ‘excuse me?’ prompted the student to translate her request into Arabic, expressing it more politely. This experience triggered a further examination of pragmatic skills among Saudi EFL students, and it was noted that many exhibited similar language usage patterns. Despite possessing linguistic knowledge, they were deficient in pragmatic awareness.

Many studies have explored the reasons for Saudi EFL students’ limited pragmatic competence (e.g. Alqahtani, 2019; Alrabai, 2016; Alshammari, 2022; Chatta & Haque, 2020). One reason suggested is the lack of adequate teaching. As mentioned earlier, research a substantial body of pragmatic research indicates that pedagogical intervention plays an integral role in enhancing EFL learners’ pragmatic competence and awareness. However, apart from two recent studies by Al-qahtani (2020) and Zughaibi (2022, 2023), scant research has been conducted investigating the teaching of pragmatics in Saudi EFL classrooms. While teachers in these studies have acknowledged the importance of teaching pragmatics, their attempts to implement this instruction have been largely unsatisfactory, highlighting the need for further research.

Several researchers have suggested that insufficient pragmatic content within textbooks and curriculum contributes to the problem, as textbooks impact not only EFL students but also teachers (Ji, 2007; Dendenne, 2019; Vu, 2017). In Saudi EFL classrooms, textbooks are often one of the main sources of information about language and culture. They shape the curriculum and provide materials for exam practice; thus, teachers and students are expected to follow them faithfully during the teaching-learning process (Alharbi, 2017). Unfortunately, however, information about the pragmatic content in these textbooks is limited, and the extent to which teachers rely on them to teach pragmatics is unknown, indicating the need for further research. Such research has the potential to yield significant pedagogical insights for policymakers, curriculum designers, textbook authors and teachers in the Saudi educational system, ultimately contributing to the advancement of pragmatic teaching and learning. These contributions would be relevant and timely, given the current efforts being made to improve education in Saudi Arabia.

1.4 Research Objectives

The present study is a response to the concerns raised in the previous section. Accordingly, it sets out to investigate the pragmatic content pertaining to SAs, including metapragmatic content, in the Mega Goal (MG) textbook series (1–6) used in Saudi secondary schools. SAs and metapragmatic information constitute the two primary components of pragmatic content in this study. SA information includes any SA accompanied by an explicit statement of its function, such as to request, advise, greet, invite or perform a similar communicative act. Metapragmatic information includes discussions and explanations of SA usage concerning linguistic forms, politeness, appropriateness, register, illocutionary force and cultural norms.

The rationale for focusing on SAs in this study is that they are prominent indicators of pragmatic competence and awareness (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Garcia, 2004). In L2 learning, SAs are essential for the production and comprehension of communicative messages (Nu & Murray, 2020). Consequently, they hold great potential as resources for materials development in the context of L2 instruction (Cohen & Ishihara, 2012; Ren & Han, 2016). According to Diepenbroek and Derwing (2013), textbook writers are likely to find SAs appealing as they facilitate the formulaic incorporation of pragmatic content. They also represent one of the most extensively researched aspects of pragmatics (Kasper, 2006). The focus on metapragmatic information, on the other hand, is driven by a corresponding observation: Explicit pragmatic instruction has an established effectiveness in enhancing EFL learners' pragmatic competence (see section 4.2.2). As explained by Takahashi (2001), "the target pragmatic features were found to be most effectively learned when they were under the condition in which a relatively high degree of input enhancement was realized with explicit metapragmatic information" (p. 197). Accordingly, metapragmatic analysis enables a comprehensive examination of the pragmatic content within textbooks, ensuring that learners receive a well-rounded and explicit foundation in pragmatics for effective communication.

Aligned with these two research objectives – examining the SAs and metapragmatic content in the MG textbooks – are several subsidiary objectives. The first is to investigate the quantity and types of SAs explicitly presented within the textbooks. The second is to gain a deeper understanding of how these SAs are treated within the textbooks. This study thus focuses on the quantity and types of metapragmatic information and descriptions accompanying the identified SAs and investigates the distribution of this information across textbook levels in order to provide insight into the underlying principles governing the allocation of pragmatic content.

A third subsidiary objective is to determine whether teachers strictly adhere to or adapt the textbooks in question when teaching pragmatics. This objective sheds light on whether teachers identify any issues with the pragmatic content in the textbooks and, if so, how they address them. Finally, the study examines teachers' views concerning the pragmatic content within the MG textbooks, the challenges they face in teaching this knowledge, and the difficulties students experience in acquiring it.

By achieving these objectives, the study contributes to the understanding of pragmatic content in EFL textbooks, particularly within the underexamined context of Saudi schools. It explores the textbooks using a novel triangulation method that combines quantitative and qualitative analyses, teacher perspectives, and curriculum alignment (further detailed in Chapter 5). It also introduces a framework for identifying SA content based on Searle's (1979) taxonomy, proposes criteria for measuring the quantitative content, and connects these elements to curricular objectives. These efforts aim to enhance textbook development and instruction in relation to pragmatic competence within the Saudi context and similar teaching environments.

1.5 Research Rationale

This research is motivated by evidence-supported beliefs regarding education, particularly within the Saudi context, current exigencies in education, and deeply held aspirations. These are listed below:

1. The belief that teaching vocabulary and grammar alone does not suffice for learners to become proficient users of English.
2. The significant role textbooks play in shaping pragmatic teaching and learning in the Saudi EFL classroom: Examining how they present SAs and metapragmatic information is essential in understanding their potential to aid learner development and enable teachers to approach pragmatics in an informed pedagogical manner.
3. A pressing need to understand how teachers use these textbooks when teaching pragmatic materials and what motivates their practices.
4. The aspiration to provide a comprehensive description of the pragmatic content in the textbooks recently selected by the MoE in Saudi Arabia, and one that would be of practical assistance to policymakers, textbook writers and teachers, some of whom have limited knowledge of pragmatics in this context.
5. To contribute to the limited body of research on pragmatic competence in the Saudi context, with the intent of opening doors for further research into the treatment of pragmatics in language textbooks and classrooms in Saudi Arabia. It is hoped that the current research will also pave the way for comparative studies in other contexts and with other countries.
6. To contribute to the enhancement of pragmatic instruction within Saudi EFL classrooms, ultimately contributing to the overall improvement in English language education practices in Saudi Arabia.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into eight chapters, each of which is further divided into sections. Chapter 1, the current chapter, serves as an introduction and covers the background to the study, the problem statement, the study objectives and the rationale behind its undertaking.

Moving forward, Chapter 2 describes the research context in detail, providing insights into the historical backdrop of Saudi Arabia, the educational system and the status of EFL in Saudi general education. Special attention is given to the EFL curriculum and the textbooks in current use.

Chapter 3 delves into the foundational theories that underpin this research, including communicative competence, pragmatic competence and SA theory. It also explores related theories and principles, such as politeness and appropriacy, which aid in the analysis of metapragmatic content.

Chapter 4 reviews issues related to the instruction of pragmatics and its incorporation into language classrooms and textbooks. It also conducts a critical literature review on pragmatic content within English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks, identifying gaps in existing research and outlining the specific research questions addressed in this study.

Chapter 5 provides a detailed account of the methodological considerations underlying this research. It explains the participant selection processes, the data collection instruments and procedures and the coding and analysis of data. Ethical concerns and issues of trustworthiness are also addressed in this chapter.

The main findings derived from data analysis are presented in Chapter 6. These findings encompass both quantitative and qualitative data obtained from textbook analysis, classroom observations and teacher interviews.

Chapter 7 offers a detailed discussion and interpretation of the results to answer the research questions. It correlates these findings with the theories introduced in Chapter 2 and the literature reviewed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 8 presents the summary and conclusions of the study. It also offers pedagogical implications for teaching pragmatics. Finally, this chapter addresses the limitations of the current study and offers recommendations for potential future research.

2. Research Context

2.1 Introduction

The present study investigates the content of EFL textbooks and the practices of teachers in Saudi schools regarding pragmatics. Contextualising the research is essential for understanding the choice of research methods, development of key ideas, gathering of findings, and the formulation of conclusions and recommendations. Furthermore, a comprehensive exploration of this context allows for comparisons with similar research efforts. Therefore, this chapter situates the study within its educational context. It begins with a brief introduction to Saudi Arabia, followed by a discussion of the role of the English language in the country. It then outlines the education system in Saudi Arabia, highlighting its developmental stages and the transformations it has undergone. Following that, the chapter closely examines the teaching of EFL in the general education system, with specific attention given to the EFL curriculum and the language textbooks in use.

2.2 General information about Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is located in southwestern Asia, covering an approximate land area of over 2 million square kilometres and with a population exceeding 32 million (General Authority of Statistics, 2022). As the birthplace of Islam, Saudi Arabia holds a distinctive position and importance among other Islamic countries. It is often considered one of the most socially and religiously conservative countries in the Middle East, closely adhering to Islamic teachings, and basing its legal system on Islamic law. Arabic is the native and sole official language used in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Arabic variety is distinct from other Arabic-speaking varieties in its linguistic aspects and rules of appropriateness (Al-Issa, 1998). It frequently incorporates religious expressions and terminology not commonly found in other Arabic dialects.

The economy of Saudi Arabia is predominantly reliant on oil, which was discovered in 1938 by the American company Standard Oil of California (now Chevron) (Melibari, 2015). This discovery led to unprecedented economic growth that impacted all aspects of Saudi life, transforming the country into one of the world's top 20 economies (Alkharashi, 2012). Oil revenues became a vital source of wealth for the Saudi government, enabling it to improve infrastructure, healthcare, education, and social welfare. This, in turn, increased the country's engagement in global trade, diplomacy, and international collaboration.

2.3 The Status of English in Saudi Arabia

The transition of Saudi Arabia towards global engagement, initiated with the establishment of its oil industry, has emphasised the importance of the English language, which has emerged as a dominant contact language for international business and diplomacy (Melibari, 2015). Al-Seghayer (2014) notes that many stakeholders and decision-making entities within Saudi Arabia regard English as an "important tool for the development of the country in terms of both international relations and scientific-technological advancement" (pg. 143). Since most Saudis at that time lacked English language skills and the necessary technical expertise, the country heavily relied on foreign expatriates to aid in its economic development. Initially, English education was introduced into the Saudi school system to facilitate communication with expatriates, but later, the government stressed the importance of Saudis acquiring English skills to participate in the labour market (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014).

In response to these demands, educational reforms have been implemented in Saudi Arabia with a strong emphasis on systematically integrating English language instruction across all educational levels (discussed in sections 2.4.1 and 2.5). English has become the primary foreign language in Saudi Arabia, being the only foreign language taught as a core subject in all Saudi schools and many university programmes until 2019. It also serves as the medium of instruction in critical fields such as medicine, engineering, science, and computer science. Majors such as English Literature, Linguistics, and Education are considered amongst the most reputable majors that guarantee higher-paid job opportunities post-graduation (Al-Amri, 2021). Furthermore, numerous scholarships are readily available for Saudi youth to pursue degrees abroad, primarily in English-speaking countries like the UK and the USA.

Nowadays, English proficiency in Saudi Arabia has become somewhat of a necessity for job seekers, scholarship applicants, researchers, and travellers (see Elyas, 2008; Alnasser, 2022). Al-Seghayer (2014) highlights that proficiency in English is expected of employees working in governmental and national institutions and that many employers in the sectors of science, tourism, and technology prioritise candidates who possess strong English communication skills. Therefore, for Saudi individuals aspiring to achieve career success and academic excellence, acquiring proficiency in English is imperative. This proficiency also grants them access to various services, such as those provided in restaurants and hotels, and helps them stay informed and keep pace with global developments. With this understanding of the status of English in Saudi Arabia, the following subsection provides an overview of the educational system in the country.

2.4 The Education System in Saudi Arabia

Historically, education in Saudi Arabia evolved through three stages: traditional education conducted by religious scholars, government education under Ottoman rule, and private education managed by parents with a focus on traditional curricula (Al-Roumi, 2013). In 1925, education was formalised under the Directorate of Knowledge, later known as the Ministry of Education (MoE), years before the declaration of the unified Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932 (MoE, 2023). Until 1959, only male students had access to formal education (MoE, 2023), but since then, the education system has included female students and has adopted gender segregation, with separate schools and institutions for male and female students, in compliance with the religious and traditional values of Saudi society (Alrashidi &

Phan, 2015). Regardless of segregation, both genders receive equal educational instruction (Al-Johani, 2009).

The current Saudi education system comprises general education, which includes school education, and higher education at the university and college levels. General education is divided into four stages: early childhood, elementary, intermediate, and secondary, including both public and private schools. Early childhood education is attended by children aged 3-6 and it focuses on basic skills to prepare children for elementary school. Elementary school is six years (grades), starting at age six, succeeded by three years of intermediate school and three years of secondary school. After completing these schooling levels, students can pursue further studies at the university level. Core subjects taught in schools encompass Arabic, Islamic studies, mathematics, science, social, and the English language. The MoE oversees the curriculum and pedagogy in schools, with responsibilities that include creating policies, educational plans, professional development, teacher recruitment, and supplying textbooks to all schools (Alharbi, 2021). Accordingly, schools, especially the public ones, follow similar educational policies, curricula, textbooks, teaching and assessment methods.

Regarding assessment methods, the Saudi educational system employs different methods across different educational levels. At the elementary level, continuous assessment is the primary tool for assessing students' performance and ongoing progress. At intermediate and secondary levels, there are two types of assessments: during-term assessments and final exams (Alrashidi, 2021). During-term assessments, which account for 60% of the total marks, are used to gauge students' attendance, participation, homework completion, research projects, and quizzes conducted throughout the term. Additionally, a comprehensive final exam is administered at the end of the term, contributing 40% to the total marks. In EFL classrooms, these final exams are divided into written or paper exams (30% of the total marks) and oral exams (10% of the total marks), conducted at varying times. Students must attain at least 50% of the total marks to pass a subject.

Teachers design the final exams following specific frameworks and rubrics set by the MoE (Almossa, 2021). For example, written tests must include questions on composition, reading comprehension, dialogue, grammar, and vocabulary, all based on the textbook content. Accordingly, even dialogues to be completed, topics to compose, or passages to read are taken directly from the textbooks (Al-Seghayer, 2022). According to Ali et al. (2019) and Al-Seghayer (2022), this approach mainly evaluates students' rote memorisation and understanding of previously covered materials more than their actual communicative skills in English, contrary to what the MoE suggests. For oral tests and during-term assessments, teachers generally have more freedom in choosing assessment methods, though these must adhere to MoE rubrics and gain school administration approval. Teachers may measure speaking skills through presentations, role-play activities, interviews, or group discussions, and they also can determine ongoing assessment methods such as homework, attendance, and project participation. However, similar to final exams, these assessments must align with the textbook content (Al-Seghayer, 2022). Because of these constraints, despite their involvement in designing and grading exams, teachers in Saudi schools generally have a restricted role in the broader development of language assessments (Ali et al., 2019; Almossa, 2021).

Furtehrmore, COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a massive transformation in the academic landscape, including Saudi Arabia's educational system. In response to this challenge, the Saudi MoE introduced *Madrasati* in 2020—a nationwide web-based educational platform designed to facilitate remote learning and teaching across all educational levels. The primary aim of this initiative was to replicate the conventional model of distance education and address the educational disruptions caused by the pandemic. Through Madrasati, students gained the ability to participate in online classes, engage with their teachers and peers, submit assignments, and complete quizzes and exams (MoE, 2020).

2.4.1 Educational Reforms: Pre-2005 to Vision 2030

The Saudi educational system has undergone significant changes over time. Scholars have identified two major reform eras: pre-2005 and post-2005 (Alateeq, 2020; Elyas, 2008). Before 2005, the primary educational focus was on imparting Islamic principles to students, encouraging them to be productive and creative through faith, and promoting English proficiency as a means of spreading Islam (Elyas & Badawood, 2016). However, in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks[1] against the United States by an Islamic terrorist organisation, the Saudi education system faced accusations of promoting terrorism and extremism from the United States and other Western countries (Elyas, 2008). Ever since then, the Saudi government has acknowledged the need for reform, recognising issues such as the excessive focus on religious subjects, insufficient emphasis on human rights and critical thinking skills (AL-Essa, 2009; Al-Miziny, 2010).

The call for reform led to the launch of the *Tatweer* project in 2007, which aimed to transform the education system by developing teaching methods, improving curricula, enhancing various activities, upgrading school services and constructions, and ensuring that students could comprehend the globalised world. According to Elyas and Badawood (2016), the government allocated "around $293,000,000 for the *Tatweer* project and is planning to take education to new horizons to cope with transformations around the world" (p.76). Since then, Saudi education has undergone a profound transformation to align with the highest international standards, with a shift in focus away from solely Islamic studies. As a result, there has been a significant expansion of English language instruction, aimed at increasing community awareness of Western cultures and fostering tolerance and acceptance of others (Elyas, 2008).

Recently, the Saudi Arabian government has made significant investments in further improving the education system under the *Vision 2030* initiative launched by King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud in 2016. The initiative aims to diversify the Saudi economy, reduce the country's dependence on oil, and create more job opportunities for locals. One of the focus areas of this vision is education, which

[1] In the September 11 attacks of 2001, 16 Saudis were accused of hijacking two airplanes that targeted the World Trade Center towers in the USA. The terrorist group responsible, Al-Qaeda, was led by Osama bin Laden, a former Saudi citizen.

includes improving planning, monitoring, evaluation, and outcomes to make Saudi Arabia a global model of excellence. The government has established specific objectives, such as bridging the gap between higher education and the labour market, enabling students to make informed career decisions, and achieving educational results that surpass international averages (MoE, 2023). The following section provides a general overview of English language education in Saudi Arabia, highlighting the impact of the new reforms on the English curriculum, including the textbooks employed.

2.5 English in the General Education in Saudi Arabia

English was introduced into the Saudi educational system in the early 20th century, between 1924 and 1932, after the discovery of oil (Alhajailan, 2009; Al-Seghayer, 2014). As per Alhajailan (2009), English was initially introduced as a major subject in elementary schools but was discontinued in 1942, later reintroduced in 1944, exclusively within Saudi scholarship preparatory schools established to prepare students for overseas study. Because there were not enough competent Saudi English teachers, teachers from other Arab countries—Egypt, in particular—were hired to teach English in the scholarship preparatory schools, resulting in significant influence from the Egyptian education system on the English instruction in these schools (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014).

Subsequently, more schools adopted English as a mandatory subject, initially limited to four hours a week for elementary students and later extended to 12 hours (Al-Seghayer, 2014). Not long afterwards, the intermediate and secondary levels also adopted the English language as a core subject, offering six 45-minute weekly lessons, which later increased to eight in 1974. However, in 1980, this number was reduced to four, a configuration that has remained unchanged since then (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017). In 1970, the MoE limited English teaching to intermediate and secondary levels based on the misbelief that learning English at a young age would interfere with learners' acquisition of Arabic, the language of the Qur'an (Alharbi, 2021). It was reintroduced in 2005, beginning at the sixth elementary grade, gradually expanding to fifth and fourth grades, and eventually encompassing all grades in 2021.

Concerning the classroom environment, it is typical for public schools in Saudi Arabia to have large class sizes, with students varying widely in their proficiency levels and prior exposure to English. Teachers tend to closely follow the prescribed curriculum and rely on textbooks approved by the MoE. In the classroom, students often assume passive roles, demonstrating respect by maintaining silence when the teacher enters the room and refraining from speaking without permission during instruction (Alharbi, 2021). Furthermore, traditional teaching methodologies and rote memorisation continue to prevail in many Saudi classrooms to this day (Al-Amri, 2021; Eisa, 2020). This environment is also characterised by a low tolerance for mistakes, as students may harbour concerns about negative evaluations or potential disciplinary consequences for any mistakes made.

2.5.1 The Textbooks and the SELF

The MoE launched several programmes and initiatives in 2014 to enhance English language education with the assistance of native-speaking specialists and educators from the UK and USA. Significant funds have been allocated for the development of such programmes. The goal was to create a curriculum that adheres to Saudi educational policy, complies with national standards, and respects the religious and cultural values ingrained in Saudi society (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017). One of these programmes is the English Language Development Project (ELDP), which forms part of the King Abdullah Project for General Education Development (Tatweer, 2014). The establishment of the ELDP has resulted in a significant improvement in the instruction of English in Saudi schools, marking a qualitative leap in this area.

The ELDP, in collaboration with the MoE, introduced the Saudi English Language Framework (SELF) to provide comprehensive curricular guidelines, objectives, and educational outcomes that govern English language instruction within the Saudi National Curriculum. The SELF has been developed in alignment with the latest advancements in EFL theory and practice, and it follows the proficiency level classification of the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR), outlining the curriculum's progression from A1 level to B2+ upon completion of secondary school. Furthermore, the SELF is organised into distinct sections corresponding to three school levels—elementary, intermediate, and secondary. Each section outlines its unique curricular goals, provides a suggested list of topics, defines specific objectives for each grade within that level, and presents lists of topics, vocabulary, functions, language expressions, and grammar rules to be covered. An overview of the SELF aims and guidelines will be provided later in this section.

Following this, three different international integrated-skill textbook series were selected and distributed among schools across different regions of the country in the academic year 2014/2015. These textbook series were developed and published by renowned British and American publishers specialising in English language textbooks and materials, namely MM Publications, Macmillan, and McGraw Hill (MoE, 2023). Although these series were primarily produced for the global market, they were edited to align with the SELF guidelines and the local teaching context through an agreement between ELDP and the publishers (Albadri & Alshayie, 2012; E. Ghazel, personal communication, May 6, 2023). Each series offers three curricula (i.e. textbook sets) tailored for the three Saudi school levels. Within each textbook set, there are student books, workbooks, teacher's books, and accompanying CDs. Teachers are expected to follow these materials, covering all the lessons and activities, and using the audio CDs for listening exercises. To support teachers in effectively implementing these new teaching materials, the MoE organised annual teacher training workshops, equipping educators with the necessary professional expertise and knowledge (Abahussian, 2016).

In 2021, the MoE decided to continue using the McGraw-Hill series as the main and only EFL textbook series for schools. This series, as previously mentioned, comprises three sequential curriculum sets, one for each school level. The *We Can!* series is used in elementary school, including six graded textbooks intended for grades four to six. The *Super Goal* series targets intermediate schools and consists of six textbooks for grades seven through nine, with two textbooks taught in each grade in a sequential order. Lastly, the *Mega Goal* series is designated for secondary school, including six textbooks for grades 10 to 12, with two textbooks taught in each grade sequentially. Further information about the objectives and content of the MG series will be covered in Chapter 5, as it is the main subject of analysis in the present study.

2.5.2 Pragmatic Competence in the English Language Curriculum

The MG textbooks, as mentioned earlier, were edited based on the SELF. The SELF guide begins by outlining the foundational principles and general aims of the EFL curriculum in Saudi schools. These are presented in the following excerpt.

PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE CURRICULUM

1. Language is used for communication: teaching a language involves enabling learners to interact socially in a variety of situations and contexts. This is optimally achieved through the integration of the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

2. Learners' needs and abilities must be taken into consideration.

3. Learners have different individual learning styles.

4. Learners should be involved in meaningful, interactive tasks for optimum effectiveness.

GENERAL AIMS OF THE CURRICULUM

The general aims of the English Language Curriculum are to:
a) enable learners to use the language in meaningful contexts
b) build learners' ability to communicate their ideas fluently, accurately and confidently.

(SELF, 2014, p. 9)

It can be noted from the excerpt that the reformed curriculum emphasises communicative, meaningful, and contextually relevant language use as a central aim of language learning. This reflects a shift towards communicative language teaching, an approach endorsed in the SELF (p. 11), moving away from the traditional, grammar-based teaching approach of the previous curriculum (Alateeq, 2020).

Furthermore, the SELF outlines general curricular goals for students to be able to achieve by the end of their school years, these are:

> **CURRICULAR GOALS**
>
> Through developing their communicative competence in the English language, learners should achieve the following goals which enable them to:
>
> **Goal 1:** explain the tenets of Islam with a vision to promoting international understanding and tolerance.
>
> **Goal 2:** advocate and participate in spreading Islam.
>
> **Goal 3:** promote mutual cultural understanding and respect among nations.
>
> **Goal 4:** enhance their cognitive and problem-solving skills, thus leading to academic and professional advancement.
>
> **Goal 5:** develop an awareness of the significance of English as a means of international communication.
>
> **Goal 6:** develop a positive attitude towards learning the English language.

(SELF, 2014, p. 9)

To better understand these goals, it may be helpful to group them into three categories. The first group deals with serving the religion and Islamic nation (goals 1 and 2). The second group focuses on raising students' awareness and attitudes towards English and cultural differences (goals 1, 3, 5, 6). The final group addresses students' personal advancement (goal 4). By categorising these goals, it can be seen that the MoE aims to change students' perception of language learning from being solely a school subject and an exam to pass, to a set of lifelong skills that require both knowledge and mastery. The curriculum emphasises the importance of English for future careers and life experiences and highlights how learning the language facilitates communication with the broader world. Additionally, by linking the use of English to both national and Islamic goals, the curriculum seeks to foster positive attitudes towards the language among Muslim individuals, countering negative associations due to its use by non-Muslim populations.

Furthermore, the curricular goals in the SELF, shown in the excerpt above, state that English education aims at "developing [students'] communicative competence in the English language" (p. 9). Communicative competence in a language includes different areas, including grammatical and pragmatic competencies (see section 3.2 for further details). The guideline suggests the significance of "real world language [use] in realistic contexts" and "language functions" rather than forms, which is equivalent to SAs. It offers a list of target functions, which includes a relatively broad range of SAs, such as greeting, introducing, commanding, requesting, agreeing, disagreeing and so forth. The following is an example of some of the target functions in the third secondary grade.

GRADE 12 FUNCTIONS AND LANGUAGE EXPONENTS

	Functions	Language exponents
17	define people, places and things and give additional information about them	Employees who are absent because of illness must inform their supervisor. Mansour, who is my best friend, is on the football team. The town where I was born is famous for its harbour. The silk produced in south-east Asia is of the highest quality.
18	express criticism / regret and complain	You shouldn't have borrowed your father's car without asking him first. I shouldn't have eaten so much. If you had been driving more carefully, you wouldn't have had an accident. If I had woken up earlier, I wouldn't have missed my flight. It's high time you got a job. I wish I had taken my umbrella with me.
19	refer to past intentions that were not realised	Yusuf was going to buy a new car, but he changed his mind.
20	emphasise	Only when you've been there will you realise what a beautiful city Istanbul is. Under no circumstances should you enter this area without permission.
21	discuss problems and suggest solutions; give advice; make suggestions and recommendations	I have a problem and I need some good advice. Please help me decide what to do. If I were you, I would explain what happened and apologise. Hasan had better see a doctor about the pain in his knee. You should try the new Chinese restaurant that opened near our office. I definitely recommend it. Why don't you call and make a reservation now?
22	stress an action rather than the doer of an action	The museum was being renovated so we couldn't visit it. This method is believed to be more effective. The robber was seen leaving the bank. The children were not allowed to go to the park.
23	persuade someone to do something	Majed got his older brother to help him with his geometry homework.
24	report statements, questions and commands	Alan said that he had been working very hard for the past three weeks. The teacher accused Bob of cheating in the test. My mother asked me to help her with the cooking. The coach wanted to know if I was going to join the football team.

(SELF, 2014, p. 72)

The target functions listed above include various SAs and language functions, accompanied by sentence examples. The SAs in question involve expressing criticism, regret, complaining, making suggestions or recommendations, giving advice, persuading, and reporting.

The SELF guidelines also consider other pragmatic aspects, including appropriateness, politeness, register, and cultural nuances. They identify "sociolinguistic appropriateness" in language use as a key curriculum objective across elementary, intermediate, and secondary levels (SELF, 2014, pp. 14, 33, 53). This involves learners' ability to "perform and respond to a wide range of language functions, using their most common exponents in a neutral register" and to be aware of "the salient politeness conventions" associated with the target language (SELF, 2014, pp. 33–34). Language functions, or SAs, include requesting, apologising, agreeing and expressing opinions. Students are expected to master these SAs using common expressions or phrases, while adhering to the sociolinguistic rules governing their use, such as the use of modals when making polite requests in English. The SELF guidelines, however, do not define these pragmatic aspects or indicate whether they are associated with a specific English variation.

Furthermore, recognising that "English serves as a language of wider communication," the SELF also advocates for "establishing a sphere of interculturality" and "teaching culture as difference" (SELF, 2014, p. 12). This approach aims to help students become aware of the role of English as a facilitator of diverse intercultural interactions in the modern world. This requires a knowledge of linguistic and socio-cultural differences, along with the skills to apply this knowledge flexibly depending on the context of the interaction, thereby fostering respect, tolerance and acceptance of diverse identities and beliefs.

2.5.3 The Proficiency Level of Saudi Students

Despite the dedicated efforts to enhance English education in Saudi schools, the proficiency of secondary school graduates remains alarmingly low, hindering their ability to engage in even basic language interactions (Al-Seghayer, 2014; Alrabai, 2016; Alqahtani, 2019; Alshammari, 2022; Bhuiyan, 2016b). Research studies have highlighted this issue, indicating that despite receiving a minimum of nine years of English instruction, Saudi secondary school graduates perform poorly in language proficiency assessments such as TOEFL[2], placing them at a disadvantage in terms of university-level competency (Alqahtani, 2019; Alshammari, 2022). In fact, a 2019 report by Education First, the world's largest educational organisation with a presence in over 54 countries, ranked Saudi students in the lowest English proficiency category, a status they have maintained since 2011. These findings suggest that Saudi students struggle to communicate effectively in English and lack developed communicative competence.

2.6 Teacher Education in Saudi Arabia

The educational system in Saudi Arabia has been significantly reformed to adapt to global changes. Central to these reforms is the professional development of teachers, spearheaded by the MoE to ensure a robust educational framework and a well-rounded education for students. In the past, securing a teaching position required at least a bachelor's degree in fields such as English Language Education, English Literature, Translation, or Linguistics (Al-Seghayer, 2011). However, changes were implemented in 2017 when the MoE mandated that all bachelor's graduates without educational training intending to teach must enrol in a rigorous two-year educational preparation programme. This programme, equivalent to a master's degree and offered by several universities, includes courses on curriculum and instruction, teaching methods, curriculum design, technology integration, micro-teaching, and student assessment, alongside a 12-week practical training placement in schools (Al-Abiky, 2019).

In 2020, further regulations were introduced requiring all pre-service teachers to obtain a professional teaching license by passing a Teacher Knowledge Test. This is a computerised test assesses the vocational capabilities of aspiring teachers. Teachers employed before these regulations were automatically granted licenses but, like all teachers, must participate in ongoing professional development to maintain their licenses (MoE, 2020). The professional programmes are overseen by the National Centre for Educational Professional Development (NCEPD) in the MoE.

The NCEPD spearheads numerous initiatives, including the *Khebrat* programme. This programme allows EFL teachers, school leaders, and supervisors to study English and educational methods abroad

[2] The TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is a standardised examination intended to assess the English language proficiency of individuals who are not native English speakers.

for six months to a year, enhancing their expertise through interaction in local schools. It aims to enrol 25,000 participants over five years, fostering partnerships with top global education systems such as those in Finland, Singapore, and Canada (NCEPD, 2020).

Another significant initiative, *English for All*, focuses on improving EFL teachers' language skills through discounted online courses offered by international institutes and free preparation for English proficiency tests such as TOEFL. Furthermore, the NCEPD collaborates with many Saudi universities to provide online professional development courses that cater to the varying educational needs of teachers based on their degree levels. These programmes, which aim to fulfil annual training requirements specified by the MoE, ensure that teachers continually advance their professional skills, thus supporting the overall goal of improving educational outcomes in Saudi Arabia.

2.6 Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter has provided a foundation for understanding the research context, shedding light on the educational landscape and the significance of English language instruction in Saudi Arabia. The overview of this context reveals that Saudi Arabia has implemented several reforms and programmes to advance its educational system, including enhancing EFL education in schools by partnering with international Western publishing companies to create a reformed curriculum. The new curriculum prioritises fostering communicative competence, promoting cultural understanding, and encouraging real-world language use, aligning with the principles of communicative language teaching. However, despite the substantial efforts undertaken by MoE, the English language proficiency of Saudi secondary school graduates continues to fall below the desired standard, leading to challenges in effective communication and a perceived lack of development in their communicative competence (Alshammary, 2021; Alqahtani, 2019).

This increases the importance of conducting empirical research to examine and understand the content of the reformed curriculum and textbooks currently in use to help identify the problems and flaws. The next chapter reviews the theories and principles relevant to pragmatic competence and SAs that inform the analysis in the current study.

3. Theoretical Background

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the most important theories and models that have been developed in the field of pragmatics, with a focus on the issues related to SAs. The chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section reviews the main models of communicative competence to help elucidate the position that pragmatic competence occupies within broader knowledge frameworks. The second section presents background information on pragmatics as a subfield of linguistics. The third section expands on the concept of pragmatic competence. The last section, which serves as the foundation of the present research, focuses on SA theory. It also explores related concepts, such as politeness and appropriacy in language use, which will assist in the later analysis of the metapragmatic content in the MG textbooks.

3.2 Communicative Competence

Communicative competence in linguistics and language education refers to the essential knowledge and skill set that allows language users to communicate effectively and to adapt their communicative behaviour across various social contexts (Vorwerg, 2015). The concept of communicative competence was initially introduced by Hymes (1974) as a response to Chomsky's (1965) distinction between linguistic *competence* and *performance* (Leung, 2005). In Chomsky's view, competence refers to the knowledge of language rules and structures, whereas performance is the use of this knowledge. Hymes (1974) argued that language competence extends beyond mere grammatical fluency to include the speaker's communicative ability. It involves familiarity not only with language structures but also with the appropriate timing, topics, interlocutors, settings, and modes of communication (Hymes, 1974). For instance, the phrases 'answer the phone!' and 'would you mind answering the phone, please?' are both grammatically accurate but differ in their degree of directness; thus, they are not suitable for use in the same situations as they differ in their appropriateness. As this example illustrates, communicative competence enables speakers to choose a suitable utterance for a given situation depending on contextual and social factors.

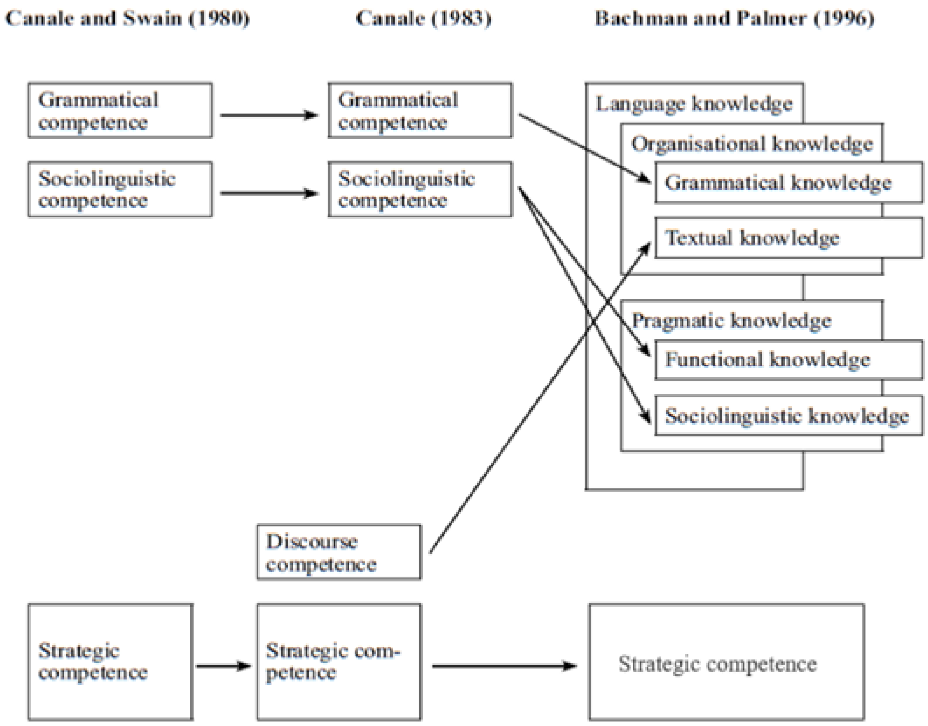
Research has proposed different models of communicative competence, each offering a distinct perspective on how language is used and understood in communication. Some of these models explicitly incorporate pragmatic competence as the main component. One such model that has been influential in the field of pragmatics is Canale and Swain's (1980) framework of communicative competence. The framework, as it was later developed by Canale (1983), consists of four interrelated components, each shedding light on a specific aspect of communicative competence. They are listed below:

- *Grammatical Competence:* This component aligns with traditional notions of language competence. It includes knowledge of the structures of a language, such as vocabulary, syntax, morphology and phonology, and the formal rules governing their use. Grammatical competence ensures that individuals can construct sentences that are grammatically correct.

- *Sociolinguistic Competence:* This component relates to an understanding of the social and cultural aspects of language use. It includes the ability to recognise and apply appropriate linguistic choices in different sociolinguistic contexts based on variables such as context, formality, politeness norms, purposes of interaction and the relationship between the interlocutors. Sociolinguistic competence places special emphasis on pragmatic competence.
- *Strategic Competence*: This refers to the speaker's ability to compensate for communication breakdowns or difficulties arising due to a lack of other competencies. It involves the use of various strategies, such as paraphrasing, clarification requests and non-verbal cues.
- *Discourse Competence*: This component was later added to the framework by Canale (1983). It refers to the ability to create coherent and cohesive language in extended stretches of speech or text through the use of discourse markers, reference and cohesive devices such as pronouns, ellipsis and conjunctions.

Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) further refined this model. They categorised communicative competence into two main areas, namely, *language knowledge* and *strategic competence*. They further subdivided language knowledge into *organisational* and *pragmatic knowledge*. Organisational knowledge includes understanding language syntax, semantics, phonology and the like (i.e., *grammatical knowledge*), as well as knowing how to organise language elements coherently in oral or written texts (i.e., *textual knowledge*). Pragmatic knowledge, on the other hand, encompasses *functional knowledge*, which involves the ability to perform language functions and assess the illocutionary power of expressions and utterances, and *sociolinguistic knowledge*, which deals with using language appropriately in relation to contextual factors and social norms, such as politeness and register. This model was the first to specify pragmatics as an independent component of language ability; it placed pragmatic competence alongside grammatical competence and allocated them equal importance (Tsutagawa, 2013). Figure 3.1 below outlines the main communicative competence models discussed above.

Figure 3.1 *Models of Communicative Competence*



Note. Source: Bagaric and Mihaljevic, 2007, p. 102.

The models shown in the figure above share a similar conceptualisation of communicative competence. They emphasise the multidimensional and context-dependent nature of effective communication, acknowledging that language competence extends beyond grammatical accuracy to encompass other dimensions of speech. From these models, it is apparent that pragmatic competence is an essential component of communication that is interrelated with other elements of language to enable effective interactions. At the same time, these models diverge in the granularity of their components, with Bachman and Palmer's (1996) model providing a breakdown of several pragmatic aspects and highlighting strategic competence as a core component.

Overall, communicative competence theory has profoundly influenced the landscape of L2 education, shifting the focus from grammar acquisition to the effective use of language in diverse contexts and thereby aligning education with real-world communication needs (Taguchi, 2009). One of the aims of L2 instruction in today's globalised world is to provide ample opportunities for practising communicative skills so that students will develop their communicative competence (Farashaiyan et al., 2017; Nguyen & Canh, 2019; Sanchez-Hernandez & Martinez-Flor, 2022; Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018; Vu, 2017). Through its impact on pedagogy and material design, the theory has promoted a holistic approach to language teaching that emphasises students' ability to use language in real-life settings. For instance, communicative competence theory has given rise to communicative language teaching, an approach that prioritises communication as the cornerstone of language instruction (Leung, 2005;

Santos, 2020). Communicative language teaching encourages students to engage in interactive and meaningful activities, negotiate meaning and participate in authentic communicative activities. It fosters a learner-centred environment that empowers students to apply their linguistic knowledge in authentic scenarios, where they can gain fluency, confidence and practical language skills. Communicative competence theory has also influenced global assessment practices in language classrooms. In recent decades, traditional grammar-centred tests have been widely supplemented by performance-based assessments, which appraise students' proficiency in communicating effectively and appropriately within real-life situations.

3.3 Pragmatics: Definitions and Descriptions

Pragmatics, often referred to as 'the social language,' is a subfield of linguistics. The term was originally introduced by the language philosopher Charles Morris (1938), who defined it as "the study of the relation of signs to interpreters" (cited in LoCastro, 2003, p. 5). With this definition, Morris situated pragmatics within the philosophy of language and, more specifically, semiotics, which is the study of signs and their symbolic meaning. Many attempts have been made to describe pragmatics, given its relation to semiotics, each offering a distinct perspective and nuanced understanding (e.g., Chapman, 2011; Crystal, 1997; Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983; LoCastro, 2012; Mey, 1993; Thomas, 2014; Thornbury, 2005; Yule, 1996).

In essence, pragmatics can be described as "the study of language use" (Levinson, 1983, p. 5). Levinson (1983) further refined this definition by stating that pragmatics involves "the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized or encoded in the structure of a language" (p. 9). This definition recognises language uses as pragmatically relevant when they use explicit grammatical expression, which means they conform to the rules governing morphological and syntactic aspects under the guidance of grammatical rules.

Leech (1983) was among the first to develop a model of pragmatics within a broader functional language model. He was particularly concerned with distinguishing pragmatic meaning from semantic meaning, another branch of linguistics. In Leech's (1983) model, pragmatic meaning is defined in relation to language users, while semantic meaning is confined to linguistic expressions isolated from real-world situations or users. According to this view, competent language users must be capable of making detailed inferences that connect spoken words with shared assumptions, previous statements or contextual cues that enable them to understand utterances, as situations exist where no apparent relationship obtains between spoken words and their referents apart from these associations.

To further define the field, Leech (1983) categorised pragmatics into two subfields: *pragmalinguistics* and *sociopragmatics*. Pragmalinguistics refers to the grammar and linguistic tools used for expressing acts and meanings, whereas sociopragmatics concerns the social factors that qualify these meanings as being appropriate in a particular context. These factors include aspects of social variation, such as power relations, the social distance between the interlocutors, the setting, the register and the purpose of communication. The distinction between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics is significant because it highlights the difference between two linguistic perspectives: the one focuses on grammatical correctness, whereas the other emphasises social appropriateness.

Thomas (2014) further emphasised that understanding meaning is a dynamic process that requires comprehending the literal meaning of an utterance, the negotiation of meaning between interlocutors and the physical and social context in which the utterance is produced. This dynamic conceptualisation aligns with the scholarly work of Thornbury (2005), who argued that, in addition to the relation between language and context, pragmatics also includes the purpose for which language is used in any particular situation.

Furthermore, Crystal (1997) proposed an even more elaborate understanding of pragmatics, defining it as:

> the study of language from the point of view of the users, especially for the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on the other participants in an act of communication. (p. 271)

This definition of pragmatics emphasises the perspective of the language users, taking into consideration the language decisions they make, the challenges they face, and the consequences of their language choices on their communication partners. Essentially, it views language not as a mere collection of words and rules but as a dynamic tool used by individuals in real-life situations where it influences communication between people (Rose & Kasper, 2001).

The various definitions of pragmatics provided above collectively highlight its focus on the ability to effectively use language to convey specific meanings within appropriate contexts. This study draws particular inspiration from the definition proposed by Crystal (1997) because of its strong emphasis on the perspective of language users and the contextual nature of their interaction. Teaching students to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts is a critical goal of EFL instruction, especially in Saudi Arabia, where they often struggle with everyday interactions in the language. Additionally, this definition is well-suited for exploring the perspectives of teachers concerning the pragmatic instruction in Saudi EFL classrooms. It allows for an examination of the factors and challenges they encounter, including those related to students, curriculum guidelines and textbooks.

3.4 Pragmatic Competence

For speakers to communicate adequately, they need to balance linguistic forms and social or pragmatic functions: a skill known as ‘pragmatic competence.’ While initially defined as the ability to use language effectively within a specific context (Thomas, 1983), pragmatic competence has since been defined more narrowly as “a set of internalised rules of how to use language in socio-culturally appropriate ways, taking into account the participants in a communicative interaction and features of the context within which the interaction takes place” (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, p. 19). This definition emphasises the need for knowledge and strategies that allow an individual to use language in a manner that is not only grammatically correct but also sensitive to social norms, cultural expectations and situational factors.

In the context of language learning, pragmatic competence is defined even more narrowly, namely, as "the ability of the second language learner to use language according to the pragmatic rules that govern the use of linguistic utterances as used by native adult speakers" (Nureddeen, 2008, p. 280). The pragmatic rules pertain to those factors that have previously been mentioned: They focus on the patterns and linguistic forms associated with SAs and the sociocultural and contextual factors that govern their use, such as the social dynamics and power relations between interlocutors (Karatepe & Civelek, 2021; Ren, 2018; Taguchi, 2015). These two dimensions of pragmatic competence thus encompass both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects, which must be developed in tandem (Roever, 2009). For instance, giving advice or making requests necessitates the ability to tailor the language used to accommodate different social contexts. Such language forms, as explained by Bardovi-Harlig (2012), are typically conventionalised and cannot be performed simply by manipulating grammatical knowledge. Instead, they require a knowledge of the contextual factors that influence communication.

It is important to acknowledge in this connection the profound challenge of defining 'culture' within the context of English language education. As Hermessi (2020) highlights, culture is not a singular concept but one that intertwines the identity, values, norms and backgrounds of different individuals within each culture. The widespread use of English across the globe further complicates this, as it is increasingly becoming a "deculturalised" language (Hermessi, 2020, p. 297). This means that the traditional association of English with any specific cultural identity is now considered untenable (Baker, 2012), and the essentialist view of culture as a fixed entity is outdated. This shift is exemplified by the rise of the English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) movement, which recognises non-native varieties of English as distinct yet fully proficient, instead of viewing them as deficient (Jenkins et al., 2011). For instance, although code-switching was traditionally seen as a lack of English proficiency, ELF regards it as a bilingual pragmatic resource that demonstrates speakers' adept communication skills (Jenkins et al., 2011). The World Englishes framework also accepts local English varieties over the traditional native speaker model, thus challenging the relevance of native speaker culture as a standard for pragmatic instruction (Galloway & Rose, 2015).

The present study supports a nuanced view of culture, acknowledging its intricate and multifaceted nature. However, the primary focus here is not on culture per se but on the pragmatics of the English language – specifically, how to use well-established linguistic forms appropriately within diverse contexts. The use of these forms is influenced by 'small,' everyday contexts such as classrooms, hospitals, offices, family units, and peer groups (see Holliday, 1999), rather than being dictated by a single, overarching culture. More specifically, analysing pragmatic content involves looking into SAs and their contextual and sociopragmatic use, including aspects of politeness, appropriateness and register, as they appear in the textbooks. For example, the choice of SA forms can depend on the relationship between interlocutors and the formality of the setting. This perspective emphasises that language is a flexible tool influenced by the immediate context of the interaction, and thus language education should focus both on forms and on understanding and navigating the complexities of their practical application in real-world interactions.

3.5 Speech Act Theory

The SA theory forms the cornerstone of pragmatics, providing a framework for understanding the various functions of language beyond their literal meanings. The concept of SAs was initially introduced by philosopher J. L. Austin in his seminal work *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). Austin (1962) argued that utterances serve not only to convey the truth or falsity of statements but also to perform actions. Stated otherwise, language is used for purposes such as promising, complaining, commanding, offering, making suggestions and other similar functions.

The term SA encompasses three types of acts: *locutionary acts*, *illocutionary acts* and *perlocutionary acts* (Cruse, 2011; Mey, 2006; Searle, 1979; Yule, 1996). At its core, a locutionary act is simply an utterance. Alston (2000) called this level of SA a ‘sentential act.’ A perlocutionary act is the result of an utterance. It thus refers to either the successful completion of an act or its impact on an audience (Alston, 2000; Cruse, 2011; Yule, 1996). An illocutionary act, situated between the two, is more challenging to define but is generally understood as an utterance containing a particular action (Alston, 2000; Cruse, 2011; Mey, 2006; Searle, 1979; Yule, 1996). For example, in the utterance ‘The kitchen is a mess,’ the locutionary act conveys the literal meaning, whereas the illocutionary act may involve a request to clean the kitchen and the perlocutionary act might be the addressee actually cleaning the kitchen or responding with a commitment, such as ‘I’ll do the dishes in a few minutes’ (Cohen & Ishihara, 2012). Notably, the majority of attention in interlanguage pragmatics and L2 research has been on the illocutionary act.

Austin (1962), for example, classified SAs according to the illocution they hold. Five types emerged: *verdictives*, where speakers deliver verdicts, appraisals and findings (e.g. pronouncing); *exercitives*, where they exercise power or rights (e.g. appointing); *commissives*, where they commit themselves to a certain action (e.g. threatening); *expositives*, where they expound views and make arguments (e.g. postulating); and *behabitives*, where they express attitudes and feelings towards others (e.g. apologising). Over the years, various classifications of SAs have subsequently emerged, each offering valuable insights into the multifaceted ways in which language serves as a tool for communication (e.g., Alston, 2000; Searle, 1975, 1979; Searle & Vanderveken, 1985a). Among these taxonomies, Searle’s (1979) taxonomy, which was later refined by Searle and Vanderveken (1985a), has been widely recognised as the most comprehensive and extensively used in pragmatic research and corpus linguistics (McAllister, 2015; Yule, 1996).

Searle (1969, 1975, 1979) systematically developed and structured Austin’s views into SA theory. He argued that Austin’s classification of SAs lacked a clear foundation, making it challenging to distinguish between different SA categories. The taxonomic categories covered were presumed to be distinct and exclusive; as can easily be demonstrated, however, certain illocutionary acts, such as 'describe,' can be interpreted as both verdictive and expositive. Searle thus contended that Austin's categories exhibited significant overlap, to the point that *verdictives* and *expositives* essentially represented the same category (cf. Alston, 2000). Another problem with Austin's approach is that it relied too heavily on a lexicographical criterion which presumes that speakers can learn a variety of illocutionary acts by learning illocutionary verbs. Here again, Searle noted that there are illocutionary acts in language that are not tied to verbs, and more than one non-equivalent verb can denote the same illocutionary act.

In response to these issues, Searle (1979) introduced 12 principles or 'dimensions of variation' for distinguishing among illocutionary acts. Among these dimensions, three hold particular significance as they "form the basis of a taxonomy of the fundamental classes of illocutionary acts" (Searle, 1979, p.1). The first one is the *illocutionary point*, which refers to the intended effect or purpose of an SA. It represents the illocutionary force or aim of an utterance. Searle (1979) illustrated the illocutionary point by comparing requests with commands. Although these are different SAs with varying degrees of force, they share the aim of prompting the hearer to take action. The second key dimension, known as the *direction of fit*, describes the relationship between words and the world. It characterises how the words in an utterance are meant to correspond to the state of affairs in the world. For example, the direction of fit for requests is 'world-to-word,' indicating that the speaker wants the world to match their words, whereas the direction fit of an assertion is 'word-to-world,' as the speaker intends to make their words match the world (Hanks, 2018). The third key dimension is the *psychological state*, which represents the attitude or mental state expressed by an SA. It represents the speaker's desires, wants, beliefs, intentions or other mental states. For instance, the expressed psychological state associated with a command is desire or want, indicating that the speaker desires or wants the hearer to perform a certain action (Hanks, 2018).

Using these three dimensions of classification, along with differences in propositional content (i.e. the meaning conveyed by an SA), Searle (1979) classified SAs into five categories:

- *Representatives* (also known as *assertives*): They include SAs that oblige the speaker to the truth or falseness of an expressed proposition. Illocutionary acts including reporting, asserting, stating, and hypothesising, belong to this class.
- *Directives*: They are utterances used to get someone to do something. For instance, the speaker may plead, order, advise, or request the hearer to do certain actions. More moderate SAs such as recommending and suggesting are also considered directives.
- *Commissives*: They are illocutionary acts that commit the speaker in varying degrees to a particular action in the future. Examples of this category include promising, offering, threatening, and vowing.
- *Expressives*: These acts use language to express the speaker's feelings and thoughts about people and things. SAs in this class include thanking, apologising, congratulating, and welcoming.

- *Declaratives*: The point of declaratives is to change the reality according to the proposition declared such as appointing, hiring, sentencing, christening, and declaring war. For this type of SA to be performed successfully, it must be issued by someone with authority in an extra-linguistic institution. For instance, to be able to call a runner out in a baseball game, the speaker must be an umpire (Searle, 1979).

Table 3.1 below summarises the five categories of SAs and their key features, based on Searle's (1979) taxonomy of SAs, as well as his foundational work on illocutionary acts in collaboration with Vanderveken (1985a).

Table 3.1 *The General Functions of SAs*

SA type	Illocutionary point	Direction of fit	Psychological state	Examples
Representatives	Commit the speaker to something's being the case	Word-to-world	Belief	To state, deduce, claim, assert, hypothesise
Directives	Attempt by the speaker to get the hearer to do something	World-to-word	Want, wish, desire	To order, request, invite, permit, advise
Commissives	Commit the speaker to some course of action	World-to-word	Intent	To promise, vow, commit
Expressives	Express the psychological state specified	None	A range of feelings and attitudes	To apologise, thank, congratulate, welcome
Declaratives	Bring into existence the state described in the proposition	Both	None	To quit, appoint, christen, name

Note. Source: Yule, 1996.

In addition to the above classification scheme, Searle (1975) also categorised SAs into one of two types, direct or indirect, depending on their structural characteristics. A direct SA is one in which the speaker's intentions align with their utterance. These SAs often correspond closely to the syntactic structure of the utterance. For instance, when someone poses an interrogative sentence like 'where are you?', it qualifies as a direct SA since it straightforwardly serves the purpose of asking a question. Conversely, an indirect SA involves intentions that deviate from the literal meaning of the words spoken. For instance, when someone says, 'can you reach the salt?' they are not merely inquiring about the hearer's ability to pass the salt; instead, they are making an indirect request (Searle, 1975). Similarly, responding to a suggestion for a walk by saying 'the weather forecast predicts rain tonight' communicates not only the literal meaning of these words but also an indirect decline of the suggestion, implying that the proposed activity may not be enjoyable due to the anticipated inclement weather. Comprehending the intent behind an indirect SA requires that the speaker and hearer have "mutually shared factual background information" and that the "hearer [is able] to make inferences" (Searle, 1975, p. 61).

Searle's theory and classification of SAs have faced considerable criticism from scholars including Geis (1995), Levinson (1981), Mey (2006), Thomas (2014) and Trosborg (1995). A key criticism pertains to his emphasis on sentences. As Geis (1995) noted, sentences cannot be isolated from the context in which they are spoken; moreover, SAs do not always manifest in sentence form. Another criticism pertains to the association made between SAs and grammar. Trosborg (1995) asserted that this simplification overlooks the complexity of SAs. Whereas grammar belongs to the formal language system, SAs are closely tied to the communicative function. In addition, Searle's taxonomy does not comprehensively cover all types of SAs or the full spectrum of communicative functions that language serves. Finally, doubts have been raised about the universality of Searle's categories, given their development within English and Western cultures. Different languages may possess unique SA conventions and categories that do not neatly fit into Searle's taxonomy.

These criticisms notwithstanding, Searle's (1979) SA taxonomy remains one of the most frequently used frameworks for empirical studies in pragmatics due to its focus on illocutionary acts and their intended effects (see McAllister, 2015). Compared to other classifications, 'Searle's is the only one in which the principles of the taxonomy are made absolutely clear' (Verschueren, 1983). Furthermore, while numerous critics have contributed additional criteria and considerations to enhance the classification of SAs, no conclusive methodology has yet surfaced for identifying the different types of SAs.

3.5.1 SAs and Politeness

Politeness is intrinsically intertwined with the discourse on SAs, as it greatly influences how individuals behave within communicative interactions. As Martinez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2007) aptly stated, "knowing how to behave in a polite and appropriate way is key for a successful communicative interchange" (p. 39). Politeness is fundamental to human interactions since it allows for mutual comfort and promotes rapport and positive relationships (Malekian, 2016). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness involves an awareness of how others want to be viewed, that is, their 'face wants.' The term 'face' refers to the public self-image that an individual maintains, which can be either perceived, lost, or improved (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Accordingly, some SAs—such as requests, favour requests, refusals, and disagreements— are regarded face threatening as they inevitably challenge either the speaker's or the hearer's face, or both (Brown & Levinson, 1987). When performing these SAs, conversational participants are expected to engage in some form of face-work that involves using certain strategies to save the hearer's face. Examples include hedging to soften the imposition of the SA with expressions like 'perhaps' and 'I think,' inserting politeness markers such as 'please' or 'excuse me,' or using syntactic indirectness such as formulating a request as a question.

Given that face value and politeness norms are largely context and culture dependent, L2 learners often find it challenging to choose the appropriate politeness strategy when using the target language. They may inadvertently carry over cultural influences from their native language into their L2, potentially causing complications when there are disparities in cultural norms between the two languages. As highlighted by Alhammad (2022), Saudi students studying in the UK may find it challenging to employ a politeness strategy for asking straightforward questions, even in situations similar to those in their first language, and they occasionally struggle to comprehend the underlying dynamics of the cultural context in which they are communicating. This can result in misunderstandings or failure in communication. Therefore, it becomes crucial to equip students with the necessary tools to understand linguistic actions in relation to politeness norms while developing L2 pragmatic competence. This enables them to decide the extent to which they wish to adhere to native speakers' conventions (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Jorden, 1992).

3.5.2 SAs and Contextual Appropriateness

In their pragmatic context, SAs are largely constrained by certain sociocultural and contextual norms, as previously mentioned. These norms help convey meanings by ensuring that language is used in a way that fits the context; they thus shape what is considered an 'appropriate' use of SAs. Appropriateness, similar to politeness, focuses on the relation between language and context. However, despite their close relationship and occasional interchangeability, politeness and appropriateness are distinct concepts. While politeness involves the use of language to convey respect and consideration for others' face, appropriateness is concerned with the use of language suitable in a particular context. It follows that a speaker can be polite without being appropriate, and vice versa. An example of the former would be using overly formal language in an informal setting. While inappropriate, it would not necessarily be impolite.

In essence, appropriateness in pragmatics is "the knowledge of the conventions of communication in a society, as well as linguistic abilities that enable learners to communicate successfully in L2" (Taguchi, 2006, p. 513). This definition covers both the linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of communication.

Brown and Levinson (1987) identified three key contextual variables that govern the appropriate use of SAs within a given context, which are identical to those that bear upon politeness. These are factors embedded in the social situation which may determine the speaker's choice of strategy when performing SAs (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Martínez-Flor, 2004; Roever, 2015). They include power relations, social distance and ranking of imposition.

A.1) Power Relations: Power relations refer to the relative power held by the speaker over the hearer, which typically dictates the speaker's language choices. Such dynamics are often observed in hierarchical settings such as educational institutions, courts, military settings and workplaces, where an asymmetry in power exists between individuals. In such settings, the more powerful the hearer is, the more polite the speaker is expected to be (Al-Bantany, 2013; Martínez-Flor, 2004). The example below illustrates the consideration of relative power in language choices when seeking permission:

- Excuse me sir, would it be all right if I smoke?
- Mind if I smoke? (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 80)

In this example, the first sentence might be one uttered by an employee seeking permission from their boss, whereas the second sentence might be spoken by the boss in addressing the employee. In these sentences, the scenario could be the same.

A.2) Social Distance: Social distance encompasses psychological factors including familiarity, age and gender, which influence the language employed. Greater social distance requires more polite and indirect language use (Al-Bantany, 2013; Martínez-Flor, 2004; Roever, 2015). Accordingly, individuals are often inclined to use polite language when interacting with strangers or acquaintances as opposed to friends or family members. An example illustrating the consideration of social distance when asking questions appears below:

- Excuse me, would you by any chance have the time?
- Got the time, mate? (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 80)

In this example, the first sentence is suitable when addressing a stranger since greater social distance dictates the need for a longer, more polite utterance. Conversely, the second sentence is more appropriate for use with a friend or an acquaintance.

A.3) Ranking of Imposition: This contextual variable pertains to the level of inconvenience or burden that an SA imposes on the hearer. The degree of imposition correlates with the level of politeness expected from the speaker (Al-Bantany, 2013; Martínez-Flor, 2004; Roever, 2015). The following example demonstrates the difference that rank of imposition makes in the SA of requesting favours:

- Look, I'm terribly sorry to bother you but would be there be any chance of your lending me just enough money to get a railway ticket to go home? I must have dropped my purse and I just don't know what to do.
- Hey, got change for a quarter? (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 81)

In this example, both utterances might occur at a railway station between a traveller and a stranger. However, the rank of imposition and the seriousness of the face-threatening acts differ between the two sentences. The first entails a higher imposition as the speaker requests money without offering compensation, while the second involves a lower imposition as the speaker asks for small change in return for a larger denomination. Given the greater imposition in the first sentence compared to the second, the speaker is likely to employ more careful and polite strategies in conveying the request.

3.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical foundations that underpin the current study. It delves into the concepts of communicative competence, pragmatics and its associated theories and principles, including pragmatic competence and SAs. The primary aim of this review is to ensure a solid understanding of the current state of knowledge on this topic. It highlights that effective communication goes beyond mere knowledge of grammatical rules and vocabulary, encompassing a rich tapestry of skills and knowledges necessary for navigating human interaction intricacies. This understanding underscores the importance of integrating these aspects into L2 classrooms and materials.

Consequently, this chapter sets the stage for a more in-depth exploration of pragmatics in relation to language education in the following chapter.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Introduction

This chapter, structured into four main sections, aims to provide an understanding of pragmatics and its research, specifically focusing on its applications in teaching. The first section explores the significance of teaching pragmatics, approaches for teaching it, and its incorporation into ELT classrooms and textbooks. The subsequent section directs its focus towards the pragmatic content of textbooks. It begins by defining the role of textbooks and introducing the methods used in their analysis. Moving forward, the third section critically reviews relevant research concentrating on pragmatic content in language textbooks and the fourth delves into identifying gaps within the existing literature. Finally, this chapter concludes by articulating the specific objectives and questions that guide the current study.

4.2 Teaching Pragmatics

4.2.1 Why Teach Pragmatics?

The development of learners' communicative ability is often considered an objective of second language pedagogy. It involves linguistic and pragmatic competence (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Kasper, 1997; Martinez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2007). As Bachman and Palmer's (1996) model demonstrates, pragmatic competence is a crucial component of learners' communicative competence (see section 3.4). As such, it should not be regarded as "extra or ornamental, like the icing on the cake" in language classrooms (Kasper, 1997, para. 6); Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991) argue that "Teaching pragmatics empowers students to experience and experiment with the language at a deeper level, and thereby to participate in the purpose of language – communication, rather than just words" (p. 13).

The importance of teaching pragmatics has been emphasised by many researchers (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, et al., 1991; Bardovi-Harling & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Martinez-Flor, 2016; Rose, 2005; Rose & Kasper, 2001; Schmidt, 1993; Takahashi, 2001) with various reasons given. First, research into the pragmatic competence of additional language learners has demonstrated that their pragmatic competence level does not necessarily correspond to their level of grammatical development, regardless of how high that may be (e.g., Abduljawad, 2020; Al-Juraywi & Abdulaziz, 2021; Alkahtani, 2012; Almegren, 2017; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Eslami-Rasekh, 2005b; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Yang, 2015). Even learners who have mastered the vocabulary and grammar of a language often struggle to use it in a pragmatically appropriate manner. To illustrate, Almegren (2017) compared greeting strategies used by intermediate and advanced Saudi EFL learners to those used by Saudi Arabic and American-English native speakers. Their findings showed that learners at both proficiency levels used greeting strategies and expressions that significantly deviated from those of native speakers. This could lead to misunderstandings in intercultural settings. Similarly, Abduljawad (2020) assessed the performance of pre-intermediate and advanced Saudi EFL learners against native British English speakers in pragmalinguistic tests. They found that both Saudi groups struggled with contextual functions and the use of pragmalinguistic structures, regardless of their ability level. These results indicated that the high proficiency level of the advanced Saudi groups did not correspond to their pragmatic competence.

A significant challenge arises when linguistic proficiency outpaces pragmatic competence as "[n]ative speakers assume that speakers who exhibit linguistic fluency will also produce pragmatically felicitous utterances" (Frenz-Belkin, 2015, p. 35). When an advanced learner of a foreign language fails to meet this expectation, it can lead to a negative opinion of their character rather than being recognised as a deficit in pragmatic competence. Several scholars concur that native speakers are less forgiving of pragmatic errors than linguistic ones, particularly in the case of advanced learners (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Baron, 2002; Fraser, 2010; Li, 2018; Savić, 2014). Such heightened expectation for advanced learners is due to grammatical proficiency no longer being seen as an excuse for impoliteness (Baron, 2002); advanced learners are expected to adhere more closely to L2 pragmatic norms by their interlocutors (Savić, 2014). With the aid of structured instruction directed towards the acquisition of pragmatics, students can increase their pragmatic competence to correspond with their linguistic development (Rueda, 2006). This discussion postulates valid reasons for including pragmatic knowledge in language teaching and materials at all proficiency stages.

Second, Rose and Kasper (2001) identify the need for pragmatic instruction by highlighting the existence of a certain amount of universal pragmatic knowledge (e.g., politeness principles) within all adult learners, which they can transfer to their L2. They suggest that learners can acquire some pragmalinguistic knowledge "for free" if there is "a corresponding form-function mapping between L1 and L2, and the forms can be used in corresponding L2 contexts with corresponding effects" (Rose & Kasper, 2001, p. 6). For instance, some modal verbs in English, such as *could* and *would*, have equivalent functions in other Germanic languages (Rose & Kasper, 2001). Therefore, learners from Germany might successfully convey their pragmatic intentions in English simply by transferring what they would say in their first language. This process is known as positive pragmatic transfer. In Arabic language, for example, a common way to apologise is by using the phrase '*ana asif*,' which translates directly to 'I'm sorry' in English (Bataineh, 2004). Both phrases directly map to each other in terms of function (expressing an apology) and form (a simple verbal expression), facilitating the transfer and use of this expression by Arabic EFL learners. Similarly, the use of conditionals in Arabic to express wishes and regrets mirrors the conventional form used in English to convey the same functions (see Farghal & Almanna, 2014). However, educational psychology indicates that adult students do not always use this universal pragmatic knowledge as they are unaware of it (Kasper, 1997; Rose & Kasper, 2001). Research by Fukushima (1990) supports that argument, indicating that, although proficient in recognising pragmatic strategies based on context in their native language, EFL learners encounter difficulties when attempting to do the same in English. This is particularly the case when faced with variations in social distance and power (explained later in this chapter). Planned pedagogical efforts are, therefore, essential to raise learners' awareness of their existing pragmatic knowledge and teach them how to use it effectively in L2 contexts (Belz, 2007; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; O'Keeffe et al., 2011; Rose & Kasper, 2001).

Third, language learners can profit from learning about other nonuniversal, untransferable L2 pragmatic features. Most are inherent and latent, making them hard to observe or comprehend without assistance (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Taguchi, 2015). To effectively learn pragmatics, learners must navigate linguistic forms, functional aspects, and contextual factors, which are complex and lack systematic correlations (Taguchi, 2015). Moreover, cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatic studies have shown that native and non-native speakers often have different pragmatic systems (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Cohen, 2010; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990). Cohen (2010) illustrates this issue with differences in greeting customs. In American English, for instance, the response to 'How're you doing?' is expected to be brief: 'Fine, thanks,' or 'OK, thanks,' rather than a detailed list of complaints. The latter, however, is a customary response in some other countries, such as Serbia. Similarly, in Arabic cultures, greetings typically involve religious expressions and inquiries about family and personal life, deviating from English greeting norms (Almegren, 2017; Bouchara, 2015). Cohen (2010) explains that "members of a given speech community know how to perform such greetings and how to interpret them as well". For learners, though, the seemingly straightforward task of greetings may be challenging (p. 7). Therefore, pedagogical intervention is essential to help them grasp these intricate, nuanced underlying concepts so that they can make informed linguistic decisions rather than relying on trial and error (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005b).

Teaching pragmatics is especially critical in EFL contexts like Saudi Arabia. In contrast to the ESL context, where learners living in the L2 community have opportunities for cross-cultural communication outside the classroom (Usó-Juan, 2007), learners in EFL settings experience challenges stemming from their limited exposure to authentic language use. This results in restricted input and fewer opportunities to practise sociopragmatic strategies in real-life situations (Fatah & Ibrahim, 2020; Nugroho & Rekha, 2020). Research reveals notable disparities when comparing EFL and ESL learners. For example, Japanese ESL learners, immersed in the language environment, tend to closely mirror the abilities of native speakers in their performance of pragmatic functions like refusal (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987) and their sociopragmatic perceptions of requests (Kitao, 1990). These findings underscore the heightened importance of pragmatic instruction in EFL learning contexts. This is significant for Saudi Arabia's EFL setting, as English education frequently has limited weekly hours in class, and textbooks serve as the primary source of language input. In such settings, EFL learners largely rely on teaching delivered within the classroom to enhance their pragmatic skills (Kasper & Roever, 2005; Usó-Juan, 2007). Consequently, teaching them pragmatic competence becomes not only useful but also necessary to bridge the substantial gap between classroom learning and real-world language usage (Fatah & Ibrahim, 2020).

The importance of teaching pragmatics has been acknowledged in Saudi EFL education in secondary school. Developing learners' communicative competence, including linguistic and pragmatic competencies, is regarded as one of the main objectives of teaching English within the Saudi general education system (see Chapter 2 for further details). Many Saudi researchers have also consistently advocated for the inclusion of pragmatic instruction (e.g., Al-Qahtani, 2022; Alsmari, 2020; El-Dakhs et al., 2019; Qari, 2017; 2021; Zughaibi, 2022). El-Dakhs et al. (2019) emphasise that

> developing pragmatic competence is becoming a requirement for Saudi learners of English to advance a successful career, especially when most well-paying jobs require work in multi-cultural contexts where English is the main language for communication. (p. 297)

In such settings, the ability to navigate English communication and understand its nuances is not just beneficial but often a requirement for career advancement and success.

All of these issues emphasise the importance of teaching pragmatic competence. This study is founded on this belief and grounded in the assumption that EFL textbooks should cover pragmatic content to help learners develop pragmatic competence.

4.2.2 Approaches to teaching pragmatics

The teaching of pragmatics has been gaining importance. Nevertheless, the debate persists over which approach is more effective for teaching L2 pragmatics. Currently, there are two main approaches: explicit and implicit. This section analyses these approaches, particularly exploring their effectiveness in teaching SAs.

Explicit vs. Implicit Pragmatic Instruction

Explicit pragmatic instruction of SAs involves a systematic and direct approach. Learners should receive explicit explanations and guidance not only on linguistic forms and strategies (i.e. pragmalinguistic aspects) but also on socio-cultural and pragmatic dimensions of the language, such as politeness, contextual appropriateness, and register (i.e. sociopragmatic aspects) (Chong-yuan, 2021). This approach aligns with Schmidt's *Noticing Hypothesis* (1990), which suggests that learners must first notice or attend to a linguistic feature in the input before they can acquire it (El-Dakhs et al., 2018). Therefore, to foster a comprehensive understanding of both the 'how' and 'why' behind SA choices, it incorporates methods such as metapragmatic discussions, explicit explanations, modelling, drilling, structured practice, feedback, and correction (Ishihara & Cohen, 2021; Rose, 2005; Rose & Kasper, 2001).

In contrast, implicit instruction relies on indirect exposure and acquiring pragmatic knowledge and skills without formal rules or explicit teaching (Derakhshan & Shakki, 2020; Takahashi, 2001). It aims to create an environment where learners actively participate, explore, and engage with the language or subject matter naturally, allowing them to develop skills and knowledge through immersion and practice. Some of the methods used in this approach include input enhancement techniques, implicit feedback, awareness-raising activities, and task-based learning (Huang, 2022). Implicit instruction often allows errors without immediate correction: learners are encouraged to learn from their mistakes and self-correct through repeated exposure and practice. However, this approach frequently demands a longer period of exposure and more practice to achieve the desired outcomes than explicit instruction (Huang, 2022).

There is controversy regarding the effectiveness of these two teaching approaches in developing L2 pragmatic competence (Taguchi, 2011). Nevertheless, there is a substantial body of pragmatic research spanning both ESL and EFL contexts and the consensus favours explicit over implicit approaches (e.g., Alcón-Soler & Pitarch, 2013; Alhammad, 2022; Chong-yuan, 2021; Derakhshan & Arabmofrad, 2018; Kasper, 1997; Martínez-Flor, 2008; Takahashi, 2010; Yuka, 2012). In a recent comprehensive meta-analysis, Plonsky and Zhuang (2019) reviewed 50 experimental studies to determine the extent to which pragmatics instruction was effective. Their results showed that the explicit method was significantly more effective in enhancing learners' pragmatic abilities. Shakki et al. (2020) conducted similar research in an Iranian EFL context with a sample of 54 studies. Their findings reinforced previous meta-analyses in acknowledging the teachability of pragmatics and the effectiveness of explicit instruction as a facilitative tool for learning compared to implicit instruction.

These conclusions have primarily been made regarding SA instruction (e.g., Derakhshan & Shakki, 2020; Eslami-Rasekh et al., 2004; Qari, 2021; Xiao-le, 2011). For instance, a study by Qari (2021) focusing on intermediate and advanced-level Saudi EFL learners revealed that explicit instruction through explanations, modelling, and structured practice effectively developed learners' realisation of the SA of requests. Their improvement was evident in being able to use correct request strategies, successfully identify request function names, assign the right functions to language forms, and understand their appropriate usage in various request situations. In a similar vein, Derakhshan and Shakki (2020) used a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test design to investigate the effect of explicit and implicit instruction on intermediate Iranian EFL learners' realisation of apologies and refusals. The control group received no specific instruction, the explicit instruction group received metalinguistic explanations and discussions, and the implicit instruction group received indirect feedback. Their results indicated that both treatment groups significantly improved their comprehension of SAs, with the explicit-instruction group significantly outperforming the implicit instruction group. These studies strengthen the case for adopting explicit pragmatic instruction in L2 teaching.

According to Halenko and Jones (2011), the main advantage of explicit instruction is that it allows for conscious observation and awareness of how nuanced social and contextual elements function in L2 interactions. Expanding on this idea, Taguchi et al. (2015) suggest that it can even change naturalistic developmental patterns in learners' abilities, resulting in more substantial and robust learning outcomes. The implication is that pragmatic awareness promoted through explicit pedagogical intervention is vital to the process of effective L2 pragmatic development, especially in EFL contexts.

4.2.3 Incorporating Pragmatics in the ELT Classroom

Given the significance of instruction in fostering learners' pragmatic competence, it is crucial to recognise the ways in which pragmatics can effectively be taught in L2 classrooms. Inadequate instruction or treatment of pragmatic knowledge logically results in negative outcomes (Kasper &

Schmidt, 1996). For example, Japanese EFL learners were found to use *should* in situations where *must* is more appropriate (e.g., 'you *should (must)* be happy that you got a promotion so quickly') because their teachers informed them that in English *must* is less polite than *should* (see Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). Therefore, many frameworks for teaching pragmatics have been proposed by scholars (e.g., Cohen & Ishihara, 2012; Kasper, 1997; Martínez-Flor & Uso-Juan, 2012; Nguyen & Cahn, 2019; Tatsuki & Houck, 2010). Many of these frameworks share criteria, including the provision of rich and contextually relevant input through both the teacher and material resources, the creation of opportunities for meaningful practice, and a feedback mechanism for learners to reflect on and refine their understanding of target features (Cohen & Ishihara, 2012).

The incorporation of pragmatic information in EFL classrooms and materials should take various factors into consideration to achieve outcomes effectively (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). First, offering learners authentic, pragmatic input based on natural interactions is advisable. This exposes them to accurate models of appropriate language use and demonstrates the underlying social strategies of communicative behaviour (Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Martínez-Flor, 2008). Second, the speech samples given should represent a range of pragmatic elements (e.g., SAs, conversation structures, politeness) and various linguistic devices for expressing them. Third, it is essential to contextualise the pragmatic input by making situational and cultural information available. This helps learners to understand why particular strategies are appropriate in given situations (Martínez-Flor, 2016; Uso-Juan, 2008). Fourth, metapragmatic discussion should accompany the presentation of pragmatic input (i.e., comments about language and sociopragmatic use) to increase learners' awareness of how linguistic forms interact with context (Nguyen, 2011). Similar effects can be achieved by including contrastive activities between communicative action patterns (e.g., the performance of a given SA) in a learner's native language and L2 in similar situations (see Ellis, 2008 and Nguyen, 2007 for a discussion about this). Finally, to reinforce pragmatic learning, teachers and textbook writers must arrange ample opportunities for students to practise using language and engage them in producing interactional output. This also affords learners the opportunity to receive feedback from their teacher and/or peers (Koike & Pearson, 2005; Usó-Juan, 2007).

It is important to remember that successful L2 pragmatic instruction does not aim to assimilate learners into different cultures (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Cohen & Ishihara, 2012). Some students might be learning the L2 as a tool for communication while maintaining their identity; they are not aiming to obtain a native-like pragmatic ability (Cohen & Ishihara, 2012; Ellis, 2008; Nguyen, 2011). Therefore, material designers and teachers should offer learners input that covers a variety of pragmatic forms and practices, allowing students to make informed choices based on their personal and social goals (see Cohen & Ishihara, 2012; Kasper, 1997; Thomas, 1983). This can also assist learners in adeptly navigating cross-cultural communication and averting misunderstandings in multicultural and multilingual environments. Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) further substantiate this argument, contending that, through pragmatic instruction, "learners can maintain their own cultural identities and participate more fully in the target language communication, and gain control of the force and outcome of their contributions" (p.38).

4.3 Pragmatics and ELT Textbooks

Before delving into pragmatic content in language textbooks, it is important to first establish a foundational understanding of textbooks themselves and their role within language classrooms. These issues are discussed in the ensuing subsections.

4.3.1 Definitions of Textbook

Textbooks are a fundamental component of language learning and teaching materials (Tomlinson, 2011). The concept of teaching and learning materials is broad, encompassing various tangible, visual, and auditory resources applicable in language learning settings. These may include narratives, realia, students' personal experiences, newspapers, interviews, illustrations and pictures (Cullen & Sato, 2000). The range of examples is extensive, as Tomlinson (2012) points out, as materials can be "anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language" (p. 143).

These materials can be broadly categorised into several groups, including published, authentic, teacher-produced, and student-produced materials. Published materials include commercially developed resources often authored by experienced language educators and experts, such as textbooks, workbooks, grammar guides, vocabulary books, and audio-visual aids (Vellenga, 2004). In contrast, authentic materials consist of real-world content typically designed for native speakers, such as newspapers, books, movies, podcasts, and websites, providing learners with exposure to natural language use. Teacher-produced materials, on the other hand, are created by teachers themselves and can be customised to meet specific student needs, including lesson plans, worksheets, handouts, and multimedia presentations. Lastly, student-produced materials are created by learners as part of their learning process, encouraging creativity and the practical use of language skills, such as assignments, presentations, projects, and recordings.

Among these diverse materials, textbooks stand out as a universal and extensively used tool in the teaching and learning of languages (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017). According to Tarigan (1993), textbooks are books frequently employed by teachers to support the teaching and learning processes in educational institutions. Gebregeorgis (2017) defines textbooks as "teaching–learning resources containing a series of texts and images aiming at certain educational outcomes, convey knowledge, attitudes and behaviours" (p. 56). Textbooks serve as guides for teachers in the instructional process and as tools for learners to consolidate their knowledge. They can also act as a springboard of ideas and activities and provide a syllabus for the reflection on predetermined learning objectives (McGrath, 2016). Within their pages, language textbooks encompass a wide array of linguistic, cultural, and communicative elements crucial for comprehensive language development. These elements include structured lesson sequences, grammar explanations, vocabulary lists, reading passages, and exercises aimed at reinforcing learning.

Based on the definitions above, it is evident that the textbook is an important component in the field of teaching and learning. Further exploration of the debates surrounding the significance of textbooks in language teaching is examined in the following subsection.

4.3.2 The Role of the Textbook in ELT

Textbooks play a crucial role in language education, supported by various scholars (e.g., Karatepe & Civelek, 2021; McGrath, 2016; Nu & Murray, 2020; Tatsuki, 2019; Tomlinson, 2012; Vellenga, 2004; Vu, 2017). Sheldon (1988) describes textbooks as “the visible heart of any ELT program”, without which there will be no impact on the teaching and learning process (p. 237). This view of textbooks still stands in many EFL contexts today, where they continue to serve as the primary medium for delivering language learning material (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017). A textbook is thought to be the second most significant factor in a teaching context, behind the teacher (Riazi, 2003). For the most part, textbooks form the foundation for classroom language practice as well as the language and cultural information that students are exposed to. Their use is not only important in certain teaching contexts; it is also mandatory. This holds true in Saudi schools, where textbooks are mandatorily used in all schools across the country. Consequently, many instructors and students tend to over-rely on these textbooks throughout the teaching-learning process (Ansary & Babaii, 2002; Fatima et al., 2015).

Nonetheless, textbooks come with their own set of merits and demerits. One of the advantages of textbook use, as highlighted by Haycroft (1998), is their psychological vitality as they can be used as a measure of students’ concrete progress and achievements. Textbooks are often seen as providing a structured framework for both teachers and learners, guiding them on their journey by indicating their current position, accomplished tasks, and future objectives (McGrath, 2016; Ur, 1999). This guidance fosters a degree of learner autonomy, enabling students to engage with new material, review, and monitor their progress independently. Without the guidance of textbooks, as Ur (1999) points out, learners might become excessively teacher-dependent.

Furthermore, textbooks, by offering “a range of professionally developed materials within tried and tested syllabus structures” in a ready-to-use format, equip instructors to concentrate on effective teaching rather than on preparing materials (Bell & Gower, 1998, p. 116). This practicality allows teachers to save valuable time and effort during lesson planning and materials creation. Textbooks can also serve as a valuable training tool for EFL teachers, particularly those with limited experience (Ayu & Indrawati, 2019). Tomlinson (2003) supports this view and adds that textbooks can help teachers re-skill rather than de-skill by providing clear instructions on lesson execution.

In exam-oriented contexts, textbooks frequently serve a dual purpose as practice materials (Tomlinson, 2008), intensifying their importance. This is especially notable in Saudi Arabia, where the educational system is built around exam-oriented instruction. Teachers in such contexts are typically expected to closely follow the textbook’s guidance, not only because it shapes the curriculum but also because exam questions are directly derived from the textbook content (Alharbi, 2017). As a result, students rely on these textbooks not only for learning the required material but also for extensive practice, which is essential for success in an exam-centric system.

However, despite their importance in ELT programmes, the ELT textbook has been subject to criticism on various grounds. Critics argue that textbooks do not always meet the diverse needs of teachers and learners, as these needs vary significantly across contexts and backgrounds (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Cunningsworth, 1995). Ur (1999) highlights that since every class and learner possesses unique learning needs, "no one coursebook can possibly supply these satisfactorily" (p. 80). A textbook suitable for one class in a particular country might prove inadequate for another, and a textbook designed for a smaller class in a metropolitan setting may not suffice for a larger class in a rural area. This mismatch can result in irrelevant or culturally inappropriate content or content that does not align with students' interests or level of knowledge.

Textbooks are also criticised for limiting the freedom and creativity of teachers and pre-empting the content for learners (Littlejohn, 1992; Maley, 2011). Overreliance on structured textbooks can lead to rigid, uninspiring teaching methods, diminishing the teacher's role to that of a mere executor of the textbook writer's intent. Textbooks can also inadvertently limit learners, restricting their exposure to what is presented. This overreliance may even lead to teaching the textbook rather than the intended language (McGrath, 2016; Tomlinson, 2008), culminating in learners' language skills hinging primarily on textbook content. Should a textbook fall short in linguistic or pragmatic elements, students may find themselves lacking in these areas.

Another major criticism of language textbooks is that the majority of EFL/ESL textbooks are often based on the intuition of native-speaking writers regarding language use and learning, rather than being rooted in language acquisition principles and corpus-based research (Harwood, 2005; Ishihara & Cohen, 2021; Tomlinson, 2003). However, it is essential to recognise that native speakers are not necessarily capable of explaining the social uses of their language to learners, and their intuitions about language may not always be reliable (Bardovi-Harlig, et al., 1991; Ishihara, 2013). Bardovi-Harlig, et al. (1991) elucidate that most native speakers possess only partial awareness of their pragmatic competence, as much of their pragmatic knowledge remains tacit or implicit. That is, they are not necessarily capable of articulating or describing the implicit knowledge underlining their communicative actions. Therefore, native speakers' intuitive understanding of pragmatics can be viewed as unreliable, and can, as Ishihara (2013) noted, "be at odds with actual sociolinguistic practices" (p. 144). This reliance on intuition and assumptions can lead to the presentation of inauthentic language samples to learners, potentially hindering their learning experiences as they would be taught language patterns that diverge from those used in real-world contexts (Ishihara & Cohen, 2021). For instance, Bouton (1996) illustrated that 80% of invitations in a native-speaker-written ELT textbook employed a format that was present in just 26% of invitations in a real-world corpus. This discrepancy between textbook content and real-world language usage can result in teaching language that lacks reality and credibility.

Lastly, several researchers have raised concerns about ELT textbooks' concentration on linguistic knowledge while giving little attention to the equally important pragmatic knowledge (Nguyen, 2011; Nu & Murray, 2020; Ren & Han, 2016; Takafumi et. al., 2007; Vellenga, 2004). This issue will be explored further in section 4.4.1, supported by empirical research and illustrated with examples.

Overall, while ELT textbooks offer valuable structure and support in the teaching-learning process, they are not without their drawbacks. Therefore, it is essential to approach textbook usage judiciously, considering their inherent limitations and the diverse needs of learners (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Nguyen & Le, 2019). Another critical aspect to consider is how to ensure the selection of a textbook that aligns with the learning objectives and needs of a language programme. To achieve this, it is important to thoroughly examine the content of a textbook to understand its objectives, strengths, weaknesses, and how it addresses specific language elements (McGrath, 2016; Nguyen & Le, 2019). Furthermore, teachers can make different textbook adaptations to better align them with the specific teaching context and objectives (see the subsection below for further discussion). In light of these considerations, the present study aims to analyse the pragmatic content found in the language textbooks used within the Saudi EFL general education context and to determine whether teachers make adaptations to this content.

4.3.3 Textbook Adaptation

Textbook adaptation is a dynamic process aimed at tailoring existing educational materials to address the specific requirements of a particular learning context (Tomlinson, 2012). As previously discussed, textbooks often fall short of aligning with the unique needs, interests, and objectives of diverse learning environments. In addressing this misalignment, teachers often employ a range of adaptation methods, each serving a distinct purpose in enhancing the effectiveness of teaching materials. These methods include *modification*, which involves any internal change made by the teacher in any aspect of the materials (e.g., content, procedure, or focus of an exercise) as a response to a problem or an opportunity; *supplementing*, which includes the use of materials from another source to support the existing materials within the textbook; *replacement*, which is the substitution of the provided materials in the existing textbook with new ones from another source; *addition*, which is any form of extension of the existing materials made by the teacher to enhance learning; and *deletion*, which involves removing materials from the existing textbook that are irrelevant or inappropriate for the learners (see McGrath, 2016; Tomlinson, 2012). McDonough and Shaw (2003) extend these methods by introducing *simplifying* and *reordering*. However, as these include making internal changes to the textbooks, they can be considered subsets of the broader category of modifications.

In the realm of teaching pragmatics, adapting or creating pragmatic activities for EFL instruction can be a challenge for teachers, regardless of whether they are native or non-native English speakers (Cohen, 2016). This complexity stems from the nuanced nature of pragmatics, which integrates linguistic, social and contextual elements, making it more intricate than other language areas like grammar or vocabulary. Accessing pragmatic information typically requires experiential and integrative tools that extend beyond conventional dictionaries and grammar books (Ji, 2007). Furthermore, a lack of pragmatic competence and professional development poses significant challenges for teachers (Akikawa, 2010; Cohen, 2016). Research has shown this to be particularly true for Saudi EFL teachers, who generally possess limited metapragmatic awareness and training in teaching pragmatics (Al-qahtani, 2020; Zughaibi, 2022, 2023). These deficiencies can lead to teachers lacking confidence to effectively teach pragmatic aspects of English, sometimes causing them to avoid including pragmatic teaching materials in their instruction (Al-qahtani, 2020). While a multitude of pragmatic awareness-raising exercises have been proposed in the literature, a notable gap persists regarding implementing pragmatics by EFL teachers (Karatepe & Civelek, 2021). Undoubtedly, teachers' perceptions play a vital role in shaping their instructional practices (see Doyle, et al., 2020), and therefore, the present study extends its investigation to teachers' perceptions regarding pragmatics instruction and content to gain a deeper understanding of their teaching practices.

4.3.4 ELT Textbook Analysis

The following subsection focuses on ELT textbook analysis. It surveys existing research on the analysis and evaluation of language textbooks to clarify the significance of textbook analysis and reveal the frameworks that are the foundation of the analytical methods employed in this study.

4.3.4.1 What is Textbook Analysis?

In general, textbook analysis can be defined as "an objective description that attempts to discover components of a textbook" (Zhang, 2017, p.81). It primarily addresses questions about "what the materials contain, what they aim to achieve, and what they ask learners to do" (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 22). In other words, it focuses on describing content without passing judgment. Textbook analysis first emerged in the 1980s as illustrative commentaries principally concerned with societal perspectives rather than linguistic aspects. By the 1990s, it had evolved into theory-driven analyses adopting macro-sociological and macro-linguistic standpoints to uncover hidden ideological implications in linguistic choices (Ouchaoua, 2022). In recent years, a data-driven approach to textbook analysis has become dominant, emphasising a straightforward description of the material's contents with no need for a theoretical framework (Littlejohn, 2013). This shift reflects a desire to simply describe 'what is there.'

The consensus in the literature highlights the importance of textbook analysis, regardless of the specific approach (e.g., Littlejohn, 2013; McGrath, 2016; Tomlinson, 2013). Answering the question of whether textbook analysis is needed, McGrath (2016) says, "Yes, there is" because "it is only by establishing, as a first step, what is there that we can make a judgement about how well that might suit our particular context" (p. 29). That is, textbook analysis is a valuable tool for understanding the components and purpose of a textbook. It can help identify its possible defects and advantages and understand its appropriateness in relation to specific objectives in certain situations (McGrath, 2016). Additionally, information obtained from textbook analysis can aid comprehension of its underlying assumptions and beliefs as well as predict its potential effects (Littlejohn, 2011; McGrath, 2016). For example, if educational materials claim to be learner-centred but most tasks involve scripted responses and reliance on provided content, this exposes a significant misalignment. Similarly, if materials assert that they promote problem-solving skills but mainly necessitate repetition tasks, this brings into doubt the validity of their assertion. By delivering such valuable insights, textbook analysis can inform the development and selection of language textbooks for a given context (McGrath, 2016; Ouchaoua, 2022).

Textbook analysis can be conducted independently or as a precursor to textbook evaluation, as one can only evaluate an aspect of the textbook after describing it (Littlejohn, 2013; McGrath, 2016). Although the terms 'textbook analysis' and 'textbook evaluation' have been used interchangeably in some previous research, they differ in objectives and procedures (Littlejohn, 2013; McGrath, 2016; Tomlinson, 2012; Weninger & Kiss, 2015; Zhang, 2017). It is important to point these differences out here for clarity. Textbook analysis involves an objective, descriptive analysis of a textbook's content and structure, focusing on the materials to describe what is included and how it is presented, typically incorporating both quantitative and qualitative analyses of specific features (Littlejohn, 2011; Zhang, 2017). On the other hand, textbook evaluation is a more subjective process that assesses a textbook's effectiveness and suitability for a specific educational context (Tomlinson, 2012; Zhang, 2017). Unlike textbook analysis, evaluation typically takes place during the textbook selection phase, where various textbooks are reviewed to identify the most appropriate one for particular educational settings. This involves judging a textbook's quality and its ability to meet students' learning needs, often leading to a decision on whether to adopt or reject the textbook. Common methods of evaluation include using a scaled rating system for various criteria, piloting the textbook in actual teaching situations and measuring learning outcomes based on its usage.

Masuhara and Tomlinson's (2013) study is an example of textbook evaluation. Informed by language theories, they devised criteria for evaluating the alignment between the literacy development of adult students and several ESL/EFL textbooks. These included questions such as "To what extent do the materials provide exposure to inauthentic English use?", "To what extent is the exposure to English in use likely to be meaningful to the target learners?" and "To what extent do the activities provide opportunities for learners to make discoveries about how English is used?" (pp. 24-29). They rated these on a scale. By applying these criteria, the authors concluded that no textbooks they evaluated were suitable in terms of their potential impact on learners' academic literacy, reflecting a somewhat subjective approach based on their assessment of what was appropriate and effective for the learners involved.

In the present study, the textbooks examined – the MG series – have already been chosen, edited in line with the national curriculum objectives, and used in all public schools nationwide after years of trials (see the research context chapter, section 2.5.1). Therefore, the primary focus is not to evaluate them for selection purposes. Instead, this study aims to analyse their SA content, offer an objective, detailed description of what is there in terms of quality and quantity, determine the availability of opportunities to teach and practice SAs, and deduce the textbooks' underlying principles concerning the curriculum guidelines. This will ultimately help in better understanding and enhancing the value of the current materials with regard to teaching pragmatics (Cunningsworth, 1995). Accordingly, most of the discussion and review in the following sections is dedicated to ELT textbook analysis and the existing research on pragmatic content. Textbook evaluation will only be referred to when it is relevant to discussion points, such as the approaches found in the literature about textbook analysis and evaluation in section 4.3.4.2 below.

4.3.4.2 Approaches to Textbook Analysis.

A wide range of approaches and guidelines for textbook analysis and evaluation exist in the current literature (e.g., Byrd, 2001; Cunningsworth, 1995; Khodabakhshi, 2014; Littlejohn, 1998, 2011; McGrath, 2016; Tomlinson, 2003; Ur, 1996, among others). These frequently vary depending on the specific context and objectives of the evaluation, as well as the researcher's theoretical perspective on L2 learning and teaching (Gray, 2010; Tomlinson, 2013). This section reviews the most influential approaches employed, specifically those proposed by Cunningsworth (1995), McGarth (2016), and Littlejohn (2011), as those have informed the approach adopted in this study.

Cunningsworth (1995) proposed a model in which textbook analysis and evaluation can be carried out using two main techniques: an impressionistic overview approach and an in-depth approach. These can both function as stages of analysis, with the former often serving as preliminary to the latter (Cunningsworth, 2005). As the name suggests, the impressionistic approach involves browsing the materials to gain a general overview. It includes analysing general aspects (e.g., layout and design), representative aspects (e.g., organisation), and specific features (e.g., inclusion of a linguistic element). While it is a convenient method that can help quickly identify unsuitable books, it alone is inadequate as it cannot impart detailed information about textbook contents (McGrath, 2016).

For this, an in-depth evaluation is needed, involving carefully examining content extracts, typically one or two units or chapters. Such an examination aims to identify the treatment of specific features, including topics, aspects of language (e.g., verb tenses), organisation of content, and teaching methods, to gain a comprehensive understanding of what is taught and intended by the textbook. Although analysis at this stage can yield a better comprehension of specific textbook features, it has the drawback of being subjective: given that it is often carried out only on selected extracts, it may focus on parts that are unrepresentative of the overall content (McGrath, 2016; Monbec, 2020). Nevertheless, this framework places specific emphasis on the importance of identifying the requirements of different teaching contexts before conducting an evaluation. It suggests a list of questions to guide the investigation and identification of key features of the teaching context.

Other researchers have proposed models for material analysis and evaluation that are similar to Cunningsworth's (1995) but use different terminology. McGrath (2016) suggests that textbook analysis can be conducted through either a first glance, a close evaluation, or a combination of both. The first-glance evaluation, akin to Cunningsworth's impressionistic analysis, involves assessing general criteria, such as overall aspects of the book, with the goal of establishing a match between the learning context and the materials. Textbooks meeting the first-glance conditions are then subject to thorough analysis using specific criteria in the close evaluation, which roughly corresponds to Cunningsworth's in-depth analysis. Each stage can employ one or more evaluation methods and include appraisal measures to assess the materials.

During the close evaluation, McGrath (2016) recommends using either checklists or in-depth analysis to scrutinise the textbooks. In the checklist method, analysts use predefined criteria to guide the evaluation process. Many scholars, including Byrd (2001), Cunningsworth (1995), McDonough and Shaw (2003), Tomlinson (2003, 2008), and Ur (1996), advocate for this approach. Compared to other methods, it is the most cost-effective, flexible, and reliable. Checklists ensure that all critical aspects are considered during evaluation, which can enhance the overall consistency of the process. However, McGrath (2016) emphasises that while using an 'off-the-shelf' checklist is convenient, it can lead to superficial judgements. For these reasons, an in-depth analysis, a comprehensive examination of specific elements in the materials guided by pre-specified questions, is also necessary. Like Cunningsworth's (1995) approach, McGrath's does not clearly distinguish between objective analysis and subjective evaluation, treating them somewhat interchangeably.

Littlejohn (2011) suggests a more detailed, step-by-step analytical approach that distinguishes itself from others by separating analysis from evaluation (Pemberton, 2019). In Littlejohn's view, analysis involves describing the makeup of textbooks to "expose their internal nature" (p. 201). This description can later aid in evaluating the textbooks' suitability for specific contexts, which involves a more subjective assessment. Much like McGrath's (2016), this analytical model is intended for non-context-specific evaluations (Nguyen, 2015). It consists of three levels of material analysis, each building upon the previous one, offering varying degrees of objectivity. Level one presents an objective description of the contents, encompassing details such as the title and publication information, materials available, and unit structure. Though aimed at obtaining a general overview, it differs from Cunningsworth's impressionistic analysis and McGrath's cursory approach by including the analysis of an extract – typically one unit –to avoid sole reliance on a general overview. Level two delves into the expectations placed on learners for each task, examining tasks within one or two units to identify what is required from them (e.g., hypothesise, express ideas), with whom, and the types of output expected. Level three, known as 'subjective inferences,' is based on the findings of the first two levels. It focuses on drawing conclusions and identifying implications about the philosophy and underlying principles of the materials. Unlike Cunningsworth's (1998) in-depth evaluation, Littlejohn's third level of analysis primarily serves a summative function rather than an evaluative one (Pemberton, 2019); it does not extend beyond the content analysis of the first two levels to consider factors like the local context (Nguyen, 2015). This level entails making inferences about implied aims, participation expectations, principles guiding content design and sequencing (e.g., proficiency level), and the overall role of the materials (e.g., a guide to follow or select from). Additionally, Littlejohn suggests conducting context analysis separately, combining data from the three-level analysis and context analysis for evaluation purposes to ascertain alignment with the learning context.

This framework offers a principled and informative approach, remaining true to its claim to avoid unexamined bias and assumptions. One of its key advantages lies in its ability to test textbook claims, delineating the requirements for each task and aiding in understanding which of them might pose challenges to students at a particular proficiency level. This information, in turn, can inform the evaluation and decision-making processes. Moreover, the detailed level three analysis identifies the disparities between stated aims and actual content, which can be particularly revealing. For instance, if a textbook, as in the case of this study, claims to emphasise the promotion of communicative skills but the analysis reveals limited communicative aspects and tasks, a misalignment becomes apparent. This leads to pertinent conclusions about its content and aims.

However, a notable drawback is its emphasis on tasks within the materials. It neglects other elements that may not involve learner actions, such as vocabulary and expressions lists, grammar explanations, author comments, and usage notes, which are present in the textbooks examined in this study. Additionally, considerable time and effort is required to go through these three levels (Pemberton, 2019). This has led many in-depth material analyses and evaluations to adopt a narrower focus on specific features and components, as observed in most studies, including the current one. Utilising such an approach has proven to be a more effective and practical way to address research questions.

This study builds upon established approaches, particularly those outlined by McGrath (2016) and Littlejohn (2011). Their analytical models provide a robust structure for textbook analysis and evaluation, having been widely employed in the field of material evaluation (Nguyen, 2015). A detailed discussion of the approach adapted here is presented in the following subsection.

4.3.4.3 The Analytical Approach Adapted in this Study.

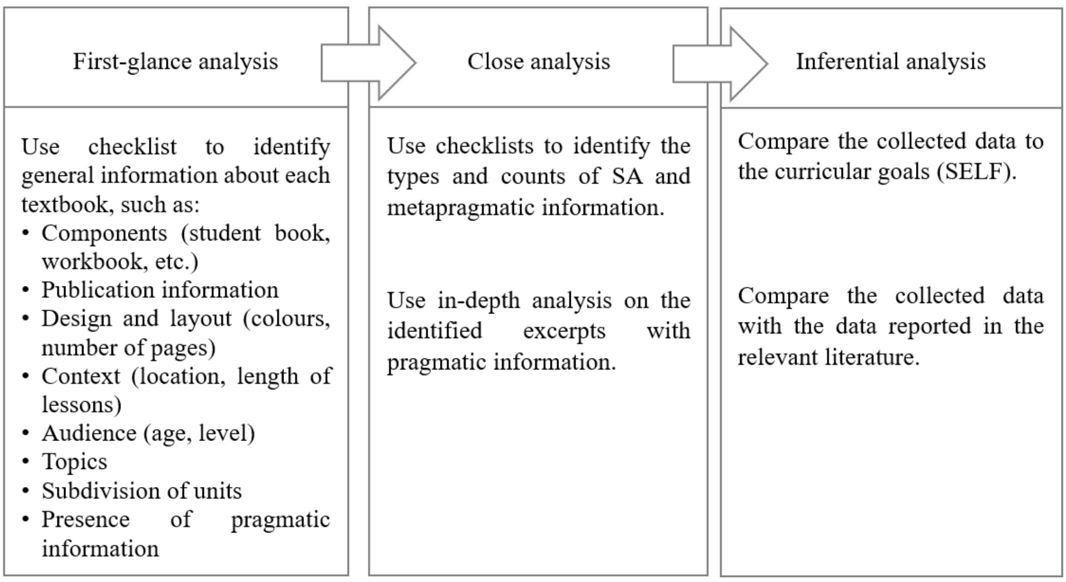
This study's analytical approach draws upon the established methods discussed earlier, particularly McGrath's (2016) and Littlejohn's (2011) models. It is, however, important to clarify that it does not consider all the aspects or criteria associated with these approaches as it is narrowly focused on pragmatic content. Instead, it uses them as a map to guide the analysis process, moving from the objective to the subjective.

These frameworks have been integrated and modified to align with the specific objectives of this study. As such, this study employs three sequential levels of analysis: first glance, close analysis, and inferential analysis. The goal is to gain a comprehensive overview of the pragmatic content of the textbooks, with each level complementing the other and mitigating their individual limitations. The first-glance overview obtains a quick summary of the examined textbook regarding its components, topics, number of pages, publication, target learners, and teaching context. It also quickly answers whether pragmatic content is detected in the lessons through a cursory look or in the content list and objectives presented at the beginning of each textbook to give an idea as to whether the textbooks are suitable for the next stage. After that, there is a close examination of the treatment of SA using a checklist method in conjunction with in-depth analysis. These checklists and the rationale behind their design are explained in further detail in the next chapter. They are used to guide the identification of SA and metapragmatic information, confirm the presence of the main SA types, and determine the counts of the identified SAs and the metapragmatic information. After that, in-depth analysis is performed on textbook extracts pertinent to pragmatic content. This looks at how each SA is presented: whether they are contextualised, accompanied by other pragmatic information, and distributed systematically across the textbook. It compares and investigates any meaningful connections and patterns between the pragmatic data.

After that, the analysis moves to a more inferential focus, drawing on Littlejohn's (2011) 'subjective inference' level, to deliver a summative understanding of the data obtained. It is important to note that inferential analysis does not aim to address a specific research question; instead, its purpose is to extrapolate beyond the data collected and make inferences about the quality of the pragmatic content and the principles underlying its design, ultimately reaching conclusions about its potential appropriateness. In this way, its objective is to deliver valuable insights into the discussion of the data obtained that answer the research questions. Within this level, conclusions emerging from the two previous levels are made.

The analysis approach used in this study is presented in the figure below. It is explained in further detail in Chapter 5.

Figure 4.1 *The framework adopted in this study for analysing the textbooks*



4.4 Research on Pragmatics within ELT Textbooks

Since textbooks are regarded as one of the primary sources of language input for EFL students, including pragmatic content within them has been deemed essential (see Nguyen, 2011; Rose, 2005; Rueda, 2006). Pragmatic content in ELT textbooks encompasses information and activities that aim to teach students how to effectively and appropriately use language in various situations and with different interlocutors. Consequently, it covers topics such as implicature, politeness strategies, conversational proficiency, and contextual application (see Cruse, 2011, for definitions of these concepts). Among these pragmatic issues, SAs often occupy a prominent position (Diepenbroek & Derwing, 2013). Many language textbooks rely heavily on the inclusion of SAs (Koester, 2002); they provide a systematic means to incorporate pragmatic content, which is likely appealing to textbook writers. SAs also stand out as one of the most extensively researched aspects of pragmatics (Diepenbroek & Derwing, 2013; Kasper, 2006).

The following section contributes an overview of pragmatic content in ELT textbooks, both generally in international contexts and specifically within the Saudi EFL context. This review will also encompass findings related to teachers' perceptions of pragmatic teaching in Saudi classrooms. Accordingly, the review is structured into two subsections: one addressing pragmatic content in textbooks and the other delving into pragmatic teaching practices and perceptions in the Saudi classroom.

4.4.1 Pragmatic Content in ESL/EFL Textbooks

Due to the increasing interest in and emphasis on the importance of pragmatic competence, a growing body of research has investigated the inclusion and treatment of pragmatic components in ESL and/or EFL textbooks. These studies examining pragmatics in textbooks have had different focuses ranging from comprehensive analyses encompassing a wide range of pragmatic aspects, like SAs, politeness, and implicatures (e.g., Ji, 2007; Neddar, 2010; Ren & Han, 2016; Vellenga, 2004), to examinations concentrating solely on a specific area within pragmatics, such as examining SAs (e.g. Nguyen, 2011; Takafumi et al., 2007), or issues of politeness (e.g., LoCastro, 1997b). Furthermore, some studies have narrowed their focus even further to specific SA types, for example, apologies (Limberg, 2016), requests (Qari, 2021; Usó-Juan, 2007), or complaints (Boxer & Pickering, 1995). Notably, the literature review revealed only one study, by AlGhamdi (2014), directly addressing the analysis of pragmatic information within EFL textbooks used in Saudi Arabia. Highlighting the little attention given to pragmatic input in the Saudi EFL context, it concentrated on a set of two listening and speaking textbooks used at the university level.

Depending on their focus, studies employed distinct methodologies and adhered to specific conceptual frameworks which informed their data analysis and findings. Those which were more comprehensive classified pragmatic information into roughly four main categories: SAs; metapragmatic descriptions of Sas (including discussions of issues like politeness, appropriacy, and register when presenting them); general pragmatic information (including discussions of politeness, appropriacy, formality, register, and culture irrelevant to Sas); and metalinguistic style (the use of personal pronouns and sentence types when discussing pragmatic-relevant content). This framework was first introduced by Vellenga (2004) and adapted by others, including AlGhamdi (2014), Dendenne (2019), Ji (2007), Neddar (2010), Nu and Murray (2020), and Vu (2017).

Other studies used a more speech-act-focused framework, also drawn from Vellenga's (2004) model, in which pragmatic information was classified into three categories: the range and distribution of SAs, their linguistic presentations, and the metapragmatic information offered with these presentations (including politeness, appropriacy, and register information). This model of investigation was employed in two papers by Takafumi et al. (2007) and Nguyen (2011). Others followed the taxonomy presented by Searle (1979) to investigate the types, frequency and distribution of SA types incorporated in the textbooks, including Moradi et al. (2013), Kohandani et al. (2014), and Nourdad et al. (2016).

In her pioneering research, Vellenga (2004) conducted a content analysis of the pragmatic information within four ESL grammar and EFL integrated-skills textbooks designed for students at intermediate to upper-intermediate proficiency levels. At the time, these books were used in North America and worldwide. As mentioned earlier, her framework for this analysis divided pragmatic information into general pragmatic information, metalanguage style, SAs, and metapragmatic explanations provided with SAs. Notably, SAs received particular emphasis: they accounted for half of the classification scale. Moreover, she aimed to determine whether teachers supplemented the textbooks' pragmatic content by conducting brief telephone and email interviews with four ESL/EFL teachers from Canada and the United States. It is important to note, however, that none of these teachers had experience teaching any of the investigated textbooks.

The results of the textbook analysis revealed that, in both ESL and EFL textbooks, pragmatic information, including explicit SAs, was minimal. Some SAs were present but lacked metapragmatic information to facilitate comprehension. The textbooks covered 22 SA types, only two of which were accompanied by usage discussions in relation to appropriacy and context. The EFL textbooks generally had more extensive coverage of the pragmatic features than the ESL texts. Concerning the interviews, the findings were that teachers had limited time, inclination, and expertise to introduce additional pragmatic material from external sources. The study concluded that, given the lack of pragmatic information in the ESL/EFL textbooks, the acquisition of pragmatic competence from them was highly improbable.

Vellenga's (2004) study contributed a comprehensive framework for analysing pragmatic content in ELT textbooks, which could be beneficial to researchers in a similar area. However, one criticism of the framework lies in the unclear distinction between pragmatic information and metapragmatic discussions of SAs, as she defined metapragmatic discussions to cover the same topics as general pragmatics, such as politeness, appropriacy, and register. This lack of clarity raises questions about how pragmatic instruction, such as teaching the use of 'please' in making polite requests, should be classified: as metapragmatic information about politeness, general pragmatic information, or possibly even both. Further clarification and definitions would have been helpful in refining the framework and guiding future research. It is also important to mention that the choice of textbooks for Vellenga's study, particularly the inclusion of grammar-oriented textbooks, seemed somewhat illogical. They would not be expected to teach pragmatic and contextual knowledge, which somewhat weakens the author's arguments.

Ji (2007) and Vu (2017) conducted quantitative and qualitative content analyses of the pragmatic features in EFL textbooks designed for non-English major students at the university level in China and Vietnam, respectively. Specifically, Ji examined eight textbooks authored by Chinese writers, while Vu selected three written by English speakers. Both researchers adopted Vellenga's (2004) classification for pragmatic input but introduced pragmatic tasks as an additional category to extend their analysis. Notably, neither presented a clear definition for the new category other than its pragmatic or culture-oriented nature. The category of cultural information, which was grouped under 'general pragmatics' and 'metapragmatic information' in Vellenga's framework, was treated as separate in these studies. This expanded framework was also adopted in a recent study by Nu and Murray (2020) in a Vietnamese secondary school context.

Both Ji's (2007) and Vu's (2017) studies consistently reported a general oversight of pragmatic knowledge in the examined textbooks. They noted that the quantity and variety of pragmatic information were limited, and pragmatic-oriented tasks were rare. The number of pragmatic activities Vu found was so minimal it made further analysis infeasible. These findings align with those of Nu and Murray (2020), who reported that explicit pragmatic information was present in only 5.5% of the textbooks' pages and absent from teachers' manuals. Moreover, Ji found that lower-level textbooks contained significantly higher pragmatic input than higher-level ones.

Additionally, Ji (2007) and Vu (2017) investigated educators' perceptions of teaching pragmatics and their incorporation of pragmatic materials and tasks in the classroom using questionnaires, observations, and interviews. Ji also included the perspective of Chinese EFL students regarding pragmatic knowledge in the teaching and learning process. The studies reported that teachers predominantly relied on textbooks in their instruction; the main challenges they faced were linked to the limited pragmatic content of textbooks and their lack of understanding of pragmatics and its pedagogy. In light of these findings, the studies underscored the pressing need to integrate pragmatics into the textbook design process and to enhance teachers' competence in teaching and assessing pragmatics.

Most relevant to the present study, AlGhamdi (2014) examined the quality and quantity of the pragmatic content in *Interactions-1* and *Interactions-2* textbooks used to teach speaking and listening at the first-year university level in Saudi Arabia. These textbooks targeted students at intermediate to upper-intermediate proficiency levels. Following Vellenga's (2004) approach, the research employed quantitative and qualitative content analysis to examine general pragmatics, metalanguage, and SAs. Additionally, it explored broader pragmatic topics such as deixis, presupposition, and conversational implicature. AlGhamdi's analysis was limited to the exercises within the textbooks, without delving into other materials, which could potentially impact the findings. A survey was used to investigate whether Saudi EFL instructors supplement pragmatic input in textbooks if needed.

The findings of AlGhamdi (2014) confirmed earlier research on textbook analysis, highlighting the lack of explicit presentation of pragmatic information. For example, the textbooks did not include deictic input, and presuppositions and conversational implicature appeared only once. Interestingly, the quality of pragmatic exercises and metalanguage was found to be satisfactory, albeit not entirely comprehensive. These exercises offered implicit instruction and ample opportunities to practise pragmatic skills. In addition, the teachers generally expressed their reluctance to supplement the pragmatic content during their teaching. However, like in Vellenga's (2004) research, the teachers involved had no prior experience with the examined textbooks, raising questions about the depth of the investigation into classroom practice claimed by the author. Exploring the reasons behind the teachers' reluctance to supplement the pragmatic materials would have further strengthened the study's findings.

AlGhamdi's (2014) study is significant as it is the only investigation into the pragmatic content of textbooks used in the Saudi context. It serves as a starting point for further such studies. Expanding this analysis to more widely used ELT textbooks in Saudi Arabia, such as those in the present study, could yield more comprehensive results beneficial for educators and students in the region.

Dendenne (2019) and Neddar (2010) conducted studies in another Arabic context, examining the pragmatic content of EFL and ESL textbooks used in Algeria. Both papers followed Vellenga's (2004) approach and employed content analysis to identify and investigate the pragmatic information covered in these textbooks. Dendenne's findings indicated that, overall, pragmatic topics constituted a limited portion of the textbooks. The teaching of SAs primarily focused on the pragmalinguistic level, addressing linguistic devices while overlooking their contextual use. On the other hand, Neddar reported a larger amount of SA information across all pages of the textbooks compared to the findings of other studies. Approximately 27% of the textbook pages covered pragmatic issues, with an average of 10.75 SAs per EFL textbook and 11.5 per ESL textbook. However, Neddar argued that the quality of these SAs was insufficient, as they included a limited range of SA formulas with little to no accompanying information or discussions. Such content would have been beneficial for the successful acquisition of pragmatic knowledge and for mitigating negative pragmatic transfer.

Focusing on SA content, Takafumi et al. (2007) undertook a content analysis of 17 textbooks used in Japanese secondary schools. As mentioned earlier, they adapted a more speech-act-focused framework centred on the range and distribution of SAs, the linguistic presentations of SAs, and the associated contextual and metapragmatic information. Their results showed that the number of SAs covered in the textbooks was low, as each textbook only taught an average of six. Furthermore, there was no variation in the realisation forms of SAs. On average, less than three variations in form for an SA were available to students in each textbook, and there were some cases where only one form was introduced. The researchers expressed concerns that linking a function to a restricted number of forms may lead students to overgeneralise their use.

In a similar paper, Nguyen (2011) examined three textbooks for upper-secondary education in Vietnam. The aim of this study was to provide a detailed account of the number and nature of SAs covered in the textbooks. However, like previous research, there was no specific classification for SAs based on which the materials were identified and coded. Contrary to previous findings, it indicated that the textbooks and their accompanying materials included a wide variety of SAs compared to existing literature. For example, a total of 27 SA types were taught and practiced across the three textbooks. However, upon closer examination, the author concluded that the presentation of these SAs needed improvement as they were mostly taught out of context, with poor or no metapragmatic explanations of their use, and their distribution appeared unpatterned. For instance, while apologies and advice were only introduced in low-level textbooks, simpler SAs like responding to thanks were practiced solely in high-level ones. Also, the metapragmatic information about when, where, and how to produce SAs appropriately was only discussed for agreement and disagreement SAs. Furthermore, Nguyen reported that most SA linguistic forms in the textbooks did not reflect natural speech, which could potentially mislead learners in their choice of expressions. For instance, the textbooks consistently presented blunt disagreements, which native speakers of Australian English tended to avoid (Nguyen, 2005). Therefore, the study encouraged textbook writers to supplement materials with authentic input and contribute adequate explanations of usage rules to help learners develop pragmatically.

Several researchers, particularly in the Iranian EFL context, have made efforts to systematically analyse SA information by employing Searle's (1979) SA taxonomy. This classifies SAs into *representatives*, *directives*, *commissives*, *expressives*, and *declaratives* (e.g., Kohandani et al., 2014; Moradi et al., 2013; Nourdad et al., 2016). Their analyses aimed to identify which SA types were explicitly or implicitly covered in textbooks and compare the frequency and distribution of these types. However, one aspect that this research did not cover was the number of subtypes within each main SA category. This could further enrich our understanding of how textbooks address this phenomenon.

Moradi et al. (2013) examined SAs in conversations from three Iranian-developed EFL textbooks and three internationally-developed textbooks (New Interchange). They discovered that SAs appeared 1100 times in the international series but only 275 times in the Iranian textbooks. *Representatives* and *directives* were the most prevalent identified SAs in both. The authors concluded that the international textbooks would be a more suitable choice for courses aiming to teach pragmatics and the communicative functions of English.

These findings were echoed by Kohandani et al. (2014) and Nourdad et al. (2016) in their analyses of the conversations in the international textbook for beginners, Top-Notch 1, and the local textbooks for intermediate levels, Prospect-1 and Prospect-2. *Representatives* and *directives* were the most used SA types, followed by *expressives*. *Declarations* and *commissives* had the lowest frequency. However, in contrast to Moradi et al.'s (2013) findings, both studies noted a scarcity of the incorporated SA types in the materials. For instance, there were 97 SA occurrences in the Top-Notch textbook and 186 SA occurrences in the Prospect textbooks. Nonetheless, it is worth considering that the researchers' approach of randomly selecting conversation excerpts may not accurately represent the overall distribution of SAs within the materials. A more comprehensive analysis to obtain an accurate picture of the SAs incorporated into language textbooks would involve examining more extensive samples from the textbooks.

It is essential to highlight that the discussed literature on pragmatic content lacks standardised criteria or guidelines for determining the appropriate number of SAs to teach at different proficiency levels, akin to what can be found in works on vocabulary and grammar. This issue is discussed further in the upcoming chapter, which addresses the methodology of this study.

4.4.2 Teachers' Perceptions and Practices regarding Pragmatics in Saudi EFL Classrooms

To date, there has been minimal research on pragmatic instruction in the Saudi EFL context, particularly regarding the inclusion of pragmatic content within textbooks. Other than AlGhamdi's (2014) thesis, no other study, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, has endeavoured to investigate how EFL textbooks used in Saudi Arabia address pragmatic issues. Most pragmatic research in the EFL Saudi context has concentrated on issues concerning learners' interlanguage competence (e.g., Al-Otaibi, 2015; Alharbi, 2017; Alkahtani, 2012; Almegren, 2022; Qari, 2017). Only a few experimental studies have focused on the effect of teaching on pragmatic competence (e.g., Alraddadi, 2019; Alsmari, 2020; Qari, 2021).

Of more relevance to the current study are the few papers that have focused on teachers' pragmatic competence and practices: one by Al-qahtani (2020) and two by Zughaibi (2022, 2023). These investigations, conducted concurrently with the research presented here, yielded valuable insights that inform the part of this study exploring teachers' perceptions and practices concerning pragmatics. Al-qahtani explored the awareness and implementation of pragmatic competence teaching by EFL teachers in Saudi schools, specifically the particular challenges and factors impacting its implementation. It adopted a mixed-method research design, encompassing questionnaires, classroom observations, and interviews. However, different teachers were recruited for each part of the research. Interviewing the same teachers after observing them would have been more informative as it could have aided in understanding the motivation behind teachers' documented practices. One key finding was that, although teachers acknowledged the importance of pragmatic competence, their grasp of pragmatics was limited to certain aspects associated with the introduced curriculum. Furthermore, while considerable efforts were made to implement pragmatic competence through feedback and practical exercises, a gap remained in integrating adequate input factors. Teachers cited challenges stemming from teaching approaches, resource limitations, pedagogical constraints, and contextual deficiencies within the EFL environment. Al-qahtani's work underscores the need to address these contextual challenges. It emphasises including pragmatic features in classrooms and supplying Saudi teachers with the training necessary to enhance their pragmatic competence and instruction skills.

In his 2022 research, Zughaibi explored the pragmatic awareness and teaching practices of Saudi EFL teachers, with a subsequent study in 2023 focusing on the influence of teachers' gender and qualifications on their pragmatic competence and teaching methods. Through questionnaires, Zughaibi (2022) found that – despite ambiguity around the concept of pragmatics among some teachers that was evident in incorrect or irrelevant examples of SAs in their responses – a significant majority (88%) demonstrated a relatively high level of pragmatic awareness. Notably, his 2023's research indicated that neither qualifications nor gender significantly impacted this awareness. However, intriguing variations emerged in teachers' perceptions of the importance of teaching and learning pragmatics in Saudi classrooms, which declined slightly as academic qualifications decreased. Furthermore, the analysis unveiled a concerning statistic: nearly half of the teachers (49.82%) reported a dissatisfactory implementation of pragmatic instruction in their classrooms, irrespective of their individual efforts. Zughaibi's research underscores the pressing need for educational managers and policymakers to invest in equipping teachers with the requisite pragmatic knowledge and skills in addition to suitable teaching materials.

4.5 Gaps in the Existing Literature

The literature reviewed in the preceding sections reveals a noteworthy lack of studies focused on the treatment of SA information within ELT textbooks. This has also helped identify methodological and contextual gaps in the existing research on pragmatic content in language textbooks. While these gaps have been referred to already, it is crucial to reiterate them to underscore the justification for the current study.

First, existing research in EFL contexts has often directed its attention towards the various kinds of pragmatic topics included in textbooks. While this broad approach offers a holistic perspective, it frequently lacks the depth necessary for a rigorous and systematic examination of each pragmatic aspect. As a result, some of these investigations lack rigour. They may, for instance, discuss a particular pragmatic aspect, such as politeness or SAs, without delving into the specifics of how it was defined, identified, approached, and analysed. Furthermore, because pragmatic issues are often interrelated (Mey, 2006), the inclusion of a wide range of topics in a single analysis framework may result in overlapping categories if the researcher is not careful. Descriptions of the categories of general pragmatics and metapragmatic information in Vellenga's (2004) framework, widely used in subsequent studies, indicate this to be the case. For instance, the category of general pragmatic topics was broadly defined by Vellenga as information related to politeness, appropriacy, register, culture, and illocutionary force. However, these topics were not further defined within the framework. What aggravates this methodological issue is that another category within the framework – that of metapragmatic information of SAs – had a similar description, i.e., information given with SAs that relates to politeness, appropriacy, register, illocutionary force, and contextual and cultural information. In her analysis, Vellenga discussed the identified pragmatic information in relation only to SAs: as metapragmatic information and not general pragmatic issues. This raises the question of why 'general pragmatic information' is separate when it is not addressed in her analysis and results. She also discussed appropriacy and illocutionary force issues under politeness, even though they do not necessarily have a subcategory relationship (see section 4.4.1). In other words, the distinction between the main categories of pragmatic information was not made clear, which would have facilitated their analysis by researchers in related fields.

Subsequent studies have not addressed this shortcoming. For example, Ji (2007) similarly presented the categories of 'general pragmatic' and 'metapragmatic information.' The former included "a variety of topics related to politeness, appropriacy, formality, register and culture", and the latter involved "discussion of politeness, register, illocutionary force, context, social variants, and appropriacy" (p. 94). Therefore, the present research commenced with the belief that textbooks should be investigated with a narrower focus – their treatment of a specific pragmatic feature – encompassing various considerations such as that feature's frequency, distribution, instruction, and contextualisation. This study also intends to offer a more comprehensive description of each pragmatic issue, including SAs, politeness, and appropriacy, drawing from pragmatic theories and concepts in addition to insights from previous pragmatic studies. This effort is geared towards enhancing comprehension of metapragmatic elements associated with SAs and aiding future research in this area.

Furthermore, as noted earlier in the chapter, most studies on pragmatic input in textbooks have not specified or provided the taxonomy used to classify the identified pragmatic information. Instead, many seem to have conducted analyses based on an intuitive judgement of what qualifies as a pragmatic component in a given textbook. An exception to this trend can be found in the research conducted in Iran, as discussed in section 4.4.1, which utilised Searle's taxonomy to categorise SA information. These studies, however, were more concerned with tallying the SA types appearing in textbooks, irrespective of the nature of the coverage. To address this gap and obtain more systematic SA data, this study follows the well-established taxonomy Searle (1979) developed to identify the SAs textbooks cover. This approach enables the identification of the common English SAs listed in the taxonomy and highlights any noteworthy SAs absent from the materials. This issue has not been systematically addressed in any previous studies. In fact, none of them adequately account for the discussion of SAs missing from the textbooks, an important aspect of the analysis.

In addition, given that teachers have a significant impact on students' learning (Hattie, 2008), it is surprising that most previous research on pragmatic content has overlooked the examination of teachers' perspectives and practices. To fill this research gap and achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the issue, this study places some focus on teachers. Specifically, it aims to investigate whether and why educators supplement SA materials, their general perspectives on the pragmatic information presented in textbooks, and the challenges they encounter when teaching it. It is worth noting that within the existing literature, only two studies, Ji (2007) and Vu (2017), investigated teachers' opinions on the pragmatic content in the textbooks they use. However, these studies did not include stimulated-recall interviews after observations as the present study does, a decision made here to enhance the reliability and validity of textbook and classroom findings. Regarding the examination of teachers' practices in supplementing pragmatic materials, there has been no research systematically categorising the methods they employ to adapt instructional materials for teaching pragmatics. This dearth of investigation hinders an understanding of how teachers address deficiencies within the existing pragmatic content, whether through addition, deletion, modification, or replacement. Consequently, this study aims to address these issues.

In terms of textbook selection, this research concentrates on a set of international textbooks that, despite their widespread global use, have not been previously investigated in this regard: the MG series. The significance of this series lies in the fact that, since 2021, it has been selected as the primary series for teaching EFL in all secondary public schools in Saudi Arabia. Contrary to earlier research, this investigation covers an entire textbook series designed for a specific proficiency range, spanning the lower intermediate to upper intermediate level. This scope was chosen to establish a more extensive dataset.

It has been observed that previous investigations often lacked precision when specifying the part of the textbooks from which their data is drawn. For instance, Moradi et al. (2013) stated that their data came from "the end of each unit of high school English textbooks … and at the beginning and usually through each unit in [the] Interchange Series" (p. 328). This description is vague, and the rationale for selecting those sections remains unclear. Other studies, while identifying the source of their data, limited their analysis to only partial sections of the textbooks. For example, Kohandani et al. (2014) and Nourdad et al. (2016) based their analysis on randomly selected textbook extracts, while AlGhamdi (2014) limited her analysis to the exercises in the textbooks. However, it could be argued that analysing isolated sections of textbooks might yield inaccurate information and lead to flawed conclusions since these segments may not adequately represent their overall content. To mitigate this potential issue, the present study aims to conduct a comprehensive examination of all instructional content of the MG textbooks, their teacher guides and CDs, to enhance the clarity of the analysis and ensure more representative findings.

Moreover, given that the textbook content is inherently context-dependent, this study considers factors such as curriculum guidelines and educational objectives in the analysis. These course objectives are a valuable reference point for examining both the quantity and quality of pragmatic coverage. Previous research has largely overlooked this aspect: there has not been an explicit acknowledgement of the intended course objectives. Most studies seem to operate under the assumption that pragmatic competence should be a universal inclusion in all EFL/ESL textbooks, regardless of their intended aims. Vellenga's (2004) selection of grammar textbooks may be a case in point. Certain textbooks may not prioritise the teaching of pragmatic aspects, catering instead to educational contexts where this is not a primary focus.

Contextually, the field of pragmatic teaching and learning has seen limited research efforts in Saudi Arabia. Such scrutiny is paramount given Saudi Arabia's status as an EFL environment. Communicative competence is emphasised, yet opportunities for sufficient English input and practice outside the classroom are restricted. Consequently, the role of textbooks in enhancing students' pragmatic competence within such a context becomes more prominent, underscoring the need to investigate the integration of pragmatic competence in them.

Among the scarce research conducted in this context, only one example investigated pragmatic content. This study (AlGhamdi, 2014) concentrated on higher education settings, specifically investigating the tasks in two speaking and listening textbooks. Other studies have explored the perspectives and instructional methods of Saudi teachers with regard to pragmatics, specifically Al-qahtani (2020) and Zughaib (2022, 2023). However, they did not consider the integration of pragmatic input into the teaching textbooks. Notably, both papers highlighted a pronounced lack of research examining how pragmatics is addressed in language textbooks and classrooms within the Saudi context. Their findings showed that teachers in this setting encountered difficulties when attempting to incorporate pragmatic knowledge into their classrooms, demonstrating a pressing need for the integration of comprehensive pragmatic content into textbooks and the improvement of teachers' pragmatic understanding and teaching. The researchers called for further research initiatives in the region.

Overall, this study aims to fill the identified gaps and contribute to the literature on pragmatic content in ELT textbooks, as well as teachers' supplementary efforts and perspectives related to this content. Specifically, this study marks the first exploration of pragmatic elements in EFL textbooks used in Saudi schools, employing a triangulation method that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the pragmatic content, teachers' perspectives, and their alignment with curriculum objectives. It introduces a clear framework for identifying SA content in textbooks, based on Searle's (1979) taxonomy, to address a gap in the literature and guide future research. Additionally, the study proposes criteria for measuring SA quantities based on the analysed content and teacher feedback. It also connects these findings to curricular guidelines, emphasising the significance of the educational context in examining pragmatic content—a novel approach in existing literature. The outcomes of this research offer practical insights for textbook and curriculum development, and teaching methodologies in Saudi Arabia and beyond, potentially improving pragmatic instruction within these contexts.

4.6 Aims and Questions of the Study

The present study analyses pragmatic information on SAs in the MG (1–6) textbook series used in Saudi secondary schools. This involves examining types, frequency, distribution of explicit SAs, and the metapragmatic information supplied with them to facilitate learning. It aims to determine whether EFL teachers adhere to or adapt the textbooks when teaching pragmatics. The perceptions and views of those teachers in relation to pragmatic teaching and learning and content are also taken into account.

Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the types, frequencies and distribution of SAs explicitly presented in the MG series used in Saudi schools?

2. What are the types, frequencies and distribution of metapragmatic information explicitly presented with SAs in the MG textbook series used in Saudi schools?
3. How do MG textbooks used in Saudi schools differ in their SA and metapragmatic content by textbook level?
4. How do Saudi EFL teachers use the MG textbooks when teaching SAs?
   4.1 Do teachers adhere to the SA content? If so, why?
   4.2 Do teachers adapt the SA content? If so, how and why?
5 What is the teacher's perspective on SA content, teaching and learning in MG textbooks and the Saudi EFL classroom?

It is vital to present a clear and detailed description of the pragmatic content of the current EFL textbooks in Saudi Arabia. This study hopes to serve as a foundational step, potentially opening doors for further research into the treatment of pragmatic aspects in textbooks employed by Saudi Arabian educational institutions. It could also pave the way for comparative studies involving diverse contexts and countries.

The outcomes of this investigation will offer valuable recommendations that can be of great value to EFL textbook designers, teachers, and policymakers in Saudi Arabia. In addition, the insights gathered from studying the perspectives of Saudi EFL teachers will offer practical applications. By providing a greater understanding of the nature of pragmatic content in language textbooks and how teachers use these textbooks in their pragmatic instruction, this study will inform general education policies and support the development of English textbooks tailored for Saudi Arabia.

The methodology and procedures used in conducting the study to address these research questions will be outlined in the next chapter.

5. Methodology and Procedures

5.1 Introduction

This study investigates SAs and the metapragmatic content in EFL textbooks used in Saudi schools. It also examines the classroom to determine whether teachers supplement textbooks with outside materials when teaching pragmatics. Accordingly, a mixed-method approach, including textbook analysis, classroom observations and stimulated-recall interviews, was employed to achieve the research objectives.

This chapter covers the methodology employed in this study. It begins with presenting the participants of the study and the process of their selection. Next, it discusses the methods of data collection, the design of the instruments, and the pilot study. The chapter proceeds to detail the data collection process and the subsequent data analysis. Lastly, it addresses issues related to research trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

5.2 Subjects of the Study

Before discussing the methods for data collection and analysis, it is essential to provide an explanation of the subjects under investigation. The following subsections describe the textbooks selected for analysis, the process of sampling data within these textbooks, introduce the participating teachers, and elaborate on the size and process of sampling participants most suitable for this study.

5.2.1 The Textbooks

The textbooks chosen for the study analysis are the MG textbook series used in Saudi secondary schools at the time of this study. MG is a global English language textbook series prepared by McGraw-Hill Publications, edited by Danae Kozanoglou and Eli Ghazel, and published in the USA. The textbooks examined for this study were regional editions designed in alignment with the SELF guidelines and they were first published in 2012 for Saudi secondary schools (see the research context chapter, section 2.5.1).

The MG series was chosen as the primary material for this study for two reasons. First, it was selected by the MoE as the main textbook series for teaching mandatory English language lessons in public (state) secondary schools in Saudi Arabia from 2021 (refer to section 2.5.1). This underscores the significance of investigating this series, for which there were no alternatives available for examination at this level. Second, this series has been used by secondary school students who received English language lessons for a minimum of six years before entering secondary school. Their proficiency levels in secondary school are expected to range from B1.1 to B2+ on the CEFR scale (equivalent to lower intermediate to upper-intermediate levels). These students are independent language users who have already acquired the fundamental grammar and vocabulary skills necessary to understand the various pragmatic aspects of the English language (Takafumi et al., 2007). The intermediate level is recognised as the optimal stage to acquire and develop L2 pragmatics, as noted by

Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998). This underscores the critical need to analyse the content of MG textbooks to identify both the quantity and the variety of the SA and pragmatic information they offer to students at this proficiency.

The primary source of data for the textbook analysis is the students' textbook (hereafter, the textbook). This is because, in Saudi schools, the use of textbooks is obligatory; they are distinguished from workbooks and teachers' guides. Consequently, textbooks provide teachers and students with the core content, including the SA information and activities of interest in this study. It is important to note that the workbooks, teachers' guides and CDs were also examined in this study, but solely to ascertain whether they provided any explicit supplementary pragmatic materials. However, the frequency and distribution of SA information within these books were not included in the quantitative analysis.

In terms of sampling data within the textbooks, the analysis included the entire textual content of each textbook, with the exception of pages that do not contain instructional material, such as the front and back matters.[3] Furthermore, the analysis included the content of the teachers' guides and the audio CD with their scripts. Although this method of scrutinising the text on every page demands a substantial time investment, the results offer a high level of comprehensiveness and confidence, as they faithfully represent the textbook's content. This ensures a high degree of accuracy in determining the percentage of pages containing pragmatic input and the quantity of pragmatic information present in each textbook.

The textbook analysis in this study focuses on pragmatic content, particularly SAs and the metapragmatic information that accompanies them. This focus is chosen because SAs are recognised as critical indicators of pragmatic competence and awareness among language learners (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Garcia, 2004). They are key vehicles for conveying and interpreting pragmatic and communicative messages (Nu & Murray, 2020), and their importance in L2 education and material development is extensively documented (Cohen & Ishihara, 2012; Ren & Han, 2016). Textbook authors often find SAs particularly valuable as they provide a systematic way to integrate pragmatic content into educational materials (Diepenbroek & Derwing, 2013). While considering additional pragmatic functions might expand the scope of pragmatic analysis, maintaining a focused examination on SAs enables a more thorough and systematic review (see section 4.5 in the literature review for further discussion on the limitations of wider analytical frameworks).

Textbooks Description

The MG series integrates the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. The series consists of six textbooks (1–6), two for each year (i.e., grade) of secondary school, and each textbook includes a student book, workbook, and teacher's guide. The textbooks are consistent in design and overall organisation; each consists of six units and two 'expansions' for review of the six units. The

[3] The front matter encompasses the title page, table of contents, preface, and acknowledgments, while the back matter includes the bibliography, glossary, index, and appendices.

topics covered in the materials are mostly familiar to the young Saudi audience, such as food, animals, sports, TV programmes and so forth. The units have consistent lesson format following this pattern:

- Language—vocabulary, structures, and functions—are presented and used in context.
- Grammar points are presented in chart form and practiced.
- Additional functional language is presented in the context of conversations and role plays.
- A reading expands the unit theme.
- A writing activity calls on students to use the language they have learned.
- Form, Meaning and Function activities expand students' knowledge of structures and functional language.
- A Project allows students to perform a task and produce a product that calls on them to apply the language and vocabulary they have learned (Ghazel & Kozanoglou, 2017, p. vii).

However, according to the writers, the treatment of these language skills across the textbooks varies in accordance with the proficiency levels: "the earlier levels focus on speaking and listening, but reading and writing are increasingly prioritized as students' progress through the series" (Ghazel & Kozanoglou, 2017, p. vii). The exercises in the workbooks correspond to the topics and themes in the lessons. These exercises reinforce the materials taught in the student book and specifically focus on vocabulary and grammar. Activities in the workbook include writing tasks, fill-in-the-blank exercises, multiple-choice questions and so forth.

The aims of the textbooks, specified at the beginning of each volume, are classified according to their language scope in terms of functions, listening, pronunciation, grammar, reading and writing. The 'functions' section encompasses the learning objectives related to language functions (e.g., discussing, describing, comparing, etc.) and SAs. Examples of SAs that are explicitly listed as objectives for these textbooks include expressing opinions, asking for and giving information, agreeing and disagreeing, making suggestions, requesting and apologising. Some of these SAs are introduced and are the focus of only one unit in a textbook, while others, such as agreeing and disagreeing, appear repeatedly across different units and textbook levels but in distinct contexts and activities.

5.2.2 The Participants and Sample: EFL Teachers

This study targets EFL female secondary school teachers in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Riyadh city was selected for two reasons. Firstly, per the Saudi General Authority of Statistics (2017), Riyadh has the largest number of schools and students in the country, including 163 public secondary schools for girls, and more than 500 EFL teachers. Secondly, the researcher is familiar with Riyadh city, including its schools, education offices and the road system in this geographical area, which are important for strategically planning observations and interviews. This is a critical point for the researcher as a scholarship student who is specifically limited by time and location. In terms of participants gender, male EFL teachers are excluded given the gender segregation policies enforced in all Saudi Arabian schools, which restrict interactions between males and females. Consequently, the researcher was limited to conducting observations only in girls' schools. However, this exclusion should not affect the course of the data collection as the study does not probe the teacher's gender effect whatsoever.

It is not feasible to include the entire female EFL teacher population in Riyadh; therefore, this study pursued purposive, convenience and snowball sampling to identify participants who are likely to offer rich, detailed data (Etikan, 2016). Purposive sampling is when the researcher selects participants because they possess specific characteristics that are related to the purpose of the study. This technique begins with determining selection criteria and recruiting participants who meet those criteria (Wellington, 2015). Snowball sampling involves identifying potential participants and using them as "informants" to identify further participants from the same population who have the desired characteristics (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 116). Convenience sampling is when the researcher selects a sample for practical reasons, "based on time, money, location, availability of sites or respondents, and so on" (Merriam, 1998, p. 63). The schools participating in this study were selected using a random sampling technique to ensure that all eligible schools had an equal probability of selection. This method involves "selecting at random from a list of the population […] the required number of subjects for the sample" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 111). Initially, a list of public secondary schools for girls in Riyadh was acquired from the Education Department within the MoE. The names of these schools were then inputted into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate a random sample from the list.

The three criteria used to determine the eligible participants for this study were: (a) individuals who are currently teaching English in a secondary school in Riyadh, (b) teach or have experience teaching MG textbooks and (d) agree to participate in both the classroom observations and the interviews.

5.2.3 The Sample Size

In qualitative research, it is common to employ smaller sample sizes compared to quantitative research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). This is mostly because qualitative data is considered time-consuming and costly to collect, transcribe and analyse (Babbie, 2001b; Cohen et al., 2007). Additionally, qualitative research is not concerned with making generalisations or representing large populations; instead, it aims to collect data from "individuals who can provide rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation so as to maximize what we can learn" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 126). The present study does not aim for making statistical generalisations but rather for in-depth understanding of the teachers' classroom practices in relation to teaching pragmatics. Therefore, it recruited a sample of nine teachers to participate in the observations and interviews. This sample generated a substantial volume of data, comprising 30 classroom observations (with each teacher observed three to four times, totalling about 22.5 hours of audio-recorded lessons[4]) and 18 interviews (with each teacher interviewed twice, totalling approximately 12 hours of audio-recorded interviews).

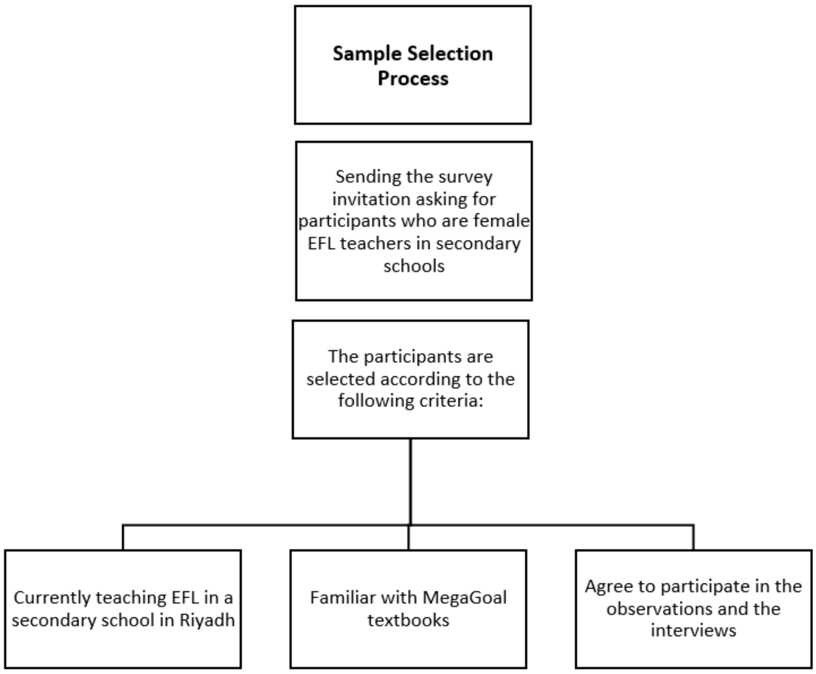
5.2.4 Sample Selection

After obtaining ethics approval for this study, the researcher contacted the education offices in Riyadh and requested that they send an email to the selected secondary schools asking EFL teachers to

[4] The standard duration of English periods in Saudi schools is 45 minutes.

participate in the study and schools for their cooperation and assistance in the matter. The email had a hyperlink to a survey invitation, which provided a concise overview of the study's objectives and inquired about interested participants' contact information, qualifications, and their familiarity with teaching MG textbooks. This preliminary information gathering aimed to assess their eligibility for participation in the study. When the surveys were completed and a number of subjects was obtained, the researcher carefully examined the responses to choose the most appropriate participants based on the selection criteria listed previously in section 5.2.2 and reminded in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1 The Sample Selection Process



After identifying the potential participants, the researcher visited schools in Week 1 to obtain their permission and meet the participating teachers. An induction with the teachers was held in which the aims of the project and the procedures involved are explained in further detail. Participant information sheets and consent forms (see Appendix A) were distributed to participants during the induction. Then, a brief questionnaire was provided to the participants for the purpose of gathering additional background information (Appendix B). Following that, the researcher grouped the participating teachers according to the level of the textbooks they teach: three teachers in the first grade, three in the second grade, and three in the third grade. Each group of teachers was expected to be using two textbooks in the series subsequently, as every two textbooks are designed for the same proficiency level. For instance, first grade teachers were using MG1 and MG2, and so on. However, each textbook was designated for a specific semester, which meant that the observations would cover the first half of the textbooks, as they were conducted in the first semester. Finally, the observations and interviews were scheduled based on an agreement with the participating teachers to ensure that they are available within the desired time frame.

Table 5.1 below shows the information of the participating teachers. The names of the teachers in the table are pseudonyms assigned to ensure anonymity.

Table 5.1 *Information about Participating Teachers*

Teacher name	Grade	Textbook	EFL teaching experience	Teaching MG experience	Highest qualification	Experience abroad	Learning pragmatics	Training in material	Training in using MG
Samia	1	MG1	6-10 y	1-5 y	BA in English language (Linguistics)	No	No	No	No
Abrar			+10 y	1-5 y	BA in English Language & Literature	No	No	Yes	Yes
Muna			+10 y	1-5 y	BA in English language	No	Yes	Yes	No
Abeer	2	MG2	6-10 y	1-5 y	BA in English language & translation	No	No	No	No
Reem			1-5 y	1-5 y	BA in English Translation	No	No	No	No
Hana			6-10 y	6-10 y	BA in English Language & Literature	No	Yes	No	No
Rowa	3	MG3	6-10 y	1-5 y	BA in English language	No	No	No	No
Asma			+10 y	6-10 y	BA in English Language	No	Yes	Yes	No
Saba			+10 y	1-5 y	BA in English Language & Literature	No	No	Yes	Yes

Note. 'y' means years, '+' means more than, and '-' represents a range.

As shown in the table above, all the selected teachers in this study had varying levels of experience in teaching English language, ranging from one to over 10 years at the time of data collection. Each teacher held, at most, a bachelor's degree, with majors related to the English language, such as English language, English literature, and English translation. However, none of the teachers held formal qualifications in English language teaching, and only three of them had a background knowledge in pragmatics. Additionally, the teachers' experience with teaching the MG textbooks spanned from one to ten years. Two of the teachers had training on using the MG textbooks, and four had training in the broader area of material development and adaptation.

It is worth noting that no demographic information was collected from the students. However, the students involved in this study were in the first to third grades of secondary school, with ages ranging from 15 to 17 years old. While the specific English proficiency level of the students was not provided, the MoE expects them to have proficiency ranging from A1 to B2+ (see the context chapter, section 2.5.1). For context, the first-grade students had received English language instruction in school for six years, the second-grade students for seven years, and the third-grade students for eight years. According to information provided by the school administration, all the students were Saudi nationals, and Arabic was their native language. Each classroom had 25 to 35 students, and two teachers, Abeer and Reem, had some students attending their classes online via Blackboard.

5.3 Methods of Data Collection

This study employed three different methods of data collection: checklists (for textbooks data), classroom observation and stimulated recall interviews. The following subsections provide a detailed discussion of these research methods and the rationale behind their selection in this study.

5.3.1 Checklists (Textbook Data)

The pragmatic data in each textbook were collected and analysed according to two checklists developed especially for the present study. This research tool was selected to ensure that the analysis was conducted in an organised, consistent and thorough manner according to the research questions and the identified focus. A checklist is also practical as its layout allows the comparison of two or more textbooks (McGrath, 2016). To maintain the focus of the study, and to ensure that the tools do not become unwieldy or impractical, the checklists were structured around predetermined categories derived from the literature (Cunningsworth, 1995; McGrath, 2016). However, these predetermined categories did not constrain the textbook analysis; when any additional SA or metapragmatic concept was identified during data analysis, it was added to the checklist accordingly. The first checklist was used to identify and quantify the SA types incorporated in the textbooks, while the second checklist examined the types and quantities of metapragmatic cues accompanying these SAs. Using two checklists built around different pragmatic issues allows for a comprehensive analysis of the representation of pragmatic knowledge in the textbooks and facilitated the identification of potential issues. The list of categories in each checklist was intended to help identify the elements under study and code a substantial amount of text in a focused and efficient manner. The analysis methods of the data obtained from the textbooks are discussed in more detail in later sections.

The first checklist, used to identify the explicitly mentioned SAs, was based on Searle's (1979) taxonomy of SAs. As explained in section 3.5 of the theoretical background chapter, this classification model, originating from Austin's (1962) SA theory, is defined in terms of the dimensions of variation between illocutionary acts and categorises SAs into five main categories including several subtypes. These categories are displayed in Table 5.2 below and described in detail with examples in the section 5.3.1.2.

Table 5.2 *Checklist for the SA Information in the Textbooks*

SA Category	**Definition**	**SA Subtype**	**Present**	**Not present**	**No. of**	**Example**	**Comments**
Representatives	SAs that oblige the speaker to the truth or falseness of an expressed proposition.	Reporting					
		Hypothesising					
		Assuring					
		Asserting					
		Stating					
		Insisting					
		Informing					
		Reminding					
		Notifying					
		Confirming					
		Claiming					
		Arguing					
		giving opinion					
		Agreeing					
		disagreeing					
		Approving					
		Disapproving					
		Expressing preference					
		Predicting					
		Guessing					
		Negotiating					
		Admitting					
		Denying					
		Accusing					
		Deducting					
		Describing					
Directives	SAs used to get someone else to do something.	Requesting					
		Commanding/ordering					
		Begging					
		Pleading					
		Making Suggestion					
		Giving advice					
		Making a proposal					
		Warning					
		Inviting					
		Persuading					
		Insisting					
		Directing/instructing					
		Urging					
		Forbidding/prohibiting					
		Giving Directions					
		Permitting					
		Asking					

Commissives	SAs that commit the speaker in varying degrees to a particular action in the future.	Promising					
		Offering					
		Threatening					
		Volunteering					
		Waranting					
		Contracting					
		Bidding					
		Betting					
		Challenging/daring					
		Summoning					
		Accepting					
		Refusing					
		Declining/rejecting					
		Vowing					
		Pledging					
		taking an oath					
Expressives	SAs that use language to express the speaker’s feelings and thoughts about people and things.	Complaining					
		Complimenting/praising					
		Thanking					
		Apologising					
		Congratulating					
		Condoling					
		Regretting					
		Lamenting					
		Greeting					
		Bidding farewell					
		Introducing					
		Wishing					
		Welcoming					
		Expressing Surprise					
		Expressing enthusiasm					
		Criticising					
		Encouraging					
		Joking/telling jokes					
Declaratives	SAs that aim to change the reality according to the proposition declared.	Pronouncing					
		Firing					
		Hiring/ Appointing					
		Sentencing					
		Resigning					
		Blessing					
		Baptising					
		Arresting					
		Marrying					
		Approving					
		Disapproving					

The present study employed this taxonomy to analyse the SAs within the examined textbooks due to its clear focus and applicability. It has been proven effective in analysing various SA types and their intended effects, yielding meaningful findings in previous studies. Besides, this study specifically examined explicitly mentioned SAs found in the textbooks; an approach that differs from the examination of implied meanings commonly explored in discourse and conversation analysis research.

Therefore, an explicit classification of SAs became necessary. It is also important to clarify that the aim of this study was not to develop a SA taxonomy but rather to identify and classify the SAs provided in the textbooks using a practical and convenient classification method, such as the one provided by Searle (1979). Any novel concepts that emerged during the analysis process, not covered in the existing taxonomy, were thoughtfully integrated into the coding categories to enhance the comprehensiveness of the study.

As previously discussed in the theoretical background chapter (section 3.5), a central critique of Searle's framework revolves around its consideration of SAs primarily through a grammatical lens, neglecting other factors such as the context in which they may be used (Geis, 1995). This study agrees that SAs cannot be fully comprehended in isolation without consideration of social and contextual factors; therefore, the analysis of SAs in the textbooks not only considered the SA types, but also information related to appropriacy, context, politeness, and cultural nuances associated with the SAs. That is, the study accounted for factors known to influence the choice of language forms and the ways in which SAs are constructed and interpreted in discourse.

Accordingly, the second checklist used in the analysis of pragmatic content focused on the metapragmatic information provided with SAs in the textbooks. This type of information is considered essential for raising learners' pragmatic awareness (see Celce-Murcia et al., 1995; Grant & Starks, 2001; Nu & Murray, 2020; Vellenga, 2004). This checklist was designed around an adaption of the data categorisation frameworks on pragmatic issues outlined in the literature, particularly those discussed by Vellenga (2004). Metapragmatic information here refers to any additional discussion, instruction, direction, comment, or usage note explicitly given in the textbooks to explain the use of SAs in relation to pragmatic concepts such as politeness, appropriacy, register, usage, illocutionary force, and cultural information (see also Alghamdi, 2014; Ji, 2007; McConachy & Hata, 2013; Ren & Han, 2016; Vu, 2017). The exploration of these metapragmatic issues in this study is important in gaining a better understanding of the treatment of SAs in the textbooks and to reveal whether these were presented with pragmatic information that can support their learning.

These pragmatic concepts are somewhat broad and partially overlap which might complicate their analysis (AlGhamdi, 2014). Therefore, each of these concepts underwent further refinement to narrow their scope, provide guidance for the analysis process, and enhance its overall consistency (see section 5.3.1.2 for detailed definitions). The overlapping nature of the concepts was taken into account in the analysis. In cases where two or more pragmatic topics were covered simultaneously in an exercise or a piece of information, each one of them was counted as a separate occurrence of pragmatic information. An 'occurrence' here denotes a single item of explicit pragmatic information found in the textbook. For instance, when a single activity focused on both formality and appropriacy, it was marked in the checklist next to both categories. As an example, the statement "polite ways to make requests with *can, could* and *would*" in MG3 was categorised as both politeness and usage information, as it provided guidance on using modals auxiliaries to convey politeness when making requests. Table 5.3 below shows the checklist for the metapragmatic data. More detailed descriptions and examples of each of these categories will be presented shortly.

Table 5.3 *Checklist for Metapragmatic Information Associated with SAs in the Textbooks*

Type of Metapragmatic Information	**Description**	**Focus of Metapragmatic Information**	**Present**	**Not present**	**No. of Occurrences**	**SA** (e.g. apology, advice, request, etc.)	**Example**	**Comments**
Politeness	Explicit information with SAs about how language is used to show awareness of another person's self-image.	Metapragmatic discussions highlighting aspects of politeness when performing SAs, including information about the use of markers like 'please' with SAs.						
		Metapragmatic information about how the level of directness in the linguistic form can be used to produce an SA that would be perceived as polite (or impolite).						
Appropriacy	Explicit information about the acceptable use of SAs within a given sociocultural context.	Metapragmatic explanations of the appropriate use of SAs in relation to contextual factors, including power dynamics, social distance and imposition involved.						
Register	Explicit information that differentiates SA use based on formality settings or the medium of communication.	Metapragmatic discussion that distinguishes between SA use in spoken and written language.						
		Metapragmatic discussion that distinguishes between SA use in formal and informal situations.						

Usage Information	Any language that provides explicit explanations or guidance on linguistic/grammatical or extralinguistic elements for performing SAs.	Explicit metalanguage used to elucidate how to construct a specific SA form. This is typically supported by example sentences.						
		Explicit information about the sue of extralinguistic features to perform SAs. Including intonation, voice tone, and gestures.						
Illocutionary force	Explicit information that involves the force, strength, or intensity with which an illocutionary point is presented.	Metapragmatic discussions about the variations in the degree of force or strength of an SA.						
		Metapragmatic discussions about the linguistic means to weaken or strengthen the force of an utterance.						
Cultural information	Explicit reference to how an SA is used in relation to culture in general.	Metapragmatic information about the conventions of SA use in English-speaking cultures.						
		Metapragmatic instruction on cross-cultural variations in performing SAs, such as differences between English and Arabic languages.						

5.3.1.1 The Structure of the Checklists.

The criteria in each checklist were based on the research questions and the pragmatic concepts discussed in Chapter 3. While each checklist examined the pragmatic content in the textbooks from a different perspective—that of SAs information and metapragmatic information—they were meant to be used side-by-side. The first checklist comprised two main categories. The first category addressed the types of SA and it included five subcategories. The second category encompassed the common subtypes within each SA type, which were derived from Searle's works (1969, 1975, 1979), alongside other pragmatic studies resulting in a total of 88 SA subtypes. Similarly, the second checklist contained one main category, in this case related to metapragmatic information. It comprised six metapragmatic concepts and their definitions according to their focus to enhance the precision and focus of the criteria items.

Regarding the format of the items and responses, the checklists consisted of closed-ended items (statements or prompts) to which the response was a tick; that is, items were ticked in the checklist once their presence had been confirmed in the textbook. The checklists incorporated items to confirm the presence or absence of each identified pragmatic information, record its frequency, and provide an example extracted from the data. There was also space to write comments in the checklist to enable any relevant information, descriptions or interpretations to be recorded, as shown in Tables 5.2 and 5.3. This format was selected in this study for two reasons. Firstly, closed items can be completed more quickly (McGrath, 2016) and can also provide more reliable and specific data that are appropriate for making comparisons. Secondly, the aim of this research is not to select or reject textbooks but, rather, to examine the representation of pragmatic knowledge in them, highlighting any shortcomings in this regard. Thus, identifying the presence or absence of the main pragmatic features, besides the counts of their occurrences, using closed items and responses is sufficient to reveal the relevant particulars about the textbooks (see McGrath, 2016). Moreover, the pragmatic content in the books was further examined using a qualitative approach to establish the necessary level of detail; that is, to provide specific information, interpret meanings, and explain the information identified in order to support the overall discussion. This detailed analysis helps supplement the checklists and overcomes any limitations they may contain. The way in which these checklists were used to identify and gather the pragmatic information within the textbooks is illustrated in section 5.6.2. The following sub-section provides descriptions and examples of the main categories used in each checklist.

5.3.1.2 Descriptions of Categories.

The first area of examination in the textbooks pertains to the information on SAs, using categories sourced from Searle's (1979) taxonomy of SA types. While the SA types have been previously defined in the theoretical background chapter, it is essential to elaborate on them in this context, presenting additional details and examples to improve the understanding of their application in the analysis.

A) SA Types

SAs are divided into the following five classes based on their function:

A.1 Representatives: They are illocutionary acts which oblige the speaker to the truth or falseness of an expressed proposition. This category includes the SAs of reporting, hypothesising, stating, accusing, arguing, assuring, asserting, admitting. Examples of this type of SA include:

- *Chomsky didn't write about peanuts* (arguing).
- *It was a warm and sunny day* (reporting) (Yule, 1996, p. 53).

A.2 Directives: They are utterances aimed at getting someone to do something. SAs under this category include requesting, commanding/ordering, pleading, giving advice, making suggestion, inviting, persuading, directing, urging, permitting, and forbidding. Examples of this type of SA include:

- *Could you lend me a pen, please?* (requesting).
- *Don't touch that!* (forbidding) (Yule, 1996, p. 54).

A.3 Commissives: They are utterances which commit the speaker to an action in the future, such as promising, accepting, refusing, threatening, betting, and offering. Examples of this type of SA include:

- *You'd better do as we tell you, or else*! (threatening).
- *We will not do that* (refusing) (Yule, 1996, p. 54).

A.4 Expressives: They use language to express the speaker's feelings, emotions, or psychological states. Subtypes under this class include complaining, complimenting, thanking, apologising, congratulating, condoling, regretting, greeting, wishing and welcoming. Examples of this type of SA include:

- *I'm really sorry*! (apologising).
- *Oh, yes, great, mmmm, ssah*! (complimenting) (Yule, 1996, p. 53).

A.5 Declaratives: They are utterances that bring about a change in the external world, such as appointing, hiring, firing, pronouncing, sentencing, christening, and resigning. Examples of this type of SA include:

- Referee: *you're out!* (firing).
- Jury Foreman: *we find the defendant guilty!* (declaring) (Yule, 1996, p. 53).

The second area to examine in the textbooks is the metapragmatic information; the following is a detailed description of the categories included in the second checklist.

B) Type of Metapragmatic Information

B.1 Politeness information: It refers to explicit information given with SAs to increase students' understanding of how language is used to show awareness of another person's self-image. As such, politeness information highlights aspects of politeness when performing SAs; the use of modals or markers, such as 'please,' with SAs to express politeness; and the level of directness in the language form used to produce an SA that would be seen as polite (or impolite) in a particular situation. The following are examples of politeness information related to SAs that can be found in ELT textbooks:

- Using the expression *I'll pass* [in the United States] as an indirect way to decline an offer is more polite than being direct and saying *I don't want any*' (Baleghizadeh & Rastin, 2015, p. 53).
- Using modals (such as *would* and *could*) is a more polite and indirect way to tell someone to do something. (Vellenga, 2004, p. 10).

B.2 Appropriacy: It is the ability to use language suitable for a particular context or situation (see Taguchi, 2006). Information about appropriacy in the textbooks includes any explicit instruction, discussion or commentary about the SAs which may be considered acceptable or unacceptable within a given sociocultural context, in relation to factors such as power relations between speakers, social distance and rank of imposition involved (see section 3.5.2 for explanations of these factors). For example:

- It would be appropriate if you use '*No way*' in a conversation with your intimate friend to express disagreement (Ji, 2007, p. 115).
- When you write to a business/professional contact: Address and sign the letter more formally, e.g. Dear Sir/Madam/Dear Mr./Mrs. + last name and Kind regards/Best regards/Sincerely. (MG2, p. 15).

It is worth mentioning that the level of politeness may sometimes be considered a component of appropriacy in SA literature (see, for example, Locher & Watts, 2005; Meier, 1997; Taguchi, 2006). However, this correlation does not always hold true, as highlighted in section 3.5.2. There are instances where an inappropriate SA does not necessarily imply impoliteness. Therefore, to maintain precision in the analysis and narrow the focus of each category, appropriacy in this study is exclusively concerned with providing explicit instruction and information on SA use in relation to contextual factors. Nevertheless, when the same metapragmatic instruction covered both politeness and appropriateness aspects, it was counted as two distinct occurrences—one for each category. However, no such instances were encountered during the analysis.

B.3 Register: In this study, register refers to any clear reference to the use of SAs in connection with a particular language register, particularly formal and informal registers, as well as spoken and written language varieties (see Ji, 2007; Vellenga, 2004). Examples of this information that can be found in ELT textbooks are:

- We often use *can't* instead of *must not* to express prohibition in spoken English (Vellenga, 2004, p. 11).
- Usage Note: In informal speech people say *Me too* to express agreement with an affirmative statement and *Me neither* to express agreement with a negative statement (Vellenga, 2004, p. 4).

B.4 Usage Information: Usage information in this study includes any element of explicit metalanguage (instruction, description, etc.) used to explain grammatical aspects related to SA, specifically focusing on how to construct a particular SA form. Typically, this information is supported by example sentences. For example:

- We form questions by using *must* before the subject: *Must I see the doctor?* (Spotlight on English 2, p. 54; Neddar, 2010).
- I make a request when I ask someone for something, or when I ask someone to do something: Can/May + Subject + V (stem) + (rest of sentence)? (Dendenne, 2019, p. 8).

Usage information may also include any explicit attention given to the use of extralinguistic features of language, such as voice intonation and body gestures, in relation to performing SAs.

B.5 Illocutionary force: This category includes any explicit information related to the degree of force, strength, or intensity with which an illocutionary point is conveyed, as well as ways to soften or amplify this force. Examples of such information found in the textbooks include:

- *We're on the same page here* to express strong/ total agreement. *I see your point but (don't you think it's worth considering a different option?)* … we use this expression to express tentative agreement/ disagreement. (MG3, Teacher's guide, p. 3).
- *Ought* to is stronger than *should*. *Might* and *could* are less strong (MG1, p. 84).

B.6 Cultural information: This category involves any reference to the general regulations of SA use in English-speaking cultures, as well as any instruction on cross-cultural variations in how to perform SAs (e.g., between English and Arabic languages). For example:

- In North America, people usually apologize and explain, or apologize and offer to do something about it … How do people usually apologize in your country? (Vellenga, 2004, p. 12).
- Read these expressions. Do you have the same in your own language? Tell them to your partner. (Neddar, 2010, p. 29)

5.3.2 Classroom Observation

This study uses semi-structured, non-participant classroom observations to capture direct, real-life data of teachers' practices. The main purpose of the observations was to investigate EFL teachers' use of textbooks in their classrooms, particularly how closely they followed the prescribed textbook when teaching SA and metapragmatic content, as well as to understand their methods of adaptation if they modified such content. This investigation can offer insights into whether and how teachers address potential shortcomings in the pragmatic materials identified in the textbooks. Observations are commonly categorised into participant and non-participant based on the role taken by the observer; the participant observer engages in all activities, whereas a non-participant observer does not become involved in the setting (Cohen et al., 2007). Observations are also categorised by their degree of structure and focus, from structured to unstructured (Cohen et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 2007). At the mid-point of the continuum lies the semi-structured observation, which involves going into the setting with "an agenda of issues" and to "gather data to illuminate these issues in a far less predetermined or systematic manner" (Cohen et al., 2007, p.397).

In the present study, a semi-structured observation scheme was opted for as it allows researchers to add notes, questions and interpretations and to record pertinent information as it emerges in the observed context (Cohen et al., 2007). To illustrate, the researcher walked into the classroom with a list of predetermined items in a checklist (explained in the following subsections). During the observation, the researcher investigated the presence of these categories in the lessons. However, other aspects of the class which appeared to hold significance or relevance to the study were additionally documented. In this way, the observation captured other potentially relevant features that appeared during the observation and might have had an impact on the participants' behaviours (Dörnyei, 2007).

The non-participant approach was employed because it allowed the researcher to observe the participants and investigate the situation directly and unobtrusively in the presence of contextual factors (Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005). Observing classrooms "can help demystify what is actually going on as opposed to what one might hope or assume or what a participant says is happening" (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 185). That is, visiting the classrooms offered the researcher a chance to gather information on teachers' behaviours and actions during lessons instead of relying only on reports of classroom actions. Observation was also selected for its advantages with triangulating and double-checking the data obtained from interview sources (Anderson et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005).

All classroom observations were audiotaped to support the researcher's notes and recollections (Johnson, 2016) and to be "replayed several times for discussion, analysis, or corroboration of written account" (Wragg, 2011, p.16; Johnson, 2016). Audio recording was used instead of video recording because educational policy in Saudi Arabia prevents video recording of female students (Al-Thiyabi & Albargi, 2015). The present study does not seek to investigate non-verbal communications. However, instances of teaching and using non-linguistic features to communicate pragmatics (e.g., gestures and body language) which could not be captured by the audio recorder were written in the notes/comments section in the observation sheet. Additionally, contextual aspects and any other emerging related non-verbal factors were also be written in the context information and in the comments/notes section.

There are some risks involved in conducting classroom observations which may affect the quality of the observation data. For instance, several researchers cautioned that the observer's presence can affect the way the participants act (i.e., reactivity), to the extent that the target behaviour may no longer be wholly representative of the classroom in its natural state (Cohen et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 2007). This study, therefore, implemented several strategies to minimise the threats of reactivity and researcher intrusion. First, the researcher visited the observation settings multiple times before conducting the study to build rapport and to familiarise the participants with the presence of an observer (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Second, the researcher was as unobtrusive as possible during the classroom observations, taking a position in an inconspicuous place such as the back of the classroom and avoiding disturbance or interference with lessons and activities (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Another potential issue with observations is that they "do not typically speak for themselves" (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 187). That is, observations do not ascribe meanings to the behaviours or events observed, nor do they give access to the reasons and motivations underlying the data. To address this issue, interviews with the teachers followed the observations to help the researcher better understand the reasons motivating the teachers' behaviours and choices (O'Sullivan, 2006). Any questions raised during the observation were recorded for the researcher to pose in the interview (see section 5.3.3).

5.3.2.1 Semi-Structured Observation Scheme.

During the observations, the researcher used an observation sheet as an instrument to collect data. The observation sheet included a checklist to enhance the guided and systematic gathering of data during classroom observations, thereby promoting consistency across the collected data (see Burns, 2009). The sheet featured a structured layout, comprising categories, items, and checkboxes that allowed the observer to document their observations during their real-time classroom session. It began with sections to record essential information, such as teacher details and textbook information. Subsequently, it presented categories and subcategories related to teacher adherence to the textbook and the types of adaptations made, if present. Moreover, the observation sheet allocated space for detailed descriptions of any observed adaptations and a space for notetaking. This space was used to record potentially relevant features, quotes, and examples of the teacher's actions to support the checklist data, as well as to note any questions that arose during the observation for later discussion in the follow-up interview. This design aimed to mitigate the inherent limitations of a checklist, ensuring that no important information was overlooked during the observations due to a restricted list of items (see Burns, 2009).

For this study, the observation sheet was developed based on the focus and nature of the observations (see Appendix C). Observation schemes and categories can be adapted from other publications in the relevant research area or can be devised by the researcher (Dörnyei, 2007). The implemented scheme must have "a degree of reflection, rather than the uncritical application of an instrument constructed by someone with perhaps a quite different focus or purpose" (Wragg, 2011, p.24). Accordingly, the checklist employed in this study aimed to confirm whether the teachers followed the textbook or made adaptations when delivering pragmatic content. In the event of adaptation, the checklist allowed for the classification of the specific type of adaptation and offered a space to describe its implementation. This helped understand whether teachers were aware of any shortcomings in the textbook and whether they supplemented the pragmatic materials accordingly, such as providing reflective discussions of metapragmatic concepts or comparing the nature of these conceptualisations cross-culturally.

The categories in the observation schedule were identified before the observations to ensure that all target aspects were accounted for, to guide the observation process and focus the researcher's attention, and to provide a greater degree of consistency across each observation (see Cohen et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 2007). They were considered of low-inference type as they were "simply reporting observations", rather than "making judgements about events observed" (Wragg, 2011, p. 23). The following subsection presents the categories used in the observation schedule.

5.3.2.2 Descriptions of Categories.

The first area to examine in the observations was whether the teacher followed the textbook as it is when delivering the pragmatic content. The second area of examination was the type of adaptations the teacher made when teaching pragmatic content. The adaptation categories used in the observation sheet were drawn from McGrath's (2016) framework for material adaptation. Accordingly, the checklist used the following categories:

A) Textbook Adherence

It refers to how closely teachers follow the instructions and content provided in the textbook when delivering pragmatic information and activities in the classroom. For example, if a textbook includes a lesson on SA and provides specific activities and explanations, a teacher who adheres to the textbook would teach the lesson exactly as it is laid out, without making changes to the materials or instructions.

B) Textbook Adaptation

Textbook adaptation in this study involves making changes to the pragmatic content and activities in the textbook to align with the specific requirements, objectives, and cultural background of a particular classroom or group of students. The primary types of adaptation covered in the checklist are:

B.1. Modification: Any internal change made by the teacher in any aspect of the materials (e.g., content, procedure, nature or focus of an exercise) as a response to a problem or an opportunity. Modifications can be minor, such as rewording instructions or explanations or major, such as introducing new learning objectives to an activity. For example:

- The teacher paraphrases the instructions of an SA activity that learners are likely to find too difficult in its original form.
- The teacher rewrites a provided reading passage and delivers it orally as a listening exercise and follows it with comprehension questions in order to compensate for the insufficient coverage of the oral practice in the textbook (McDonough et al., 2013).

B.2. Supplementation: The use of another activity/exercise, text, etc. from another source to bridge the gap between a textbook and syllabus goals or student needs. Supplementation aims to support the existing materials, rather than substitute for them. For example:

- The teacher plays a conversation from a soup opera show to demonstrate how disagreements are expressed in an authentic situation.
- The teacher designs a worksheet and uses it at the end of a unit to reinforce the pragmatic elements covered.

B.3. Replacement: The use of other material from another source (separate from the textbook) to teach a given pragmatic component instead of using the provided activity/exercise or text. For example:

- The teacher substitutes the dialogue at the beginning of a lesson with another dialogue taken from a podcast to present the target pragmatic points more adequately.

B.4. Addition: Addition involves providing more of the same; that is, adding more items, examples, etc., to supplement those which are already found in the textbook whilst maintaining existing objectives and methodology. For example:

- The teacher adds further examples of SA expressions.
- The teacher adds further items in an exercise to give extra practice to pragmatic points.

B.5. Deletion: Deletion occurs when the teacher skips or deletes SA examples, activities, exercises, texts, and other tasks that are found in the textbook.

5.3.3 Stimulated Recall Interviews

This study employed stimulated recall interviews (SRIs) with EFL teachers as a as a supplementary method to interrogate the observational data and validate the findings of the textbook analysis. SRI is an introspective research method used to “prompt participants to recall thoughts they had while performing a task or participating in an event” (Gass & Mackey, 2000, p. 13). In this method, participants are typically recorded while engaging in a series of actions; they view this recording later and comment on their thoughts and actions during those moments. This process holds value as it enables researchers to delve deeper into aspects that cannot be directly observed, including, such as teachers’ thoughts, decision-making processes, interpretations, beliefs about a particular issue and motivations for their behaviours and actions (Dempsey, 2010; Gass & Mackey, 2000; Lyle, 2003; Nguyen et al., 2013).

Stimulated recall has been adapted for different purposes in educational and language research, primarily to explore issues related to participants’ cognitive processing and to assist their recall of interactive or concurrent thoughts, the precise thoughts they had during particular events (Borg, 2008). SRIs have also increasingly been used to facilitate “concrete discussions of what the teachers were doing, their interpretations of the events represented in the stimuli, and of the reasons for the instructional decisions they were taking” (Borg, 2008, p. 219). This can lead to useful discussions of “other lessons, other studies, [teachers’] planning, their beliefs, and so on” (Woods, 1996, p. 28). The aim of the SRI in this study, thus, was to help the researcher gain a deeper insight into teachers’ motivations and the factors affecting their adaptation practices to the pragmatic content. That is, the focus was not on what the teachers were thinking while teaching, but, rather, on the motivations behind their thoughts and classroom choices. More specifically, this study implemented SRIs in the collection of data to serve five main purposes: (a) to investigate the factors affecting teachers’ presentation and practice of the pragmatic content, (b) to investigate the motivations underlying the adaptations they made to the pragmatic content, (c) to seek their perceptions regarding teaching and learning pragmatics in Saudi Arabia, (d) to complement and validate the observational data, (e) and to validate the findings from the textbook analysis regarding the quantity and quality of the SA content.

However, one major drawback related to the use of SRI is that the respondents may create “explanations about the links between prompted actions and intentions” (Lyle, 2003, p. 865) because of difficulties in recollection, shyness, anxiety or in an attempt to give responses that they think the researcher wants to hear in order to present themselves more favourably (Gass & Mackey, 2000; Lyle, 2003; O'Brien, 1993). Any of these reasons would pose a threat to the validity of the data; hence, this study took a number of measures to mitigate this risk following mechanisms provided in the literature to support participants' recall. Firstly, the SRIs were conducted as soon as possible after the observational event to help access accurate memory structures (Gass & Mackey, 2000; Lyle, 2003). According to Gass and Mackey (2000), SRIs must be conducted at most 48 hours after the recorded event. Secondly, the observed events were recorded and played during the interview as stimuli. It is believed that when participants view themselves in action, they can reexperience the original situation with more vividness and precision which helps them access accurate memory structures (Borg, 2008; Gass & Mackey, 2000; Lyle, 2003; Nguyen et al., 2013). Thirdly, the researcher developed an interview protocol prior to each SRI with questions based on what was observed during the lesson to aid participants' recall and responses (Dempsey, 2010; also see the next subsection for more details). Fourthly, the researcher conducted "dry-run" sessions of the SRI procedure, as suggested by O'Brien (1993, p. 217), by visiting each classroom several times before commencing the study to familiarise the teacher with the process and the presence of the researcher. Preparing the participants for the techniques and requirements of the SRI is considered to be effective in reducing any feelings of stress or intimidation (Calderhead, 1981; Gass & Mackey, 2000; O'Brien, 1993). Additionally, SRIs were conducted in a familiar place and, if the interviewee prefers, in their native language "to reduce any anxiety which might occur when communicating in a non-native language" (Kuzborska, 2011, p. 107).

5.3.3.1 The SRI Protocol.

The instrument used for collecting the stimulated recall data in this study was a high-structured interview protocol containing prepared open-ended questions (see Appendix D for a sample of the questions used during one of the SRIs). Dempsey (2010) observed that the interview protocol is important in providing a structure for the SRI, to help the researcher ensure that all the principal research concerns are comprehensively addressed and to aid participants in their responses. SRI protocols are typically divided into those with high or low structure, based on the degree of structure in their design (Gass & Mackey, 2000). The more a recall procedure follows a predetermined list of questions, put to all participants in the same order, the more highly structured it is; conversely, the less it follows an agenda or rigid order, the lower its structure. This research adapted a relatively high-structured SRI approach, using prepared questions based on specific stimuli selected by the researcher before the interview; however, the researcher remained open to the need to probe for more information and follow up any developments of potential interest. This format was chosen for the study as it struck a balance between two extremes. It addressed the limitations of a less-structured approach, which could produce data of little use, when participants are not focused or led (see Gass & Mackey, 2000), but avoided the inflexibility of the highly structured approach.

The questions in each protocol were formulated after the researcher carefully selected and examined pertinent segments from the audio-recordings and observation notes. These segments included events and activities in which the teacher engaged in teaching SAs or made any adaptations to the textbook related to the pragmatic content. In particular, the researcher focused on the following key issues in the SRI: (a) the teacher's use of the textbook when teaching pragmatics, whether adhering closely or adapting; (c) the underlying motivations and/or factors affecting teachers' use of the textbook, including time, class size, teaching load, teacher's knowledge and skills, and students' needs (AlAsmari, 2015; Alharbi, 2022); and (d) the teacher's opinion of the pragmatic content in the textbooks, whether it was sufficient or lacking in certain areas.

The current SRI protocol consisted of three sections: the first section contained prepared questions derived from observational data to investigate teaching behaviours and thoughts related to the use of the textbook when teaching pragmatics; the second section included questions about the teacher's perceptions of learning pragmatics and their views on the pragmatic content within the MG textbook; and the final section presented a closing question that invited participating teachers to add comments or raise relevant points that had not been discussed. The researcher also included a statement that recapped the main points covered in the interview to allow the participant to correct any misunderstandings (Dörnyei, 2007).

At the beginning of the interview, participants were reminded again of the general research purpose and given instructions for the task. The researcher used both notetaking and audio recording during the interview (using Sony ICD-PX470 digital voice recorder and the researcher mobile phone recorder) to enhance the data's accuracy and quality (Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007). However, notetaking was kept to a minimum, as it could be distracting and off-putting for some participants (Cohen et al., 2007). The audio recording of the observed lessons was played in a computer, and the researcher led the playback of the audio using the prepared protocol; however, the teachers were allowed to pause or play any part they wanted. The researcher was attentive but non-intrusive, listening carefully to the participants and allowing for relatively unstructured responses without being subjective or judgemental (Gass & Mackey, 2000). In addition to the prepared questions, the researcher sought clarification when needed, provided backchannelling cues as reactive responses and offered prompts that arose from the participant's responses. The average duration of each interview procedure was around 40 to 45 minutes. Approximately 20% of this time was spent on setting up and explaining the instructions, with 80% spent on the SRI, including playing and rewinding the recording, asking the questions and allowing the participants to comment and respond.

5.4 The Pilot Study

A pilot study is a small-scale research endeavour meant to test and improve research methods before a larger study (Thabane et al., 2010). In this study, the researcher piloted the research methods to test their suitability and reliability and refine them accordingly. Specifically, one textbook (MG1) was analysed, followed by two classroom observations and an SRI carried out during the first week of the 2021-2022 academic year. The following subsections outline the procedures and outcomes of the pilot study.

5.4.1 Piloting the Textbook Data

5.4.1.1 Modifications to the Data Sources.

The MG1 textbook consisted of a textbook, CD, workbook, and teacher's guide. After identifying explicit SA and metapragmatic information within the textbook, the researcher proceeded to examine the content of the remaining materials. It was noted that the pragmatic content in the workbook was rather redundant, as it did not offer explicit SA data for analysis beyond what was already presented in the textbook. Instead, it contained "exercises that reinforce the material presented in the student book" (Ghazel & Kozanoglou, 2017, p. vii, p. xiii). That is, they included exercises on SA expressions previously introduced in the textbook, without any new SA information alongside them. The teacher's guide, on the other hand, offered supplementary instructions and strategic guidance on how to use the textbook and approach lessons involving pragmatic content. Consequently, it was decided to include the teacher's guides in the main study and exclude the workbooks from further analysis.

Furthermore, the pilot study included examining the audio CD, which contained recordings of textbook activities, as well as the corresponding audio scripts. The researcher focused on scripts in lessons with SA information, as they had the potential to contain additional pragmatic insights. One audio segment (Audio 3) was identified, featuring intonation cues for expressing surprise. This audio clip was intended for use in pronunciation activities that instructed students to listen and observe the intonation patterns for this SA expressions. Since the audio clip here provided a practical demonstration of the intonations required to convey SAs, it was considered supplementary material. As a result, the audio recordings and transcripts were retained for further analysis.

5.4.1.2 Modifications in Instruments.

Piloting the checklists highlighted two issues. Firstly, the textbook contained some information about variations in the force or intensity of SAs, which did not neatly fit into any of the initial categories in the checklist;[5] for example, a note before advice-giving expressions stated: "*ought* to is stronger than *should*" (MG1, p. 84). To accommodate such explicit metapragmatic information, a new category called *illocutionary force* was added to the metapragmatic classification.

Secondly, the original politeness and appropriacy categories covered extralinguistic features, like intonation and tone of voice. However, some activities in the textbook focused on SA intonation without any direct ties to politeness or contextual factors, such as "Note the rising and falling intonation in expressions of surprise" (p. 4). These activities seemed more related to general SA usage and, thus, were incorporated into the usage category. However, during the main study, explicit information about extralinguistic features of SAs was carefully reviewed to determine their association with usage

[5] See section 5.3.1.2 for descriptions and examples of the metapragmatic categories.

information or other pragmatic aspects, including politeness and appropriacy. They were then categorised accordingly. All metapragmatic categories were considered to potentially encompass information related to their associated extralinguistic aspects.[6]

5.4.1.3 Reliability of the Textbook Analysis.

In qualitative research, ensuring a reliable and consistent coding framework and process is crucial (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Reliability, defined as a "measure repeatedly delivering the same results (or near same) results" (Litosseliti, 2010, p. 55), is one of the fundamental criteria for establishing trustworthiness in a study (Lombard et al., 2005). To establish reliability in this study, inter-rater reliability was employed inter-rater reliability measures the agreement between different coders regarding how to code the same data, thus enhancing the systematicity and transparency of the coding scheme and its application (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020).

Accordingly, a colleague[7] not involved in this research was invited to independently code the pilot data. Training sessions, spanning around seven hours, were organised to acquaint the second coder with the research objectives, data collection tools, and coding framework. These sessions also included coding exercises and discussions to address any uncertainties or concerns. Following the training, the second coder independently coded the MG1 data, marking segments with SA and metapragmatic information using PDF 'highlight' and 'insert text' functions. The coders then compared their results and resolved inconsistencies in some interpretations. A notable point of contention involved distinguishing 'politeness information' from 'appropriacy information' within the metapragmatic information category, which was resolved through revisiting situations and refining category definitions.

To quantify reliability, Cohen's kappa was calculated—a statistical measure assessing the agreement between raters (Chmura Kraemer et al., 2002). This measure was chosen because it accounts for chance agreement and is suitable for categorical data, as required in this study (McHugh, 2012). The coders agreed on 91.6% of codes, resulting in a kappa value of 0.82, indicating strong agreement beyond chance (according to the guidelines of McHugh, 2012[8]). All disagreements between the two coders were resolved through discussions that clarified definitions and addressed points of contention, particularly in areas such as illocutionary force, and the SAs of giving opinions and expressing preferences. With coding reliability firmly established, the researcher decided to proceed independently with the coding and analysis of the main study.

[6] The results obtained from the main analysis revealed that all instances explicitly teaching extralinguistic aspects of SAs in the textbooks were exclusively linked to usage information. Consequently, this information was incorporated solely within the category of usage information in the main study.

[7] The second coder has a PhD in women's studies from the University of York and three years of experience teaching EFL in Saudi universities.

[8] Kappa values can be evaluated as follows: values exceeding 0.90 indicate nearly perfect agreement; values falling between 0.80 - 0.90 suggest strong agreement beyond chance; values between 0.60 and 0.79 indicate moderate agreement; values between 0.40 and 0.59 signify weak agreement; values between 0.21 and 0.39 indicate minimal agreement; whereas those below 0.20 indicate no agreement (McHugh, 2012).

5.4.2 Piloting Classroom Observations

During the pilot study, the researcher observed two 45-minute teaching sessions, each with approximately 20 students in grouped arrangements, and the teacher standing at the front of the classroom. During the observations, the researcher was seated at the back with a recorder on her desk and discreetly completed the observation sheets. The recorded data were later transcribed for analysis. The pilot observations indicated that observational checklists were effective in gathering the required data, as they facilitated real-time identification of pertinent aspects covered during the lessons. The comments/notes section provided a space to record additional pragmatics-related details and potential interview questions. For example, one teacher assigned homework focusing on vocabulary and pronunciation, omitting SA-related exercises. This was noted in the comments section with a question mark which later informed the preparation of some interview questions.

Additionally, the pilot observations highlighted two important issues to address before the main study. Firstly, some parts of the recording were unclear as the students' voices and background noise sometimes made the teacher's speech nearly inaudible during transcription. To resolve this, the researcher decided to use two recorders—one at the front and another at the back of the classroom as a supplement. Secondly, the first observation was transcribed using the verbatim method, which involved capturing every detail and took over four hours to complete. After reviewing the transcript with an expert, it was deemed unsuitable as it included extensive and unnecessary elements for this specific analysis. A different approach was adopted for the other observations to focus on content rather than the manner of expression. Extraneous elements like repeated words and background noise were omitted to create a more concise and readable transcript. Furthermore, to concentrate on identifying explicit pragmatic episodes and adaptations within them, only segments explicitly addressing pragmatic content were transcribed. Explicit pragmatic instruction episodes were defined as discourse starting when attention was directed to SA and/or metapragmatic information and ending when activities unrelated to pragmatic content commenced. SA information included explicit mentions of SAs, along with practice, discussions, or commentary on their communicative function, as well as conversations or activities preceding or following them. Non-pragmatic activities were not transcribed but briefly described in the teacher's profile. An example of SA information from the second observation is as follows:

> Teacher: "Study the following expressions and practise saying them out loud: for disagreeing, I say*: I don't agree, I'm afraid I disagree. that's wrong!* Ok? For strongly disagreeing: *What nonsense!, what rubbish!, I completely disagree*!"

Around 10 minutes of the second observation (22.2% of class time) covered pragmatic data and were subsequently transcribed. Afterwards, the audio was reviewed again to ensure alignment with the transcript.

5.4.3 Piloting the SRIs

Before conducting the SRI, the researcher reviewed the transcribed observational data, marked any relevant audio segments and prepared a set of questions. These questions probed the teacher's reasonings and decisions regarding their approach to teaching the SA activities, for example:

- why the teacher used Arabic to explain the expressions for clarifying and confirming
- reasons for group work during pair-work activities
- the motivations to use outside material (worksheets) to teach new vocabulary but not for pragmatics
- whether the teacher typically supplemented the SA content and, if so, when, how and why
- perspectives on the importance of learning L2 pragmatics in the Saudi context
- assessment of the coverage of pragmatic and SA aspects in the textbook
- what challenges were faced by the teacher when delivering pragmatic content
- what challenges the teacher believed students faced when learning this content.

The interview was conducted in English at the vice principal's office, as per the participant's choosing. The researcher first explained the SRI procedure using guidelines and models for approximately 5 minutes, followed by a 33-minute interview.

Overall, the interview proceeded smoothly, but a few issues emerged, leading to adjustments in the interview framework. Some questions were found to be redundant, as they led to repetitive responses; for instance, when inquired about the challenges teachers encountered when teaching pragmatics, the teacher's answers mirrored their answers about their reasons and motivations behind supplementing SA activities, including students' low proficiency level, limited class time and the nature of SA materials in the textbook. Similar points arose when discussing the challenges the students faced while learning pragmatics. Consequently, the question about challenges faced by teachers was eliminated to instead concentrate on probing into the factors and rationales guiding their practices when teaching SA content.

Moreover, the participating teacher found it difficult to articulate her thoughts accurately in English owing to language barriers that increased her anxiety and affected her responses. In subsequent interviews, participants who chose to be interviewed in English were advised to switch to Arabic whenever needed. Finally, the researcher aimed to minimise interrupting participants with follow-up questions to ensure comprehensive answers were given in future interviews. Any questions arising from the participant's responses would be jotted down to be asked once the participant completed their answer.

5.4.4 Reliability of the Observations and SRIs

The transcripts of the observational data and SRI were sent to an external qualitative research expert[9] to double-code the data. After receiving training sessions, the second coder independently identified any additional inductive categories or codes using the provided codebook. Microsoft Word was used during the analysis, enabling comments to be inserted via the review tab and segments in the transcript to be labelled with the respective codes. Regarding the SRI, the researcher assigned a total of 29 codes,

[9] The second coder for the SRI and observations was a PhD holder in TESOL from the University of York.

while the second coder identified 31 codes. A consensus was reached on 28 of these. A percentage agreement test was used to assess coder agreement on the observational and SRI data, given their interpretive nature, such as the thematic coding applied. This method provides a straightforward calculation and interpretation process while still offering a meaningful measure of reliability. The test followed the formula outlined in Miles and Huberman (1994), which suggests that an 80% agreement rate among coders for 95% of the codes is sufficient to establish the inter-rater reliability. The formula used was:

$$\text{inter-rater reliability} = \frac{\textit{Number of agreements}}{\textit{number of agreements + number disagreements}}$$

The test results indicated a high level of agreement between both coders, evident in their respective inter-rater reliability percentages (96% for the researcher and 87% for the second coder).

Regarding the observational data, both the researcher and the second coder were independently assigned 15 codes each; they unanimously agreed on 14 codes (inter-rater reliability = 93%), confirming the reliability of the instruments used. The main point of contention arose in the 'supplementation' category, where there appeared to be a misunderstanding of its specific definition. During the lesson, the teacher provided additional example sentences related to the given agreement and disagreement rule. The second coder categorised this as supplementation, while the researcher considered it an addition because the teacher expanded upon what had already been provided in the textbook. To prevent similar misunderstandings in the future, the researcher decided to redefine both of these categories to be more precise and distinct, highlighting their unique characteristics compared to other categories.

5.5 Data Collection Procedure in the Main Study

The data collection process for this study consisted of two main phrases. The first phase included extracting and analysing textbook data, while the second phase included conducting classroom observations and interviews. The analysis of the textbooks occurred over a six-week period in summer 2021. Classroom observations and interviews were conducted during the second week of the 2021-2022 academic year. Information sheets, consent forms and background surveys were distributed to teachers the week preceding the official start of the term, as teachers and staff are mandated to be present at schools one week in advance to prepare for the upcoming term.

In Saudi Arabia, the academic year is divided into three semesters, each lasting 13 weeks (MoE, 2021). The first 11 weeks are for teaching and learning, while the last two weeks are for revision and final examinations. Therefore, the study covered a period of 11 weeks, with the first week dedicated to piloting classroom data and dry-run sessions, and the subsequent weeks allocated to the main observations and interviews. This allowed the researcher to cover the teachers' practice throughout the entire teaching and learning part of the semester. Table 5.4 illustrates the timetable for the data collection process.

Table 5.4 *Data Collection Process*

Week	Consent form & Information sheet	Background survey	Pilot study	Dry-run sessions	Observation	Interview
0	√	√				
1			√	√		
2					√	√
3					√	√
4					√	√
5					√	√
6					√	√
7					√	√
8					√	√
9					√	√
10					√	√
11					√	√
12		Revision week				
13		Final Exams				

5.6 Data Analysis

The data obtained from MG textbooks, classroom observations were analysed using quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods, and the SRIs were analysed using thematic analysis method. The following subsections outline the methods used for analysing the data.

5.6.1 Content Analysis

The Content Analysis approach was adopted in this stage to obtain the counts and descriptions of SA information in the textbooks (see Cohen et al., 2007; Krippendorff, 2018). Content analysis, in essence, is defined as "a coding operation and data interpreting process" (Berg, 2007, p.304). It helps explore textual data unobtrusively "to determine trends and patterns of words used, their frequency, their relationships, and the structures and discourses of communication" (Vaismoradi et al., 2013, p. 400). Content analysis is used to sort data into pre-existing (or emerging) codes and themes based on systematic categories summarised from the literature review (Berg, 2007; Bryman, 2012; Krippendorff, 2018). This method can be carried out quantitatively and/or qualitatively. Quantitative content analysis is concerned with counting occurrences and frequencies of certain expressions in the data, whereas qualitative Content analysis deals with latent meanings and interpretations to explain the target phenomena rather than only counting them (Berg, 2007; Krippendorff, 2018).

In this study, the researcher used content analysis as it can deal with the large amount of data (which comes from three resources) in a systematic structure (Cohen et al., 2007). NVivo, a software programme for analysis, was used to assist the researcher in organising the data into suitable codes and categories and comparing data across different data resources (Baralt, 2012). Both quantitative and qualitative approaches of content analysis were employed to complement each other (Pingel, 1999). Quantitative analysis allowed the researcher to measure the frequency of specific pragmatic elements within the text and determine their emphasis, to show where the emphasis lies, for example. Qualitative content analysis, on the other hand, helped reveal underlying assumptions that cannot be measured quantitatively (Berg, 2007), such as, what messages a text transmits about the authors or the teaching-learning objectives. The researcher followed the three processes of content analysis proposed by Cohen et. al. (2007) and Krippendorff (2018), namely:

1. Coding (sorting the data into chunks by preidentified or emerging codes and placing them into meaningful categories);
2. Making comparisons (comparing categories to identify meaningful patterns and links among them); and
3. Concluding (making inferences from the text and establishing a set of conclusions to answer the research questions).

5.6.1.1 Codes and Coding Schedule.

Coding of data refers to the process of identifying meaningful cohesive categories in the collected data and finding relationships between them (Saldaña, 2021). It enables researchers to reduce and condense large quantities of data in order to easily observe and interpret it and develop steps for the future (Cohen et al., 2007). When carrying out content analysis in this study, the researcher used coding schedules that consisted of deductive codes (determined prior to analysis) and inductive codes (emerging directly from the data itself) (Castro et al., 2014). These schedules were applied in entering data coding in the analysis (Bryman, 2012). Any further refining and developing of the codes required refilling of the schedules accordingly.

The codes used in the analysis of the textbooks were developed in alignment with the research questions and the SAs and pragmatic concepts that formed the basis of the checklist categories (see section 5.3.1). Accordingly, the coding schedule for the textbook data included the following primary codes: ‘Representatives,’ ‘Directives,’ ‘Commissives,’ ‘Expressives,’ ‘Declaratives,’ and ‘Metapragmatic information’. These main codes were further divided into sub-codes. For instance, the ‘Directives’ category was divided into sub-categories including orders, advice, invitations, and other similar SAs. Each code was accompanied by a description and examples, similar to those provided in section 5.3.1.2.

The observation data were coded using two sets of codes: ‘Textbook adherence’ and ‘Type of adaptation.’ The second code was divided into subcodes: modification, supplementation, replacement, addition and deletion, each of which was accompanied by descriptions and illustrative examples, similar to those provided in section 5.3.2.2.

In terms of the SRIs, their coding schedule was primarily shaped by the data itself, given that these interviews were constructed based on observed lessons and depended on the participants’ responses.

Additionally, the coding framework drew insights from the research questions and previous studies conducted in the Saudi EFL context, albeit on different topics, including Alasmari's (2015) and Alharbi's (2022) studies of the challenges encountered by Saudi EFL university instructors during communicative language teaching. Initially, the researcher aimed to manage the data with a predefined set of codes to assign to the interview transcripts; however, after the pilot study and during the processes of data collection and analysis, these initial codes underwent refinement and categorisation. The final set of SRI codes employed in the study were:

A) Opinion of the quantity of pragmatic content

This category pertains to the teachers' evaluations of the quantity of pragmatic content featured in the textbook. Teachers may express whether the amount of pragmatic information and activities in the textbooks was sufficient or insufficient relative to their students' levels and needs.

B) Opinion of the quality of pragmatic content

This refers to teachers' views of the quality of the textbook's pragmatic content. This includes the quality of metalinguistic explanations, the provision of illustrative examples, the contextualisation of the SA phrases, the relevance of the content to the students' lives, the authenticity of the language used and the language difficulty.

C) Factors affecting teaching pragmatics

This refers to any factors or motivations mentioned by teachers that influenced their use of textbooks when teaching pragmatics. These factors may relate to whether teachers adhere to the textbook's content or adapt it. The factors can be categorised into four main subcategories:

C.1) *Student-related factors*: These pertain to aspects concerning students, including their language proficiency levels, needs, attitudes and the level of support or cooperation they receive from their parents or caregivers; for instance, a teacher might mention that they simplify certain SA activities to align with their students' language proficiency.

C.2) *Policy-related factors*: These encompass any policies or guidelines set by educational institutions or authorities that impact the use of textbooks when teaching pragmatics. This includes considerations like the limited number of EFL classes, assessment methods and the requirements set by the MoE or school administration to adhere to the textbook and curriculum schedule; for instance, a teacher might discuss how the MoE's instruction influences their textbook adaptation methods.

C.3) *Teacher-related factors*: These pertain to the background knowledge, training, experiences and teaching styles of the teachers themselves. An example could be a teacher explaining how their teaching philosophy guides their use of the textbook.

C.4) *Textbook-related factors*: This relates to any references made to the content, design or language level of the textbook as reasons that influence teachers' use of the textbook when teaching pragmatics.

C.5) *Pedagogical reasons*: This includes pedagogical considerations, such as the heavy teaching load and the availability of teaching aids or technological tools that impact their use of the textbook. Teachers might discuss how a lack of resources or tools has an impact on their adaptation choices, for example.

D) Challenges students face in learning pragmatics

This refers to the challenges that students encountered while learning pragmatic language skills in the EFL classroom, as perceived by their teachers. These challenges can be categorised into the following:

D.1) *Student-related challenges*: This includes students' current proficiency levels, their motivation (or lack thereof) to learn the English language, their autonomy as learners, as well as their social and economic backgrounds; for example, a teacher reported that certain students lacked motivation to participate in pragmatic exercises, impeding the learning process.

D.2) *Policy-related challenges*: These challenges are linked to external policies, such as the allocated time for EFL classes, the frequent changes in the textbooks used and the inadequate foundational English education that impacts students' pragmatic learning experiences; for instance, the limited number of EFL classes per week poses difficulties for the effective acquisition and practice of pragmatics.

D.3) *Textbook-related challenges*: These are difficulties associated with the textbooks, including the authenticity and formality of language, the type of pragmatic information and the language proficiency level; for example, a teacher might discuss how the textbook does not provide enough real-life examples of pragmatic language use, making it challenging for students to apply the concepts.

5.6.1.2 Coding of Data.

This study followed a two-cycle approach to code the data, as recommended by Saldaña (2021). The first cycle of coding included reading and coding all data excerpts. The researcher assigned descriptive codes (such as advice, requests, greetings and so forth) to the textual data lending themselves explicitly to these predefined categories. The following excerpts from the SRIs are examples that readily fit within the codes 'Student-related factors (low proficiency level)' and 'Policy-related factors (limited class time),' respectively, because the teachers explicitly cited them as factors that influenced their supplementation of pragmatic content in the textbooks:

> Because of the students' language ability, I would translate [the SA activity] and simplify it by providing more explanations and examples (Samia, SRI 1).

> The biggest influence for me is the class time… 45 minutes per day is not enough time to successfully teach and learn a foreign language (Reem, SRI 1).

This study also used inferential coding, particularly with the SRI transcripts, in case there were segments of a text that did not suggest direct codes and, thus, necessitated making interpretations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the following excerpt, the teacher did not provide a direct response about their reasons for using the textbook when delivering an SA activity, which required more inferencing to understand their response. Instead, the teacher discussed the overwhelming number of tasks associated with her teaching responsibilities, which hindered her from incorporating innovative teaching methods, leading her to rely more on the textbook. Accordingly, this segment was labelled as 'Pedagogical reasons (heavy teaching load)':

> When I first started teaching, that was my main goal – to do everything I could to make sure my students became really good at English. But time went on and I found myself handling multiple courses and textbooks in a single semester and I also had to mentor some trainee teachers. There is not much room for creativity (Abrar, SRI 1).

This segment does not explicitly indicate a specific category but requires the use of inferential coding. All codes and categories were constantly compared across the participants' data to ensure that they were comprehensive and did not overlap.

In the second cycle of coding, the researcher reviewed the codes and reread the coded extracts to ensure they were coded accurately. This resulted in some codes being renamed or regrouped into families of codes, while other codes were discarded as redundant or irrelevant (Saldaña, 2021). For example, explicit instructions in the textbooks regarding 'advising someone against something,' 'asking someone to do something,' and 'promising to keep a secret' were renamed as 'giving advice,' 'making requests,' and 'promising,' respectively. Patterns and correlations between the codes were identified in this cycle. The reliability of the coding was assessed by checking the coding with another researcher, as elaborated in sections 5.4.1.3 and 5.4.4. After this cycle, the coded data were organised in the order of the research questions and prepared for analysis.

5.6.2 Analysis of Textbook Data

The methodology used to analyse the textbook data drew upon McGrath's (2016) and Littlejohn's (2011) models, as discussed in the literature review chapter (section 4.3.4.3). The textbooks were analysed in three stages: a first-glance analysis, close analysis and inferential analysis. Each stage is subsequently detailed in the following subsections. However, before discussing the stages of textbook analysis, it is crucial to discuss the method for identifying and quantifying the textbook's SA information, as well as the approach used to assess whether the data was extensive or limited.

5.6.2.1 Identifying SA Information.

The analysis included explicit SAs only, those that were mentioned explicitly as an apology or request, etc. The rationale behind selecting explicit pragmatic content exclusively for this study was influenced by the recognised effectiveness of explicit pragmatic instruction over implicit instruction in EFL contexts (see the literature review chapter, section 4.2.2 for a discussion of this argument). Furthermore, analysing implied meanings and intentions in a consistent manner without inevitably introducing subjectivity is a significant challenge (Yule, 1996). This is because pragmatics, in general, deals with speakers' intentions, presuppositions, assumptions, and their meanings rely on the interpreter and their point of view. It also often intersects with other language subfields such as semantics and syntax (Mey, 2006). To remain focused on pragmatics, therefore, it is important to examine manifest pragmatic information rather than implicit information.

To identify the SA information in the textbooks, the researcher first closely read the textbooks, supported by an electronic search using NVivo while referencing the SA checklist. This involved looking for SAs that appeared with an explicit mention of their name or function; for instance, SAs that were presented under specific headings like "Making and declining special requests" (MG3) or were introduced with usage instructions like "use *should, ought to, might* and *could* to give advice" (MG1, p. 84) were considered as explicitly presented SAs. The corresponding expressions and phrases were categorised accordingly. These phrases could be complete sentences, such as 'you should see a doctor soon' or they might be incomplete sentences, such as 'my advice to you is...' Even the basic expression 'hi' following an explicit mention of the SA of greeting was coded as an SA.

5.6.2.2 Determining the Amount of Pragmatic Content.

It is important to note that the literature on pragmatics lacks standardised criteria or guidelines to determine the appropriate number of SAs to teach at different proficiency levels, comparable to what is often found in vocabulary and grammar literature. One potential explanation for this lies in the fundamental difference between learning SAs or pragmatic skills and acquiring vocabulary and grammar skills (Cohen, personal communication, 2023). Understanding pragmatics is not merely about the number of new SA-related words one knows, but rather involves the nuanced understanding of appropriate usage within various contexts and communicative intentions, such as avoiding overly demanding requests or insincere apologies. Hence, a specific, predetermined quantity of SAs cannot be definitively recommended for inclusion in language textbooks. Rather, the emphasis should be on providing a rich and varied pool of SA information and ample opportunities for learners to practise and explore these skills.

It is essential to acknowledge that the assessment of pragmatic content is inherently prone to subjective interpretation. To mitigate this, previous researchers typically adopted a direct approach to defining what constitutes a substantial or limited presence of SAs. They relied on both quantitative data (e.g., the frequency of SA elements in the textbooks) and qualitative data (e.g., the ways these elements are presented). Additionally, they drew upon comparisons with earlier research in similar contexts (see, for example, Denedenne, 2019; Neddar, 2010; Nu and Murray, 2020; Ren & Han, 2016; Vu, 2017). Insights from personal communications (August, 2021) with Dendenne (2019), Nguyen (2011) and Ren and Han (2016) validated and supported this approach.

Furthermore, based on the findings and discussions from prior studies, there emerged a consensus that an average frequency of SAs in each textbook of less than 20 was considered low (for a discussion of these findings, please refer to section 7.2.1). The rationale for this approach stemmed from the recognition that, while not every part of a textbook must focus on teaching pragmatics, an excessively low percentage of pragmatic content may indicate insufficient attention to pragmatic competence. However, an average of fewer than 20 SAs in a textbook may not be universally deemed low or insufficient across all educational contexts. To validate this claim, it is crucial to examine whether this recommended quantity can enhance students' pragmatic competence. Accordingly, it is necessary for additional research to explore this aspect, which is beyond the scope of this study.

Nevertheless, this study followed the approach proposed in the literature discussed above to define percentages as either high or low, including considering quantitative and qualitative data, as well as data derived from similar research. Additionally, the study considered the importance of the learning contexts; specifically, the study compared the findings obtained with the learning and curricular objectives outlined in the SELF. This study also investigates the teachers' opinion of the quantity and quality of this pragmatic content, for instance, whether they think it is adequate for their students or not. This could have an evaluative effect, as teachers themselves are considered evaluations (McGrath, 2016).

Furthermore, the broader body of literature on pragmatic competence, particularly in the context of Saudi EFL learners, was consulted to draw informed conclusions; for example, to understand the frequency of SAs in the MG series, the study first looked at the SELF objectives to check the inclusion of SAs as learning objectives. Subsequently, the researcher compared the collected counts with those reported in comparable studies. For instance, to determine the coverage of specific SAs, such as apologies, within the textbooks, the researcher cross-referenced the SELF's instruction on teaching apologies with data from similar studies on apologies in textbooks and apology frequency in natural interactions reported in corpora and cross-cultural studies. The study also consulted the literature on how Saudi EFL learners understand SAs of apology to ascertain whether this knowledge needed to be reinforced with language textbooks used by Saudi learners.

The relative frequencies of the quantity of metapragmatic topics were compared with metapragmatic data reported in previous research. Furthermore, their frequencies were compared to discern which topics were emphasised more. These were also juxtaposed with the obtained SA frequencies to understand the extent to which metapragmatic discussions and instructions supplemented SAs, potentially enhancing comprehension and learning of these SAs. The SELF guidelines were also consulted to check the inclusion of pragmatic information in the curricular's objectives.

5.6.2.3 Stages of Textbook Analysis.

Stage 1: First glance analysis

In the first glance stage, the textbooks were first investigated to gain a broad understanding of them. This involved identifying the textbooks' objectives, size and content, as well as checking if they mentioned any pragmatic features in their contents and objectives. For this analysis, a schedule for understanding “what is there,” adapted from Littlejohn (2011, p. 187), was used to rapidly review the materials (see Appendix E). This adapted schedule, chosen for its directness and informativeness, covered the general aspects of each textbook, including components, publication details, target learners, layout and content sequence. Then, the pages in each textbook that contained explicit information on SAs were identified by examining every page across the six volumes, following the pragmatic information checklists introduced earlier. Several textbook researchers have employed this page-by-page method, as it permits them to quickly obtain an overview of the inclusion of certain aspects in the examined material (e.g., Nguyen, 2011c; Ren & Han, 2016; Vellenga, 2004).

Stage 2: Close analysis

The data were quantitatively and qualitatively analysed in this stage to obtain accurate counts and a deeper understanding of the SA information in the textbooks. To examine the counts and frequencies of the available SA information, the researcher confirmed the presence or absence of the main SAs and metapragmatic cues using the checklists. When an SA was found in the material, it was referenced against the checklist and ticked as present next to the type that best matched its characteristics. Then, the researcher coded the identified pragmatic data in the texts using the codes/categories lists and then entered them in the coding schedule accordingly using NVivo (as exemplified in Figure 5.2 below).

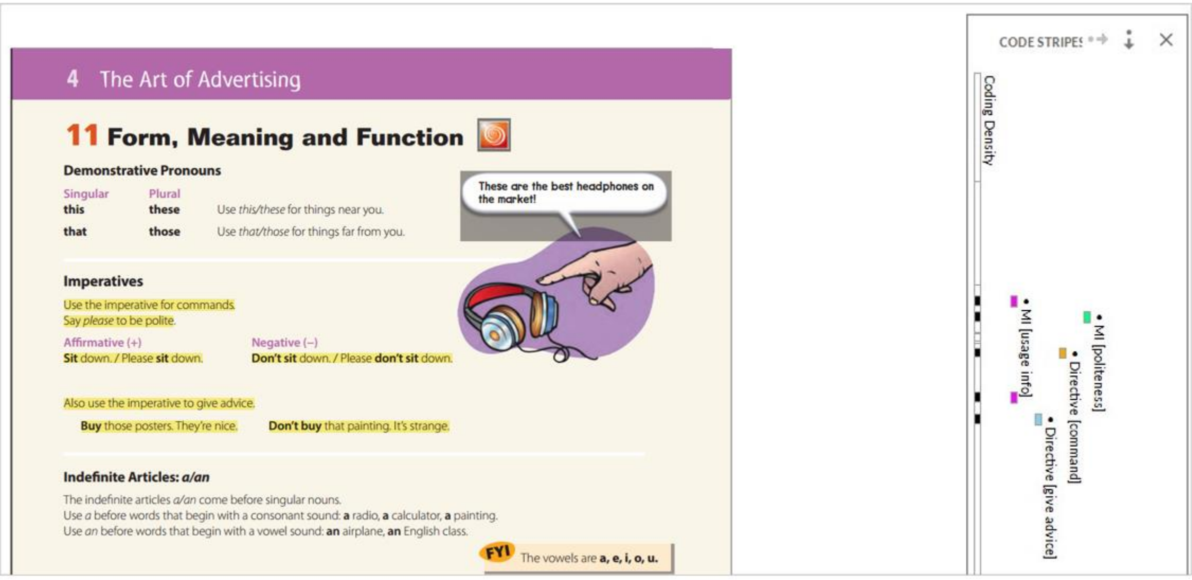
To illustrate, when the phrase “Could you fill in this form, please?” (MG2, p. 79) was identified after an explicit instruction about making requests, it was recorded in the checklist next to the ‘Directive SA (making requests)’ category. Then, the SA was referenced against the second checklist to determine whether it was presented with any metapragmatic information. When such information was identified, it was ticked in the checklist next to the concept it related to; for example, a brief statement preceding this phrase that read “Use *can* and *could* to make polite requests” (MG2, p. 79) was considered a metapragmatic cue, as it associated the use of these SA expressions with politeness. Such a statement was counted as a metapragmatic instruction on ‘Politeness’ in the checklist and the target SA as ‘Making requests.’ The identified metapragmatic information was then coded in NVivo accordingly. Any new SAs that were not initially included in the checklist were examined and documented as they emerged; for example, expressing preferences was introduced in a lesson alongside the SAs of giving opinions and agreeing or disagreeing, with each accompanied by a list of example phrases. Expressing preferences, originally not on the checklist, was added under the category of ‘Representatives’ because it aligns closely with the SAs of giving opinions and agreeing or disagreeing.

During the coding, the frequency of each code was recorded to determine the occurrence of each pragmatic aspect. Additionally, at the end of the coding, the researcher used the ‘coding summary’ function in NVivo to retrieve the code counts, which summarised how frequently each code was applied to the data, aiding in the confirmation of the obtained counts from the checklists. The outcomes of these counts revealed the extent to which the textbooks covered each type of SA and provided insights into the prevalence of specific pragmatic aspects in the data, compared to others. It also facilitated comparisons between codes within the same textbook and across all six textbooks, enabling the detection of any meaningful connections or relationships between the proficiency levels of the textbooks and the distribution of covered SAs to be detected.

The tokens of SAs in terms of their realisation strategy (expression/phrase) concerning SA types were counted in this stage; for example, three expressions of making suggestions were explicitly covered on one page – such as 'why don't you try the new Italian restaurant downtown?', 'how about we meet for coffee tomorrow?' and 'let's go for a walk in the park this evening?' – were counted as three occurrences of one type of SA (i.e., making suggestions). They were not considered a single occurrence of the SA of suggestions because they represented different expressions of the same function. Furthermore, when the same expression of offering, such as 'would you like a ride home?', appeared twice in the same textbook, it was counted as two occurrences of the SA of offering because the context of its usage varied in each occurrence. The results of the SA count were then displayed in tables[10] with the numbers and percentages of the occurrence of each type of SA to provide an overview of their coverage in each textbook (Ren & Han, 2016).

The following initial coding of Unit 4 in the first MG textbook illustrates the process of such analysis.

Figure 5.2 *Textbook Data Coding with NVivo.*



This lesson includes explicit instructions on SAs for making commands and giving advice. The highlighted words in this passage were coded to signify particular pragmatic information. The first token conveyed metapragmatic information concerning usage, offering guidance to students on the grammatical structure of the SA; it was coded accordingly. The coded token following this focused on the metapragmatic information related to politeness, specifically instructing students on how to give advice more politely. Subsequently, the four examples that followed these rules were categorised as

[10] See Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 in the data report chapter, section 6.2.1.

instances of the SA of giving commands. In the second part of the extract, the first highlighted phrase provided another metapragmatic explanation of its usage, this time teaching how to form statements of advice. These examples were recorded as two occurrences of the SA of giving advice. Therefore, this lesson encompassed four occurrences of the SA of giving commands, two occurrences of giving advice, one occurrence of politeness and two occurrences of usage instruction.

While the counts and frequencies of SAs alone did not generate findings, the results provided a guideline to examine the data further. Therefore, after counting the provided SAs, the researcher analysed the content qualitatively to provide a detailed description of how it was managed within and across the textbooks. The identified SAs were closely examined by analysing the provision of accompanying metapragmatic information. The accompanying metapragmatic concepts were examined in terms of their types and whether their influence over SA performance was emphasised. Any meaningful correlations in the SA data were compared and explored; for instance, comparing the given number of threatening expressions with apologetic expressions can offer insights into which pragmatic input the writers emphasised and whether they may have overlooked any more practical and common English SAs, as suggested by Dendenne (2019).

Stage 3: Inferential analysis

Lastly, the analysis moved to a more inferential perspective to provide a cumulative understanding of the data obtained. Conclusions and made inferences were drawn from the text, which considered the two previous levels, as well as the previous literature, supported by the quantitative data and quotations from the existing material. During this stage, conclusions were reached regarding whether the pragmatic content presented in the textbooks was limited or not, as previously detailed in section 5.6.2.2.

5.6.3 Statistical Analysis

The study applied a chi-squared test to establish whether the coverage of SA and metapragmatic content in the textbooks differed. The chi-squared test is a statistical tool employed to assess the presence of a significant relationship between two categorical variables within a dataset. This statistical test was chosen due to its suitability for comparing observed and expected frequencies within categorical data, which aligns with the nature of the data collected in this study. The metapragmatic content categories (i.e., politeness, appropriacy, register, usage explanation, illocutionary force and cultural information) are discrete categorical variables; the frequency of occurrence within each category serves as the data point for analysis. By comparing the observed and expected frequencies, this test provides insights into whether there are statistically significant differences in the distribution of pragmatic content among MG textbooks. It ensures that the assessment of pragmatic content distribution is robust, contributing to the reliability of the study's findings.

To apply the chi-squared test, the pragmatic content data from each of the three textbooks were organised and entered into SPSS. The pragmatic information and respective proficiency levels represented by the textbooks were specified. A null hypothesis (H0) was established that assumed that there were no statistically significant differences in the distribution of the pragmatic content among the textbooks. A significance level of 0.05 was set. Then, the chi-squared test was conducted separately for each MG textbook to compare the observed frequencies of pragmatic content categories with their expected frequencies. The results were then recorded and are reported in Chapter 6.

5.6.4 Analysis of Observations

The observational data, which were primarily collected through observation sheets and audio recordings, were analysed using qualitative content analysis method. This analysis aimed to determine whether the teachers' adhered to the textbook while teaching pragmatics, identify any modifications made to the pragmatic content during the lessons, and to understand how these changes were put into practice. Following data collection, observations were transcribed and categorised using the code schedule previously described in section 5.6.1.1. During this stage, the researcher revisited the observation sheets completed during the observations to further validate the presence of adaptations in pragmatic content and to delineate the types of SAs and metapragmatic information presented and practised by the teacher.

5.6.5 Analysis of SRIs

The SRI data were analysed using a thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is an analytic method that involves searching for patterns in qualitative datasets. These recurring patterns are referred to as themes, each of which "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). A thematic analysis allows researchers to explore intricate phenomena and understand the subjective experiences and viewpoints of their participants. It is a flexible and widely adopted method applicable to various types of data, including interviews, focus groups, surveys and written texts. However, it is crucial to remain cognisant of subjectivity and potential biases during the interpretation process. This can be achieved through techniques such as checking reliability with other coders, reviewing the analysed data with the participants to ensure accuracy of interpretations and using other sources of data. All these techniques were applied in this study, as discussed in the ensuing subsections.

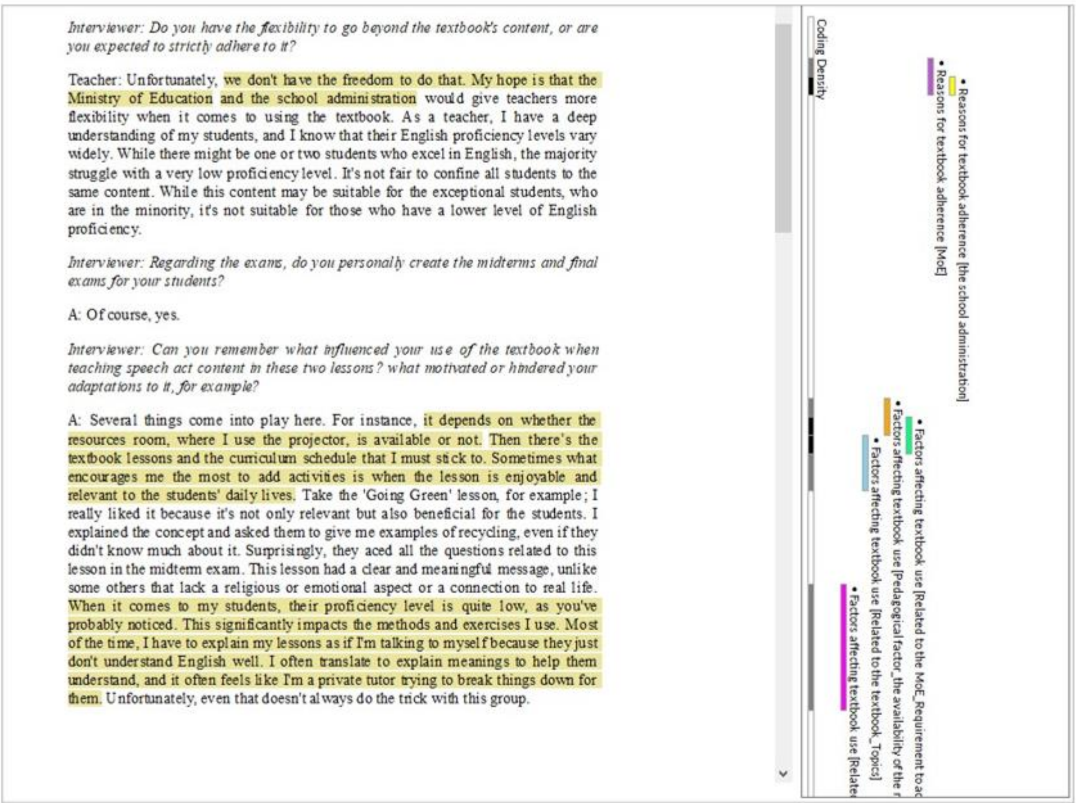
The interviews were analysed separately in the order in which they were held. First, the SRIs, the majority of which were conducted in Arabic, were transcribed to text and were subsequently translated into English. During the transcription, notes and initial impressions about the data were recorded, following the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2006). To proceed with the analysis, the researcher reviewed the transcribed interviews multiple times to develop a comprehensive understanding of their content. Following these initial readings, the transcripts were uploaded into NVivo to facilitate the coding. The transcripts were scrutinised once more and used the coding function in NVivo to assign informative labels (themes) to chunks of text, such as words, phrases, sentences, or entire paragraphs, that involved key ideas. Figure 5.3 below provides a screenshot of this coding process, displaying codes in the margins.

In the initial phase of the analysis, the researcher used deductive categories that were established before the interviews and were drawn from the research questions and previous literature, including categories like ‘Student-related factors.’ Throughout this process, the researcher remained vigilant for the potential emergence of new categories. This led to the development of categories and subcategories that were directly derived from the interviews (As discussed earlier in section 5.6.1.1); for example, any information that the participants specifically referenced as a factor that influenced their adaptation choices was labelled accordingly, such as the requirements of the MoE.

The researcher faced challenges analysing the SRI data due to its richness, as each sentence or paragraph contained a wealth of details. This posed difficulties when discerning between useful and redundant information. To address this issue, clear analysis was established and the research questions were used as guiding principles to prevent us from becoming excessively immersed in detail.

In the following analysis, each code was scrutinised in relation to others. Codes reflecting similar concepts, ideas or perspectives were grouped under the same theme, as exemplified by the subcategories ‘The heavy teaching load’ and ‘The availability of classroom resources’ under the category of ‘Pedagogical reasons.’ The codes were then meticulously cross-referenced within a single interview and across all interviews.

Figure 5.3 *SRI Coding with NVivo*


Interviewer: Do you have the flexibility to go beyond the textbook's content, or are you expected to strictly adhere to it?

Teacher: Unfortunately, we don't have the freedom to do that. My hope is that the Ministry of Education and the school administration would give teachers more flexibility when it comes to using the textbook. As a teacher, I have a deep understanding of my students, and I know that their English proficiency levels vary widely. While there might be one or two students who excel in English, the majority struggle with a very low proficiency level. It's not fair to confine all students to the same content. While this content may be suitable for the exceptional students, who are in the minority, it's not suitable for those who have a lower level of English proficiency.

Interviewer: Regarding the exams, do you personally create the midterms and final exams for your students?

A: Of course, yes.

Interviewer: Can you remember what influenced your use of the textbook when teaching speech act content in these two lessons? what motivated or hindered your adaptations to it, for example?

A: Several things come into play here. For instance, it depends on whether the resources room, where I use the projector, is available or not. Then there's the textbook lessons and the curriculum schedule that I must stick to. Sometimes what encourages me the most to add activities is when the lesson is enjoyable and relevant to the students' daily lives. Take the 'Going Green' lesson, for example; I really liked it because it's not only relevant but also beneficial for the students. I explained the concept and asked them to give me examples of recycling, even if they didn't know much about it. Surprisingly, they aced all the questions related to this lesson in the midterm exam. This lesson had a clear and meaningful message, unlike some others that lack a religious or emotional aspect or a connection to real life. When it comes to my students, their proficiency level is quite low, as you've probably noticed. This significantly impacts the methods and exercises I use. Most of the time, I have to explain my lessons as if I'm talking to myself because they just don't understand English well. I often translate to explain meanings to help them understand, and it often feels like I'm a private tutor trying to break things down for them. Unfortunately, even that doesn't always do the trick with this group.

As previously mentioned, the SRI data was meant to support the textbook data and observations. The teachers were asked about their perspectives on the quantity and quality of SA information within the textbooks. Their responses, whether they indicated a limited or substantial amount, were compared to the actual quantity derived from the textbook analysis. Additionally, the SRI data gave the chance to explore the alignment between the teachers' expressed opinions about the pragmatic content and their actual classroom practices by comparing their interview responses with observed behaviours. The researcher scrutinised the SRI data for statements made by teachers regarding their beliefs about the quality of the pragmatic information, such as how they lacked contextual information. Subsequently, the observational data was searched to identify whether the teacher made efforts to supplement and contextualise the SAs during their lessons.

The data and findings were then written into a clear and comprehensible manner, as presented in the next chapter.

5.7 Trustworthiness

Qualitative research has attracted criticism for its engagement with subjective observation. Miles and Huberman (1984) maintained that "we have few agreed-on canons for qualitative data analysis, in the sense of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying their sturdiness" (p. 16). Nevertheless, qualitative analysis aims to deeply explore and understand the collected data in an inquiry. To verify the analysis and interpretation of the data, the research must adhere to rigorous, systematic, and verifiable data collection and analysis processes. Therefore, researchers must establish trustworthiness in their work, which refers to confidence in their data collection and analysis methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Several criteria have been proposed for assessing trustworthiness in qualitative studies, as outlined by Emden et al. (2001), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Schreier (2012). Among these, a broadly accepted set of criteria developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) includes *credibility*, *dependability*, *confirmability*, and *transferability* (Connelly, 2016; Mackey & Gass, 2005). This study demonstrates and justifies its trustworthiness by addressing these criteria in the following sections.

5.7.1 Credibility

Credibility is one of the first procedures for fulfilling the trustworthiness of a research study. Achieving credibility involves instilling confidence in the reader that the research findings are accurate and that the presented experiences are real; in this way, general readers or other researchers can recognise the experiences as their own (Connelly, 2016). Techniques used to enhance research credibility include prolonged engagement – investing sufficient time in observation and data collection – and triangulation – employing different sources and data collection methods to examine the problem from all possible standpoints (Connelly, 2016; Mackey & Gass, 2005). Triangulation helps address the drawbacks of individual data collection methods and mitigate potential researcher bias. As outlined by Denzin (1978) (cited in Denzin and Lincoln 2000), there are three primary types of triangulations: data triangulation, investigator triangulation, and methodological triangulation. Meaning, when various data sources, different investigators, and diverse research methods all yield relatively consistent results, it enhances the overall credibility of the findings.

To enhance the credibility of this study, several measures were adopted. Firstly, to achieve prolonged engagement, the researcher visited the observation settings multiple times before conducting the study, following the recommendations of Mackey and Gass (2005). These visits served the purpose of familiarising the participants with the presence of an observer, introducing the researcher, explaining the study, and addressing any potential misunderstandings regarding the research objectives. This proactive approach aimed to ensure that teachers felt at ease and comfortable when participating in the study. Furthermore, the observations were conducted over 12 weeks to give the teachers sufficient time to become more comfortable with the observation process (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Secondly, the researcher aimed to establish triangulation by using both methodological and data triangulation approaches. Method triangulation was achieved by employing multiple methods, including textbook analysis, classroom observations, and interviews. Combining different methods helped with triangulating, substantiating, and double-checking the data obtained from each source (Anderson et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005). It also helped overcome errors often linked to a particular method (Shenton, 2004). Data triangulation was accomplished by comparing participants' stated viewpoints in the interviews with their observed behaviours in the classroom, as well as comparing textbook data with teachers' opinions about them. This triangulation also helped mitigate any researcher bias that could have resulted from the researcher's preconceptions regarding potential deficiencies in pragmatic content within the textbooks. Such preconceptions were influenced by the researcher's experience as an EFL instructor and the existing literature indicating generally weak pragmatic competence among Saudi students, suggesting deficiencies in teaching materials and practices. In other words, by combining textbook analysis with teacher interviews, the study captured multiple perspectives, providing a comprehensive understanding of the pragmatic content in textbooks and challenging initial assumptions.

5.7.2 Transferability

Transferability is established when the findings of a research study can be generalised or transferred to similar contexts (Connelly, 2016). The findings of a qualitative research study are seldom immediately transferred to other contexts; however, "the extent to which findings may be transferred depends on the similarity of the context" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 180). Accordingly, determining the similarity of contexts through a method of reporting referred to as obtaining "thick descriptions" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 214) is significant for researchers. Thick descriptions refer to providing a rich, thorough account of the process and procedures of the study and "taking into account the actors' interpretations of their actions and the speakers' interpretations of their speech" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 180).

To augment the transferability of this study, the researcher provided a detailed description of the characteristics of the participants, including their gender, qualifications, professional training, and years of teaching English. Additionally, information about the educational context of the study was provided to clarify the settings in which the study took place. Also, details regarding the students involved, such as their gender, age, and expected proficiency level were explained. This helps readers compare between the research situation and their own settings, allowing them to determine whether the findings can be applied to their specific context (Connelly, 2016).

6.7.3 Confirmability

Confirmability is the degree to which findings are consistent and can be verified by other investigators (Connelly, 2016). To guarantee the confirmability of a study, the researcher needs to ensure that the findings can be traced back to the raw data and that the data-gathering procedure and the logic of the interpretations are explained in detail (Bryman, 2012; Mackey & Gass, 2005). This can help demonstrate how the findings are the result of systematic procedures and not based on speculation and assumptions. To ensure confirmability, the researcher provided a comprehensive account of all phases of the research process, beginning with the research design and continuing with the data collection, analysis, and reporting. Additionally, the researcher kept a detailed record of the raw data, which included audio recordings, transcripts, interview schedules, observation schemes, and field notes. Excerpts from the analysed data and direct quotations were incorporated into the results and discussion chapters to support the interpretations (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

Moreover, as explained in sections 5.4.1.3 and 5.4.4, fellow researchers were invited to double-code the data to confirm the coding reliability and, by extension, the quality of the findings (Kurasaki, 2000). Additionally, the researcher checked *intra-rater reliability* during the study by re-coding the textbook data using the same codebook after some time had passed (Larsson et al., 2020). This helped determine if the researcher assigned consistent categories to the same dataset on a different occasion. The results were compared to the initial coding to assess consistency. Intra-rater reliability was generally high, but there were two discrepancies in quantifying SAs in the textbook data. These disagreements stemmed from coding errors rather than differing interpretations. The codes were subsequently rectified, and the results tables were updated accordingly.

6.7.4 Dependability

Establishing dependability involves ensuring that the data are consistent and repeatable over time (Connelly, 2016). According to McKay (2006), achieving dependability involves carefully recording every step of the research process and presenting data in a manner that allows others to access and review the evidence presented in research reports. To ensure reliability in this study, the researcher provided thorough explanations of the study's participants, context, and all the steps and decisions made during the data collection and analysis. A well-defined protocol was followed in the SRIs to direct the gathering of data from each participant. This approach ensures that the methodologies of the study can be successfully replicated in subsequent research projects. Moreover, when presenting and discussing the findings, representative examples, rather than exceptional or unexpected examples, were selected from the data to illustrate specific points. Any modifications made to data collection tools were acknowledged and justified, maintaining the research's dependability.

5.8 Ethical Considerations

The present study adhered to the ethical guidelines advised by the University of York throughout at every phase of data gathering and analysis. Firstly, all permissions required were obtained before commencing the study, they included ethical approval from the University's Ethics Committee, ethical approval from Princess Noura University (the researcher's sponsor) and permission from the MoE to gain access to the selected schools. Second, before commencing the data collection, the researcher held an induction with the participants to explain the purpose and the methodology of the study in further detail. Participants were asked to read carefully information sheets that included a sufficient amount of information about the study whereby they learned that the data will be collected through audio-recorded classroom observations and interviews during the first semester. The participants agreeing to take part in the study were asked to sign a consent form before being observed or interviewed. Secondly, the participants were assured, verbally and in written form, that their participation was confidential and the data they provided would be anonymised. All the data obtained from them, including the notes and audio recordings of the observations and interviews, were stored using a code number system in a password-protected Google Drive folder. Any information that could identify the participants was kept separate from the data. Additionally, participants were also assured that all electronic data would be destroyed five years after the project was completed. Also, participants were reminded that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they retained the right to withdraw from the study at any point, up to four weeks after the data collection was completed. They were instructed to contact the researcher at the email address and phone number provided in case they changed their mind during the study.

Furthermore, the guidelines of the Saudi MoE, which provided ethical oversight for the study in Saudi Arabia, did not require consent from students or their parents for classroom observations. This was because the primary source of data was the teachers, not the students. Only teachers' data were transcribed and analysed, and no student-identifiable information was collected. Additionally, through the school administrations, students were informed of the researcher's presence and the use of audio recordings in some lessons, assured of data anonymity, and given the option to object or withdraw if they felt uncomfortable. As mentioned previously, all recordings and transcripts were securely stored and destroyed after data analysis was completed to ensure confidentiality and compliance with data protection standards.

5.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology used to guide and structure the data collection process for the present study. A mixed-method approach, including textbook analysis, classroom observation, and SRI, was employed to investigate EFL textbook content and teachers' practices and perceptions concerning the teaching of pragmatics. The study's subjects and sampling techniques were discussed, followed by a description of the different research methods and data collection instruments. The instruments discussion included explaining the rationale behind their selection, acknowledging the limitations of each method and explaining how they were handled in this study. Explanations of how the data collection and analysis were carried out were presented to strengthen the transparency of the study. The next chapter will present the findings derived from the analysis of textbooks, classroom observations, and SRIs.

6. Data Analysis Report

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section presents the results of the quantitative and qualitative textbook analyses. It includes a discussion of the types and frequencies of the SA information in each textbook as well as the metapragmatic information. The pragmatic content in the textbooks is then compared with respect to the textbook proficiency level. The second section of this chapter reports the qualitative results of the teachers' classroom observations and interviews. This chapter primarily focuses on reporting and describing the data, leaving more interpretive discussions for the next chapter.

6.2 Textbook Analysis

This section reports on the findings concerning three research inquiries:

1. What are the types, frequencies and distribution of SAs explicitly presented in the MG series used in Saudi schools?
2. What the types, frequencies and distribution of metapragmatic information explicitly presented with SAs in the MG textbook series used in Saudi schools?
3. How do MG textbooks used in Saudi schools differ in their SA and metapragmatic content by textbook level?

This study examined the textbooks in the MG series. The series includes six textbooks (1–6), with two textbooks designed for each proficiency level, including lower-intermediate (textbook level 1), intermediate (textbook level 2) and upper-intermediate (textbook level 3) (see section 5.2.1 for more details). Each pair of textbooks is taught sequentially to the same group of students over the course of one year of secondary school (three semesters). MG1 and MG2 are allocated for the first year: MG1 is used in the first semester and the first half of the second semester, while MG2 is used in the latter half of the second semester and throughout the third semester. Similarly, MG3 and MG4 are allocated for the second year and MG5 and MG6 for the third year.

Accordingly, the present study does not distinguish between two textbooks that comprise a pair when summarising findings or comparing textbook levels. Since both textbooks represent the same proficiency level and are used by the same teacher and group of students, comparisons made are among the different textbook levels to enhance the clarity of the report.

Before analysing the content of the textbooks, the study first compared the number of pages and units among the three levels of textbooks. The results revealed that they were identical in terms of length and number of units; at each level, both textbooks consisted of six units and were 100 pages long. Since the textbooks were identical in length, a textbook analysis was carried out to investigate the amount and nature of the pragmatic information they contained. The teacher's guides were also examined to establish whether they provided additional SA information not presented in the textbooks. The counts of the SAs and the metapragmatic information found in these guides, however, were not included in the frequency and distribution data tables in this report.

The major results obtained from the data are presented in the subsections below and organised in relation to the first two research questions. The first and second subsections discuss, respectively, the findings related to the SA and metapragmatic information contained in the textbooks. The results under each question are organised according to textbook level, and the results for each level are followed by a comparison of the pragmatic content among the three levels in order to address the third research question.

6.2.1 RQ1: What are the Types, Frequencies and Distribution of SAs in MG Textbooks?

The present study used descriptive data analysis to count the number and frequency of SA types and tokens in textbooks. This approach can help reveal what pragmatic aspects were included and emphasised in textbooks and whether other practical and commonly used SAs are overlooked (Dendenne, 2019). Accordingly, every textbook was examined, page-by-page, using the pragmatic checklists described in Chapter 5 to confirm the presence or absence of the main SAs and metapragmatic issues.

6.2.1.1 Textbook Level 1: SA Information.

The frequency and diversity of the identified SAs within the MG1 and MG2 textbooks, which are equivalent to lower intermediate level, are presented in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 Frequency and Distribution of SA Subtypes in First-Level Textbooks

SA subtype	**Examples from the textbooks**	**F. of SA in MG1**	**F. of SA in MG2**	**Total in text-book level 1**	
				F.	**%**
Making predictions	*Machines aren't going to control us*	4		4	1.7%
Reporting	*He asked how old I was*		18	18	7.9%
Agreeing	*I totally agree with you*	11	10	21	9.2%
Disagreeing	*I see your point but...*	5	7	12	5.3%
Giving opinions	*I wouldn't feel comfortable. Would you?*	13	7	20	8.8%
Expressing preference	*I'd rather go for Y or Z*	2		2	0.8%
Promising	*I'll get some from the store*	1		1	0.4%
Offering	*I'll get some from the store*	1		1	0.4%
Accepting	*Yes, please, if you could*	5	1	6	2.6%
Declining	*We can't... we don't have a map*	2		2	0.8%
Refusing	*No, you may not*		2	2	0.8%
Greeting	*Is this for real?*	14	8	22	9.7%
Bidding farewell	*See you soon*	5	9	14	6.1%
Introducing	*Let me introduce (name)*	6		6	2.6%
Expressing wishes	*I wish I didn't have to go to work*		6	6	2.6%
Expressing regret	*I wish I'd been a better student*		2	2	0.8%
Expressing enthusiasm	*Absolutely terrifying/amazing*		4	4	1.7%
Expressing surprise	*What on earth!*	6	7	13	5.7%
Asking	*you know what the name of the street is?*	3	7	10	4.4%

Giving advice	*You shouldn't eat when you're driving*	20	1	21	9.2%
Making suggestions	*Let's look for the hidden treasure*	5		5	2.2%
Making requests	*Could you open the window?*	7	3	10	4.4%
Commanding	*Sit down*	4		4	1.7%
Giving directions	*Go straight*	5	11	16	7%
Taking permission	*May I leave early today?*		2	2	0.8%
Giving permission	*Yes, you may*		2	2	0.8%
Total	26 SA subtypes	119	107	226	100%

Note. *'F.' stands for frequency.*

The table above shows that 26 different SA subtypes, such as making predictions, reporting, commanding, and making requests, were taught in first-level textbooks. These SAs occurred 226 time across the two textbooks combined, with 119 occurrences in MG1 and 107 in MG2. Among these SA types, greeting constituted the highest percentage at 9.7%, followed by giving advice and agreeing at 9.2%. Giving opinions accounted for 8.8%; reporting for 7.9%; giving directions for 7%; bidding farewell for 6.1%; expressing surprise for 5.7%; and disagreeing for 5.3%. each of the remaining 17 SA types represented less than 5% of the total, with promising and offering being the least frequent at 0.4%.

The distribution of the SAs varied across the two first-level textbooks. For example, reporting was mentioned 18 times in MG2 but was not covered in MG1. However, as noted previously, this information was not taken into account in the comparative analyses, which focused on textbook levels rather than the distribution of pragmatic content across textbooks of the same level.

6.2.1.2 Textbook Level 2: SA Information.

Table 6.2 presents the frequency and variety of the explicitly mentioned SAs within the second-level textbooks, MG3 and MG4.

Table 6.2 *Frequency and Distribution of SA Subtypes in Second-Level Textbooks*

SA subtype	**Example from the textbooks**	**F. of SA in MG3**	**F. of SA in MG4**	**Total in text-book level 2**	
				F.	**%**
Making deductions	*This must be them*		5	5	2.5
Reporting	*The coat is thought to be lost*		5	5	2.5
Confirming	*I get it*	1		1	0.5
Agreeing	*You're quite right*	2	1	3	1.5
Disagreeing	*I'm not sure*	6		6	3
Giving opinions	*The way I see it…*	11	14	25	12.7
Expressing preference	*Personally, I prefer…*	6	1	7	3.5
Promising	*Sure. I'll draw you a map*		1	1	0.5
Offering	*Do you want some pizza?*		6	6	3
Accepting	*Thanks, I'd love a little/some more…*		1	1	0.5
Declining	*That won't be possible…*	6		6	3
Refusing	*…I couldn't eat another bite.*		4	4	2
Greeting	*Dear...*	2	3	5	2.5
Bidding farewell	*Speak soon*	7		7	3.5

Making complaints	*The elevator moves too slowly*		2	2	1
Expressing wishes	*I wish I could cheer up*		7	7	3.5
Expressing regrets	*I wish I had seen the TV comedian*		5	5	2.5
Criticising	*I wish he wouldn't use his cell phone…*		3	3	1.5
Expressing enthusiasm	*This has been the best trip ever!*		1	1	0.5
Encouraging	*You'll do great*		7	7	3.5
Telling jokes	*Did you hear the one about…?*		4	4	2
Responding to jokes	*I don't get it*		1	1	0.5
Asking	*How long are they going to stay?*	19	10	29	14.7
Giving advice	*If I were you…*	5	4	9	4.5
Warning	*You need to … or else…*	5		5	2.5
Prohibiting	*You are not allowed to...*	3		3	1.5
Making requests	*Will you drive me home?*	7	3	10	5.1
Making suggestions	*How about + gerund…?*	8		8	4
Giving directions	*Turn left/right*	3	7	10	5.1
Favour asking	*Do me a favor and…*	7		7	3.5
Taking permission	*Is it all right if I …?*	3		3	1.5
Total	31 SA subtypes	101	95	196	100

Note. *'F.' stands for frequency.*

As can be noted in the table above, the second-level textbooks presented 31 different SAs subtypes, including giving advice, warning, and prohibiting. These SAs appeared a total of 196 times throughout the textbooks. Notably, this textbook level offered a broader range of SA subtypes compared to the first level, which had 26 SA subtypes, although the frequency of these SAs was lower than in the previous level, where they appeared 226 times. Among the SAs covered in the textbooks, asking (about information) constituted the largest percentage at 14.7%. Giving opinions ranked second at 12.7%, while making requests and giving directions came in third at 5.1%. The remaining 27 types of SAs each accounted for less than 5% of the total SAs. SAs such as confirming, promising, accepting, responding to jokes, and expressing enthusiasm were among the least common, representing as little as 0.5% of the SA content in the textbooks. Furthermore, SAs like commanding and predicting, which were present in previous textbooks, were not included in this textbook level. However, this level introduced some new SA types, including making complaints, criticising, warning, and prohibiting.

6.2.1.3 Textbook Level 3: SA Information.

In terms of the quantity and types of covered SAs, Table 6.3 shows the frequency and distribution of the SAs within the third-level textbooks (MG5 and MG6).

Table 6.3 Frequency and Distribution of SA Subtypes in Third-Level Textbooks

SA subtype	Example from the textbooks	F. of SA in MG5	F. of SA in MG6	Total in text-book level 3	
				F.	%
Making predictions	*I don't think so*	2	2	4	2.5
Making deductions	*He must have known*	5		5	3.1
Reporting	*Jane asked if the rumor was true*		14	14	8.9
Negotiating	*How about if I…and you…?*	5		5	3.1
Agreeing	*I agree completely*	5		5	3.1
Disagreeing	*I see it differently*	6		6	3.8
Giving opinions	*From my point of view, …*	4	2	6	3.8
Expressing preference	*I'd rather go shopping*	4		4	2.5
Promising	*I promise I won't tell anyone*		4	4	2.5
Offering	*I'll translate it*		1	1	0.6
Accepting	*That's OK*		5	5	3.1
Refusing	*No, you may not*		2	2	1.2
Greeting	*Dear Sir or Madam,*	3	3	6	3.8
Bidding farewell	*Best wishes*		4	4	2.5
Making complaints	*I want to make a complaint*		10	10	6.3
Apologising	*Please excuse me for…*		5	5	3.1
Expressing wishes	*If only I knew more foreign languages*		5	5	3.1
Expressing regrets	*Looking back, I would have…*		8	8	5
Criticising	*It's about time you thought about …*		2	2	1.2
Expressing enthusiasm	*Quite priceless*	6		6	3.8
Expressing surprise	*Now way!*		8	8	5
Asking	*When's the festival?*	11		11	7
Giving advice	*Are you sure you want to do that*	5	5	10	6.3
Persuading	*Trust me on this…*	10		10	6.3
Making Requests	*Can I speak with you.*		2	2	1.2
Giving directions	*If you see a…you've gone too far*	5		5	3.1
Taking permission	*May I leave early today?*		2	2	1.2
Giving permission	*Yes, you may*		2	2	1.2
Total	28 SA subtypes	71	86	157	100

Note. *'F.' stands for frequency.*

The third-level textbooks included 28 different SA subtypes, surpassing the number in the first-level textbooks (26 SA subtypes) but falling short of the second level (31 SA subtypes). However, the frequency of SAs in this textbook level, totalling 157 occurrences, was lower than in the previous levels. Reporting was the most frequently occurring SA (8.9%), followed by asking (7%), making complaints, persuading, and giving advice (6.3%), and expressing surprise (5%). Among the SA types covered in the textbooks, offering constituted the smallest portion (0.6%). The SA of persuading was the only new type introduced in the latest textbooks.

6.2.1.4 Overview of the SA Information in the MG Textbooks.

When examining the types, frequencies, and distribution of the SAs in the MG textbooks (RQ1), it was found that these textbooks encompassed a comprehensive range of English SAs outlined in the checklist. The results of how often each SA type and subtypes were explicitly covered within the six textbooks is presented in Table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4 *Frequency and Distribution of SA Types and Subtypes in MG Textbooks*

SA type	**SA subtype**	**Total**			
		F.	**%**	**F.**	**%**
Representatives	Making predictions	8	1.3%	178	30.7%
	Making deductions	10	1.7%		
	Reporting	37	6.3%		
	Confirming	1	0.1%		
	Negotiating	5	0.8%		
	Agreeing	29	5%		
	Disagreeing	24	4.1%		
	Giving opinions	51	8.8%		
	Expressing preference	13	2.2%		
Commissive	Promising	6	1%	42	7.2%
	Offering	8	1.3%		
	Accepting	12	2%		
	Declining	8	1.3%		
	Refusing	8	1.3%		
Expressive	Greeting	33	5.6%	163	28.1%
	Bidding farewell	25	4.3%		
	Introducing	6	1%		
	Making complaints	12	2%		
	Expressing wishes	18	3.1%		
	Expressing regret	15	2.5%		
	Criticising	5	0.8%		
	Apologising	5	0.8%		
	Expressing enthusiasm	11	1.8%		
	Expressing surprise	21	3.6%		
	Encouraging	7	1.2%		
	Telling jokes	4	0.6%		
	Responding to jokes	1	0.1%		
Directives	Asking	50	8.6%	196	33.8%
	Giving advice	40	6.9%		
	Making suggestions	13	2.2%		
	Making requests	22	3.7%		
	Commanding	4	0.6%		
	Giving directions	31	5.3%		
	Persuading	10	1.7%		

	Warning	5	0.8%		
	Prohibiting	3	0.5%		
	Taking permission	7	1.2%		
	Giving permission	4	0.6%		
	Favour asking	7	1.2%		
Total	39	579	100%	579	100%

Note. *'F.' stands for frequency.*

As illustrated in the above table, four out of the main five SA types were covered in the six textbooks. Among them, *directive* SAs were the most commonly occurring, with a distribution rate of 33.8%. *Representatives* and *expressives* followed behind, with distribution rates reaching 30.7% and 28.1% respectively. *Commissives*, on the other hand, were the least presented in the textbooks, with a distribution rate of 7.2%. None of the textbooks covered *declarative* SAs.

Furthermore, Table 6.4 shows that the six textbooks collectively incorporated a total of 39 different SA subtypes, with a combined frequency of 579 times. Since the taxonomy used in this study comprised 88 SA subtypes (as outlined in section 5.3.1.1 of the methods chapter), it can be concluded that around 44.3% of the common English SAs were explicitly taught and practised within the MG series. Among these SAs, giving opinions was the most commonly occurring in the textbooks, accounting for 8.8% of the total SA frequency. Other SAs following opinions, in descending order of frequency, included asking (8.6%); giving advice (6.9%); reporting (6.3%); greeting (5.6%); giving directions (5.3%); agreeing (5%); bidding farewell (4.3%); disagreeing (4.1%); making requests (3.7%); and expressing surprise (3.6%). Of these SAs, only giving opinions, giving advice and greeting appeared in all six textbooks.

The remaining 28 SAs, including commanding, suggesting, refusing, offering and promising, had distribution rates ranging from 0.1% to 3%. The least prevalent SAs were confirming and responding to jokes, each appearing only once and constituting a mere 0.1% of the total SA frequency. Notably, certain SAs from the taxonomy used in this study, such as complimenting, thanking, congratulating and inviting, were not covered in the textbooks. These will be addressed in further detail in the upcoming discussion chapter.

6.2.2 How Do MG Textbooks Differ in SA Content by Level?

In order to determine whether the MG textbook levels differed significantly in terms of their frequency of SA information, a chi-squared test of independence was performed. Table 6.5 displays the results of this test.

Table 6.5 *SA Frequency Across MG Textbook Levels and Chi-Squared Test*

Textbook level	**Frequency of SAs**	**Percentage of SAs**	**Chi-square**	***p*-value**
Level 1	226	39%	12.41	.0061
Level 2	196	33.8%		
Level 3	157	27.1%		

As illustrated above, first-level textbooks exhibited the highest SA frequency among the three levels, followed by second-level and third-level textbooks. The results of the statistical analysis point to highly significant differences in SA frequency among the three textbook levels: $\chi^2 = 12.41$, $p < 0.05$). In other words, there were notable discrepancies in the distribution of SAs across the discourse of the three MG series textbook levels.

Additionally, a pairwise comparison test was conducted to determine the source of these differences. The results showed that, while there was no significant difference between the first-level and second-level textbooks in terms of SA frequency ($\chi^2 = 0.244$, $p = 0.621$), both the first-level and second-level textbooks had a significantly higher SA frequency than the third-level textbooks ($\chi^2 = 39.219$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2 = 6.944$, $p = .008$, respectively).

It can be concluded that the textbooks at lower proficiency levels contained more SAs than those at higher proficiency levels. In other words, as the textbook level increased, the number of SAs decreased. Further discussion on the possible explanations for this observed pattern is provided in section 7.4 of the following chapter.

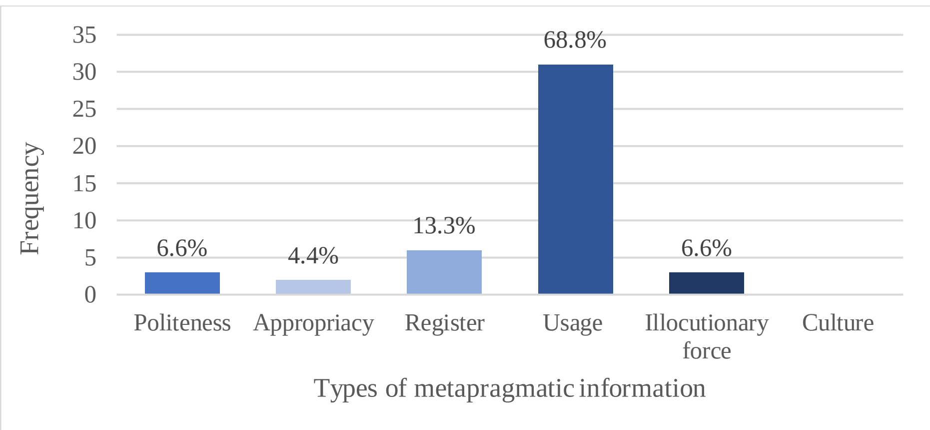
6.2.3 RQ2. What are the Types, Frequencies and Distribution of Metapragmatic Information with SAs in MG Textbooks?

The SAs were closely examined in terms of the type and quantity of metapragmatic information associated with them to facilitate an understanding of the quality of SA content within the textbooks and allow for inferences to be drawn from the text, supported by both quantitative data and quotations from the materials. Accordingly, any explicit information provided with SAs, including discussions of politeness, appropriacy, register, usage, illocutionary force, and/or culture, was coded as metapragmatic data. The following subsections present the types and counts of metapragmatic information accompanying SAs at each textbook level.

6.2.3.1 Textbook Level 1: Metapragmatic Information.

The first-level textbooks, MG1 and MG2, contained five out of the six types of metapragmatic information. They were politeness, appropriacy, register, usage, and illocutionary force. The frequency and distribution with which they occurred are displayed in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1 *Frequency and Distribution of Metapragmatic Information in First-Level Textbooks*



As shown in the figure above, usage explanations appeared most frequently in the two textbooks, with a frequency of 31 and distribution of 68.8%. Other metapragmatic types were ranked from high to low as follows: register (13.3%), politeness and illocutionary force (6.6%) and appropriacy (4.4%). There was no information pertaining to culture found in either of the textbooks. Table 6.6 below provides details on the SAs in the textbooks associated with this metapragmatic data.

Table 6.6 *SAs with Explicit Metapragmatic Information in First-Level Textbooks*

SA subtype	F. of SA with MI	Politeness	Appropriacy	Register	Usage	Illocutionary Force	Culture	Examples detected from the textbooks
1. Making predictions	4				√			Use *will* or be going to make predictions about the future.
2. Reporting	18				√			In reported speech, some words may be different from those in the original sentence.
3. Agreeing	16				√			… *So*… shows agreement with an affirmative statement… *Neither*… shows agreement with a negative statement.
4. Giving opinions	1				√			Give your …. opinion about the following. Use *should* or *shouldn't*… now rewrite the above using *had better.*
5. Promising	1				√			We also use *will* when we decide to do something at the time we're speaking, such as for offers or promises.
6. Offering	1				√			We also use *will* when we decide to do something at the time we're speaking, such as for offers or promises.
7. Accepting	1	√						*Yes, please, if you could* = polite way to respond to an offer.
8. Refusing	2				√			Use *may* and *can* to express permission… No, you may not.
9. Greeting	5		√	√				When you write an email to a friend: Greet and sign your letter in an informal manner …
10. Bidding farewell	7		√	√				When you write an email to a friend: Greet and sign your letter in an informal manner, …
11. Expressing wishes	6				√			Use *wish* for things you want to happen but probably won't. Note: *Was* is usually used in informal spoken English with *I*
12. Expressing regret	2				√			Use *should have* + past participle to talk about regrets. Use this form to talk about things you wish you had or hadn't done
13. Expressing enthusiasm	4				√			Expressing enthusiasm with intensifiers and adjectives. Note: We can use *really* with both kinds of adjectives…

14. Expressing surprise	7				√			Note the rising and falling intonation in expressions of surprise.
15. Asking	7				√			Use *indirect questions* when you ask for information. There is no inversion of the subject and verb in indirect questions.
16. Giving advice	16			√	√	√		*Must* is stronger than *should*.
17. Making requests	3	√		√	√			Use *can* and *could* to make polite requests.
18. Command-ing	4	√			√			Use the *imperative* for commands and instructions. Say please to be polite.
19. Giving directions	7				√			*Imperatives* for directions: Take a left / Turn left. Take a right / Turn right. Go straight.
20. Taking permission	2				√			Use *may* and *can* to express permission. May I leave early today?
21. Giving permission	2				√			Use *may* and *can* to express permission… Yes, you may...
Total	116							

Note. *'F' means frequency; 'MI' means metapragmatic information.*

In MG1 and MG2, metapragmatic explanations were provided for 21 out of 26 SA subtypes (see Table 6.1), which amounts to 80.7%. Specifically, politeness information was given with three SAs, appropriacy with two, register with four, usage explanations with 18, and illocutionary force with one SA. In terms of SA frequencies, metapragmatic information was associated with 116 out of 226 SA frequencies in the first-level textbooks, representing 51.3% of SA frequencies. In most cases, the provided information consisted of only one to two phrases, as shown in Table 6.6.

Some metapragmatic information in both textbooks pertained to politeness. These discussions typically linked politeness to the use of the marker *please* and to modals. For example, students were instructed to use *please* "to be polite" when giving commands (MG1, p. 64), and when accepting offers (MG2, p. 39). Requests were also provided with brief references to politeness through the use of modals. An example was the statement: "Use *can* and *could* to make polite requests" (MG2, p. 79). However, most of the SAs in the textbooks were presented without any discussion of how politeness interacts with their use or strategies to adjust the level of politeness in these SAs. For instance, samples of language for expressing disagreement appeared in an expression box without any metapragmatic explanation, as shown in the excerpt below:

> Expressing (…) Disagreeing:
> No, not really. I think.
> it's boring/ pointless/ unimportant. I'd rather go for Y or Z

I don't agree. Look at it this way. / I see your point but … (MG1, p. 3)

The SAs listed in this excerpt all indicated disagreement, but they did not convey the same level of politeness, and their pragmatic intent varied. However, they were presented without any information about their different levels of politeness, and the teacher's guide did not provide this information either.

Concerning appropriacy discussions, there was only one instance in both textbooks where the influence of contextual factors, such as social distance, on SA choices was mentioned. In MG2, the instruction for a greeting and farewell activity read:

> When you write an email to a friend, greet and sign your letter in an informal manner … when you write to a business/professional contact, address and sign the letter more formally. (p. 15)

This statement acknowledged the importance of considering social distance and the context of communication when selecting an SA. It also touched on register issues by discussing the use of SAs in formal and informal letters and thus provided students with an opportunity to reflect on two pragmatic concerns simultaneously.

The teacher's guides offered one additional item of information regarding the appropriate contextual use of SAs, which was:

- Ask students to find expressions that they would use with friends/ peers.
  (Hi / How are you doing? Great! / Great to meet you! / Is this for real?)

(MG1, Teacher's guide, p. 4)

This type of instruction is valuable as it helps direct students' attention to the influence of contextual factors and initiates discussion on how the closeness of the relationship between speakers can impact one's language choices.

Regarding the concept of register, the textbooks included explicit discussions of formality in relation to a few SAs. For example, in MG1, students were informed that when giving advice, "*Must* … has a more formal or official tone" compared to "*should"* (p. 78). In MG2, students were taught that "*could* is more formal" than *can* when making requests (p. 79). Notably, neither of these instructions provided contextual information to indicate the specific situations and speakers that require formal or informal language use. As shown in the discussion of appropriacy, however, formality information that included a discussion of context was given in a writing exercise that compared expressions of greetings and farewells used with friends versus those used in business or professional settings.

Discussions of register that distinguish between spoken and written language were almost lacking in the textbooks. Only one reference to this distinction was provided, and it appeared in MG2 with the SA of expressing wishes:

> Note: *Was* is usually used in informal spoken English [with *wish*]: I wish I was a millionaire. (MG2, p. 22)

The materials also included other SA expressions that conveyed varying degrees of formality; however, these distinctions were not explicitly highlighted for the students. For example, the disagreement expressions discussed earlier exhibited differences in formality, with the phrase "no, not really" being more informal than "I see your point but ..." (MG1, p. 3). Nevertheless, no information regarding register and formality was provided in connection with these expressions.

Metapragmatic information in the textbooks about SA usage covered two areas: the use of intonation to perform SAs and the grammatical points related to forming SAs. Below is an example of information about intonation:

> **B.** Listen. Note the rising ↗ and falling ↘ intonation in expressions of surprise.
>
> Good morning, ↗ Ashraf! ↘

(MG1, p. 4)

This instruction provided insight into the way of expressing surprise and was accompanied by an audio clip that demonstrated how the annotated intonations are produced in spoken language.

Another discussion of SA usage appeared in texts used to explain grammatical points associated with SAs. Examples of such usage explanations are found below:

> Use *should*, *ought to*, *might*, and *could* to give advice. Affirmative (+) You should stay. You ought to stay. You might stay. (MG1, p. 84)
>
> Use the imperative for commands... Affirmative (+) Sit down/Please sit down. Negative (−) Don't sit down/Please don't sit down. (MG1, p. 64)
>
> Use *should have* + past participle to talk about regrets. Use this form to talk about things you wish you had done or hadn't done. E.g., I should have said I was sorry. (… but I didn't say I was sorry) (MG2, p. 70)

The explicit metalanguage shown above offered guidance on how to give advice, issue commands and express regrets. The instructions were all incorporated into grammar lessons that explained how to form SA utterances and included example sentences. In some instances, the teacher's guides provided supplementary discussions on usage. For instance, to enhance students' comprehension of the nature of giving advice, teachers were directed as follows:

> - Remind students that both *must* and *should* are modal auxiliaries. The form is the same for all persons (I, you, he, she, it, we, they, etc.). After the modal we use the main verb in its base form (without to).

(MG1, Teacher's guide, p. 78)

Metapragmatic information in the textbooks also touched upon illocutionary force. However, these discussions were rather limited, with only one instance found in MG1, which focused on modal verbs. Students were informed that "*ought to* is stronger than *should*. *Might* and *could* are less strong" and "[*had better* is] stronger than *should* and *ought to*" (p. 84). This instruction addressed the linguistic means of strengthening or weakening the force of giving advice. However, it did not explain the meaning of 'stronger' in the given context or when and why one modal should be used over another to convey a specific communicative function. This information was also absent in the corresponding teacher's guide. Other face-threatening acts[11] such as suggesting, commanding and disagreeing were provided in the textbooks and guides without any instruction regarding their different degrees of illocutionary force. In MG2, only the teacher's guide offered a discussion of illocutionary force, specifically with the SA of enthusiasm:

> Explain to students that we use adverbs like very, quiet, really, pretty, and extremely to make adjectives stronger … For example, Ali is very tall! (p. 64)

This instruction explained how to use intensifiers with adjectives to increase the strength of enthusiasm expressions.

Remarkably, there was no explicit mention of cultural aspects of SAs in either textbook. However, the MG1 teacher's guide included a couple of references to the L2 culture. One reference is provided below:

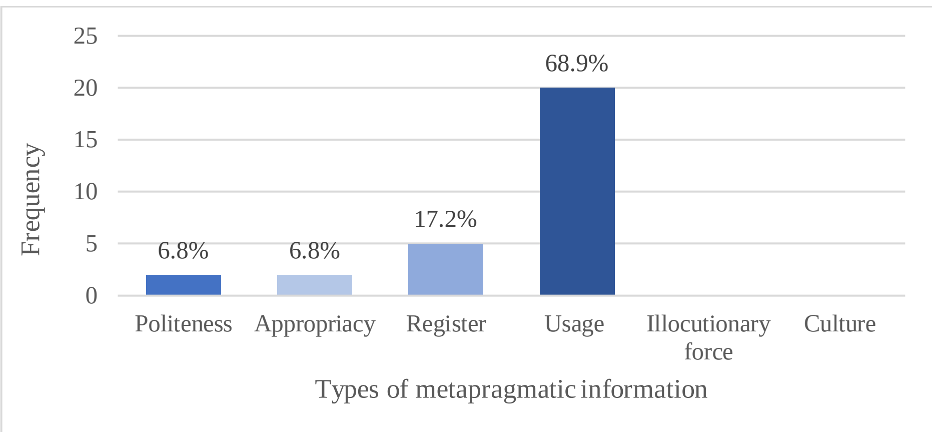
> Explain that for English speakers, it's important to use the word *please* when asking people to do things. Ask students if this is the same or different in their language and culture (p. 64)

As shown in this excerpt, instruction was given on cross-cultural variations in the performance of the SA of commanding. This information is pragmatically valuable as it can help students become aware of the differences in how certain SAs are used in the target language.

6.2.3.2 Textbook Level 2: Metapragmatic Information.

The metapragmatic information covered in the second-level textbooks (MG3 and MG4) included politeness, appropriacy, register and usage. Figure 6.2 below demonstrates the frequency and distribution of each of these metapragmatic information.

Figure 6.2 *Frequency and Distribution of Metapragmatic Information in Second-Level Textbooks*



Among the provided metapragmatic topics, usage explanation was the most prevalent, appearing 20 times and constituting 71.1% of the total frequency. The majority of usage information was presented

[11] See section 3.4.1 for an explanation of face-threatening acts.

in MG4. Register distantly followed with a frequency of five times and a distribution of 17.8%. Politeness ranked third, appearing twice in MG3 only, with a distribution of 7.1%. Appropriacy was the least frequent, appearing only once and accounting for 3.5% of the total frequency. Interestingly, information about culture and illocutionary force was not included in either of the textbooks. Table 6.7 below displays the types of SAs accompanied by this metapragmatic data in the textbooks.

Table 6.7 *SAs with Explicit Metapragmatic Information in Second-Level Textbooks*

SA subtype	F. of SA with MI	Politeness	Appropriacy	Register	Usage	Illocutionary Force	Culture	Examples detected from the textbooks
1. Reporting	5				√			We often use the passive with reporting verbs when we want to talk about what people say or believe ...
2. Expressing preference	2				√			Use *would like* for preferences.
3. Promising	1				√			Use *will* for offers and promises...
4. Offering	3				√			Use *will* for offers and promises...
5. Greeting	5		√	√				When you write a formal letter of complaint: open in an appropriate way.
6. Bidding farewell	7		√	√				When you write a formal letter of complaint … sign off in an appropriate way.
7. Making complaints	2				√			Use the words to write one complaint using *too* and one complaint using *enough*.
8. Expressing wishes	7				√			Use *wish* and *if only* for things you want to happen now or in the future but which you know probably won't happen…
9. Expressing regrets	3				√			Use *wish* for things that happened in the past that you now regret…
10. Criticising	3				√			Use *wish* or *if only* with *would* to express irritation or annoyance with a situation or the particular action of someone else…
11. Expressing enthusiasm	0*				√			Listen and find examples for rising or falling intonation in the conversation. Identify attitude, feeling if relevant…
12. Telling jokes	1				√			Note: The present simple tense is often used in joke telling to make the situation feel more immediate.
13. Asking	6	√			√			Polite ways to ask for information with *can*, *could* and *would*

14. Making requests	8	√			√			Polite ways to make requests with *can, could* and *would*
15. Making suggestions	3			√				When you write a formal letter of complaint.... use phrases to offer suggestions and solutions to problems.
Total	56							

Note. *'F' means frequency; 'MI' means metapragmatic information.*
**The metapragmatic information accompanying the SA of enthusiasm was an activity instruction and was not provided with any expressions of enthusiasm in the textbook.*

Around 15 out of 31 SA subtypes (see Table 6.2), accounting for 48.3%, were provided with metapragmatic explanations in the textbooks. These explanations addressed topics of politeness and appropriacy, which were associated with two SAs; register, which was mentioned with three; and usage explanations, which were provided for 12 different SAs. Furthermore, among the 196 total SA frequency in the second-level textbooks, 56 (28.5%) were accompanied by metapragmatic information.

Metapragmatic information related to politeness was specifically found in MG3. It was linked to the use of modals like *can*, *could* and *would* to convey politeness when asking for information or making requests. This illustrated below.

Polite Ways to Ask for Information with *Can, Could* and *Would*

Excuse me, can (could) you tell me where the bank is? Would you be able to tell me where the bank is?
Can (Could) you tell me where the bank is? Would you mind telling me where the bank is?

Polite Ways to Make Requests with *Can, Could* and *Would*

Q: Can you give me your credit card details, please? A: Certainly.
Q: Could you help me? A: Of course.
Q: Would you open the window, please? A: Sure.

(MG3, p. 78)

As shown in the excerpt, the only reference to politeness was the term 'polite,' used to describe the use of modals when performing the given SAs. There was no mention of any contextual or situational aspects related to polite usage. This brief statement, however, was coded as metapragmatic information as it has a potential value in pragmatic instruction.

Furthermore, the majority of SAs in the textbooks were taught without any reference to issues of politeness. For instance, language samples for expressing face-threatening acts, such as making suggestions, advising, or refusing, were given in the textbooks without any metapragmatic explanations.

The teacher's guide, however, referred to politeness in a few instances. For example, in MG3 teacher's guide, teachers were instructed to explain that the phrases for asking and giving advice listed in the textbook, shown below, were intended to make speech "sound more polite" (p. 72).

Asking for Advice	Giving Advice
What do (you suggest) I do about...?	I (strongly) advise you to...
Could you advise me on...?	If I were you...
I really need some advice on...	It would be (a) good (idea) to...
How should I handle it when...?	It's not (a) good (idea) to...

(MG4, p. 72)

However, the provided forms for giving advice did not exhibit the same degree of politeness and they conveyed distinct pragmatic intentions, which were not further explained in either the textbook or the teacher's guide. For instance, using the conditional *if* to give advice conveys a different level of politeness compared to using performative verbs, as in 'I strongly *advise* you to' (see Martinez-Flor, 2004).

As far as appropriacy information is concerned, the textbooks provided only one instance where the appropriate use of SAs concerning contextual variables was addressed. For example, when introducing greeting phrases in an activity in MG4, the instruction read:

> When you write an email to a friend, greet and sign off the email in an informal manner: e.g. Hi/Hello/Dear + first name and Best/Best wishes/See you soon..." (MG4, p. 29).

This instruction pointed out the relation between the speakers' social distance and their use of SAs in terms of formality. The same information was also offered to students in the previous textbook level, as discussed in section 6.2.3.1 above.

While there were instances in the textbooks where SAs were presented within conversational contexts, the opportunities to provide information regarding the influence of these contexts on language choices were not fully utilised. For instance, a conversation featuring advice and warning phrases was preceded by a question about the relationship between the speakers, which read, "What is the relationship between the speakers? Are they friends, brothers, other? How do you know?" (MG3, p. 5). The teacher's guide provided a likely answer to this question, stating, "Friends - older to younger friend: Omar, the first speaker must be older because he advises Imad about what he should or shouldn't do" (p. 5). This type of prompt drew attention to the importance of identifying the relationship between the speakers in an interaction and understanding its role in their choices when giving advice or warnings. However, explicit discussions on this matter were not provided. This omission is significant because some of the phrases provided were rather direct and could be perceived as threats in certain situations, such as "you'd better... if you don't want to get into serious trouble" and "you need to... or else..." (p. 5). Furthermore, the teachers in this lesson were instructed to perform the following activity for giving advice:

- Put students in pairs and ask them to role-play a conversation like the one they listened to. Remind them to use language from the box. Tell them that they can change the context of the conversation, i.e. decide on a different setting/ location, and people with a different relationship, time, activity etc. Invite volunteers to act out in class.

(MG3, Teacher's guide, p.50)

Such an activity could be problematic, as it implied that all the advice phrases in the lesson are universally acceptable in all types of contexts and among speakers with different relationships, disregarding the variations in their directness levels.

Regarding register information, the textbooks included a few explicit discussions on the topic. These discussions primarily revolved around the formality of language when writing emails and letters. For example, in MG3, students were instructed that when composing a formal letter of complaint, they should use formal phrases for greeting, such as "Dear Editor"; closing phrases, such as "Yours sincerely"; and making suggestions, such as "I suggest that …" (p. 91). Additional register information was found in the teacher's guide of MG4, specifically related to the SA of encouraging. In this case, teachers were instructed to inform students that phrases like "you're going to knock 'em dead/knock their socks off" were considered "informal expressions" (MG4, teacher's guide, p. 24).

That there were other SA phrases in the textbooks that exhibited variations in formality. Nevertheless, the textbooks and teacher's guides did not offer to explain these differences. For instance, in MG3, students were not informed that phrases of agreement, such as "we're on the same page here" and "I guess," were considered informal and often used in spoken interactions. Similarly, when presenting an isolated list of expressions for context-sensitive SAs related to telling and responding to jokes in MG4, the crucial aspect of formality associated with these expressions was not addressed in either the textbook or teacher's guide.

Among the metapragmatic topics, usage explanations remained the predominant in the second-level textbooks, similar to the previous textbooks. Examples of these usage instructions included the following:

> Use *I'd rather* (= I would rather) to talk about preferences. A: Would you rather go to the mall now or later? B: I'd rather go now. (MG3, p. 93)
> Use *can* and *will* for requests. Use *will* for offers and promises. Can you tell me where you live? Sure. I'll draw you a map. Will you drive me home? Sure. (MG4, p. 17)
> NOTE: The present simple tense is often used in joke telling to make the situation feel more immediate. (MG4, p. 38)

These instructions provided guidance on how specific phrases can be used when expressing preferences, making requests, offering, promising, or telling jokes. They were supplemented with example sentences to aid students in grasping the application of these new communicative features. In some instances within the textbook, such as when introducing SAs related to expressing wishes, regrets and criticism, the textbooks provided more extensive grammatical explanations and furnished additional examples of these SAs. This is demonstrated in the following extract:

Expressing Wishes, Regret and Criticism

Verb: *Wish*

Use *wish* for things that happened in the past that you now regret.

in the past	I didn't see the TV comedian. I couldn't get the joke. I switched off before the end of the TV show.	I **wish** I **had seen** the TV comedian. Everyone thought he was so funny! I **wish** I **had been able** to get the joke. I need to improve my English. I **wish** I **hadn't switched** off before the end of the TV show. The ending was supposed to be very good.

Use *wish* and if only for things you want to happen now or in the future but which you know probably won't happen.

in the present	I am not a big fan of his jokes. I feel down today. The comedian can't make people laugh.	I wish I found his jokes funny. I wish I didn't feel down today. I wish I could cheer up. The comedian wishes he could make people laugh.
in the future	He won't lend me his car. My brother will leave for college soon.	I **wish** he **would lend** me his car. **If only** he **would stay**.

Expressing Criticism

Use *wish* or *if only* with *would* to express irritation or annoyance with a situation or the particular action of someone else.

I **wish** he **wouldn't use his cell phone** in class. I **wish** the children **would stop** interrupting.

Note: Use *if only* .... in the place of *wish* to express a wish, regret or criticism more emphatically: *If only it would stop raining, I wouldn't feel so depressed!*

(MG4, p. 44)

Each of the language samples provided covered different situations and tenses in which the SAs were performed. The teacher's guides provided additional discussions related to the grammatical aspects of these SAs. For example:

Language Builder

As a verb followed by *would*, it usually indicates a criticism. For example: *I wish you would be quieter.* Followed by an infinitive, *wish* is used to express what the speaker wants to do. For example: *I wish to speak to him.* Explain that this is more formal than: *I would like to speak to him.*

(MG4, Teacher's guide, p. 44)

This descriptive metalanguage explained how the verb *wish* (in the previous excerpt) could be used to perform different illocutions. It also addressed formality, which was another metapragmatic topic coded for the same token in the analysis.

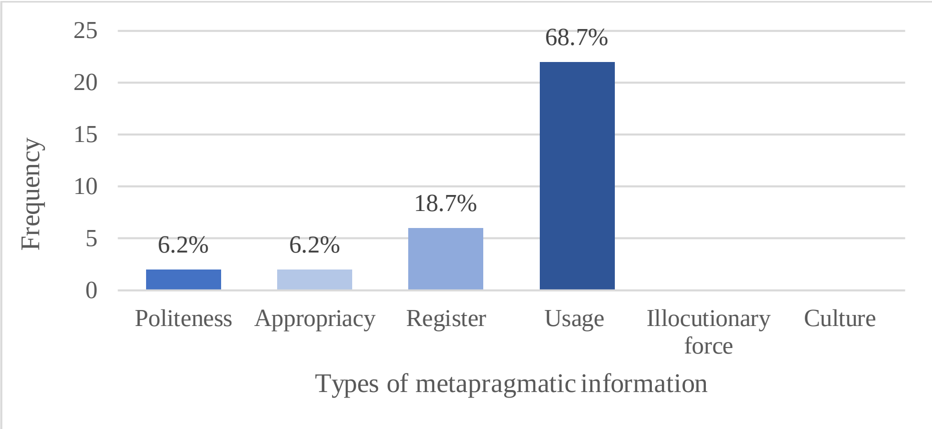
In terms of illocutionary force, there was no explicit information provided in either of the textbooks. However, the MG3 teacher's guide did included a discussion of illocutionary force. When teaching the SAs of agreement and disagreement, teachers were encouraged to "explain: *we're on the same page here* to express strong/total agreement ... Explain that we use [I see your point but] to express tentative agreement/disagreement" (MG3, teacher's guide, p. 3). This guidance emphasised that different agreement phrases can convey varying degrees of strength.

Similar to the previously discussed textbooks, the second-level textbooks did not explicitly provide information related to culture in the context of SAs. However, one of the teacher's guides included an instance where the issue of culture was addressed in connection with making requests. Teachers were advised to "ask students to compare the function of making a request with *can*, *could* and *would* with their own language and culture. Is there something similar?" (MG3, teacher's guide, p. 78). These instructions can help promoting cross-cultural understanding and pragmatic development among students.

6.2.3.3Textbook Level 3: Metapragmatic Information.

The third-level textbooks, MG5 and MG6, addressed four out of the six types of metapragmatic information, including politeness, appropriacy, register and usage explanation. The frequency and distribution of each of these metapragmatic types are shown in Figure 6.3 below.

Figure 6.3 *Frequency and Distribution of Metapragmatic Information in Third-Level Textbooks*



The figure above demonstrates that usage explanations were ranked first as the most commonly occurring metapragmatic information in the third-level textbooks, with a frequency of 22 times and a distribution rate of 68.7%. Register was ranked second, with a frequency of six times and a distribution rate of 18.7%. Politeness and appropriacy were ranked third, appearing only two times with a distribution rate of 6.2%. Discussions related to illocutionary force and culture were absent in the third-level textbooks and teacher's guides and, therefore, were not included in the analysis.

The SAs accompanied by metapragmatic information associated in MG5 and MG6 are presented in Table 6.8 below.

Table 6.8 *SAs with Explicit Metapragmatic Information in Third-level Textbooks*

SA subtype	**F. of SA with MI**	**Politeness**	**Appropriacy**	**Register**	**Usage**	**Illocutionary Force**	**Culture**	**Examples detected from the textbooks**
1. Making prediction	4				√			Was/Were + going to + the base form of a verb is used to talk about a prediction for the future made in the past…
2. Reporting	14				√			To report *yes/no* questions, *whether* or *if* is used to introduce the noun clause. *Ask* (not *say* or *tell*) is used as the reporting verb.
3. Disagreeing	1	√		√				You must be joking! (Informal and not very polite)
4. Giving opinions	2				√			*Passive modals* in the past are used to give opinions about events and situations that happened in the past…

5. Expressing preference	4				√			Talk about your preferences and give some reasons. Use *conditional sentences* in the present or future.
6. Offering	1				√			I'll translate it using machine translation software on the Internet.
7. Refusing	2				√			Use *may* and *can* to express permission… No, you may not. No, you can't.
8. Greeting	3		√	√				When you write an email to a friend: greet and sign your letter in an informal manner.
9. Bidding farewell	4		√	√				When you write an email to a friend: greet and sign your letter in an informal manner.
10. Expressing wishes	5			√	√			*Was* is usually used in informal spoken English with I: I wish I was on vacation.
11. Expressing regrets	0*				√			We use *past hypothetical conditionals to* talk about things that did not happen in the past. They are often used to express regret…
12. Criticising	2				√			Use *It's high/about time* + past simple to talk express criticism that something should have happened, or should already have been done.
13. Expressing enthusiasm	6				√			We use the intensifiers *really, very, absolutely and quite* with adjectives to express our enthusiasm with something…
14. Giving advice	5				√			Use *ought (not) to, had better, and should (not)* to give advice.
15. Persuading	4				√			Work with a partner and persuade him or her to buy the product. Use sentences with *when, if* and *unless.*
16. Making Requests	2	√		√	√			Could is more formal [than can]
17. Taking permission	2				√			Use *may* and *can* to express permission. May I leave early today? Can I have another soda?
18. Giving permission	2				√			Use *may* and *can* to express permission… Yes, you may. Yes, you can.
Total	63							

Note. *'F' means frequency; 'MI' means metapragmatic information.*
**The metapragmatic information accompanying the SA of regrets was an activity instruction and were not provided with specific expressions of regrets in the student textbook.*

Among the 28 SA subtypes (see Table 6.3) included in the textbooks, 18 were accompanied by metapragmatic explanations, representing 64.2% of the total subtypes. Specifically, politeness and appropriacy information appeared with two SAs, register was mentioned with five, and usage explanations with 15 different SAs. These metapragmatic discussions were present in 63 out of the total 157 SA frequencies, accounting for 40.1%, in the third-level textbooks.

Politeness discussions were offered in the textbooks with disagreements and requests only. For example, the expression “you must be joking!” was described as an “informal and not very polite” way of disagreeing (MG5, p. 58), and the modals *can* and *could* were referred to as “polite” when making requests in (MG6, p. 65). These metapragmatic discussions served to highlight native speakers’ norms of politeness; however, they lacked explanations of situations that require polite usage and did not explore various forms for expressing different degrees of politeness. The teacher’s guides also included a few discussions on politeness. For example:

> Remind students that when making a complaint, they should sound upset or dissatisfied. However, point out that when making a formal complaint it is best to be polite. When spoken politely, all of these phrases are appropriate for making a formal complaint.

(MG6, teacher’s guide, p. 38)

This instruction was provided with a lesson about making complaints. The provided complaint phrases were:

Making a Complaint	
I am very unhappy/upset about/with…	**I’m sorry to have to say this but…**
I insist that you…	**This is completely unsatisfactory.**
I want to make a complaint.	**This is not what I expected/is nothing like…**
I’d like to speak with a manager.	**This…is too…**
I’m not (at all) satisfied with this (situation).	

(MG6, p. 38)

It should be noted, however, that the phrases listed above can vary in their level of politeness when used to make complaints. The instruction implied that all the phrases were suitable for making polite complaints “when spoken politely,” which might not always be the case. Expressing a face-threatening act such as making complaints politely involves other considerations, such as the level of directness of the phrase, the employment of justification and explanation strategies, and the use of mitigation devices and softeners—all of which depend on the context, the speakers, and the topic at hand (see Kreishan, 2018).

Regarding appropriacy information, it was addressed once in a writing activity about the use of greeting and closing phrases when emailing a friend. The same activity was repeated across all three textbook levels (see sections 6.2.3.1 & 6.2.3.2). While repeating or recycling information can help reinforce language learning, it is also important to provide learners with new pragmatic aspects. The textbooks, however, did not offer new appropriacy information. The teacher’s guide of MG6 provided one additional discussion of appropriacy, pointing out that “[the] choice of modals for giving advice is also dependent on other factors such as the formality of the circumstances, and who is speaking to whom” (p. 65). This instruction highlighted the impact of contextual factors, such as the speakers’ relationship, on appropriate language choices. It also touched on the concept of formality, allowing students to reflect on multiple pragmatic issues simultaneously. Nevertheless, this instruction did not explain how these factors could affect the use of modals or specify when to choose one modal over another to convey the desired meaning.

Discussions about register were provided with several SAs in the textbooks, particularly in MG6. For example, students were taught that when expressing wishes, "*was* is usually used in informal spoken English with I" after the verb "wish" (p. 79). They were also informed that "*could* is more formal" than *can* in requests (p. 65). The teacher's guide for MG6 offered additional discussions on register. When teaching reported speech using *whether* or *if*, teachers were asked to do the following:

- Explain that *whether* and *if* are interchangeable in sentences like these and have the same meaning. However, *whether* is considered more formal and is used more commonly in writing.

(MG6, Teacher's guide, p. 56)

This instruction highlighted the differences in formality levels and between spoken and written language in reported speech. Another similar example in the teacher's guide was found with the SA of giving advice. It read:

- Explain that the negative form of *ought to* is usually considered formal and is usually only used in formal speech and writing.

(MG6, Teacher's guide, p. 64)

While these discussions on register in materials can help enhance pragmatic learning, they were limited to only a few SAs in the textbooks (see Table 6.8).

Similar to the previously discussed textbooks, the emphasis on information related to SA usage was prominent in these textbooks compared to other types of metapragmatic information. The following is an example of usage discussions found in the textbooks:

Noun Clauses Beginning with *Whether* or *If*

To report *yes/no* questions, *whether* or *if* is used to introduce the noun clause. *Ask* (not *say* or *tell*) is used as the reporting verb.

Jane asked, "Is the rumor true?" → Jane asked her friend **if** the rumor was true.
He asked, "Are they spreading rumors?" → He asked **whether** they were spreading rumors.

(MG6, p. 56)

This explanation accompanied the SA of reporting and was followed by two examples and an exercise. Additionally, the SAs of offering and requesting were discussed in the following manner:

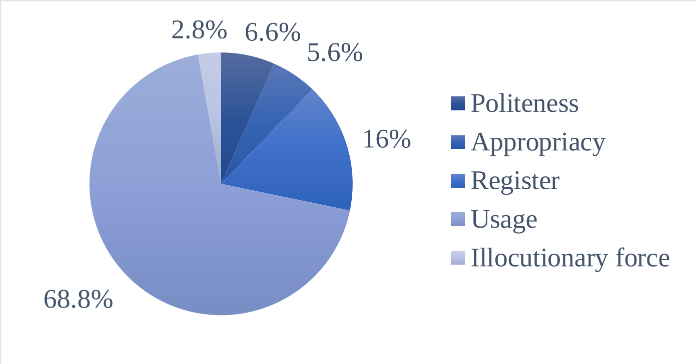
> Use *will* to make an on-the-spot offer [and] request … [for example] Ali is going to have his work professionally translated, but I can't afford it. I*'ll* translate it using machine translation software on the Internet. (MG6, p. 78)

This usage instruction provided only one form for both offering and requesting, even though the functions of these SAs can be accomplished using a variety of forms. Additionally, it provided one example to model the use of this form, and it was not clear which function of the two SAs this example was expressing, i.e., an offer or request.

6.2.3.4 Overview of the Metapragmatic Information in the MG Textbooks

Overall, the analysis revealed that metapragmatic information related to SAs was present in all MG textbook levels. Figure 6.4 below provides an overview of the distribution of each type of metapragmatic information identified in the six textbooks.

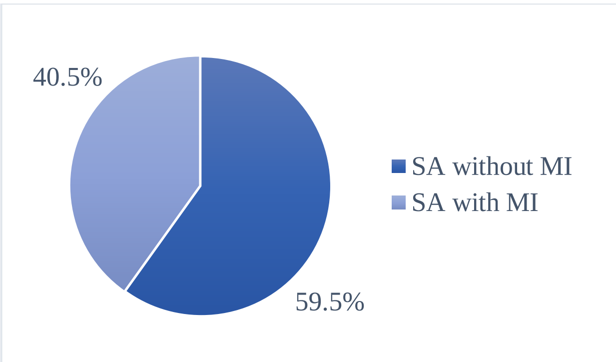
Figure 6.4 *Distribution of Metapragmatic Information Types in MG Textbooks*



As Figure 6.4 demonstrates, usage information was the most frequently mentioned metapragmatic information in the textbooks, accounting for 68.8% of the distribution. Register discussions ranked second, with a distribution rate of 16.1%, followed by politeness at 6.6%, appropriacy at 5.6%, and illocutionary force information at the lowest distribution of 2.8%. Interestingly, metapragmatic discussions related to culture were not incorporated with SAs across the six textbooks.

Furthermore, Figure 6.5 below show the total amount of SA occurrences that were accompanied by metapragmatic information across the textbooks.

Figure 6.5 *Total SA Occurrences with Metapragmatic Information in the Six Textbooks*



Metapragmatic information was identified in 235 out of the 579 occurrences of SAs[12] across the three levels of textbooks, accounting for 40.5% of the total SA frequency (as shown in Figure 6.5 above). These instances included comments and/or activity instructions related to politeness, appropriateness, usage, illocutionary force, and register.

[12] see Table 6.4 in Chapter 6.

6.2.4 How Do MG Textbooks Differ in Metapragmatic Content by Level?

Table 6.9 presents the frequency and percentage of the pragmatic topics presented in the three textbook levels.

Table 6.9 *Metapragmatic Content Frequency Across MG Textbook Levels*

Textbook level	**Politeness**		**Appropriacy**		**Register**		**Usage explanation**		**Illocutionary force**		**Total**	
	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%	F.	%
Level 1	3	6.6	2	4.4	6	13.3	31	68.8	3	6.6	45	42.8
Level 2	2	6.8	2	6.8	5	17.2	20	68.9	0	0	29	26.6
Level 3	2	6.2	2	6.2	6	18.7	22	68.7	0	0	32	30.4
Total	7	6.6	6	5.6	17	16	73	68.8	3	2.8	106	100

The first-level textbooks had the highest SA frequency among the three levels, followed by the third-level and second-level textbooks. To determine whether there were significant differences in the frequency of metapragmatic information across the three textbook levels, a chi-squared test was conducted, the results of which are shown in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10 *Chi-Squared Test, Frequency of Metapragmatic Content Across MG Textbook Levels*

Textbook level	**Chi-square**	**p-value**
Level 1	9.72	0.083
Level 2	7.14	0.214
Level 3	8.23	0.144
Total	27.45	< 0.001

For the first-level textbooks, the test yielded a value of 9.72 (df = 5) with a corresponding p-value of 0.083. Similarly, for the second-level textbooks, the value was 7.14 (df = 5) with a p-value of 0.214 and, for the third-level textbooks, the value was 8.23 (df = 5) with a p-value of 0.144. In other words, none of the tests reached a conventional level of statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). However, there were observable variations in the frequency of metapragmatic content between each textbook level.

Another chi-squared test was performed to examine differences in terms of the categories of metapragmatic information. The observed frequencies for these types across textbook levels were as follows: politeness (7); appropriacy (6); register (17); usage explanation (73); and illocutionary force (3). Based on these observed frequencies and the total number of occurrences of each pragmatic content category across all textbook levels, expected frequencies were calculated. The test yielded a value of 27.45 (df = 5) with a p-value of <0.001, indicating significant differences in the total frequencies of metapragmatic content. These results suggest that metapragmatic information was not equally distributed across all MG textbook levels.

6.3 Saudi EFL Teachers' Practices and Perspectives Concerning SA Content in MG Series

The following discussion reports the results of the teachers' classroom observations and interviews in order to answer the last two research questions, which are:

4. How do Saudi EFL teachers use the MG textbooks when teaching SAs?
   4.1 Do teachers adhere to the SA content? If so, why?
   4.2 Do teachers adapt the SA content? If so, how and why ?
5. What is the teacher's perspective on SA content, teaching and learning in MG textbooks and the Saudi EFL classroom?

The observational data aimed to determine whether teachers follow or adapt the textbooks with outside materials to teach pragmatics, whereas the stimulated recall interviews (SRIs) were intended to support the observations and to explore the underlying motivations of teachers' practices. Furthermore, the SRIs also aimed to collect teachers' professional opinions about pragmatic knowledge and competence in the process of teaching and learning and in MG textbooks. In this section, the practices of teachers when teaching SAs are described and supported by the SRI-based data. Then, the stated opinions of the teachers are qualitatively reported.

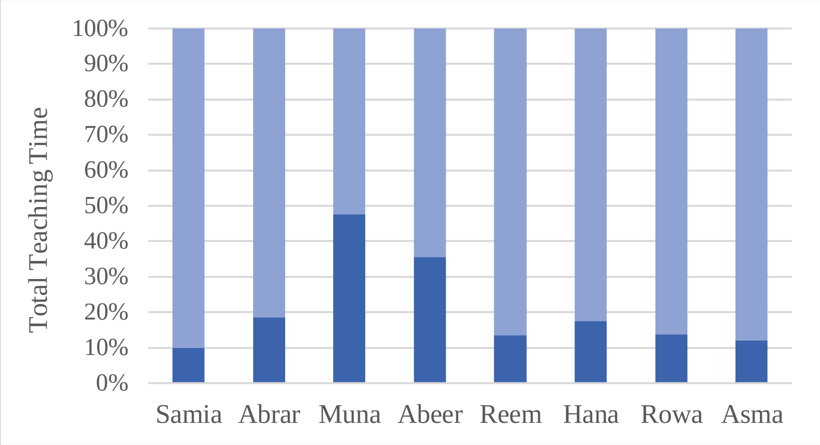
6.3.1 RQ4: How do Saudi EFL Teachers' Use the Textbooks when Teaching SAs?

To investigate current teaching practices of pragmatics in Saudi EFL classrooms, nine teachers were observed in the first semester of the 2021–2022 academic year. The observation period extended over three months, with each teacher being observed during three to four teaching periods, each lasting 35 to 45 minutes. An observation sheet specifically developed for this study (see section 5.3.2 for detailed information) was used during these observations. Before reporting the findings, it is important to first provide an overview of the time allocated for teaching pragmatics in the observed classes.

Before conducting the classroom observations, the researcher analysed the textbooks and identified the SAs and metapragmatic information they contained. Most teachers followed the prescribed sequence of activities in each textbook lesson, which allowed pragmatic content delivery to be tracked during the lessons. Additionally, during the observations, the researcher was meticulous in documenting any additional information explicitly linked to the targeted SA or any other SAs, which was then included in the calculation of class time dedicated to teaching pragmatics. As explained in section 5.4.2, episodes of explicit pragmatic instruction began when attention was directed towards SA and metapragmatic information and ended when activities shifted away from pragmatic content. This included explicit references to practice, discussions, or commentary on SAs grammatical or sociopragmatic use, and any conversations or activities that preceded or followed these discussions.

All teachers dedicated a portion of their class time to teaching explicit pragmatic content, with the exception of Hana's fourth lesson, where the provided SA content was not taught. This lesson, however, was included in the calculation of the average. Figure 6.6 below illustrates the proportion of class time each teacher devoted to teaching SAs in comparison to the time spent on teaching other language skills.

Figure 6.6 *Allocation of Class Time for SA Instruction*



The figure above indicates that the percentages of classroom instruction time allocated for SAs were mostly below 20, except for two classes where teachers spent 47.6% and 35.5% of class time in teaching pragmatics. On average, across the thirty observed classes, pragmatic teaching accounted for 20.1% of the total class time, while the teaching of other language skills constituted an average of 79.7%.

The following subsections discuss the teachers' use of textbooks when delivering pragmatic content; whether they adhered to or adapted from the provided materials.

6.3.1.1 Adherence to Pragmatic Content.

In all of the observed lessons, the textbook served as the primary resource for teaching pragmatics, complemented by supplementary materials like audio, visual aids and reading materials. In teaching conversation skills, all the teachers played recordings of the conversations provided in the MG CDs. Additionally, in roughly 20 out of 30 lessons, teachers used PowerPoint presentations. However, the workbook was not used during the observed thirty classes. Teachers in eight classes assigned homework exercises from the workbook. The main reasons cited by teachers for not incorporating the workbook into their lessons were as follows. Firstly, teachers mostly relied on exercises from the student textbook alone as they were aligned with the curriculum and examination requirements, whereas workbook exercises were not. Saba, for example, explained, "The workbook exercises are not included in the curriculum plan or in exams" (Saba, SRI 2). Secondly, time constraints and having multiple responsibilities deterred teachers from using workbook exercises in class. Thirdly, some teachers found the workbook to be excessively packed with activities, potentially overwhelming both students and instructors. Hana expressed this sentiment, stating, "The workbook is a burden for me and my students; it as an excessive number of random exercises. I personally don't like it" (SRI 1). Additionally, Hana clarified that the MoE does not require teachers to cover the entire workbook, but rather "between 40% to 50% of the workbook content" (SRI 1).

It was also observed that the teachers did not follow the steps and instructions provided in the teacher's guide. Many teachers believed that the teacher's guide did not align with their teaching style or their students' needs. Four teachers, Rowa, Asma, Hana and Abeer, preferred to have the flexibility to adapt their teaching methods rather than following a prescribed method. One teacher, Reem, found the teacher's guide to be "complicated and redundant," while suggesting that the guide's creators may not be "aware of the limited class time we have and the actual language levels of our students" (Reem, SRI 1). Two teachers, Hana and Abrar, believed that the teacher's guide lacked innovative teaching strategies and techniques and preferred to use other sources, including online materials, when preparing their lessons. However, their use of online sources was limited to incorporating a few videos from YouTube channels, observed in half of their lessons.

Overall, the teachers closely adhered to the content and information provided in the textbook. They explained that it was mandatory for teachers to cover the entire textbook, as required by the MoE. Teachers are not permitted to go beyond the textbook, particularly because exams are based solely on the textbook content. "I am bound by the textbook," confirmed Hana, "because exam questions are based on it" (SRI 2). MoE supervisors occasionally conducted unannounced visits to English classrooms to ensure teachers were following the prescribed textbook. School administrators also monitored teachers' textbook usage, as Abeer noted, "The principal and vice-principal would sometimes attend my classes to check that [I follow the textbook]" (SRI 1).

Three teachers, Hana, Abrar and Samia, expressed their desire for more flexibility in using the textbook, believing it would be more beneficial for students as teachers have a better understanding of their students' needs and proficiency levels. Conversely, two teachers, Reem and Saba, believed that textbook adaptation and modification were not the responsibility of teachers but rather that of textbook designers, as they are "specialised in material design and adaptation" (SRI 1) and are "paid to do this job" (SRI 2).

Although teachers remained committed to the textbook's content, objectives and information, they made different types of adaptations to the provided SA activities, which are discussed in the following section.

6.3.1.2 Adaptations to Pragmatic Content.

The classroom observations showed that all observed teachers made some adaptations to the pragmatic content in the textbooks. The adaptation methods identified through the analysis included modification, supplementation, replacement, addition, and deletion[13] of SA materials and activities. The following subsections provide insight into how the teachers implemented these adaptations and elucidate the reasoning behind their choices.

6.3.1.2.1 Modification.

Modifications of pragmatic content were observed in five out of the 30 classes, representing 16.6% of the observed classes and involving four different teachers. These modifications mainly occurred in the 'Your Turn' peer activities within the conversation lessons. In particular, three teachers – Asma, Hana and Abeer – opted to change this activity from pair work to individual work. Teacher Asma, for

[13] See section 5.3.2.2 for the definitions of these adaptation methods.

example, modified the activity in her lesson, which originally required students to "role-play with a partner" by pretending they were about to engage in an action and their partner had to convince them not to do it using advice phrases (MG5, p.72). Instead, Asma asked her students to individually create sentences advising against taking a nap while studying. She mentioned in the interview that, due to COVID-19 restrictions in schools, group and pair work were excluded from her classes. However, it should be noted that Asma's students were seated in pairs close to each other, suggesting the possibility of students engaging in peer activities with their immediate classmates without altering the seating arrangement. Another option could have been for each student to perform the activity with a partner at home using online or phone communication.

Similarly, teacher Hana modified the role-play peer activity in one of her lessons to an individual activity. She also changed the imagined scenario in the activity from offering tips for improving the environment to giving suggestions for a family dinner. The reason for this adaptation, as stated by Hana, was to connect the phrases with students' daily lives. When asked during the interview about considering the appropriateness of the provided suggestion expressions in the new context, Hana responded, "You can use all the expressions in the example I gave. The language to be used here is informal. So, it can be used with friends and family" (SRI 2). Her statement revealed that she perceived all the provided suggestion phrases (shown in the excerpt below) as equally informal and can be used interchangeably.

Making Suggestions

You might want to consider + *gerund...*
How about + *gerund...?*
Don't you think it would be a good idea + *infinitive...?*
If you..., I think you'll find...
If you don't mind, I'd like to suggest+ *gerund...*

(MG3, p. 86)

However, it could be argued here that some of these phrases, such as "If you don't mind, I'd like to suggest...," exhibit a relatively formal tone and may be better suited for situations where there is a greater social distance or power imbalance between the conversational partners. Therefore, it is important for teachers to pay attention to these aspects when making adaptations, thereby helping learners to grasp the vital role that social and contextual factors play in real-life interactions.

6.3.1.2.2 Supplementation.

Supplementation of pragmatic content was the most commonly employed adaptation method, with all nine teachers implementing it in 80% of their observed classes. These supplements mainly took the form of providing additional explanations, mostly delivered in the Arabic language, along with metapragmatic information related to politeness and contextual factors, examples to demonstrate the use of the new language and SA activities. For instance, Asma often supplemented the SA activities with metalinguistic explanations that relied on translation. For example,

Teacher Asma: When you want to convince someone, *ana lamma yakun ‘indi* [when I have] a point of view and I want to convince someone *wa ‘abi aqna’a ahad* [and I want to convince someone] to accept my idea *aysh aqul* [what should I say]? *‘Anti lamma yakun ‘indik wajhat nazr wa tabi tawassaliniha li-ahad, aysh mumkin taqulin bi-l-‘arabi? Aysh al-‘ibarah? Mumkin ‘aqul: Ana wathiq anna ha-shay’ raah yu’jibuk. Sah? Wa ‘uhawwil aqna’uh traa min mumayyazat hadha al-shay’, traa min ‘uyubih, traa-hu mufid, sahih wa-la la?* [when you have a point of view and you want to convey it to someone, what can you say in Arabic? What’s the phrase? I can say: I am confident that you will like this. Right? And I try to convince him by mentioning the advantages of this thing, its disadvantages, and how useful it is. Right or not?]
Students: *aywa* [yes] (Lesson 1).

According to the interview findings, Asma offered these explanations to familiarise students with the meaning of new information and to attract their attention to the importance of forming and expressing opinions. As she stated,

> It is important for me that my students learn how to properly express their points of view … I care that this information is conveyed to my students educationally, even if it was through the Arabic language, so they can have a point of view and confidently say, ‘I disagree’ when necessary, providing a reason for their disagreement (SRI 1).

Teacher Abrar also incorporated metalinguistic explanations into her grammar lesson about making predictions using *will* and *going to*. Abrar explained that she added these supplements because she “love[s] grammar lessons and work[s] harder in them” in terms of material adaptation (SRI 1). She held the belief that grammar is “quite important” in language learning and regarded it as highly important, even more so than other language components, including pragmatics (SRI 1). Another reason for her supplementation was to reinforce the new information, especially since the textbook “lacks sufficient explanations with SAs like predictions” (SRI 2). This view was shared by other teachers, such as Hana and Reem.

Furthermore, there were instances where teachers supplemented SAs with metapragmatic information, particularly regarding politeness and contextual factors. For example, when teaching polite ways to make requests, Reem added the explanation, “if you want to be polite, you can add *please* at the end of your request” during a lesson (Lesson, 4). While the textbook provided examples with the word *please*, it did not explicitly explain its role in expressing politeness, as shown below.

Polite Ways to Make Requests with *Can, Could* and *Would*

Q: Can you give me your credit card details, please?	**A:** Certainly.
Q: Could you help me?	**A:** Of course.
Q: Would you open the window, please?	**A:** Sure.

(MG3, p. 78)

Reem clarified in the interview that this addition aimed to instruct students on displaying politeness in communication using various strategies.

During a lesson on commands and advice, teacher Samia introduced information regarding the impact of the speakers’ relationship on SA use, stating, “Advice is typically given by a friend or someone close [to you], while commands come from someone who is not your friend, for example, your teacher" (Lesson 4). According to Samia, this addition aimed to establish real-world connections in the classroom, enhancing the learning experience. As Samia put it,

> I always try to make the content relatable to students. When they can connect what they're learning to their own experiences, it makes things much clearer. For example, think about who usually gives you commands? It's someone in charge. But when you're dealing with friends or equals, it's more about giving advice (SRI 2).

However, it is important to note that this additional information could be problematic as it implies that advice is exclusively used in situations with a low social distance between speakers, while commands are for situations with high social distance or differences in power status. In reality, the nature of SAs is influenced by various sociocultural, situational and personal variables, such as the degree of imposition, setting and purpose of the interaction. For instance, it would not be appropriate for a teacher to issue commands to students when advice or suggestions are more suitable, such as during consultations regarding academic or personal matters. Commands can also be appropriate among friends in situations like warning them of danger. Approaching SAs with this misconception can lead students to communication breakdowns when interacting in English.

Other SA activities were supplemented during some lessons, with teachers incorporating activities from outside the textbook. In some cases, these activities were introduced before discussing the SA information "to familiarise students with the new concept" (Muna, SRI 2). In other cases, the activities followed the SA to "check whether [students] have understood the information" (Saba, SRI 1). For instance, in her grammar classes, Abeer provided additional SA activities beyond the textbook. After explaining the grammar rule for forming requests in one lesson, Abeer presented a teacher-made multiple-choice exercise in a PowerPoint presentation. This exercise included two sentences with missing verbs and students were asked to select the correct verbs. Abeer stated that this activity was intended to make the lesson more suitable for the students and resembled the objective questions they would encounter in exams, as the textbook's activities were "not suitable with the type of exams they have, as most of the [textbook] exercises are subjective and essay-based" (SRI 2). A similar supplementation approach was employed by Abeer in another lesson concerning polite requests. However, in this case, the teacher provided a rather unreasonable justification, as indicated below:

> There wasn't any information or explanations about politeness [in the textbook] … I think there should have been some extra notes or comments to clarify that. So, I added an activity for practice. If I had more time, I would have added even more activities (SRI 2).

Based on this comment, it seems that the teacher observed the lack of explanations regarding making polite requests in the textbook. Instead of addressing this gap, she decided to include an activity that primarily centred on the structural aspects of requests, emphasising the linguistic aspect.

6.3.1.2.3 Replacement.

Replacement was evident in nine out of the 30 observed classes, accounting for 30% of the total. Typically, the teachers substituted the textbook exercises with simpler activities, such as instructing students to provide examples or use structured activity phrases in complete sentences. For instance, teacher Muna chose not to include the role-play pair work in her third lesson, which was:

B. Hussain and Ahmed are at the museum. They are discussing what to see and do. Make up a dialogue. Use language for making and responding to suggestions.

Hussain: *Let's go to the 'Space Show.'*

Ahmed: **Great idea!** Oh wait …. **We can't.** It's sold out. **How about** …

(MG1, P. 44)

Instead, Muna asked her students to individually suggest things to do when bored using the phrases provided in the lesson. An excerpt from Muna's third class illustrating this replacement is shown in Figure 6.7.

Figure 6.7 *Excerpt from Muna's Lesson Demonstrating Replacement of a SA Activity*

Teacher: use one of these forms here and make a suggestion. I have "let's, how about, why don't." Now, make a suggestion. I'm bored. Yes? *Al-sigha kullaha mawjooda 'indak fi al-kitab* [You have all the forms in the book]. Make a suggestion. *Baa'teekum* [I'll give you] time. Take 2 minutes and think about it.
Student: let's go to scho-
Teacher: think about it my dear, you have two minutes *ba'daha narja' 'ashan na'khud al* [and then we'll hear the] answers. How to make a suggestion. OK?
[Students work for 2 minutes]
Teacher: let's take your answers now. Yes?
Student: let's go to school
Teacher: OK. Yes Khlood?
Khlood: let's go draw for the picture
Teacher: let's go draw for the picture? Let's draw *ala tool* [directly]. OK. Yes Mai?
Mai: how about watching TV?
Teacher: excellent. How about watching TV. Yes?
Student: let's go to eat
Teacher: let's go to eat. Let's have something to eat. Huh? Yes my dears?
Student: let's go supermarket
Teacher: let's go to the supermarket. Why don't? Why don't you? *Marra basi'ta damaki ta'rifin al-jumla fa-haykun basi't* [it should be very easy for you as you already know the structure] Hmh? Why don't you. Why don't we go to the beach, why don't we play football. Yes?
Student: why don't you cut your hair?

According to Muna, this substitution aimed to make the exercise more suitable for the students, as she found the textbook exercises to be "complicated, confusing and indirect" (SRI2).

Similarly, Abeer did not incorporate the role-play peer activities into her first and third lessons. Instead, she instructed her students to individually create full sentences using the phrases provided in the lesson. The replaced SA activity in Abeer's third lesson was as follows:

Your Turn

Role-play with a partner. Ask your partner for a favor. Your partner is unwilling to grant the favor until understanding why it is necessary. Use the phrases for asking for favors.

Asking for Favors

Do you think you could…?
Do me a favor and…
I'd really appreciate it if you would…
Would it be possible/too much trouble…?
What are the chances you could…?
I hate to ask, but…

(MG3, p. 72)

The rationale for this replacement was to make the exercise "simpler and easier for students" (Abeer, SRI 1). Abeer believed that expecting students to "create a complete conversation just from imagination" during class was "challenging" and "time-consuming" (SRI 1). However, rather than entirely replacing the activity, it could have been modified to enhance suitability. This could have been done by providing students with a specific scenario, offering model responses and guiding them through the task. Abeer also acknowledged the possibility of assigning this activity as homework, considering that students might have had more time outside of class to contemplate it and generate their own ideas, but it slipped her mind.

In one instance, teacher Samia replaced the SA content itself. In her lesson about commands and advice, Samia introduced the use of the modal *should* to give advice, which was not provided in the lesson, instead of teaching the use of imperatives. Samia explained that this substitution was made because students were "more familiar with giving advice using *should*" since it had been introduced to them earlier in the textbook (SRI 2).

6.3.1.2.4 Addition.

Instances of additions were identified in 16.6% of the observed classes, mirroring the occurrence of modifications. Teachers Muna, Abeer and Samia mainly included additional example sentences for suggestions, requests and commands, respectively. According to their SRIs, these additions aimed to "provide more language models for students to enhance their learning" of the new SA information (Samia, SRI 2). Abeer also explained that she enjoyed incorporating examples and visuals into her lessons to capture students' attention. On one occasion, teacher Reem added a comprehension question about advice to those following a conversation. Reem explained in her interview that she included this question "to give students more opportunities to speak and to assess their comprehension" (SRI 1).

6.3.1.2.5 Deletion.

Deletions of pragmatic content were observed in 30% of the classes, a rate similar to replacement, and were practised by six teachers. On occasion, teachers would remove the provided SA activity without offering an alternative. For example, teachers Reem and Asma did not incorporate SA peer activities into most of their classes, citing limited class time and their students' low language proficiency as reasons for this practice. Reem admitted that she would omit parts of the lesson she deemed less important, such as SA activities, to prioritise covering other components. As Reem put it,

> It's hard to cover everything, so I try to focus on the most important language aspects, such as the meaning of the conversation itself and new words because they're the foundation of the lesson (SRI, 2).

That is, Reem seemed to emphasise the teaching and learning of vocabulary and semantics over pragmatics.

A similar perspective was held by teacher Abrar, who, in one of her classes, assigned two homework exercises—one related to the SA of making predictions and the other to vocabulary. When explaining how to complete these activities, Abrar said to her students, “The most important thing to me is the vocabulary [activity]” (Lesson, 1). The following class, she only checked and discussed the vocabulary activity with her students. In her interview, Abrar revealed that she skipped the SA activity because she “ran out of time” and instead focused on vocabulary, which she considered “a fundamental language skill like grammar” (SRI, 1).

Deletions also extended to SA phrases and metapragmatic information. For example, teacher Hana only taught and practised three out of the six suggestion expressions provided in the textbook in her third lesson, reasoning that “overwhelm[ing] the students with too much information was unnecessary, given their current proficiency level” (SRI 2). In her fourth lesson, Hana made a more significant deletion by skipping the SA information provided entirely. The writing activity in the lesson proceeded without Hana teaching or practising the formal suggestion phrases provided in the instructions, clarifying that teaching this activity was “beyond the students’ level” and thus it would “burden them” (SRI 2).

Interestingly, four of the six teachers who made deletions to SA information expressed their dissatisfaction with the low quantity of SA information in the textbooks during the SRIs (see section 6.3.2.1 below). “[SA information] definitely needs to be increased”, posited Hana, “there should be more lessons with pragmatic information about various functions” (SRI 2). However, instead of adding to the SAs and phrases in their lessons, these teachers decided to delete a few of them.

6.3.2 RQ5: What is the Saudi EFL Teacher’s Perspective on SA Content, Teaching and Learning?

In addition to the analysis of teachers’ practices when teaching SAs, it is crucial to collect their professional opinions about SA content, teaching and learning using MG series in Saudi EFL classroom. To provide data for this part of the study, the observed teachers were interviewed after every two classes. As the results revealed, the teachers expressed definite opinions about SAs. Although there was some variation in their opinions, the teachers’ views were similar in many ways.

6.3.2.1 Teacher’s Opinion on SA Content.

During the interviews, teachers were asked for their opinions on the quantity and quality of pragmatic information contained in the MG textbooks. The findings from these interviews are presented in the following subsections.

6.3.2.1.1 Quantity of SA information.

Based on the interviews, it was found that five teachers (55.5%) believed that the amount of pragmatic information in the MG textbooks was appropriate for the students’ level. In contrast, four teachers expressed the view that the amount was lacking. One teacher, Samia, offered specific feedback on the quantity of SA information in the textbook, stating:

> I believe that there is a low number of SA expressions and tasks in each lesson. For example, there are only two or three expressions in the ‘real talk’ box within the conversation lessons… The advice expressions in this lesson are presented as if learners have encountered them before and need to practise them again, but this is not the case… There should be more lessons

> containing pragmatic information and functions to help students express themselves effectively (SRI 2).

Samia suggested that the SA expressions and tasks needed to be increased to enhance students' ability to communicate successfully. However, this perspective was only partially reflected in Samia's own classes. For example, when teaching advice, Samia discussed a previously introduced advice strategy instead of introducing a new one. She also skipped teaching the only politeness comment provided in the lesson, "say please to be polite" (MG1, p. 64). Samia did include a couple of additional advice examples to demonstrate their use to students, but this was the extent of her supplementations to the SA content in her lessons. Teacher Hana suggested that the textbook did not give as much attention to pragmatic content as it did to grammar, saying:

> English is a communicative language. It's not just about grammar; it's also about idioms and expressions. I'm not suggesting that grammar should be neglected, but please consider incorporating more real-life pragmatic expressions [into the textbook] (SRI 2).

Hana further argued that if a student were to travel to an English-speaking country, they would likely "not use much of what they had learned, as many of the grammar rules they study are not commonly used by native speakers themselves" (SRI 2). In Hana's perspective, the textbook does not adequately equip students to "develop enough linguistic foundation for effective communication with native speakers." To improve students' pragmatic competence, Hana recommended reducing the redundancy of grammar rules in the textbook to create more space for pragmatic input. However, similar to Samia, Hana was observed making deletions in her lessons (See Section 6.3.1.2.5).

Other teachers such as Muna, Saba and Rowa, believed that the quantity SA information and tasks in the textbook was appropriate for the students' level and needs. However, Muna suggested, "[Students] should explore other resources besides the textbook to be able to further develop pragmatically and linguistically … otherwise, [they] would not be able to improve" (SRI 2).

6.3.2.1.2 Quality of SA information.

In general, all the teachers expressed negative opinions about the quality and relevance of the SA information found in the textbooks. They provided the following reasons for their views:

- the lack of explanations and examples;
- the provision of incomplete SA phrases;
- the irrelevance to students' daily lives;
- the artificial conversations and language;
- the difficulty of the language level;
- the limited metapragmatic information;
- the lack of contextual information in conversations using SAs.

Out of the nine teachers, six agreed that the textbooks lacked explanations to accompany the SA information. They compared the SA phrases, often presented in blue boxes within conversation lessons, to "a shopping list!" (Abeer, SRI 2). That is, these phrases were listed without clear explanations or guidance on their use and they were consistently incomplete. Teacher Saba acknowledged that it was the teacher's role to explain these phrases, but at times, "it is challenging [for teachers] to know how to effectively incorporate such information into the lessons" (Saba, SRI 1). It is worth noting that the teacher's guide seldom provided additional information to supplement these incomplete SA phrases, and even when it did, the teachers rarely used it, as they consistently expressed their limited reliance on the teacher's guide (see section 6.3.1.1).

Furthermore, four teachers pointed out that most of the pragmatic activities in the textbook were out of touch with students' real-life experiences. According to Hana, "the vocabulary, topics and pragmatic expressions in the textbooks did not resonate with the students' daily lives … our lives and not the lives of Western people" (SRI 2). Hana also criticised the absence of activities that encouraged students to compare English and Arabic SAs, suggesting that such activities could help students connect with their culture and make learning pragmatics more enjoyable. Samia noted that the SAs were mostly formal, focusing on "careers and academia rather than daily life" (SRI 2). Rowa added that not only were some conversations irrelevant to students, but they also felt "artificial" and "unrealistic," potentially discouraging student engagement with the textbook's content (SRI 1). The teachers suggested that incorporating topics and information closer to students' lives in a casual and informal language would capture their attention and make learning pragmatics easier and more enjoyable. Additionally, two teachers, Rowa and Saba, believed that the language used in the pragmatic materials was too advanced for students and should be simplified and adapted accordingly.

Additionally, three teachers highlighted the limited metapragmatic information concerning formality and politeness in the SA content as a flaw in the textbook. For instance, one lesson in MG5 included around six disagreement phrases but provided a formality comment for only one phrase, as can be seen below.

Agreeing	Disagreeing
I agree completely.	(I'm sorry but) I don't agree (with you).
I couldn't agree more.	I see it differently.
You're absolutely right.	I totally disagree.
You're right about *that*.	(I'm afraid) I don't really agree.
	I'm not so sure about that.
	You *must* be joking. (Informal and not very polite)

(MG5, p. 58)

When teaching this information, Saba explained that she had to "figure out" whether the other phrases were formal or not (SRI 1). However, she did not attempt to provide such information during the observed lesson. Teacher Rowa suggested that the formality levels of SAs should be explicitly indicated in the textbook or in training sessions for teachers. As Rowa put it,

> Teachers often conduct their research to understand how to effectively deliver such [formality] information, but they are not curriculum designers or native speakers. It's highly likely that they make mistakes when doing that. Providing training on such topics would be beneficial (SRI 1).

The textbooks were also seen by three teachers to offer limited contextual information about the speakers and their relationships. They believed that the conversations using SAs needed to be preceded with introductory comments to "explain who and where the speakers are and what type of relationship they have rather than only mentioning names" (Abrar, SRI 2). The textbooks were also criticised for not teaching how the meaning of utterances could change in different contexts. When discussing exercises on the use of polite requests in banking situations, two teachers, Reem and Abeer, suggested that while these activities were important, the textbook could have included other contexts and scenarios to teach students how to apply new pragmatic input in different life situations. Abeer argued that students might otherwise think that being polite was only necessary in banking.

Interestingly, despite recognising the need to enhance both the quantity and quality of SA information in the lessons, the teachers seldom took it upon themselves to make such improvements. When asked if they considered addressing the identified gaps, they indicated that they rarely did so due to the constraints discussed in section 6.3.1.1. That is, teachers felt obliged to adhere to the textbook content, as exams were based only on the provided textbook information. Making such modifications was implied to be the responsibility of the MoE and curriculum and textbook designers, rather than the teachers.

6.3.2.2 Teacher's Opinion on Teaching SAs: Factors Influencing their Teaching.

The analysis revealed that different factors influenced how teachers used the textbooks for teaching SAs, as well as EFL in general. These factors included aspects related to students, the MoE, the textbooks themselves, the teachers, and other pedagogical considerations. The classification of these factors is presented in Table 6.11 below.

Table 6.11 *Factors Influencing Teaching Pragmatics*

Factor	**Sub-factor**
Student-related factors	• Students' limited language proficiency, • students' negative attitudes toward learning English, and • lack of cooperation from students' parents/caregivers.
Policy-related factors	• Restricted class tim, • the limited number of EFL classes, and • the MoE requirement to adhere to the textbook and curriculum schedule.
Pedagogical reasons	• The heavy teaching load and • the availability of resources.
Textbook-related factors	• The content of the textbook and • the language level of the textbook.
Teacher-related factors	• The teachers' limited pragmatic knowledge and • The lack of training in using the textbook.

Eight out of nine teachers agreed that the predominant low proficiency level among their students significantly influenced how they taught pragmatics. In their interviews, these teachers regarded this low proficiency level as a substantial impediment to effectively delivering pragmatic or any educational content because it hindered student engagement and communication with the teacher. Teacher Asma expressed her frustration, saying, "[The students' level] is very disappointing ... I often feel helpless as a teacher" (SRI 1). Hana, for example, noted that her students typically had a low language proficiency level, and that her role became of a "private tutor" because "they just don't understand English well," necessitating frequent translation to aid their understanding (SRI 1).

Students' negative attitudes towards learning English influenced how three teachers taught and practised SA information and activities. One teacher lamented that a significant portion of her students "simply don't want to learn a foreign language" (Reem, SRI 2). Another teacher emphasised that although students possessed the potential to learn English, "they lacked the enthusiasm and interest to [do so]" (Samia, SRI 2). Samia also noted that parental attitudes could impact how pragmatic content was delivered, as parents often protested when teachers introduced modifications to the SA content: "Whenever I make changes or enhancements to parts of the lesson, [parents] start complaining because they care that their children are evaluated based on the textbook's content alone" (SRI 1).

Furthermore, five teachers reported that they considered the directives of MoE supervisors when teaching SAs. They explained that adhering to the MoE's requirement to follow the curriculum schedule was paramount, as detailed in section 6.3.1.1. Therefore, they could not change lessons, even if they found them repetitive or unnecessary, as "school and MoE supervisors regularly visited [their] classes" to ensure compliance with the curriculum (Asma, SRI 1). Saba added that MoE supervisors also mandated the implementation of active learning methods, which she found "confusing" since the textbook she was required to follow "[did] not support many active learning strategies" (SRI 1). Also, the exam-based nature of the education system, which drove students to "care only about grades," also influenced the teachers' practices (Abrar, SRI 1).

Other factors related to MoE policies included the limited class time and the restricted number of English classes. Seven out of nine teachers believed that the standard 45-minute class duration was insufficient for effectively teaching and practising the assigned lessons and activities. Teacher Reem expressed the following,

> The biggest influence for me is the class time… 45 minutes per day is not enough time to successfully teach and learn a foreign language (SRI 1).

Teacher Rowa explained that delivering the curriculum within the allocated time frame was especially challenging given the heavy content load in the textbook. Teachers were "expected to deliver too much [information] within the limited class time" (SRI 1). Along similar lines, Abrar voiced her dissatisfaction with the class duration and advocated for longer periods dedicated to teaching and learning English. She reasoned that extending class time would provide students with more opportunities to practise English in class and enable teachers to enhance their teaching methods and adapt materials more effectively when instructing in English. Similarly, Saba expressed her dissatisfaction with the duration of the EFL classes and recommended allocating more time for English instruction or using English as the medium of instruction in other classes.

Pedagogical factors, including a heavy teaching load and resource availability, were reported by the teachers. Among the nine teachers, five expressed feeling "burdened" due to teaching multiple curriculums for “over 25 hours a week” and handling various responsibilities (Abrar, SRI 1). Abrar explained that the teaching load became particularly demanding due to COVID-19 restrictions, with most teachers simultaneously instructing students in both in-person and online[14] formats. This necessitated extra effort to integrate different teaching and assessment methods and monitor online students. Abeer added:

> There are requests from the Education Office, the school, students’ parents and the students themselves. You feel that there is a significant pressure on teachers. Everything in the educational process is put on the teachers’ shoulders (SRI 2).

Limited resources within EFL classrooms were mentioned by three teachers as a factor influencing their teaching of SA content. None of the observed schools had language laboratories, and approximately 42.8% of the classrooms lacked technological tools such as smartboards, computers, and speakers that could enhance the teaching and learning process. Only two schools had a single resource room with audio and visual technologies available for all students. EFL teachers would occasionally use these rooms for some classes if they were available. In certain cases, teachers would bring their own projectors and speakers to the classrooms. Rowa emphasised the importance of technology and teaching aids in facilitating effective English learning, but noted that “not all teachers are willing to provide their own tools and aids” as this can be “difficult, costly and time consuming” (SRI 2). Reem revealed that she often planned her lessons based on the availability of the resource room, as her classrooms lacked the necessary technology. She mentioned, “I'd like to incorporate activities and videos into the lessons, but that depends on the resource room’s availability” (SRI 1). Since the resource room was consistently unavailable, Reem “typically prepared [her] lessons without making any changes to save time and effort” (SRI 1).

Moreover, according to three teachers, the nature of the SA content and the language complexity of the textbook influenced how they delivered SA information. For example, Hana mentioned that she tended to be more creative with her use of the textbook when the lesson was related to students’ experiences. Such lessons were more enjoyable and comprehensible for students, resulting in better performance on exam questions related to these topics. Samia noted that when an information or a task was challenging for students, she would “simplify it by providing more explanations and examples” (SRI 1). In other instances, she would omit difficult tasks like ‘Your Ending’ activities following conversations, as “they require interaction and preparation that [her] students struggle to provide” (SRI 1).

Factors such as teachers’ limited knowledge of pragmatics and lack of training in textbook use and material adaptation also seemed to impact how they taught the SA content. In their responses to the background questionnaire and general discussions during orientation, most teachers expressed limited familiarity with the concept of pragmatics. Only three out of nine teachers indicated they had studied

[14] Students who were not vaccinated or belonged to vulnerable groups attended their classes online. They were often referred to as online students.

pragmatics during their undergraduate studies, with two mentioning it as part of a linguistics course and one, Hana, claiming to have self-learned it through teaching experience. However, when asked about her knowledge of pragmatics, Hana veered into explanations of semantic concepts[15] instead. This suggested that Hana's self-acquired knowledge of pragmatics was limited. Furthermore, the background questionnaire revealed that only four teachers had received training in materials adaptation, and just two had undergone training in using the MG series, which occurred in 2018 and was conducted by the MoE. It is plausible that teachers' limited understanding of pragmatics and their lack of training in textbook adaptation and utilisation hindered their ability to create supplementary pragmatic materials or design additional activities to compensate for the identified shortcomings in the textbook.

6.3.2.3 Teachers' opinions on Learning SAs.

The teachers were inquired about their perspectives on Saudi students' acquisition of pragmatic skills, including their motivation to learn SAs and the obstacles they encountered in their learning.

6.3.2.3.1 Importance and justification for learning pragmatics.

Without exception, all teachers recognised the significance of students acquiring English language pragmatic and communicative skills for different reasons. Firstly, the teachers believed that pragmatics play an important role in "enable[ing] students to attain a high level of English language proficiency and communication competence" (Samia, SRI 2). Rowa emphasised that "language is not only grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing," it also includes the ability "to learn how to communicate successfully in English" (SRI 1). According to Muna, pragmatic knowledge could empower learners to interact in English successfully with people worldwide "through the use of social media and the internet" (SRI 2). Secondly, the teachers stressed the importance of enhancing pragmatic competence to facilitate seamless communication with native English speakers when students travel abroad for leisure, study, or employment, especially in light of the growing number of "scholarship offers to high school graduates seeking overseas education" (Abeer, SRI 2). Thirdly, the teachers underscored the contemporary relevance of English language acquisition and communication skills, given the ongoing "development in Saudi Arabia and the increasing influx of tourists and international events" (Abeer, SRI 2). Therefore, as Abeer further emphasised, "students need to learn pragmatic expressions and conversational techniques, as they're likely to encounter various situations necessitating English communication in modern Saudi Arabia" (SRI 2). Fourthly, a growing need for English proficiency has emerged within Saudi universities, as many academic programmes have transitioned to adopting English as their main medium of instruction. English language has also become prerequisites for many job opportunities. Therefore, the teachers underscored the importance of students acquiring English language communicative skills before embarking on their career pursuits. As Asma pointed out,

> Many students aspire to careers as pilots, engineers, or employees of commercial or international companies, where English is essential for conducting meetings with foreign delegations. Proficiency in polite and appropriate language usage is vital for fostering positive relationships,

[15] Semantics is the branch of linguistics concerned with meaning.

as the misuse of expressions related to persuasion, agreement and disagreement could jeopardise important business deals (SRI 2).

6.3.2.3.2 Challenges students face when learning SAs.

According to the teachers, students encountered various challenges that could impede their learning and development of pragmatics. Many of these challenges mirror the factors influencing teachers' instruction of pragmatics, as discussed in section 6.3.2.2. However, for the purpose of this section, these challenges are re-examined from the students' perspective, as perceived by the teachers.

One major obstacle, as noted by around five teachers, was the poor English foundation of Saudi students. Many students had not been exposed to the English language during their early school years, with some not formally studying English in primary school or kindergarten. This resulted in varying proficiency levels among students and a gap between their abilities and the textbook's expectations. Consequently, students who aspired to learn English often found it frustrating to keep pace with the textbook or their grade level. Teacher Saba suggested that teachers "should start working with [their] students to improve their proficiency level" (SRI 2), while others, like Muna, encouraged students to supplement their learning "outside the classroom to catch up with the intended upper-intermediate level" (SRI 2).

Another challenge students faced was the limited English classes and class time allocated by the MoE. Hana pointed out that "expecting students to master all aspects of English with just three hours of instruction per week is unrealistic" (SRI 2). Relying solely on 45-minute classes might not be sufficient for students to grasp pragmatics, as emphasised by Saba. Additionally, Abeer and Reem expressed concerns about the frequent changes in curricula used in Saudi schools, oscillating "between American to British to American again," which could pose challenges for students in adapting to the pragmatic rules of the target language(Abeer, SRI 2). These concerns are in reference to changes in textbook selections that the MoE has implemented from 2014 to 2021, as detailed in Section 2.5.1. These textbooks, developed and published by British and American companies like MM Publications and McGraw Hill, typically adhere to the linguistic and phonetic conventions of their respective English varieties. For instance, the MG series clearly follows American English spelling and pronunciation, a detail observed during the textbook analysis. Abeer suggested that the MoE should commit to one curriculum series and periodically update or enhance it, rather than undergoing "radical changes" every other year, which "negatively impacts both learners and educators" (SRI 2). Another teacher, Abrar, recommended that the MoE arrange regular lectures, workshops and competitions "to motivate students and raise awareness about the importance of the use of appropriate and correct language expressions for communication" (SRI 2).

Furthermore, five teachers pointed to issues with the textbook language and content as additional difficulties for students when learning pragmatics. The high proficiency level of the textbook often discouraged students from effectively learning and applying the provided SA information. The language used in the textbook was described as "artificial" and "overly formal," potentially hindering students' grasp of pragmatics, according to Muna (SRI 1). Samia commented that the SA expressions in the lessons were "outdated" and failed to "engage young learners who are more inclined towards slang and social media language" (SRI 1). The textbooks were also criticised for lacking metapragmatic explanations and examples that could aid students in better understanding and acquiring pragmatic skills.

Additional challenges in learning SAs were attributed to the students themselves. Seven teachers believed that the disparity in students' pragmatic skills stemmed from their lack of interest in and motivation to learn English properly. Some students even considered English to be their "fiercest enemy" (Hana, SRI 2). Those who were interested in learning the language often lacked learner-autonomy knowledge and skills, relying heavily on the teacher, as pointed out by Reem. Two teachers posited that students' general lack of interest in learning English could be attributed to their social and economic backgrounds. For instance, Abrar explained that "most of my students come from lower-middle-class backgrounds, … an environment that typically does not encourage learning a foreign language" (SRI 1).

6.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the main focus was on the findings derived from analyses of six MG textbooks, as well as classroom observations and interviews with nine secondary school EFL teachers. The analysis of the textbooks revealed that they covered a broad range of SAs. This finding is particularly striking as it diverges from the majority of existing research, which often points to rather limited types of SAs featured in EFL/ESL textbooks. The most prevalent and emphasised SA being giving opinions. Other SAs such as making suggestions, giving commands, apologising, refusing, offering, and promising received considerably less attention in terms of coverage. Furthermore, regarding how SAs were treated in the textbooks, they mostly appeared out of context and offered limited metapragmatic instruction. Of the metapragmatic information provided, explanations for usage were the most common, while discussions about appropriacy, illocutionary force and cultural considerations were notably lacking. Interestingly, the amount of pragmatic content included in the textbooks appeared to decrease as the level of the textbook increased.

The analysis of the teachers' data aimed to ascertain whether teachers adapted the textbook content with external materials to teach pragmatics and to uncover the underlying motivations behind their instructional practices. The results showed that teachers primarily adhered to the content and information presented in the textbooks when teaching pragmatics, making only minor adjustments to the provided SA activities. Most teachers chose to adapt the textbooks' SA content through methods such as modification, supplementation, replacement, addition, and deletion. Various factors influenced the teachers' approach to teaching SAs, including the students' limited proficiency level, MoE's guidelines, time constraints, limited classroom resources, and the content of the textbooks. Moreover, most of the teachers had limited knowledge of pragmatics and lacked training in material design and adaptation, which likely influenced their decisions when teaching SAs.

Some teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the quantity of SA information in the MG textbooks, whereas the majority agreed on the low quality of this information. They called for an increase in explicit metalinguistic instructions and greater contextual and metapragmatic information related to SAs to enhance pragmatic learning and teaching. While all teachers agreed on the vital importance of developing pragmatic competence in the Saudi EFL classroom, two teachers suggested that SA activities held less value compared to other language activities. Additionally, there were some inconsistencies between the teachers' stated beliefs in the SRIs and their actual classroom practices. Although most teachers recognised the need to improve the quality of SA content in the lessons, they often refrained from doing so themselves. The four teachers who perceived the quantity of SAs as insufficient were observed deleting portions of this content rather than supplementing it. Furthermore, only two teachers were observed addressing metapragmatic issues in their classes and even these attempts were rather problematic. It was implied by some teachers that making modifications to the SA content was rather the responsibility of the curriculum and textbook designers.

The subsequent chapter will provide a discussion and interpretation of the data and findings, aiming to provide potential answers to the research questions. The key findings from this study will be compared with existing literature and analysed in the context of the theoretical frameworks guiding this research.

7. Discussions and Interpretations

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and interprets the research findings collected from three instruments—textbook analysis, classroom observation and stimulated recall interviews. The chapter is structured into four sections, each corresponding to a research question, with the questions presented in sequential order for clarity. The first section discusses the quantity of the SA information covered in the MG textbooks, while the second section explores the metapragmatic information included. Moving forward, the third section reviews the distribution of SA and metapragmatic content across different textbook levels. Finally, the last two sections investigate the teachers' practices when teaching SAs using the MG textbooks and provide insights into their perspectives on the content, teaching and learning of the pragmatics covered.

7.2 The SA Information in MG Textbooks

The first research question pertained to the type and frequency of SAs featured in MG textbooks. To address this query, a quantitative content analysis was conducted. The following subsection presents the analysis results.

7.2.1 Frequency of SAs

The analysis revealed a substantial number of SA occurrences throughout the textbooks, with a total frequency of 579 SAs across all three textbook levels and an average of 193 occurrences at each textbook level (equating to 96.5 occurrences in each textbook). The first textbook level had 226 occurrences; the second,196 occurrences; and the third, 157 occurrences. This number of SA occurrences is deemed suitable in this study considering the factors discussed in section 5.6.2.2 of the methods chapter, namely, the teachers' opinions, the proficiency level of the students, the curriculum objectives and the findings of similar research.

Acquiring SA skills accounts for approximately 20% of the total learning objectives outlined in the SELF for secondary grades. Given this guideline, the current study deemed the presence of 579 SA occurrences across the MG textbooks as appropriate to ensure ample coverage of SAs while also providing a comprehensive overview of other essential language components. Keeping in mind that some of the pragmatic content was incorporated implicitly in the textbooks. While there is no recommended frequency of new SAs per lesson for students at the pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate proficiency level—the level of most students using the MG textbooks—previous research on vocabulary learning has suggested that intermediate-level textbooks should contain between 5 to 15 new words per lesson for learners to fully understand their usage and retain what they have learned (Ghalebi, et. al., 2020; Pakzadian, 2012). Providing an excessive quantity of new vocabulary has the potential to cause cognitive overload and hinder the learning process, especially for learners at early proficiency levels (e.g. Baranowska, 2020; Zarifi, 2020). This finding is not only intuitively persuasive but theoretically supported by the cognitive load principle, which suggests that effective learning occurs when the capacity of working memory is appropriately managed (Plass, et al., 2010). Considering this principle as well as the proficiency level of the Saudi students for whom the textbooks are intended, this study argues that the quantity of SA occurrences across these textbooks (i.e., 579) is neither too limited nor excessive. However, as emphasised previously, additional research is necessary to ascertain whether exposure to this amount of pragmatic information contributes to the development of learners' pragmatic competence.

The analyses also showed that the MG textbooks provided a higher frequency of SAs compared to those used in most previous studies (see AlGhamdi, 2014; Neddar, 2010; Takafumi et al., 2007; Nguyen, 2011; Vellenga, 2004; Vu, 2017). For instance, Vellenga (2004) found an average of 5.5 SAs in four integrated EFL textbooks, an amount the author deemed limited given the students' intermediate level and linguistic development. Similarly, Takafumi et al. (2007) reported that 17 textbooks used in Japanese secondary schools contained a low number of SAs, with an average of 6.29 explicit occurrences. In an Arabic context, Neddar (2010) found an average of 10.75 SAs in each of four ELT textbooks used in middle schools in Algeria. Nguyen (2011) found 43 SAs (which equates to 14.3 on average) across the three textbooks she examined; the author, similarly, considered this number as limited given the intermediate proficiency level of the students.

More in line with the findings of the present study, Li (2018) reported a total of 444 SA occurrences in four intermediate-level EFL textbooks used in universities across China, averaging 111 SAs per book. The author maintained that this quantity of SAs was sufficient for intermediate or advanced students, especially given the textbooks' focus on developing communicative skills in speaking and listening, and that increasing the number of SAs might overwhelm students at this proficiency level. Nevertheless, the recommendation was made to supplement the teacher's books with additional SA information to enable teachers to tailor their lesson plans to meet the needs and proficiency levels of their students.

Furthermore, the majority of the interviewed teachers agreed that the quantity of SAs provided in the textbooks aligned well with their students' level and needs (See Section 7.6). This reinforces the assertion that the textbooks covered appropriate amount of SAs in terms of frequency, given that the teachers are more familiar with their students and teaching environment. Nonetheless, the teachers voiced discontent regarding the quality of these SAs, a matter that will be discussed in subsequent sections.

7.2.2 Types of SAs

In terms of SA types, the findings indicated that only four of the five SA categories were addressed in the textbooks, suggesting that the overall coverage of SAs was not comprehensive. Moreover, the distribution of these four SA types was not proportionally equal across the six MG textbooks. To be more specific, the textbooks appeared to prioritise the teaching of *directive* SAs, followed by *representatives* and *expressives*, while *commissive* and *declarative* SAs received minimal or no attention (see Table 6.4 in Chapter 6). These findings align with the results of previous studies conducted by Kohandani et al. (2014), Li (2018), Nevisi and Moghadasi (2020) and Vaezi et al. (2014), all of whom reported that the examined textbooks engaged a disproportionate number of *representatives*, *directives* and *expressives* as compared to other SA types. For instance, in their analysis of six Iranian secondary-school EFL textbooks, Nevisi and Moghadasi (2020) found that *directive* SAs were the most frequent, accounting for 39.7% of the total SAs. This was followed by *representatives* (35.1%) and *expressives* (19.4%). By contrast, *commissives* and *declaratives* were much less common, accounting for 4.5% and 1.1% of the total SAs, respectively. Nevisi and Moghadasi (2020) concluded that these textbooks were an unreliable point of reference for teaching pragmatics as the inequality in the distribution of the SA types did not promote competence of the main language functions.

The focus on *directives, representatives* and *expressives* in the MG textbooks is likely owing to the fact that these SAs account for most of the content in everyday conversations; they are thus "everyday vocabulary" (Schneider, 2022, p. 155). For instance, *representative* SAs—such as confirming, reporting, negotiating, agreeing and disagreeing— constitute the majority of transactional language (Gholami, 2015). Furthermore, *directives* and *expressives* include commonly occurring face-threatening acts, such as commanding, complaining, requesting and promising (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Therefore, the acquisition of these SAs is crucial for language learners, especially since they have been found to be challenging to perform successfully, as highlighted by several studies in different EFL contexts (e.g., Nureddeen, 2008; Woodfield, 2008), including the Saudi context (e.g., Al-Otaibi, 2015; Alsmari, 2020; Qari, 2017).

While including a sizeable portion of these SAs is thus deemed reasonable, learners must also acquire *commissive* and *declarative* SAs at all proficiency levels to achieve pragmatic competence. However, the MG textbooks gave limited to no attention to these SA types, suggesting that decisions regarding their SA content were not based on the frequency and distribution of SAs in natural language. Considering that learners require opportunities to practise these SAs, their underrepresentation could lead to inadequate pragmatic and communicative comprehension (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Taguchi, 2015).

An observational study conducted by Alharbi (2017) on the SAs performed by EFL teachers in Saudi context found that teachers commonly used *directives*, followed by *representatives* and *expressives*, while *commissives* were infrequently used and *declaratives* were absent. Interestingly, the ranking of SA occurrences in Alharbi's (2017) study aligns with that found in the textbooks discussed in this study, suggesting that teachers may emphasise the types of SAs that are incorporated in language textbooks. This finding underscores the importance of being mindful when designing instructional materials to include different SA types and distribute them proportionately as teachers heavily rely on such materials in their classrooms.

In addition to investigating the SA types found in the textbooks, this study also examined the subtypes with a view to their adequacy in meeting the objectives outlined in the SELF and previous literature, including pragmatic studies on Saudi EFL learners. The analysis revealed that some subtypes were overrepresented while others were underrepresented, irrespective of their complexity level, frequency in natural language and curriculum objectives. The lack of a discernible pattern in the frequency and distribution of SA subtypes suggested some arbitrariness in the design of the textbooks, as previous studies on the pragmatic content of language textbooks have also indicated (Ji, 2007; Kohandani et al., 2014; Neddar, 2010; Nguyen, 2011; Ren & Han, 2018; Vellenga, 2004). For instance, in an analysis of eight EFL textbooks used in Algeria, Neddar (2010) found an over-presentation of certain SA subtypes and a lack of others, with a distribution based neither on the learning objectives of the textbooks nor on the frequency of SAs in natural language as reported in corpus research. For example, Neddar (2010) found that the SA of describing people received an abundance of attention, whereas more common SAs, such as apologising and refusing—both of which play a key role in human interactions and are frequently investigated in interlanguage pragmatics studies—received less attention. According to Neddar (2010), the imbalanced distribution of SAs, with some receiving more attention than others and key SAs being ignored, may limit learners' exposure to certain types of language input, impeding their acquisition of those SAs and their ability to use the language effectively.

The analysis of MG textbooks revealed that highly formulaic SAs—such greetings, farewells and expressions of enthusiasm—were practised at all textbook levels, whereas other SAs—such as persuading, negotiating, making complaints, criticising, warning, refusing, and suggesting—were not given comparable attention. It is widely acknowledged that the latter SAs are challenging, as their performance involves jeopardising social face and thus requires more pragmatic awareness (e.g., Al-Juraywi & Abdulaziz, 2021; Alfadda, 2019; Nguyen, 2005). Negotiating and persuading, for example, are highly complex SAs and require advanced interaction skills (Kadhim et al., 2018; Sugawara, 2009). However, they received only five and ten occurrences respectively in one textbook, whereas reporting, which is relatively straightforward, was taught and practised frequently across all three textbook levels. This is particularly remarkable given that negotiating and persuading have been identified in the SELF as speaking goals for intermediate learners. In addition, several researchers have noted that Saudi EFL learners often struggle to use appropriate expressions in their negotiation and persuasion interactions (e.g., Almegren, 2022; Almutwakkil & Alshakhi, 2022). The finding that these SAs were minimised or neglected in the textbooks indicates that these textbooks do not align with curriculum objectives, learners' needs and real-world language use.

Another problematic finding of the analysis was that the SA of apologising, which is frequently used in natural language to maintain social harmony (Blum-Kulka et. al, 1989), was only introduced in the final textbook (MG6), whereas other SAs which involve risking social harmony, such warning, prohibiting, commanding, asking for favours and refusing, were only covered in the earlier textbooks.

This finding is perplexing considering that the SA of apologising might be needed to mitigate conflicts and misunderstandings arising from the misuse of the latter SAs among students at the early intermediate stage. Similar results, however, were reported by Dendenne (2019), Neddar (2010) and Vellenga (2004). For instance, Vellenga (2004) found that the SA of threatening was explicitly taught in the examined ESL textbooks, while apologising, among others, was not provided for learners at all, reflecting a counterintuitive SA distribution. According to Vellenga, "the importance of teaching learners how to threaten is questionable when they do not get input about learning what might be considered more practical speech acts, such as apologising" (p. 9).

Furthermore, the quantitative analysis demonstrated that only 10 out of 39 SAs occurred more than 20 times in the textbooks, namely giving opinions, asking, giving advice, reporting, greeting, bidding farewell, giving directions, agreeing, disagreeing and expressing surprise. This finding raises questions about why these subtypes were emphasised over others in the textbooks, especially those that have been designated as learning objectives in the SELF. For example, giving opinions and asking received the most attention in the MG textbooks, accounting for 8.8% and 8.6% of the SA content, while the coverage percentages of other SAs ranged from 0.1% to 6.9% (see Table 6.4, Chapter 6). A cursory examination of the nature of the SAs that were emphasised indicated that they lack common characteristics. For instance, they do not belong to the same category, are not uniformly face-threatening and are not all recognised in the literature as challenging for EFL learners. Whereas giving opinions, advice and disagreeing are considered highly complex (Põldvere et al., 2022; Song, 2020), many others are not. In addition, the 10 SAs that were emphasised do not share the same level of directness and context sensitivity. For instance, SAs of reporting facts and giving directions are generally less context dependent than those that involve the expression of emotion or intention, such as disagreeing or giving advice. In sum, there appeared to be no clear rationale for prioritising these particular SA subtypes over others, such as suggesting, refusing, promising and offering, which constituted 2.2% or less of the total SAs across the three textbook levels.

The SA of giving suggestions, for example, received less attention than it merits given previous research findings about its daily use (e.g., Alfghe & Mohammadzadeh, 2021; Senel, 2021). According to the SELF (2014), giving suggestions is designated as a language function to be acquired in the first, second and third grades of Saudi secondary schools (pp. 61, 67 and 74). However, the MG textbooks provided only 13 occurrences (2.2%) of making suggestions, and this SA was completely absent in the third-level textbooks (MG5 and MG6). By contrast, other *directive* SAs, such as giving advice and directions, appeared over thirty times. Similarly, the highly occurring SAs of offering and promising, which the SELF (2014) includes as learning objectives of two secondary grades (pp. 61 and 73), were addressed only six (1%) and eight times (1.3%) in the textbooks. This is particularly remarkable when compared to the frequency of reporting, another SA that is specified among the learning objectives of two grades, and one that appeared 37 times across the three textbook levels with a distribution of 6.3% of the total SA frequency.

Additionally, the analysis revealed that the MG textbooks completely lacked explicit input on several SAs commonly used in daily life, including complimenting, responding to compliments, thanking, congratulating and inviting, all of which were included in the taxonomy adopted for this research. Some of these SAs, such as giving thanks and invitations were featured in the SELF as learning objectives (p. 57). The absence of these SAs from the English curriculum and textbooks is problematic, especially since some of these SAs can be particularly challenging for even advanced learners due to the conflicting conversational principles they entail (Herbert, 1989). Their absence in the textbooks could result in learners being competent in using some SAs but completely unable to use others (Neddar, 2010; Nevisi & Moghadasi, 2020; Vellenga, 2004). Indeed, previous research has shown that Saudi learners tend to struggle with some of these SAs. For instance, Alqarni (2017) reported that Saudi EFL students generally exhibited awkward compliment responses in various contexts. The lack of explicit information on compliment exchanges in Saudi textbooks might plausibly explain this awkwardness. Certainly, it indicates the need for educators and curriculum developers in Saudi Arabia to include instruction on compliment responses to facilitate learners' acquisition of this linguistic skill (Alqarni, 2017).

While the writers of the MG textbooks may have aimed to avoid overwhelming learners with a profusion of information about SA types and subtypes, they appeared to have overloaded students with information on certain SAs, such as giving opinions, reporting and advice, as mentioned previously. From a pragmatic perspective, it would be more sensible to offer intermediate-level learners, who already possess a fairly complex linguistic understanding, opportunities to practise various subtypes of SAs. This approach would enable them to achieve the learning goals specified in the curriculum guidelines and further enhance their proficiency beyond their current level. This argument can be supported by the well-accepted principle in second language acquisition that exposure to a comprehensive (but not excessive) amount of language input is essential for achieving successful language acquisition.

Another problem stemming from the limited occurrence of certain SAs in the textbooks is that it deprives learners of the opportunity to review and practice many of the SAs they have learned. Therefore, they are at high risk of forgetting much of what they have learned, a phenomenon known as "the forgetting curve" (Zaidi et al., 2020). This observation is particularly salient considering that English language learning in Saudi secondary school takes place over a course of three years; being exposed only infrequently (between one to 18 times) to highly common English SAs during this period is unlikely to enable them to develop pragmatic understanding and competence in these SAs.

Overall, the MG textbook writers did not seem to consult empirical research on SA use and frequency before designing their instructional materials, as evidenced by the disparity between the number of different SA subtypes they included and the non-recurrence of some SAs that appear frequently in natural language and pose difficulties for many Saudi learners. This lack of congruence with natural language use is consistent with what has been reported in several studies (e.g., Angouri, 2010; Bouton, 1996; Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Handford, 2010; Jiang, 2006; Koester, 2002). For example, Boxer and Pickering (1995) found a mismatch between complaint dialogues in textbooks and natural conversations, particularly with respect to indirect complaints and discussions on complaints as a social strategy, both of which were lacking in the textbooks. In another study, Jiang (2006) observed that while ESL textbooks emphasised the use of *Wh-questions* and the modal *should* for suggestions, these structures were less prevalent in actual language use than the expression *Let's...* and the modals *have to* and *need to*. These discrepancies between SA use in natural language and in language textbooks could result in teaching that lacks credibility. Moreover, it suggests that textbooks might not be based on authentic, spontaneous conversations but rather on the writers' intuitions, a criticism that has often been made, as mentioned in section 4.3.2 of the literature review chapter. As Ishihara and Cohen (2021) observed,

> the majority of published textbooks are still written on the basis of the curriculum writers' intuitions. … [textbook] dialogues are inauthentic in the sense that they do not represent spontaneous pragmatic language as used in natural conversation. (p. 171)

The tendency of textbook writers to rely on their intuitive understanding when designing pragmatic content might be attributed to the fact that intuition is easily accessible and stems from personal language experience, unlike empirical research or extensive linguistic analysis, which is time-consuming. Additionally, pragmatic knowledge, unlike language acquisition, is a domain that inherently lacks structure and consequently presents greater challenges in terms of teaching (Halliday, 1989). This might drive writers to lean on their intuitive insights to bridge the gap. However, the reliance on intuition alone in material design can be problematic because "intuition about speech act realization often differs greatly from the way in which naturalistic speech act patterns out" (Bardovi-Harlig, et al., 1991; Boxer & Pickering, 1995, p. 44; Ishihara, 2013; Ji, 2007). Previous research has attested to the unreliability of judgments made by even expert speakers (Cook, 2008; Tateyama & Kasper, 2008). It appears, therefore, that Bardovi-Harlig's (2001) claim that "textbooks cannot be counted on as a reliable source of pragmatic input for classroom language learners" (p. 25) may hold true.

Accordingly, it is recommended that language educators and textbook writers give more consideration to research-informed insights when designing their instructional materials (Ishihara & Cohen, 2021). An increasing body of literature exists that can inform textbook design by providing information regarding SA frequency and use in authentic language (e.g., Cohen & Ishihara, 2013; Rodríguez-Fuentes & Swatek, 2022). Scholars such as Bardovi-Harlig et al. (2017) and Cohen and Ishihara (2013) have provided guidelines and examples demonstrating how educators can incorporate a corpus-based approach to material design and the teaching of pragmatics. In sum, educators and textbook developers should be more intentional and strategic in selecting and including SAs by considering their nature, frequency in natural language, learners' needs and learning objectives. This approach would enhance learners' overall understanding of the language and better prepare them for effective communication in diverse contexts.

7.3 The Metapragmatic Information Accompanying SAs

The second research question investigated the type and quantity of metapragmatic information provided in the MG textbooks, including discussions of politeness, appropriacy, register, usage, illocutionary force and cultural information. The textbook analysis suggests that this metapragmatic information was restricted in terms of both the variety and amount provided, especially when compared to the overall amount of information the textbooks contained. Out of the 579 SAs presented in the textbooks, only 235 (40.5%) were accompanied by metapragmatic instructions and discussions. The majority of SAs thus lacked accompanying metapragmatic information that aids in comprehension and appropriate usage. This is not to suggest that each SA occurrence should have been accompanied by metapragmatic instruction; however, providing this instruction with less than half of the SAs is indicative of how the SAs are represented in the textbooks: abstractly and without regard for how they might be used in real life settings. As highlighted by Vellenga (2004), this way of presenting SAs "puts learners with little target language exposure at a disadvantage in terms of acquiring pragmatic competence" (p. 12).

While it is important not to overwhelm learners, pragmatics is an intrinsic and indispensable aspect of language competence. Moreover, learners possess an inherent ability to incorporate pragmatics into their linguistic repertoire and benefit from an exposure that aligns with their developmental path (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003). Neglecting this aspect of language acquisition may impede learners from fully grasping the sociolinguistic nuances needed for effective communication. The lack of metapragmatic content in this textbook series reflects a potential shortcoming in achieving its objective of enhancing communicative skills. A balanced approach that gradually introduces pragmatic concepts is more likely to ensure learner engagement, foster holistic competence and equip learners with the skills needed for effective communication in diverse contexts, thus enhancing language learning outcomes while mitigating the risk of providing too much information at once.

Furthermore, the textbooks did not cover all types of metapragmatic information examined in the study, and there was a notable variation in emphasis across the different types, with a greater focus on usage explanations. These discrepancies reflect a lack of guiding principles in the design of the textbooks, which might be attributed to the absence of instruction provided in the SELF regarding the incorporation of pragmatic input in the materials. Regardless of the explanation, the present findings align with previous literature emphasising the lack of metapragmatic information, especially sociopragmatic instruction, in English language textbooks (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Cohen & Ishihara, 2013; Dendenne, 2019; Neddar, 2010; Nguyen, 2011; Ji, 2007; Ren & Han, 2016; Takafumi et al., 2007; Vellenga, 2004). For example, Neddar (2010) conducted a study on the Spotlight and Headway series used in Algeria, where the predominant language is Algerian Arabic. The study revealed that metapragmatic information was provided with only 18.6% and 26% of SA occurrences in the Spotlight and Headway textbooks, respectively. Neddar (2010) argued that this lack of metapragmatic information could hinder learners' ability to react appropriately in pragmatically-loaded situations. Moreover, EFL learners who are not properly taught target pragmatic conventions could transfer some of their first language's pragmatic features to the target language, which would likely result in communication failures if a mismatch existed between the two (Neddar, 2010). Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive information on pragmatics in textbooks can lead both learners and teachers to perceive learning pragmatics as an optional aspect (Ren & Han, 2016). The common argument that textbooks are generally ineffective in fostering learners' pragmatic competence due to their lack of contextual and metapragmatic information (Cohen & Ishihara, 2013) thus appears substantiated. As Cohen and Ishihara (2013) concluded, learners whose instruction is based solely on these textbooks may master various linguistic forms, but they risk being unable to accurately select the appropriate ones to convey their intentions.

The following subsections provide a more detailed discussion of the results of each type of metapragmatic information found in the MG textbooks. These types include politeness, appropriacy and contextual information, usage information, illocutionary force and register.

7.3.1 Politeness

The analysis revealed a noticeable inadequacy in both the quantity and quality of politeness information present in the textbooks. Only seven politeness remarks were identified across the six textbooks, appearing with five SA types (see section 6.2.3.4). This finding indicates that no instruction was given on the politeness norms governing the social usage of the majority of SAs the textbooks address. These findings are consistent with previous studies conducted by Dendenne, (2019), LoCastro (1997), McConachy (2009), Neddar (2010), Nguyen (2011), Ren and Han (2016), Vellenga (2004) and Vu (2017), all of which found lack of attention given to politeness discussions in language textbooks. However, the present findings contradict those of AlGhamdi (2014), whose study on two college-level textbooks in a Saudi EFL context found politeness discussions in 17 instances, which the author viewed as sufficient. Unlike the present study, however, AlGhamdi (2014) examined all instances of politeness, whether accompanied by SAs or presented alone. Additionally, the textbooks she examined were mainly designed for listening and speaking purposes, and such texts can be expected to contain more pragmatic materials.

In the language classroom, teaching politeness norms is vital in developing learners' pragmatic competence (Watts, 2003; Yoga et al., 2018). Politeness expectations vary across different speech communities and cultures (Sifianou & Blitvich, 2017), and introducing learners to the politeness conventions of the target language expands their cultural awareness and enhances their ability to engage in meaningful conversations and establish positive relationships. It also helps them navigate potential difficulties that might arise during communication (LoCastro, 1997; Matthews & Thakkar, 2012). This is especially significant in the Saudi EFL context, where the norms of the learners' native culture differ markedly from those cultures where English is spoken as a native language. For instance, Arabic speakers view direct linguistic expressions as polite when giving advice or making requests; these SAs are often softened with semantic devices, mostly in the forms of religious prayers (Abualsamh, 2022; Qari, 2017). By contrast, native speakers of Anglo-Western varieties of English, such as British English, often prefer indirect requests and express politeness through syntactic and linguistic devices (Abualsamh, 2022; DeCapua & Dunham, 1993; Qari, 2017). Opportunities to recognise these differences outside of the classroom, however, are limited.

In his research on politeness among Arab and British English speakers, Hamza (2007) concluded that misunderstandings can arise from such differences. The study, which focused on Arab students majoring in English at a Libyan university, found that these students often used direct requests when communicating with their lecturers, such as 'What...?,' 'Why...?,' 'Repeat that,' and 'Explain to me...' These phrases are often viewed as linguistically impolite in English due to their imperative structure and lack of mitigation and politeness markers, and they are somewhat inappropriate for use in formal situations, especially with someone in a position of authority. As might be expected, this interaction style led to misunderstandings with the students' non-Arab lecturers, who perceived their behaviour as disrespectful. The author maintained that these communication issues emerged due to the students' practice of transferring culturally specific language strategies from their native culture. As the study demonstrated, it is imperative for language instructors to highlight the differences in expressing politeness in different languages to ensure that learners demonstrate cultural sensitivity, avoid needless misunderstandings and do not cause offense in multicultural settings.

It is important to note that the current study does not suggest that teaching politeness in the context of EFL requires imposing the norms of English-speaking cultures on learners, as some learners may aim to maintain their own cultural values and beliefs while acquiring proficiency in the target language (Kasper, 1997). However, the teaching of politeness in the language classroom should aim at raising learners' awareness of cultural norms and promoting reflection on the differences in politeness norms between their native and target languages, empowering them to make intentional language choices (Félix-Brasdefer & Mugford, 2017; Fitriyani & Andriyanti, 2020; Mahmud, 2019). This awareness is particularly important in the modern globalised world, where interaction between diverse languages and cultural groups has increased (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005b; Nguyen & Canh, 2019; Vu, 2017). It follows that instructional materials should provide learners with ample pragmatic information on politeness, enabling them to make well-informed decisions that align with their own value systems and beliefs while facilitating effective communication. As Dirven and Pütz (1993) concluded, "a major aim of foreign language learning is, then, to become aware of cultural communicative differences" and show a "willingness to accommodate" (p. 152).

The textbook analysis revealed a notable lack of politeness information, and when it was addressed, the content was problematic in two respects: First, the information was brief and oversimplified, and, second, it lacked consideration of the diverse range of alternative language forms that express different levels of politeness. Regarding the first of these issues, the textbook writers only touched on politeness, presenting brief statements that relied on the use of basic adjectives without an accompanying description of the situation requiring the polite expression. For example, when teaching making requests through the use of the modal verbs *can*, *could* and *would*, the textbook preceded these forms with the label "polite requests" (MG3, p. 78). The same instruction was used in MG2. The textbooks did not offer actual discussions of politeness that addressed context, nor did they discuss the different politeness degrees suggested by the given modals to help students better understand how to convey the intended communicative message. This observation aligns with McConachy and Hata's (2013) critique of ELT textbooks, namely, that they tend to oversimplify metapragmatic characterisations of other cultures by using basic adjectives, such as *polite* or *formal*, with the result that the expressions remain opaque to learners, who are likely to interpret their level of politeness based on their own cultural background. To address this issue, McConachy and Hata (2013) suggested that the textbook writers and teachers incorporate explicit metalanguage accompanied by linguistic examples of politeness expressions as well as reflective discussions to probe the meaning of words such as *rude* or *polite* and to compare how these concepts differ in different cultural contexts.

The second problem with the politeness content in the textbooks is that it was linked with a limited range of SA strategies, such as the use of *please* or modals. In one case, politeness was associated with the level of formality the expression conveyed: "you must be joking! (informal and not very polite)" (MG5, p. 58). However, it is important to teach students that other strategies to express politeness exist in the English language, such as using voice tone, hinting at the request, framing it as a question, or using conditional statements (see Trosborg, 1995). The textbooks' limited perspective could mislead learners into thinking there are only a few polite ways to communicate in English or that using the correct strategies will always be perceived as polite, which could eventually result in communication tension (see also Neddar, 2010; Vellenga, 2004). Gauging the level of politeness perceived or required implies an understanding of various contextual and social factors (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Locher & Watts, 2005, 2008), although the textbooks did not provide this additional information. For instance, saying "you must be joking!" to a close friend or family member would typically be understood as a light-hearted remark rather than impolite. Dendenne (2019) made similar observations in his study on pragmatic input in Algerian EFL textbooks, finding that the textbooks often associated politeness issues with formal and informal language use, but did not give further clarification. The author argued that this misrepresentation of politeness could lead learners to mistakenly believe that formality always indicates politeness and vice versa.

A related criticism is that the majority of SAs in the textbooks, including face-threatening acts, such as suggestions, advice and refusals, were presented without any reference to pragmatic relevance. For example, the expression “no kidding” was explained as a way “to express surprise, in this case, pleasant surprise” (MG1, p. 39), but no information was provided about its level of politeness or appropriate contextual usage. However, this phrase is context-sensitive, as LoCastro (1997) noted. In educational settings, for instance, the expression would be considered inappropriate if spoken by a student to a teacher, “given the power, status and age differences” between the interlocutors (LoCastro, 1997, p. 252). Therefore, failing to provide guidance governing the usage of such phrases could place learners in a disadvantageous position (LoCastro, 1997). Another example appeared on page 3 of MG1, where samples of language were provided for expressing agreement and disagreement with varying degrees of politeness (see section 6.2.3.1 for more details). These expressions were not accompanied by detailed explanations of the politeness levels they convey, despite the SELF guidelines clearly stating that one of the grade’s objectives is to learn how to “politely express agreement and disagreement” (SELF, 2014, p. 57). The limited metapragmatic content related to politeness in the textbooks raises concerns about the adequacy of explanatory tools for intentional language choices in terms of rudeness or politeness (see Neddar, 2011).

Although the textbooks generally follow the expectations of the SELF guidelines to teach politeness, they provide such minimal information on the subject that their effectiveness is questionable. It should be noted, however, that while the SELF highlights the importance of teaching appropriate and polite language use in its introduction, it does not provide explicit guidelines on the specific content to include or how to effectively teach it (SELF, 2014, p. 9). In fact, polite language use is mentioned only briefly as a learning objective in the SELF guidelines, appearing just twice. For instance, “ask for information (politely)” is listed as a target function for first-grade level, and “to politely express agreement and disagreement” is a speaking objective for the same grade level (SELF, 2015, pp. p. 57-60). However, no further guidance on how to implement politeness teaching is provided. This oversight in the curriculum guidelines may explain why there were so few remarks of politeness in the designated textbooks.

Ideally, teachers would compensate for the lack of politeness information by using supplementary materials. However, this may not happen, especially in the Saudi EFL context where teachers often have limited exposure to the sociolinguistic features of the target language and tend to accept textbooks at face value (Al-qahtani, 2020). In addition, the lack of proper guidance in the teacher’s books increases the likelihood of teachers neglecting politeness instruction or even inadvertently providing incorrect information based on their own intuitions and assumptions. Further research, however, is needed to substantiate these inferences.

7.3.2 Appropriacy

The textbook analyses revealed limited attention given to the pragmatic concept of appropriacy. Both the quantity and quality of information concerning appropriacy were found to be restricted and lacking, as they appeared six times across the textbooks (see section 6.2.4) with only two SA types: greetings and expressions of farewell. These findings highlight a substantial oversight in addressing the social norms governing the appropriate usage of the identified SAs.

According to SA theory, meaning is negotiated through contextual variables such as power relations, social distance and the rank of imposition, as well as the interaction between language users, including the speaker-to-listener or writer-to-reader dynamic (Thomas, 2014). These contextual cues can assist in determining how to achieve appropriacy when performing SAs (see Brown & Levinson, 1987). For instance, decisions regarding the respective status of the speaker and hearer can affect the level of directness in the expression of the SA (LoCastro, 1997; Nguyen, 2005, 2007). Previous pragmatics research has shown that contextual and interlocutor variables can vary significantly across communities and cultures (Haugh & Chang, 2015; Nguyen, 2005, 2007), impacting how SAs are produced and perceived within each language community (an example of such research highlighting the impact of cultural differences on SA production between American and Arabic cultures can be found in section 3.4.2). Accordingly, it is important for language textbooks and classrooms to integrate appropriacy instruction to help learners develop an understanding of cultural differences that will assist them in conveying their intended meanings, thereby enhancing their sociopragmatic competencies and fostering effective intercultural communication.

The SELF guidelines acknowledge the importance of appropriateness in language usage as indicated by their curriculum goal of teaching "sociolinguistic appropriateness" in secondary-school language education (p. 53). According to the guidelines, language is employed for communication, and, thus, "teaching a language involves enabling learners to interact socially in a variety of situations and contexts" (p. 9). More specifically, it entails enabling them to "adjust what [they] say and the means of expressing it to the situation and the recipient" (p. 54). However, it appears that the writers of the MG textbooks did not fully consider these instructions, as most SAs were presented without contextual information or instruction on when or how to perform them in an appropriate manner. In fact, many SAs were presented in isolation of usage instructions, being given to illustrate grammar rules. This is shown in the following excerpt:

Make and Respond to Suggestions

To make suggestions we can use: *Let's..../ How about .....?/ Why don't we/ you .....?*

Q: **Let's** look for the hidden treasure.	**A:** **We can't.** We don't have a map.
Q: **How about** making a time capsule for the school project?	**A:** **Great idea!** Let's do it!
Q: **Why don't we** design a robot to help with the cleaning?	**A:** Yes, **why not! That sounds great!**

(MG1, p. 44)

Such instruction is problematic as it lacks both explicit and implicit indicatives of the setting in which the suggestions might be made and the nature of the relationship between the speakers. Consequently, even if students practised the given phrases until they achieved fluency, they might not be able to successfully apply them for communication purposes (Denddenne, 2019; Ji, 2007). It would have been more advantageous to provide the suggestion phrases within a relevant context, accompanied by questions or discussions that encourage students to reflect on how context and relationship dynamics influence linguistic choices when making suggestions (McConachy & Hata, 2013).

In other places in the texts, SAs were presented in conversational contexts; however, information regarding the influence of situational and interlocutor variables on language choices was rarely given. For example, joke-telling expressions were incorporated in a conversation in which the relationship between the speakers was not explicitly indicated. It is particularly important when giving instruction on joke-telling that the nature of the relationship between the speakers is specified, given the highly context-sensitive nature of the SA involved. A lack of guidance in this regard can limit students' awareness of how relationship dynamics impact appropriate language use in different contexts and inhibit their ability to make informed and appropriate choices when using these difficult SAs.

The degree to which such pragmatic information was lacking varied in the textbooks. For instance, in MG3, an effort was made to expand on the SAs of greetings and farewells, as shown in the extract below.

Writing Corner

When you write an email to a friend:

- **Greet and sign your letter in an informal manner, e.g. Hi/Hello/*Dear* + first name and *Best/Best wishes/See you soon/Take care* + your first name.**
- **Write as if you were speaking to him/her, i.e. use contracted forms, emoticons, or abbreviations.**

When you write to a business/professional contact:

- **Address and sign the letter more formally, e.g. *Dear Sir/Madam/Dear* Mr./Mrs. + last name and Kind *regards/Best regards/Sincerely*.**
- **Do not use contracted or abbreviated forms.**

(MG3, p. 15)

This extract provides contextual insights into the employment of greeting and farewell expressions and explicitly acknowledges the influence of the speaker's relationship on the language choices. Such metapragmatic information could initiate a class discussion that would increase students' awareness of these important considerations (Nu & Murray, 2020). Rather than merely listing the expressions in a box or providing them as language samples in grammar lessons, the authors in this case provided contextual and relational information to clarify the appropriate usage of the SAs. Unfortunately, this was not the case with the majority of SAs that were covered.

The teacher's guides, moreover, offered minimal supplementary materials on appropriacy in SA usage, making it unlikely for this information to be adequately addressed in the classroom. This finding is particularly critical because there is significant uncertainty about the ability of Saudi teachers to effectively compensate for the absence of appropriateness-related materials without textbook guidance. The problem pertains to their non-native speaker status in English, their reported limited pragmatic knowledge and their infrequent use of the teacher's guides, as indicated by the SRIs.

Overall, the findings on appropriacy content provide further support to previous research, which has consistently criticised ELT textbooks for their inadequate coverage of contextual and sociocultural elements that influence the use of SAs (e.g., Denedenne, 2019; Diepenbroek & Derwing, 2013; Ji, 2007; Neddar, 2010; Nguyen, 2011; Ren & Han, 2016; Vellenga, 2004). For instance, Nguyen (2011) noted that, in three EFL Vietnamese textbooks used in secondary schools, metapragmatic information regarding the appropriate use of SAs in specific contexts was provided for only two SAs, agreeing and disagreeing. Ren and Han (2016) also arrived at a similar conclusion in their analysis of ten Chinese university ELT books, finding a lack of discussion on contextual pragmatic factors such as relationship, age and gender. The authors argued that this omission could hinder learners' ability to respond appropriately in highly-pragmatic situations.

The tendency to prioritise the linguistic forms used in performing SAs while overlooking the social and contextual aspects of their use suggests a traditional approach to language teaching that is not commensurate with the cross-cultural needs of language students in EFL classrooms. This point is further discussed in the following subsection.

7.3.3 Register

The findings indicated that discussions regarding register or level of formality, which are vital to cross-cultural learning, were infrequent in the textbooks. Despite being the second most occurring metapragmatic discussion, they only appeared 17 times across the textbooks with seven SAs. This limited coverage of register information aligns with the findings of Dendenne (2018), Ji (2007), Neddar (2010) and Vu (2017), all of whom found a lack of register discussions in the language textbooks examined. However, these findings contrast with those of AlGhamdi (2014) and Ren and Han (2016). In the Saudi context, AlGhamdi (2014) identified a significant number of exercises dedicated to the practise of speaking, writing and interpreting different registers. The author also found that linguistic expressions for SAs in the textbooks examined were occasionally organised in accordance with their formality level, ranging from the least formal to the most formal or vice versa, with explicit mention made of their formality. One possible explanation for this finding, as previously discussed later in this chapter, is the nature of the textbooks that AlGhamdi (2014) examined. These textbooks were specifically designed to improve the speaking and listening skills of college students majoring in English, unlike the integrated textbooks that the current study investigated. The difference in intended audience and goals might explain the difference in the quantity and quality of pragmatic content included in these texts.

Explanations aside, insensitivity to the degree of formality required in actual language settings can lead to inappropriate language use, which in turn can cause pragmatic tension or breakdown (Vellenga, 2004). Language used in communication, whether oral or written, varies from formal to informal, depending on the topic, situation and people involved. For example, the language used to invite close friends to an event differs from that used to invite colleagues or supervisors, with the latter often requiring a more formal tone. If the same level of formality were used to invite both groups, it would result in an inappropriate use of language (Ji, 2007). Being aware of such differences is important for language learners, especially when they come from a completely different cultural background than that of most people who speak the target language as their native language. This observation applies to Saudi learners. Providing these language learners with opportunities to navigate the complexities of cross-cultural communication is important to avoid potential misunderstandings and enhance successful communication in diverse contexts (Wilczewski & Alon, 2023).

It seemed as though Saudi curriculum designers were conscious of the vital role of register awareness in language learning since they included "appreciating register shifts" and "adopt[ing] a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances" as learning outcomes for the secondary school level (SELF, 2014, pp. 52–53). Textbooks were thus expected to provide ample register information for their intended readers. Not only did they fall short, however, but the information provided tended to be simplified and concise. For example, a grammar lesson in MG1 presented modals for giving advice in isolation and followed them with a metapragmatic note on formality that lacked proper contextualisation: "*Must* is stronger than *should*. It has a more formal or official tone" (p. 78). There is no doubt that such metalinguistic information is beneficial for learners. However, providing contextualisation of the SA expressions along with further metapragmatic explanations and exercises would be more beneficial, especially considering the distinct perceptions of formality in Arabic and English cultures. While teachers might be advised to provide additional pragmatic instruction, the corresponding teacher's guide lacked explanation of formality that pertained to the foregoing example, or, indeed, to other formality instructions, making such intervention difficult if not impossible for most Arabic teachers of English.

Furthermore, it appeared that certain SA types in the textbooks included more register information than others. Seven out of the 12 register remarks identified were related to the SA expressions of greeting and farewell. Ji (2007) made a similar observation, noting that making requests was the only SA that included register information about formal and informal use in the examined textbooks. However, it is worth noting that, in the MG textbooks, the register comments regarding greetings and farewells were the same and repeated, in both cases addressing letters to friends and to business partners. Providing exposure to register information with other common SAs is also important for learning and practice purposes. To address this issue, textbooks could incorporate research activities for students that involve, for example, comparing the use of SA expressions in diverse social contexts within their native and target cultures (see Kondo, 2008). By implementing these strategies, textbooks would provide learners with more tools to navigate diverse cultural and social environments.

This lack of emphasis on the pragmatic relevance of register appeared throughout the textbooks. For instance, the SA phrases presented in expression boxes within conversation lessons often exhibited variation in formality degree. Surprisingly, however, this variation was rarely acknowledged or addressed. A striking example was found in MG6, which provides different phrases for accepting apologies, such as: “don’t sweat it”, “don’t worry about it”, and “it’s no big deal” (p. 10). Neither the textbook nor the teacher’s guide acknowledged the informality of these expressions or offered any contextual information that would help students understand the type of context that required this informal language use. Randomly using a linguistic expression without proper consideration of the context in which it might be appropriate hardly signals the ability to use SAs successfully. The textbooks’ neglect of formality issues, alongside other metapragmatic considerations, suggests that the textbook writers adhered to a functional approach rather than a communicative approach, contrary to their claims (see Ji, 2007). That such an approach can foster pragmatic competence is highly improbable (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Crandall & Basturkmen, 2004).

7.3.4 Usage Explanations

SA usage was the only aspect of metapragmatic instruction that appeared consistently across all MG textbooks. The textbook writers dedicated 68.8% of metapragmatic information to usage explanations, all of which focused on grammar with the exception of two statements about intonation. These findings are consistent with earlier research conducted by Ji (2007), Li (2018), Limberg (2016) and Vu (2017) highlighting the predominant focus on pragmalinguistic aspects of language within the pragmatic content found in textbooks.

Usage explanation primarily focuses on providing pragmalinguistic instructions pertaining to the use of SAs, which makes it different from other metapragmatic instruction more closely associated with sociopragmatics (see Li, 2018; Vu, 2017). This study classified as usage information any explicit employment of metalanguage, including instructions or descriptions, to elucidate the grammatical aspects of SAs, especially in constructing specific SA forms. These kinds of instructions are typically accompanied by example sentences, as shown in the following excerpt that addresses the construction of the SA for giving advice:

> **Modals and Giving Advice in the Present and Future**
> Use *ought (not) to, had better,* and *should (not)* to give advice.
> Ali: The candidate for mayor said he would build a sports complex and lower taxes. We **should vote** for him!
> Majid: I don’t agree. The news story says that he is not telling the truth. We **ought not to vote** for that candidate. We **had better** vote for someone else.

(MG6, p. 64)

Engaging in similar metalinguistic discussions regarding language is important in enhancing learners’ linguistic awareness as such discussions facilitate their comprehension of the various linguistic forms for expressing an illocutionary meaning (Kasper, 1997). However, language cannot be learned solely through pragmalinguistics; it requires attention to both the linguistic structures of utterances and the relevant social and contextual aspects with which they are associated (McConachy, 2009). Studies have shown that sociopragmatic failures, involving difficulties in appropriate language use in social contexts, can pose significant barriers to effective communication, while pragmalinguistic failures, being linguistic issues, are comparatively easier to overcome through grammatical error correction (Bardovi-

Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Li, 2018). Studies conducted by Li (2015, 2018) would appear to highlight the need for sociopragmatic instruction. An initial study (2015) revealed limited sociopragmatic competence among Chinese EFL students, as observed through their lack of understanding of imposition degrees in different social contexts and inability to adjust their expressions accordingly. Li's later study (2018) attributed the previously reported lack of competence to the limited sociopragmatic content found in the English language textbooks used in China, an attribution corroborated by other researchers including Ji (2007) and Ren and Han (2016).

The amount of usage information in the MG textbooks reflects an emphasis on form rather than function, attesting to the observation made earlier that these textbooks adopt a grammar-focused teaching approach which lacks sufficient consideration of how language is actually used in social situations. These findings contradict the guidelines established by the SELF, which advocate for a communicative theory of language and emphasise "a shift from a focus on form to a focus on meaning" (SELF, 2014, p. 11). This emphasis is also apparent in the framework's specification of "sociolinguistic appropriateness" as a primary objective for secondary education and the inclusion of different "language functions" that should be taught at each level. The textbooks should align more closely with these guidelines by moving away from a rigid grammar-centric approach to incorporating more sociopragmatic language usage to aid in the development of EFL learners. Moreover, the curricular guidelines themselves could benefit from revisions to improve the directions for teaching pragmatic knowledge. These potential improvements will be further discussed in section 8.4, under implications.

7.3.5 Illocutionary Force

According to the textbook analysis, information about illocutionary force was the least mentioned metapragmatic aspect among all those discussed, appearing only three times in one textbook (see section 6.2.4). This result echoes Neddar's (2010) finding that both the Spotlight series intended for intermediate-level EFL Algerian classrooms and the internationally marketed Headway textbooks lacked sufficient input on illocutionary force. Neddar (2010) highlighted the significance of providing learners with metapragmatic knowledge on illocutionary force, particularly with respect to refusals or offers since these involve different degrees of force that could threaten the hearer's positive face and disrupt social harmony if used inappropriately. For example, the invitation refusal phrase "Thank you, but I'm really busy..." found on page 3 of Spotlight 3 carries a higher illocutionary force than "How nice of you, unfortunately I'm busy…" due to its directness and lack of positive language that might soften the rejection. The textbook, however, did not provide any insight into the difference between these utterances, potentially leading learners to use expressions that convey meanings contrary to their intended meaning (Neddar, 2010).

Illocutionary force, which refers to the strength or intensity with which an illocutionary point is presented (Vellenga, 2004), has most often been examined in conjunction with other metapragmatic types, especially politeness and appropriacy. For instance, Dendenne (2019) combined illocutionary force with appropriacy information, resulting in a relatively high number of comments on illocutionary force as compared to those found in the current study, which considers illocutionary force as an independent metapragmatic type and treats any references to politeness or related topics as separate instances of different metapragmatic information. Regardless of how it is classified, however, all prior research acknowledges the significance of including information on illocutionary force in language textbooks to facilitate students' understanding of this concept and its practical application (Dendenne, 2019; Ji, 2007; Vellenga, 2004; Vu, 2017).

That the examined textbooks contained only three explicit instructions on this topic was therefore an oversight. One instruction stated: "*Ought to* is stronger than *should*. *Might* and *could* are less strong" (MG1, p. 84). Like this example, the other instructions pertaining to illocutionary force also centred on the use of modals and were given in the context of advice-giving. This observation is consistent with the findings of Vellenga's (2004) study, which indicated that the discussion of illocutionary force in the examined textbook was exclusively linked to the use of modals.

Providing illocutionary force information can serve as a good starting point for teachers to initiate discussions on how different expressions of the same SA can vary in terms of their reception. Such discussions could be enhanced by providing explicit metalanguage that highlights and explains the notion of *strength* in these comments. For instance, students could be taught that using the modal *must* in giving advice carries a stronger tone as it suggests obligation or necessity, while the modal *may* conveys a more permissive tone, allowing the listener to follow the advice or not. Furthermore, engaging students in reflective activities might enhance their understanding of the nuances of pragmatics. An example would be an activity that involves analysing various scenarios, discussing the implications of using different modals and reflecting on the impact of these linguistic choices on the amount of force and obligation conveyed to the listener (Cohen, 2016; McConachy & Hata, 2013). To facilitate such discussions, the textbooks should have offered more guidance on illocutionary force within and across various types of SAs, going beyond advice-giving to include other types, such as making requests, refusing requests and expressing opinions. These additions would have enhanced their coverage of illocutionary force, which is an essential aspect of pragmatic awareness, and broadened students' analytical skills.

7.4 SA and Metapragmatic Content According to Textbook Level

The quantitative analysis revealed a significant decrease in the amount of SA information in the MG series of textbooks from the first to the third levels (see Table 6.5 of Chapter 6). These findings are consistent with those of Ji (2007) and Gholami (2015), who reported a considerable decrease in pragmatic content as the proficiency level of textbooks increased. For instance, the frequency of SAs, such as agreeing, disagreeing, and giving advice, was notably lower in the examined higher-level textbooks than in the lower-level ones. For example, the SA of giving advice appeared 21 times in the first-level textbooks; in subsequent textbook levels, this frequency was reduced by more than half, appearing nine times in second-level textbooks and 10 times in third-level textbooks. Furthermore, the SAs of commanding, asking for favours, warning, and prohibiting were not reintroduced in higher-level textbooks, although they were found to be considerably challenging, even for learners with fairly advanced grammatical competence (see El Hiani, 2015). Additionally, the analysis revealed that the first-level textbooks had a higher overall occurrence of metapragmatic information compared to the second- and third-level textbooks (Table 6.9 in Chapter 6). While there was no statistical significance in the metapragmatic content, noticeable differences were observed in the frequencies of metapragmatic information across each textbook level. Based on these findings, learners using MG textbooks are provided fewer opportunities to learn new SAs or practise previously introduced ones as their linguistic and pragmatic sophistication increases. This outcome contradicts a widely accepted principle in language education literature that advocates the gradual and consistent introduction of language functions and features, along with ample practice opportunities, as an effective approach to language learning (Li, 2018).

The observation that the amount of pragmatic content in EFL textbooks declines as proficiency levels increase highlights an intriguing pattern, and several possible explanations might account for this trend. Firstly, textbook designers may presume that by reaching higher linguistic levels, students have acquired a high level of pragmatic competency, resulting in the reduced inclusion of pragmatic content in higher-level textbooks. However, there is debate in the literature about whether high language proficiency levels ensure commensurate levels of pragmatic development, particularly for SA production (see section 4.2.1 for a discussion). In fact, many Saudi studies on interlanguage pragmatics and L2 acquisition have shown that language learners, even those with high grammatical levels, often struggle to communicate appropriately in the target language (e.g., Abduljawad, 2020; Al-Juraywi & Abdulaziz, 2021; Alkahtani, 2012; Almegren, 2017). This could be attributed to the Saudi EFL context, given its limited exposure to the target language, which can conceivably “restrict pragmatic input and opportunities for practicing discourse organization strategies” (Gholami, 2015, p. 42). Secondly, higher-level classrooms often promote independent learning, encouraging students to engage with advanced pragmatic aspects through authentic materials such as movies, news and literature, rather than offering structured teaching of pragmatics. This focus might lead textbook writers to overlook the need for instruction on pragmatics at this level and focus more on exam-preparation materials or academic language skills. Overall, these decisions likely reflect the intuitions and beliefs of the MG series writers rather than being based on empirical evidence.

Therefore, researchers in pragmatics call upon educators and material designers to treat linguistic and pragmatic competences as interdependent instead of assuming that they naturally codevelop (Kasper & Rose, 2002). According to Yang (2015),

> linguistic competence development will not naturally lead to the appropriate use of the target language ... They are interdependent because linguistic competence is the foundation of pragmatic competence and pragmatic competence is the ability of appropriately using the linguistic forms

> in context, the combination of the two is the communicative competence. They are like the two wings of a bird; in order to develop communicative competence, both of them should be paid attention to. (p. 1292)

Furthermore, teaching pragmatics should not be aimed exclusively at learners in lower levels, nor should it be treated as complementary in language materials and classrooms. As Childs (2005) (cited in Bouchard, 2011) asserts,

> pragmatics is not an optional add-on. It is a necessary facet of language and of language learning. That is because the whole point is no longer grammatical form but communication of meaning, and that is based on situations. (p. 23)

This assertion is particularly valid when considering the argument in section 7.3.4: the consequences of pragmatic errors are potentially more severe than those of grammatical errors, especially when produced by advanced learners (see also the literature review, section 4.2.1). Accordingly, MG textbook writers should be more careful about the inclusion of SA material at all levels rather than relying on linguistic proficiency to enhance pragmatic performance. Further research investigating the motivations and perceptions of MG textbook writers is needed to better understand the basis upon which they distribute SAs and metapragmatic information.

7.5 Teachers' Adaptations to Pragmatic Content in Textbooks

The fourth research question sought to determine whether teachers made adaptations to the pragmatic content as well as identify the reasons behind these adaptations. The findings indicate that teachers primarily relied on the textbooks when teaching pragmatics, making minimal and ineffective adjustments to their SA information. These findings align with those of previous studies conducted by Al-Ghamdi (2014) and Vellenga (2004), demonstrating that not all teachers supplemented the textbooks with additional materials to compensate for their limited pragmatic content.

The literature on interlanguage pragmatics showcases a positive correlation between explicit pragmatic instruction and learners' development of pragmatic competence (see section 4.2.2 for further discussion). However, pragmatic instruction is often neglected in actual teaching practices (Vellenga, 2004; Xiao-Le, 2011), including in the Saudi secondary schools examined in this study. While the observed teachers made some adaptations to the textbooks to teach pragmatics, their effectiveness is unclear for several reasons. First, a significant portion of these adaptations involved deletions, by which teachers completely or partially removed SA content without providing alternatives. Deletion was observed in approximately 30% of classes, surpassing modifications and additions, which were collectively observed in 16.6% of classes. The reasons cited for this practice included limited class time, heavy curricular demands, and low proficiency among students. These factors have been reported previously by Al-qahtani (2020) in another study on pragmatic instruction in the Saudi EFL context. However, there are doubts regarding whether the consistent deletion of SA content would effectively help students develop beyond their current proficiency level. The practice also raises questions about whether teaching practices like deletion may contribute to students' low pragmatic level, although this particular issue falls outside the scope of the present study. One potential motivation behind the deletion of pragmatic content could be the teachers' perception of pragmatics as less valuable than other linguistic elements. This notion is supported by the perspectives of two teachers, Reem and Abrar, both of whom implied that vocabulary and grammar—regarded as "fundamental language skill[s]" (Abrar, SRI 1) and "the most important language aspects" (Reem, SRI 2)—should receive the majority of their teaching time.

Second, most of the additional pragmatic materials provided by the teachers were centred around grammar and language usage, neglecting sociopragmatic elements. Despite the importance of the pragmalinguistic supplementations, the textbook analysis revealed that the majority (68.8%) of the metapragmatic information associated with SAs focused primarily on linguistic usage explanations, as discussed earlier in section 7.3.4. This dynamic underscores the need for additional sociopragmatic materials to address the existing gap; however, this was not offered by the teachers. This practice further reinforces the earlier assertion regarding the teachers' tendency to undervalue the language's pragmatic and sociocultural dimensions relative to other dimensions.

Third, teachers often simplified SA activities by replacing them with basic tasks, such as "give me examples" and "complete the sentence", in line with the predominantly objective and direct format of exam questions. While this practice is often considered acceptable due to teachers' understanding of students' needs and levels, using the exam format as a justification for modifying textbook content becomes less valid when the choice of question format is determined by the teacher rather than external imposition, as confirmed by all the teachers in the SRIs. Furthermore, limiting pragmatic exercises to simplified and objective tasks can deprive students of valuable opportunities to apply SAs in meaningful contexts, express creativity, and demonstrate nuanced pragmatic knowledge (see Brown & Hudson, 2002; Shepard, 2000). This preference for exam format, which influences SA instruction, may be driven by the large number of students in public schools, leading teachers to opt for objective exams for grading convenience. Another potential factor could be a lack of understanding of how to assess students' pragmatic knowledge, potentially making them hesitant to include pragmatic elements in their teaching (Kasper, 2001). Recommendations for assessing pragmatic knowledge in Saudi classrooms will be offered in the upcoming chapter, section 8.4.

Fourth, some attempts made by the teachers to supplement metapragmatic information related to sociopragmatic elements were rather problematic. In one illustrative instance, teacher Samia taught her students that advice was always conveyed as an imperative when given by a person of a higher power, disregarding variability in advice-giving expressions (see section 6.3.1.2.2). The teachers also cited compliance with COVID-19-related social distancing rules as a motivation behind modifying pair and group exercises into basic individual activities. However, this justification is questionable, as students were seated closely together regardless of activity type, and teachers like Hana and Saba sometimes effectively implemented pair and group work for tasks focused on other language skills, such as writing and grammar.

These findings suggest that there may be limited knowledge of both English-language pragmatics and means of effectively teaching them among teachers. As a result, teachers "might feel at a loss [when teaching pragmatics], as they are not native of English and might lack metapragmatic awareness of the L2 pragmatic norms" (Sharif et al., 2017, p. 51). This assumption is substantiated by responses provided by the teachers in the background questionnaire (see section 5.2.4). It is also supported by similar studies in the Saudi context by Al-qahtani (2020) and Zughaibi (2022; 2023) as well as those in other EFL contexts, including those by Eslami-Rasekh and Eslami-Rasekh (2008) and Farashaiyan et al. (2017) in Iran and Ivanova (2018) in Bulgaria. This limited understanding of pragmatics among teachers represents an additional challenge for EFL students in acquiring pragmatic skills on top of the inadequate textbooks and EFL learning environment (Al-qahtani, 2020). In fact, it has been identified as a contributing factor to the frequently observed low levels of pragmatic proficiency among EFL students (Wyner & Cohen, 2015; Zughaibi, 2023). According to Zughaibi (2023),

> teachers are the primary source of L2 input in EFL environments. Their classroom interactions offer students linguistic and lexical information, and a lack of adequate information and correct pragmatic practices may impact students' pragmatic development in the target language. Students' low sociopragmatic awareness may also be viewed as a consequence of teachers' general lack of pragmatic instruction. (pp. 67 - 68)

In other words, the limited pragmatic knowledge among teachers naturally leads to ineffective pragmatic instruction and supplementation. As teacher Rowa explained in the interview, being a non-native speaker with limited exposure and knowledge of English pragmatics increases the likelihood of making mistakes when conveying pragmatic information to students (see section 6.3.2.1.2). This situation ultimately hampers students' acquisition of pragmatic knowledge.

Furthermore, teachers' practices were likely influenced by MoE guidelines. While these guidelines contained some pragmatic materials, they lacked clear instructions on how to teach and assess them, and they failed to emphasise the importance of pragmatics. Consequently, teachers may underestimate the importance of developing students' pragmatic abilities when relying solely on prescribed textbooks. In addition, MoE supervisors' constant emphasis on strictly adhering to the curriculum may discourage some teachers from providing necessary pragmatic supplements. This dynamic also leads teachers to perceive offering essential pragmatic input as the role of curriculum and textbook designers rather than their own responsibility. This viewpoint was evident in the cases of Reem and Saba, who openly expressed that it was the responsibility of textbook writers and curriculum designers to address any deficiencies in the pragmatic content of the textbooks (see section 6.3.1.1).

Teachers' practices may also be influenced by the tendency of teacher education and training programmes to overlook pragmatics-related issues, as highlighted by previous studies (e.g., Biesenback-Lucas, 2003; Eslami-Rasekh & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008; Glaser, 2018; Ishihara, 2011). Even when pragmatics is addressed in these programmes, the focus is generally on theoretical considerations rather than practical implementation (Cohen, 2012; Sharif et al., 2017; Tan & Farashaiyan, 2016). Ishihara (2011) has stressed the significance of subject-matter knowledge in pragmatic instruction: To adapt current materials to incorporate pragmatics, teachers simply must possess a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Similarly, Savvidou and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2019) argued that inadequate teacher training can lead some teachers to "feel uncomfortable about being a source for target language pragmatics" (p. 39).

To effectively address the aforementioned issues, the present study made some implications for the teachers, policymakers, and textbook writers in the Saudi EFL contexts. These implications are discussed in the next chapter.

7.6 Teachers' Perceptions of SA Content and Teaching

The last research question concerns teachers' perceptions of pragmatics in classroom teaching and in the MG textbooks. The obtained results indicate that the teachers generally held negative views of the quantity and quality of SAs and metapragmatic content in the MG series. Most of the interviewed teachers (five out of nine) agreed that the quantity of the pragmatic information in the textbooks was suitable for the students' overall level, while they all agreed that it had substantial deficiencies in both nature and quality. This finding partially corresponds with the results of the content analysis, which indicated that the textbooks contained a substantial number of SA expressions but offered limited metapragmatic information alongside them as well as an uneven distribution of SA types. The teachers argued that such limited pragmatic content was unlikely to sufficiently develop students' communicative skillset. They suggested that increasing the number of metapragmatic cues and enhancing the textbooks' means of presenting SAs could significantly improve the situation.

These findings are consistent with a study conducted by Li (2007), which reported EFL teachers at a Chinese institution expressing concern over a lack of pragmatic content. These teachers acknowledged their limited resources and knowledge regarding the implementation of pragmatics in the classroom. These findings highlight the importance of including sufficient pragmatic content in language textbooks, as it enables teachers to be better guided and informed in their instruction. As Bell and Gower (1998) emphasised, textbooks should

> provide teachers and learners with a range of professionally developed materials …, thereby allowing teachers to spend their valuable time more on facilitating learning than materials production. (p. 135)

It is worth mentioning here that there is a discrepancy between the teachers' stated beliefs (regarding the need for the comprehensive inclusion of pragmatics) and their actual adaptation practices, which included deleting and simplifying pragmatic activities. For instance, Hana expressed the need for increased SA information and pragmatic functions in textbooks during her interview, but she was observed deleting pragmatic content in two out of four lessons.

Furthermore, the findings from the interviews indicated that all teachers possessed positive views of the importance of teaching and learning L2 pragmatics. They explained that acquiring pragmatic skills would enable students to communicate effectively with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, be it during travel, social media interactions or encounters with tourists, colleagues and delegates. The importance of pragmatic competence is further heightened by the fact that mastery of the English language has now become a prerequisite for many universities and professions in Saudi Arabia (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; El-Dakhs et al., 2019). Despite this, however, the teachers' classroom practices did not consistently reflect their perceived importance of pragmatics; as discussed previously, they rarely provided additional pragmatic and socio-cultural content to their students. In other words, there was a clear discrepancy between the teachers' perceptions and their implementation of those perceptions into instructional practice. Similar inconsistency was highlighted in Al-qahtani's (2020) study, which noted that while Saudi teachers understood the importance of pragmatics and were familiar with its concepts, integrating these effectively into their teaching practices remains a significant challenge. This may be attributed to the factors discussed in the previous section, including constraints on time and resources and the limited attention given to pragmatic competence in the curricular guidelines and textbooks. As a result, EFL teachers have become reluctant to integrate pragmatics into their language classrooms (Jianda, 2006).

The teachers' level of training might also have influenced this issue. The teachers participating in this study all had over five years of teaching experience, indicating they were hired before the 2017 educational reforms. These reforms included requirements for untrained teachers to obtain a professional teaching licence and pass a teacher knowledge test, but those already employed were automatically granted licences without the updated training (see section 2.6). Many of the participating teachers did not specialise in EFL education, appeared to lack in-depth knowledge of pragmatics and had received little training in adapting materials or using the MG series, as indicated in their survey responses (see section 5.2.4). This shortfall in training likely contributed to the disconnect between their theoretical beliefs and practical application in the classroom. Further research is needed to explore how pragmatics is integrated into teacher training programmes and to examine the dynamics between teachers' beliefs and practices within the context of Saudi EFL education.

7.7 Chapter Summary

The outcome of the textbook analysis regarding the quantity and distribution of SAs revealed that the frequency of SA occurrences within the textbooks was relatively large, with an average of 96.5 SAs per book, considering factors such as learning objectives, student proficiency levels, and comparisons with previous research. The analyses also showed that the distribution of SA categories was not proportionally equal across the textbooks. Certain types of SAs received less attention than others, regardless of their complexity or frequency in natural language. These findings suggest a need for more comprehensive and principled approaches to the inclusion and distribution of SAs in the textbooks.

The inclusion of metapragmatic information alongside SAs was found to be limited in terms of variety and quantity. The majority of SAs lacked any metapragmatic discussions that could aid in comprehension or appropriate usage. Additionally, there was a lack of coverage across different types of metapragmatic information, with a disproportionate focus on usage explanations and a disregard for other topics, such as illocutionary force and culture. These findings raise concerns about the adequacy and effectiveness of SA information, as the limited explicit instruction on pragmatics alongside SAs may hinder learners' pragmatic awareness and their ability to use SAs appropriately in real-life contexts.

Furthermore, the analysis of teachers' adaptation practices revealed that teachers primarily rely on textbooks to teach pragmatics, making minimal and ineffective adaptations to the SA information. Their practices often entailed deleting SA content, simplifying activities, and focusing on grammar and language usage while overlooking sociopragmatic considerations. The reported factors behind teachers' adaptation of pragmatic content included students' overall low proficiency level, heavy curricular demands, MoE guidelines, and insufficient time and resources. Their practices may also reflect a limited knowledge of and an undervaluation of pragmatics among teachers. Additionally, teachers' practices were inconsistent with their expressed opinions regarding the importance of pragmatics for learners' development and the need to improve the quality and quantity of its instruction in language textbooks. Overall, the findings highlight a need to develop teachers' pragmatic competence with further support from policymakers, curriculum designers and textbook writers. By addressing these issues, pragmatic instruction in Saudi EFL classrooms can be improved, and students' pragmatic competence can be more effectively supported.

8. Conclusion, Implications, Limitations and Directions for Future Research

8.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study by bringing all the arguments together. It first provides summaries of the research and its key findings. This is followed by outlining implications and recommendations regarding textbook and curriculum design, teaching pragmatics in the Saudi EFL context or similar teaching contexts, and other recommendations for the Saudi MoE. Next, the main contributions this study has made in analysing pragmatic content research are discussed. Finally, the limitations of this study are considered, along with directions for further research.

8.2 Summary of the Study

This thesis has presented the findings of an investigation into the pragmatic content of English language teaching textbooks used in Saudi schools as well as teachers' practices and perceptions of pragmatics. Specifically, it has analysed the MG textbook series used in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia. This consists of six textbooks with corresponding teachers' guides and CDs for students at the intermediate proficiency level. The analysis concerned the types, frequency, and distribution of the SA information and metapragmatic information provided. It also examined the differences in the distribution of this content across the textbooks' three proficiency levels. Furthermore, this thesis has explored whether teachers supplement this pragmatic content in their classes, their underlying motivations for such supplementations, and their perceptions of teaching and learning pragmatics in the Saudi context. To achieve this, the nine teachers enrolled in this research each participated in two SRIs and three to four classroom observations.

The study was divided into three analyses. The first scrutinised the content of the textbooks following two checklists for identifying pragmatic aspects based on Searle's (1979) SA taxonomy and Vellenga's (2004) classification of metapragmatic information, which were developed in this study. The second investigated the teachers' adherence to or adaptation of the pragmatic content. If they modified the subject matter, it sought to understand what type of adaptation was implemented. The third analysis examined the factors that affected teachers' choices in altering pragmatic content and their perceptions regarding the material in the textbooks and the teaching and learning of pragmatics in Saudi Arabia.

8.3 Summary of Research Findings

Analysis of the Pragmatic Content of the Textbooks

The outcome of the textbook analysis revealed that the textbooks covered a relatively wide distribution and high frequency SAs (i.e., a total of 579 occurrences) compared to numbers reported in the relevant literature and considering the SELF guidelines and the teachers' opinions. However, the distribution of SA categories was not proportionally equal, with *directives* receiving the most attention, followed by *representatives* and *expressives*. *Commissives* were given minimal focus, and *declaratives* were absent. Within these categories, certain SA subtypes received less attention than others, regardless of their complexity or frequency in natural language. Giving opinions was the most prevalent, emphasised across the textbooks, while face-threatening SAs such as giving commands, refusing, offering, complaining, and promising were much less numerous. Other common SAs, including complimenting, inviting, and congratulating, were missing from the six textbooks, potentially leaving learners competent in some SAs but unable to use others effectively.

Additionally, certain complex SAs, like making suggestions, negotiating, and persuading, which are specified as learning objectives in the curriculum and reported in the literature as challenging for Saudi learners even at advanced levels, were mentioned much less frequently in the textbooks. The discrepancies between curriculum objectives, pragmatic literature, and textbook content suggest that the textbooks follow inconsistent guiding principles in SA distribution. This could hinder students from achieving learning goals and create a gap with real-world SA language usage. Moreover, third-level textbooks had significantly less SA content than lower-level ones, reducing opportunities for learners to develop pragmatic competence with their increasing proficiency.

The inclusion of metapragmatic and contextual information alongside SAs was, furthermore, found to be limited in terms of variety and quantity. Most SAs lacked metapragmatic discussions that could aid comprehension and appropriate usage. This aligned with the findings of previous studies (such as Dendenne, 2019; Neddar, 2010; Nguyen, 2011c; Ji, 2007; Ren & Han, 2016; Takafumi et al., 2007; Vellenga, 2004). A dearth of coverage across different types of metapragmatic information, coupled with a disproportionate focus on usage explanations and a disregard for other topics, like politeness, illocutionary force, and culture, indicates that the textbooks emphasise linguistic over sociopragmatic knowledge. These findings raise concerns about the adequacy and effectiveness of SA information. Limited explicit accompanying instruction on pragmatics may hinder learners' awareness and, hence, their ability to use SAs appropriately in real-life contexts.

Analysis of Teachers' Practices

It became evident that teachers heavily relied on the textbooks for teaching pragmatics; they made minimal supplementations to the materials provided. This practice was influenced by factors such as the specification of the curriculum and selection of compulsory textbooks by the MoE, low student proficiency levels, and time constraints. Some of the alterations made by teachers were rather concerning, as they were likely ineffective in raising learners' pragmatic awareness. They revealed a possible lack of pragmatic teaching knowledge among teachers and a potential undervaluation of it. First, teachers often resorted to deleting SA content, citing reasons such as limited class time and curricular demands. It may be that these omissions stemmed from a perception that pragmatics were less important than other aspects of language, like grammar and vocabulary. The responses of two teachers supported this inference, as did how some teachers changed given SA activities from pair to individual work for social distancing requirements even though they allowed pair and even group tasks for writing and grammar exercises. This could lead to missed opportunities for students to develop nuanced pragmatic knowledge through such interactive situations. Second, supplementary materials provided by teachers often overlooked sociopragmatic aspects in favour of grammar and language usage, even though the textbooks offered more information on usage than sociopragmatic issues. Third, some teachers provided somewhat problematic supplementary materials, such as stating that imperative suggestion expressions were exclusively used by individuals with higher status regardless of situational and contextual factors.

Analysis of Teachers' Perceptions

While most teachers perceived the quantity of SAs in the textbooks as appropriate, they all expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of SA content in the MG series. They emphasised the need for covering more explicit metalinguistic instructions, and additional contextual and metapragmatic information to enhance SA learning and teaching in Saudi EFL classrooms. The findings also showed that most teachers acknowledged the importance of developing pragmatic competence. However, their perceptions did not appear to align with their instructional practices, as many of them refrained from providing supplementary pragmatic and socio-cultural materials and even omitted portions of SA textbook content. This discrepancy may be attributed to factors such as limitations in their own knowledge and the restricted attention given to pragmatics in the curriculum guidelines. Additionally, some teachers argued that modifying SA content was not their responsibility but that of the curriculum and textbook designers.

8.4 Implications

Based on the findings of this research, several implications and recommendations have been formulated concerning textbook and curriculum development, the teaching of pragmatics, and the MoE.

Implications for Textbooks and Curriculum Development

As discussed in the chapter on theoretical background, pragmatic competence has been identified as an integral component of communicative proficiency (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). It is vital for successful communication and should not be neglected or overshadowed within language education, which often emphasises linguistic competencies. The curricular guidelines for English language education in Saudi schools identified the development of communicative and cultural knowledge as one of its educational objectives. Consequently – especially given that language education in Saudi schools is mostly textbook-based – prescribed textbooks should allocate pragmatic knowledge a more equitable share of content alongside other linguistic knowledge components. All stakeholders, including teachers, textbook authors, and policymakers, should collaborate to devise strategies that expose students to input and assignments promoting pragmatic knowledge acquisition.

The curricular guidelines lack clear directions on how to integrate communicative competence and its components into textbooks or classroom instructions. Additionally, the guidelines do not employ consistent metalinguistic terms when introducing target pragmatic functions, which can lead to ambiguity about how to implement them. This presents an opportunity to revise the guidelines by adding detailed instructions and illustrative examples that focus on teaching these pragmatic aspects more effectively. Introducing metalanguage, which has been shown to improve EFL teaching and learning (Schleppegrell, 2013, Vellenga, 2004), could also play a crucial role in this revision. For instance, labels such as ‘SAs’, ‘pragmatic activity’, or ‘sociopragmatic information’ could be used similarly to how ‘grammar’, ‘vocabulary’, and ‘pronunciation’ are currently used when discussing teaching outcomes. This would help textbook writers, teachers, and consequently learners understand that these are essential skills rather than optional or incidental aspects of language competency that can be overlooked. Such enhancements to the curriculum could guide textbook revisions to align with these principles by promoting the deliberate and consistent inclusion of relevant pragmatic exercises and information. This is particularly crucial given that teachers predominantly rely on textbooks to deliver English instruction. Textbook authors and policymakers in Saudi Arabia must, therefore, recognise the limitations of the existing prescribed series with regard to pragmatics, and institute plans to improve these materials to help learners’ pragmatic development and facilitate effective pragmatic instruction.

For instance, the identified gap in pragmatic content within the textbooks highlights the need for specialised training for textbook writers. Although the current training for MG textbook writers remains outside the scope of this study, it is crucial that they integrate pragmatic competence into the textbooks and move beyond their reliance on intuition. Textbook writers should first deepen their understanding of pragmatics and how to effectively teach it. They could seek training that focuses on empirical research, such as studies on natural language usage or corpus analyses, to help them adopt a more evidence-based approach and develop a comprehensive understanding of pragmatic functions as they occur in real interactions. Expert-led workshops or seminars could further expose writers and educators to the latest research and methodologies in pragmatics and equip them to apply these insights when designing materials. These training opportunities could be offered by publishing companies or as part of the existing partnership the Saudi MoE. Textbook writers are also encouraged to engage in further education through university courses, professional seminars and conferences run by organisations such as the TESOL International Association, and online courses and webinars to continuously hone their skills. Finally, writers could consult existing research on instructional models for teaching pragmatics (discussed in section 4.2.3) to ensure a more systematic presentation of pragmatic knowledge in their textbooks. Using feedback loops between teachers and learners using these textbooks can also provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the pragmatic content and inform further refinements.

Furthermore, strategies that could be employed to incorporate and enhance pragmatic content within textbooks are as follows: First, an updated English curriculum and textbooks could be developed using pragmatics as an organising principle to ensure the inclusion of pragmatic elements (Ishihara, 2010b). Pragmatic materials could alternatively be incorporated as “an add-on” to existing curricula (Ishihara, 2010b, p. 202), which might involve creating pragmatics-focused activities and instructions within current activities (Vu, 2017). One approach is to design supplementary materials for the teachers’ guides, offering information on pragmatics and guidance on incorporating it into each section of the student textbooks. For example, teachers could be directed to make the implicit pragmatic information in each unit's 'Conversation' sections explicit to learners. These sections often include functional language but have little contextual information highlighting the participants' relationship, the purpose of the interaction, or the formality of the situation. This approach would be particularly useful for teachers, who often cite a lack of time and training as major barriers to supplementing pragmatic content in their lessons. By offering teachers ready-made materials tailored to the curriculum, these resources could save preparation time and boost teachers' confidence in including sociopragmatic aspects of language. It also offers teachers the flexibility to adapt material based on students' needs and the available class time. Nevertheless, the MoE should also provide the necessary support and training to teachers to help them maximise the use of these resources, a topic that will be discussed later in this section.

Second, textbooks should provide more pragmatic input with various SA types, especially those commonly used in daily life, distributed systematically across them with increased contextual and pragmatic instruction. Activities enabling learners to compare how SAs and other pragmatic issues, such as politeness and formality, are constructed and perceived in their own and different cultures should also be included to foster a deeper intercultural understanding and awareness. This would also help students become aware of SA linguistic forms that might be a problem for mutual intelligibility and provide strategies to mitigate such issues (Vu, 2017).

Moreover, textbooks should expand and diversify metapragmatic knowledge to encompass both pragmalinguistic and sociolinguistic aspects rather than – as revealed by the textbook analysis – prioritising the former over the latter. In addition to teaching the use of various expressions and sentence structures, textbooks should discuss their appropriate usage in different contexts and registers and incorporate more reflective discussions and exercises. Although it may not be feasible to incorporate a full range of pragmatic information and activities, textbook writers should nevertheless strive to move away from a rigid grammar-centric approach to one that treats language use as a critical element (Ji, 2007).

Lastly, textbooks must increase opportunities for learning and practising pragmatics for students at higher proficiency levels. Both competencies should be treated as interdependent in language classrooms and materials (Kasper & Rose, 2002), with pragmatic input presented and recycled for students at different proficiency levels.

In summary, textbook developers should adopt a more intentional and strategic approach when selecting and incorporating SAs by considering research-informed insights, the frequency of SAs in natural language, learners' needs and learning objectives. This approach would enhance learners' overall understanding of the language and better prepare them for effective communication in diverse contexts.

Implications for the Teaching of Pragmatics

Both the present study and existing research literature on pragmatics in Saudi EFL classrooms show that language teachers positively perceive the importance of pragmatic competence for their students. However, they appear to face challenges in incorporating the instruction of pragmatic features into their lessons. The reasons for this include requirements to follow textbook content without alteration, restricted pragmatic textbook content, limited class time and resources, heavy workload and low student proficiency. It has also been shown in this study that teachers' lack of knowledge of L2 pragmatics, including its teaching and assessment, is a factor in their classroom practices. Nevertheless, teachers should be aware of their role as a source of language and pragmatics input, taking responsibility for helping learners develop pragmatically beyond their level. As Graden (1996) put it,

> [c]lassroom teachers, too, must accept some responsibility for their own lack of preparation. ... Although it is easy to understand the busy teacher's need for concrete and practical teaching practices, the teacher must also be receptive to more abstract knowledge that serves as the underpinnings for classroom instruction. (p. 394)

In other words, it is crucial for teachers to first develop a comprehensive understanding of pragmatic competence. Scholars such as Ishihara (2011), Kasper (1997), and Yates and Wigglesworth (2005) have emphasised the significance of pragmatics within the knowledge base of language teachers, noting that they encompass a general understanding of the cultural norms and sociocultural factors that affect language use. Moreover, teachers should develop pedagogical expertise to successfully integrate pragmatics into instruction and assessment. For example, they might adopt key criteria from established instructional frameworks when they teach SAs (see section 4.2.3). These criteria involve providing learners with contextualised L2 samples through listening and reading and engaging them in a wide range of meaningful classroom activities (see Lightbown,2000). Pragmatically oriented tasks like role-plays, interactive problem-solving exercises, and case studies are valuable performance-based activities (Dinapoli, 2000) that increase students' opportunities to hone their communicative skills. In addition, it is crucial to consider providing awareness-raising activities and instructions that encourage learners to analyse samples and draw conclusions independently about appropriate language usage.. Examples of pragmatic-awareness-raising tasks include teacher-led discussions of pragmatic issues, student-led exploration and analysis, translation and cross-cultural activities, and discussions of potentially problematic interactions (see Eslami-Rasekh et al., 2004, for further detail). Teachers would also be better equipped to teach and practise pragmatics in their classrooms with the support of the MoE, which could provide appropriate training in pragmatic pedagogy and emphasise the importance of pragmatic competence as a core curricular objective (see the following subsection for further discussion).

Additionally, teachers can make use of the recent publications in pragmatic teaching and learning literature by visiting accessible databases like the Open Accessible Summaries in Language Studies (OASIS), which offers easily understandable one-page summaries of research articles in the field of language teaching and learning. This resource can help educators to readily access updated research findings and insights and incorporate them into their teaching materials and methods. This is particularly important given that teachers often have limited exposure to academic research (Marsden & Kasprowicz, 2017), and applied linguistics theories are often challenging for them to access or apply (Tomlinson, 2013).

Online resources for pragmatic materials can also be leveraged, such as those provided by artificial intelligence-powered websites like Amazy, Twee, and ChatGPT. According to Chen et al. (2024), advanced artificial intelligence (AI) systems, such as ChatGPT, are particularly valuable for pragmatic education because they generate language with pragmatic patterns that significantly mirror human speech. Teachers can use these tools to create texts, dialogues and exercises that mimic real-life interactions, as well as to develop simulated scenarios for contextual language practice. Furthermore, teachers can encourage their students to engage in AI-simulated conversations to practise key conversation skills, such as turn-taking and politeness, without the stress of engaging in actual social interactions. Additionally, teachers can use language corpora (Limberg, 2016) offered in websites such as the British National Corpus and the International Corpus of English to extract supplementary language samples to source supplementary language samples. These can be used for teaching and analysing authentic interactions to prepare learners to use English independently in real-world situations. Alsmari (2020) suggested using films and TV shows, which approximate authentic interactions, to teach pragmatics deductively and inductively.

In terms of assessment, the current methods in Saudi schools need to be reevaluated to include the assessment of pragmatic skills. As noted in section 2.4, teachers are typically responsible for designing final exams and ongoing assessment methods; however, they must adhere to the schemas and guidelines established by the MoE. The current assessment methods have been criticised for focusing more on memorisation and basic skills rather than on communicative language use, contrary to the MoE's claims (see section 2.4 for details). To better assess pragmatic competence, therefore, support and training from the MoE is essential. For instance, pragmatic language skills should be explicitly included and measured as distinct competencies within MoE-developed rubrics to underscore their importance as central skills rather than marginal ones, which could be perceived as optional and be overlooked during assessments. Teachers also need training on how to effectively design assessments for pragmatic knowledge and communicative skills.

There are numerous ways to assess pragmatic language skills (see Azizi & Namaziandost, 2023; Koran, 2015;), which educators can tailor to their specific teaching contexts. For example, pragmalinguistic (i.e., grammatical) aspects of SAs could be tested in written mid-term and final exams through multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blanks formats, similar to how grammar and vocabulary are currently assessed. These aspects can also be evaluated through homework assignments, pair-work activities and classroom discussions throughout the term. Sociopragmatic skills could be assessed through methods adapted to existing Saudi classroom practices. For instance, written exams could include multiple-choice questions to assess students' understanding of register and politeness in SAs. Teachers could also use discourse completion tasks that prompt students to write responses to specific situations to test the appropriateness of their language based on contexts. Furthermore, appropriate language use can be assessed through oral methods already in use in Saudi EFL classrooms, such as role-play and simulation tasks. These tasks can be structured around various social scenarios to assess students' ability to use language appropriately in different settings, considering contexts such as formality, power dynamics and relationships. Peer assessments, where students critique each other's language use in different contexts, should also be considered to promote reflective learning and a deeper understanding of pragmatic nuances. Combining these methods would create a comprehensive framework for assessing pragmatic language competence in a controlled yet realistic manner. It is important to emphasise that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and assessing pragmatics. Further investigation is needed into effective instructional and testing methods for pragmatic knowledge in the Saudi context. Teachers should also recognise their responsibility for adapting prescribed materials, developing supplementary resources, and testing different strategies to identify what works within their specific teaching context for their group of students.

Implications for the Saudi MoE

Findings from the interview data showed that instruction from the MoE to follow the prescribed textbooks was one of the main factors influencing teachers' textbook use and supplementation of pragmatic content. The MoE sets out the curriculum, its objectives, the syllabus, and prescribed textbooks. Teachers are directed to follow them. Teachers generally did this during the classroom observations; it was confirmed during the interviews. Many teachers wish for more freedom in the content they use in their teaching as they know individual students' needs and capabilities. Furthermore, while the learning objectives specified in the curriculum included several SAs, guidelines on how to teach them or on issues of culture and appropriateness surrounding their use were not included. Accordingly, the MoE should take proactive measures to ensure that the curriculum comprehensively addresses pragmatic issues and that there is close alignment between curriculum guidelines and developed textbooks. It should also consider granting teachers more flexibility in using these materials given their expertise and understanding of their specific educational contexts and student needs.

As also revealed by this research, many of the teachers in this study did not receive specific training in material development for teaching pragmatics or other language skills. There is a need for a greater teacher autonomy to establish connections between the externally mandated curriculum and prescribed textbooks with their teaching methodologies, the unique needs of their students, and the available timeframe. To support this, teachers need to receive help and guidance from "textbook writers, publishers and curriculum designers—and, needless to say, the Ministry of Education" (LoCastro, 1997, p. 260). In other words, the MoE and policy makers need to dedicate efforts to support teachers by equipping them with the necessary knowledge, resources and professional training in pragmatics and material adaptation so that they can effectively complement the content of the prescribed textbooks. This can be achieved, for instance, by organising regular workshops and training programmes led by experts in pragmatics pedagogy to educate teachers about the latest in pragmatics, including its teaching and assessment methods, and show them how to apply current research findings to their teaching practices. This effort “would ideally result in greater emphasis on [pragmatics] in the L2 classroom” (Cohen, 2012, p. 34; Cohen, 2016; Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008; Glaser, 2018; Huth et al., 2019; Karatepe & Civelek, 2021). These educational opportunities could also be made available through MoE-developed platforms, such as Madrasati platform (see section 2.4). This platform could offer flexible access to pragmatic courses and workshops, and feature a variety of digital resources, including video tutorials, interactive exercises, and practical strategies for teaching pragmatic skills.

Furthermore, the MoE should ensure that teachers are well-informed about the underlying principles of curricular learning outcomes, including the primary goals of and approaches to teaching SAs (Zughaibi, 2022), through induction workshops. Establishing discussion groups and forums within and across different institutions can also improve teaching practices, facilitate the exchange of effective approaches and encourage regular feedback on teachers’ pragmatics instruction. Without such supportive measures, even teachers who possess a sufficient understanding of the field may struggle to effectively teach pragmatics (Zughaibi, 2022).

In summary, this study offers some valuable empirical insights into incorporating SA content in textbooks and classroom instruction in the Saudi context. To facilitate the development of pragmatic competence among Saudi EFL learners, concerted efforts should be directed into updating textbooks to enhance their pragmatic content, likewise revising the national curriculum, and bolstering teachers’ knowledge and professional development.

8.5 Contributions of the Current Study

This research has made several significant contributions to research on pragmatic content in language textbooks. Firstly, it contributes to the knowledge of the pragmatic content covered in the language textbooks used in Saudi Arabia, teachers’ supplementary efforts, and perceptions regarding pragmatics teaching and learning. Despite their crucial role in language learning, these areas have been largely overlooked in this context. This highlights the importance of this study.

Secondly, due to the lack of a clear framework to identify SA content in EFL textbooks, this study synthesised previous work in pragmatics to develop one. A modified structure was created for use in this study to investigate SAs and the metapragmatic information accompanying them. Specifically, SA and metapragmatic information checklists were developed for the purpose of this study to identify the pragmatic elements in question and to pinpoint any that are not addressed. Drawing upon Searle’s (1979) classification of SA types and Vellenga’s (2004) framework for metapragmatic information, these checklists offer a detailed and precise delineation to direct current and future research. For instance, they address a deficiency in Vellenga’s framework, which lacked clarity in distinguishing between the main categories of metapragmatic information (discussed in the literature review chapter, section 4.4.1), by offering clear descriptions and examples of each metapragmatic type derived from pragmatic theories and concepts. This approach was developed to yield more accurate data and, hence, to enhance comprehension of metapragmatic elements associated with SAs in textbooks.

Thirdly, it was noted during the literature review that previous research lacked specificity regarding approaches used to judge the suitability of the SAs found in the textbooks being examined. This study, therefore, addressed that gap by proposing criteria for measuring identified SA quantities, considering factors such as learning objectives, students' proficiency levels, and previous research in pragmatics. However, it emphasises analysis over evaluation. As a result, there is a requirement for further investigation into the effectiveness of these measures, particularly in assessing whether students' pragmatic competence increases after using the MG textbooks.

Finally, the study marks several 'firsts.' To the best of the researcher's awareness, it is the first attempt to investigate the pragmatic content of language textbooks used in Saudi schools. Despite the stated emphasis in the Saudi curricular guidelines on communicative competence, including pragmatic knowledge, empirical examinations of its coverage in classrooms and instructional materials have been lacking. This research thus holds particular significance in the Saudi context. It has the potential to inform textbook and curriculum design as well as teacher preparation programmes, ultimately contributing to the advancement of pragmatic teaching and learning. It is also the first study to include curricular learning objectives as a point of reference in pragmatic content analysis. This step was taken in the belief that context plays a major role not just in learning pragmatics but also when analysing any language textbook, and, in addition, assists the recommendations made by the study to be more meaningful and relevant. It is the first research endeavour to employ SRIs following classroom observations to investigate the adaptation of pragmatic content practices by teachers and to explore their motivations and perceptions regarding pragmatic teaching and learning. The aim was to gather first-hand data about classroom dynamics and practices followed by justifications for these practices rather than what participants might hope, assume, or claim is happening (Anderson et al., 2007).

8.6 Limitations of this Study and Directions for Further Research

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study to promote transparency and credibility and to identify opportunities for methodological improvement and future research.

The sample size in this study was relatively small, as only nine teachers from seven schools in Riyadh, where the researcher was based, participated. However, the qualitative nature of the investigation meant that it sought an in-depth and thorough understanding of specific cases over statistical generalisability (Duff, 2012). The selected sample was, therefore, informative and appropriate given the study's nature and objectives. It remains for future research to include more extensive and diverse samples across Saudi Arabia to confirm the generalisability of this study's findings.

The limited frequency – three to four times – of observation data may not offer a complete picture of typical classroom practices employed by the surveyed teachers. A more extensive data set would involve more frequent observations, perhaps over an entire semester. Unfortunately, this was not feasible within the timeframe of the present study.

The textbooks analysed in this study were targeted at a particular proficiency level, specifically intermediate. It would be insightful to explore the pragmatic content included in textbooks designed for different proficiency levels, whether at earlier school grades or at the college/university level.

During analysis, the researcher faced a significant challenge in interpreting the quantitative data. This was due to the absence of any unified or recommended criteria to assess the adequacy of findings in previous studies. Efforts were made to contact those researchers, who confirmed the assumed lack of a standardised index. Therefore, to minimise subjectivity and reliance on intuition, the researcher in this study attempted to outline specific factors for consideration when analysing SA content. It is impossible to eliminate subjectivity, however, as it is an inherent part of qualitative research. Accordingly, this study highlights that issue and advocates for further investigations to test and refine the criteria proposed.

This study focused on the practices of teachers concerning the supplementation of pragmatic content. However, it would also be insightful to investigate the specific methods and techniques they employ in teaching and testing pragmatics.

It would also be valuable to involve students to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the condition of teaching and learning pragmatics. Conducting an experimental study assessing students' progress in this area before and after exposure to textbook materials could provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the pragmatic content regarding students' proficiency levels. This would also test the argument made here about the suitability of the amount of pragmatic content in relation to students' existing abilities. Additionally, exploring their perspectives of pragmatics and its learning would enhance awareness of their experiences and needs. Nevertheless, this represents another research direction falling beyond the scope and timeframe of this study. It is, however, an avenue that warrants exploration in the future to further enrich our understanding of pragmatics education.

Lastly, a recommended future research agenda based on this study should explore the perspectives of textbook writers. Specifically, it is important to understand their decision-making processes, pedagogical priorities, and the factors that influence the integration of pragmatic elements within ELT textbooks. This investigation could be conducted through a mixed-methods research design that incorporates both qualitative methods—such as interviews and focus groups—and quantitative surveys. Interviews and focus groups with textbook writers could reveal their intentions, challenges, and strategies for incorporating pragmatic content, while surveys could gather broader data on the prevalence and diversity of these practices among a larger group of writers. Predictably, this research might identify a gap between the pragmatic goals of textbook writers and the actual content, possibly influenced by a complex interplay between educational objectives, the writers' personal understanding of pragmatics, pedagogical beliefs, and the educational policies that influence textbook content. Therefore, future research should aim to unpack these influences and examine how they shape the pragmatic content in language textbooks. This deeper insight could lead to more communicatively relevant textbook content and enhance EFL learning outcomes at both the national and international levels.

Appendices

Appendix A.1. ***Information Sheet (English version)***

Dear Participant,

I am Noura Almehaidly, currently working on a research project about the pragmatic content in the Mega Goal textbooks. You are invited to take part in this research project. Before joining, please carefully read the information sheet and familiarise yourself with the general data protection regulations. Should you have any questions or require further clarification, please do not hesitate to ask.

This research aims to study the pragmatic content of the Mega Goal textbooks and how teachers teach this content in Saudi Arabian schools. To achieve this, the researcher will attend several classroom sessions and subsequently conduct an interview with the teacher. This means:

- The researcher will attend four classroom sessions, each lasting no more than 45 minutes. During this time, the researcher will record the lesson without any interruption or interference.
- After every two classroom sessions, the researcher will conduct a 45-60-minute interview with the teacher. In the interview, the teacher will listen to recordings of parts of the lessons and will be asked to comment on these parts and answer some questions about them. The teacher will have the opportunity to review the data and add any comments within two weeks of the interview.

Participation in this research may help improve English language curricula and textbooks in Saudi Arabia.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Should you decide to join, you will be presented with a consent form to sign after reviewing this information sheet. You are free to withdraw from the study at any point during data collection and up to two weeks after the data has been collected. You can initiate your withdrawal by contacting me via email.

To protect your identity, all information and recordings will be stored under encrypted pseudonyms, ensuring the complete anonymity of participating teachers. The data will be securely stored in a password-protected Google Drive. It may be used anonymously for various purposes, such as presentations, reports, or electronic publications. All data will be securely disposed of three years after the conclusion of the research.

Should you wish to participate in this research, please complete the attached consent form and return it to me while retaining this information sheet for your reference.

I sincerely hope that you will consider taking part in this research. If you have any questions or require further information before providing your consent or after the data collection, please feel free to contact Noura Almehaidly via email (na1128@york.ac.uk) or the Chair of the Ethics Committee via email (educationresearch-administrator@york.ac.uk).

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Noura Almehaidly

Appendix A.2. ***Information Sheet (Arabic version)***

ورقة المعلومات

عزيزتي المشاركة، أنت مدعو للمشاركة ببحث علمي لدراسة تعليم الكفاءة الاتصالية من خلال كتب اللغة الإنجليزية المستخدمة في المملكة العربية السعودية.

قبل الانضمام، يرجى قراءة ورقة المعلومات بعناية والتعرف على لوائح حماية البيانات العامة. إذا كانت لديك أي أسئلة، فلا تتردد في طرحها على الباحثة مباشرة او عن طريق البريد الالكتروني للباحثة na1128@york.ac.uk او البريد الكتروني لرئيس لجنة البحث العلمي educationresearch-administrator@york.ac.uk

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة محتوى كتب Mega Goal وكيفية تدريس المعلمين لهذا المحتوى في المدارس السعودية. ولتحقيق ذلك، سيحضر الباحث عدة جلسات صفية وسيقوم فيما بعد بإجراء مقابلة مع المعلم .وهذا يعني:

- حضور الباحث داخل اربع حصص دراسية لمدة لا تتجاوز 45 دقيقة. وخلال هذه المدة ستسجل الباحثة الدرس بدون أي مقاطعه أو تدخلات في الشرح.
- وبعد كل حصتين دراسية، ستجري الباحثة مقابلة مع المعلمة لمدة 45-60 دقيقة، وفي المقابلة ستستمع المعلمة إلى تسجيلات من الدروس ومن ثم ستجاوب على عدة أسئلة حولها. ستقوم الباحثة بتدوين الملاحظات اثناء المقابلة، وستستطيع المعلمة الاطّلاع على هذه الملاحظات وإضافة أي تعليق خلال أسبوعين من تاريخ المقابلة.

مشاركة المعلمة في هذا البحث قد تسهم في تحسين مناهج و كتب اللغة الإنجليزية في المملكة العربية السعودية.

المشاركة في هذا البحث تكون تمامًا على أساس الاختيار الشخصي. إذا قررت الانضمام، ستقدم لك استمارة موافقة للتوقيع بعد مراجعة ورقة المعلومات هذه. علماً بأنه يمكنك الانسحاب من الدراسة في أي وقت خلال جمع البيانات ولمدة تصل إلى أسبوعين بعد جمع البيانات عبر البريد الإلكتروني.

لحماية هويتك، سيتم تخزين جميع البيانات والتسجيلات تحت اسم مستعار، ولن تكون هناك أي معلومات أو بيانات تثبت هوية المشاركة. كما سيتم تخزين البيانات بشكل آمن في محرك قوقل محمي بكلمة مرور. سيتم التخلص من جميع البيانات بشكل آمن بعد مرور ثلاث سنوات من انتهاء البحث. خلال هذه الفترة، قد يتم استخدامها بشكل لأغراض متنوعة، مثل العروض التقديمية، والتقارير، أو النشرات الإلكترونية.

إذا كنتي ترغبين في المشاركة في هذا البحث، يرجى ملء نموذج الموافقة المرفق وإعادته للباحثة مع الاحتفاظ بورقة المعلومات هذه للرجوع إليها.

مع خالص الشكر.

نوره المهيدلي

Appendix A.3. ***Consent form (English version)***

Research Consent Form

Research Title: Teaching Pragmatic Competence in the Saudi EFL Classroom: Analysis of Textbook Content and Teachers' Practices.

Please mark ✓ next to each box, then sign the document and return it to the researcher if you agree to participate.

I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided to me regarding the research project mentioned above.	
I understand that the study involves a short survey to gather information about the participants' backgrounds.	
I understand that the study includes four non-participant classroom observations of participants over a period of ten weeks.	
I understand that the study includes two interviews, and that these interviews will take place after every two classroom observations.	
I agree to be audio-recorded during the classroom observations and interviews.	
I understand that the research will not include the names of participants or their respective schools.	
I am aware that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and I can withdraw at any point during the data collection process.	
I understand that my data will be kept confidential, anonymous, and protected from unauthorised access.	
I understand that the anonymous data may be used by the researcher in research publications and presentations.	

Consent Statement

I have been briefed on the objectives and procedures associated with this research and hereby agree to participate under the terms outlined above.

Name ________________________ Signature ______________________ Date____________

Appendix A.4. ***Consent form (Arabic version)***

نموذج الموافقة

عنوان البحث: "تدريس التداوليات في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية في المملكة العربية السعودية: تحليل الكتب المدرسية وممارسات المعلمين"

من فضلك ضعي علامة ✓ بجانب كل صندوق، ومن ثم قومي بتوقيع الورقة وإعادتها للباحثة إذا كنتي توافقين على المشاركة.

أؤكد أنني قد قرأت وفهمت المعلومات المقدمة لي حول مشروع البحث المذكور أعلاه.	
أنا على علم بأن الدراسة تشمل استبيانًا مختصرًا حول خلفية المشاركين.	
أنا أفهم أن الدراسة تتضمن أربع ملاحظات صفية للمشاركين على مدى عشرة أسابيع.	
أنا أفهم أن الدراسة تتضمن مقابلتين، وأن هذه المقابلات ستجرى بعد كل ملاحظتين صفيتين.	
أوافق على استخدام التسجيلات الصوتية أثناء المقابلات والملاحظات.	
أنا على علم بأن البحث لن يتضمن أسماء المشاركين أو مدارسهم.	
أنا على علم بأن مشاركتي في هذه الدراسة طوعية تمامًا، وأستطيع سحب مشاركتي في أي وقت خلال عملية جمع البيانات.	
أنا على علم بأن بياناتي ستُحفظ بسرية وسرية تامة وستكون محمية من الوصول غير المصرح به.	
أنا على علم بأن البيانات المجهولة يمكن استخدامها من قبل الباحث في منشورات وعروض تقديم البحث.	

أنا (الإسم) ___________________________ أوافق على المشاركة في البحث المذكور أعلاه وقد تم شرح متطلبات البحث لي.

التوقيع: ___________________________ التاريخ: ___________________________

Appendix B. ***Background information survey***

School: ____

Date: ____

Please check the appropriate choices:

Gender:

☐ Male
☐ Female

Age:

☐ 23-28
☐ 29-34
☐ 35-40
☐ 41-46
☐ 47-52
☐ 53 and above

Education Level:

☐ Bachelor’s Degree
☐ Master’s Degree
☐ PhD
☐ Other (please specify): ______________________________

Academic Discipline:

☐ English Translation
☐ English Literature
☐ Linguistics
☐ Applied Linguistics
☐ Education
☐ TESOL
☐ Other (please specify): ______________________________

Have you ever stayed in an English-speaking country for an extended period?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Type of School You Currently Work In:

☐ Public
☐ Private

The Grade(s) You Currently Teach:

☐ First Grade
☐ Second Grade
☐ Third Grade

Teaching Experience:

☐ Less than one year
☐ 1-5 years
☐ 6-10 years
☐ More than 10 years

Experience in Teaching Mega Goal Series:

☐ Less than one year
☐ 1-5 years
☐ 6-10 years
☐ More than 10 years

Have you received any training in material design and/or adaptation?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Have you received any training on the use of the Mega Goal textbook series?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Which of the following subjects did you study in your university/graduate studies?
(Please check all that apply)

☐ Syntax
☐ Semantics
☐ Pragmatics
☐ Sociolinguistics
☐ Phonology and/or Phonetics
☐ Morphology

Appendix C. ***Classroom observation sheet for investigating EFL teachers' use of textbooks when teaching pragmatic content***

1. Teacher Information:

- Teacher's Name:
- Class/Grade:
- Date of Observation:

2. Textbook Information:

- Textbook Title:
- Page Number(s) of Observed Activity:
- Unit & Lesson:

3. Pragmatic Information Involved:

- SA:
- Metapragmatic information:
- Type of activity/exercise:

4. Observation Categories

A) Adherence to Textbook:

[ ] Teacher closely follows textbook instructions.

B) Type of Adaptation (if observed):

[ ] Addition (providing more of the same)

[ ] Modification (making internal change)

[ ] Supplementation (using external materials to enhance textbook content)

[ ] Replacement (using external materials to substitute textbook content)

[ ] Deletion (omitting all or part of the pragmatic materials)

C) Description of Adaptation (if applicable):

……………..……………..……………..…………………………..……………..……………

……………..……………..……………..……………..……………..……………..…………..

D) Additional Comments:

……………..……………..……………..…………………………..……………..……………

……………..……………..……………..……………..……………..……………..…………...

Appendix D. ***Sample SRI schedule: Teacher Hana***

The following interview schedule is based on the first two classroom observations of Teacher Hana. Within the excerpt provided, italicised words represent the categories that emerged from the lesson upon which the interview is centred.

I. Recall of the Lessons

LESSON 1 (MG3, p. 38)

Adaptation (Supplementing Speech Act Explanation): During this segment of the lesson, the teacher introduced the concept of making and declining requests through a role-play activity, providing additional explanation and translation for request meanings.

- Can you share your thoughts on how you taught making requests in this part of the lesson?
- How do you usually teach SA expression lists, like the one in this lesson? Do you usually incorporate explanations or supplementary activities, for example? Why?
- Do you have the flexibility to go beyond the textbook's content, or are you expected to strictly adhere to it? Why?
- Can you remember what influenced your use of textbook when teaching speech act content in these two lessons? What motivated or hindered your adaptations to it, for example? And how about in other lessons?

Adaptation (Supplementing Politeness Information): In this part of the lesson, the teacher referred to the expressions for making and declining requests as 'polite,' which was additional information not covered in the textbook lesson.

- Why did you describe the expressions for making and declining requests in this lesson as 'polite'?
- Do you think that all the phrases listed in the box are considered polite when used in any context or situation? Why or why not?
- Do you think it is essential for students to comprehend the differences between these phrases in terms of politeness? For example, whether 'I wish it were possible but ...' is more polite than 'we can't do it ...'? Why or why not?
- Is it your usual practice to include information about politeness when teaching speech acts? what influences your decision?

LESSON 2 (MG3, p. 78)

Adaptation (Supplementation of Speech Act Explanation): In this part, before introducing the grammatical rule of 'polite ways to make requests,' the teacher explained and translated the concept of politeness and provided examples of polite requests in Arabic.

- Can you share your reflections on how you taught this rule in this section?
- Why did you choose to include the SA explanation at this point in the lesson?
- Was there a specific reason behind using the Arabic language to convey this information here?

Adaptation (Supplementation of Cross-Cultural Information)

- Why did you choose to include information on the way we express polite requests in Arabic here?
- Do you believe it is important to educate students about the cultural differences between Arabic and English, particularly in terms of politeness norms? Why or why not?
- Is it your typical practice to include such cultural information when teaching speech acts? Can you provide some examples?

Adaptation (Supplementation of Appropriacy Information)

[In this part, the teacher indicated that the example sentences were suitable for use with a stranger.]

- Is there anything specific you'd like to comment on regarding this part?
- Do you recall the reasons behind mentioning the addressee's relationship as a stranger? How do you perceive its relevance to making requests?
- Does the textbook typically offer such contextual information, and if not, do you think it is important to address this in your class? Why or why not?

The Use of Workbook and Teacher's Guide

[The teacher did not utilise the workbook for in-class or home exercises and did not seem to follow the instructions from the teacher's guide in both lessons.]

- What led you to abstain from using the workbook in these lessons? Is this a common practice for you, and if so, why?
- Regarding the teacher's guide, did you incorporate any of its materials and instructions while teaching speech acts in these lessons? How about in your other lessons? Why or why not?

II. Views on Pragmatic Learning and Pragmatic Content in Mega Goal 3

- Do you believe that Saudi students can or should learn pragmatics in general? If so, why and how?
- In your opinion, are your students genuinely interested in learning pragmatics?
- What, in your view, are the challenges or obstacles that students typically encounter when learning pragmatics in the Saudi English classroom?
- Do you believe that the language level of the textbook matches the proficiency level of your students? If so, why do you think so, and if not, what are your reasons?
- What are your thoughts on the quantity and quality of the speech act information included in the textbook? Can you give me examples?
- Regarding other pragmatic aspects, such as politeness, register, and culture, how well does the textbook address these issues?
- Do you believe the textbook adequately addresses all the necessary aspects and skills of pragmatics that your students need at this level for their pragmatic development? If yes, how does it do so?
- What suggestions or recommendations do you have for helping Saudi students improve their pragmatic competence in English?

III. Conclusion

I have no further questions at this time. Is there anything else you would like to add or discuss regarding the teaching of pragmatics using Mega Goal textbooks? Do you have any questions or topics you'd like to ask me?

Before we conclude, I'd like to recap the main points we've addressed during our conversation. Your input is crucial, so please correct any inaccuracies if you find them. We touched upon...

Thank you sincerely for your participation in this research.

Appendix E. ***Schedule for first-glance analysis for MG1 (adopted from Littlejohn, 2011, p. 187)***

Title: MG 1
Editor: Kozanoglou and Ghazel
Publisher: McGraw-Hill Publications (USA)
Year: 2017

1. **Type**: *main course, exam-oriented, general English, integrated skills.*
2. **Intended audience:**
   a. age-range: *15-16*
   b. level: *lower intermediate (expected)*
   c. school grade: *secondary school*
   d. location: *Saudi Arabia*
3. **Extent**:
   a. components: *student book, audio program, workbook, teacher's guide, student e-book.*
   b. total estimated time: *not mentioned.*
4. **Design and layout**:
   a. use of colour: *yes*
   b. use of pictures and arts: *yes*
   c. number of pages: *100*
5. **Distribution**:

Material	Teacher	Learners
• audio	[✓]	[✓]
• audio script	[✓]	[ ]
• answer keys	[✓]	[ ]
• guidance on use of the material	[✓]	[ ]
• methodology guidance	[✓]	[ ]
• extra practice	[✓]	[✓]
• tests	[✓]	[ ]

6. **Route through material**:
   - specified [✓]
   - user-determined [ ]
7. **Subdivision**:
   a. number of units: *6 units, 2 expansions, and 1 introduction.*
   b. number of subsections in each unit: *13*
   c. content of each subsection:
   Section 1: 'listen and discuss'
   Section 2: 'pair work'
   Section 3: 'grammar'
   Section 4: 'language in context'
   Section 5: 'listening'
   Section 6: 'pronunciation'
   Section 7: 'about you'
   Section 8: 'conversation'
   Section 9: 'reading'
   Section 10: 'writing'
   Section 11: 'form, meaning and function'
   Section 12: 'project' group work'
   Section 13: 'self-reflection'

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

L1: First Language

L2: Second or Foreign Language

MG: Mega Goal

MoE: Ministry of Education

SA: Speech Acts

SELF: Saudi English Language Framework

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