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## Thanking in Algerian Arabic

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### Abstract:

*Thanking/Expressing gratitude is an important custom that we do over and over in our everyday life. All around the world, people perform this speech act in countless ways, linguistic and non-linguistic employing various kinds of expressions, phrases and gestures. These thanking formulas are human universals, present in all human societies but expressed differently as far as the culture is concerned. This study deals with such speech act of 'thanking' in Algerian Arabic since it is very important in establishing interpersonal relationships and represents a key factor in keeping up conversations among the members of the speech community under investigation.*

### 1. Introduction

Thanking is one of the most frequently occurring communicative acts in human interaction and conversation in daily life. People say 'thank you' almost every day during their conversational routines with their family, neighbours, friends, teachers, and other relatives. This speech act represents a high degree of politeness. Aijmer (1996, 33) wrote that 'functionally, thank you/thanks are analyzed on the speech act level, a politeness marker and an element organizing the discourse.' According to Searle in SAT (Speech Act Theory), the speech act of thanking is defined as an "expression of gratitude and appreciation." He also states later (1976:12) that "expressing gratitude is classified as an expressive speech act on the part of the speaker, to the hearer whose past or future act benefits the speaker." (1993, p65) More clearly, most people consider that a speaker expresses gratitude because of some debts that the speaker owes to the hearer. In other words, the speaker owes something for the benefit of the hearer and hence "maximizing its illocutionary force and in this way maximizing its politeness" (Leech, 1983). On the other hand, Brown and Levinson ((1978-1987) have enriched the literature by introducing a politeness theory that is based on the concept of 'face'. In the light of this theory, Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) consider the speech act of thanking as a "complex act" (p 65). They refer to Brown and Levinson's claims in categorizing the speech act of thanking as "offensive to the speaker's negative face and accepts a debt." Consequently, thanking is like any other speech act that people perform and one way of maintaining politeness and gratitude to the hearer.

### 2. Purpose and Significance of the Study

In our speech community, there are many people with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and hence various ways of speaking to one another. So, they have different choices of language for signaling their ethnicity and culture. Therefore, the forms of language usage are crucial to building social relationships. These forms are employed by people to perform either formal or intimate language i.e. to express either distant or close relations Brown and Gilman (1967-1972). Following these two parameters, studies of the way people address each other in face-to-face interaction have been related to another phenomenon, general to all human societies, namely 'politeness' that is one of the functions carried out by language. It refers to "the behaviour which entirely expresses positive concern for others as well as non-imposing distance behaviour." (Holmes, 1995:5) In other words, linguistic politeness is an expression of cultural values, connected to what is considered proper or prescriptive of how people should act. Accordingly, our aim in this research work is to contribute empirically to the body of information on politeness in speech act use from an Algerian perspective bearing in mind the nature of the Algerian linguistic situation characterized by 'diglossia' and 'bilingualism'; because according to my knowledge no one has dealt with this topic before in Algerian Arabic. To do so, we tend to examine politeness in the Algerian spoken discourse and how it is manifested linguistically in the performance of the speech act of 'thanking.' The study also explores and identifies whether these forms are combined consciously or unconsciously to other non-linguistic forms in expressing gratitude. Therefore, we will focus on the following research questions:

- 1- What are the factors determining/governing the choice of politeness markers / formulas?
- 2- How is politeness manifested in Algerian Thanks?
- 3- Is there a specific combination between verbal (linguistic) and non-verbal (non-linguistic) politeness formulas in performing a thank you in Algeria?

### 3. Literature Review on Thanks

Although a sizable body of research has been carried out on speech act use as well as other aspects of pragmatics such as politeness in many other languages, similarly a good body of research has been done on Arabic politeness, starting from Ferguson's work on Syrian Arabic (1967, 1976 and 1983). Later, research on Moroccan Arabic (Davies, 1987), Egyptian Arabic (El-Sayed, 1990; El-Shazly,

1993; Farghal, 1996; Nelson and El-Bakary, 1993; Soliman, 2003). On Saudi Arabian Arabic (Al-Ammar, 2000) ..... and Jordanian Arabic (Bataineh, 2001; Bataineh, 2005, 2006, 2008). Bearing in mind Austin's notion (1962) of Speech Act Theory, which postulates that many utterances do not only communicate information but also perform actions, and Searle's (1969) claim that all speech acts are meaningful, rule-governed and executed through illocutionary force, which is part of one's linguistic competence providing the theoretical framework within which the dimensions of utterance, meaning and action are involved in one unit. Furthermore, with the republication of the elaborated theory of Brown and Levinson in 1987 that has constituted the preferred framework for empirical speech act research in various languages, cultures and cross-cultural settings; most of the politeness research is essentially within this theory and revealed that different cultures have different rules of appropriateness i.e. politeness strategies, and their verbal expressions, are present in all speech communities, but governed by the socio-cultural values of these human communities. As a matter of fact, we aim to investigate the specific speech act of 'thanking' because of its unique aspect to be investigated in being a crucial part to build and establish social relationships; it is considered unique since people look at it as a polite behaviour and one that has a courteous function (Leech, 1983:104).

The speech act of thanking has been investigated in a limited range of studies. Some studies explore the strategies employed by speakers in different languages while other research has focused on analyzing speech acts of thanking with reference to their functions and forms. Others scholars investigate the influence of "pragmatic transfer" on EFL/ESL learners' performance of speech acts of thanking. According to many linguists, the speech act of thanking is a universal illocution across languages and cultures. (Coulmas, 1981; Aijmer, 1996; & Schneider, 2005). Jautz points out that gratitude expressions are used "when a speaker wants the addressee to know that s/he is grateful for what the addressee has said or done" (Jautz, 2008, p 142). Aijmer (1996) states that expressing gratitude is considered a stereotypical speech act because the form of thank you or thanks is almost always used by speakers every time they want to express gratitude (1996, p.78). Eisenstein and Bodman (1995) point out that expressing gratitude can "engender feelings of warmth and solidarity among interlocutors" (1995, p.64). Jung (1994) adds in his paper on speech acts of thanking that gratitude expression has the "effect of enhancing rapport between the interlocutors" (1994, p.20). He states that some gratitude expressions may serve different functions depending on the situation such as "conversational openings, stopping, leave takings and offering positive reinforcement" (1994, p. 20).

Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) refer to Rubin's (1983) analysis of the different functions of the phrase thank you, such as complimenting, signaling the closing of a conversation, or a "bald" thank you at service encounters. (Eisenstein & Bodman 1986, p.168).

Eisenstein & Bodman (1993) did four experiments to investigate how gratitude is expressed. They state that native speakers can express their gratitude by saying anything they want. The results also show that native speakers employ lack of necessity as a strategy in expressing gratitude for a gift.

In 1996, Aijmer conducted a study to investigate the functions and the strategies of gratitude expressions. Her study was based on the London - Lund Corpus of spoken English. Aijmer refers to thanking as an expressive speech act which has "illocutionary force" (1996, p.34). The findings show that the most frequent conversational routines for thanking were found to be thanks/ thank you. In this study, different formulas for gratitude expressions are accounted for in terms of the stem they involve.

Many scholars have dealt with the realization of forms of gratitude expressions and responses to thanking in languages, such as Akan (Agyekum, 2010), English (Aijmer, 1996; Einstein & Bodman, 1993), French (Kerbrat -Orecchioni, 2005; Bujon, 2008), German (Marten Cleef, 1991), etc. Studies from a cross-cultural pragmatics perspective compare German and Spanish (Mayor, 2006), German and Iraqi Arabic (Ali Mahdi, 2010), English and Iraqi Arabic (Al Zubaidi, 2012).

#### 4. Studies on the Speech Act of Thanking in Arabic<sup>1</sup>

A great core of research has been done on the speech act of thanking on Arabic language. However, to my knowledge, none dealt with Algerian Arabic. Below I present some of the studies that discuss speech acts of thanking in Arabic.

Morsi (2010) investigates the speech act of thanking in Egyptian Arabic dialect. In her study, Morsi states that Egyptian speakers employ different strategies in expressing and responding to gratitude expressions. She points out that Egyptian speakers use "repetition, redundancy and plenty of formulaic expressions [...] in order to show sincerity and gratitude to the hearer" (2010, p. 5). She observed naturally occurring thanking and responses to thanking in Egyptians' everyday interactions. She divides the data according to the "functions of thanking" into four categories: appreciation of benefit, leave taking, opening and closing a conversation. Her results show that Egyptian speakers show their politeness by using: "formulaic expressions whether explicit mention of thanks, e.g. 'thanks a million', 'don't mention it' or blessings, e.g. 'bless your hand', 'bless your heart', 'May God reward you', or other non-religious formulas including good wishes, e.g. 'May we hear good things about you'" (2010, p. 51)

Another study conducted by Al-Khawaldeh and Žegarac (2013) examine Jordanians' perceptions of how and to what extent gender influences the communication of gratitude in some everyday situations.

The interviewers focused on the ways the participants would express gratitude to the same and opposite gender interlocutors and why they would choose certain ways of expressing gratitude in preference to others.

Al-Khawaldeh and Žegarac (2013) also compare Jordanian and English native speakers' perceptions about the speech act of thanking. The main aim of this study is to explore the similarities and the differences between Jordanian and English perceptions of expressing speech acts of thanking. Besides, in "Speech Acts in American English and Palestinian Arabic", Al-Shaer (2013) studies how both

<sup>1</sup> Taken from Hana Altalhi (2014:15)

English and Arabic realize promising and thanking speech acts. Al-Shaer analyzes spontaneous naturally-occurring utterances in both English and Arabic.

Finally, in the same year, Al-Zubaidi (2013) investigates speech acts of thanking produced by native speakers of American English, native speakers of Iraqi Arabic and Iraqi EFL learners.

## 5. Method and Data Collection

### 5.1. Research Methodology

The most common method of data collection in studying verbal behaviour is called the Discourse Completion Task (DCT). Participants are provided with a written questionnaire that consists of different social situations in which the participants are expected to express their gratitude

The following section contains a reprint of our questionnaire as well as some remarks concerning our experience in working with this questionnaire. Sometimes informants were unable to fill it in on their own, so this anonymous questionnaire should be regarded as the basis of a structured interview. That is why very often introductions, explanations, and examples were added to the forms included here; they were given just as the situation demanded but not included in the next reprint.

#### 5.1.1. Reprint of the questionnaire: Please read and fill it attentively

##### a- Questions concerning the informants' background<sup>2</sup>

In this section, we ask you some questions concerning your past life, as they are of great importance to us. We hope that such information will help us to determine the influences which have led to your present language usage. Of course; all personal information will be kept in strict confidence so that conclusions about the identity of the informants are impossible.

Total number :

Date :

- 1) Where were you born?
- 2) Do you live in the town of your origin?
- 3) How old are you?
- 4) Are you male or female?
- 5) What is your family status (i.e. married, single, etc)?
- 6) Please give me in chronological order the places you have lived in for more than one year.
- 7) Where are you living now?

Name of the place	How long did you live there?
1-	-
2-	-
3-	-

8- If you are a student, what schools and colleges have you attended?

9- What is your level of education?

10- If you are not a student, what jobs have you done for more than one year?

Kind of job practised	Length of occupation
1-	
2-	
3-	

##### b- Gratitude Expressions (i.e. Thanking)

1-How do you thank members of your family?

Members	Thanking Expressions
Your father	
Your mother	
Your brothers and sisters	
Older than you	
Younger than you	
Your grand-parents:	
Paternal	
Maternal	
Your father's brother	
Your mother's brother	

<sup>2</sup> Some of the questions here are inspired from Braun (1988:1)

Your father's sister Your mother's sister Your parents-in-law: Father-in-law Mother-in-law Your son Your daughter	
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2-How are you thanked by members of your family?

By your father By your mother By your brothers and sisters Older than you Younger than you By your grand-parents: a- Paternal b- Maternal By your father's brother By your mother's brother By your father's sister By your mother's sister By your parents-in-law: Father-in-law Mother-in-law By your son By your daughter	
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3- How do you thank your neighbours?

Male Female Younger than you Same age as you Older than you Very young Very old Higher in social status than you Lower in social status than you The same social status as you
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4- How are you thanked by your neighbours?

Male Female Younger than you Same age as you Older than you Very young Very old Higher in social status than you Lower in social status than you The same social status as you
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5- At school: How do you thank friends, teachers and staff?

Friends Teachers: a- In class b- Not in class Members of the administration staff (Responsible): Males Females Secretaries Simple workers Headmaster Inspectors	
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6- At work: How do you thank colleagues, juridical Magistrates in the court of justice?

Colleagues Juridical Magistrates	
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7- In a restaurant, in a café: How do you thank the waiter?

The waiter Name known Name unknown	
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8- How do you thank the shop-keeper?

The shop keeper Young Old	
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9- Do you use any pronouns for a direct thank?

\*Singular

Male Female Neutral	
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\*Plural

Male Female Neutral	
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10- How do you thank God in your dialect?

11- Do you use other kinds of behaviour for thanking (non-linguistic such as gestures, movements of the body?)

12-Why and when do you thank people (Circumstances and obligations)?

13-On what basis do you choose a gratitude expression?

14-What kind of expressions do you use to thank a person regarding his social position?

Gratitude Expressions	To an inferior	To an equal	To a superior
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15-What kind of terms can you associate /combine to your thanking formulas?

16-Are you obliged to add a term of address when thanking a person?

Yes    a- To an inferior:            No    a- To an inferior:  
       b- To an equal:                b- To an equal:  
       c- To a superior:              c- To a superior:

17- Imagine the following situations and provide an answer to each:

Have been given a gift, have been done a favour, have been given a help by:

- a- Someone younger than you and lower in social status (inferior).
- b- Someone of the same age as you and equal in social status (equal).
- c- Someone older than you and higher in social status (superior).

- d- Younger and higher in status.
- e- Older and lower in status.

### 5.2. Collection of Data

In the first part of the questionnaire, personal information about the informants was gathered to find out the factors affecting the linguistic choice such as: age, sex, birthplace, educational background, jobs practiced and social rank.

In the second part, informants were asked to give a taxonomy of different terms they use to thank various categories of people in the speech community under investigation. (Family members, friends, colleagues and their responsible, neighbours, teachers, etc)

The third part of the questionnaire was devoted to how the two famous concepts put forward by Brown and Levinson (1978-1987) namely positive and negative politeness are reflected in the spoken repertoire of my speech community to perform the speech act of thanking.

The persons interviewed had different educational backgrounds (graduate, undergraduate, primary, middle and secondary education); very few of them were illiterate.

Most of them belonged to the 14-50 age range; there were only few people who were above 50 years old.

## 6. Results and Analysis

In analyzing the data collected on performance of thanks, we observed that there is a qualitative difference between the speech behaviour of status un-equals, such as teachers and students, between statuses equals such as classmates or colleagues, between people as socially distant as strangers or as familiar as family members. Those differences were labelled by Wolfson 'the bulge' (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1987:184); they are all based upon a large set of obligations, whether the obligation is to act or refrain from acting, or merely to carry out an act in an appropriate way.

By means of direct observation of the way in which these obligations determine the need for thanking we have attempted to examine the actual conditions which elicit thanks in every day interactions in Algerian Arabic. In constructing the empirical study, one major consideration was to examine the factors determining the choice of thanking expressions and to test whether these thanking items are necessarily combined to other politeness features. The second consideration whether the judgments we had made regarding the relationship between S and H were confirmed by the choice of thanking formulas in combination to politeness markers. In general, our investigation revealed that thanks were given when being offered a help, a gift, and also as a response to compliments. In other words, our preliminary findings show that the basic obligations to give a 'thank you' are:

a - The obligation to be in someone's debt, i.e., to feel grateful to somebody for his/her kindness and help because thanking in general, as Norick states (1978), is the 'acknowledgment of one's having benefited from the actions of another person.'<sup>3</sup> For example, a man driving a car and doesn't know the right way said to a policeman:

S: /nqəd nədXul mənna / (Can I take this road?)

H: /ru:h maʕliʃ / (Go, no problem)

S: /saħi:t Xuja barakalla:hufi:k / ( Thanks brother, may Allah reward you)

In a telephone conversation, a man said to his son of 19 years old:

S: /matmədʃ əddra: hhəm lrabəh ru:h Xallasli la knep qbəl/

(Don't give money to 'Rabeh' pay 'la CNEP' first)

H: /saħħa/ (ok)

S: /saħħi:t alla:h jassətrək ʃukran/ (Thanks, God protect you, thank you)

Here the speaker is emphasizing his thank by the use of both /saħħi:t/ taken from the Algerian Arabic dialect and /ʃukran/taken from Modern Spoken Arabic. The same phenomenon occurs with the use of Arabic and French thanking expressions, as the examples below will show; for the purpose of expressing great acknowledgment to the hearer.

b- The obligation to express gratitude to someone when given a gift viewing 'thanking' as a post event, that is a reaction to another act. For example, a girl coming back from a trip to France brought some presents to her family.

S: /zəbtəlkum həza 'symbolique' rakum ʕarfi:n 'les moyens'/

(I brought something symbolic; you know the means.)

H: /kulʃi ʃabbi:n 'merci'/ (Everything is beautiful, thanks)

S: / ha:d ssa:k ta:ʕ bna:tək/ (This bag is for your daughters)

H: /ksi:ti:həm alla:h jahħafdək wajhənni:k məʕda:b adənja wəl?a:Xira waʃa ngullək alla:h jnaʒħək fiqəra:jtək / (You gave a lot, may Allah protect you, reward you,...)

These thanking expressions show that the receiver of gifts was so happy, satisfied and tried to use all kinds of thanking.

S: /a:mi:n jarabbi/ (God willing)

c- The obligation to express gratitude to someone who pays a compliment for you about your appearance, look, beauty, or good action for example:

A: /Xurʒətlək ʃa:bba 'la tarte au citron' / (it's delicious 'la tarte au citron')

B: /wa:h 'merci' dajmən ra:ha tuXraʒli ha:ka/ (yes, thanks, it's always like that)

A: /hətta lbiskwi 'noir' ʒa:k ʃba:b/ (Even the black biscuit is delicious)

B: /ha:di 'la recette' ta:ʕ 'Danette' (This is the recipe of 'Danette')

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Poynton (1990: 327)

A: /ʕaddəbna:k qarritihum wʒədtti qahwitihum/

(We have caused you harm, you taught them and gave them coffee again)

B: /lla: mafihawa:lu ‘avec plaisir’/ (No problem with pleasure)

A: ‘merci’ /samhi:na/ (Thanks, sorry again)

B: ‘Je vous en prie’ /alla:h jsahhal/ (You are welcome, may Allah make it easier).

Moreover, thanks can sometimes be used ironically in response to an act that does not please the hearer; for example, a woman threw water on a man when she was cleaning the window and watered him.

A: /smahli Xuja maʕəttək/ (excuse me brother, I didn’t see you)

B: /sahhi:ti/ (thanks).

Here the ‘thank you’ was used metaphorically to express anger and mean that the hearer was impolite in his action that does not deserve a thanking.

Although these situations were very much in evidence in our observational data, there were a number of others often more subtle and sometimes difficult to describe.

The examples analyzed here are drawn from spontaneous conversations between Algerian speakers of both sexes and various ages recorded in my hometown. The interactions took place in a number of contexts: for example, at home, at work, in cafés, at informal social gatherings, at formal discussions, for example in an administration, at school between either students and teachers or classmates alone. The respondents are all native speakers of Arabic who share the same dialect i.e. Algerian Arabic but belong to various ethnic groups. They were approached by the researcher in person. Some were asked once to answer the questionnaires individually but sometimes recorded in groups with no interference of the researcher. Information about the study was provided when requested by respondents. This helped ensure spontaneous interaction between informants i.e. as a researcher; I attempted not to interfere in order not to guide the informants’ responses.

My 2<sup>nd</sup> year 80 students also provided invaluable data on patterns of thanks in families, in various work contexts, both in class discussions of the topic and in their papers; friends and colleagues likewise provided me with more common expressions of gratitude, as well as opinions based on their own experiences of the claims made by other informants on the hypotheses I had formulated. And finally, for more qualitative aspects of the study, the questionnaire was designed so that subjects were asked to read the item and write what they think should be the response in that particular situation. These items were intended to require a gratitude expression or thanking with distance being either plus or minus and dominance being plus, zero or minus. The relationship between the speaker and the addressee is ‘plus dominance’ if the speaker is of higher status than the addressee, ‘zero dominance’ if they are of equal status and ‘minus dominance’ if the speaker is of lower status than the addressee.

Most of the subjects show their politeness with the use of different terms of address that they sometimes combine to thanking expressions. On the other hand, some of them mark their courteous behaviour with a hand rising, a body or head bowing when thanking others with a specific consideration to their relation to the interlocutors they address or thank.

On the basis of those findings, the informants were divided into three groups; the first thanking inferiors in age and social status, the second interacting with equals in age and social rank and the third group conversing with superiors in age and social status. Table 1. below represent the features of address terms in thanking formulas bearing in mind the two variables, social distance and social dominance.

Thanking an inferior	Thanking an equal	Thanking a superior
/sahhi:t Xuja/, /sahhi:t/, /sahhi:t ʕukran/, /rabbi jahhafdək/, /ʕukran alla:h jXelli:k/, /barak alla:hufi:k rabbi jahhafdak/, /sahhi:t alla:h jahhafdak/, /barak alla:hufi:k/, /sahhi:ti ?a banti/ ‘merci’, / jahhafdak barakalla:hufi:k/, /sahhi:t ?a waldi/, /jsəzʒi:k/, jassatrak/, /rabbi jXelli:k/, /alla:h jarda ʕli:k/, /ʕukran alla:h jfarhək/, /sahhi:t wəlla:h jsəzʒi:k/, /alla:h jahhafdak/, makan htta muʕkil Xuja/, /alla:h jnawrak/, /alla:h jkabrak fitaʕt əlla:h/, /alla:h jazʕal mənək zraʕ wəzərriʕa/, /ʕukran ?a Xti/ /sahhi:t ?a bba /, alla:h jahhafdək ?a Xali/ or /?a ʕammi/, /alla:h jnuwrək/, /alla:h jsezʒi:lək ləwlad wajsaxər fi:hum/, /alla:h jaslahlək uriʒa/, /sahhi:t tastahəl bu:sa/ (for kids)	/ʕukran/, /ʕukran Xuja /or /ʕukran Xti/, /sahhi:t Xuja /, /sahhi:t ja Xuja/, /sahhi:t sa:ʕbi/, ‘merci mon ami’, /barak alla:hufi:k ʕzizti/, /rabbi jahhafdək ‘merci’/, /ʕukran alla:h jnaʒʒhək ja Xti/, /sahhi:t rabbi jʕawwed ʕli:k/, /ʕukran zazi:lan/, ‘merci beaucoup’, ‘merci beaucoup’/ alla:h jXəlli:k Xuja/, /jarham lwalidi:n/, /sahhi:t alla:h jzazi:k bəIXi:r/, / barak alla:hufi:k ʕri:ki/, ‘merci’ / ?a ʕumri or ‘ma chérie’, /sahhi:t ?a lafqiḥ/ or/ ?a lbaraka /, /alla:h jʕati:k ?asahha/, /sahhi:t Xu/, /sahhi:t ja Xuja/ /sahhi:t/ + FN,	/barak alla:hufi:k/, /sahhi:t barak alla:hufi:k/, / ʕukran ja ?usta:d rabbi jahhafdək/ /barak alla:hufi:k ʕi:X/, /sahhi:t ʕammi/, ‘merci beaucoup, moncieurs’, /ʕukran ʕammi/, /barak alla:hufi:k ʕammi/, /ʕukran ʕi:X/, /sahhi:ti madame/, /ʕukran/, /sahhi:t ?a ʕammi/, / barak lla:hufi:k ?alha:ʒ/ or /?a lha:ʒʒa /, /barak alla:hufi:k allah jaʕti:k həʒʒa/, /ʒaza:ka alla:hu Xajran /, / alla:h jtawwəl ʕumrak/, /alla:h jakutlak ʕla fra:ʕ atta:ʕa/, /alla:h jkatər man mta:lək/, /sahhi:t ?a nsi:bi/, / barak alla:hufi:k ?a ʒa:rti/ or /?a ʒa:ri/,
Thanking+ Kts, FN, Address inversion	Thanking+ Kts, Endearing Terms, Nicknames, Friendship terms, Other Specific Terms.	Thanking+ /ja /+kts, LN, /?a/+Kts, Kts, Titles, /?a/+Titles, Other Specific Terms i.e. /?a ʒa:ri/

Table 1: Gratitude Expressions in Algerian Arabic

Regarding the previous findings, the responses data have been converted to the percentage of the total number of subjects for each item. So, table 2. illustrates this percentage for each category of the feature.

	Number	None	FN	Kts	Titles	Nicknames	Other terms
<b>To an inferior</b>	31	14 45.16%	01 3.22 %	10 32.25%	00 00 %	01 3.22 %	02 6.45 %
<b>To an equal</b>	31	11 35.48 %	00 00 %	17 54.83%	00 00 %	02 6.45 %	06 19.35%
<b>To a superior</b>	31	10 32.25 %	00 00 %	09 29.03%	19 61.29%	00 00 %	08 25.80 %

Table 2: Percentage of address terms' features combined to thanks

We see then, there were a total of 31 subjects who responded, the percentage varies between 32. 25% and 54. 83% who associated their thanking expressions to address terms, more precisely to Kts. Therefore, in case which represents no or minus distance and zero dominance the speaker attempted to show more affection and closeness to the addressee by making use of Kts to relatives and address inversion to non- kins especially to children but very limited or no use of FN and titles to this category 00 %. Very few of them used some nicknames and endearing terms for more intimate relations.

In the case of plus dominance, the study shows that 61. 29% of the respondents tend to combine their thanking expressions to titles, 29. 03% to Kts, 25.80 % to other terms indicating a certain kind of relations when addressing superiors of higher social status and age or strangers for the purpose of expressing more respect and politeness. Hence, as we move from plus dominance to minus dominance (the speaker is of lower status than the addressee), we find a corresponding increase in the percentage of respondents who combine their gratitude expression to address terms. That is, when the hearer is of higher status there is a great tendency for the speaker to use formal terms of address in thanks in order to show their gratitude to the addressee. By contrast, when the hearer is lower in status than or equal to the speaker, subjects feel free to choose their thanking expressions, associating them or not to a term of address; they even code switch to the French 'merci' and the English 'thanks' when thanking their closest friends and kins since they feel in a relaxed situation. For instance, /saħhi:t/ 'mon ami' (thanks my friend), /fukran/ 'ma chérie' (thanks darling), 'merci ma petite' (thanks my little), thanks /saħbi/ (thanks my friend). Most of them argue that the use of French and English was done on purpose to show more closeness to friends and colleagues but this code-switching is avoided with elders, it can be rude and impolite especially if the hearer is illiterate.

In interviewing informants on the necessity of adding a term of address to their thanking expressions, among 54 interviewees (students, teachers, waiters, shopkeepers and others), 51(94. 44 %) confirm that the combination of thanking formulas to terms of address is more necessary when addressing superiors than when speaking to inferiors or equals. It indicates more respect to the person addressed and emphasizes our acknowledgment and gratitude to him. For the first case, i.e., addressing an equal, we find 30: yes (55.55%) and 24: no (44. 44%); it means respondents agree that it is not necessary to combine their thanks to any term of address but the addition of those terms Kts, endearing terms, FN, nicknames play an important role in establishing certain relationships with participants being more affectionate and closer to their addressees. With inferiors, we find 30: no (62. 96%); this means that more than half approved the non- obligation of these combinations but 20 others (37.03%) prefer the addition of these familiar terms of address to their GE.

Thus, the greater is the distance between interlocutors, the more there is combination of terms of address to the realization of thanking. The latter criterion was also represented in table 4. 4. with the non-use of address terms in thanking formulas that is increasing as the social distance becomes minus or equal. An important point to mention is that very often terms of address are preceded by the vocative /ja/ often realized as a /?a/ when combined to a gratitude expression; these two ways are used to attract the listener when thanking him/her.

Working on thanks, we have tried to focus on the most important factors, i.e., social distance and social dominance under which sub factors, determining our choice of address terms and how dependent or independent their combination is to the realization of thanking expressions, may be grouped from the most to the least important. These are essentially, age, social relation to the addressee and his/her social responsibility or status.

According to the data gathered we found that among 60 informants, 52 stated that their combination of gratitude expressions to address terms is closely tied to the age of the person addressed, i.e., most of the time they added an address term to their thanking formulas when speaking to an older person. Besides, from 30 to 32 informants argued that in addition to age, our relation to the addressee and his social responsibility or rank are of paramount importance when giving a thank; they most of the time combine these gratitude expressions to a term indicating a kin relation or an occupational title. On the other hand, the importance of the act performed, education of the interlocutors, our debt to the person thanked and other perhaps hidden factors like the psychological state..... of the interlocutors at the moment of conversation should not be neglected (10 informants) because they might affect the responses; Our results of the interview concerning the factors contributing to the choice of thanking expressions are represented in table 3. below:



Factors for choosing a thanking	Age	Relation to addressee	Social Responsibility	Other Factors
Informants	52	32	30	10

Table 3: Number of informants and determinant factors for GE

And the bars representing those most important factors are shown on figure. below

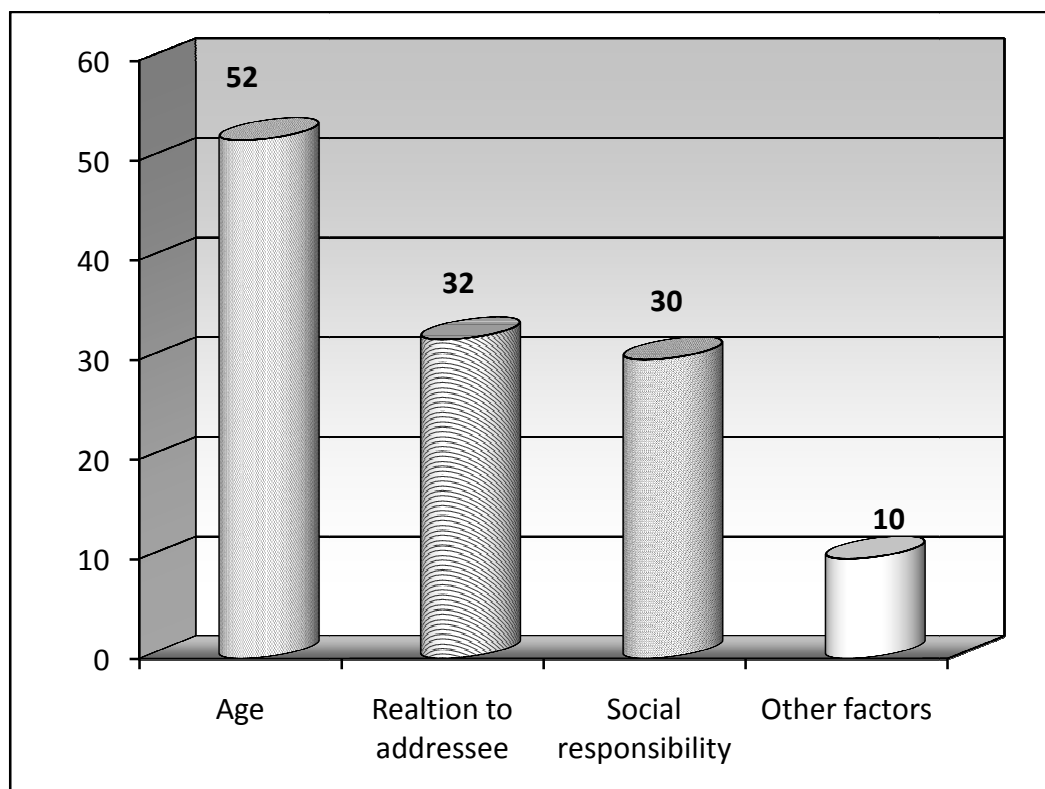


Figure 1: Factors determining the choice of thanking expressions.

Nonverbal communication is another strategy employed by Algerians to perform a gratitude expression. Nonverbal communication includes eye gaze, facial expressions and pointing gestures. Some examples of the nonverbal communication examples that are found in the corpus of thanking behaviour are: a smile combined to a thank you, a head nod, a gentle pat on the shoulder, hand rising especially when the thanker is far from the thankee or he/she is driving his car. All these examples of combining a non-linguistic behaviour with a gratitude expression are done in cases of intimacy or close relation to the hearer.

## 7. General Conclusion

Considering the implications of Brown and Levinson's theory and other earlier researches on speech acts grounding their link to the notion of face threat, the results above show that the speech act of thanking, viewing it an expressive act, is the manipulation of verbal material to convey information about one's emotional state bearing in mind the social relationship between the speaker and the hearer and the weight of action they are involved in.

Thanking expressions are speech acts which reveal great politeness, especially when the social distance between S and H is plus, i.e., when the hearer is greater in power, status, age and social responsibility. This criterion of plus distance is reflected in the choice of more formal thanking formulas such as /ʃukran ʒazi:lan/; and even by a code switching to French phrases and words like 'merci, c'est très gentil' because both the high variety and the French language are considered as prestigious varieties to express politeness and more respect. Moreover, they are most of the time combined to a term of address by which more focus on the gratitude is expressed.

On the other hand, in minus and equal distance relations thanks are used more freely not necessarily combined to a term of address. In short, the social distance and the social dominance including age, power, responsibility, rank and status are the most important factors which determine the combination of a gratitude expression with a term of address in addition to perhaps other intentions of the speakers.

One of the major concerns of this sociolinguistic research is how is politeness manifested, to perform a specific speech act called 'thanking'. It has been observed that thanking formulas are very often combined to terms of address as the social distance between participants is greater. They are intended to show more deference and respect and emphasize more the importance of help or gratitude to the listener. On the other hand, the addition of terms of address to a gratitude expression in intimate relations can be explained in terms of affection and closeness to the person addressed. Furthermore, forms of address are combined to thanking formulas relatively freely and unconsciously. Hence the greater is the distance, the more is the necessity to combine address terms to a gratitude

expressions. The last point may be analyzed psycho-linguistically, in terms of the hidden factors that must be of great interest in interpreting the findings. To conclude, we have tried to demonstrate that the very problems we find as we analyze the data, can help us to discover the uncovered variables that may be of great interest in deepening our understanding of the sociolinguistic patterns discussed before.

I also wish that this study will pave the way to those who are interested in investigating how this speech act of thanking is accompanied by a non-verbal behaviour, like certain gestures or movements of the body asking new questions and raising a new problematic in order to get at the conditioning factors we have uncovered.

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