Speech Act Analysis of the English Section of College Scholastic Ability Test: With Focus on Conversational Listening Material

Hayoung Kim & Hyunoo Lee (Inha University)


For the past three years, the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) has undergone two major revisions. The first major change was made to the 2014 CSAT, and the second one, to the 2015 CSAT. Accordingly, the listening part of the CSAT has been repeatedly changed in the number and types of question items. Given these revisions, one would naturally think that they have had some effect on the conversational listening material used in the 2014 and 2015 CSATs. In an effort to examine whether this reasoning is objectively supported, the present study aims to answer the questions whether there is a difference between the 2013, 2014 and 2015 CSATs (i) in the case of the distribution of illocutionary acts identified by Searle (1976) and (ii) in the case of the use of direct and indirect speech acts. Comparison of the data annotated with speech acts through the chi-square tests shows that there is no difference between the three CSATs in either of the cases. It is, however, suggested that the provision of virtually the same amount of listening material using indirect speech acts is crucial in maintaining the same level of difficulty of listening tests of CSAT.

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1. INTRODUCTION

For the past three years, the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) has undergone two major revisions. The first major change was made to the 2014 CSAT, and the second one, to the 2015 CSAT. The 2014 CSAT English test was a level-differentiated test, consisting of Level A for students with low English language proficiency and Level B for other students. These two level tests were then unified in the 2015 CSAT English test. Accordingly, the listening part of the CSAT has been repeatedly changed in the number and types of question items. Given these revisions, one would naturally think that they have had some effect on the conversational listening material used in the 2014 and 2015 CSATs. In an effort to examine whether this reasoning is objectively supported, one may try to show that all the tests involved have the same level of difficulty or the same distribution of illocutionary acts. Since the tests were taken by three substantially different groups of examinees, and since predicting the difficulty level of a test is beyond the scope of the present work, examination of the distribution of illocutionary acts could be the more reliable indicator of whether the tests are consistent.

Given the state of affairs mentioned above, this paper aims to answer the following two research questions:

Research Questions

Question 1: As far as the conversational material is concerned, do the 2013, 2014 and 2015 CSATs differ in the distribution of illocutionary acts identified by Searle (1976)?

Question 2: As far as the conversational material is concerned, do these tests differ in the distribution of direct and indirect speech acts?

Related to these research questions are the following alternative hypotheses:

Alternative Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is a difference in the distribution of illocutionary acts
Hypothesis 2. There is a difference in the distribution of direct and indirect speech acts between the 2013, 2014 and 2015 CSATs.

Although the same distribution of illocutionary acts or the same proportion of indirect speech acts in the test materials do not guarantee the same level of difficulty of tests, it is desirable that a series of tests such as CSATs should maintain them inasmuch as learning each of illocutionary acts is a specific objective of any English curriculum and the balanced distribution of illocutionary acts and indirect speech acts is necessary to for the test materials to be authentic.

II. SPEECH ACT THEORY

As developed by Austin (1962) and Searle (1975: 1976), speech act theory assumes that the minimal unit of communication is the performance of certain kinds of acts such as requests and promises, rather than a sentence or other expression.

In performing a speech act the speaker expresses a propositional content, and every speech act expresses a so-called illocution, the intention of the speaker in performing that speech act. To mention some examples, an assertion is a statement by the speaker about a state of affairs that the speaker thinks that the hearer accepts as true, a request is an attempt by the speaker to get the hearer to do something, and a promise is an undertaking of an obligation by the speaker to do something in the future.

Some illocutions are intended to get the words (more accurately, their propositional content) to match the world, others to get the world to match the words. Assertions belong to the former category, and requests and promises, to the latter. Searle (1976) illustrates this distinction by referring to the situation of a shopper in a supermarket who chooses items according to his shopping list. This shopper is followed by a detective who writes down everything the shopper takes. When the shopper leaves the shop, both have identical ‘shopping’ lists, but the function of the two lists is different.
The function of the shopper's list is to get the world to match the words, whereas the function of the detective's list is to make the words to match the world. Searle proposes to call this difference a difference in direction of fit. The detective's list has a word-to-world direction of fit (as do statements, descriptions and assertions); the shopper's list has a world-to-word direction of fit (as do requests, commands and promises).

As illustrated below, Searle (1976) classifies speech acts or illocutionary acts on the basis of three primary criteria: the illocutionary point, the direction of fit, and the sincerity condition. The latter is the psychological attitude of the speaker towards the propositional contents of the speech act.

**Assertives or Representatives**

The illocutionary point of the members of this class is to commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. The direction of fit is word-to-world, and the sincerity condition expressed is the belief that the proposition holds. Examples: *It is sunny today. There is a lawyer in the garden.*

**Directives**

The illocutionary point of these acts consists in the fact that they are attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something, expressed by the propositional content. The direction of fit is world-to-word, and the sincerity condition is to want that the hearer takes a course of action establishing the truth of the proposition. According to Searle, questions are a subclass of directives, since they are attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to answer, i.e. to perform a speech act. Examples: *Open the door. Can you do me a favor?*

**Commissives**

The illocutionary point of these acts is to commit the speaker to some future course of action. The direction of fit is world-to-word, and the sincerity condition is to intend to act such that the proposition becomes true. Examples: *I promise you to come home early. I will call later.*
Expressives

The illocutionary point of this class is to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content. In these acts there is no direction of fit. In performing an expressive, the speaker is neither trying to get the world to match the words nor the words to match the world. The truth of the expressed proposition is presupposed. There are several possible sincerity conditions expressed in the performance of the illocutionary acts in this class. The propositional content ascribes some property to either the speaker or the hearer. Examples: *I apologize for making such a decision. I congratulate you on winning the race. Nice to meet you!*

Declarations

The illocutionary point of these acts is that its successful performance guarantees the correspondence between the proposition and the world. The state of affairs expressed by the proposition is brought into existence by merely declaring it to exist. Because of this peculiar character of declaratives the direction of fit is both word-to-world and world-to-word. There is no sincerity condition. Examples: *I now pronounce you husband and wife. The ball is out.*

The following sums up the five major types of illocutionary acts:
Table 1: Searle’s (1976) Classification of Illocutionary Acts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Subclass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assertives</td>
<td>stating, boasting, complaining, claiming, reporting, asserting, describing, announcing, insisting, guessing, forecasting, predicting, introducing, calling, complimenting, concluding, reasoning, hypothesizing, telling, insisting, swearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directives</td>
<td>requesting, warning, inviting, questioning, ordering, commanding, advising, reassuring, summoning, entreated, asking, directing, bidding, forbidding, instructing, begging, recommending, suggesting, daring, defying, challenging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissives</td>
<td>promising, vowing, offering, threatening, refusing, pledging, intending, vowing to do or to refrain from doing something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressives</td>
<td>greeting, thanking, apologizing, regretting, commiserating, congratulating, condoling, deploring, welcoming, surprising, praising, blaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declarations</td>
<td>declaring, christening, baptizing, blessing, naming, excommunicating, appointing, nominating, firing, resigning, dismissing, sentencing, bidding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Speech acts are also classified into direct speech acts and indirect ones. In the course of performing speech acts, people communicate with each other. The content of communication is sometimes identical with what the speaker says but sometimes more than what he says. In the former, the speaker intends to communicate directly and literally, but in the latter, the speaker does so indirectly and nonliterally. In a word, an indirect speech act is a speech act in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another, namely a direct one.

Examples of Indirect Speech Acts
The following are examples of indirect requests taken from Searle (1975).

GROUP 1: Sentences concerning H’s ability to perform A:
   Can you pass the salt?
   Could you be a little more quiet?
   You can go now (this may also be a permission = You may go now).

GROUP 2: Sentences concerning S’s wish or want that H will do A:
I would like you to go now.
I would/should appreciate it if you would/could do it for me.
I wish you wouldn’t do that.

GROUP 3: Sentences concerning H’s doing A:
Officers will henceforth wear ties at dinner.
Would you kindly get off my foot?
Aren’t you going to eat your cereal?

GROUP 4: Sentences concerning H’s desire or willingness to do A:
Would you be willing to write a letter of recommendation for me?
Do you want to hand me that hammer over there on the table?
Would you mind not making so much noise?

GROUP 5: Sentences concerning reasons for doing A:
You ought to be more polite to your mother.
You had better go now.
Hadn’t you better go now?
Why not stop here?
It would be better for you (for us all) if you would leave the room.
I can’t see the movie screen while you have that hat on.

GROUP 6: Sentences embedding one of these elements inside another; also, sentences embedding an explicit directive illocutionary verb inside one of these contexts.
Would it be too much if I suggested that you could possibly make a little less noise?
I hope you won’t mind if I ask you if you could leave us alone.
I would appreciate it if you could make less noise.

The following are examples of indirect commissives taken from Searle (1975).

GROUP 1: Sentences concerning the preparatory conditions:
A: that S is able to perform the act:
Can I help you?
I can do that for you.

B: that H wants S to perform the act:
Would you like some help?
Do you want me to go now, Sally?

GROUP 2: Sentences concerning the sincerity condition:
I intend to do it for you.
I plan on repairing it for you next week.

GROUP 3: Sentences concerning the propositional content condition:
I will do it for you.
Shall I give you the money now?

GROUP 4: Sentences concerning S’s wish or willingness to do A:
I want to be of any help I can.
I’d be willing to do it (if you want me to).

GROUP 5: Sentences concerning (other) reasons for S’s doing A:
I think I had better leave you alone.
Wouldn’t it be better if I gave you some assistance?

GROUP 6: Sentences containing hypothetical sentences:
If you wish any further information, just let me know.
If I can be of assistance, I would be most glad to help.

GROUP 7: Sentences uttered as indirect assertion:
I think I ought to help you out.

III. METHODS

This study used Searle’s taxonomy (1976) of illocutionary acts and his distinction between direct and indirect speech acts.

The data were collected from the listening parts of the 2013, 2014, and 2015 CSATs. Since various types of illocutionary acts and indirect speech acts can be used more easily in conversations than in monologues, only conversations with ten to fourteen turns were considered. More specifically, the data were obtained from the conversational material of the following question items:
2013 CSAT
   Question Item #1: picture, what to buy
   Question Item #2: woman's feeling
   Question Item #4: what to do for the man
   Question Item #5: number, how much to pay
   Question Item #7: what was requested
   Question Item #8: place of the conversation
   Question Item #9: relationship between the speakers
   Question Item #10: what to do
   Question Item #11: diagram/table, what to order
   Question Item #14: what to say as a response
   Question Item #15: what to say as a response
   Question Item #16: what to say as a response

2014 CSAT: Level B
   Question Item #6: topic of the conversation
   Question Item #7: woman's opinion
   Question Item #8: picture, what's not true
   Question Item #9: relationship between the speakers
   Question Item #10: what to do for the man
   Question Item #11: what was requested
   Question Item #12: reason for not doing something
   Question Item #13: what was not mentioned
   Question Item #14: number, how much to pay
   Question Item #17: diagram/table, what to order
   Question Item #18: what to say as a response
   Question Item #19: what to say as a response

2015 CSAT
   Question Item #4: topic of the conversation
   Question Item #5: relationship between the speakers
   Question Item #6: picture, what's not true
   Question Item #7: what was requested
   Question Item #8: reason for not doing something
Question Item #9: number, how much to pay
Question Item #10: what was not mentioned
Question Item #12: diagram/table, what to choose
Question Item #13: what to say as a response
Question Item #14: what to say as a response

One of the most important steps in this study was to “code” all speech acts used in the conversational data as accurately as possible. Even though the investigator is a professional linguist who has been working in the areas of formal semantics and/or pragmatics, the coding of speech acts turned out to be very difficult. Review after review of the data led to numerous revisions of coding, which helped keep the accuracy and consistency of the coding.

There were several issues to be resolved in the coding of speech acts. The first concerned the unit of speech acts. Whether it is a complete sentence or not, a sentence normally counts as one speech act. But sometimes, an utterance of a sentence reveals two or more speech acts. Although the following is just one complex sentence, its utterance was treated as showing two assertive (more specifically, informing) speech acts.

*A medium coffee is 3 dollars [informing] and a large one is 6 dollars. [informing] (from Question #9, 2015 CSAT)*

According to Leech, McEnery, and Weisser (2003), the basic units for conveying speech acts, which are regarded as the minimal communicative actions performed in a conversation, can be independent clausal or a non-clausal expressions.

The second concern in the coding was how to deal with so-called discourse markers. According to Leech and Svartvik (2002), three types of discourse markers are distinguished.

Only interactive: *ah, aha, gosh, hm, mhm, oh, quite, uuhh, yes, yeah, yup*
Mainly interactive: *I see, I mean, I think, no, please, OK, that’s OK, right, all right, that’s right, that’s all right, well, sure. You know, you see*
Also interactive: *absolutely, actually, anyway, certainly, honestly, indeed, in fact, maybe, obviously, of course, perhaps, probably, really*

In this study, the discourse markers analyzable as speech acts are those that are used as an independent, complete utterance or as an interjection that expresses a strong feeling such as surprise, pain or horror.

M: *Okay. [accepting] Is there a problem with the book? [questioning]*
W: *Yes. [acknowledging] Look! [getting attention] Page 16 is blank. [informing] (from Question #9, 2014 CSAT)*

The third concern in the coding was the treatment of expressives. As already explained above, if the speaker of an utterance mainly intends to express his or her psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content, that utterance should be treated as an expressive. According to this definition, fairly many fixed expressions of greeting or leave-taking, discourse markers, and other kinds of utterances can be expressives.3) Here are examples of expressives used in the study.

W: *I called for a taxi, [informing] but it never came! [complaining]*
M: *Oh, [surprising] I'm terribly sorry. [apologizing] When were you supposed to be picked up? [questioning] (from Question #2, 2013 CSAT)*

As well–known to those who are interested in indirect speech acts, a statement like “You need to finish this job by five.” can be thought of as informing the hearer of the need for him or her to finish a certain job by five or as giving a directive so that he or she should finish the job by five. This kind of ambiguity might seem awkward, but it is hardly problematic in

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Vaezi, Tabatabaei, and Bakhtiarvand (2014) take the same approach in the treatment of expressions of greeting and leave–taking. For detailed discussion on how English greeting as well as leave–taking phrases are created and changed as they move to and fro between assertives to expressives, see Grzega (2005).
reality, as pointed out by Hassell and Christensen (1996), because the context in which a speech act occurs in general makes quite clear whatever illocutionary point of an utterance is conveyed.

M: *I tripped in the classroom upstairs.* [informing] *My ankle really hurts.* [informing]

W: *Oh, dear!* [surprising] *Let’s take a look.* [promising, IN] *[Pause]*

Hmm.... [hesitating] *It seems you sprained your ankle.* [informing] *I’ll bandage it for you and give you some painkillers.* [promising, IN]

(from Question #8, 2013 CSAT)

W: *But we already have a grinder.* [disagreeing]

M: *Oh,* [surprising] *right.* [acknowledging] *Then let’s choose one without a grinder, but with a warmer.* [suggesting] (from Question #17, 2014 CSAT)

Finally, as you can see in Appendices 1–3, in order to annotate the data with specific illocutionary acts, the following classes and subclasses of speech acts were needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: A Summary of Illocutionary Acts Used in the Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since we are primarily concerned with the distributional differences between the four major classes of illocutionary acts, the precise distinction between subclasses of illocutionary acts is not so decisive a factor in this
study. None the less, a couple of subclasses may be worth noting. Following Leech, McEnery, and Weisser (2003), an acknowledgement is a casual positive response to a speech act that has a declarative/informative/assertive intention, while acceptance is a positive response to a speech act such as suggesting, offering, or any other directive act. The speaker does not just acknowledge that the previous speech act has been heard and understood, but also accepts, complies with or agrees with the force of that speech act.

M: Ah, [E, surprising] so you want to mention what happened in the meeting. [R, stating]
W: Yes. [R, acknowledging] But as you know, I have an appointment with a customer this Wednesday. [R, reminding] So, would you attend the residents’ meeting for me to bring up the issue? [D, requesting, IN]
M: No problem. [R, accepting] I’ll be there to demand that more security cameras be installed. [C, promising, IN] (from Question #11, 2014 CSAT)

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, 36 conversations were examined: 12 conversations from the 2013 CSAT, another 12 conversations from the 2014 CSATs, and 10 conversations from the 2015 CSAT. As seen in Table 3 below, the total number of 753 illocutionary acts were identified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Assertive</th>
<th>Directive</th>
<th>Commissive</th>
<th>Expressive</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>127(48.85)</td>
<td>72(27.69)</td>
<td>18(6.92)</td>
<td>43(16.54)</td>
<td>212(81.54)</td>
<td>48(18.46)</td>
<td>260(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>135(51.92)</td>
<td>60(23.08)</td>
<td>17(6.54)</td>
<td>48(18.46)</td>
<td>227(87.31)</td>
<td>33(12.69)</td>
<td>260(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>110(47.21)</td>
<td>77(33.05)</td>
<td>13(5.58)</td>
<td>33(14.16)</td>
<td>188(80.69)</td>
<td>45(19.31)</td>
<td>233(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>372(49.40)</td>
<td>209(27.76)</td>
<td>48(6.37)</td>
<td>124(16.47)</td>
<td>627(83.27)</td>
<td>126(16.73)</td>
<td>753(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Numbers in ( ) indicate the percentage of illocutionary acts.
Out of the 753 illocutionary acts, 372 (49.40%) were coded as assertives. As expected, the assertive was by far the commonest type of illocutionary act. On average it was almost as numerous as all other types of illocutionary acts combined. This held true except for the 2014 CSAT, where assertives were more than all other types of illocutionary acts combined. The second most frequently used type of illocutionary act in the study was the directive, followed by the expressive. In total, 209 (27.76%) and 124 (16.47%) speech acts were coded as directives and expressives, respectively. Except for declarations, which were not used at all in any of the three CSATs, commissives (6.37%) had the least frequency of occurrence. As seen in Table 3, indirect speech acts comprised 16.73 % of the overall data, ranging from 12.69 % in the 2014 CSAT to 19.31% in the 2015 CSAT.

It is now time to statistically examine whether there is a difference in the distribution of illocutionary acts between the three CSATs. Consider the Speech Act * Year of Testing (2013–2015) crosstab in Table 4 and its chi-square test result in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Act</th>
<th>Year of Testing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissive</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Speech Act * Year of Testing (2013–2015) Crosstab
According to Table 4, the chi-square value is 6.724 and, with 6 degrees of freedom, this does not achieve statistical significance (p > .05). Therefore, we reject one of the alternative hypotheses and conclude that there is no difference in the distribution of illocutionary acts between the 2013, 2014 and 2015 CSATs.

The chi-square test also lends itself to answering the question whether there is a difference in the distribution of direct and indirect speech acts between the three CSATs. Consider the (In)Direct Speech Act*Year of Testing (2013–2015) crosstab in Table 6 and its chi-square test result in Table 7.

**Table 5: Chi-Square Tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>6.724</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>6.732</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>753</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (0%) have an expected frequency below 5. The minimal expected frequency is 14.85.

**Table 6: (In)Direct Speech Act * Year of Testing (2013–2015)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Act</th>
<th>Year of Testing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7: Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>4.718a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>4.886</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>753</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (0%) have an expected frequency below 5. The minimal expected frequency is 38.99.

The chi-square value in Table 7 is 6.724 and, with 2 degrees of freedom, this does not achieve statistical significance ($p > .05$). Therefore, just as did in the previous hypothesis, we must reject the other alternative hypothesis that there is no difference in the distribution of direct and indirect speech acts between the 2013, 2014 and 2015 CSATs.

On the basis of the chi-square tests above, the two alternative hypotheses have to be rejected. Nonetheless, careful examination seems to suggest that the rejection of the second alternative hypothesis is quite different than that of the first. Even though the $p$-value .095 is statistically insignificant, it is far smaller than the $p$-value .347. Moreover, if only the 2014 and 2015 CSATs are compared, the relationship can be statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level, as seen below:

Table 8: (In)Direct Speech Act * Year of Testing (2014–2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Act</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9: Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>4.045(^a)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>3.563</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>4.045</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher’s Exact Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>493</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) 0 cells (0%) have an expected frequency below 5. The minimal expected frequency is 36.86.
\(^b\) Computed only for a 2x2 table

The chi-square value in Table 9 is .044 and, with 1 degree of freedom, this does achieve statistical significance (p < .05). Note that Fisher’s exact p-value is even smaller. Therefore, if the alternative hypothesis were that there is a difference in the distribution of direct and indirect speech acts between the 2014 and 2015 CSATs, that hypothesis would have to be accepted.

V. CONCLUSION

The results of the present work show that the College Scholastic Ability Test has successfully maintained the consistency of conversational materials used for listening test items even though the number and types of listening questions were substantially changed twice for the past three years. In connection with the distribution of major classes of illocutionary acts, the conversational listening materials of the 2013, 2014 and 2015 CSAT do not differ. Nor do they show a difference in the use of direct and indirect speech acts.

As the discussion of the previous section suggests, there is one caveat: examples of indirect speech acts should be distributed more consistently across the conversational listening materials of CSATs. Equally important is the fact that the provision of virtually the same amount of listening material
using indirect speech acts is one of the crucial factors in maintaining the same level of difficulty of listening tests. As noted in Section II, an indirect speech act is a speech act in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another, namely a direct one. This means that unlike direct speech acts, which have a direct relationship between form and meaning, indirect speech acts have an indirect relationship between form and meaning (Yule, 1996). So it is reasonable to suppose that by and large, the interpretation of indirect speech acts requires more cognitive load than that of direct speech acts because it is difficult to establish one-to-one correspondence between form and meaning in indirect speech acts. Moreover, as summed up by Anquetil (2013), the interpretation of indirect speech acts is a problem for L2 learners, because the linguistic associations which allow them to move from the literal meaning of an utterance to the meaning in context are not necessarily the ones which they associate with the literal meaning of the corresponding utterance in their mother tongue. In relation to this, note that the conversational listening material of the 2014 CSAT used 33 indirect acts, which are 12 short of the number of indirect speech acts used in the 2015 CSAT, even though the former test has two more conversational listening questions than the latter one. Consider Table 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Act</th>
<th>Year of Testing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2015 CSAT used 31 indirect requests, but the 2014 CSAT, 15
indirect requests, less than half the number obtained in the 2015 CSAT. Even though such differences were not big enough to give us statistical significance, they could be said to affect other aspects, such as difficulty level, of the two tests in question.

REFERENCES


Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: Korean, English
Applicable Levels: Secondary

Key words: speech act theory, illocutionary act, (in)direct speech, College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT), chi-square test

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