Original Research Article

Dissertation Acknowledgements in Cameroon English: A Semantic Analysis

Shey Mary[1]*
[1]Doctorate student, University of Yaounde

*Corresponding Author
Shey Mary
Doctorate student, University of Yaounde

Abstract: The acknowledgement section of a thesis is a genre within the academic discourse community. It gives the graduate student an opportunity to express their gratitude toward a number of addressees after the completion of a rather tedious research process. This genre has attracted a lot of interest in research in academic writing in English in the Outer Circle. Some of these studies have focused on their generic structure (Al-Ali, 2010, Hyland 2004), their expressions of gratitude (Hyland and Tse 2004) or their semantic structures (Cheng 2012). These features have, however, been conspicuously neglected in the literature in Cameroon English. Given that genre is the study of language use in a given sociocultural or academic context, this study examines 200 dissertation acknowledgements (herein after DAs) collected from six major disciplines in three renowned state universities in Cameroon. Our objective here was to do an in-depth analysis of all the thanking acts of the various texts that constituted our corpus in order to bring out the dominant semantic features that were used in expressing thanks. As far as semantic categories are concerned, our data revealed about 1494 thanking acts with seven categories of thanking, 1308 of which were explicit and 186 of which were implicit. These thanking strategies, however, varied greatly from one discipline to another. For the purpose of this study, the strategies were simply identified as strategy 1 to strategy 7 according to how they were semantically structured and strategy 8 comprises implicit thanking acts. The different semantic strategies were classified following Cheng's 2010 coding scheme though with modifications depending on what our analysis revealed.
Keywords: Genre; strategy, thanking; reason, favour.

1. INTRODUCTION

The acknowledgement section, where credit is given to individuals and institutions has become a regular practice in published texts. They appear in academic books, journal, and research articles and are fast becoming universal in dissertations and theses. Studies have not said when or from where acknowledgements began but Atkinson (1999) comments that they seem to have originated from thanks expressed to patrons and powerful benefactors in the covering letters accompanying scientific articles.

Baserman (1988) however holds that they only became widespread in the 1960s while Hyland (2004) claims that they have since then "established their presence as an important feature of the scholarly communication process". Brookley (1987:18) sees acknowledgements as formal practices in scholarly text and comments that they constitute part of "the cultural repertoire of all academics" (p. 23). Acknowledgements have also been considered as "a typical form of rhetorical action" (Miller 1984:151) which, according to Hyland and Tse (2004:260) "Draws on distinct combinations of formal resources, occurs in

identifiable social contexts and use distinct organizing devices".

The identifiable overriding purpose of a dissertation acknowledgement is that of giving credit to institutions and individuals for some services rendered to the writer. Cronin (1995) notes that acknowledgements are meant to express gratitude that reflects a mix of personal, moral, financial, technical, intellectual and conceptual support provided by or received from institutions, agencies, peers, mentors, academics, family members and experimental subjects." Swales and Feak (1994) have taken the definition a bit further than just a display of gratitude for assistance to involve an opportunity for acknowledgers to show that they are members of the academic community and have benefited from that membership.

Commenting on the centrality of acknowledgements in academic texts, Hyland (2004:305) asserts that "it would be a mistake to see acknowledgements as a simple catalogue of idiosyncratic gratitude". Discourse analysts and EAP (English for Academic Purposes) teachers have found particular interest in acknowledgements due to the fact that they possess a rhetorical sophistication and reveal academic preferences. In fact, they are useful in that they contribute to the writer's effort in creating both a professional and personal identity. Usually the acknowledgement section is detached from the main text, yet it metadiscursively points to the process of its creation, looking both inward to the text and its author and outward to the factors which help in constructing it and this particularly gives it uniqueness as a genre of its own.

2. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS
2.1. Discourse as Text
Looking at discourse as text means considering the analysis of language as confined to the surface-level properties of discourse (Bhatia, 2004). This has to do with both the formal and functional aspects of discourse. Under this model, attention is paid to phonological, lexico-grammatical, semantic and organizational aspects. The organizational aspect of discourse as text includes "intersentential cohesion, or information structures such as 'general-particular', problem solution, etc., not necessarily having interaction with context in a broad sense" (Bhatia, 2002:17).

The fact that discourse is embedded in context notwithstanding, discourse as text would rather not involve any meaningful analysis of context except in a very narrow sense of intertextuality to include how a text interacts with surrounding texts. In the same way, emphasis is laid, at this level, on the properties associated with the construction of textual products rather than on the interpretation or use of such products. The reader's contribution on the basis of what he brings into the interpretation of the textual output is often ignored especially when it has to do with the knowledge of the world, including the professional, the socio-cultural and institutional knowledge, even the experience that one may use in the interpretation, use and exploitation of such discourse (Bhatia, ibid).

2.2. Discourse as Genre
Contrary to the analysis of discourse as text, discourse as genre extends the analysis of discourse beyond textual output (Bhatia, 2002). It goes as far as incorporating context in a broader sense not only to account for the way a text is constructed, but also to account for the way it is likely to be interpreted, used or exploited in specific contexts, be it social, institutional, or more narrowly professional in order to achieve specific purposes. The kind of questions addressed in this kind of analysis may often include not only linguistic but also socio-cognitive and ethnographic properties of the text. It attempts mainly to answer the question, "Why do people construct discourse the way they do?" and "what makes the text possible?" This kind of grounded analysis of discourse is often found in any framework within the genre-based theory.

2.3. Discourse as Social Practice
Looking at discourse as a social practice means taking the interaction with context much in the direction of a broader social context than when looking at discourse as genre. Here, the focus extends significantly from the textual product to such features of context as changing the identities of participants, the social structures and professional relationships likely to be maintained or changed in the genres, and the advantages and disadvantages likely to be brought about by those genres to a set of readers. Because discourse as a social practice functions within a broader social space, it becomes necessary that one should possess a broader social and pragmatic knowledge in order to operate it effectively.

Bhatia (2002; 2004) however notes that these three models of genre analysis, though they may seem independent at a first look, are not mutually exclusive. They essentially depend on one another. It is the objective that the analyst has in mind to pursue that determines the approach. For example, in a typically sociolinguistic work, the analysis will obviously give priority to the social approach, with an exhaustive and deep interest in the social context. On the other hand, any work whose interest is applied linguistics will start by exploring the textual space exhaustively, moving

towards the social space where social context would only serve in providing an explanation for the textualization of lexico-grammar.

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This study is comprised of 200 dissertation acknowledgements written over a period of 24 years (1990-2014). The DAs were collected from six different disciplines in three fields of study from some major faculties of three renowned state universities in Cameroon. These faculties include the Higher Teacher Training College (ENS) of the University of Yaounde 1, the Higher Teacher Training College (HTTC) of the University of Bamenda, and the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Buea. In the HTTC, the students write a dissertation as part of the requirements for the award of a Post-Graduate Diploma which qualifies them as secondary school teachers. In the University of Buea, the students go through the same academic experience to obtain Master of Science (MSc). These dissertations are usually defended publicly. Students usually go through rather stressful moments as they are compelled to write a dissertation and defend within a given period of time. During the defences, members of the academic community, family members and friends come around to organize a feast accompanied by a lot of celebrations. These participants are usually held in high esteem by the authors of the DAs as people who contributed positively to their success. The collection of the samples was distributed as presented in tables 1 and 2 below.

We also conducted interviews with some lecturers and students of those faculties in order to add validity to our findings.

Table 1: Regional distribution of DAs

Region	CENTRE UY1	NW UBa	SW UB	Total
Nº of DAs	100	50	50	200

Table 2: Distribution of DAS according to fields of study

Discipline	Specialization	No of DAs	Total
Humanities	Language	50	100
	Literature	50	
Hard sciences	Biology	25	50
	Physics	25	
Social sciences	History	25	50
	Economics	25	

The analysis was done manually where each Das was segmented into semantic categories in terms of thanking strategies in order to determine how authors structure their thanks.

4. ANALYSIS

As far as the semantic categories of thanking strategies in dissertation acknowledgements are concerned, our data rev... table below. For the purpose of this study, the strategies were simply identified as strategy 1 to strategy 7 according to how they were semantically structured and strategy 8 comprises implicit thanking acts. The different semantic strategies were classified as follows (following Cheng's 2010 coding scheme though with modifications according to our results).

S1 - Thanking + addressees

S2 - Thanking + addressees + reason (favour)

S3- Thanking + addressees + reason (positive feelings)

S4 - Thanking + addressees + reason (favour and positive feelings)

S5 - Thanking + addressees + reason (favour) + elaboration

S6 - Thanking + addressees + reason (favour) + indispensability

S7 - Thanking + addressees + [reason (favour & positive feelings) + elaboration]

NB. Other categories that were identified in Cheng's scheme but which have not been indicated in our results were eliminated based on the fact that they occurred in less than one per cent of the total corpus which we consider statistically insignificant.

Table 3: Occurrences of thanking strategies in DAs

Strategy	Discipline						
	Lang	Lit	His	Econs	Phys	Botany	Mean
S1	13	36	40	15	24	28	156
S2	93	145	95	86	90	105	611
S3	33	100	5	10	24	21	193
S4	31	33	86	30	32	26	238
S5	13	25	10	10	14	7	80
S6	4	1	6	1	5	0	17
S7	5	5	0	2	1	0	13
S8	21	22	76	5	35	28	186
Total	213	367	318	159	**225**	**215**	**1494**

Table 4: Percentages of thanking strategies in DAs

Strategy	Discipline						
	Language	Literature	History	Economics	Physics	Biology	Total
S1	6.2%	09.8%	12.6%	09.4%	10.7%	13%	**10.4%**
S2	43.7%	39.5%	30%	54%	40%	48.8%	**40.9%**
S3	15.5%	27.2%	1.6%	06.3%	10.7%	09.8%	**12.8%**
S4	14.5%	09%	27%	18.9%	14%	12.1%	**16%**
S5	06.2%	06.8%	03.1%	06.3%	06%	03.2%	**5.35**
S6	01.9%	0.3%	1.9%	0.6%	02%	00%	**1.1%**
S7	02.3%	01.4%	00%	0.12%	0.04%	00%	**1%**
S8	09.8%	06%	40%	03.1%	15.5	13%	**12%**
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Strategy 1 - Thanking + Addressees

This strategy comprises only of one simple sentence. Here the name of the individual, group of individuals or institution receiving the thanks is mentioned and an overt thanking act expressed by a verb, noun or adjective is attached to it. The thanks in this category are the simplest because no reason is attached to the thanking act. What seems to be more important here is the fact that the person, group of persons or institution is mentioned. It was also noticed that this strategy occurred only in about 10.4% of the total corpus with the occurrences distributed almost fairly evenly in the six disciplines that constituted the population of our study. It was, however, noticed that this strategy was less frequent in the Language texts (06.2%) and relatively more frequent with the Physics texts.

One could also notice that the thanks expressed in this manner were directed to participants who contributed rather passively to the realization of the research project. The following examples suggest that this category of participants include distant relations (especially those whose assistance was neither financial nor practical assistance), friends, classmates and colleagues.
➢ I express my gratitude to my classmates and friends of Bilingual 5, to XX, XX, XX, XX, XX, and XX (Language, ENS Yaounde).

➢ I am also grateful Mr. YY technician, Life Sciences Teaching Laboratories, University of Buea. (Botany, University of Buea).

This sparing occurrence of this strategy in expressing thanks may tend to reveal something very interesting about the context the texts are constructed. It could suggest the assistance received from that minority of participants was less valued and therefore tended to be expressed using fewer structures.

Strategy 2 - Thanking + Addressees + Reason (favour)

This strategy comprises the same expressions as in strategy-1 (a simple sentence) but here a reason is attached to the thanking act. It occurred in 40.9% of the total corpus and was the most frequent of all the thanking strategies. The occurrences were, however, unevenly distributed across the six disciplines with the highest recorded in Economics (54%) and Botany (48.8%) and lowest in History (30%) and then Literature and Physics (39.5% and 40% respectively). So far disciplinary conventions hardly seem to have a role in the choice of the thanking strategies. This, of course, is obvious since thanks are often expressed purposely due to the favour one has received from the person to

whom the thanks are given. The writer mentions some favour(s) received from the participant such as academic assistance, technical assistance, ideas, quality time and financial assistance. This category of thanks was expressed mostly to members of the academic community (more of lecturers and administrators and less of students and nonacademics), family members especially parents, guardians and sponsors. Some informants also received thanks expressed in this category. The following examples are evident.

➢ I am greatly indebted to my supervisor Prof. XX for his assistance all through this study. (Language, ENS Yaoundé).
➢ To all lecturers in the economics department amongst whom include Prof. XX, Mr. XX, Dr XX, and a host of others whose names have not been mentioned. I am grateful to you for adding value to my obscure thoughts. (Economics, ENS Bambili).

Strategy 3- Thanking + Addressees + Reason (positive feelings)

The third category of thanking strategies in DAs in Cameroon English consists in attaching a different kind of reason to the simple structure of addressee and thanking, that of a positive feeling. Here participants receive thanks for love, care, patience, kindness and moral encouragement that helped to keep the writer emotionally balanced during their academic life. This strategy occurred 193 times accounting for 12.8 % of the total data with the frequencies unevenly distributed across the different disciplines. We recorded 15.5% for language and 27.2% for literature, 10.7% for Physics and 09.8% for Botany and 1.6% for History and 06.3% for Economics. This suggests that writers in the humanities (Language and Literature) tend to express thanks for reasons due to positive feelings more while those in the social sciences (History and Economics) and the pure sciences (Physics and Botany) tend to express this kind of thanks less.

The following examples also indicate that this kind of gratitude is expressed mostly to friends, relatives and well-wishers who may not have participated actively in the realization of the research work but who would have provided an environment that is conducive for study.

➢ I sincerely thank my uncles XX, XX, XX and XX, my aunts YY, YY, YY, and YY, my sisters, YY, YY, YY, and all friends and well-wishers for their constant support and encouragement (Literature, ENS Yaounde).
➢ I equally thank my fellow mates of HTTTC Bambili who in their usual caring and loving manner assisted me morally toward the

realization of this project. (Economics, ENS Bambili.)

Strategy 4 – Thanking + Addressees + Reason (favour and positive feelings)

In this category of thanking strategies, participants received thanks for reasons due to both a favour received and a positive feeling. This strategy occurred 238 times accounting for 16% of the total data. The frequencies were also unevenly distributed across the disciplines. The highest frequency was recorded in the social sciences (History and Economics), that is, 27% and 18.9% respectively. The natural sciences also recorded fairly even frequencies, that is, 14% and 12.1% for Physics and botany respectively. In the humanities, 14.5% was recorded for language while 09.5% was recorded for literature.

These statistics suggest that writers in the social sciences tend to express thanks for reasons due to both positive feelings and favour in one semantic structure while those literature and Botany may tend to separate them more.

➢ I will also like to express my profound thanks to some dear ones like my brother Mr. XX my sister Mrs. YY and my aunt Mrs. YY whose constant help (financially and moral) as well as guardians over the years have inspired me in all I do (Language, ENS Yaounde).
➢ My greatest thanks are due to Dr. XX and XX whose criticisms, suggestions and moral assistance proved indispensable for the realization of this work (History, ENS Bambili).

Strategy 5 - Thanking + Addressees + Reason (favour) + Elaboration

The analysis of our corpus reveals that Cameroonian writers of DAs generally express their gratitude in what Cheng terms simple thanking strategies. There is, however, an indication that some individual writers break these bounds to construct more complex strategies. That this strategy occurred only about 80 times accounting only for about 5.35% of the total corpus is indicative of the fact that only few individual writers used it thereby making it less conventional in the Cameroon context. It is also possible that disciplinary conventions may hardly have a rule to play as far as the use of this strategy is concerned since the frequencies were fairly evenly distributed across the six disciplines from which our data was collected. It can therefore be observed that the choice of this strategy is influenced more by individual writing styles rather disciplinary differences.

The structures in this strategy are constructed with more than one sentence. After expressing gratitude to a participant, the writer goes further to add more information to the participant's contribution toward the success of the research work. It was also observed, as the examples below indicate, that this kind of thanks was offered mostly to individuals who played a very central role either in the upbringing of the researcher in general or in the research experience in particular.

➢ I also acknowledge the ceaseless and unending determination of my parents Mr. and Mrs. XX to ensure that despite the hard times I lack nothing. Their financial, moral, physical and spiritual support surpasses all (Economics, ENS Bambili).

➢ I am grateful to Dr. XX my lecturer for his massive impressive knowledge and ability to see his everything through his magical mathematical fingers. He has been quite simple to work with. I am impressed to work with as a scientist and more as a true human being (Physics, University of Buea).

Strategy 6 - Thanking + Addressees + Reason (favour) + Indispensability

This strategy corresponds to C3 (complex strategy 3) of Cheng's corpus. It featured 17 times in the total corpus accounting for 1.1% of the total corpus. The frequencies were unevenly distributed amongst the disciplines. It was completely absent in botany texts and almost completely absent in the Literature and Economics texts (0.3% and 0.6% respectively). Only the Language, History and Physics texts demonstrated some use of this strategy of expressing thanks.

These statistics still suggest that the choice of the strategy was not influenced by disciplinary conventions or styles since it occurred in one of the two disciplines under each field of study (that is, English Language in the humanities, History in the social sciences and Physics in the natural sciences). It could just have been a matter of individual styles.

Despite the fact that this strategy occurred in relatively low frequencies in the corpus, the few texts in which it was used demonstrated some common features in that such manner of thanking was expressed only to those who played a central role in the life of the writer or in the research process, that is, parents, sponsors and academics especially the supervisor as indicated in the following excerpts.

➢ I am greatly indebted to my supervisor Prof. XX for his assistance all through this study. I tell him all my gratitude for his patience, professionalism and his availability, his constant pieces of advice and monitoring without which this work would not come either to this end or this standard (Language, ENS Yaounde).

➢ I remain ever grateful to my supervisors, Prof. XX and Dr. XX for their immense contributions and inputs that have made this dissertation a reality. They will always be remembered for their meticulous correction and direction without which, I would not have been able to realize this work (Economics, ENS Bambili).

Strategy 7 - Thanking + Addressees + Reason (favour & positive feelings) + Elaboration]

This category of thanks was quite rare in our corpus as it occurred only 13 times out of the 1494 thanking acts recorded in our corpus accounting for only 1% of the total corpus. More so, it was totally absent in the History and Botany texts and almost totally absent in the Economics and Physics texts (0.12% and 0.04% respectively). Only the language and literature writers seemed to show some little interest in the use this strategy (2.3% and 1.4% respectively).

From these statistics, it would appear difficult to determine the role of disciplinary conventions in the use of this strategy. Although the frequencies were not evenly distributed across disciplines, there seems to be a disparity between the disciplines under the same field of study. It was observed that while this strategy was used in the both disciplines in the humanities, only one discipline each in the other fields of study used it (Physics in the hard sciences and Economics in the social sciences). It is therefore still obvious that individual writing styles might have played a more important role in the choice than disciplinary conventions.

This, being the most complex of all the thanking strategies in our corpus, as the following examples reveal, the thanks were offered only to persons who played the most central role both in the research experience as a whole and the writing of the thesis, that is, the thesis supervisors.

➢ I would like to begin by expressing my infinite gratitude to me my supervisor, Dr. XX and my co-supervisor, Dr. XX for their helpful assistance, patience and enduring care in the conception, research and writing of the work. Their corrections, suggestions and criticisms were indispensable for the realization of this study. (History, ENS Bambili).

➢ I am deeply indebted to my supervisor Dr. XX who has been an active and highly inspiring mentor throughout the evolution of this research. He greatly assisted in the conception of this research and in setting up the logistical

framework under which it was to be carried out. (Economics, ENS Bambili.)

Strategy 8: Implicit Thanking
Apart from the thanks expressed overtly or explicitly using a thanking word (e.g. thank, thanks or gratitude) followed by a reason why the addressee should receive such thanks, Cameroonian writers of DAs also express their gratitude covertly or implicitly, that is, expressing gratitude without necessarily using a thanking word. Here, only the name of the addressee and maybe the office of the person is mentioned followed or preceded by the reason (the kind of favour or positive feeling received from the person). What is essential here is that the addressee played a role the accomplishment of the research work. In many cases, the role played by the people who receive this category of thanks is either peripheral or an indirect one as indicated by the following examples.
➤ The assistant curator and director of the Laboratory of MBG Dr. XX was very helpful during specimen measuring and illustrations. (Botany, University of Buea)
➤ The Divisional and Sub-divisional Delegates of Bui division, as well as the different individuals of the Divisional and Sub-divisional archives

equally provided useful documents and other materials for this study. (History, ENS Bambili)

Implicit or covert thanking strategies constituted about 86 out of the 1494 thanking acts registered in our corpus accounting for about 12 % of the total corpus. The frequencies were quite unevenly distributed across the three main fields of study and across disciplines or specializations in the same field.

Favoured Thanking Strategies in Das
In a nutshell, preference for the in choice of semantic structures in expressing gratitude take the following tendency.
1. Thanking + addressees + reason (favour
2. Thanking + addressees + reason (favour and positive feelings)
3. Thanking + addressees + reason (positive feelings)
4. Thanking without overt thanking word
5. Thanking + addressees
6. Thanking + addressees + reason (favour) + elaboration
7. Thanking + addressees + reason (favour) + indispensability
8. Thanking + addressees + [reason (favour & positive feelings) + elaboration]

Table 5: Taxonomy of favoured strategies in Das

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
S 2	611	40.9%
S4	238	16%
S3	193	12.8%
S8	186	12%
S1	156	10.4%
S5	80	5.35%
S6	17	1.1%
S7	13	1%
Total	1494	100%

5. DISCUSSION
5.1. Factors Affecting the Choice of Semantic Structures in Thanking Acts
A number of factors may have affected the choice of the thanking strategies discussed above. It is worth recalling that genre analysis, which is our main framework of analysis for this study, seeks to answer the questions, "why do members of a given discourse community construct their texts the way they do? In the course of our research, we came across the following tendencies which could attempt to answer this question. The information here is obtained from the responses we got from the interviews and from personal observation.

5.1.1 Disciplinary Conventions
Bhatia (2002:14) notes that a genre is most often "a highly structured and conventionalized communicative event" and that specialist members of a given discourse community are usually credited for their knowledge of the structure of the genre in which they usually participate as part of their daily activities and for their knowledge of the communicative goals of their community. In this light, we find DAs written Cameroon taking some trends that reveal disciplinary conventions. The specialist members' (lecturers and students in our case) long experience together with their training within the specialist community contribute a great deal in shaping the genre and giving it a conventionalized internal structure.

Some disciplines instruct their students (either formally or informally) on how to structure their acknowledgement texts such that they portray "constraints on allowable contributors in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value" ((Bhatia 10:15). DAs in Cameroon English seem to have boundaries along which writers are confided even though they may take liberties in the choice of certain linguistic resources. These constraints may vary from the use of certain lexico-grammatical features to semantic and pragmatic structures associated to particular genres. The following responses from our interview help to illustrate the fact about DAs in Cameron English.

➢ I wonder how a student will include thanking God in an academic work like a dissertation acknowledgement, we tried cautioning them but some of them keep doing it. (Lecturer, History, ENS Bambili)

This suggests that some students from that department could have been taught either formally or informally, at least, how to select participants in the construction of their acknowledgement texts. The following responses from other lecturers help to illustrate the rule played lecturers in defining the boundaries along which writers are confided in the construction of their dissertation acknowledgements.

➢ I do intervene in checking the acknowledgements to ensure that all contributions are duly acknowledged. (Lecturer Botany, university on Buea).
➢ I encourage my students to exhaust the list of those who helped in one way or the other. It is the part of their dissertation that almost everyone reads. (Lecturer, Physics, University of Buea)
➢ My jury members did not agree with the fact I acknowledge my elder Brother, who is a medical doctor, for proofreading and suggesting ideas. They said I should have rather acknowledged him for the financial and moral support he gave me.(Student, English language, ENS Yaounde)
➢ My supervisor had to check and control everything thanking act I did. He had to remove some names and insert others before he could certify my work for defence (Student, Botany, University of Buea).

These excerpts suggest that some lecturers put a check on the writing style of their students' acknowledgement section of a dissertation even though this does not constitute part of the academic or intellectual construction of the research work.

5.1.2. Individual writing strategies

The fact that the different strategies are unevenly distributed across the various disciplines and, more so, that some strategies or semantic structures occurred only in very few of the texts indicates that individuals were creative or took liberties about the styles and their creativity did not conform to the disciplinary conventions. This is in line with what Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995:6) assert, "…genres are inherently dynamic rhetorical structures that can be manipulated according to conditions of use and that genre knowledge is therefore best conceptualized as a form of situated cognition embedded in disciplinary cultures". It is worth noting that these individual writing styles do not seem to deviate from disciplinary conventions but are just embedded in the disciplinary culture, not allowing for the creation of a new genre or of a subgenre. (Bhatia 2002.)

➢ I had no methodology lessons from anyone as far as the writing of dissertation acknowledgement is concerned. The inspiration is taken both from my heart and other already approved dissertations. (Student Physics, University of Buea)
➢ I think the acknowledgement should be left at the discretion of the student.
➢ Lecturer, Physics, University of Buea)
➢ I did not have any formal lessons on how to lay out my acknowledgements. I think it was just a matter of personal inspiration depending on the kind of contributions I received from those I acknowledged.(Student, literature, ENS Yaoundé)

5.1.3. Traditions Cultivated by Students

The personal inspirations underlying certain constructions in dissertation acknowledgements later on serve as inspirations to other students thereby creating some sort of handed down traditions. Many of the students we consulted acknowledged that they had to look at the acknowledgement sections of dissertations that had been defended in their department and copy certain styles and expressions. Some DAs in our corpus actually looked so alike in the course our data collection that we almost thought we had mistakenly photocopied one DA more than once but when we observed closely, we realized that the names of those receiving the thanks were different even though the thanking words and strategies were almost the same. The following excerpts from two History texts can help illustrate this fact better.

➢ In bringing this work to its final completion, I leaned on various persons to whom I am thankful. My greatest thanks are due to Drs, XX and XX whose criticisms, suggestions and moral assistance proved indispensable for the realization of this work. My appreciation also goes to Prof. XX, Dr. XX, Dr. XX, Dr. xx, Dr. XX of the University of Bamenda. (History, ENS Bambili)

I am also grateful to the staff of the Buea University and the staff of the Buea National Archives (NBA) especially XX. I am also thankful to the lecturers of the Department of Fashion and Dress Making (EH) at the Ecole Normale Superiéure d'Enseignement Technique (E.N.S.E.T.). Douala especially the H.O.D. and YY who went out of their way to provide me with relevant and information necessary for the successful completion of this research

(History, ENS Bambili)

➢ In bringing this work to its final completion, I leaned on various persons. I am thankful to my supervisor and co-supervisor; Dr. XX and Dr. XX respectively whose criticism, suggestion and moral assistance proved absolutely indispensable for the realization of this work.

My sincere thanks also go to, Prof. XX, Prof. XXX Dr. XX, Dr. XX, Dr. XX , Dr. XX, Dr. XX, Prof. XX, Mr. XX and late Mr. XX for their valuable suggestions which were indispensable for the completion of this study thanks equally goes to Prof. XX, Prof. XX and Dr. XX whose books and academic wit gave me great inspiration in history. My deepest appreciation goes to Prof. XX and Prof. XX for providing a conducive atmosphere in which I carried out my studies. (Economics, ENS Bambili.)

The following similarities in expression in the two excerpts prove that one writer surely copied from another and just adjusted a few items replacing the addressees with his.

➢ In bringing this work to its final completion
➢ I leaned on various people
➢ To whom I am grateful/thankful
➢ Whose criticisms, suggestions and moral assistance proved (absolutely) indispensable for the realization of this work.

One also notices the rhetorical pattern to be similar. Both texts open with an introductory statement, followed by thanking the supervisor, then to thanking other lecturers in the same department or discipline.

➢ I equally thank Prof. XX my departmental head who also held me by the hand. Thanks to the administration of the University of Bamenda from the highest authority (Rector, Prof. XX) to the least for their unbending effort of training students at the University of Bamenda through teachers who have given me their time during the training and completion of this research.

➢ In addition I owe immense gratitude to the head of department for Economic Sciences, Dr. XX, the director of HTTC, Dr. XX and the Vice Chancellor of the University of Bamenda, Prof. XX for the skilful administration and advice. To all lecturers in the Economics Department amongst whom include Prof. XX, Mr. XX, Dr. XX, and a host of others whose names have not been mentioned. I am grateful to you for adding value to my obscure thoughts.

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These texts from the Department of Economic Sciences of the University of Bamenda also reveal some trends that were not noticed in the texts from other disciplines. Constructions with "will" and "would" were more commonly used as indicated by the above examples. (e.g. *I will express my, I will thank, I would like to, I will like*).

6. CONCLUSION

From the above presentation and analysis of our data, it is obvious that dissertation acknowledgements in Cameroon English are fast developing into a genre of their own. This goes a long way to add diversity to status enjoyed by Cameroon English as an Outer Circle English.

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