

Cultivating Gratitude: Essential Korean Thankfulness Phrases for Indonesian Learners

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ABSTRACT

This research explores various ways of expressing gratitude in the Korean language and their effects on Indonesian learners of Korean. Through the analysis of language variations involving expressions of gratitude in Korean, it highlights differences in formality, familiarity, and intensity of gratitude expressed. This research utilized a descriptive qualitative method. The data for this study were obtained from online books and related articles. The results indicate that understanding various expressions of gratitude has a positive impact on communication skills, politeness, cultural adaptation, and social integration for Indonesian learners. By expanding their knowledge of the Korean language and culture, learners can more easily interact with native speakers, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and gain a deeper understanding of Korean culture as a whole. The implications of this research provide insights into the importance of understanding language variations in social and cultural contexts, as well as their implications for language learning and cross-cultural integration.

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1. Introduction

In everyday life, expressing gratitude is a crucial form of social communication. It not only conveys our appreciation for the help or generosity of others but also demonstrates politeness and respect. For many people, both in Korea and around the world, saying thank you is a simple yet powerful way to strengthen interpersonal relationships and create a warmer and friendlier environment. This act of gratitude helps to foster a sense of community and mutual support, making interactions more pleasant and cooperative.

Properly expressing gratitude reflects a deeply appreciative attitude towards the assistance and contributions provided by others. It shows recognition and value for the efforts and kindness of those around us, reinforcing positive behavior and encouraging a culture of generosity and respect. As noted by researchers (Wilang, 2022; Sukmawaty et al., 2022), gratitude is not just a social nicety but an essential element in maintaining harmonious and constructive relationships in both personal and professional settings.

In a social context, a well-given expression of thanks can be a meaningful form of appreciation for the recipient, fostering a warm and positive environment among supportive individuals (Wang et al., 2023; Andini et al., 2021; Rahman & Weda, 2018).

Koreans have distinct and diverse ways of expressing gratitude, reflected in their everyday language and social etiquette. One prominent example is the use of formal or informal language appropriate to the social relationship between speakers and their interlocutors. When speaking to elders or in formal situations, expressions like "gomapseumnida" or "gamsahamnida" are used to show politeness and respect. Conversely, in informal conversations among friends or family members, expressions like "gomawoyo" or "gomawo" are often used to express thanks in a more relaxed and familiar manner.

For Korean language learners in Indonesia, understanding various ways to say thank you in Korean is an important asset in interacting with native speakers (Cahyaningrum, 2023; Adinda & Said, 2023). This not only helps build better relationships with them but also demonstrates respect for their culture and customs. By having a good

understanding of how to express gratitude in Korean, learners can feel more confident and comfortable when communicating with native speakers.

In this article, we will explore various expressions of gratitude in Korean that Indonesian learners should learn. From formal expressions like "gomapseumnida" to more casual ones like "gomawoyo", each expression has different nuances and contexts of usage.

Aside from enriching the repertoire of thank-you expressions in Korean for Indonesian learners, another good goal is to broaden understanding of Korean culture as a whole. In the process of learning the language, it's important not only to focus on vocabulary and grammar but also to understand the cultural context in which the language is used. By studying various ways to express gratitude in Korean, Indonesian learners can gain deeper insights into the values, norms, and social customs in Korea.

1.1. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistic science that studies the use of language in communicative contexts, focusing on the meanings conveyed in utterances that go beyond the literal meanings of words (Sosrohadi & Nur, 2020; Bahcriani et al., 2018; Rahman & Weda, 2019). More than just understanding the grammatical or lexical structures of a sentence, pragmatics highlights how context, speaker intention, and desired effects influence the interpretation and understanding of the message conveyed in speech. Levinson (2014) defines pragmatics as the study of language that examines the relationship between language and its context. The context referred to is grammaticalized and codified, thus inseparable from the language structure.

Pragmatics delves into the intricate dynamics of language beyond its structural components, examining how language is used in real-life situations to achieve communicative goals. It explores the contextual factors that shape linguistic interactions, such as social norms, cultural conventions, and situational cues, all of which contribute to the interpretation of meaning in discourse.

1.2. Language Variety

Language variety refers to the diverse forms and variations of a language resulting from factors such as geographical location, cultural influences, and historical developments. It encompasses differences in vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and usage within a specific language. Language variety can be observed in various dialects, accents, registers, and sociolects used by different groups of speakers (Rochani, 2023; Dalyan et al., 2024). It constitutes a significant aspect of human communication, reflecting the diversity and complexity of languages.

Furthermore, this concept considers how language can vary across different social, cultural, and situational contexts (Eisenberg et al., 2021; Tardy et al., 2021). In the context of Korea, there are several language variations that can influence how someone expresses gratitude, including variations based on social status, level of formality, and familiarity between speakers and interlocutors.

For example, Korean language exhibits clear formal and informal variations, where formal expressions of gratitude like "gomapseumnida" or "gamsahamnida" are used in formal situations or between unfamiliar individuals, while informal expressions like "gomawoyo" or "gomawo" are used in casual situations or among friends.

Additionally, language variations can also be influenced by social factors such as age, gender, or social status (Leskelä et al., 2022; Miaschi et al., 2022; Sulastri & Alleynisa, 2024). For instance, a younger individual may use more relaxed expressions of gratitude towards an older person, whereas an older person may use more formal expressions towards a younger individual.

2. Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative method is a research approach that uses context to interpret current events and utilizes existing methods. The method used is a descriptive method that is qualitative in nature. Descriptive method is a method that describes, depicts, and analyzes the research object based on existing facts (Yuliana, 2017).

The descriptive nature of the method enables the researcher to meticulously describe and analyze the phenomenon under study, providing a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. This approach is well-suited for uncovering the diverse meanings and cultural nuances inherent in different expressions of gratitude, ultimately contributing to a nuanced understanding of language and culture.

3. Result and Discussion

In this session, various ways of expressing gratitude in Korean will be discussed through a table depicting language variations used in different social and situational contexts.

Table 1. Korean and Indonesian Thankfulness Phrases

No.	Korean	Read	Indonesian
1	감사합니다	Gamsahamnida	<i>Terima Kasih</i>
2	고마워	Gomawo	<i>Terima Kasih</i>
3	감사해요	Gamsahaeyo	<i>Terima Kasih</i>
4	고마워요	Gomawoyo	<i>Terima Kasih</i>
5	고맙습니다	Gomapseumnida	<i>Terima Kasih</i>
6	고맙다	Gomabda	<i>Terima Kasih</i>
7	감사드려요	Gamsadeureyo	<i>Terima Kasih</i>
8	많이 고마워요	Mani Gomawoyo	<i>Terima Kasih</i>
9	정말 고마워요	Jeongmal Gomawoyo	<i>Terima Kasih</i>
10	너무 고마워요	Neomu Gomawoyo	<i>Terima Kasih</i>
11	참으로 감사합니다	Chameuro Gamsahamnida	<i>Terima Kasih</i>
12	정말로 감사합니다	Jeongmallo Gamsahamnida	<i>Terima Kasih</i>
13	너무나 감사합니다	Neomuna Gamsahamnida	<i>Terima Kasih</i>
14	감사드립니다	Gamsadeurimnida	<i>Terima Kasih</i>
15	고마워 줘서 고마워	Gomawo Jwoseo Gomawo	<i>Terima Kasih</i>

Sources: <https://www.bola.com/ragam/read/5533724/15-contoh-ucapan-terima-kasih-bahasa-korea-beserta-artinya?page=3>

It is evident that in the Korean language, there are various ways to express gratitude, depending on the context and the recipient. Expressions of thanks can range from highly formal ones like "고맙습니다" (gomapseumnida) or "감사합니다" (gamsahamnida), used in formal situations or between unfamiliar individuals, to informal expressions like "고마워요" (gomawoyo) or "고마워" (gomawo), used in casual situations or among close friends. However, in the Indonesian language, all these variations are translated as "terima kasih." This indicates differences in communication styles between the two cultures, where in the Korean language, the use of language variations in expressing gratitude reflects the complexity of social relationships and cultural etiquette.

The choice of how to express gratitude can indicate the level of familiarity or social hierarchy between the speaker and the interlocutor, as well as depict the social norms followed in everyday interactions. This illustrates the complexity of language use within specific cultural contexts, where each expression of thanks is not only a communicative act but also reflects the social dynamics and norms inherent in that culture.

Additionally, the expression "고마워 줘서 고마워" (Gomawo Jwoseo Gomawo) is an extremely polite way to express gratitude in Korean. In this expression, the phrase "고마워" (Gomawo) is repeated twice, indicating deep appreciation and gratitude. The additional use of "줘서" (jwoseo) indicates that the thanks are directed towards someone who has done something for the speaker. Although this expression is not as formal as "감사합니다" (Gamsahamnida) or "고맙습니다" (Gomapseumnida), the use of repetition and extra emphasis signifies a higher level of politeness and gratitude. Therefore, despite being more familiar, this expression is still considered polite and effectively conveys thanks.

Furthermore, the expression "정말 고마워요" (Jeongmal Gomawoyo) indicates heartfelt and profound gratitude. The word "정말" (jeongmal) means "really" or "very," so this expression indicates that the speaker is very thankful for what has been given or done by the interlocutor. This expression is often used to express sincere and heartfelt gratitude. On the other hand, the expression "너무 고마워요" (Neomu Gomawoyo) also indicates gratitude, but its intensity is slightly lower than "정말 고마워요" (Jeongmal Gomawoyo). The word "너무" (neomu) means "too" or "very," but in this context, it is often used to express thanks in a lighter or more relaxed manner. Thus, this expression indicates that the speaker is very thankful but may not be as strong as "정말 고마워요" (Jeongmal Gomawoyo).

On the other hand, the expression "많이 고마워요" (Mani Gomawoyo) has a slightly different meaning from the previous two expressions. It indicates gratitude expressed using the word "많이" (mani), which means "many" in Korean. Thus, this expression literally means "Thank you very much" or "Very grateful." The difference is that "많이 고마워요" (Mani Gomawoyo) highlights the quantity of gratitude, implying that the recipient feels greatly appreciated for what has been given or done by others. This expression indicates that the gratitude is significant and involves significant contribution or help from the recipient. Although not as strong as "정말 고마워요" (Jeongmal Gomawoyo), this expression still conveys heartfelt gratitude.

Additionally, "고맙다" (Gomabda) is a simpler and more casual expression of thanks. This expression uses the basic form of the verb "고맙다" (gomabda), which means "thank you" in Korean. This expression is more suitable for informal contexts, such as among friends or family members, where formality is not a primary concern.

"감사드려요" (Gamsadeureyo) is a more formal expression of thanks. This expression uses the word "감사하다" (gamsahada), which has the same meaning as "thank you," but in a more formal and official form. The use of the word "드려요" (deureyo) indicates a level of respect in the expression of thanks. This expression is more suitable for formal or official situations, such as in interactions with elders, superiors, or in professional contexts.

Thus, comprehending the various methods of expressing gratitude in Korean holds significant importance for Indonesian learners. Beyond merely enhancing language proficiency, this understanding also contributes to social integration and a deeper cultural appreciation. By utilizing appropriate expressions of gratitude tailored to specific contexts and social relationships, learners can more seamlessly integrate into Korean social settings. This facilitates a sense of belonging and acceptance within Korean communities, whether they are studying in Korea or engaging with Korean communities in Indonesia.

Understanding the nuances of formality and familiarity in expressions of gratitude also plays a pivotal role in learners' comprehension of Korean culture and its associated social norms. This knowledge empowers them to navigate social interactions with greater finesse and to cultivate stronger interpersonal connections with Koreans. Mastery of when to employ formal or informal language in expressing gratitude enhances learners' capacity to communicate effectively and respectfully across diverse social situations.

Moreover, delving into the cultural intricacies of expressing gratitude in Korean fosters mutual understanding and appreciation between Indonesian learners and Korean counterparts. It enables learners to recognize and value the cultural norms and customs of Korean society, thereby fostering mutual respect and cooperation. This cultural awareness facilitates smoother interactions and helps to bridge potential cultural gaps, promoting harmonious relationships between individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Ultimately, the ability to express gratitude in Korean not only enriches language skills but also fosters deeper connections and mutual respect within multicultural environments. Indonesian learners who possess a nuanced understanding of Korean gratitude customs are better equipped to navigate social interactions, contribute positively to cross-cultural exchanges, and foster meaningful relationships in both personal and professional spheres.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, in the context of the Korean language, there are various ways to express gratitude, each with different nuances and levels of formality. Expressions such as "고맙다" (Gomabda) and "고마워" (Gomawo) are more informal and suitable for use in casual situations among friends or family members. On the other hand, expressions like "감사드려요" (Gamsadeureyo) and "감사합니다" (Gamsahamnida) are more formal and better suited for situations requiring higher levels of politeness, such as in professional contexts or when interacting with elders.

Additionally, there are variations in expressions of gratitude that indicate the intensity of gratitude, such as "정말 고마워요" (Jeongmal Gomawoyo) which expresses profound gratitude, "너무 고마워요" (Neomu Gomawoyo) which conveys gratitude in a lighter manner, and "많이 고마워요" (Mani Gomawoyo) which highlights the quantity of gratitude.

Therefore, the selection of the appropriate expression of gratitude in Korean depends not only on the communication context but also on the relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor, as well as the desired level of formality and intensity in conveying gratitude.

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