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Thanking Formulae in English and Spanish: A Pilot Study

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Index

ABSTRACT	3
RESUMEN.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION.....	4
2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	5
2.1. Cross-cultural and Interlanguage Pragmatics.....	5
2.1.1. Cross-Cultural Pragmatics.....	5
2.1.2. Interlanguage Pragmatics	5
2.2. Verbal Politeness.....	8
2.2.1. Brown and Levinson	8
2.2.2. Verbal politeness in English and Spanish: some remarks.....	10
2.3. Speech Acts.....	10
2.3.1. Thanking as speech act.....	12
2.3.2. Studies on the speech act of thanking from a cross-cultural perspective.....	13
3. METHODOLOGY	14
3.1. Objectives.....	14
3.2. Participants	15
3.3. Instrument.....	15
3.4. Procedure.....	18
3.5. Data analysis	18
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	23
4.1. Results	23
4.2. Discussion	28
4.2.1. Common thanking formulae used by native speakers of British English	28
4.2.1. Common thanking formulae used by native speakers of Peninsular Spanish.....	31
4.2.3. Similarities and differences between British English and Peninsular Spanish native speakers' performances	35

4.2.4. Differences in thinking performances of groups II and III of native speakers of Spanish	37
4.2.5. Pragmatic transfer from the L2-English to the L1-Spanish of participants from group III.....	38
5. CONCLUSIONS.....	38
REFERENCES.....	40
APPENDIX	44
Questionnaire. English version	44
Questionnaire. Spanish version	47

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the thanking formulae used in different situations by native speakers of British English (group I) and native speakers of Peninsular Spanish, making a distinction in the latter between those who have never (group II) and those who have ever (group III) lived in the UK, in order to find any evidence of pragmatic transfer from the L2-English into the L1-Spanish in group III members, especially in service encounters. Social distance, relative social power, and the degree of imposition are social and contextual variables which have been considered in the design of the scenarios. There were 45 participants in this study, both male and female, aging from 20 to 35 years old, all of them holding a university degree, who were divided into 3 groups of 15 people each. The data for this study were collected by means of an open-ended Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) consisting of 6 different scenarios adapted from Eisenstein & Bodman (1986), Cheng (2005 cited in Farnia & Suleiman, 2009) and Díaz Pérez (2005) and administered via social networks. The results have not shown any evidence supporting our hypothesis.

KEYWORDS: Cross-cultural Pragmatics, Politeness, Speech Acts, Thanking, English, Spanish, Pragmatic transfer

RESUMEN

El presente estudio investiga las fórmulas de agradecimiento empleadas en diferentes situaciones por hablantes nativos de inglés británico (grupo I) y hablantes nativos de español peninsular, divididos estos últimos en dos grupos: los que nunca han vivido en Reino Unido (grupo II) y los que sí lo han hecho (grupo III), con el fin de averiguar si podría darse transferencia de la L2-inglés a la L1-español en los miembros del grupo III, concretamente en encuentros dentro del sector servicios. Igualmente se han tenido en cuenta variables sociales y contextuales como la distancia social, la relación de poder y el grado de imposición en el diseño de los escenarios. Un total de 45 hombres y mujeres, con edades comprendidas entre los 20 y los 35 años y con estudios superiores, fueron divididos en tres grupos de 15 personas. La recogida de datos se realizó por medio de un cuestionario para completar el discurso abierto (Discourse Completion Task – DCT) que consistía en 6 escenarios diferentes adaptados de Eisenstein & Bodman (1986), Cheng (2005 citado en Farnia & Suleiman, 2009) y Díaz Pérez (2005) y que se distribuyó entre los participantes a través de redes sociales. Los resultados obtenidos no muestran evidencias que apoyen nuestra hipótesis.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Pragmática intercultural, Cortesía, Actos de habla, Agradecimientos, Inglés, Español, Transferencia pragmática

1. INTRODUCTION

As children, one of the first things we are taught is how and when to thank others because “*expressing gratitude is a language function that has an important social value*” (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986:167) as “*thanking is [considered] a matter of politeness*” (Cheng, 2010:259). In fact, its performance may have social consequences: if successful, it “*can engender feelings of warmth and solidarity*”; if failed, it can sometimes result “*in severing the relationship of speaker and listener*” (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986:167). Thanking is a speech act which “*is used frequently and openly in a wide range of interpersonal relationships among intimates, friends, strangers and with superiors and subordinates*” (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986:167).

“*However, like many politeness conventions, there appears to be a large degree of cross-cultural variation in the use and realization of thanking*” (Cheng, 2010:259). And that is what I have observed as a native speaker of Spanish and as an EFL learner. When I was in the UK, I noticed how the British expressed gratitude in situations where Spanish people would say nothing: “*in the Spanish culture, this speech act [thanking] is not used as a routine answer in certain interactions (waiter-client, ticket inspector-passenger and seller-buyer)*” (De Pablos-Ortega, 2010:151). Following those thanking routines for a certain period of time, I internalised them to the point that, when I came back to Spain, I continued thanking in those situations in which Spanish people do not usually say anything. With this pilot study, I would like to find some evidence supporting the hypothesis that there may exist some pragmatic transfer from the L2-English into the L1-Spanish spoken by those people who have lived in the UK for a medium-long period of time.

The research questions can be formulated as follows:

1. What are the common thanking formulae used by native speakers of British English?
2. What are the common thanking formulae used by native speakers of Peninsular Spanish?
3. What are the similarities and differences between 1 and 2?
4. What are the differences in thanking (if any) between native speakers of Spanish who have lived in the UK for a medium-long period of time and those who have not?
5. May there be some pragmatic transfer from the L2-English to the L1-Spanish of those speakers who have ever lived in the UK?

To provide an answer to those questions, we will first provide a theoretical background by offering a general review of the main theories on pragmatics, politeness, and speech acts with regard to this research. Next, the methodological issues of the investigation

will be detailed. Then, the main findings will be illustrated and discussed. Finally, some suggestions for further research will be offered. A 55-item bibliography is included and the two versions of the questionnaire are appended.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

“Language does not exist apart from culture, that is, from the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the textures of our lives.” (Sapir, 1921:221 cited in Creese, 1991:38)

2.1. Cross-cultural and Interlanguage Pragmatics

2.1.1. Cross-Cultural Pragmatics

Pragmatics is *“the study of how people use language that is appropriate for the context of interaction, and that helps them to accomplish their communicative goals”* (Cheng, 2010:257).

Cross-cultural pragmatics is a young discipline which emerged in the 1980s. According to Thomas (1983), cross-cultural is *“any communication between two people who, in any particular domain, do not share a common linguistic or cultural background”* (1983:91). Research on this field has proved the existence of discourse features specific to certain cultures, that is, different communities of speakers present different interaction styles. Those deep and systematic differences are a mirror of different cultural values, of different hierarchies of values.

Cross-cultural pragmatic research usually consists of a contrastive analysis between English and other languages, more often than not, non-Western languages, such as Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Hebrew, Malaysian... However, as a discipline which has recently emerged, it is essential to carry out further research which helps to the development of a theoretical basis.

With regard to this work, the production of speech acts is one of the main examples of cross-cultural variation.

2.1.2. Interlanguage Pragmatics

Interlanguage Pragmatics *“is the branch of second language research which studies how non-native speakers...understand and carry out linguistic action in a target language, and how they acquire L2 pragmatic knowledge”* (Kasper, 1992:203). This young discipline was born in the 1970s – early 1980s as an interdisciplinary study combining Second

Language Acquisition aspects with pragmatic theory. It comprises five main research areas: i) pragmatic comprehension, ii) production of linguistic action, iii) development of pragmatic competence, iv) pragmatic transfer, and v) communicative effect (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993).

2.1.2.1. *Pragmatic competence*

Hymes (1972) used this term to refer not only to the knowledge of the grammatical rules – grammatical competence – but also to the knowledge of the use of those rules – sociolinguistic competence.

Communicative competence can be divided into linguistic and pragmatic competence. *“A speaker’s “linguistic competence” would be made up of grammatical competence (“abstract” or decontextualized knowledge of intonation, phonology, syntax, semantics, etc.)* (Thomas, 1983: 92) and pragmatic competence – the ability to use and understand language effectively in context (Taguchi, 2008:34). Ahar & Eslami-Rasekh (2011:120) also highlight the importance of sociocultural knowledge for a speaker to be pragmatically competent. Additionally, some other authors point out that the utterances produced by speakers have to be not only effective but also appropriate to the communicative situation (Thomas, 1983:92; Ahar & Eslami-Rasekh, 2011:120).

For our purpose, the relevant concept is pragmatic competence.

2.1.2.2. *Pragmatic transfer*

Most of the definitions of pragmatic transfer refer to the influence of the speaker’s L1 on his/her performance of the L2. For instance, Díaz Pérez (2003:66) describes it as the influence of native culture and language on the pragmatic competence and performance of a non-native speaker. Odlin (1989) states that *“transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired”* (1989:27). For Wolfson (1989) pragmatic transfer is *“[the] use of rules of speaking from one’s own native speech community when interacting with members of the host speech community or simply when speaking or writing in a second language”* (1989a:141). According to Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990), it refers to the *“transfer of L1 sociocultural communicative competence in performing L2 speech acts or any other aspects of L2 conversation, where the speaker is trying to achieve a particular function of language”* (1990:56). However, for our purpose we are in need of a more general definition, such as the one provided by Žegarac & Pennington (2000:1), for

whom pragmatic transfer is “*the carryover of pragmatic knowledge from one culture to another*” without any restriction towards the languages involved.

A plausible explanation for the phenomenon of pragmatic transfer is the one proposed by Takahashi (1993) suggesting that if L1 strategy is perceived to be frequently used and assumed to be appropriate enough, this strategy would more likely be transferred to the L2 context.

There are two types of pragmatic transfer: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic. Leech (1983) established this distinction, which applied to the field of pragmatics. For him, sociopragmatics is “*the sociological interface of pragmatics*” (1983:10) and pragmalinguistics refers to “*the study of the more linguistic end of pragmatics – where we consider the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions*” (1983:11). However, both disciplines are not independent. Whereas the former has to do with the rules which, in a particular culture, indicate the appropriate behaviour in a specific situation, considering extralinguistic social factors; the compliance of those rules is linked to a pragmalinguistic choice (Díaz Pérez 2003:48).

Thomas (1983) applied Leech’s division to transfer. On the one hand, pragmalinguistic transfer is “*the inappropriate transfer of speech act strategies from one language to another, or the transferring from the mother tongue to the target language of utterances which are semantically/syntactically equivalent, but which, because of different “interpretive bias”, tend to convey a different pragmatic force in the target language*” (1983:101). On the other hand, sociopragmatic transfer “*is operative when the social perceptions underlying language users’ interpretation and performance of linguistic action in L2 are influenced by their assessment of subjectively equivalent L1 contexts*” (Kasper, 1992:209). “*Such transfer could effect whether they would use a given speech act, and if so, how frequently, and how much prestige they afford other participants in the encounter*” (Olshtain & Cohen, 1989:61). With regard to the scope of our research, this distinction is relevant since we are studying aspects within the scope of sociopragmatics, which includes social parameters, such as the social distance and the relative social power between the interlocutors, which may vary from culture to culture, from language to language or, even, from variety to variety within the same language.

Transferability is subject to certain constraints, such as sociolinguistic factors, which can be both external – social distance and relative power status – or internal – degree of imposition; the linguistic proficiency, which is a controversial aspect, since some studies have proved its influence whereas others considered that it is not such a decisive factor; the cultural

information, which has been proved to influence the inhibition or promotion of pragmatic transfer (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986, 1993) ; and the length of stay.

2.1.2.3. Studies on pragmatic transfer L2 to L1

Although research on pragmatic transfer has mainly considered L1 influence to the L2, there are some examples of studies where the directionality of the transfer is the opposite.

Yoon (1991) investigated pragmatic transfer of compliments by means of comparing the speech patterns of monolingual speakers of American English and Korean, with those of bilingual Korean-English speakers, who had lived in the USA for at least 16 years. The findings revealed negative pragmatic transfer from American English to Korean for the bilingual speakers.

Eisenstein & Bodman (1993), in their research about the expression of gratitude in American English, showed how a Spanish speaker from Puerto Rico, who had lived for many years in the USA, transferred sociopragmatic L2 behaviour to her native language when she thanked her father for helping her take care of her son (his grandchild). The man felt hurt and angry because *“in many cultures, the words “thank you” are not commonly used to express appreciation to family members for acts of kindness considered part of their social roles”* (1993:73-74).

The last example is the most relevant to the concerns of this study. Bou Franch (1998:13) described how her Spanish students of English constantly report that, after a stay in England, they use more frequently the routines *Perdón*, *Lo siento* y *Por favor* as Spanish equivalents of *Sorry* and *Please*. The frequency of use of these routines is different. Spanish learners in the UK are often judged to be brusque and impolite due to their scant use of *Sorry* and *Please*. However, the same students are judged to be extremely or unnaturally polite when they come back to Spain, because they use the Spanish equivalents too frequently.

2.2. Verbal Politeness

2.2.1. Brown and Levinson

Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed a model of politeness based on Goffman's (1967) concept of face. Face is the public self-image that every member of society wants to claim for themselves (our beliefs about our status in society and how people ought to behave towards us). *“Face is something that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction”* (Brown & Levinson, 1987:61). Individuals have two types of face: the positive one and the negative one. Brown and Levinson (1987) defined

positive face as “*the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others*” (1987:62), that is, the desire to be liked, approved of and accepted. For them, the negative face is “*the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others*” (1987:62), that is, the right to autonomy and freedom, the desire not to be imposed on. Face needs are thought to be universal notions in human societies.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), there are certain acts which “*intrinsically threaten face, namely those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or the speaker*” (1987:63). They are called Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). For instance, expressions of disapproval, accusations, criticisms, disagreements and insults threaten the positive face of the hearer; giving advice, orders, requests, suggestions and warnings threaten the negative face of the hearer; complaints and threats threaten both the positive and the negative face of the hearer; apologies threaten the negative face of the hearer, who has to accept or acknowledge the apology, but also the positive face of the speaker; offers threaten the negative face of the hearer, because they are then obligated to the speaker, and also the negative face of the speaker.

In the context of mutual vulnerability of face, any speaker will normally try to avoid these face-threatening acts or, at least, use strategies to minimize the threat. S/he will consider the relative importance of at least three wants: (a) the want to communicate the content of the FTA x, (b) the want to be efficient or urgent, and (c) the want to maintain the H’s face to any degree (Brown & Levinson, 1987:68).

Speakers employ politeness strategies so as to mitigate face threatening acts (FTAs) and maintain addressees’ face needs.

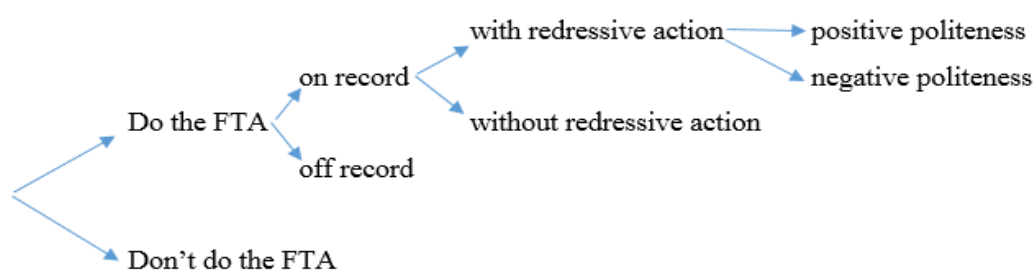


Figure 1. Possible strategies for doing FTAs (Brown & Levinson, 1987:69)

Positive politeness is oriented towards the positive face of the hearer, whereas negative politeness is oriented towards the negative face of the hearer.

The strength of the FTA is calculated according to:

- Social distance between S and H (D)

- Relative power of H over S or S over H (P)
- Weight of imposition in given culture (W)

Although it has received a lot of criticisms, it is still the most important and most influential theory in the field.

2.2.2. Verbal politeness in English and Spanish: some remarks

As Díaz Pérez (2003:134) suggests, the notion of politeness varies from culture to culture and, consequently, is reflected in different ways through different languages. That is the reason why we may find differences between politeness in English and in Spanish. For instance, whereas English verbal politeness is oriented towards the hearer's negative face, the Spanish one is oriented towards the hearer's positive face. This means that English speakers put more emphasis on the individual's autonomy, while Spanish people give more importance to the necessity of the individual to feel part of a group. One example of how verbal politeness may differ between those two languages is found in the performance of speech acts. For example, thanking formulae are more frequent in English among members of the same group and in situations in which they would not occur in Spanish (Hickey, 1991:4), as has already been illustrated in section 2.1.2.3, with the use of *Please*, *Thank you* and *Sorry* and their Spanish equivalents *Por favor*, *Gracias* and *Perdona*.

2.3. Speech Acts

A speech act is “*what is directly achieved by the conventional force associated with the issuance of a certain kind of utterance in accord with a conventional procedure and it is consequently determinate*” (Levinson, 1983:237). They were first established by Austin (1962) and described as a communicative activity defined with reference to the intentions of speakers while speaking and the effects they achieve on listeners. A speech act is created when a speaker (S) addresses an utterance (U) to a hearer (H) in a context (C). In this connection, a speech act could be defined as the minimal or basic unit of linguistic communication.

According to Austin (1962) utterances can be constatives – if they simply express a statement or state something as a fact – or performatives – when the act of saying something is the performing of an action.

The same speech act consists of 3 different components: locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act.

- The locutionary act is produced when a speaker S uses an identifiable expression E (a sentence or a fragment of a sentence) from the language L and with an also identifiable prosody, that is, it is the act of saying something.
- The illocutionary act is performed by the speaker by virtue of his/her utterance, so it is the act of doing something. Each illocutionary act is therefore associated with a given illocutionary force, i.e. ordering, requesting, apologizing, thanking, etc.
- The perlocutionary act is performed when “*saying something [...] produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience*” (Austin, 1962:70).

The distinction drawn by Austin (1962) between constative and performative utterances is based on the fact that whereas the former – which describe states of affairs – may be assessed in terms of true or false, the latter – which are used to perform actions – present felicity conditions, which are a set of rules determining the success of speech acts. Austin (1962) describes the felicity conditions that an illocutionary act must meet as follow:

- A.1. There must be a conventional procedure having a conventional effect, the procedure must include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances,
- A.2. The circumstances and persons must be appropriate for the illocutionary act to be produced successfully,
- B.1. The procedure must be executed by all participants correctly and
- B.2. Completely.
- C.1. The participants must have the requisite thoughts, feelings and intentions as established in the procedure, and
- C.2. The participants must conduct themselves consequently (Austin, 1962:67).

Whereas in those cases in which the conditions of As or Bs are not fulfilled the result is what Austin has called misfires, unsuccessful acts; failure to comply with the conditions of the Cs gives rise to cases of lack of sincerity, or abuse of the procedure.

Searle, who was Austin’s disciple, considered his master’s classification presented some weaknesses, so he intended to improve it by setting rules to identify the different types of speech acts possible in languages. “By “rule” he means a conventional association between a certain kind of act and its socially determined consequences.” (Sadock, 2008:7)

Searle’s felicity conditions were divided into four categories: a) *Propositional content*, which considers the restrictions or constraints on the content of a concrete speech act; b) *Preparatory condition*, which takes into consideration the context for the speech act; c) *Sincerity condition*, which focuses on the speaker’s feelings; and d) *Essential condition*,

which deals with the intention underlying the speech act which has to be recognized (Searle, 1969:54-71). These features allowed him to classify the different speech acts in the following groups: a) *representatives*, if they commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition, e.g. *asserting, concluding*; b) *directives*, if the speaker attempts to get the addressee to do something, e.g. *requesting, questioning*; c) *commissives*, if they commit the speaker to some future course of action, e.g. *promising, threatening*; d) *expressives*, if they express a psychological state, e.g. *thanking, apologizing, complaining*; e) *declarations*, if they effect immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs, e.g. *sentencing, marrying, declaring war* (Searle, 1976:12).

Coulmas (1979) links the success in the performance of many speech acts to the use of routine formulae, “*expressions whose occurrence is closely tied to types of recurrent social situations*” (1979:23). She also states that those conventional expressions are presumed to be shared by the members of the community and they become an essential element in the handling of everyday situations (1981:4). One example of these formulaic recurrent expressions is the speech act of thanking.

2.3.1. Thanking as speech act

The first one to classify the speech act of thanking was Austin (1962) for whom it was a behabitive act, “*a reaction to other people’s behaviour and fortunes and of attitudes and expressions of attitudes to someone else’s past conduct or imminent conduct.*” (1962:151). His disciple, Searle (1976:12) classified it as an expressive act. With regard to the felicity conditions he established, the act of thanking would be described as in Table 1.

THANK (FOR)	
PROPOSITIONAL	Past A done by H.
PREPARATORY	A benefits S and S believes A benefits S.
SINCERITY	S feels grateful or appreciative for A.
ESSENTIAL	Counts as an expression of gratitude or appreciation.

Table 1. Felicity conditions of the illocutionary act of thanking

Coulmas (1981) stated that “*every sincere verbalization of gratitude is directed to some action (or actions) of a “benefactor” or to a result of this action*”, which is the object of gratitude and can differ in kind on a very wide scale (1981:74). She proposed the taxonomy in Table 2 for the classification of expressions of gratitude.

I	a	Thanks ex ante (for a promise, offer, invitation)
	b	Thanks ex post (for a favour, invitation (afterwards))
II	a	Thanks for material goods (gifts, services)
	b	Thanks for immaterial goods (wishes, compliments, congratulations, information)
III	a	Thanks for some action initiated by the benefactor
	b	Thanks for some action initiated from a request / wish / order by the beneficiary
IV	a	Thanks that imply indebtedness
	b	Thanks that do not imply indebtedness

Table 2. Description of the speech act of thanking by Coulmas (1981:74)

Leech (1983) describes thanking as a “convivial function” whose illocutionary goal coincides with the social goal of establishing and maintaining a polite and friendly social atmosphere. It can be categorized within what is known as absolute politeness, which reinforces positive politeness and as such, contributes to the harmonious development of social relationships between members of a community (1983:83).

Eisenstein & Bodman (1993) classified thanking as a face threatening act in which the speaker acknowledges a debt to the hearer – thus threatening the speaker’s negative face (1993:65).

Despite the fact that the function of thanking can also refer to other discourse functions, such as complimenting, signalling the closing of a conversation, the “bald” thank you at service encounters, accepting or refusing an offer or even used ironically, as Cheng (2010:268) suggests, we will only consider the function of expressing gratitude.

2.3.2. Studies on the speech act of thanking from a cross-cultural perspective

This section aims to provide a brief summary of the research on the speech act of thanking from a cross-cultural perspective. One of the pioneers on the field were Eisenstein & Bodman (1986), who compared the expressions of gratitude by native and non-native speakers of American English, highlighting native speakers’ tendency to use the same conventionalised expressions and routines: “*although a wide variety of responses was theoretically possible, the native speakers were remarkably consistent in their choice of language*” (1986:172). In a similar study carried out a couple of years later, the same scholars described cross-cultural differences and sociopragmatic failure when receiving a gift. Whereas the Anglo-American informants “*would say very little [...] for fear of placing too much emphasis on the gift rather than the person*” (Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988:12), the Hispanic subjects would feel disappointed because of the lack of acknowledgment to their

effort when their present would be put aside unopened. Díaz Pérez (2005) analysed the selection of the strategy used when expressing gratitude and the use of external modifiers in English both as a native and as a foreign language (to Spanish students), concluding that the main difference had to do with the use of colloquial strategies, since “*Spanish does not possess colloquial IFIDs to express gratitude.*” (2005:98). De Pablos-Ortega (2010) studied the difference between Spanish and British conventions, stating that “*in the Spanish culture, this speech act is not used as a routine answer in certain interactions (waiter-client, ticket inspector-passenger and seller-buyer)*” (2010:151). Another example is Cheng’s (2010) research on thanking in American and Asian cultures, the expression of gratitude is more common in the American culture, and it is also considered more mechanical than sincere as it is done for big as well as for small favours. Similar findings were reached by Cui (2012) when investigating expressions of gratitude by American English native speakers and Asian advanced EFL and ESL students: “*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 expressions much less, preferring instead a wider variety of phrases depending on the specific situation.*” (2012:758).

But cross-cultural variation also includes the different varieties of a same language. One example of research carried out in this field is Creese (1991), who focused on the speech act variation in British and American English, concluding that “*as a general rule, the English were [...] more apt to say “please” and “thank you” if they were asking for something*” (1991:44). Jautz (2013), in his turn, studied the differences between British and New Zealand English in spoken discourse.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Objectives

1. To identify the common thanking formulae used by native speakers of British English.
2. To identify the common thanking formulae used by native speakers of Peninsular Spanish.
3. To establish the similarities and differences between 1 and 2.
4. To find possible differences in thanking between native speakers of Spanish who have ever / never lived in the UK.
5. To find any evidence of pragmatic transfer from the L2-English into the L1- Spanish of those native speakers of Spanish who have lived in the UK.

3.2. Participants

Table 3 shows the distribution of the participants of this study. There were 45 native speakers of British English and Peninsular Spanish divided into 3 groups: I) 15 native speakers of British English; II) 15 native speakers of Peninsular Spanish who have never lived in the UK; III) 15 native speakers of Peninsular Spanish who have lived in the UK. Participants are both male and female, aging from 20 to 35 years old, all of them holding a university degree. Although we aim to have the same number of male and female participants in the three groups, this has been possible only in groups II and III due to the low participation of English male participants.

Other varieties either of English or Spanish have not been included, since recent research has proved¹ “*that language communities are not homogeneous, but that there may indeed be considerable variation between different varieties of one language*” (Jautz, 2013: 81). To guarantee homogeneity, participants have a similar social and educational background. Additionally, Spanish native speakers who have lived in the UK report a length of stay in the UK between 3 weeks and 2 years, being the average length of stay of 8.6 months.

GROUP OF INFORMANTS	LANGUAGE	SPEAKERS	NUMBER OF INFORMANTS
I	British English	Native	15 (3M + 12F)
II	Peninsular Spanish	Native who have lived in the UK	15 (4M + 11F)
III	Peninsular Spanish	Native who have never lived in the UK	15 (4M+ 11F)

Table 3. Description of the group of informants

3.3. Instrument

In the research of speech acts performance there is a wide range of instruments available to the researcher: authentic discourse, elicited conversations, role-plays, multiple choice questionnaires, rating scales, interviews, diaries, corpus-data. Among all the possible options, the choice for the present study was a Written Discourse Completion Task consisting of several written descriptions of situations in which the particular pragmatic aspect under study had been omitted. Those brief descriptions are followed by a space to be completed by

¹ Jautz (2013) on British and NZ English and Creese (1991) on British and American English.

the participant, if s/he thinks s/he would say something in that particular situation. Otherwise, s/he would leave a blank space.

The arguments against this tool are varied: it provides a limited context (Zuskin, 1993); it elicits a minimal amount of linguistic features (Sasaki, 1998; Yuan, 2001); it offers a narrow range of semantic formulas (Rose, 1994); it resembles a test-like method (Sasaki, 1998) and, being written, participants may use a more formal register (Beebe & Cummings, 1996); responses may lack the naturalness of oral responses as they do not reflect real communication (Cui, 2012; Golato, 2003; Rose, 1994; Yoosefvand & Eslami-Rashek, 2014); participants are asked to write what they would say, not what they actually say (Eslami & Azizullah, 2014).

However, it is one of the most important instruments in cross-cultural research (Cheng, 2010) since it allows to assess the participants' performance of a particular speech act function (House & Kasper, 1987; Blum-Kulka *et al.*, 1989; Barron, 2003) and it has been proved to offer similar results to oral data (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986). The advantages of the WDCT are several: it allows to gather a great amount of data in a short period of time (Eisentein & Bodman, 1986; Beebe & Cummings, 1996; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2011; Houck & Cass, 1996; Cohen, 1996); it allows to control contextual variables (Eslami, 2014; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2011), such as the relationship to other interlocutors or the imposition on the interlocutor for which gratitude is expressed (Schauer & Adolphs, 2006), as the scenarios are the same for all the participants (Houck & Gass, 1996:46); the responses in a DCT are easier to codify as they are written samples which do not need to be transcribed (Johnston, Kasper & Ross, 1998:157) .

All reasons explained above justified the choice of the research tool for the present paper: a WDCT questionnaire with 6 different scenarios, adapted from Eisenstein & Bodman (1986), Cheng (2005 cited in Farnia & Suleiman, 2009) and Díaz Pérez (2005), which are as follows:

1. You board the bus, pay your money and take a seat near the front of the bus. Just before your stop, you signal the driver to stop. You move to the front, the bus comes to a stop, and the doors open.
2. You are in a shop and you have bought some stuff. The cashier puts your stuff in bags and gives them to you together with your ticket. You pick up your bags to leave.
3. You and your friend, whom you know very well, go out for lunch. When you go to pay for your lunch, you can't find your wallet. Then you realize that you left it at home. Your friend pays for your lunch.

4. You are at home. A stranger rings the bell and brings you a wallet. You had lost it that morning with many important documents inside (ID card, credit card, driving licence, bus ticket, etc.) and some money. S/he found it at a bus stop. Everything, even money, is there.
5. You are sharing an apartment with a friend. You are both sitting and relaxing in the living room. You ask your friend to hand you your phone which is nearby. Your friend gives you the phone.
6. You want to apply for a job position in a big company and it requires a recommendation letter. This is the job of your dreams so you decide to ask a university professor / your former boss to write the recommendation letter for you. A few days later, you meet this person and s/he tells you that s/he has sent out the recommendation letter.

One of the criticisms against this tool was its artificiality. Consequently, the 6 scenarios above were chosen and adapted so that they presented familiar situations to the informants, which is crucial to the reliability of the data obtained, since participants are expected not to put themselves in somebody else's shoes, but to answer what they usually say when facing one of those situations.

On the other hand, as this tool allows some degree of control over the contextual variables, we have considered situations in which the social distance, the social power and the degree of imposition vary, as it is shown in Table 4. The only exceptions are S1-bus and S2-shop because those are the ones that support the hypothesis of pragmatic transfer from the L2-English to the L1-Spanish. As Díaz Pérez (2003) explains, social distance is related to the notion of familiarity between the interlocutors, and it has been measured using a binary system: +SD, if the interlocutors know each other; -SD if they do not know each other. Social power has to do with the existence – or not – of any authority of one of the interlocutors over the behaviour of the other and it has been expressed in terms of equality between the interlocutors, S=H; or in terms of the superiority of the hearer over the speaker, S<H. The degree of imposition is a situational variable which refers to the effort made by the hearer to complete the action. It has been assessed in terms of a high (+) / low (-) degree of imposition.

THANKING SITUATION	SOCIAL DISTANCE	SOCIAL POWER	DEGREE OF IMPOSITION
S1 – bus	+SD	S=H	-
S2 – shop	+SD	S=H	-
S3 – lunch	-SD	S=H	+
S4 – wallet	+SD	S=H	+
S5 – phone	-SD	S=H	-
S6 – letter	-SD	S<H	+

Table 4. Descriptors of the situations proposed in the DCT (adapted from Díaz Pérez, 2005)

Apart from the different scenarios, the WDCT also included a section to gather participants' personal data such as native language, nationality, age, sex and level of studies. Additionally, the Spanish version asked the informants about their stays in the UK (place and length) and their level of proficiency in English. Some instructions about how to fill the questionnaire were also provided before the presentation of the scenarios.

3.4. Procedure

First, the choice of the research instrument had to be made, which, for the reasons explained in the previous section, finally was a WDCT. After comparing the questionnaires of different authors, which were the most commonly used in cross-cultural research, 6 different scenarios were chosen and adapted from Eisenstein & Bodman (1986), Cheng (2005 cited in Farnia & Suleiman, 2009) and Díaz Pérez (2005) to make them more familiar to participants. Two pragmatically equivalent versions of the questionnaire were designed – one in English and the other one in Spanish – using *Google forms*, a free application by Google, which facilitated its administration and the submission of the answers. In addition, this device simplified the process of data collection as all the answers may be saved in an Excel sheet. Once the DCT was ready, it was administered to the informants via social networks.

The data were gathered by *Google forms* and coded following the classification of Díaz Pérez (2003). The next section provides a more detailed analysis of the data.

3.5. Data analysis

The classification of thanking formulae has been made following Díaz Pérez (2003), who partially inspired in Eisenstein & Bodman (1986) and Bodman & Eisenstein (1988). A distinction is made between the nuclear act, which is the essential component, as its name indicates, and those optional elements which are not necessary for the production of the

illocutionary act. The latter category includes alerters and modifiers either internal or external, used to intensify the illocutionary force of the speech act of thanking.

An alerter is “*an element functioning as an attention getter or an address term preceding the actual speech act to gain the hearer’s attention or signal some interpersonal relationship*” (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989 cited in Farnia & Suleiman, 2009:123). Alerters include titles, surnames, names, terms of endearment typical of colloquial register, pronouns, attention getters, or the combination of two or more of the previous alerters. Among the answers of the participants in the present study, none of these elements was found.

A nuclear act is the minimal unit by means of which the illocutionary act is performed. It may be direct – Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs) – or indirect, which combined with an IFID may be used as a supportive move. There are four categories, containing different strategies associated to a particular register.

CATEGORY 0: No realization of the illocutionary act.

CATEGORY I: Expression of surprise and scepticism.

STRATEGY 1: Question about the disposition of the hearer to carry out the action: No example has been found on the use of this strategy as a nuclear act.

STRATEGY 2: Expression of surprise:

- (1) *¡No me lo puedo creer! No sabe cuánto se lo agradezco. Por favor, entre y tómese algo. Y si puedo ayudarle en algo, dígamelo, por favor. (III / 11 / S4)*

CATEGORY II: Expression of indebtedness or acknowledgment of the favour.

STRATEGY 3: Expression of the lack of necessity or obligation: No example has been found of the use of this strategy as a nuclear act.

STRATEGY 4: Intention to show reciprocity:

- (2) *Te debo una. (II / 4 / S3)*
(3) *En otra te invito yo. (II / 14 / S3)*
(4) *¡Jo, persona! La próxima pago yo. (III / 10 / S3)*

CATEGORY III: Expression of feelings on the part of the speaker.

STRATEGY 5: Expression of appreciation or acknowledgment of the favour:

- (5) *That’s so nice, I really appreciate it. Have a nice day. (I / 10 / S4)*

STRATEGY 6: Inability to articulate deep feelings:

- (6) *No sabes cuánto te lo agradezco, para mí es muy importante esta oportunidad y es un detalle que te hayas molestado en redactar y enviar la recomendación. Te debo una. (III / 4 / S6)*

STRATEGY 7: Praise to the action: No example has been found on the use of this strategy as a nuclear act.

STRATEGY 8: Praise to the person:

(7) *Lifesaver!* Love you. (I / 6 / S3)

STRATEGY 9: Expression of affection: No example has been found on the use of this strategy as a nuclear act.

STRATEGY 10: Expression of gratitude: No example has been found of the use of this strategy as a nuclear act.

CATEGORY IV: Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID)

STRATEGY 11: *Cheers, Ta:*

(8) *Cheers.* (I / 5 / S1)

(9) *Cheers, Sunshine* (I / 8 / S5)

(10) *Ta.* (I / 12 / S5)

STRATEGY 12: *Thanks:*

(11) *Thanks, chicken.* (I / 9 / S5)

(12) *Thanks very much.* (I / 12 / S3)

STRATEGY 13: *Thank you / Gracias:*

(13) *Thank you* so much. You have no idea how much this means to me. (I / 5 / S4)

(14) *Muchísimas gracias*, me has hecho un gran favor. (II / 7 / S6)

(15) ¡*Gracias!* ¡Hasta luego! (III / 4 / S2)

STRATEGY 14: Performative statements:

(16) *Le agradezco* profundamente la ayuda que me prestó con la carta. No decepcionaré la confianza que mostró en mí. (II / 2 / S6)

(17) *Se lo agradezco* de veras. Espero no haberle puesto en un compromiso. Gracias una vez más, ya le contaré si finalmente obtengo el puesto de trabajo. (III / 2 / S6)

Internal modifiers have the function of emphasizing the illocutionary force of the speech act. There are several types: adverbial intensifiers, strategy repetition, expression of emotion, and a combination of the previous ones.

1. Intensifiers of the IFID:

(18) Thanks *so much*. I will pay you back next time I see you. (I / 3 / S3)

(19) *Muchísimas* gracias, no sabe cómo se lo agradezco. (II / 1 / S4)

- (20) Se lo agradezco *de veras*. Espero no haberle puesto en un compromiso. Gracias una vez más, ya le contaré si finalmente obtengo el puesto de trabajo. (III / 2 / S6)
2. Strategy repetition: This modifier has not been used in isolation, but combined with other internal modifiers (25).
 3. Expression of emotion:
 - (21) Wow, thank you! (I / 6 / S4)
 - (22) Aw! Thank you! I'll get it next time. (I / 8 / S3)
 - (23) ¡Madre mía! ¡Gracias! Aún queda gente decente. (III / 10 / S4)
 4. Combination of two or more of the previous modifiers:
 - (24) Oh, my God! Thank you so much. That's so kind of you. Thank you. (Expression of emotion + Intensifier of the IFID + Strategy repetition) (I / 12 / S4)
 - (25) ¡Ay, por Dios! Muchísimas gracias. ¡Uf, qué mal rato de pensar que había perdido todos los papeles! (Expression of emotion + Intensifier of the IFID) (II / 8 / S4)
 - (26) Gracias *de nuevo*. Es algo importante para mí. La necesitaba para adjuntarla a mi curriculum. He visto una oferta de trabajo muy buena y es una oportunidad única para mí. Muchas gracias, *de verdad*. (Intensifier of the IFID + Strategy repetition) (III / 13 / S6)

External modifiers or supportive moves are employed to intensify the illocutionary force of the speech act. They can be divided as follows:

1. Question about the disposition of the hearer to carry out the action: No examples have been found of the use of this external modifier.
2. Expression of surprise: No examples have been found of the use of this external modifier.
3. Expression of the lack of necessity or obligation: This modifier has not been used in isolation, but combined with other external modifiers.
4. Expression of indebtedness:
 - (27) Thanks so much. *I owe you one*. (I / 2 / S3)
 - (28) Muchas gracias. *Te debo una invitación*. (II / 6 / S3)
 - (29) Muchas gracias. *Le debo una*. (II / 14 / S6)
5. Intention to show reciprocity:
 - (30) Thanks so much. *I will pay you back next time* I see you. (I / 3 / S3)

- (31) Gracias, lo siento mucho. *Ven conmigo a casa, nos tomamos un café y te doy mi parte.* (II / 15 / S3)
- (32) ¡Gracias! *Otro día invito yo.* (III / 8 / S3)
6. Expression of appreciation or acknowledgment:
- (33) Thank you. *I really appreciate it.* (I / 6 / S6)
- (34) Muchas gracias por su consideración. *La verdad es que necesitaba su ayuda para ese trabajo.* (III / 11 / S6)
7. Inability to articulate deep feelings:
- (35) Thank you so much. *You have no idea how much this means to me.* (I / 5 / S4)
- (36) Muchísimas gracias. *No sabe cómo se lo agradezco.* (II / 1 / S4)
- (37) Muchísimas gracias. *No sé cómo podría agradecerse.* (II / 12 / S4)
8. Praise to the action:
- (38) Oh, my God! Thank you so much! *That's so kind of you.* Thank you. (I / 12 / S4)
- (39) Muchas gracias, de verdad. *Acaba de salvarme la vida.* (II / 2 / S4)
- (40) Muchas gracias. *Significa mucho para mí.* (III / 1 / S6)
9. Praise to the person:
- (41) Muchas gracias. *Da gusto ver que aún queda gente buena y honrada.* (II / 6 / S4)
- (42) Oh, muchas gracias. *No todo el mundo haría eso.* (III / 1 / S4)
- (43) *Muy amable.* Muchas gracias. (III / 12 / S2)
10. Expression of affection:
- (44) Lifesaver! *Love you.* (I / 6 / S3)
- (45) Gracias, *guapo/a.* (II / 12 / S5)
- (46) Gracias, “*apañao*”. (III / 14 / S5)
11. Expression of gratitude:
- (47) ¡Madre mía! Muchas gracias, de verdad. Ya la daba por perdida. *Se lo agradezco muchísimo.* (III / 15 / S3)
- (48) Se lo agradezco de veras. Espero no haberle puesto en un compromiso. *Gracias una vez más, ya le contaré si finalmente obtengo el puesto de trabajo.* (III / 2 / S6)
12. Combination of two or more of the previous external modifiers:
- (49) Thank you so much. *That's so good of you. I really appreciate it.* (Praise to the action + Affection) (I / 2 / S4)

(50) ¡Gracias, gracias y gracias! *No sé cómo agradeceréelo. ¿Le puedo invitar a pasar y tomar algo?* ¡Mil gracias! (Inability to articulate deep feelings + Reciprocity) (II / 5 / S4)

(51) ¡Mil gracias! *No me lo puedo creer. ¡Qué amable y qué buena persona eres!* ¡Muchas gracias, de verdad! (Surprise + Praise to the person) (III / 8 / S4)

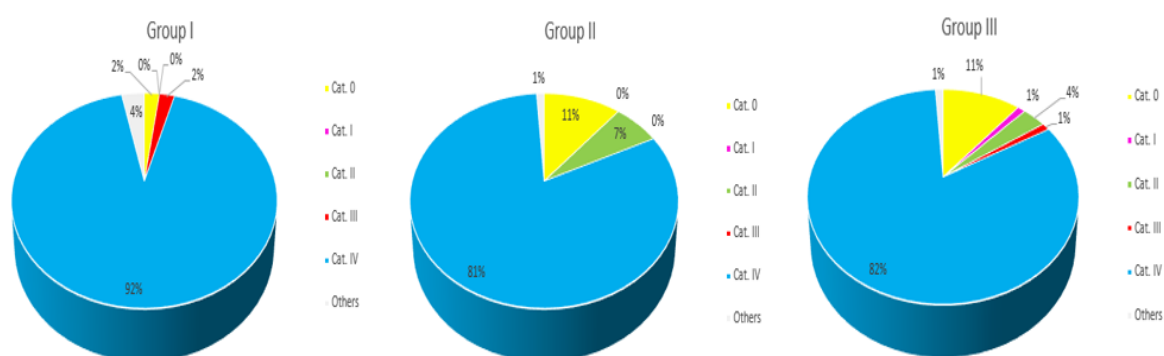
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Results

After the codification of the data, results are presented and discussed here in order to provide an answer to the five research questions formulated in the introduction. To illustrate our findings for their analysis and discussion, data have been represented as follows:

A. Results on the use of strategies

Graphic 1 shows the distribution of the nuclear act categories used by informants with respect to their groups. Those results are further detailed in Table 5, where strategies are assigned their number of users and the percentage they represent and in Table 6, where they are classified according to the situation in which they have been used.



Graphic 1. Distribution of categories with regard to the participants' groups

		ENGLISH NS (group I)		SPANISH NS (group II)		SPANISH NS (group III)	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Cat 0: No realization	None	2	2.2	10	11.1	10	11.1
Cat I: Surprise & scepticism	1. Security question	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2. Surprise	0	0	0	0	1	1.1
Cat II: Indebtedness	3. Lack of necessity	0	0	0	0	0	0
	4. Reciprocity	0	0	6	6.6	3	3.3
Cat III: Expression of feelings	5. Appreciation	1	1.1	0	0	0	0
	6. Inability to articulate feelings	0	0	0	0	1	1.1
	7. Praise to the action	0	0	0	0	0	0
	8. Praise to the person	1	1.1	0	0	0	0
	9. Affection	0	0	0	0	0	0
	10. Gratitude	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cat IV: IFIDs	11. Cheers, Ta	15	16.6	0	0	0	0
	12. Thanks	28	31.1	0	0	0	0
	13. Thank you / Gracias	40	44.4	72	80	73	81.1
	14. Performative statement	0	0	1	1.1	1	1.1
Non-valid answers		3	3.3	1	1.1	1	1.1
TOTAL		90	100	90	100	90	100

Table 5. Distribution of thanking strategies according to participants' groups

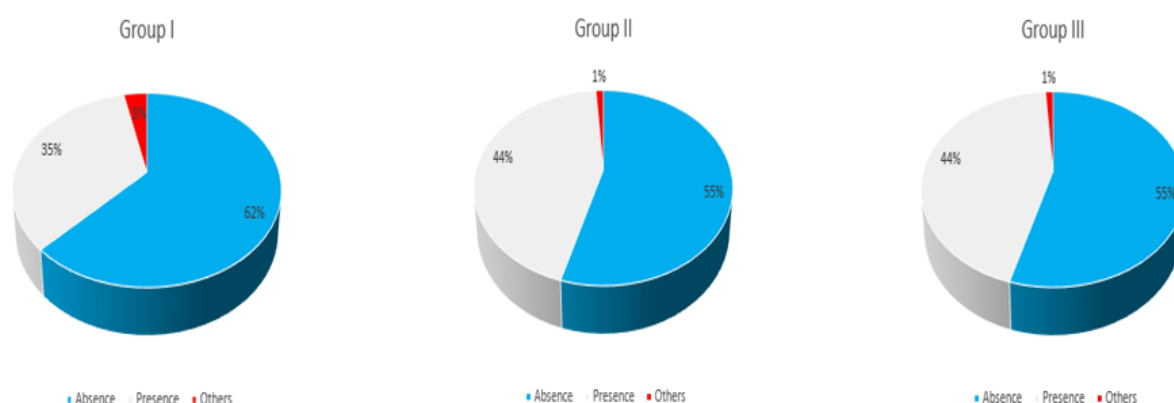
	S1		S2		S3		S4		S5		S6	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Cat 0	12	26.6	12	26.6	1	2.2	0	0	7	15.5	0	0
Cat I	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.2	0	0	0	0
Cat II	0	0	0	0	9	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cat III	0	0	0	0	1	2.2	1	2.2	0	0	1	2.2
Cat IV	31	68.8	31	68.8	34	75.5	41	91.1	38	84.4	43	95.5
nv	2	4.4	2	4.4	0	0	2	4.4	0	0	1	2.2
TOTAL	45	100	45	100	45	100	45	100	45	100	45	100

Table 6. Distribution of categories of strategies with regard to the situation

Although details on the performances of the different groups are further discussed in the following sections, there are some remarks that need to be done. There is a clear tendency (70% to 95%) to use strategies from Category IV (*IFIDs*) to express gratitude. The non-realization of the nuclear act reached a higher percentage mainly in those situations where thanking is more an automatic response than a real expression of gratitude, especially when interlocutors have an equal power status and there is a low degree of imposition, as in S1-bus, S2-shop, and S5-phone.

B. Results on the use of internal modifiers

Graphic 2 represents the presence or absence of internal modifiers concerning each group of participants. Table 7 details the number of informants who have used every type of internal modifiers and the percentage it represents. Table 8 shows the distribution of the different types of internal modifiers depending on the situation.



Graphic 2. Presence / Absence of internal modifiers with regard to the participants' group

	ENGLISH NS (group I)		SPANISH NS (group II)		SPANISH NS (group III)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	56	62.2	49	54.4	49	54.4
Intensifiers of the IFID	25	27.7	31	34.4	30	33.3
Strategy repetition	0	0	0	0	0	0
Expression of emotion	3	3.3	0	0	1	1.1
Combination	3	3.3	9	10	9	10
Non-valid answers	3	3.3	1	1.1	1	1.1
TOTAL	90	100	90	100	90	100

Table 7. Distribution of internal modifiers with regard to the participants' groups

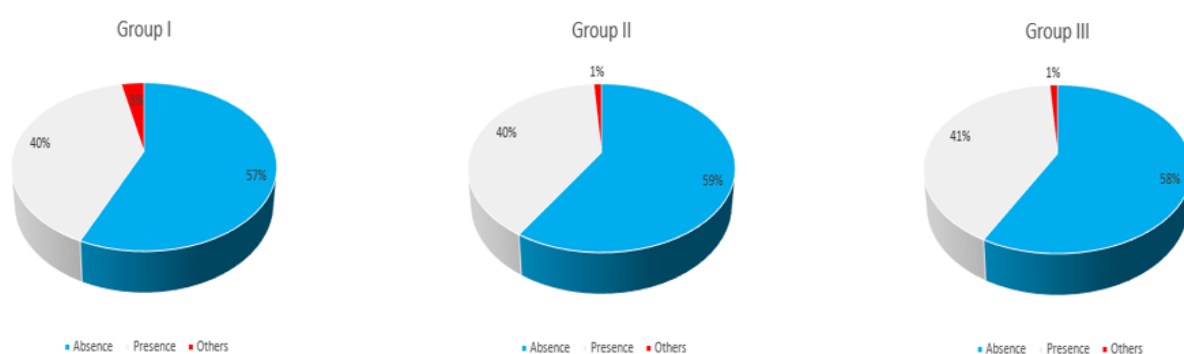
	S1		S2		S3		S4		S5		S6	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I.mod.	8	17.7	8	17.7	19	42.2	31	68.8	0	0	36	80
nv	2	4.4	2	4.4	0	0	2	4.4	0	0	1	2.2
TOTAL	45	100	45	100	45	100	45	100	45	100	45	100

Table 8. Presence of internal modifiers with regard to the situation

Concerning the use of internal modifiers, some general remarks are discussed now considering some social and situational factors, i.e. social distance and power status. For instance, in S1-bus and S2-shop, only 17.7% of the participants have used internal modifiers in spite the fact that there is social distance between interlocutors; whereas in S3-lunch, this percentage reached 42.2% although there is no social distance between interlocutors. That may be because of the low degree of imposition of the favour (in S1 and S2) and the equal power status of speaker and hearer (in all the three situations). Social relative power may also be a determining factor in the use of internal modifiers. If we compared, for example, S5-phone and S6-letter, it can be observed that none of the participants used internal modifiers when thanking a friend (S5, S=H), whereas 80% did it when it came to express gratitude towards a professor or a previous boss (S6, S<H). In other words, those situations in which the hearer's relative social power is higher than the speaker's one present a higher percentage of use of internal modifiers.

C. Results on the use of external modifiers

Graphic 3 shows the presence or absence of external modifiers with regard to each group of participants. Those results have been detailed in Table 9 by indicating the number of informants who have used every type of external modifier and the percentage it represents, and in Table 10, where external modifiers are classified regarding the situation.



Graphic 3. Presence / Absence of external modifiers with regard to the participants' group

	ENGLISH NS (group I)		SPANISH NS (group II)		SPANISH NS (group III)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	49	54.4	52	57.7	53	58.8
1. Security question	0	0	0	0	0	0
2. Expression of surprise	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. Lack of necessity	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Expression of indebtedness	1	1.1	3	3.3	0	0
5. Intention to show reciprocity	10	11.1	9	10	9	10
6. Appreciation	10	11.1	0	0	1	1.1
7. Inability to articulate feelings	1	1.1	2	2.2	0	0
8. Praise to the action	2	2.2	4	4.4	7	7.7
9. Praise to the person	0	0	5	5.5	2	2.2
10. Expression of affection	4	4.4	5	5.5	2	2.2
11. Expression of gratitude	0	0	0	0	3	3.3
12. Combinations	8	8.8	9	10	12	13.3
Non valid answers	3	3.3	1	1.1	1	1.1
TOTAL	90	100	90	100	90	100

Table 9. Distribution of external modifiers with regard to the participants' group

	S1		S2		S3		S4		S5		S6	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
E.mod.	0	0	0	0	34	75.5	35	77.7	10	22.2	30	66.6
nv	2	4.4	2	4.4	0	0	2	4.4	0	0	1	2.2
TOTAL	45	100	45	100	45	100	45	100	45	100	45	100

Table 10. Presence of external modifiers with regard to the situation

With regard to the use of external modifiers, Table 10 shows the influence of social factors, such as social distance and relative power status. For instance, in S1-bus and S2-shop, none of the participants have used external modifiers, even if there is social distance between interlocutors; whereas in S3-lunch, 75.5% of the informants included some external modifiers in their answers, though there is no social distance between interlocutors. The reason for this may be again the low degree of imposition of the favour (in S1 and S2) and the equal power status of speaker and hearer (in all the three situations). Social relative power may also condition the use of external modifiers. When comparing, for example, S5-phone and S6-letter, it can be perceived that, whereas 22.2 % of informants used supportive moves when thanking a friend, this percentage increases to 66.6% when it came to express gratitude towards a professor or a previous boss.

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. Common thanking formulae used by native speakers of British English

The results showed that British informants preferred direct strategies when formulating the nuclear act, by means of using IFIDs (92.1%). Within this category, the unmarked IFID *Thank you* (Cat. IV, St. 13) reached the highest rate of use (44.4%). It was used in all the different scenarios, both by men and women.

(52) *Thank you, goodbye.* (I / 1 / S1)

(53) *Thank you, bye.* (I / 6 / S2)

(54) *Aw! Thank you. I'll get it next time.* (I / 8 / S3)

(55) *Thank you so much. How can I repay to you?* (I / 7 / S4)

(56) *Thank you.* (I / 15 / S5)

(57) *Thank you. I appreciate your support* (I / 9 / S6)

Thanks (Cat. IV, St. 12), which belongs to the informal register, accounted for 31.1% of the cases. It appears in all the scenarios, although it might seem not to be appropriate for some of them. For instance, in S6-letter, interlocutors do not have equal power status (S<H). Something similar happens in S4-wallet where there is social distance between the interlocutors as they do not know each other. Additionally, in both situations there is a high degree of imposition because of the size of the favour. The degree of imposition, however, has been minimised by using external modifiers as supportive moves.

(58) *Thanks.* (I / 14 / S1)

(59) *Thanks a lot.* (I / 2 / S2)

(60) *Thanks so much. I will pay you back next time I see you.* (I / 3 / S3)

(61) *Wow! Thanks! You're a life-saver. Could I offer you something, perhaps a cup of tea?* (I / 4 / S4)

(62) *Thanks, chicken.* (I / 9 / S5)

(63) *I really appreciate the effort, thanks very much.* (I / 10 / S6)

The colloquial IFIDs *Cheers* and *Ta* (Cat. IV, St. 11) obtained 16.6%. Due to their colloquial character, they have been used in everyday situations, such as S1-bus, S2-shop, even if there exists social distance between the interlocutors. They also appear in S5-phone since the context is informal, there is no social distance and no difference in power status between the participants, and the degree of imposition is almost inexistent. As Eisenstein & Bodman (1986) found out in their research, this kind of situations produced “*phatic ritualized responses: (Thank you) (Thank you. Have a nice day) (Thanks)*. Natives indicated that they

made these statements automatically. The expression of thanks in these situations seems to be a social amenity” (1986:66).

(64) *Cheers*. Have a good day. (I / 4 / S1)

(65) *Cheers*. (I / 3 / S2)

(66) *Cheers*, Sunshine. (I / 8 / S5)

Only 2 participants employed indirect strategies. One of them used *Expression of appreciation* (Cat. III / St. 5) (67), and the other one expressed *Praise to the person* (Cat. III / St. 8) (68). Both examples were produced by women.

(67) That’s so nice. *I really appreciate it*. Have a nice day. (I / 10 / S4)

(68) *Lifesaver!* Love you. (I / 6 / S3)

None of the participants in this group employed *Performative statements*.

Concerning the use of internal modifiers, most British English speakers used none of them (62.2%). In the cases where they did, *Intensifiers of the IFID* were the most common ones (27.7%). In our results, there are examples of adverbs such as *very much* or *so much*, and noun phrases as *a lot*. S3-lunch, S4-wallet and S6-letter were the situations where more modifiers were used since in S3 and S6 there is a high degree of imposition, despite the fact that there is no social distance. Furthermore, in S6 the power status between interlocutors is not equal ($S < H$). In S4, apart from the size of the object of gratitude, there is also social distance between interlocutors as they do not know each other.

(69) Thanks *so much*, I owe you one. (I / 2 / S3)

(70) Thanks *a lot*. Next round’s on me. (I / 4 / S3)

(71) Thank you *so much*. You have no idea how much this means to me. (I / 5 / S4)

(72) Thank you *very much*. (I / 12 / S6)

Only 6 participants used other modifiers. Three of them opted for *Expressions of emotion*,

(73) *Aw!* Thank you. I’ll get it next time. (I / 8 / S3)

(74) *Wow!* Thanks! You’re a life-saver. Could I offer you something, perhaps a cup of tea? (I / 4 / S4)

(75) *Wow!* Thank you! (I / 6 / S4)

whereas another three used a combination of several internal modifiers.

(76) *Oh!* Thank you *so much*. You really have saved me so much trouble there. Can I give something as a reward? (Expression of emotion + Intensifier of the IFID) (I / 1 / S4)

(77) *Oh, my God! Thank you so, so much. You're a star!* (Expression of emotion + Intensifier of the IFID) (I / 11 / S4)

(78) *Oh, my God! Thank you so much. That's so kind of you. Thank you.* (Expression of emotion + Intensifier of the IFID + Strategy repetition) (I / 12 / S4)

None of them employed the strategy of repetition in isolation, although it appears in combination with other internal modifiers, as example (78) shows.

As far as external modifiers are concerned, more than a half of the native speakers of British English did not use any of them (54.4%). When a supportive move appears, it is usually either an *Expression of appreciation* (11.1%) or an *Intention to show reciprocity* (11.1%). On the one hand, *Appreciation* appears in situations with a high degree of imposition, such as S4-wallet and S6-letter. There are also some other variables working: in S4, there is social distance between the interlocutors, whereas in S6 they have different power status (S<H).

(79) Thank you so much. *I really appreciate this* and hope it was not much trouble for you. (I / 3 / S4)

(80) Thank you very much. *It is much appreciated.* I will let you know how I get on. (I / 11 / S6)

Intention to show reciprocity, on the other hand, appears in situations in which there is a certain feeling of indebtedness on the part of the speaker because of the size of the object of gratitude. Examples (81) to (87) serve to illustrate this supportive move:

(81) Thanks so much. *I'll transfer you the money later.* (I / 2 / S3)

(82) Thanks so much. *I will pay you back next time I see you.* (I / 3 / S3)

(83) Thanks a lot. *Next round's on me.* (I / 4 / S3)

(84) Thank you so much. *How can I repay to you?* (I / 7 / S4)

(85) Thank you very much. I'd no idea. *Would you like to come in for a cup of tea and some cake for me to say thank you?* (I / 9 / S4)

(86) Thank you. *I will get it next time.* (I / 10 / S3)

(87) Thank you. *I will treat you the next time we have lunch.* (I / 15 / S3)

A combination of external modifiers was the supportive move to reach the second highest rate of use, accounting for 8.8% of the cases.

(88) Thanks, *you're a life saver. Do you want the money and I'll get it to you tomorrow or shall I pay next time?* (Praise to the person + Reciprocity) (I / 1 / S3)

(89) Oh, thank you so much. *You really have saved me so much trouble there. Can I give you something as reward?* (Praise to the action + Reciprocity) (I / 1 / S4)

(90) Thank you so much. *That's so good of you. I really appreciate it.* (Praise to the action + Appreciation) (I / 2 / S4)

(91) Thanks so much for doing that. *I really appreciate it. If you ever need anything, let me know.* (Appreciation + Reciprocity) (I / 2 / S6)

(92) Thank you. *I really appreciate it. If I get the job, I owe you one.* (Appreciation + Indebtedness) (I / 13 / S6)

Only 4.4% opted for an *Expression of affection*.

(93) Cheers, *Sunshine.* (I / 8 / S5)

(94) Oh, my God! Thank you. *You're a star!* (I / 11 / S4)

(95) Thanks, *chicken.* (I / 9 / S5)

(96) Lifesaver! *Love you.* (I / 6 / S3)

The less popular modifiers were *Praise to the action* (2.2%) (97, 98), and *Inability to articulate deep feelings* (99) and *Expression of indebtedness* (100), which only accounted for 1.1% of the cases.

(97) *That's so nice.* I really appreciate it. Have a nice day (I / 10 / S4)

(98) Oh, my God! Thank you so much. *That's so kind of you.* Thank you. (I / 12 / S4)

(99) Thank you so much. *You have no idea how much this means to me.* (I / 5 / S4)

(100) Thanks so much. *I owe you one.* (I / 2 / S3)

Speakers have not provided any example of the following external modifiers: *Security question*, *Expression of surprise*, *Lack of necessity*, *Expression of indebtedness*, *Praise to the person*, or *Expression of gratitude*.

4.2.1. Common thanking formulae used by native speakers of Peninsular Spanish

As happened with English native speakers, Spanish informants preferred direct strategies when formulating the nuclear act by means of using IFIDs. Within this category, the unmarked IFID *Gracias* (Cat. IV, St. 13) had the highest rate of use, reaching 80% in group II and 81.1% in group III. It appears in all the different scenarios, in male and female participants' interventions.

(101) ¡Adiós! ¡*Gracias!* (III / 5 / S1)

(102) *Muchas gracias.* Hasta luego. (II / 2 / S2)

(103) *Gracias*, tío, te debo una. A la próxima invito yo. (III / 3 / S3)

(104) *Muchísimas gracias*, de verdad. (II / 4 / S4)

(105) *Gracias, nene.* (II / 6 / S5)

(106) *Muchísimas gracias.* Me ha hecho un gran favor. (III / 14 / S6)

Only two people (one from each group) opted for a performative utterance, in S6-letter.

(107) *Se lo agradezco* de veras. Espero no haberle puesto en un compromiso. Gracias una vez más, ya le contaré si finalmente obtengo el puesto de trabajo. (III / 2 / S6)

(108) *Le agradezco* profundamente la ayuda que me prestó con la carta. No decepcionaré la confianza que mostró en mí al redactarla. (II / 2 / S6)

Some other participants (6.6% in group II and 3.3% in group III) chose the indirect strategy *Intention to show reciprocity* (Cat. II / St. 4). Examples correspond to both groups of NS of Spanish and they appear only in S3-lunch used both by men and women.

(109) *Luego te pago mi parte o a la siguiente invito yo.* (II / 1 / S3)

(110) *Perdona. A la próxima invito yo.* (II / 2 / S3)

(111) *Uy, pues me he dejado la cartera en casa. Te debo una cena entonces. Si te corre prisa te lo pago hoy.* (II / 3 / S3)

(112) *Te debo una.* (II / 4 / S3)

(113) *Bueno, ahora la recogemos y pago yo las copas.* (II / 8 / S3)

(114) *Venga, vale, pero te lo devuelvo mañana.* (III / 5 / S3)

Inability to articulate deep feelings (Cat. III / St. 6) was used only by one person from group III in S6-letter. Due to the high degree of imposition of the favour and the difference in the power status between interlocutors (S<H), it was followed by different external modifiers to minimise the threaten.

(115) *No sabes cuánto te lo agradezco*, para mí es muy importante esta oportunidad y es un detalle que te hayas molestado en redactar y enviar la recomendación. (III / 4 / S6)

Concerning the use of internal modifiers, more than a half of Peninsular Spanish native speakers used none of them (54.4% in both groups). In the cases where they did, intensifiers of the IFID were the most common type (34.4% in group II and 33.3% in group III). In Spanish, intensifiers of the IFID tend to be indefinite quantifiers, such as *muchas* or *muchísimas*. Our informants produced also an example using *mil*. As the function of modifiers is to emphasise the nuclear act, they appear in those situations in which there is a high degree of imposition (S3-lunch, S4-wallet, S6-letter), different power status between interlocutors (S6-letter) or social distance (S1-bus, S2-shop, S4-wallet). The presence of

internal modifiers in the performances of NS of Spanish when expressing gratitude in S1-bus and S2-shop was unexpected, since Spanish native speakers are not supposed to thank in service encounters (De Pablos-Ortega, 2010:151).

(116) *Muchas* gracias, nena. El próximo día te invito yo. (II / 11 / S3)

(117) *Muchísimas* gracias. Cualquier cosa que necesites, no dudes en pedírmela. (II / 9 / S6)

(118) ¡*Mil* gracias! No me lo puedo creer. ¡Qué amable y qué buena persona eres!
¡*Muchas* gracias *de verdad*! (III / 9 / S4)

(119) *Muchas* gracias. Que tenga un buen día. (III / 6 / S1)

(120) *Muchas* gracias. Hasta luego. (II / 2 / S2)

The strategy of repetition has not been used in isolation, but combined with other internal modifiers as in example (118).

There is only one example of *Expression of emotions* used in isolation.

(121) ¡*Madre mía*, gracias! ¡Aún queda gente decente! (III / 10 / S4)

A combination of at least two of the previous internal modifiers accounted for 10% of the cases in both groups.

(122) ¡*Gracias, gracias y gracias*! ¡No sé cómo agradecerérselo! ¿Le puedo invitar a pasar y tomar algo? *Mil gracias*. (Strategy repetition + Intensifier of the IFID)
(II / 5 / S4)

(123) ¡*Ay, por Dios! Muchísimas* gracias. ¡Uf! Vaya mal rato de pensar que había perdido todos los papeles. (Expression of emotion + Intensifier of the IFID) (II / 8 / S4)

(124) ¡*Qué alivio! Muchísimas* gracias. No todo el mundo hace esto. *Gracias*, de verdad. (Expression of emotion + Intensifier of IFID + Strategy repetition) (II / 7 / S4)

As regards external modifiers, more than a half of the native speakers of Spanish did not use any of them (57.7% in group II and 58.8 % in group III). When a supportive move appears, the highest rate of use is for a combination of several external modifiers (10% in group II and 13.3% in group III).

(125) *Muchas* gracias. *Me ha ahorrado usted un montón de problemas. Déjeme que le invite a un café, al menos*. (Praise to the action + Reciprocity) (II / 3 / S4)

(126) ¡*Gracias, gracias y gracias*! ¡No sé cómo agradecerérselo! ¿Le puedo invitar a pasar y tomar algo? *Mil gracias*. (Inability to articulate deep feelings + Reciprocity) (II / 5 / S4)

- (127) *No sé cómo agradecerse. Es muy importante para mí. Muchas gracias.* (Inability to articulate deep feelings + Praise to the action) (II / 5 / S6)
- (128) *Muchísimas gracias. Es algo muy importante para mí y le agradezco mucho su ayuda.* (Praise to the action + Gratitude) (II / 6 / S6)
- (129) *Muchas gracias, nena. El próximo día te invito yo.* (Affection + Reciprocity) (II / 11 / S3)
- (130) *¿Dónde te la has encontrado? Muchas gracias, me has salvado la vida. Si fuera otro, se la habría quedado o habría pasado de cogerla. Muchas gracias.* (Praise to the action + Praise to the person) (II / 11 / S4)
- (131) *Gracias, tío. Te debo una. A la próxima invito yo.* (Appreciation + Indebtedness + Reciprocity) (III / 2 / S3)
- (132) *No sabes cuánto te lo agradezco. Para mí es muy importante esta oportunidad y es un detalle que te hayas molestado en redactar y enviar la recomendación. Te debo una.* (Praise to the action + Indebtedness) (III / 4 / S6)
- (133) *¡Mil gracias! No me lo puedo creer. ¡Qué amable y qué buena persona eres! Muchas gracias de verdad.* (Surprise + Praise to the person) (III / 8 / S4)
- (134) *Gracias. Muchísimas gracias. Ha sido una suerte que la encontrara. No sé cómo agradecerse.* (Surprise + Inability to articulate deep feelings) (III / 9 / S4)

Intention to show reciprocity was used by 10% of informants in both groups, mainly in those situations with a higher degree of imposition, such as S3-lunch, S4-wallet and S6-letter.

- (135) *¡Gracias! Otro día invito yo.* (III / 8 / S3)
- (136) *Muchísimas gracias. Tome, por las molestias.* (II / 15 / S4)
- (137) *Muchas gracias. Cualquier cosa que necesites, no dudes en pedírmela.* (II / 9 / S6)

With the exceptions of *Security question* and *Lack of necessity*, all the external modifiers have been used. However, the ones we have not mentioned yet reached really low rates of use. For instance, *Praise to the action* (138) reached 4.4% in group II and 7.7% in group III, whereas *Expression of affection* (139) and *Praise to the person* (140) reached similar percentages in both groups: 5.5% in group II and 2.2% in group III, respectively. Other supportive moves were used only by one of the groups, as it is the case of *Expression of indebtedness* (3.3%) (142) and *Inability to articulate deep feelings* (2.2%) (143) belonging to group II, or *Expression of gratitude* (141) (3.3%) and *Expression of appreciation* (1.1%) (144) from group III.

- (138) Muchísimas gracias, *me ha hecho un gran favor*. (III / 14 / S6)
- (139) ¡Gracias, *guapo/a!* (II / 12 / S5)
- (140) Muchas gracias. *Poca gente hace lo que tú acabas de hacer. Si hubiera más personas como tú, el mundo funcionaría mucho mejor.* Gracias. (II / 13 / S4)
- (141) ¡Madre mías, muchas gracias, de verdad! Ya la daba por perdida. *Se lo agradezco muchísimo.* (III / 15 / S4)
- (142) Muchas gracias. *Te debo una invitación.* (II / 6 / S3)
- (143) Muchísimas gracias. *No sabe cómo se lo agradezco.* (II / 1 / S4)
- (144) Muchísimas gracias por su consideración. *La verdad es que necesitaba su ayuda para este trabajo.* (III / 3 / S6)

4.2.3. Similarities and differences between British English and Peninsular Spanish native speakers performances

Regarding the choice of strategies for the nuclear act, both English and Spanish native speakers; preferred the use of direct strategies by means of using an IFID, although the use of Category IV strategies was slightly higher in English (94.3%) than in Spanish (approx. 80%). The difference lays on the choice of the strategy: whereas the Spaniards mainly used the unmarked IFID *Gracias* (St. 13) (approx. 80%), only 44.4% of the British used the equivalent *Thank you*. “*The fact that Spanish native speakers make use of this IFID in a much higher percentage is logical, since Spanish does not possess colloquial IFIDs to express gratitude*” (Díaz Pérez, 2005:98). Another difference within this category is the use of *Performative statements* (St. 14). While in Spanish this strategy was used by two people (one in each group), in English nobody employed it.

Strategies from other categories were also used by both groups but with different results. Only two native speakers of English (2.2%) employed other strategies: one of them used *Expression of appreciation* (St. 5), and another one *Praise to the person* (St. 8). Both of them belong to Category III. In the case of Spanish participants, the use of other strategies is slightly higher (6.6% in group II and 5.5% in group III), being also Cat. III the most popular one, with 6.6% (group II) and 3.3% (group III) of the informants using Strategy 4 (*Reciprocity*). Only two people, both in group III, opted for other different strategies: 1.1% used Strategy 6 (*Inability to articulate deep feelings*) and another 1.1% used Strategy 2 (*Surprise*) from Category II.

Within strategies, the *Non-realization of the nuclear act* (Cat. 0) was performed by 2.2% of the British speakers, whereas in Spanish this strategy accounted for 11.1% of the cases (both for group II and for group III).

Focusing on internal modifiers, our findings showed that English and Spanish participants' performances were quite similar, with a high tendency to avoid the use of internal modifiers: 62.2% in English, 54.4% in Spanish. When speakers employed them, *Intensifiers of the IFID* was the most common choice: 27.7% in English vs. 33.3% (group III) to 34.4% (group II) in Spanish. Both of them used *Strategy repetition* in combination with other internal modifiers, but not in isolation. Type 3-*Expression of Emotion* appears in three examples provided by the British, whereas only one Spanish speaker in group III employed this modifier. Using a combination of modifiers was the choice of 10% of Spanish speakers, while in English this option reached only 3.3%.

As far as external modifiers are concerned, both groups of speakers tended not to use any external modifier: 54.4% in group I and 57.7% to 58.8% respectively in groups II and III. As Table 9 shows, the most widely used modifiers were *Appreciation* and *Reciprocity* (11.1%) for the British; the former was also used by many Spanish speakers (10%), whereas the latter was employed just by one person in group III. Among the Spanish speakers, the most common supportive move was in fact a combination of external modifiers (10% in group II and 13.3% in group III), which only got a third position within the group of British speakers (8.8%). Other types of modifiers were also shared by both groups, with different results, though. *Praise to the action* was used by 4.4% and 7.7% of the Spanish speakers respectively in groups II and III, but only for 2.2% of the British. *Expression of affection* was also used by both groups: 4.4% in English vs. 5.5% and 2.2% in Spanish respectively by group II and III. *Expression of indebtedness* and *Inability to show deep feelings* were employed only by one person in group I, whereas in Spanish 3.3% of the informants in group III included an *Expression of indebtedness* and 2.2% of participants in group II expressed *Inability to show deep feelings*.

Another similarity is that none of them used any of the first external modifiers: *Security question*, *Expression of surprise* and *Lack of necessity*.

Praise to the person and *Expression of gratitude* were only used by native speakers of Spanish.

4.2.4. Differences in thanking performances of groups II and III of native speakers of Spanish

In the overall performance, the results of both groups are almost identical, so that we are going to focus on the differences, even though they are so slight variations that they cannot be considered significant at all. Concerning the use of strategies, group III employed more strategies than group II. For instance, although both groups shared the use of some strategies: Strategy 13-*Thank you* and Strategy 14-*Performative* from Category IV, Category 0-*No realization*, and Strategy 4-*Reciprocity* from Category II, group III additionally employed Strategy 2-*Surprise* from Category I (1.1%) and Strategy 6-*Inability to articulate feelings* from Category III (1.1%). Table 11 illustrates this variation which affects specially S4-wallet and S6-letter, where all the speakers of group II chose strategies from Category IV (*IFIDs*), whereas speakers in group III also employed strategies from Category III (*Expressing feelings*).

As far as the use of internal modifiers is concerned, differences are almost imperceptible. There is only 1.1% difference in the choice of modifiers: whereas group II used 34.4% of intensifiers and no expressions of emotions, group III employed 33.3% of intensifiers and 1.1% of expressions of emotion. Looking at the different situations in Table 11, we find the highest variation in S1-bus, where group II performed type 1-intensifiers in a slightly lower proportion (2.2%) than group III (6.6%). For the rest of the situations, the results are quite similar.

With regard to external modifiers, performances are different in each group, although those variations are minimal. For instance, the biggest difference appears in S5-phone, where 7 Spanish speakers of group II use these modifiers versus only one in group III.

			S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
G. II	STRATEGY		St. 13 St. 0	St. 13 St. 0	St. 13 St. 14	St. 13	St. 13 St. 0	St. 13 St. 14
	INT.MOD.	Yes	2 T1	4 T1	5 T1	14 T1-T4	0	15 T1-T4
		No	13	11	10	0	15	0
	EXT.MOD.	Yes	0	0	9 T4-T5- T12	12 T5-T7- T8-T9- T12	7 T9-T10	9 T4-T5- T8-T12
		No	15	15	6	2	8	5
	STRATEGY		St. 13 St. 0	St. 13 St. 0	St. 4 St. 13	St. 12 St. 13	St. 13 St. 0	St. 6 St. 13 St. 14
G. III	INT.MOD.	Yes	6 T1	3 T1	6 T1-T2	12 T1-T3- T4	0	13 T1-T4
		No	9	9	9	3	15	1
	EXT. MOD.	Yes	0	1 T9	13 T2-T5- T10	12 T5-T8- T9-T11	1 T10	10 T6-T8- T11-T12
		No	15	14	2	3	14	4

Table 11. Distribution of the use of strategies and modifiers with regard to Spanish NS participants' group

4.2.5. Pragmatic transfer from the L2-English to the L1-Spanish of participants from group III

The results obtained in our research have not shown any evidence to support our hypothesis about pragmatic transfer from the L2-English to the L1-Spanish of those native speakers of Peninsular Spanish who have lived in the UK. The three groups have performed similarly in most situations, and when they differ, the results were still quite similar for the Spanish informants of groups II and III. As it was a pilot study administered to a small amount of participants, our results are not conclusive. Further research would be necessary involving a bigger group of informants, more homogeneous with regard to the length of stay, with people who have never been abroad, not only in the UK. Additionally, data should be obtained by means of different research tools, such as questionnaires, interviews, field notes, natural conversation, corpus data, etc. for their triangulation, in order to get more accurate and conclusive results.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The present paper has contributed to illustrate the wide range of thanking formulae used both by native speakers of British English and Peninsular Spanish. It has also shown how those two groups share some features, such as the performance of the nuclear act by means of IFIDs and a tendency not to use modifiers, either internal or external. Moreover, it has also provided some examples of the differences between those two groups with regard to the type of IFID used. For instance, whereas in Spanish there is only the unmarked IFID *Gracias*, English offers different alternatives: *Thank you*, *Cheers*, *Ta*, and *Thanks*. However, there were no significant differences in the answers provided by both groups of native speakers of Spanish. Concerning the use of modifiers, the most determining factor seems to be the degree of imposition since the bigger the object of gratitude, the wider the use of both types of modifiers, internal and external, as in S3-lunch (Int. mod.: 42.2%; Ext. mod.: 75.5%), S4-wallet (Int. mod.: 68.8%; Ext. mod.: 77.7%) and S6-letter (Int. mod.: 80%; Ext. mod.: 66.6%). However, this factor does not seem to work in isolation: “*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*” (Coulmas, 1981:75). That would explain the high percentages that both types of modifiers reached in S4-wallet, where there is social distance between the participants, and S6-letter, where there exists an unequal power status between the interlocutors. The results obtained do not support our initial hypothesis of pragmatic transfer from the L2-English to the L1-Spanish of those native speakers of Peninsular Spanish who have lived in the UK. It has been suggested that further

research is needed, involving a higher number of informants, as well as the triangulation of results obtained by means of different research tools.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire. English version

Thanking formulae in English and Spanish

PERSONAL INFORMATION

***Obligatorio**

Nationality *

☐ British

Mother tongue: *

☐ British English

Age *

Sex *

☐ Male

☐ Female

Level of studies *

☐ Degree

☐ MA

☐ PhD

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read the following short descriptions of situations in which you might find yourself. Think of what you might say in response to this situation. Write your response (if any) in the space provided. Say as much or as little as you wish – you may choose to say nothing in several circumstances.

1. You board the bus, pay your money and take a seat near the front of the bus. Just before your stop, you signal the driver to stop. You move to the front, the bus comes to a stop, and the doors open.

2. You are in a shop and you have bought some stuff. The cashier puts your stuff in bags and give them to you together with your ticket. You pick up your bags to leave.

3. You and your friend, whom you know very well, go out for lunch. When you go to pay for your lunch, you can't find your wallet. Then you realize that you left it at home. Your friend pays for your lunch.

4. You are at home. A stranger rings the bell and brings you a wallet. You had lost it that morning with many important documents inside (ID card, credit card, driving licence, bus ticket, etc.) and some money. S/he found it at a bus stop. Everything, even money, is there. *

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5. You are sharing an apartment with a friend. You're both sitting and relaxing in the living room. You ask your friend to hand you your phone which is nearby. Your friend gives you the phone.

6. You want to apply for a job position in a big company and it requires a recommendation letter. This is the job of your dreams so you decide to ask a university professor / you former boss to write the recommendation letter for you. A few days later, you meet this person and s/he tells you that s/he has sent out the recommendation letter.



Enviar

Fórmulas de agradecimiento en inglés y español

INFORMACIÓN PERSONAL

***Obligatorio**

Nacionalidad *

☐ Española

Lengua materna *

☐ Español peninsular

Edad *

Sexo *

☐ Hombre

☐ Mujer

Nivel de estudios *

☐ Grado

☐ Máster

☐ Doctorado

¿Has vivido en Reino Unido? *

☐ Sí

☐ No

¿Dónde? *

¿Cuánto tiempo? *

(en meses y años)

Nivel de inglés *

☐ Básico

☐ Intermedio

☐ Avanzado

CUESTIONARIO

Por favor, lee la descripción de las siguientes situaciones en las que podrías encontrarte y piensa en lo que dirías. Escribe tu respuesta en el espacio provisto para ello. Puedes escribir tanto (mucho o poco) como desees. Si en alguna de las situaciones no dirías nada, deja el espacio en blanco.

1. Subes al urbano, compras el billete y te sientas en la parte delantera. Un poco antes de tu parada, le indicas al conductor que pare. Avanzas hasta la parte delantera, el autobús para y se abre la puerta.

^

v

2. Estás en una tienda y has comprado algunas cosas. La cajera pone lo que has comprado en bolsas y te las da junto con el ticket. Coges las bolsas para irte.

^

v

3. Tú y un/a amigo/a, al/a la que conoces muy bien, salís a comer. Cuando vas a pagar, no encuentras la cartera. Entonces te acuerdas de que te la has dejado en casa. Tu amigo/a paga tu comida.

^

v

4. Estás en casa. Un/a desconocido/a llama al timbre y te da una cartera. Es la cartera que habías perdido esa mañana con toda tu documentación dentro (carné de identidad, tarjeta de crédito, carné de conducir, bonobús, etc.) y algo de dinero. Él/ella la encontró en una parada de autobús. Todo, incluso el dinero, está dentro.

^

v

5. Compartes piso con un/a amigo/a. Los dos estáis sentados, relajándoos en la sala de estar. Le pides a tu amigo/a que te pase tu móvil que está a su lado. Él/ella te lo da.

^

v

6. Quieres solicitar un puesto de trabajo en una empresa importante y para ello necesitas una carta de recomendación. Es el trabajo de tus sueños así que decides pedirle a un/a profesor/a de la Universidad o a tu antiguo/a jefe/a que redacte una carta de recomendación para ti. Al cabo de unos días, te encuentras con él/ella y te dice que ya te ha enviado la carta.

^

v

Enviar