

## Gratitude Expressions in Spoken Discourse of Filipino Speakers of English: A Corpus-based Study

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Received: 28 November 2022; Accepted: 26 April 2023; Published: 15 May 2023

<https://doi.org/10.58304/tc.20230205>

### Abstract

Based on Wong's (2010) types of thanking strategies, this corpus-based research explored how Filipino speakers of English express their gratitude and respond to the speech act of thanking. The Antconc software was utilized to search, extract, and examine instances of such expressions from the Philippine component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-PHI). The 279 occurrences of gratitude expressions found in the corpus showed that the interlocutors employed these ten different thanking strategies in varying degrees and frequencies with *thanking + alerter* as the most commonly used strategy. The data also revealed that they utilized *thanking + alerter + stating a reason* and *thanking + stating beneficiary's feeling*. It is hoped that the study's findings may inform language learners, teachers, and instructional materials developers.

### Keywords

Gratitude, English language teaching, pragmatics, speech acts, thanking

### Introduction

Studies in gratitude expressions have gained considerable attention from researchers across disciplines and cultures. Recently, these expressions have been investigated by human development scholars and psychologists to understand how gratitude as a cultural value develops among children from different cultures (Mendoca et al., 2018; Payir & Zeytinoglu, 2012). In the context of language education, corpus-based studies of thanking strategies in spoken discourse (Cheng, 2010; Wong, 2010) and cross-cultural studies concerning gratitude expressions of native and non-native speakers of English were carried out and examined using Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) (Pishghadam & Zarei, 2012; Yoosefvand & Rasekh, 2014). Cultural differences might have impelled the researchers to delve into further studies of gratitude expressions to provide insights on how and when to express appropriately one's gratitude depending on the cultural background of the benefactor.

As a virtue, gratitude is usually expressed by a beneficiary who uninhibitedly assumes a commitment to respond to a benefactor and intentionally reciprocates with something to give favor to the benefactor (Mendoca et al., 2018). These expressions are normally learned by children as part of their moral and social development and eventually mastered as they grow and interact with the people in their community. Successful expression of gratitude could boost the feeling of warmth and social harmony (Bodman & Einstein, 1988) and strengthen the relationship among interlocutors (Elwood, 2010), while failure or inadequate expression of gratitude might result in negative social consequences and jeopardize interpersonal relationships (Cheng, 2010; Intachakra, 2004). Singh et al. (2005) emphasized the importance of thanking expressions in English and possible miscommunication among different cultures

due to inappropriate expressions of gratitude by language learners, while Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) opined that mastery of the semantic formulas required in expressing gratitude is secondary only to knowing the felicitous time to apply these thanking formulas.

### Previous Studies

Studies investigating the different thanking strategies employed by both native and nonnative speakers of English have yielded interesting findings.

In 2004, Intachakra carried out a contrastive analysis of thanking strategies between British English natives and Thai speakers of English using observation and field notes of a variety of different kinds of interactions. Findings of this study revealed that the respondents' thanking strategies can be categorized as (a) an explicit expression of gratitude, (b) an account or acknowledgment of favor, (c) an expression of admiration, (d) an indication of the unnecessary of favor, and (e) a promise of repayment (see Eisentein & Bodman, 1993; and Aijmer, 1996). The study also showed that whereas the British respondents "may have several direct strategies to choose from" when they express gratitude, the Thais would have "less explicit strategies, each with minute sociocultural overtones" (p. 59).

These differences in preferences for thanking strategies were likewise noted in Cheng's (2005) exploratory cross-sectional study of expressions of gratitude involving Chinese learners of English and native speakers of American English. In his study, eight most common thanking strategies used by the respondents emerged: (a) thanking, (b) appreciation, (c) repayment, (d) recognition of imposition, (e) apology, (f) positive feeling, (g) alerter, and (h) others. The findings revealed that there is not much difference in the thanking patterns between English learners and English native speakers except in the low-status situations where Chinese speakers of English used more strategies in expressing their gratitude towards people with higher rank/status in society, for example, their professors or people older than they are. The author opined that the Chinese participants' pragmatic choice of thanking strategies can be attributed to cultural variables, their L1 interference and their length of stay in the US.

Following Cheng's (2005) eight categories of gratitude strategies/coding scheme, Pishghadam and Zarei (2011, 2012) explored how Persian and Chinese learners of English realized the speech act of thanking and whether the gratitude strategies they utilized map those of British speakers of English. Among all the three groups of respondents, thanking is regarded as the favorite strategy, with the use of positive feeling, repayment, alerter, apology, appreciation, imposition, and others slightly different between groups. The authors argued that sociocultural factors could have played a role in the preferences/choices made by the respondents.

A similar study conducted by Yoosefvand and Rasekh in 2014 revealed that Persian and English native speakers have different thanking strategies. They found that aside from explicitly thanking their benefactors, Persians as compared to American respondents frequently used names or titles as an alerter. Notable in the results was the English natives' utilization of apology and recognition of imposition strategies compared to the Persian speakers of English.

Various types of gratitude expressions among children from Brazil, China, Guatemala, Russia, South Korea, Turkey and the United States were noted by Mendonça et al. (2018) when they explored how children may possibly respond to a benefactor's gift and/or act of kindness towards them. They argued that sociocultural influences may account for the variations they found as children learn "normative values from interactions with adults and peers" (p. 11).

### Research Questions

These studies seem to validate Scollon and Scollon's (1995) argument that although performing the speech act of thanking is universal, it is also culture-specific in terms of the speakers' preference for or utilization of specific strategies to express their thanks. With the hope of contributing to the on-going discussion of how various cultures perform the speech act of gratitude and how the results can inform language teaching, this study was conducted to explore how Filipino speakers of English express and respond to gratitude expressions. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research questions:

- (1) How do Filipino speakers of English express gratitude in spoken discourse?
- (2) How do Filipino speakers of English respond to gratitude expressions?

### Theoretical Underpinnings

Although the lexical chunk *thanks* or *thank you* is often regarded as a simple thanking strategy, this expression may function in various ways depending on how it is used. *Thank you* as a thanking strategy is given primarily when a benefactor provides a benefit to the beneficiary (Park & Lee, 2012) and if performed successfully, "can be a happy experience for both the giver and receiver" (Cui, 2012, p. 753), and "can provide a feeling of warmth and solidarity" (Cohen, 1996, as cited in Intachakra, 2004, p.59).

Wong (2010) argued that *thank* and *thank you* tend to be the most frequently included strategy in the thanking formulas and can be paired with another strategy to create a formulaic expression that reinforces the expression of gratitude. She also claimed that they can be used as complete turns than any longer formulaic sequences. As such, the analysis of gratitude expressions for this paper would center on the stem *thank* as part of the formulaic expression of the thanking variants, i.e., *thanks*, *thank you*, *thanks a lot*, *thank so much*, among others. Wong's classification of 11 thanking strategies and three thanking responders would be the basis of categorizing the strategies employed by Filipino speakers of English for this paper. This classification system is presented in Table 1 with corresponding examples.

Table 1

Wong's (2010) Classification System of Thanking Strategies and Thanking

Speech Act	Classification of Strategies	Examples
Thanking Strategies	Thanking + alerters	
	Attention getter	<i>Oh thanks!</i>
	Title	Thanks, <i>Professor</i> .
	Name	Thank you, <i>Alice</i> .
	Thanking + complimenting interlocutor or positive evaluation of previous speaker's utterance	
	Appreciation of the act	Thank you, <i>that's lovely</i> .
	Appreciation of the addressee	Thank you, <i>that's nice of you</i> .
	Thanking + confirming interlocutor's commitment	<i>Are you sure?</i> Okay, thanks

Thanking + refusing	<i>No, no I'll do it anyway</i>
Thanking + stating intent to reciprocate	<i>Thanks very much I'll get it next time.</i>
Thanking + stating interlocutor's non-existent obligation	<i>Thank you, but you shouldn't have.</i>
Thanking + stating a reason	<i>Thank you for helping me.</i>
Thanking as a closing signal	<i>Thank you, bye.</i>
Thanking as a responder to an expression of gratitude	<i>Sure. Thank you.</i>
Thanking as a single expression	<i>Thanks/ Thank you.</i>
Thanking as an extended turn	<i>Thanks for helping. Really thanks.</i>
Thanking responders	Minimizing the favor Expressing pleasure Expressing appreciation
	<i>That's okay.</i> <i>Great pleasure!</i> <i>You're welcome</i>

Lanteigne and Crompton (2011) argued that in any context of a conversation, gratitude expressions are normally preceded by a response to gratitude which forms an adjacency pair. Adjacency pairs as defined by Hutchby and Wooffit (1998) are “pairs of utterances which are ordered, that is, there is a recognizable difference between first pair parts and second parts” (p.39). The first pair as a gratitude expression and the second pair as a response to gratitude are usually observed in a conversation structure that is uttered by a beneficiary and a benefactor, respectively. Dippold (2008) concluded that the relativeness of the second adjacency pair most likely relies on the first adjacency pair. Therefore, if the beneficiary intends to receive a positive response from the benefactor, he/she needs to use an appropriate thanking strategy. Failure to do so might result in negative consequences like what happened to an Arabic native who received silence as a response after saying inappropriately ‘*thanks to you*’ to an American English speaker because it was misinterpreted as sarcasm (Lanteigne & Crompton, 2011). According to Wong (2010), a response to gratitude expressions is employed to minimize the favor, express pleasure, and express appreciation of the beneficiary.

In sum, the single word *thank* can be paired with another utterance to create a formulaic expression that reinforces the expression of gratitude. Moreover, gratitude is often responded to by an adjacency pair that could imply something. Both beneficiary and benefactor should know what suitable formulaic expression of thanking and responding to use to achieve solidarity and save each other's face.

### Methodology

This corpus-based research was designed to explore how Filipino speakers of English express their gratitude and respond to the speech act of thanking. A large corpus of real-life spoken and

written discourse is a great source of data for this study because a) “it captures language used by a wide range of speakers and in a variety of contexts and social relationships” (Cheng, 2010, p.271); b) the language to be analyzed is more authentic (Hunston, 2002); c) real data are used here, and it may reveal some new expressions that did not surface in previous studies, and d) it is centered on providing a “ready resource of natural, or authentic, texts for language learning (Reppen, 2010, as cited in Almutairi, 2016, p.103).

With the paper's other goal of providing research-based recommendations for language teachers and learners, the researchers drew inspiration from Almutairi's (2016) argument that a corpus-based approach to language teaching is centered on providing a “ready resource of natural, or authentic, texts for language learning in order to improve syllabus design and infer more effective classroom exercises” (p.103).

### ICE-PHI

Cheng (2010) argued that using a corpus to analyze gratitude expressions helps to show how thanking strategies are used in different discourse contexts. In this study, the data were taken from the International Corpus of English-Philippines (ICE-PHI), which was part of the International Corpus of English (ICE) project undertaken by 20 countries including Great Britain, Singapore, Canada, Hong Kong, and India “to facilitate the description and comparison of varieties of English around the world in countries where English is used as a first language or as an official second language” (Bautista, 2004, p.1).

The International Corpus of English-Philippines (ICE-PHI), the third component of the project, preceded only by ICE-Great Britain and ICE-Singapore, was compiled between 1990 and 2004. It contains 500 texts with roughly 2,000 words each which include two major parts: spoken and written texts in English produced by Filipino adults who received formal instruction in the English language. The spoken part obtained data from public and private dialogues and scripted and unscripted monologues. Written discourse contains non-printed and printed writing from the different writing genres: student writing, letters, academic, popular, reportage, instructional, persuasive, and creative writing. Table 2 lists the composition of this corpus.

Table 2  
*Composition of ICE-PHI*

		Number of Entries
Spoken	Private Dialogues	100
	Public Dialogues	80
	Scripted Monologues	50
	Unscripted Monologues	70
Written	Non-printed	
	Student Writing	20
	Letters	50
	Printed	
	Academic	40
	Popular	20
	Reportage	20
	Instructional	20
	Persuasive	10

Creative	20
Total number of entries	500

### Procedure

A preliminary search and analysis of gratitude expressions were done to determine if there are expressions that stem from the lexical item *thank* in the ICE-PHI. Using Antconc, the lexicon was searched, extracted, and scrutinized by getting the whole discourse to understand the context. After typing the lexicon *thank* in the search tab, Antconc automatically displayed the number of occurrences of the word in the corpus and how it was used in the concordance tool, which was useful in determining its function. Afterward, the expressions were categorized using the classification system for thanking strategies developed by Wong (2010). However, not all expressions with the word *thank* could function as a speech act of thanking; thus, the study adopted the parameters set by Wong (2010) to distinguish the expressions that are not used as thanking strategies (see Table 3). In addition, occurrences of thanking expressions that do not operate as an illocutionary speech act or when they are used in indirect speech were disregarded (Cheng, 2010). The following are the examples from the ICE-PHI:

<ICE-PHI:S1A-015#86:1:A> Trish was like hey hi and then Shelly 's like oh that's a nice jacket and Trish was like *thanks* but it's not mine  
<ICE-PHI:S1B-057#119:1:Z> *Thank* you Mr President <&> uttered by Majority Floor Leader xxx </&>

After analyzing how Filipino speakers of English express gratitude in spoken discourses, the responses to gratitude expressions were examined. Unlike the thanking strategies analyzed through the lexicon item *thank*, the responses were not centered on any lexicons. This means that they could be any words or phrases as long as they respond to the speech act of thanking. Next, they were classified according to their functions as explained by Wong (2010). Lastly, aside from the first researcher, two other inter-coders validated the formulaic expressions of gratitude, and 100% agreement was reached among them.

Table 3

*Unqualified Instances of Thanking Strategy* (Adapted from Wong, 2010)

Instances	Examples
They are grammatical errors.	<ICE-PHI:S1B-069#131:1:D> <b>Thank</b> that is all for the witness Your Honor
They occur in set phrases and other constructions.	<ICE-PHI:S1A-034#143:1:B> I mean <b>thank</b> God I don't.



They are used in an extended turn where expressions of gratitude can be seen as ‘a speech act set’ rather than a single speech act.

<ICE-PHI:S2A-001#109:1:E> **Thank** you very much uh Fred and **thank** you <{> <[> for having me </[>

*\*Note: Only one instance is counted to avoid counting the same category twice.*

They are used ironically.

<\$A> <ICE-PHI:S1A-088#41:1:A> Yeah it's the same thing except you you 're not invited  
<\$B> <ICE-PHI:S1A-088#42:1:B> Oh shit <,> okay that's too bad **thanks** a lot fine <O> laughs </O>

They are indirect speech.

ICE-PHI:S1A-080#221:1:A> Really were they saying **thank** you

They are unclear instances.

<ICE-PHI:S2A-029#37:1:A> And apparently I would imagine as much in La Salle as in the Ateneo corruption in class is in good health **thank** you <,>

## Results and Discussions

### Thanking strategies of Filipino speakers of English

Statistical calculations are shown in the following table representing the thanking strategies employed by Filipino speakers of English.

Table 4

*Thanking Strategies in Spoken Discourse of Filipino Speakers of English*

Thanking Strategies in Spoken Discourse	<i>f</i>	%
Thanking + alerters	137	49.0%
Thanking as a single expression	37	13.3%
Thanking + stating a reason	35	12.5%
Thanking as a closing signal	22	7.9%
Thanking as an extended turn	12	4.3%
Thanking as a responder to an expression of gratitude	7	2.5%
Thanking + refusing	3	1.1%
Thanking + complimenting interlocutor or positive evaluation of previous speaker's utterance	1	0.4%
Thanking + confirming interlocutor's commitment	0	0.0%
Thanking + stating intent to reciprocate	0	0.0%
Thanking + stating interlocutor's non-existent obligation	0	0.0%

### Formulaic expressions not found in Wong's categories

Thanking + alerters + stating reason	19	6.8%
Thanking + stating beneficiary's feeling	6	2.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>100%</b>

Out of 279 thanking expressions examined in the spoken discourse of ICE-PHI, forty-nine percent of them tended to use the *thanking + alerters* strategy as shown in Examples 3 and 4.

- (3) <ICE-PHI:S1B-055#87:1:C> **Thank** you *Mr President*  
 (4) <ICE-PHI:S1B-062#60:1:C> **Thank** you *Mr Chief Justice*

The data showed that when Filipinos express their gratitude, they tend to include the titles and names of the benefactors especially when these are high-ranking government officials such as the president and the chief justice. These most frequently occurred in parliamentary proceedings where other speakers were addressed by their roles. Similar high percentages of usage of this strategy among Chinese English speakers (Cheng, 2005) and Persian speakers of English (Yoosefvand & Rasekh, 2014) were noted. This could be in line with Blum-Kulka et al.'s supposition that (1989) alerters are used to signal interpersonal relationships between the beneficiary and benefactor. Moreover, for the Filipinos or mostly Asian cultures, recognizing the rank and higher social status of their interlocutors is a sign of respect and courtesy.

The lexical item *thank you* as a gratitude expression, according to Park and Lee (2012), is primarily uttered when the beneficiary receives a benefit from the benefactor. These benefits do not only come in the form of material gains but also non-material things such as compliments and greetings (Aijmer, 1996). Filipinos, like other speakers of English across the globe, showed preference towards using *thank you*, *thanks*, *many thanks* as single expressions of their gratitude. The same findings emerged in the studies conducted by Elwood (2010), Intachakra (2004), and Wong (2010). This could explain why 13% of the thanking instances found in the data were used.

- (5) <\$A> <ICE-PHI:S1A-092#3:1:A> Belated happy birthday.  
 <\$B> <ICE-PHI:S1A-092#4:1:B> **Thank** you.  
 (6) <\$A> <ICE-PHI:S1A-099#44:1:A> Oh as always you are very organized  
 <\$B> <ICE-PHI:S1A-099#45:1:B> <{> <[> **Thank** you </[>

Almost 13% of the corpus data showed the use of *thanking + stating a reason*. Linguistically, this strategy normally starts with *thank/thanks* and is followed by a preposition *for* verb + *ing* and can also be formed with the lexicon *thank/thanks + for + noun*. Various occasions where this strategy were employed include thanking the audience for tuning in to broadcasts news or for introducing a seminar speaker, as exemplified in Examples 7 and 8. Inclusion of reason among Filipino speakers of English, perhaps like their British counterparts, "would express their gratitude in every situation they get help, offer and service" (Pishghadam & Zarei, 2012, p.122).

- (7) <ICE-PHI:S2B-004#99:1:B> **Thanks** for joining us here on Cable News Asia  
 (8) <ICE-PHI:S2A-042#1:1:A> **Thank** you for your kind introduction



In addition, Filipinos employed *thanking as a closing signal* strategy when expressing gratitude to their benefactors (7.9%). This result corroborates Wong's (2010) findings that this strategy is widespread in broadcast discussions, legal cross-examinations, and unprepared speeches. Moreover, this strategy was commonly used by Filipino speakers of English to end a conversation, or a speech delivered before the audience (see Examples 9 and 10), which is often applied when the spoken discourse is time-constrained (Wong, 2010). Thus, when the allotted time for a dialogue or a conversation is about to end, the speaker would normally close the discourse with an expression of gratitude.

- (9) <\$A> <ICE-PHI:S1B-080#113:1:A> Any any further questions <O> laughs </O>  
 <\$B> <ICE-PHI:S1B-080#114:1:B> Okay  
 <\$A> <ICE-PHI:S1B-080#115:1:A> **Thank** you
- (10) <ICE-PHI:S1B-055#84:1:A> We owe it to the students and the teachers and the parties concerned  
 <ICE-PHI:S1B-055#85:1:A> **Thank** you.

Other thanking strategies such as *thanking as extended turn* (4.3%) and *thanking as a responder to an expression of gratitude* (2.5%) are seldom used by Filipino speakers of English in spoken communication. In ICE-PHI, *thanking as an extended turn* can be observed within a sentence or within a dialogue (see examples 11 and 12) which is used to emphasize the expression of gratitude. Furthermore, in example 13, *thank you* can also be a response to the first set of thanking statements or the second part of an adjacency pair (Hutchby & Wooffit, 1998). This means that in the spoken discourse, the gratitude expressed by Filipino speakers of English to the benefactor could also be reciprocated by another gratitude expression.

- (11) <ICE-PHI:S2A-001#109:1:E> **Thank** you very much uh Fred and **thank** you  
 <{}> <[> for having me </[>
- (12) <\$B> <ICE-PHI:S1B-045#75:1:B> Okay alright **thank** you  
 <\$B> <ICE-PHI:S1B-045#76:1:B> And uh well **thank** you very much Dr Wassmer
- (13) <\$A> <ICE-PHI:S1B-056#23:1:A> I accept the amendment Your Honor  
 <\$C> <ICE-PHI:S1B-056#24:1:C> **Thank** you Mr President  
 <\$A> <ICE-PHI:S1B-056#25:1:A> **Thank** you

Filipino speakers of English rarely used *thanking + refusing* strategy (1.1%) and *thanking + complimenting interlocutor* or positive evaluation of previous speaker's utterance' (0.4%). In Example 14, *thanking + refusing* seems to be an uncommon thanking strategy among Filipinos because refusing to receive something good from other people is sometimes perceived to be an impolite attitude in Philippine culture. Moreover, only one instance in the ICE-PH in which the beneficiary expressed gratitude and complimented the benefactor's positive act was observed (see Example 15).

- (14) <ICE-PHI:S1A-014#277:1:B> No no no **thanks**
- (15) <ICE-PHI:S1A-039#405:1:A> Oh **thank** you Grace you 're so sweet <O>  
 laughter

Similar to the result of Wong's (2010) study, the analysis found no instances of thanking strategies in which Filipinos confirm the commitment of a benefactor, state their intent to reciprocate the benefit, and state benefactor's non-existent obligation. However, worth mentioning here is that other formulaic expressions not included in Wong's categories emerged

during the examination. The corpus revealed that Filipino speakers of English like their British counterparts (Intachakra, 2004) would use *thank* + *altermers* + *reasons* for being grateful at the same time as exemplified in Example 16. This strategy occurs 19 times in the corpus (6.8%). This may imply that Filipinos give high regard to their benefactors by mentioning not only their names or titles but also stating why they feel grateful for them.

Lastly, some Filipinos would also state their feelings after expressing their gratitude to the benefactor. This strategy has six frequencies, which is higher compared to other thanking strategies employed by Wong's (2010) respondents. This is in line with the belief that the expression *thank you* is considered a positively affective speech act (Holmes, 1984) and thanking is a speech act which is intrinsically polite or courteous Leech (1983). It usually appears in the corpus when the benefactor asks how the beneficiary feels about it, as shown in example 17.

- (16) <ICE-PHI:S2A-004#32:1:A> **Thank** you so much Sir for joining us  
 (17) <\$B> <ICE-PHI:S1A-100#4:1:B> Oh how are you doing  
 <\$C> <ICE-PHI:S1A-100#5:1:A> I'm fine **thank** you

### Thanking responders of Filipino speakers of English

Using the context of every statement that expresses gratitude, this study analyzed how Filipino speakers of English respond to gratitude expressions. The response to gratitude expressions typically forms an adjacency pair (Lanteigne & Crompton, 2011) that is used to minimize favor, and express pleasure and appreciation. However, it was surprising to find in the corpus data that only four occurrences of thanking responders were used by Filipinos in their spoken discourses and none in their written discourses. Given the size of the corpus-data examined here, it is not plausible and reasonable to theorize why this is so. It is worth mentioning here, however, that in Wong's (2010) study of Chinese English speakers similar results emerged. These findings may weaken the argument of Aijmer (1996) that a gratitude expression is frequently followed by a responder, but at the same time, they strengthen the belief that although thanking is a universal speech act, the speakers' preference for specific strategies makes it culturally nuanced.

The responder *you're welcome* (see Example 18), also observed among British speakers of English, as used exclusively to express appreciation for the addressee who thanks the other party could possibly be due to the received didactic teaching that this variant is seen as a proper response to an expression of gratitude in nearly every context (Wong, 2010).

- (18) <\$A> <ICE-PHI:S1A-093#10:1:A> Uhm Happy Father 's Day belated  
 <\$B> <ICE-PHI:S1A-093#11:1:B> Uh yes uh thank you very much  
 <\$A> <ICE-PHI:S1A-093#12:1:A> <indig> Ha </indig> <{> <[> **you 're welcome** </[>

### Conclusion

This corpus-based study attempted to provide some insight into the various strategies Filipino speakers of English express and respond to gratitude. With the *Antconc* software as a tool to search, extract, and examine instances of the speech act of gratitude, a total of 279 gratitude expressions found in ICE-PHI were examined using Wong's (2005) types of thanking strategies. The study revealed that Filipino speakers of English used the same strategies, and that the most frequently used strategies among Filipino speakers of English are *thanking* + *alterter* in their spoken communication, and *thanking* + *stating a reason* strategy in the written

discourses. In terms of responding to gratitude expression, extremely few occurrences with only four thanking responders were present.

The data likewise showed that Filipinos tended not to respond to every gratitude expression uttered by a beneficiary. It could be argued that the discursive situations could be contributory to this as these exchanges mostly appear in speeches, broadcasts, legal proceedings, and emails where the benefactor might have a rare opportunity to respond to the expression of gratitude, or not really expected to respond to it. This phenomenon needs further investigation with corpus or data bigger in size and wider in scope before conclusions can be drawn.

## **Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations**

### **Corpus-based approach to language teaching**

The examination of the thanking strategies employed by the Filipino English speakers in spoken discourses showed that they are varied and relative to the thanking situations. Although not significantly frequent, instances of not responding properly to an expression of gratitude was observed from the data. Eisenstein and Bodman's (1993) study showed the difficulties encountered by even their advanced learners of English in expressing gratitude and recommended that they need knowledge and skills on what to say, the language to express it, and the context in which it was needed.

This brings about the difficulties faced by nonnative speakers of English to produce responses appropriate to the speech act context of thanking (Pishghadam & Zarei, 2012), to express gratitude successfully (Cui, 2012), and to choose formulaic replies when expressing their gratitude (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1993). As such, Wong (2010) argued that instructional materials should provide language learners lessons and activities that will equip them with "a repertoire of formulaic sequences and expressions of gratitude to help them convey their thanks in an appropriate manner even at a relatively early learning stage" (p. 1255). In a similar vein, Schmitt and Carter (2004) pointed out that it is important for learners to acquire the knowledge and skills for efficient language usage, and that it is their responsibility to learn these familiar word sequences (Ellis, 1997). However, various studies conducted to examine how this speech act is taught in various English textbooks found them wanting in terms of authenticity of situations where interlocutors engage in expressing and responding to gratitude (see, for example, Schauer & Adolphs, 2006).

This is where findings from corpus-based research like the present study would come in very useful because they are based on actual, real, and authentic occurrences of the said expressions of gratitude, which may guide to language teaching and learning instruction. Moreover, incorporating these data with findings from other studies involving both native and nonnative speakers of English such as Americans, British, Koreans, Persians, Thais, among others, can enrich both the teachers and students' understanding of the cultural nuances and linguistic differences present in the realization of the act.

Almutairi (2016) argued that corpus-based approach to language teaching "has revolutionized language research with its authentic appeal as it is based on actual usage, real and authentic occurrences of language as it is uttered, written and used by various groups of speakers of English "in various situations" (p. 103). Reppen (2010, as cited in Almutairi, 2016) also claimed that "with findings based on statistically proven evidence of the used language" (p.103), it has proved to be useful for teachers and learners alike.

Hence, teachers need to be familiar with these formulaic expressions and incorporate this important topic in their English instruction to help the learners develop pragmatic competence. In addition, book writers should highlight this topic and provide additional examples of thanking expressions. Schauer and Adolphs (2006) claimed that there's a disjoint between actual use of language and the language exercises found in English textbooks.

### Recommendations

This study recommends that researchers investigate the study of gratitude expressions in the Filipino language to understand how Philippine languages and culture influence the students' construction of thanking expressions in English. It can be done by collecting real and authentic data from Filipino speakers with the same number of words in ICE-PHI for comparison purposes.

There is also a need to examine instructional materials to validate claims that real, actual, and authentic discourses can help develop pragmatic competencies of learners of English to help them respond appropriately to expressions of gratitude. As argued by Cui (2012), explicit instruction of the pragmatic use of thanks and other speech acts must be executed instead of letting the learners acquire them incidentally. It has been observed that the lack of relevant resources and text materials based on actual, real and authentic usages of language in various situations seem to be a problem for language teachers (see, for example, Almutairi, 2016; Intachakra, 2004; Kanouta, 2015; Wong, 2010). In fact, after extensively assessing four textbooks, Schauer and Adolphs (2006) found that only a simple thanking strategy (*thanks/thank you*) is present in the textbooks.

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