

Gratitude Strategies as Pragmatic Parameter of Filipino Pre-Service Teachers' Identity

Juland Dayo Salayo

University of Santo Tomas

jdsalayo@ust.edu.ph

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Abstract

This study investigated the common gratitude strategies in different situations, which permeated indebtedness as a way of shaping pre-service teachers' identity. Using a 15-item Discourse Completion Test (DCT), 22 pre-service teachers in the Province of Cavite, Philippines participated in this study. An informal interview was conducted to validate the gathered data from the instrument used. The analysis was done through the use of Cheng's (2005) taxonomy of gratitude expressions, which include eight (8) strategies: thanking, appreciation, repayment, recognition of imposition, apology, positive feeling, alerter, and other non-taxonomy-based expressions. The results revealed that the respondents highly employed the use of 'simple thanking,' which reflects the simplicity and directness of the Filipino linguistic choice in making responses on various occasions. It was also found out that aside from the taxonomy-based thanking schemes, the respondents also used combined strategies and the 'no-response' strategy. Supported by Woodward's identity theory, the identified gratitude strategies, as an illocutionary speech act, built the participants' identities with an implication to their relational and socio-cultural patterns of language.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is an expression of man's feelings and activities, which are associated with cultural, social, personal and even religious affiliations (Cui, 2012; Al-Ghamdi, Almansoob, & Alrefae, 2019). It was emphasized by Meiramova and Kulzhanova, (2015) that "in order to produce appropriate language, a person should be aware of pragmatic competence as well as the grammatical one" (p. 16). On top of the different arguments about language use, sociolinguists emphasize primarily the influence of the social factors on the speakers' language or linguistic behaviour which can contribute to building linguistic identity. Hence, language becomes a manifestation of one's identity that characterizes their social involvement including gender, ethnicity and even social class (Holmes & Wilson, 2017; Labov, 1972; Moore, 2004, cited in Shahreabaki, 2018). For Fairclough, any form of discourse is not just about language, but a social practice which is constituted by "knowledge, social relations, and social identity" (Fairclough, 1995, cited in Sudar, 2018, p. 147.). Emphasizing the role of language in the development of identity, Rovera (2008) stated that "language is a fundamental aspect of cultural identity" (p.66); hence, language defines "social structure, and identity creating" (Baez, 2002, cited in Rovira, 2008, p. 68). True enough, linguistic positioning effectively builds identities, together with the "learning, affiliations,

dissociations, similarities and differences” of any speaker like a political figure (Adeola & Muhyideen, 2020, p. 14).

Among the most common language expressions which strengthens the bonds between the members of the society is thanking (Yusefi et al., 2015). Gratitude is conceptualized as an emotion, an attitude, a moral virtue, a habit, a personality trait, or a coping response. It is taken from "gratia," which means grace, graciousness, or gratefulness --- all have to do with kindness, generousness, gifts, the beauty of giving and receiving or getting something for nothing (Pruyser, 1976, cited in Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Accordingly, it has a dual meaning: a worldly one and a transcendent one (Emmons & Stern, 2013).

People express gratitude through words of thanks, praise, or appreciation (Pishghadam and Zare, 2011; Meiramova and Kulzhanova, 2015). Concerning the speech act, Leech (1983, cited in Cui, 2012) investigated thanking from a more socially-oriented perspective whose goal is to establish politeness and convivial atmosphere between and among the participants. Also, Searle (1969, cited in Cui, 2012) defined thanking as an illocutionary act performed by a speaker based on a past act performed by the hearer. Huang (2007, cited in Dalilan, 2012) stressed out that the feeling of gratefulness or appreciation for what the hearer has done, the speaker makes an utterance which serves as an expressive kind of speech act that expresses a psychological attitude or state in the speaker such as joy, sorrow, and likes or dislikes. For Verschueren and Ostman (2009, cited in Dalilan, 2012), two arguments underlie the speech act theory: (a) there is a distinction between the meaning expressed by an utterance and how the utterance is used (i.e., its force) and (b) utterances of every kind (assertion included) can be considered as acts. Similarly, thanking is a speech act that expresses the speaker's psychological state about an event, an object, a behavior, Etc. (Nofsinger, 1999, cited in Meiramova and Kulzhanova, 2015); moreover, it is an emotional attitude with several phases that may be used by the speakers in thanking (Van Ek, 1977, cited in Pishghadam and Zare, 2011). Yule (1966, cited in Dalilan, 2012) further stated that speakers use expressive speech to express their feelings by making their words fir their inner psychological world.

Therefore, if expressions of gratitude are used appropriately, they can provide feelings of warmth and solidarity among interlocutors (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1968, cited Pishghadam and Zare, 2011). Priceless when it is said with sincerity; its magic power has almost limitless potentials; produces a pleasant encounter between interlocutors where language function that has significant social value in American English (Eisentein & Bodman, 1986, cited in Cui, 2012)); failure to express gratitude adequately can sometimes result to ruining the relationship of speaker and listener (Cui, 2012; Meiramova and Kulzhanova, 2015).

Moreover, thanking still has a variety of functions. Siregar (2011, cited in Dalilan, 2012) discussed that "thank you" serves the following purposes: (a) to express the feeling of generosity at an act accepted by a speaker, (b) as a courtesy to maintain a relationship, (c) to praise, (d) to end a conversation, (e) to reject a gift or a present given by someone in a polite way. It is linguistically simple but pragmatically complicated because it involves socio-cultural values different from one language to another. For Eisenstein & Bodman, 1993, cited in Dalilan (2012), thanking is not always an expression of gratitude but can also serve as a compliment and a closing form in communication.

Likewise, knowledge of different speaking styles can help people grasp the essence of social-cultural knowledge to communicate with others more successfully (Pishghadam & Zarei, 2012; Yassin, & Razak, 2018). Indeed, expression of gratitude has its own cultural identity (Nofsinger), 1999, cited in Meiramova and Kulzhanova, 2015). In the study conducted by Al Falasi (2014) that aims to find out whether Arabic learners of English produce target-like compliment responses in English and whether the pragmatic transfer can occur, it was revealed that Arabic (L1) expressions and strategies were sometimes transferred to English (L2) as they perceived these norms to be universal among languages rather than being language-specific. This resulted in significant cultural and pedagogical implications,

which suggest that syllabus designers must consider proper use of speech acts involving the target language when designing instructional materials like textbooks. The differences in speaking styles are signs of the differences in cultural values, so people can communicate with others successfully when they grasp the essence of social-cultural knowledge (Wang, 2011; Tian, 2010). Because of cultural differences in discourse, the impact of communication is usually affected negatively (Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998) since native speakers and L2 learners' pragmatic competence may differ (Cohen, 1996).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Yoosefvand and Rasekh (2014) studied a cross-cultural investigation of the speech act of gratitude used by Persian and English speakers using discourse completion test which introduced eleven natural situations; hence, findings revealed that there were significant differences in the use of thanking, positive feeling, repayment, and recognition of imposition strategies between the research participants. With the results, it was suggested that further studies on the influence of social power, curriculum, educational background, age, or social distance on the use of gratitude as a speech act be conducted between Persian and other languages. Also, Cheng's (2010) study focused on a corpus-based approach to investigate thanking speech. It has pedagogical implications on language teaching materials, which "should equip learners with a repertoire of conversation strategies that learners may use in a given context" (p. 270); thus, it provides a beneficial source for language textbooks.

In another study, Dalilan (2012) described the gratitude strategies realized by Indonesian EFL learners in responding to different situations. With 17 undergraduate students, it was shown that simple, brief thanking to lengthy, complex thanking was used to expressed gratitude. It was emphasized that the participants' way of saying 'thank you' shows various functions such as differences in social status, indebtedness, and breaking promises. He reiterated that the realization of the thanking speech act is found in different languages from various cultures. It may be different from one language community to another, depending on the contexts and cultures.

Likewise, Pishghadam and Zarei (2011) conducted another study with 180 Iranian students from the English language institute. With the goal of determining the different gratitude strategies of the respondents, the results state that female Persian speakers use gratitude strategies more often than males. Also, thanking and positive feelings strategies were mostly used. It describes that the thanking strategy is employed more often than expected, which means that participants used "thanking strategies comprising simple thanking, thanking mentioning favor, thanking mentioning favor, and imposition extensively in their interactions" (p. 143). Showing similar results in the study of Yasami and Rastegar, (2014) which proved Iranian's linguistic patterns in gratitude is simple thanking. Generally, the findings were associated to cultural differences; however the intention of the speaker, in any language, must be given attention (Fahey, 2005).

In the same line of thoughts, Shinta (n.d.) investigated thanking strategies used by 70 English Department students as EFL learners analyzing whether there are any possibilities of different strategies in expressing gratitude among non-native speakers. The results said that the thanking strategy and elaborated thanking (thanking + intensifier; thanking +intensifier + intensifier; thanking + for a reason) and thanking + intensifier + for (reason). The results noticed and considered seriously the 0% appreciation and 0% thanking a third person. Results still showed that gratitude is an expression of politeness, greeting, and conversational ending. Accordingly, apologizing did not receive much attention (apologizing + thanking is not commonly used by native speakers). Farashaiyan and Hua (2012) described and compared the gratitude strategies by Iranian EFL and Malaysian ESL learners in facing different situations having 20 Iranians and 20 Malaysian postgraduate university students. Their study illustrated certain commonalities and differentials in terms of the strategies and type of gratitude used by Iranian and Malaysian students.

Ozdemir and Rezvani (2011) scrutinized the production of non-speakers regarding the thanking speech act in an EFL context. The subjects included Turkish and Iranian advanced speakers of English. They were examined how they expressed gratitude regarding the strategy use and length of speech through a DCT. As a result, both Turkish and Iranian English speakers made use of most frequently similar strategies for thanking; however, they utilized the length of speech to some extent differently. Ahar and Eslami-Rasekh (2011) sifted through the strategies used by native English and Persian speakers for expressing gratitude. The findings suggest that Persian EFL learners transfer their first language pragmatic norms to the target language to some extent due to their perception of the norms' universality.

In order to compare the use of speech act of gratitude in Persian and Chinese EFL learners and English native speakers' performance to identify the existing pattern among them, Pishghadam and Zarei (2012) found out that although thanking is regarded as the most favorite strategy among all three groups, there are significant differences in the ways Persian and Chinese learners of English, and also speakers of English use the speech act of thanking. In the study made by Meiramova and Kulzhanova (2015), Kazakhstani males and females' most frequent strategy is "thank you"; females often thank other people in order to be polite; females are more apologetic; males prefer thanking, and repayment than apologizing; males are more indebted towards their hearers. Most common strategies: thanking, feeling positive, and repayment. Results might be influenced by several factors like their social status, cultural norms, and degree of politeness.

To investigate whether advanced ESL and EFL learners can express gratitude appropriately in different situations and whether there exists any difference in expressing gratitude among speakers from various language and cultural background, Cui (2012) found out that native speakers expressed gratitude through simple thanking, reassuring, promising to repay, expressing a lack of necessity of obligation, expressing a desire to continue the relationship; high level of expressing gratitude. The typical formula is from one function (thanking) to five functions: expressing surprise + expressing delight + complimenting the object + expressing pleasure + complimenting the giver + expressing the *preference* (*Wow! Wonderful! My favorite color too. How did you know my favorite color? And a sweater too. Just what I need for this cold weather.*). Among the non-native speakers, the gratitude expressions through five functions (expressing surprise + thanking + expressing pleasure + complimenting + expressing a desire to continue the relationship or repay the favor). Among the participants, Filipinos and Indonesians used thanking to emphasize the depth of their gratitude. While the Japanese expressed thanking as a form of indebtedness, this expression is more on quasi-apology, which positively reflects their language and culture. In his study, females were higher than male participants in producing gratitude expression, even if generally, there were no gender differences in expressing gratitude.

Contrary to the dominant expression of simple thanking among Asian participants in the stated studies, Canadians expressed their gratitude commonly by "minimizing the favor," "expressing appreciation," and "expressing pleasure." However, the same study also revealed that the following were among the least expressions of gratitude by the respondents: "returning thanks" and "acknowledging thanks" are among the least strategies Canadians use to express gratitude. This study has proven that the participants produced various linguistic patterns in the producing gratitude strategies (Farenkia, 2012, p. 9).

This present study focuses on the Filipino pre-service teachers who are considered millennials with challenging ethical and moral standards in modern times. Expectedly, they are preparing for their future career as co-missionaries of learning; thus, they should embody positive behavior that includes culturally and socially accepted language expressions on different occasions. As Filipinos, this is not just expressing norms but, most importantly, their profession being models of the human behavioral standards that are acceptable to all to educate the learners and the public. Hence, they can continue the identity of the teachers as cultural and moral beings through their linguistic choice.

Behind several studies concerning gratitude as a form of speech act by different speakers from different language backgrounds; literature that specifically linked a particular speech act to identity formation remains limited.

Research Questions

The present study aimed to determine the Filipino pre-service teachers' gratitude strategies in different situations, which permeated indebtedness, as a measurement of constructing an identity as future educators. Specifically, this paper answered the following questions: (1) What are the different gratitude strategies of pre-teachers used in different situations? (2) How do the identified gratitude strategies build their identity as pre-service teachers?

Theoretical Perspectives

Cheng's Taxonomy of Gratitude Strategies. To identify the gratitude strategies as the primary goal of this study, the researcher applied Cheng's (2005) taxonomy of gratitude strategies (Yoosefvand & Rasekh, 2011, 2014; Pishghadam & Zarei, 2012). They are categorized into eight (8) strategies: thanking, appreciation, repayment, recognition of imposition, apology, positive feeling, alerter, and other expressions which do not belong to the other categories. Each strategy is still composed of sub-strategies to differentiate the responses further.

Table 1
Cheng's (2005) Taxonomy of Gratitude Strategies

Strategies	Sub-Strategies	Example
1. Thanking	a. Thanking comprising simple thanking	"Thank you."
	b. Thanking by stating the favour	"Thank you for your help." "Thank you for your notice."
	c. Thanking and mentioning the imposition caused by the favor	"Thank you for helping me cleaning the room."
2. Appreciation	a. Using the word appreciation	"I appreciate it!"
	b. Using the word "appreciate" and mentioning the imposition caused by the favor	"I appreciate the time you spent with me."
3. Repayment	a. Offering services, food, etc.	"Next time is my turn."
	b. Feeling indebted	"I owe you one."
	c. Promising future self-improvement	"It won't happen again."
4. Recognition of imposition	a. By acknowledging the imposition	"I know you are not allowed to give me extra time."
	b. By stating or diminishing the need for the favor	"You shouldn't do that."
5. Apology	a. Using the apologizer words	"I am sorry."

	b. Using apology by stating the favor	"I am sorry for the problem I made."
	c. Expressing embarrassment	"I feel embarrassed."
	d. Criticizing oneself	"I am such a fool...")
6. Positive feeling	a. Expressing a positive reaction to a person	"You are a lifesaver."
	b. Expressing positive feeling to action	"This book was really helpful."
7. Other (Expressions that do not belong to the mentioned strategies)	a. "Here" statements	"Here you are."
	b. Small talk	
	c. Leave-taking	"Goodbye, have a nice day."
	d. Joking	
8. Alerter by using titles and names, an attention-getter		

Identity Theory. It was elaborated by Woodward (1997, cited in Blomquist, 2009) through her book titled, "Identity and Differences" that identity is a self-construction by establishing one's differences from the other. This theory presents two primary concepts presented about identity: identity and difference and identity and representation. In this study, the second idea (identity and representation) is adapted to explore how the pre-service teachers' gratitude strategies build their identities that deal with the representation. This aspect of the theory emphasizes the cultural identity of the language or linguistic choice manifested in both practices and symbolic symbols. Highlighting the cultural property of the theory in language use, representation supports individual and group identities. Since identity is established in both language and culture, she argues that such identities "are constantly changing in a social context and through symbolic systems (Blomquist, 2009, p. 11).

3. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative-quantitative study was participated by 22 pre-service teachers from various public and private colleges and universities in Cavite, a Southern Tagalog province in the south of Metro Manila, the Philippines. To complete their tertiary program requirements, they are required to have their in-service teaching training in the chosen or assigned schools in the community. Those who participated in this study majored in English, Filipino, Mathematics, Science, and Music, Arts, and Physical Education (MAPEH). Their program supervisor assigned each one of them to a cooperating teacher who served as his mentor in the early stage of their teaching training opportunities. During their pre-service training in a public junior high school, they were assigned to handle Grade 7 to Grade 10 students. Their ages were between 20 and 25.

The researcher employed the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) as a method of data collection in addressing the research goal, which is to determine the respondents' gratitude strategies as a way of building their identity. To gather more information and unlimited responses from the given scenarios, the researcher considered the respondents' social, cultural, and environmental influences. It comprises 15 different conditions that reflect different forms of gratitude-formulation scenarios like receiving a favor, congratulatory remarks, financial support, unexpected blessings or rewards, and receiving admiration. To address the given research questions, the researcher personally explained the nature and purposes of the study to the participants. They were then asked to imagine themselves in the given situation and respond accordingly based on their immediate reaction. With the participants' positive responses, they were given a copy of the DCT with specific scenarios

that elicited their linguistic responses specifically in expressing their gratitude to the different stated conditions. The data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire. Analyzing data, the researcher identified the respondents' gratitude strategies using Cheng's (2005) taxonomy. Responding to some ambiguous data concerning the respondents' thanking strategies as their way to build their identity as preservice teachers, an informal clarificatory interview was also used.

As part of validating responses, respondents' informal interviews further achieved reliability; raters assisted the researcher for the analysis and interpretation.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Pre-service Teachers' Gratitude Strategies

4.1.1. Taxonomy-Based Gratitude Strategies of the Respondents

Table 2.1
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Taxonomy-Based Gratitude Strategies of the Respondents

Strategies	Sub-Strategies	Frequency	Total F	Percentage	Total %
1. Thanking	a. Thanking comprising simple thanking	75	27	22.73%	38.5%
	b. Thanking by stating the favour	35		10.61%	
	c. Thanking and mentioning the imposition caused by the favor	17		5.16%	
2. Appreciation	a. Using the word appreciation	9	1	2.73%	3.34%
	b. Using the word "appreciate" and mentioning the imposition caused by the favor	2		0.61%	
3. Repayment	a. Offering services, food, etc.	3		0.91%	2.74%
	b. Feeling indebted	4		1.22%	
	c. Promising future self-improvement	2		0.61%	
4. Recognition of imposition	a. By acknowledging the imposition	1		0.30%	.6%
	b. By stating or diminishing the need for the favor	1		0.30%	

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5. Apology	a. Using the apologizer words	2	0.61%	1.51%
	b. Using apology by stating the favor	1	0.30%	
	c. Expressing embarrassment	1	0.30%	
	d. Criticizing oneself	1	0.30%	
6. Positive feeling	a. Expressing a positive reaction to a person	2	0.61%	1.51%
	b. Expressing positive feeling to action	3	0.91%	
7. Other (Expressions that do not belong to the mentioned strategies)	a. "Here" statements	1	0.30%	4.23%
	b. Small talk	1	0.30%	
	c. Leave-taking	1	0.30%	
	d. Joking	11	3.33%	
8. Alerter by using titles and names, and attention getter		2	0.61%	0.61%
Total		175	53.04%	

Table 2.1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of gratitude strategies of the respondents according to the taxonomy of Cheng. Among the strategies presented, it was revealed that thanking is the most dominantly expressed gratitude response. It has a total response of 127 (38.5%). It is categorized as follows: (a) thanking comprising simple thanking, 75 or 22.73%; (b) thanking by stating the favor, 35 or 10.61% and (c) thanking and mentioning the imposition caused by the favor, 17 or 5.16%). These sub-strategies can be exemplified by:

(a) Thanking comprising simple thanking

"Thanks."

"Thank you, Ma'am and Sir."

(b) Thanking by stating the favor

"Thank you very much for your care."

"Thank you for the offer."

(c) Thanking and mentioning the imposition caused by the favor

"Thank you, Ma'am / Sir, for accepting my recommendation letter."

"Thank you for helping me understand the lesson."

The frequency and percentage received by simple thanking, being the highest among the gratitude strategies, show the Filipino pre-service teachers' simplicity and directness in expressing gratitude on various occasions. The results also proved that, like many other speakers, the universality of thanking is also present among the study participants.

It is followed by 'other expressions,' which do not necessarily belong to the named categories. It has a total of 14 responses, or 4.23%. However, dominant among these other expressions is in the form of jokes. It received a total of 14 responses, or 3.33%. Most of those expressions were stated like the following: *"Bagay sa akin kahit anong kulay. Char!"*

(*Any dress color fits me, Char!*); “*Siempre, ako pa ba? Kaya kong gawin ang lahat!*” (*Of course, I can do everything.*) The use of jokes in expressing thanks becomes a new characteristic of the respondents who belong to the younger generations called millennials. While joking may affect the features of politeness, the respondents stated that behind the fluidity of their jokes is the sincerity of their gratitude expressions; hence, politeness must not be an issue. Therefore, their generation manifests a lighter way of treating different conditions that demand gratitude instead of the usual serious expression of sincerity.

It is followed by ‘Appreciation’ with a total frequency of 11 or 3.34%. It is categorized explicitly into (a) using the word appreciation, 9 or 2.73% and (b) using the word ‘appreciate’ and mentioning the imposition caused by the favor, 2 or 0.61%. The following statements exemplify these strategies:

(a) Using the word appreciation

“*Very much appreciated.*”

“*Thank you. I appreciate it.*”

“*Thank you! I really appreciate that.*”

(b) Using the word ‘appreciate’ and mentioning the imposition caused by the favor

“*I really appreciate all your hard works on the paper.*”

“*Appreciating your time and effort in helping me to solve my problem with my laptop.*”

‘Repayment,’ which is closely related to appreciation in terms of frequency and percentage distribution (9 or 2.74%) is categorized accordingly, (a) offering services, food, etc., 3 or 0.91%; (b) feeling indebted, 4 or 1.22%; and (c) promising future self-improvement, 2 or 0.61%. The respondents expressed this strategy through the following expressions or responses:

(a) Offering services, food, etc.

“*Let’s go inside and have some snacks.*”

“*Here’s 20 pesos; buy soda or anything you want.*”

(b) Feeling indebted

“*I owe you one.*”

“*I will return the favor in some other time.*”

(c) Promising future self-improvement

“*I’m willing to listen next time.*”

“*I will never disturb you next time.*”

Appreciation and repayment are both among the attitude of the Filipinos in a general way. In this study, those cultural behaviors are also manifested as one of the common ways of thanking. The respondents tend to show the preservation and continuity of the traditional values of sincere appreciation and repayment to whatever material or non-material things they received from anyone. Thus, these values can also be characterized as an everlasting showcase of maintaining positive relations with others. These strategies are commonly observed as “utang na loob” (debt of gratitude) as one of Filipinos’ popular characteristics. While the respondents do not commonly practice this, it still leaves a positive impact that the pre-teachers of the modern time still values this Filipino character.

Other gratitude strategies appeared to be less preferred responses of the respondents as they only received low frequency and percentage like ‘apology’ and ‘positive feelings’ which both received the frequency of 5 or 1.51%. In case of ‘apology’, it is expressed through (a) using the apologizer words, 2, or 0.61%; (b) using apology but stating the favour, 1 or 0.30%; (c) expressing embarrassment, 1 or 0.30%; and (d) criticizing oneself, 1 or 0.30%. The following were noted as expressions of apology as a form of thanking.

- (a) Using apologizer words
"I'm sorry."
"Sorry."
- (b) Using apology but stating the favor
"I'm sorry for the damage I've caused."
- (c) Expressing embarrassment
"How embarrassing!"
- (d) Criticizing oneself
"I'm such a fool."

Apologizing appears to be less frequent among the strategies because it also shows that this strategy has a special function as far as gratitude is a concern. Analyzing the instrument used, the use of apology remains a preferred means of the respondents, especially when they could cause certain damage or troubles. 'Positive feeling,' having the same frequency and percentage as 'apology' can be expressed through (a) expressing a positive reaction to a person, 2 or 0.61% and (b) expressing positive feeling to action, 3 or 0.91%. The respondents expressed 'positive feeling' through the following:

- (a) Expressing a positive reaction to a person
"You saved my life."
"You are a blessing from heaven."
- (b) Expressing positive feeling to action
"This can help me survive."
"Malaking tulong sa akin to." (This is an excellent help to me.)

Finally, the 'recognition of imposition' serves as the least among the gratitude strategies with only having two responses or 0.60%. These are categorically expressed through (a) acknowledging the imposition, 1 or 0.30%, and (b) stating or diminishing the need for a favor, 1 or 0.30%. These are shown in the following responses:

- (a) By acknowledging the imposition
"I understand you're busy also."
- (b) By stating or diminishing the need for the favor
"Hindi mo dapat 'yan ginagawa." (You shouldn't do that.)

Again, these last two strategies appeared to be the least among the respondents' preferred responses as it directly contradicts the simplicity of the Filipinos in thanking. However, it was reiterated by the respondents that behind their simplicity of expressions is the sincerity of their feelings to even express themselves not in words, but by thoughts and actions.

Generally, the results show the Filipino pre-service teachers' linguistic choice's simplicity and directness, especially in their strategies of saying "thanks." However, it remains visible that the culture of "utang na loob" (debt of gratitude) is highly expressed in "appreciation" and "repayment" strategies. The dominant expression of simple thanking is parallel to the Iranian's linguistic conventions of expressing their gratitude, especially among elementary and intermediate respondents (Yasami & Rastegar, 2014). In contrast, Canadian respondents prefer the use of "minimizing the favor," "expressing appreciation," and "expressing pleasure." These results have been correlated to the common expressions used in American English, British English, and Irish English. In the same study, "returning thanks" and "acknowledging thanks" are among the least strategies Canadians use to express gratitude. Although this study used Aijmer's (1996) classification, it still proves that the participants "made use of a considerable number of linguistic realization forms" (Farenkia,

2012, p. 9). True enough, while speech acts possess their universality, they still vary across languages and cultures. Hence, developing awareness of explicit and implicit cultural differences must fully understand the speakers' intention in any language (Fahey, 2005).

4.1.2. Non-Taxonomy-Based Gratitude Strategies

Table 2.2
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Gratitude Responses
(Non-Taxonomy-Based) of the Respondents

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
No response / Silence	51	15.45%
Non-agreement / Non-acceptance (Scale Down) and Reassignment	19	5.76%
Request Interpretation	2	0.61%
Total	72	21.82%

Aside from the strategies and sub-strategies in the gratitude taxonomy, it is also significant to know that the respondents can also produce other expressions or even non-verbal expressions of thanking. Table 2.2 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of other gratitude responses of the respondents. These strategies are not categorically included in the taxonomy used in this study.

Primary to that is the 'no response' strategy. Even if the latter is not among the given strategies in Cheng's (2015) taxonomy, Filipino pre-service teachers opted to choose this with a total of 51 frequency (15.45%). Another non-inclusion to the given strategies, 'non-agreement or non-acceptance (scale down) and reassignment, were among the respondents' preferred response. In the Taxonomy of Compliment-Response by Herbart (1990) as employed by Yousefvand (2010), **scale down** is a form of non-agreement which specifically refers to the disagreement of the addressee with the compliment saying praise is overstated (e.g., 'Oh, it is really quite old.'). Also, **reassignment** is defined as an agreement with the compliment, but it is transferred to a third person or object itself (e.g., "Thanks, my mother made it for me.'). It has a total of 19 responses, or 5.76%. This chosen strategy was stated through the following responses:

"Of course not!"
"That's actually very cheap."
"Oh, really? It's already old."
"It is because of you."

Finally, the use of 'request interpretation' was also identified by the respondents. According to Herbart's Model (1990, cited in Yousefvand, 2010), **request interpretation** tends the addressee to interpret the compliment as a request (e.g., 'You want to borrow it?'). This strategy received only 2 or 0.61%. Such a strategy was expressed through the following responses;

"Gusto mo ba?" (Do you like it?)
"Interesado ka?" (Are you interested?)

The results show that the respondents would remain silent in expressing gratitude, but unlike any other cultural interpretation of silence, they stated that silence is always meaningful and deep. Most of the time, their silence to the received favor, appreciation, or reward is characterized by shyness because of the overwhelming feelings that silence becomes their immediate reply instead of verbal expressions. Silence, in its respect, still possesses a "meaning and function" (Sifianou, 1997, Agyekum, 2002, Nakane, 2007, Ephratt

2008 cited in Alagözlüa & Sahin, 2011) depending on the involved speakers, the topic and the culture (Alagözlüa & Sahin, 2011). Highlighting Roman Jakobson's communicative model (1960), silence "is an iconic affective way of expressing emotions in the emotive function as a linguistic sign" (Ephratt, 2008, p. 1909). While silence produces much meaning in different cultural perspectives, it still leaves unfavorable implications, especially in a political frame as it claims to cause anxiety for the state (Guillaume, 2018).

4.1.3. Combination Strategies

Table 2.3
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Gratitude Strategies (Combination) of the Respondents

Combination	Examples	Frequency	Percentage
Thanking + Repayment	Thank you. I owe you one.	7	2.12%
Apology + Explanation / Defensive Mechanism / Alibi / Excuses / Repayment	I'm sorry. (Explanation)	16	4.87%
Doubt / Questions + Thanking + Repayment	Are you sure? Thank you. I will give it back to you.	11	3.33%
Thanking + Gratification / Self-fulfilment / Appreciation	Thank you. I'm glad you liked it / Nice to hear that. / I'm happy to have you.	9	2.73%
Thanking + Rewarding / Blessing	Thank you. God bless you. Thank you. I'll treat you.	9	2.73%
Thanking + Apology / Regret / Refusal / Rejection	Thank you, but sorry I will not buy it.	8	2.42%
Thanking + Praise Upgrade	Thanks. It's really beautiful to me.	8	2.42%
Thanking + Embarrassment / Excuses	Thanks. How embarrassing!	3	0.91%
Thanking + Asking Favour / Requesting	Thank you. Can you wipe it for me?	4	1.22%
Thanking + Words of Encouragement / Praises / Return / Expectations	Thanks + You are such a blessing, + I will return it as soon as I have.	8	2.42%
Total		83	25.17%

Like the 'no response' category or strategy, there were also various combinations of gratitude strategies from the responses. Among the combination of the gratitude strategies, the use of apology + explanation / defensive mechanism/alibi/excuses/repayment received the highest frequency and percentage (16 or 4.87%). It was followed by 'doubt / question+ thanking + repayment (11 or 3.33%).

Other combinations made were 'thanking + gratification / self-fulfilment / appreciation and 'thanking + rewarding / blessing. Both formulas have a frequency of 9 or 2.73%. Closely related to that are the following gratitude formulas: 'thanking + apology / regret / refusal / rejection'; 'thanking + praise upgrade' and 'thanking + words of encouragement / praise / return / expectations.' These received the frequency of 8 or 2.42%. It was followed by 'thanking + repayment (7 or 2.12%). Also, 'thanking + asking favor / requesting' was used by the respondents. Finally, 'thanking + embarrassment/excuses' was also formulated. While most of the respondents choose simple thanking, still a good frequency and percentage toward various combinations of expressions further resulted in a

positive cultural and relational relationship with and among others. It also shows that a simple 'thank you' is not enough without further expressing what they feel. Hence, language manipulation remains an important way to deliver the message depending on the purpose or intention and the situation.

While combination strategies show relatively lower in the frequency and percentage distribution compared to the taxonomy-based strategies, the pre-service teachers' creativity in constructing their formula in expressing thanks is also evident. These strategies are connected to the situations, relation to the recipient, culture, values, and language. Cehan's (2010) paper also showed that combined strategies in expressing thanks, used commonly as pre-closing or closing marker in classroom discourse, are also minimally used in Romania's analyzed textbooks.

Table 2.4
Summary of the Gratitude Strategies

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1. Taxonomy-Based Strategies	175	53.04%
2. Non-Taxonomy-Based Strategies	72	21.82%
3. Taxonomy-based Combination Strategies	83	25.17%
Total	330	100%

Table 2.4 shows the summary of the gratitude strategies of the respondents. This includes the taxonomy-based gratitude strategies, non-taxonomy-based gratitude strategies, and the pre-service teachers' combination strategies in various situations. Among the classified strategies, the taxonomy-based strategies have the highest frequency and percentage. It has a total of 175 frequencies, or 53.05%. The combination strategies follow it with a frequency of 83 (25.17%). The lowest frequency and percentage but still closer to combination strategies are the non-taxonomy-based gratitude strategies expressed through 'no response' at all, 'non-agreement / non-acceptance / scale down and reassignment' strategies with a total of 72 or 21.82%.

The taxonomy on the expressions of gratitude of Cheng (2005) remains instrumental in analyzing how the respondents thank even if there is a tendency of the speakers to produce other strategies. Indeed, the production of such expressions is just affected by the nature of the event and the integrity of the favors or benefits received from the others. The study conducted by Dalilan (2012), which examined the thanking strategies among Indonesian learners, revealed that the participants expressed their gratitude from simple to complex strategies. Accordingly, the results are affected by different contexts of the given situations, such as social status, indebtedness, and breaking promises. Additionally, it is also notable that this speech act is influenced by the degree of the situations, from informality to formality, and the kind of relationships between or among the participants, such as friendships.

4.2 Gratitude as an Approach to Building Pre-Service Teacher's Professional Identity. Thanking, as "an illocutionary act by the speaker as a response to the other participant's previous act, is a communication act used to express different forms of gratitude, appreciation and other language functions like complimenting, and even apologizing. In the end, a simple thanking is not just a form of expression, but its cordial use preserves politeness and friendliness in social relations. Its simplicity, however, remains only in a linguistic form, but its pragmatic function shows a more complicated use because of its socio-cultural values that form the identity of the speaker's language (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1986; Eisenstein & Bodman, 1993; Leech, 1983; Siregar, 2011, cited in Dalilan, 2012).

Like others, thanking in the Philippine context is among those measurements of one's value system, especially in showing respect and debt of gratitude. With the Filipino high regard for education, Filipino culture also demands this act highly in the education sector where teachers play as the role model of the learners, not just in academic advancement, but most significantly, in behavioral and moral development. In this present study, the participants' gratitude strategies are predominantly taxonomy-based simple thanking, non-taxonomy-based combination strategies, and silence or no response strategy.

Primarily, the simplicity of the thanking reflects pre-service Filipino teachers' cultural and linguistic directness and simplicity of expressions. This is proven that "thank you" or "thanks" is equivalent to an overflowing debt of gratitude behind short and simple responses to the favor, appreciation, praise, etc. that they received from the speaker. Accordingly, "thank you" as an act cannot be measured by lengthy statements of gratitude because its impact remains in its plainness and sincerity of expressions.

Interestingly, the use of combined strategies from Cheng's (2005) taxonomy also appeared, although the distribution of frequency and percentage is relatively low compared to simple thanking. The combined strategies are mostly expressed in terms of unexpected favors involving material and non-material support, especially in the most challenging times in the speakers' lives. It looks like that behind the participants' direct and simple formula in expressing gratitude, they tend to be experimental in creating linguistic functions and formula when they are in emotional situations affected by special favors, wish or prayer grants, unexpected blessings and appreciations.

Finally, it is also notable that the participants' no-reaction strategy or silence also appear among their thanking strategies. Culturally, this appears to support the simple thanking as Filipinos tend to remain silent as an expression of deep appreciation and even awkwardness to the favors received from others. According to some participants, they tend to be shy or embarrassed because they feel that they do not deserve such kindness, especially during unexpected situations and times. Filipino communication style is characterized by Scoppe (2017) to be indirect, diplomatic, and humble to avoid arrogance and to induce "hiya" (embarrassment). This identity characterizes the Filipino language and culture. It was further stressed that "hiya," which appears in their silence or no reaction strategy, means "deeper level it refers to one's sense of self, propriety, and respect" (para. 9).

Hence, Filipino pre-service service teachers, despite being millennials, remain linguistically and culturally attached to the Filipino identities. Through gratitude strategies, this study proves that the participants' language serves as an indicator of identity as future teachers as they interact in different contexts where expressions of gratitude are expected to be produced. Their simple thanks can also be diverted to creative ones depending on the situations and the degree of relation to other participants in the discourse or communication act. This proves Woodward's (1997, cited in Blomquist, 2009, p. 11) theory that such representation "is constantly changing in a social context and symbolic system." Hence, their identities remain despite the public clamor of the changing values of the younger generations. Language may change from time to time, but their identity as Filipinos strongly support its continuity to preserve the endeared values. Hence, the educational system can still trust them as future educators of young learners.

5. CONCLUSION

Thanking strategies are not novel in speech acts; however, with the fast-changing life styles that affect human practices, values, and beliefs, including language use, it is appropriate that researchers update themselves in the progress or changes of any linguistic features, especially its pragmatic form. The expression of thanking is a universal language with different faces, values, and impacts to both the speakers and the receivers. Its differences, aside from the language variations in every part of the world, are affected mainly by the differences of the speakers' occasions, intentions, and implied meanings of the

speakers and level of understanding to the speakers' pragmatic functions and both the speakers' language and the addressee. In this study, the Filipino pre-service teachers still observe the simplicity of thanking strategies; combination strategies appear only in selected situations like receiving unexpected favors and rewards like financial support and receiving effusive appreciations. Still, others do a no-response strategy or silence, especially if they feel awkward or shy about the received favors. The results prove that the participants' linguistic choice in expressing their gratitude values politeness in preserving human relations and cultural, linguistic patterns.

Hence, the respondents' view of themselves as millennial pre-service teachers can also serve as their way to establish their own identity as community members. Since they are preparing for their future as educators, the opposing contexts must be seriously considered in achieving the challenges of education in meeting the demands toward progress and development. The respondents are also in good standing to identify the mixture of the tradition with modernity fluency. Again, this includes language use, such as an expression of thanks on every occasion.

Interestingly, this study explores the participants' gratitude strategies to establish their identities as future educators. Hence, the study revealed that despite the strong clamor and doubts of the past generations regarding the younger generations' changing values, they can still be trusted as strong generations in continuing the Filipinos' highly-valued practices. This appears in their linguistic choice and communicative interactions that mirror cultural identities. Thus, language, culture, and identity are interrelated and closely linked to each other and cannot ignore their overwhelming influences on communication styles. Indeed, the differences of the communication behavior is heavily influenced by the cultural background of the speaker or the participant (Torres, 2020). Finally, it is suggested that in order to establish the role and impact of language in building identity, future studies are encouraged by focusing on other specific verbal actions like apologizing, giving and responding to complimentary, expressing congratulations, and others that would elicit linguistic and socio-cultural patterns.

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About the Author

Juland Dayo Salayo teaches English and Research at the University of Santo Tomas – Senior High School. He earned his Master in Educational Management from Polytechnic University of the Philippines. Currently, he is writing his dissertation in Critical Language Pedagogy for his PhD in English Language Education (ELE) at the Philippine Normal University – Manila. His research interests include Sociolinguistics, Second Language Writing, Critical Writing, Transitivity Analysis and Critical Language Pedagogy.