

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG



KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP

NGÀNH : NGÔN NGỮ ANH – NHẬT

Sinh viên : LÊ MINH TIẾN

Giảng viên hướng dẫn: TH.S BÙI THỊ MAI ANH

HẢI PHÒNG – 2024

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TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG**

**A JAPANESE - AMERICAN CROSS CULTURAL
STUDY ON EXPRESSING GRATITUDE**

**KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP ĐẠI HỌC HỆ CHÍNH QUY
NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH - NHẬT**

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1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

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2. Các tài liệu, số liệu cần thiết

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3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp

Trung tâm Anh ngữ MyEnglish

CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

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Học hàm, học vị : Thạc sĩ

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Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc

PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN HƯỚNG DẪN TỐT NGHIỆP

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Nội dung hướng dẫn: A Japanese - American Cross Cultural Study on Expressing Gratitude

1. Tinh thần thái độ của sinh viên trong quá trình làm đề tài tốt nghiệp

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2. Đánh giá chất lượng của đề án/khóa luận (so với nội dung yêu cầu đã đề ra trong nhiệm vụ Đ.T. T.N trên các mặt lý luận, thực tiễn, tính toán số liệu...)

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3. Ý kiến của giảng viên hướng dẫn tốt nghiệp

Được bảo vệ Không được bảo vệ Điểm hướng dẫn

Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm

Giảng viên hướng dẫn

(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)

CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM

Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc

PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIÁO VIÊN CHẤM PHẢN BIỆN

Họ và tên giảng viên:

Đơn vị công tác:

Họ và tên sinh viên: *Lê Minh Tiến* Chuyên ngành: Ngôn ngữ Anh Nhật

Đề tài tốt nghiệp: A Japanese - American Cross Cultural Study on Expressing Gratitude.

1. Phần nhận xét của giáo viên chấm phản biện

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2. Những mặt còn hạn chế

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3. Ý kiến của giảng viên chấm phản biện

Được bảo vệ Không được bảo vệ Điểm hướng dẫn

Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm

Giảng viên hướng dẫn

(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)

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Hai Phong, January, 2024
Student

Lê Minh Tiến

ABSTRACT

The current research constitutes an exploratory cross-cultural investigation into the pragmatic evolution of gratitude expressions across varied situations. As a speech act, the expression of gratitude encompasses diverse functions and meanings that exhibit variations across societies. Societal norms, values, contextual appropriateness, and considerations of when, how, why, and to whom gratitude is expressed contribute to the distinct ways in which each society employs these expressions. Cultural disparities between Japan and America in the articulation of gratitude become apparent, reflecting nuances influenced by the specific situations encountered within each respective culture.

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

The reasons for conducting the “A Japanese - American Cross Cultural Study on Expressing Gratitude” are grounded in the awareness of the significant influence that cultural subtleties wield over expressions of gratitude. Gratitude, as a universal emotion, takes on unique forms and expressions in different cultural settings. Recognizing the variations in how Japanese and American cultures convey gratitude is essential for fostering cross-cultural understanding and effective communication.

The study acknowledges that expressions of gratitude are intricately tied to cultural norms, societal expectations, and interpersonal dynamics. Given the distinct cultural backgrounds of Japan and America, it is anticipated that individuals from these cultures will exhibit diverse patterns in expressing gratitude. Investigating these cultural nuances not only enhances our understanding of cross-cultural communication but also offers practical insights for individuals navigating diverse cultural environments.

Moreover, the study acknowledges the potential impact of cultural perspectives on gratitude in shaping interpersonal relationships, contributing to a broader discourse on cultural competence. By exploring the cross-cultural dimensions of expressing gratitude, the research aims to bridge gaps in understanding, promote cultural sensitivity, and improve communication effectiveness between Japanese and American communities.

In summary, the rationale behind this study is rooted in the belief that unraveling the cultural intricacies of expressing gratitude will not only advance scholarly knowledge but also foster a more harmonious and empathetic global community.

2. The aim of the study

Gratitude in many situations is expressed by people in many different ways and will be expressed more clearly the way they do in Japan and America. It is of interest to study the cultural differences in expressing thanks between Japanese and Americans. This study focuses on the perceptions and interpretations of both indigenous people, especially the younger generation, on how they express gratitude in different thank you situations. Young people have mature abilities in communication, reading, and writing, so we chose university students as the appropriate subjects for this study. In young people, those aspects of language become more complex with age (Owens Jr., 2008). Since this research mainly aims to observe the expressions used by the younger generation of two different cultures in conveying gratitude, this thesis specifically focuses on the expressions of gratitude. Used by university students. This will be representative of younger generations in both Asian cultures and the Western world in different types of gratitude situations and why they use the words they do.

To achieve the purpose of this study, the following questions must be answered to guide the research:

- How do individuals from both cultural groups express gratitude in various situations, uncovering shared patterns and distinctions in communication?
- Is there any evidence of gender in the Japanese and American cultures of gratitude?

3. The scope of the study

The report covers the scope of the project:

Time: We conducted this survey from October 2023 to December 2023

Space: Data were collected through a discourse completion task (DCT) questionnaire designed based on Coulmas's (1981) classification of acknowledgments.

Participants: The subjects are Japanese and American university students traveling and studying in Vietnam. Through direct and online surveys posted online, we received 26 respondents, in which 10 Japanese speakers and 16 American English speakers participated. Descriptive and test analyzes were conducted to identify differences in gratitude expressions that distinguish the behavior of Japanese and English speakers toward different gratitude situations.

4. The method of the study

With the purpose of clarifying how Japanese and Americans express gratitude, to complete the research, the following methods were implemented :

- Consult the opinions and views of the above subject lecturers at Hai Phong University of Management and Technology.
- Research information on reference websites.
- Conduct a survey of American and Japanese students in Vietnam to collect data through:
 - **Questionnaire:** make a list of questions along with open questions including information needed for the report.
 - **Survey and interview:** Approach the subject to be surveyed through many sources and then interview using the available list of questions.

From the collected data, statistics are compiled. The data analysis method used is drawing a pie chart.

5. Design of the study

The report is divided into three main chapters:

The first part is Introduction, which covers the rationale, aim, scope, methodology, and design of the study.

The second part is the Development, consisting of two chapters:

Chapter 1: Theoretical Background. This chapter focuses on presenting the Gratitude Culture in Japan and America. The objective is to understand how both nations express gratitude in various situations.

Chapter 2: Data Analysis and Results. This chapter presents the outcomes of the data study. Firstly, it analyzes expressions of “*Thank you*,” followed by examining gender differences in how the Japanese and Americans express gratitude. Detailed results and noteworthy findings from the research are also discussed.

Finally, **Part III, titled Conclusion**, presents discussions and concluding remarks based on the data analysis and results from Chapter 2.

PART II: DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Brief Overview on the Culture of Thanking in Japan and America

1.1. Brief Overview of Culture of Thanking in Japan

Japan, recognized as a modern and advanced nation, is celebrated for its commitment to preserving its cultural heritage, including the profound significance of gratitude within its customs. The Japanese exhibit a deep sense of respect by consistently expressing gratitude towards others. Notably, in the current globalized era, spanning from children to the elderly, Japanese individuals have cultivated a natural inclination to articulate gratitude, irrespective of the scale of the favor received.

The cultural emphasis on gratitude is instilled in Japanese youth from an early age, with parents and teachers actively fostering an awareness of gratitude. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's 1998 curriculum guidelines, targeted at defining fundamental education standards in Japan, underlines the importance of gratitude in moral education for fifth and sixth graders. It advocates an ethos of thankfulness for the daily reliance on the support and assistance provided by others (Naito et al., 2005, p. 247).

Manners and customs play integral roles in the daily lives of the Japanese people. The act of bowing, a distinctive Japanese custom, is pervasive, occurring during greetings, farewells, expressions of gratitude, and apologies. This gesture symbolizes respect, remorse, and a form of greeting. Beyond its use in greetings, bowing serves as a common expression of gratitude or apology. In verbalizing their gratitude, the Japanese frequently employ the term "*Arigatou*." Additionally, "*Sumimasen*," though literally meaning sorry, is employed for expressing gratitude. Naito et al. (2005) emphasize that the Japanese often use "*Sumimasen*" as an

expression of gratitude, acknowledging a sense of indebtedness associated with receiving a favor in Japanese society (p. 249). In essence, “*Sumimasen*” encapsulates both positive emotions and feelings of indebtedness within the Japanese concept of gratitude. Previous research in Japanese pragmatic fields, particularly in the 80s and 90s, delves into the multifaceted functions of “*Sumimasen*.” Ide (1998) argues that one such function is to convey mixed feelings of regret and thankfulness. This aligns with prior studies suggesting that, in cultures where a gratitude statement like “*thank you*” is anticipated, apologies may be employed in lieu of or in conjunction with expressions of gratitude (Coulmas, 1981; Ide, 1998; Kumatoridani, 1999).

In informal conversations, the Japanese employ the term “*Doumo*” as an intensifier, analogous to the English term “*much*.” While “*Doumo*” is commonly used as a greeting, signifying “*very much*,” it also serves as an expression of gratitude. It is noteworthy that, despite assertions by Long (2010) that “*Doumo*” does not explicitly convey gratitude or apology, its prevalent usage in Japanese discourse contradicts this claim.

1.2. Brief Overview of Culture of Thanking in America

Americans are globally recognized for their ubiquitous use of expressions of gratitude, particularly the ubiquitous “*thank you*.” While some instances of these expressions undoubtedly convey genuine sentiment, a substantial number are ingrained in routine and lack profound emotional resonance. The frequency with which Americans employ expressions of gratitude may seem paradoxical given that, in several other global cultures, such verbal acknowledgments are comparatively rare.

In the realm of American English, expressions of gratitude often take on a transactional nature, intertwining with language conveying personal indebtedness. Phrases such as “*I owe you a debt of gratitude*,” “*Thanks, I owe you one*,” “*One*

good turn deserves another,” and “*How can I ever repay you?*” exemplify this transactional approach. This conceptualization of gratitude as a transaction has the potential to foster mutually beneficial relationships. However, it also runs the risk of viewing personal and impersonal interactions through an economic lens, where relationships are assessed based on market criteria of gain and loss.

The American linguistic landscape of gratitude mirrors the tendency for individuals to perceive relationships as interpersonal transactions. If relationships are entered into solely on the premise of personal and potentially material benefits, it introduces a potentially limiting perspective. This lens of transactionality in expressing gratitude reflects a broader cultural inclination.

The American demographic mosaic encompasses numerous religious groups and their respective subgroups, as well as hundreds of ethnic groups, each with its unique languages. Despite this rich linguistic diversity, American English serves as the official language, acting as a unifying force across communities with distinct cultural backgrounds and languages. In the American context, common expressions of gratitude predominantly revolve around “*thank you*” or the informal “*thanks.*” Unlike Japanese expressions, there is no equivalent to expressions with dual functions, such as “*Sumimasen.*”

In summary, the American cultural and linguistic landscape shapes expressions of gratitude, weaving them into a transactional fabric. This inclination reflects not only linguistic patterns but also cultural perspectives on interpersonal relationships and the perceived value of gratitude in various contexts.

1.3. Cross-Cultural Analysis of Gratitude Expressions in Japan and the United States

The profound influence of cultural dynamics on the expression of gratitude becomes evident when comparing Japanese and American societies. In Japanese

culture, individuals employ a diverse array of expressions to convey thanks across various contexts, including instances requiring expressions of gratitude, such as “*Arigatou*,” “*Sumimasen*,” and “*Doumo*.” Notably, “*Arigatou*” stands out as the general and least marked expression of gratitude (Ide, 1998). Moreover, the interchangeability of gratitude and apology expressions is observable, exemplified by the use of “*Sumimasen*” when thanks are expected in specific situations (Kumatoridani, 1999). Additionally, “*Doumo*” serves as a formality marker in situations of thanks that do not necessitate explicit expressions like “*Arigatou*.”

In contrast, the American expression of gratitude is characterized by a more streamlined approach, predominantly relying on a limited repertoire of expressions, namely “*thank you*” or the informal “*thanks*.” Unlike the nuanced Japanese expressions, there is an absence of gratitude expressions for apologetic situations, as seen in “*Sumimasen*.” Americans opt for expressions such as “*sorry*” or “*my apologies*” in analogous situations. The prevalence of “*thank you*” as the sole commonly used expression across various gratitude situations underscores a discernible cultural distinction.

The divergence in cultural practices between Japan and the United States is conspicuous and aligns with the premise that distinct languages shape individuals’ perceptions within their physical and social environments, consequently influencing their behavioral patterns (Mulyana, 2012). The present study endeavors to explore how Japanese and Americans articulate their feelings of gratitude within specific contexts outlined by Coulmas’ taxonomy of thanks (1981). This taxonomy delineates various situations where individuals may experience gratitude, prompting them to express it. The choice of gratitude expressions is contingent upon individuals’ perceptions of these situations as conducive to expressing gratitude, a perception that varies among individuals. The cultural variance in the

utilization of expressions of thanks reflects how distinct cultures interpret and respond to situations that elicit expressions of gratitude.

2. Speech Acts of Thanking

2.1. Speech Acts of Thanking

Speech acts, conceptualized allow individuals to convey thoughts or messages through language. Austin emphasized that a statement, formed by words, not only describes a situation or provides information but also performs a specific action. According to Searle (1969), speech acts constitute the fundamental unit of language used to express meaning or an utterance that conveys intention. These acts, the actions performed through speech, have the potential to influence the existing state of affairs or produce an effect on the interlocutor (Cheng, 2005). For example, when expressing gratitude by saying thank you, an individual is not merely stating something but is also engaging in the act of thanking.

Searle's detailed classification outlines five types of speech acts (pp.12-20):

- **Representatives (or assertives):** Commit the speaker to the truth of something (e.g., asserting, claiming, reporting).
- **Directives:** Attempts to prompt the hearer to perform an action (e.g., ordering, commanding, requesting, begging).
- **Commissives:** Commit the speaker to a future action (e.g., promising, offering, threatening).
- **Expressives:** Convey a psychological state (e.g., thanking, apologizing, complimenting).
- **Declarations:** Establish the correspondence between propositional content and reality (e.g., appointing a chairman, nominating a candidate, marrying a person, christening).

Drawing on Searle's classification, this study explores native speakers' behavior concerning one specific expressive speech act, namely thanking. Searle categorizes thanking as an expressive illocutionary act, reflecting a psychological state. Psychological components conveyed during expressions of gratitude include warm appreciation, a sense of goodwill toward the benefactor, and a resulting disposition to act positively due to appreciation and goodwill (Fitzgerald, 1998). The act of thanking acknowledges the hearer's involvement in a prior beneficial action.

Choosing thanking as a routinized speech act is predicated on its significance in daily routine conversations within society. Recognizing the social value of expressing thanks, Leech (1983) examines thanking from a social perspective, defining it as a friendly function. The primary goal of expressing appreciation is to establish and maintain a polite and friendly social atmosphere. Furthermore, Leech characterizes thanking as an expressive act that reveals the speaker's psychological attitude.

Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) describe thanking as an illocutionary act within Searle's classification of speech acts. Their study suggests that an expression of gratitude is an illocutionary act performed by a speaker based on a past act by the hearer that benefited the speaker. Not all expressions using the term "*thank you*" necessarily denote gratitude (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1993). Rubin's (1983) ethnographic study on the use of the words "*thank you*" reveals that it can serve various language functions, such as closing a conversation or rejecting an offer.

The practice of thanking exhibits cultural variations (Cheng, 2005). In most English-speaking cultures, thanks can be given regardless of whether an offer or promise is accepted or rejected, serving as an acknowledgment (Hymes, 1971, cited in Cheng, 2005). Additionally, Hinkel notes that in British English, giving thanks differs from American English, with "*thank you*" often functioning as a discourse

marker or conversation sequencer rather than a direct expression of gratitude. According to Coulmas (1981), “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. Differences in this respect are obviously subject to cultural variation” (p.75). In other words, the quality of social relationships among specific individuals plays a pivotal role in defining particular situations.

2.2. Coulmas’ Frameworks of Expressing Gratitude and Previous Studies

Coulmas’ conceptual framework serves as the cornerstone for this investigation into expressions of gratitude. As the trailblazer in researching gratitude expressions, Coulmas (1981) posits that thanking represents a routinized speech act intrinsically tied to standardized communication situations and social norms within specific communities. Coulmas asserts that sincere expressions of gratitude are intricately linked to actions undertaken by a benefactor or the outcomes thereof, referred to as “the object of gratitude” (p. 74). This object is characterized by properties such as real vs. potential, material vs. immaterial, requested vs. not requested, and indebting vs. not indebting, forming Coulmas’ taxonomy of thanks:

- **Real vs. Potential**
 - Thanks ex ante (for a promise, offer, invitation)
 - Thanks ex post (for a favor, invitation afterward)
- **Material vs. Immaterial**
 - Thanks for material goods (gifts, services)
 - Thanks for immaterial goods (wishes, compliments, congratulations, information)
- **Requested vs. Not Requested**
 - Thanks for some action initiated by the benefactor

- Thanks for some action resulting from a request/wish/order by the beneficiary.

➤ **Indebting vs. Not Indebting**

- Thanks that imply indebtedness
- Thanks that do not imply indebtedness (p. 74)

Coulmas emphasizes that this taxonomy is not exhaustive, suggesting the potential inclusion of other criteria, such as the weightiness of a situation. Additionally, the criteria in the taxonomy are not mutually exclusive. He underscores that the nature of the object of gratitude alone does not determine the choice of a gratitude expression; the quality of interpersonal relations is equally crucial (p. 75).

Coulmas also draws attention to apologetic thanks, where expressions of thanks and apologies converge in certain situations, a phenomenon observed notably in Japanese culture. The connection between thanks and apologies hinges on the concept of indebtedness. While thanks convey the speaker's indebtedness as a beneficiary, apologies express indebtedness to the interlocutor for their actions. This linkage is evident in the Japanese expression "*Sumimasen*," which serves dual roles in thanking and apologizing (Coulmas, 1981; Ide, 1998; Kimura, 1994; Kumatoridani, 1999).

Ide (1998) notes that in Japanese culture, the "*metapragmatic*" function of apology expressions, such as "*Sumimasen*," is to mark "public discourse." In essence, apology–gratitude can be seen as a ritualized formula signaling engagement in proper public discourse. This observation extends to Chinese culture, where expressing embarrassment for causing extra effort or taking up someone's time serves as an indicator of gratitude (Cheng, 2005).

Jautz (2013) identifies a limited number of studies comparing expressions of gratitude in one language with those in different languages, particularly assessing non-native speakers against native speakers. Most research on the speech act of thanking has concentrated on linguistic aspects rather than perceptions and interpretations by both native and non-native speakers (Pablos-Ortega, 2010).

While many studies have explored gratitude expressions among non-native speakers or second language learners, limited attention has been given to native speakers of a language. Existing research on cultural differences in attitudes toward giving thanks has predominantly focused on non-native speakers of American English, revealing variations in the perception of the appropriateness of certain expressions of thanks among speakers of different languages (Hinkel, 1994). Cheng (2005) highlights the positive impact of the length of residence in the United States on the pragmatic development of non-native speakers (L1 Chinese) in expressing gratitude.

In contrast, few studies have delved into the gratitude expressions of native speakers (L1) of a specific language. Johansen (2008) investigates how native speakers of Norwegian and learners of American English express gratitude, with Norwegian participants relying heavily on their L1 pragmatic competence. Farnia examines how Iranian English learners express gratitude, emphasizing the influence of Farsi, their first language. Bodman and Eisenstein (1988) assert that expressing thanks poses a challenge not only for non-native speakers but also for native speakers, emphasizing the need for comprehensive research on the use of thanking expressions among native speakers.

Coulmas' comprehensive framework on the speech act of thanking forms the foundational basis for this study. His taxonomy of thanks, encompassing various dimensions, serves as a primary guide for understanding how individuals in two distinct cultures, Japanese and American, perceive and respond to situations

evoking feelings of gratitude. The study aims to explore the nuanced expressions of gratitude statements in response to specific situations, classifying them according to Coulmas' taxonomy. By focusing on the perceptions of native speakers (L1) in Japanese and American cultures, the research aims to enrich the understanding of L1 perception and interpretation of gratitude expressions across cultures.

While there has been extensive research on Japanese gratitude expressions, literature on American gratitude expressions, especially among native speakers (L1), remains scarce. Existing studies on American gratitude culture, such as highlight the influence of factors beyond ethnicity, including language exposure and attitudes toward cultures, on gratitude expression. The present study seeks to address this gap by conducting a cross-cultural investigation into the gratitude acts of L1 speakers of Japanese and American English.

In summary, this study builds upon Coulmas' frameworks to delve into the nuanced dimensions of expressing gratitude, bridging the research gap by focusing on L1 speakers' perceptions and interpretations across two diverse cultures, Japanese and American. The goal is to contribute to the comprehensive understanding of gratitude expressions, emphasizing the importance of considering native speakers in the field of the speech act of thanking.

2.3. Utilizing the Discourse Completion Task

The selection of the research instrument plays a pivotal role in determining the reliability and accuracy of data that reflects authentic language-related behaviors (Rasekh, 2012). The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) stands out as a widely employed instrument in cross-cultural pragmatics studies, specifically within the realm of speech acts (Beebe & Cummings, 1996; Kasper, 2000). DCT's prevalence in speech act studies is attributed to its capacity to facilitate rapid data collection (Rasekh, 2012) and the ability to control situational variables, such as social status, age, gender, and language proficiency (Kasper, 2000). Beebe and Cummings

(1996) emphasized that DCTs are a “*highly effective means of instrumentation*” (p. 80), enabling researchers to achieve several objectives, including (a) swiftly gathering large amounts of data, (b) forming an initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies found in natural speech, (c) exploring stereotypical, perceived requirements for socially appropriate responses, (d) gaining insight into social and psychological factors influencing speech act performance, (e) understanding the canonical shape of speech acts in the minds of language speakers, and (f) manipulating situational control variables influencing speech behavior. DCT provides participants the freedom to respond openly, allowing them to express what they would say in specific situations without being prompted to produce a predetermined speech act (Johansen, 2008).

Despite its common usage and advantages, the use of DCTs in collecting speech act data has faced criticism. Beebe and Cummings (1996) noted potential discrepancies, such as (a) differences from the actual wording used in real interaction, (b) variations in the range of strategies employed (e.g., avoidance strategies being omitted), (c) differences in response length or the number of turns required to fulfill a function, and (d) a lack of emotional depth that qualitatively affects the tone, content, and form of linguistic performance (p. 80). Since participants do not encounter real-life situations during DCTs, the data reflects what individuals think they would say rather than their actual verbal expressions (Rasekh, 2012).

Despite these advantages and disadvantages, the present study employs DCT as its research instrument. DCT is a prevalent type of questionnaire used to elicit speech acts. Questionnaires serve as a common method to obtain a written version of speech data, consisting of a list of questions that participants read, interpret, and respond to (Johansen, 2008). Unlike interviews where the interviewer records responses, respondents record their answers in questionnaires (Johansen, 2008).

DCT is convenient for data collection across different geographical areas and with limited resources. By requesting written responses, participants have more time to complete the questionnaire compared to oral communication. Expressing utterances in written form, as in a questionnaire, allows for responses that closely mirror natural language use.

3. Non-Verbal Expressions of Gratitude

3.1. Body Language for Expressing Gratitude

In the realm of interpersonal communication, body language serves as a potent means through which individuals convey emotions and sentiments without resorting to verbal expression. It encompasses various physical behaviors such as facial expressions, body posture, gestures, eye movement, touch, and the utilization of personal space.

➤ **Facial Expression:**

- Facial expressions, inclusive of eye movement, eyebrows, lips, nose, and cheeks, constitute a crucial aspect of body language for conveying emotions. Interpretation of facial expressions requires a holistic approach, considering multiple signs in combination with the context and the individual's likely intention.

➤ **Body Language of the Head and Neck:**

- The positioning and movement of the head and neck contribute to overall body language. Understanding the nuanced range of movements in conjunction with connected factors aids in accurate interpretation.

➤ **Emotional Postures:**

- Body postures serve as indicators of emotions, with research suggesting that comparing postures associated with different emotions enhances accuracy. For instance, anger is associated with dominant postures, while fear is linked to submissive postures.

➤ **Gestures:**

- Movements involving body parts, such as hands, arms, fingers, head, and legs, constitute gestures. These can be voluntary or involuntary and carry varied meanings. For instance, folded arms may indicate a closed mind, while specific arm crosses denote insecurity.

➤ **Handshakes:**

- Handshakes, a common greeting ritual, convey levels of confidence and emotion through factors like grip strength and eye contact. Different handshake styles, such as the finger squeeze or bone crusher, offer insights into interpersonal dynamics.

➤ **Breathing Patterns:**

- Body language related to breathing provides cues about a person's mood and state of mind. This connection is particularly considered in professional settings like business meetings and presentations.

➤ **Mouth Covering:**

- Covering one's mouth suggests the suppression of feelings or uncertainty, possibly indicating deep thought and hesitation in responding

The manifestation of gratitude serves as a self-affirming practice, as individuals demonstrating gratitude are inclined to respond appreciatively across various situations, acknowledging the benevolence of others. This sets in motion a positive, self-renewing feedback loop – the more overt expressions of gratitude, the greater the enhancement of subjective well-being and resilience to negativity, fostering an increased propensity for gratitude. When verbal expressions fall short in conveying appreciation, body language becomes a potent means of communication. The following section explores seven primary expressions of body language and their application in expressing gratitude.

➤ **Facial Expression as a Reflection of Gratitude:**

- A person's face can exhibit happiness when expressing gratitude, typically characterized by a smile and an upward gaze. The combination of facial expression and body language imparts an overall heightened sense of energy.

- **Gestural Appreciation:**

- Gesturing gratitude is one of the most common ways to appreciate someone. Simple gestures, such as nodding or tipping one's hat, can convey gratitude. Hand gestures like the OK sign and the thumbs-up are frequently employed in daily life to express appreciation. Additionally, a handshake or placing a hand over the chest can serve as signs of gratitude.

- **Physical Gestures of Thanks:**

- Hugging is considered a physical act of thanking, typically reserved for those closest, such as family members, relatives, and friends. Bowing, a more formal gesture, varies in meaning based on cultures and situations, reflecting respect towards the person being thanked. Bowing with hands pressed together, akin to prayer, signifies gratitude in certain cultures with strong religious backgrounds, emphasizing appreciation, respect, and politeness.

- **Less Common Signs of Gratitude:**

- Various cultures and situations may yield less common signs of gratitude. Examples include the Hollywood-Indian How – raising one's hand, palm forward, mouth forming "*Thank you*," and nodding. Another less common gesture is the All-Digit Lefty Wiggle-Waggle – a raised, outward-facing palm wiggled back and forth, coupled with a spoken 'Thank you.' These less conventional gestures, though intricate, serve as unique expressions of gratitude.

- **Postural Signals of Gratitude:**

- Our own body posture can effectively convey our level of gratitude. A positive posture reflects happiness, indicating an appreciation for life, family, and friends. The profound connection between happiness and gratitude, facilitated through daily exercises that encompass physical, social, and psychological benefits, is reinforced by the practice of maintaining good posture. Beyond enhancing mental clarity and productivity, good posture acts as a cognitive manifestation of gratitude, ultimately fostering a sense of well-being.

In conclusion, expressing gratitude through body language is a nuanced and multifaceted endeavor. The various forms of gestures and postures allow individuals to communicate appreciation in diverse ways, transcending linguistic boundaries. As substantiated by scientific research, the practice of gratitude extends beyond a fleeting sentiment, positively influencing sleep, emotions, and the immune system.

3.2. Expressing Gratitude through Actions

Demonstrating gratitude through actions holds greater significance than merely feeling thankful towards others. Therefore, it becomes imperative to comprehend effective ways of expressing gratitude and to implement them when situations demand. The act of expressing gratitude can yield considerable enhancements in subjective, psychological, spiritual, and physical well-being, encompassing manifold benefits. The choice of how to express gratitude is often contingent upon the social context. Taking a partner to their favorite restaurant as a gesture of thanks for their support may be appropriate, but it may not be a measured expression of gratitude towards a stranger who held open a door. The following are some avenues through which gratitude can be expressed, serving as a preliminary guide for finding suitable methods to convey appreciation.

➤ Random Acts of Kindness:

- Engaging in random acts of kindness can significantly contribute to subjective well-being .Simple acts such as offering assistance to a stranger burdened with heavy shopping, donating clothes to charity, or aiding someone lost with directions can have profound effects.

- **Maintain Respect:**

- Uphold standards of etiquette in daily interactions with strangers, acknowledging that common courtesy should not be withheld simply because one does not know the other person. Holding the door open, respecting personal space, and being mindful of the impact of actions exemplify such courtesy.

- **Tipping in Service Industry:**

- Recognize the efforts of service-industry employees by leaving a tip, if affordable. While expressing gratitude through a lengthy letter might not be practical in a fast-paced service environment, a monetary acknowledgment in the tip jar communicates appreciation.

- **Community Volunteering:**

- Engaging in community volunteering not only fosters connection and experience but has also been associated with increased subjective well-being and notable health benefits .Volunteering has been linked to heightened levels of happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem, a sense of control over life, physical health, and reduced depression.

Expressing gratitude may pose challenges for some, even towards those individuals who hold significant meaning in our lives, be they friends, teachers, or parents. However, the positive impact of conveying gratitude, even through small gestures, is immense for both parties involved. The subsequent strategies outline ways to express gratitude to those who merit acknowledgment.

- **Write a Gratitude Letter or Note:**

- Dedicate time to contemplate what is most appreciated about friends, teachers, or parents, and articulate sentiments in a handwritten letter. While the act of recognizing gratitude is crucial, reading the letter aloud carries even greater emotional weight.

- **Express Gratitude through Creative Means:**

- Creative expressions of gratitude, such as homemade gifts, resonate profoundly. The thought and effort invested often surpass the monetary value of the gesture.

- **Gifts of Gratitude:**

- When selecting a gratitude-focused gift, prioritize meaning over monetary value. A thoughtful, personal gift, whether kept, displayed, or treasured, holds significant sentimental value.

- **Convey Appreciation in Person:**

- Undertaking a gratitude visit in person might be a substantial step for some; nevertheless, the act of expressing appreciation directly carries meaningful benefits. If an in-person visit is not feasible, sending a personalized video message can be equally impactful.

- **Inquire and Actively Listen:**

- Demonstrating genuine interest in the well-being of loved ones by asking how they are and actively listening to their responses is a simple yet effective way to convey value. Putting aside distractions and engaging attentively in conversation fosters a sense of appreciation.

- **Gratitude Scrapbook:**

- Consider creating a gratitude scrapbook as a unique way to show appreciation, especially in the context of a teacher. Alternatively, involve an entire class by having each student contribute a page expressing gratitude, culminating in a collective token of appreciation. Similarly, create a scrapbook for friends or parents, filled with photographs capturing special

moments over the years. While friends, teachers, and parents may be the individuals we are most grateful for, they may also be the recipients of the least overt expressions of gratitude. The act of expressing gratitude is deeply personal, and understanding the individual preferences of the recipient enhances the value of the gesture.

3.3. Cultural Manifestations of Gratitude: a Comparative Analysis between Japan and America

Our understanding of gratitude has largely been shaped by research conducted on Americans, particularly white American college students—a demographic found predominantly on the campuses where studies are conducted. This focus introduces a cultural bias to the scientific exploration of gratitude, prompting researchers to broaden their investigations to encompass diverse cultural perspectives. In Western countries, such as the United States, expressions of gratitude often involve a simple thumbs-up, coupled with a nod of the head, eye contact, or an OK sign. Some individuals prefer the gesture of placing both hands on their chest, near the heart. Additionally, traditional Western etiquette might involve tipping one's hat as a gesture of gratitude. Given America's status as one of the world's most religiously diverse nations, cultural influences, including gratitude practices like the namaste bow from India, have been incorporated, notably through the dissemination of practices such as yoga.

While America tends to exhibit individualistic tendencies, prioritizing the individual over the collective, it is essential to recognize that a significant portion of the global population resides in cultures deemed more collectivist, comprising 85 percent of the world. Unlike individualistic cultures, collectivist societies place greater emphasis on social harmony and honoring others, values that align with the communal expressions of gratitude observed more prominently in Japan. A study

even found that the level of gratitude among Japanese children correlates with the respect they show to their parents.

Japan, with its distinctive cultural identity, maintains a cultural tapestry that amalgamates traditional values with the influences of cultural integration. Despite the evident differences, Japan shares some similarities with America in the manifestation of gratitude. However, as a nation deeply rooted in tradition, Japan has preserved ancient customs, with bowing being a prevalent and distinct gesture of expressing gratitude. Bowing is ingrained in Japanese social interactions, observable in various contexts such as exchanging business cards during initial meetings and store staff bowing to customers in shopping centers. The depth and duration of a bow convey levels of respect, with a profound bow indicating greater respect, while a subtle nod with the head denotes a more casual and informal expression of gratitude. Beyond expressing gratitude, bowing serves multiple purposes, including apologizing to someone, making it a versatile and culturally significant gesture deeply embedded in Japanese society.

CHAPTER 2:DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter clearly presents and analyzes the research results according to the research questions presented in Chapter 1:

(1) How do individuals from both cultural groups express gratitude in various situations, uncovering shared patterns and distinctions in communication?

(2) Is there any evidence of gender in the Japanese and American cultures of gratitude?

Statistical analyses were conducted to assess the significance of the collected data sets. Following data collection, a subset of randomly chosen thank-you responses underwent coding to capture expressions of gratitude within specific gratitude scenarios. The data underwent encryption before being entered into the database. Coded responses were then input into a software program for comprehensive statistical analysis. Consistently, pie charts were employed as visual representations of the studied data. The research findings are sequentially presented, first analyzing data from Japan and subsequently examining data from the United States. The Japanese data were subsequently compared with the American data to identify both similarities and differences in the expressions of gratitude across various thank-you situations.

In order to gauge the significance of expressing gratitude, a test was executed to discern the extent of differentiation in responses to specific gratitude situations between Japanese and American participants. All data presented in the chart underwent scrutiny based on two primary aspects:

1. Data analysis

1.1. Thank-you Expressions:

Through a research survey exploring various expressions of gratitude, the outcomes were categorized into two distinct groups: expressions of gratitude

employed by Japanese respondents and those used by their American counterparts. The survey questionnaires for each group encompassed diverse types of gratitude expressions, serving as data points in the analysis. The responses from both Japanese and American datasets were categorized based on the expressions provided, resulting in a classification of distinct thank-you expressions applicable to various gratitude situations in both cultures.

1.2. Gender

Each survey question included two sets of answer choices, requiring participants to provide responses for both male and female genders in identical situations. Sample answer choices are elucidated below:

X offers to do it for you because you have personal matters to attend to that day.

If you were in that situation, would you say thank you?

(1) X is female.

A. no

B. yes. If so, what type of expression will you convey?

.....

(2) X is male.

A. no

B. yes. If so, what type of expression will you convey?

.....

1.2.1. Gratitude expressions in Japanese

In the context of this thesis, a critical exploration is undertaken to unveil the differential utilization of expressions within diverse expressions of gratitude

scenarios, with a particular focus on discerning patterns between male and female students. This investigation aims to establish empirical evidence regarding the potential correlation between gender and the selection of gratitude expressions across a spectrum of articulated thank-you situations.

One distinctive merit of this study lies in its capacity to illuminate varied modes of expressing gratitude contingent upon specific thanking scenarios. The dataset reflects a rich array of expressions employed by both Japanese and American participants, indicating their considered appropriateness in responding to the multifaceted spectrum of thank-you situations outlined in the questionnaire. Statistical analysis underscores the prevalence of certain expressions, with Japanese “*Arigatou*” and American “*thank you*” emerging as the foremost expressions of gratitude. Notably, expressions of gratitude find heightened relevance in situations involving non-material possessions and occasions where the giver extends wishes, congratulations, compliments, or imparts information, prompting heightened responsiveness from students in both Japanese and American contexts.

The analytical findings reveal a significant discrepancy between Japanese and American native speakers’ likelihood of responding in gratitude situations. Notably, Japan exhibits a notably higher response rate (94.72%) compared to the United States (86.05%), a difference that attains statistical significance.

In the broader perspective, the study elucidates that, overall, Japanese and Americans exhibit comparable tendencies in selecting expressions of gratitude across various situations. An intriguing observation emanates from both cultural contexts, indicating instances where expressing gratitude may not be deemed necessary due to the absence of corresponding feelings of gratitude.

The investigation further delineates the spectrum of expressions of gratitude prevalent in Japanese culture. The Japanese dataset showcases a diverse array of

expressions, classifiable into eight primary categories, namely: [provide a list of the eight main types of expressions].

(1) *Arigatou*

(2) *Doumo*

(3) *Arigatougozaimasu,*

(4) *DomoArigatougozaimasu*

(5) *Otsukaresamadeshita,*

(6) *Sumimasen*

(7) *Osoreirimasu*

(8) *Other expressions are not often used to express feelings.*

1) *Arigatou*

Arigatou with 44 responses the rate is 44% that the most common form of thanks in Japanese. It usually means “*thank you*”, in a way that is neither too casual nor too formal. It has a state of being natural, comfortable, informal, and formal. Japanese people can use *Arigatou* for a variety of activities that occur every day in normal life, but will not use it in stressful situations. strong or need to show special gratitude. Linguistically, *Arigatou* is classified as a simple form expression. According to Larsson (2011), the simple form is often considered informal and not polite but is used between colleagues. As a simple form, *Arigatou* can be expressed between equals to convey a mood of casualness and intimacy between them. Specifically, according to the data, this expression is used in thank-you situations that do not imply indebtedness. The situation in the questionnaire is one that involves less effort in performing the favor requested by the benefactor. The

recipient is also considered to have a close relationship with the person being introduced, so the usual form of expressing gratitude is enough to convey.

2) *Doumo*

Doumo with 14 response rate (14 %): According to data, Japanese people use *Doumo* (private use) as a way to express gratitude. *Doumo* is another commonly used Japanese word of thanks. It is moderately polite, often used for small things that others help you with. Its meaning simply means “*thank you*” and is often used on informal occasions without *Arigatou* when thanking Thanks to some friends and acquaintances. *Doumo* can be classified as an expression that does not explicitly express gratitude or apology when used alone, or it can mean “*a lot*” if combined with both sorry and thank you. Coulmas (1981) states that *Doumo* is also used as a casual greeting, a polite expression of greeting or goodwill to indicate a general feeling of gratitude and obligation without any specific object. How to be grateful or regretful. He added that the act of greeting is expected to convey the social relationship that the person in question has assumed or attempted to establish. Expressed through *Doumo* as a way of expressing greetings, it is not gratitude that refers to any specific object but rather the recognition of a certain type of social relationship, where one conveys a general feeling of politeness or goodwill toward others. As described by Coulmas (1981), referent-addressee relationships are clearly reflected in Japanese discourse most of the time, and this is certainly true for ritualized units of discourse such as greeting.

3) *Arigatougozaimasu.*

Arigatougozaimasu with 12 answers (12%): In general, most predictors choose this as a very polite and respectful way of saying thank you to superiors to show more gratitude. Japanese honorifics are considered an essential function in their society and one of the most important means of expressing politeness in

Japanese (Okamoto, 1999). Okamoto also suggests that forms Irreverent modals can imply distance, while they can imply intimacy in a friendly relationship and the speaker's higher status in a hierarchical relationship. Whereas *Arigatou* is a form of disrespect in which the referent expresses that with the addressee they have a close relationship, the -masu form, on the contrary, creates social distance between the referent address and recipient suggest a distant relationship. .

One of the forms of -masu, namely -mashita, is also used in another expression of grateful gratitude, *Arigatougozaimashita*. In other words, *Arigatougozaimasu* is an expression of gratitude that shows politeness and Show respect for the recipient.

4) *DomoArigatougozaimasu.*

DomoArigatougozaimasu with 8 responses (8%): This is the most sincere and official expression of gratitude. It is made up of three basic words: *Arigatou*, *Doumo* and *gozaimasu*. This Japanese word thank you has the most polite and formal meaning. *Arigatougozaimasu* is enhanced with *Doumo*. This way of speaking is much more formal than *Arigatougozaimasu*. It is used with people who have a higher status than you, are older than you, or in situations where a very formal element is needed. Because of its formality and rarity, the use of *DomoArigatougozaimasu* by Japanese students in the survey was not much.

5) *Otsukaresamadeshita*

Otsukaresamadeshita with 6 answer (6%): In the Japanese workplace, *Otsukaresama* (*deshita*) can be used for any reason throughout the work day, such as the beginning or end of an individual or group task. An example might be when you and a colleague are talking about how he/she is working on a difficult case. Saying *Otsukaresama* (*deshita*) will mean that his/her time and effort are acknowledged and appreciated (as part of teamwork) or that you acknowledge each

other's hard work. This is also a common way to say good night at work in Japan which can be translated as "you're tired." In Japan, it is considered a compliment to someone that they are tired because it implies that they have worked hard. According to the latest data and research information, "Otsukaresama deshita" is also used in many other cases to "cheer up", especially between colleagues who go out to eat and drink together after work. (Traditionally, Japanese colleagues will share drinks with each other after work, and in a more casual setting, this will help build a good working relationship.)

6) *Sumimasen*

Sumimasen with 4 answer (4 %): According to linguist Goffman, *Sumimasen* has two main meanings: expression of remorse or courtesy. Repentance is expressed when a person commits a wrong act that affects others. Socializing is a form of maintaining social relationships, like how you say "Hello, how are you doing?" instead of silently passing by when meeting acquaintances. In Japanese communication, *Sumimasen* means the most basic linguistic meaning of *Sumimasen* is "sorry" or "to bother you". What's special is that *Sumimasen* also means "thank you" in cases where Japanese people feel they are being bothered when someone helps them. If someone holds the door for you, the Japanese will say *Duomo*. But if in case they are sick and someone cooks dinner or drives them to the hospital then the expression *Sumimasen* will be used, it will mean thank you but also sorry for the inconvenience. It is a very polite word and deeply expresses the speaker's gratitude.

7) *Osoreimasu*

Osoreimasu with only 4 response (4%) This is a polite thank you, often used in business, enterprise or other contexts that require seriousness and

politeness. It also has the same meaning as *Sumimasen*, meaning you thank them very much, and apologize or feel embarrassed for bothering them.

According to survey results and research, we see that *Osoreirimasu* is not used often in everyday conversations. This way of thanking is only appropriate when thanking someone for their service or loyalty, such as customers, colleagues, superiors... showing respect and gratitude to the other person.

Although it has the same meaning of thanks as *Sumimasen*, *Osoreirimasu* is not used to apologize in case you make a mistake like the main meaning of *Sumimasen*.

8) Other ways of expressing gratitude account for 8% the remaining, some ways of expressing gratitude such as:

- o *Yatta* with can be used when you have finally finished whatever you were doing for a certain amount of time.

- o *Gomen* when you feel regret rather than gratitude when someone corrects you

- o *Wakarimashita* when receiving an explanation from someone.

- *Yoku dekimashita* is a way of saying Good job in Japanese. It is a polite but not too formal way of expressing yourself, suitable for use with anyone.

Research shows that *Arigatou*, *Arigatougozaimasu* and *Doumo* are the three most common ways in Japanese people's communication when politely expressing gratitude to the other person. However, the expression of gratitude is not always used in every thanking situation. Japanese people do not express gratitude because they believe that in certain situations, expressing gratitude is unnecessary.

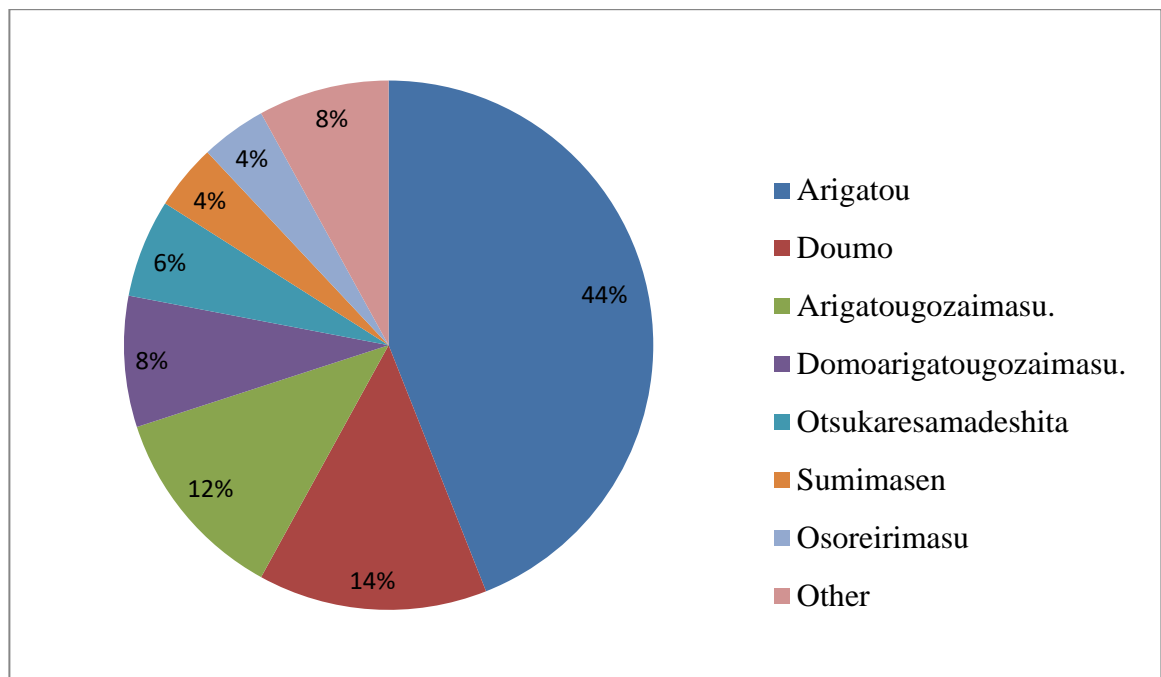


Chart 1: Frequency of gratitude expression in Japan

2.2. Gratitude Expressions in American

It is shown in the frequency of gratitude expressions used in the various situations of thanks by American . In general, there are 7 expressions given by speakers of American as their responses in expressing gratitude, namely:

- (1) *Thank you*
- (2) *Thanks*
- (3) *I appreciate*
- (4) *I'm so grateful*
- (5) *I can't thank you enough .*
- (6) *That's so kind of you*
- (7) *I owe you one.*

- 1) **Thank you** is the most frequent expression used by anticipants in conveying gratitude with 84 responses (52.5%)

- 2) **Thanks** was frequently appeared, with 40 responses (25%)

Using “*thank you*” or “Thanks” are two common but no less effective ways in American communication when expressing gratitude.

- 3) **I appreciate** to express appreciation. This way is used when Americans want to tell someone or want to say that they appreciate someone or something. It was occasionally appear with 12 responses (7.5%)
- 4) **I’m so grateful** with 6 responses (3.75%) used to express gratitude when someone helps. It is a deeply sincere way of saying thank you, showing true gratitude and compassion.
- 5) **I can’t thank you enough** with 4 answers (2.5%)

.This phrase brings deeper sincerity, showing true gratitude and love for the helper. Additionally, “*I can’t thank you enough* “ expresses an inability to be grateful enough, showing dedication and appreciation for special help from others.

- 6) **That’s so kind of you** to thank someone for something they did for you that they didn’t have to do. It was low frequency appear with 6 responses (3.75%)
- 7) **I owe you one** with just **2 answers (1.25%)** . This is a sentence used when you want to express appreciation for someone’s help. The speaker wants to show that they owe the other person a response. After the usual thank you, they often attach this sentence, to emphasize their goodwill.
- 8) Other unusual expressions

Other unusual expressions with 6 responses (3.75 %) such as Many Thanks, Sorry, You are a wonderful friend... , etc.

Thank you is the formal form of thanks expression, while Thank you is a well-known American gratitude expression commonly used by the younger generation in America now. “*Thanks*” is slightly more informal than saying “*Thank you*”, but

both are used frequently , a polite way of saying thank you and can be used every day. Thank you appears dominantly for the situation of material and immaterial of thanks. Nevertheless, Americans do not always express their gratitude in every situation of thanks. Americans mostly do not express gratitude in the thanks situations of immaterial goods.

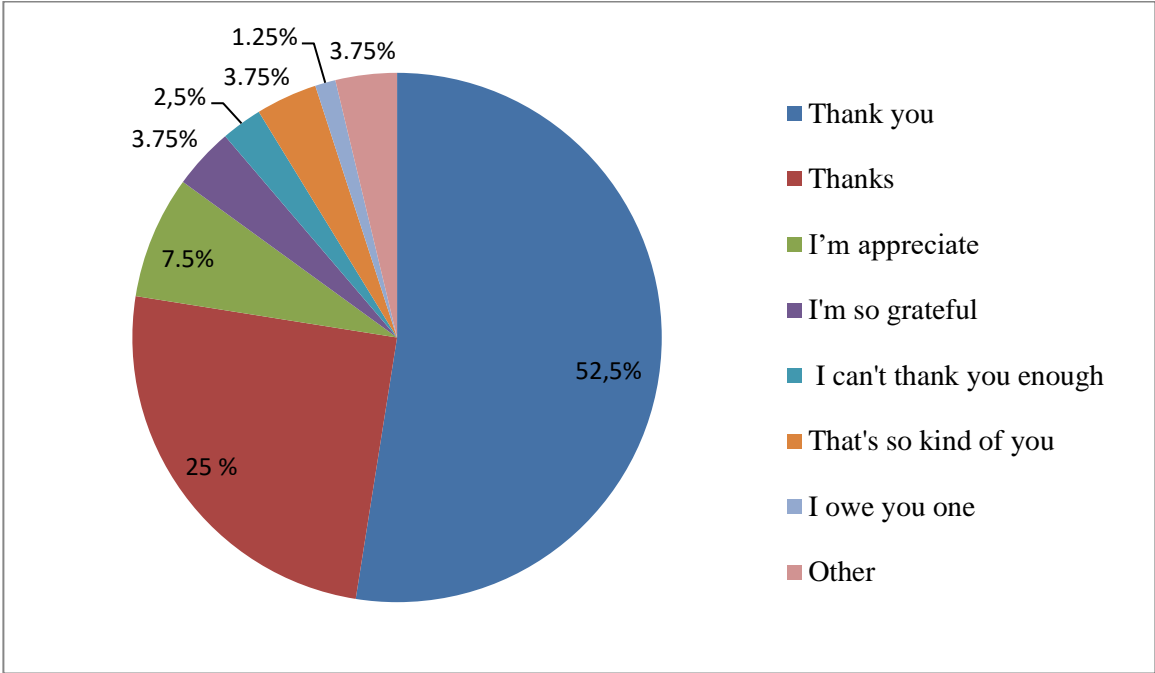


Chart 2: Frequency of gratitude expressions in America

2.3. Gender differences between Japanese and Americans

Through the survey, we see that both Japanese and American students tend to choose common or familiar ways of expressing gratitude to express their gratitude to their peers. The subjects studied were students of similar age and equal gender ratio. Research results indicate that there are no significant gender differences between Japanese and Americans when choosing grateful responses in grateful situations. In general, although they are two different cultures, the awareness of young people, specifically here, is that the male and female genders of the two countries have similarities when giving thanks in thanking situations. different.

Researching further, for Americans, there is no major difference between how both men and women express gratitude. However, male often add some words like man, guy, guys... after saying thank you to clearly indicate the target audience, while female do not (with a rate of 58% and 42%).). These findings are consistent that men tend to be more communicative and directive, and that they also use more informal forms while women are more supportive, polite, and expressive. more sensitive. In Japan, survey data show that Japanese male use more intimate expressions than female (61% and 39% respectively), especially in some expressions. certain reach, specifically *Arigatou*. Combined with documents from the research of many predecessors along with data from this survey, we clearly see that Japanese men pay more attention to simplicity and intimacy to express their relationships with each other. peers. While women pay less attention. The results of this study further confirm that men and women differ in speaking style as well as word choice preferences. Men have a simple but concise way of expressing themselves and focus on the person who needs to thank.

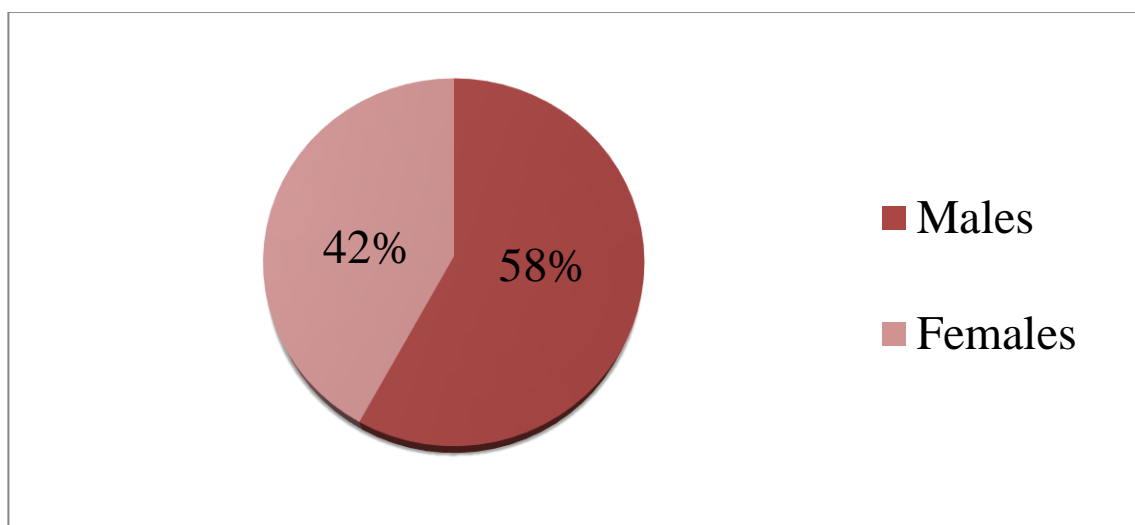


Chart 3: Informal or casual expressions of gratitude between genders in Japan

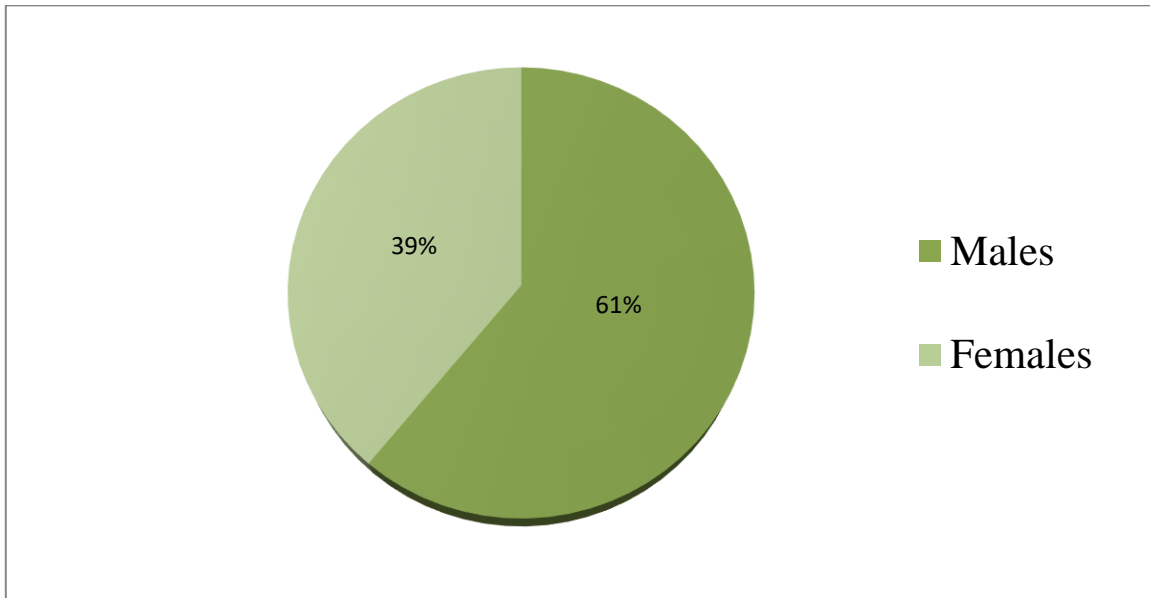


Chart 4: Informal or casual expressions of gratitude between genders in American

2. Discussions

This study delves into gratitude expressions across cultures, specifically examining Japanese and American students in various gratitude situations. The findings reveal diverse gratitude expressions in L1 Japanese and L1 American English, showcasing notable cultural differences. Overall, Japanese respondents exhibit a significantly higher tendency to respond to gratitude situations compared to Americans. However, there is a subtle distinction between Japanese and Americans in choosing not to respond with gratitude expressions across all dimensions.

In perceiving different gratitude situations, both Japanese and Americans demonstrate similar preferences in selecting gratitude expressions, emphasizing the prevalence of expressing gratitude in response to situations with a gratitude sense. The study identifies several commonalities between the two cultures:

- Informal or casual forms of gratitude expressions: Both Japanese and Americans employ expressions like *Arigatou*, *Arigatougozaimasu*, *Doumo*, *Doumo*, *Arigatougozaimasu*, *Thank you*, *Thanks*, *I'm grateful*, *You have my thanks*, *I appreciate it*, and *You're so kind*. *Arigatougozaimasu* for Japanese and *Thank you* for Americans emerge as the most common expressions for thanking in various gratitude situations.
- Frequency of gratitude expressions: Both cultures commonly express gratitude in situations involving material goods, wishes, compliments, congratulations, and information, indicating a shared perception of these situations as provoking or not provoking feelings of gratitude.

However, notable differences also emerge:

- Least popular expressions: Japanese rarely use the informal apologetic expression *Gomen* in gratitude situations, while Americans infrequently use the apologetic form *Sorry*. The study highlights the uncommon use of *Sorry* as a gratitude expression in American culture.
- Other expressions and combination expressions: Both cultures exhibit categories of expressions not frequently used as gratitude expressions and combinations of apology and gratitude expressions. This suggests a positive reception of these expressions in gratitude contexts, emphasizing their acceptability in both societies.
- Gender influence: The study finds no significant influence of gender on the use of gratitude expressions among Japanese and American

participants. Both male and female respondents tend to utilize formal or polite expressions when conveying feelings of gratitude to their peers.

The discussions arising from this cross-cultural study on expressing gratitude between Japanese and American participants offer valuable insights into the dynamic nature of interpersonal communication and cultural variations. Several noteworthy aspects merit detailed consideration:

- **Cultural Nuances in Expressions:** The observed cultural nuances in gratitude expressions highlight the importance of cultural context in shaping communication patterns. Japanese participants tend to exhibit a higher frequency of responses, suggesting a societal inclination toward acknowledgment and appreciation in various situations. In contrast, Americans display a more reserved approach, with fewer instances of explicit expressions.
- **Formality in Expressions:** The prevalence of informal or casual gratitude expressions in both cultures underscores the significance of maintaining politeness and societal norms. The consistent use of phrases like "Arigatou" and "Thank you" indicates a shared understanding of the appropriate level of formality in expressing gratitude, contributing to the sociolinguistic fabric of each society.
- **Gender Neutrality in Gratitude Expressions:** The absence of significant gender-based differences in gratitude expressions challenges stereotypical assumptions. Both male and female participants in both cultures demonstrate similar tendencies in their choice of expressions, emphasizing the universal nature of certain gratitude norms regardless of gender.
- **Variations in Apology-Gratitude Combinations:** The emergence of combined apology and gratitude expressions in both cultures suggests a

nuanced approach to conveying complex emotions. While the study identifies these combinations, further exploration is warranted to understand the underlying motivations and sociolinguistic implications of such expressions in diverse cultural contexts.

In conclusion, the discussions derived from this cross-cultural study contribute to the broader understanding of gratitude expressions, emphasizing the intricate interplay between culture, language, and interpersonal communication. The nuanced insights gained pave the way for further exploration and refinement of cross-cultural communication theories and practices, shedding light on the nuanced dynamics of gratitude expressions across cultures and highlighting both shared practices and distinctive nuances in the way Japanese and Americans express gratitude.

PART III : CONCLUSION

1. Conclusion

This study explores the speech act behavior of gratitude expressions among Japanese and American speakers, revealing cross-cultural differences in thanking practices. By utilizing Coulmas' 1981 taxonomy of thanks, the research illustrates how both cultures express gratitude in diverse situations. Additionally, the study investigates potential gender-based variations in expressing gratitude among Japanese and American-English speakers, offering insights into the broader pragmatic practices of these cultures.

The findings contribute to understanding pragmatic knowledge among Japanese and American college students, representing the younger generation. The study suggests that Japanese and American speakers share similar perceptions in using certain gratitude expressions across various situations. It also highlights the preliminary nature of this research, emphasizing the need for further exploration, particularly in the qualitative analysis of gratitude expressions.

While the study adopts a quantitative approach using a questionnaire, it acknowledges the limitations in providing in-depth exploration. To address this, future research could incorporate qualitative methods such as interviews and explore additional media like movies and books. Each identified gratitude expression can serve as material for follow-up studies, delving into their roles and functions in the speech act fields of both cultures.

In future research, reducing the number of questionnaire items without compromising essential criteria is suggested to prevent participant boredom. Recognizing the study's focus on college students, it is noted that the results describe the general conditions of gratitude pragmatic speech acts among the younger generation of Japan and America. To enrich explanations, future studies

could incorporate other speech act theories, such as politeness, extending beyond the eight specific situations defined by Coulmas in 1981.

2. Limitation of the study.

While this research contributes valuable insights into the expressions of gratitude among Japanese and American speakers, several limitations should be acknowledged to provide a comprehensive understanding of the study's scope and implications.

- **Sample Size and Composition:** The study is confined to 26 Japanese and American speakers, which, although providing valuable perspectives, may not fully represent the diversity within these cultural groups. The findings should be interpreted with consideration for the limited sample size.
- **Timeframe Constraints:** The data collection period spanned from October to December, limiting the scope of capturing potential seasonal variations in gratitude expressions. Different cultural events or holidays during other periods might influence expressions of gratitude, and this timeframe constraint should be taken into account.
- **Cultural Dynamics Within Japan and America:** The study did not delve deeply into regional or subcultural differences within Japan and America, which are vast and diverse. Cultural nuances and variations in expressing gratitude may exist among different regions or subcultures, and the study's generalizations should be applied cautiously.
- **Language Proficiency:** Language proficiency among participants may vary, influencing the richness and complexity of gratitude expressions. This limitation may impact the generalizability of the findings, particularly considering the intricate nature of expressing gratitude in different languages.

- **Cross-Cultural Sensitivity:**The study primarily focuses on gratitude expressions within specific contexts, and its findings may not fully capture the intricacies of cross-cultural sensitivity. There are broader aspects of cultural dynamics that influence communication, and future studies should explore these dimensions more comprehensively.
- **Limited Exploration of Non-Verbal Expressions:** While the study briefly touches on non-verbal expressions of gratitude, a more in-depth exploration of body language and other non-verbal cues could enhance the understanding of cultural differences in expressing gratitude.
- **Single Data Collection Method:**The research predominantly relies on a discourse completion task (DCT) questionnaire. While DCTs are valuable, incorporating additional methods, such as interviews or observations, could provide a more holistic view of gratitude expressions in diverse situations.

Addressing these limitations in future studies will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of cross-cultural dynamics in expressing gratitude.

3. Suggestions for Further Studies

- **Expand Cultural Scope:** The research could broaden its scope to examine gratitude expressions across various cultures, not limited to Japan and the United States. A comparison between Asian and Western cultures could provide a broader and insightful perspective.
- **Diverse Participant Demographics:** Additionally, the study may diversify participant demographics, including individuals of different ages, social backgrounds, and linguistic scholars from various countries.
- **Enhanced Social Context Interaction:** The research could enhance interaction with social contexts, not only focusing on specific situations but

also examining the influence of broader social factors on gratitude expression.

- **Longitudinal Tracking of Changes:** Subsequent studies could track changes in gratitude expression over time to gain a deeper understanding of trends and directions in cultural development.
- **In-Depth Analysis of Interconnected Factors:** Future research may conduct in-depth analyses of how factors such as education, family, and media play roles in shaping gratitude expression at both individual and societal levels.
- **Integration with Language Research:** Combining gratitude expression research with language studies may open new opportunities for understanding the relationship between language and culture.
- **Implement Multimodal Research Methods:** The study could employ multimodal research methods to include both verbal and non-verbal language, incorporating images and videos to capture non-linguistic expressions of gratitude.
- **Extend Community Impact Discussion:** The research could expand to discuss how gratitude expression influences communities and general social relations, emphasizing the importance of gratitude in building and maintaining relationships between individuals and communities.

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APPENDIX

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

(for students of Japanese - English major and English major)

Below is a 10-question questionnaire given to ask Japanese and American students about how to express gratitude.

Please give appropriate answers in the following specific situations. Choose at least 1 of the most common answers from the answer form marked 1 to 8 in the table. If you have any other answers, please write them in the space below each situation. Please tick (✓) where appropriate or write your answer:

You are

Male

Female

Common answer patterns of Japanese

<i>(1) Arigatou</i>	<i>(5) Otsukaresamadeshita,</i>
<i>(2) Arigatougozaimasu</i>	<i>(6) Osoreirimasu</i>
<i>(3) Doumo</i>	<i>(7) Sumimasen</i>
<i>(4) DomoArigatougozaimasu</i>	<i>(8) Gomen</i>

Common answer patterns of American

<i>(1) Thank you</i>	<i>(5) Thanks a lot</i>
<i>(2) Thanks</i>	<i>(6) That's so kind of you</i>
<i>(3) I appreciate</i>	<i>(7) I owe you one</i>
<i>(4) I'm so grateful</i>	<i>(8) Many thanks</i>

1. Your colleague helps you complete a challenging project at work, ensuring its success. You would:

Express gratitude by saying:

.....

Choose not to say anything because:

.....

2. A friend helps you move to a new apartment over the weekend. After everything is settled, you would:

Express gratitude by saying:

.....

Choose not to say anything because:

.....

3. You borrow a book from a classmate to prepare for an exam. After returning it, you would:

Express gratitude by saying:

.....

Choose not to say anything because:

.....

4. Your neighbor regularly collects your mail when you're away. Upon returning, you would:

Express gratitude by saying:

.....

Choose not to say anything because:

.....

5. A classmate shares detailed notes with you before an important exam. You would:

Express gratitude by saying:

.....

Choose not to say anything because:

.....

6. Your sibling helps you fix a computer issue that you couldn't resolve. Afterward, you would:

Express gratitude by saying:

.....

Choose not to say anything because:

.....

7. Your friend throws a surprise birthday party for you. You would:

Express gratitude by saying:

.....

Choose not to say anything because:

.....

8. A co-worker covers for you during a busy day at the office. You would:

Express gratitude by saying:

.....

Choose not to say anything because:

.....

9. Your roommate regularly helps with household chores. You would:

Express gratitude by saying:

.....

Choose not to say anything because:

.....

10. A family member offers emotional support during a challenging time.

You would:

Express gratitude by saying:

.....

Choose not to say anything because:

.....