



# Filipino students and employees' linguistics strategies in expressing gratitude towards a proposed module

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## Abstract

This study explored the reasons for the utilization of strategies in expressing gratitude among 71 college students and 29 employees of a non-sectarian private higher educational institution in the northern part of the Philippines using a mixed method of research. Descriptive-quantitative research design was used to identify the most commonly used strategy of gratitude expression by the respondents. Phenomenological study was also conducted to describe the reasons of strategies in expressing gratitude using structured interview and Discourse Completion Task (DCT) which included real-life scenarios. The gathered data were transcribed and coded through the classification of categories based on Cheng's model. The findings revealed that the respondents used varied strategies in being grateful for the favor, service or material things offered. Moreover, the respondents exhibited similarities in their reasons for using varied strategies. The key findings of the study provided implications that the proposed teaching modules were seen as relevant in enhancing the students' politeness in relation to expressing gratitude.

**Keywords:** Pragmatics, speech acts, politeness, gratitude, thanking hybrid

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the study

Successful communication in a target language necessitates not only in grammar and knowledge on vocabulary, but also pragmatic competence and awareness of the target language's culture. Understanding and producing speech acts, as well as their appropriateness in a particular setting, are crucial aspects of pragmatic competence. (Cheng, 2005, p. 9). According to Eisentein and Bodman (1986), a speaker's illocutionary act of thankfulness is predicated on the hearer's previous gesture of gratitude. The speaker believes that the previous act is beneficial to him. When the speaker is grateful, he expresses this by making a statement.

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In the following remarks, Kumar (2001) emphasizes the importance of expressing thankfulness: expressions of gratitude in daily conversations between individuals in the community appear to clearly fit within the "social" language use. The usage of expressions of gratitude and civility is a crucial tool for keeping the relationships between members of a society well-established. Studies on strategies in expressing gratitude are a new trend of interlanguage study. Thanking is a common speech act and one of the most important instruments for strengthening the bonds between members of a society (Yusefi, Gowhary, Azizifar & Esmaeili, 2015).

There are a number of studies which utilized Discourse Completion Task (DCT) when dealing with thanking strategies. For instance, Özdemir and Rezvani (2010) utilized a Discourse Completion Task (Cheng, 2005) that contains eight situations in EFL context to investigate the expression of gratitude among Turkish and Iranian graduate candidates. The research focused on the employment of related strategies and the length of speech. The strategies include *thanking, appreciation, positive feelings, apology, recognition of imposition, repayment, attention getter and others*. The study involved 32 Turkish and 32 Persian learners from Eastern Mediterranean University. It further showed that most frequently, the Turkish and Iranian speakers who are proficient in English express gratitude in similar ways but they differ in the length of their speech.

Also, the gratitude strategies used by Iranian EFL and Malaysian ESL learners in their encounters with various scenarios were compared (simple thanking, acknowledging the favor, complimenting the person/action, apologizing, asking God to reward the individual a good wish, and promising compensation). This was participated by 20 Iranian postgraduate university students and 20 Malaysian postgraduate university students with similar levels of linguistic competency. The findings indicated a notable comparison in the expression of gratitude among Iranian and Malaysian students. The data also showed a significant difference in the ways the two non-western cultures communicate (Farashaiyan & Hua, 2012).

Moreover, Zarei and Pishghadam (2012) examined not only the difference between Persian and Chinese EFL but also considered the identification of the patterns used by the said two groups. The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) used was the task developed by Eisenstein and Bodman (1993). The findings showed that Persian and Chinese learners of English differ in expressing gratitude. Another study investigated the compliment patterns including the extent of expression among respondents which may have links to the first or second language among six native Turkish ELT students and six non-native Turkish ELT students. Sucuoğlu, Menemenci and Bahçelerli (2015) a series of six different scenarios demonstrated that non-native English speakers were unable to develop the focused compliment responses because their knowledge in culture influenced their expression. Razi (2013) also used Discourse Completion Task (DCT), a Persian version which involved four situations designed by Tang and Zhang (2009). This concealed the similarities and contrasts between Australian English and Iranian Persian when it comes to expressing thanks. With a total of 56 participants, (26) Persian speakers from Iran and (30) English native speakers from Australia, the result revealed that Persian speakers from Iran used less accept techniques and mostly practiced reject and evade strategies than Australian Persian speakers, according to the findings.

Interestingly, Alemi, Eslami and Rezanejad (2014) used Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT) to identify what causes the variations of teachers' means of assessing their students when responding to compliments. The task is composed of seven situations which needs to be responded by 60 Iranian EFL teachers. Different criteria and some criteria (e.g. the criterion of politeness) were more dominant among the respondents as reflected from the findings. Yasami and Rastegar (2014) found a link between the English proficiency levels of 15 Iranian EFL learners and their thanking strategy preferences Cheng's (2005) taxonomy of gratitude expression (*thanking, appreciation, repayment, recognition of imposition, apology, positive feeling, other expressions like joking, and letter*).

While it is true that there are many studies on thanking or compliment strategies using the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) that enables researchers to access the exact expression of the respondents in expressing gratitude, there is still a dearth in studies that explains why Filipinos deliver gratitude in different ways. According to several studies, the practice of thanking varies by culture (Özdemir and Rezvani, 2010). In congruence to this, encoding and decoding utterances are influenced by culture. This cultural understanding is a must for intercultural dialogue to be successful (Nuredeen, 2008). Cross-cultural differences in compliments have been documented (Mursy & Wilson, 2001; Manes & Wolfson, 1981; Manes, 1983; Holmes 1986, 1995; Herbert, 1989; Conlan, 1996; Lund, 1997; Besson et al., 1998 as cited in Cuesta & Ainciburu, 2015). In another perspective, Coulmas (1981) explains that the differences in expressing gratitude are determined by the respondents' relationship and the properties of the object of gratitude which are inherited, both of which exist due to differences in culture (Coulmas, 1981). Hearing "thank you" in the workplace is usual and when the favor is something special, free snacks or soft drinks in the canteen will make them satisfy in repaying the goodness of others. When thanking among the teachers, others would not necessary mention the name but the position instead, for instance "thank you Sir/Ma'am". It has also been observed that others would use other callings like "girl/bes/bro/tol/anti/uncle/thank you". It is also interesting to hear when others would say, "Salamuch/ agyamanak/salamat ng marami". Among the students and how they deal with the instructors, you would hear them use such callings (girl/bes/bro/tol/anti/uncle) with "thank you" and at times they mention the favor.

Thus, this study examined the reasons and use of strategies in expressing gratitude among students and employees. Specifically, it sought answers to these questions:

1. What are the strategies used by the respondents in expressing gratitude?
2. What are the reasons of the respondents in using those strategies?
3. What teaching modules can be proposed to enhance students' politeness in relation to expressing gratitude?

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research design

This study utilized a mixed method. Descriptive-quantitative research design was used to identify the most commonly used strategy of gratitude expression by the respondents. Moreover, phenomenological study through Discourse Completion Task (DCT) by Cheng

(2005) and structured interview were used. This was deemed necessary because phenomenology research investigates people's experiences. Its goal is to characterize the meaning that each subject receives from their experiences, which are referred to as "lived experiences" (Donalek, 2004).

## 2.2 Participant (subject) characteristics and sampling procedures

The general profile of employees and students in Patria Sable Corpus College, Santiago City in terms of type, gender, age cluster, and ethnicity are shown in the table. The samples were chosen using non-probability sampling, particularly convenience sampling where one of the researchers was working in the institution as an English instructor during the conduct of the study in 2017-2018.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
<b>Type of Respondents</b>	Student	71	71.0
	Dean/Coordinator	5	5.0
	Teacher	14	14.0
	Administrator	3	3.0
	Staff	7	7.0
	Total	100	100.0
<b>Gender</b>	Male	82	82.0
	Female	18	18.0
	Total	100	100.0
<b>Age Cluster</b>	16 – 20	63	63.0
	21-30	27	27.0
	31 and Above	10	10.0
	Total	100	100.0
Youngest – 16; Oldest – 59; Mean Age – 22.2; SD - 8.07827			
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Ilocano	80	80.0
	Igorot	2	2.0
	Ifugao	2	2.0
	Yogad	2	2.0
	Tagalog	10	10.0
	Others	4	4.0
	Total	100	100.0

In terms of respondent type, table 1 shows that 71% are students, 14% are teachers, 7% are staff, 5% are deans/coordinators, and 3% are administrators. In general, this indicates that the respondents from PSCC are dominated by students. According to gender, 82% are males and 18% are females. This discloses that the females were outnumbered by male respondents. About 63% belonged to age bracket 16-20, the age

group 21-30 comprised 27% of the total, and those aged 31 and up accounted for 10% of the total. It's worth noting that the majority of the respondents were young individuals.

In terms of ethnicity, 80% were Ilocano, 10% were Tagalog, Igorot, Ifugao and Yogad, each had 2%, and others, 4% respondents. Generally, this shows that the majority of the respondents in the research locale were Ilocano speakers.

### *2.3 Research instrument*

The study utilized Discourse Completion Task (DCT) designed by Cheng (2005) which was eventually modified. The task includes eight different situations where respondents were asked to write down their real-life reactions to the scenarios. Employees were asked what they would say when a colleague helps them to pick papers and notes; when the dean/coordinator accepts late syllabi; when they are given ink or a board marker; when someone takes over their class while sick; when someone helps them to fix their computer; when they are offered something to eat; when a student helps them to carry materials to the office; and when somebody helps you to stand because they slip.

The students were also asked what they would say when a classmate helps them to pick papers; when an instructor considers an extension for the submission of papers; when an instructor lends a book; when a classmate lends his notes; when someone helps them to fix their computer; when a classmate offers food; when an instructor compliments; and when somebody helps them to stand because they slip.

The last technique is interview to discover the respondents' reasons in the use of strategies in expressing gratitude. There were eight questions asked since it includes eight situations as well. Some of the questions asked were the use of "tol/pre/bro/brad/babes"; the reason of including in the statement "Sir/Ma'am"; the reason of thanking and apology at the same time; the reason of stating the favor when thanking; the reason of saying "God bless".

### *2.4 Data collection procedure*

In gathering the needed data, the following activities were undertaken: a) The researcher prepared the necessary instrument for collecting data and information from the respective respondents of the study. Then, the tools were subjected to content validity by experts; the examining panel members critiqued the tools for finalization; b) After the finalization of the data gathering tools, some parts were pilot-tested to check the reliability of the items per category in the survey. The results of the reliability test provided by a sample of 55 respondents show that per domain and as a whole, the Cronbach Alpha Coefficients exceeded the conventional acceptability level of .700 except the items 25-30 which obtained .363. Nevertheless, in per domain, the reliability ranges from .703 to as high as .912. The data gathering tool therefore has a high reliability, only that one item has to be improved. After determining the reliability co-efficient, the instrument that answers the frequency of use in the expression of gratitude was improved; c) At this stage, the finalized data gathering tool, the one pilot-tested and the discourse completion task were administered to the respondents. The researcher asked

the respondents an hour to finish answering the data in a day. After waiting, it was retrieved immediately; d) Then, the researcher met about 30 respondents and conducted the interview to gather their reasons for the usage of strategies indicated in the DCT; and e) The gathered data were encoded, coded with the help of an inter-coder to validate the researcher's coding and in case of discrepancies; the adviser was the one who identified the strategies. For analysis and interpretation, the data were processed statistically.

### 2.5 Analysis of data

To treat the gathered data, computation of frequency of occurrence and percent was used to describe the respondents' strategies in expressing gratitude. After the verbatim of the respondents from the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and structured interview were transcribed, the researchers used classification of data into categories (Van Kaam, 1969: cited in Priest, 2002) according to the strategies (thanking, appreciation, positive feelings, apology, recognition of imposition, repayment, alerter, others) of Cheng (2005) for the thematic coding to describe the reasons of strategies in expressing gratitude.

## 3. Findings

### 3.1. Strategies used by the respondents in expressing gratitude

The data were obtained from the employees' discourse completion task that attempts to reveal the exact expressions of the respondents when being grateful which results to the different strategies in expressing gratitude formulated by Cheng (2005).

Table 2. Strategies in expressing gratitude used by employees of Patria Sable Corpus College in the different situations

Discourse Completion Task	Strategies	Frequency	Percent
Situation 1: <i>You and your colleague are taking a walk to your class. Unintentionally, you drop your papers and notes, scattering them across a crowded hallway. Your coworker assists you in retrieving your documents and notes. What would you say if your colleague handed you the documents and notes?</i>	Thanking	19	65.5
	Alerter	8	27.6
	Hybrid	2	6.9
	Total	29	100.0
Situation 2: <i>Your dean/coordinator informed you about the schedule of syllabi submission. However, because of your concern in preparing for your lessons in different subjects you will teach a week ahead and perhaps you were given additional office work, you can't seem to meet the set time of submission. You did your best to finish everything but you submitted two days late. Your dean/coordinator hesitates to accept your papers but he/she was pleased with your explanations and accepts them. What will you say before leaving his/her office?</i>	Thanking	10	34.5
	Alerter	13	44.8
	Hybrid	5	17.2
	Total	28	96.6
	No Responses	1	3.4
Situation 3: <i>You are discussing something which your students find very interesting. While you are in the middle of your talk, you run out of ink and did not bring an extra board marker. Since, you do not wish to leave the class to go out and</i>	Thanking	7	24.1
	Apology	1	3.4
	Alerter	14	48.3
	Hybrid	6	20.7
	Permission	1	3.4

<i>ask the other teacher nearest from your room, you just continued to discuss while students are taking note. When you reach your office, you see how every teacher is busy doing something. Then, you ask Mr. Agustin to lend you a board marker or an ink for you to refill yours and he hands you what you just asked. Before you go to your next class, what will you say to him?</i>	Total	29	100.0
Situation 4: <i>You were sick for almost a week. Since, you informed your dean/coordinator about your situation, he/she assigned a teacher to take over your classes or paper works in the office. Then, you got well and decided to be in school. You just learned the teacher who was assigned to be in your classes when you stayed at home for rest, what will you say to him/her?</i>	Thanking	14	48.3
	Apology	1	3.4
	Alerter	4	13.8
	Hybrid	10	34.5
	Total	29	100.0
Situation 5: <i>Your computer keeps crashing, and you're having difficulties fixing it. Even though the two of you are not good friends, you know a person who is an expert on computers, and you ask him/her to help you. The person initially hesitates since he/she is really busy, but eventually decides to help you and spends the entire day repairing your computer. What would you say once the pc is repaired?</i>	Thanking	17	58.6
	Alerter	1	3.4
	Hybrid	11	37.9
	Total	29	100.0
Situation 6: <i>You and your colleague (one of them is Cherry) are working for a paper and she suddenly feels so hungry. She goes to the canteen and buys snacks. She comes back thinking she has to finish the paper. Then, she offers you some food while eating. You are not really hungry because you had a heavy breakfast before you went to school. What would you say to her?</i>	Thanking	9	31.0
	Hybrid	10	34.5
	Imposition	8	27.6
	Total	27	93.1
	No Responses	2	6.9
	Total	29	100.0
Situation 7: <i>You just finished your class just a minute today before the next one. You used many materials, such as laptop, books, photocopies, etc. and you are thinking hard how to carry all those without being late to your next class. A student notices what you need to carry going back to the faculty office, then he/she carries some of your things. When you reach the faculty office where you stay, what will you say to the student before he/she goes back to the room?</i>	Thanking	12	41.4
	Positive	1	3.4
	Feeling		
	Alerter	2	6.9
	Others	3	10.3
	Hybrid	9	31.0
	Total	27	93.1
	No Responses	2	6.9
	Total	29	100.0
Situation 8: <i>You are excited to come to your class today. However, heavy rain suddenly drops and you decide to still come to school even late. Then, you suddenly slip reaching the gate of the school. The guard and a student whom you don't know come rushing to help you stand. What would you say to them before going to your class?</i>	Thanking	20	69.0
	Apology	1	3.4
	Alerter	3	10.3
	Others	1	3.4
	Hybrid	2	6.9
	Total	27	93.1
	No Responses	2	6.9
	Total	29	100.0

In responding to the *situation 1*, almost 70% (65.5%) of the respondents used thanking as a strategy in expressing gratitude. This was followed by alerter (27.6%) and hybrid (6.9%). Most of them actually stated the words, “thank you” and “explicitly stated the favor” by saying: “for helping me pick up my notes and papers.” About 50% of the respondents made use of alerter as a strategy in *situation 2*, which is the most dominant expression of gratitude used by the respondents as compared to thanking (34.5%), and hybrid (17.2%). In *situation 3*, the most dominant strategy in expressing gratitude is alerter (48.3%) followed by thanking (24.1%) and hybrid (20.7). It is interesting to note

that one respondent used apology and another one used permission which is not found in the taxonomy. Almost half of the respondents (48.3%) used thanking as a strategy and the second most dominant strategy was hybrid (34.5%) in *situation 4*. In responding to *situation 5*, the most dominant strategy used by the respondents in expressing gratitude was thanking (58.6%). This was followed by hybrid (37.9%) and the last was alerter (3.4%). The teacher-respondents made use of thanking as the most dominant strategy in situation 5. In *situation 6*, most dominant expression of gratitude is hybrid (34.5%) and thanking (31%) is also used by the respondents. The teacher-respondents apparently also made use of recognition of imposition as a strategy used by about 30% of the respondents. In *situation 7*, the most dominant strategy used by the respondents is thanking which was employed by almost 45% of the respondents. In this situation, it is apparent that diverse ways of expressing gratitude were employed by the teacher-respondents in that many used either thanking or hybrid or combination. But about 10.3% of them used “others” as a strategy. In *situation 8*, almost 70% of the respondents used thanking as a strategy. However, there were other respondents who used alerter (10.3%), hybrid (6.9%), apology and others (3.4%).

Based on the responses of the teacher-respondents, it is clear that they used diverse ways of expressing gratitude in different scenarios or situations. However, the most common ways for showing thankfulness have been identified in thanking, alerting and hybrid or combinations of strategies.

Apart from the teacher-respondents, 71 student-respondents participated in the study.

Table 3. Strategies in expressing gratitude used by students of Patria Sable Corpus College in the different situations

Discourse Completion Task	Strategies	Frequency	Percent
Situation 1: <i>You're walking to class with a classmate you don't know very well. You drop your papers and notes, scattering them all over the place. Your classmate lends a hand in retrieving your papers and notes. What would you respond if your classmate handed you the papers and notes?</i>	Thanking	44	62.0
	Appreciating	1	1.4
	Positive	1	1.4
	Feeling		
	Alerter	14	19.7
	Others	1	1.4
	Hybrid	10	14.1
	Total	71	100.0
Situation 2: <i>You were given a lot of requirements in different subjects you enrolled. You are working hard to finish everything, so you will not be marked 'incomplete' (INC) in your final grade; however, one of your papers has its deadline tomorrow, and you only have few more days to complete it. Then, you try to request an extension from Sir Cabauatan, with whom you are not very friendly. He hesitates at first since it would be not so fair to your classmates, but he suddenly agrees to extend your deadline. What would you say to Sir Cabauatan a few days later, when you submit your request?</i>	Thanking	15	21.1
	Appreciating	1	1.4
	Apology	1	1.4
	Alerter	33	46.5
	Hybrid	20	28.2
	Recognition of imposition	1	1.4
	Total	71	100.0
Situation 3: <i>You were given an assignment by your instructor. As a result, you'll need to borrow a book from</i>	Thanking	10	14.1
	Alerter	37	52.1
	Hybrid	23	32.4



<i>another instructor you're familiar with. Sir Bersola expects you to give back the book the next day. However, you cannot finish your paper without it. So, you ask permission from him to keep the book for a few days longer, and says OK. What would you say to Sir Bersola when you return the book?</i>	Total	70	98.6
	No Responses	1	1.4
	Total	71	100.0
<i>Situation 4: You were unwell last week and missed class. You're feeling better, so you're going to class this day. You ask your friend in the class to lend you the notes you missed, so that you can make duplicates. Then, your pal gave you his/her papers. What would you say if you were to return the notes?</i>	Thanking	25	35.2
	Positive Feeling	1	1.4
	Alerter	15	21.1
	Hybrid	28	39.4
	Total	69	97.2
	No Responses	2	2.8
	Total	71	100.0
<i>Situation 5: Your computer keeps crashing, and you're having difficulties with it. Even though you are not close friends, you know that individual as an expert on computers, and you ask him/her to help you. The person hesitates at first since he is really busy, but eventually decides to assist you and spends the entire afternoon fixing your computer. What would you say when the pc has been repaired?</i>	Thanking	23	32.4
	Alerter	6	8.5
	Hybrid	39	54.9
	Total	68	95.8
	No Responses	3	4.2
Total	71	100.0	
<i>Situation 6: You and your classmates are working for a paper and Cherry suddenly feels so hungry. She goes to the canteen and buys snacks. She comes back thinking she has to help in your group activity. Then, she offers you some food while eating. You are not really hungry because you had a heavy breakfast before you went to school. What would you say to her?</i>	Thanking	13	18.3
	Alerter	4	5.6
	Hybrid	13	18.3
	Recognition of Imposition	36	50.7
	Non Verbal	1	1.4
	Total	67	94.4
No Responses	4	5.6	
Total	71	100.0	
<i>Situation 7: You are feeling sad because your mother scolded you early this morning. So, you come to school an hour or two before your first class. While walking to the library, your former instructor who just came out of her class noticed how well-dressed you are. You remember your mother who bought you that dress you are wearing and suddenly, you become happy. What would you say to Ma'am Mitra before she passes you by?</i>	Thanking	18	25.4
	Alerter	13	18.3
	Others	1	1.4
	Hybrid	32	45.1
	Imposition	2	2.8
	Non Verbal	1	1.4
	Total	67	94.4
	No Responses	4	5.6
Total	71	100.0	
<i>Situation 8: You are excited to come to your class today. However, heavy rain suddenly drops and you decide to still come to school even late. Then, you suddenly slip reaching the gate of the school. The guard and a student whom you don't know come rushing to help you stand. What would you say to them before going to your class?</i>	Thanking	45	63.4
	Positive Feeling	1	1.4
	Alerter	9	12.7
	Hybrid	15	21.1
	Total	70	98.6
	No Responses	1	1.4
	Total	71	100.0

As a response to the *first situation*, more than 60% of the respondents dominantly used thanking as a strategy. The second was alerter (19.7%) followed by hybrid (14.1%). It can be noted that appreciating, positive feeling and others were also used by one respondent respectively. In *situation 2*, 46.5% of the respondents used alerter as a strategy, followed by hybrid with 28.2% and thanking with 21.1%. It can be observed that only one

respondent used appreciation, apology as well as recognizing imposition. Like in the second situation, the most prevalent strategy used by the respondents in *situation 3* is alerter. A little more than half of the respondents used alerter as a strategy. The most commonly used strategy in expressing gratitude in relation to *situation 4* was hybrid (39.4%). In *situation 5*, about 55% of the respondents used of hybrid as a dominant expression of gratitude, followed by thanking with 32.4% and “alerter” with 8.5%. In *situation 6*, a little more than half of the respondents (50.7%) used recognition of imposition as a dominant expression of gratitude, followed by thanking and hybrid, each with 38.3% and alerter with 5.6% of the respondents who used the strategy. In *situation 7*, 45.1% used hybrid and it can be noticed that thanking in the samples is accompanied by positive feeling directed to the hearer. It seems to signify that the respondents wanted to transfer the compliment to the hearer as well as a manifestation of a compliment response. In addition, the use of positive feeling often provides a balance between the compliment received by the hearer and the compliment response directed to the previous speaker. In *situation 8*, 63.4% used thanking as a dominant expression of gratitude, followed by hybrid with 21.1%, alerter with 12.7% and the least was positive feeling.

It is important to note that based on the responses of the student-respondents, they used diverse ways of expressing gratitude in different scenarios or situations. Similar to the strategies used by the employee-respondents, the most dominant strategies used in expressing gratitude are thanking, alerting and hybrid or combinations of strategies. It has also been observed that in the student-respondents, the recognition of imposition is also found in their expressions in the given situation. It's also worth noting that the respondents utilized a combination of thanking tactics, including declaring the favor, mentioning the imposition produced by the favor, apologizing, gaining attention, asking for permission, and others.

### 3.2 Reasons of the students and employees of Patria Sable Corpus College in using the strategies

Based on the qualitative data in *situation 1*, the respondents used thanking strategy because of the effort and good heart of the person who minded to help. Alerter was used to respect someone and to indicate that even when they were not so close, they were used to calling someone like *pre, tol* etc. Repaying someone, telling how thankful they were in the situation and the practice of certain expressions were all combined to express gratitude and is categorized as hybrid strategy.

The responses from *situation 2* indicate that the respondents used alerter because they were being careful not to insult the one in authority who should be given respect. In other words, the term *Sir* was used to signify respect to the teacher. Thanking was used in the situation because of the chance given to them, hoping that the person who did favor towards them will do the same thing next time. They also considered that it would be unjust not to express gratitude to someone who had done them a favor. In addition, hybrid appeared in their expressions because they felt the necessity to apologize and to respond positively since they were given a chance.

The verbatim responses of the respondents in *situation 3* show that the main reason in the use of alerter is because of showing respect to authority and seeking for an attention. The respondents also used hybrid believing it to be appropriate in the situation because they needed to thank, get the attention and apologize to the person they were indebted with. Thanking was also used because they wanted to make the person feel that he became a great help and because they hoped to give the same favor to him.

Based on the given reasons in *situation 4*, the respondents used hybrid not only just to say how thankful the respondents were but also to show how eager they were to return the favor to the person. Aside from these, they felt the necessity to repay the effort through free snacks because they expressed that others were really asking for something in return and that nothing in this world is free. It is also because they had the tendency to engage themselves to someone who has a good heart. According to some, they used to call others “*bro/pre*”. Thanking, in particular, was also used because of the great feeling someone has caused them. In addition, alerter was practiced in the situation because the respondents believed that those terms are what the Filipinos use to call others.

The use of words to get someone’s attention, the need to repay the favor, the need to apologize which are found in the expressions of the respondents were the reasons in the use of hybrid strategy in *situation 5*. Thanking was also used because of the time and favor given to them. Alerter was also found in their expressions because they shared that they are comfortable in using the words they usually call others in their group.

The respondents explained that their reason in recognizing the imposition in *situation 6* is that they never wish to miss the opportunity to appreciate the act of the person in doing something good unto them. Thanking was also used in the situation because they did not want to embarrass someone from not accepting what was offered to them and because that person demonstrated concern as well. The acts of thanking and explaining the reason why they cannot accept the offer made the strategy. The respondents also indicated that the reason why they used alerter was that they were really used to call others with those terms and because they were also friendly.

Hybrid is once again used in *situation 7* because aside from the respect the respondents wanted to show, they also believed that they might cause pain or embarrassment to the person without saying “thank you”. Aside from expressing how thankful they were, they also responded positively to the person. Thanking was also practiced because they realized how the person changed their perspective that day. In addition, alerter was also present in their expressions because they believed that using titles was a sign of respect to the person and it also indicate positive outlook in life.

The respondents expressed that they it would be embarrassing to embrace the persons who gave them favor most especially when they are not close to the person so saying “thank you” is enough for them. Another reason is because of the other person’s initiative to help. Hybrid was also used in *situation 8* because they believed that they needed to respect the ones who ran to help and that there could be only a few persons with initiative to help. In addition, alerter was seen in their expressions because they stated that titles are a sign of respect to people unknown to them.

### 3.3 Proposed teaching modules to enhance politeness among students in relation to expression of gratitude

The designed teaching modules are sequenced in five which are the following: *On politeness in relation to intercultural communication*; *On speech acts*; *Gratitude as a speech acts*; *Strategies in expressing gratitude*; and *Expressing gratitude in different contexts*. Each module includes important parts which are titled as *Objectives*; *Let's Warm Up*; *Let's Work and Learn*; *Key Concepts and Ideas*; *Let's Practice*; and *Let's Reflect*. The activities in the modules have rubrics to assess the learning and change in the behavior of the students.

The first module is *On Politeness in relation to Intercultural Communication* has its objectives to a) display different scenes in group and role play the scenes with a twist as examples of drills on politeness; b) define politeness, its scales, and characteristics of a competent intercultural communicator pertaining to the understanding of politeness in relation to intercultural communication; c) perform specific tasks of recalling details, responding to conversations, and writing an essay; and d) reflect on learning. The activities in this module are the *Tableau in Action*; *Act it Out*; *Recap Time*, *Imagine Me*, *Right First*; and *Reflection*.

*On Speech Acts* is the second module which aims to a) describe and guess tourist destination, discern meaning of different utterances as examples of drills about speech acts; b) distinguish three types and classifications of speech acts; c) perform specific tasks of writing a creative skit and an essay; and d) reflect on your learning. The tasks are *Tour Primer*, *Look Behind*, *Fill Me In*, *Skit Act*, *Hidden Message*, and *Reflection*.

The third module which is on *Gratitude as Speech Act* will enable students to a) share stories in pair, illustrate a situation or an experience as a drill pertaining to gratitude as a speech act; b) define gratitude as a speech act; c) perform specific tasks of acting out an advertisement, creating a four-stanza poem; and d) reflect on your learning. *The Untold Stories*, *Draw Me a Picture*, *Listen and Recall*, *Watch Me*, *Great Seed in Poem*, and *Reflection* are the activities which students have to do in this module.

*Strategies in Expressing Gratitude* is the fourth module. The students are expected to a) share experiences and reasons of certain emotions, write a dialogue and dramatize as examples of drills in understanding the strategies in expressing gratitude; b) differentiate the strategies in expressing gratitude and identify strategies from dialogue and Filipino expressions; and c) reflect on your learning. The tasks which students have to accomplish are *Probing Feelings*, *Camera Roll at Mine & other's Shoes*, *Flashbacking*, *I Feel You*, *While on my Shoes*, *Exchange Time*, and *Reflection*.

The last module focuses on *Expressing Gratitude in Different Context*. This aims to a) determine values and experiences, list moments of expressing gratitude, as examples of drills pertaining to gratitude in different contexts; b) identify the significance of expressing gratitude; c) perform specific tasks of writing an essay, practice gratitude in conversations; and d) reflect on your learning. The activities in this module are *Thinking Deep*, *Think, Pair and Share*, *Just Feel Me*, *Happy Pick*, and *Reflection*.

#### 4. Discussion

The teacher-respondents used diverse ways of expressing gratitude in different scenarios or situations. But the most dominant strategies used in expressing gratitude are thanking, alerting and hybrid or combinations of strategies. Similarly, the student-respondents also used diverse ways of expressing gratitude in different scenarios or situations. Similar to the strategies used by the teacher-respondents, the most dominant strategies used in expressing gratitude are thanking, alerting and hybrid or combinations of strategies. It has also been observed that in the student-respondents, the recognition of imposition was also found in their expressions in the given situations. A study revealed that gratitude reinforces behavior as it acts as a barometer of morality, allowing people to acknowledge people's act of morality; it acts as a motivator, instilling to people how to be prosocial; and it encourages acts of generosity in the future McCullough et al. (2001).

It is also interesting that the respondents combined thanking strategy by describing the favor and mentioning the imposition that the favor has created with apologizing, getting attention, seeking for a permission, etc. which is called the hybrid strategy. Mathews & Green (2010), on the other hand, pointed out that those who are more self-centered are more likely to feel indebted and less grateful.

There are similarities in terms of the respondents' reasons in the use of thanking; that they are thankful when receiving offer, favor, effort and time from someone who has a good heart. People are substantially more thankful when they sense good intentions than when people have other motivations (Tsang, 2006). Using thanking is also because they want to make the person feel how good he has been and how blessing he was in situations they don't expect to be needing something. According to a study, when someone was unexpectedly generous, respondents felt (and expressed) more gratitude (Smith, Pedersen, Forster, McCullough, & Lieberman, 2017). Other reason for thanking is that it is considered magic words taught at home. This is in line with a previous study by Hussong and colleagues, which suggests one method for parents to teach thankfulness to their children. It's possible that there is a higher tendency that children practice gratitude with thankful parents (Rothenberg et al., 2017). Only a few researches, however, have considered the impact of parents to their children when it comes to expressing gratitude (Allen, 2018).

Moreover, the respondents used alerter for these reasons: They feel at ease with the person; They respect authority; They do not wish to insult someone; that they are used to calling others with *brad, tol, pre, bes*. While they also shared that the reasons in the use of recognition of imposition is because they want to be understood for not accepting the favor; and that they don't want to embarrass someone who has a good heart. Other research has tried to investigate the relationship between thankfulness and positive emotions, such as elevation, which is the feeling one gets while witnessing moral acts (Haidt, 2000 & Fredrickson, 2004).

Interestingly, the discourse completion task revealed that hybrid as a strategy in expressing gratitude also exists. It is for the reasons that they feel saying thank you is

insufficient to express gratitude more so that the time of the person is compromised. Indeed, gratefulness recognizes and acknowledges a benefit received for the efforts, sacrifices, and deeds (Adler & Fagley, 2005).

Furthermore, the reason for the use of hybrid is because they feel the need to repay the favor from someone aside from thanking. The intention to repay generosity through the expression of gratitude has been part of the studies of many scientists. In fact, some of them believe that it originated as a means to foster reciprocity of altruism where friendship and alliances begin, having the initiative to assist one another (Allen, 2018). The respondents also respond positively to someone's words which made them happy; and that they want to assure to be responsible for something. According to Wood, Maltby, Stewart, Linley, and Joseph (2008), a grateful personality is more likely to be thankful in a given situation than a less grateful personality. On the part of the recipient of appreciation, a study has shown that this can lead to prosocial behavior. Increased sense of social worth can explain the influence of gratitude expression on prosocial behavior (Grant & Gino, 2010).

The proposed teaching modules in this research focused on the enhancement of politeness among students in expressing gratitude. It is in consideration that it is insufficient to increase the linguistic competence of learners. However, it is beneficial to develop their sociocultural competence, which will improve their grasp of the target culture's frames of interaction and etiquette conventions. It is on this ground and reason that this output was crafted for the intercultural competence of the students.

## **5. Conclusions and recommendations**

Generally, to express gratitude to other people, the respondents use varied strategies to let others know that they are grateful of the favor, services or material things given to them. The respondents exhibit similarities in their reasons of using varied strategies in expressing gratitude. Lastly, the proposed teaching modules are seen as relevant in enhancing the students' politeness in relation to expressing gratitude; however, these are not the only ways of enhancing politeness among students particularly in the use of different strategies in expressing gratitude. Based on the primary findings and established conclusions, the following recommendations are advanced: it might be good to consider more respondents to participate in future studies, since the study is limited only to 100 respondents, especially that only 30 respondents were interviewed; future researches may use more data collection instruments and more reliable statistical treatment; it might also be interesting to explore possible relationship of the respondents' expression of gratitude in second language learning; it might be interesting also to include sub-strategies in expressing gratitude; and it is also recommended that students be exposed to actual target language in the classrooms when teaching politeness, as well as learners being introduced to socio-cultural variations between languages.

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