



GlobELT: An International Conference on Teaching and Learning English as an Additional Language, Antalya - Turkey

## A pragmatic analysis of thanking strategies among Kurdish speakers of Ilam based on gender and age

Kolsoum Yusefi<sup>a</sup>, Habib Gowhary<sup>a\*</sup>, Akbar Azizifar<sup>a</sup>, Zakieh Esmaeili<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of English language Teaching, Islamic Azad University, Ilam Branch, Ilam, Iran

### Abstract

Thanking is one of the most commonly used speech act and major instruments which strengthen the bonds between the members of a society. This study attempted to study the most frequently- used thanking strategies in Ilami Kurdish language. To this end, a DCT (discourse completion task) will be applied. DCT represents various scenarios where the participants are asked to write down the terms they use to thank others. The participants involve 117 people from different walks of life, poor or rich, educated or uneducated, young or old, and the like. The analysis of data based on Cheng's (2005) taxonomy of 8 strategies to express gratitude. To analysis the collected data both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized. The results revealed that 'thanking', 'positive feeling' and 'appreciation' were the most frequently used strategies among subjects of under 30 years respectively and 'thanking', 'positive feeling' and 'appreciation' were common used strategies among subjects of above 30 years respectively. Regarding the gender of participants 'thanking', 'positive feeling' and 'appreciation' were the most frequently used strategies among male subjects respectively and in responding to thanking strategies 'thanking' and 'positive feeling' were the general tendency of females participant. EFL learners can be benefited from these findings to develop their pragmatic competence.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of Hacettepe Üniversitesi.

*Keywords:* thanking; speech act; pragmatic; Ilami-kurdish

### 1. Introduction

Speech act is the performance of a certain behavior, such as thanking, apology, refusal, or greeting, through words. "Speech acts are realized from culture to culture indifferent ways and these differences may result in

\* Corresponding author. Tel: +98-9185102095;  
E-mail Address: [h\\_gowhary@yahoo.com](mailto:h_gowhary@yahoo.com)

communication difficulties that range from the humorous to the serious” (Gass and Neu 2006). Speech acts are very culture specific and people from different cultures have different norms to express their gratitude, apology, compliments, refusals, etc. These differences can result in cross cultural stereotypes well as miscommunication among individuals. Gass&Selinker (2008, p.288) pointed out that all “languages have a means of performing speech acts and presumably speech acts themselves are universals, yet the form used in specific speech acts varies from culture to culture”. However, people sometimes perceive and evaluate the behavior of others from different cultures differently as sometimes being insincere and they feel that some people may “overdo their friendliness” (ibid). Wolfson (1986) notion that speech acts are different in many aspects such as cross culturally, the way they are realized, their distribution, and their frequency of occurrence and in the function they serve.

Brown and Levinson (1978) have enriched the literature by introducing a politeness theory that is based on the concept of ‘face’. They defined ‘face’ as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (1978: 61). They claim that there are two aspects of this ‘face’: ‘positive face’ and ‘negative face’ (ibid). ‘Positive face’ is defined as a desire to be valued and appreciated while ‘negative face’ is defined as the desire to have freedom from imposition. In any human interaction, people may threaten others' face because it competes against one’s desires and needs. Brown and Levinson called this a Face Threatening Act (FTA).

According to many scholars, the speech act of thanking is a universal illocution across languages and cultures (Coulmas, 1981; Aijmer, 1996; & Schneider, 2005). Jautz points out that gratitude expressions are used "when a speaker wants the addressee to know that s/he is grateful for what the addressee has said or done" (Jautz, 2008, p 142). Aijmer (1996) states that expressing gratitude is considered a stereotypical speech act because the form of thank you or thanks is almost always used by speakers every time they want to express gratitude (1996, p.78). Jung (1994) adds in his paper on speech acts of thanking that gratitude expression has the effect of enhancing rapport between the interlocutors. He states that some gratitude expressions may serve different functions depending on the situation such as “conversational openings, stopping, leave takings and offering positive reinforcement (ibid).

Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) refer to Rubin’s (1983) analysis of the different functions of the phrase thank you. Rubin (1983) showed the different uses of the phrase thank you, such as complimenting or signaling the closing of a conversation, or a “bald” thank you at service encounters. (As cited in Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986). One important aspect of pragmatic competence is the production and understanding of speech acts and their appropriateness in a given situation (Cheng, 2005). Austin (1962) defines speech acts as the actions performed in saying something. According to Austin’s theory, these “functional units in communication” have propositional or locutionary meaning (the literal meaning of the utterance), illocutionary meaning (the social function of the utterance), and perlocutionary force (the effect produced by the utterance in a given context) (p.384). Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) have identified thanking as an illocutionary act under Searle’s classification of speech act. Their study indicates that an expression of gratitude is:

“An illocutionary act performed by a speaker which is based on a past act performed by the hearer. This past act benefits the speaker and the speaker believes it to have benefited him or her. The speaker feels grateful or appreciative, and makes a statement which counts as an expression of gratitude (ibid).”

However, not all expressions using the word ‘thank you’ refer to gratitude (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1993). They can also refer to other language functions such as compliments and closings (Rubin, 1983). Even the use of thanking might differ from culture to culture. For instance, ‘thank you’ used in American English is more common as an expression of gratitude while in British English it is more a formal marker (Hymes, 1972, cited in Eisenstein and Bodman, 1993). As Coulmas (1981) puts it: “The social relation of the participants and the inherent properties of the object of gratitude work together to determine the degree of gratefulness that should be expressed in a given situation. Differences in this respect are obviously subject to cultural variation” (p.75). Saying thank you is a problem not only for native speakers, but also for second language learners who need to know when and how to thank in the target culture (Bodman and Eisenstein, 1988; Eisenstein and Bodman, 1986, 1993).The problem is typically considered in terms of when and how thanking is an appropriate response to the social situation (Cheng, 2005). Kumar (2001) highlights the significance of expressions of gratitude in the following word:

“Expressions of gratitude in the normal day-to-day interactions between the members of a society seem obviously to fall in the category of the “social” use of language. Expressions of gratitude and politeness are a major instrument the use of which keeps the bonds between the members of a society well-cemented and strong. They are used profusely and

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1109777>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1109777>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)