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Acknowledging gratitude in American English: a pragmatic study of native speakers' role play data

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List of abbreviations

GA	Gratitude acknowledgment
HA	Head act
SM	Supportive move
AmE	American English
BrE	British English
CanE	Canadian English
CamE	Cameroon English
ESL	English as a second language
EFL	English as a foreign language
SL	Second language
FL	Foreign language
DCT	Discourse completion task
MC	Multiple choice
UGE	Unacknowledged gratitude expression
TRP	Transition relevance place
FTA	Face threatening act
P	Degree of Power
=P	Socially equal thankee
+P	Socially superior thankee
-P	Socially subordinate thankee
D	Social distance
+D	Socially distant thankee
-D	Socially close thankee

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

One of the ways in which it is possible to approach the study of language is to describe how it "is used in communication" (Leech, 1990: 1) and its "relation to contextual background features" (Cutting, 2008: 2). This is the approach adopted in the field of pragmatics, one of whose privileged areas of investigation is speech acts, that is, "the actions performed in saying something" (Cutting, 2008: 13). Research has shown that verbal communication is not the responsibility of the message producer alone, since an addresser's speech and writing are co-determined and shaped by the participants in their complementary interactional roles. This is especially true of dialogic oral communication, which is co-constructed by the interlocutors on a moment-to-moment, and of speech act performance. Indeed, many speech acts might both be initiating or responding communicative events; also, they often require or trigger some kind of response or (non-)verbal feedback, possibly another speech act. So far, research has mostly focused on initiating rather reacting speech acts, although the latter are beginning to attract more interest.

The thanking speech act is a case in point. Indeed, since Austin (1962) introduced the notion of the illocutionary act – that is, "the performance of an act *in* saying something" (Austin, 1962: 99; original emphasis) – and included the thanking act among them, countless studies, including cross-linguistic and cross-cultural ones, have been devoted to it (see, e.g., section 2.2 for a review of relevant studies in the last two decades). However, the speech act of responding to thanking has not been thoroughly examined, possibly because considered the manifestation of mere automatic and routine behaviour (see section 2.3). Only quite recently has there been a growing interest in investigating how speakers react to gratitude.

Several scholars have drawn attention to the importance of investigating responses to thanking in English and in other languages. To mention but a few, Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) stress that "both the giver and the thanker collaborate in the development of a successful thanking episode" (p. 74). Similarly, Jung (1994) observes that thank you

expressions and the responses to them "are "chained actions" or units of discourse, coordinated with each other". Also, Farenkia (2012: 1) comments that "responding to gratitude expressions" is "a universal practice". In addition, Schneider (2005) points out how the intrinsically conventional and formulaic nature of this speech act "makes responses to thanks particularly suitable for systematic in-depth analysis", and argues that "this speech act fulfils social functions not to be underestimated" (p. 101). Indeed, responses to thanking are important in conversational management, as they ratify thanking, contributing to the success of thanking exchanges and thus to the restoration of the interactants' balance of social debts and credits (see section 2.3).

The present study analyses American English (AmE) verbal reactions to thanking acts, which I will call *gratitude acknowledgments* (GAs; see section 1.2). To this end, a corpus containing 32 transcripts of role play interactions between 6 pairs of native speakers is analysed. Given that the bulk of research on GAs is based on written elicited data (see sections 2.3 and 3.2.1.1), the use of role play data will provide a new perspective from which to examine GAs (see sections 3.2.1.3 and 3.2.2).

The main goals of my study are: to develop a method for identifying GAs in English; to set out procedures for identifying and distinguishing head acts from supportive moves in GAs, and for analysing their strategies, semantics and lexico-syntactic encoding; and to compare and contrast the findings obtained from the analysis of oral elicited data with those of previous studies obtained through different data collection methods. Therefore, this work aims to provide new insights into the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of GAs in AmE by proposing a method for the analysis of GAs, which takes into consideration the analytical procedures adopted in previous research (see section 3.3), and by examining a type of data not considered before, that is role play data, relevant to one variety of English, that is AmE.

My approach will consist first in identifying genuine acts of thanking in the data (see section 3.2.3.3) – rather than thanking formulae used for other functions, such as encoding irony or closing a conversation – and then examining the turns produced in reaction to thanking. More specifically, I am going to: detect GAs in the reacting turns, and distinguish them from other turn material possibly performing other functions within the same interactional turns (see section 3.3.1); identify the core and ancillary components

of the GAs (i.e. the head acts vs. the supportive moves; see section 3.3.3); and describe the functions, content and encoding of the GAs (see sections 3.3.4, 3.3.5, 3.3.6).

In the remaining part of the chapter, I will motivate my choice of the term *GA* (see section 1.2); then I will set my study within its relevant research field, and refer to the theoretical framework that it draws on (see section 1.3); finally, I will provide an overview of the present work (see section 1.4).

1.2 Terminological clarifications

GAs have been variously labelled in the literature. Some scholars use terms generally focused on the position of the speech act with respect to the larger interactional sequence in which it occurs, that is as a *response*, such as *(thanking) responders* (Coulmas, 1981; Aijmer, 1996; Jacobsson, 2002; Ouafeu, 2009; Wong, 2010), *responses to thanks/thanks responses* (Jung, 1994; Leech and Svartvik, 2002; Farenkia, 2012, 2013). Other scholars use terms focusing on the transactional function[1] of the speech act, namely minimizing the thanker's degree of indebtedness, such as *minimizes* (Edmondson and House, 1981) and *thanks minimizers* (Schneider, 2005). Finally, other scholars use terms that focus on the interactional function[2] of the speech act, namely accepting and ratifying an act of thanking, such as in *acknowledgement of thanks* (Quirk et al., 1985), and *gratitude acknowledgments* (Colston, 2002; Katz et al., 2007). Each term comes with its pros and cons.

First, *response* is widely used to generally indicate "something that is done as a reaction to something that has happened or been said", and more specifically "something that is said or written as a reply" (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*). Responses are very often distinguished from backchannels and feedback tokens, that is, "the responses that show that the hearer is listening and encourage a speaker to continue taking [sic, talking]" and which "have a social function, but do not constitute a speech act" (Cutting, 2008: 20). However, several studies on GAs (see section 2.3) have demonstrated that some backchannels, such as *mmm hmm*, *(that's) ok* and *yeah*, might instead do more important interactional work, and thus function as speech acts, such as

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1 The transactional function "is the function which language serves in the expression of content and the transmission of factual information" (Cutting, 2008: 21).
2 The interactional function consists "in expressing social relations and personal attitudes, showing solidarity and maintaining social cohesion" (Cutting, 2008: 21).

GAs. Therefore, I disregarded the use of *response* in the present study because too generic and not inclusive of GA realizations whose encoding resembles backchannels and feedback tokens.

Second, *minimize* signals that something is made to seem less serious or important than it really is (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*); while more specific than *response*, *minimize* might be confused with the action of minimizing the value/cost of the benefit which triggered the thanking, that is locally adopted in order to reach the main GA communicative goal of minimizing a debt. Besides, since a thankee might pursue the goal of restoring the balance of social debts and credits with the interlocutor by other means than that of minimizing a benefit (called *minimizing the favour* in previous literature; see sections 2.3.2.2, 2.3.2.3, and 3.3.4.1), using the term *minimize* for GAs would obscure the other possible strategies that s/he might adopt to reach the aforementioned main goal.

Finally, the term *acknowledgment* appears to include a wider range of more general meanings. Indeed, Biber et al. (2006: 455) define it as "a word or minimal response used as an utterance to show that the listener is continuing to pay attention", and Ward (2001)[3] as "a brief contribution" (p. 10) uttered instead of "a more extensive presentation, such as a relevant next contribution" (p. 10), which signals "understanding but not necessarily agreement" (p. 2), and "assure[s] the speaker that information has been conveyed successfully", thus "play[ing] a role in managing turn-taking" (p. 2). Similarly, the verb *to acknowledge* includes the following range of relevant meanings: to "publicly announce that you are grateful for the help that someone has given you"; to "show somebody that you have noticed them or heard what they have said"; and to "let someone know that you have received something from them" (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*).

As it appears, the term *acknowledgment* conveys the meaning/attitude of gratitude, acceptance and understanding of previous speech; it also signals the general brevity of a participant's contribution to discourse. Since all these notions broadly apply to the GA speech act, in the present study I have chosen the term *GA* to refer to ways of ratifying a gratitude expression, acknowledging a previous turn, and preferably concluding an exchange.

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3 Ward (2001) draws on notions illustrated by Clark and Schaefer (1989), Novick and Sutton (1994) and Sacks et al. (1974).

1.3 Background to the study

The present work falls within the realm of pragmatics, a subfield of linguistics that investigates language use in context, which is goal-oriented and evaluative (Leech, 1990), in the sense that understanding the needs of the speaker and the hearer[4] is essential to study how the meaning of utterances is determined on the basis of different communicative circumstances and short- and long-term communicative purposes. For this reason, pragmatics is said to be "principle-controlled", rather than "rule-governed" (Leech, 1990: 5). In this section, I will introduce some notions relevant to pragmatics research in general, as well as the current study in particular. First, I will briefly define the pragmatic sub-disciplines that have a bearing on the present study. Second, provided that pragmatics investigates language in context, I will describe the main objects of study in this research field. Third, I will introduce the concept of politeness, which informs virtually every kind of social interaction, and which is key to thanking exchanges. Finally, I will outline the concept of the speech act, which GAs are a type of.

Pragmatics includes such sub-disciplines as pragmalinguistics, sociopragmatics, cross-cultural pragmatics, contrastive pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics. As Leech (1990) defines it, pragmalinguistics studies "the more linguistic end of pragmatics – where we consider the particular resources which a language provides for conveying particular illocutions" (p. 11). That is, pragmalinguistics considers the interaction between grammar – that is, "the abstract formal system of language" (p. 4) – and speakers' goals in the production of meaning in speech events. Sociopragmatics is "the sociological interface of pragmatics", which considers "more specific 'local' conditions of language use" (p. 10); it primarily investigates social factors in speech events, like power differential and social distance between them. Cross-cultural pragmatics investigates "synchronic […] first language use" (Cutting, 2008: 66), across different languages, but also across varieties of the same language; it assumes that "speech communities share detectable patterns of speech", which "provide an important domain for the exploration of speech as a cultural phenomenon" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a: 5). Contrastive pragmatics compares and contrasts speech production and usage in different languages and/or varieties of the same language. Finally, interlanguage pragmatics is concerned

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4 Leech (1990) and many other scholars use the terms speaker and hearer as relevant to both spoken and written verbal production and reception, and so are to be intended, respectively, as 'addresser' and 'addressee', more generally.

with speakers' and language learners' "pragmatic and discourse knowledge" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a: 9). Of all the above sub-fields, the ones directly relevant to the present study are pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, since I will be looking at the lexico-syntactic and semantic encoding of GAs in different situational contexts.

Main objects of study in pragmatics are context, text and function. Cutting (2008) observes that there are three types of context. The first is called *situational context*, that is, the spatio-temporal setting and general circumstances in which speakers are co-present and communicate. The second is called *background-knowledge context*, that is, the participants' shared cultural knowledge and their degree of familiarity with each other. The third is referred to as the *co-textual context*, that is, speakers' knowledge about the content of the communicative encounter at the moment of speaking. The notion of *text* is twofold: on the macro-level there is "discourse, or the use of language", while on the micro-level there is "text, or pieces of spoken or written discourse" (Cutting, 2008: 2). Finally, the notion of *function* comprises the immediate and distant goals of speakers when they produce individual utterances and broadly engage in conversation. The GAs in the corpus will be examined with regard to the three notions outlined above. Indeed, each GA is relevant to a situational context, where the participants share a certain cultural background and a certain degree of familiarity between each other, as presented in the scenario description; and, in the course of the role play interaction, the participants also share knowledge about the specific development and content of the conversation (i.e. the co-textual context). Also, each GA is to be considered an instance of micro-level type of text, since local thanking exchanges are detected and analysed independently from other possible thanking exchanges, or larger interactional episodes, reproduced within the same transcript. Finally, a GA is to be seen as the expression of a specific communicative function, which consists in ratifying gratitude and extinguishing debts.

One of the central areas of investigation in pragmatics is politeness, that is the "greasing" of the wheel of interaction" which is meant to maintain and enhance social relationships. A pragmatic analysis of politeness phenomena must consider several points. First, as Cutting (2008) specifies, politeness must be conceived more in its "function and intended social meaning" (p. 49), rather than simply from the (local) encoding of utterances. Second, since it is context-dependent, politeness is especially influenced by two situational factors thereby related, namely, the "size of the imposition,

the routine and reasonableness of the task", and "the formality of the context" (Cutting, 2008: 50). Third, other significant factors are relevant to social aspects of context, in particular, the power relationship – that is, "differences of status, roles, age, gender, education, class, occupation and ethnicity" (Cutting, 2008: 50) – and social distance – that is, the degree of familiarity between speakers. The data considered in this study consist of politeness-driven and -oriented interactions (i.e. interactions meant to restore social harmony) produced by study participants playing the roles of interlocutors in different role-relationships in terms of social distance (close vs. distant) and relative degree of power (equal vs. superior vs. subordinate); thus, they show how the "same" type of polite behaviour is instantiated in different situational contexts. Finally, a fundamental point to consider is that politeness is differently constructed and conceived across cultures, which inevitably influences the pragmatic aspects of politeness and calls for a cross-cultural perspective in the analysis of these phenomena. However, the present study only considers data from one language and culture. Reference to cross-linguistic/cultural issues is limited to chapter 2.

Many pragmatic studies adopt speech acts as their preferred object of study because they are a prototypical manifestation of language use in context. As a result, a whole theoretical framework has developed to investigate speech acts, namely Speech Act Theory. Its notions and methods are directly relevant to the current study, which analyses a specific type of speech act.

Speech acts are actions performed through language, and are assumed by many scholars to be a pragmatic universal, although their formulation is cross-linguistically and cross-culturally variable. The notion of *speech acts* (in particular, of *illocutionary acts*) was introduced by Austin in 1962 in the philosophy of language, and later discussed in a number of disciplines, like linguistics, anthropology and literary criticism (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989a: 1-2). Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory postulates that a given speech act can be examined on three different levels: the locution, that is, the form of "the full units of speech" (p. 94), which gives rise to locutionary acts, defined as "the act *of* saying something (p. 99; original emphasis); the illocution (or illocutionary force), that is, the function given to a locution, the speaker's purpose/intention underlying its realization, which gives rise to the illocutionary act, that is "the performance of an act *in* saying something" (p. 99; original emphasis); and the perlocution, that is, "the consequential

effects [of a given utterance] upon the feelings, thoughts or actions" (p. 101) of the hearer, which gives rise to the perlocutionary act, that is, what is accomplished/reached through the utterance of words. Austin's (1962) preliminary classification of illocutionary acts is based on the assumption that every performative sentence (i.e. an utterance which performs an action, p. 6) is expressed by a corresponding verb; as a result, his classification of illocutionary acts postulates the 5 categories of 'verdictives' (i.e. declarations of verdicts, as in appraising), 'expositives' (i.e. expressions of views, as in arguing), 'exercitives' (i.e. the exercising of authority, as in advising), 'behabitives' (i.e. reactions to events, as in congratulating) and 'commissives' (i.e. the undertaking of actions, as in promising). Acts of thanking and GAs would fall under behabitives. Searle (1975) later revises Austin's classification, arguing against Austin's classification criteria, and especially the assumed correspondence between illocutionary verbs and illocutionary acts.

Searle (1975) thus proposes a classification of speech acts based on 3 key elements of speech acts: the illocutionary point, that is, "the point or purpose of a type of illocution", which is "part of, but not the same as illocutionary force" (p. 3); the direction of fit, that is, "how the content [of an illocution] is supposed to relate to the world" (p. 4); and the expressed psychological state of a speech act, that is, the expression of an "attitude, [a] state, etc., to [the illocution's] propositional content" (p. 4). As a result, Searle proposes 5 categories of speech acts: 'declarations', 'representatives', 'commissives', 'directives' and 'expressives'. Speech acts belonging to declarations modify the state of affairs at the moment they are uttered in the first person, such as in "I name you John", or "I resign from this job". Representative speech acts are those in which the speaker's words reflect something that s/he believes matches the state of affairs in the world (e.g. descriptions, claims, hypotheses, etc.). Commissive speech acts are those that bind the speaker to do something in the future (e.g. promises, offers, threats, etc.). Directive speech acts, instead, are those that are meant to elicit an action from the hearer (e.g. commands, requests, invitations, etc.). Finally, expressive speech acts are those that describe an emotional state or attitude of the speaker (e.g. apologies, congratulations, regrets, thanking etc.); the realization of these speech acts, while having no direction of fit, necessarily requires the speaker's sincerity. In Searle (1975), thanking speech acts are classified under the class of expressive speech acts; while no mention is made of GAs,

these can also be classified as 'expressive', since "they express the thankee's reading of the thanking situation" (p. 19) (see Rüegg, 2014).

Searle also points out that speech acts can be realized directly or indirectly. In the former there is a direct correlation between the literal meaning and the intended meaning of the utterance, that is, "there is a direct relationship between form and function" (Cutting, 2008: 17). In the latter, the literal meaning of an utterance differs from its intended meaning (i.e. speakers use a speech act to perform another type of speech act) and, as a result, speakers mean more than they actually say (Leech, 1990). In many cultures, such as the English culture, it is a common practice to associate higher degrees of indirectness with greater degrees of politeness, as a demonstration of respect towards other people's negative face (see footnote 6). In the case of GAs, the degree of (in)directness can be determined on the basis of whether it contains at least one explicit head act (core component) or only a less explicit supportive move (ancillary component).

Since it is a member of Searle's (1975) class of 'expressives', thanking can be regarded as one of those acts that, according to Leech (1990), "tend to be *convivial,* and therefore intrinsically polite" (p. 106; original emphasis), meaning that the illocutionary function of thanking correlates with its social goal of showing courtesy and maintaining relationships. Thanking has also been described with regard to the management of 'face' needs in Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory[5], where it is classified as a 'face threatening act' (FTA)[6]. The main reason for this is that thanking threatens the speaker's (i.e. the thanker) negative face, since it recognizes the existence of a debt incurred by the speaker, whose face is thereby humbled; at the same time, however, it is implied that thanking is a face-enhancing act which sustains the hearer's positive face, since it shows the thankee that the benefit s/he provided is appreciated and valued. In line with Brown and Levinson, Edmondson and House (1981) argue that thanking is "H-supportive, such

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5 Politeness Theory is an approach to the investigation of politeness phenomena across different languages, which has been introduced by Brown and Levinson (1978); the work includes a theoretical model for the analysis of speakers' politeness strategies in conversation and has become a fundamental point of reference for pragmatics scholars.

6 An FTA is an act whose performance is deemed to endanger the hearer's or the speaker's positive or negative face. For Brown and Levinson (1987), the notion of 'face' comprises the "individuals' self-esteem" (p. 2), the projection of the self, its wants and needs into social life and interactions. Positive face is the need for sociability, approbation from other people and integration into a group. Negative face is the need to maintain one's own space, freedom and avoid external impositions.

that the recipient is potentially "embarrassed", in that according to the H-supportive maxim he should underplay or suppress his own benefits" (p. 166).

Similarly to acts of thanking, GAs can be said to threaten the speaker's (i.e. the thankee's) negative face, but at the same time to enhance the addressee's (i.e. the thanker's) positive or negative face. Indeed, on the one hand, the thankee "may feel constrained to minimize [the thanker's] debt […] as in 'It was nothing, don't mention it'" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 67). On the other, the aforementioned strategy might be regarded as safeguarding the thanker's negative face, since claiming the absence of debts cancels any possible pressure on the thanker to reciprocate the benefit. Alternatively, the thankee might choose to address the thanker's positive face by stating how s/he is valued and liked as a person, or by expressing how the provision of the benefit has triggered positive feelings in him/herself. Finally, the thankee could emphasize the need for reciprocation of the benefit (see section 2.3.2.2); this way, the GA would function as an FTA to the thanker's negative face.

In this study, I regard GAs as expressive speech acts which occur to ratify a gratitude expression, and thus to restore the balance between the debts of the thanker and the credits of the thankee.

1.4 Outline of the work

This chapter has introduced and contextualized the gist of the current dissertation, and the field of research it is relevant to. Chapter 2 will provide a general overview of studies dealing with the speech act of thanking; next, it will report on cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies on GAs, with particular focus on the English language. Chapter 3 will discuss the data collection methods employed in previous GA research; then it will describe the procedure adopted to collect, select and analyse the data for the present study. Chapter 4 will present the results of the analysis of the reacting turns to the thanking exchanges identified in the corpus. Chapter 5 will summarize the main findings and discuss them in relation to those of previous studies on GAs; it will also weigh the strengths against the weaknesses of the current study, and suggest possible future directions for research in this field.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The speech act of thanking has been extensively studied in the last 5 decades in its sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects across a number of languages, including from cross-cultural and cross-linguistic perspectives. While the literature on the act of thanking is quite vast, the literature considering its reactive speech act, that is, GAs, appears to be rather scant. However, GAs are as important as the speech act they respond to in the management of social interactions and transactions, since they form an integral part of many conventional thanking exchanges and since they are also relevant to enhancing and maintaining social bonds between speakers.

In this chapter, I will first (section 2.2) provide an overview of some recent works on thanking, both in English and in other languages. Then (section 2.3), I will review the literature on GAs, whether these are discussed as part of the thanking exchange or in their own right. The goal is to overview what is already known about the strategies, formulation and uses of these reactive speech acts.

2.2 Studies of thanks over the past 20 years

Thanking in English has been examined from different perspectives. Some scholars have investigated the encoding of thanking, its communicative strategies and effects, and its cross-cultural realizations across English varieties from a synchronic perspective – for instance, Eisenstein and Bodman (1993), Jung (1994), Aijmer (1996), Okamoto and Robinson (1997), Leech and Svartvik (2002), Schauer and Adolphs (2006), Cheng (2010), and Elwood (2010, 2011) – as well as from a diachronic perspective – for instance, Jacobsson (2002). Other scholars have looked at thanking in English from a contrastive perspective, such as Aston (1995), Ahar and Eslami-Rasekh (2011), and Pishghadam and Zarei (2012). Finally, other scholars have examined thanking as realized by English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speakers, such as Hinkel (1994), Cui (2012), Cheng (2005), Ghobadi and Fahim (2009), Wong (2010), Pishghadam and Zarei (2011) and Liao (2013).

Studies on thanking other than English include Al Khatib (1997) on Jordanian, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997, 1998, 2005, 2008) on French, Kumatoridani (1999), Ohashi (2008a, 2008b) and Long (2010) on Japanese, Koutlaki (2002) on Persian, Ameka (2006) on West-African languages, Agyekum (2010) on Akan, Morsi (2010) on Egyptian Arabic, Pedersen (2010) on Swedish, Terkourafi (2011) on Cypriot Greek, and Altalhi (2014) on the Hijazi dialect. Cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies on thanking include Held (1996) on French and Italian and Ragone (1998) on French and Spanish. Finally, other scholars have dealt with thanking expressions produced by Second Language (SL) and Foreign Language (FL) students, such as Pearson (2001) and De Pablos-Ortega (2010, 2011) on Spanish, and Yang (2013) on Chinese.

Most of the above scholars exclusively deal with oral thanking – for instance, Aijmer (1996), Cheng (2010), Elwood (2011), Aston (1995), Wong (2010), Liao (2013), Jacobsson (2002), Kumatoridani (1999), Ohashi (2008a), Ohashi (2008b), Koutlaki (2002), Ameka (2006), Agyekum (2010), Morsi (2010), Pedersen (2010), Terkourafi (2011), Altalhi (2014), Ragone (1998), De Pablos-Ortega (2010, 2011) – some consider exclusively written thanking – for instance, Ahar and Eslami-Rasekh (2011), Pishghadam and Zarei (2012), Hinkel (1994), Cui (2012), Cheng (2005), Pishghadam and Zarei (2011), Al Khatib (1997), Long (2010), Held (1996) and Yang (2013) – some investigate both aspects – for instance, Eisenstein and Bodman (1993), Jung (1994), Okamoto and Robinson (1997), Leech and Svartvik (2002), Schauer and Adolphs (2006), Elwood (2010), Ghobadi and Fahim (2009) and Pearson (2001) – and one considers thanking without making a clear-cut distinction between written and oral production – namely, Kerbat-Orecchioni (1997, 1998, 2005).

2.3 GAs

This section will look at studies on GAs. It will start with a study that outlines the nature of this speech act. Next, it will consider GAs in English and in other languages.

2.3.1 The nature of GAs

Coulmas (1981) defines verbal GAs – called *responders* – as optional, yet often required, reactive speech acts that implicitly or explicitly state "an opposing or concurrent assessment" (p. 71) of the interlocutor's previous thanking. Factors like the social role-

relationship between the participants, the nature of the object of gratitude and the thanker's (presumed) responsibility in triggering/receiving the beneficial act are said to influence the strategies underlying GA realizations. These strategies that speakers can adopt consist either in denying/underplaying the magnitude of the object of gratitude, or in "recognizing the object of gratitude" (p. 77) and expressing the benefactor's gladness for the beneficial act. Coulmas further observes that GAs – especially those expressing pleasure – are considered unnecessary or inappropriate under such circumstances as after compliments and wishes, in routine commercial conversations, after ex-ante thanks and in situations unpleasant for the thanker, such as after thanking for condolences. In the end, Coulmas observes a strong but not systematic affinity between GAs and responses to apologies – for instance, in languages such as English, French, German, Greek and Japanese – since both are reactive speech acts through which speakers strategically acknowledge or deny, through positive or negative expressions, the interlocutor's (i.e. the thanker/offender's) indebtedness, and in which the same linguistic realizations are often employed.

2.3.2. English GAs

Although occasionally mentioned in studies on the speech act of thanking, to my knowledge, GAs in English have been scholars' focus of interest only in the last decade or so. The following sub-sections will report on corpus-based, experimental and cross-cultural studies on English GAs.

2.3.2.1 Corpus-based studies

Corpus-based studies of GAs briefly illustrate the principles and strategies underlying verbal GAs, and their typical phraseologies; they also provide some cross-cultural and sociopragmatic observations as to their appropriateness and frequency.

Jacobsson (2002) takes a diachronic look at spoken GAs in Early Modern English. By examining a 761,262-word corpus covering the period between 1560 and 1760, he observes that GAs can be realized in three ways: through expressions of deference, which are instantiated in expressions including the words *humble* and *servant,* often combined together – for instance, "I am *your most humble servant*" (p. 69; original emphasis); through expressions of appreciation of the addressee, instantiated in "You are *heartily welcome* sir" (p. 69; original emphasis); and through the minimization of the favour –

exemplified in "*It is not worth thanks*" (p. 69; original emphasis). However, the author also remarks that GAs in the past were even rarer than they apparently are in present-day English, since he finds only 5 instances of them in the corpus considered.

Edmondson and House (1981) illustrate from an interactional perspective the realization of speech acts and the verbal reactions to them, including thanking and GAs, the latter called *minimizes*. Minimizes are described as ritual "satisfying move[s]" (p. 163) – rather infrequent in English – that underplay the thankee's indebtedness to the beneficiary, and also prevent the interactants from indefinitely engaging in reciprocal thanking. The minimizes identified include: *pleasure,* elliptical for *it's a pleasure*, and *my pleasure*, apparently more widespread in AmE than in BrE; *not at all*, *don't mention it* and *no trouble*; *you're welcome*, apparently more common in AmE, yet probably formal in BrE. The authors also present a small group of "informatory moves" (p. 167), which can be combined with minimizes as strengthening moves for the whole reacting speech act, or appear alone, as substitutes for minimizes (e.g. *I enjoyed doing it actually, it didn't take me long actually, anything for a friend, I'm sure you'd do the same for me*). The authors observe that minimizes are infrequent in the closing exchanges of shopping encounters – where, instead, reciprocation of thanks is common – and after verbal acts – for instance, compliments – since thanking in the latter case functions as an uptaker, "acknowledging receipt of the preceding communicative act" (p. 165). They also point out that BrE favours bodily gestures or no acknowledgments over verbal minimizes, and that AmE prefers a more standardized use of this speech act.

Aijmer (1996) deals with conversational routines in English and thoroughly examines some speech acts with their "continuation patterns" (p. 39), including the speech act of thanking and GAs[7], called *thanking responders*. English thanking responders are said to be characterized by "a rising (fall-plus-rise) tone" (p. 40), not to be as common as in other languages, and to be realized by means of 3 main strategies: 1) "minimizing the favour" (p. 40), which counterbalances the thanker's indebtedness, is exemplified in the corpus by *that's okay*, but is equally realizable by other formulae such as *not at all*, *no problem*, *don't mention it*, *that's all right*; 2) "expressing pleasure" (p. 40), which emphasizes the thankee's pleasure in having done something beneficial to the

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7 The same publication includes a brief description of Swedish GAs, for which see section 2.3.3.

thanker, as in *great pleasure*; and 3) "express[ing] appreciation of the addressee" (p. 40), which is realized by *you're welcome* and appears to be highly frequent only in AmE.

Wong (2010) explores Chinese speakers' realizations of gratitude expressions and GAs in English. By examining the Hong Kong section of the International Corpus of English and applying Aijmer's taxonomy to the analysis of thanking episodes, she observes that GAs in English by Chinese speakers could be regarded as particularly unnatural, since only "18 out of 233 expressions of gratitude are responded to" (p. 1253) in the corpus, and as displaying limited variation of expressions. Indeed, GA occurrences in the corpus instantiate two of Aijmer's (1996) strategies, namely *minimizing the favour*, exemplified by *(that's) all right, okay* and *yeah*, and *expressing appreciation of the addressee*, exemplified by *you're welcome*. Wong speculates that the occurrence of *you're welcome* may be due to the influence of foreign language teaching, which apparently leads learners to consider this formula a proper response to almost any thanking episode.

In their comprehensive grammar of English, Quirk et al. (1985) briefly observe that English GAs are realized through expressions such as *not at all*, *(it's) my pleasure*, *don't mention it*, *you're welcome* (this apparently being widespread in AmE)*, that's ok* (informal) and *no problem* (apparently common especially in AmE). Many of these expressions are said to belong to non-modifiable routine formulae used in conventional situations (e.g. *don't mention it* cannot be modified into **mention it* and still function as a GA).

Leech and Svartvik (2002) briefly mention GAs – called *responses to thanks* – in their communicative grammar of English, saying that these can be realized in one of 3 ways: 1) no reply; 2) formulae such as *not at all*, *that's all right*, *you're welcome* and other formulae; and 3) the thankee's counter-thank, as often happens in service encounters.

In general, many of the above studies suggest that GAs are a relatively infrequent speech act in English and that they are realized through a similar set of strategies and linguistic expressions.

2.3.2.2 Experimental studies

Further insights into the speech act of acknowledging thanking are offered by experimental studies, including psycholinguistic ones. In general, these studies have shed more light on features of GAs which had already been identified in corpus-based studies, but have also examined speakers' context-dependent and gender-specific use of GAs, and their perception as to the value and functions of GAs.

Schneider (2005) provides one of the most detailed studies on GAs, which he investigates across 3 English varieties (BrE, AmE and Irish English). He examines GAs – which he calls *minimizers* – elicited through a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) questionnaire, in a formal and an informal thanking situation. In this section, I present Schneider's description of the variable encoding of GAs, while in section 2.3.2.3 I deal with his analysis of cross-cultural variation.

First of all, Schneider observes that the GAs occur in 98.6% of all responses to the DCTs, and that the remaining responses, called *zero realizations*, include zero responses and farewells, the latter suggesting that speakers interpreted the DCT thanking as a "sealing thanks" (p. 112). Next, Schneider analyses GAs in terms of their encoding and their combinatorial options. Encoding options comprise: 'conventions of means', that is, the "different strategic options for the speaker" (p. 101), 'conventions of form', that is, the lexico-grammatical encoding of GAs, and the internal modification of the head move. Combinatorial options have to do with the interactional structure of GAs, that is, the number, types(s) and sequencing of component move(s) in a GA (both head acts and supportive moves); the use of supportive moves (which are regarded as the external modification of the head act), that is, "illocutions other than a [GA]" (p. 112); and what he calls *token combinations* of GAs, that is, "the occurrence of multiple heads" (p. 122) in one move.

Schneider's findings reveal considerable variation both in the conventions of means and the conventions of form of GAs. The former include such strategies as Aijmer's (1996: 40) *minimizing the favour* – the second preferred strategy in the data – *expressing pleasure, expressing appreciation of the addressee* – the preferred strategy overall – *thanking the hearer* – called "returning thanks" (p. 121) – plus *acknowledging the thanks*. These strategies are relevant to 10 types – that is, GAs grouped by "their distinctive element or dominant form" (p. 116) – of conventions of form, as follows: the types *okay*

(19.9%), *no problem* (17.2%), *don't mention it* (1.7%) and *don't worry about it* (0.5%) realize the *minimizing the favour* strategy; the type *pleasure* (3.2%) realizes the strategy *expressing pleasure*; the types *welcome* (34.6%), *anytime* (19.2%) and *sure* (1%) realize the strategy *expressing appreciation of the addressee*; the type *thanks* (1.5%) realizes the strategy *returning thanks*; and the type *yeah* (1.2%) realizes the strategy *acknowledging the thanks*. Overall, the major types are *welcome, okay, anytime* and *no problem*. Internal modification (7.9% in the data) is realized by: 1) intensifiers[8], which "have a heightening effect on elements of the proposition" (p. 114), occur preferably in single head moves and in the formal context, and modify the types *welcome*, *okay* and *no problem*; 2) exclaims[9], which are items expressing the speaker's attitude towards an utterance, are instantiated by "*oh* (9) and *ah* (4)" (p. 125; original emphasis), and are mainly used informally.

Schneider's findings also highlight considerable variation in the combinatorial options of GA types and tokens. First, 3 main structural patterns are identified: head move only (86.5%), head move + supportive move (9.9%), and supportive move only (3.7%), the first of the three occasionally instantiating a double head move or, in one case, a triple head move structure. Second, supportive moves (49 occurrences), predominantly used informally, occur considerably more in head move + supportive move (71.4%) than in supportive move only (28.6%) patterns; they instantiate such semantic patterns as "negotiating a follow-up meeting/repetition of the event", "offering the opportunity for reciprocation/remuneration", "subsequent offers", and "expressing joy" (p. 126). Third, multiple head moves reveal different combinatorial preferences: *anytime, thanks* and *sure* appear more frequently in combination than alone, while the opposite holds for *welcome, okay, no problem, pleasure, don't mention it, yeah* and *don't worry about it;* recurrent final combinations range from *welcome + anytime*, to *no problem + anytime*, or *okay + anytime*. The major GA types present some preferred sequencing patterns: *okay* always, and *no problem* and *welcome* predominantly occur in initial position, while *anytime* occurs almost exclusively in final position.

In conclusion, Schneider's research shows that GAs display greater variation than previously stressed in the literature, and that the complexity of specifically oral

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8 Intensifiers are a subtype of upgraders, which are illocutionary impact-increasing elements.
9 Exclaims are a subtype of uptakers , which are a type of "gambit", that is, a supportive act which occurs in a pre-message position" (Schneider, 2005: 114)

phenomena – such as zero realization, farewells or exclaims – also shows up in written DCTs, despite their being often criticised as artificial language-eliciting devices.

Colston's (2002) psycholinguistic study starts from the assumption that GAs vary along a "continuum of non-literalness" (p. 206), where more literal expressions (e.g. *don't worry about it*, *no problem* and *don't mention it*) have a plain meaning, while non-literal expressions are apparently constructed on hyperbolic and exaggerated meanings (e.g. *anytime, whenever you need it*, *anything you need* and *anything for a friend*), which apparently allow greater risks of misinterpretation. Colston investigates speakers' reasons underlying the use of different (non-)literal GAs through four experiments. These require speakers to assess some GAs – categorised as literal, non-literal and combinations of the two – in terms of their (non-)literalness, potential for misunderstanding, expression of esteem, and expression of politeness respectively. The first study suggests that GAs are characterised by different degrees of (non-)literalness. The second study reveals that nonliteral GAs apparently present higher probabilities of misunderstanding from the thanker. Findings from the third and fourth study suggest that non-literalness is not only regarded as showing respectively greater politeness and esteem than literal expressions, but also that combined GAs would exceed both literal and nonliteral GAs in terms of the politeness and esteem conveyed. For this reason, Colston argues that, since nonliteral GAs convey such pragmatic functions of politeness and esteem, they are equally likely to be employed as literal GAs, despite possible risks of misinterpretation.

Katz et al. (2007) investigate whether GAs instantiate phatic language – that is, "content free" (p. 247) expressions exclusively serving functions of social solidarity. In particular, the authors investigate whether being phatic applies especially to nonliteral GAs – for instance, *anytime, whatever you need, whenever you like* – which, due to their highly hyperbolic meaning, apparently are more likely to be misunderstood by the thanker. Two experiments were thus carried out to determine whether the degree of (non)literalness of GAs, but also males' and females' acknowledgment behaviour is sensitive to variables such as the cost of the favour and the gender of the interlocutor. The findings show that nonliteral GAs are less frequent with high-cost favours and are generally employed in different ways by males and females. When chosen, nonliteral GAs are: 1) meant to allow the thankee to ask for future reiteration of favours, although within certain limits; 2) more easily recalled by the participants; 3) used by males to signal their

disposition to repeat favours only with high-cost favours, and towards other men; 4) used by women to signal their disposition to repeat favours independently of the costs/efforts, although with low-cost favours women's nonliteral GAs signal that such repetition is preferably directed towards other men. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that variables such as the cost of the favour and the thanker's gender strongly affect GAs and their (non)literalness, and thus that GAs are far from being phatic language, as they are often assumed to be.

2.3.2.3 Cross-cultural studies

A cross-cultural investigation of GAs in English has gained ground only in the last decade. Scholars have been interested in profiling the pragmalinguistic and sociolinguistic patterns of GAs across varieties of English. The data examined include GAs elicited in experimental studies (Schneider, 2005, Farenkia, 2012, 2013) or GAs occurring in natural conversations or other written/oral sources (Jung, 1994, Rüegg, 2014), or both (Ouafeu, 2009). The studies reviewed below include some that have a distinctive cross-linguistic/cultural slant – they compare and contrast GAs in two or more English varieties (see section 1.3) – and others that examine data from only one of the many attested English varieties. Collectively, they provide a cross-cultural perspective on GAs in English.

Jung (1994) discusses AmE thanking and GAs by analysing natural conversations, written texts and TV programs, and classifies GAs into 6 strategies. The *acceptance* strategy is exemplified by: the widespread *you're (very) welcome* (42%), which apparently symbolizes the typically American precept of kindly accepting gratitude; *mhmm* (22%), "a non-verbal sound" (p. 12) acknowledging gratitude; *sure* (11.3%); *my pleasure* (4.1%); and *O.K.*, which is not instantiated in the data. The *denial* strategy postulates the thankee's expression of self-effacement and modesty, as in *no problem* (4%), *not at all* (0.2%), and *don't mention it*, which is not instantiated in the data. The *reciprocity* strategy, exemplified by reciprocal *thank you* (13%), occurs when both parties believe to have received a benefit (e.g. in commercial exchanges or one-to-one TV interviews). In the *comments* strategy, the thankee explains or justifies the previous event, conveying acceptance or denial of the event itself. The *non-verbal gestures* strategy, consisting of facial and bodily gestures, is said to occur, among other things, to avoid

interrupting possible "thanking plus additional accounts" (p. 16). The *no response* strategy is said to be associated to: the thankee's mood, especially if negative (e.g. the thankee is worried or pressed for time); specific conversational contexts (e.g. ritualized greetings or compliments); the participants' relationship (e.g. strangers, especially if pressed for time, are unlikely to elaborate on conversations); and thanking used as a leave-taking, opening and closing formula (e.g. in formal addresses, conferences, interviews).

Schneider[10] (2005) analyses the variation of GAs across the BrE, AmE and Irish English by considering data elicited from 180 study participants (60 per variety) through DCTs relevant to formal and informal interactional scenarios.

The BrE data (129 tokens) display a slight tendency to use farewells or no GAs at all. When GAs occur, the preferred interactional structure consists in heads with no supportive moves (93.1%), the latter, mainly used in the informal situation, but playing a marginal role in the data. BrE conventions of means extensively rely only on 2 strategies, namely *minimizing the favour* (60.5%) and *expressing appreciation of the addressee* (30.2%). Conventions of form, instead, are marked by linguistic variation: the type *okay* (51.2%) predominates, followed by *welcome* (16.3%), *anytime* (12.4%) and *no problem* (6.2%), very rarely replaced by *trouble*; minor types account for 14% of the data, twice as much as the other varieties. The other phenomena identified by Schneider, namely token combinations and internal modification (see section 2.3.2.2), are only occasionally instantiated in the data.

The AmE data display as many GA tokens as the BrE data (129). Some of the distinctive features of the former dataset include a high frequency of head moves occurring alone (87.5%), a low frequency of supportive moves (12.5%), the preference for only 2 speaker strategies – *expressing appreciation of the addressee* (72.1%) and *minimizing the favour* (23.3%) – and 3 conventions of form – *welcome* (53.5%) occurring in both registers, *no problem* (20.2%) being used formally (65.4%), just like *anytime* (18.6%); instead, *okay* occurs exclusively as an informal minor type (0.8%); and finally, only 4 of the 6 minor types have some occasional exemplification, while *sure* and *don't worry about it* are not instantiated at all. Other phenomena such as token combinations and internal modification are quantitatively marginal.

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10 See section 2.3.2.2 for other aspects of this study.

The Irish dataset includes the highest number of GA tokens (149) and stands out for several peculiarities. First, it displays the highest number of supportive moves (21%, which equals to 53.1% of all supportive moves found in Schneider's study), used predominantly in the informal scenario, including also the only instance of a head move with 2 supportive moves. Second, as in the AmE data, the predominant conventions of means are *expressing appreciation of the addressee* (61.1%) and *minimizing the favour* (34.9%). Furthermore, the Irish conventions of form too resemble the American choices, although the former are more equally distributed: the first preferred type is *welcome* (34.2%), prevailingly used in the formal scenario; this is followed by the similarly formal *anytime* (25.5%) and *no problem* (24.2%) – occasionally replaced by the typically Irish "*bother*" (p. 119) – and the predominantly informal *Okay* (9.4%) – with the *you're*-construction and the substitute *grand* as typical Irish realizations. Token combinations represent 28.7% of the Irish head moves and 50.8% of complex GAs (i.e. those combining two or more heads, or a head move with at least one supportive move). Furthermore, Irish internal modification stands out as displaying the highest percentage of intensifiers and exclaims and a specifically Irish exclaim, *ah*.

In conclusion, Schneider shows how the realization of GAs across 3 major English varieties strongly diverges in some aspects, but also how it shares other aspects (e.g. the choice of structures, strategies and types). In particular, similarities are partly ascribable to the American influence – especially the use of *welcome* – and partly to language evolution in time and the young age of informants. Worthy of notice is the finding that the Irish variety emerges as having its own pragmalinguistic specificity.

Ouafeu (2009) investigates postcolonial Cameroon English (CamE) GAs in tape-recorded interviews between the author and 169 informants, aged 11 to 20. Ouafeu shows that specific forms for responding to thanks exist both in CamE and Cameroon indigenous languages[11]. In CamE, the most frequent GA is *yes* (41%), which most likely reflects the typical corresponding GA in Cameroonian indigenous languages. Other GAs include the reciprocal formulae *thank you* (17%) and *thank you too* (14%), the expression *for nothing* (9%), and the acknowledgment *mm* (7%). The *no acknowledgments* response (6%) could also reflect the indigenous pattern of not reacting to thanking speech acts. The *all right* and *ok* responses, instead, are rather marginal (3% each). In sum, the findings emphasize

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11 See section 2.3.3.

that postcolonial CamE GAs diverge considerably from native English varieties, a finding that Ouafeu attributes to the influence of indigenous languages, which are said to permeate vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation and especially conversational routines.

Farenkia (2012) addresses "functional, formal and situational aspects" (p. 1) of Canadian English (CanE) GAs. By using a DCT questionnaire, he elicited 189 responses relevant to different social/power distance scenarios – that is, thanking exchanges with a friend, a professor and a stranger. The findings highlight that responses are either simple – that is, comprising 1 move – or complex – that is, comprising 2 or more moves. Simple responses (55.55%), preferred in the stranger situation, occur exclusively as head act only; complex responses, preferred in the professor situation, occur as multiple head acts or head act(s) combined with supportive move(s). The data exemplify 9 types of supportive moves: *comments*, the most frequent, which reinforce GAs; *offering help*, which is often boosted by the *if*-conditional, a possible face-saving move providing the thanker with a way out; *wish/hope*, which is considered a face-enhancing move; *partying*, which signals a conversational closing; *empathy*, which "assert[s] reciprocity with the other" (p. 9); and *request*, *joke*, *promise* and *suggestion/advice*. Both CanE conventions of form and conventions of means display considerable variation, in that 8 linguistic types realize 5 strategies respectively: the types *no problem*, *don't worry about it* and *don't mention it* instantiate *minimizing the favour* (50%), a strategy common in the friend and stranger scenarios; *welcome* and *anytime* realize *expressing appreciation* (31.30%), which is favoured in the professor situation; *pleasure* instantiates *expressing pleasure* (13.82%), and is preferred in the professor scenario; *thanks* realizes the strategy *returning thanks* (3.66%), and is favoured in the professor scenario; and *yeah* enacts *acknowledging the thanks* (1.22%), a strategy equally distributed across the scenarios. Overall, *no problem* (47.97%), *welcome* (22.76%) and *pleasure* (13.82%) emerge as the study participants' preferred types, with *pleasure* displaying a fairly large range of linguistic realizations, mainly built upon the adjectives *glad/happy/pleased*, the nouns *pleasure/fun/reward/great time*, the verb *enjoy*, and the adverbs *really/so*.

Farenkia (2013) compares "formal, functional situational and interactional" (p. 707) aspects of GAs in CanE and CamE. The responses, elicited through a DCT questionnaire relevant to 3 different social scenarios (namely, with a friend, a professor and a stranger), reveal each variety's (dis-)preferred choices.

The findings reveal how, in interactional terms, both varieties realize simple responses – that is, 1 move, occurring as single head acts – as well as complex responses – that is, 2 or more moves, realized as combinations of head acts, or of head act(s) and supportive move(s), or, most rarely, of supportive moves alone. However, both datasets show a preference for simple responses (CanE 55.5%, CamE 64.63%). The supportive moves comprise many types – *comment, offering further help, wish/hope, parting (leave-taking), empathy, request, joke, promise, suggestion/advice* and *question* – with CanE instantiating 9 types (all except for *question*), and CamE 6 (i.e. all except for *empathy, request, joke* and *promise*). However, both varieties prefer *comments*, used mainly in the friend and professor scenarios.

Further findings regard the 8 linguistic types realizing 5 speaker strategies: the types *no problem*, *don't worry about it* and *don't mention it* realize *minimizing the favour*; the type *pleasure* instantiates *expressing pleasure*; the types *welcome* and *anytime* strategically exemplify *expressing appreciation*; *thanks* instantiates *returning thanks*; and *yeah* realizes *acknowledging the thanks*. In this frame, CanE favours the strategies *minimizing the favour* (50%) and *expressing appreciation* (31.30%), and the types *no problem* (47.97%), *welcome* (22.76%) and *pleasure* (13.82%). CamE, instead, prefers *expressing appreciation* (43.35%) and *expressing pleasure* (25.43%) as strategies, and *welcome* (42.77%), *pleasure* (25.43%) and *don't mention it* (21.39%) as linguistic types. Farenkia remarks that the first strategic and linguistic preferences of CanE reflect negative politeness values, that is, the desire to maintain one's freedom/rights and avoid interference from other people, whereas CamE preferences are relevant to positive politeness values, that is, expressing empathy and intimacy towards the interlocutor. The varieties differ also in the linguistic realizations of types: for instance, *pleasure* is realized through a varied range of adjectives/verbs/nouns/adverbs only in CanE; *don't mention it* includes forms such as *for nothing* (p. 714) only in CamE. Furthermore, some typical CamE features include the invocation of God – for instance, "All thanks goes to the Almighty" (p. 714) – when realizing *returning thanks*, and the use of address terms – for instance, the honorifics *Sir/Madam, Prof./Professor*, first name/nickname, *dear/my friend* etc. – in GAs, which mark, respectively, social distance vs. closeness in the friend and professor scenarios. The situational distribution of strategies and types across the scenarios similarly reveals different cross-linguistic preferences.

In sum, Farenkia shows how the realization of the same speech act diverges in two postcolonial varieties that, on the surface, appear to exploit the same range of interactional, strategic and linguistic means.

Rüegg (2014) analyses the variation in frequency and form of AmE GAs in different socio-economic settings. His data consist of recorded conversations between customers and waiters in 3 types of restaurants, namely, with high, medium and low prices, relevant to different levels of formality in interaction: formal, semi-formal and informal, respectively. The findings show that only 21% of thanking episodes contain verbal GAs, distributed as follows: 1) in the formal situation, 111 thanking episodes and 25 responses (22.5%); 2) in the semi-formal one, 79 thanking episodes and 19 responses (24.1%); and 3) in the informal one, 36 thanking episodes and 4 responses (11.1%). Verbal GAs are classified into 13 types, namely, *alright*, *pleasure*, *no worries*, *of course, sure*, *welcome*, *thank you*, *awesome*, *great*, *okay, you got it*, *yeah* and *absolutely*, whose frequency and distribution differ across the contexts considered: the semi-formal and informal contexts instantiate more varied GAs, while the formal situation includes more standardized GAs; also, *welcome* and *pleasure* occur exclusively in formal and semi-formal GAs. Other phenomena occasionally exemplified in the data include: internal modification, realized through the upgraders *very* and *much*, which is found only with *welcome* and *thank you*; multiple heads, which exclusively involve *pleasure, thank you*, *yeah* and *absolutely*; and supportive moves, which realize "either acts of whishing the guest well […] or offers to perform an additional service" (p. 26). Another interactional aspect considered in the study is the 4 types of favour triggering GAs: 1) *guests' well-being*, that is, expressions of care towards the guests' comfort; 2) *non-verbal service acts*, that is, material services provided by the waiter, which are the most often responded to with a GA, and only found in the formal and semi-formal context; 3) *verbal offer of service*, that is, verbal acts directed to "fulfil the guests' potential desires" (p. 27), which are the second type most frequently responded to with a GA in all 3 situations; and 4) *serving food and drinks*.

2.3.3 Cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies

This section investigates works that primarily deal with thanks, but that also report on GAs in languages other than English, grouped according to their language families: the Indo-European, the Afro-Asiatic, the Niger-Congo and the Altaic groups. The studies

reviewed below include some that have a distinctive cross-linguistic/cultural slant – they compare and contrast GAs in two or more languages (see section 1.3) – and others that examine data from only one language. Collectively, they provide a cross-cultural perspective on GAs.

Aijmer[12] (1996) briefly describes 4 Swedish strategies realizing GAs. The first strategy coincides with the English "minimizing the favour" (p. 40) strategy, as exemplified in "för all del" (p. 40), meaning 'by all means'. The second strategy is glossed as "denying the cause for thanking" (p. 40) and is exemplified in *ingen orsak*, literally meaning 'no cause'. The third strategy is "leaving the hearer the option whether to accept the favour" (p. 40), instantiated in *var så god*, meaning 'please'. Lastly, the fourth strategy "thanking the hearer 'expressing appreciation of the hearer'" (p. 40) resembles the English "expressing appreciation of the addressee" (p. 40) and is exemplified in "tack (själv)" (p. 40), translated as 'thanks yourself'.

GAs in German are analysed by Engel (1988) in his introductory overview of German speech acts in the work *Deutsche Grammatik*. Engel refers to a German GA as an *Aufhebung,* literally meaning 'abolition', 'negation', 'balancing/equalizing'. *Aufhebungsakte* 'negation acts' belong to *Ausgleichsakte* 'compensatory speech acts' along with thanks and apologies, which, in their turn, belong all to *partnerbezogener Sprechakte*, that is, speech acts that require at least an interlocutor to whom the utterance is directed. The author explains how, in theory, thanks and apologies should cancel the social imbalance after a favour/offense, but in practice, being *ungesättigte* 'unsaturated' speech acts, their realization brings about further imbalance between speakers that needs to be equalized. *Aufhebungen*, indeed, come about as socio-psychic compensating devices, being seen as the only remedy to guarantee successful relationships, because – the author observes – if a speaker does not react to thanks/apologies, his/her behaviour might sound impolite and could leave inconveniences behind. Possible realizations of *Aufhebungen* vary from conventional short forms, which in German coincide for thanks and apologies, such as "*Bitte"*, "*Bitte, Bitte!"*, "*(Bitte, bitte,) keine Ursache!"* (p. 44), and longer expressions, specific for thanks or apologies. Longer responses exclusively suitable after thanks are *Ich habe es (doch) gern getan* 'I (really) did it with pleasure/ it really was my pleasure'*, Aber das habe ich doch gerne getan* 'but I really did it with

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12 For other aspects of this study, see section 2.3.2.1.

pleasure/but it really was my pleasure', *(Aber) das war doch selbstverständlich* '(but) this was obvious/natural'. Furthermore, two longer expressions are considered appropriate for both thanks and apologies, namely, *(Aber) es war ja nicht der Rede wert!* '(But) it isn't really worth mentioning' and *Das hat mir doch nichts ausgemacht* 'I didn't really care about it/It was really nothing to me'. Some linguistic particles that politely help minimizing the state of affairs which gave rise to thanks are: the adversative conjunction *aber* 'but', an introductory element occurring in initial position, which signals that the thankee views the thanking situation as overestimated, and therefore s/he seeks to underestimate, if not to completely cancel, the supposedly existing debt; the items *doch* and *ja* – used in their adversative meaning, although the latter is said to be less common – which occur inside the sentence, and are meant to establish a common ground between the speakers.

In several works (1997, 1998, 2005, 2008), French linguist Kerbrat-Orecchioni deals with GAs, called *réactions au remerciement* 'reactions to thanks'. These occupy the third position in the thanking exchange (1998: 188; 2005: 128), after the thankee's initial gift and the thanker's consequent expression of gratitude. GAs in French are said to be optional, if not unnecessary, and awkward, after small ritual thanks – as happens, for example, during meals or in shops, or, according to Traverso quoted in Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2005: 132), after a visit. When GAs occur in small commercial conversations – conceived as mutually-indebting situations ("*une relation de <<redevabilité mutuelle>>*", 2005: 140; 2008: 79; original emphasis) since both parties benefit from the transaction – both the seller and the customer feel morally obliged to utter (repeated) thanks in the money/goods exchange. For this reason, thanking reciprocation represents the most common pattern in such contexts, instantiated by *merci à vous* (2005: 140) – or, in Quebec's variant, *merci pareillement* (1997: 137, 2005: 133), approximately 'thank you as well' – *c'est moi qui vous remercie* (approximately, 'it's me who thank you')*, merci surtout à vous* (2005: 140), approximately 'thanks especially to you'; another typical polite expression in these contexts, "à votre service" (2008: 78) 'at your service', is said to be likely to occur in cases of particularly cheerful and friendly conversations between a customer and the shopkeeper. In general, GAs are classified as either positive or negative, depending on the nature of the exchange. Positive GAs are preferred in French; the most common positive expressions minimize or negate – pursuing the

politeness "loi de modestie" (2005: 139) 'modesty law' – the gift's magnitude/cost, as in *mais c'est bien normal* (approximately, 'but it's normal')*, c'est la moindre des choses* (approximately, 'it's a really small thing')*, ben de pas grand-chose* (1997: 137; 2005: 134), roughly meaning 'but it's really nothing/it isn't really that much'. Other common minimizing expressions include *ce n'est rien* 'it's nothing'*, y a pas de quoi* (more or less meaning 'not at all') and *de rien* (2005: 134), the two latter formulae, presumably the most frequent and radical, implying a highly hyperbolic meaning usually not taken literally (1997: 137)*.* Finally, the expression *je vous en prie* (2005: 133), approximately corresponding to 'you're welcome', signals the thankee's benevolent willingness to be at the thanker's service, a derivation from the ancient formula *je suis votre serviteur* (1997: 137), 'I am your servant'. Negative GAs include 3 types: the first negates the existence of reasons triggering the preceding thanking, as for instance in "Mais non, c'est Pierre qui a tout preparé!" (2005: 132), translatable as 'But it's Pierre who has prepared everything! (not me)'; the second type is only seemingly negative – in that it formally contests the preceding gratitude expression – and consists of a polite acceptance of thanks, as in "De rien!" (2005: 132) and its variants (translatable as 'for nothing', 'it's nothing'); the third type, although considerably rare, concerns truly negative reactions, which entirely reject the thanker's symbolic repayment, often overtly proposing some form of material reciprocation.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2014) explores the semantics of *souci*, and observes that, over time, the formula *(y a) pas de souci* has apparently bleached, although, when used as a polite routine GA, it still reveals its original meaning, that is, 'there is no problem at all, don't worry about it'. In this sense, it minimizes the perceived imbalance between the interlocutors, along with other reactions to thanking such as *de rien* and *y a pas de quoi*, even though it appears to have exceeded in frequency both such expressions and *je vous en prie*. Moreover, the author argues that when the formula is employed as a GA in its elliptic form (*pas de souci*), the understood experiencer of the *souci* could be either the thanker or the thankee (i.e. 'don't worry about it, because I do not worry either'). In sum, the author concludes that the pragmatic value of *pas de souci* employed as a GA derives directly from the original meaning of the expression, although it has undergone a process of routinization and de-semantization.

Aston's (1995) study examines conversation management in Italian and English bookshop encounters, focusing on gratitude expressions as conversation-closing formulae. This leads him to briefly touch on GAs. From this perspective, the author notices a cross-cultural difference between the Italian and the English data on GAs: while in Italian "the expression of thanks would often seem to call for an acknowledging response (*prego*)" in closing service encounters conversations – 68% of assistants acknowledge customers' thanking, and 30% of customers acknowledge assistants' thanking – the reverse happens in English, so that GAs as *you're welcome* and *don't mention it* are exceptionally infrequent – only 15% of assistants acknowledge customers' thanking, and 32% of customers acknowledge assistants' thanking. The reasons for this turn out to be "local factors of conversational management [... and] more general factors in the social situation seen as a whole, such as power, distance and degree of imposition (or indebtedness)" (p. 79). Indeed, in the Italian context, the author observes that GAs by the shop assistant (the thankee) occur especially in case of problematic conversational agreement between participants, that is, when the customer's initial request is followed by the assistant's negative response, which triggers remedial work that needs to be ratified. When this "mutual acceptability of the outcome" (p. 71) is reached with no delay – that is, unless further remedial work is required – the closing is effected by the customer's thanking expression *grazie*, responded to by the assistant through the "empty acknowledgment" (p. 78) *prego*. To Aston, the occurrence of this "empty move" (p. 77) suggests a possible stronger duty of the assistant to signal that he/she has no other remedy to provide and to ratify the conversational agreement reached by the interactants.

Altalhi (2014) explores thanking and GAs in the Hijazi dialect[13], as produced by women in everyday situations (thanking for a favour, a meal, and a gift). By analysing naturally occurring exchanges, Altalhi observes a good number of strategies for realizing GAs. *Minimizing the debt* comforts the thanker about his/her presumed indebtedness. *Expressing pleasure* communicates the thankee's gladness in having done something beneficial for the thanker. *Reciprocating*, consisting of a counter-thanking to a gratitude expression, is often found in commercial sites. *Acknowledging the thanks* conveys the acceptance of gratitude, as in *amen* ('amen') and *ajmaǎeen* ('for all') when the preceding

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13 "The Hijazi dialect is one of the sub-dialects of the Saudi Arabic dialect. It is spoken in the Western province of Saudi Arabia" (Altalhi 2014: 11).

thanking contains blessings and prayers. *Expressing endearment,* that is, formulae showing the thankee's affection for the thanker, is realized by *ăasal* ('honey'). *Alerting,* consisting of attention-catching formulae, is realized by the sub-strategy *attention getters*, instantiated in the data by *walaw* ('nonetheless'). Under the label *other,* Altalhi includes strategies such as: *wishing,* consisting of goodwill wishes for the thanker, and possible blessings and prayers; *non-verbal communication*, consisting of bodily gestures, which is avoided in the case of thanking after a meal and a gift, which would be regarded as impolite; *opting out*, called also *no response*, which generally occurs with strangers; *question*, used to shift the conversational topic, which occurs only once, and exclusively between intimates; *apology*, which is used to convey modesty; and *advice*, which is realized only once between family members. In addition, *combining strategies* is encoded as a strategy itself; frequent combinatorial options include *minimizing the debt* with *expressing endearment, wishing*, *attention getters*, *acknowledging the thanks* or *apology*, and *expressing pleasure* with *wishing*. The enactment of strategies is shown to correlate with the type of benefit and conversational turn (i.e. in the data, thanking for a gift often takes 2 turns). Overall, when GAs follow thanking for a favour, the preferred strategies are *minimizing the debt* (22.5%) with closer social distance, and *opting out* (18.6%) with strangers; however, except for *apology* and *advice*, all the other strategies show up in this situation. In GAs after thanking for a meal, speakers display lesser variation, and *wishing* is the most prominent strategy (30.1%). In case of GAs after thanking for a gift, in the first turn speakers display limited variation in the choice of strategies, and *minimizing the debt* is extensively preferred (73.9%); in the second turn, speakers exploit only *acknowledging the thanks* (45.5%) and *wishing* (54.5%).

Morsi (2010) investigates thanking and GAs in Egyptian Arabic among immigrants in New York, by means of transcripts of naturally occurring thanking episodes in different social contexts. His data reveal that GAs instantiate 4 main strategies, often combined together in lengthier responses (i.e. displaying multiple moves): 1) acceptance of the thanking, 2) denial of the favour, 3) commenting on the thanking with compliments, and 4) offering future help. The length and form of GAs appear to mainly depend upon social factors such as age, gender and social distance. Indeed, in thanking exchanges involving elderly people (aged 50 and above) or elderly people and young people, GAs typically include as many moves as those of the preceding thanking expression – typically more

than 3 moves – as a signal of positive acknowledgment of the thanking and of respect towards the older person. The opposite holds instead for thanking exchanges between younger interactants, where GAs are not necessarily as long as the thanking. Furthermore, GAs often display specific address terms such as *hag/haga*, used with elderly people as a sign of respect, or *ibni* ('son') and *binti* ('daughter'), usually employed by elderly people with younger interlocutors, even in formal contexts. Gender as a variable influences in particular the length of GAs, the number of interactional turns and the use of (reiterated) blessings: female-female interactions typically display longer thanking and GAs, might develop over several turns, and include (repetitive) blessings (e.g. *rabena yekremak* 'may God reward you'), whereas male-male exchanges are less likely to display such features. Another factor influencing the length of GAs is social distance: generally, greater social distance results in lengthier GAs, whereas greater intimacy typically correlates with shorter GAs, except for service encounters, where short forms of GAs occur despite great social distance.

Ameka (2006) observes how the most common strategy for acknowledging thanks in West African languages is *minimizing the favour*. Illustrative formulae include the Ewe[14] expression "*Akpé mé-le é-me o*" (p. 244), which means 'there are no thanks in it' and finds almost an exact correspondence in meaning in the Akan[15]– expression "*Adase n-ni hɔ*" (p. 244), 'there are no thanks'; the Ewe second expression "*Akpé mé-li o*" (p. 244), meaning again 'there are no thanks'; and an Ewe form which "makes use of an 'equality' verb" (p. 244), that is, "*Mé sũ akpé o*", translated as 'it does not merit thanks': Ameka specifies that this expression relies on the concept that the favour done by the thankee does not deserve thanks. The author further stresses that both the Ewe and the Akan expressions consist in a "negation of the locative or existential verb" (p. 244). Additional, less routinized expressions are attested, such as "Ewe *Mé-nyè nánéké-é má o*" (p. 245), which means 'that is nothing'.

Ouafeu[16] (2009) briefly mentions the ways of acknowledging thanks typical of Cameroon indigenous languages, by reporting on "two dialects of *Ghomala*, *Jogam* and *Wẽ* […] and also *Banso'o,* a language of North West Cameroon" (p. 545). Generally,

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14 Ewe language is spoken in south-eastern Ghana and from the southern Togo to across the Togo-Benin border.
15 Akan is spoken in Ghana.
16 For other aspects of this study, see section 2.3.2.3.

Cameroon indigenous routines are said to not necessarily require GAs, since thanking as a means of reciprocation for gifts received is considered an exchange-terminating speech act. Consistently, in *Banso'o* no reaction generally follows an act of thanking, whereas in *Jogam* speakers most frequently react with a simple nod. Among verbal GAs, the apparently preferred reaction to thanks after "no acknowledgments", often subject to transposition into CamE, is the common item meaning 'yes': the expression *e'em* ('yes') seems to be linguistically identical both in *Jogam* and *Wẽ*, being, in the latter dialect, the preferred response to gratitude expressions such as *ge pie'en o be* ('I thank you') and *ge ma'a ga tse'o* ('I shoot a gun in your honour'). The same item 'yes' is realized in *Banso'o* as *e'eh*, which is said to merely acknowledge the thanking sentence *beriwa.* Other verbal GAs symbolize the local vision of the world. In *Jogam*, according to the author, speakers can use a wide array of expressions to realize GAs, depending also on the type of thanking formula previously uttered by the thanker: the first instance, *si kwo'o* (literally, 'god carries you'), occurs as a responder of *mo'o tche kwa* (approximately, 'I do not know how to thank you'); the second instance *mo'o le jie bong* (literally, 'it is someone who knows your poverty') is suitable to respond to *la'ah pe tche'ehn* (similarly, 'I do not know how to thank you'). In brief, Ouafeu's overview of Cameroon attitudes towards GAs demonstrates that local culture has a strong influence on people's linguistic routines.

Ohashi (2008a) examines Japanese *o-rei*, that is, a cultural linguistic ritual of thanking that comes about as a verbal symbolic repayment of a debt. Being considered the Japanese cultural manner of expressing thanks, it is "often associated with using the *arigatoo* thanking speech formula and other speech formulae for apology, such as *sumimasen, mooshiwake arimasen*" (p. 2152). The author observes that during *o-rei*, beneficiaries (i.e. thankers) usually engage in demonstrations of self-denigration and respect towards the thankee, as a signal of politeness. These demonstrations are performed through several socially required verbal and non-verbal behaviours, which function as a countermeasure to the social imbalance generated by the benefactor's (i.e. the thankee) gift. An analysis of spontaneous thanking episodes on the telephone during *seibo* (i.e. the Japanese gift-giving season) display highly fixed social and conversational patterns. First of all, speakers' behaviour appears to respond to social distance criteria: on the one hand, more socially distant speakers require greater mutual work for achieving equilibrium; the fundamental role of benefactors consists in disregarding/neutralizing the

beneficiary's overt expression of debt – uttered through "thanking, apology, debt-conscious speech formulae and benefactive verbs" (p. 2168) – by means of *ie (tondemonai)/ (iya iya) tondemonaidesu* and other negating or minimizing expressions, which deny/minimize exclusively the existence of a debt/imbalance. On the other hand, socially closer speakers like family members are expected to produce less complicated elaboration on the debt, involving a combined pattern of "complimenting gift–expressing gladness" (p. 2169). In this case, the benefactor is required to respond with varying expressions of gladness, according to the specific conversational context and participants involved. The in-between case combines the occurrence of both patterns, where participants "negotiate a consensus *vis-à-vis* their social relation and appropriate norms" (p. 2166). Marginal exceptions to these patterns might be attributed to other meaningful factors, that is, type of gift, age difference or speakers' specific conversational habits. Another frequently expected pattern with debt-credit negotiation concerns conversational overlaps, in which the benefactor's denial expression interrupts – or immediately follows – the beneficiary's utterance; this interruption contributes to relieving the beneficiary's debt and signals that the negotiation process is in progress. Ohashi argues that this pattern would be justified as a manifestation of politeness and of concern towards the face of both interlocutors, since "for the benefactor, claiming that s/he is creditor is seen as arrogant and a social disgrace" (p. 2169). The last pattern regards topic change, which is usually prompted by the benefactor, since *o-rei* typically features cyclical prolongation of the beneficiary's expressions of debt. Possible explanations for this behaviour include the expectation that the benefactor terminates the ritual, relieving the beneficiary of his/her burden and signalling the adequacy of his/her commitment in restoring the imbalance, or alternatively, the expectation that the beneficiary persists with his/her self-denigration until the benefactor decides to change topic. Overall, the fine process of counterbalancing debts and credits in the *o-rei* ritual appears to reflect speakers' concern for face-saving against their cultural sensitivity to social indebtedness, in which the benefactor demonstrates concern for the beneficiary's face and helps reduce his/her face threat.

Ohashi (2008b) investigates thanking among young Japanese university students and looks at whether this interactional behaviour diverges from the Japanese conventional thanking ritual of *o-rei*, the latter involving a mutual negotiation of social rights and duties between the beneficiary (i.e. the thanker) and the benefactor (i.e. the thankee). Ohashi's

analysis thus includes an examination of Japanese GAs as a fundamental component of this process. By analysing transcripts and recordings of naturally occurring conversations in several contexts, he observes that the traditional *o-rei* pattern of the thanker's thanking and the thankee's denial/self-denigration is never constructed in thanking exchanges. In other words, to restore the balance between participants, the benefactor does not deny or minimize the existence of a debt/credit, but rather finds other ways of expression: for instance, the expression of compliments on the gift; the "use of a strongly masculine form by a female speaker" (p. 297); the use of facial expressions (e.g. a smile); the reciprocation of thanks; and the use of back-channelling devices signalling that the thanking has been acknowledged. In this way, the thankee is said to play a major role, in that his/her reaction to thanks establishes and identifies the nature of the thanking exchange (namely, simple thanking exchange, exchange of routine formulae or *o-rei*), and influences also the possible subsequent negotiation between speakers, so that both elements "co-construct the meaning of [both speakers'] collective intention" (p. 303).

2.3.4 Summary of the main features of GAs

The above studies show that verbal GAs are culturally-bound reactive speech acts, which function as conversational lubricants for social relationships. GAs occur to restore the balance between speakers after the thanker's expression of gratitude for a benefit received, and strongly depend upon contextual and social factors. The analysis of GAs usually addresses the strategies and linguistic expressions adopted by speakers (often termed conventions of means and conventions of form, respectively), but also other aspects, like the (number of) interactional structure(s), the internal/external modification of head act(s), the use of address terms, and of wishes/blessings.

The studies exploring the realization of English verbal GAs have revealed that these are infrequent, and yet variable, as is evident when comparing linguistic and cultural varieties of English. Indeed, although varieties apparently share the same linguistic base for realizing GAs, each one displays its own specificity (Jung, 1994, Schneider, 2005, Farenkia, 2012, 2013), and this is especially true of postcolonial varieties, due to the influence of native cultures (Ouafeu, 2009, Farenkia, 2012, 2013). The variability of English GAs also appears to correlate to such variables as contextual factors, the cost of the favour, social distance, the age and gender of participants, and the formality of the

setting (Colston, 2002, Schneider, 2005, Katz et al., 2007, Ouafeu, 2009, Farenkia, 2012, 2013, Rüegg, 2014). Therefore, studies show that although English GAs are widely held to be routine formulae, they are nonetheless far from being entirely conventional or phatic in nature (Colston, 2002, Katz et al., 2007).

The research on English GAs has also revealed that they can vary in their internal structure, consisting of head acts alone, supportive moves alone, multiple head acts, multiple supportive moves, and combinations of head move(s) and supportive move(s) (Edmondson and House, 1981, Schneider, 2005, Farenkia, 2012, 2013, Rüegg, 2014). Supportive moves are described as illocutionary acts different from GAs, which occur as strengthening moves or as substitutes for GAs themselves (Edmondson and House, Schneider, Farenkia, Rüegg). Although the linguistic form of supportive moves is shown to be more variable than that of GAs – the former being less conventional and more speaker- and context-dependent – some recurrent semantic patterns have been identified across studies, which include offers for repetition of beneficial acts, requests for reciprocation/remuneration, expressions of gladness in doing the beneficial act, comments, expressing wishes/hopes, and several others.

Additionally, English GA head acts are shown to be variable both in strategic and linguistic terms. As to the former, research has shown that speakers generally prefer adopting the *minimizing the favour*, *expressing appreciation* or *expressing pleasure* strategies, rather than the *acknowledging the thanking* or *returning thanking* strategies. All these strategies are also described as addressing either positive or negative politeness values, depending on the conversational outcome that the thankee intends to achieve. In linguistic terms, except for *not at all*, every GA token listed in corpus-based studies correlates to a GA type encoded by experimental literature. Overall, the linguistic types encoded so far are *welcome, okay, anytime, no problem, pleasure, don't mention it, thanks/thank you (too), yeah, sure, don't worry about it, for nothing, mm, yes, all right, no worries, of course, awesome, great, you got it* and *absolutely*. Although their frequency and distribution differs across studies, the most common types so far appear to be *welcome*, *no problem, pleasure, okay* and *anytime*. The variability of GA head acts is also enriched by phenomena like the internal modification of GAs, which is exemplified by upgraders (in particular, intensifiers) and uptakers (in particular, exclaims), and the use of address terms, which signal the degree of social distance and help creating and

maintaining social bonds. Therefore, research has so far revealed that speakers have a good deal of strategic and linguistic options to choose from when realizing English GAs.

In sum, research has highlighted the considerable variability of GAs contrary to the commonly held assumption that these speech acts are entirely automatic routine utterances, and has laid the methodological foundations for further explorations of the formulations and use.

2.4 Concluding remarks

This chapter has provided an overview of the literature on GAs, revealing their cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences, with particular focus on GAs in English.

However, although the above studies have shed light on GAs in English, there are some not fully understood or unexplored issues. First, the taxonomies of GAs (for both head acts and supportive moves) across studies appear to differ in terms of both concepts and labels. Second, different studies use different levels of classification, namely, semantic only, lexical only, or a combination of the two. Third, not all studies are equally explicit about the identification criteria of GAs. Fourth, the GAs discussed in the studies partly overlap, but are not always identical, and this may depend upon the different data collection methods employed; finally, it is not clear if the full set of GAs can be compiled on the basis of the existing literature. Consequently, there is, first, a strong need for an agreed-upon practice for confidently, reliably, and unambiguously recognizing GAs in a stretch of discourse; second, there is an equally strong necessity of elaborating a single, coherent and shared method for classifying head acts and supportive moves; finally, it is important to establish a clear-cut distinction between conventions of means and conventions of form in GA head acts and supportive moves implying also that it allows a clear-cut distinction between conventions of means and conventions of form in GA head acts (and supportive moves). Additionally, another relevant necessity could consist of checking whether more and different realizations of GAs exist.

Furthermore, the different type of data used for the literature on English GAs have revealed different types of them. However, the bulk of studies on English GAs – excluding non-experimental ones, based on corpora – draws data from written elicited material (DCTs or questionnaires), and only a minority of studies analyses spontaneous oral data. Therefore, instances of studies using oral elicited material as a data collection

method are still – almost completely – lacking, since only Ouafeu (2009) uses interviews in his studies, whereas no one has so far carried out studies using, for instance, role plays for data collection. In this sense, there is a substantial need to collect (more) evidence from this type of data, which could reveal more and different types of GAs, but also check if the new data are in line with previous findings or not.

In light of the above observations, in the present study I set out to pursue the following three goals: first, to propose a method for reliably distinguishing GAs in English; second, to devise a method for identifying and classifying head acts and supportive moves of GAs, and, by extension, for clearly distinguishing speaker strategies from linguistic types and tokens (i.e. distinguishing the functions from the meanings and the lexis of moves and steps of GAs); third, to check if the GAs elicited by means of open role plays correspond to those recorded in the previous literature in terms of their semantic, syntactic and structural properties.

CHAPTER 3
METHOD

3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses two major goals: one, to frame the present study in the context of the relevant literature; two, to present and motivate the choice of the analytical method used to analyse the data under consideration. To these ends, section 3.2 will address questions concerning data collection methods; then, section 3.3 will present the coding scheme adopted in this study for identifying and classifying GAs, with illustrative examples.

3.2 Data collection

In this section, I will provide background information on different data collection methods relevant to GAs (section 3.2.1), pointing out their advantages or disadvantages. In particular, I will describe the method adopted in the present study and consider its pros and cons (section 3.2.1.3) in comparison to other methods (section 3.2.2). This discussion will be followed by a detailed description of the procedures of data collection and selection implemented in this study (section 3.2.3).

3.2.1 Background

This section overviews different data collection methods employed so far in the analysis of GAs, broadly divided into two categories: elicitation of monitored discourse and recording of spontaneous discourse. Then, it outlines a collection method that shares characteristics of both, namely role plays.

3.2.1.1 Methods for collecting elicited GAs

So far, four different methods – sometimes combined together – have been used to elicit GAs, namely DCTs, rating scales, Multiple Choice (MC) questionnaires and interviews. DCTs, rating scales and MC questionnaires are different types of questionnaires that elicit written data relevant to contextualized oral or written discourse. Interviews, instead, are means of eliciting oral, typically monologic, data on largely pre-selected topics.

In general, questionnaires make it possible to easily collect large amounts of data under closely monitored experimental conditions (Golato, 2004: 13) and to probe into speakers' conscious background knowledge and opinions (Golato, 2004: 13; Kasper, 2008: 291). However, they present several drawbacks: since the informants do not directly experience the specific situations reported in the prompts, responses to questionnaires display what the informants think is the best or correct answer, or what they think they would or should do in real life, rather than their actual reactions; questionnaire data are thus classifiable as self-reports. Additionally, the objects of study of questionnaires are situated outside real communicative contexts; thus the responses collected from participants most likely reflect "abstract items in ways that make sense to them" (Kasper, 2008: 291-292). Finally, the use of questionnaires automatically excludes the possibility of observing, let alone recording, features typical of spoken interaction (Golato, 2004: 14; Kasper, 2008: 291). For these reasons, Kasper (2008) considers questionnaires more suitable for achieving "decontextualized pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge" than information on "contextualized language use" (p. 292).

DCTs are built in such a way that they "require a constructive, that is, participant-generated textual response" (Kasper, 2008: 292) that is relevant to the interactional scenario provided as the context for the task (e.g. Schneider, 2005; Katz et al., 2007; Farenkia, 2012, 2013). In general, the DCT prompt that is specifically designed for GAs consists of an interactional exchange displaying an act of thanking in the first turn, and an open slot in second-turn position. The latter is meant to elicit the written representation of GAs as relevant replies to the prompt in the first turn. The specific format of DCTs presents several advantages, some of which are a direct consequence of the aforementioned general advantages of questionnaires: 1) each response or lack thereof is to be considered a meaningful signal as to the (in)appropriateness of GAs in specific situations or cultures (Kasper, 2008: 293); 2) the data collected requires no transcription; 3) pragmalinguistic patterns are immediately revealed; 4) the frequency of occurrence of the interactional-communicative phenomenon under analysis can be easily ascertained; and 5) the researcher can address cross-linguistic and cross-cultural issues (Golato, 2004: 13). However, the main disadvantage of DCTs is that, like all the other questionnaires, they provide metapragmatic data (Golato, 2004: 13), that is, the equivalent of offline responses (Kasper, 2008: 291).

Rating scales are employed as a means of investigating the perceptions of speakers towards certain features of discourse. The format of rating scales displays pre-determined response options and a numerical scale as the basis for assessment; on the basis of this, the informant has to rate the extent to which the response option fits the pre-determined parameters (on GAs, see Colston, 2002; Katz et al., 2007). In general, rating scales are particularly fit for obtaining empirical assessment of contextual variables relevant to possible communicative scenarios.

In MC questionnaires, speakers are presented with a given interactional scenario, a dialogue prompt, and pre-determined response options, from which they have to choose the most suitable one. In general, MC questionnaires are the tools for examining "people's preference for speech act strategies and forms, comprehension and metapragmatic judgments" (Kasper, 2008: 294; in the research on GAs, cf. Katz et al., 2007). However, this method has two main disadvantages in the study of speakers' pragmalinguistic preferences: 1) it might not be completely reliable, because the pre-set response options most often represent limited single-utterance text segments; 2) identifying suitable response options is rather challenging if the object of investigation is complex and variable (e.g. requests, offers). For the latter reason, MC questionnaires are said to be more appropriate with restricted objects of study such as situational routines (Kasper, 2008: 294).

Interviews are used to elicit oral data, in particular, data about speakers' pragmatic knowledge and norms – indeed, Kasper (2008: 296) calls them "metapragmatic interviews" – as Ouafeu (2009) did in his work. Given the structure of the interviews (i.e. a series of question-answer turns), Kasper (2008) argues that responses from the informants are strongly related, both in form and content, to the preceding questions, so that the former are "co-constructed by default" between the researcher and the participants; this implies that the responses from the participants cannot be taken as expressions of "stable, de-contextualized belief and knowledge states" (p. 296).

3.2.1.2 Methods for collecting spontaneous GAs

Spontaneously produced GAs have been collected in naturally occurring interactions. Data collected from interactions are considered online (Golato, 2004; Kasper, 2008), that is, experienced by participants in real-life situations at the same time

they are engaged in interaction. Spontaneously produced data – called "naturally occurring talk-in-interaction in Golato" (2004: 20) – are the most appropriate source for directly studying how speakers behave in real-life encounters, since they are unaffected by the experimental control of researchers (Golato, 2004; Kasper, 2008).

Spontaneous discourse data vary according to the situational context they occur in, that is, "ordinary conversation [vs.] institutional interaction" (Kasper, 2008: 282), and according to the type of interaction they instantiate: ideal interactions to be analysed are those that happen face-to-face, which involve verbal and non-verbal communication, although traditional research mostly relies on phone conversation data (on thanking and GAs over the telephone, see, e.g., Ohashi 2008a); additionally, technological innovations make it possible to record and compare other types of interactions, an option yet to be employed in the research on GAs. The technique employed to record authentic interactions determines which aspects of the recorded interactions will be included in, or excluded from, analysis . Traditionally, three main techniques for collecting spontaneous data are audio recordings (e.g. Rüegg, 2014; Aston 1995; Ohashi 2008a), field notes (e.g. Jung, 1994; Altalhi 2014; Morsi 2010; Ohashi 2008b) and video recordings (not used with GAs so far). Each technique has its own focus, as well as its own strengths and weaknesses.

The main benefit of using field notes, as Golato (2004) observes, derives from the considerable amount of data collectable in various contexts and with various kinds of people. Yet, field notes suffer from several limitations: first, the researcher's notes cannot be checked against the original data (Golato, 2004); second, although a study may employ the traditional ethnographic technique, it does not automatically become ethnographic in nature (Kasper, 2008: 285); third, the researcher's observations almost inevitably rely on selected stretches of conversations, which might not faithfully or thoroughly reflect the real episode they aim to register (Golato, 2004, Kasper, 2008) due to the limitations of "human cognitive capacities" (Kasper, 2008: 285) such as possible inaccuracies in the researcher's personal transcription, or his/her limited oral perception/mnemonic abilities. Thus, researchers risk collecting only "salient and expected (or particularly unexpected) facets of the interaction, at the expense of less salient but perhaps decisive (often indexical) material" (Kasper 2000, quoted in Golato, 2004: 17). Therefore, field notes are a good data collection method when conducting research on "single-turn, short, high-

frequency 'semantic formulae', such as greetings, leave-takings, and (some forms of) compliments" (Kasper, 2008: 285).

Audio recordings allow the researcher to repeatedly check the data that have been captured against the original utterances, and to analyse various oral phenomena (e.g. prosody, turn-taking, overlaps etc.), although, of course, visual aspects of the interaction remain excluded from analysis (Kasper, 2008: 286). In addition, as Kasper (2008) and Golato (2004) point out, audio recordings might present difficulties related to: the availability of a location and the concrete possibility of doing the recordings, obtaining permission from study participants; collecting enough material; the fact that research might require more time than initially estimated due to the difficulty in collecting (enough) data exemplifying the phenomenon under analysis, or a possible initial embarrassment experienced by speakers, until they become accustomed to the recording situation; and the difficulty in collecting data from different samples of speakers (e.g. differing in age, gender, social class etc.). Consequently, the possibility of statistical analysis and of generalizability of the results is likely to be considerably undermined (Golato, 2004: 20).

3.2.1.3 Method for collecting oral elicited discourse: role plays

In light of the previous observations on the methodological differences between the collection of elicited data vs. spontaneously produced data, some scholars consider role plays a fairly good compromise between monitored experimental conditions and online production of interactional speech, which approximates spontaneous discourse. Role plays are "simulations of communicative encounters" (Kasper, 2008: 288) which are enacted by participants (usually in pairs) by following pre-determined interactional scenarios (also called prompts). These are usually designed for the purpose of eliciting specific types of communicative behaviour.

Various forms of participation in the interaction are envisaged for the informants, and this gives rise to different types of role plays, and of varying length. First of all, role play types can be spontaneous – which do not require participants to assume a different role/identity from their own – and mimetic-pretending – which require participants to take on a different role/identity from their own. Secondly, role plays can be closed or open-ended. The former type is conceived as a single-turn utterance that is a reaction to the

prompt – and, optionally, to a pre-set initiating speech turn calling for a given response/reaction – usually designed to elicit a specific speech act. The latter, instead, does not usually apply restrictions to the length, the development or the outcome of an interaction, which entirely depend upon the communicative negotiation process between the informants.

However, scholars have largely debated the advantages and disadvantages of using role plays for collecting data. One advantage is that, as Kasper (2008) observes, role plays may present many different linguistic and communicative types of behaviours occurring within the same interaction, independently of the kind of situation or communicative targets involved. Another major advantage is that role plays are suitable for planning out certain variables (e.g. characters, situations), so that these increase the likelihood of triggering specific speech acts and conversational behaviour. On the other hand, researchers have questioned the validity of data collected through role plays exercises, which are not instances of actual discourse behaviour (Kasper, 2008: 290). There are two reasons for this: the interaction develops in imaginary contexts detached from reality – with no real, actually perceived consequences for the participants – and, since participants may lack previous social experience, they might enact their suppositions about what is appropriate or typical in a certain context (Golato, 2004: 16). A further criticism advanced by several researchers is that the participants' role play roles might be hampered by their real-life roles. It therefore appears that role plays could be useful approximations of spontaneous discourse interactions only when speakers have consolidated experience in various social contexts, and when the design of a role play is such that it closely reflects real-life situations. More generally, Kasper (2008) points out that the choice of role plays over other research methods should be evaluated on the basis of a researcher's specific research goals: for instance, EFL students might be put into an uncomfortable position if they were asked to enact fictional situations in a target language where they have little or limited pragmatic competence.

3.2.2 Implications

The above descriptions of various data collection methods have evidenced how researchers must necessarily weigh the pros and cons of different data collection methods.

On the one hand, elicited written DCT data can be easily collected in considerable amounts and be closely monitored by researchers, but, on the other hand, such data cannot provide instances of the structures and features of multiple-turn interactions, let alone exemplify oral aspects of conversation. Consequently, many researchers have suggested that the findings from DCT data should be compared to, or integrated with, spontaneous discourse data, even if, on the whole, DCTs contribute to broadening current knowledge of pragmatic rules and (hypothetical and ideal) language usage. Indeed, research has demonstrated that DCT data and spontaneous discourse data most often consistently diverge in frequency, (preferred) linguistic patterns and length of responses (Golato, 2004: 13; Kasper, 2008: 293-294). By the same token, methods like rating scales and MC questionnaires are often more limited in the (possible) variation (and reliability) of the responses elicited, due to their pre-set response choices; they are thus regarded as more useful in combination with other methods. Likewise, the findings from metapragmatic interviews, which are obtained from online oral elicited data, are said to be a more reliable source when integrated and/or compared with other types of data, also because, by default, their semantic-syntactic encoding is pre-determined by the way the questions are formulated.

Data recorded from online spontaneous interactions make it possible to observe and analyse a wider range of phenomena than other types of data, and also to access less biased versions of interactional practices. Yet, spontaneous data collection methods have their own drawbacks too. For example, although they allow a collection of considerable quantities of authentic discourse data, field notes are subject to the limitations of human mnemonic and cognitive capabilities, so that they are more suitable for registering short portions of conversations. Audio recordings allow researchers to examine many aspects of oral interactions that are not accessible through with written data collection methods (see section 3.2.1.2), although they might suffer from practical limitations, such as the difficulty of recording (substantial amounts of) data, and thus of generalizing the results (see section 3.2.1.2). However, a compromise is supposedly reached with audio-video recordings of elicited oral data, in particular, open-ended role plays. Yet, even role plays, which allow the researcher to closely monitor experimental conditions and to collect online interactions, do not faithfully represent spontaneous communication because they serve to collect elicited data.

It would thus seem that the data collection method that presents the greatest number of advantages is the audio-video recording of authentic discourse in naturally occurring interactions. In fact, this method enables a researcher to study the audio, visual and verbal aspects, as well the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features, of communication. However, their practical constraints (see section 3.2.1.2) do not make them the most easily applicable type of data collection method.

All things considered, open role play data, which are audio/video recordable, may represent a fair compromise between spontaneous online interactional speech and elicited production of interactional speech. Indeed, they enable researchers to closely monitor the experimental conditions of their studies (e.g. the design of the tasks, the roles of participants, their power relationships etc.) and to collect considerable amounts of data, in line with their research goals. Also, in open role plays speakers are likely to adopt the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic behaviours they prefer, given that they enact their own knowledge or experience when engaging in interaction, and given that the interaction is constructed and developed in the way they believe or know is the most suitable. Interestingly, role plays have yet to be used in research on GAs[17], and so they might open a new perspective from which to carry out research on this speech act.

3.2.3 Procedure

This section presents the data collection and selection procedure of the present study. I will first introduce the logistical aspects relevant to the collection process (section 3.2.3.1), then I will describe the dataset collected (section 3.2.3.2); finally, I will report on the procedures I followed to select all and only the data relevant to my research goals (section 3.2.3.3).

3.2.3.1 The role plays, the instructions and the elicitation sessions

The present study examines role plays which are mimetic-pretending and open-ended (see section 3.2.1.3). The material considered was collected and made available to me by my thesis supervisor, who informed me of the data collection procedure. The data originally consisted of the transcripts of 36 elicited role play interactions (about 10,600

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17 My supervisor is working on GAs in the same dataset considered in *this* study (Gesuato, forthcoming). However, I have not had access to her work in the design and writing up of this dissertation.

words), which were elicited by means of 22 written descriptions of scenarios (see Appendix B), selected by the participants out of a larger set of 36 scenario descriptions .

The scenarios were mostly based on real-life events (that is, directly experienced or witnessed by my supervisor) and partly adapted from the relevant literature. They described situations involving two interactants in the roles of beneficiary/thanker and benefactor/thankee, and were designed so as to lead the study participants to produce, and react to, oral acts of thanking, without explicitly prompting the participants to perform these acts.

The background information in each scenario description was presented through distinct prompts for the roles of thanker/beneficiary vs. thankee/benefactor. These roles were characterized by different relationships, in terms of the addressee's social distance (D) from the addresser – that is, close (-D) vs. distant (+D) – and degree of power (P) – that is equal (=P) vs. subordinate (-P) vs. superior (+P). The degree of imposition – or magnitude of the benefit – was kept constant (i.e. high), because it was believed that this would more easily lead the participants to engage in the production of thanking exchanges. According to the above-mentioned variables, 6 sets of scenario descriptions were compiled, relevant to intimate and equal addressees (set A: 13 scenarios), distant and equal addressees (set B: 5 scenarios), intimate and subordinate addressees (set C: 5 scenarios), distant and subordinate addressees (set D: 3 scenarios), intimate and superior addressees (set E: 5 scenarios) and distant and superior addressees (set F: 3 scenarios).

The participants in the study (7 females, 5 males) were native speakers of English attending a US university, who received a small amount of money for their participation. In pairs, they showed up for distinct elicitation sessions, after having signed up for available time slots in an on-line form. During each elicitation session, each pair of participants was given the 6 sets of scenarios (A, B, C, D, E and F) and was asked to choose six scenario descriptions, one from each set. More specifically, for each of sets A, B and C, one participant would silently read the prompt relevant to Speaker A, then the other participant would silently read the matching prompt for Speaker B, and if this second participant liked his/her prompt, then that scenario would count as their joint choice. If, on the other hand, the second participant did not confirm the first participant's choice, the first participant would be asked to make an alternative choice until they could agree on a given scenario. The roles were reversed for sets C, D and F. After having

chosen each scenario, the participants were then invited to enact it as if they were personally experiencing the situation described therein. Each pair was thus involved in role plays characterized by different degrees of social distance and power between the interactants. Additionally, both members of each pair took turns being the pro-active (Speaker A) vs. the reactive (Speaker B) interlocutor.

The oral instructions provided to the participants specified that no time restrictions were placed on the realization of their task, and that their interactions could be as short or long as they liked. Furthermore, they were told that they could repeat each interaction until they felt satisfied with it, or they could decide to delete the recording, or they could partly or totally withdraw from their task at any point during the recording session. However, none of these options was chosen by the participants.

3.2.3.2 Data description

Overall, 36 dialogues (about 1 hour of recordings overall) were recorded in a sound-proof booth; of these dialogues, 7 were relevant to set A, 6 to set B, 6 to set C, 6 to set D, 5 to set E and 6 to set F. The numerical difference between set A and set E is possibly attributed to an oversight of my supervisor in submitting the sets to the participants (i.e. one pair was supposed to enact sets D, E, and F, but actually enacted A, D and F). Later, the recordings were transcribed by a university lecturer, an English native speaker.

A first issue emerged during my preliminary examination of the written transcripts: some of them revealed occasional problematic aspects concerning the interactional behaviour of participants. This urged me to systematically check all the transcripts against the original audio recordings. As a result of this, I also noticed inaccuracies in the transcripts themselves (e.g. inconsistencies in the use of punctuation marks signalling rising vs. falling intonation, and oversights in the representation of pauses, overlaps, emphasis, non-verbal sounds). I therefore revised the transcriptions, and sometimes the corrections turned out to be crucial to a full understanding of the interactions.

3.2.3.3 Data selection

After improving on the quality of the transcripts, I checked which ones were suitable to my research goals. The reason was that I had noticed occasional manifestations of, apparently, contextually irrelevant or contradictory interactional behaviour on behalf

of some participants (e.g. inappropriate laughter or joking possibly due to their embarrassment at performing the task or insufficient commitment to performing the task seriously).

To regard the data at my disposal as relevant to my research goals, and thus an appropriate object of analysis, I applied three criteria: a given transcript had to contain at least one expression of gratitude; second, the expression(s) of gratitude instantiated had indeed to be used to express gratitude rather than, say, to close the conversation or to encode irony or sarcasm; and the thanking exchange as a whole had to sound plausible, that is, conforming to the social norms of conversation and behaviour that generally apply to real life contexts; thus, (re-)actions like a sarcastic GA or a burst of laughter to a thanking act from a socially distant interlocutor were considered grounds for exclusion.

Therefore, whenever the above-mentioned conditions were met in a given dialogue transcript, this was considered for analysis; every other factor that might be considered detrimental to the plausibility of a dialogue transcript as a whole was thus disregarded, since the goal of the study was not to analyse the staged realization of a complete interaction, but only local thanking exchanges.

On the basis of the above criteria, 4 transcripts had to be disregarded: in 2 transcripts, the participants had followed the scenario instructions, but produced no thanking expressions; in 1 transcript, the participants had produced speech acts other than thanking, plus a token of ironic thanking; and in 1 other interaction, the participants had followed the instructions, but thanking occurred only as an interaction-closing formula. The excluded conversations belonged to sets A (2), E (1) and F (1). Furthermore, in 1 other transcript, which was considered for analysis, 1 thanking exchange belonging to set C was actually disregarded because uttered in a sarcastic way.

Overall, the data considered for analysis in this study consist of 32 transcripts of interactions (about 8,700 words) from 32 recordings of interactions (about 48 min. overall) relevant to sets A (5), B (6), C (6), D (6), E (4) and F (5), in which 77 thanking exchanges are realized. The transcripts of the interactions appear in Appendix C. The transcription conventions are found in Appendix A.

3.3 Data analysis

As pointed out in chapter 2, the various methodological approaches employed by scholars so far in the analysis of GAs are yet to be thoroughly integrated into a single agreed-upon analytical method for distinguishing, labelling and classifying head acts and supportive moves, their strategic and lexical realizations, and their external vs. internal modifications. I therefore developed my own coding scheme by drawing on the literature on GAs, other speech acts, and conversation more generally.

My analysis started from the identification of the GAs in the thanking exchanges; then, I distinguished the head acts from the supportive moves, and afterwards I described both their strategic and lexico-semantic properties.

3.3.1 Identification of GAs

The point of departure in my analysis consisted in finding a reliable way to identify GAs when they occurred after a gratitude expression and distinguishing them from other accompanying material in the same turn, if any. To identify and isolate GAs, I applied four criteria.

The first had to do with the sequencing of the GA itself: a text segment possibly encoding a GA had necessarily to occur in the turn immediately after the one encoding the thanking act.

The second criterion was the direct lexico-semantic relevance of the candidate text segment to the preceding thanking expression. In other words, to qualify as such, a GA had to be directly relevant to the thanker, thankee, thankable or act of thanking itself.

The third criterion was the employment of one of the formulas for encoding GAs as listed or attested in the literature, namely, frequently mentioned or attested expressions like *you're welcome*, *(my/great) pleasure*, *that's (quite) all right/that's okay*, *not at all*, *don't mention it*, *thank you/thanks*, *okay*, *yeah*, and *no problem*, but also less frequently mentioned or attested formulae like *anytime*, *yes*, *no worries*, *sure*, *you owe me*, *feel free to ask me again*, *just this once*, *(mmm) hmm*, *no trouble*, *for nothing*, *of course*, *awesome*, *great*, *you got it*, and *absolutely*, including the lexico-semantic variations of these expressions as attested in the literature.

The fourth criterion consisted in verifying that the prosody of the GA clearly indicated that this referred to the gratitude expression rather than other portions of speech.

In doing so, I relied on my intuition, and also took into consideration Aijmer's (1996) suggestion that GAs (presumably) have a "fixed prosodic pattern with a rising (fall-plus-rise) tone" (p. 40), although in my data this appeared to be the case only part of the time, mostly with short and syntactically simple GAs.

Therefore, I regarded every other portion of speech uttered by the thankee after a thanker's gratitude expression that did not fulfil (one or more of) the above mentioned four criteria as material external to the GA, and thus to be excluded from the object of the present study. In the few cases in which it was difficult to establish the presence of a GA in a reacting turn, the thankers' responses were coded as unclear. The relevant thanking exchanges are reported below for discussion.

> (1) TH-O1-B03-01
> […]
> 1 B: Maybe about 9 a.m. or so, head up on the hills, get a nice thing, come back, have a nice… late lunch?
> 2 A: Yeah, I appreciate that!
> 3 B: [Yeah?]
> 4 A: [I mean], I'd actually like to learn a little bit about er, how to, how to take care of my bike as far as maintenance goes a little better,
> […]

The thanking exchange in (1) is instantiated at turns 2 and 3; at turn 3, Speaker B takes advantage of a transition relevance place (TRP) – that is, "a point in a conversation where a change of turn is possible" (Cutting, 2008: 28) – to gain the right to speak. The ambiguity of Speaker B's reacting turn depends on the potentially multiple referents of the lexical item "yeah", which might be a GA, but also a reaction to the "yeah" preceding Speaker A's thanking (turn 2; see section 3.3.1); according to the latter interpretation, "yeah" would function as a request for confirmation, which finds support in the rising intonation of the turn.

Similarly, the next extract displays lexical ambiguity in the referent of Speaker B's response.

> (2) TH-O1-C04
> […]
> 1 A: I, I'll be sure to freeze dry it and bring it back. Well er a-again, thank you for planning all this. Hotel's great, the business is great, er, weather's wonderful, it couldn't have gone smoother.
> 2 B: Glad to hear that and I oh, I await your return.

In thanking exchange (2), Speaker A (the thanker) produces a complex thanking turn that combines a response to a previous turn, the reiteration of a gratitude expression,

and a positive descriptive comment that shows his appreciation both of Speaker B's work and of other external beneficial circumstances, for which Speaker B is not to be held responsible. Thus, the pronoun "that" might indifferently allude to Speaker B's provision of a benefit (i.e. logistic arrangements), to the external positive factors that Speaker A has been mentioning (i.e. business, weather, and trip in general), or to Speaker A's appreciative comment on the whole.

The following extract

(3) TH-O1-D01-03
[…]
1 A: Well sir, I really appreciate it,
2 B: Oh
3 A: I'll enjoy the sunset
4 B: hmm
[…]

Shows a thanking exchange (turns 1, 2) in which the "oh" could be interpreted either as an unusual GA or a generic feedback token.

3.3.2 Other responses to gratitude expressions

If a gratitude expression is not responded to, this leaves a possibly empty slot in the thankee's interactional turn where a GA might have occurred. That is, in the reacting turn after (or in immediate overlap with) the gratitude expression: 1) something other than a GA may occur, which refers to other stretches of discourse (e.g. responses to previous requests) or new conversational topics (e.g. requests or comments), or which concludes the interaction (e.g. pre-closing and/or closing formulae); alternatively, 2) no verbal response might occur at all, due to non-verbal reactions – as in the case of laughter – or even no further interactional contribution may be provided, that is, the interaction may end with the thanking turn. I called the former type of turn material *unacknowledged gratitude responses (UGEs)* and the latter *zero realizations*. The interactional and/or linguistic aspects of UGEs and Zero realizations will be addressed in sections 3.3.2.1 and 3.3.2.2, respectively.

3.3.2.1 UGEs

UGEs comprise A) responses to other text segments within the thanking turn, B) responses to other stretches of discourse previous to the thanking turn, C) deliberate topic

shifts, D) overlaps with/continuation of unfinished discourse, and E) deliberate utterance of pre-closing/closing formulae.

A) Quite often, that is in 14 UGEs, the thanker's gratitude expression is accompanied by speech segments performing additional functions (e.g. request, comment etc.), all of which calling for a reaction from the interlocutor. In those cases, the thankee responds only to the additional speech segments, thus apparently ignoring the gratitude expression. The following thanking exchanges exemplify various situations where such a phenomenon occurs.

(4) TH-O1-E01-02
[…]
1 B: Thank you for coming by! Appreciate it. I, I, I, the, the paper's good, I feel like you're gonna get a good grade. Just, just try to add in a little bit more of your own thoughts, fix the grammar that I pointed out, and you should be set.
2 A: I, I will, I will attempt this. Thank you.
[…]

In example (4), Speaker A's gratitude expression occurs in initial position, and is followed by a lengthy comment that slightly shifts the conversational topic: Speaker B refers exclusively to Speaker A's suggestion ("Just try […] be set"), reacting only to the thanker's very last speech segment (i.e. the one temporally closest to the beginning of his/her interactional turn).

(5) TH-O1-A13
[…]
1 A: Thank you! That, that's actually extremely nice, w-w-what are you making?
2 B: Some… wonderful mashed potatoes, a little bit of…
[…]

(6) TH-O1-C03-01
[…]
1 A: [Um,] thank, thank you again for… helping, um, like I hope you can like, help us babysit, um, Charlotte… in the future.
2 B: Of course. I really enjoy… babysitting her.
[…]

In both example (5) and example (6), the thanker utters a request, for information vs. action, respectively, after the act of thanking, and in both cases the thankee replies to the turn-final request.

(7) TH-O1-B02
1 A: Ok, thank you miss, that's, that's so kind of you. This, this postman over here, really just, just
    these day and age, these people just don't understand what it's like to be so old.
2 B: [I]
3 A: [I], I forgot my glasses at home and, and this postman, he wouldn't, he wouldn't fill out the
    form with me, what's wrong with people these days?
4 B: People are really annoying, angry, bitter… blue (mild laughter) collar workers.
[…]

In example (7), immediately after "old", which marks a possible TRP, Speaker B tries to gain the floor, but is interrupted by Speaker A, who provides an account of the story, followed by a rhetorical question; this is the only segment in Speaker A's long turn that receives feedback from Speaker B.

(8) TH-O1-A13
[…]
1 A: Well, thank you! I, I mean, I mean studying, studying the brain and such, I, I can tell you that
    those are all great brain foods, I'm excited for the steak.
2 B: Yeah.
[…]

In example (8), "yeah" could function either as GA, that is the acceptance of the act of thanking, or as a response to the comment ("I, I mean… steak"), that is an expression of agreement, and thus it cannot be unequivocally associated with the gratitude expression, especially considering that the comment is turn-final and that, judging from previous examples, thankees are more likely to react to the speech segment that occurs the closest to the beginning of their turn.

(9) TH-O1-D01-01
[…]
1 A: Alright, [again, thank you] so much and hopefully I'll see you some time in the future.
2 B: [unclear]   Good,
    have a safe trip!
[…]

(10) TH-O1-D01-03
[…]
1 A: Exciting.   [Thank] you sir.
2 B: Ye[ah]   See you!

Examples (9) and (10) instantiate "complex" UGEs: a reply to previous speech ("good" and "yeah", respectively) within the thanking turn, and a closing formula, signalling the thankee's intention to end the conversation.

B) In 1 marginal case, a UGE occurs when a thankee responds to the turn immediately preceding the gratitude expression. In Speaker A's first turn (1) a quite

lengthy speech segment consisting of several strategies realizes a tentative request, which ends with a final gratitude expression in turn 3. However, right after the TRP (i.e. after "I'll study in the living room") Speaker B tries to take advantage of Speaker A's slight pause and utters something unclear, in the attempt to gain the turn to speak. Yet, Speaker A delays Speaker B's turn through the expression of his gratitude; when Speaker B finally obtains space to speak, he responds to A's previous request, thus patently ignoring the occurrence of the final gratitude expression. The case is reported below in (11).

(11) TH-O1-A13
[…]
1 A: Help me go along there, I, I hate, I hate to do this but I, I actually have finals coming up soon and I, is, is, is it alright if I stay up a bit late, I'll I'll study in the living room.
2 B: (unclear)
3 A: I appreciate that you made the meal and I feel bad.
4 B: Yeah, yeah I mean, as long as you're not making too much noise…
[…]

C) In 1 case, a UGE occurs when the thankee disregards the gratitude expression, and shifts the conversational topic, as in example (12).

(12) TH-O1-C04
[…]
1 A:… THANK you very much [for that…]
2 B:.   [And how] are the er, how are the cocoa plantations?
[…]

D) In another 4 cases, the thanker's gratitude expression occurs in total overlap with – as in (13) – or extremely temporally close – as in (14) – the thankee's portion of speech. As a result, thankees in both examples apparently pay no attention to the gratitude expression, being exclusively focused on the accomplishment of their own communicative goal.

(13) TH-O1-D01-03
[…]
1 B: If, if memory serves. It's, I mean it's it's a little bit crowded, but, but to be honest the reason it's crowded is because it's got the best views, if you, if you manage to stick around for the sunset,
2 A: Well [thank you]
3 B: [it's a great] time!
[…]

(14) TH-O1-E01-02

[…]

1 B: Ah! I, I er, I actually just spent a, a large portion of the afternoon checking it over, I, [I appreciate]

2 A: [Yes]

3 B: you bringing it to me.

4 A: Yes, I, I, I did not get a very good score, and perhaps it's because my English is, is still having, having trouble with my English, but I, I was trying to… implement some of the changes that you gave to me.

[…]

E) Finally, UGEs occur when the thankee ignores the gratitude expression and brings the interaction to a close by uttering a pre-closing (15) or a closing formula (usually a farewell, as in (16)).

(15) TH-O1-A13

[…]

1 A: I suppose I'll see you in the morning. Thank you again.

2 B: Good luck with the studying.

[…]

(16) TH-O1-B02

[…]

1 A: thank you.

2 B: Goodbye.

In sum, the examples show that, in the thanking exchanges displaying UGEs, the participants tend to respond to the segment of speech that is the temporally closest to the beginning of their reacting turn, or are more inclined to complete their main communicative goal – be it relevant to a preceding segment of interaction, or an already initiated utterance – than to acknowledge gratitude; alternatively, they keep the interaction going or bring it to an end.

3.3.2.2 Zero realizations

Under the expression Zero realization I included all those cases where a gratitude expression is non-verbally responded by the thankee. In the datasets, Zero realizations occur when the thankee utters a non-verbal sound as a reaction to a gratitude expression (e.g. laughter or sneer, 4 cases), as in (17), or alternatively, when the interaction ends with the utterance of gratitude, namely, the thankee responds no further to his/her interlocutor (4 cases), as in (18).

(17) TH-O1-B02
[…]
1 A: Thank you. Now to take this off to the rude old postman,
2 B: (laughs)
[…]

(18) TH-O1-B03-01
1 A: Enjoy yourself sir, thank you!

3.3.3 Encoding of head acts and supportive moves

The second step in my analysis involved identifying the head acts of GAs and distinguishing them from their supportive moves, that is, the external modification of the head acts. I thus started by considering what other scholars had done when facing the same issue with regard to various speech acts.

Scholars studying other types of speech acts (requests and apologies) have proposed an explicit criterion for identifying a head act; for instance, "[a] Head Act is the minimal unit which can realize a request; it is the core of the request sequence. […] In order to isolate the Head Act one should disregard those parts of the sequence which are not essential for realizing the request." (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b: 275; original emphasis). These scholars have also proposed a basic identifying criterion for a supportive move, which is recognizable as "a unit external to the request, which modifies its impact by either aggravating […] or mitigating […] its force" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b: 276). Other scholars have further observed that "external modification does not affect the utterance used for realizing the act, but rather the context in which it is embedded, and thus indirectly modifies illocutionary force" (Faerch and Kasper 1989, mentioned in Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1989: 204).

With specific regard to GAs, Schneider (2005) alone, to my knowledge, has provided definitions of their head acts and supportive moves. On the one hand, GA head acts are defined as the direct realizations of a GA, which should be identifiable in "the standard tokens usually listed for illustration in the literature, i.e., formulaic expressions such as *not at all, that's all right*, or *don't mention it*" (p. 113), independently of the context they occur in. On the other hand, supportive moves are defined as "illocutions other than a TM" [Thank Minimizer, i.e. GA] (p. 112), which are indirect realizations of GAs, can potentially replace head acts when they fail to occur, and are generally characterized by greater linguistic, syntactic and contextual variability than head acts.

In the present study, to identify GA head acts and distinguish them from GA supportive moves I integrated the defining criteria relevant to the head acts and supportive moves of speech acts other than GAs with the arguments put forward by Schneider (2005) on the components of GAs. Therefore, I considered a GA head act a turn segment that minimally (i.e. by itself) and most explicitly (i.e. unambiguously) responds to an act of thanking, thus ratifying its validity, and bringing, or potentially bringing, the thanking exchange to a close; therefore, I regarded as GA head acts not only conventional and routinized formulaic expressions that in any GA exchange would be easily recognized as relevant and complete responses to thanks, but also less conventional formulae – even if not attested in the literature – that could be recognized as relevant and complete responses only in specific GA exchanges. Conversely, I classified as a GA supportive move an optional text segment that expands on, motivates and/or contextualizes the thankee's attitude towards the thanking event, and may thus be characterized by less standardized and more context-dependent encoding than a GA head act. Instead, I did not regard as supportive moves turn segments accompanying the head act, but not directly relevant to the thankee's attitude toward the thanker and/or the benefit – unlike Farenkia (2012, 2013), who, for example, considers (pre-)closing formulae instances of the supportive move Parting.

3.3.3.1 Internal structures of GAs

The distinction between GA head acts and GA supportive moves is essential to identifying the internal structure of a given GA (see Schneider, 2005, Farenkia, 2012, 2013 and Rüegg, 2014). A first structural distinction is made between simple GAs and complex GAs. Simple GAs are made up of 1 element, which can be either a head act alone or a supportive move alone. Complex GAs are made up of multiple components (i.e. 2 or more), and comprise these sub-types: multiple head acts, which I refer to as the *head act combination* structure; multiple supportive moves, which I call the *supportive move combination* structure; and the combination of one or more head acts with one or more supportive moves, or what I called the *head act(s) + supportive move(s)* structure.

3.3.4 Analysis of head acts

The next step in the analysis of GAs consisted in analysing the head acts. To do so, I identified the strategic choices made by speakers (section 3.3.4.1) and distinguished them from their specific lexico-semantic realizations, which I later grouped into broader lexico-semantic types (section 3.3.4.2). Finally, I analysed also multiple elements that contribute to the variable realization of head acts (section 3.3.4.2.1).

3.3.4.1 Strategies of the head acts

To identify and classify the GA head act strategies in my corpus, I looked for instances of strategies attested in previous studies, but without excluding the possible occurrence of additional strategies not yet investigated .

GA head act strategies, which are meant to restore the social balance between the interactants, can refer to the thankable, the thanker, the thankee (see Schneider, 2005) or the act of thanking itself. In general, the strategies of GAs head acts in my data conform to speaker strategies previously identified in the literature (i.e. Aijmer, 1996, Schneider, 2005), whose labels, however, I slightly adapted in order to make them more accurately fit my data. In the following presentation, the labels of the speaker strategies will be italicized, to distinguish them from the main text.

In my data I identified 5 head act strategies. *Minimizing the benefit*, which focuses on the thankable, occurs as the thankee seeks to downplay the cost of the specific benefit s/he is being thanked for; a relevant specific realization in this study is "no problem". *Expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*, which focuses on the thankee, expresses the thankee's positive feelings for having done something beneficial to the thanker, for example, realized in this study as "glad that we were able to fix it". *Expressing appreciation of the addressee*, which focuses on the thanker, is the strategy where the thankee describes the positive feelings towards the thanker as the reason for the performance of the benefit, for example, realized in this study by "you're welcome". *Reciprocating the thanking*, which focuses on the thanking, is the strategy in which the thankee responds to a gratitude expression with another gratitude expression, so as to indicate that a reciprocal benefit was gained; a relevant example is "thank you". Finally, *accepting the thanking*, which focuses on the thanking, labels the strategy through which

the thankee simply confirms that a thanking act has occurred and accepts it; in this study, for instance, it is realized by "yeah", "sure", "mmm hmm".

3.3.4.2 Lexico-semantic types of the head acts

If GA speaker strategies, on the one hand, represent the functions through which the speech act is realized, the single GA tokens are their concrete linguistic realizations in discourse. Many of the tokens instantiating a given strategy share certain lexical/semantic properties and can therefore be grouped under broad lexico-semantic types (see section 2.3).

Although a majority of the head act tokens in my corpus are discussed in the literature, I could not always apply the labels of lexico-semantic types elaborated by other scholars because these did not adequately fit all my data , and because previous scholars' classification criteria were not always explicit or consistent . First, given their wording, previous labels appeared to fit only some of the GA tokens instantiated in my data, but to exclude differently worded, but semantically similar, GA tokens; second, their strong reliance on lexico-syntactic, rather than semantic, criteria, was at times not helpful in the distinction between GA head acts and GA supportive moves . Therefore, I developed my own labels for the lexico-semantic types of GA head acts in my data: I employed first a semantic criterion – by identifying the main notion conveyed (e.g. 'yes', 'welcome') – and only secondarily a lexico-syntactic criterion – signalling a typical encoding of that notion (e.g. YOU'RE WELCOME for "you're welcome"). Interestingly, the majority of the labels I used to encode the GA head act types turned out to differ only in part from – and one even coincided with – those already used in previous studies. However, as a result of my classification procedure, my labels turned out to be more consistently motivated and applicable to all my data.

I identified 6 lexico-semantic types of GA heads in my data: YOU'RE WELCOME, (I'M) PLEASED, (IT'S) GOOD, NO PROBLEM, THANK YOU, and YES. YOU'RE WELCOME, subsumed under the *expressing appreciation of the addressee* strategy, expresses the speaker's commitment to be of service to the addressee (e.g. "you're welcome"; "you're welcome to come over anytime you want"). (I'M) PLEASED is one of the two types realizing the *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* strategy; this formulation type expresses the thankee's emotional experience (specific realizations

include "I'm glad you enjoyed it", and "I was happy to know that you wanted my help". (IT'S) GOOD is the other type realizing *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*; it conveys a positive aesthetic, or ethic evaluation of (aspects of) the benefit (e.g. "it was nice meeting you too"). NO PROBLEM, a realization of the *minimizing the benefit* strategy, expresses the lack of a need to reciprocate, or the thankee's lack of discomfort in the provision of the benefit (e.g. no problem vs. no worries). THANK YOU, which realizes the *reciprocating the act of thanking* strategy, conveys the notion of gratitude (specific formulations include "thank you"; "thank you for being such a great mentee"). Finally, the type YES, subsumed under the *accepting the thanking* strategy, signals that the thankee has received the gratitude expression and accepted it as valid (specific formulations include "yeah", "sure" or "mmm hmm").

3.3.4.2.1 Additional elements of the head acts

GA head acts may also be modified by elements that enrich their expressiveness (Schneider, 2005, Farenkia, 2012, 2013, Rüegg, 2014): uptakers, address terms, and upgraders. The first two elements are external to the head act, like supportive moves, yet are irrelevant to the illocution, unlike supportive moves, and only support the interaction, whereas upgraders are internal to the core message and directly modify the expressiveness of the head act. Generally, uptakers are elements that frame the head act from the outside, since they occur in pre-message position. In my data, they comprise exclaims, that is, elements that "express an attitude towards the preceding thanking act" (Schneider, 2005: 124) and frame the following GA message. Address terms, which signal "a cultural setting in which closeness, distance, respect, reverence, etc., prevail" (Farenkia, 2013: 721), belong to alerters, that is, elements that attract the interlocutor's attention. Finally, upgraders are elements that increase the illocutionary force of the head act. In my data, they comprise intensifiers, namely, elements that "have a heightening effect on elements of the proposition" (Schneider, 2005: 114).

3.3.5 Analysis of supportive moves

I also classified the tokens of the supportive moves in terms of speaker strategies and semantic types of their tokens.

3.3.5.1 Strategies of the supportive moves

In previous studies, the supportive moves of GAs have not been systematically analysed in terms of speaker strategies. However, that supportive moves are analysable also in these terms is suggested, although not explored into detail, in Farenkia (2012, 2013), who noticed that the supportive moves in his data perform such functions as "express[ing] social responsibility (to friends and superiors) and […] maintain[ing] a cordial relationship", of "solidif[ying] social bonds", of "assert[ing] reciprocity with the other", or those of "minimiz[ing] any feeling of embarrassment or any face loss" (Farenkia, 2013: 720-721).

To identify the strategies of supportive moves, I applied two criteria, the first of which had also been used in the identification of GA head act strategies: a) the thanker, the thankee, the thankable, or the thanking had to be the main focus of the text segment being considered, whether those concepts were explicitly mentioned or implicitly referred to; b) the meaning of the text segment had to be logically linked – or linkable – to the head act (e.g. motivation, consequence, context etc. of the head act).

By applying the above method, I classified 6 GA supportive move strategies. The first strategy, *offering*, is focused on the thanker as a beneficiary/recipient, – whose behaviour is going to be affected by the action expressed in the text segment – and expresses the thankee's commitment to provide a benefit for the thanker (e.g., "I'm always here to help you out with that kind of stuff"). The second strategy, *requesting a change of conduct*, is focused on the thanker as the requestee, – whose behaviour is likely to be influenced by the illocution expressed in the supportive move – and expresses the intention of having the thanker to change his conduct (e.g. "Er, if, if, if you could, I, I would appreciate it if, you would come to class, 'cause, believe it or not, that's actually the place where we normally explain these things"). The third strategy, *requesting information*, is equally focused on the thanker as a requestee, – whose conduct is likely to be influenced by the thankee's illocution – and expresses the intent to elicit from the thanker information that is somehow related to the preceding thanking act (e.g. "I hope you, enjoyed our company and our… little… cabin in the mountains"). Another strategy, *motivating the expression of pleasure*, is oriented toward the thankee as the experiencer of emotions; it co-occurs with the head act strategy *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*, and generalizes the thankee's attitude towards the thanker (e.g. "You know, we

love having you kids… come through here, you know, and see our country, and visit around"). The fifth strategy, *motivating the minimization of the benefit*, focuses on the benefit (i.e. the only element of the thanking exchange mentioned in the text segment); it co-occurs with the head act strategy *minimizing the benefit*, and justifies the immediately preceding minimization of the cost of the benefit (e.g. "that's, you know, that's part of my job… um…"). The last strategy, *commenting the benefit*, is focused on the thankable (i.e. the only element of the thanking exchange mentioned in the text segment), and provides further (contextual) information on the benefit (e.g. "I knew you liked durians and starfruit, and…").

3.3.5.2 Semantic types of the supportive moves

I identified the semantic types of the supportive moves on the basis of the content conveyed through the stretches of discourse encoding them, without considering their lexico-syntactic properties. The reason for this was that the GA supportive moves were much more variable in their encoding, far less numerous, and relevant to more varied scenarios, than the GA head acts; therefore, the identification of lexico-syntactic patterns would have been much less likely. Also, I did not adopt or adapt classification schemes from previous studies, which were not characterized by consistent categorization parameters, but I developed one of my own that could suitably (i.e. accurately and completely) account for my data.

Overall, I classified the supportive moves in my dataset into 9 types. The first type, *willingness to act* is the expression of the thankee's readiness to provide a benefit for the thanker (e.g. "and I'm always here to help you out with that kind of stuff"). The second type, *imminent provision of the benefit*, is the thankee's indication that the benefit is about to be provided (e.g. "let me just grab one for you"). The third type, *positive evaluation of the benefit*, is the expression of a positive judgment on the benefit, its features or other background aspects (e.g. "Our, er, grocery store has some pretty exotic fruit"). Another type, *enjoyability of the benefit*, describes the quality of the benefit as a source of pleasure (e.g. "Charlotte has been really great today"). The fifth type, *emotional impact*, describes the positive feeling(s) that the thankee generally experiences towards the benefit (e.g. "I love watching Lily!"). The sixth type, *background knowledge*, is the reference to contextualizing information about the benefit (e.g. "I knew you liked durians and starfruit,

and…"). Another type, *triviality of the benefit*, describes the benefit as ordinary rather than special or costly (e.g. "that's, you know, that's part of my job… um…"). The eighth type, *appropriate alternatives*, mentions a possible, future, desirable type of behaviour that differs from previous conduct (e.g. "Er, if, if, if you could, I, I would appreciate it if, you would come to class, 'cause, believe it or not, that's actually the place where we normally explain these things…"). The last type, *verification of the enjoyability of the benefit*, encodes the thankee's inquiry about the thanker's actual appreciation of the benefit (e.g. "I hope you, enjoyed our company and our… little… cabin in the mountains").

3.3.6 Elements of spoken discourse

In the GAs of my dataset, I also registered and counted the frequency of occurrence of discursive elements that are typically instantiated in oral production: cajolers (e.g. you know), "conventionalized speech items [… which] increase, establish, or restore harmony between the interlocutors" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b: 284); discourse markers (e.g. well, now, right), which signal "interactively how the speaker plans to steer the dialogue" (Biber et al., 2006: 456) and which are most likely to appear in initial position; and hesitators (e.g. uh, um, er), that is pause fillers that "signal that the speaker is hesitating, and has not yet finished what he/she wants to say" (Biber et al., 2006: 452).

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has described the data under analysis, and reported on the data collection and data selection procedures. It has also clarified and motivated the analytical method adopted in the examination of the data. The findings of the analysis will be reported in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the analysis of the reacting turns in the thanking exchanges found in the corpus: section 4.2 reports on the frequency, situational distribution and general content of the reacting turns; section 4.3 reports on the frequency and situational distribution of UGEs and Zero realizations, which together make up Other responses; section 4.4 describes the structures of the GAs identified in the reacting turns in terms of component head acts and supportive moves; section 4.5 offers an analysis of the head acts in terms of strategies, lexico-semantic types and realizations; section 4.6 describes the supportive moves in terms of strategies, semantic types and realizations; finally, section 4.7 reports on the frequency of occurrence of the elements of spoken discourse that were found in the reacting turns where the GAs are instantiated. The analysis will be accompanied by illustrative examples throughout.

4.2 Frequency of the GAs

Overall, the 32 interactions considered for analysis contain 77 thanking exchanges, that is, sequences of an expression of gratitude – and optional benefit(s) and supportive moves – uttered by one speaker and the reaction to it, uttered by the interlocutor. By applying the procedure described in section 3.3.1, I identified GA responses in 42 (54.5%) reacting turns, Other responses (see section 3.3.2) in 32 (41.6%) reacting turns, and Unclear responses in the 3 (3.9%) remaining reacting turns (see section 3.3.1).

Table 4.1 shows the frequency of occurrence of the thanking speech acts, of the GA responses, of Other responses and Unclear responses in the corpus, and their dispersion across the datasets. The highest frequency of thanking episodes is found in sets B and D, and the lowest in sets E and F, which have almost half as many thanking episodes as set B. On average, 2.4 gratitude expressions occur in a transcript (i.e. from a minimum of 1 thanking act to a maximum of 7). GA, Other and Unclear responses are not similarly frequent across the datasets: in set F, GAs are almost as many as thanking speech acts (except for 1 case); in set C, GAs are almost three times as frequent as Other responses; in set E, GAs are twice as many as Other responses; in sets A and B, GAs and Other

responses are equally frequent; only in set D are GAs half as many as Other responses; and Unclear responses are found in 3 thanking episodes from sets B, C and D. Additionally, the frequency of occurrence of different types of reactions to acts of thanking is not uniform in each transcript, although this is not reported in Table 4.1: 1) in 16 interactions, thanking acts always trigger a GA; 2) in 5 interactions, gratitude expressions never trigger GAs; 3) in 3 interactions, thanking acts trigger an equal number of GAs and Other responses; 4) in 5 interactions, gratitude expressions trigger more GAs than Other responses; and 5) in 3 interactions thanking acts trigger more Other responses than GAs.

Set	Thanking	GA responses	Other responses	Unclear responses
A (=P, -D)	14	7	7	0
B (=P, +D)	17	8	8	1
C (-P, -D)	12	8	3	1
D (-P, +D)	16	5	10	1
E (+P, -D)	9	6	3	0
F (+P, +D)	9	8	1	0
Total	**77**	**42**	**32**	**3**
(%)	**(100%)**	**(54.5%)**	**(41.6%)**	**(3.9%)**

Table 4.1: Frequency and dispersion of GAs responses, Other responses and Unclear responses across the datasets.

Set	A, B	E, F	C, D	B, D, F	A, C, E	**Total**
Scenario variable	=P	+P	-P	+D	-D	**responses**
Thanking act	31	18	28	42	35	**77**
GA responses	15	14	13	21	21	**42**
Other responses	15	4	13	19	13	**32**
Unclear responses	1	0	2	2	1	**3**
Total responses	**31**	**18**	**28**	**42**	**35**	**77**

Table 4.2: Frequency and dispersion of thanking acts and response types across different values of the P and D variables.

The dispersion of thanking episodes and of their response types across the different values of the P and D variables is represented in Table 4.2. The thanking episodes in scenarios involving a =P or a -P thankee display an equal frequency of occurrence of GAs and Other responses. On the contrary, in scenarios where the thankee is a +P, the frequency of GAs outweighs by far that of Other responses. On the other hand, in scenarios where the thankee is +D, the frequency of GAs is only slightly higher than that

of Other responses; conversely, in scenarios where the thankee is -D, the frequency of GAs is fairly higher than that of Other responses. In other words, a gratitude expression from a -D participant is more likely to be responded to with a GA than one from a +D participant.

4.3 Other responses

Other responses, those reacting turns after an act of thanking in which no GA occurs (see section 3.3.2), comprise 24 UGEs (75%), that is, responses that do not acknowledge gratitude expressions, and 8 Zero realizations (25%), that is, non-verbal responses (total 32, i.e. 41.6%). Table 4.3 illustrates their frequency and dispersion across the datasets.

Set	UGEs	Zero realizations	Total
A (=P, -D)	6	1	7
B (=P, +D)	4	4	8
C (-P, -D)	3	0	3
D (-P, +D)	7	3	10
E (+P, -D)	3	0	3
F (+P, +D)	1	0	1
Total	**24**	**8**	**32**
%	**75%**	**25%**	**100%**

Table 4.3: Frequency and dispersion of UGEs and Zero realizations across the datasets.

UGEs are instantiated at least once in every dataset, whereas Zero realizations are instantiated only in sets A, B and D. The UGEs alone occur the most frequently in sets D and A – which have, respectively, the second and third highest frequency of thanking episodes – and the least frequently, that is just once, in set F – one of the two sets with the lowest frequency of thanking episodes. The highest number of Zero realizations (i.e. 4), instead, is registered in set B, while the lowest (i.e. 1) in set A.

The rates of occurrence of UGEs and Zero realizations across the different values of the P and D variables are illustrated in Table 4.4. In general, Other responses are realized the most frequently by =P thankees, less frequently by -P thankees, and the least frequently by +P thankees; besides, Other responses more frequently correlate with +D interlocutors. On the one hand, the frequency of occurrence of UGEs is considerably greater when a gratitude expression is uttered by a =P or -P interlocutor than when it is realized by a +P thankee. Considering social distance, instead, UGEs are equally frequent

by -D and +D thankees. On the other hand, Zero realizations are slightly more frequent among =P thankees, while they are never realized by a +P thankee. Finally, the Zero realizations are almost entirely realized by +D thankees.

Dataset	A, B	E, F	C, D	B, D, F	A, C, E	**Total Other responses per variable P/D**
Scenario variable	=P	+P	-P	+D	-D	
UGEs	10	4	10	12	12	24
Zero realizations	5	0	3	7	1	8
Total Other responses per value of P/D	**15**	**4**	**13**	**19**	**13**	32

Table 4.4: Frequency and dispersion of UGEs and Zero realizations across different values of the P and D variables.

4.4 The structures of the GAs: head acts, supportive moves and their combinations

The variable length and complexity of the 42 GAs depends on the number and sequencing of head acts and supportive moves making up a single GA (see Schneider, 2005; Farenkia, 2012, 2013; Rüegg, 2014). Overall, I identified 55 head acts[18] and 12 supportive moves. The head acts may occur alone in structurally simple GAs or in combination with other head acts or supportive moves in structurally complex GAs (see section 3.3.3.1). Structurally simple and complex GAs realize 3 structures, namely, head act alone, head act combination, and head act(s) + supportive move(s); their frequency of occurrence is illustrated in Table 4.5:

Head Act Structures	Composition	Tokens	**Percentages**
Head act alone	1 *HA*	24	**57.1%**
Head act combination	2 *HA*	5	11.9%
	3 *HA*	2	4.8%
	Sub-total	**7**	**16.7%**
Head act(s) + supportive move(s)	1*HA* + 1*SM*	6	14.3%
	2*HA* + 1*SM*	4	9.5%
	1*HA* + 2*SM*	1	2.4%
	Sub-total	**11**	**26.2%**
Total		**42**	**100%**

Table 4.5: Frequency and composition of GA structures. *Note: HA* stands for 'head act'; *SM* stands for 'supportive move'.

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18 The number of head act tokens exceeds that of GA responses due to the occurrence of multiple heads within a single GA (see Schneider, 2005; Farenkia, 2012, 2013; Rüegg, 2014).

The most frequently instantiated structure in the corpus is head act alone, found in 24 (57.1%) GAs; for instance:

(19) TH-O1-A08
[…]
1 A: That sounds good. Thank you!
2 B: No problem

(20) TH-O1-D01-02
[…]
1 A: (laughs) Thanks very much.
2 B: You're welcome.

The head act combination structure occurs in 7 GAs (i.e. 16.7%). In 5 cases, it is instantiated as a double-head act GA (see Tables 4.5, 4.6 and example (21)), and in 2 cases as a triple-head act GA (see Tables 4.5, 4.6 and example (22)). This structure occurs when the preceding thanking act is long and/or emphatic, such as when it is expanded on with the reason for thanking and/or is reiterated in a single turn (as in example (21)), or is supported by appreciative comments (as in example (22)). As a result, the GA ends up being almost as long as the supportive move; examples follow:

(21) TH-O1-A13
[…]
1 A: Studying's a, a fairly quiet activity, as far as I've experienced thus far. I think it will be alright. Thank you for dinner though! [I really] appreciate that!
2 B: [Yeah.]   You're welcome! Are, you think it's gonna be a late night tonight[19]?
[…]

(22) TH-O1-D01-01
1 A: Thank you so much for your hospitality, these past five days in Croatia have been wonderful, it's, it's such a beautiful country.
2 B: Oh, why thank you (laughs), and no problem at all, I was glad to have someone so… nice and responsible as you as a… mentor.
[…]

The head act(s) + supportive move(s) structure occurs in 11 cases (26.2%), when the preceding thanking act is long and/or particularly emphatic. It includes 3 combinatorial options: 1 head act + 1 supportive move (6 cases; see example (23)); 2 head acts + 1 supportive move (4 cases; see example (24)); 1 head act + 2 supportive moves (1

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19 The request "are, you think […] tonight?" is external to the GA, that is, relevant to a different topic (i.e. it counts as a topic shift token; see sections 3.3.1 and 4.4.1), and is thus not considered in the current analysis.

case; see example (25)). In such cases, the length of the GA generally approximates, and occasionally exceeds, that of the thanking speech act.

(23) TH-O1-B05-01
[…]
1 A: Um… Ok, yes, thank you, I appreciate it [very much].
2 B: [Sure], let me just grab one for you.
[…]

(24) TH-O1-A05
1 A: Hey Emma, I just wanted to thank you for helping me study for that hard math test I had a couple of days ago, I got a really good grade on it so, I appreciate your help.
2 B: Oh you're welcome Rosina, I was happy to know that you wanted my help, and I'm always here to help you out with that kind of stuff.
[…]

(25) TH-O1-C03-02
1 A: Hey Amanda, thanks SO MUCH for watching Lily today.
2 B: Oh no worries. I love watching Lily! She's such a good kid.
[…]

Table 4.6 shows the frequency of occurrence and dispersion across the datasets of the 3 structures described above. Head act alone is generally realized multiple times (at least twice) in the corpus and is generally more frequent than the other GAs structures across the datasets, except in set D. The head act alone structure occurs the most frequently in datasets A, C and F, that is, in some of those displaying the highest frequency of GAs. Head act combination, instead, does not occur in sets C and F – which have opposite values for the P and D variables (i.e. -P and -D vs. +P and +D, respectively) – and is instantiated once in set A, and twice in sets B, D and E. Finally, the head act(s) + supportive move(s) structure occurs at least once in every dataset, and is most frequently realized in sets C and F. Thus, it appears that the participants enacting interactions reproduced in sets C and F prefer the use of head act(s) + supportive move(s) as structures for complex GAs, rather than head act combination structure.

The situational distribution of the three structures of GAs across the different values of the P and D variables is represented in Table 4.7. Overall, the dispersion of GA structures is almost identical across the three values of the P variable (=P, +P and -P), and identical for the two values of the D variable (+D and -D). =P thankees most frequently realize GAs in the head act alone structure, and quite infrequently in the other structures. Similarly, +P and -P thankees most frequently realize GAs as head act alone, less frequently as head act(s) + supportive move(s) and the least frequently as head act combinations; in both +P and -P, the head act(s) + supportive move(s) structures are

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equally frequent, and the head act combination structures have half as many tokens as head act(s) + supportive move(s). Even +D and -D thankees most frequently realize GAs as head act alone, then as head act(s) + supportive move(s) and the least frequently as head act combinations. To notice, the difference in the frequency of occurrence of head act alone vs. head act(s) + supportive move(s) and head act combinations is greater when the thankee is a -D rather than a +D interlocutor.

Set	Head Act Alone	Head Act combination	Head Act(s) + Supportive Move(s)	Total
A (=P, -D)	5	1	1	7
B (=P, +D)	4	2	2	8
C (-P, -D)	5	0	3	8
D (-P, +D)	2	2	1	5
E (+P, -D)	3	2	1	6
F (+P, +D)	5	0	3	8
Total	24	7	11	42

Table 4.6: Frequency and dispersion of GAs structures across the datasets.

Dataset	A, B	E, F	C, D	B, D, F	A, C, E	Total
Values of P and D variable	=P	+P	-P	+D	-D	structure
Head Act alone	9	8	7	11	13	24
Head Act combinations	3	2	2	4	3	7
Head Act(s) + Supportive Move(s)	3	4	4	6	5	11
Total structures per P/D	15	14	13	21	21	42

Table 4.7: Frequency and dispersion of GA structures across different values of the P and D variables.

4.4.1 The non-GA material accompanying the GAs in the reacting turns

Of the 42 reacting turns containing GAs, 14 (i.e. 33.3%) contain stretches of discourse that perform communicative functions other than acknowledging gratitude. Table 4.8 shows the frequency of occurrence of these turn segments, their sequencing with respect to adjacent GA material and their dispersion across the datasets.

In general, the non-GA text segments tend to follow GAs (13 out of 18 occurrences), which generally have only 1 text segment after them (only in 1 case do 2 non-GA segments occur after one GA). Additionally, 6 non-GA text segments surround 3 GAs (e.g. "thanking + GA + circumstances", "reply + GA + closing formula" and "request + GA + response").

Function	Before the GA	After the GA	Around the GA	Set						Total
				A	B	C	D	E	F	
Topic shift	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	**3**
Closing formula	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	**3**
Reply	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	**3**
Thanking	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	**2**
Wish	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
Pleasantries	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
Empathy	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
Circumstances	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
Comment	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**
Request	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Pre-closing formula	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Total	**5**	**13**	**6**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**1**	**4**	**6**	**18**

Table 4.8. Frequency, sequencing and dispersion of non-GA material in GA turns across the datasets.
Note: Around the GA stands for 'both before and after the GA'.

The non-GA text segments realize a variable number of functions, which are realized with different frequencies of occurrence: "topic shift", "closing formula", and "reply" register 3 occurrences each; "thanking" has 2 occurrences; and the remaining functions, namely "wish", "pleasantries", "empathy", "circumstances", "comment", "request" and "pre-closing formula" occur only once each. Non-GA text segments have also different positions in the turns: "reply" is the only function that can either precede or follow GAs; "thanking" and "request" always precede the GAs in turn-initial position; all the remaining functions (namely, "topic shift", "closing formula", "wish", "pleasantries", "empathy", "circumstances", "comment" and "pre-closing formula") always occur in turn-final position after the GAs (see 4.5.1.1 on the internal sequencing coding terms of GAs). The dispersion of the non-GA text segments is not the same across the datasets. Set F has 6 realizations (2 "closing formula", 1 "reply", 1 "thanking", 1 "request" and 1 "pre-closing formula"); set E has 4 (1 "topic shift", 1 "closing formula" and 2 "reply"). Sets B and C have 3 each, with 1 "topic shift", 1 "wish" and 1 "pleasantries" in the former, and 1 "thanking", 1 "empathy" and 1 "circumstances" in the latter. Sets A and D, instead, only have 1 occurrence each (respectively, "topic shift" and "comment").

In sum, the findings suggest that when speakers structure their reacting turns as a sequence of text segments performing multiple communicative functions, they make the conversation proceed (or terminate) by introducing new (or resuming old) elements in(to) the discourse after the GA. When they have other "pending" topics, they first provide

feedback on those topics, then they acknowledge gratitude and finally, they may introduce further contributions that move the interaction forward or bring it to a close. Interestingly, the thankees more often contribute to the conversational development (or conclusion) when their thanker is a subordinate distant interlocutor (i.e. +P; +D), that is in set F.

4.5 The analysis of the head acts

This section presents and discusses the findings from the analysis of the strategies and semantic types of the 55 GA head acts identified in the corpus. I first report on the head act strategies (4.5.1), then their lexico-semantic realizations and classification into types (4.5.2), and, finally I describe the additional modifying elements of the head acts (4.5.2.2).

4.5.1 The strategies of the head acts

The 5 strategies instantiated in the 55 GA head acts are *minimizing the benefit*, *expressing appreciation of the addressee*, *accepting the thanking*, *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*, and *reciprocating the thanking* (see section 3.3.4.1). Table 4.9 shows the different rates of occurrence and situational dispersion of the strategies across the datasets:

Set	Minimizing the benefit	Expressing appreciation of the addressee	Accepting the thanking	Expressing pleasure for providing the benefit	Reciprocating the thanking	**Total**
A (=P, -D)	1	4	3	1	0	**9**
B (=P, +D)	1	4	3	3	0	**11**
C (-P, -D)	4	2	0	0	2	**8**
D (-P, +D)	2	3	0	3	1	**9**
E (+P, -D)	3	1	4	1	1	**10**
F (+P, +D)	4	1	2	1	0	**8**
Total **%**	**15** **27.2%**	**15** **27.2%**	**12** **21.9%**	**9** **16.4%**	**4** **7.3%**	**55** **100%**

Table 4.9: Frequency and dispersion of the head act strategies across the datasets.

The frequency hierarchy of the head act strategies is: *minimizing the benefit* = *expressing appreciation of the addressee* (15 GA head acts each; 27.2%) > *accepting the thanking* (12 GA head acts; 21.9%) > *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* (9 GA

head acts; 16.4%) > *reciprocating the thanking* (4 GA head acts; 7.3%). *Minimizing the benefit* and *expressing appreciation of the addressee* together account for over half of the GA head acts (54.4%). Additionally, these two strategies (occurring at least once in every dataset) and *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* (occurring in 5 datasets out of 6) have the widest dispersion across the datasets, whereas *accepting the thanking* and *reciprocating the thanking* occur in fewer situational contexts.

Tokens of the 5 head act strategies occur the most often in set B, which has one of the highest number of GAs, and in set E, which has surprisingly almost the lowest number of GAs in the datasets. In the other datasets, the slightly lower frequency of head acts perfectly or nearly perfectly correlates with the number of GAs in sets C and F, and in set A, while in set D this is not so. Set E is the only one that instantiates each of the 5 strategies at least once, whereas set C has the lowest variety of moves, since it instantiates only 3 out of 5 strategies; all the other datasets instantiate 4 out of 5 strategies.

The highest and lowest rates of occurrence of *minimizing the benefit* and *expressing appreciation of the addressee* – which are found sets A, B, E and F – are almost perfectly in complementary distribution (i.e. except for *minimizing the benefit* in sets C and E). Examples of *minimizing the benefit* are (25) (reproduced below as example (26)) and (27), the former being a more emphatic and the latter being a concise way of downplaying the magnitude of the benefit. Relevant examples of *expressing appreciation of the addressee* are the succinct (28) and the more extended (29):

> (26) TH-O1-C03-02
> 1 A: Hey Amanda, thanks SO MUCH for watching Lily today.
> 2 B: <u>Oh no worries</u>. I love watching Lily! She's such a good kid.
> […]
>
> (27) TH-O1-B03-02
> […]
> 1 A: Oh my God, thank you so much.
> 2 B: No problem.
>
> (28) TH-O1-A01
> […]
> 1 A: Oh, thank you, thank you! Oh, d'you… d'you… thank you for the present!
> 2 B: Oh, you're welcome!
> […]

(29) TH-O1-B04
1 A: Well, thank you Emma for having us over, I had a great time meeting you and all your lovely
   friends.
2 B: <u>Of course you're, you're welcome to come over any time you want</u>. It was nice meeting you
   too and I hope to see you again soon.
[…]

The strategy *accepting the thanking* occurs most frequently in set E (4 tokens), with an intermediate frequency in sets A and B (3 tokens each), and the least frequently in set F (2 tokens). Relevant examples are (30) and (31) – in turns 2-3:

(30) TH-O1-A01
[…]
1 A: [I] appreciate your effort and [time.
2 B: [Yeah.
[…]

(31) TH-O1-A01
[…]
1 B: [Yeah!]
2 A: [Thank] you!
3 B: [Mmm hmm].
4 A: [Wow], it's really nice, I like the colour!
[…]

The strategy *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* is instantiated 3 times in sets B and D and once in sets A, E and F, while it does not occur in set C. Two examples are (32) and (29), the latter reproduced below as example (33):

(32) TH-O1-B03-01
[…]
1 A: Yeah, hopefully not. Again, again, thank you
2 B: [yeah]
3 A: [for] stopping.
4 B: <u>Glad that we were able to fix it</u>, and have a… nice rest of your ride!
[…]

(33) TH-O1-B04
1 A: Well, thank you Emma for having us over, I had a great time meeting you and all your lovely
   friends.
2 B: Of course you're, you're welcome to come over any time you want. <u>It was nice meeting you
   too</u> and I hope to see you again soon.
[…]

Finally, the *reciprocating the thanking* strategy is instantiated only in sets C (the only one where it occurs twice), D and E (where it occurs once). This strategy is exemplified in example (34) below:

(34) TH-O1-C06-01

[…]

1 A: Yeah… likewise, thank you for being my mentor.

2 B: (mild laughter) Thank you for being such a… great mentee. (both laugh)

[…]

The dispersion of strategies across the datasets indicates that occasionally certain values of the P and/or D variables correlate with the realization of a given strategy, as illustrated in Table 4.10. In general, thankees realize more head act strategies when they are =P interlocutors, than when they are +P/-P interlocutors, whereas the frequency with which they use head act strategies appears to be almost unaffected by their thanker's degree of social distance.

The *Minimizing the benefit* strategy is most frequently realized by +P or -P, rather than =P thankees, whereas it is almost equally distributed between -D and +D interlocutors, although slightly more frequent among the former. The *expressing appreciation of the addressee* strategy is preferred by =P, rather than by -P or +P thankees, whereas it is almost equally distributed between +D and -D interlocutors, although slightly more frequent among the former. In this respect, the findings from the dispersion of *minimizing the benefit* and *expressing appreciation of the addressee* across different values of the P and D variables show quite clearly that these two strategies display highly complementary distributional patterns. The *accepting the thanking* strategy is equally distributed between =P and +P thankees, while it is never employed by -P thankees; besides, the strategy is preferred by -D thankees. The *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* strategy, on the one hand, is almost equally distributed among =P, +P and -P thankees, but most frequently used by =P thankees; on the other hand, the strategy is considerably preferred by +D rather than -D thankees. Finally, the *reciprocating the thanking* strategy is mostly employed by -P thankees, marginally employed by +P thankees, and never employed by =P thankees, whereas it is preferred with -D rather than +D thankees. In sum, the realization of *minimizing the benefit* and *expressing appreciation of the addressee* more frequently correlates with the P variable, the realization of *accepting the thanking* and *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* correlates more frequently with the D variable, and the realization of *reciprocating the thanking* correlates both with one value of the P and the D variables.

Dataset	A, B	E, F	C, D	B, D, F	A, C, E	Total
Scenario variable	=P	+P	-P	+D	-D	strategy
Minimizing the benefit	2	7	6	7	8	**15**
Expressing appreciation of the addressee	8	2	5	8	7	**15**
Accepting the thanking	6	6	0	5	7	**12**
Expressing pleasure for providing the benefit	4	2	3	7	2	**9**
Reciprocating the thanking	0	1	3	1	3	**4**
Total strategies per variable P/D	**20**	**18**	**17**	**28**	**27**	**55**

Table 4.10: Frequency and dispersion of the head act strategies across different values of the P and D variables.

The findings concerning the combinations of head act strategies are outlined in section 4.5.1.1.

4.5.1.1 The combinations of head act strategies

Out of a total of 55 head acts, 24 (43.6%) occur in combinations in 11 GAs. Of these, 4 GAs also include a supportive move (i.e. 2 head acts plus 1 supportive move; see section 4.6.1.1). Table 4.11 shows how often given GA head act strategies occur in combination, and in what position each token of the strategies occurs in the GA, namely first, second non-final, second final, and third.

Strategy	GA-first position	GA-second non-final position	GA-second final position	GA-third position	Total
Minimizing the benefit	0	2	0	1	**3**
Expressing appreciation of the addressee	3	1	1	1	**6**
Accepting the thanking	6	0	0	0	**6**
Expressing pleasure for providing the benefit	1	1	4	2	**8**
Reciprocating the thanking	1	0	0	0	**1**
Total	**11**	**4**	**5**	**4**	**24**

Table 4.11: Frequency and sequencing of the component head act strategies when used in combinations.

The 5 head act strategies do not occur in combinations to the same extent: *minimizing the benefit* combines with other strategies 3 times out of 15 (i.e. 20%); *expressing appreciation of the addressee* occurs in combination 6 times out of 15 (i.e. 40%); *accepting the thanking* occurs in combination 6 times out of 12 (i.e. 50%);

expressing pleasure for providing the benefit appears in combination 8 times out of 9 (i.e. 88.9%); and *reciprocating the thanking* occurs in combination once out of 4 times (i.e. 25%). Therefore, the combinability hierarchy of the head act strategies is: *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit > accepting the thanking > expressing appreciation of the addressee > reciprocating the thanking > minimizing the benefit*.

The sequencing of the strategies in complex GAs reveals some favourite patterns. *Accepting the thanking* always occurs in GA-initial position. *Minimizing the benefit* is always preceded by 1 or 2 strategies, and never occupies the GA-second and final position. Except in one case, *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* never occurs in GA-first position, being preceded by 1 or 2 head act strategies, or a head act strategy and a supportive move strategy (see transcript TH-O1-B05-02 in Appendix C); besides, only once does it occur in GA-second non-final position. *Expressing appreciation of the addressee* mainly occurs in GA-first position, less frequently in GA-second position, whether non-final or final; only once does it occur in GA-third position. Therefore, it appears that when speakers acknowledge gratitude with elaborate formulations, they first express the acceptance of gratitude or their appreciation of the thanker, and then realize other strategies.

Overall, the highest number of head act strategies in complex GAs is equally frequently realized in sets D (-P; +D) and E (+P, -D), then, in decreasing order, in sets A (=P; -D) and B (=P; +D). In these sets: 1) *minimizing the benefit* occurs only in sets D and E, which have opposite values of the P and D variables (i.e. -P, +D vs. +P, -D); 2) *expressing appreciation of the addressee* is slightly preferred in sets A and D, which have different values of the P and D variables, while it marginally occurs in sets B and E (which have different values of the P and D variables); 3) *accepting the thanking* occurs the most frequently in set E, and less frequently in set B, while it is marginal in set A, and absent from set D; that is, it is preferably employed by -D interlocutors; 4) *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* is the most frequently instantiated in both sets B and D (which are characterized by +D), while it is marginal in sets A and E (which are both characterized by -D); and 6) *reciprocating the thanking* occurs only once in set D. Thus, *accepting the thanking* correlates with -D and *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* with +D, while no other plausible correlations can be determined between the

other strategies and the P or D variables. The dispersion of the head act strategies occurring in combination across the datasets is represented in Table 4.12:

Strategies occurring in combinations	Set						Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Minimizing the benefit	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Expressing appreciation of the addressee	2	1	0	2	1	0	6
Accepting the thanking	1	2	0	0	3	0	6
Expressing pleasure for providing the benefit	1	3	0	3	1	0	8
Reciprocating the thanking	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	**4**	**6**	**0**	**7**	**7**	**0**	**24**

Table 4.12: Frequency and dispersion of the component head act strategies when used in combinations across the datasets.

Overall, the analysis of the component head act strategies in complex GAs reveals that some strategies tend to occur alone (especially *minimizing the benefit*) and others in combinations (especially *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*). Those that occur in combinations show preferred sequencing (e.g. *accepting the thanking* always occurs in GA-first position; *minimizing the benefit* never in GA-first position) and distributional patterns (e.g. *accepting the thanking* in complex GAs correlates with -D thankees and *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* with +D thankees).

Table 4.13 illustrates the frequency of the components within their specific combinations. In the 11 GAs displaying combinations of head act strategies, the participants realize 6 different combinatorial options, listed below Table 4.13 (and represented in Table 4.14). Most combinatorial options (i.e. 4) consist of 2 head act strategies and realize the head act combination and head act(s) + supportive move(s) structures; the other two combinatorial options comprise 3 head act strategies, and realize the head act combination structure.

The frequency and dispersion of the head act strategy combinations across the datasets are illustrated in Table 4.14. The most frequent combination (occurring 4 times) is Option 1. The second most frequent combination is Option 2, which is instantiated 3 times. The other 4 combinatorial options – namely, Option 3, Option 4, Option 5, and Option 6 – occur only once. Although the table does not illustrate the sequencing of each combinatorial option, those that occur multiple times display preferred sequencing patterns. In Option 2, *accepting the thanking* always occurs in GA-first position, followed

by *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* in GA-second or GA-third position. In Option 1, *expressing appreciation of the addressee* predominantly occurs in GA-first position, followed by *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* – except 1 case where their positions are reversed – while *expressing appreciation of the addressee* occupies the GA-third position (see transcript TH-O1-D01-02 in Appendix C).

Option	Minimizing the benefit	Expressing appreciation of the addressee	Accepting the thanking	Expressing pleasure for providing the benefit	Reciprocating the thanking	**Total No. of component head acts**
1	0	1	0	1	0	**2**
2	0	0	1	1	0	**2**
3	0	1	1	0	0	**2**
4	1	0	0	1	1	**3**
5	1	0	1	0	0	**2**
6	1	1	1	0	0	**3**
Global	**3**	**3**	**4**	**3**	**1**	**14**

Table 4.13: Frequency of the components within combinations of head act strategies. *Note:* Option 1: expressing appreciation of the addressee + expressing pleasure for providing the benefit; Option 2: accepting the thanking + expressing pleasure for providing the benefit; Option 3: accepting the thanking + expressing appreciation of the addressee; Option 4: reciprocating the thanking + minimizing the benefit + expressing pleasure for providing the benefit; Option 5: accepting the thanking + minimizing the benefit; Option 6: accepting the thanking + expressing appreciation of the addressee + minimizing the benefit.

Option	Set						Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
1: expressing appreciation of the addressee + expressing pleasure for providing the benefit	1	1	0	2	0	0	**4**
2: accepting the thanking + expressing pleasure for providing the benefit	0	2	0	0	1	0	**3**
3: accepting the thanking + expressing appreciation of the addressee	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
4: reciprocating the thanking + minimizing the benefit + expressing pleasure for providing the benefit	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**
5: accepting the thanking + minimizing the benefit	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
6: accepting the thanking + expressing appreciation of the addressee + minimizing the benefit	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Total	**2**	**3**	**0**	**3**	**3**	**0**	**11**

Table 4.14: Frequency and dispersion of the head act strategies combinations across the datasets.

The combinations of head act strategies illustrated in Table 4.14 are found in sets A (=P, -D), B (=P, +D), D (-P, +D) and E (+P, -D) (see also Table 4.12); except for set A, which contains 2 GAs, each dataset contains 3 GAs. Combinations of GAs are realized more frequently by =P thankees (5 times), than by +P or -P addressees (3 times). Moreover, they occur fairly equally frequently among +D addresses (6 times) and -D

interlocutors (5 times). Option 1 occurs twice in set D, and once in sets A and B, thus, 3 times out of 4 among +D interlocutors, and 2 times out of 4 among =P interlocutors; Option 2 occurs twice in set B and once in set E (which have different values for the P and D variables).

In sum, the head act strategies co-occur in a few types of combinatorial options, which show considerable variability in their composition, sequencing and dispersion across the datasets. Indeed, the only regularity registered in the composition and sequencing of combinations concerns Options 1 and 2.

4.5.2 The lexico-semantic types of the head acts

The 55 head act tokens identified in the corpus were grouped and classified into 6 lexico-semantic types (see section 3.3.4.2), namely: YOU'RE WELCOME, which realizes the *expressing appreciation of the* addressee strategy; NO PROBLEM, which realizes the *minimizing the benefit* strategy; YES, which realizes the *accepting the thanking* strategy; THANK YOU, which realizes the *reciprocating the thanking* strategy; and (I'M) PLEASED, and (IT'S) GOOD, which realize the *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* strategy. Except for the *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* strategy, each head act strategy is realized by only 1 lexico-semantic type. This implies that the rates of occurrence of the NO PROBLEM, YOU'RE WELCOME, YES and THANK YOU types reported in Table 4.15 almost perfectly match those reported in Table 4.9 (see section 4.5.1) The frequency of occurrence of the GA head act lexico-semantic types and their dispersion across the datasets are illustrated in Table 4.15:

Set	NO PROBLEM	YOU'RE WELCOME	YES	(I'M) PLEASED	THANK YOU	(IT'S) GOOD	Total
A (=P, -D)	1	4	3	1	0	0	**9**
B (=P, +D)	1	4	3	2	0	1	**11**
C (-P, -D)	4	2	0	0	2	0	**8**
D (-P, +D)	2	3	0	3	1	0	**9**
E (+P, -D)	3	1	4	1	1	0	**10**
F (+P, +D)	4	1	2	1	0	0	**8**
Total **%**	**15** **27.2%**	**15** **27.2%**	**12** **21.8%**	**8** **14.5%**	**4** **7.3%**	**1** **1.8%**	**55** **100 %**

Table 4.15: Frequency and dispersion of the head act lexico-semantic types across the datasets.

The overall frequency of occurrence of the head act lexico-semantic types is the highest in sets B and E, lower in sets A and D, and the lowest in sets C and F. The widest variety of lexico-semantic types is instantiated in sets B and E, which have 5 types out of 6, whereas sets A, D and F instantiate 4 types, and set C exemplifies 3 types. The frequency hierarchy of the lexico-semantic types is NO PROBLEM = YOU'RE WELCOME (15 realizations each; 27.2%) > YES (12 occurrences; 21.8%) > (I'M) PLEASED (8 occurrences; 14.5%) > THANK YOU (4 occurrences; 7.3% of all head acts) > (IT'S) GOOD (1 occurrence; 1.8%). The combined frequency of NO PROBLEM and YOU'RE WELCOME accounts for over half of the GA head acts (54.4%). The NO PROBLEM, YOU'RE WELCOME and (I'M) PLEASED types have the widest dispersion, the former being instantiated in all the datasets, and the latter in all but C; YES and THANK YOU have a narrower dispersion, being instantiated in 4 and 3 datasets respectively; and (IT'S) GOOD has the narrowest dispersion, being instantiated in only 1 dataset.

The NO PROBLEM and YOU'RE WELCOME types have an almost complementary situational distribution. Indeed, the former type occurs the most frequently in sets C and F (slightly less frequently in set E), and marginally in sets A and B, whereas YOU'RE WELCOME occurs the most frequently in sets A and B, and marginally in sets E and F. NO PROBLEM is realized by 3 variants: the elliptical token *no problem* (see example (35)) is the most frequent lexico-semantic variant of this type (13 occurrences, i.e. 23.6%), but alternative realizations are *not a problem* (1.8%; see example (36)) and *no worries* (1.8%; see example (25), reproduced below as example (37)).

(35) TH-O1-F01-01
1 A: Well, I'd really like to thank you for going over this with me, er, I was quite lost before, I, but I seem to... have a better grasp on it now.
2 B: <u>No problem</u>. Er, if, if, if you could, I, I would appreciate it if, you would come to class, 'cause, believe it or not, that's actually the place where we normally explain these things…
[…]

(36) TH-O1-C03-01
[…]
1 A: Hey, Wan. Hey so thanks for er, babysitting my er, child.
2 B: <u>Oh. Not a problem</u>. Charlotte has been (mild laughing) really great today.
[…]

(37) TH-O1-C03-02
1 A: Hey Amanda, thanks SO MUCH for watching Lily today.
2 B: <u>Oh no worries</u> I love watching Lily! She's such a good kid.
[…]

Two variants of the YOU'RE WELCOME type occur in the corpus: the basic conventional form *you're welcome* (see example (38)), which is the more frequent one, with 13 tokens (23.6%); and the semantic-syntactic expanded form *you're welcome+object*, that is, accompanied by an indication of what the thanker is invited/allowed to do (see example (29) reproduced below as example (39), and example (40)); this occurs twice (3.6%). The latter variant always occurs in complex GAs, namely, in the head act combination structure – as in example (39) – or in the head act(s) + supportive move(s) structure – as in example (40).

(38) TH-O1-B05-01
[…]
1 A: Thank you very much!
1 B: You're welcome!
[…]

(39) TH-O1-B04
1 A: Well, thank you Emma for having us over, I had a great time meeting you and all your lovely friends.
2 B: <u>Of course you're, you're welcome to come over any time you want</u>. It was nice meeting you too and I hope to see you again soon[20].
[…]

(40) TH-O1-D01-02
1 A: Hi! Um, I just wanted to thank you for how wonderful this trip has been.
2 B: Oh, I'm glad you had a good time staying here. You know, we love having you kids…
3 A: [(laughs mildly)]
4 B: [come through here], you know, and see our country, and visit around, <u>so yeah, you're welcome back any time. Tell your friends</u>.
[…]

The YES type occurs the most often in set E, the least in set F, with an equal intermediate frequency in sets A and B, while it is not found in sets C and D. It is realized in 3 lexical variants: the most frequent one is *yeah* (see example (41)) with 9 tokens, (16.4%), followed by *(mmm) hmm* (see example (31), reproduced below as example (42)), with 2 tokens (3.6%), and by *sure* (see example (23), reproduced below as example (43)), with 1 token (1.8%).

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20 The turn segment "and I hope […] soon" realizes an expression of pleasantries, and is thus not part of the GA (see section 4.4.1).

(41) TH-O1-E01-02

[…]

1 A: [Ok. Thank you.] Thank [you.]

2 B: [Yeah.]

So, so, so the skeleton is, is good, I'd say right now if you turned it in, maybe, maybe be a B minus, luckily you still have another week [I think… to work on it]²¹

[…]

(42) TH-O1-A01

[…]

1 B: [Yeah!]

2 A: [Thank] you!

3 B: [Mmm hmm].

4 A: [Wow], it's really nice, I like the colour!²²

[…]

(43) TH-O1-B05-01

1 A: Um… Ok, yes, thank you, I appreciate it [very much].

2 B: [Sure], let me just grab one for you.

(I'M) PLEASED occurs the most frequently in set D (3 occurrences), while it is found twice in set B, once in sets A, E and F, and not at all in set C. This type is realized by 2 lexical variants, namely, *glad* and *happy*. The tokens of the former variant are the most frequent, with 7 occurrences (12.7%), and occur in 3 different syntactic constructions: the elliptical construction (i.e. subjectless and verbless; 2 tokens; see example (32), reproduced below as example (44)); the construction in the present tense (4 tokens, see example (45)); and the construction in the past tense (1 token, see example (22), reproduced below as example (46)). The lexical variant happy is instantiated only once (1.8%), and occurs in the past tense (see example (24) reproduced below as example (47)):

(44) TH-O1-B03-01

[…]

1 A: Yeah, hopefully not. Again, again, thank you

2 B: [yeah]

3 A: [for] stopping.

4 B: <u>Glad that we were able to fix it</u>, and have a… nice rest of your ride!²³

[…]

---

21 The utterance after "yeah" realizes a topic shift, and is thus not part of the GA (see section 4.4.1).

22 In the thanking exchange, there is an overlap between "yeah" and "thank", and another between "mmm hmm" and "wow".

23 The text segment after "fix it" encodes a wish, and is thus not part of the GA (see section 4.4.1).

(45) TH-O1-B05-02
1 A: [chewing noises] Thank you so much, that was, is that, is that a kumquat [or something?]
2 B: [(laughs)]
3 A: That was really good, thank you.
4 B: Yeah. Our, er, grocery store has some pretty exotic fruit. <u>I'm glad you enjoyed it</u>! (mild laughter)
[…]

(46) TH-O1-D01-01
1 A: Thank you so much for your hospitality, these past five days in Croatia have been wonderful, it's, it's such a beautiful country.
2 B: Oh, why thank you (laughs), and no problem at all, <u>I was glad to have someone so… nice and responsible as you as a… mentor</u>.
[…]

(47) TH-O1-A05
1 A: Hey Emma, I just wanted to thank you for helping me study for that hard math test I had a couple of days ago, I got a really good grade on it so, I appreciate your help.
2 B: Oh you're welcome Rosina, <u>I was happy to know that you wanted my help</u>, and I'm always here to help you out with that kind of stuff.
[…]

Given the low frequency of THANK YOU, it is not surprising that it occurs only in few datasets, namely C (2 occurrences), D and E (1 occurrence each). Two main variant realizations of this type are *thank you*, which occurs 3 times (see example (48)), and *thank you* plus the reason for reciprocating the thanking, which occurs once (see example (34), reproduced below as example (49)):

(48) TH-O1-E01-02
[…]
1 A: I, I will, I will attempt this. Thank you.
2 B: Sounds good. <u>THANK you!</u> Have a good one![24]

(49) TH-O1-C06-01
[…]
1 A: Yeah… likewise, thank you for being my mentor.
2 B: (mild laughter) Thank you for being such a… great mentee. (both laugh)
[…]

The least frequent type in the dataset, with only 1 occurrence in set B, is (IT'S) GOOD, which realizes the *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* strategy. This type has only 1 variant, which is focused on the adjective *nice* and is preceded by a past tense predicate (see example (29), reproduced below as example (50)):

---

24 The text segments "Sounds good." and "Have a good one!" are not part of the GA, but rather a reply to a previous statement and a farewell, respectively (see section 4.4.1).

83

(50) TH-O1-B04

1 A: Well, thank you Emma for having us over, I had a great time meeting you and all your lovely friends.

2 B: Of course you're, you're welcome to come over any time you want. <u>It was nice meeting you too</u> and I hope to see you again soon[25].

[…]

Dataset	A, B	E, F	C, D	B, D, F	A, C, E	Total type
Scenario variable	=P	+P	-P	+D	-D	
NO PROBLEM	2	7	6	7	8	15
YOU'RE WELCOME	8	2	5	8	7	15
YES	6	6	0	5	7	12
(I'M) PLEASED	3	2	3	6	2	8
THANK YOU	0	1	3	1	3	4
(IT'S) GOOD	1	0	0	1	0	1
Total types per P or D variable	**20**	**18**	**17**	**28**	**27**	**55**

Table 4.16: Frequency and dispersion of the head act lexico-semantic types across different values of the P and D variables.

In Table 4.16 I show the dispersion of the lexico-semantic types across different situational variables. In general, the head act lexico-semantic types are realized more frequently when the thankees are =P, than when they are +P or -P; conversely, different values of the D variable (+D and -D) do not seem to significantly correlate with the realization of lexico-semantic types. NO PROBLEM is rather infrequent only by =P, whereas it is quite frequent and almost equally distributed between +P or -P thankees, and also between +D or -D thankees, although being slightly more frequent among the former. Conversely, YOU'RE WELCOME occurs more frequently among =P, rather than -P or +P thankees; the type is almost equally distributed between +D and -D thankees, although being slightly more frequent among the former. The YES type correlates more with -D, rather than +D, whereas it is equally distributed between =P and +P thankees, and is never realized by -P thankees. (I'M) PLEASED is quite preferred among +D interlocutors, whereas it is almost equally distributed across the values of the P variable (i.e. only +P registers one fewer occurrence than =P and -P). THANK YOU almost always correlates with -P, or -D thankees, while it occurs only once with +D and +P thankees. Finally, (IT'S) GOOD is exclusively enacted among =P and +D thankees. In sum: a) THANK YOU and (IT'S) GOOD correlate with, respectively, -P and -D, and =P

---

25 The text segment "and I hope […] soon" realizes an expression of pleasantries, thus is beyond the scope of the present study (see section 4.4.1).

and +D; b) NO PROBLEM and YOU'RE WELCOME correlate with, respectively, +P/-P and =P; and c) YES and (I'M) PLEASED correlate with, respectively, -D and +D.

In some cases, the head act lexico-semantic types occur in combinations in complex GAs, which will be illustrated in the following section.

4.5.2.1 The combinations of head act lexico-semantic types

In the corpus, 24 head acts out of 55 (43.6%) occur in combination in 11 GAs (of these, 4 GAs include also a supportive move in their structure; see section 4.6.2.1). Table 4.17 illustrates: a) the lexico-semantic types that occur in combination and their general combinatorial frequency; b) the variant(s) of a given type that occur(s) in combination, and its/their frequency; c) and their sequencing within a combination.

Type	Variant	GA-first position	GA-second non-final position	GA-second final position	GA-third position	**Sub-total**	**Total**
NO PROBLEM	No problem	0	2	0	1	**3**	**3**
YOU'RE WELCOME	You're welcome	2	1	1	0	**4**	**6**
	You're welcome+object	1	0	0	1	**2**	
YES	yeah	6	0	0	0	**6**	**6**
(I'M) PLEASED	Happy	0	1	0	0	**1**	**7**
	Glad	1	0	3	2	**6**	
THANK YOU	Thank you	1	0	0	0	**1**	**1**
(IT'S) GOOD	Nice	0	0	1	0	**1**	**1**
Total		**11**	**4**	**5**	**4**		**24**

Table 4.17: Frequency and sequencing of the component head act lexico-semantic types when used in combinations.

Each type combines with the others to different extents: NO PROBLEM combines with other types 3 times out of 15 (20%); YOU'RE WELCOME, instead, occurs in combinations 6 times out of 15 (40%); YES occurs together with other types 6 times out of 12 (50%); (I'M) PLEASED occurs in combination 7 times out of 9 (77.8%); THANK YOU occurs in combinations once out of 4 times (25%); and (IT'S) GOOD occurs only in combination, once (100%). As a result, the frequency hierarchy of the above types

when used in combinations is (IT'S) GOOD > (I'M) PLEASED > YES > YOU'RE WELCOME > THANK YOU > NO PROBLEM.

Furthermore, the four lexico-semantic types that occur multiple times in complex GAs – namely, NO PROBLEM, YOU'RE WELCOME, (I'M) PLEASED and YES (see Table 4.15) display sequencing patterns when they occur in combination. YES always occurs in GA-first position. NO PROBLEM always occurs in GA-second non-final or GA-third position. Except one case in which it occurs in GA-first position, (I'M) PLEASED occurs in GA-second position (3 times in second and final, once in second but non-final position) or GA-third position – the lexical variant *happy* occurs only once and in GA-second non-final position. Finally, YOU'RE WELCOME, except for one occurrence in GA-third position (*you're welcome+object*), mainly occupies the GA-first position (3 times, of which once in its expanded variant) or the GA-second position (twice, always in its elliptical variant, of which once in second non-final position, and once in second final position).

Type	Variant	Set						Sub-total	Total
		A	B	C	D	E	F		
NO PROBLEM	No problem	0	0	0	1	2	0	**3**	**3**
YOU'RE WELCOME	You're welcome	2	0	0	1	1	0	**4**	**6**
	You're welcome+object	0	1	0	1	0	0	**2**	
YES	yeah	1	2	0	0	3	0	**6**	**6**
(I'M) PLEASED	Happy	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**	**7**
	Glad	0	2	0	3	1	0	**6**	
THANK YOU	Thank you	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**	**1**
(IT'S) GOOD	Nice	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**	**1**
Total		**4**	**6**	**0**	**7**	**7**	**0**		**24**

Table 4.18: Frequency and dispersion of the component head act lexico-semantic types when used in combinations across the datasets.

The dispersion of the lexico-semantic types used in combinations is illustrated in Table 4.18. The lexico-semantic types of complex GAs occur the most frequently in sets D (-P; +D) and E (+P; -D), in set B (=P; +D), and finally in set A (=P; -D), while they are not realized at all in sets C (-P; -D) and F (+P; +D). Each lexico-semantic type occurring in combinations is variously dispersed across the datasets. The variant *no problem* of the NO PROBLEM type occurs only in sets D and E, and slightly more frequently in the latter. YOU'RE WELCOME shows a different distribution of its variants: the elliptical

you're welcome occurs twice in set A and once in sets D and E (thus, in 3 cases when the thankees are -D); *you're welcome+object* occurs once in both sets B and D (thus, in 2 cases when the thankee is +D); overall, YOU'RE WELCOME is equally realized by +D and -D thankees. Set D has 1 instance of both the variants of YOU'RE WELCOME occurring in combination. The *yeah* variant of the YES type occurs in 3 sets out of 4, more frequently in set E, less frequently in set B, while marginally in set A, thus preferably when the thankee is -D. (I'M) PLEASED also shows a different distribution of its two variants: the one with *happy* occurs once in set A, while the one with *glad* in all the other datasets, with a preference for set D, less for set B, and minimally for set E; thus, *glad* appears to correlate with +D 5 out of 6 times. Finally, THANK YOU occurs only once in set D, and (IT'S) GOOD once in set B.

Overall, the findings reveal that certain GA lexico-semantic types are preferably used on their own (i.e. NO PROBLEM, THANK YOU and YOU'RE WELCOME) and others in combinations (i.e. (IT'S) GOOD, (I'M) PLEASED and YES). The lexico-semantic types occurring in combinations reveal sequencing patterns (e.g. YES is always in GA-initial position, while NO PROBLEM is always in GA-second non-final or third position), and display preferences in their encoding, in the sense that only certain variants of some head act lexico-semantic types appear in combinations (e.g. the NO PROBLEM type, when occurring in combination, is realized only by 1 of its 3 variants, namely, *no problem*), while other variants have their specific situational distribution (e.g. *you're welcome+object* and *glad* are totally and almost totally realized among +D thankees).

Table 4.19 illustrates the frequency of the components attested in the corpus within their specific combinations. There are 7 combinatorial options of the lexico-semantic types (see the legenda); the majority (i.e. 4) are made up of two head acts, and realize the head act combination and the head act(s) + supportive move(s) structures; the other 2 combinatorial options are made up of 3 head acts and realize the head act combination structure. More specifically, each of the 7 combinatorial options is realized by 1 combination of variants of the lexico-semantic types, except for Option 1, which is realized by 3 different combinations of lexico-semantic type variants (see the legenda and Table 4.19).

Sequencing patterns can only be identified for the 2 recurrent combinations of lexico-semantic types. In the combination of YOU'RE WELCOME with (I'M)

PLEASED (see the legenda), the elliptical variant *you're welcome* always occupies the GA-first position (i.e., twice), while *happy* (once) and *glad* (once) occur in GA-second position (the former variant being the intermediate component, the latter being the final component); when the positions of the types are inverted, instead, *glad* occurs in GA-first position, while *you're welcome+object* occurs in GA-third position. In the combination of YES with (I'M) PLEASED, instead, the variant *yeah* always occupies the GA-first position, while *glad* either the GA-second position (twice) or the GA-third position (once).

Option	NO PROBLEM	YOU'RE WELCOME		YES	(I'M) PLEASED		THANK YOU	(IT'S) GOOD	Total No. of head act components
	No problem	You're welcome	You're welcome + object	Yeah	Happy	Glad	Thank you	Nice	
1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
5	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3
6	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
7	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Global	3	4	2	4	1	4	1	1	20

Table 4.19: Frequency of the components within combinations of head act lexico-semantic types. *Note:* Option 1: YOU'RE WELCOME + (I'M) PLEASED (a. you're welcome + happy; b. glad + (supportive move) + you're welcome+object; c. you're welcome + glad); Option 2: YES (yeah) + (I'M) PLEASED (glad); Option 3: YES (yeah) + YOU'RE WELCOME (you're welcome); Option 4: YOU'RE WELCOME (you're welcome+object) + (IT'S) GOOD (nice); Option 5: THANK YOU (thank you) + NO PROBLEM (no problem) + (I'M) PLEASED (glad); Option 6: YES (yeah) + NO PROBLEM (no problem); Option 7: YES (yeah) + YOU'RE WELCOME (you're welcome) + NO PROBLEM (no problem)

The frequency and dispersion of the combinatorial options of the head act lexico-semantic types across the datasets are illustrated in Table 4.20. The most frequent combinations are Options 1 and 2 (3 occurrences each); these are also the only combinations that occur multiple times in the corpus, while all the other combinations occur only once. The GA lexico-semantic types may combine with one another, but not all possible combinations are actually instantiated, nor are similar combinations of types entirely identical, due to the occasional presence of multiple variants for one single lexico-semantic type (see Option 1). Only THANK YOU and (IT'S) GOOD co-occur

exclusively with 1 or 2 types, whereas the other types combine with more types. The least frequent variants of YOU'RE WELCOME and (I'M) PLEASED (i.e. *you're welcome+object* and *happy*) are always realized in one of the variant combinations of Option 1, YOU'RE WELCOME with (I'M) PLEASED), which has the most varied variants.

Combinations of lexico-semantic types are found only in sets A (=P; -D), B (=P; +D), D (-P; +D) and E (+P; -D), which have 3 complex GAs per set, except for set A, which contains 2. On the one hand, their realization correlates with =P between the interlocutors (5 instances out of 11[26]), while their frequency is almost identical among +D and -D thankees (i.e. 6 occurrences vs. 5, respectively). On the other hand, only the 2 recurrent combinations have a (however limited) situational distribution: Option 1 occurs twice in set D and once in set A (characterized by different values of the P and D variables); and Option 2 occurs twice in set B, and once in set E. However, the generally low number of complex GAs (vs. the high number of combinatorial options and variants realized) does not offer enough material to formulate any reliable distributional generalization.

Option	Set						Total occurrences
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
1: YOU'RE WELCOME (you're welcome) + (I'M) PLEASED (happy)	1	0	0	0	0	0	
(I'M) PLEASED (glad) + YOU'RE WELCOME (you're welcome+object)	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
YOU'RE WELCOME (you're welcome) + (I'M) PLEASED (glad)	0	0	0	1	0	0	
2: YES (yeah) + (I'M) PLEASED (glad)	0	2	0	0	1	0	3
3: YES (yeah) + YOU'RE WELCOME (you're welcome)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
4: YOU'RE WELCOME (you're welcome +object) + (IT'S) GOOD (nice)	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
5: THANK YOU (thank you) + NO PROBLEM (no problem) + (I'M) PLEASED (glad)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
6: YES (yeah) + NO PROBLEM (no problem)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
7: YES (yeah) + YOU'RE WELCOME (you're welcome) + NO PROBLEM (no problem)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	**2**	**3**	**0**	**3**	**3**	**0**	**11**

Table 4.20: Frequency and dispersion of the head act lexico-semantic types combinations across the datasets.

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[26] Instead, 3 complex GAs are associated with the -P value and 3 more with the +P value.

4.5.2.2 The additional elements of the head acts

The 55 GA head acts in the dataset are also occasionally modified by uptakers, address terms, and upgraders. Two subtypes of the first and third type of modifiers are actually realized in the corpus, namely, exclaims and intensifiers, respectively.

In the data, 11 exclaims (realized as "oh") occur in as many head acts, that is, they modify 20% of all the head acts. In particular, 4 exclaims occur in set C (-P; -D), 3 in set D (-P; +D), and 2 in sets A (=P; -D) and F (+P; +D), thus their preferred situational context is that of acknowledging thanks from a -P thankee. They occur in "pre-GA" position (see 3.3.4.2.1), even with complex GAs constructed with multiple head acts (i.e. exclaims never modify a head act in GA-second or GA-third position). In particular, exclaims modify 4 lexico-semantic types out of 6: YOU'RE WELCOME contains 4 exclaims, which always modify the elliptical variant *you're welcome*; (I'M) PLEASED instantiates 2 exclaims, always in the lexical variant *glad*; NO PROBLEM has 4 of its tokens modified by as many exclaims, and, in this case, every variant of the type is modified, namely, *no problem* (twice), *not a problem* (once), and *no worries* (once); THANK YOU is modified only once by an exclaim, which occurs with the basic formula *thank you*.

The second modifier of GA head acts, address term, occurs only once in the data (in the form of a first name), in association with the YOU'RE WELCOME type (in its elliptical variant), immediately after the head act in transcript TH-O1-A05 (=P; -D); the thanking exchange is illustrated in example (24), reproduced below as example (51).

> (51) TH-O1-A05
> 1 A: Hey Emma, I just wanted to thank you for helping me study for that hard math test I had a couple of days ago, I got a really good grade on it so, I appreciate your help.
> 2 B: Oh you're welcome <u>Rosina</u>, I was happy to know that you wanted my help, and I'm always here to help you out with that kind of stuff.
> […]

The third possible modifier of the GA head act is the intensifier, an adverb or an adverbial construction that emphasizes a specific element within the GA head act and strengthens its illocutionary force. Overall, 4 intensifiers occur in the GA head acts: "so" (1 occurrence), which modifies the elliptical variant *you're welcome* of the YOU'RE WELCOME type; "really" (1 occurrence), which modifies the *glad* variant of the (I'M) PLEASED type; and "at all", which is the only intensifier that occurs twice in the data, and modifies the *no problem* variant of the NO PROBLEM type. Given the low number

of intensifiers, it is difficult to establish correlations between their occurrence and situational variables.

The three above-mentioned modifiers of the GA head acts occasionally co-occur and modify the same head act in a single GA, but once they modify different head acts from the same GA. In the former cases, exclaims co-occur with the other two modifiers: on 1 occasion, "oh" co-occurs with the address term "Rosina", modifying the elliptical *you're welcome*; on another occasion, "oh" is realized along with the intensifier "so", modifying the elliptical *you're welcome*; finally, "oh" co-occurs once with the intensifier "at all", modifying the *no problem* variant. In the latter case, 3 modifiers are found in 2 head acts of a single GA; as a result, the GA is considerably strengthened, by comparison to other more conventional (and less emphatic) expressions, as illustrated in (52) below:

> (52) TH-O1-D02-02
> 1 A: Maddie, you were the BEST secretary I've had yet, the hotel was AMAZING, and it was in the BEST location ever, and the service was just UNBELIEVABLE, thank you SO much.
> 2 B: Oh, you're SO welcome, I'm really glad to hear it. Been working hard all week, but glad to have you back![27]

In general, despite their low frequency of occurrence, modifiers contribute to the variable realization of GAs.

4.6 The analysis of the supportive moves

This section reports on the findings relevant to the analysis of the 12 GA supportive moves that co-occur with GA head acts in the head act(s) + supportive move(s) structure, in terms of strategies (section 4.6.1) and semantic types (section 4.6.2).

4.6.1 The strategies of the supportive moves

The 12 supportive moves identified in the data are relevant to 6 strategies (see section 3.3.5.1), namely, *motivating the minimization of the benefit*, *commenting on the benefit*, *offering*, *motivating the expression of pleasure*, *requesting a change of conduct*, and *requesting information*. Their rates of occurrence and dispersion across the datasets are illustrated in Table 4.21:

---

27 The text segment "Been working […] back" realizes a comment, thus is beyond the scope of the present study (see section 4.4.1).

Set	Motivating the minimization of the benefit	Commenting on the benefit	Offering	Motivating the expression of pleasure	Requesting a change of conduct	Requesting information	Total
A (=P, -D)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
B (=P, +D)	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
C (-P, -D)	3	1	0	0	0	0	4
D (-P, +D)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
E (+P, -D)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
F (+P, +D)	0	1	0	0	1	1	3
Total	4	3	2	1	1	1	12
%	33.3%	25%	16.7%	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%	100 %

Table 4.21: Frequency and dispersion of the supportive move strategies across the datasets.

The highest frequency of supportive move tokens is found in sets C and F, namely, the ones with the highest frequency of head act(s) + supportive move(s) (see Table 4.6). In addition, supportive moves occur twice in set B (in 2 distinct GAs), and once in sets A, D and E. The highest variety of supportive move strategies is realized in set F (3 strategies), less frequently in sets B and C (2 strategies each), and the least frequently in sets A, D and E (1 strategy each). Overall, supportive moves are not equally represented across the datasets and correlate with different values of the P and D variables.

Motivating the minimization of the benefit is the most frequent strategy (4 occurrences; i.e. 33.3%), which mostly appear in set C (3 tokens), and marginally in set E (1 token); thus, this strategy is almost exclusively realized by -P thankees, and always by -D thankees. The strategy is illustrated in examples (36) (reproduced below as example (53)), (25) (reproduced below as example (54)), which are relevant to 2 transcripts in which participants enact the same interactional scenario (see Appendix B for scenario TH-O1-C03), and (55).

(53) TH-O1-C03-01
[…]
1 A: Hey, Wan. Hey so thanks for er, babysitting my er, child.
2 B: Oh. Not a problem. Charlotte has been (mild laughing) really great today.
[…]

(54) TH-O1-C03-02
1 A: Hey Amanda, thanks SO MUCH for watching Lily today.
2 B: Oh no worries. I love watching Lily! She's such a good kid[28].
[…]

---

28 The exchange has two supportive moves, the first ending at the exclamation mark.

(55) TH-O1-E01-01

[…]

1 A: I just want to come by your office hours, thank you for all the help you've given me on THIS paper.

2 B: Um… Yeah, you know, no problem, <u>that's, you know, that's part of my job… um…</u>

[…]

The second most frequent strategy is *commenting on the benefit*, which occurs once in each of sets B, C and F (25%); its tokens are equally distributed across the different values of the P variable, while they are slightly more frequent among +D thankees. *Commenting on the benefit* usually provides positive background information on the benefit: its quality and nature (see example (27), reproduced below as example (56)), the motivations for its choice (see example (57)), and its outcome (see example (58)):

(56) TH-O1-B05-02

1 A: [chewing noises] Thank you so much, that was, is that, is that a kumquat [or something?]

2 B: [(laughs)]

3 A: That was really good, thank you.

4 B: Yeah. <u>Our, er, grocery store has some pretty exotic fruit</u>. I'm glad you enjoyed it! (mild laughter)

[…]

(57) TH-O1-C06-02

[…]

1 B: About the fruit, so um, I liked the fruit, thank you, they're very tropical.

2 A: Thank you. <u>I knew you liked durians and starfruit, and…</u>

[…]

(58) TH-O1-F03-02

[…]

1 A: [everything] you taught was SO relevant to my experience there and so I wanted to say thank you because it was, it was a really great educational experience.

2 B: Oh really?

3 A: [Ye]

4 B: [Oh,] well I'm glad that it er, I'm glad that, um, you found that helpful to you in your experience, <u>and that's, that's really kind of, the …. best possible outcome of a class like that, so, um, … great!</u> Yeah! We'd love to have you![29]

[…]

The *offering* strategy occurs twice (16.7%), once in set A and once in set B; that is, *offering* always occurs among =P interactants, while it is equally distributed between +D and -D participants. Two examples of the strategy are (24) and (23), reproduced below as examples (59) and (60), respectively:

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29 The turn segment "Yeah! […] you!" includes a reiterated response to previous topics of the interaction (see section 4.4.1) and so is not part of the GA.

(59) TH-O1-A05
1 A: Hey Emma, I just wanted to thank you for helping me study for that hard math test I had a
     couple of days ago, I got a really good grade on it so, I appreciate your help.
2 B: Oh you're welcome Rosina, I was happy to know that you wanted my help, <u>and I'm always</u>
     <u>here to help you out with that kind of stuff</u>.
[…]

(60) TH-O1-B05-01
[…]
1 A: Um… Ok, yes, thank you, I appreciate it [very much].
2 B: [Sure], <u>let me just grab one for you</u>.
[…]

The fourth strategy is *motivating the expression of pleasure* and occurs only once
(8.3%) in set D (where the thankee is +D and -P), where it strengthens a GA head act
realizing *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*. The logical relationship between
the two components is that of statement-motivation, as illustrated in example (40),
reproduced below as example (61):

(61) TH-O1-D01-02
1 A: Hi! Um, I just wanted to thank you for how wonderful this trip has been.
2 B: Oh, I'm glad you had a good time staying here. <u>You know, we love having you kids</u>…
3 A: [(laughs mildly)]
4 B: <u>[come through here], you know, and see our country, and visit around</u>, so yeah, you're welcome
     back any time. Tell your friends.
[…]

The *requesting a change of conduct* strategy is also realized once (8.3%) in set F
(by a +D and +P thankee). It is used with an adversative meaning, thus contrasting the
message conveyed in the GA head act (i.e. that of downplaying the value of the benefit),
and is the only instance in the corpus of behaviour that indirectly suggests the
inappropriateness of possible future repetitions of the benefit. A relevant instantiation is
found in example (35), reproduced below as example (62):

(62) TH-O1-F01-01
1 A: Well, I'd really like to thank you for going over this with me, er, I was quite lost before, I, but
     I seem to .... have a better grasp on it now.
2 B: No problem. <u>Er, if, if, if you could, I, I would appreciate it if, you would come to class, 'cause,</u>
     <u>believe it or not, that's actually the place where we normally explain these things</u>…
[…]

The last supportive move strategy is *requesting information*, which occurs once
(8.4%) in set F (i.e. in the same set as *requesting a change of conduct*, by a +D and +P
thankee). The strategy of eliciting information concerning the suitability of the benefit

and the appreciation of the thanker make the thankee appear considerate and modest about the magnitude of the benefit s/he has provided, as illustrated in example (63):

(63) TH-O1-F02
1 A: It was SO nice meeting you, thank you so much for your hospitality, this trip would not have been the same without you.
2 B: Oh, it, no problem. I hope you, enjoyed our company and our ….. little, ….cabin in the mountains.
[…]

Overall, the supportive move strategies identified contribute to the variability of the GA supportive moves. This is due to the high number of supportive move strategies and the generally low frequency of supportive moves in the corpus (i.e. 6 strategies in 12 occurrences). The most frequent strategies (i.e. *motivating the minimization of the benefit*, *commenting on the benefit* and *offering*) are the only ones that show some correlation with the P and D variables, and logically expand on the head acts[30], while more original supportive moves (especially *request for a change of conduct* and *request for information*) are marginally instantiated in the data.

In the head act(s) + supportive move(s) structures, the strategies of GA supportive moves co-occur with the strategies of GA head acts in different combinations, which will be examined in the following section.

4.6.1.1 The combinations of supportive move strategies

Overall, 11 GAs have their head acts accompanied by 1 supportive move (in 10 cases) or 2 supportive moves (in 1 case). In these GAs, supportive moves occur in preferred sequencing patterns and with different frequencies of occurrence, as illustrated in Table 4.22[31]. The majority of supportive moves (9 occurrences out of 12, i.e. 75%) occurs in GA-second position, where 6 supportive moves occur as the final component and half as many occur as the intermediate component in given GAs; a trifling minority (3 occurrences of 12, i.e. 25%) occurs in GA-third position, while none occurs in GA-first position.

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30 Even *motivating the expression of pleasure* could be seen as a logical and predictable continuation of its head act.
31 Since all the supportive moves in the corpus occur in complex GAs (unlike the head acts), and the situational distribution of all the supportive moves has already been addressed in section 4.6.1, Table 4.22 does not re-propose the same situational distribution.

The sequencing of the strategies presents some regular patterns, as Table 4.22 illustrates. First, of the strategies that occur multiple times in the data, only *commenting on the benefit* is exclusively realized in GA-second position – even when a GA is made up of 3 components (see, e.g., transcript TH-O1-B05-02 in Appendix C) – whereas *motivating the minimization of the benefit* and *offering* are both equally realized in GA-second (the former strategy occurs once as final and once as intermediate component, the latter only once as final component) and GA-third position (the former twice, the latter once). Second, the strategies that occur once in the data (namely, *motivating the expression of pleasure, requesting a change of conduct* and *requesting information*) are always realized in GA-second position, even when a GA is made up of 3 components, as in the case of *motivating the expression of pleasure* (see transcript TH-O1-D01-02 in Appendix C).

Strategy	GA-first position	GA-second but non-final position	GA-second and final position	GA-third position	**Total**
Motivating the minimization of the benefit	0	1	1	2	**4**
Commenting on the benefit	0	1	2	0	**3**
Offering	0	0	1	1	**2**
Motivating the expression of pleasure	0	1	0	0	**1**
Requesting a change of conduct	0	0	1	0	**1**
Requesting information	0	0	1	0	**1**
Total	**0**	**3**	**6**	**3**	**12**

Table 4.22: Frequency and sequencing of the component supportive move strategies in combinations.

Table 4.23 illustrates the frequency of the components within their specific combinations in head act(s) + supportive move(s) structures. Overall, there are 10 combinatorial options out of 11 GAs (listed below Table 4.23 and represented in Table 4.24), 6 of which are made up of 2 components, and 5 are made up of 3 components. Each token of different supportive move strategies occurs once within each different combinatorial option, except for one case with Option 4, which contains 2 tokens of the *minimizing the benefit* strategy.

	Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	**Global**
Head Act	Minimizing the benefit	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	**4**
	Expressing appreciation of the addressee	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**2**
	Accepting the thanking	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**3**
	Expressing pleasure for providing the benefit	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	**4**
	Reciprocating the thanking	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Supportive move	Motivating the minimization of the benefit	0	0	0	1, 2[32]	0	0	1	0	0	0	**4**
	Commenting on the benefit	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	**3**
	Offer	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	Motivating the expression of pleasure	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
	Request for a change of conduct	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**
	Request for information	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
	Total No. of components	**3**	**2**	**3**	**2,3**	**2**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**27**

Table 4.23: Frequency of the component head act strategies and the component supportive move strategies within combinations. Note: Option 1: expressing appreciation of the addressee + expressing pleasure for providing the benefit + offer; Option 2: accepting the thanking + offer; Option3: accepting the thanking + commenting on the benefit + expressing pleasure for providing the benefit; Option 4: minimizing the benefit + motivating the minimization of the benefit; Option 5: reciprocating the thanking + commenting on the benefit; Option 6: expressing pleasure for providing the benefit + motivating the expression of pleasure + expressing appreciation of the addressee; Option 7: accepting the thanking + minimizing the benefit + motivating the minimization of the benefit; Option 8: minimizing the benefit + requesting a change of conduct; Option 9: minimizing the benefit + requesting information; Option 10: expressing pleasure for providing the benefit + commenting on the benefit

The combinations of strategies in head act(s) + supportive move(s) structures show various frequency and dispersion patterns in the corpus, as illustrated in Table 4.24. The infrequent instantiation of each combinatorial option correlates with the considerable number of strategies used by speakers to realize (and combine) both head acts and supportive moves. The only combination that is instantiated twice in the dataset is Option 4 (see interactions TH-O1-C03-01 and TH-O1-C03-02 in Appendix C). The other 9 combinations are all instantiated once. In general, complex GAs constructed with supportive moves are realized the most frequently in sets C and F (3 tokens each), less frequently in set B (2 tokens), and the least frequently in sets A, D and E (1 token). The

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32 In 1 GA, *minimizing the benefit* co-occurs with one *motivating the minimization of the benefit* supportive move, whereas in another GA, the same head act strategy co-occurs with 2 instances of the *motivating the minimization of the benefit* supportive move. This affects also the total number of components, which are 2 in the former combination, and 3 in the latter combination.

only combination that occurs twice in the data is relevant to set C and, in particular, to the same scenario description. The others occur only once.

Option	Set						Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
1: expressing appreciation of the addressee + expressing pleasure for providing the benefit + offer	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2: accepting the thanking + offer	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
3: accepting the thanking + commenting on the benefit + expressing pleasure for providing the benefit	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
4: minimizing the benefit + motivating the minimization of the benefit	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
5: reciprocating the thanking + commenting on the benefit	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
6: expressing pleasure for providing the benefit + motivating the expression of pleasure + expressing appreciation of the addressee	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
7: accepting the thanking + minimizing the benefit + motivating the minimization of the benefit	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
8: minimizing the benefit + requesting a change of conduct	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
9: minimizing the benefit + requesting information	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
10: expressing pleasure for providing the benefit + commenting on the benefit	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	1	2	3	1	1	3	11

Table 4.24: Frequency and dispersion of combinations between head act strategies and supportive move strategies across the datasets.

Some observations on the strategic nature of combinatorial options or their components can be made at this point. First, all the combinatorial options are quite different from one another, except for Option 7, which is almost identical to Option 4 (the former has 1 more component strategy than the latter, i.e. *accepting the thanking*). Second, 2 supportive move strategies appear to be subject to combinatorial restrictions, that is, *motivating the minimization of the benefit* and *motivating the expression of pleasure* follow *minimizing the benefit* and *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*, respectively. Conversely, *commenting on the benefit*[33] and *offering*[34] follow different head act strategies quite freely. Finally, the other two supportive move strategies, *request for a change of conduct* and *request for information*, occur only once in the corpus, and so cannot be described in terms of their combinatorial options.

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33 It follows 3 head act strategies, namely accepting the thanking, reciprocating the thanking, and expressing pleasure for providing the benefit.
34 It follows 2 head act strategies, namely, expressing pleasure for providing the benefit and accepting the thanking.

In sum, the above findings on the structures of head act(s) + supportive move(s) show a high degree of diversification. The only significant regularity concerns the combination of *minimizing the benefit* with *motivating the minimization of the benefit*, which is attested in two transcripts relevant to the same interactional scenario.

4.6.2 The semantic types of the supportive moves

Nine semantic types were identified in the data (see section 3.3.5.2) in the 12 supportive moves, namely, *positive evaluation of the benefit, enjoyability of the benefit, emotional impact, willingness to act, imminent provision of the benefit, background knowledge, triviality of the benefit, appropriate alternatives*, and *verification of the enjoyability of the benefit*. Their rates of occurrence and situational distribution across the datasets are illustrated in Table 4.25.

The occurrence of 9 supportive move semantic types in 12 tokens illustrates the extremely high variability of supportive moves, and affects the frequency of each type. Indeed, only 3 out of 9 types occur multiple times, while the others occur only once. They are not equally represented across the datasets and correlate with different values of the P and D variables.

Set	A (=P -D)	B (=P +D)	C (-P -D)	D (-P +D)	E (+P -D)	F (+P +D)	Total (%)
Positive evaluation of the benefit	0	1	0	0	0	1	**2 (16.7%)**
Enjoyability of the benefit	0	0	2	0	0	0	**2 (16.7%)**
Emotional impact	0	0	1	1	0	0	**2 (16.7%)**
Willingness to act	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1 (8.3%)**
Imminent provision of the benefit	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1 (8.3%)**
Background knowledge	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1 (8.3%)**
Triviality of the benefit	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1 (8.3%)**
Appropriate alternatives	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1 (8.3%)**
Verification of the enjoyability of the benefit	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1 (8.3%)**
Total	**1**	**2**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**3**	**12 (100%)**

Table 4.25: Frequency and dispersion of the supportive move semantic types across the datasets.

The most frequent types are *positive evaluation of the benefit*, *enjoyability of the benefit* and *emotional impact* (2 occurrences each; i.e. 16.7%). The first type realizes the *commenting on the benefit* strategy, and occurs in sets B and F, where the thankee is always +D. Exemplifications of the strategy are found in examples (45) and (58), reproduced below as examples (64) and (65), respectively:

(64) TH-O1-B05-02
1 A: [chewing noises] Thank you so much, that was, is that, is that a kumquat [or something?]
2 B: [(laughs)]
3 A: That was really good, thank you.
4 B: Yeah. <u>Our, er, grocery store has some pretty exotic fruit</u>. I'm glad you enjoyed it! (mild laughter)
[…]

(65) TH-O1-F03-02
[…]
1 A: [everything] you taught was SO relevant to my experience there and so I wanted to say thank you because it was, it was a really great educational experience.
2 B: Oh really?
3 A: [Ye]
4 B: [Oh,] well I'm glad that it er, I'm glad that, um, you found that helpful to you in your experience, <u>and that's, that's really kind of, the …. best possible outcome of a class like that, so, um, … great!</u> Yeah! We'd love to have you!³⁵
[…]

The *enjoyability of the benefit* type realizes in both cases the *motivating the minimization of the benefit* strategy, and occurs only in set C (i.e. with -P and -D thankees), in particular, in interactions that are relevant to the same interactional scenario (see also sections 4.6.1 and 4.6.1.1), as illustrated in examples (36) and (25), reproduced below as (66) and (67):

(66) TH-O1-C03-01
[…]
1 A: Hey, Wan. Hey so thanks for er, babysitting my er, child.
2 B: Oh. Not a problem. <u>Charlotte has been (mild laughing) really great today</u>.
[…]

(67) TH-O1-C03-02
1 A: Hey Amanda, thanks SO MUCH for watching Lily today.
2 B: Oh no worries. <u>I love watching Lily!</u> <u>She's such a good kid</u>.
[…]

The *emotional impact* type realizes in one case the *motivating the minimization of the benefit* strategy (see the text segment underlined with the curvy line in example (67))

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35 The turn segment "Yeah! […] you!" is a reiterated response to previous topics of the interaction, and thus not part of the GA (see section 4.4.1).

and the *motivating the expression of pleasure* strategy in the other (see example (40), reproduced below as example (68)). The type occurs in sets C and D, respectively, by a -D and -P thankee and a +D and -P thankee; thus, *emotional impact* appears to correlate with -P thankees.

(68) TH-O1-D01-02
1 A: Hi! Um, I just wanted to thank you for how wonderful this trip has been.
2 B: Oh, I'm glad you had a good time staying here. <u>You know, we love having you kids…</u>
3 A: [(laughs mildly)]
4 B: <u>[come through here], you know, and see our country, and visit around,</u> so yeah, you're welcome back any time. Tell your friends.
[…]

Some of the remaining 6 semantic types that occur only once in the corpus (8.3% each) share certain distributional patterns. Both *willingness to act* and *imminent provision of the benefit* occur in sets where the thanker and the thankee are =P (the former in set A, the latter in set B); the former is instantiated in example (23), reproduced below as example (69), and the latter is instantiated in example (24), reproduced below as example (70):

(69) TH-O1-B05-01
[…]
1 A: Um… Ok, yes, thank you, I appreciate it [very much].
2 B: [Sure], <u>let me just grab one for you.</u>
[…]

(70) TH-O1-A05
1 A: Hey Emma, I just wanted to thank you for helping me study for that hard math test I had a couple of days ago, I got a really good grade on it so, I appreciate your help.
2 B: Oh you're welcome Rosina, I was happy to know that you wanted my help, <u>and I'm always here to help you out with that kind of stuff.</u>
[…]

Both the *background knowledge* type and the *triviality of the benefit* type are realized by -D thankees. The former is instantiated in (57), reproduced below as example (71), while the latter is instantiated in example (55), reproduced below as example (72):

(71) TH-O1-C06-02
[…]
1 B: About the fruit, so um, I liked the fruit, thank you, they're very tropical.
2 A: Thank you. <u>I knew you liked durians and starfruit, and</u>…
[…]

(72) TH-O1-E01-01

[…]

1 A: I just want to come by your office hours, thank you for all the help you've given me on THIS paper.

2 B: Um… Yeah, you know, no problem, <u>that's, you know, that's part of my job… um…</u>

[…]

The *appropriate alternatives* and *verification of the enjoyability of the benefit* types are both realized in set F, that is by +D and +P thankee (see examples (35) and (63), reproduced below as examples (73), and (74)):

(73) TH-O1-F01-01

1 A: Well, I'd really like to thank you for going over this with me, er, I was quite lost before, I, but I seem to …. have a better grasp on it now.

2 B: No problem. <u>Er, if, if, if you could, I, I would appreciate it if, you would come to class, 'cause, believe it or not, that's actually the place where we normally explain these things</u>…

[…]

(74) TH-O1-F02

1 A: It was SO nice meeting you, thank you so much for your hospitality, this trip would not have been the same without you.

2 B: Oh, it, no problem. <u>I hope you, enjoyed our company and our ….. little, ….cabin in the mountains</u>.

[…]

Overall, although some common distributional patterns have emerged from the above descriptions of the supportive move semantic types, the degree of variation between them is quite high, which correlates with the varied realizations of supportive moves; also, the generally low frequency of each type does not make it easy to check whether a given type might have regular patterns of occurrence (e.g. a preferred situational context or a preferred situational value of the P and/or D variables; see Table 4.25 and section 4.6.1).

The following section will address the combinations of the head act lexico-semantic types and the supportive move semantic types.

4.6.2.1 The combinations of supportive move semantic types

The 9 supportive move semantic types occur in 11 complex GAs, giving rise to various combinatorial options. First of all, Table 4.26 illustrates the frequency and sequencing of each supportive move semantic type in combination with head acts. In general, the supportive move semantic types are predominantly realized in GA-second position (9 occurrences, of which 6 in second and final, and 3 in second non-final), marginally in GA-third position (3 occurrences), and never in GA-first position. Two of

the three most frequent supportive move semantic types, namely *positive evaluation of the benefit* and *emotional impact*, always occur in second position (the former as both the intermediate and the final component, the latter only as the intermediate component in a GA); the third most frequent supportive move semantic type, namely, *enjoyability of the benefit,* occurs once in second and final position, and once in third position; so it is always a final component in GAs. Of the remaining 6 types, all of which occur only once, only *willingness to act* and *triviality of the benefit* occupy the GA-third position, while the others (namely, *imminent provision of the benefit, background knowledge, appropriate alternatives* and *verification of the enjoyability of the benefit*) occur all in GA-second and final position.

Type	GA-first position	GA-second but non-final position	GA-second and final position	GA-third position	**Total**
Positive evaluation of the benefit	0	1	1	0	**2**
Enjoyability of the benefit	0	0	1	1	**2**
Emotional impact	0	2	0	0	**2**
Willingness to act	0	0	0	1	**1**
Imminent provision of the benefit	0	0	1	0	**1**
Background knowledge	0	0	1	0	**1**
Triviality of the benefit	0	0	0	1	**1**
Appropriate alternatives	0	0	1	0	**1**
Verification of the enjoyability of the benefit	0	0	1	0	**1**
Total	**0**	**3**	**6**	**3**	**12**

Table 4.26: Frequency and sequencing of the component supportive move semantic types in combinations.

Table 4.27 illustrates the frequency of the component head act lexico-semantic types and the component supportive move semantic types within their specific combinations. In the 11 GAs structured as head act(s) + supportive move(s), 11 combinatorial options are realized. Of these, 6 are made up of 2 components, and 5 are made up of 3 components.

	Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Global
Head Act	NO PROBLEM	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	**5**
	YOU'RE WELCOME	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	YES	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	**3**
	(I'M) PLEASED	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	**4**
	THANK YOU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
	(IT'S) GOOD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Supportive move	Positive evaluation of the benefit	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	Enjoyability of the benefit	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	Emotional impact	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	Willingness to act	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	Imminent provision of the benefit	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
	Background knowledge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
	Triviality of the benefit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**
	Appropriate alternatives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
	Verification of the enjoyability of the benefit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
	Total No. of components	**3**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**27**

Table 4.27: Frequency of the component head act lexico-semantic types and the component supportive move semantic types within combinations. *Note:* Option 1: YES + positive evaluation of the benefit + (I'M) PLEASED; Option 2: (I'M) PLEASED + positive evaluation of the benefit; Option 3: NO PROBLEM + enjoyability of the benefit; Option 4: NO PROBLEM + emotional impact + enjoyability of the benefit; Option 5: (I'M) PLEASED + emotional impact + YOU'RE WELCOME; Option 6: YOU'RE WELCOME + (I'M) PLEASED + willingness to act; Option 7: YES + imminent provision of the benefit; Option 8: THANK YOU + background knowledge; Option 9: YES + NO PROBLEM + triviality of the benefit; Option 10: NO PROBLEM + appropriate alternatives; Option 11: NO PROBLEM + verification of the enjoyability of the benefit

The frequency and dispersion of the combinations of the head act lexico-semantic types with the supportive move semantic types across the datasets are illustrated in Table 4.28 (p. 106). The number of attested combinations is the maximum allowed by the number of GAs displaying the head act(s) + supportive move(s) structure, namely, 11 combinations. Other possible combinations between the types of head acts and the types of supportive moves are not attested in the present corpus. Finally, it is worth pointing out that the (IT'S) GOOD type is the only one that does not co-occur with a supportive move.

Some combinatorial options quite closely resemble one another. Option 1 shares with Option 2 the head act component (I'M) PLEASED (and also, the variant *glad*) and the supportive move component *positive evaluation of the benefit*, although the sequencing of the components differ. Option 3 and Option 4 have the same head act

component NO PROBLEM and the supportive move component *enjoyability of the benefit*; however, NO PROBLEM is realized by the variant *not a problem* in Option 3, and by the variant *no worries* in Option 4; besides, the internal sequencing of the combinations differs, since *enjoyability of the benefit* follows NO PROBLEM in Option 3, and *emotional impact* in Option 4. The other combinatorial options are only occasionally similar to each other, mainly in the number of components and in the combination of head acts. Options 5 and 6 have both 3 components, whose head acts are YOU'RE WELCOME and (I'M) PLEASED; also, in both combinations the supportive move type (*emotional impact* and *willingness to act,* respectively) follows the (I'M) PLEASED lexico-semantic type. However, major differences between Options 5 and 6 are that: a) Option 5 realizes the *glad* variant, while Option 6 the *happy* variant of (I'M) PLEASED; and b) Option 5 realizes the *you're welcome+object* variant, while Option 6 realizes the elliptical *you're welcome* variant of YOU'RE WELCOME. Finally, in Options 9, 10 and 11 the supportive move semantic types (*triviality of the benefit*, *appropriate alternatives*, and *verification of the enjoyability of the benefit,* respectively) always occur after the NO PROBLEM lexico-semantic type (always realized by the variant *no problem*).

The highest frequency of combinations of head acts and supportive moves occurs in sets C and F (which have opposite values of the P and D variables, i.e. –P, -D vs. +P, +D), then in set B, and finally in sets A, D and E. Since every combinatorial option occurs only once in the data, it is not possible to comment on it in terms of possible preference for a given situational context.

In sum, the combinations between head act lexico-semantic types and supportive move semantic types have shown highly variable realizations, more variable than the ones attested with the combinations of head act lexico-semantic types. The reason lies in the considerably high number of supportive move semantic types available, but also partly in the number of the head act lexico-semantic types, and especially the higher number of variants that are realized in different combinations.

Option	Set						Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
1: YES + positive evaluation of the benefit + (I'M) PLEASED	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
2: (I'M) PLEASED + positive evaluation of the benefit	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
3: NO PROBLEM + enjoyability of the benefit	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
4: NO PROBLEM + emotional impact + enjoyability of the benefit	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
5: (I'M) PLEASED + emotional impact + YOU'RE WELCOME	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**
6: YOU'RE WELCOME + (I'M) PLEASED + willingness to act	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
7: YES + imminent provision of the benefit	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
8: THANK YOU + background knowledge	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
9: YES + NO PROBLEM + triviality of the benefit	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
10: NO PROBLEM + appropriate alternatives	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
11: NO PROBLEM + verification of the enjoyability of the benefit	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Total	**1**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**3**	**11**

Table 4.28: Frequency and dispersion of combinations between head act lexico-semantic types and supportive move semantic types across the datasets.

4.7 Elements of spoken discourse

The 3 elements of spoken discourse that I described in section 3.3.6, namely hesitators, cajolers and discourse markers, are found in 6 GAs out of 42 in the corpus (total: 14 items). They occur in all the datasets, except for sets A. The most frequent elements are hesitators, with 9 tokens in datasets B (1), C (2), E (2) and F (4). Hesitators are realized as "um" (4 times) or as "er" (5 times), and, except for 2 GAs (in datasets B and F) they always co-occur in a given GA, as illustrated in example (58), reproduced below as example (75):

> (75) TH-O1-F03-02
> […]
> 1 A: [everything] you taught was SO relevant to my experience there and so I wanted to say thank you because it was, it was a really great educational experience.
> 2 B: Oh really?
> 3 A: [Ye]
> 4 B: [Oh,] well I'm glad that it er, I'm glad that, um, you found that helpful to you in your experience, and that's, that's really kind of, the …. best possible outcome of a class like that, so, um, … great! Yeah! We'd love to have you![36]
> […]

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36 The turn segment from "yeah!" to the end of the turn is not part of the GA, in that it includes a reiterated response to previous topics of the interaction (see section 4.4.1).

The second most frequent element is cajolers, with 4 occurrences in 2 GAs (two each in sets D and E). Cajolers are realized as "you know", and always co-occur in the 2 GAs, as illustrated in example (40), reproduced below as example (76):

(76) TH-O1-D01-02
1 A: Hi! Um, I just wanted to thank you for how wonderful this trip has been.
2 B: Oh, I'm glad you had a good time staying here. You know, we love having you kids…
3 A: [(laughs mildly)]
4 B: [come through here], you know, and see our country, and visit around, so yeah, you're welcome back any time. Tell your friends.
[…]

Discourse markers are realized as "well" only once in set F, and co-occur with 3 hesitators (see instance (75) above, where it is underlined with a curvy line).

In general, the occasional use of elements of spoken discourse in GAs might signal a speaker's need to gain time while planning how to formulate a suitable response to the interlocutor's previous turn.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has reported on the findings of the analysis of the turns following gratitude expressions identified in the data.

First, 3 main types of responses to gratitude expressions have been identified, namely, GA responses, Other responses and Unclear responses, that is, responses that could not be unambiguously classified as either a GA or an Other response. GAs are the most frequent in the corpus (54,5%) – in particular in 3 datasets – and also are the most widely distributed across all the datasets. Unclear responses are the least frequent, occurring just once in each of sets B, C and D. Other responses to thanking acts occur in half of the transcripts in the corpus (i.e. 16; see section 4.2), and comprise UGEs, that is, responses performing different functions than acknowledging gratitude, and Zero realizations, that is, the lack of a (verbal) response. On the whole, Other responses are particularly infrequent among superior thankees, and quite infrequent among socially close thankees. In particular, UGEs are the most frequent Other responses throughout the datasets, except in the case of superior thankees. Finally, Zero realizations are quite infrequent, and occur especially among distant thankees, while they are never instantiated among superior thankees.

Second, the internal structure of GAs appears to be varied and at times complex, especially when gratitude expressions are longer and more emphatic: a GA can be realized as a head act alone (i.e. simple GAs), a head act combination and a combination of head act(s) + supportive move(s) (i.e. complex GAs). The first structure is the most frequent (i.e. 57%) and widely used across the datasets, whereas the other two structures are less frequent overall and less widely attested across the datasets. The structure of complex GAs depends on the number and type of their component elements and on their sequencing, but does not include instances of supportive moves occurring alone. Finally, GAs occasionally co-occur with other stretches of speech within the same reacting turn, which perform additional conversational functions such as responding to previous topics, introducing new topics, and concluding the interaction. Such cases are more common among superior and distant thankees.

The findings also show that the 55 head acts identified in the data instantiate 5 head act strategies. In particular, 3 out of 5 head act strategies, namely, *minimizing the benefit, expressing appreciation of the addressee* and *accepting the thanking*, are employed the most frequently throughout the datasets. In addition, the first two head act strategies have an almost complementary situational dispersion in 4 datasets out of 6 (see section 4.5.1), but are also the most widely dispersed across the datasets, along with *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*. Interestingly, each strategy tends to correlate with given values of P or D: *minimizing the benefit* correlates with +P and -P thankees, *expressing appreciation of the addressee* with =P thankees, *accepting the thanking* with -D thankees, *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* with +D thankees, and *reciprocating the thanking* with -P and -D thankees.

The analysis of the complex GAs reveals, first, that not all the head act strategies freely combine with one another: *minimizing the benefit, expressing appreciation of the addressee* and *reciprocating the thanking* mostly occur alone, while *accepting the thanking* and *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* tend to more often occur in combination. In particular, 6 combinatorial options of head act strategies are attested in 11 complex GAs, the 2 recurrent ones being *expressing appreciation of the addressee + expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*, and *accepting the thanking + expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*. The data also shows preferred sequencing patterns (e.g. *accepting the thanking* always occurs in GA-first position, while *minimizing the benefit*

never occurs in GA-first position); and preferred situational patterns of the head act components in complex GAs (e.g. *accepting the thanking* is preferably used in combination by -D thankees, and *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* by +D thankees) and of the combinatorial options (i.e. only in sets A, B, D and E; see section 4.5.1.1).

The findings on the head act lexico-semantic types reveal that, of 6 types attested in the corpus, NO PROBLEM, YOU'RE WELCOME and YES are the most frequent, just like the strategies they realize; they also reveal that *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* is the only strategy realized in 2 lexico-semantic types, namely (I'M) PLEASED and (IT'S) GOOD. (I'M) PLEASED, along with YOU'RE WELCOME and NO PROBLEM, remains one of the most widespread lexico-semantic types across the datasets. Furthermore, the dispersion of YOU'RE WELCOME across the datasets is almost the mirror image of NO PROBLEM in 4 datasets out of 6. Other findings on the dispersion of the lexico-semantic types reveal that each of them correlates with one or more of the values of the P and/or D variables: NO PROBLEM correlates with +P and -P thankees, YOU'RE WELCOME correlates with =P thankees, YES correlates with -D thankees, (I'M) PLEASED correlates with +D thankees, THANK YOU with -P and -D thankees, and (IT'S) GOOD with both =P and +D thankees. Finally, variants of the types are found in the corpus: except for (IT'S) GOOD, every type has more than one variant (NO PROBLEM and YES have 3, the other types 2).

The head act lexico-semantic types occurring in combination in complex GAs show different combinability rates, that is, NO PROBLEM, YOU'RE WELCOME and THANK YOU preferably occur alone, whereas YES, (I'M) PLEASED and (IT'S) GOOD preferably occur in combinations. The combinatorial options of the above types are more variable than the combinations of the relevant head act strategies, because there are more lexico-semantic types than strategies (see above and sections 4.5.2, 4.5.2.1), and also because some lexico-semantic types are realized by multiple variants – in particular, variants of YOU'RE WELCOME and (I'M) PLEASED show up in complex GAs. As a result, 7 combinatorial options are attested out of 11 complex GAs, and one recurrent combinatorial option shows 3 different combinations of variants. However, some preferred patterns are still attested, which include: 2 recurrent combinatorial options (i.e. YES + (I'M) PLEASED and YOU'RE WELCOME + (I'M) PLEASED); the sequencing

of the components (e.g. YES occurs always in GA-first position, YOU'RE WELCOME mainly occurs in GA-first position, and NO PROBLEM is never realized in GA-first position); and the dispersion of the combinatorial options (i.e. only in sets A, B, D and E; see section 4.5.2.1).

Finally, the GA head acts occasionally instantiate additional modifiers, especially exclaims, intensifiers and address terms. Exclaims (i.e. "oh"), which express the thankee's attitude towards the thanking event, are the most frequent additional modifier in the corpus (11 tokens), and modify 4 out of 6 lexico-semantic types (in particular, the YOU'RE WELCOME and NO PROBLEM types). Intensifiers (i.e. "so", "really" and "at all"), which emphasize the content of the GA head act, are the second most frequent additional modifier in the corpus (i.e. 4 tokens), and modify 3 lexico-semantic types (in particular, "at all" modifies the NO PROBLEM type twice). Finally, one address term (i.e. a first name) is used in the corpus, which calls the thanker's attention. Finally, tokens of additional modifier can co-occur, and modify the same head act within a GA or different head acts within the same GA.

The 12 supportive moves in the corpus realize 6 strategies. Of these, only *motivating the minimization of the benefit*, *commenting on the benefit* and *offering* occur multiple times and in a preferred situational context; that is, the first strategy is favoured by -P and -D thankees, the second by +D thankees, and the third by =P thankees. The other strategies, namely, *motivating the expression of pleasure*, *requesting information* and *requesting a change of conduct* occur once, and are all realized by +D thankees. In particular, both the *requesting-* strategies are more original in content and are relevant to the same values +P and +D. The findings on the complex GAs with 1 or 2 supportive moves show that such combinations are infrequent and variously realized, since there are 10 combinatorial options in 11 GAs. However, some combinatorial limitations characterize *motivating the minimization of the benefit* and *motivating the expression of pleasure*, given that they only combine with *minimizing the benefit* and *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*, respectively. Thus, the combinations of head act and supportive move strategies in complex GAs very rarely share given similar patterns of composition or distribution. However, one more general common pattern is that most supportive moves occur in GA-second and final position; another common pattern is the combination of *minimizing the benefit* with *motivating the minimization of the benefit*,

which occurs twice in the corpus, and is in both cases relevant to the same interactional scenario.

The findings also reveal that the 12 supportive move realize 9 semantic types, of which only *positive evaluation of the benefit*, *enjoyability of the benefit* and *emotional impact* occur twice and in preferred situational contexts, namely, the first strategy is preferred by +D thankees, the second strategy by -P and -D thankees, and the third strategy by -P thankees. The remaining strategies, namely, *willingness to act*, *imminent provision of the benefit*, *background knowledge*, *triviality of the benefit*, *appropriate alternatives*, and *verification of the enjoyability of the benefit* occur once. The only common pattern identified concerns the situational distribution of some semantic types. The findings on the semantics of the GAs structured as head act(s) + supportive move(s) reveal the considerably more variable realization of the combinations with supportive moves by comparison to those with head acts: 11 different combinations in as many GAs vs. 7 different combinations of the head act lexico-semantic types in 11 GAs. Only rarely do the former combinations display similarities between one another.

Finally, the occasional occurrence of hesitators, cajolers and discourse markers hints at the online processing and elaboration of GAs as suitable responses to acts of gratitude; this may indicate that, at least in some cases, GAs are not as automatically produced and routinized as is often claimed in the literature.

Chapter five will summarize the work that has been done, take stock of the findings that have emerged from the analysis carried out, draw relevant implications, and make suggestions for future research directions.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have reported on the findings of a study on GAs in AmE based on role play data. In particular, chapter 1 introduced the topic and goal of the study, and outlined its relevant research domain. Chapter 2 overviewed the literature on thanking in the last two decades, and reviewed cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies on GAs, with a special focus on English. The description has revealed how different scholars have so far employed different data sources and adopted varied methodological and analytical practices to study GAs, while mostly relying on written elicited data. Chapter 3 then overviewed different data collection methods used in the study of GAs thus far and described in detail the various phases of the research approach adopted in this study: the data collection procedures, and the classification and analysis of the data itself. Finally, chapter 4 illustrated the findings from the analysis of the thanking exchanges and the GAs in the corpus.

In this chapter, I am going to sum up the work that has been done and draw some relevant conclusions. In section 5.2, I am going to recapitulate the main findings reported in chapter 4. In section 5.3, I am going to discuss the current findings by comparing them with those from previous studies on GAs. Then, in section 5.4 I will assess the strengths and weaknesses of the present study. Finally, in section 5.5 I will make some suggestions for possible directions of future research in this field.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The analysis of the reacting turns in the thanking exchanges identified in the corpus has provided information on: the instantiation of various types of responses to gratitude expressions; the frequency of occurrence and dispersion of the GAs in the corpus; the variable internal structure of the GAs and possible co-occurrence with additional conversational material in the same turns; and the strategic and lexico-semantic aspects of the GA head acts and supportive moves. The present section will summarize the main findings of the analysis.

GAs are the participants' preferred reaction to gratitude (54.5%) in the corpus, especially in 3 datasets. Much less frequent, instead, are Other responses and Unclear responses. Other responses – which comprise UGEs (i.e. responses which fulfil other communicative functions than acknowledging gratitude) and Zero realizations (i.e. no, or non-verbal, responses) occur only in half of the transcripts (i.e. 16; see section 4.2), and are particularly infrequent among superior thankees and quite infrequent among intimate thankees. In particular, the slightly more frequent UGEs tend to occur when thankees have additional topics to address in their turns besides the act of thanking, or when they have other communicative goals to achieve, or when they want to end the interaction after the thanking, while the infrequent *zero realizations* are mostly instantiated among distant interlocutors. Unclear responses, instead, comprise 3 cases where the thankees' speech is ambiguous, that is, when it is unclear whether it is relevant to the act of thanking proper or other speech material co-occurring within the thanking turn.

The GAs display 3 different structures, a simple one and two complex ones. The majority of the GAs realize the simple head act alone structure (57.1%), which is the only one slightly preferred by intimate thankees. A minority of GAs, instead, are complex, that is structurally elaborate, and are found after elaborate gratitude expressions; these complex GAs comprise the head act(s) + supportive move(s) and head act combination structures, the former being slightly more frequent. GAs may co-occur with additional speech material within the same interactional turn, which performs conversation management functions. These complex turns are more typical of distant superior thankees.

The 55 head acts identified in the corpus exemplify 5 head act strategies, namely, *minimizing the benefit, expressing appreciation of the addressee, accepting the thanking, expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* and *reciprocating the thanking*, the first 3 of which are the most frequent. Interestingly, *expressing appreciation of the addressee* and *minimizing the benefit* occur almost in complementary distribution in 4 datasets out of 6. Furthermore, each strategy appears to generally correlate with given values of the P or D variables. In particular, *minimizing the benefit* correlates with +P and -P thankees, *expressing appreciation of the addressee* with =P thankees, *accepting the thanking* with -D thankees, *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* with +D thankees, and *reciprocating the thanking* with -P and -D thankees.

The head act strategies co-occurring in complex GAs reveal preferences for certain combinatorial patterns: *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* and *accepting the thanking* occur the most often in combination, while each of *minimizing the benefit*, *expressing appreciation of the addressee* and *reciprocating the thanking* tends to occur alone. Of all the possible combinatorial options, 6 are attested in 11 complex GAs, and 2 are recurrent (i.e. *expressing appreciation of the addressee + expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*, and *accepting the thanking + expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*). Also, the sequencing of the head act strategies in complex GAs similarly reveals preferred patterns (e.g. *accepting the thanking* always occurs in GA-first position, and *minimizing the benefit* never occurs in GA-first position). Such complex GAs are attested only in sets A, B, D and E.

The lexico-semantic realizations of the 55 head acts in the corpus include 6 types, namely NO PROBLEM, YOU'RE WELCOME, YES, (I'M) PLEASED, THANK YOU and (IT'S) GOOD, the first 3 of which occur the most frequently. Every lexico-semantic type realizes one of the 5 above-mentioned strategies, and shows the same frequency values as its strategy, except for (I'M) PLEASED and (IT'S) GOOD, which together realize the *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* strategy. In general, NO PROBLEM and YOU'RE WELCOME emerge as the main choices of the speakers, not only for their frequency, but also for their complementary distribution in the majority of datasets; besides, the realization of each head act type correlates with one or more of the values of the P and/or D variables: NO PROBLEM correlates with +P and -P thankees, YOU'RE WELCOME correlates with =P thankees, YES correlates with -D thankees, (I'M) PLEASED correlates with +D thankees, THANK YOU with -P and -D thankees, and (IT'S) GOOD with both =P and +D thankees. Lexical or syntactic variant realizations of the head act lexico-semantic types are found in the corpus. In particular, NO PROBLEM and YES have 3 variants, YOU'RE WELCOME, (I'M) PLEASED and THANK YOU have 2, while (IT'S) GOOD has only 1. Variants of YOU'RE WELCOME and (I'M) PLEASED are also attested in complex GAs. These variants testify to the not completely routinized realization of the GAs.

The lexico-semantic types co-occurring in complex GAs include (IT'S) GOOD, (I'M) PLEASED and YES, which combine with other types the most often, whereas NO PROBLEM, THANK YOU and YOU'RE WELCOME preferably occur alone. Of all the

possible combinatorial options, 7 are attested in 11 complex GAs; the slightly higher degree of variation of the lexico-semantic types vis-à-vis the corresponding head act strategy combinations is due to the higher number of lexico-semantic types than head act strategies. Only 2 combinatorial options are recurrently instantiated, namely, YOU'RE WELCOME + (I'M) PLEASED and YES + (I'M) PLEASED). Similarly, only a few sequential patterns can be identified (e.g. YES always occurs in GA-first position, while NO PROBLEM never occurs in GA-first position). Finally, the dispersion of the types in complex GAs shows their preferences for a sub-set of the datasets, namely A, B, D and E. Overall, the lexico-semantic aspects of GAs are considerably more varied than their corresponding strategies.

The head acts attested in the corpus are occasionally accompanied by additional modifiers, which further contribute to their variable realization; these modifiers enable the thankees to better express their attitude towards the thanking event (e.g. through exclaims), to strengthen the expressiveness of their message (e.g. through intensifiers) or to establish a closer bond with their thankers (e.g. through address terms). Overall, the use of modifiers shows how speakers customize their GAs to their local interactional/transactional needs and goals.

The 12 supportive moves identified in the corpus exemplify 6 strategies. Of these, *motivating the minimization of the benefit, commenting on the benefit* and *offering* occur multiple times, the first strategy being preferred by -P and -D thankees, the second by +D thankees, and the third by =P thankees. The remaining strategies, namely, *motivating the expression of pleasure, requesting a change of conduct,* and *requesting information* occur only once and, except for *motivating the expression of pleasure*, convey original content and are realized by +D and +P thankees. Most supportive move strategies freely combine with various head act strategies, giving rise to 10 combinatorial options of head acts and supportive moves in 11 complex GAs; however, the *motivating the minimization of the benefit* and *motivating the expression of pleasure* strategies combine with only one head act strategy each (i.e. *minimizing the benefit* and *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*, respectively). The only regular pattern is the combination of the *minimizing the benefit* head act strategy with the *motivating the minimization of the benefit* supportive move strategy, which is realized twice in role play interactions relevant to the same interactional scenario.

The 12 supportive moves identified in the corpus realize 9 lexico-semantic types: *positive evaluation of the benefit*, *enjoyability of the benefit*, *emotional impact*, *willingness to act*, *imminent provision of the benefit*, *background knowledge*, *triviality of the benefit*, *appropriate alternatives*, and *verification of the enjoyability of the benefit*. Of these, only the first 3 types occur twice and in preferred situational contexts – *positive evaluation of the benefit* is preferred by +D thankees, *enjoyability of the benefit* by -P and -D thankees, and *emotional impact* by -P thankees – while all the others occur once. Hence, the supportive moves turn out to be far less conventional than GA head acts and highly context- and topic-specific, more than the supportive move strategies and the head act lexico-semantic types. Indeed, the supportive move semantic types in complex GAs reveal 11 combinatorial options in as many GAs.

In sum, the findings from the corpus considered evidence how the AmE GAs identified can range from simpler and more conventional expressions, to more complex and elaborate realizations: being lexico-semantically and syntactically flexible, they can adapt to different situational contexts and interlocutors' role-relationships.

5.3 Discussion of the findings

The present findings are partly similar to and partly different from those of previous studies on English GAs.

The GAs in my corpus occur in 54% of all reacting turns, a finding that might be attributed to the nature of the scenario descriptions used in the study, which were designed to favour the production of thanking exchanges (see section 3.2.3.1). However, such a prominent presence of GAs in the corpus was not necessarily to be expected, if one considers the widely held assumption that GAs are quite rare (see section 2.3). In comparison to previous studies on GAs, the frequency of occurrence of GAs in my data is: higher than in studies on the same English variety (see Rüegg, 2014; on the other hand, Jung, 1994, and Schneider, 2005 do not explicitly mention the frequency of GAs in their data); lower than in other studies considering oral elicited data (see Ouafeu, 2009); higher than in studies examining oral spontaneous data (see Rüegg, 2014); and lower than in studies investigating written elicited data (see Schneider, 2005; Farenkia, 2012, 2013). Overall, it is not surprising that my data contain fewer GAS than elicited data (i.e. DCTs and interviews), where informants are primed for a given type of highly monitored

communicative behaviour on purpose, but more GAs than spontaneous data, where informants are completely free to behave as they prefer in conversation. The reason is that, although my data were elicited through written scenario prompts, the participants were only generically instructed to engage in interaction, and not imposed specific restrictions or requirement on how to handle them.

The structures of the GAs in my corpus are similar, but not identical, to those attested in previous studies on GAs. For instance, the head act alone, head act combinations and head act(s) + supportive move(s) structures are attested also in Schneider (2005) and Farenkia (2012, 2013), although they are labelled differently there. Interestingly, in my corpus both complex structures comprise a maximum of 3 components, as in Schneider (2005), but differently from Farenkia (2012, 2013), who also reports the occurrence of GAs consisting of 4 components. Also, complex GAs in my corpus occur after lengthy gratitude expressions, as is the case of Egyptian Arabic GAs (Morsi, 2010; see section 2.3.3). On the other hand, in the present corpus, supportive moves never occur in simple GAs in the place of head acts (i.e. alone), contrary to what attested in Schneider (2005) and Farenkia (2012, 2013; but see Rüegg, 2014). In addition, my study shows that GAs may occur with turn segments realizing other communicative functions, something not mentioned in Farenkia (2012, 2013) or Rüegg (2014), and only briefly hinted at in Schneider (2005), who points out the occasional occurrence of GAs with farewells. Possible reasons why DCT-based studies disregarded this aspect might be that written elicited data most likely instantiate only one speech act in the reacting turn – the one that is the object of investigation; besides, scholars like Farenkia (2012, 2013) and Rüegg (2014) regarded closing and pre-closing formulae as supportive moves rather than as external from the GA, as I did.

A general comparison of my findings with those of previous studies reveals that the head act strategies identified in my corpus entirely correspond to those attested in Schneider (2005) and Farenkia (2012, 2013) – although they are termed differently there (see sections 2.3.2.2, 3.3.4.1) – and that my lexico-semantic types partly differ from those exemplified in Schneider (2005), Farenkia (2012, 2013), Jung (1994) and Rüegg (2014). First, the two preferred strategies in my corpus, namely, *expressing appreciation of the addressee* and *minimizing the benefit*, are generally preferred even in the other English varieties, except in CamE. The overall frequency hierarchy of the head act strategies in

my corpus is *expressing appreciation of the addressee = minimizing the benefit > accepting the thanking > expressing pleasure for providing the benefit > reciprocating the thanking*. It is thus very similar to that of the GAs in the Irish and AmE corpora in Schneider (2005), but largely differs from those characterizing the BrE corpus in Schneider (2005) and the CanE and CamE corpora in Farenkia (2012, 2013). Second, the number of lexico-semantic types in my corpus is lower than in Schneider (2005), Farenkia (2012, 2013) and Rüegg (2014). In particular, the lexico-semantic types realizing the *expressing appreciation of the addressee* and *minimizing the benefit* strategies are fewer in my corpus than in Schneider (2005) and Farenkia (2012, 2013), whereas the *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit* strategy is realized by more lexico-semantic types in my corpus than in the above-mentioned ones. This provides support for Schneider's (2005) assertion that AmE GAs are quite standardized, and is in line with Jung's (1994) AmE data, which attest only 9 GA tokens, although he does not classify his GAs into lexico-semantic types. On the other hand, my findings run counter what reported in Rüegg (2014), who attests the highest number of types ever recorded in the AmE variety, but also in any other English variety. These differences are partly due to the different classification criteria adopted across the studies.

A more focused comparison of the (dis)preferred choices of strategies and lexico-semantic types in my corpus and those reported in studies carried out on AmE also reveals similarities and differences. The main AmE strategies in my data are *expressing appreciation of the addressee* and *minimizing the benefit*, which have identical frequency values and show complementary dispersion patterns, like the lexico-semantic types they are realized by, namely, YOU'RE WELCOME and NO PROBLEM, respectively. Findings about the former strategy and former type are thus similar to Jung (1994), Schneider (2005), and Rüegg (2014), given that *expressing appreciation of the addressee* and YOU'RE WELCOME are also the preferred AmE choices in their works; however, my data show specific frequency and distributional patterns. Findings about *minimizing the benefit* and NO PROBLEM in my corpus, instead, resemble those in Schneider (2005) (but see above on frequency and dispersion patterns), since they are the second choice in his AmE corpus, but differ from Jung (1994) and Rüegg (2014) (the second choices in their corpora being *mhmm* and THANK YOU, respectively). The third AmE strategy in my corpus is *accepting the thanking*, whose corresponding lexico-semantic type is YES.

However, the findings relevant to other AmE corpora do not show instances of this strategy, let alone its type (e.g. Jung, 1994 attests the *thank you* token, Schneider, 2005 the ANYTIME type, and Rüegg, 2014 the (I'M) PLEASED type). Interestingly, in my corpus (I'M) PLEASED (i.e. *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*) and THANK YOU (i.e. *reciprocating the thanking*) are speakers' infrequent choices, while they are more prominent in previous studies, in particular, the former in Schneider (2005) and Rüegg (2014), and the latter in Jung (1994) and Rüegg (2014). Finally, the type (IT'S) GOOD occurs only in my corpus.

The specific instantiations of GAs in my corpus overlap in part with those reported in previous studies. Identical GA realizations include *you're welcome*, *no problem, no worries, not a problem, yeah, sure, (mmm) hmm, thank you, (I'm/I was) glad (that-clause/object predicative clauses), (I was) happy (object predicative infinitive clause)*, and *thank you (for something)*. Previously unattested GA instantiations include the extended form of *you're welcome,* namely, *you're welcome+object*, just like the form *it was nice (object predicative –ing clause)*. On the other hand, the present study does not show instances of: a) conventional formulae that could be classified under the (I'M) PLEASED lexico-semantic type, like the elliptical *(my) pleasure*, or the non-elliptical *it's/it was/that's my/a pleasure*; b) more conventional GAs like *anytime*, *don't mention it*, *don't worry about it, not at all*, *(it's/that's/you're) okay, (that's) alright* (see section 2.3.2); c) forms attested in certain varieties of English, like *of course, awesome, great, you got it, absolutely, no bother/trouble, (it's/that's) grand, yes* and *for nothing* (see Schneider, 2005; Ouafeu, 2009; Rüegg, 2014); d) and more informal variants of NO PROBLEM, like *no prob(s), no problemo* and *no biggie*. One reason for this might be that some of the above GAs are possibly inappropriate to high-cost benefits like those characterizing the scenarios relevant to my corpus – for instance, *anytime*, *of course, awesome, great, you got it,* and *absolutely* are mainly attested with low costs of the benefit (see Katz et al., 2007; Rüegg, 2014). Another reason might be that some GAs are not typical of AmE (see Schneider, 2005; Rüegg, 2014).

My corpus shows the combination of two or more head acts in complex GAs, although quite infrequently, a finding that is similar to those in Schneider (2005) and Rüegg (2014), but different from those in Farenkia (2012, 2013). In my data, complex GAs almost equally occur in 4 situational contexts out of 6, whereas those attested in

Farenkia (2012, 2013) are more concentrated in one specific context. The combinatorial options of multiple head acts in my corpus generally involve at least one token of each strategy and lexico-semantic type. This gives rise to 6 combinatorial options of strategies, and 7 of lexico-semantic types, attested in 11 complex GAs. Such combinatorial patterns are not mentioned in previous studies, except for Schneider (2005), who attests 17 combinatorial options; however, none of my combinatorial options resembles those he mentions. On the whole, in my corpus (IT'S) GOOD, (I'M) PLEASED (i.e. *expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*) and YES (i.e. *accepting the thanking*) mainly occur in combination, while NO PROBLEM (i.e. *minimizing the benefit*), YOU'RE WELCOME (i.e. *expressing appreciation of the* addressee), and THANK YOU (i.e. *reciprocating the thanking*) mainly occur alone; besides, YES and YOU'RE WELCOME always and mainly occur in GA-initial position, respectively, while NO PROBLEM never occurs in GA-initial position. In this respect, my findings about YOU'RE WELCOME and NO PROBLEM are similar to those in Schneider (2005) – except that the sequencing pattern of NO PROBLEM is specific to my data – while those about (I'M) PLEASED and THANK YOU are not. Overall, my findings on the occurrence of multiple head acts in complex GAs suggest that complex GAs might converge toward prototypical realizations, but also that they are adaptable to context-specific topics and goals. However, the low number of complex GAs is too limited to make reliable generalizations about their combinatorial options, their sequencing and situational distribution.

Additional modifiers of GA head acts are infrequent in my corpus. Some, namely, the exclaim "oh", the intensifier "at all", and a first name used as an address term are attested also in Schneider (2005) and Farenkia (2013) while others, that is, the intensifiers "so" and "really", have not been previously identified. On the other hand, additional modifiers identified in other studies, like the exclaim "ah", the intensifiers "quite", "more than", "very", and "much", and several other types of address terms (e.g. honorifics, professional titles, endearment terms), are not found in my data. One possible reason for these differences between my study and others is that the GA head act modifiers are context-specific (Schneider, 2005: 124) and subject to individual preferences.

Finally, supportive moves are attested in my corpus as a far less frequent GA component that the head acts, as is the case in Schneider (2005), Farenkia (2012, 2013) and Rüegg (2014). Like the head acts, they can be examined both in terms of strategies

and semantic patterns. The strategies identified in my corpus are *offering, motivating the minimization of the benefit, motivating the expression of pleasure, commenting on the benefit, requesting information* and *requesting a change of conduct*, which are a subset of those attested in Schneider (2005) and Farenkia (2012, 2013). Other strategies which do not occur in my corpus include: "negotiating a follow-up meeting/repetition of the event (in the near future)" and "offering the opportunity for reciprocation/remuneration", which occur in Schneider (2005: 126); "wish/hope", "empathy", "joke", "promise", "suggestion/advice" and "question", which occur in Farenkia (2012, 2013). The supportive move semantic types I identified in my corpus are *positive evaluation of the benefit enjoyability of the benefit*, *emotional impact*, *willingness to act, imminent provision of the benefit, background knowledge, triviality of the benefit, appropriate alternatives* and *verification of the enjoyability of the benefit*. Several of them overlap with some supportive move tokens attested in Schneider (2005) and Farenkia (2012, 2013), which suggests some degree of conventionalization; however, since they are apparently classified only as strategies, it is difficult to establish correspondences across the studies.

In sum, my study shows similarities and differences with respect to previous research on the same topic. As in previous studies, my findings show that GAs display 3 structures (simple, multiple head acts, head acts + supportive moves), exemplify 5 head act strategies, and exemplify many conventional GA types (i.e. YOU'RE WELCOME, NO PROBLEM, THANK YOU, (I'M) PLEASED) and tokens (e.g. *you're welcome, no problem, yeah, sure, mmm (hmm) thank you* etc.). In addition, they show that the AmE participants generally prefer YOU'RE WELCOME and NO PROBLEM and more infrequently employ types like (I'M) PLEASED, but also that the first two types are mainly used alone, and that YOU'RE WELCOME is preferred in GA-first position. My findings also show that the strategies of supportive moves in my corpus are recurrent (thus, more conventionally employed), and that also many of my supportive move semantic types are instantiated in other corpora. Finally, they reveal that some additional modifiers of the head acts are more recurrently employed than others, in particular the exclaim "oh", the intensifier "at all", and first names used as address term. Overall, this suggests that GAs are partly conventionalized speech acts, which, however, can adapt to the interactional needs and communicative style of different speakers.

Unlike previous studies, my findings show a higher frequency of oral elicited GAs, a different dispersion of head act strategies and semantic types (in particular, the almost complementary distribution of *expressing appreciation of the addressee*/YOU'RE WELCOME vs. *minimizing the benefit*/NO PROBLEM), the occurrence of the "new" *you're welcome+object* and *nice* variants, and the lack of many conventional GA tokens (in particular, *(my) pleasure* and the like). They also reveal different combinatorial options of the head acts in complex GAs, their different dispersion in many situational contexts, and the lack of many intensifiers and address terms in particular. Finally, they reveal that supportive moves in my corpus never occur in simple GAs, and that my corpus does not instantiate all the possible strategic and semantic patterns of supportive moves. However, all the above-mentioned differences between studies may be due partly to differences in the findings properly, and partly to different research goals, but also methodological and analytical approaches.

On the whole, my study shows that different types of data collection methods affect the amount of relevant data that is collected, albeit with reference to the "same" phenomenon. It has also shown that GAs have varied, yet also, preferred strategies and lexico-semantic encodings, that is more and less typical instantiations, and that the choice of one option or another results from some common forms of interactional behaviour, but also it depends at least partly upon contextual variables (e.g. the interlocutors' degree of power and social distance). However, in this study stable correlations between strategies/formulations and contextual variables are difficult to pin down with confidence, and could be the goal of future studies. Finally, at the moment a comprehensive comparison of findings on GAs across studies is rendered difficult by the use of different analytical methods, and by the occasional lack of explicit information regarding their data classification procedures.

5.4 Assessment of the present work

The present work grew out of my initial intention to generally analyse and classify the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of GAs in AmE. Given that not many studies had been carried out on GAs and that, in particular, no one had investigated role play data[37], I decided to study the use of GAs in (American) English, by examining audio-

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37 However, see Gesuato (forthcoming) in the *References* section.

recorded role play transcripts. Furthermore, since the previous studies on English GAs had used different methodological approaches, which undermined the comparability of their findings, I decided to construct my own analytical method, which combined procedures from previous studies, wherever possible, and enriched it with new criteria where needed. Overall, the findings from my corpus offer insights into how some AmE speakers employ GAs, but also partly confirm and partly enrich those from previous studies.

The present work has two main strengths – its method and its data. First, the method has described and motivated every single step of the analysis, which previous studies on GAs had at times disregarded or left incomplete. It has also included a procedure for identifying GAs in larger pieces of discourse and for classifying GA realizations that is based on explicit criteria and which can thus be validated in other studies, and possibly adjusted and enriched as a result of the analysis of further data. Additionally, it has analysed supportive moves like head acts, in terms of strategies and lexico-semantic types. The second main strength of the present study is the use of role play transcripts as data, which approximate speech in real-life situations, and which has revealed how speakers produce heterogeneous and at times hesitating GAs, and also that gratitude expressions may pass unacknowledged, or be replaced by reactive strategies other than realizing a GA.

On the other hand, there are two main weaknesses in the present study. The main one is the limited amount of data available for analysis, which is representative only of one English variety, one type of speakers (young adults) and does not include corpus-based or other spontaneously produced data. This affects the generalizability of the findings, and made it difficult to formulate reliable correlations between strategies/lexico-semantic types and situational variables.

An additional problem is that the labels of some supportive move strategies and semantic types show room for improvement: some of them are quite generic, as is the case with *offering* (i.e. avoiding more specific labels like *offering a service* vs. *offering a material benefit*), while others are more specific, as in the case of *requesting information* vs. *requesting a change of conduct* (and not, e.g., just *requesting*). Yet, in the absence of more tokens of the same types, I could not refine my labels any further.

On the whole, possible ways of further validating my study or improving and expanding upon my method might include: 1) having a co-rater apply the coding scheme I devised to the same data, so as to verify its clarity, validity and reliability; 2) checking whether and to what extent the tokens of GAs attested in previous studies can be suitably classified on the basis of the current coding scheme; and 3) submitting incomplete versions of the corpus transcripts to native speakers and ask them to fill in the blanks where GAs occurred in the original interaction, and see if the same, or similar, GAs are collected.

5.5 Suggestions for future research

Although the present work has addressed many of the issues relevant to the study of GAs, there still are areas that can be further explored, which suggest additional venues for future research.

First, to validate the present findings, more research is needed on oral data, spontaneously produced (as in Rüegg, 2014), elicited through role play interactions (as in the present study), which could also be video-recorded, and scripted (as in films, situation comedies or plays). This would make it possible to examine a wider range of conversational phenomena (including prosody), to explore non-verbal ways of acknowledging gratitude (a topic marginally addressed in Jung, 1994), and to observe if they combine with verbal strategies. This way, it would be possible to outline a more accurate and thorough profile of GA behaviour.

In addition, research on GAs should also be carried out on data representative of additional English varieties (like Australian English, New Zealand English, Indian English and South African English), relevant to different types of communicative situations (e.g. differing in levels of formality and relevant to various objects of gratitude) and amenable to quantitative analysis (i.e. easily searchable for patterns, as in electronic corpora). This would make it possible to: a) check how context-specific or context-independent the patterns identified in previous studies are; b) more reliably determine the frequency of occurrence and distribution of the patterns identified across communicative contexts; c) trace a more complete and accurate profile of the prototypical realizations of GAs.

In addition, future research might set out to analyse GAs from alternative perspectives, such as the politeness aspects of GA strategies, partly explored by Farenkia (2012, 2013). This could be approached through the model proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), which is based on the notion of 'face' (i.e. the projection of the self, its wants and needs into social life), and considers 'positive face wants' (i.e. the need for approbation from and integration into a social group) and 'negative face wants' (i.e. the need to be unrestricted by external impositions). In this respect, one could investigate if 'positive' and/or 'negative politeness' strategies are employed to realize GAs, which are both a polite speech act but also a 'Face Threatening Act' (FTA), as well as if the aforementioned strategies are used to endanger or safeguard the thanker's or the thankee's positive or negative face. An additional perspective could be that of examining extended thanking exchanges, rather than merely the thanking head acts and the responses immediately following them, so as to check whether GAs may occur over discontinuous discourse segments, and if they are co-constructed with the interlocutor. Finally, another possible suggestion for future research might be comparing and contrasting GAs with other types of reacting speech acts (e.g. compliment responses, apology responses) so as to better identify the properties that are peculiar to them and those that are relevant to reacting speech acts more in general.

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Appendix A

Transcription conventions

[]	Overlap
()	Non-verbal sounds
(unclear)	Unclear utterance
.	Falling intonation + short pause
?	Rising intonation
CAPITALIZATION	Emphasis
,	Short pause
…	Long pause
[…]	Omission

Scenario descriptions chosen by the study participants

Set A: the thankee is Equal (=P) to & Intimate with (-D) the thanker

TH-O1-A01	
<u>Speaker A</u>: It is your birthday. You are celebrating it with a group of friends. The time comes for you to open up presents. Your brother/sister's girl/boyfriend gives you her/his gift for you. It is something that you like and/or find useful.	<u>Speaker B</u>: It is your boy-/girl-friend's sister/brother's birthday. She/he is giving a party and you have been invited. The time comes for the party[38] girl/boy to open up the presents. You give her/him your present. It is something that you hope she/he will like and/or find useful.
TH-O1-A05	
<u>Speaker A</u>: A friend helped you to study for a demanding maths exam. A few days ago you sat the exam and received a good mark on it. Today you call up your friend to let her/him know.	<u>Speaker B</u>: You helped a friend prepare for a demanding maths exam. He/she was supposed to take it a few days ago. Today you receive a call from him/her.
TH-O1-A06	
<u>Speaker A</u>: You are getting together with a friend for lunch after not seeing him/her for a couple of months. For no special reason – you two are not celebrating anything – he/she surprises you with a nicely wrapped present. You open it up, and see it is a CD (or sweater, or book…).	<u>Speaker B</u>: You are getting together with a friend for lunch after not seeing him/her for a couple of months. For no special reason – you two are not celebrating anything – you have decided to surprise him/her with a nicely wrapped present, a CD (or sweater, or book…).

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[38] This is the original wording, although my supervisor told me that *party* should have been replaced by *birthday*.

TH-O1-A08	
Speaker A: You needed to learn to use PowerPoint to be able to use it at your workplace. You asked a friend to help you out, since he/she is very good with computers. He/she was very patient with you. You took notes during his/her tutorial. Now that you've studied them, you can use the program quite confidently. Today you are seeing your friend.	Speaker B: You are good at using the computer. You have recently helped a friend learn how to use PowerPoint, which he/she needed at work. Today you are seeing your friend.

TH-O1-A13	
Speaker A: You are a university student. You share a flat with a young man/woman who works full time. You are studying hard for your final exams. Sometimes you stay up until late at night. Tonight you come home late and your flat-mate is already at home.	Speaker B: You work full time and share a flat with a university student. These days he/she is studying hard for his/her final exams. You've noticed that sometimes he/she stays up until late at night. Tonight you've come home before him/her and, after having your dinner, you decided to cook him/her a simple dish so that he/she will only have to warm it up when he/she comes back. Your flat-mate comes home.

Set B: the thankee is Equal (=P) to & Stranger (+D) with the thanker

TH-O1-B02	
Speaker A: You are an elderly man/woman at the post office. You have kindly asked the post office employee to fill out a form for you to send some registered mail, explaining that you haven't got your glasses with you, and adding that you would be willing to wait. However, the post office employee has refused to fill in the form for you, claiming that he/she is too busy. A younger man/woman queuing up behind you volunteers to help you, and fills out the form for you. You feel grateful to him/her for his/her kindness.	Speaker B: You are at the post office. You are queuing behind an elderly man/woman. He/she has asked the post office employee to fill out a form for him/her to send some registered mail, explaining that he/she hasn't got his/her glasses with him/her, and adding that that he/she would be willing to wait. However, the post office employee has refused to fill in the form for him/her, claiming that he/she is too busy. You volunteer to help the man/woman in front of you, and fill out the form for him/her in no time.
TH-O1-B03	
Speaker A: You are driving home. Suddenly you hear a strange noise, so you stop the car to check what it is, and realize you have a flat tyre. Thankfully, at that moment a cyclist/biker/motorist rides past, and sees that you need help. He/she stops and helps you change the tyre. You are relieved and feel extremely grateful.	Speaker B: You are driving/cycling home. You see a car stopped on the shoulder and a man/woman trying to change a tyre. You stop to give a hand, and together succeed in the job.

TH-O1-B04	
Speaker A: These days you are staying with a friend/sibling who you don't see very often because he/she does not live in the same town/area/country as you. You have both been invited over to a friend of his/hers' for dinner. You two go over there and meet other people. The food is great and you enjoy the evening. When you leave, the host accompanies you to the door.	Speaker B: You have invited a friend of yours over for dinner. He/she tells you that a friend/sibling is staying with him/her, and so you extend the invitation to him/her as well. Your friend and his friend/sibling have dinner at your place and meet other people you have invited. When your friend and his/her friend/sibling leave, you accompany them to the door. Your friend's friend/sibling looks very pleased.

TH-O1-B05	
Speaker A: You are a tourist. You have spent the day at a fantastic sight-seeing location far away from your hotel. You board the bus that is going to take you back to the hotel where you are staying. You sit down, tired but happy, and mutter to yourself "Oh gosh, I'm starving". The man/woman sitting next to you overhears you and offers you a piece of fruit. You hesitate, but he/she insists, and in the end you accept it and eat it. You eat it, and find it is refreshing and satisfying.	Speaker B: You have boarded a crowded bus. You are carrying three bags full of groceries. You find an empty seat next to someone who looks like a tourist. You overhear him/her mutter to him-/her-self "Oh gosh, I'm starving". You offer him/her a piece of fruit. He/she hesitates at first, but then accepts it and eats it.

Set C: the thankee is Subordinate (-P) to & Intimate (-D) with the thanker

TH-O1-C01	
Speaker A: You are the manager of a large firm. You have to prepare the annual financial report for tomorrow's meeting. But you have a bad headache and can't concentrate. You tell your secretary about it. After a while, you decide to go home and rest a bit. As you get up to leave, your secretary knocks on the door. You let him/her in and he/she hands you a draft of the report for tomorrow.	Speaker B: You work as the secretary to the manager of a large firm. Today your chief is supposed to prepare the annual financial report for tomorrow's meeting. But he/she has a bad headache and can't concentrate, and he/she tells you about it. After a while, he/she decides to go home and rest a bit. As he/she gets up to leave, you knock on the door, and hand your chief a draft of the report for tomorrow.
TH-O1-C03	
Speaker A: Your young neighbour often babysits your 2-year-old child, and this way you are free to go to work and run your errands. You are very pleased with and grateful to your neighbour because the baby is well-taken care of and always has a lot of fun. Today you are paying your baby-sitter her due.	Speaker B: You are in your early twenties. You do odd jobs for a living. One of these is babysitting your neighbour's 2-year-old child, which you enjoy doing, since you like spending time with children. Today you are going to get paid by the child's mother/father.
TH-O1-C04	
Speaker A: You are the CEO of a company. A few days ago you left on a business trip abroad. Your secretary planned it in every detail, as usual, and everything went smoothly. Now you are back and you see your secretary.	Speaker B: You work as a secretary to the CEO of a company. A few days ago he/she left on a business trip abroad. You planned it in every detail, trying to be as efficient as possible. Now your boss is back.

TH-O1-C06	
Speaker A: You are a full professor. While you were in a meeting yesterday, a new junior colleague, a former student of yours, left a Christmas present in your office. Today you call him/her up.	Speaker B: You have recently been hired as an assistant professor (or research fellow) at university. Yesterday you wanted to give a Christmas present to your former mentor, now older colleague, but when you went to his/her office, he/she was in a meeting. So you asked the secretary to leave the present in his/her office. Today you receive a call from your former professor.

Set D: the thankee is Subordinate (-P) to & Stranger (+D) with the thanker

TH-O1-D01	
Speaker A: You spent five wonderful days on holiday in Croatia. You were a paying guest in a private home. Your host/hostess did all he/she could to make you feel at home. You are now taking your leave.	Speaker B: You rent out rooms to tourists in your town in Croatia. A guest who has spent five days in your home is now about to leave. You got along well with each other.
TH-O1-D02	
Speaker A: You are the CEO of a company. A few days ago you left on a business trip abroad. Your new secretary planned it very well, and everything went smoothly. Now you are back and you see your secretary.	Speaker B: You have recently been hired to work as a secretary to the CEO of a company. A few days ago he/she left on a business trip abroad. You planned it in every detail, trying to be as efficient as possible and make a good impression. Now your boss is back.

Set E: the thankee is Superior (+P) to & Intimate (-D) with the thanker

TH-O1-E01	
Speaker A: You are an international exchange student. You had to hand in a term paper to your psychology teacher a few days ago, otherwise you wouldn't pass the course. But what you had written up on your own was not very good. You went to your teaching assistant's office hours and asked for help. Your TA spent a whole afternoon with you revising your paper and giving you smart advice. You've learnt you got top marks on your paper, so you go back to you teaching assistant to let him/her know.	Speaker B: You are a graduate student. You work as a teaching assistant for a psychology professor. Not long ago, one of your students, an international exchange student, came to see you during your office hours asking for help on his/her term paper that he/she needed to hand in to pass the course. The paper was not very good, and you spent the whole afternoon revising the paper with the student and giving him/her some tips. Today that student is back.
TH-O1-E02[39]	
Speaker A: You are a university student. Both for personal reasons and for study purposes you would like to spend the summer in Germany. Last week, the teaching assistant to your German literature professor provided you with the information that enabled you to apply for a scholarship and find good accommodation. Today you go to her/his office hours to update him/her on what you've accomplished so far.	Speaker B: You work as a teaching assistant to a university professor of German literature. Last week, a student came to your office hours asking for information on how to apply for a scholarship so as to spend the summer studying in Germany. You also gave him/her suggestions on where to look for reasonably priced accommodation. Today that student is back.

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[39] This episode was adapted by my supervisor from Held (1996: 372).

TH-O1-E05	
Speaker A: You are a university student. You have just come back from Spain where you spent an exciting and productive month attending a language course. Your mother/father paid for the trip, accommodation and course. He/she has come to pick you up at the airport and you have a present for him/her.	Speaker B: Your son/daughter has just come back from Spain where he/she spent an exciting and productive month attending a language course. You paid for the trip, accommodation and course. You have driven to the airport to pick him/her up.

Set F: the thankee is Superior (+P) to & Stranger (+D) with the thanker

TH-O1-F01	
Speaker A: You are a university student. You do not attend classes steadily. You have gone to your professor's office hours to ask for clarifications about a topic he/she has already covered in class. This is a professor you don't know very well apart from seeing him/her in the large lecture hall. He/she spends a full hour going over the topic with you.	Speaker B: You are a university professor. A student comes to your office hours asking for clarifications on a topic you have already covered in class when he/she was absent. This is a student you don't know personally apart from seeing him/her in the large lecture hall. You spend a full hour going over that topic with him/her.
TH-O1-F02	
Speaker A: You are a university student. You spent the weekend with a friend in her/his parents' flat/cabin in the mountains. You had a lot of fun skiing, and your friend's father/mother, who you hadn't met before, and who was there with you two, not only kindly kept house for you and your friend, but basically treated you like a daughter/son. You enjoyed your stay there very much. Now you are taking your leave from your host.	Speaker B: You and your husband/wife have a flat/cabin in the mountains. You are spending your holiday there. Your son/daughter and a friend of his/her from University you hadn't met before reached you over there for the weekend. You tried your best to make your son/daughter's friend feel welcome. Now your son/daughter and his/her friend are taking their leave.

TH-O1-F03	
Speaker A: You are a university student. You are studying foreign languages. Last semester, one of your professors held a language course in which he/she discussed topics and assigned readings about the culture of the country where that language is spoken. You spent the summer in that country and found that what you had learnt in the course was both accurate and useful. Today you go to that professor's office hours to take care of a small business (e.g. to ask if you can audit his/her course this semester without being officially enrolled, or to ask for bibliographic references for a term paper, or to have a form signed to apply for an internship on campus…).	Speaker B: You are a university professor. Last semester you held a language course in which you discussed topics and assigned readings about the culture of the country where that language is spoken. It was a course attended by a large number of students, and so you didn't get to know them personally. Today, at the beginning of the new semester, a student comes to your office hours.

List of interactions considered for analysis

Note: a) The speech acts of thanking are italicized; b) the GAs are underlined with a straight line; and the turn segments that I categorized as *other* are underlined with a wavy line.

TH-O1-A01

B: Hi Charlotte, happy birthday!

A: *Oh, thank you, thank you! Oh, d'you… d'you… thank you for the present!*

B: Oh, you're welcome!

A: Um… [ok].

B: [I] spent a long time searching for it, [so I hope] that you really like it.

A: [Oh really?] Oh really?

B: [mmmh]

A: [*I*] *appreciate your effort and* [*time*.]

B: [Yeah.]

A: Oh, Can I open it?

B: Yeah, sure, go ahead!

A: (unwrapping noise)

A: Wow, it's a new computer!

B: [Yeah!]

A: [*Thank*] *you!*

B: [Mmm hmm].

A: [Wow], it's really nice, I like the colour!

B: You do?

A: Yeah!

B: That's great, cause I thought that would be really useful for you in school as well.

A: Mmm hmm… so, like does it have like wireless connection?

B: Yeah, I think it does!

A: Ok, can I try it?

B: Yeah, go ahead!

A: Ok. (noise) Wow, it's really nice!

B: [Mmm hmm,]

A: [I like it!]

B: oh, that's great, [that's great!]

A: [It's really] comfortable to use too.

B: That's great, that's, that's really awesome.

TH-O1-A05

A: *Hey Emma, I just wanted to thank you for helping me study for that hard math test I had a couple of days ago, I got a really good grade on it so, I appreciate your help.*

B: <u>Oh you're welcome Rosina, I was happy to know that you wanted my help and, I'm always here to help you out with that kind of stuff</u>.

A: So do you have anything that you want me to do as a favour in return?

B: Maybe you could help me with my English test?

A: Ok, sounds good!

B: Alright, talk to you later.

A: Bye!

TH-O1-A06

A: *Ok, wow, thank you, that was, that is so nice, I, I feel really bad for not, for not getting you anything, I mean this is really lovely, I, I REALLY like this album.*

B: Really? I thought you wouldn't like this artist, but you know, it was on sale so I just got it.

A: That's very nice of you. Um, where d'you, how d'you think of it?

B: What d'you [mean how'd I think of it?

A: [That's really sweet] [What'd you]

B: [I] got it at Amoeba. (suppressed laughter)

A: You got it at Amoeba? Ok, that's nice. [Well…]

B: [you know], you like Mimosa right?

A: I do. It's so, thoughtful and considerate. So I wonder if the waiter is around. Er … [(laughter)]

B: [(laughter)] So how have you been? We haven't seen each other in so long…

A: I know, right, how long has it been now?

B: It's been like ten years.

A: What are you up to these days?

B: I am… studying at UC Berkeley! (laughs).

A: Really?

B: (laughs)

A: Small world.

B: (laughs)

A: I was there five years ago, got my PhD in neuroscience. [Now I…]

B: [Oh,] what do you study?

A: Um… I'm working on er, on cognitive linguistics.

B: [That's] so fascinating.

A: [(unclear)]   Um, it is! [It's, it can be dry] at points, but, um,

B: [(laughs mildly)]

A: you know the research, research gets me by. So have you any idea what you're, er, thinking of doing

B: Um…

A: after you graduate?

B: I'm actually majoring in linguistics as well.

A: Majoring in linguistics, [wow!]

B: [Yeah.]

A: Any idea, do you want to do research with that?

B: Yes, probably.

A: Really? That's cool. Um, what else, what else are you up to these days?

B: I want to go to a concert, um, a dub step concert.

A: Real[ly?]

B: [Si]milar to the… [album I got you.]

A: [Oh, the one you got me?]

B: Yeah!

A: Oh, that's so thoughtful.

B: Would you like to come?

A: Absolutely. It's so nice of you. I feel like, I feel like I should get you something now, but, I feel, I feel really bad for not getting you something. How about this? I get, I get the dinner.

B: What dinner?

A. We're, we're having dinner.

B: (laughs)

A: [Can't you tell?]

B: [Are we?] (laughs) [Are we having dinner?]

A: [(Can't you tell?)] I guess our waiter's pretty slow. (exhales) I guess we should probably be having dinner some point soon, if the waiter ever came around.

B: Oh, I must have been dozing off, we're in a restaurant. [(laughs)]

A: [(laughs)] Oh, this is silly. Um, waiter!

B: (la[ughs)]

A: [Can I get my]… water, please? (exhales) So, are you working anywhere?

B: I'm a student! [(laughs). I work]

A: [Students work]

B: at the Self-paced Centre

A: Self-paced for what?

B: Self-paced for computer science.

A: Self-paced,

B: Do you like computer science?

A: Um, sometimes. I remember taking some. It was, it was pretty, pretty rough,

B: (laughs)

A: but I'm glad you, I'm glad you, do you like it?

B: I like it. I like compute… computational linguistics.

A: [(unclear)]

B: [You said] you've done modelling in linguistics, right? (laughs)

A: Um, I've, I've done a bit of work on it yes, some, like, tokenizing and lexical analysis. It's, it's kinda dry, I don't know if I want to spend the rest of my life doing it.

B: Well you can always switch to… sounds of music and how that affects perception.

B: (unclear)

A: Cause you like music right?

A: Yeah,

B: (laughs)

A: yeah.

B: I hope you like the album I got you.

A: I DO, *thank you*. Do you have you any idea when the waiter is coming back?

B: (laughs) I DON'T know, we might have to move to another restaurant.

A: Oh dear. Hmm, if you want to get food, what would you wanna get? I feel like we should leave.

B: Sushi bar.

A: Sushi bar? That sounds good.

B: I don't like pizza. This pizza parlour sucks.

A: (Laughs) You don't even… you haven't even tasted it yet.

B: Yelp reviews were bad.

A: Hmm.

TH-O1-A08

A: Hey Maddie, d'you have a... spare half an hour? [Or so…]

B: [Yeah!]   What for?

A: I'm not very tech-savvy and I need to make a power-point for a teach-in that I'm doing for V-Day at UC Berkeley, do you think you could give me some pointers?

B: Yeah, not a problem! Um, it's really easy, just er… I will help you with it tomorrow, and

A: [right]

B: [we'll] figure it out!

A: That sounds good. *Thank you!*

B: <u>No problem</u>

TH-O1-A13

B: Hey dude, how was your day of studying?

A: It was alright. Er… didn't quite accomplish as much as was, as was intended…

B: [Yeah…]

A: [As per] the usual. W-w-what exactly are you doing home from work so early [for]?

B: [Oh! I,] I came home early t-to er, make you a little bit of food, cause I knew that, you have a big test tomorrow, thought you might enjoy… a dinner, wouldn't have to… spend time making it.

A: *Thank you! That, that's actually extremely nice*, w-w-what are you making?

B: Some… wonderful mashed potatoes, a little bit of…

A: I do love mashed potatoes.

B: … onions and mushrooms on top.

A: Relevant to my interests.

B: Nice. Good steak, to… build some protein…

A: *Well, thank you! I, I mean, I mean studying, studying the brain and such, I, I can tell you that those are all great brain foods, I'm excited for the steak*.

B: Yeah.

A: Help me go along there, I, I hate, I hate to do this but I, I actually have finals coming up soon and I, is, is, is it alright if I stay up a bit late, I'll I'll study in the living room.

B: (unclear)

A: *I appreciate that you made the meal and I feel bad*.

B: Yeah, yeah I mean, as long as you're not making too much noise…

A: Yeah

B: Doesn't matter, I won't mind at all.

A: Studying's a, a fairly quiet activity, as far as I've experienced thus far. I think it will be alright. *Thank you for dinner though! [I really]* appreciate that!

B: [Yeah.]   You're welcome! Are, you think it's gonna be a late night tonight?

A: I, absolutely. I, I have, I have a mid-term, it's an MCB, I, honestly haven't really gone to class in the last week or two, and, it it's about to be rough.

B: Yeah, that, that happens…

A: [Yeah]

B: [I know] that feeling.

A: yeah.

B: But, then you're out in the working world, [and…]

A: [Yeah.]

B: You don't have to take tests, but…

A: Every day is a test.

B: Every day is a test.

A: I, I semi- look forward to it.

B: Yeah. Exciting, but, enjoy your dinner.

A: I will do. *Thank you!*

B: You're welcome.

A: I suppose I'll see you in the morning. *Thank you again.*

B: Good luck with the studying.

A: *Thank you.*

TH-O1-B02

A: *Ok, thank you miss, that's, that's so kind of you. This, this postman over here, really just, just these day and age, these people just don't understand what it's like to be so old.*

B: [I]

A: [*I*], *I forgot my glasses at home and, and this postman, he wouldn't, he wouldn't fill out the form with me, what's wrong with people these days?*

B: People are really annoying, angry, bitter… blue (mild laughter) collar workers.

A: Hmm….

B: You know, I have a grandfather who is, you know, near-sighted like you, so I always help him write his prescriptions.

A: Really? That's so sweet of you. It's nice for people like you to be, to be so considerate of old people in this day and age.

B: Yes. I am one of the few young people who have some decency left.

A: Have some respect for your elders.

B: I do.

A: I'm, I'm so happy for you. *Thank you for existing*.

B: (Laughs) You're welcome. What were you mailing?

A: I was mailing, I, I was mailing some food to my grandson,

B: (laughs)

A: His name is Alexander. I hope the package comes in, comes all right. He's off to college and now I have this assortment of like, jerky and nuts and dried fruit that I'm sure he'll love.

B: Oh really?

A: [Yes]

B: [He] likes … jerky?

A: Sometimes. I think, I don't really know, I just, I just got some food that I think he would like.

B: That's so cute. Why don't you save the food for yourself since you can't work nowadays and can't really afford food? (suppressed laughter)

A: Well I, I still have my, I still have a pension, I, how dare you

B: [(laughs)]

A: [assume that I can't afford food! Who are you to say I can't afford food? Hmm!]

B: Hey,

A: [Miss, you're out of line]

B: [I'm helping you write your], your, your dumb,

A: Yes

B: letter.

A: Yes. *Thank you,*

B: (laughs)

A: *thank you for your kindness. It's nice to see people like you these days.* And um, so what, what are you here for?

B: I'm here to mail some packages to my pen pal in Japan.

A: Oh really? What do YOU guys talk about there?

B: I'm practicing my language with my pen pal.

A: Oh, very nice. Is he, are you both communicating in Japanese or

B: [that's right]

A: [Do] you communicate in mutual different languages?

B: Well I'm practicing Japanese and he's practicing English.

A: Oh really! So does he write back in English?

B: Yes he does.

A: That's so cute

B: Right, (laughs) so about your pension, does it keep you… keep you alive (laughs)?

A: [Well I'm not dead am I? At least not yet. I hope not…]

B: [(laughs)]

B: How old are you? (laughing)

A: That would present some problems... I'm, I'm 73.

B: Wow!

A: [So, I hopefully have a few years left, and then...]

B: [(maybe suppressed laughter)]

B: Where does your grandson go to school?

A: He goes to school in University of Hawaii.

B: Oh, wow, that's a long way. Do you think the jerky will make it overseas [safely]?

A: [(laughs)]

A: Well jerk, jerky KEEPS for YEARS so I think it'll be fine.

B: Would it?

A: Yeah

B: (laughs)

A: That's, that's what it's designed to do. Jerky keeps, I mean jerky stays literally months and months and months without going bad.

B: Right. [Do you think…]

A: [Do you like jerky?]

B: No, I hate jerky. Do you think you will come to this post office again after the way the post office worker treated you?

A: Well there's one down the way, not too far, so I think I'll try that one. I think I'll write a complaint and send it to his manager

B: (laughs)

A: Unfortunately things like that are never very useful.

B: Hmm. Well, it was very nice meeting you sir, old man. I hope you found this letter useful,

A: I [did]

B: [this] form.

A: *Thank you.* Now to take this off to the rude old postman,

B: (laughs)

A: *thank you.*

B: Goodbye.

TH-O1-B03-01

B: I see you need some help with er, your tire, how's that going?

A: Ah, it is not… going well, gonna be honest. I, I, I was coming down 80 East and all of a sudden I started hearing some slapping and that was wrong. Pulled over, I, I honestly have no idea what's wrong.

B: Do you know how to change a tire?

A: I,

B: [Do] you want some help?

A: [I]'ve never done this in my life.

B: Really?

A: Yeah.

B: Do you er, well, do you have a, a bike pump, do you have a…?

A: Ah, [unclear] no.

B: No? No, oh well, it's a good thing I have one here on my bike,

A: oh

B: [to help you out…]

A: [Thanks] goodness.]

B: Do you have a… tire patch?

A: Yes.

B: Oh, good! Well er, here… let's start by taking the wheel off, off the bike.

A: Ta-ta-ta.

B: And er, now we gotta… take the tube, tube off so… just give you a hand here!

A: Oh, yeah! Huh, it's coming off nicely.

B: Oh, very nice. And then er, we'll just inflate it here, [sweet, sweet,

A: [pfff pfff

B: [get you] on your way, was it a nice ride on the hills there?

A: [pff pff]

A: It, it, it was really good, I'm gonna be honest. It, it actually rained on me about half-way through for a couple of minutes, but…

B: Yeah.

A: It was swell.

B: Still, it's a beautiful day today though…

A: [Yeah.]

B: [the] sun finally poked through the clouds.

A: Yeah. I, I, I don't know how much time you spend up here until… but, but they're, they're, right now is the time to be here.

B: I love, yeah, I love riding my bike around…

A: Yeah.

B: But it's er, maybe we should go riding sometime.

A: Yeah. Hey, I, I actually just moved here from Long Beach

B: [Ok]

A: [and] I've, I've been trying to get a group together for riding, haven't been able to find one yet… then.

B: D'you usually go weekend mornings?

A: Yeah.

B: Maybe about 9 a.m. or so, head up on the hills, get a nice thing, come back, have a nice… late lunch?

A: Yeah, *I appreciate that!*

B: [Yeah?]

A:[I mean], I'd actually like to learn a little bit about er, how to, how to take care of my bike as far as maintenance goes a little better,

B: [hu-huh]

A: [cause] obviously [I'm slightly useless.]

B: [Definitely a good thing], you don't want to have this situation happen again.

A: Yeah, hopefully not. *Again, again, thank you*

B: [yeah]

A: [*for*] *stopping*.

B: Glad that we were able to fix it, and have a… nice rest of your ride!

A: Absolutely!

B: (exhales, mild laughter)

A: Enjoy yourself sir, *thank you!*

TH-O1-B03-02

A: Oh my God, what is that noise? Flat tire, seriously? Oh, here comes someone.

B: Hey, d'you need some help?

A: Please.

B: [Hey]

A: [I] don't know how to change a tire.

B: Ok. I got this. Uh… do you have a spare tire with you?

A: There should be one in the back, yeah.

B: And do you have a jack?

A: Yes.

B: All right. We got this. (*some whispering*)

A: *Oh my God, thank you so much.*

B: No problem.

TH-O1-B04

A: *Well, thank you Emma for having us over, I had a great time meeting you and all your lovely friends.*

B: Of course you're, you're welcome to come over any time you want. It was nice meeting you too and I hope to see you again soon.

A: Yeah I'm staying for another week with Katie so maybe we can get together another time?

B: Of course yeah, that'd be great!

A: Alright, so what was the recipe for that DELICIOUS lemon cake you made?

B: Ah well, let me write it down for you.

A: *Right, thank you. I shall try it at home*.

B: You're welcome.

A: Alright, see you later!

B: Bye!

B: God, it's such a crowded bus!

A: Huh, uff, I know, right? Ok, Ok. Oh, gosh, I'm starving. [After] the long day.

B: [Oh,]

A: huh?

B: Are you, are you traveling here on a vacation?

A: Yeah, I am.

B: Oh, Where are you from?

A: Um, I'm from New York.

B: I've been to that place, it's a great city.

A: Yeah, it is, there's a lot of stuff to do.

B: Mmm hmm. So how long have you been… here for?

A: Er, for three days.

B: Do you like this place?

A: Yes, I love it! It's fantastic

B: [mmm hmm]

A: [over here,] it's very different [from] New York.

B: [Yeah].   Apart from the crowded bus.

A: Mmm hmm.

B: Op! I've, I actually bought some oranges just now from the [market!]

A: [(inhales)] Ohh…

B: Would you like some?

A: Yes, pff… no, no, no no, it's ok, it's ok. No, I, [I'm ok].

B: [Are you sure?]

A: Um…[mmh]

B: [It's] fresh off the market, I just got it, I'm just on my way home to bake some orange pastries.

A: Um… Ok, yes, *thank you, I appreciate it* [*very much*].

B: [Sure], <u>let me just grab one for you</u>.

A: Ok.

B: Here you go.

A: *Thank you very much!*

B: <u>You're welcome</u>!

A: (gnam gnam [gnam gnam])

B: [It's really sweet], isn't it?

A: Yeah, it's very street, sweet and… very juicy. (repeated sound of appreciation) Yes, it's very good.

B: Ok, I think next stop is mine!

A: Oh, ok, [oh].

B: [It was] really meeting you though.

A: Yeah, it was nice to meet you too.

B: Mmm hmm, I hope you enjoy your stay here!

A: *Yeah, thank you! Thank you for the oranges!*

B: Bye!

A: Bye! (burst of laughter)

TH-O1-B05-02

A: [chewing noises] *Thank you so much, that was, is that, is that a kumquat* [*or something?*]

B: [(laughs)]

A: *That was really good, thank you.*

B: <u>Yeah. Our, er, grocery store has some pretty exotic fruit. I'm glad you enjoyed it!</u> [(mild laughter)]

A: [Um, yeah. *Thanks*].

B: (laughs)

A:So where are you from? Um, well, I guess you're from here, right?

B: [I'm from here!]

A: [I mean, You're traveling too, or not?] (unclear)

B: Nope, just buying groceries. Where are YOU from?

A: Oh, um, I'm from er, the United States.

B: Oh, very nice.

A: Yeah.

B: What part of the Uni[ted States?] (laughs)

A: [(laughs)] New York State.

B: Aha.

A: Yeah.

B: [(laughs)] How nice.

A: [(It's)]

B: [I've been] to New York once. It's a [nice place.]

A: [Oh really?] Cool, er, to the city?

B: Yes! (laughs).

A: Um, I'm, I'm actually from like further, upstate, in the northeast.

B: Ah, how nice.

A: Um. But, er, back to this… f-fruit, that was… great. Um, I mean, you, maybe I should, should I pay you for the fruit?

B: No, no, no! I have so much and, you know. We like to show visitors to our city that we're friendly. [(mild laugh)]

A: [Oh,] that's very kind of you, I, this city is great and I love it and all and you, you guys are really friendly.

B: I'm glad you're enjoying your trip!

TH-O1-C01

A: *Wow, Emma, thank you for preparing that report for me, I really appreciate it!*

B: Oh it's no problem at all, I hope your headache is better!

A: Yes, it is, it's just this crazy weather we're having, my head is super sensitive so… can't take this but, glad I took that nap (exhales), it really helped!

B: Yeah. It's allergy season so…

A: Yep. So should we take the bus or get a cab?

B: I'd prefer a cab.

A: Alright, *well, thank you again for the report.*

B: No problem!

A: Alright, let's [go.]

B: [See] you tomorrow.

B: Hi Mrs Shee, I see that you're back.

A: Hey, Wan. *Hey so thanks for er, babysitting my er, child.*

B: Oh. Not a problem. Charlotte has been (mild laughing) really great today.

A: Oh, really? [I hope…]

B: [We had] a lot of fun.

A: Oh, I hope she's not too much trouble for you.

B: No, absolutely not.

A: Ok, um… oh! Wait! Is you, are you, you, is your pay check due in today?

B: Oh yeah.

A: Um… ok, so let me take my wallet and… yeah.

B: *Thank you very much, Mrs Shee.*

A: Oh, you're welcome.

B: [Mmm hmm)]

A: [*Um,*] *thank, thank you again for… helping,* um, like I hope you can like, help us babysit, um, Charlotte… in the future.

B: Of course. I really enjoy… babysitting her.

A: Ok, cool. Bye

TH-O1-C03-02

A: *Hey Amanda, thanks SO MUCH for watching Lily today.*

B: Oh no worries. I love watching Lily! She's such a good kid.

A: Awesome, it's good to hear. Um, I'm gonna go run a few errands, and then I will pay you when I get back.

B: Ok. Sounds good! I'll just be chilling here with Lily.

TH-O1-C04

A: Brrr – Trrrrrr

B: Hello sir, how's your er, trip to the... Africa going?

A: Oh! It has been absolutely great! I'm gonna be honest, the flight was planned well, not even a red eye flight, got in smoothly, hmm… [guy was waiting there]

B: [(unclear)] How was the middle seat?

A: The middle seat. The middle seat was actually terrible! I, I, I fell asleep, there, the-there were two men on either side of me, I fell asleep and I ended up drooling on one of their shoulders, …. they got up and moved away, er, i-it was awkward.

B: Well it seems terrible for THEM, but seems like YOU enjoyed yourself…

A: Oh, I ABSOLUTELY enjoyed myself.

B: Good. And, er, then er, then you got in, the hotel was all… in working order?

A: Yeah. For, for the most part, I, I don't know how much I, I trust the sleeping situations here [normally but…]

B: [Yeah, I tried,] [to save a little money,]

A: [Yes]

B: … so I hope you don't mind [the…]

A: [No, no,]

B: [mosquito nets and…]

A: [no!] [Actually worked out!]

B: [I thought that] would give it a little bit of character.

A: No, I, I honestly I, *I appreciate that very much*. If, if I'm going to be here…. doing, doing business with, with the, the people here, I feel like I should… ha, have a more cultural experience, and, and come to understand them on that term [so]…

B: [Yeah]

A:… *THANK you very much* [*for that…*]

B:. [And how] are the er, how are the cocoa plantations?

A: Oh the- they're actually doing very well!

B: Yeah?

A: Yeah! The, the things are in season, they're currently harvesting, er, plenty of workers, no shortage there.

B: Good, glad to hear that, so,

A: Yeah.

B: overall a productive trip!

A: Yeah, [a productive trip.]

B: [Are you, ,]   are you er, do you want me to follow up with the safari I was er, thinking about…[planning?]

A: [Well,]   now, which one was that?

B: That was er, through the jungle you're going to be er, you know with machetes, it sounded very rugged, but I thought you might appreciate it.

A: I mean. That, that is what I came here [to do.]

B: [But] you also have the option of relaxing on the coast, with,

A: (sighs)

B: er, beautiful views and beautiful women, and…. so, but I wasn't sure which experience you would appreciate more.

A: D'you like Hemingway?

B: I do.

A: Have you read "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber"?

B: No, I haven't.

A: An inspiring tale. I'm gonna take the safari.

B: The safari?

A: Yes.

B: Ok. I will make sure to follow up with er, my friend that I know…

A: Yeah?

B: in Africa. He…

A: Is a Trustable dude?

B: He'll… Yeah, he's a, he'll get you through the experience all right and you might even er, see some wildlife.

A: Ooh oh. I, n-n-n-now, now, this isn't a violent safari, in any way, this, this isn't poaching, [correct]?

B: [Um…]

A: This, [this is more] of a sightseeing?

B: [You know] .   I, I, I, I could, I'm not sure. I'll er, I'll check with my friend, he's known to be quite the adventurer, so…

A: All right.

B: … Yeah. I wouldn't be surprised if you had to spear a lion or [something of that nature]

A: [(coughs)]

B: but well in true spirit of Teddy Roosevelt or something like that…

A: yeah, ye[ah]

B: [you'll] come back not only with business but with a er, lion's head to… show your… accomplishments.

A: Um, actually, while, while we're at it, could, could you look into at, at recipes… for… lion… meat?

B: Yeah… uuuh- uuuh um, my mother actually has a great one.

A: Really?

B: Yeah. So the family recipe, I'll call her up and [unclear]

A: [Now, where] is your family from?

B: We're er, we're from Tanzania [actually].

A: [Wow], I had no idea.

B: Yeah, quite a few lions there, it's one of the… staples of our diet.

A: I, I'll be sure to freeze dry it and bring it back. Well er a-again, *thank you for planning all this.* Hotel's great, the business is great, er, weather's wonderful, it couldn't have gone smoother.

B: Glad to hear that and I oh, I await your return.

A: See you soon.

B: Adios.

<center>TH-O1-C06-01</center>

B: Hello?

A: Hi! *I'm just um, calling to say thank you for the gift that you left on my desk yesterday.*

B: Oh, thank you! Um, er you're welcome. I didn't actually leave it there, I had er, the secretary, er, leave it because you weren't in when I came by.

A: Ah, that was nice of you. Er, you'll have to let me have you over to dinner to thank you… sometime.

B: Oh, that sounds… awesome. Er, I mean… I, I think I'm got hired here so I guess I can come to… dinner… where you are?

A: [(laughs)]

B: [Where we are!]

<center>163</center>

A: [Yes!]

B: [Both] of us, um, yeah, that sounds awesome, er, I would like that a lot.

A: Hmm hmm. I'm looking forward to working with you more… in the future.

B: Yeah… likewise, *thank you for being my mentor*.

A: (mild laughter) <u>Thank you for being such a… great mentee</u>. (both laugh)

B: Bye!

A: Bye! (laughs)

<center>TH-O1-C06-02</center>

A: Bring-bring bring-bring

B: Hello?

A: Hello, is this Alex?

B: Why yes, who may I ask is calling?

A: This is professor Trin [(mild laugh)].

B: [Oh,] professor Trin! How are you these days? I left, I left that fruit basket with your secretary. Did you like it?

A: …Yes, I did, except it was kind of spoiled.

B: Spoiled fruit? How long were you waiting?

A: Two days?

B: Two days?

A: I didn't see it, when I got back.

B: Oh, your damned secretary.

A: (Laughs). Yeah. He's a little absent minded these days.

B: Hmm. You should tell him to f… look [somewhere else. (sarcastic/ironic)]

A: [mild laughter]

B: So how is the research coming?

A: Research is ok.

B: Cool. What are you looking at these days?

A: How sounds and music affect perception. (noises of beats)

B. That's cool. So any, what's the ground-breaking news… going on over there?

A: We haven't reached any conclusion yet.

B: No conclusion?

A: *About the fruit, so um, I liked the fruit, thank you, they're very tropical*.

B: <u>Thank you. I knew you liked durians and starfruit, and</u>…

A: How did you ever manage to get your hand on fresh durian?

B: Oh, I, er…

A: They're not legal here.

B: They're not legal?

A: You [can't import them.]

B　　　[I s-…]　　　　　　　　　　I smuggled them. [I smuggled them.]

A:　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　[Oh did you?]

B: [I smuggled them] from Cambodia.

A: [You shouldn't have told me that].　(mild laugh) You shouldn't have told me now I
　　have to report you.

B: Now you have to report me? What kind of a friend are you?

A: I'm not your friend, I'm your professor! (with a tone of amusement)

B: (exhales) Wait, I'm a professor! (with a tone of amusement)

A: No, I'm the professor! (laughing)

B: We're both professors…

A: (quite laughing) I'm pretty [sure you]'re a student!

B:　　　　　　　　　　　[unclear]　　　　　　　You… evil faculty!

A: (Laughs)

B: I'm not even doing it, it's a fruit basket, [how dare] you report me! (with a tone of
amusement)

A:　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　[(mild laugh)]　　　　　But you got
　　durian off overseas, and that's illegal.

B: Or is it? You don't have any evidence. You threw it away.

A: This phone conversation's recorded.

B: [Oh really.(mild laugh)]

A: [(mild laugh)]

B: What kind of, what kind of operation are you running over there?

A: (laughs)

B: You [gonna…]

A: [I'M A] LINGUISTICS professor. I record things on the phone! (almost laughing)

B You realize that's illegal.

A: No it's not… (laughing)

B: Yes.

A: … the CIA does it. (with a tone of amusement)

B: Yeah, and it's illegal [for them]

A: [exhales, mild laugh]

B: to do it, but they still do it. That is inadmissible evidence in court!

A: (mild laugh) Well, they're the law! So they can do it. (with a tone of amusement)

B: They're not going to, they're not going to accept your evidence in a courtroom.

A: Well, I'll have to fake evidence then.

B: Fake evi[dence?]

A: [(mild laugh)]

B: [What are] you going to get random durians and pretend I did it?

A: Yes.

B: Then whose word [is it against?]

A: [(exhales, mild laugh)]

B: This conversation really took a turn for the worse. (both laugh)

A: Well, it's surely more interesting than your fruit basket, which is SPOILED, by the way.

B: Tha[nk[40]. (laughing)] I'm sorry. Next time I'll get you dried fruit.

A: [(mild laugh)]   I   HATE   dried fruits.

B: Well GOODBYE!

---

[40] Since it was uttered with a sarcastic/ironic tone, I did not consider the "thank" as a proper expression of gratitude.

A: *Thank you so much for your hospitality, these past five days in Croatia have been wonderful, it's, it's such a beautiful country*.

B: <u>Oh, why thank you (laughs), and no problem at all, I was glad to have someone so… nice and responsible as you as a… mentor</u>.

A: Really, it was, it was no problem, you made it... such a good experience and I, I can't wait to come back again and see the country.

B: That's very good to hear, I'm glad… that you like it, I have had some… previous tenants who... came, who came when the weather was bad so they did not have such a good experience but I'm glad there was lots of sunshine…

A: Yes, me too.

B: For you to enjoy the sea… and the food.

A: Alright, [*again, thank you*] *so much* and hopefully I'll see you some time in the future.

B: [(unclear)]

    Good, have a safe trip!

A: Bye.

B: Bye!

TH-O1-D01-02

A: Hi! *Um, I just wanted to thank you for how wonderful this trip has been*.

B: <u>Oh, I'm glad you had a good time staying here. You know, we love having you kids…</u>

A: [(laughs mildly)]

B: [<u>come through here</u>], <u>you know, and see our country, and visit around, so yeah, you're welcome back any time. Tell your friends</u>.

A: *Thank you. You just made me feel so welcome, and you know, I learned so much about Croatia while I was here, um*.

B: Well I, I'm glad that you, er, liked our country.

A: Mmm hmm. You, you um, you're really a wonderful host, and, I certainly will recommend this place to my friends.

B: Oh, you're too kind.

A: (laughs) *Thanks very much*.

B: <u>You're welcome.</u>

A: Well, I'm checking out now, but I've had such a wonderful time here in your country.

B: I, I'm so glad you came down here, er, what, what was actually the best part of your trip, [d'you think?

A: [Well, I] really appreciated your suggestion for the, er, Croatian nightlife, I really [found] that exciting [on Saturday]

B: [yeah.]   [Yeah., I, I] mean…

A: The … disco clubs, till … late last night, it was...

B: Disco.

A: [yeah.]

B: [I mean], I, I don't, I don't, I really don't understand why, why other countries let disco be a fad, it, it, it really is a way of life. I'm, I'm glad that our country has really been able to sustain that.

A: Yeah, it's, it's, I, the people seemed very into it, and there were many very friendly people around, I stayed out till 4 a.m., [it was] fabulous!

B: [Wow!]   Wow!

A: I barely want to leave, but

B: [Yeah.]

A: [perhaps] you know a suggestion of a, a nice beach to visit, I was thinking of watching the sunset before my… flight out.

B: Ah… there, there's actually er, one down on Bienvenue, if, if you just take a left out here and go about, er, four, four blocks I think?

A: Ok

B: If, if memory serves. It's, I mean it's it's a little bit crowded, but, but to be honest the reason it's crowded is because it's got the best views, if you, if you manage to stick around for the sunset,

A: *Well* [*thank you*]

B: [it's a great] time!

A:, I'm excited! *I also, thank you so much for your wonderful Croatian food...*

B: <u>No Problem</u>!

A: [It was delicious]

B: [HOW, how did] you like the amenities?

A: Oh! I, I er, I was a little bit, um confused by certain… Croatian customs, er, such as their lack of hot water in the showers

B: [(mild laughter)]

A: [and er,]… their er, lack of er, …. shampoo, but otherwise I thought it was er, quite comfortable.

B: (unclear) The best of part of the shower's conditioner, so the… the way we figure is why, why bother with, with the foreplay, just get straight to the conditioner

A: [it]

B: [I mean] shampoo's [all right but…]

A: [It seems like a] much more… efficient way of doing it

B: [yeah]

A: [compared] to the, perhaps us Americans, are just stuck in our consumerist ways, and, come up with different things to buy, when only you, you truly only need conditioner.

B: It's very true. [I mean…]

A: [Shampoo is] quite extraneous.

B: … that, that's why I'm always so happy to see people come down from America and get to know our way of life here, I, it, it's simpler, it, it, it doesn't involve shampoo, and it's, it's beautiful!

A: [Yeah,]

B: [to be] honest!

A: lots of disco [and no] shampoo!

B: [Yeah.]   It… heaven.

A: *Well sir, I really appreciate it*,

B: Oh

A: I'll enjoy the sunset

B: hmm

A: and hopefully I'm back to Croatia, we can go out to the… bars together. [(unclear sounds)]

B: [Absolutely! I'll] be here! Come down on a weekend next time and er, I might actually be able to join you for the disco.

A: Exciting. [*Thank*] *you sir*.

B: [Yeah]   See you!

TH-O1-D01-04

A: Hello, I would like to report a…. roach infestation in my hotel. (sneering)

B: A roach infestation? How did this happen? We, I have the best [hotel in all of Croatia.]

A: [(laughs)]
It is a very nice hotel, but, other than the fact of, there were, three hundred roaches crawling around…

B: Three hundred roaches?

A: [I counted!]

B: [How did this happen?]

A: (laughs)

B: That must have been a very busy evening. Please, please stay, please don't go, I will set you up with a very nice room, and I will take care of this rodent problem.

A: Roach.

B: Roach and rodent problem, immediately.

A: OH! DO YOU [have RODENTS too?]

B: [(sneers)]

A: I'm glad I reported this, 'cause I would never have known you have rodents hidden in that… hotel.

B: No, the rodents take care of the roaches.

A: That's disgusting. I don't want mice running [around my bathrooms.]

B: [(sneers)]   They're
running around your bathrooms… no! This is the nicest room in all of, in all of Croatia, I will get you with the presidential Croatian suite. So, [that way…]

A: [Why, will] there be only one hundred roaches?

B: There will be absolutely no roaches, I will seek it to, so the maids do a sweep of it, every single, every single evening.

A: You need an exterminator, not a maid!

B. A maid sla[sh exterminator]

A: [(laughs)]   they, they are very qualified individuals, who know what they're doing. So I will, I will get, I will get this taken care of, and I will give you… a free room for the next… three days… and so hopefully, hopefully we can go out and get some drinks and have a good time… Please stay!

A: I am married. I don't wanna go out have drinks with you. (almost laughing)

B: I love you.

A: (Laughs).

B: Please stay.

A: You're a very STRANGE hotel manager.

B: Croatian manager.

A: Yes.

B: Well.

A: Well, it was a very nice room, apart from the roaches.

B: *Thank* [*you*.]

A: [The view] was lovely, I loved the beach.

B: We, we try, even though Croatia isn't particularly known [for its beaches]

A: [(laughs)]

B: considering it's…

A: Well, your fake beach was gorgeous!

B: *Thank you. We, we try to give people a touristy*

A: (sneers)

B: a touristy feel about the place.

A: Yes. And the price was very nice too, I just have to report your hotel on…

B: No, no, [no, no].

A: [on Yelp] [and say…]

B: [No,] no, please, please [don't report.]

A   [(laughs)]   We will, take care of this infestation, I will, I will show you the documentation and I will call, I will call the exterminator in just a few minutes.

A: Well I would LOVE to stay, I just have to get back to my country.

B: Oh, where are you from?

A: The United States.

B: United [States?]

A: [The best] country ever.

B: Oh, that's, that's, that's silly. (exhales)

A: (laughs)

A: Well, we certainly don't [have roach]

B: [Croatia]

A: infestations in our hotels (sneers).

B: But they do… they do in their homes. Roaches live everywhere. Particularly in east coast super-populated places.

A: I know that, but not in hotels. But anyway, I guess our hotels doesn't match when it comes to beach views.

B: Uhm. Well I suppose I'm sorry, I'm sorry for what, for all the infestation, I wasn't aware there was one, and I will take care of it.

A: Right.

B: [*Thank you*.]

A: [I will not] give you a negative star on Yelp after all.

B: *OK. THANK YOU* and please have a safe flight back to America.

A: *Thank you*.

TH-O1-D02-01

B: Good morning, Miss Wayne, I see you're back, how was your trip?

A: It was great! How are YOU, Charlotte?

B: I'm doing ok, we missed you at the office.

A: Oh. (mild laughter) Yeah, um, I had a great trip, when I was in China. The client was very pleased with us, and I think you did a wonderful job, at arranging all the meetings.

B: Oh really? Good, good.

A: Keep it up! I think we'll make a great team!

B: Ok, yeah, *thanks for encouragement*! Aah…

A: *Maddie, you were the BEST secretary I've had yet, the hotel was AMAZING, and it was in the BEST location ever, and the service was just UNBELIEVABLE, thank you SO much.*

B: <u>Oh, you're SO welcome, I'm really glad to hear it</u>. Been working hard all week, but glad to have you back!

A: Hey!

B: Hi…

A: I just want to come by your office hours, *thank you for all the help you've given me on THIS paper.*

B: <u>Um… Yeah, you know, no problem, that's, you know, that's part of my job… um…</u>

A: Yeah, but it's a really big deal, I was NOT gonna pass this class without your help…

B: Yeah. Well, you know, the university has, you know, many resources available, you know, there's a writing… centre… lab er where er there's, you know, people that …. work there all the time to, you know, help particularly international students, um, with their writing in English and such, so, you know, there's lots of the sort of resources that you should take advantage of.

A: Yeah, sure, I'll check that out. *But er, thanks again man, you know, you, you really saved me!*

B: <u>Yeah</u>. (both laugh) here <u>… You're welcome.</u> (A laughs) <u>No problem.</u>

A: Alright, see you at next week… office hours! (both laugh)

A: Hello sir! I'm a, I came in today to talk to… talk about my paper!

B: Ah! I, I er, I actually just spent a, a large portion of the afternoon checking it over, I, [*I appreciate*]

A: [Yes]

B: *you bringing it to me.*

A: Yes, I, I, I did not get a very good score, and perhaps it's because my English is, is still having, having trouble with my English, but I, I was trying to… implement some of the changes that you gave to me.

B: I mean, there's,

A: Did, did they seem helpful?

B: Yeah! Yeah! Um, it, it's looking, it's it's looking better than before, er, I, I, I feel that the majority of your errors ARE coming FROM a bit of a language barrier, [er…]

A: [Yes,] yes…

B: I,….. I've tried to fix a lot of the grammar and, and some of the words that didn't get exactly have the correct connotations that you were looking for…

A: Yes.

B: Um the, the paper itself…

A: Yes, how about the, er, organization, [the ideas?]

B: [Er, Yeah.] The, the, the content is, is ok, um, it's, it's not particularly er, what we're looking for here, I, I feel that you didn't quite delve into the issues, you covered them on a superficial level, [but…]

A: [Yes,] well, I, I just d- don't understand American history very well…

B: [Yeah.]

A: [I'm so] confused by all of you… Americans and so… the civil war seems so strange to me, but.

B: Yeah. I mean, what country are you from?

A: Oh I'm fr-, I'm from the Netherlands.

B: From the Netherlands.

A: And in the Netherlands we don't have civil [wars.]

B: [Yeah,] it er, I, I suppose understanding our history is very, very different from your own.

A: Why, why were the… African Americans enslaved, I'm so confused by th[at…]

B: [I mean,] I mean are you, are you aware of your own… your own history in South Africa?

A: Oh. Ah well yes, but that was different, I mean…

B: How so?

A: I mean. It was not a very long period of time, and that was long ago, but you Americans kept slavery for SO LONG.

B: Well I mean, one, one of the fascinating parts about American history is… we, we were, we were truly… one of the countries… to first MOVE towards abolishing it, and, and, I, I feel that that's, that's one of the aspects that you didn't really touch on, [e-enough…]

A: [um.]

B: You, you did report the slavery but but you, you should probably get a little more into the details of what actually happened historically.

A: Ahaaaa aaah. I, I viewed it more as a, an an opportunity to the critique the er, American er… actions in history, but are you just looking for me stating what happened, or, er… is that what's desired or do I get to offer my own analysis

B: [I mean we, we]

A: [of how] strange it is?

B: We, we actually do want you to offer a bit of analysis, and, that's, that's what I was gonna recommend to you next, um, you, you did a great job of using sources, and, and bringing in a lot of information, but, but believe it or not, kind of rare for a class, we kind of want your own take on some of the [issues.]

A: [Aaaah,] ok.

B: Uhm, I, I, I tried to, to fill in the margins a little bit here and there, kind of pointing out locations where you could EXPAND on your own thoughts a little bit more… [um…]

A: [*Ok.   Thank   you.*]
Thank [*you.*]

B: [Yeah.] So, so, so the skeleton is, is good, I'd say right now if you turned it in, maybe, maybe be a B minus, luckily you still have another week [I think… to work on it]

A: [Oh yes I… I don't]
care too much about my grades, [I mean…]

B: [No?]

A: I'm an international student [just here to have some fun but …]

B: [Oooh really? Really?]

A: er… yes. But I shouldn't tell you that.

B: I, I'll, I will pretend I never heard it.

A: Oh yes. But er, America is a very exciting country.

B: Yeah

A: Many things to do. Not as beautiful as my homeland, but er…

B: Plenty of things to do to avoid writing papers?

A: Oh, yeah. Well. I mean, perhaps you could tell that it seemed a bit rushed, but er….

B: A little bit!

A: Alright (with very soft voice) … but… maybe I'll be able to sit down for longer, if the, but the weather here in Berkeley is so beautiful.

B: It's true. It's true. I, I actually recommend er, trying to write outside sometime. I, I enjoy it myself very much.

A: Perhaps [I will.]

B:　　　　　[Laptops] allow for it.

A: *Well thank you, sir.*

B: <u>No pro</u>[blem.]

A:　　　　[I will im]plement…

B: *Thank you for coming by! Appreciate it.* I, I, I, the, the paper's good, I feel like you're gonna get a good grade. Just, just try to add in a little bit more of your own thoughts, fix the grammar that I pointed out, and you should be set.

A: I, I will, I will attempt this. *Thank you.*

B: Sounds good. <u>THANK you</u>! Have a good one!

TH-O1-E02

A: Hi Charlotte!

B: Hi! How's it going?

A: Good. Are you free for a quick chat?

B: Ah, yeah, sure.

A: So I'm, I'm, I'm here today just to give you a update on my application, to study abroad in Germany…

B: Ok.

A: …and the the last, the last time I was here, you were VERY helpful to me, you provided me with a lot of information, on the um, accommodation [and scholarships]

B: [Mmm hmm]

A: that I [could apply] for…

B: [yeah]

A: And, um, yeah, I'm just here to update you on that.

B: Ok.

A: Yeah, I've actually applied for a couple of the scholarships,

B: Mmm hmm

A: and I found a really nice place to stay in [when I'm going to Berkl]… when I'm going to Germany.

B: [Ooooh…]

                         so… which city are you going to?

A: Um… I'm going to Berlin!

B: Oooh, ni[ce!]

A: [Yeah,] I'm really excited about that!

B: So um, which classes are you going to take

B: [ah, I'm]

A: [when you're] there?

A: Well, I'll be taking a German literature class…

B: Oo[ok,]

A: [And,] um, art appreciation,

B: Ooooh

A: and some music classes.

B: Ok, so um, where… are you going to stay… exactly?

A: Um, it's just this place that's really near to the school that I'll be attending, yeah, and um, yeah and *thank you so much for the recommendation!*

B: Oh, awesome! *Yeah, glad to help.*

A: Mmm hmm

B: Ok. Bye.

A: Bye!

TH-O1-E05

A: Hi Mom! I missed you so much, I brought you a gift from Spain!

B: Hi sweetie, *awww thank you*! How was your trip?

A: It was SO great, I learned so much about the language and the culture.

B: That's great, so did you meet any new friends in Valencia?

A: Yeah, there were a lot of people my age and we… went out together and had fun.

B: That's great! Were the classes OK?

A: The classes were good, nothing too difficult.

B: Alright, well, I'm pretty sure you're going to have a… easy year next year in A.P. Spanish.

A: (laughs) Let's hope so! … [unclear]

B: [So how] was the plane trip back?

A: It was, it was kinda bumpy but… I was tired so I slept through it.

B: Well that's the best way to travel.

A: Mmm hmm.

B: Alright well we should get on our way 'cause there IS going to be traffic on the freeway.

A: Yeah, let's go home.

B: So, alright… I made your favourite MEAL!

A: YAY!

B: Ok, let's go.

TH-O1-F01-01

A: *Well, I'd really like to thank you for going over this with me, er, I was quite lost before, I, but I seem to .... have a better grasp on it now*.

B: <u>No problem. Er, if, if, if you could, I, I would appreciate it if, you would come to class, 'cause, believe it or not, that's actually the place where we normally explain these things</u>

B: (unclear)

A: for the first time, and I, I'm [I'm more than fine]

A: [Er yeah…]

B: going over it, going over it with students but I prefer it if you had questions ON the material, rather than questions about, WHAT material we covered. [(unclear)]

A: [Yeah, you know,] you know how life is, man, but you know sometimes you have, a lot of things to do, [and...]

B: [Yeah?] And oh, what, what exactly were, were you absent for?

A: Er... You know, I, it was just a gorgeous day so I decided to head out to the beach for a bit, but er, you know I thought I could just get some notes from a friend or something, but they didn't wanna give them to me. So, I really, you know, I really apologize for, skipping your class, but er, I'm just, I, I won't make a habit of it, um, I really, you know, it was, it was a beautiful day though, [so…]

B: [Yeah (exhales)], I respect that, I mean I, I too was once a college student, believe it or not…

A: Yes. Yes had some good, good memories. I, I imagine you skipped class once or twice in your, [in your day…]

B: [Yeah Precisely.] Precisely. Once or twice and no more, I'm sure.

A: Oh yeah. Well. This is my…

B: This is [your one, right?] (Laughs)

A: [(unclear)]   Only my second time so…

B: Yeah!

A: Oh, We'll keep it at that, I think.

B: Well, that, that shouldn't be too much of a problem. How are you liking the course, overall?

A: Very interesting! I think that the er, that the linguistics of um, of cognition are just really fascinating.

B: Yeah?

A: You know, sometimes, sometimes I just do a little bit of extra reading, by myself, [you know?]

B: [That's great.]

A: Just, I love learning about metaphors. I think that it's a really interesting way of understanding, er, your own cognition, and your own functioning.

B: Ah. [Totally agree.]

A: So I, [I can definitely] see myself pursuing this in the future.

B: Yeah. Have, have you, have you er, looked into working at the er… at, at my lab?

A: Oh, perhaps! Um, I hadn't looked into that.

B: Er, do you have any programming experience?

A: I do, I know Java and Python [actually.]

B: [Well, per]fect! Er we, we're actually, we, we, we, we've got this online project, breaking down metaphors, trying to create essentially a, a master dictionary out of it, um [if,]

A: [(unclear)]

B: if you want by all means, er, apply!

A: Yeah! I'll shoot in an application. *I appreciate the heads up on that, and…*

B: *Thank you!* No problem.

A: And, er, I will see you in lecture tomorrow.

B: Yeah. Absolutely. I'll see you then.

TH-O1-F01-02

A: Hey Professor Ravelin, um, I missed class this week and I was wondering if you could elaborate on language construction and perception?

B: Yeah, OK. How come you missed class this week?

A: I wasn't feeling well, I think I had the flu. Everyone at my floor has been pretty sick lately. So I didn't want to infect anybody else in lecture.

B: That's understandable, it's been going around. Um, basically what we were talking about was this idea, that, that the words we use are not only, representative of the world we live in, but, construct it, um, and the notes are online, so I have that... for you, um, but yeah, just come by and ask me any questions if you have trouble.

A: *All right, thank you so much* [see you] next week at lecture

B: [mmmh.]

B: All right, have a good weekend!

A: You too!

A: *It was SO nice meeting you, thank you so much for your hospitality, this trip would not have been the same without you.*

B: Oh, it, no problem. I hope you, enjoyed our company and our ….. little, ….cabin in the mountains.

A: It was SO beautiful, we've skied and… had snowball fights and, I love the snow, it's, it's so beautiful here.

B: That's good. Not many people get the chance to come out into nature and enjoy the weather.

A: Right.

B: Right, well... back in Berkeley you won't have any snow.

A: That's true but it will be plenty cold (both laugh).

B: That IS true, right well, have a safe trip home and… make sure… to call me when you get there.

A: (Laughs) Alright, thank you again.

B: No problem, [bye].

A: [bye.]

TH-O1-F03-01

B: Come in!

A: Hi, Professor Shree!

B: Hi!..... I remember YOU, were you a student in my class last semester?

A: Yes! And do you know what? I actually went to France after we had class…

B: Oooh! [Wow!]

A: [Yeah I] spent the summer there.

B: Which part of France?

A: I was in Paris [most of the time.]

B: [Paris!]   [Ooh…]

A: [Mmm hmm.] And, the language I picked up was really useful!

B: Ok, so, how, how was Paris? Like um, did you like it there?

A: Yeah. Definitely. And it was JUST like you have described.

B: Oh. (Laughs).

A: [Mmm] hmm

B: [Right], ok, that's co[ol, did you g-]

A: [Yeah]

B: Did you go visit, um, there... museums [there?]

A: [I did.]

B: [Which ones?]

A: [(unclear)]   The Louvre.

B: Um, [and you went,]

A: [As everyone does.]

B: Wow. Did you visit, like, the area around Fran-, Paris?

A: Mmm hmm. So I stayed in a host family, and um, they were French…

B: Mmm hmm

A: so… the entire culture was very, very, was very French

B: Mmm hmm

A: I walked around Paris by myself, it was… a good experience. Mmm H[mm.]

B: [Ok.]

A: Are you still teaching another class this semester [on France?]

B: [No I'm st-]   No, I'm, I'm still teaching the same class!

A: Oh, you're still teaching the same class!

B: Aha.

A: Do you think I can come to your class and just sit in [for one of the sessions?]

B: [Oh yeah, of] course, of course!

A: Yeah. Because I'm, now I'm really interested in French culture.

B: Oh, right ok! But you know what? It might be interesting for you, because um, I'm actually doing like some of, I'm actually introducing some new material…

A: Mmm hmm…

B: … in the class, [so…]

A: [Oh,]that's wonderful!

B: (unclear)

A: What are the materials that you're [introducing?]

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B: [Uuuum,]   well, the new materials is just like French, um literature, and like famous authors like Victor Hugo…

A: Wait,[I, I actually] went to his place in France.

B: [aah, (mild laughter)]   Oh, wow!

A: It's very near the Louvre.

B: Oh, cool!

A:Mmm Hmm

B: Yeah, well, you know, I, I hope to see you, like in class sometime this semester…

A: So can I just come in whenever I want?

B: Yeah! Yeah, of course, of course.

A: Fantastic.

B: Yeah, I'll be happy to see you. Ok, [bye…]

A: [*Thank*] *you Professor* [*Shree.*]

B: [Yeah.] Ok, bye! (*burst of laughter*)

TH-O1-F03-02

A: Hi Professor!

B: Er, hi!

A: (Laughs) Er, I'm just dropping by to ask you a question about um, whether I can audit your class next semester without officially enrolling in the course.

B: Um… which... which class was that?

A: Er, that's the… culture and history seminar?

B: Oh, um… yeah! I mean as long as there's er, you know room, in the class, you know, we would… love, love to have you I guess, and d'you have, um… background in this subject matter?

A: Yeah! In fact, I, that's something else I wanted to talk to you about. Um, I took your, your lecture class last year um, about the culture of this country, um, and then I spent this past summer working in that country and I found that…

B: Really? [Hmm…]

A: [*everything*] *you taught was SO relevant to my experience there and so I wanted to say thank you because it was, it was a really great educational experience.*

B: Oh really?

A: [Ye]

B: [Oh,] well I'm glad that it er, I'm glad that, um, you found that helpful to you in your experience, and that's, that's really kind of, the …. best possible outcome of a class like that, so, um, … great! Yeah! We'd love to have you!

A: Great! I'm looking forward to it! *Thank you!*

B: You're welcome.

Riassunto

Il linguaggio verbale viene usato nel quotidiano con diverse funzioni, a seconda delle necessità. In tal modo, esso trascende il concetto astratto di lingua intesa come sistema formale di segni e di regole, ed assume un significato concreto nell'esatto momento e nello specifico contesto in cui viene usato. La pragmatica è quella sotto-disciplina della linguistica che si occupa di indagare su e descrivere come il linguaggio assume significato e, di conseguenza, quale significato assume, quando viene concretamente utilizzato dal parlante all'interno di un determinato contesto comunicativo per soddisfare i propri bisogni e perseguire determinati obiettivi (comunicativi e non) nel breve e nel lungo termine. Per questo motivo la pragmatica, come ambito di ricerca che esplora e descrive l'uso che i parlanti fanno del linguaggio, viene considerata una disciplina valutativa e governata da scopi e principi, piuttosto che da regole fisse.

In questo settore, uno dei modelli di analisi più importanti ed impiegati ad oggi è la teoria degli atti linguistici, che venne introdotta già a metà degli anni '50 da J. L. Austin nel campo della filosofia del linguaggio, sebbene essa abbia iniziato ad affermarsi solamente a partire dagli anni '60 e '70, grazie alle opere fondamentali di J. L. Austin, *How to do things with words* ("come fare cose con la parole", 1962), e di J. Searle *Speech acts: an essay in the philosophy of language* ("atti linguistici: un saggio nella filosofia del linguaggio", 1969). Questa teoria prevede che, oltre al contenuto e alla veridicità di un qualsiasi enunciato, si possano analizzare anche la sua funzione (o l'azione che compie) all'interno di un determinato contesto comunicativo, e la sua incidenza sul successivo corso degli eventi. In particolare, ogni atto linguistico può essere analizzato su tre livelli: la locuzione, ossia la forma e la struttura linguistica dell'enunciato, l'illocuzione, ossia l'intenzione comunicativa del parlante nella produzione dell'enunciato, e la perlocuzione, ossia l'effetto o le conseguenze che l'enunciato produce, sia a livello linguistico, sia sul corso degli eventi.

I ringraziamenti sono stati inseriti tra gli atti illocutivi – ossia, quegli atti che vengono compiuti dicendo qualcosa – già nell'opera di Austin (1962), e da allora sono stati analizzati in diverse lingue ed in molteplici ambiti scientifici affini alla pragmatica. Di conseguenza, le informazioni disponibili ad oggi su quest'atto linguistico possono considerarsi sostanziose, essendo basate su un numero consistente di studi condotti

nell'arco degli ultimi cinquant'anni. Tuttavia, la quasi totalità di questi studi si limita a prendere in esame esclusivamente i ringraziamenti a sé stanti, senza considerare ciò che può accadere a livello dialogico prima o dopo che siano stati pronunciati. In altre parole, l'interesse verso le azioni (non-verbali) che scatenano i ringraziamenti, e le repliche o reazioni agli stessi è stato molto scarso. In particolare, ad oggi, la letteratura sulle repliche ai ringraziamenti è abbastanza esigua, sia in inglese che in diverse altre lingue. Le repliche ai ringraziamenti sono solo una delle possibili reazioni ai ringraziamenti, ma sono l'unico atto linguistico con cui la persona ringraziata sancisce esplicitamente la validità dell'atto di ringraziamento, estinguendo così il debito morale di chi ha ringraziato.

Il progetto di ricerca riportato in questa tesi nasce con l'obiettivo di esplorare le caratteristiche pragmalinguistiche – ossia, relative alla formulazione di funzioni comunicative – e sociopragmatiche – ossia, relative all'appropriatezza d'uso contestuale – di repliche ai ringraziamenti (*gratitude acknowledgments, GAs*) in inglese americano, prendendo in esame un corpus di 32 trascrizioni di interazioni simulate (*role play interactions*), una tipologia di dati non analizzata in studi precedenti.

Tre principali obiettivi sono stati perseguiti in questo studio. Il primo è consistito nello sviluppare un metodo per individuare la replica ad un ringraziamento in inglese nel turno discorsivo immediatamente seguente al ringraziamento, ed eventualmente isolarla da altre porzioni di discorso che svolgono funzioni differenti. Il secondo obiettivo è consistito nello sviluppare un metodo per distinguere i componenti interni di una replica ad un ringraziamento, ossia la/e mossa/e testa (*head act(s)*) e l'/le eventuale/i mossa/e di supporto (*supportive move(s)*), e di ideare delle procedure per analizzare le strategie, nonché gli aspetti semantici e lessicali-sintattici, di entrambi questi componenti, procedure per la maggior parte adottate e adattate da studi precedenti. Infine, il terzo obiettivo è consistito nel confrontare i risultati ottenuti con quelli di studi precedenti sullo stesso argomento, ma che si avvalgono di tipologie diverse di dati e impiegano metodologie analitiche (parzialmente) differenti.

Il primo capitolo del presente lavoro presenta e contestualizza l'oggetto di studio, assieme agli obiettivi e alle modalità del progetto di ricerca, oltre a discutere le scelte lessicali che mi hanno portato a preferire il termine *gratitude acknowledgment* rispetto ad altri per indicare le repliche ai ringraziamenti. Infine, il primo capitolo contestualizza le teorie di riferimento pertinenti a questo progetto di studio, in particolar modo: la

pragmalinguistica (*pragmalinguistics*), la socio-pragmatica (*sociopragmatics*), la cortesia (*politeness*) e gli atti linguistici (*speech acts*).

Il secondo capitolo inizialmente vaglia vari studi sui ringraziamenti nell'ultimo ventennio, in special modo sulla lingua inglese, ma anche su molte altre lingue, condotti attraverso svariati approcci analitici e metodologici, poi presenta una recensione degli studi svolti sulle repliche ai ringraziamenti, menzionati nelle grammatiche didattiche, e analizzati in studi sperimentali, o basati su corpus di dati. Questi studi si occupano per la maggior parte delle repliche ai ringraziamenti in lingua inglese, nei loro aspetti sincronici, diacronici, diatopici (nelle varietà irlandese, americana, canadese e camerunense, e in inglese come lingua straniera) e diastratici. Altri riguardano altre lingue, in particolare, lingue indoeuropee – svedese, francese, tedesco, italiano – afro-asiatiche – hijazi, ossia un dialetto saudita, e egiziano – niger-kordofaniane – Ewe e Akan, ossia lingue parlate nell'Africa occidentale, e Jogam, Wẽ e Banso'o, ossia lingue parlate in Camerun – e altaiche – giapponese.

Dalla disamina della letteratura è emerso come le repliche ai ringraziamenti in inglese siano poco frequenti in generale, ma anche variabili e solo parzialmente standardizzati o regolati dalle pratiche abitudinarie, al contrario di quanto si pensa comunemente. In particolare, questi atti linguistici variano in base a molteplici fattori, tra cui, innanzitutto, la varietà linguistica e le abitudini del parlante, ma anche fattori contestuali (ad es. l'ambientazione e il costo del beneficio oggetto di ringraziamento) e sociali (come il genere del parlante, la familiarità e il rapporto con l'interlocutore e la rispettiva posizione sociale). È stato osservato anche che la struttura interna delle repliche ai ringraziamenti può variare, e che le sue componenti principali sono la mossa testa (*head act*) e la mossa di supporto (*supportive move*); le diverse combinazioni di questi componenti danno origine a strutture semplici o complesse, che vengono realizzate in un determinato contesto a seconda della scelta del parlante e delle sue necessità e obiettivi comunicativi. I parlanti inoltre sfruttano diverse strategie per realizzare le loro repliche ai ringraziamenti, e per raggiungere tale obiettivo dispongono di una gamma abbastanza variegata di formule lessicali, semantiche e sintattiche, di varianti e possibilità di modificazione aggiuntiva delle formule, che nel loro insieme permettono di adattare le repliche al contesto comunicativo nel quale il ringraziamento e la replica hanno luogo. È inoltre emerso che la maggior parte degli studi considerati è fondata su dati prodotti

mediante completamenti di dialogo, che permettono di esaminare materiale scritto ed elicitato, mentre solo una minima parte degli studi è fondata su dati ricavati da interazioni orali e spontanee. Infine, è emerso come ad oggi non esista ancora un approccio analitico condiviso dai ricercatori in questo ambito, e che motivi per esteso l'intera procedura di analisi delle repliche ai ringraziamenti.

Il terzo capitolo tratta gli aspetti metodologici dell'analisi delle repliche ai ringraziamenti: in primo luogo, le varie metodologie di raccolta dati utilizzate dai ricercatori di quest'atto linguistico, con un'analisi degli aspetti vantaggiosi e di quelli meno vantaggiosi, per avere un quadro obiettivo sulla natura dei dati raccolti e sulla loro affidabilità generale; in secondo luogo, le procedure di raccolta e selezione dei dati riguardanti questo studio, e le procedure analitiche su cui esso si fonda, per fornire una descrizione dettagliata di come è strutturato nei suoi vari passaggi, e poterne meglio comprendere i risultati.

Per quanto riguarda le metodologie di raccolta dati usate nello studio delle repliche ai ringraziamenti, la distinzione più importante da sottolineare è quella tra dati prodotti tramite elicitazione, e dati che registrano la produzione spontanea del parlante. Alla prima categoria appartengono i questionari (completamenti di dialogo, domande a risposta multipla e scale valutative), che producono dati scritti, e le interviste, che producono dati orali, che consentono di ottenere grandi quantitativi di dati sotto controllo sperimentale, e di analizzare le variazioni linguistiche, semantiche e sintattiche delle repliche ai ringraziamenti. Per contro, la verosimiglianza di questi dati con i fenomeni della lingua reale è intaccata proprio dal controllo sperimentale, che li rende inadatti a osservare il comportamento effettivo del parlante, gli aspetti non-verbali e sovra-segmentali della produzione linguistica e la frequenza delle repliche ai ringraziamenti. La seconda categoria di metodologie include il metodo etnografico (sia scritto, sia orale), e le registrazioni audio e video, i quali permettono di analizzare il comportamento linguistico reale del parlante, oltre agli aspetti orali e visivi delle repliche ai ringraziamenti; il metodo etnografico consente inoltre di raccogliere grandi quantità di dati. Tuttavia, il principale svantaggio di questo metodo, specialmente nella forma scritta, consiste nell'essere totalmente dipendente dalle capacità mnemoniche e cognitive del ricercatore, mentre gli altri metodi presentano difficoltà logistiche, ed in genere non consentono di raccogliere grandi quantitativi di dati. Un compromesso tra queste due grandi categorie potrebbe esser

rappresentato dall'uso di interazioni simulate, come quelle esaminate in questo studio, in quanto permettono di sfruttare il controllo sperimentale tipico dei questionari scritti, di raccogliere grandi quantità di dati, e di ottenere interazioni che si avvicinano maggiormente all'interazione spontanea.

Il processo di raccolta dei dati è stato curato personalmente dalla mia relatrice, dalla quale ho ricevuto l'intero corpus di dati e, in un secondo momento, i file audio delle registrazioni originali. Le procedure da lei seguite nella raccolta dati, di cui sono stata informata, sono consistite nella somministrazione di una serie di scenari comunicativi a sei coppie di parlanti madrelingua che hanno partecipato allo studio, che in seguito hanno scelto un totale di sei interazioni da simulare. In particolare, gli scenari comunicativi concepiti per le simulazioni erano suddivisi in base alle loro caratteristiche contestuali in sei gruppi distinti (A, B, C, D, E, F), in cui i profili dei benefattori erano caratterizzati da un diverso grado di potere (=P, +P, -P) e da una diversa distanza sociale (+D, -D), o grado di familiarità, rispetto ai beneficiari, mentre il costo del beneficio era stato mantenuto costante, ossia alto; i partecipanti allo studio sono stati istruiti in modo tale che scegliessero un'interazione per ciascun gruppo di scenari, e in modo tale che ciascuno recitasse la parte di chi ringraziava tre volte, e altre tre volte quella di chi veniva ringraziato. Sono state registrate 36 interazioni in totale, che sono state trascritte da un lettore madrelingua. Tuttavia, così come le ho ricevute, le trascrizioni saltuariamente presentavano varie problematiche. Confrontando le trascrizioni con i file audio originali, ho poi apportato delle correzioni (principalmente, nella rappresentazione grafica di sovrapposizioni, intonazioni ascendenti/discendenti, pause, ed enfasi, e nella segnalazione di suoni non-verbali), che in certi casi si sono rivelate essenziali per una corretta comprensione di alcune coppie di turni di ringraziamento-replica/altra risposta. Nella valutazione della pertinenza dei dati per gli scopi di questo studio, quattro trascrizioni sono state escluse, in quanto non contenenti ringraziamenti, o contenenti ringraziamenti espressi con funzione ironica, o di chiusura dell'interazione; inoltre, è stata esclusa una coppia di turni di ringraziamento-replica da un'interazione considerata valida nel suo insieme, in quanto il comportamento dei parlanti non era appropriato. Perciò, il corpus finale di dati dopo la selezione è risultato essere di 32 trascrizioni di interazioni simulate.

Le procedure di analisi dei dati hanno previsto innanzitutto l'identificazione delle repliche ai ringraziamenti nel turno immediatamente successivo al ringraziamento stesso, secondo criteri di diretta rilevanza lessicale e semantica al ringraziamento (o la persona ringraziante, la persona ringraziata stessa, o il beneficio fornito), o di uso di formule convenzionalmente impiegate con funzione di replica, oppure prosodici (un criterio che, per questo studio, si è rivelato difficile da usare costantemente e con efficacia). Qualsiasi segmento discorsivo non avente funzione di replica è stato considerato come non rilevante ai fini degli scopi analitici di questo studio. Inoltre, i casi nei quali un ringraziamento non genera una replica sono stati classificati come "altre risposte" (*Other responses*), a loro volta suddivise tra "ringraziamenti non ratificati" (*unacknowledged gratitude expressions, UGEs*), ossia, turni contenenti atti linguistici diversi dalle repliche, e "realizzazioni zero" (*Zero realizations*), ossia la mancanza di una risposta (verbale) al ringraziamento. L'analisi ha poi previsto l'identificazione e la distinzione tra mossa testa della replica, ovvero, la parte essenziale che realizza direttamente ed esplicitamente l'atto, ed eventuali mosse di supporto, che rinforzano la forza illocutiva della mossa testa che e dell'atto stesso.

Il passo successivo è consistito nell'analizzare gli aspetti strategici e lessicali-semantici delle teste, come anche delle mosse di supporto. Per classificare questi aspetti, sono state usate in totale quattro tassonomie, due per le teste e due per le mosse di supporto (rispettivamente, una tassonomia per le strategie e un'altra per i tipi lessicali semantici). Le tassonomie delle teste sono state adattate e modificate sul modello di quelle di alcuni studi precedenti (in particolare, cfr. Schneider, 2005). In particolar modo, la tassonomia delle strategie ha subito esclusivamente variazioni terminologiche, per rendere la classificazione più chiara ed esplicita ove necessario. La tassonomia dei tipi lessicali semantici delle teste, invece, è stata rivista sia su un piano concettuale che terminologico, per motivare esplicitamente i criteri adottati, un aspetto, questo, non sempre chiaro nelle tassonomie di alcuni studi precedenti. Innanzitutto, per classificare le repliche è stato adottato un criterio semantico, per suddividerle in maniera più generale in base al loro contenuto; questa procedura è stata ritenuta più efficace rispetto ad una suddivisione basata su un criterio lessicale-sintattico, il quale dipende fortemente dai dati a disposizione del ricercatore, e può inoltre rischiare di creare categorie diverse per repliche con diverse formulazioni lessicali e/o sintattiche, ma di base semanticamente

simili (p. es. *yeah, sure* e *mmm hmm*), come già successo in altri studi. Solamente in un secondo momento è stato adottato un criterio lessicale-sintattico per la denominazione delle categorie della tassonomia che, ove possibile, si rifacevano alla forma lessicale-sintattica base di una data replica. Le tassonomie delle mosse di supporto, invece, sono state per la maggior parte ideate da zero e motivate esplicitamente. In particolare, per la tassonomia delle strategie è stata identificata la funzione di ogni mossa di supporto in base al riferimento (esplicito o implicito) ad uno dei quattro elementi chiave del ringraziamento (ossia, il ringraziamento stesso, la persona ringraziante, quella ringraziata, o il beneficio fornito) e al collegamento logico con la mossa testa precedente (p. es. se la mossa di supporto faceva un'offerta successiva a, motivava, o contestualizzava quanto affermato nella mossa testa), mentre per i tipi semantici è stato individuato il contenuto semantico di una mossa di supporto. Le teste delle repliche sono state ulteriormente analizzate in base alla presenza di elementi modificativi aggiuntivi, volti ad enfatizzare e personalizzare la mossa testa stessa. Infine, sono stati identificati e conteggiati elementi tipici del discorso orale contenuti nei turni in cui la replica viene realizzata.

Il quarto capitolo si è occupato di illustrare i risultati delle analisi dei turni successivi ai ringraziamenti identificati nel corpus. Sono stati individuati 77 ringraziamenti nel corpus, a cui sono seguiti 3 tipi di risposte: le repliche, "altre risposte", e "risposte non chiare", ossia quelle risposte in cui non era possibile distinguere con certezza se si trattasse di una replica o di "altra risposta". In quest'ultima categoria sono stati inseriti tre casi (3,9%) in cui il riferimento semantico della risposta seguente al ringraziamento era ambiguo. Le repliche ai ringraziamenti rappresentano la maggior parte delle risposte (54,5%) nel corpus, e in tre gruppi di scenari in particolare, e sono inoltre le risposte più largamente diffuse nei diversi contesti. Le "altre risposte" sono meno frequenti (41,6%), e sono realizzate in particolare solo in metà del corpus (16 testi); inoltre, queste risposte sono particolarmente rare da parte di persone con grado di potere superiore, e rare tra interlocutori aventi un maggiore grado di familiarità. I "ringraziamenti non ratificati" sono più frequenti e diffusi nei diversi gruppi di scenari rispetto alle "realizzazioni zero", tranne che tra persone ringraziate con grado di potere superiore; dal canto loro, le "realizzazioni zero" sono tipicamente realizzate da persone estranee al loro interlocutore, e mai da persone con grado di potere superiore.

L'analisi delle strutture interne delle repliche ai ringraziamenti rivela 55 mosse testa e 12 mosse di supporto in 42 repliche ai ringraziamenti, che rappresentano tre tipologie di strutture, una semplice e due complesse: la struttura semplice è la mossa testa usata da sola, quelle complesse sono le combinazioni di mosse testa, e le combinazioni tra mossa/e testa e mossa/e di supporto. La prima struttura registra la frequenza maggiore (57%), ed è la più diffusa in tutti i contesti comunicativi del corpus, mentre le altre due strutture sono meno frequenti e diffuse. Più precisamente, la combinazione tra mossa/e testa e mossa/e di supporto è la seconda struttura in ordine di frequenza (26,2%), e comprende tre sottostrutture, ossia 1 mossa testa + 1 mossa di supporto, 2 mosse testa + 1 mossa di supporto, e 1 mossa testa + 2 mosse di supporto. Le combinazioni di mosse testa, infine, sono la struttura meno frequente (16,7%), e possono esser strutturate come 2 mosse testa, o 3 mosse testa. In alcuni turni di reazione ai ringraziamenti, le repliche sono realizzate in concomitanza con altre parti di discorso facenti funzioni diverse dal ratificare i ringraziamenti, le più frequenti delle quali sono le risposte ad altri argomenti di conversazione, le introduzioni di nuovi argomenti, e le formule di chiusura di un'interazione.

Le teste realizzano cinque strategie, riportate in ordine di frequenza: "minimizzare il beneficio" (*minimizing the benefit*), "esprimere apprezzamenti del destinatario" (*expressing appreciation of the addressee*; questa strategia ha la stessa frequenza della strategia precedente), "accettare il ringraziamento" (*accepting the thanking*), "esprimere il piacere di aver fornito un beneficio" (*expressing pleasure for providing the benefit*), e "contraccambiare il ringraziamento" (*reciprocating the thanking*). Di queste strategie, le prime tre sono le più frequenti. Inoltre, le prime due sono anche le più diffuse, e hanno una distribuzione quasi interamente complementare (ovvero, quando una strategia viene usata di più in un contesto comunicativo, l'altra viene usata molto meno, e viceversa). In generale, comunque, ogni strategia è influenzata in particolare da una o due variabili di grado di potere e/o distanza sociale. Nelle repliche con struttura complessa (11), le combinazioni di teste presentano alcune caratteristiche ricorrenti, come alcune soluzioni combinatorie (ad es., "esprimere apprezzamenti del destinatario" + "esprimere il piacere di aver fornito un beneficio"), o alcune posizioni nella sequenza interna della combinazione (ad es., "accettare il ringraziamento" compare sempre in prima posizione),

oppure l'esser realizzate solo in determinati contesti comunicativi (ossia, solo nei set A, B, D ed E).

In termini lessicali e semantici, le teste sono state classificate secondo sei tipi diversi, riportati in ordine di frequenza: YOU'RE WELCOME ('prego'), che corrisponde ad "esprimere apprezzamenti del destinatario"; NO PROBLEM ('nessun problema'), che corrisponde a "minimizzare il beneficio", e che compare con uguale frequenza al tipo precedente; YES ('sì'), che corrisponde ad "accettare il ringraziamento"; (I'M) PLEASED ('mi fa piacere'), che corrisponde ad "esprimere il piacere di aver fornito un beneficio"; THANK YOU ('grazie'), che corrisponde a "contraccambiare il ringraziamento"; e (IT'S) GOOD ('è bello'), che corrisponde ad "esprimere il piacere di aver fornito un beneficio". In questo senso, siccome quasi tutte le strategie (tranne l'ultima) sono realizzate da un solo tipo lessicale semantico, i rispettivi risultati ottenuti (frequenza, distribuzione, combinazione ecc.) coincidono. Tuttavia, il maggior numero di tipi lessicali semantici registra una maggiore variabilità rispetto alle strategie, che si riscontra soprattutto nelle strutture complesse delle repliche, dove le caratteristiche ricorrenti sono meno frequenti. Inoltre, per ogni tipo lessicale semantico sono state osservate delle varianti lessicali e/o sintattiche, tranne (IT'S) GOOD, che ne ha una; in particolar modo, i tipi NO PROBLEM e YES hanno tre varianti, tutti gli altri tipi ne hanno due. Infine, tre tipi di modificazione aggiuntiva delle teste sono stati osservati nel corpus, ossia le esclamazioni (*exclaims*), realizzate da "oh", gli intensificatori (*intensifiers*), realizzati da "so" ('così'), "really" ('davvero') e "at all" ('affatto'), e un termine per rivolgersi a qualcuno (*address term*), realizzato nella forma di un nome proprio.

I risultati relativi alle mosse di supporto rivelano che queste realizzano 6 strategie, ovvero, "motivare la minimizzazione del beneficio" (*motivating the minimization of the benefit*), "commentare il beneficio" (*commenting on the benefit*), "offrire" (*offering*), "motivare l'espressione di piacere" (*motivating the expression of pleasure*), "chiedere informazioni" (*requesting information*), e "chiedere un comportamento diverso" (*requesting a change of conduct*). Di queste strategie, le prime tre sono le più frequenti, e le uniche ad avere una preferenza per certi contesti comunicativi; inoltre, le ultime due strategie risultano essere più originali nel loro contenuto. Quasi tutte le mosse di supporto compaiono in repliche ai ringraziamenti diverse; quindi, le strategie delle mosse di supporto presentano molta variazione e poche caratteristiche ricorrenti (p. es. la

combinazione di "minimizzare il beneficio" e "motivare la minimizzazione del beneficio" compare in due trascrizioni relative al medesimo contesto comunicativo).

In termini semantici, sono stati individuati nove tipi di mosse di supporto (su 12 in totale), ovvero: "valutazione positiva del beneficio" (*positive evaluation of the benefit*), "piacevolezza del beneficio" (*enjoyability of the benefit*), "impatto emotivo" (*emotional impact*), "volontà di agire" (*willingness to act*), "provvisione imminente del beneficio" (*imminent provision of the benefit*), "conoscenza posseduta" (*background knowledge*), "banalità del beneficio" (*triviality of the benefit*), "alternative appropriate" (*appropriate alternatives*), e "verifica della piacevolezza del beneficio" (*verification of the enjoyability of the benefit*). Di queste tipologie, solo le prime tre vengono realizzate due volte nel corpus, mentre le altre solamente una. Perciò, ne emerge che la variazione semantica delle mosse di supporto sia notevolmente maggiore rispetto alle loro strategie, e di gran lunga maggiore rispetto ai tipi lessicali semantici delle teste, un dato attribuibile alla natura stessa delle mosse di supporto, di per sé molto più variabili e dipendenti dalle abitudini comunicative del parlante. A conferma di ciò, l'analisi delle mosse di supporto considerate nelle repliche ai ringraziamenti complesse mette in evidenza come non ci sia nessuna combinazione che si ripete in maniera uguale, e non ci siano caratteristiche comuni o ricorrenti significative.

Il quinto capitolo riassume i risultati ottenuti tramite l'analisi del corpus, e presenta una discussione di questi attraverso il confronto con studi precedenti; esso include inoltre un'autovalutazione dei punti di forza e di debolezza di questo studio, ed infine fornisce alcuni suggerimenti per la ricerca sulle repliche ai ringraziamenti in futuro.

In generale, questo studio presenta diversi punti in comune con i precedenti, ma anche diverse differenze, a seconda degli aspetti delle repliche ai ringraziamenti considerati. Innanzitutto, l'alta frequenza delle repliche ai ringraziamenti in questo studio è in parte influenzata dalla natura stessa delle simulazioni di interazione, che sollecitavano i partecipanti a produrre ringraziamenti; tuttavia, dato che i partecipanti non hanno subìto restrizioni riguardo allo sviluppo specifico delle loro interazioni, una così alta frequenza di repliche è da ritenersi un dato significativo, considerando anche il fatto che le repliche ai ringraziamenti in inglese vengono viste come un atto linguistico particolarmente infrequente. Invece, la frequenza delle repliche in questo studio è maggiore rispetto a quella di studi che hanno considerato dati orali spontanei, e minore rispetto a studi che

hanno considerato dati scritti e elicitati, un dato che è conforme alle aspettative, dato che il presente metodo di raccolta dati presenta caratteristiche intermedie tra quelli di elicitazione *tout court*, e quelli di raccolta di interazioni spontanee. Comunque, se si considerano gli studi che hanno preso in esame l'inglese americano, la frequenza delle repliche ai ringraziamenti in questo studio è la più alta registrata finora.

I dati rilevati da questo studio che trovano riscontro positivo anche in studi precedenti sono molteplici, e comprendono: le tre strutture interne delle repliche ai ringraziamenti (ossia, mossa testa da sola, combinazioni di mosse testa, e combinazioni di mossa/e testa e mossa/e di supporto); le cinque strategie delle mosse testa (ossia, "minimizzare il beneficio", "esprimere apprezzamenti del destinatario", "accettare il ringraziamento", "esprimere il piacere di aver fornito un beneficio", e "contraccambiare il ringraziamento"); la preferenza delle strategie di "minimizzare il beneficio" ed "esprimere apprezzamenti del destinatario" rispetto ad altre strategie, in particolare in inglese americano; tutti i tipi lessicali semantici convenzionali (ossia, YOU'RE WELCOME, NO PROBLEM, THANK YOU, (I'M) PLEASED) e parecchie realizzazioni specifiche (ossia, *you're welcome, no problem, yeah, sure, mmm (hmm) thank you* ecc.); tutte le strategie delle mosse di supporto; infine, alcuni tipi di modificazione aggiuntiva attestati in questo corpus, come l'esclamazione "oh", l'intensificatore "at all" e il nome proprio usato per richiamare l'attenzione dell'interlocutore. In particolare, il fatto che le strategie delle mosse di supporto siano comuni ad altri studi sembra suggerire che anche questi componenti delle repliche ai ringraziamenti presentino un certo grado di convenzionalità, sebbene notevolmente minore rispetto alle mosse testa. Più in generale, il fatto che sia possibile individuare diversi punti in comune (significativi) tra questo studio ed altri sullo stesso argomento sembra indicare che le repliche ai ringraziamenti sono atti parzialmente convenzionali, che tuttavia possono essere variabili ed adattati ai diversi bisogni e allo stile comunicativo di ogni singolo parlante.

Tuttavia, i risultati ottenuti da questo studio presentano anche notevoli differenze e/o particolarità rispetto agli altri studi, che comprendono: la frequenza delle repliche ai ringraziamenti; il fatto che in questo corpus la mossa di supporto non venga mai realizzata da sola al posto della mossa testa, come invece succede in altri studi; il fatto che le repliche occasionalmente vengano affiancate ad altri atti linguistici nello stesso turno, un aspetto

che viene menzionato ed esaminato quasi solamente in questo studio, come anche la frequenza e la natura delle risposte date al posto di una replica ai ringraziamenti, e le possibili motivazioni sottostanti tali scelte dei parlanti; la frequenza e la gerarchia delle strategie e dei tipi lessicali meno favoriti, a partire dalla terza scelta in poi; la diffusione generale delle strategie e dei tipi lessicali attraverso i diversi contesti comunicativi, e, in particolar modo, la distribuzione complementare di YOU'RE WELCOME e NO PROBLEM; le mosse testa multiple nelle repliche ai ringraziamenti complesse, la loro posizione nelle sequenze e la loro diffusione nei contesti comunicativi; la variante estesa di *you're welcome*, e la variante *nice* (oltre al corrispondente tipo lessicale semantico (IT'S) GOOD), che non sono mai state documentate o menzionate finora; la mancanza in questo corpus di diverse realizzazioni specifiche di repliche, come ad esempio la formula convenzionale *(my) pleasure* ("il piacere è mio"), ma anche diverse modifiche aggiuntive delle mosse testa, in particolare diversi intensificatori e termini per richiamare l'interlocutore; i tipi semantici delle mosse di supporto, che finora non dispongono di termini "ufficiali" di confronto; infine, ulteriori esemplificazioni di mosse di supporto non attestate in questo corpus. Le differenze sopra citate possono attribuirsi sia a differenze nei risultati tra diversi studi, sia alle diverse tipologie di dati considerate in diversi studi, sia ai diversi approcci analitici adottati finora.

Nel complesso, questo studio presenta due punti di forza e due punti di debolezza. I primi sono il metodo analitico e la tipologia di dati esaminata, ed i secondi sono la quantità di dati disponibili ed alcune terminologie adottate per le due tassonomie delle mosse di supporto.

L'approccio analitico adottato in questo studio si distingue per tre motivi: esso è stato riportato per esteso ed esplicitamente motivato in ogni fase dell'analisi delle repliche ai ringraziamenti, una procedura, questa, che non sempre è stata attuata in maniera esaustiva o chiara in altri studi nello stesso ambito; esso include inoltre dei criteri per identificare e classificare le repliche ai ringraziamenti in porzioni discorsive più ampie quando più atti linguistici vengono realizzati in concomitanza nello stesso turno, o rispetto ad altre tipologie di risposte seguenti un ringraziamento; infine, il metodo esamina anche le mosse di supporto sia da un punto di vista strategico che semantico, come è stato fatto per le mosse testa. Per quanto riguarda la tipologia di dati, l'uso di interazioni simulate ha permesso di esaminare dati che si avvicinano considerevolmente

alle interazioni spontanee, e di osservare meglio le diverse tipologie di risposte che i parlanti possono adottare dopo un ringraziamento, oppure il fatto che le repliche ai ringraziamenti possano essere eterogenee e talvolta esitanti, un dato, questo, che sembra rigettare il luogo comune che questo atto linguistico è meramente frutto di pratiche abitudinarie e convenzionali.

D'altro canto, i principali svantaggi caratterizzanti questo studio sono la scarsa mole di dati a disposizione per l'analisi, che inoltre rappresentano solamente una varietà di inglese ed un ristretto gruppo di partecipanti (giovani adulti), e non includono dati provenienti da corpus o da interazioni spontanee; questo svantaggio oggettivamente intacca l'attendibilità generale dei dati, e la possibilità di elaborare delle correlazioni fondate tra le diverse strategie/realizzazioni lessicali semantiche delle repliche ai ringraziamenti e le variabili contestuali in cui esse vengono realizzate. L'altro punto debole di questo studio è dato dalle terminologie usate per denominare alcune strategie e alcuni tipi semantici delle mosse di supporto, un aspetto, questo, che avrebbe potuto esser migliorato avendo avuto a disposizione un numero maggiore di mosse di supporto da esaminare e confrontare.

In conclusione, questo studio sulle repliche ai ringraziamenti in inglese americano mostra che la metodologia di raccolta dei dati e l'approccio analitico adottati da un ricercatore hanno una notevole ripercussione sulla natura e sulla frequenza dei dati raccolti, nonostante vengano considerati gli stessi aspetti dello stesso atto linguistico. Esso inoltre mostra che le repliche ai ringraziamenti sfruttano sia formule convenzionali sia formule più originali, che insieme forniscono una variegata gamma di possibilità per il parlante, il quale esprime le sue preferenze in base al proprio stile personale, ad alcune forme di comportamento standardizzato, al contesto comunicativo in cui si trova, e alle variabili in gioco.