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A Pragmatic Study of Gratitude Representations in Selected American Film

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ABSTRACT: Through respectful communication, gratitude is a key pragmatic phenomena that fosters social peace and improves interpersonal relationships. This study examines how gratitude tactics are realized and how they relate to politeness methods in a few lines from Denzel Washington's 2016 film Fences. The study's analytical approach is based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory and Cheng's (2005) taxonomy of gratitude techniques. It seeks to discover the gratitude tactics utilized in the chosen data, look at the politeness strategies that go along with them, and find out which strategies are more commonly used. Four movie excerpts were subjected to both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Only two gratitude techniques thanking and positive feeling are used equally. In terms of politeness, the most common method is Positive Politeness, which is followed by Bald-on Record and Negative Politeness. The Off-Record strategy is not used. The results show that gratitude is conveyed in both direct and indirect ways and is mostly used to show appreciation and improve connections with others. The study comes to the conclusion that politeness and gratitude are strongly related and work together to sustain harmonious and successful communication in cinematic discourse.

1- GRATITUDE

Kant in(1964) states that Gratitude is "honoring a person because of a kindness he has done us " Kumar (2001) opines that "expressions of gratitude in the normal day-to-day interactions between the members of a society seem obviously to fall in the category of the social use of language . Kumar also states that " expressions of gratitude and politeness are a major instrument which keeps the bonds between the members of a society well cemented and strong"

Gratitude is used by people in many ways. Some say it is an emotion,some say it is a habit, and others say it is a way to be a good person. But most scientists agree on one simple meaning: gratitude means first, you see that something good has happened to you, and second, you know that this good thing came from someone or something outside yourself (Allen, 2018).

Gratitude comes from the Latin word gratia meaning favor, and gratus, which means pleasing or thankfulness. Later, in Middle French,

it became gratitude and from there it entered English with the same meaning of thankfulness. The word is linked to other English words such as grace, grateful, and gratify, all of which carry the idea of kindness, favor, or pleasure. This history shows that gratitude has long been tied to the idea of giving thanks and valuing others (Emmons & McCullough, 2004).

Gratitude has three components "intent of the benefactor, consequences or success of benefactor's acts,and the receiver's capability of understanding gratitude (Naito,2013).

Gratitude is not only a personal feeling but also a reaction to what someone has done in the past or how they have behaved. Through these acts, gratitude functions as both a social and linguistic tool that maintains respect and harmony in communication.

In simple words, gratitude means noticing the good, knowing it comes from others, and feeling thankful. It makes us healthier, happier, and helps us build stronger ties with people around us.

2- THE RELATION BETWEEN GRATITUDE AND POLITENESS

Gratitude and politeness are closely related because expressions of gratitude promote harmonious social relationships and recognize the advantages provided by others.

According to pragmatics, expressing gratitude serves as a social gesture that strengthens interpersonal solidarity by acknowledging the hearer's effort, compassion, or charity. Brown and Levinson (1987) assert that gratitude is a courteous tactic that addresses the hearer's positive face by expressing gratitude and approbation. Gratitude is a crucial part of courteous communication since it also shows that the speaker is aware of the social rules guiding reciprocity and respect. Contextual elements including social distance, power dynamics, and the perceived worth of the favor received all influence the type and degree of gratitude (Leech, 1983). Furthermore, depending on the communication situation, gratitude can be expressed indirectly through praises, offers of payback, promises, or professions of indebtedness in addition to explicit statements like "thank you" (Cheng, 2005). As a result, politeness offers the practical foundation for properly interpreting and communicating gratitude. To put it simply, being grateful is being aware of the positive things in life, understanding that they originate from other people, and feeling appreciative. It improves our health and happiness and fosters closer relationships with those around us.

A theoretical Framework Cheng's(2005) taxonomy for eight strategies Of expressing Gratitude:

1-Thanking : Speakers use thanking in three ways:

A- Simple talking by using "thank you."

B- stating the favor "thank you for your help".

C-Thanking and mentioning the imposition caused by the favor "thank you For helping me cleaning the room."

2-Appreciation

A-Using the word appreciate "I appreciate it."

B-using the word appreciate and mentioning the Favor. "I appreciate the time you spent for me".

3-Positive Feeling

A-By expressing a positive reaction to the favor giver "You are a life saver"

B- a positive reaction to the object of the favor. "This book Was really helpful"

4- Repayment.

A-Offering service, food or money "next time it is my turn".

B-Feeling indebted. "I owe you".

C-Promising Future self improvement .e.g. "It won't happen again"

5-Apology

A-Using only apologizing words "e.g. I am sorry".

B-Using apologizing words and stating the favor or the fact . "I am sorry for The problem I made. "

C- Criticizing or blaming oneself . "I am such a fool "! "

6-Recognition of Imposition

A-Acknowledging the imposition . "I know that you were not allowed to Give Extra time".

B-Stating the need for a favor "I try not to ask for extra time but this Time I need it".

C-Diminishing the need for a favor . "you didn't have to do that".

7-Alerters .In the thanking situation, alerters and address term are likely to occur in the Same utterance:

A-Attention getter "Hi, Well, Hey"

B-Title "Dr, Sir Professor"

C-Name "John, Mary "

8-Other expressions that don't belong to the above strategies :

A-Here statement "Here you are ! "

B-Small talk " My name is John .What is your name? "

C-Leave and Taking "Have a nice day "

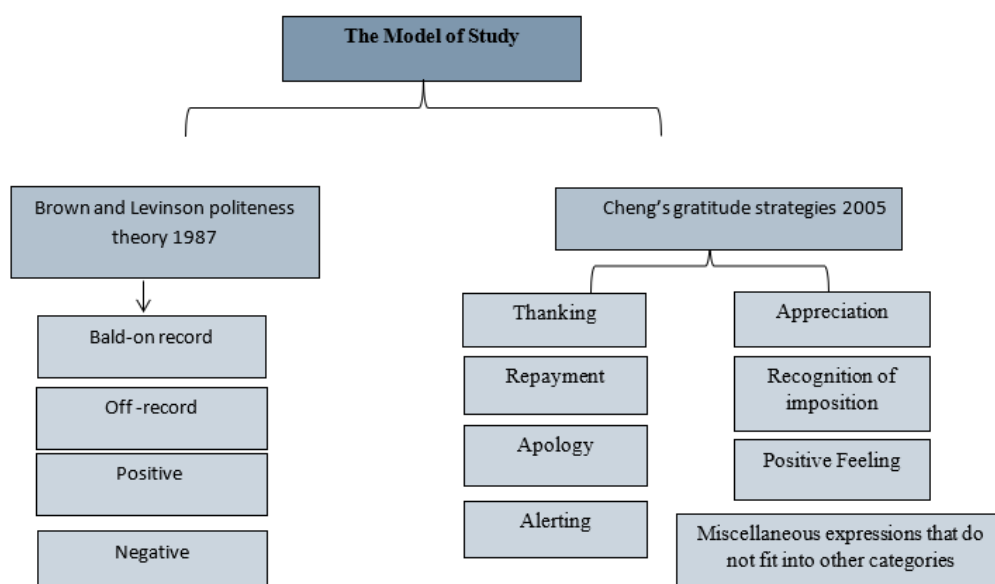
D-Joking "don't forget to pay again next time . "

3-METHODOLOGY

3-1 Data Analysis

Four chosen extracts from Denzel Washington's 2016 film *Fences* make up the data of the study. The study uses Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory to analyze the accompanying politeness techniques and Cheng's (2005) taxonomy to determine the characters' politeness strategies. A quantitative examination of the frequencies and percentages of the discovered strategies follows a qualitative analysis of the chosen extracts in accordance with the specified models. The findings are displayed in tables to identify the most popular tactics for politeness and gratitude.

Figure (1) The Eclectic Model of Gratitude Analysis based on Brown and Levinson politeness theory 1987 and Cheng's gratitude strategies 2005



3-2 The Analysis

Extract 1:

"See this woman, Bono? I love this woman. I love her so much ... I done run out of ways of loving her."

Troy's words indirectly show gratitude. He's expressing how much Rose means to him in front of another person (Bono). This public declaration reinforces their social bond . By doing this, Troy fulfills a social function of gratitude: recognizing someone's value in a relationship, especially when others are present. His indirect gratitude refers to positive feeling based on Cheng (2005).

Troy uses positive politeness strategy, by expressing deep affection in front of Bono, he seeks to strengthen his relationship with Rose and show shared values with Bono. He is appealing to share his emotions (her desire to be valued and appreciated). There is no threat to anyone's face here; instead, it is a sign of love and respect.

Extract 2

"Rose:" Thanks, Jim."

Rose's utterance, 'Thanks, Jim, is a direct expression of gratitude. Its primary function is social, as it serves to maintain friendly relations and acknowledge Bono's contribution in a polite way. According to Cheng's (2005) taxonomy, it falls under the strategy of thanking which involves using a brief thanking expression without additional elaboration.

From the perspective of Politeness Rose's utterance demonstrates positive politeness by attending to Jim's positive face his desire to be appreciated and valued. By explicitly thanking him, she strengthens social bonds and affirms his contribution. Her thanking is direct and clear. This represents bold on-record strategy

Extract 3

Cory: "No, Mama . . . thanks. I don't feel like eating."

In Cory's line the gratitude expressed is direct, as he explicitly uses the word thanks. Its function is social, aiming to maintain politeness and preserve warmth in his interaction with his mother despite refusing her offer. It belongs to thanking strategy

Cory's utterance shows negative politeness by minimizing the imposition of his refusal and respecting his mother's freedom from offense. At the same time, it reflects positive politeness by acknowledging Rose's kindness through gratitude. This combination preserves both her positive face (desire for appreciation) and negative face (freedom from challenge). Her direct thanking refers to bold on –record.

Extract 4

The only thing I say about the A&P is I'm glad Cory got that job down there."" Troy:

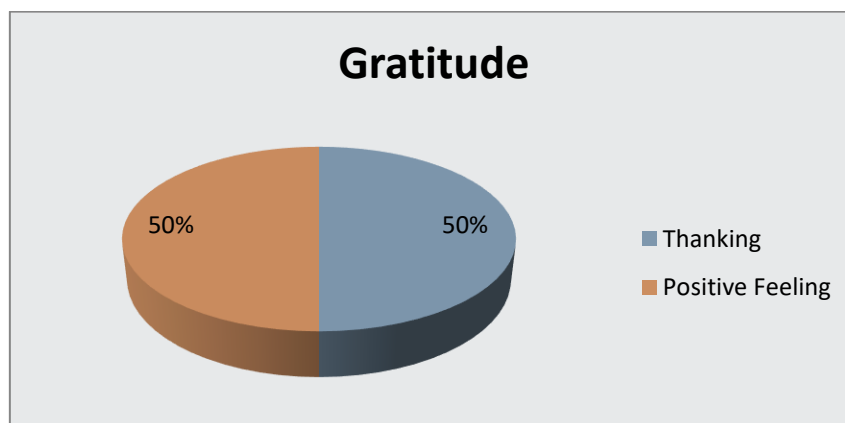
In the line Troy expresses indirect gratitude because he conveys happiness without saying it clearly. The function of this gratitude is social, as it strengthens family bonds and finally he can manage his own business. According to Cheng's (2005) taxonomy, this aligns with the positive feeling strategy, where the speaker communicates gratitude by sharing a positive emotional reaction to the beneficiary's action rather than offering explicit thanks.

In terms of Politeness Troy's utterance I'm glad Cory got that job down there reflects positive politeness because it acknowledges Cory's achievement and conveys approval, which supports Cory's positive face his desire to be valued and appreciated. By expressing gladness rather than issuing criticism or indifference, This line also shows negative politeness because he's not making demands or telling Cory what to do he's letting Cory keep his own freedom.

Frequencies and percentages of Gratitude strategies.

No.	Gratitude	Fr .	Pr.
1	Thanking	2	%50
7	Positive Feeling	2	50%
		4	100%

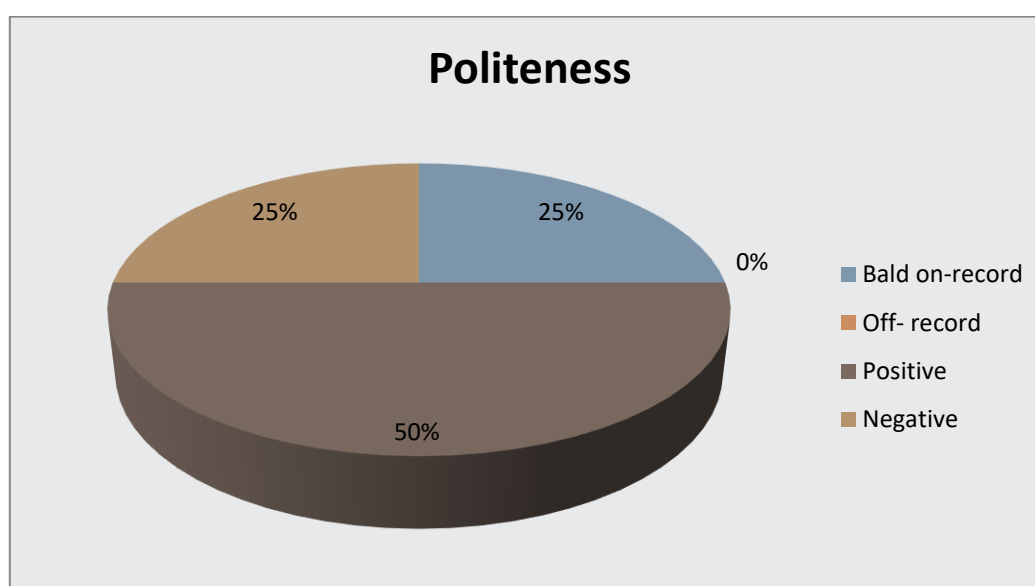
Figure 1 Gratitude strategies



Frequencies and percentages of Politeness strategies

No.	Politeness	Fr .	Pr.
1	Bald on-record	2	%25
2	Off- record	0	%0
3	Positive	4	%50
4	Negative	2	%25
		8	100%

Figure 2 politeness strategies



4-CONCLUSIONS

The study draws the following findings from the examination of the chosen extracts:

1. The characters in *Fences* express their thanks in both overt and covert ways. While indirect thankfulness is expressed through good sentiments and displays of appreciation, direct gratitude is mostly accomplished through verbal thanks.
2. The only thankfulness techniques found in the chosen data are Thanking and Positive Feeling, according to Cheng (2005). Both tactics are equally common, accounting for half of all professions of thanks.
3. The pragmatic realization of thankfulness in the chosen data is well explained by Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. The most commonly used tactic is positive politeness (50%), suggesting that speakers mostly utilize appreciation to strengthen interpersonal bonds and foster unity.
4. While the Off-Record approach is missing, the Bald-on Record and Negative Politeness strategies both account for 25% of the investigated data, indicating that the characters often choose straightforward and genuine displays of thankfulness over very oblique ones.
5. The results show a high practical correlation between politeness and thankfulness. Gratitude is always accompanied with courteous techniques that reduce possible face-threats and foster constructive social connection.

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