Strategic Gratitude: Flouting Grice's Maxims and Face in British-English and Bulgarian Talk Show Discourse

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Abstract

The study focuses on the pragmatic perspectives of gratitude communicative interactions in British-English and Bulgarian TV talk show programmes, with a particular stress on cases where Grice's conversational Maxims are intentionally flouted. Based on conversational exchanges from two purpose-built corpora, the paper identifies, classifies, and analyzes the explicit and implicit forms of gratitude acts, exploring their adherence to or deviation from the Maxims of Quality, Quantity, Manner, and Relevance. Beyond mere pattern classification, the study further examines the contextual dynamics in terms of stylistic devices and the realization of communicative goals, extended illocutionary force, and politeness perspective. Additionally, the research aims to examine the contextual dynamics between conversational implicature breaches and face management, providing a contrastive analysis of how speakers in both cultural settings strategically navigate politeness and demonstrate social identity. When examined through the prism of mediated contextual settings, such as magazine-style talk shows and entertainment formats, the communicative exchanges of gratitude reveal intricate pragmatic nuances. These nuances extend beyond the core pragmatic function of expressing gratitue, evolving into more elaborate, expressive, and strategically directed forms of social interaction.

Keywords: *conversational implicatures, flouting, gratitude communicative acts, illocutionary force, pragmatic perspective.*

1. Introduction

In talk show discourse, the communicative message rarely builds upon the surface meaning of the words; indeed, it is governed by the speaker's communicative intention and the conversational implicatures that manifest in the interaction. Gratitude speech acts, considered to be one of the most pragmatically charged communicative interactions, can serve a productive background for investigating how participants in a conversation identify and address implicatures, specifically on occasions when their utterances aim to be strategic rather than entirely sincere. In the present article, our goal is to examine the way the specific acts of gratitude are performed and interpreted as well as the cases in which they are deliberately flouted within the contexts of two comparable talk show formats, *This Morning* in British-English and *Na Kafe* in Bulgarian. By dwelling on cases where interlocutors deviate from Grice's maxims, the paper reflects on how communicative norms are shaped and guided by cultural background, giving rise to pragmatic extensions in politeness strategies and social image management. In both cultural settings, cases of purposeful flouting of Grice's implicature Maxims have been observed in strategies of interactional rapport building, which can reveal either subtle or significant discrepancies in how native speakers of English and Bulgarian manage social relations. From a cross-cultural perspective, the analysis dwells primarily on strategic gratitude behaviour that both adheres to and questions the recognized standards of politeness revealed within the format of TV-mediated talk show discourse.

2. Theoretical background

In pragmatic theory, gratitude speech acts belong to the group of expressive illocutionary acts, whose primary goal is to convey the interlocutor's psychological state (Eisenstein & Bodman 1995: 64-81). As these acts are inherently oriented to serve social functions, either by maintaining social balance or by enhancing interpersonal cohesion, the

sincerity aspect is crucial for the adequate recognition of the speaker's communicative intention (ibid.; Bodman 1986: 30-35; Fraser 2019: 118-129). However, in mediated settings such as talk show entertainment formats, communicative interactions of gratitude depict broader pragmatic dimensions which go beyond the standardized straightforward expression of genuine feeling to a more performative and strategic interaction (Martin & Rose 2003; Setyadji 2025: 1632-1634). In this respect, the literal adherence to the four conventional conversational maxims (Quantity, Quality, Relevance, Manner) cannot be entirely guaranteed as further conversational implicatures may arise when interlocutors flout these maxims deliberately, conveying more expressive meanings than the locutionary content (Grice 1989; Trendafilov 2010; Ali-Ali 2018: 34).

As for the Maxims of Quantity and Quality, there could be cases of flouting in terms of *exaggeration* (be more thankful than required) or *communicating ironic* or *insincere expressions*, used as stylistic tools (Holmes 1992: 441; Nur 2019: 113). As for the Maxims of Relevance and Manner, pragmatic deviations may occur in providing irrelevant peripheral comments or *comic*, *playful expressions*, that could extend the boundaries of the sincerity component (Nur 2019), hence affect politeness standards and face interpretation. Additionally, various stylistic devices, including hyperbole, metaphor, under- or overstatement, and some others, may be observed in the cases when a conversational Maxim is purposefully flouted (Krisdwiyani & Hanidar 2022). In this regard, in talk show programmes, gratitude speech acts navigate both positive (the desire to be liked and admired) and negative face-related considerations (the desire to act without imposition) (Ting-Toomey 2009; Jucker 2011: 178-197). A speaker being too elaborate in praising or granting recognition, can reveal traces of positive face pragmatic behaviour, though by magnifying the social value of a favour, the expression might add to a transgression of the maxim of Quality (Levinson 2000; Arundale 2010; Al Shboul 2022: 17-18). On the other hand, by over-clarifying or using evasive, indirect

wording, the speaker might reflect negative face traits (by trying to mitigate imposition), thus flouting the maxims of Quantity and Manner (Clark & Schaefer 1989; Cutting 2002; Horn 2004: 3-28)

Nevertheless, the issue of flouting the Maxims through communicating gratitude speech acts in TV media discourse, especially when investigated in cross-cultural contexts, seems to be rather challenging as expectations of politeness and pragmatic performance deviate from the standards of the routinized gratitude behaviour.

In essence, the paper delves into how gratitude speech acts, direct and indirect, add further pragmatic meanings by outstripping the Maxims' conventionalities, reflecting additional dimensions of politeness strategies, implicature deviations and socio-cultural divergences.

3. Research questions

The study presents a cross-linguistic discourse analysis of two corpora of spontaneous conversation, each drawn from seven sequential broadcasts from daytime magazine talk shows: *This morning* on ITV1, conducted in English and *Na Kafe* on Nova TV in Bulgarian. Data collection was compiled through the systematic transcription of speech interactions, featuring a wide range of topics including cultural and lifestyle content, health and fashion coverage, social issues, and entertainment segments. The turn-taking sequences reflect a co-constructed interactional schema among the participants in the conversations, hosts and celebrities, experts, public figures, or everyday people. Also, the dialogue-based exchanges employ a register which typically demonstrates a degree of casualness, blending spontaneous colloquial language elements and natural conversational syntax, whose main goal is to be strategic and foster expressive and context-sensitive behaviour, conditioned by the situational demands of the interaction (Biber & Conrad, 2009).

The study stresses the following research questions:

1) Which gratitude patterns are most commonly exploited in the flouting of Grice's conversational Maxims across the two corpora?
2) Which of Grice's conversational Maxims are most commonly flouted in gratitude utterances across the two corpora?
3) Which strategic implicatures in terms of stylistic devices are typically observed in the flouting of Grice's Maxims in both corpora?
4) Which types of politeness orientation are mainly demonstrated within the two corpora?

4. Methods

A mixed-methods design is employed in data processing, integrating *qualitative* and *quantitative* methodological approaches to facilitate an accurate and comprehensive analysis of the findings (Maxwell 2013; Creswell 2014). *Discourse analysis* is also applied to the collected data, which serves as a conceptual framework in interpreting language structures, contextual meanings and pragmatic functions (specifically, in the flouting of conversational Maxims) (Martin & Rose 2003; Weisser 2018). *Conversation analysis* techniques are also considered to be an effective method, which addresses basically a small-scale investigation of sequentially organized interactions as well as participants' (speakers') social performance in communication (Baker & McEnery 2015).

While this methodology can be highly valuable, it may also have its limitations in extending beyond a specific set of data. In this respect, *Critical discourse analysis* adds to the more thorough argumentation of situational variables, stressing on societal beliefs and community dynamics (Baker et al 2008: 288-289). This approach explores deeper layers of language patterns addressing the

community's social and cultural perspectives and their impact on spoken language discourse. Moreover, *Pragmatic analysis* (PA) and *Corpus-assisted discourse analysis* (CADA) further develop this viewpoint with PA foregrounding the way conventional and strategic implicatures, face-related considerations, and politeness preferences operate in spoken interactions, and with CADA integrating qualitative interpretation with quantitative measurements in corpus-based studies (Aijmer & Rühlemann 2014; Gillings, Mautner & Baker 2023).

Overall, the study incorporates a methodology which synthesizes a detailed examination of speech act interactions with attention to the specific cultural and contextual parameters and their deviations.

5. Data analysis

The database comprises two corpora of gratitude speech acts, 153 excerpted from the British-English annotated dialogues and 161 from the Bulgarian transcripts. The collected gratitude communicative acts are categorized in the following conventional gratitude act patterns, which are considered to be common in almost every language according to Bodman and Eisenstein's theoretical framework of gratitude patterns, which is widely regarded as comprehensive and extensively applied in pragmatics research (Bodman & Eisenstein 1988):

- *acts expressing thanks/gratitude*;
- *acts expressing appreciation*;
- *acts acknowledging debt*;
- *acts recognizing the imposition*;
- *acts expressing positive emotion*;
- *acts expressing lack of necessity/obligation*;
- *acts offering reciprocation*.

The analysis branches in three-dimensional examination format: first, the paper classifies each flouted act of gratitude according to its appropriate pattern; second, the research identifies which maxim

(or maxims) has been flouted and what figures of speech and stylistic tools are employed in this specific instance of flouting; and third, the analysis stresses on the effects of this particular case of flouting on politeness orientation and face interpretations across the two different cultural settings.

5.1. Analysis of flouted gratitude speech acts in the British-English corpus

The examination and analysis of flouted gratitude communicative acts (153 in total) in the British-English dataset are manifested through the seven conventional gratitude patterns provided above. In each utterance, at least one of Grice's Maxims is violated. Additionally, politeness and face concerns are further regarded in terms of strategic pragmatic behaviour. The following is an instance demonstrating cases of flouting of the Maxims of Quality and Quantity:

Context: Dr. Rossi (a nutrition expert) expresses gratitude for receiving an expected and generous donation from Gordon Ramsey (a renowned chef) for her charity, supporting gut health issues (ep. 2):

> Mr. Ramsey: *Dear Megan, I know how much of a difference you make to so many people's lifestyles and clinical conditions. This sum of 15000 pounds is to support your future initiatives.*
> Dr. Rossi: *Oh, wow! Gordon, I just can't believe. This is absolutely amazing! No-one has ever done such a great thing for me all of reality's past!* [27] *Now with this grand gesture we'll definitely be able to fund a months' worth of research. And now, you, solo, set a new vision for gut health!* (Set 1)
> Mr. Ramsay: *It's my pleasure to help, Megan. What you do is truly uplifting.*
> Dr. Rossi: *Thank you so much, Gordon. Indeed, what you did now will definitely amplify the significance of our research not only locally, but globally as well.* [28] *Your gift will turn to be a ray of hope for many in need.* [29] (Set 2)

In terms of **pattern categorization**, the first set of gratitude communicative acts (1) comprises 6 gratitude utterances which reveal different gratitude performance. The first three, *Oh, wow … can't believe … absolutely amazing!*, refer to the strategy of '*expressing positive emotion*' either to the act of generosity or to the benefactor. In the particular case, the illocutionary point addresses the act of kindness, where the speaker, by using strong expressive markers such as primary interjections - *wow,* emotional adjectives - *amazing,* a maximizer - *absolutely*, functioning as discourse intensifiers, aim to convey more articulate and intense communicative intention demonstrating strong emotional attitude. In fact, the initial trio of utterances clearly communicate the implicature of deference and admiration to the act of benevolence (Potts 2014: 172-173). As for the fourth utterance in Set 1, *No-one has ever done such a great thing … all of reality's past!* [27] (flouted), it can be placed in the '*acknowledging debt*' category, as there are strong markers of indebtedness. The last two utterances, *Now with this grand gesture … And now, you, solo … for gut health!*, fit in the '*recognizing imposition*' gratitude pattern, manifesting awareness of the benefactor's efforts as the speaker implicitly directs appreciation and validates the benefactor's contribution (the impact of the gift itself).

Pertaining to the second set of utterances (Set 2), it is represented via three gratitude communicative acts with the first, *Thank you so much …*, illustrating an explicit, direct gratitude communicative act, as there is a presence of a performative illocutionary indicating device (the verb *thank*) complemented by a degree intensifier (*so much*), emphasizing the emotive character of the communicative intention. In relation to the second utterance, *Indeed, what you did … but globally as well* [28] (flouted), it can be classified as an act '*expressing appreciation*' for the thankee's benevolent deed, highlighting the magnitude of their impact and contribution, appearing as an input-focused acknowledgement (Carston 2004: 643). Likewise, the last utterance in Set 2, *Your gift will turn … a ray of hope …* [29], tends towards the

pattern of '*expressing appreciation*'. However, unlike the preceding utterance, the communicative intention leans towards a more affective, socially-oriented type of gratitude.

In terms of Maxims' violation, the dialogue shows distinct deviations in the Maxims of Quantity and Quality. As for Quantity Maxim (in, *No-one has ever done … all of reality's past*, and in, *Indeed, what you did now will … amplify the significance … not only locally, but globally as well*.) [27,28], flouting the Maxim is realized through the stylistic tools of over-informativeness and lexical elaboration, thus enhancing the expressive point of the communicative intention (being overly-detailed). In parallel, the Quality Maxim is further infringed, as illustrated in the same utterances and complemented by the last utterance of Set 2 (*Your gift will turn as a ray of hope*) [29], in that, what the speaker (thanker) is saying cannot be considered entirely true judging by common-sense reference to experience (Carston 1998: 231). Additionally, the propositional content of the three utterances shows deviations from the truth-value semantics of the locutionary component, that is, the content of the utterance is not literally upheld by the speaker. So, propositionally, the statements are overstated and contradictory to fact; however, pragmatically, at an illocutionary level, they are considered felicitous as the core illocutionary point is properly recognized.

Proceeding with the analysis, by flouting Quantity and Quality Maxims, the speaker transgresses the conventional parameters of the Maxims, communicating extended inferences to the conventional implicature interpretations. Given that, the core illocutionary force is employed strategically (in flouting the two Maxims by exaggeration and overstatement) as the speaker utilizes specific stylistic tools and devices, such as hyperbole (as in: *all of reality's past*, *a new vision for gut health*) and metaphor (as in: *a ray of hope*). What is more, the deliberate application of exclamations and interjections further intensifies the emotional contour of the illocutionary message. Along with that, the employment of an emphatic adverb of certainty (*definitely*) and strong

affirmation, as well as the use of persuasive language and elevated diction (*amplify the significance*, *a ray of hope*) additionally contribute to the strategic implicature performance (Brou 2020). These factors sequentially lead to indirect face-supporting pragmatic behaviour as by demonstrating appreciation and admiration the speaker avoids any imposition on the benefactor and does not emphasize their obligation (Allot, 2018). In this context, positive politeness strategies gain preference as there is a case of mitigating imposition.

In all, the provided dialogue-based example comprises a total of 9 gratitude acts with 3 acts being flouted. One of the flouted gratitude act corresponds to the pattern of '*acknowledging dept*', whereas the other two, to the pattern of '*expressing appreciation*'.

The next step of the analysis focuses on cases that demonstrate flouting of the Maxims of Manner and Relevance. The following communicative exchanges provide evidence of this:

Context: Holly Willoughby (host) speaks to Dr. Emily Clarke (environmental scientist) about community recycling programme and ecological advocacy (ep. 4):

> Host: *Emily, it's absolutely brilliant to have you here today! Your efforts in community recycling projects have definitely caught the attention of many. Honestly, we're kind of indebted to your indefatigable spirit … though, I must admit, our coffee machine might feel neglected next to all your hard work!* [71]
> Dr. Clarke: *Oh, Holly, thanks a million! I truly appreciate you saying that, though to be honest, my drive comes from within rather than seeking praise.*
> Host: *Well, scratch away, Emily! And let me just say, about your presentations last week at the town hall… I nearly wish I could award you a medal or maybe a lifetime supply of biscuits, who can say!* [72]
> Dr. Clarke: *That's very sweet, Holly. But really, the biscuits aren't necessary. Just knowing the community is taking small steps brings me more joy than any treat.*

> Host: *Still, I feel like I owe you a proper thank you. Perhaps next time we could dedicate an entire segment to your work - and perhaps sneak in a biscuit or two, if only to reciprocate your remarkable enthusiasm. And Emily, I really value your patience with my questions, especially the bizarre ones, and I can only imagine the stamina that takes!* [73]
> Dr. Clarke: *No worries at all. I enjoyed the questions, even the weird ones!* [74]

In relation to **pattern categorization**, there are eight instances of gratitude speech acts which display one of seven gratitude perspectives. The first utterance, *… we're kind of **indebted** to your indefatigable spirit…* [71] (flouted), corresponds to the gratitude strategy of '*acknowledging debt*' as there are explicit traces conveying obligation and indebtedness. The use of a strong performative marker (*indebted*) demonstrates the speaker's sense of recognition of the benefactor's efforts and exhibits a clear focus on their contribution with a higher level of indebtedness and a significant imposition upon the speaker, strengthened by the subsequent segment of the clause (*to your indefatigable spirit*), which further depicts an emphatic illocutionary point in terms of one's debt of gratitude. However, by adding, *… though, I must admit, our coffee machine might feel neglected next to all your hard work!*, the speaker **flouts** the Maxim of Manner, in which metaphorical indebtedness is combined with humour (*coffee machine* remark), flouting clarity and conciseness. What is more, the same remark flouts the Maxim of Relevance, in that, the semantics of the phrase does not correspond to the propositional content of the utterance and the pragmatic context (coffee machine is not directly relevant to recycling initiatives), which is also observed in *neglected*, with the latter personifying the machine in a humourous way. Concurrently, there is evident hyperbolic exaggeration of the semantic content, which amplifies the communicative intention beyond its literal scope (Trang 2020: 4). The subsequent set, *… thanks a million! I truly appreciate you saying that…*, refers to the acts of '*thanks*' and '*appreciation*' as there is a combination of an informal numerical

intensifier (*a million*) and two direct illocutionary face indicating devices (*thank*, *appreciate*). The illocutionary force here manifests both acknowledgment of praise and gratitude for the interpersonal relationship (the social function embedded in the expression), which in turn is a straightforward message referring to solidarity and positive politeness, conveying a lower level of indebtedness and minimal imposition (Arundale 2010: 2102).

As for the third utterance, … *I nearly wish I could award you a medal or maybe a lifetime supply of biscuits* … [72], the act exemplifies the pattern of '*expressing positive emotion*' and '*appreciation*' through deliberate overstatement of the benefactor's distinguished efforts. Relevantly, the expressions, *award you a medal*, *a lifetime of supply of biscuits*, employ metaphorical and hyperbolic language, which flouts the Maxim of Manner as they obscure the literal meaning, intensifying the humourous effect. In the same train of thought, the same expressions flout the Maxim of Relevance as they deviate from explicit acknowledgement.

The next one, … *the biscuits aren't necessary*…, manifests a contrasting pragmatic function and falls into the pattern of '*expressing lack of necessity or obligation*'. Indeed, the contrast does not refer to any semantic opposition, it involves the propositional and pragmatic parameters of the contextual markers, in that, the speaker emphasizes appreciation without implying indebtedness or duty, while minimizing any sense of imposition. Following that, the utterance, … *I feel like I owe you a proper thank you*…, illustrates a standard example of explicit appreciation as there is a presence of a performative entry (*thank*), illustrating a moderate level of indebtedness (*owe*) and potential imposition on the speaker. However, in, … *Perhaps next time we could dedicate an entire segment … reciprocate* …, which constitutes an act of '*offering reciprocation*', the speaker's communicative intention corresponds with the implicated meaning, signalling social balance and the intention to reciprocate kindness, thus indicating recognition of reciprocal benefit, which in turn, corresponds to a shared level of

indebtedness (Fraser 2019: 123). As for … *I really value your patience with my questions, especially the bizzare ones* … [73] (flouted), the utterance reverts to the standardized direct gratitude acts of '*expressing appreciation*' and '*thanks*'. However, the direct apologetic phrase (*I value*) expands into an additional noun complement clause that signifies the act of benevolence/kindness (in the specific case, the benefactor's tolerance), implying recognition of a lower-level imposition (demonstrated by the benefactor's patience) rather than high indebtedness. The utterance flouts the Maxim of Manner as its communicative massage is indirectly implicated, that is, the speaker deliberately understates the propositional content by avoiding explicit negativity (in using *bizarre*), thus provoking closer social distance (Chepkemoi 2023: 51). The last set of utterances, … *No worries at all. I enjoyed the questions, even the weird ones.* [74], combines features of a dual illocutionary perspective, that is, by saying *No worries*, the speaker aims at minimizing imposition; while, by adding *I enjoyed* …, the speaker accentuates the expression of positive emotion, which further adds to a low or absent level of indebtedness. What is more, the speaker's remark playfully violates the Maxim of Relevance by bringing forward a more casual, irrelevant comment highlighting positive feelings (*enjoyed*).

As a whole, the flouted gratitude acts exemplify the patterns of '*acknowledging debt*' [71], '*expressing positive emotion*' + '*expressing appreciation*' [72], '*expressing appreciation*' and '*thanks*' [73], and '*minimizing imposition*' + '*expressing positive emotion*' [74]

In terms of politeness, while positive politeness is illustrated by stylistic markers of humour, playful exaggeration and informality, negative politeness is revealed through the use of indirectness, minimized imposition and understatement (Sastra 2014: 3-4). While the former shortens social distance and fosters social cohesion, the latter aims to respect the other person's negative face by refraining from direct imposition.

Based on the total number of cases (153), the percentage rates of the flouted gratitude speech acts in patterns are as follows:

acts offering reciprocation	36 cases (23.53%)
acts expressing thanks	21 cases (13.73%)
acts acknowledging debt	21 cases (13.73%)
acts expressing appreciation	15 cases (9.80%)
acts recognizing imposition	8 cases (5.23%)
acts expressing lack of necessity/obligation	4 cases (2.61%)
acts expressing positive emotion	48 cases (31.37%)

It is obvious that the majority of acts of flouting the Grice's Maxims focus on communicating '*positive emotions*' and '*reciprocation*', while fewer cases involve '*acknowledging imposition*' or '*lack of obligation*'. The instances of flouting are mainly revealed through the Maxims of **Quality** and **Manner**, which are mostly violated through the stylistic tools of hyperbole, metaphor, and deliberate obscurity of language. Politeness orientation leans towards positive face effects in relation to social closeness and mutual solidarity. Generally, flouting in the British-English corpus functions strategically as to soften imposition and diminish obligation.

5.2. Analysis of flouted gratitude speech acts in the Bulgarian corpus

The Bulgarian corpus (BgC) of flouted gratitude speech acts is represented by a total of 161 communicative acts. A similar analysis is provided regarding gratitude patterns, flouting distinctions, and politeness behaviour.

The data interpretation commences with the illustration and examination of the gratitude utterances in which the Maxims of Quantity and Quality are violated. The dialogue excerpt from the BgC offers empirical support for this observation:

Context: Gala (host), Mariya (a parent), Dr. Grigorova (child psychologist) speak on the topic of sudden bursts of verbal aggression by parents:

Gala: *… Mariya, blagodarya Vi, che se osmelihte da spodelite svoyata istoriya. Znam, che ne e lesno.*
(in En.: *Mariya, thank you for daring to share your story. I know it is not easy*.)
Mariya: *Az sam az … i da, ponyakoga sam vikala na deteto si. … Blagodarya, che ne me sadite vednaga.*
(in En.: *I am who I am … and yes, sometimes I have shouted at my child. … Thank you for not judging me immediately*.)
Dr. Grigorova: *Vie vsashnost ni pomagate poveche, otkolkoto si predstavyate.*[31] *Dalzhim Vi priznatelnost za chestnostta.*
(in En.: *You are actually helping us more than you realize. We owe you gratitude for your honesty*.)
Mariya: *Oh, veroyatno ste spasili hilyadi detski dushi samo kato ste slushali roditeli kato men.* [32] *Nyama kak da Vi se otblagodarya dostatachno.* [33]
(in En.: *Oh, you've probably saved thousands of kids' souls just by listening to parents like me! There is no way I can thank you enough.*)

Dr. Grigorova: *Az blagodarya za neimovernata Vi smelost i iskrenost.* [34]
(in En.: *I thank you for your incredible bravery and honesty*.)
Mariya: *E, togava Vi dalzha kafe sled efira. Pone tolkova moga da napravya.* [35]
(in En.: *Well, then I owe you a coffee after the show. That's the least I can do*.)
Dr. Grigorova: *Kafeto shte bade priyatno, ili mozhe bi chai, s tortichka, vzaimno shte se pocherpim. No po-vazhnoto e, che Vie veche ste narpavili krachka kam promyanata.* [36, 37]
(in En.: *The coffee will be nice, why not tea and a piece of cake, we can treat each other. But what's more important is that you have already taken a step toward change*.)

There are 11 gratitude utterances in the provided dialogue each with illocutionary components that convey different communicative intentions. However, in only seven of them there are cases of flouting the Maxims of Quantity and Quality.

In the initial utterances, *Mariya, blagodarya Vi, che se osmelihte da …. Znam, che ne e lesno.* (*Mariya, thank you for daring to …. I know it is not easy.*), the first utterance exemplifies the pattern of '*expressing thanks/gratitude*' as it contains a performative verb (*blagodarya - thank*) followed by a complement clause indicating the service/favour. The second utterance corresponds to the gratitude pattern '*recognizing imposition*'. Since the set involves an explicit performative structure and an utterance mitigating imposition, it reflects a negative politeness orientation by means of which the speaker (Gala) emphasizes the efforts made by the other speaker (Mariya, a guest) (Jucker, 2011). Regarding the next utterance, *… Blagodarya, che ne me sadite vednaga*. (*Thank you for not judging me immediately)*, it represents the pattern of '*expressing positive emotion*' as the speaker (Mariya) conveys relief and a more emotive form of gratitude behaviour, which, in turn, aligns with a positive politeness performance (solidarity) (ibid.). In terms of case [31] (flouted), *You are actually helping us more than you realize*, the utterance exemplifies the pattern of '*expressing appreciation*' in which both Maxims, of Quantity and Quality, are violated, through over-informative exaggeration (Quantity), as well as due to its inability to be empirically verified (Quality) (Damanik & Hanidar 2021: 98-99). Stylistically, the utterance employs hyberbole and lexical intensification (*more than you realize*). From the perspective of politeness, it is obvious that the speaker aims to preserve a positive self-image by fostering mutual understanding.

The next utterance in line, *Dalzhim Vi priznatelnost za chestnostta.* (*We owe you gratitude for your honesty.*), is consistent with the pattern of '*acknowledging debt*', illustrating positive politeness features as it involves making the hearer feel appreciated and valued.

In the context of case [32] (flouted), *Oh, veroyatno ste spasili hilyadi detski dushi samo kato ste slushali roditeli kato men.* (*Oh, you've probably saved thousands of kids' souls just by listening to parents like me!*), the utterance conforms to the pattern of '*expressing appreciation*', in which, similar to case [31] both Maxims are flouted. The utterance is overly detailed (*thousands of kids' souls*) and literally improbable. The language resorts to deliberate exaggeration, emotionally and lexically charged phrasing, demonstrating positive politeness behaviour (by showing admiration and awe). Analogously, in the example [33] (flouted), *Nyama kak da Vi se otblagodarya dostatachno.* (*There is no way I can thank you enough.*), which can be placed in the group of '*expressing appreciation*' and '*acknowledging debt*' gratitude patterns (by implying that conventional thanks are not sufficient), the speaker appears to flout the Maxim of Quantity, as their statement is under-informative (no details of the specific favour), though the flouting provokes an implicature that cannot be adequately verbalized. Instead, the speaker stresses on their inability to thank '*enough*'. There is a case for saying that flouting occurs as it arises from the deliberate understatement, which, in turn, leads the hearer to interpret exaggerated gratitude (Salameh 2020: 514-516). On the other hand, the Maxim of Quality is also flouted, though not entirely violated, in that, the statement is not literally true (*There is no way I can …*), but in conversational terms, the communicative intention is properly recognized as a conventional hyperbole. Interestingly, as the speaker indirectly points out their indebtedness, this could be associated with negative politeness behaviour, as the statement deliberately acknowledges obligation without explicitly imposing it (Wilson & Sperber 2012).

Turning to case [34] (flouted), *Az blagodarya za* ***neimovernata*** *Vi smelost i iskrenost.* (*I thank you for your* ***incredible*** *bravery and honesty.*), the Maxim of Quantity is not explicitly violated, as the statement is as informative as required, however, there is a slight evaluative hyperbole in the statement, which intensifies the hearer's personal qualities of '***incredible*** *bravery and honesty*'. In this respect, the Maxim

of Quality is flouted, that is, illocutionarily extended. In this case, the propositional content corresponds to the pragmatic content of the utterance, though it is not literally true (*incredible*). As for pattern realization, the specific utterance corresponds to the acts of '*expressing* direct *gratitude*' by referring to the favour.

As regards example [35] (flouted), *E, togava Vi dalzha kafe sled efira. Pone tolkova moga da napravya.* (*Well, then I owe you a coffee after the show. That's the least I can do.*), the speaker (Mariya), deliberately understates their obligation (by offering only a coffee instead of what the hearer really merits). Indeed, the speaker's utterance understates their obligation at the propositional level; at the illocutionary level, this constitutes a case of flouting of the Maxim of Quantity, as the literal semantic content communicates minimal information, while the conversational implicature expresses a significantly higher degree of appreciation or indebtedness. Definitely, the two utterances conform with the pattern of '*acknowledging debt*' as there is an explicit lexical entry (*dalzha - owe*), which directly refers to the speaker's indebtedness to the hearer.

Taking case [36] (flouted) next, *Kafeto shte bade priyatno, ili mozhe bi chai, s tortichka, vzaimno shte se pocherpim.* (*The coffee will be nice, why not tea and a piece of cake, we can treat each other.*). The pragmatic function of the utterance encompasses three types of gratitude acts, '*offering reciprocation*' (*vzaimno shte se pocherpim* (*we can treat each other*)), '*expressing positive emotion*', conveyed through the playful suggestion of multiple options (coffee, tea, cake) and '*expressing appreciation*' by indirectly communicating consideration and concern for the hearer's overall condition. Furthermore, there is a clear case of flouting the Maxim of Quantity, as the speaker is overly detailed, providing excessive information, which is irrelevant to the implicated act of kindness. Though, in turn, this stylistic figure (over-informativeness) adds to the overall friendly tone of the conversational exchanges. Additionally, a slight flouting of the Maxim of Quality is observed in *… vzaimno mozhe da se pocherpim (… we can treat each other*), as the

illocutionary perspective is conveyed by a quasi-humourous remark (*we can treat each other*) (Setyadji 2025).

The last utterance in the set [37] (flouted), *No po-vazhnoto e, che Vie veche ste narpavili krachka kam promyanata.* (*But what's more important is that you have already taken a step toward change.*), primarily expresses '*indirect appreciation*' (no explicit performative entry) by emphasizing the hearer's constructive behaviour. It flouts the Maxim of Quantity, as it is understated. The speaker does not fully indicate the degree of their personal gratitude and indebtedness, instead of that, the speaker emphasizes the hearer's action, invoking a pragmatic inference of appreciation. The Maxim of Quality is not violated, since the statement about the step toward change does not provide untruthful information.

Overall, the flouted gratitude acts correspond to either one or two patterns, with the pattern of '*expressing appreciation*' being employed 4 times (one case of direct appreciation), two acts follow the '*acknowledging debt*' pattern, one act - '*expressing direct thanks*', and one act for the patterns of '*offering reciprocation*' and '*expressing positive emotions*' respectively.

Going further into the analysis, the following dialogue-based example illustrates the manifestation of flouting with respect to the Maxims of Manner and Relevance in the BgC:

Context: Gala (host), Mrs Kiryakova (a pro-holidays guest), Mr. Kirilov (an anti-holidays guest) speak on the topic of "for and against summer family holidays" (Season 19, Ep. 4)

> Gala: *Dobre doshli v "Na kafe"! Dnes govorim za lyatnata semeina vakantsiya - obichate li gi ili ne chak tolkova? G-zho Kiryakova, zapochnete Vie!* (in En.: *Welcome to "Na kafe"! Today we are talking about summer family holidays, do you love them or not so much? Mrs. Kiryakova, please start!*)
> Mrs. Kiryakova: *Blagodarya ti, Gala! Chestno kazano, az ne prosto gi obicham, a napravo gi obozhavam! Vakantsiite sa kato glatka svezh vazduh za tsyaloto semeystvo, dori kogato vsichko e malko haotichno i*

e pretapkano ot hora na plazha … ne bihme iskali taka. [79] (in En.: *Thank you, Gala. Honestly, I don't simply love them, I absolutely adore them! Holidays are like a breath of fresh air for the whole family, even when everything is a bit chaotic and the beach is overcrowded with people … we certainly wouldn't want it that way.*)

Gala: *Tova zvuchi strahotno! A kakvo mislite Vie, g-n Kirilov?* (in En.: *That sounds great! What do you think, Mr. Kirilov?*)

Mr. Kirilov: *O, parvo blagodarya za pokanata! Tuk az sam malko po-razlichen. Ako tryabva da sam iskren, lyatoto mi nosi poveche toplina v sartseto, otkolkoto na plazha, no inache, vakantsiite mi se struvat kato prachka v koleloto. Vapreki tova, otsenyavam vsyaka vazmozhnost da se posmeem zaedno, dori ako tova znachi da bada "anti-vakantsionen geroi"!* [80] (in En.: *Oh, first, thank you for the invitation! I'm a bit different. Frankly, summer brings me more warmth in the heart than on the beach, but otherwise, holidays feel like a stick in the wheel to me. Nevertheless, I appreciate every chance to laugh together, even if that means being the "anti-holidays hero"*!)

Mrs. Kiryakova: *Blagodarya Vi, che ste tolkova zabaven, g-n Kirilov!* [81] *Razbira se, ne darzhim nikogo na sila.* [82] *Ako nyakoga reshite da doydete s nas, garantiram, che shte Vi se otplatim s ogromna usmivka i sledvashtata pokana!* [83] (in En.: *Thank you for being so funny, Mr. Kirilov! Of course, we don't hold anyone against their will. If you ever decide to come with us, I guarantee we'll repay you with a big smile and the next invitation!*)

Mr. Kirilov: *Priemam s udovolstvie. Nyamam zadalzheniya, no blagodarya, polozhitelnata energiya e vinagi dobre doshla.* [84] (in En.: *I accept with pleasure. I have no obligations, but thank you, positive energy is always welcome.*)

The provided set of communicative exchanges encompasses eight gratitude acts, six of which are flouted in relation to the Maxims of Manner and Relevance.

Mrs. Kiryakova's initial turn incorporates three gratitude-related utterances. The first, *Blagodarya ti, Gala! (Thank you, Gala!)*, is

considered to be an overt '*expession of thanks/gratitude*' as it openly manifests the explicit illocutionary force of the conversational implicature. As for the second utterance, *… az ne prosto gi obicham, a napravo gi obozhvam …* (*I don't simply love them, I absolutely adore them!*), the speaker demonstrates '*positive emotion*' by exploiting slight hyperbolic language (*obozhavam - adore*). In conjunction with the lexical intensification, the propositional content is also amplified, as the speaker deliberately augments the degree of emotional contour from neutral 'loving' to emphatically 'adoring' (by appreciating a favourable experience). Nonetheless, the examined cases do not exhibit any obvious flouting of the Maxims of Manner and Relevance, as the utterances are clear and methodical, relevant to the specific discourse. Conversely, the third utterance, [79] (flouted), *Vakantsiite sa kato glatka svezh vazduh za tsyaloto semeystvo …* (*Holidays are like a breath of fresh air for the whole family …*), also corresponds to the pattern of '*expressing positive emotion*', but displays a case of flouting of both Maxims (Manner and Relevance) as the speaker uses metaphorical and opaque language, introducing elements of indirection and figurative obscurity (Chekpemoi 2023: 51). Concurrently, the speaker slightly deviates from strictly context-sensitive communication to a more tangential, off-topic propositional content (the same metaphorical expression), which mildly disregards the Maxim of Relevance. Undoubtedly, the combined flouting of the two Maxims strategically enhances the emotive force of the communicative act, rendering it more emotionally resonant and expressive from a pragmatic perspective. The prevalent figures of speech that can be observed in this utterance are mainly simile (the use of *kato - like*), comparing holidays to a *"breath of fresh air"* and metaphor (the phrase itself). Additionally, although not strictly a figure of speech, evaluative language is also employed to enhance the positive communicative impact of the figurative language.

As for the next sequence of gratitude speech acts (Mr. Kirilov's turn), which incorporates two gratitude utterances, the first, *O, parvo blagodarya za pokanata!* (*Oh, first, thank you for the invitation!*), is a

straightforward expression of thanks/gratitude, definitely demonstrating positive face traits and no flouting of Maxims. In terms of the second act, … *otsenyavam vsyaka vazmozhnost da se posmeem zaedno, dori ako tova znachi da bada "anti-vakantsionen geroi"!* [80] (*I appreciate every chance to laugh together, even if that means being the "anti-holidays hero"!*), the utterance follows the pattern of '*expressing appreciation*' (*otsenyavam …da se posmeem zaedno*) combined with the pattern of manifesting '*positive emotion*' (*dori ako … - even if …*), however, at the level of the entire utterance, it is apparent that the Maxims of Manner and Relevance are flouted as the speaker's playful elaboration and self-reflexive metapragmatic irony (*anti-holidays hero*) invoke the notion of stylistic overextension and indirectness. This, in turn, seems to obscure the propositional content (truth-conditional aspect) and the core pragmatic function (illocutionary aspect), as the speaker's communicative intention extends beyond the boundaries of strictly referential exchange implying additional, implicit layer of meaning (through ironic performance). In terms of stylistic tools, the displayed illocutionary behaviour deploys metaphor, contrast and hyperbole to uphold interpersonal solidarity, thus demonstrating positive politeness.

The next set of gratitude-related acts (Mrs. Kiryakova's second turn) comprises three utterances, with the first, *Blagodarya Vi, che ste tolkova zabaven, …* [81] (flouted) (*Thank you for being so funny, …*), the speaker ostensibly demonstrates positive evaluation ('*expressing thanks/appreciation'*) at a surface level (propositional content), though the sarcastic remark (*tolkova zabaven - so funny*) signals a further pragmatic implicature, which infers social evaluation (that the speaker is actually not that funny). In this respect, the utterance is not strictly propositional, but it is also face-threating and ironic, which constitutes a deliberate flouting of the Maxim of Manner. The second utterance, *Razbira se, ne darzhim nikogo na sila.*[82] (flouted) (*Of course, we don't hold anyone against their will.*), exemplifies the pattern of '*lack of necessity/obligation*', acting as a form of negative politeness. It flouts the

Maxim of Relevance, as apparently it is irrelevant to the preceding gratitude act by inferring an additional ironic illocutionary meaning. The use of stylistic tools such as hedging (*razbira se - of course*) and playful phrasing (*ne darzhim nikogo na sila - we don't hold anyone against their will*) enhances the pragmatic effectiveness by using non-imperative assurance, thereby mitigating imposition in order to soften any perceived coercion. The third utterance, *… shte Vi se otplatim s ogromna usmivka i sledvashtata pokana!* [83] (flouted) (*… we'll repay you with a big smile and the next invitation!*) representing '*offering reciprocation*', flouts both Maxims (of Manner and Relevance). The employment of playful phrasing (*ogromna usmivka - big smile, sledvashtata pokana - next invitation*) infers the notions of propositional exaggeration and pragmatic obscurity that blurs the literal meaning. As for the Maxim of Relevance, the offer of repayment seems marginally inapposite given the sarcastic tone of the prior utterances. The supplementary illocutionary meaning is achieved through metaphor and hyperbolic language (big smile) which further amplify the positive reciprocity and enhance the effect of irony. However, the last utterance in the set, when combined with the earlier statements of sarcasm, somehow initiates implicit pragmatic tension, resulting in a subtle face-threatening act, pragmatically interpreted as a form of mockery (Ali-Ali 2018).

The last gratitude-related utterance in the dialogue (Mr. Kirilov's second turn), *Nyamam zadalzheniya, no blagodarya, polozhitelnata energiya e vinagi dobre doshla.* [84] (flouted) (*I have no obligations, but thank you, positive energy is always welcome.*) is split into two components: *Nyamam zadalzheniya …* (*I have no obligations …*), which refers to the pattern of '*lack of necessaty/obligation*' and adheres to the Grice's Maxims (as it implicates understatement to uphold negative politeness (avoiding imposition while maintaining social distance (Fraser 2019: 122)), and the second component, *… no blagodarya, polozhitelnata energiya e vinagi dobre doshla.* (*… but thank you, positive energy is always welcome.*), which flouts both Manner and

Relevance Maxims. The latter part of the utterance encompasses the patterns of '*expressing thanks*' and '*positive emotion*' which in combination provokes an overall expression of politeness acknowledgment. Three stylistic tools are identified in the two-component utterance: hedging (*I have no obligations, but thank you*) demonstrating negative politeness by avoiding imposition; positive framing (*positive energy is always welcome*), highlighting socio-pragmatic affiliation and relational cohesion, and clausal combination. Through its multi-clausal construction, the utterance highlights the prevalence of its performative (pragmatic) function over its propositional content. Indeed, this means that the specific utterance aims first to perform a social act and second, less distinct, to convey a factual statement.

In all, the dialogue contains eight (or nine, considering the final utterance splitting) gratitude communicative acts. They either correspond to one or two gratitude patterns. Four acts align with the pattern of '*expressing thanks/gratitude*'; four acts fall under the pattern of '*expressing positive emotion*', one act represents '*expressing appreciation*' and one act -'*offering reciprocation*'; two acts demonstrate '*lack of necessity/obligation*'.

From the 161 analysed cases (BgC), the flouted gratitude speech acts are distributed across patterns as follows:

acts expressing appreciation	47 cases (29.19%)
acts acknowledging debt	34 cases (21.12%)
acts expressing thanks/gratitude	32 cases (19.88%)
acts offering reciprocation	21 cases (13.04%)
acts expressing positive emotion	15 cases (9.32%)
acts expressing lack of necessity/obligation	9 cases (5.59%)
acts recognizing imposition	3 cases (1.86%)

The data show that most flouted acts are concentrated on expressing '*appreciation*', '*acknowledging debt*', and '*offering thanks*', whereas acts related to '*lack of necessity/obligation*' or '*recognizing imposition*' occur less frequently. Flouting is most noticeably

manifested with the Maxim of Quantity and the Maxims of Manner and Relevance on an equal basis. In terms of Quantity flouting, stylistic devices such as hyperbole, lexical intensification, understatement, and intentional over-informativeness are mainly employed, while Manner and Relevance flouting is widely observed with stylistic strategies including metaphor, simile, irony, contrast, hedging and multi-clausal constructions. Politeness orientation reveals a mixed-pattern approach, reflecting both positive and negative politeness features.

5.3. Cross-Corpus Analysis

The contrastive examination of the two corpora yields intriguing analytical observations.

The quantitative measurements below provide a cross-corpus empirical data in terms of flouted gratitude patterns:

	BrEnC	**BgC**
acts expressing positive emotion	**(1)31.37%**	9.32% (5)
acts offering reciprocation	**(2) 23.53%**	13.04% (4)
acts expressing thanks	**(3) 13.73%**	**19.88% (3)**
acts acknowledging debt	(4) 13.73%	**21.12% (2)**
acts expressing appreciation	(5) 9.80%	**29.19% (1)**
acts recognizing imposition	(6) 5.23%	1.86% (7)
acts expressing lack of necessity/obligation	(7) 2.61%	5.59% (6)

In relation to **pattern preferences** in instances of flouting, in BrEnC, the dominant pattern is '*expressing positive emotion*' accounting for 48 cases (31.37%), whereas in BgC, this pattern is relatively rare, appearing nearly three times less (15 cases - 9.32%). In contrast, '*expressing appreciation*' is the most frequent pattern in BgC (47 cases - 29.19%) but is observed far less often in BrEnC (15 cases - 9.80%). This contrast suggests that the native speakers of English may favour affectively-oriented, slightly more emotionally expressive language,

whereas the native speakers of Bulgarian seem to prioritize appreciative acknowledgement of the contributions of the benefactor.

On the other hand, '*offering reciprocation*' is more salient in BrEnC (36 cases - 23.53%) than in BgC (21 cases - 13.04%), indicating that the native speakers of English often pair gratitude with offers of reciprocity, while Bulgarian speakers tend to rely less on this gratitude strategy. In terms of direct '*expressions of thanks/gratitude*', Bulgarian speakers show higher preference (32 cases - 19.88%) than British-English speakers (21 cases - 13.73%), prioritizing more conventionalized and explicit gratitude acts in Bulgarian speech. Likewise, '*acknowledging debt*' is more commonly observed among the native speakers of Bulgarian (34 cases - 21.12%) than among English L1 speakers (21 cases - 13.73%), pointing to a stronger orientation toward obligation and formal recognition in Bulgarian communicative behaviour. Minor patterns, namely, '*recognizing imposition*' and '*expressing lack of necessity/obligation*', have lower incidence in both corpora, though they are slightly more favoured among the British-English speakers in terms of imposition (8 relative to 3 cases) and among the Bulgarian speakers in terms of obligation (9 relative to 4 cases).

In relation to **Maxim flouting** and **stylistic devices**, in both corpora intentional deviations of Grice's Maxims are a notable phenomenon, particularly in the context of gratitude interactions within TV talk show discourse, despite variations in the frequency of flouting among the different Maxims, stylistic tools and politeness approaches.

It should be noted that precise measurement is complicated as individual utterances may flout more than one maxim concurrently. Taking this into account, out of 153 BrEnC utterances, roughly two-thirds reveal instances of flouting of the Maxims of Quality and Manner. In the BgC (161 utterances in total), approximately half of them demonstrate flouting of the Maxims of Manner and Relevance to the same degree, while around more than one-fourth manifest flouting

of the Quantity Maxim. Though Quality Maxim deviations are more frequent in BrEnC, for both corpora Quality Maxim pertains to ambiguities in propositional content, where the propositional truth tends to be subordinated to the pragmatically felicitous communicative performance. While in the BrEnC lexical exaggeration and emphatic overstatement are considered to be the dominant discourse strategies, complemented by the use of hyperbole, metaphor, and the deliberate application of exclamations and interjections, in the BgC, flouting of the Quality Maxim tends to be frequently mediated through ironic or sarcastic rhetorical devices.

On the other hand, although the BrEnC dataset demonstrates occasional flouting of the Maxim of Quantity utilizing stylistic strategies such as: over-informativeness, lexical elaboration, and hyperbolic exaggeration, the examined BrEnC utterances are predominantly marked by violations of the Quality Maxim. In contrast, the BgC not only deploys the same Quantity Maxim strategies, but also exhibits a prominent occurrence of Quantity Maxim flouting, on the whole. What is more, the native speakers of Bulgarian seem to frequently employ understatement as a pragmatic tool to alleviate perceived indebtedness (subjective sense of obligation), integrating expressive illocutionary functions and socially appropriate gratitude behaviour.

In terms of Manner and Relevance Maxims, the former is seemingly characteristic of the native speakers of English, whilst both appear to be almost equally and largely prioritized by the Bulgarian speakers. In the BrEnC, flouting of the Maxim of Manner is observed in humorous, metaphorical, or intentionally obscure expressions, coupled with expressions of Relevance Maxim violations which result in emphatic illocutionary performance. Conversely, in the BgC, Manner and Relevance floutings typically co-occur, incorporating a wider spectrum of stylistic tools - metaphor, simile, irony, contrast, hedging, as well as multi-clausal constructions. In turn, the anticipated gratitude performance adopts playful, figurative, or indirect

formulations, whose illocutionary force extends beyond the conventional boundaries of conversational implicature, outstripping the mainstream (theoretical) interpretative understanding of these pragmatic limits.

A further point of interest is that the native speakers of English seem to manipulate logical coherence and factual precision primarily for achieving humorous or emphatic effects, whilst the native speakers of Bulgarian show a tendency to use a variety of devices to convey a multi-dimensional illocutionary perspective, namely, reflecting an extension of the communicative intent in the domain of gratitude pragmatics. That is, in fact, going beyond the conventional bounds of expressing thanks or appreciation in order to encompass heightened emotional and evaluative pragmatic behaviour. In this respect, the two examined datasets differ in terms of conversational norms and their strategic gratitude performance.

In relation to politeness orientation, politeness strategies also reveal both parallels and contrasts:

In the British-English dataset, the illocutionary perspective is mainly realized through positive politeness strategies, which underline the specific, cultural traits in communicating a flouted gratitude act, namely, the strategies of social affiliation, rapport-building and acknowledgment while simultaneously minimizing the potential face-threatening implications to both speaker's and the hearer's face. The utterances whose implicated illocutionary force indicates negative politeness traits are comparatively limited and are mainly communicated through understatement and indirectness.

In comparison, the Bulgarian dataset exhibits a mixed or hybrid politeness approach, combining positive politeness features (solidarity, playful exaggeration, appreciation) with negative politeness elements (hedging, understatement, obliqueness), the latter serving to minimize imposition and uphold communicants' negative face wants to non-interference. The stylistic tool of hedging in the Bulgarian context signals the pragmatic functions of consideration and

deference, which are not abstract traits, but pragmatic mechanisms aiming at protecting the hearer's face needs. Similarly, gratitude utterances of understatement reveal an evaluative illocutionary perspective, which prevents the speaker from coming across as overassertive and intrusive. Obliqueness, on the other hand, provides an extended illocutionary force, wherein the core illocutionary function remains intact but the speaker communicates deviations that reflect cultural considerations.

6. Key findings and results

The contrastive analysis reveals the following crossing points and divergences between the two datasets:

Pattern preferences in flouted gratitude acts:

- Native speakers of English communicate strategies of '*expressing positive emotion*' more frequently, often complemented by '*offers of reciprocation*'. Direct '*acts of thanks*' and '*acknowledgement*' are less common;
- Native speakers of Bulgarian tend to prioritize acts of '*expressing appreciation*', '*direct thanks*' and '*acknowledging debt*' while acts of '*offering reciprocation*' are less distinct;
- Native speakers of English tend to emphasize emotional expressivity and reciprocity, whereas the native speakers of Bulgarian seem to lean also toward formal acknowledgment and obligation.

Maxim flouting and stylistic devices:

- Native speakers of English primarily flout the Maxims of Quality and Manner through hyperbole, exaggeration, metaphor, and exclamations for humourous or emphatic effect;
- Native speakers of Bulgarian tend to flout the Maxims of Manner, Relevance and Quantity using the stylistic tools of irony, hedging, understatement, multi-clausal

constructions, and figurative devices, reflecting a multi-dimensional illocutionary perspective.

Politeness orientation:

- Native speakers of English seem to be predisposed to employing positive politeness strategies to preserve solidarity, communicated through flouted gratitude acts;
- Native speakers of Bulgarian exhibit a tendency to demonstrate a hybrid politeness approach, combining positive politeness with negative politeness strategies, primarily to minimize imposition.

Conclusions

The present contrastive study is designed within the framework of cross-cultural pragmatics and has made an attempt to examine gratitude speech acts in British-English and Bulgarian TV magazine discourse in terms of Maxim flouting, pattern preferences, stylistic devices and politeness strategies. By contextualizing the research within the conventional Gricean perspective and a broader pragma-linguistic model, the study dwells on the issues of how native speakers of two different cultural settings navigate expressive meanings and communicate complex communicative behaviour. Taken together, the findings underscore both convergent tendencies as well as cross-cultural disparities regarding pattern frequency, distinctive features of flouting performance and face-attentive pragmatics. These results may prove essential in advancing theoretical and practical understanding of the pragmatics of intercultural communication and may offer substantive implications for further research into politeness, conversational exchanges and their norms. Furthermore, the study also enables further investigation into the ways in which expressive pragmatic behaviour, stylistic innovation and illocutionary extensions differ across socio-cultural and media contexts.

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