A Cross-linguistic Study on Expressions of Gratitude by Native and Non-native English Speakers

Xuebo Cui
English Department, Yanbian University, Yanji, China
Email: xuebocui@yahoo.com

Abstract—This paper attempts to investigate whether advanced ESL and EFL learners are able to express gratitude appropriately in different situations and whether there exists any difference in expressing gratitude among speakers from various language and cultural background. The participant in this study were ten 6 native-English speakers who were born and raised in the United States, and ten 10 Filipinos who were ESL learners, and 28 EFL learners with Chinese, Korean, Indonesian, and Japanese background who have lived in the Philippines at least one year. The written data from native and non-native speakers were coded and analyzed. It is concluded by the result of the study that native speakers' expression of gratitude is appropriately a speech act set. On the other hand, non-native speakers' data showed that advanced-level non-native learners of English, to some extent, have difficulty in expressing gratitude successfully. The reason of the failure is fully discussed in this study.

Index Terms—expressions of gratitude, native and non-native English speakers, ESL learners, EFL learners

I. INTRODUCTION

What is the worth of saying "Thank you"? It is priceless when it is said in sincerity. The magic power of a simple expression of gratitude has almost limitless potentials. Expressing appreciation to those who do things for you is also a way to make people happy. Expressions of gratitude can be a happy experience for both the giver and receiver. Expressing gratitude is a language function that has important social value in American English (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986, p.165). They noted that the mark of the importance was that adults in western countries spent a lot of time and effort in teaching gratitude to small children how and when to thank others. Failure to express gratitude adequately can sometimes result in ruining the relationship of speaker and listener.

Because of the high social value of the expression of gratitude, it is important for non-native speakers (NNSs) of English express the function adequately. The author expected advanced-level non-native speakers who have learned English as Second Language (ESL) or those who have learned English as Foreign Language (EFL) for quite long time and have already lived in ESL country at least one year would express gratitude quite adequately. The purpose of the paper is to investigate whether advanced ESL learners and EFL learners are able to express gratitude appropriately in different situation and whether there exists any difference in expressing gratitude among speakers from a variety of linguistic and cultural background.

Some researchers have been investigated both across cultural groups and among speakers of American. Searle (1969) defined thanking as and illocutionary act performed by a speaker which is based on a past act performed by the hearer (Searle, 1969, cited in Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986, p.165). Leech (1983) investigated thanking from a more socially oriented perspective. Leech describes thanking as a 'convivial function' whose illocutionary goal coincides with the social goal of establishing and maintaining a polite and friendly social atmosphere (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986, p.166).

In addition to the theoretical approach to describing thinking, some empirical studies also conducted by researchers. Grief and Gleason (1980) conducted a laboratory study which suggested that sex differences might influence the frequency with which thanks were given. They found out that women were more likely to thank than men under laboratory conditions (Wolfson, 1989, p.103).

Coulmas (1981) has reported study conducted in Europe and Japan. He made the point that both thanking and apologizing are linked to the notion of indebtedness, through gratitude and regret respectively. He noted that in Japanese culture, the concept of gifts and favors focuses on the trouble they have caused the benefactor rather than the aspects which are pleasing to the recipient. Rubin's (1983) empirical study conducted in Hawaii in which she and her students gathered natural data on use of the words 'thank you' from a range of people and a variety of situations reported than 'thank you' can refer not only to gratitude but also to other language functions, such as complimenting of signaling the conclusion of a conversation. One of the most common forms of 'thank' she referred to was what she called 'bald' thank you -- a quick, almost automatic thanks -- typical of service encounters. The study also found out expressions of appreciation were longer and more embellished either when the giver had apparently invested a large

amount of time, money, or effort, or when the recipient felt that the action had been especially helpful.

The most comprehensive studies in this area have been conducted by Eisenstein and Bodman in 1986 (Wolfson, 1989, p.102). Eisenstein & Bodman (1986) looked at 7 different situations out of 14, administered first to 56 native speakers (NSs) and then revised and administered to 67 non-native speakers (NNSs) from five countries. The study found native speakers to show consistent use of expressions of gratitude within specifically defined contexts, often in the form of speech act sets. In addition, Eisenstein & Bodman (1995) has pointed out that expressing gratitude is a complex act, potentially involving both positive as well as negative feelings on the part of the giver and receiver. They noted that thanking is a face-threatening act in which the speaker acknowledges a debt to the hearer – thus threatening the speaker's negative face. Thus the very nature of thanking, which can engender feelings of warmth and solidarity among interlocutors, stands as well to threaten negative face (a desire to be unimpeded in one's actions). They concluded that expressing gratitude involves a complex series of interactions and encodes cultural values and customs.

Ferrara's (1994) report on two studies suggested that the Americans tended to use thanks where a quasi-apology form was the preferred token by Japanese. When a professor is given a small gift, Americans chose to give thanks whereas Japanese would apologize for being unworthy. The study offered the recommendation of more overt instruction in cultural differences.

Hinkel (1994) has reviewed several cultural differences in the implications of expressing thanks, e.g., in South and East Asian languages. Hinkel found that in some languages expression of thanks implies social indebtedness that is not connoted by a thank-you in Chinese or English. In some Arabic cultures, certain forms of thanking establish a social debt while others do not. Gender differences exist as well, e.g., in Hispanic countries (p.75-76). Knowledge of how to say thanks in a second language does not necessarily translate into knowledge of *when* a statement of thanks is appropriate (p.73-74). To examine NNSs'use of thanking with respect to NSs' norms in English, a study was conducted with 233 graduate and undergraduate students at Ohio State University, with 1 to 5 years of residence in the U.S. The study suggested that NNSs who have resided in the U.S. for long periods still may not render a thank-you appropriately (p.83-84). The implication for teaching is that appropriate pragmatic use of thanks and other speech acts must be explicitly taught and is not acquired incidentally. This begins with making NNSs aware of the implications of their non-native-like productions. NNSs can also learn from observing NSs offering thanks and taking note of what is said in what contexts. While the pragmatics of thanking are quite complex, their relative linguistic simplicity allows them to be presented at intermediate, as opposed to advanced, levels of language learning (p.84-85).

Ide (1998) has examined the social and metapragmatic functions of *sumimasen* (Japanese: 'there is no end' or 'it is not enough'), a conventional expression of apology in Japanese that is also used to express the feeling of thanks. This paper first describes seven pragmatic functions of *sumimasen* based on 51 instances of *sumimasen* recorded through ethnographic participant/non-participant observations of discourse in an ophthalmology clinic in Tokyo. The professionals were two female doctors, a female nurse, and a female receptionist. Fifty-eight patients participated, males and females of many ages. The seven functions were: 1) a sincere apology, 2) quasi-thanks and apology, 3) a request marker, 4) an attention-getter, 5) a leave-taking devise, 6) an affirmative and confirmational response, and 7) a reciprocal exchange of acknowledgment (as a ritualized formulas to facilitate public face-to-face communication). These seven functions are presented not as mutually exclusive but rather as overlapping concepts, ranging from remedial, remedial and supportive, to supportive in discourse. The author also cites Kumatoridani (1999), Coulmas (1981), and others to account for the concept of indebtedness that emerges from the shift of point of view from the speaker to the listener. The paper also demonstrates the exchange of *sumimasen* as a metapragmatic ritual activity, an anticipated and habitual behavior in public discourse in Japanese society.

Kim (1994) used a questionnaire to survey 20 native speakers of Japanese in their 20's to 30's (younger generation) in comparison with another 20 in their 50's to 60's (older generation) regarding their use of apologizing and thanking expressions. The frequency of the expressions and intensifiers (adverbials such as *doumo, taihen, hontouni, makotoni*) were analyzed in terms of: the semantic categories (apology, or thanks, although sometimes combined), magnitude of thanks and apology, and status of the interlocutors. Among the younger speakers, the prototypical expressions of thanks were variants of *arigatou*, whereas typical apology expressions (variants of *gomen, sumanai,* and *moushiwake nai*) were sometimes used for thanks as well. The larger the magnitude of thanks/apology was and the older the hearer was than the speaker, the more intensifiers were likely to be used and apologetic expressions were preferred (rather than pure expressions of thanks like variants of *arigatou*).

Takashi Naito, Janjira Wangwan, Motoko Tani (2005) surveyed 212 university students in Japan and 284 university students in Thailand, using a multiaspect questionnaire that was designed to investigate cultural similarities and differences in gratitude. The questionnaire included the items involved in hypothetical helping situations: (a) perceived gains of recipients, cost to benefactors, and obligation to help as antecedent variables of gratitude; (b) both positive feelings of gratitude and feelings of indebtedness; and (c) requital to benefactors and increased prosocial motivation of recipients as an outcome of gratitude. In both Japanese and Thai students, positive feelings co-related with facial and verbal expressions of gratitude and increased prosocial motivation. However, the variable of feelings of indebtedness was positively related to increased prosocial motivation only in Japanese male students

The work done so far has provided us with valuable and unexpected information, stimulating our interest in the ways of expressing and responding to thanks by native speakers and non-native speakers of English.

To sum up, there are many factors that are related to the expression of gratitude by speakers from a variety of language backgrounds. The goal of this present paper is to investigate a variety of factors that influence the expression of gratitude by speakers of native and non-native speakers of English. This paper collected qualitative data from native and non-native speakers: (1) to see how this speech act is realized by them; (2) to explore whether they express gratitude differently in the same situation; (3) to investigate whether advanced ESL and EFL learners are able to approximate native English-speaking norms in expressing gratitude; (4) to determine if the gender is one of the factors which may effect the way the gratitude is expressed.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The participant of the study were six native-English speakers who were born and raised in the United States, and ten Filipinos who were ESL learners, and ten Chinese, ten Koreans, six Indonesian, and two Japanese, who have lived in the Philippines more than one year. The native speakers were all the members of an Institute of Linguistics in the Philippines. The non-native speakers were all advanced-level ESL and EFL learners of graduate students at the universities in the Philippines. The ten Filipino ESL learners all announced that they were exposed to English since they were born or from kindergarten. And all of the EFL learners said that they started learning English from junior high school and had been exposed to English setting one to two years (See TABEL I).

TABLE I:
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ON NATIONAL GROUPS

	YLE		YIP	
	Range	Average	Range	Average
Chinese	11 to 25years	18.3years	4months to 1.6years	1.3years
Korean	7 to 21years	13.5years	2months to 5years	2.6years
Indonesian	17 to 28years	20.8years	1.4years to 3years	2years
Japanese	9 to 17years	13years	2months to 2.5years	1.4years

YLE: years of learning English; YIP: years in the Philippines

As advanced English learners, the ESL and EFL participants have learned how to express gratitude appropriately in English.

B. Framework of Analysis

The author modified the questionnaire which was developed by Eisenstein and Bodman (1986). Among the twenty-five situations, The author only chose seven situations which can arouse the most detailed, varied, and sincere responses, not those situations which can raise the response what Rubin (1983) called the 'bald' thank you.

The author presented the situations in written form to the participants and asked them to write what they would say orally if they were in these situations. I also asked them to write as much or as little as they want to say to made it as natural as possible. In addition, the participants were asked to fill out the Profile Sheet which includes information about their demographic data and the norm of expressing gratitude (verbal or nonverbal) in their own language setting. It was helpful to investigate the variables which might influence their way of expressing thanks. After the participants filled out the questionnaires, follow-up interviews were conducted by the author. It was helpful to obtain more useful information which might not be included in the questionnaire.

This approach has distinct disadvantages. First, since the participants have enough time to write down their possibly best answers, the response may not be as natural as oral response. However, Eisenstein & Bodman (1995) found that the role plays contained the same words and semantic formulas as in the written data, confirming that the written data were representative of oral language use as well. Secondly, this written response did not allow for nonverbal cues and prosodic features which could soften the response, like tone, facial expression, or other body movement. Thus, the Profile Sheet of the participant and the follow-up interviews could make up the limitation to an extent.

In order to investigate whether ESL and EFL learners are able to approximate native English-speaking norm in expressing gratitude, the author modified the rating scale developed by Eisenstein & Bodman (1986). Thomas (1983), after having analyzed the range of errors in the speech of second language learners, proposed a distinction between instances of pragma-linguistic failure (errors resulting from non-native speakers knowing the correct thing to say, not knowing how to say it correctly) and socio-pragmatic failure (errors resulting from non-native speakers not knowing what to say or not saying the appropriate thing as a result of transferring incongruent social rules, values and belief systems from their native language and cultures). Considering these failures and with the native speakers' data as a basis for comparison, Eisenstein & Bodman (1986, p.172) had developed six rating scale to code the responses of the non-native participants: *not acceptable*, *problematic*, *acceptable*, *native-like/perfect*, *not comprehensible*, and *resistant*.

Since the scales are not mutually excusive and there was not resistant (refusing to answer) in my data, I applied the three rating scales: (1) NATIVE-LIKE (close to native in content and lexicon, with minimal or no grammatical problems) (2) ACCEPTABLE (clear and appropriate, but with a small error or errors) (3) NOT ACCEPTABLE (a violation of a social norm; with errors that might cause misunderstanding; you couldn't make sense of it, if you didn't look at the response for awhile). I invited one native speaker of American English as the inter-rater[1] to investigate the acceptability of ESL

and EFL students' expression gratitude.

C.   Units of Analysis

According to Rubin (1983) expressions of appreciation were longer and more embellished either when the giver had apparently invested a large amount of time, money, or effort, or when the recipient felt that the action had been especially helpful. And Grief and Gleason's (1980) laboratory study suggested that sex differences might influence the frequency with which thanks were given.

In order to investigate the relationship between the length of the expression and the variables like, time, money, effort and gender, we need a unit of analyzing the data. Considering the fact that each expression conveys separate and independent ideas, I thought of analyzing the data per *idea unit*. An idea unit as defined by Kroll (1977) is chunk of information which is viewed by the speaker/writer cohesively as it is given a surface form…related… to psychological reality for the encoder (Kroll, 1977).

Kroll (1977) characterized an idea unit as containing the following criteria: (1) the subject and verb is counted as one idea with the presence of a direct object, prepositional phrase, adverbial element, or mark of subordination; (2) full relative clauses are counted as one idea unit when the relative pronoun is present; (3) phrases which occurred in sentence initial position followed by a comma or which is set off from the sentence with commas are counted as separate idea units; (4) verbs whose structure requires or allows a verbal element as object are counted with both verbal elements is counted as one idea unit; (5) reduced clauses in which a subordinator was followed by a non-finite verb element are counted as one idea unit; (6) post nominal –*ing* phrases used as modifiers counted as one unit; (7) other types elements counted as idea units are absolutes, appositives, and verbal.

III.   RESULT

Formulas of Expressing Gratitude

  1. Data for Native Speakers

Looking at the data of native-speakers, we can find that the expression of gratitude is appropriately a speech act set. In addition to expressing the simple function of thanking (*Thank you so much*), they regularly expected other functions such as complimenting (*You made just the perfect choice*), reassuring (*Blue is one of my favorite colors*), promising to repay (*I'll try to repay you as soon as I can*), expressing surprise and delight (*Wow! Wonderful!*), expressing a lack of necessity of obligation (*You should not have taken time to do that*), expressing a desire to continue the relationship (*I'll be in touch soon and would like you to come to my place some time*). These groups of functions were consistent with the findings of Eisenstein & Bodman (1986), which they noted as the combination of forming the higher-level speech act set of expressing gratitude (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986. p.171). Depending on the situation, the formulas ranges in length from one function (expressing thanks - e.g. *thanks*) to five functions (expressing surprise+expressing delight+complimenting the object+expressing pleasure+complimenting the giver+expressing the preference - e.g. *Wow! Wonderful! My favorite color too. How did you know my favorite color? And a sweater too. Just what I need for this cold weather.*).

  2. Data for Non-native Speakers

Expectedly, these five functions (expressing surprise+thanking+expressing pleasure+complimenting+expressing a desire to continue the relationship or repay the favor) could be easily found in ESL and EFL data. For example,

  Oh*, thank you so much. I promise I'll pay you back on Monday*. (Filipino data)
  It's very beautiful. I like the color very much. Thank you very much. (Chinese data)
  Oh! Thank you, but you don't need to do. (Korean data)
  Thank you so much for inviting me. The meal was wonderful, and I really had a great time. Good night! (Indonesian data)
  Thank you very much. I'm very happy. I'm looking forward the farewell party for me. (Japanese data)

An interesting finding in Filipino data was that many participants used exaggerations to emphasize the depth of their gratitude, like "*You are a lifesaver*", "*There's nothing as satisfying as getting a free real good meal. Thank you so much for the real good meal*", and "*Oh my, you shouldn't have. I don't like being the center of 'distraction' but thanks anyways. Let's go*". Such expressions were also found in native speakers' data in Eisenstein & Bodman (1986). And such expressions as "*You are a blessing*", "*You are my angel today*" were also found only in Filipino dada, which has a religious undertone.

Another finding from the ESL and EFL data was that they all contained expressions of indebtedness except for Indonesian data. We can see that expressing indebtedness is also a way to express gratitude in some languages, especially in the situations which is needed to show sincere thanks. For example,

  Thank you so much. I owe you a lot. You are my angel today. (Filipino data: 100peso)
  Thank you. I know a friend in need is a friend in deed. You are real my friend. I'll remember you for my whole life. You help me a lot.   (Chinese data: 10,000peso)
  Really? Thank you! I didn't expect that. I never forget your kindness. (Korean data: Farewell)
  I'm sorry to put you to a lot of trouble. I'll pay back soon without fail. Thank you very much. (Japanese: 10,000peso)
  The data in Japanese showed the quasi-apologetic thanks. It is caused by their native language and cultural. In

Japanese culture, the indebtedness implies an expression of gratitude. And the participant from Japan said it is generally acceptable to use expression of indebtedness to show sincere thanks to the giver.

3. Number of Idea Unit

As previously talked about, expressions of appreciation were longer and more embellished either when the giver had apparently invested a large amount of time, money, or effort, or when the recipient felt that the action had been especially helpful (Rubin, 1983). And gender differences might also influence the frequency of expression of gratitude (Grief & Gleason's, 1980). In order to investigate the relationship between the length of the expression and the variables like, time, money, effort and gender, the data was analyzed by means of *idea unit*.

The data from Japanese speakers were excluded in this analysis because the only two participants were both female. The gender of non-native participants in each language groups was not even. However, we could still get some suggestive understanding through the following analyses.

As can be seen in TABLE II, the average number of idea unit ranged from 1.82 (100 peso) to 3.06 (Sweater) depending on the situation. Obviously, the situations which made the receiver fell especially indebted or surprised produced a more lengthy speech act set. 10,000 peso situation (2.8) has apparently more lengthy number of idea unit than 100 peso situation (1.82).

Data for native speakers didn't show the gender differences. They equally produced the same speech act set. The data for the rest of the language groups, to an extent, suggested gender differences. The data for non-native speakers showed that the number of idea unit produced by female participants were higher than those of male participants in each language groups. It suggested that generally women are more likely to express thanks than man.

TABLE II:
NUMBER OF IDEA UNIT

Participants	Prompt	1 100peso	2 Sweater	3 Raise	4 10,000peso	5 Lunch	6 Party	7 Dinner	Average/ person
Native	Total(6)	2.2	3.5	3	3	2.5	2.7	3.3	**2.9**
Filipino	Total(10)	2	3	2.9	2.7	2.2	2	2.3	**2.4**
Chinese	Total(10)	2	3.2	2.2	3.1	1.7	2.3	2.8	**2.5**
Korean	Total(10)	1.7	2.3	1.9	2.5	2.4	2	2.3	**2.2**
Indonesian	Total(6)	1.2	3.3	2	2.5	1.8	2.5	2	**2.2**
	Average / situation	**1.82**	**3.06**	**2.4**	**2.8**	**2.1**	**2.3**	**2.54**	

Another finding from the analysis was that, looking at the average number of the idea unit produced per person, the native speakers' data (2.9) was higher than the data from the rest of the language groups (Finipino-2.4; Chinese-2.5; Korean-2.2; Indonesian-2.2) all situation of the native speaker. During the interview, most of the participants of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese language backgrounds complained about their limit of vocabulary to express properly in the situation. It suggested that limitation of vocabulary might influence the length of the expression of gratitude.

4. Acceptability

The response of non-native speakers was coded according to the three rating scales: (1) NATIVE-LIKE (close to native in content and lexicon, with minimal or no grammatical problems) (2) ACCEPTABLE (clear and appropriate, but with a small error or errors) (3) NOT ACCEPTABLE (a violation of a social norm; with errors that might cause misunderstanding; you couldn't make sense of it, if you didn't look at the response for awhile).

Table 3 shows the percentages of participants scoring NATIVE-LIKE, ACCEPTABLE, and NOT ACCEPTABLE among four language groups. Filipino participants, as ESL learners, performed best of all the non-native language groups (80% of NATIVE LIKE). Their responses were much more native-like than the other groups. However, they also had 4.3% of responses rated as NON ACCEPTABLE. Looking at those responses, they all violated social norm, especially threaten the positive face of the givers. For example,

This is the Philippines. Where am I going to use a sweater. Thank you though. (Filipino data: Sweater)

No, I don't think so.   (Filipino data: 10,000 peso)

I don't think it necessary.   (Filipino data: Farewell)

These are not accurate conventionalized expression of gratitude, which will be considered over-aggressive and abrupt.

The Korean responses were rated as the lowest (55.7%) in terms of the NATIVE-LIKE, and the highest (5.7%) in terms of NOT ACCEPTABLE. In addition to a violation of a social norm, syntactic and lexical problems appeared in the data. For example,

You shouldn't do that! I'm honor to hear that.   (Korean data: Raise)

I am feeling flattered for being praised by you.   (Korean data: Raise)

Thank you for dinner. I'll buy you next time. Don't waste your money next time. Here is too expensive. (Korean data: Lunch)

I had such a wonderful time. I'm looking forward to you soon!   (Korean data: Dinner)

These pragma-linguistic failure as well as socio-pragmatic failure appeared in the responses of all the advanced-level ESL and EFL learners. The syntactic and lexical problems were more significant. For example,

I'm sorry to put you to a lot of trouble. (influence of native language and culture)

I'm full. It is the biggest meal I have ever had. (influence of native language and culture)
I can't take it. It's good for me and for you. I know your mind. (influence of native language and culture)
Thank you. I'll return you next Monday. (preposition)
Thank you. I return it to you tomorrow. (tense)
You know I really want a sweater such this one. (misused idiom)
Thanks, the dishes are really delicious. (plural form)
It's really nice sweater. (article)
I am deeply greateful. (choice of words or misspelling)
I had a very very nice meal. (superabundance)
I'll pay you back on Monday without fail. (transform from L1)

It suggested that even advanced-level learners are not often able to use the conventional expressions of English appropriately without syntactic errors.

TABEL III:
RESULTS OF ACCEPTABILITY

Language background	Not acceptable	Acceptable	Native-like
Filipino (10)	3 (4.3%)	11 (15.7%)	56 (80%)
Chinese (10)	0 (0%)	30 (42.9%)	40 (57.1%)
Korean (10)	4 (5.7%)	27 (38.6%)	39 (55.7%)
Indonesian (6)	0 (0%)	15 (35.7%)	27 (64.3%)

IV. DISCUSSION

Culture consists of all the shared products of human society. This means not only such material things as cities, organizations and schools, but also non-material things such as ideas, customs, family patterns, languages. The term 'culture' generally refers to the total pattern of beliefs, customs, institutions, objects, and techniques that characterize the life of a human community.

Language is intimately tied to man's feelings and activity. It is bound up with nationality, religion, and the feeling of self. So language is a part of culture and plays a very important role in the society. Some social scientists consider it the keystone of culture. Without language, they maintain, culture would not be possible. On the other hand, language is influenced and shaped by culture; it reflects culture. In the broadest sense, language is the symbolic representation of a people, and it comprises their historical and cultural backgrounds as well as their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking.

There are many differences in language and culture among different language groups. For example, between Chinese and native speakers of English, there are many differences in language and culture, such as language, manners of dress, conduct in public, eating habits and so on.

And there are differences of national origin, class, geographical region, occupation, age and sex. However, there are certain attitudes and ideas, certain culturally prescribed rules of behavior that seem to be accepted by most Americans and Englishmen, certain ways of social interaction that are generally observed.

Turing to China, the problem is similar. Chinese language and culture have their local variations. Both Chinese and English have expressions for gratitude, for example, '*xiexie*' in Chinese and '*Thank you*' in English. On the whole, they are quite similar and present no problem. However, even among these there are certain differences.

Thank you is used more widely than the Chinese *xiexie*. For minor favors like borrowing a pencil, asking directions, requesting someone to pass on a message, calling a person to the telephone, etc, such polite expressions are often omitted by Chinese, especially among close friends and members of the family. The more frequent use of *Thank you* by Westerners is often regarded as unnecessary and even tiresome by many Chinese. On the other hand, the Chinese attitude - that appreciation is understood and need not be expressed - is sometimes taken for rudeness or lack of consideration by Westerners.

Compared to the speakers of English and many other languages tend to rely on a limited set of fixed expressions for everyday spoken pleasantries, such as *Thank you*, Koreans like Chinese also use the equivalent of the expressions much less, preferring instead a wider variety of phrases depending on the specific situation. If you go around saying *Kamsahamnida* (Korean, meaning *thank you*) for every little thing to Korean people in Korea, it seems really funny and strange. Other ways of expressing thanks are more appropriate in many situations. For example, when someone has done some work for you, you say, *Sugohasyesmnida* ('You have taken much trouble'), if someone has treated you to a meal, you say, *Zalmogosunida* ('I am full' or 'I've eaten well').

And when you leaving a dinner in a Japanese home we might say, *O-jama itashimashita* 'I have intruded on you.' The response, *Iie, iie, do itashimashite* 'No, no, don't mention it', is a responder for both apologies and thanks. As Coulmas (1981) noted that *sumimasen* 'Thank you' or 'I'm sorry' tends to be appropriate for a host of occasions. It is noted that in Japan the gratitude is equated with a feeling of guilt. As presented previously, in Japanese culture, the concept of gifts and favors focuses on the trouble they have caused the benefactor rather than the aspects which are pleasing to the recipient. So, the Japanese language has a large range of routine formulae for exhibiting sensitivity to

mutual obligations, responsibilities, and moral indebtedness.

V. Conclusion

The data from native speakers showed that the expression of gratitude is appropriately a speech act set. In addition to expressing the simple function of thanking, they regularly expressed other functions such as complimenting, reassuring, promising to repay, expressing surprise and delight, expressing a lack of necessity of obligation, expressing a desire to continue the relationship. Secondly, native speakers' data showed no function of indebtedness, as had been found in all the rest of non-native speakers' data except for Indonesian data. We can see than showing indebtedness is not a conventional expression of gratitude for the native speakers of English. Thirdly, no gender differences has been found in native speakers' data. Thirdly, native speakers produced lengthy speech act of expressing gratitude than the non-native speakers, which suggested that lack of vocabulary is also a factor of expressing thanks.

Non-native speakers' data showed that advanced-level non-native learners of English to an extent have difficulty in expressing gratitude successfully. The failure mainly caused by the misuse of convention and syntactic errors. Filipino data showed that as advanced ESL learners they can use the conventional everyday expressions of English nearly perfectly. The Chinese, Korean, Indonesian and Korean data showed that, as advanced EFL learners, they had yet difficulty in expressing themselves in a native-like manner. Secondly, non-native speakers' data showed more or less the influence of their native language and culture, for example expressing indebtedness, direct transformation from their native language. Thirdly, non-native speakers' data suggested gender differences in expressing gratitude. It showed that female participants tended to use lengthy expressions than male participants when giving thanks.

The data showed that in all language groups expressions of appreciation were longer and more embellished either when the giver had apparently invested a large amount of time, money, or effort, or when the recipient felt that the action had been especially helpful, which is consistent with the finding in previous study by Rubin (1983).

The giving and receiving of thanks, as well as responding appropriately, are some of the ways that feelings of solidarity can be built. The expression of gratitude has been found to be yet problematic for even advanced ESL and EFL learners. This is because the social norms for thanks giving/receiving are to some extent specific to a culture and a language. The lack of cross-cultural distinctiveness could lead to instances of pragmatic failure.

Learning a foreign language well means more than merely mastering the pronunciation, grammar, words and idioms. It means learning also to see the world as native speakers of that language see it, learning the ways in which their language reflects the ideas, customs, and behavior of their society, learning to understand their language of the mind. Learning a language, in fact, is inseparable from learning its culture.

Social scientists tell us that cultures differ from one another, that each culture is unique. As cultures are diverse, so languages are diverse. Understanding is not always easy. So it is very important to aware the culture differences between languages and the difference between daily conversation is only one part of it. The present study will be of interest and of possible use and helpful to ESL and EFL learners as well as teachers.

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Xuebo Cui, heads the Department of English at Yanbian University, China. Her research interests are in Applied Linguistics, Professional Development for Teachers of English, Bilingual Education, and Contrastive Linguistics. She is currently exploring the effect of language policy change on teacher support program.