

## Activity: Exploring Research-Based Descriptions of Speech Acts<sup>1</sup>

### Objectives:

- 1) Participants will be able to identify descriptions of speech acts as derived from research in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics.
- 2) Participants will be able to gain more explicit awareness of the cross-cultural similarities and differences regarding the pragmatic use of the target language they teach.

**Suggested time:** 40 minutes

### Materials:

- Computers with access to internet, and/or
- Research articles on speech acts or other pragmatic features that participants wish to investigate

### Directions:

- 1) Form groups according to the speech act(s) of your interest. Ideally your group has speakers of different languages. Sit next to them in the computer lab.
- 2) Read the portion of this chapter that contains information about the speech act(s) of your choice. This serves as an introduction to the CARLA website.
- 3) Then, go online and explore your speech act(s) listed in: <http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/descriptions.html>. Make sure to click on “research notes” links for more detailed information.
- 4) Save the link or copy down the cultural and linguistic information that you think will be beneficial to you and your colleagues. At some later point you may decide to utilize this information to build pragmatics-focused tasks or a lesson plan.
- 5) Discuss in your small group what you have found out about the speech act(s) you have studied, comparing descriptions across languages. Evaluate how credible the information seems to be to you. If the information does not appear to reflect authentic language use, discuss why that might be the case and how you would adapt the information.
- 6) Report to the whole group what your small group has found out about the speech act(s). Make sure to discuss both cultural and linguistic aspects of the speech act(s).

**Discussion/Wrap-up:** Discuss the utility of research-based information in pragmatics-focused instruction. What are the pros and cons of such data? Start considering how you might use the information in teaching speech acts.

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<sup>1</sup> Appearing in Describing speech acts: Linking research and pedagogy (Ch. 4) in N. Ishihara & A. D. Cohen (Forthcoming). *Teaching and learning pragmatics: Where language and culture meet*. Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.