



## A Comprehensive Analysis of the Speech Act of Gratitude among Saudi Women on Snapchat

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### Abstract:

This study gives a pragmatic analysis of the speech act of gratitude among Saudi women on Snapchat. Grounded in politeness theory and pragmatics, it examined 202 screenshots capturing expressions of thanks for gifts and meals. The findings revealed culturally rooted strategies showcasing the significance of religious norms. Emphasizing the evolving role of social media, the study advocates for a novel coding model tailored to platforms like Snapchat, Instagram, and WhatsApp, considering their distinct communication dynamics. It offers implications for language education, intercultural communication, and the development of AI-driven communication systems seeking to replicate human expressions of gratitude. By unraveling the complexities of thanking, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of gratitude's role in human communication, connecting theoretical insights with practical applications in diverse cultural and social contexts.

**Keywords:** Cross-cultural communication, gratitude, politeness, pragmatics, Snapchat, speech act, thanking

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## 1. Introduction

Pragmatics, a branch of linguistics examining language use in social contexts, has gained considerable attention in recent decades. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory introduced the concept of universals in language use, which Kadar and Haugh (2013) considered the foundation of pragmatics. Lakoff (1973, 1977) contributed the idea that politeness is rule-governed, with universal rules like "don't impose," "give option," and "make someone feel good." In pragmatics, the act of thanking falls under the category of expressive speech acts. Speech acts, as conceptualized by Austin (1962) and later developed by Searle (1976), refer to the performative nature of language, where speaking is not only about conveying information but also about performing actions. Expressive speech acts, including thanking, are characterized by the speaker's expression of their psychological state, such as feelings, emotions, or attitudes. Whilesome speech acts are thought to be universal, the actual forms they take vary across cultures (Gass&Selinker, 2008). As a result, cross-cultural differences in speech acts such as apologies, requests, and compliments can lead to stereotypes.

The speech act of thanking is a communicative action in which an individual expresses appreciation to another person for something they have done (Searle, 1976). It is a verbal acknowledgment of a favor, kindness, gift, assistance, or any positive action or gesture received from someone else. The act of thanking is not merely a linguistic formality but is deeply embedded in social interactions, playing a crucial role in maintaining positive relationships and reinforcing social bonds. Expressions of thanks range from simple phrases like "thank you" to more elaborate and context-specific statements. Non-verbal cues, such as body language and facial expressions, often accompany verbal expressions of thanks, contributing to the overall communicative act. The effectiveness and appropriateness of thanking also depend on cultural norms, social context, and the relationship between the speaker and addressee. Understanding this speech act is not only essential for advancing theoretical knowledge in linguistics but also has practical implications for communication across diverse cultural and social settings. This research contributes to the development of a more nuanced and culturally sensitive framework for studying gratitude, offering insights that can inform communication strategies in both interpersonal and professional contexts.

This study builds upon existing literature on politeness theory, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics to offer a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of thanking. As Altalhi (2014) noted, there has been a lack of attention given to how Saudi Arabic speakers articulate and respond to expressions of gratitude. According to Altalhi, investigating speech acts in Saudi dialects would address gaps in sociolinguistic studies. Furthermore, she suggested that research on speech acts

provides an opportunity for individuals from diverse cultures to gain insights into Saudi interactional norms. To that end, this study examined how Saudi women performed the speech act of gratitude on Snapchat, including the strategies employed. The primary question guiding this investigation asked, "What strategies do Saudi women use on Snapchat when expressing gratitude for gifts and meals?"

## 2. Literature Review

Previous studies have investigated the speech act of thanking in various Arabic dialects, including Egyptian (Morsi, 2010), Iraqi (Al-Zubaidi, 2012), Jordanian (Al-Khawaldeh, 2013), and Palestinian Arabic (Al-Shaer, 2013). Alalhi (2014) explored the naturally occurring strategies employed by Hijazi women when expressing gratitude and responding to expressions of thanks. The study was based on 400 exchanges across diverse settings such as relatives and friends' houses, hospitals, a female university campus, and women's stores on three distinct occasions: thanking for a meal, thanking for a favor, and thanking for a gift. The coding schemes were derived from previous studies. Overall, the study revealed intriguing differences in the way Hijazi women expressed and responded to gratitude based on the source of the gratitude. They employed various strategies when expressing and responding to thanks for a low imposition favor, utilizing a limited number of strategies for meals and gifts. The study contributed to the understanding of social behavior mandated by Hijazi culture and called for further research on speech acts in different Saudi dialects to address gaps in the sociolinguistics literature.

Al-Shaer (2013) examined how American English and Palestinian Arabic speakers realized the speech acts of promising and thanking. The analysis included spontaneous, naturally occurring utterances encompassing declaratory speech acts, commissives, thanking, and responses in both English and Arabic. Occasions included giving a gift, doing a favor, helping, and inquiring about someone's health. To ensure data validity and reliability, Al-Shaer presented collected utterances to panels of seven native speakers of Arabic and seven native speakers of English for evaluation. The results revealed differences between the two cultural groups at the structural and lexical levels. Colloquial Arabic expressions of gratitude conveyed strong positive feelings, showing politeness and acknowledging the hearer's help, favor, or gift, expressing deep indebtedness. Al-Shaer noted that religious formulas, in the form of supplication, were the most frequent expressions of gratitude among Palestinians in their daily interactions. These supplications often included the mention of Allah (God), followed by verbs. Additionally, these supplications frequently occurred at the beginning or end. The absence of the explicit mention of God was considered implicit and easily recoverable. Al-Shaer

emphasized that Arabic dialects, including colloquial, social, and regional variations, are rich in speech acts. He concluded that cross-cultural and pragmalinguistic characteristics of Arabic speech acts merit further sociolinguistic, contrastive, semantic, and translation studies.

Morsi (2010) investigated how Egyptians living in the United States expressed gratitude and indebtedness in response to favors or generosity. The study observed naturally occurring thanking and responses in everyday interactions, collecting 25 examples in various settings, including grocery stores, a doctor's waiting room, the houses of Egyptian friends, and Egyptian restaurants. Morsi categorized thanking functions into appreciation of benefit, opening and closing a conversation, attention grabber, and leave-taking, as defined by Jung (1994), Rubin (1983), Ide (1998), and indebtedness, as defined by Kotani (2002). Morsi noted that the distribution and frequencies of expressions, forms, rituals, and formulaic expressions seemed different from other cultures. The data revealed significant differences in these forms compared to English and possibly other cultures. Morsi concluded that expressing gratitude in Egyptian Arabic may serve more than one function. She observed the use of repetition, blessings, routine formulaic expressions, and apology phrases as core elements, resulting in lengthy forms of thanking and responses, which might be perceived as "overfriendliness" by speakers of other languages.

Al-Maznaei (2021) explored the thanking expressions in Arabic and English, considering the impact of dialectical variation, cultural influences, and contextual variables, by employing Arabic and English versions of an open-ended questionnaire. The findings revealed that dialectical diversity was not linked to an increased prevalence of thanking strategies in English. Additionally, religious expressions were identified as a prominent method of expressing politeness and gratitude among Arabic speakers. Both native Arabic and English speakers exhibited a preference for negative politeness strategies, emphasizing the minimization of face-threatening actions. Contextual variables, such as familiarity and social status, played a significant role in shaping the performance of the speech act.

These studies show the need for exploring speech acts, particularly expressions of gratitude, in various Arabic dialects. They contribute valuable insights into the cultural nuances and linguistic characteristics of thanking across contexts, informing the present study.

### **3. Methodology**

#### ***Social Media as a Data Source***

Social media use witnessed substantial growth across the Arab world in 2011, evolving beyond social networking and entertainment to influence daily life (Arab Social Media Report, 2011).

Platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter have become increasingly popular in Arab countries. Building on this trend, in 2023, Saudi Arabia ranked sixth globally in terms of Snapchat users with a Snapchat audience base of over 21.75 million users (Statista, 2023).

Verbal thanking has been studied in various cultures and languages using different data collection methods (Altalhi, 2014). Previous research on Arabic verbal thanking, for instance, has commonly employed field observation methods (e.g., Al-Shaer, 2013; Altalhi 2014; Morsi, 2010). The current study introduces a novel source of authentic and natural written discourse data, collecting 202 screenshots of Snapchat messages (snaps) sent by women expressing thanks for a meal or gift. Snapchat, a mobile app facilitating the exchange of self-destructing videos and pictures, was selected for this study due to its popularity in Saudi culture. Among Arab countries, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have the highest Snapchat usage, employing the platform for information sharing, documenting life events, and business marketing (Middle East Media, 2019).

### ***Participants***

Participants were randomly selected to contribute to the study by sharing screenshots of instances where they expressed gratitude for a gift or a meal, or received gratitude for the same. The participants were specifically chosen based on the following criteria: they were all female, in their 30s, and native speakers of one of three dialects of Saudi Arabic (Najdi, Hijazi, and Northern). These criteria were established to ensure a diverse representation of Saudi women across different regions and age groups. The screenshots provided by the participants were required to meet certain conditions: firstly, both the giver and receiver of gratitude in the screenshots had to be females. Secondly, the participants needed to ensure that the screenshots captured instances of expressing gratitude for either a gift or a meal. Thirdly, the social connections depicted in the screenshots were classified as either relatives or friends. The captured screenshots were then shared with the researcher for analysis.

### ***Analysis Procedure***

The analysis involved utilizing basic descriptive statistics, particularly frequency distribution, to quantify the frequency of different strategies employed in expressing gratitude within the dataset. Additionally, a qualitative analysis was conducted to delve deeper into the nuances of the expressions of gratitude, considering factors such as language use, cultural nuances, and the overall context of the interactions. This mixed-method approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the patterns and intricacies of expressing gratitude in the context of Saudi culture, as observed through Snapchat messages.

All expressions of gratitude were systematically coded based on the schemes summarized by Al-Zubaidi(2012), which were adapted from previous studies to encompass the diverse strategies for expressing gratitude, as shown in Table 1 (as cited in Altalhi, 2014, p. 24).

Table 1. *Coding Schemes in Previous Studies for Strategies to Express Gratitude*

Eisentein&Bodman (1986,1993)	Aijmer (1996)	Chang (2005)	Schauer &Adolph (2006)	Chang (2008)
1. Expressing intimacy: mind reading	1. Thanking somebody explicitly	1. Thanking	1. Thanking + complimenting interlocutor	1. Explicit expressing of thanking gratitude
2. Virtually automatic thanking	2. Expressing gratitude	2. Appreciation	2. Thanking+ stating reason	2. Suggesting indebtedness
3. Thanking	3. Acknowledging a debt of gratitude	3. Positive feeling	3. Thanking + confirming interlocutor's commitment	3. Showing intention to repay
4. Expressing affection	4. Expressing appreciation of the addressee	4. Apology	4. Thanking + stating intent to reciprocate	4. Indicating caring
5. Complimenting the giver	5. Expressing appreciation of the act	5. Recognition of imposition	5. Thanking + stating interlocutor's non-existent obligation	5. Implying request.
6. Complimenting the person/action	6. Stressing one's attitude	6. Repayment	6. Thanking + refusal	6. Asking questions
7. Expressing indebtedness	7. Expressing emotion	7. Others		7. Complimenting
8. Expressing an inability to articulate deep feeling	8. Commenting on one's own role by suppressing one's importance (self-denigration)	8. Alerters		8. Value judgment
9. Expressing the lack of necessity				9. Terms of calling
10. Non-verbal communication				10. Suggesting affection
11. Promising to reciprocate				11. Expressing relief
12. Expressing surprise				12. Further talk
13. Leave-taking				13. Promising
14. Repayment				14. Accepting the offer
15. Stating a person's name				15. Non-verbal communication
				16. Opting out
				17. Pause-filler
				18. Refusing
				19. Avoiding

Expressions were coded using the framework introduced by Al-Zubaidi (2012), shown in Table 2 (as cited in Altalhi, 2014, p. 26). Al-Zubaidi devised nine distinct strategies for expressing gratitude, aiming to compare Iraqi Arabic and American expressions.

Table 2. *Al-Zubaidi's (2012) Strategies of Gratitude Expression*

Main Strategy	Sub-Strategy
1. Thanking	a. Bald thanking b. Thanking and stating the favor c. Thanking and stating the imposition
2. Complimenting	a. Complimenting the thankee b. Complimenting the thanking act
3. Expressing benediction	a. Explicit benediction b. Implicit benediction
4. Apologizing	a. Expressing apology b. Expressing embarrassment c. Expressing self-denigration
5. Acknowledging the imposition	a. Recognizing the imposition b. Expressing the unnecessary of the favor
6. Reciprocating	a. Expressing indebtedness b. Expressing repayment
7. Expressing intimacy	a. Body part term b. Endearment term c. Kinship term
8. Alerting	a. Attention getters b. Address term
9. Other	a. Swearing b. Here-statement c. Opting-out d. Non-verbal communication e. Refusal f. Stating results g. Expressing liking

#### 4. Results and Discussion

Individuals employ varied strategies when expressing gratitude, influenced by situational conditions (Wong, 2009). As Altalhi (2014) noted, “the type of benefit to be derived from expressing gratitude is an important situational condition in which the thanker considers” (p. 28). In this study, the 202 instances of expressing gratitude were initially categorized based on the type of benefit, as illustrated in Table 3. Thanking for a meal constituted 78.71% of the data, while thanking for a gift made up 21.28%.

Table 3. *Distribution of Thanking Expressions According to Type of Benefit*

Type of benefit	N	%
Thanking for a meal	159	78.71%
Thanking for a gift	43	21.28%

<b>Total</b>	202	99.99%
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The statistical method employed in the above table included basic descriptive statistics, specifically frequency distribution. The researcher categorized instances of expressing gratitude into two main types of benefits: “Thanking for a meal” and “Thanking for a gift.” Each category was then represented in the table by its respective frequency (N), indicating the number of instances falling into each type of benefit. Additionally, the percentage (%) was included to illustrate the proportion of instances within each category relative to the total number of instances observed. The percentage was calculated by dividing the frequency of each category by the total number of instances (202) and multiplying by 100. As a result, the table briefly presents the distribution of gratitude expressions according to the type of benefit received, offering insights into the prevalence of thanking for meals versus thanking for gifts within the dataset.

**Strategies Employed to Convey Thanks for a Gift**

Out of all instances, 43 (21.28%) involved expressing gratitude for a gift. Of these, 44% used a single strategy (see Table 4), and 55% involved a combination of more than one. Table 4 uses descriptive statistics, specifically frequency distribution, to categorize instances of expressing gratitude for a gift based on different strategies employed.

Table 4. *Distribution of Using One Strategy to Express Gratitude for a Gift*

Type of Main Strategy	Sub-Strategy	N	%
Thanking	1. Bald thanking	2	10.5%
Complimenting	2. Complimenting the thankee	3	15.7%
Expressing benediction	3. Explicit benediction	10	52.6%
Reciprocating	4. Expressing indebtedness	1	5.2%
Expressing intimacy	5. Endearment term	1	5.2%
Other	6. Expressing liking	2	10.5%
<b>Total</b>		19	99.7%

Each strategy, such as "Bald thanking" or "Explicit benediction," is listed with its frequency and percentage of occurrence relative to the total instances of gratitude for a gift. For instance, "Explicit benediction" emerged as the most prevalent strategy when expressing gratitude for a gift (52.6%), followed by complimenting the recipient (15.7%), bald thanking (10.5%), and expressing liking (10.5%). This concise presentation offers insights into the prevalence of various gratitude expression strategies in the dataset. Strategies such as expressing indebtedness and using terms to convey intimacy were less common when employed individually in this context. Overall, combining strategies was

more common, constituting 55.8% of the data, than using individual strategies when thanking someone for a gift. The following examples illustrate how two strategies were combined:

Expressing intimacy (using endearment/kinship term) along with expressing benediction

habibti Um Talin, Allah la yahrmni mnk  
 darling Talin'[s] mother [may]God [do]-not prevent-[me] from [you]

“My darling Um Talin, may God not deny me your presence.”

Thanking along with expressing intimacy

shukran ukti algaliah Saronah  
 thank [you] sister-[my] dear Saronah

“Thank you, my dear sister Saronah.”

Expressing intimacy along with acknowledging the imposition

habibti Um Anas, mfrftk akbar hadiahwallah  
 darling [mother-of]-Anas knowing-you [is] the-biggest gift wallah

“My darling Um Anas, knowing you is the biggest gift, I swear.”

Thanking and stating the favor along with complimenting the object

“Thanks for this cute cake.”

Complimenting the thankee along with expressing intimacy

atfagabhalhadiahelqaliah ala galbimthlsahbatha. Shukran Hayat yaahla w agla neighbor.  
 surprised-[I-was][by]-the-gift[which-is]-valued [on]-heart-my like friend-her. thanks Hayat  
 [the]sweetest and [the]dearest neighbor

“I was surprised by this valued gift like the one who gave it. Thanks, Hayat. You're the sweetest and dearest neighbor.”

Thanking along with expressing repayment

Shukran Lulu ahdeekum fe alafrah yaRab  
 thank-you Lulu turn-you-back [on] happy-[occasions] my God

“Thank you, Lulu. God willing, I hope I return the favor on your happy occasion.”

Complimenting the thankee along with expressing benediction

Ntghwa ala yummy chocolate mn Khawlah, A llahykthrkherha  
 drink-[ing] [with] yummy chocolate from Khawlah God give her more

“We're drinking coffee with the yummy chocolate from Khawlah. May God give her more.”

Expressing benediction along with expressing intimacy

Allah la yhrmni mn ahbabi  
[may] God [do]-not prevent-me from beloved-my

“May God not deny me your presence my beloved.”

Ysfd le Dalolahhabibtieli jaibah l walidi hadiah  
[make for me]-Happy Dalolahdarling who bring-s for son-my gift

“God, make my darling Dalolah happy; she brings my son a gift.”

Furthermore, participants sometimes combined more than two strategies when expressing gratitude for a gift:

Expressing intimacy along with expressing benediction, using endearment or referring to a body part, and expressing indebtedness

Layonahhabiti Allah yfteek alafiah yarohi, ma gassarti  
Layonahdarling God give-you wellness soul-my [do]-not fail

“My darling Layonah, may God give you good health, you did not fail to satisfy me.”

Expressing benediction, thanking, and stating the favor along with expressing intimacy

Allah yesfdkum w yftekumalfafiah flaalhodor w sharaftonamashkoreenhabaibiflaalhadaia  
God make-you happy and give-you one thousand wellness for coming and  
honoring-usthanks-[all] darling for the gifts

“May Allah make you happy and give you good health a thousand times over for coming and honoring us. Thank you darling for all the gifts.”

Expressing benediction, complimenting the thankee, and expressing intimacy

Jl Rabi ykather kherkya ajmal ukt bldnia  
God make-more welfare [the most]-beautiful sister in-the-world

“May God give you more, the most beautiful sister in the world.”

Expressing thanking, indebtedness, and intimacy

Shukranhabiti Ohoud, fugal ma nrahbfyalk  
thank you darling Ohoud [looking] to be happy on son and daughter's-your graduation

“Thank you, my darling Ohoud. God willing, we'll return the favor on your daughter and son's graduation.”

These examples illustrate the amalgamation of strategies to convey politeness and appreciation toward the gift giver. Combining three strategies was the maximum observed, potentially due to the character limit on Snapchat. Notably, explicit benediction was frequently employed, constituting 53% of the data. This strategy could be used independently but was often combined with other strategies.

Another observation was the influence of visual representation, particularly sharing an image of the received gift, which served as a form of acknowledgment. In 6.9% of instances, participants sent a picture featuring the giver's name with emojis. Participants employed repeated emojis to underscore their sense of indebtedness. According to Skovholt et al. (2014), emojis serve as contextualization cues, helping organize interpersonal relations in written interactions. That study identified three roles of emojis in workplace emails: indicating a positive attitude, serving as hedges when accompanying expressive speech acts like thanks or greetings (acting as strengtheners), and fulfilling a softening role when following directives such as requests or corrections (p. 780). Intriguingly, 95.3% of expressions in the current study conveying thanks for a gift incorporated an emoji.

Saudi women often employed emojis to convey their emotions, mood, or facial expressions. Commonly used emojis were the smiling face with heart-shaped eyes, face throwing a kiss, loudly crying face, two hearts, sparkling heart, growing heart, and hearts in different colors.

### *Strategies Employed to Convey Thanks for a Meal*

In 159 instances (78.7%) of the data, participants expressed gratitude for a meal. Of these, 69.8% of the expressions involved a single strategy, while 19.4% combined two strategies. Combining more than two strategies accounted for only 1.25% of the data. Similar to expressing thanks for a gift, individuals also used emojis alone. Visual representation was evident as well, with participants posting pictures or videos of the meal, possibly leading to a greater reliance on emojis. Another potential explanation would be the limited characters allowed per snap. Table 5 illustrates the distribution of using a single strategy to thank someone for a meal.

Table 5. *Distribution of Using One Strategy to Express Gratitude for a Meal*

Type of Main Strategy	Sub-Strategy	N	%
Thanking	1. Bald thanking	5	3.41%
Complimenting	2. Complimenting the thankee	11	6.91%
Expressing benediction	3. Explicit benediction	93	58.59%
Reciprocating	4. Expressing indebtedness	1	0.62%
Other	5. Expressing liking	1	0.62%
<b>Total</b>		111	96.81%

Table 5 utilizes descriptive statistics, specifically frequency distribution, to categorize expressions of gratitude for a meal based on the strategies used. Each strategy, such as "Bald thanking," "Complimenting the thankee," and "Explicit benediction," is listed with its frequency (N), indicating how often it was employed. For instance, "Explicit benediction" emerges as the most prevalent strategy, representing 93 instances or 58.59% of total expressions. This concise presentation offers insights into the prevalence of different gratitude expression strategies for meals within the dataset. The following examples illustrate the combination of two strategies when expressing thanks for a meal:

Expressing benediction and complimenting the thankee

Ahla lasagna mn yden aljamelah Maram  
 [the]-best lasagna from hands beautiful Maram  
 "The best lasagna made by the beautiful Maram."

Complimenting the thankee and expressing intimacy

Wahla ftoor fi bet jdti  
 [the] nicest breakfast in home grandmother  
 "The nicest breakfast at my grandmother's home."

Expressing benediction and intimacy

Kathar Allah khairakHaloomalgalb  
 give-more God welfare Haloom [the]-heart  
 "May God give you more,my heart,Haloom."

Thanking and expressing benediction

Shukran Ashwagalazemah, Allah ykhatherkhairak  
 thank Ashwag [for] invitation, [may] God Give-more welfare-[you]  
 "Thank you,Ashwag, for the invitation. May God give you more."

Expressing benediction and liking

Tslm ydeenk Shosho ala al karak  
 bless- hands[your] Shosho for the chai latte  
 "May God bless your hands,Shosho, for the chai latte."

Only two instances (1.25%) combined three strategies:

Thanking, expressing benediction, and expressing intimacy

Shukran mama Allah la yhrmna mnk yagaliah  
 thank-[you] mom[May] God [do]-not prevent-me from [you] my dear

“Thanks,Mom. May God not deny me your presence, my dear.”

Expressing liking, thanking, and complimenting the thankee

Allah Allah shukran Reem klk thoug

God God thank-[you] Reem you-[all] decency

“God! Thank you, Reem, for your generosity.”

### ***General Analysis of Expressions Used to Express Thanks***

Participants frequently incorporated compliments into their expressions of gratitude. Superlative adjectives were common, potentially signifying an expression of extreme gratefulness and indebtedness. Numerous prayers and blessings were prevalent throughout the data as well, reflecting the influence of Islam in Arabic countries. This observation aligned with findings from previous studies on the speech act of thanking in Arabic (e.g., Al-Maznaei, 2021; Al-Shaer, 2013; Altalhi, 2014; Morsi, 2010).In the current study, benediction was the most prevalent strategy to thank someone for a meal or gift, constituting 50.9% of the data. Examples of prayers and blessings are given below:

Kathar Allah khairakHadoo

Give-more God welfare Hadoo

“May God give you more, Hadoo.”

YaRab asfd geranee wkather khairahum

may God make-happy neighbors-my and-give-more welfare-them

“May God give my neighbors more and make them happy.”

Akramk Allah Hadeel

generous-make you God Hadeel

“May God be generous with you, Hadeel.”

ʃndKhadoj Allah ygneha

at Khadoj[‘s home] may God rich-[make-her ]

“InKhadoj’s home, may God make her rich.”

Additionally, Saudi women incorporated the phrase “mashallah”(literally, “God has willed it”) into their thanking strategies (2.9%) to convey appreciation and signify that the achievements were attributed to the will of God. Individuals likely uttered this phrase as a protective measure against jealousy and the evil eye. This practice aligned with the visual representation involved in performing the speech act of thanking through Snapchat, where pictures or videos are accessible to a broader audience. The following examples of thanking strategies were accompanied by this phrase:

Mashallah, tslmydenk Khadoj

God has willed it    bless hands-your    Khadoj

“Godhas willed it, bless your hands, Khadoj.”

Mashallah,            sufrah daimah            ya Nada.

God has willed it    feast    permanent    Nada

“Godhas willed it, give Nada an endless feast.”

Furthermore, honorific titles such as “um”(indicating the mother of the eldest child)were in 5.4% of the data. This reflected a customary social practice in Arabic cultures aimed at demonstrating respect and admiration, particularly when conversing with someone older. The following examples illustrate how women opted for these formsinstead of the addressee’s actual first name:

Yfteek                    alafiah                    Um Meral

[may-God]-give-you                    wellness            [mother-of]Meral

“May God give you good health, Um Meral.”

Kathar            Allah khairak            Um Bader

give-more    God    welfare            [mother-of] Bader

“May God give you more, Um Bader.”

Moreover, Saudi women employed nicknames to convey attachment and friendship, expressing intimacy through endearment and kinship terms, constituting 55.4% of the data, such as “my heart,” “my soul,” “my dear,” and “darling.” Additionally, code-switching, where participants wrote in English instead of Arabic, accounted for 6.9% of the data. This choice could be attributed to the thankee being a non-native Arabic speaker, or it might reflect the writer’s preference for English as a lingua franca. Furthermore, the data revealed a significant presence of emojis, aligning with Skovholt et al.’s (2014) claim that emojis serve communicative functions such as “marking positive attitude” and “hedges when following expressive speech acts (such as thanks, greetings, etc.), functioning as strengtheners” (p. 1).

## 5. Conclusion

This study exploredthe strategies Saudi women used to perform the speech act of thanking for meals and gifts on Snapchat. The data consistedof 202 screenshots of snaps that exhibited a rich array of strategies. These encompassed the artful use of compliments, incorporating superlative adjectives to convey heightened appreciation, as well as prayers and blessings, alongside benedictions, which reflected a profound religious influence. The inclusion of honorific names and endearing nicknames established an intimate and respectful tone, while code-switching underscored the adaptability of communication across linguistic boundaries. Notably, emojis offered a visually impactful and

emotionally resonant dimension in conveying thanks. This comprehensive repertoire of strategies reflected the nuanced and culturally embedded nature of expressing gratitude among Saudi women, highlighting the intricate interplay of language, culture, and emotion in their communicative practices.

While the study provides insights into Saudi norms, generalization should be approached cautiously due to the limited data and specific occasions analyzed. Future studies could collect data at various points in time to encompass a broader range of situations. Moreover, there is a need for a novel coding model that accommodates media such as Snapchat, Instagram, and WhatsApp. In contrast, many existing schemes from prior studies on gratitude expression strategies are primarily designed for verbal expressions (see Altalhi, 2014). Following the adoption of a new coding model, a follow-up interview could establish a more precise understanding of the writer's intent.

By unraveling the complexities of the speech act of thanking, this research aims to enrich our understanding of the role gratitude plays in human communication. The findings may have implications for language education, intercultural communication, and the development of AI-driven communication systems that aim to replicate human expressions of gratitude.

## المستخلص

دراسة تحليلية شاملة لفعل الامتنان بين السيدات السعوديات من خلال تطبيق التواصل الاجتماعي السناشات

نهي خالد السالم

تهدف هذه الدراسة التداولية إلى تقديم تحليل واقعي لفعل الامتنان بين السيدات السعوديات من خلال تطبيق التواصل الاجتماعي (السناشات). تستند الدراسة إلى الـ Politeness theory and pragmatics لتحليل 202 مثال تم التقاطها من خلال تطبيق السناشات تظهر تعبيرات الشكر عن الهدايا ودعوات الولائم. أوضحت النتائج عن استخدام السيدات للعديد من الاستراتيجيات للتعبير عن الشكر والامتنان وتظهر هذه الاستراتيجيات متجذرة ثقافياً تبرز أهمية الثقافة الدينية. مع التأكيد على الدور المتطور لوسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، تدعو الدراسة إلى استحداث نموذج مصمم خصيصاً لتحليل اللغات في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي مثل سناشات، إنستغرام، واتساب، مع مراعات ديناميات التواصل الفريدة لكل منها. تسهم النتائج في تعزيز التواصل بين الثقافات وفهم أكثر دقة لدور الشكر والامتنان في التواصل البشري مرتبطاً ذلك بين الأفكار النظرية والتطبيقات العملية في سياقات ثقافية واجتماعية متنوعة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التواصل الثقافي، التداولية، اللباقة، أفعال الكلام، الامتنان، سناشات.

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## Appendix

- habibti Um Talin, Allah la yahrمني mnk darling Talin'[s] mother [may] God [do]-not prevent-[me] from [you] "My darling Um Talin, may God not deny me your presence."
- shukran ukti algaliah Saronah  
 thank [you] sister-[my] dear Saronah  
 "Thank you, my dear sister Saronah."
- habibti Um Anas, mfrftk akbar hadiahwallah  
 darling [mother-of]-Anas knowing-you [is] the-biggest gift wallah  
 "My darling Um Anas, knowing you is the biggest gift, I swear."
- atfagabhalhadiahelqaliah ala galbimthlsahbatha. Shukran Hayat yaahla w agla neighbor.  
 surprised-[I-was] [by]-the-gift [which-is]-valued [on]-heart-my like friend-her. thanks Hayat  
 [the]sweetest and [the]dearest neighbor  
 "I was surprised by this valued gift like the one who gave it. Thanks, Hayat. You're the sweetest and dearest neighbor."
- Shukran Lulu ahdeekum fe alafrah yaRab  
 thank-you Lulu turn-you-back [on] happy-[occasions] my God  
 "Thank you, Lulu. God willing, I hope I return the favor on your happy occasion."
- Ntghwa ala yummy chocolate mn Khawlah, A llahykthrkherha  
 drink-[ing] [with] yummy chocolate from Khawlah God give her more  
 "We're drinking coffee with the yummy chocolate from Khawlah. May God give her more."
- Allah la yhrمني mn ahbabi  
 [may] God [do]-not prevent-me from beloved-my  
 "May God not deny me your presence my beloved."
- Ysfd le Dalolahhabibtieli jaibah l waldi hadiah  
 [make for me]-Happy Dalolah darling who bring-s for son-my gift  
 "God, make my darling Dalolah happy; she brings my son a gift."
- Layonahhabibti Allah yfteek alafiah yarohi, ma gassarti  
 Layonah darling God give-you wellness soul-my [do]-not fail  
 "My darling Layonah, may God give you good health, you did not fail to satisfy me."
- Allah yesfdkum w yftekumalfafiah flaalhodor w sharaftonamashkoreenhabaibiflaalhadaia  
 God make-you happy andgive-you one thousand wellnessfor coming and  
 honoring-usthanks-[all] darlingfor the gifts  
 "May Allah make you happy and give you good health a thousand times over for coming and honoring

us. Thank you darling for all the gifts.”

- Jfl Rabi ykather kherkya ajmal ukt bldnia  
God make-more welfare [the most]-beautiful sister in-the-world

“May God give you more, the most beautiful sister in the world.”

- ShukranhabibtiOhoud, fugal ma nfrabhsyalk  
thank youdarling Ohoud [looking] to be happy on son and daughter’s-your graduation  
“Thank you, my darling Ohoud. God willing, we’ll return the favor on your daughter and son’s graduation.”

- Ahla lasagna mn yden aljamelah Maram  
[the]-best lasagna from hands beautiful Maram  
“The best lasagna made by the beautiful Maram.”

- Wahla ftoor fi bet jdti  
[the] nicest breakfast in home grandmother  
“The nicest breakfast at my grandmother’s home.”

- Kathar Allah khairakHaloomalgalb  
give-more God welfare Haloom [the]-heart  
“May God give you more, my heart, Haloom.”

- Shukran Ashwagalazemah, Allah ykhatherkhairak  
thank Ashwag [for] invitation, [may] God Give-more welfare-[you]  
“Thank you, Ashwag, for the invitation. May God give you more.”

- Tslm ydeenk Shosho ala al karak  
bless- hands[your] Shosho for the chai latte  
“May God bless your hands, Shosho, for the chai latte.”

- Shukran mama Allah la yhrmna mnk yagaliah  
thank-[you] mom[May] God [do]-not prevent-me from [you] my dear  
“Thanks, Mom. May God not deny me your presence, my dear.”

- Allah Allah shukran Reem klk thoug  
God God thank-[you] Reem you-[all] decency  
“God! Thank you, Reem, for your generosity.”

- Kathar Allah khairakHadool  
Give-more God welfare Hadool  
“May God give you more, Hadool.”

- YaRab asfd geranee wkather khairahum  
may God make-happy neighbors-my and-give-more welfare-them  
“May God give my neighbors more and make them happy.”

- Akramk Allah Hadeel  
generous-make you God Hadeel  
“May God be generous with you, Hadeel.”

- fndKhadoj Allah ygneha  
at Khadoj[‘s home] may God rich-[make-her ]  
“In Khadoj’s home, may God make her rich.”

- Mashallah,                      tsImydenk                      Khadoj  
God has willed it    bless hands-your    Khadoj  
“God has willed it, bless your hands, Khadoj.”
- Mashallah,                      sufraH daimah                      ya Nada.  
God has willed it    feast    permanent    Nada  
“God has willed it, give Nada an endless feast.”
- Ysteek                      alafiah                      Um Meral  
[may-God]-give-you                      wellness                      [mother-of] Meral  
“May God give you good health, Um Meral.”
- Kathar                      Allah khairak                      Um Bader  
give-more    God    welfare                      [mother-of] Bader  
“May God give you more, Um Bader.”