

Gender Differences in Expressing Speech Act of Gratitude

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ABSTRACT

This research looks at the importance of the gratitude speech act in communication. This study was carried out using qualitative methods by the researchers. A non-interactive technique known as a questionnaire was used by researchers in this study. This questionnaire was chosen to learn more about the perspectives of lecturers and students at Uzbekistan's Urgench State University on the importance of expressing gratitude in speech and action. The questionnaire technique was chosen by the researchers to save time and obtain more participants than interviews would have required. The questionnaire contained a number of questions designed to elicit information from participants about their attitudes toward expressing gratitude, such as the types of occasions when they believe it is necessary, their preferred method of expressing gratitude, and so on. Gender differences influence the decision to express gratitude to others, according to this study. The importance of expressing gratitude in order to communicate politely is emphasized in this study.

Keywords: Gratitude, speech acts, locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary, gender, verbal communication, nonverbal communication, formality dimension.

INTRODUCTION

Gratitude, expressed primarily through the speech act of gratitude in Uzbek, is an etiquette speech or non-speech act with the

communicative goal of demonstrating that the speaker appreciates the good done for him by the interlocutor. Gratitude is defined in all languages as a feeling of appreciation arising from a beneficial act performed by one person for another or a way of expressing this feeling through word or deed. Speech production is a process that is influenced by both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. These variables can be objective (national norms and usage) or subjective (motivation, speech environment). The constituents of the speech environment, the integration of all private linguistic and speech environments influence the speaker's communicative intention. According to the above definition, the environment is divided into context and speech situations, which include extra-linguistic social factors and their reflections in the speaker and listener's consciousness.

The nature of the situation, the social characteristics of its participants, the "size" of the good that stimulates the expression of gratitude, and the nature of the communicants' relationship all influence the expression of gratitude. These components have a direct effect on the level of perceived gratitude, and all must be taken into account when considering a person's expression of gratitude. At the same time, gratitude is a manifestation of the author's emotional state as well as a means of influencing the addressee's emotions. Gratitude is thus both a psychological and a sociological construct, and its expression depends on multiple variables. Consequently, an analysis of the expression of gratitude requires not only attention to the relationship between the communicants but also a more holistic understanding of both their individual and collective psychological states.

Generally, gratitude is expressed in a variety of ways, depending on how much it has benefited the person giving thanks (someone helped to carry a bag, someone was given a gift, someone was invited to the theater, etc). The choice of sign is influenced by the contact or distance nature of the communication, gender, age, status characteristics, and degree of familiarity between the communicants.

Conversations between people of different ages frequently display varying levels of politeness. Many scholars, including G. A. Schauer and S. Adolphs argue that age differences affect the

formality of the speakers and thus the level of gratitude expressed. People of the same age, on the other hand, generally use familiar speech styles when expressing gratitude. That being said, age differences may also affect the form and content of gratitude. For instance, younger speakers may display more enthusiasm in expressing gratitude than older speakers, who may be more reserved in their expression. This can be seen in research conducted by Schauer and Adolphs, which found that younger speakers were more likely to use words such as “fantastic” or “amazing” when expressing gratitude, while older speakers used more common words such as “thank you” or “grateful.” This research shows that while people of the same age may use similar speech styles when expressing gratitude, age differences can lead to distinct variations in the form and content of expressions of gratitude (Schauer & Adolphs 2006).

Another facet of expressing gratitude is the concept of “status,” which derives from the Latin term for “standing” and simply refers to one’s place in society, offering a person “rights and obligations as a citizen of a political community” (Turner 1988). Variations in status can be based on a “combination of income, employment, education, and subsequent differences in access to social, economic, and political power, and thus reflects inequality among sectors of the population,” according to Bonvillian. Such characteristics of the power dynamic influence whether the dialogue is at a low or high level. Brown and Levinson's theory in this regard is that “the stronger a person is, the more influential he is in the conversation” (Bonvillian 1993). Expressing gratitude might even degenerate into unpleasant discourse. Hung and Bradac write that “polite language can be perceived as courteous and an indication of low status in some settings, but is successful and reflects high status throughout” (Hung & Bradac 1993).

It is founded on the assumption that men and women speak differently. One distinction is that women are thought to be more courteous than men when expressing appreciation. According to Speer, women are more likely than men to utilize politeness methods in their communication, such as greater praise, apologies, and words of thanks (Speer 2002). Hobbs (2003)

observes that while conversing with same-gender acquaintances, women employ a variety of positive etiquette practices. Men in a comparable situation, on the other hand, did not exhibit this inclination.

The speaker's level of expression of appreciation toward the other person will change as they get closer to them. As two people become closer, their level of politeness will often give way to a more informal approach to expressing gratitude. Brown and Levinson coin the term "social distancing" to describe this phenomenon. This demonstrates that the way gratitude is expressed between speakers depends on their familiarity. The closer they got, the more they felt the need to be informal and impolite (Brown & Levinson (1987). Formal and informal speaking situations also play a role in shaping speech acts in communication. Speaking more formally requires a more formal tone of voice, while speaking more casually calls for a more familiar one. This observation suggests that the manner in which speakers express gratitude is highly contextualized and dynamic. In addition, even when communicating with the same person, the volume of one's voice can vary from one occasion to the next. This is what Holmes (1995) refers to as the "formality dimension," which deals with the external circumstances that may cause or discourage polite behavior. The importance of context, he adds, cannot be overstated.

During the last decades, the research directions based on the anthropocentric approach to the study of linguistic phenomena have been intensively developed in linguistics, i.e., the researchers focus their attention on the phenomenon of a person who is a thinker and speaker, a listener, and a constructor of speech communication. Gender studies take a unique place among such linguistic trends, "which remain extremely relevant in all fields of humanities knowledge." Gender studies, both foreign and Uzbek, have two strands: the study of gender asymmetries in the language system and the study of men and women's speech and their speech behaviors.

Austin's theory of speech acts is dominated by the concept of illocutionary force. Therefore, it was not the production of the utterance but its communicative purpose that was the focus of the

scholar's attention. In the Speech Act, Austin distinguishes three levels: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary (Austin 1962). The locutionary act represents the very fact of utterance, which has phonetic, lexico-grammatical, and semantic structures. The illocutionary act expresses the communicative purpose of the given utterance. A perlocutionary act is an intentional impact on the addressee to achieve some result. The perlocutionary act is part of the speech act of the speaker and not a reciprocal post-communicative action of the addressee. Perlocutionary is the very act of impacting the addressee's information state, mood, plans, desires, and will. Whether the addressee responds or does not consider it necessary is beyond the scope of the initiative speech act of the speaker. As Austin points out, all three acts, occur simultaneously, not one after the other (Austin 1962).

In other words, we will be interested in the pragmatic power of these utterances and their primary function. Many factors can help us determine the function of an utterance in English, such as word order, intonation, punctuation, verb inclination, and so-called performative verbs as indicators of the function of illocutionary acts. In the absence of such indicators, however, in real speech situations, the function of the utterance is clarified by the context. This study investigates the reasons why women are more likely than men to express gratitude. It can be concluded that both social and biological factors influence men and women's gratitude expressions. According to traditional masculinity and femininity standards, women were expected to be caring and pleasing, while men were expected to be strong and brave. Because those standards have never been completely eradicated in modern society, men are less comfortable expressing gratitude than women. In terms of biological factors, women are more reactive to positive emotions than men, owing to differences in hormonal composition. It is important to note that all explanations for why women express gratitude more frequently than men are intended to make people happier. In comparison to men, women report more intense emotional experiences, are more willing to express them, and derive greater benefits from them. In light of this study and a small subset of studies on gender differences in gratitude, we predicted that

women would experience and express more gratitude and benefit more than men. Because of their increased awareness and acceptance of emotions, women might have an advantage over men in deriving rewards from their gratitude experiences; they are also likely to be more practiced in executing complex behavioral strategies to create, maintain, and strengthen close friendships. Gender issues in the emotionality of gratitude may be related to differences in social-emotional skills between men and women, as well as different social consequences. Women, for example, are more aware of their emotions and how to use them intelligently to achieve desired results. Greater gratitude experiences, as well as more positive and less negative reactions, strengthen the willingness to express future gratitude experiences openly. Men showed a slight deficiency in this valuable source of intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits when compared to women.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The questionnaire technique is chosen as the design for answering research questions. First, the researcher explained the purpose of the research and what the topic meant. Then, the questionnaire was administered to the participants, who filled it out according to the instructions given by the researcher. Questionnaire sheets that included several questions about what they thought about the importance of expressing gratitude. Researchers only gave two days for respondents to answer the questions, and the respondents only needed at least 10 minutes to answer the questions. The responses to the questionnaire were then tabulated and analyzed in order to obtain data that could be used to answer the research questions. The questions on the questionnaire were designed to measure the attitudes of participants towards expressing gratitude

METHODOLOGY

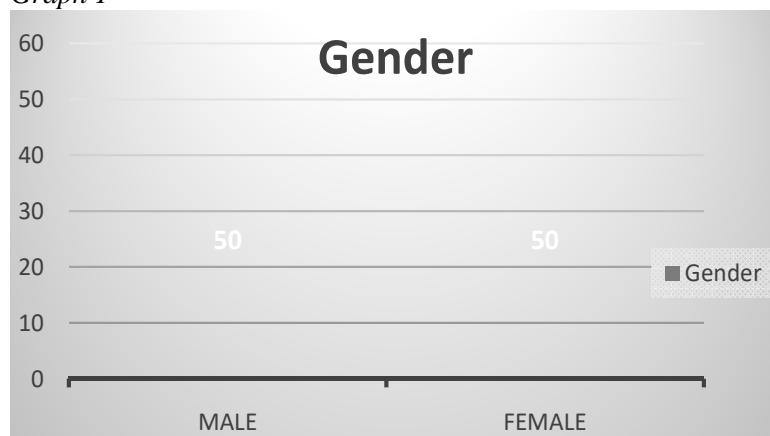
The total number of participants in this study is 40 (20 male and 20 female), who were selected from the Foreign Philology

Department at Urgench State University in Uzbekistan. These participants ranged in age from 20 to 50, including instructors, lecturers and students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programs, including English language, linguistics, and literature. Participants were required to complete three questionnaire questions.

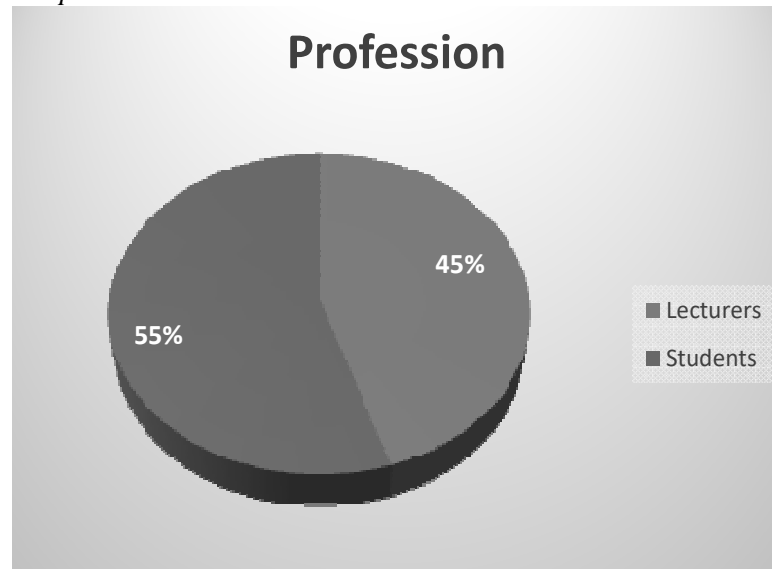
Demographic information of participants

	Variables	Number	%
Gender	Male	20	50
	Female	20	50
Profession	lecturers	18	45
	students	22	55
Age	20-22	19	47.5
	25-35	9	22.5
	40-50	12	30

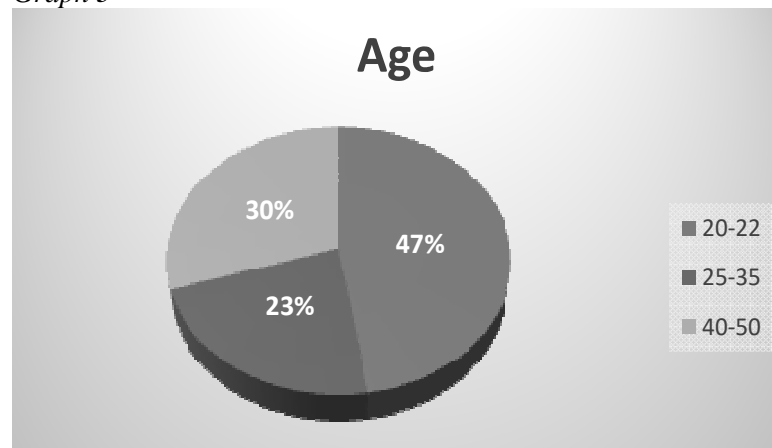
Graph 1



Graph 2



Graph 3

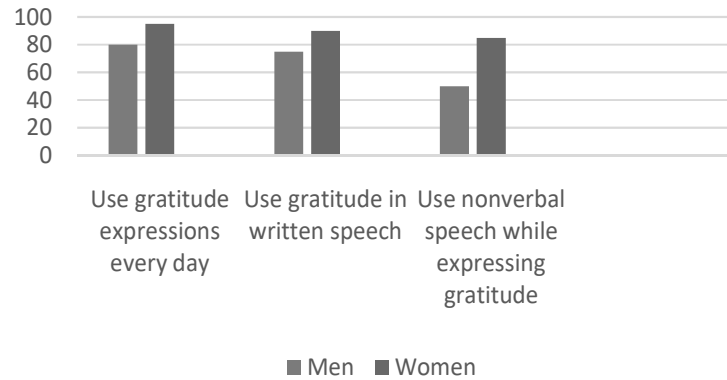


The following questions answered by respondents

Expressing gratitude	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
Do you use gratitude expressions every day?			
Do you use gratitude in written speech?			
Do you use nonverbal speech while expressing gratitude?			

RESULTS

Graph 4



The results of the questionnaire revealed that women tend to express gratitude more in all three situations than men do. The findings support previous research that showed that females are more likely to express gratitude than males, even when facing the same situations more specifically, a very large proportion roughly 95 per cent of female respondents use expressions of appreciation/gratitude in their everyday lives, whereas a fifth of male lecturers and students do not. Similarly, in written contexts, over 90 per cent of female lecturers expressed gratitude in their questionnaire responses, compared to only three quarters of male participants. Furthermore, the questionnaire asked about the use of nonverbal speech when expressing gratitude. Here, the results were disparate, with almost all female lecturers and students

using nonverbal speech when expressing gratitude, compared to only 50 per cent of male participants. Around half of the female participants reported using nonverbal expressions such as nodding and smiling while expressing gratitude, compared to just over a third of the male participants. This could indicate that, while female lecturers and students may appreciate the importance of expressing gratitude more than men do, they are perhaps more aware of the role it plays in developing strong social relationships. Moreover, the results also indicated that, regardless of gender, all lecturers and students felt more comfortable expressing gratitude verbally than in written form. While this could suggest that men may be less likely to use nonverbal expressions of gratitude, it is important to note that the differences between genders may also be a result of different cultural norms.

CONCLUSION

This study discovered interesting differences in how Uzbek females express and respond to gratitude depending on the scenario. The strategies used in expressing gratitude and responding to gratitude expressions in three situations were then thoroughly examined. The findings were used to determine whether females express gratitude differently compared to men. The results revealed that in all three situations, women generally exhibited a higher level of gratitude expression and response than men did. Interestingly, the findings revealed some differences in the strategies used by female participants to express and respond to gratitude in situations involving nonverbal communication, with males being more likely than females to use direct expressions of gratitude. Despite the fact that Uzbek females expressed gratitude in a more indirect manner than males, their responses to expressions of gratitude were more direct and vocal. This study adds to our understanding of the differences in gratitude expression and response between males and females in different cultural contexts.

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