

## **PROPOSITIONAL AND PRAGMATIC DISCREPANCIES OF GRATITUDE BEHAVIOUR IN ENGLISH AND BULGARIAN DEBATE SHOWS**

**Deyana PENEVA**

**Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, Bulgaria**

**Abstract:** *The article focuses on the communicative acts of gratitude, when displayed in a debate interactive format, demonstrated by interlocutors who are native speakers of English and Bulgarian. It further considers the direct and indirect utterances preferred by the two groups of speakers with respect to the exploited performative entries (grateful, gratitude, thank, thankful, thanks, appreciate) in English and their variants in Bulgarian (blagodarya, blagodaren, blagodarnost, otsenyavam, tsenya). The paper mainly dwells on the semantic differences identified in the comparative analysis between the two sets of performative entries and the discrepancies which occur at a locutionary level (prepositional and propositional), which refer to the relations between the benefactor, the beneficiary and the beneficence. Additionally, the indirect acts of gratitude are also examined, which accompany the performative utterances and shape the illocutionary (intended) perspective of the exact individual chain of gratitude expressions. There are certain disparities, primarily in the choice of indirect utterances (indicating positive emotions, expressing wishes, indicating the need for the beneficence, etc.) and the direction of illocutionary force, either expressive, commissive or/and assertive.*

**Keywords:** *illocutionary force, locutionary attitude, propositional attitude, pragmatics, semantics*

### **Introduction**

During the last two decades, it has been possible to monitor an intriguing observation into the development of language use, namely in the sphere of language interaction. As is common, conversational turn-taking is a serious and necessary line of work which requires a set of rules and conventions which are dependent on the form and content of the utterances. When realized in different cultural environments, similar conversational exchanges can render pragmatic meanings which may deviate in structure and function. Among the linguistic means of routinized behaviour patterns, the expressions of gratitude occupy a conspicuous position. Under the moral principle of indebtedness, interlocutors typically associate gratitude with the feeling of guilt. In regards, gratitude expressions are conventionally provided in the form of declarative sentences having an expressive nature, that is derived from the intended meaning of the utterance, or the so-called illocutionary point. A principal

function of the acts of gratitude and their usage is to make interaction tactful and polite as well as inoffensive.

The present article aims to illustrate some differences in the locutionary component and certain pragmatic discrepancies in the illocutionary component in the speech acts of gratitude in English and Bulgarian in regard to two corpora of data from current affairs shows.

### **Previous research into the field**

There are certain prescriptive as well as ingrained principles of social etiquette that the communicative acts of gratitude strictly follow, in that the latter are required and applicable in almost every cultural environment when an act of benevolence has taken place. The use of routinized forms of politeness is considered by linguists (Aston 1995; Locher, Watts 2005; Arundale 2006) as causing less discrediting effect to the speaker and are less face-threatening (Eelen 2001) as they are expected and desired by the hearer. There are standardized linguistic structures, which share common propositional and pragmatic features in a majority of languages, though not overlapping completely due to being utilized in different socio-cultural settings. The focal point of any speech act of gratitude, as in all other types of communicative utterances, is to be taken sincere and regarded as genuine. That is the main requisite which can guarantee the successful performance of an utterance, making it either felicitous or infelicitous (Coulmas 1981; Clankie 1993). Socially, gratitude communicative utterances emphasize a set of mandatory features which comprises the element of obligation, the degree of indebtedness, the level of imposition, the aspect of social status and social distance as interpersonal commitment. The abovementioned criteria or characteristics can be verbalized:

- by means of a direct performative entry individually (e.g. *Now I'd like to yield the floor to Mr Louis to equip his positions on the matter. – Much appreciated, Mrs Daheley.*);
- by means of a direct performative entry coupled with another action indicating:
  - the benefactor (e.g. *I've been very impressed with the coordinated effort to this point. Thank you to Dr. Barkley and his affiliates across the state offering their help and support.*);
  - the act of favour/benevolence (e.g. *I am grateful to you and your show by giving me the opportunity to raise my concerns in front of the public.*)

- by means of an indirect utterance of gratitude illustrating:
  - positive attitude (e.g. *Thank you. That was extremely supportive and considerate of you and the local healthcare services minding the fatal incidence in the last few month.*);
  - an act of apology (e.g. *I owe you a lot. Sorry for making you drill down the evidence. I couldn't do it myself.*);
  - an act of retaliation/requital (e.g. *I really appreciate your immediate actions. I promise on behalf of my team that you will get a constructive feedback in a couple of weeks.*);
  - an act of expressing need for favour (e.g. *The small-size business establishments in the Country of Coventry really needed this grant booster for which I can truly express my gratitude to the mayor.*)

Among the aspects in which gratitude utterances can deviate from one another, there are four based on their intended prerequisites:

1. an act of gratitude for a promise, offer or invitation (in advance or afterwards);
2. an act of gratitude for gifts, services (for material favours);
3. an act of gratitude for wishes, compliments, information (for immaterial goods);
4. an act of gratitude that implies indebtedness.

It is obvious that the object of gratitude or the reason for thanking someone for something varies according to the scale of obligation and the magnitude of imposition. Different objects of gratitude demand different utterance ordering, that is, a different set of gratitude expressions. A further obstacle can be the extra-linguistic qualities of the interpersonal relation among the interactants. In regards, the social variables along with the inherent attributes of the object of gratitude work cooperatively as to shape the most appropriate sequence of gratitude strategies demonstrated in a given speech situation (Jacobsson 2002; Cheng 2005).

When we examine the occurrence of gratitude utterances cross-culturally in similar contexts, but demonstrated by two different language groups of participants, propositional and pragmatic divergences emerge.

### **Research questions**

This paper examines two corpora of data, British English and Bulgarian, which comprise utterances of gratitude extracted from 2 popular debate and discussion TV shows in the two languages, respectively, namely 10 consecutive live emissions of *BBC Free Speech* and *Referendum* on BNT 1 (from February to April, 2022). Both TV shows share a common current affairs format of presenting ongoing problematic issues, locally and globally. In both

sets of data the object of investigation is the direct strategies of gratitude, including the performative entries (*thank, appreciate, gratitude* in English, *blagodarya, otsenyavam/tsenya* in Bulgarian) as well as their derivative forms, and the indirect strategies identified in the two corpora.

The case study aims to collect, classify and examine the two sets of gratitude speech acts focusing basically on the distinctions that may occur in the locutionary attitude of the performative entries favoured by the native speakers of English and the native speakers of Bulgarian, as well as on the pragmatic discrepancies derived from the data analysis. We aim to answer the following questions:

1) What are the deviations in the semantic and propositional content in both sets of verbs?

2) How do the native speakers of Bulgarian differ from the native speakers of English in their pragmatic behaviour as determined by expressing gratitude regarding different contextual factors and variables?

3) What are the differences in the manner of politeness between the two groups of interactants?

## **Methods**

There has been a recent tendency towards multi-method examinations in linguistic research which tend to extend the narrow scope of analytical norms in support of the size of data that could be extracted and analysed by using more than one method (Byrne 2002; Richards 2009). Since the current paper is of a comparative nature, a two-sided methodology is exploited in collecting, classifying and investigating the material, which first applies an inductive and exploratory approach of how meanings and functions of different linguistic structures and patterns collaborate in the given corpora as expressed in a conversational format (given the socio-cultural variables of social distance, the level of imposition and indebtedness). Once the *qualitative research* has been done, the second stage is ready to take place, in that, the linguistic features must be categorized, counted and explored. That is the *quantitative approach* (Blum-Kulka, House, Kasper 1989; Roever 2011).

For the purposes of the research, all identified direct and indirect speech acts of gratitude were extracted from the video material and manually transferred in a written format.

## **Data analysis**

The data include 148 cases of direct and indirect gratitude expressions from the British TV show (78 and 70, respectively) contrasted to a total of 136 (92 and 44) utterances extracted from the TV show in Bulgarian.

As regards the direct expressions, the following list of performative entries were identified:

➤ from the English corpus:

*Thank you*

*Thank you for* + the beneficence

*Thanks to* + the benefactor

*I would like to express my thanks/gratitude to* + the benefactor

*I am grateful to/I am thankful to* + the benefactor + *for* + the beneficence

*I appreciate* + the beneficence

*I appreciate* + *that* + account of the beneficence

*Appreciated*

➤ from the Bulgarian corpus:

*Blagodarya za* (for) + the beneficence

*Blagodarya na* (to) + the benefactor + *za* (for) + the beneficence

*Blagodarya che* (that) + account of the beneficence

*Blagodaren sam* + *na* (to) + the benefactor + *za* (for) + the beneficence

*Bih iskal da blagodarya na* + the benefactor + *za* (for) + beneficence

*Otsenyavam* + account of the beneficence

*Tsenya* + the benefactor's opinion

The expressions from both corpora were divided into a) utterances of thanking (*thank, thanks, thankful*) in English and (*blagodarya, blagodaren*) in Bulgarian; b) utterances of gratitude (*gratitude, grateful*) in English and (*blagodaren*) in Bulgarian; c) utterances of appreciation (*appreciate* in English; *otsenyavam/tsenya* in Bulgarian).

In terms of indirect expressions, the following list of utterances were observed:

- expressing positive feelings;
- recognition of imposition;
- expressing wishes;
- offer of repayment;
- recognizing the need for the beneficence.
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Additionally, the data were grouped in **3 context-dependent situations** selected on the basis of their occurrence and frequency which call for an act of gratitude for:

1. receiving a warm welcome (invitations) and as a closing signal of a conversation;
2. receiving a compliment;
3. receiving information previously requested (services rendered, offers, promises).

We must also state that all interactants in the two debate shows share similar socio-cultural variables as they represent the verbal behaviour of people who are renown and proficient in their area of expertise (doctors,

lawyers, engineers, political analysts, etc.). That is, the majority of interactants, if not all, come from almost identical social environments and reveal equal parameters in regard to the social factors of social rank and status. It should also be taken into account that, since the database is extracted from a debate and discussion show format, the relationship between the participants does not ask for any personal favours or more intimate connections, which, on its part, predetermines the high level of social distance.

The table below illustrates the qualitative values of the different types of gratitude expressions:

Type of expression	English corpus		Bulgarian corpus	
	number of utterances	percent	number of utterances	percent
<i>Direct expressions</i>				
thanking	43	29.05%	76	55.88%
gratitude	11	7.43%	10	7.35%
appreciation	24	16.21%	6	4.41%
	<b>78</b>	<b>52.7%</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>67.65%</b>
<i>Indirect expressions</i>				
positive attitude	37	25.00%	17	12.5%
recognition of imposition	13	8.78%	9	6.62%
expressing wishes	13	8.78%	4	2.94%
recognizing the need for the beneficence	3	2.08%	7	5.15%
repayment	4	2.70%	7	5.15%
	<b>70</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>32.35%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100%</b>

**CONTEXT 1: expressing an act of gratitude after receiving a warm welcome / as a closing signal of a conversation**

(1) (Eng):

*Interlocutor 1 (benefactor-presenter): Mr Blackman, pleasure to have you on. We hope you will shed some light on the lessons the world can learn from the aggressive operations of Russia in Ukraine.*

*Interlocutor 2 (beneficiary – a MP): Thank you for the invitation, Fareed. There's no place that I'd rather be right now than right here in your studio. Highly appreciated.*

(2) (Bg):

*Interlocutor 1 (benefactor-presenter): Radvame se, che ste v studioto, prof. Petrov. Chuvstvame se privilegiovani, che se saglasihte da uchastvate tochno v nasheto predavane. (Eng.: We are glad that you are in the studio, prof. Petrov. We feel privileged that you agreed to take part exactly in our show.)*

**Interlocutor 2 (beneficiary – a professor in cardiology):** *Sardechno blagodarya za pokanata. Priyatno e da si chast ot diskusiya, kasaeshta nabolyal problem. Blagodarya na ekipa i spetsialistite v oblastta.* (Eng.: I thank you kindly for the invitation. It is nice to be part of a discussion on a hot topic.)

Common to both sets of data in the event of conversational openings and as a closing signal is that there can be a moment of potentially high strain between the participants. A gratitude expression may be effective in reducing the tension. Additionally, it serves as a mark of politeness in an extremely formal interactive environment functioning as part of a greeting.

In analysing the differences in the propositional attitude communicated in the case of receiving a warm welcome, several deviations were observed in the comparative data examination. Though, as a whole, the locutionary perspective remains stable in both sets of direct expressions due to overlapping of semantic meanings as expressed by the performative entries, there are some differences in the choice of expressions preferred by English speakers and Bulgarian speakers.

Three direct expressions of gratitude predominate in the English corpus in the given contextual setting, namely, ***I am grateful to*** + *the benefactor* + ***for*** + *the beneficence*; ***thank you for*** + *the beneficence*; ***I appreciate that*** + *account of the beneficence*. In contrast, the prevailing direct utterances in Bulgarian are as follows: ***blagodarya za*** + *the beneficence*; ***blagodarya, che*** + *account of the beneficence*; ***blagodarya na*** + *the benefactor* + ***za*** + *the beneficence*.

In terms of the English data, the most utilized expressions become explicit with three different performative entries, *grateful*, *thank* and *appreciate* which, in comparison with *blagodarya* in Bulgarian, show deviations in propositional logic semantics. While the adjective *grateful* derives from Latin with the meaning “pleasing to the mind, agreeable”, the verb *thank* is of Proto-Germanic origin meaning “think, feel of reward” (*Cambridge dictionary*). The translation variant of *thank* into Bulgarian is the verb *blagodarya*, which comprises two lexical morphemes: *-blag-* and *-dar-*, with the former relating to goodness, kindness, gentleness, pleasant to the mind while the latter is associated with something given as a present or gift. The word “blag” is of Proto-Bulgarian origin with the meaning “good, nice”, while “dar” has Indo-Iranian roots, meaning ‘gift’ (*Bulgarian etymology dictionary*). In a complex-word formation they refer to the meaning of giving goodness / showing kindness as an act of goodwill; feeling thankful to a person who was considerate or concerned to do a favour or help in need. Indeed, the performative entry in Bulgarian seems to be a partial combination of the semantic attitude of *grateful* and *thankful*. However, the entry in Bulgarian

reveals a broader sense in comparison with the entries in English as the lexical meanings of *grateful* and *thank* are intertwined into the denotation of the word in Bulgarian. Conversely, *blagodarya* cannot entirely depict the expressive character and the internal complicity intrinsic in *grateful* (Kissine 2007; Pablos-Ortega 2010).

In analysing the verb *appreciate* with the meaning “to set a price to; to esteem, to value highly” (from Latin) in comparison with its translation variants in Bulgarian, two verbs emerge, *tsenya* and *otsenyavam* sharing the same root morpheme. They derive from the ProtoBulgarian verb *tsenati* with the meaning ‘to respect’ (Bulgarian etymology dictionary). While *otsenyavam* comprises a larger range of meanings, namely:

- to evaluate or rate;
- to judge or provide assessment;
- to realize and acknowledge the value /the worth of;
- to measure,

*tsenya* prioritizes the aspect of giving value to, or appreciating, a favour, an act of benevolence or kindness recognizing its worth and showing respect. In fact, what we observe in the semantics of *appreciate* is illustrated in Bulgarian via two entries with narrower lexical meanings, which, in turn, is just the opposite of the *grateful/thank* - *blagodarya* comparative case.

From another point of view, in the first two gratitude expressions in English (Context 1) (***I am grateful to*** + *the benefactor* + ***for*** + *the beneficence*; ***thank you for*** + *the beneficence*) the beneficiary first addresses the benefactor, then indicates the beneficial act. In the case of *grateful*, the beneficiary “I” is grateful to some benefactor for something the latter has done that was considered favourable/positive for the speaker (beneficiary).

(3) (***beneficiary - a doctor***): *I am grateful to D-r Locke at this moment for inviting me here today. That is a sign of genuine respect and honour for me.*

(4) (***beneficiary – an economics analyst***): *I feel flattered that you called me to participate in the show. Thank you for that.*

Since the link between the performative entry and benefactor’s indication is realized via the preposition “to”, the attitude communicated by this type of reference applies to a locutionary speech act of prepositional character (McAlear 2012), whereas in the case of the performative entry *thank*, which is succeeded by the object pronoun “you” (denoting the benefactor), it precedes the acknowledgement of the beneficence. In both cases we observe a stress on the importance of mentioning the benefactor first, while the indication of the beneficial act appears second. In contrast, the gratitude entry in Bulgarian (the verb *blagodarya*) is preferably exploited followed by the



preposition “za” (*for*) or the conjunction “che” (*that*), which both refer to some state of affairs the beneficiary finds favourable:

(5) (**beneficiary – a doctor**): *Blagodarya za obazhdaneto da vzema uchastie vav vasheto predavane. Beshe mnogo priyatno, che se obadihte tochno na men.* (Eng.: *Thank you for calling me to take part in your show. It was very nice, that you called me specifically.*)

That type of expressed attitude is typical of the locutionary act of propositional character (Roberts, Telech 2019). While the prepositional locutionary attitude is primarily three-sided, between the interactant 1 (the beneficiary), interactant 2 (the benefactor) and the beneficence, the propositional locutionary attitude is a two-sided relation between the beneficiary and some beneficial act. Unlike the propositional character, the prepositional attitude is an essentially interpersonal involvement, which, in turn, may induce something more specific oriented towards the benefactor. Propositional attitude, on the other hand, is better realized as adequate feedback to a favourable state of affairs (Carr 2013).

Another discrepancy emerges at a locutionary level. In the analysis of the propositional attitude of gratitude in the Bulgarian data, another sense has to be added, namely, the aspect of appreciation or contentment. To communicate that *blagodarya* “za” the invitation or *blagodarya* “che” I was invited to take part in the discussion is, indeed, to say I am pleased or I appreciate that you did so. On the other hand, the prepositional locution in the English *I am grateful to* goes beyond the aspect of appreciation and gladness. In fact, the aspect of some personal commitment or individual approach to the other interlocutor changes the locutionary perspective of the exact expression, for instance, to communicate gratitude directly to one of the debaters showing desire to reciprocate the favour/the act of beneficence.

The prevailing number of prepositional locutionary acts in the English corpus in comparison with the prevailing number of propositional locutionary acts in the Bulgarian corpus is related to a different interpretation of the notion of gratitude expressed by the native speakers of English and the native speakers of Bulgarian. While the former group emphasizes the more personal commitment when communicating gratitude, the latter stresses the act of appreciation, which is not always related to a beneficent act that the other interlocutor has done for the speaker (Peneva 2021).

From a different perspective, though the element of appreciation is conveyed in the expression *blagodarya za/che* in Bulgarian, it is not explicitly present in the performative verb. Conversely, that aspect is well noticeable in the English *I appreciate that* expression, where the performative entry *appreciate* plainly demonstrates the aspect of gladness and value. For example:

(6) (**beneficiary – a professor in law, benefactor – the presenter**): *I appreciate that you've specifically chosen me to guarantee for the adequate interpretation of the newly issued law. No doubt well-intentioned on your behalf, Mrs Bailey.*

What we actually observe in the comparative analysis of the semantics of the performative entries is that, while the entries in English are more concrete and narrow in meaning, conveying different gratitude attitudes, the performative entry in Bulgarian is just one, which cannot suggest a direct reference either to an act of appreciation, an act of gladness, or personal involvement, unless included in an utterance succeeded by reference to the beneficence or the benefactor. In fact, the semantic meaning of the entries in English overlap to a marked degree the locution of the utterance they are included in, which does not apply to the entry in Bulgarian.

As far as the pragmatic approach of gratitude goes, the verbal expression of gratitude should be considered sincere by the benefactor, but what actually stands for a sincere gratitude speech act is affected by the type of speech act, either expressive or commissive. In general, the speech act of gratitude is expressive, as it reflects the appreciative and grateful feelings that become explicit in a beneficiary. From the other side, the speech act of gratitude can be taken as commissive if the beneficiary commits him/herself to undertaking some future actions, which will be regarded felicitous or will express some dispositions that will be realized in the future, such as promises, offer of reciprocation. While direct gratitude expressions are primarily considered expressive, the indirect expressions accompanying the performative utterances can change the direction of the illocutionary aspect (Rintell, Mitchell 1989).

Within the category of indirect utterances, Context 1 points to a prevalence of implicit expressions “indicating positive feelings” in the English corpus as well as the incidence of utterances “expressing wishes”, which, on its part, contributes to the expressive character of the illustrated gratitude expressions.

(7) (**beneficiary – a professor in microbiology**): *I am grateful to all the team but I want to make a special mention to D-r Penne. Thank you, D-r Penne. I was pleasantly surprised by your cooperation and assistance.* (positive feelings towards the benefactor)

(8) (**beneficiary – a lawyer, benefactor – a prosecutor**): *I am grateful to Mr. Penrose for his kind reply and hope we'll be able to jointly operate in the future. That will be a privilege for me and my team.* (expressing wishes).

By comparison, Bulgarian interactants have opted for utterances “recognizing the need for the beneficence” with few cases communicating positive feelings. As the indirect acts of communicating positive feelings significantly add to the expressive nature of gratitude utterances, this can affect the less commissive force of the acts demonstrated by the native speakers of English. In contrast, Bulgarian interlocutors emphasize on the need for the beneficial act, which makes reference both to a commissive and an assertive illocutionary aspect. The interlocutor can state that a proposition is true (that is the assertive aspect) and s/he can also offer or promise that they will complete it in the future (commissive aspect).

(9) (**beneficiary – a mayor, benefactor – head of the fire brigade**): *Blagodarya, che se otzovahte na moite nastoyatelni molbi za pomosht v sluchaya s detsata, Beshe izklyuchitelno vazhno i nalozhitelno.* (Eng.: *Thank (you) that you responded to my entreaties for help in the case with children. It was extremely important and urgent.*) (expressive and assertive aspect)

(10) (**beneficiary – head of the police, benefactor - head of the hospital**): *Iskreno blagodarya za mignovennata reaktsiya. Nadyavam se, che nyama da se povtori i nyama da vi izpravi na nokti.* (Eng.: *I thank you sincerely for the immediate reaction. I hope, this will not happen again and will not put you on edge.*) (assertive and commissive aspect).

While the expressive character is present in all utterances, the assertive one is straightforward in the case of emphasis on the need for the favour, whereas the commissive aspect becomes obvious when the expression of gratitude (either direct or indirect) is a potential claim for an obligation of gratitude.

## **CONTEXT 2: expressing an act of gratitude after receiving a compliment**

Interestingly, the native speakers of English have opted for *Thank you for* + and *I appreciate* expressions expanding in an expression indicating the beneficence whereas the native speakers of Bulgarian have exploited mainly *Blagodaren sam za* (*I am grateful for*) and *Tsenya* expressions succeeded by either the account of the beneficial act or the benefactor’s opinion. Though both groups of participants show preference for mentioning the beneficence, this cannot be implied completely in expressions of gratitude of propositional character, as the succeeding indirect utterances can change the locutionary direction. In *Thank you for* and *I appreciate*, the expressive element is less distinct compared to *I am grateful to*, however the cognitive element is better manifested, in that it refers to certain judgements or beliefs (mostly culturally specific) which may recognize that an act of beneficence has actually occurred. In the case of *I appreciate*, since the expressions implies the element of

acknowledging the recognized value of the beneficence (the compliment), the emotive contour is even less noticeable. Additionally, the prevalence of indirect utterances of “recognition of imposition” and “expressing wishes” further emphasizes the act of favour rather than the beneficiary’s personal address to the benefactor. This is better illustrated in the examples:

(11) **Interlocutor 1 (benefactor-presenter):** *Mr Penne, thank you for expressing your concern and opinion as a professional and educated authority. That was indeed a rather detailed analysis on the matter.*

**Interlocutor 2 (beneficiary – a metallurgy specialist):** *I appreciate your kind words and recognize the value of your judgement. I wish you and all the specialists here would support me in the future, too. Thank you again.*

Conversely, the native speakers of Bulgarian, in using mostly the *Blagodaren sam za* expression, add to the more emotive contour of the gratitude utterance in contrast to *Thank you for*, as the performative entry bears a stronger affective element (affected by the lexical meaning of the performative), in that it calls for certain feelings and affection for the doer of the beneficence, namely feelings of gladness and joy as the thanker has benefited somehow from the thankee’s act of kindness. What is more, though in exploiting *Tsenya* expressions Bulgarian participants resemble the communicative behaviour of their English counterparts with respect to *I appreciate*, they do not completely overlap from a locutionary perspective. Explicitly, there is a propositional connection of the elements in the locution, but in observing the supportive indirect utterances it can be seen that they are benefactor-oriented, either by communicating “positive attitude to the benefactor”, or by “offering repayment”. For example:

(12) **Interlocutor 1 (benefactor - a specialist in pharmacy):** *Izklyuchitelnite Vi postizheniya v paralelnite prouchvaniya se okazaha izvanredno polezni. Strahotna rabota ste svarshili, Vie i vashiyat ekip.* (Eng.: Your outstanding achievements in parallel clinical surveys turned to be extremely useful. You and your team have done a great job.)

**Interlocutor 2 (beneficiary – a doctor):** *Tsenya, tova, koeto kazvate. Ot golyamo znachenie e za ekipa. Blagodarya za okazanata finansova podkrepa i se nadyavam, che shte vi iznenadame v nai-skoro vreme. Blagodarya otново.* (Eng.: I appreciate what you said. It is of great importance for the team. Thank you for the financial support and I hope that we will also surprise you very soon.)

Pragmatically, we observe again the same perspective with speech acts of gratitude in English presupposing an expressive illocutionary force and

slight hints of assertive attitude (in the case of stress on the imposition) in comparison with more commissive illocution illustrated in the Bulgarian corpus via the indirect acts of offering repayment.

**CONTEXT 3: expressing an act of gratitude after receiving information previously requested (services rendered, offers, promises)**

In both sets of data, the main criterion for choosing an adequate chain of gratitude utterances was related to the degree of indebtedness. The prevalent direct expressions in English are *I am thankful to*, followed by the benefactor which is further succeeded by the beneficence and *Appreciated* and *Thank you expressions*. In most cases, the indirect supporting utterances refer to the acts of recognition of imposition. For instance:

(13) (*beneficiary – a cardiologist to a professor*): *I am thankful to Prof. Patterson for the report he’s provided me with. It was extremely important and crucial for the case.* (recognition of imposition)

(14) (*beneficiary – head of a bank to the minister*): *The information received from the Minister was of main priority and can be a benchmark against other stock violations. Highly appreciated, Mr Garrison. Thank you again.*

On the other hand, *Blagodarya na + the benefactor + za (for) + the beneficence* and *Blagodarya, che* expressions gain prominence in the Bulgarian corpus with a dominance of indirect utterances of expressing need for the favour, for example:

(15) (*beneficiary – head of the district police to a deputy mayor*): *Blagodarya na G-n Kolev za predvaritelniya доклад. Tova beshe nalozhitelno i ne tarpeshe otlagane.* (Eng.: Thank you, Mr Kolev for the preliminary report. That was extremely necessary and could not be postponed.)

It is noteworthy that the most exploited expression in English *I am thankful to* in Context 3 bears a close resemblance to *I am grateful to*, though in terms of Bulgarian lexicology, they share identical semantic meanings when translated. However, while *thankful* implies the idea of spontaneity of a person conscious of a service/favour received, an automatic and routinized answer to an act of beneficence, *grateful* is typically associated with the aspect of appreciation and a continuous stream of being thankful, more expressive and personal (Peneva 2021). By contrast, Bulgarian participants have demonstrated inclination mostly towards the performative verb expressions.

Contrary to the results of the comparative analysis of Context 1 and Context 2, the locutionary aspect illustrated in the Bulgarian corpus is mostly related to the prepositional perspective whilst both prepositional and

propositional types of locution have been observed in the English corpus for Context 3.

Regarding the pragmatic discrepancies, the demonstrated gratitude utterances in English still support the expressive character of the speech act, while both the expressive and the assertive are intertwined within the preferred gratitude utterances in Bulgarian.

### **Results and key findings**

After examining the two sets of data, the following differences were found:

From the *locutionary perspective*:

- in general, the native speakers of English fell behind the native speakers of Bulgarian speakers in the use of direct expressions (78 compared to 92 cases);
- despite the slightly lower occurrence in direct expressions in English, the variety of performative structures is higher than in the Bulgarian corpus;
- certain differences were identified in the semantic meanings of the verb *thank* in English and *blagodarya* in Bulgarian, as well as in the adjective *thankful/grateful* and their counterpart in Bulgarian, *blagodaren*;
- the prepositional type of locution is prevalent in English, highlighting the benefactor, or his/her opinion;
- the propositional type of locution is distinct in the Bulgarian data, with the beneficial act being mentioned or underlined.

Regarding the *indirect expressions* and *illocutionary perspective*:

- the gratitude utterances in the English database outnumber the Bulgarian ones significantly (70 compared to 44 examples);
- the native speakers of English, when expressing gratitude, seem to put emphasis on communicating positive feelings which are benefactor-oriented as well as stressing the imposition and expressing wishes;
- the native speakers of Bulgarian tend to use mainly utterances indicating the need for the beneficence along with offering reciprocation;
- the expressive illocutionary perspective gains prominence in the English data;
- there are distinct elements of commissive and assertive illocutionary perspective in the Bulgarian corpus.

All in all, it could be assumed that the concept of emotion may present propositional and pragmatic differences. Whether the emotion of gratitude will lean towards recognition and appreciation (EC) or will tend to imply the idea

of gladness and obligation (BC), is primarily a cultural choice and specific to the two groups of speakers.

### **Conclusion**

The empirical observation, along with measuring the frequency of a specific linguistic form, can provide a solid basis for establishing the differences in the use of the communicative acts of gratitude in a comparative mode. The findings of this paper may help substantially both university students and researchers in the fields of pragmatics and cross-cultural speech acts phenomena with respect to the lexical and more practical uses of the speech act of gratitude when interpreted by different linguistic groups in a particular speech situation. In a broader sense, when the focus of attention has shifted in support of language use, knowledge of pragmatics gains momentum. This is an issue directly related to the communicative use of a language in a specific context by a specific group of interactants. This, in turn, is of central importance in developing communicative skills of foreign language learners.

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