DE GRUYTER

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Thank you for a lovely day! Contrastive Thanking in Textbooks for Teaching English and Spanish as Foreign Languages

Thank you for a lovely day! Una comparación del agradecimiento en los libros de textos para la enseñanza de inglés y de español como lenguas extranjeras

Abstract: Thanking, as other speech acts such as apologizing or requesting, can be performed in numerous contexts and, for their analysis, many crucial variables must be taken into consideration (eg. social distance, gender, age, etc.), which often are difficult to control. Besides these variables, speech acts are carried out in different situations, taking into account the culture in which they are performed. For example, thanking might be performed after alighting a bus in the UK, the USA or Australia, but this might not necessarily happen in Spain. The aim of the study on which this paper is based, in to explore thanking contrastively in British English and in Peninsular Spanish from a pragmatic viewpoint, by looking at specific independent variables: the context and situation in which this speech act is performed, the relationship between the interlocutors who perform it, which includes social power and distance, and the reason for expressing gratitude. For the purpose of this investigation, a corpus of 128 textbooks (64 for each language) for the learning and teaching of Spanish and English as foreign languages was used. It is important to note that, although these corpora are built on prefabricated dialogues and these can be regarded as abstractions of reality, the communicative situations found in the textbooks are aimed at depicting exchanges and linguistic patterns representing what naturally occurs in real conversations in both cultures.

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Resumen: El agradecimiento, al igual que otros actos de habla como las disculpas o las peticiones, se lleva a cabo en contextos variados y, por lo tanto, para su análisis es necesario tener en cuenta numerosas variables (la distancia social, el sexo, la edad, etc.) que son, a menudo, difíciles de controlar. Junto a estas variables, los actos de habla se llevan a cabo en diferentes situaciones teniendo en cuenta una cultura específica. Por ejemplo, se suelen dar las gracias al conductor después de bajarnos del autobús en el Reino Unido, en los Estados Unidos o en Australia, pero es un acto que no suele realizarse en España. El objetivo del estudio que aquí se presenta es explorar el agradecimiento desde un punto de vista pragmático-contrastivo en el inglés británico y el español peninsular. Para llevarlo a cabo, se han tenido en cuenta una serie de variables independientes específicas: el contexto y la situación en la que se lleva a cabo el acto de agradecer, la relación entre los interlocutores (la distancia y el poder social) y el motivo por el que se expresa el agradecimiento. En esta investigación se empleó un corpus de 128 libros de texto (64 para cada lengua) destinados a la enseñanza de español e inglés como lenguas extranjeras. Es importante señalar que, aunque este corpus de análisis se ha construido a partir de diálogos prefabricados y que éstos pueden considerarse abstracciones de una realidad, el objetivo de las situaciones comunicativas, que se muestran en los libros de texto, es mostrar intercambios y patrones lingüísticos que intentan simular conversaciones e interacciones reales en las dos culturas.

1 Introduction

In this paper I will look at the representation of thanking in the materials used for the teaching of Spanish and English as foreign languages (FL). Previous research has explored thanking as a speech act (SA), the contrastive examination of thanking from a pragmatic viewpoint and the analysis of teaching materials, which take into account the development of pragmatic competence in a FL.

Investigations on thanking have focused on its realization from a linguistic point of view, including both its pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic dimensions. Thanking is a speech act which has been analysed according to the way in which it is performed and in its relationship with other speech acts within the

same language (Aijmer, 1996; Coulmas, 1981; Kumatoridani, 1999). Terkourafi (2011) took a slightly different direction in the investigation of thanking, analysing it contrastively (Cypriot Greek and English) from a semantic perspective along with the expressions *sorry* and *please*.

The realization of thanking has been explored when performed by native and non-native speakers of a language (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1986; Dumitrescu, 2005; Hickey, 2005; Wong, 2010). Other researchers have studied the differences in thanking formulae between English and other languages as English-Italian (Aston, 1995), English-Japanese (Ferrara, 1994) and English-Spanish (Díaz Pérez, 2003).

The study carried out by Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) investigated the production of various forms of gratitude expressions by native and non-native speakers of American English while Hinkel (1994), using the same type of informants, analysed how appropriate certain thanking expressions were in specific contexts. Okamoto and Robinson (1997) studied determinants of gratitude expressions in British speakers, and Giannoni (1998, 2002) and Hyland (2003, 2004) investigated acknowledgement texts in research articles and in graduate dissertations respectively. The investigation by Schauer and Adolphs (2005) explored the similarities and differences of gratitude expressions used in a discourse completion task and in a five-million-word corpus of spoken English, examining the advantages and disadvantages of both data sets with regard to the language-teaching context. Contrastive work has been devoted to the representation of thanking in the materials used for teaching and learning Spanish as FL (de Pablos-Ortega, 2011a, 2011b) and the perception of English native speakers towards the absence of thanking in Spanish (de Pablos-Ortega, 2010). Despite the research studies carried in the area of thanking, more contrastive pragmatic studies are needed with a view to exploring when and in which specific communicative situations the SA of thanking is used across languages.

Salazar Campillo (2007, p. 209) states that studies "on the analysis of the presentation of pragmatics in textbooks point to a lack of pragmatic information". Much research has focused on the contrastive analysis of interactions found in the textbooks and their realization in spontaneous or prefabricated dialogues (for example, soap operas). Some studies, Grant and Starks (2001) and Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan and Reynolds (1991), have investigated conversational closings and other discourse features (Gilmore, 2004). In Gilmore's study, interactions from seven textbooks were chosen and contrasted with comparable authentic interactions. The work carried out by Vellenga (2004) aimed at establishing the amount of pragmatic information, both from quantitative and qualitative viewpoints, included in English as FL textbooks. In the same area, Lanteigne and Crompton (2011) analysed the use of

thanks to you in the Corpus of Contemporary American English and the British National Corpus in order to gain insights for English language instruction / assessment in the American context. From the same variationist perspective, Rüegg (2013) investigated thanking responses taking into account the socio-economic level in English of the respondents.

Given the work carried out so far in the field of pragmatics with regard to the expression of thanking and its representation in textbooks for the teaching of FL, this paper presents a new direction in the study of thanking which stems from its presence in the materials used for the teaching of FL from a contrastive perspective. The results of the investigations will help establish parallels in the pedagogical approaches for FL learning in English and Spanish and will serve as a platform for future studies on the expression of gratitude.

2 Theoretical framework: Thanking and its classification parameters

Thanking is a speech act which generally comprises four main elements (de Pablos-Ortega, 2011a):

1. the sender or benefactor: one of the interlocutors that performs the SA of thanking.
2. the receiver or beneficiary: the interlocutor / s who receives the benefit of this SA. In some cases thanking is performed in front of an audience.
3. the beneficial action or act that triggers the performance of the SA.
4. the specific object or element that is exchanged in the thanking action or the action for which the SA is performed. One example representing this last case would be, when thanking someone's service (a waiter in a restaurant) or when acknowledging someone's help (a student thanking a teacher for an explanation during a seminar).

Generally speaking, when analysing and researching the speech act of thanking, the following independent variables need to be taken into consideration:

1. the personal and individual characteristics of the sender and the receiver: gender and age,
2. the origin and cultural background of the interlocutors,
3. the relationship between them: social distance (the degree of familiarity) and social power (the degree of social (im)balance: hierarchy or equal status),
4. the specific characteristics of the object (in this case associated with the SA of thanking) whether the benefit associated with the SA is tangible or verbal,

5. the specific type of action linked to the performance of a speech act (e. g. provision of help, goods, etc.),
6. the context in which the SA takes place (public places – shops, banks, hotel, etc. or private contexts – someone's house).

It might seem apparent that thanking is a speech act usually performed in similar situations. However, previous research shows that the frequency of use varies between cultures. The study conducted by de Pablos-Ortega (2010) compared the attitudes of two English-speaking groups of informants (British and Americans) towards the absence and less frequent use of thanking formulae in Spanish. The results showed that:

> (T)hanking in the British culture is a necessary speech act in certain contexts and, if absent, the British will consider it a sign of rudeness, showing a lack of consideration, thus producing a negative attitude. These results contrast with those provided by the English speakers of American nationality, as they seem not to have an attitude so negatively marked as the British. (de Pablos-Ortega, 2010, p. 161).

In the present study, a pragmatic classification of thanking (de Pablos Ortega, 2011) has been used in order to control the independent variables posed by this specific SA.

Table 1 takes into account three variables: the characteristics of the object for which gratitude is expressed, the action linked to this SA, and the context in which it takes place. Other variables are difficult to control when analysing thanking exchanges in textbooks for teaching FL. This is due to the fact that the exchanges found in the textbooks often do not specify certain information about the interlocutors: gender, age and origin or cultural background, hence the reason for opting not to factor in these variables.

Within the classification of thanking, category number 3 includes actions and services. These are of two different types: i) actions and services which are part of the interlocutor's work or duties and ii) actions and services which are not necessarily part of the interlocutor's work or obligation.[1]

Table 1: *Classification of thanking from a pragmatic dimension (de Pablos-Ortega, 2011a).*

1. Thanking for offers or invitations.
1.1 Acceptance or rejection of offers / an offer.
1.2 Invitation (ex-post or ex-ante).

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1 For a more detailed explanation and exemplification of these categories in the classification, please consult the study by de Pablos Ortega (2011a).

Table 1: *(continued)*

2. Thanking for receiving goods.
2.1 Non-material goods.
2.1.1 Receiving information previously requested.
2.1.2 Receiving good wishes and congratulations.
2.1.3 Receiving a compliment.
2.1.4 Receiving help and receiving permission.
2.2. Material goods.
2.2.1 Receiving objects and presents.
2.2.2 When borrowing objects.
3. Thanking for services rendered and performance of an action.
3.1 Reaction or answer to a service rendered.
3.2 Reaction or answer to the performance of an action.
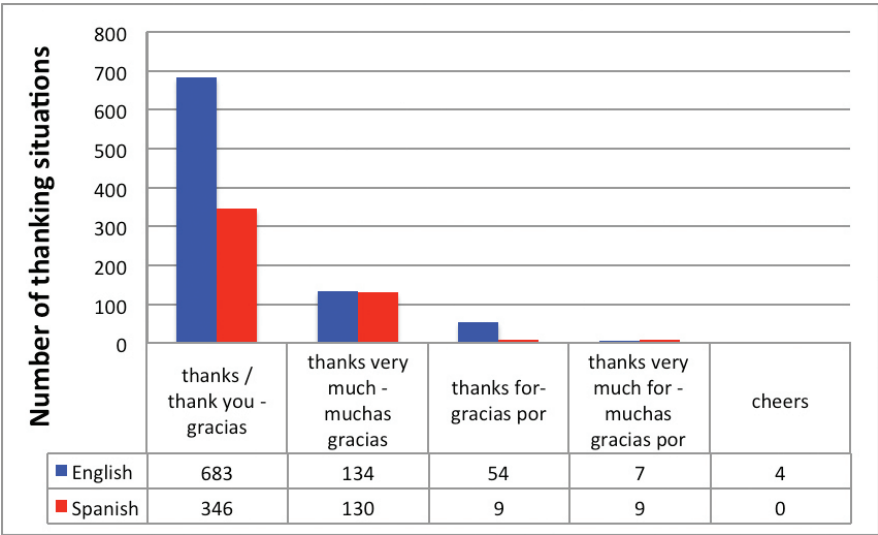4. Thanking in greeting rituals.

3 Methodological considerations

In order to ascertain the differences in the situations when a gratitude expression is used in the UK and Spain, materials for the teaching and learning of Spanish and English as FL were used as corpora. One hundred and twenty eight textbooks were selected, sixty-four for each language. These textbooks (Appendix 1), all published in the UK and in Spain between 1985 and 2010, are aimed at learners of English and Spanish as FL and represent linguistic proficiency levels from A1 to C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The books were selected taking into consideration two criteria: their publication by varied publishing companies, both from the UK and Spain, so that different teaching pedagogical and methodological approaches could be incorporated, and the representation of all linguistic levels, from beginners level (A1) to proficiency (C1).

To compare the performance of thanking in different interactions, every dialogue in which the SA was performed was extracted from the corpora. The criteria used for identifying these situations was: firstly, the thanking formulae in both Spanish and English, found as follows *gracias* ('thank you', 'thanks'), *muchas gracias / muchísimas gracias* ('thank you very much']); and secondly, thanking formulae included in the scripts of conversational exchanges (those occurring in written discourse, as for example in a letter, were not taken into account). Besides the thanking formulae stated above, the speech act of thanking can be carried out / performed by using other linguistic choices such as: *I really appreciate that*, *you saved my life*, *you shouldn't have done it*, etc. However, these have not been taken into consideration in this study.

Most conversational exchanges in the textbooks, in the form of dialogues, are usually found in the introductory sections of the chapters of the textbooks. These conversations are generally used as introductory elements of the chapters and employed to present the grammatical or lexical components which are to be studied. In addition, other conversations which were extracted and analysed for the study appear in the listening comprehension activities, which are gathered in the transcript sections at the end of the textbooks. Thanking formulae were usually located at the end of these interactions and were often used as conversational closing signals.

A total of 1,382 situations were found in the corpora: 878 situations for the English corpus and 504 situations for the Spanish. The type of thanking formulae found (Graph 1) was similar in both languages, except for the use of *cheers*, an informal thanking formula in British English. It is important to observe that the English corpus presents a wider variety of thanking expressions when compared to the Spanish. For example, in English there are two expressions: *Thank you (for) and thanks (for)*, the last being slightly more informal, whilst in Spanish there is only one equivalent for both: *gracias (por)*. When gratitude is intensified in, for example, *thank you very much (for)* and *thanks very much (for)*, the same happens in Spanish, only one equivalent is found: *muchas gracias (por)*. However, in Spanish there is an even more intensifying thanking formula: *muchísimas gracias (por)*, which does not have a direct equivalent in English. It is interesting to note that the thanking formula *thanks a lot* was not found in the English corpus.

	thanks / thank you - gracias	thanks very much - muchas gracias	thanks for- gracias por	thanks very much for - muchas gracias por	cheers
English	683	134	54	7	4
Spanish	346	130	9	9	0

Graph 1: *Thanking formulae distributions found in corpora.*

Once the situations were extracted from both corpora, firstly they were catego-rised following the classification for thanking from a pragmatic perspective, as shown previously in Table 1. The thanking situations were then quantified in order to establish a comparison between the representations of thanking between both corpora. Results of the preliminary analysis confirmed a significant difference in the number of thanking expressions in both corpora and some discrepancies in the pragmatic use of this speech act in both languages.

The contrastive analysis was carried out taking into consideration the follow-ing independent variables: the social distance and social power between inter-locutors and the type of action or object for which thanking was performed. The presence or absence of thanking expressions is quite often dependent on the social distance or the social power that exists between the participants in the interaction. The contextual information included in the thanking situations extracted from the conversational exchanges of the textbooks helped identify these independent variables: social distance and power. As Leech indicates (1983), social distance is a factor directly linked to socio-pragmatic principles and the usage variations associated with a language. The wider the social distance between participants, the higher the frequency of some specific formulae expressing politeness; in this case, thanking expressions. According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of polite-ness, thanking can be categorised as a face threatening act for the receiver. Speakers choose strategies to minimise face threats by assessing the weight of the act which takes into account the distance and power between the interlocutors and the cost of the action. So face threatening acts are computed considering the social distance between hearer and speaker, the power that the hearer has over the speaker, the cost of the action and the degree to which the act is considered as an imposition in the culture that the speaker and the hearer belong to (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

The type of object or action is a determinant factor in the presence, or perhaps absence, of this studied speech act. Thanking tends to be a necessary polite formula when the object is of a material nature, unlike the object of a non-material nature. These can be material goods, which refer to a present, a drink, etc., or non-material goods, which denote non-physical objects such as information, directions, help, etc.

There are two independent variables which were not factored into the analysis of the thanking situations, as they were difficult to establish from the information given in the exchanges and interactions found in the textbooks. These variables are the gender and age of both sender and receiver, and their origin and cultural back-ground. As stated above, the main aim of the study is to explore the context in which thanking is performed and the reasons for expressing gratitude, therefore gender and age of the interlocutors are not determined aspects in order to reach the objective.

A contrastive examination of the interactions was also conducted taking into account the distribution of thanking interactions across the language levels of

the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for the Study of Foreign Languages. The textbooks were assigned to the CEFR levels on the basis of their stated target levels: those aimed at beginners and lower intermediate levels were included in A1–A2 level, intermediate level textbooks in B1–B2 levels, and upper-intermediate and advanced in C1–C2.

The statistical tests applied to the raw data are the calculation of percentages and the p-value. The p-value test is used to calculate the possible statistical differences between the two samples.

It is essential to highlight that despite the fact that the corpora for the analysis is not built from naturally occurring communicative situations and the exchanges from the textbooks are prefabricated dialogues, which can be regarded as abstractions of reality, the communicative situations are aimed at depicting exchanges and linguistic patterns representing what naturally occurs in real conversations in both cultures.

4 Findings

In this section, results are presented taking into account the elements previously mentioned. Firstly, the distribution of thanking situations according to the pragmatic classification of thanking, and secondly, the results according to the independent variables (social power and distance between interlocutors and material vs. non-material objects) are presented. The last two elements included in this section are: the type of thanking formula and the distribution of thanking formula according to the language levels in the CEFR of both corpora. The final part of this section is devoted to the presentation of thanking interactions which were found exclusively in the English corpus and, therefore, helped reveal an important aspect in the use of thanking formula in the English culture with respect to that of the Spanish culture.

The most significant result is the difference between the number of thanking situations between both corpora. The Spanish corpora comprises 504 situations (36.47 %) whilst the English includes 878 situations (63.53 %), therefore showing 42 % more thanking situations in the English corpora than in the Spanish.

Generally speaking, the contrastive analysis of the distribution of situations according to the pragmatic classification of thanking shows an even distribution within each of the categories of the classification parameter (Graph 2). It is important to highlight that the largest amount of situations found in both English and Spanish (over 10 %) corresponds with the same types of classification criteria: thanking when receiving information previously requested, thanking when rejecting and offer, thanking when receiving objects and presents, and thanking

when reacting or answering to a performed action. The first two categories show that slightly more thanking situations are found in the Spanish corpus (thanking after receiving information previously requested (21.2%), and thanking after rejecting an offer (14.2%) than the number of situations found in the English corpus (17% and 12% respectively).

Certain situations were found less frequently in the corpora according to the pragmatics classification of thanking: thanking when borrowing money and objects (1.2% in the English corpus and 0.5 in the Spanish), thanking when receiving a compliment (1.7%, English and 1.5%, Spanish), thanking after an invitation (3.6%, English and 1.1%, Spanish) and thanking after accepting an offer (1.8%, English and 3.5%, Spanish).

From a contrastive point of view (Table 2) and according to three thresholds chosen as standard significant levels, highly significant differences were found in two criteria of the thanking classification: thanking when receiving objects or / and presents and thanking after an invitation. Quite significant differences correspond with thanking after accepting an offer, thanking after receiving information previously requested, thanking as a reaction or an answer after a service rendered, thanking after asking for the health or state of things and thanking after a nice day or a nice time. Thanking after reacting to a performed action and thanking for asking a question do not present any significant results.
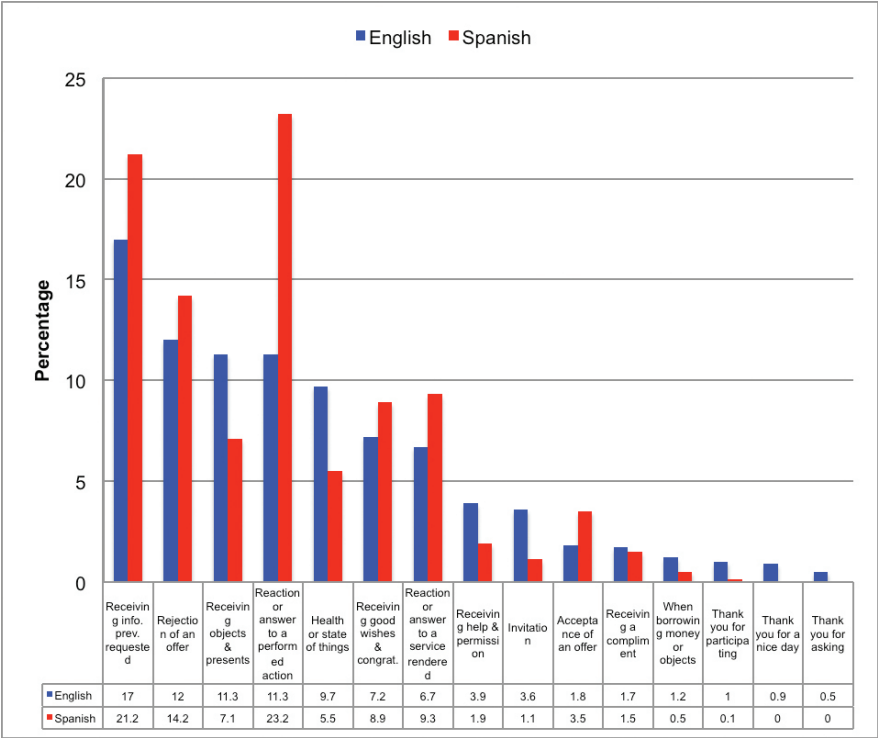
Table 2: *Thanking category by nationality: figures and comparison.*

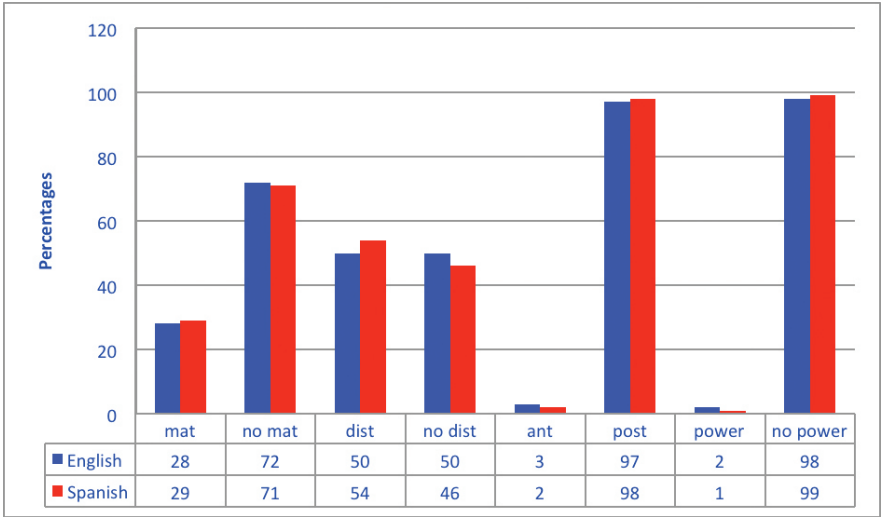| Thanking category	English (%)	Spanish (%)	*p*-value[a]	Significance level[b]
Rejection of an offer	11.61731	14.28571	0.1501	
Acceptance of an offer	1.82232	3.57143	0.0433	**
Invitation	5.01139	1.19048	0.0003	***
Receiving info previously requested	16.97039	21.23016	0.0498	**
Receiving good wishes and congratulations	7.28929	8.92857	0.2765	
Receiving a compliment	1.70843	1.5873	0.8655	
Receiving help or permission	3.64465	2.18254	0.1318	
Receiving objects presents	12.30068	7.14286	0.0025	***
When borrowing money or objects	1.25285	.59524	0.2400	
Reaction or answer to a service rendered	6.37813	9.3254	0.0446	**
Reaction or answer to a performed action	20.04556	24.40476	0.0582	*
Health or state of things	9.4533	5.55556	0.0103	**
Thanks for asking a question	.56948	0	0.0897	*
Thanks for the suggestion or advice	0	.19841	0.1867	
Thanks for a nice day / time	.91116	0	0.0316	**

Notes: a) p-value resulting from a two-sample test of proportion; b) significance level according to standard thresholds (*** for p < 0.01, *** for p < 0.05 and * for p < 0.1).

Percentages with regard to thanking after rejecting an offer (11.6%, English and 14.2% Spanish), thanking after receiving good wishes and congratulations (7.2%, English and 8.9%, Spanish), thanking after receiving help or permission (3.6%, English and 2.1%, Spanish), thanking after receiving a compliment (1.7%, English and 1.5%, Spanish), thanking when borrowing money or objects (1.2%, English and 0.5%, Spanish) and thanking for the suggestion or advice (0%, English and 0.5%, Spanish) do not show significant results in either corpora.

The correlation between the three independent variables which have been taken into account in the study, i.e. social distance, social power and type of thanking object, and the thanking situations found in both corpora show highly consistent and similar results (Graph 3). The percentages of thanking interactions when referring to material objects is much higher (72%, English and 71%, Spanish) when compared with non-material objects (28%, English and 29%, Spanish). Results of the contrastive analysis with regard to the social distance between the interlocutors reveal an equal balance. However, in the case of thanking situations in the English

	Receiving info. prev. requested	Rejection of an offer	Receiving objects & presents	Reaction or answer to a performed action	Health or state of things	Receiving good wishes & congrat.	Reaction or answer to a service rendered	Receiving help & permission	Invitation	Acceptance of an offer	Receiving a compliment	When borrowing money or objects	Thank you for participating	Thank you for a nice day	Thank you for asking
English	17	12	11.3	11.3	9.7	7.2	6.7	3.9	3.6	1.8	1.7	1.2	1	0.9	0.5
Spanish	21.2	14.2	7.1	23.2	5.5	8.9	9.3	1.9	1.1	3.5	1.5	0.5	0.1	0	0

Graph 2: *Number of thanking situations according to the classification of thanking from a pragmatic dimension.*

	mat	no mat	dist	no dist	ant	post	power	no power
■ English	28	72	50	50	3	97	2	98
■ Spanish	29	71	54	46	2	98	1	99

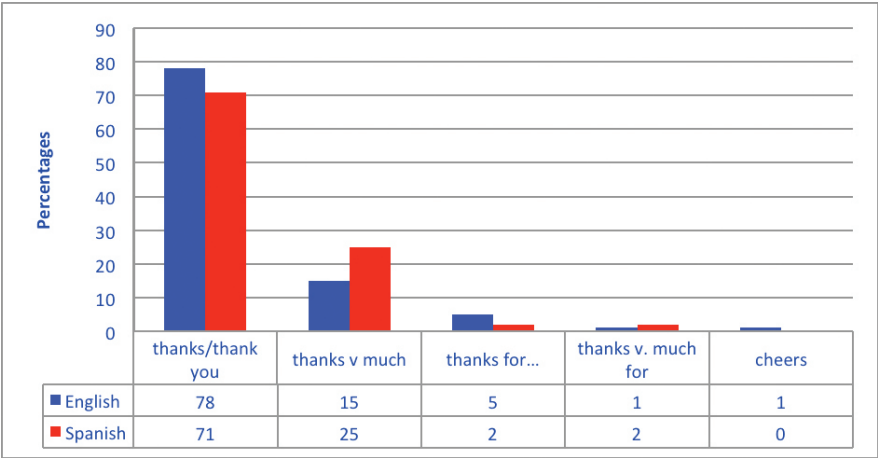**Graph 3:** *Number of thanking situations according to the independent variables.*

corpora, there are 50 % of cases in which there is no social distance between participants and another 50 % in which there is social distance. Similar results are found in the Spanish corpus: 54 % with social distance and 46 % with no social distance.

Results related to the independent variable *social power* indicate that the larger number of thanking situations correspond to interactions in which there is no power (98 %, English and 99 %, Spanish) in contrast with the number of situations with social power between the interlocutors (2 %, English and 1 %, Spanish). In both corpora most thanking formula take place after an action has been performed (97 %, English and 98 %, Spanish).
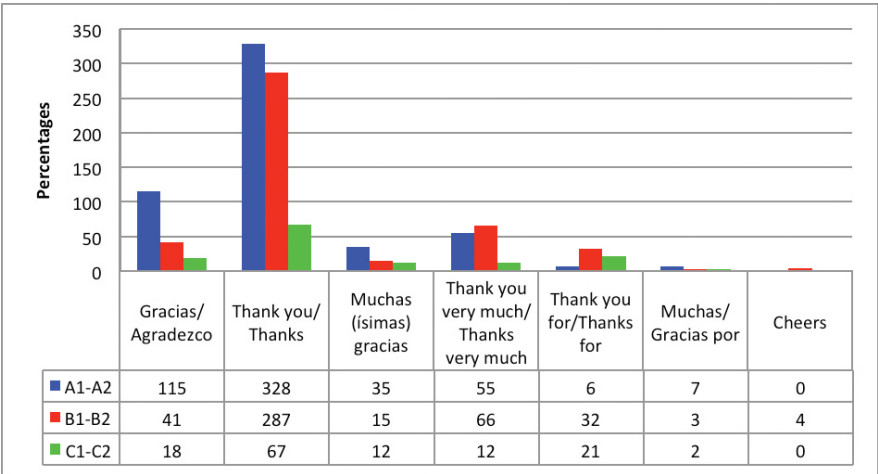
The most common type of thanking formula found in the corpora (Graph 4) is *thanks / thank you* in the English corpus (78 %), and *gracias* in the Spanish (71 %). Thanking expressions which include the intensifying particle in both corpora (*thank you very much / muchas gracias-muchísimas gracias*) appear less frequently, 15 % in the English corpus and 25 % in the Spanish. Expressions including the thanking formula and a justification (*thank you / thanks for*) only appear in 6 % in the English corpus and 4 % in the Spanish one (*gracias por*).

As in previous contrastive analysis, the distribution of thanking situations according to the classification by language level and following the CEFR, is quite similar in both corpora (Graph 5).

In the Spanish corpus the percentage of thanking situations in A1-A2 textbooks is 61 % compared with 44 % in English. However, B1-B2 textbooks show a lower percentage in the Spanish corpus (26 %) compared with the English

	thanks/thank you	thanks v much	thanks for…	thanks v. much for	cheers
English	78	15	5	1	1
Spanish	71	25	2	2	0

Graph 4: *Number of thanking situations according to thanking formula.*

	Gracias/ Agradezco	Thank you/ Thanks	Muchas (ísimas) gracias	Thank you very much/ Thanks very much	Thank you for/Thanks for	Muchas/ Gracias por	Cheers
A1-A2	115	328	35	55	6	7	0
B1-B2	41	287	15	66	32	3	4
C1-C2	18	67	12	12	21	2	0

Graph 5: *Number of thanking situations according to language levels in the CEFR.*

corpus (44 %). In the case of C1-C2 textbooks, these situations are the least frequent (14 %, Spanish and 12 %, English). Although thanking situations tend to appear quite frequently in lower levels (A1-A2), it is important to point out that in the English corpus, the total number of thanking situations is equal in textbooks for levels A1-A2 and B1-B2.

Certain thanking situations were not found in the Spanish corpus and, therefore, were not included as part of the categories in the pragmatic classification of

thanking. One interesting finding of the contrastive analysis is a group of thanking situations which do not fit in the pragmatic classification for thanking and are exclusively found in the English corpus: thanking someone for or after asking a question (example 1), thanking after having a nice time (example 2), thank you with irony (example 3) and thanking for participating (example 4) In this last example, one of the interlocutors is changing the topic of the conversation and the other is using *thank you* in order to make a request.

Example 1: **Thank you for asking**
Two friends talking about the weekend
A: What did you do on Saturday evening?
B: We went to a restaurant.
A: Where did you go?
B: We went to The Red Dragon.
A: Did you enjoy it?
B: Yes, the meal was delicious, **thanks**.
English for Life (Beginner), Oxford University Press (2007: 80)

Example 2: **Thank you for a lovely day / a nice time**
Whilst leaving someone's house
Man 1: Thanks, goodbye.
Woman 1: Bye
Women 2: Bye, thanks.
Man 2: Bye-bye.
Man 3: Goodbye and thank you.
Woman 1: Goodbye.
Woman 3: Bye and **thanks for a nice time**.
Man 2: You're welcome.
True to Life (Starter), Cambridge University Press (1998: 9)

Example 3: **Thank you (irony)**
On the phone. Two friends.
Ruby: Hello.
Stuart: Hi, Rube. It's me. Stuart.
Ruby: Oh, hi, Stuart. Did you have a good day at work?
Stuart: Yeah, not too bad. There's a really gorgeous new girl in the Kung Fu class.
Ruby : **Thank you for telling me that**, Stuart. I'm very interested in all the beautiful girls in your classes, I'm sure.
Straightforward (Pre-Intermediate), MacMillan (2005: 136)

Example 4: **Thank you for participating**
At a meeting
B: Can I say something here?
A: Is it about wages?
B: No, it isn't.
A: All right then. Because we aren't talking about wages in this meeting.

B: Can I just say that the dress code we have now is terrible. Terrible.
A: **Thank you**, David.
B: I hate these ties.
A: I know... which is why we're talking about a change in the dress code
Global (Pre-Intermediate) MacMillan (2010: 62)

The ironic use of thanking is more commonly found in the media and other forms of oral discourse, such as on TV. In the exploration of thanking by looking at audiovisual resources, examples of the use of thanking using irony are found in British English. This is the case of the comedy series entitled "The Royle Family" (Aherne, 1999) that presents the story of a working class family from Manchester. Example 4 is a short extract of one of the scenes where Denise, the daughter of Mr and Mrs Royle, is arguing with her husband, Dave, and her father, Jim.

Example 5
Denise: Dave, will you keep your big fat nose out? It's nothing to do with you. It's not your family.
Dave: Well you've brought me in on this argument, haven't you? It's nothing to do with me. Bloody'ell. Anyway what about you having a pop at your dad and you're never off your arse, are you?
Jim: Cor-rect, David.
Denise: I'm pregnant and I'm carrying your child about, **thank you very much**.
Dave: What d'you mean you're pregnant, you're carrying my child about **thank you very much**? Anyone'd think you were the only woman ever to bloody be pregnant. It's only the size of a bloody orange.
Denise: Well, that's as much as you know – it's the size of a grapefruit, **thank you**, Dave.

Despite the fact that the dialogue is scripted, characters in this comedy series engage in conversations which resemble authentic interactions between native speakers with a humoristic tone. The use of *thank you* in this interaction is similar to example 3. The emphasis is not on the gratitude aspect but more on the fact that someone is thanking ironically with the intention of reproaching someone else's behaviour. This type of ironic use was not found in the Spanish textbooks.

5 Discussion and conclusion

As stated in the results section, the amount of thanking situations in the English corpus is 42% higher than the number of thanking situations found in the Spanish corpus. This result confirms that thanking seems to be more widely presented and employed in the English textbooks than in the Spanish books. Despite the

limitations of the corpora used for this investigation, it is quite apparent that thanking tends to be more often used in English. This finding corroborates the hypothesis and outcome of the previous investigation which reveal the negative attitude of English speakers towards the lack of gratitude in Spanish (de Pablos Ortega, 2010).

The distribution of thanking situations according to the pragmatic classification of thanking shows an almost equal representation across the different categories. The most common thanking situations in both corpora are: thanking after reacting or answering to a performed action, thanking after receiving information previously requested, thanking after receiving objects and presents and thanking after rejecting an offer. It is important to highlight that these findings show that, regardless of the language of the textbooks to teach either English or Spanish as foreign languages, materials seem to use similar situations, dialogues or scenarios to present samples of interaction. It is important to remember that the analysed thanking situations can be regarded as prefabricated and, that although the situations might not necessarily reflect the actual use of thanking, they represent abstractions of language to learners of English and Spanish which are a close reality of language use. In spite of the differences found between the two languages, it is clear that the pedagogical foundations of these textbooks are similar and have been designed bearing in mind similar communicative situations.

The results of the contrastive analysis, taking into account the independent variables, show a much larger number of thanking situations when these are referring to non-material elements than to material ones in both corpora. Therefore thanking for non-material elements seems to be more usually employed in the textbooks than situations including thanking for material elements. However, the results when analysing the independent variable "distance" indicate that there is an equal number of situations when there is presence or absence of social distance. The representation of characters according to this variable is quite uniform throughout the corpora. Power between interlocutors is hardly represented in the analysed scenarios found in the textbooks. This is due to the fact that interactions take place in informal settings. Thanking tends to take place after the specific action, which triggers its use, has been performed in most analysed situations.

The most popular thanking formula is *thanks / thank you* in English and *gracias* in Spanish and the percentages of formula in which the reason is justified (*thank you for / thanks very much for – gracias / muchas gracias por*) are very low and do not seem to be representative in either corpora.

The results of the representation of thanking according to the CEFR show that there is an equal distribution of thanking situations between levels A1-A2 and B1-B2 in the English corpus / textbooks. However, in the Spanish corpus the

difference in the number of situations in level A1-A2 is more significant than in B1-B2. In both cases the lowest number of thanking situations corresponds with levels C1-C2. This means that in Spanish, thanking seems to be more widely represented in lower levels whilst in English it is represented throughout all levels. The frequent use of thanking formula in lower levels in the Spanish corpus may be due to the presence of more frequent exchanges and interactions in the textbooks at lower levels (A1-A2) than in higher levels (B1-B2). However, the contrastive analysis shows, once again, that thanking is represented more frequently in English textbooks than in Spanish, regardless of the linguistic proficiency level.

Some specific thanking situations were found in the English corpus, which did not fit within the categories of the thanking classification. These are: thanking someone for asking a question, thanking after having had a nice day or a nice time, thank you with irony and thanking with a different illocutionary force (asking someone to do something / requesting someone). This suggests that the classification category can be expanded and the use of these thanking situations in English can be further explored. This can be done by means of different types of corpora or perhaps by other data collection methods, such as participant observation. The contrastive analysis according to other independent variables does not show any significant differences in either of the corpora. Moreover, the percentage averages of the independent variables (material vs. non-material and distance vs. no-distance) are very similar and the types of thanking formulae in both corpora do not reveal any significant differences.

One important aspect which emerges from this investigation is that thanking is a speech act which tends to be used more widely in English than in Peninsular Spanish. This brings important implications for intercultural communication and more particularly from pragmatic and pedagogic perspectives. Interestingly enough, the pragmatic representation of thanking in both corpora is homogeneous in its use and in the type of thanking formula employed. However, the specific thanking situations found in the English corpus (thanking for asking, thanking for a lovely day, thanking with irony, thanking with a different illocutionary force) are worth exploring. It would be interesting to develop a further study to ascertain the attitudes of Spanish speakers towards the realization of these thanking situations found in English textbooks.

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Appendix 1

English Textbooks

Levels A1 / A2

1. *Cutting Edge Elementary*, Publisher Longman (2001)
2. *English File*, Publisher Level 1 Oxford University Press (1996)
3. *Snapshot Elementary*, Publisher Longman (1998)
4. *New Hotline Elementary*, Publisher Oxford University Press
5. *Matters Elementary* , Publisher Longman (1997)
6. *Natural English Elementary*, Publisher Oxford University Press (2006)
7. *True to Life Elementary*, Publisher Cambridge University Press (1995)
8. *Face 2 Face Elementary*, Publisher Cambridge University Press (2005)
9. *Language Leader Elementary*, Publisher Pearson Longman (2008)

10. *Global Elementary*, Publisher MacMillan (2010)
11. *New Inside Out Elementary*, Publisher MacMillan (2007)
12. *Life lines Elementary*, Publisher Oxford University Press (1999)
13. *Impressions. Level 1*, Publisher The Macmillan Short Course Programme (1993)
14. *English for Life Beginner*, Publisher Oxford University Press (2007)
15. *Inside Out Beginner*, Publisher MacMillan (2007)
16. *New Headway Beginner*, Publisher Oxford. (2002)
17. *HeadStart Beginner*, Publisher Oxford University Press (1995)
18. *Face 2 face Starter*, Publisher Cambridge University Press (2009)
19. *True to Life Starter*, Publisher Cambridge University Press (1998)
20. *Reward Starter*, Publisher Macmillan Heinemann. (1997)

Levels B1 / B2

21. *English Result Pre-intermediate*, Publisher Oxford University Press (2008)
22. *International Express Pre-intermediate*, Publisher Oxford University Press (1996)
23. *Workout Pre-intermediate*, Publisher Nelson (1995)
24. *Link Pre-intermediate*, Publisher Thomson Heinle (2004)
25. *Clockwise Pre-intermediate*, Publisher Oxford University Press (2000)
26. *New Headway Pre-Intermediate*, Publisher Oxford University Press (2000)
27. *Headway Pre-Intermediate*, Publisher Oxford University Press (1991)
28. *The Short Course Programme, Expectations Pre-Intermediate*, Publisher Macmillan Publishers Ltd (1995).
29. *Innovations Pre-Intermediate*, Publisher Thomson (2005)
30. *Move Pre-Intermediate*, Publisher MacMillan (2006)
31. *True to Life Pre-Intermediate*, Publisher Cambridge University Press (1995)
32. *Face 2 Face Pre-Intermediate*, Publisher Cambridge University Press (2005)
33. *Language to go Pre-Intermediate*, Publisher Longman (2002)
34. *Global Pre-Intermediate*, Publisher MacMillan (2010)
35. *English for Life Pre-intermediate*, Publisher Oxford (2007)
36. *Straightforward Pre-Intermediate*, Publisher MacMillan (2005)
37. *Inside out Pre-Intermediate*, Publisher MacMillan (2002)
38. *Activate Your English Intermediate*, Publisher Cambridge University Press (1996)
39. *New Hotline Intermediate*, Publisher Oxford (1998)
40. *Natural English Intermediate*, Publisher Oxford University Press (2002)
41. *Language to go Intermediate*, Publisher Longman (2002)
42. *English File Intermediate*, Publisher Oxford University Press (1999)
43. *Face 2 Face Intermediate*, Publisher Cambridge University Press (2006)
44. *English File Level 2*, Publisher Oxford University Press (1997)

45. *Headway. Intermediate*, Publisher Oxford. (1986)
46. *Innovations. Intermediate*, Publisher Thomsom. Heinle. (2003)
47. *International Express. Intermediate*, Publisher Oxford University Press (1997).
48. *Just Right. Intermediate*, Publisher Marshall Cavendish ELT (2004)
49. *Meaning into words. Intermediate*, Publisher Cambridge University Press (1983)
50. *New opportunities. Intermediate*, Publisher Longman, (2000)

Levels C1 / C2

51. *True to Life Upper- Intermediate*, Publisher Cambridge University Press (1998)
52. *Face 2 Face Upper Intermediate*, Publisher Cambridge University Press (2007)
53. *Think First certificate*, Publisher Longman (1996)
54. *Language to go Upper Intermediate*, Publisher Pearson Longman (2002)
55. *Straightforward. Upper-Intermediate*, Publisher MacMillan. (2007)
56. *International Express. Upper-Intermediate*, Publisher Oxford University Press (2001).
57. *Inside Out. Upper- Intermediate*, Publisher MacMillan Heinemann. (2001)
58. *Landmark. Upper Intermediate*, Publisher Oxford. (2000)
59. *Meaning into words. Upper-Intermediate*, Publisher Cambridge University Press. (1984)
60. *Workout. Upper-Intermediate*, Publisher Nelson. (1993)
61. *Premium. B2 level*, Publisher Pearson/Longman. (2008)
62. *Inside Out. Advanced*, Publisher MacMillan. (2001)
63. *Straightfoward. Advanced*, Publisher MacMillan. (2008)
64. *English Panorama 2 Advanced*, Publisher Cambridge University Press. (1998)

Spanish Textbooks

Levels A1 / A2

1. *Así me gusta 1*, Editorial Cambridge University Press. (2003)
2. *Aula 1*, Editorial Difusión. (2003)
3. *Aula 2*, Editorial Difusión. (2003)
4. *Avance (nivel elemental),* Editorial S.G.E.L. (2002)
5. *Cumbre (nivel elemental),* Editorial S.G.E.L. (1999)
6. *Eco A1 + A2*, Editorial Edelsa. (2011)
7. *En acción 1*, Editorial EnCLAVE ELE. (2007)
8. *Esespañol 1*, (libro del alumno y libro de ejercicios) Editorial Espasa Calpe (2002)

9. *Español (2000): (nivel elemental)*, Editorial S.G.E.L. (2002)
10. *Español en marcha 1*, Editorial S.G.E.L. (2005)
11. *Español más claro*, Editorial S.G.E.L. (2002)
12. *Español sin fronteras 1,* Editorial S.G.E.L. (2003)
13. *Esto funciona A*, Editorial Edelsa. (1987)
14. *Gente 1*, Editorial Difusión. (2013)
15. *Intercambio 1*, Editorial Difusión. (1989)
16. *Nuevo ELE inicial 1*, Editorial S.M. (2009)
17. *Nuevo ELE inicial 2*, Editorial S.M. (2006)
18. *Nuevo Ven 1*, Editorial Edelsa. (2006)
19. *Planeta 1*, Editorial Edelsa. (2006)
20. *Primer plano 1*, Editorial Edelsa. (2003)
21. *PRISMA: comienza nivel A1*, Editorial Edinumen. (2002)
22. *PRISMA: continúa nivel A2*, Editorial Edinumen. (2002)
23. *Rápido, Rápido*, Editorial Difusión. (2002)
24. *Redes Nivel 1*, Editorial S.M. (2003)
25. *Sueña 1*, Editorial Anaya. (2006)

Levels B1 / B2

26. *Así me gusta 2*, Editorial Cambridge University Press. (2003)
27. *Aula 3*, Editorial Difusión. (2004)
28. *Avance*, Editorial S.G.E.L. (2003)
29. *Cumbre (nivel medio),* Editorial S.G.E.L. (1997)
30. *Eco B1 + B2*, Editorial Edelsa. (2011)
31. *En acción 2*, Editorial EnCLAVE ELE. (2011)
32. *Esespañol 2*, Editorial Espasa Calpe. (2001)
33. *Español (2000): (nivel medio)*, Madrid: S.G.E.L. (2007)
34. *Español en marcha 2*, Editorial S.G.E.L. (2005)
35. *Español sin fronteras 2*, Editorial S.G.E.L. (2005)
36. *Gente 2*, Editorial Difusión. (2004)
37. *Marca Registrada*, Editorial Santillana. (1994)
38. *Nuevo Ele Intermedio*, Editorial S.M. (2002)
39. *Nuevo Ven 2*, Editorial Edelsa. (2004)
40. *Planeta 2*, Editorial Edelsa. (1999)
41. *Primer plano 2*, Editorial Edelsa. (2001)
42. *PRISMA: avanza nivel B2*, Editorial Edinumen. (2003)
43. *PRISMA: progresa nivel B1*, Editorial Edinumen. (2003)

44. *Redes Nivel 2*, Editorial S.M. (2006)
45. *Sueña 2*, Editorial Anaya. (2006)

Levels C1 / C2

46. *A fondo*, Editorial S.G.E.L. (2000)
47. *Abanico*, Editorial Difusión. (1995)
48. *Así me gusta 3*, Editorial Cambridge University Press. (2004)
49. *Aula 4*, Editorial Difusión. (2005)
50. *Cumbre (nivel superior)*, Editorial S.G.E.L. (1996)
51. *Esespañol 3*, Editorial Espasa Calpe. (2002)
52. *Español 2000 (nivel superior)*, Editorial S.G.E.L. (1996)
53. *Español en marcha 3*, Editorial S.G.E.L. (2006)
54. *Español sin fronteras 3*, Editorial S.G.E.L. (2005)
55. *Gente 3*, Editorial Difusión. (2005)
56. *Nuevo Ele Avanzado, Editorial S.M. (2014)*
57. *Nuevo Ven 3, Editorial Edelsa. (2006)*
58. *Planeta 3, Editorial Edelsa. (2000)*
59. *Primer plano 3*, Editorial Edelsa. (2002)
60. *Primer plano 4*, Editorial Edelsa. (2003)
61. *PRISMA: consolida C1*, Editorial Edinumen. (2005)
62. *Redes Nivel 3*, Editorial S.M. (2010)
63. *Sueña 3*, Editorial Anaya. (2007)
64. *Sueña 4*, Editorial Anaya. (2007)

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