

# THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALAY AND CHINESE POST-GRADUATES' GRATITUDE: THE GENERIC STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## ABSTRACT

Acknowledgement is a genre that is widely used in academic discourse to express gratitude towards help from and contribution of an individual or an institution, thus establishing a favorable academic and social reputation. This comparative study is conducted to examine the generic structure of acknowledgement and linguistics elements written by Malay and Chinese Post Graduates in M. Ed. TESL program. The data were randomly collected from 40 post-graduate corpora from 2 Universities which are Universiti Teknologi MARA and Universiti Malaya and were purposively selected from 20 Malays and 20 Chinese post-graduate students' theses acknowledgements of the universities. There are five research questions for this study (1) Do Malaysian Post-Graduate students' ways of writing acknowledgement follow Hyland's (2004) Generic Structure of Acknowledgement?, (2) What are the differences between Malay and Chinese post-graduate students' structure of writing acknowledgement?, (3) What are the obligatory move(s) in Malay and Chinese structure of acknowledgement?, (4) What are the optional move(s) in Malay and Chinese structure of acknowledgement? and (5) What are the linguistic elements in the thanking act. Results reveal that the most prevalent items of Malay and Chinese way of writing acknowledgement derive from Thanking Moves namely thanking for academic assistance and thanking for moral support. This study also discovers that Chinese students tend to be more reserved compared to Malay by referring to high occurrence of bare mention in their sentence structure. Malay students tend to be more expressive in conveying their gratitude.

**Keywords:** Acknowledgement, Malay and Chinese Postgraduates, Generic structure, Malaysian, linguistics elements.

## INTRODUCTION:

Al-Ali (2006) claimed that acknowledgements in theses and dissertations are part of academic practice in that they allow students to reflect their gratitude for any kind of help received from others during the process of writing. This comparative study is conducted to examine the generic structure of acknowledgement and linguistics elements written by Malay and Chinese Post Graduates in M. Ed. TESL program.

## LITERATURE REVIEW:

Swales (1990) stated that genres consist of a series of goal-oriented communicative events formed out of schematic structures, and those who take part in these events share the same communicative purposes. In order to conduct genre analysis on academic texts, researchers can adopt one of two main approaches namely generic moves at a macro-level or linguistic features at a micro-level. Previously, a large number of studies have been conducted at macro-level analysis to investigate moves/steps in academic texts such as research or conference paper titles (Afful & Mwinlaaru, 2010; Haggan, 2004), abstracts (Lores, 2004; Samaraj, 2005), and conclusions (Bunton, 2002; Yang & Allison, 2003). Most of the above studies on academic genre either adopted or adapted CARS model from Swales to explore the issues of generic structures in academic texts.

Acknowledgement as a genre is widely used in academic discourse to express gratitude toward help from and contribution of an individual or an institution, thus establishing a favorable academic and social reputation. The researcher uses the acknowledgment to thank those who have helped release the thesis. Although the dissertation lists one person as a writer, writing remains a collective and many needs thanking to produce one dissertation. Acknowledgements, in general, occur in response to social expectations sharing the tendency to reflect reciprocal gift giving for all kinds of contributions (mental, physical, etc.) to the work as stated by Bach and Harnish, (1979), cited in Al-Ali (2006). Afful & Mwinlaar (2010) on the other hand perceives Acknowledgement in scholarly writing as a commonplace phenomenon. Their popularity is borne out of the obligation the academic community has latently imposed on its members to express gratitude for the assistance of others in the former's endeavors.

Writing acknowledgement is important part for the writer because the acknowledgement could be as a chance of a lifetime to express in words the gratefulness one who has always helpful and felt in one's heart. Hence, in this section the writer can acknowledge everyone who helped him to complete his dissertation. In the study of K. Hyland (2004) the results of his study show that many students regard an acknowledgement as an important way of publicly recognizing the role of mentors and the sacrifices of loved ones. They thought that acknowledgement is a good way to thank their friends and share the happiness of completing a thesis with them. Also they consider it as a very important section as it gives them an opportunity to express their gratitude. It is a very personal thing. Al-Ali (2006) confirmed that the importance of acknowledgements stems from their high frequency of occurrence in scholarly texts in general and in MA and PhD dissertations in particular. They reflect a combination of interpersonal, academic, institutional, technical, financial, and moral support to the person(s) or institutions for their multifarious contributions. The dissertation acknowledgement should acknowledge the participation of everyone who participated to the work. Everyone who helped the researcher develop an important paper deserves mention.

To write an acknowledgement, the writer should follow three textual devices that are generic structures of acknowledgements. According to Hyland (2004) student acknowledgements have a three tier structure consisting of a main thanking move framed by optional Reflecting and Announcing moves. Each of these moves can be divided into sub-units or steps.

In the Reflecting move the writers should think about the key challenges that they faced while writing the dissertation and how they substituted them. According to Al-Ali, (2006) this move refers back to the writer's research experience she/he has gained and the challenges that have been encountered and overcome.

In thanking move there are four steps the writers might express the people who helped them based on these steps. They may mention their guide or supervisor for steering their towards percipient references and for being their sounding board also thank to people who made suggestions or comments that helped to obtain a different perspective to the research problem, contributions as research subjects, editors, and advisors or any other college or university professional who had a hand in the writing the dissertation. They also may express gratitude to people who might serve as a source of inspiration, a librarian who was particularly helpful, or even an editor who was particularly helpful. Lastly, they can thank the family members, helpful classmates and other friends who encouraged creating the dissertation even thank their children. Hyland (2004) stated that the thanking move is potentially a move of four steps which enables the writer to introduce and thank individuals

and institutions for various kinds of support.

Announcing Move has two sub-units; Accepting responsibility in this step the writers should bear in mind to take full responsibility for any possible errors in their dissertations, even in those areas where some people have helped them to create their thesis. Hyland (2004) asserted that by clearly stating their responsibility for possible shortcomings in the data, results, and ideas in a dissertation, writers not only seek to absolve their advisors and collaborators of blame for any deficiencies, they also assert their ownership of the product. And dedicating the thesis some students like to dedicate their thesis to people who they love or respect them they may consider it as another way of expressions. According to Al-Ali, (2006) the writers who included this step in this genre feel they have something of great value to offer, if only symbolical, for the 'addressee' as a reward for a unique effort.

Distribution of gratitude expression of the writers have different linguistic style in the thanking acts involves per formative verbs (e.g. thank), nouns (e.g. thanks), adjectives (e.g. thankful) and passives (e.g. thanks should be given). The writer usually uses nouns, verbs or adjectives more than using passive in their acknowledgments. Hyland, (2004) asserted that, while writers generally expressed thanks using nouns and per formatives, these forms were more dominant when expressing gratitude for academic and moral support. Adjectival, passives and simple mentions were particularly frequent when writers offered their thanks for resources. Mingwei & Yajun (2010) found that, Chinese mainland students' preference for bare mention is more than evident, while, rather surprisingly, much fewer passives and nominalizations are employed. Additionally, they stated that, Chinese students tend to be more reserved when comes to expressing feelings and emotion.

### **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:**

There is a limited amount of study conducted on the generic structure of academic dissertation's acknowledgement and much less on the comparative study of different ethnicity way of writing it. Hence this research is focused upon identifying the nature of the generic structure of academic dissertation acknowledgement texts especially on the comparison between the Malay and Chinese style of writing their acknowledgement.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

This preliminary study is conducted to examine the generic structure of acknowledgement and linguistics elements employed in written form by Malay and Chinese Post-Graduates in M. Ed. TESL program.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

1. Do Malaysian Post-Graduate students' ways of writing acknowledgement follow Hyland's (2004) Generic Structure of Acknowledgement?
2. What are the differences between Malay and Chinese post-graduate students' structure of writing acknowledgement?
3. What are the obligatory move(s) in Malay and Chinese structure of acknowledgement?
4. What are the optional move(s) in Malay and Chinese structure of acknowledgement?
5. What are the linguistic elements in the thanking act?

### **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:**

This study is considered as an exploratory study in nature, thus the findings of the study were not adequate enough to make general conclusion. Larger sampling may yield more conclusive result.

### **RESEARCH DESIGN:**

The acknowledgements were analyzed for their move structure and linguistic elements to determine how these student writers accomplished their thanks. This involved scanning the text to identify text units which expressed a particular function, developing categories inductively through recursive passes through the texts, checking all cases manually.

### **CORPUS:**

Purposive Random Sampling was used for this study. Data were randomly collected from 40 post-graduate corpora from 2 Universities which are Universiti Teknologi MARA and Universiti Malaya. The samples of the data were purposively selected from 20 Malays and 20 Chinese post-graduate students' theses

acknowledgements of the universities.

### FRAMEWORK FOR DATA ANALYSIS:

In order to identify the generic structure of acknowledgement, we employed the move structure proposed by Al-Ali (2006) which also related to the original acknowledgment structure created by Hyland (2004). According to Hyland (2004) the purpose of acknowledgement is to allocate credit to institutions and individuals who have contributed to the dissertation in some way. Hyland introduced the three tier structure in the acknowledgement consisting of a main thanking move framed by optional Reflecting and Announcing moves. Each of these moves can be divided into sub-units or steps. Al-Ali (2006) modified the structure by adding Thanking Allah (God) as the first sub-move in Thanking Move and financial support is considered as new sub-move apart from Thanking for resources.

Hyland's Move structure of Dissertation Acknowledgements		Al-Ali's Move structure of Dissertation Acknowledgements	
I	Reflecting Move	I	Reflecting Move
II	Thanking Move	II	Thanking Move
	1. Presenting participants 2. Thanking for academic assistance 3. Thanking for providing resources 4. Thanking for moral support		1. Thanking Allah (God) 2. Presenting participants 3. Thanking for supervisor (s) and other academics 4. Thanking for data access and clerical and technical support 5. Thanking for financial support 6. Thanking for moral support
III	Announcing Move	III	Announcing Move
	1. Accepting responsibility for possible shortcoming in the data 2. Dedicating the thesis		1. Accepting responsibility 2. Dedicating the thesis

### LINGUISTIC ELEMENTS SELECTED FOR THE STUDY:

The linguistic elements chosen to be focused upon in this study are the sentence patterns, modifiers, hedges employed in thanking acts and the choice of sentence subjects employed by the writers with reference to pioneering study of Mingwei and Yajun (2010).

### DATA ANALYSIS:

The data are analyzed quantitatively. Using analytic techniques such as rearranging the arrays, placing the evidence in a matrix of categories, creating flowcharts or data displays, tabulating the frequency of different events, using means, variances and cross tabulations to examine the relationships between variables, and other such techniques to facilitate analysis.

### FINDINGS & DISCUSSION:

#### RESEARCH QUESTION 1:

#### Do Malaysian Post-Graduate students' way of writing acknowledgement follows Hyland's (2004) Generic Structure of Acknowledgement?

The result of the generic structure from all 40 corpora of Malay and Chinese dissertation acknowledgements revealed the following component moves that tend to occur in corpus texts.

#### MOVE STRUCTURE OF MALAY AND CHINESE DISSERTATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

**Table 1: Number of move components for Malay and Chinese acknowledgements**

Moves	Malay		Chinese	
	N	%	N	%
1.Reflecting Move	2	10	4	20
2.Thanking Move				
i. Divine Appreciation	11	55	5	25

ii. Presenting Participant	5	25	13	65
iii. Thanking for Academic Assistance	20	100	20	100
iv. Thanking for Resources	12	60	12	60
v. Thanking for Moral Support	19	95	20	100
3. Announcing Move				
i. Accepting Responsibility	0	0	0	0
ii. Dedicating the Thesis	0	0	2	10

#### 1. Reflecting Move

#### 2. Thanking Move

- i. Divine Appreciation/ Thanking God
- ii. Presenting Participants
- iii. Thanking for Academic Assistance
- iv. Thanking for Resources
- v. Thanking for Moral Support

#### 3. Announcing Move

- i. Accepting Responsibility
- ii. Dedicating Thesis

### REFLECTING MOVE:

This move requires the writers to reflect their experience and challenges that they have been encountered and overcome. This component is very peripheral to the genre as it occurred in 10% (Malay) and 20% (Chinese) of the student corpus. The following sentence exemplifies the kind of realization available in corpus text.

(1) Working on this dissertation has been a very enlightening, rewarding and gratifying experience for me.

### THANKING MOVE:

This move is collateral to the genre, as it is confirmed by its presence throughout the corpus. This main thanking move is realized by five component steps which informed the readers about the people and institutions to be thanked, when and why to be acknowledged (Al-Ali, 2006).

### THANKING GOD/ DIVINE APPRECIATION:

This step occurred in 55% (Malay) and 25% (Chinese) of the acknowledgements. Although this step is not very common written by writers, it reflects and symbolizes writers' attitudes towards their religious beliefs as shown by the following excerpts:

- (2) I would like to express my gratitude to Allah S.W.T. for the strength and courage that He has given me along the duration of conducting and completing this academic project. (Malay)
- (3) First of all, I would like to thank God, for through Him all things are possible. (Chinese)

### PRESENTING PARTICIPANTS:

This step was present in 25% (Malay) and 65% (Chinese) of the texts in the corpus. According to Hyland, this step has a textual function since it provided means of introducing the people to be thanked who are then specified in following steps (cited in Al-Ali, 2006).

- (4) Without the support, patience and guidance of the following people, this study would have not been completed. It is to them that I owe my deepest gratitude.

### THANKING FOR ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE:

This step is considered as obligatory constituent and the backbone of this genre since it is found in all texts, 100% (Malay) and 100% (Chinese). It is meant to show that the writers are grateful for any kind of intellectual help they received from members in the academic community such as advisors and lecturers, who have been influential in stimulating and nurturing the research by giving ideas, insights, feedbacks or critical analysis (Al-Ali, 2006). The following excerpt from the corpus illustrates this statement:



- (5) First and foremost, I would like to extend my utmost appreciation to my supervisor Associate Professor Dr X, for his guidance and valuable suggestions. His invaluable advice and constructive suggestions had helped greatly in the completion of the study. I sincerely appreciate the time he has taken patiently review my entire work.

#### **THANKING FOR RESOURCES:**

This step collates acknowledgements for support received from colleagues, institutions from which data were collected, clerical support and financial supports. This step was found in 60% of the acknowledgements for both Malay and Chinese dissertation.

- (6) Not forgetting, my gratitude to my PKBP Coordinator, Principal, Senior Assistants, teachers and staff of my present school who have assisted me throughout the study.

#### **THANKING FOR MORAL SUPPORT:**

This step is another obligatory sub-move in which the writers thank family members for their patience, understanding and care and it also offers gratitude to friends for encouragement and friendship. Data showed that this move was evident in 95% (Malay) and 100% (Chinese) of the texts analyzed. According to Al-Ali (2006), this step carries interpersonal considerations and social interactions with different audience other than academic and demonstrates how the acknowledgers present themselves as active participant not only in the same discourse community but also in the wider social community.

- (7) I also would like to express my gratitude for the support my mother has given me throughout the time I spent to complete my study. Her belief in me has never faltered and that at times was my only source of strength.  
(8) It is also a pleasure to express my gratitude to my fellow colleagues at UiTMKT. It was with their cooperation that I was able to complete this study. Thank you and I hope everything will work out well for all.

#### **ANNOUNCING MOVE:**

This move is considered as marginal move as it has a low frequency of occurrence. This move includes two constituent steps which are accepting responsibility and dedicating the thesis.

#### **ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY:**

The writers asserted their authorial responsibility for the dissertation's imperfection and contents. This step did not occur in both Malay and Chinese acknowledgements.

#### **DEDICATING THE THESIS:**

According to Al-Ali (2006), the writers who included this step in this genre feel they have something of great value to offer. It occurred in 10% of the Chinese students texts analyzed. The following portion from the acknowledgement text illustrates the constituent of this step.

- (9) Lastly, this project paper is dedicated to everyone who has made it possible.

Overall, the Malaysian Post-Graduate students' structures of writing acknowledgement are quite similar to Al-Ali's Structure of Acknowledgement compared to Hyland Generic structure. This is due to the fact that, Hyland did not emphasize much on Divine Appreciation or thanking God; Malay and Chinese corpora show that when it is employed, this step occupies the first position in the analyzed texts. This may be rooted to religion background of the writer as it is highly evident in Malay corpora (55%) compared to the Chinese corpora (25%). For the Chinese, the act of Thanking God seemed mostly from the Christian Chinese postgraduate students. The high occurrence of *Thanking move* in both corpora portrayed the students aware of their role in academic and social relations. The result obtained from the study revealed that *Reflecting* and *Announcing* moves have a very low frequency of occurrence in both corpora. This suggested that the students have low degree of self-confidence because they did not assert absolute responsibility for the content or deficiency in the dissertation thus; they chose not to dedicate their thesis because they did not see it as something special.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION 2:**

**What are the differences between Malay and Chinese post-graduate students' structure of writing acknowledgement?**

The first distinction between Malay and Chinese post-graduate students' structure of writing acknowledgement

is from the amount of words and average words per acknowledgement (Table 2). The average length of the acknowledgements in the sample Malay dissertations is 186.30 words, with the longest one containing 318 words and the shortest only 72 words. The acknowledgements in Chinese dissertations are comparatively shorter, with 130.60 words on average, and longest containing 229 words and the shortest 90 words. With a difference of 1114 words this study revealed that the Malay tend to write longer compared to the Chinese

**Table 2: Average length of acknowledgements**

Variable	Masters Dissertation		
	texts	words	average
Malay	20	3726	186.30
Chinese	20	2612	130.60

Next, another evident of difference in writing acknowledgement (refer to APPENDIX 1) is in '*presenting participant move*' where the Chinese have higher concern in it (65%) compared to the Malay (25%). In Divine appreciation sub-thanking move, where the Malay postgraduates student is highly opted for it (55%) compared to the Chinese postgraduates student (25%). Dedicating of the thesis occurred in an apparently lower frequency (Chinese 10%, Malay 0%) indicating that both ethnicities of students feel less easy to dedicate their work. Similarly, both ethnicities did not claim responsibilities for flaws or errors (Chinese 0%, Malay 0%). Additionally, the percentage of gratitude expression toward different acknowledgees also shows an almost similar data for both ethnicities, as is shown in Table 3. It revealed that students able to present themselves as active participants not only in the same discourse community but also in the wider social community. Overall, most of other moves yield not much difference between both of the Malay and Chinese corpora.

**Table 3: The percentage of gratitude expression toward different acknowledgees**

Variable	Supervisor	Other lecturer	Classmate and Colleagues	Family Members	Institution
Malay	100	45	75	100	60
Chinese	100	55	65	90	45

### RESEARCH QUESTION 3:

#### What are the obligatory move(s) in Malay and Chinese structure of acknowledgement?

Generally, based on the previous studies conducted, it is confirmed that thanking move is an obligatory move meanwhile reflecting and announcing moves are considered as optional (Hyland, 2004; Al-Ali, 2006; Mingwei and Yajun, 2010). Thus, this study focused more on sub-moves and revealed that both of the Malay and Chinese acknowledgement corpora shows that **Thanking for academic assistance** and **Thanking for moral support** as of obligatory moves. This study reveals that almost 40 corpora of Malay and Chinese alike consist of both of the moves (95% to 100%) refer to Table 4. This shows that it is of utmost importance for the Malay and Chinese writer making it is as of obligatory in writing of acknowledgement.

### RESEARCH QUESTION 4:

#### What are the optional move(s) in Malay and Chinese structure of acknowledgement?

By referring to table 4, it can be deciphered that other than thanking for academic assistance and thanking for moral support, all other moves such as Reflecting Move, Announcing Move, Divine appreciation, thanking for resources, et cetera can be considered as of optional move.

**Table 4: Moves and functions**

Moves	Malay		Obligatory/Optional	Chinese		Obligatory/Optional
	N	%		N	%	
1. Reflecting Move	2	10	Optional	4	20	Optional
2. Thanking Move						
Divine Appreciation	11	55	Optional	5	25	Optional
Presenting Participant	5	25	Optional	13	65	Optional
Thanking for Academic	20	100	Obligatory	20	100	Obligatory
Thanking for Resources	12	60	Optional	12	60	Optional
Thanking for Moral Support	19	95	Obligatory	20	100	Obligatory

3.	Announcing Move						
	Accepting Responsibility	0	0	Optional	0	0	Optional
	Dedicating the Thesis	0	0	Optional	2	10	Optional

### RESEARCH QUESTION 5:

#### What are the linguistic elements in the thanking act?

Linguistic elements in thanking act (2.3- thanking for academic assistance, 2.4- thanking for resources, 2.5- thanking for moral support) can be explained further in three aspects namely choice of authorial subjects, gratitude expression and modifiers in the thanking acts.

### CHOICE OF AUTHORIAL SUBJECTS:

**Table 5: Percentage of occurrence of each authorial subject in Malay and Chinese corpora**

Variable	I/ My	Third Pronoun	The Author
Malay	100	25	0
Chinese	75	35	5

Majority of the acknowledgers (100% Malay, 75% Chinese) prefer to use first person pronouns serving as subjects. Only one acknowledger (5%) used the word ‘the researcher’ as subject. The occurrence of third person pronoun is insignificant in this study and it usually used in bare mention form.

(10) *I* would like to express *my* gratitude to *my* thesis supervisor.

(11) *The researcher* would like to express sincere appreciation to her supervisor.

### GRATITUDE EXPRESSIONS:

**Table 6: Distribution of gratitude expression in Malay and Chinese acknowledgement**

Moves	Performative verbs		Noun		Adjectives		Passive		Bare mention	
	Malay	Chinese	Malay	Chinese	Malay	Chinese	Malay	Chinese	Malay	Chinese
2.3	5	40	85	70	5	25	0	0	5	20
2.4	10	35	45	50	0	15	0	5	5	10
2.5	20	45	90	55	5	25	0	10	15	60

In order to provide thank for academic assistance, finding from both corpora show that gratitude is expressed mainly by means of nominalizations (Malay, 85%; Chinese 70%) and performative (Malay, 5 %; Chinese 40%), which are followed by adjectives (Malay, 5%; Chinese, 25%) and bare mention (Malay, 5%; Chinese, 20%) , while passive does not exist. It shows that acknowledgers prefer to have clear and direct indication of their thankfulness to the acknowledgees.

(12) *Special thanks* to Associate Professor Dr X, for his assistance during the course of my research and study. (Nominalization)

(13) *I would like to extend* my utmost appreciation to my supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. X, for his guidance and valuable suggestions. (Performative)

Next, to express thank for resources, the finding shows similar pattern to the previous sub-moves in which gratitude is expressed mainly by means of nominalizations (Malay 45%; Chinese 50%) and performative (Malay 10%; Chinese 35%), which are followed by adjectives (Chinese 15%) and bare mention (Malay 5%; Chinese 10%), while passive is the least used one (Chinese, 5%).

Lastly, in order to thank for moral supports Malay acknowledgers (90%) prefer to express their gratitude by nominalization, on the other hand, Chinese acknowledgers (60%) prefer to use bare mention. It shows that Chinese students tend to be more reserved when comes to expressing feelings and emotion (Mingwei and Yajun, 2010).

(14) Lastly, *this thesis* would not have been possible without the support of these people. (Bare mention)



## MODIFIERS IN THANKING ACTS:

Table 7: Percentage of occurrence of modifiers in thanking acts

Moves	Adjectives		Adverbs		Modals	
	Malay	Chinese	Malay	Chinese	Malay	Chinese
2.3	75	95	0	30	35	70
2.4	50	70	0	40	25	50
2.5	75	90	45	85	45	55

The study revealed that both ethnicity used high number of adjectives in writing in all three sub-moves. Chinese students used adverbs in expressing their thankfulness for academic assistance and resources, when Malay students did not use it. Adjective and adverbs indicates strong emotions used to intensify the gratitude felt by the acknowledgers towards specific addressees. The use of modal phrase such as 'I would like' also show high occurrence in all three sub-moves especially in Chinese acknowledgment corpus which indicates that the acknowledgers recognized the demarcation in social status between them and addressees; thus the tend to be indirect when offering thanks. The modal verbs are used to show obligation and responsibility, as is shown in the example below.

- (10) I *must* convey my utmost appreciation to my beloved husband and sons, for their endless support and enormous sacrifices, tolerance and understanding.

## CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, both of the way of writing acknowledgement for the Malay and Chinese are of little differences only. The most prevalent items of Malay and Chinese way of writing acknowledgement is of Thanking Moves that are **thanking for academic assistance** and **thanking for moral support**, that yield significantly with 95% to 100% in all of the acknowledgement corpora. These may be of the similar school of thoughts that restrict the way of writing acknowledgement. This study also discovered that Chinese students tend to be more reserved compared to Malay by referring to high occurrence of bare mention in their sentence structure. Malay students tend to be more expressive in conveying their gratitude.

## RECOMMENDATION:

There are few recommendations made in order to improve the way of writing an acknowledgement. First, students need to refer to reliable source such as Hyland's structure of acknowledgement so that they know who they need to address. Second, it is acceptable if the students use language for affective purpose so that this genre becomes more humane. Third as what had been stated by Al-Ali, (2006) lecturers need to create clear and standardized guidelines of the practice for the students to follow, to facilitate more efficient and regular use of acknowledgement. The writing skill is also trainable as suggested by Yang (2012) EAP teachers can explicitly instruct students how to write purposeful and interactional acknowledgements by analyzing keywords and the context of a genre.

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