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# *Thank you, sorry* and *please*: English politeness markers in Polish

**Abstract.** The aim of this study is to analyse the use of the English politeness markers *thank you*, *sorry* and *please* in Polish. My initial hypothesis was that the politeness markers have already been incorporated into the mental lexicon of Polish speakers, and are thus understood and accepted by them, but they do not have the prospect of replacing their Polish equivalents because they lack the necessary pragmatic force. Previous studies (Terkourafi 2011; Peterson & Vaattovaara 2014) show that pragmatic borrowings are unlikely to do so. However, this corpus study finds a context in which a borrowing is used increasingly, namely *sorry* in the collocation with *ale* ('but'). It seems to have started replacing its Polish equivalents in this context, as it constitutes 25% of all collocations of apologetic behaviour with *ale* in the National Corpus of Polish. However, the majority of the occurrences of the analysed politeness markers in the corpus are restricted to Internet-mediated communication.

**Keywords:** linguistic politeness, pragmatic borrowings, politeness markers, *thank you*, *sorry*, *please*.

## 1. Introduction

The study of politeness has been one of the focal points of pragmatics since the 1970s. There are three primary ways of understanding this phenomenon: politeness as social rules (Watts et al. 1992), politeness as adherence to maxims (Lakoff 1973; Leech 1983) and politeness as face management (Brown & Levinson 1987; Spencer-Oatey 2008). Recent (postmodern) approaches view it also as a discursive concept, shaped in interaction (cf. Haugh 2007; Mills 2011). As observed by Ogiermann (2009: 1), “[w]hile pragmatic theories view politeness as a set of strategies used to redress face and culture as a factor influencing strategy choice, postmodern theories emphasise the unpredictable nature of politeness and the heterogeneous nature of culture”. This study draws from

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Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, which is often used in cross-cultural comparisons in the field of politeness, and analyses the English and Polish cultures as negative/positive politeness cultures; it also aims to investigate the social rules governing politeness (cf. Watts et al. 1992).

When two languages are in contact, it is inevitable that some words are borrowed (Andersen et al. 2017). Researchers have demonstrated that the process concerns not only lexical but also pragmatic borrowings (Andersen 2014). Rather than contribute to the content of an utterance, pragmatic borrowings modify the hearer's interpretation by carrying linguistic and extralinguistic signals – they shape the listener's interpretation by signalling “speaker attitude the speech act performed, discourse structure, information state, politeness, etc.” (Andersen 2014: 17). Politeness markers are among the most common items involved in pragmatic borrowing (Andersen 2014; Peterson 2017). Having become a lingua franca, English started influencing other languages and became the source language of pragmatic borrowings for many of them (Terkourafi 2011; Peterson & Vaattovaara 2014). This study focuses on the use of the English politeness markers *thank you*, *sorry* and *please* in Polish. It investigates their use in the National Corpus of Polish to establish the degree to which they have been adapted to the Polish morphological patterns and to identify the language registers and contexts in which they appear most frequently.

## 2. English and Polish politeness

Researchers (e.g. Brown & Levinson 1987; Lubecka 2000; Ogiermann 2012) agree that some cultures are inherently positive or negative politeness cultures. This division is connected with Brown and Levinson's (1987) distinction between positive and negative face. Their understanding of the notion of face goes back to Goffman, who defined it as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (1955: 213). Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that all speech acts are potentially face-threatening; hence their use of the term “face-threatening act” (FTA).

Brown and Levinson (1987: 62) associate negative face with the want that one's actions be unimpeded by others, and positive face with the want for one's wants to be desirable to others. In consequence, negative politeness cultures are characterized by the use of strategies involving indirectness. They aim to minimise the feeling of imposition and thus fulfil the negative face wants. In positive politeness cultures, polite behaviour focuses on the strategies that fulfil the positive face wants by focusing on appreciation and approval of the hearer which may be obtained by maintaining the feeling of being united and having some common ground (Brown & Levinson 1987).

According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 129-130), in English-speaking countries, negative politeness is predominant and more developed, which means that negative-politeness

strategies, such those involving indirectness, are more elaborate. Poland is said to be a positive politeness country (cf. Lubecka 2000; Ogiermann 2012), where the sense of camaraderie predominates over the need to be unimpeded. Negative politeness in Polish culture may be associated with a high degree of social distance and thus, among the members of the in-group, perceived as an indication of coldness or dishonesty. In Polish, indirectness, achieved among other means by highly elaborate utterances (Jakubowska 1999), which are marked as inherently polite by Clark and Schunk (1980), may be perceived as “bizarre”, “absent from Polish culture” (Wierzbicka 1985: 149), or even “manipulative” (Ogiermann 2009: 38). In Polish culture, politeness is achieved by different means, such as diminutives, exaggeration and exclamations (Wierzbicka 1985; Ogiermann 2009, 2012).

### 3. English-Polish interactions

Mańczak-Wohlfeld (2006: 17-42) provides a comprehensive diachronic analysis of the English-Polish interactions since the 17th century. The first English borrowings were found in the magazine called “Merkuriusz Polski Ordynaryjny” from 1661 (the examples are: *lord*, *mylord*, *spiker* [the assimilated form of *speaker*], and *par*). They described English realia, which according to the author, is typical for the oldest borrowings. The other group of the oldest borrowings were maritime terms (*cutter*, *ket(ch)*, *sloop* and *yacht*). Later, in a dictionary from 1779, the scholar found 17 borrowings all of which were within the two categories mentioned above. All 17 words were nouns, which as she states is a common tendency in all European languages. In the 20th century, the influence of English gained momentum. Mańczak-Wohlfeld (1994) published a compilation of 1600 lexical units deriving from this language, and sixteen years later a dictionary of English loanwords with 2000 units in 2010 (Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2010). Looking at the growth rate over the sixteen years between 1994 and 2010, it may be inferred that the number of loanwords has certainly grown in the first two decades of the 21st century. The growth had been intense even before the increase in the use of the Internet. Since 2010, the Internet has become one of the most common means of communication and facilitated international contacts. What is more, Szerszunowicz (2020) demonstrates that American culture has influenced Polish ways of communication in everyday interactions and induced the emergence of some pragmatic idioms such as *milego dnia* [*have a nice day*]. Sztencel (2009: 3) claims that the contact between Polish and English is not “casual” nowadays and has reached Stage 3 according to Thomason and Kaufman (1988) borrowing scale and should be described as “more intense”. The use of the politeness markers *thank you*, *sorry* and *please* in Polish is also one of the indications of the intense language contact.

## 4. Material and method

This study draws from the speech acts theory (Austin 1962) and politeness theories (see Lakoff 1973, 1990; Leech 1983; Brown & Levinson 1987; Watts et al. 1992). It combines the study of pragmatic borrowings (Andersen 2014; Ogiermann 2012) with the corpus linguistics framework (see McEnery & Hardie 2012). The analysed phrases, i.e. *thank you*, *sorry* and *please*, are formulaic expressions also called *Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices* (IFIDs) (Ogiermann 2012). This study first looks at their use in English, then it examines the use of their Polish equivalents and, finally, it investigates the uses of *thank you*, *sorry* and *please* in Polish.

In order to compare the usage of the selected English and Polish politeness markers, and to analyse the use of English politeness markers in Polish, two corpora have been utilised: the British National Corpus (henceforth the BNC) and the National Corpus of Polish (henceforth the NCP). Both of them are reference corpora and no new entries are added to them. The BNC consists of 100 million words from over 4000 samples of modern English. 90% of the corpus consists of the written sources and 10% of the spoken samples of British English (see Aston & Burnard 1997: 28-31). The entries are dated from 1985 to 1994. The NCP consists of approximately 1.5 billion words in Polish from the period between 1988 and 2010 (see Przepiórkowski et al. 2012: 8). Both corpora are available online. The BNC has been accessed through the online interface by Birmingham Young University (see <https://www.english-corpora.org/bnc/>). The NCP has been accessed through the PELCRA NJKP browser (Pezik 2012) (NKJP is the abbreviation of the full name of the corpus in Polish: Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego). Both corpora provide researchers with the metadata about each entry so the year of each entry could be obtained. The frequencies and collocations have also been collected through the corpus tools. For the purpose of defining the analysed phrases, the dictionaries of English and Polish have been used (Rundell Fox 2002; Drabik et al. 2018).

The analysis focused on the quantitative and qualitative data to establish in what contexts and how frequently the English politeness markers are used in Polish. Moreover, this study aims to explore the possibility of the replacement of the Polish politeness markers with the English ones in some contexts. For this purpose, it was essential to analyse the frequencies and the patterns of use (the collocations) of the phrases in question in Polish. The choice of the phrases with English politeness markers was not restricted in any way. The only criterium was the use of the markers in naturally occurring sentences formulated in Polish, and not in translations or quotations from English. In order to obtain such search results in one particular case (*thank you* and *thanks*) some phrases with English collocates such as *for* and *in advance* had to be excluded. The translations of the Polish phrases provided in this chapter have been provided by the present author; they are given in square brackets when necessary.

## 5. Discussion of results

### 5.1. *Thank you, sorry, and please* in English speech patterns

#### 5.1.1 *Thank you*

To *thank* is a performative verb that is used “to tell somebody that you are grateful for something they have done or given to you” (Rundell & Fox 2002: 1484). From the discourse analysis perspective, the function of *thank you* is interactional – its aim is to express one’s gratitude. The verb *thank* is transitive and its grammar pattern is: “to *thank* sb for (doing) sth” (Rundell & Fox 2002: 1484). According to Rundell and Fox (2002: 1484), *thanks* is also an informal interjection and can be used for “telling someone you are grateful for something they have said or done”, “politely accepting something that is offered to you”, or (when used with *no*) for “politely refusing something” (Rundell & Fox 2002: 1484). What is interesting, even when used as a performative verb, it rarely occurs with an explicit subject (the subject is implied). In the BNC, out of 9555 occurrences of *thank you*, there are barely 126 occurrences of *I thank you*. The other, more informal form of this phrase is *thanks* with a frequency of 6297 in the BNC. The most common collocate of *to thank* is *you* (frequency 9555) as an interjection or an IFID (Ogiermann 2012: 32). The pronoun *you* does not collocate with the informal *thanks*. The most common collocates of both *thank you* and *thanks* in the BNC are: *very* and *much*. They usually appear together as in examples (1) a-e. The frequency of *very* in the BNC is 1314, and the frequency of *much* is 1332.

- (1) a. *Thank you very much.*  
 b. *Thank you all very much.*  
 c. *Thank you very much, thank you Chris.*  
 d. *Thanks very much.*  
 e. *That’s great, thanks very much.*

The next most frequent collocate of *thank you* and *thanks* is, as evidenced in the BNC, the preposition *for* (frequency of *thank you* is 1091 and of *thanks* 633), which may be seen in examples (2) a-e.

- (2) a. *I haven’t been able to write formally to thank you for the meeting...*  
 b. *Thank you for that...*  
 c. *Well thank you for your comments anyway...*  
 d. *Thanks for inviting me.*  
 e. *Thanks for pointing that out Terry.*

Another common collocate of *thank you* and *thanks* is *no* which occurs in a frontal position as in “*no, thanks*” (frequency 318) or “*no, thank you*” (frequency 308) and is a polite way of refusing. Other collocates of *thanks* are *to* (frequency 2456) and *the* (frequency 1031), but the function of such utterances is not exclusively performative – they serve as means of giving credit to somebody.

### 5.1.2 *Sorry*

*Sorry* is an adjective that means “ashamed, embarrassed, or unhappy about something that you have done” or “feeling sadness or sympathy for someone because something bad has happened to them” (Rundell & Fox 2002: 1365). Since it is an adjective, it usually follows the verb *to be*. The grammar pattern is: a pronoun + *to be* + *sorry* + a preposition (*for/to/about*). The verb *to be* and a pronoun may be elided, but are always inferred as in examples (3) a-c.

- (3) a. Oh, *sorry* to disturb you both.  
 b. Well *sorry*, Anne, but I know too much about you to take this drive.  
 c. Yes. *Sorry*, I'm not explaining myself very well, am I?

In each sentence, the first person pronoun and the verb *to be* could be added so the first sentence could be formed as “Oh, *I am sorry* to disturb you both”.

The most frequent prepositions that follow *sorry* are *for*, *to* and *about* (Rundell & Fox 2002: 1365). In the BNC, they are also the most common collocates, along with *I* and *am*.

- (4) a. I'm *sorry about* that!  
 b. I'm *sorry for* all that, I'm really *sorry*.  
 c. I'm *sorry for* you but this is what democracy is all about...  
 d. I'm *sorry to* have brought this down  
 e. *Sorry to* butt in but if anybody's got a car parked at the back  
 f. ...well, *sorry to* interrupt, but...

As can be seen in examples (4) c, (4) e and (4) f, not only can *sorry* be used after an FTA has been performed but it also serves as a softening tool if a speaker wants to interrupt or say something unpleasant. The clause after the IFID is then introduced with *but*, which is not one of the top ten collocations, but is still fairly common (frequency – 319).

### 5.1.3 *Please*

*Please* is an interjection that is “used as a polite way of asking for something or of asking someone to do something” and for “emphasising a request, an order, or a statement” (Rundell & Fox 2002: 1081). It may be placed at the end of a clause: *Can I make an order,*

*please* or at the beginning: *Please stop it*. If it occurs in the middle, it becomes an emphasising tool: *Can you please stop it?* Another use of *please* is a “polite way of accepting something that someone has offered you: *yes, please* or *please do*” or for “saying that you think someone has said something silly” (Rundell & Fox 2002: 1081). In this meaning, the collocate will be *oh* as in *Oh, please*.

The common collocations in the BNC are *me* (usually appearing in a distance of from two to four words, as in examples (5) a-d), *contact*, *yes*, and *do*. The personal pronoun *me* occurs in the context of asking for something. Its frequency in BNC is 626. The collocate *contact* appears in the context of asking someone to contact the speaker or another party, as in examples (5) e-g, and its frequency is 577.

- (5) a. Will you get *me* the key then *please*?  
 b. Can somebody pass *me* the new potatoes *please*?  
 c. Let *me* use the Tippex *please* Phillippe.  
 d. Otherwise *please* send *me* a colour sample...  
 e. *Please! Please contact* us at this number...  
 f. If you have any queries, *please contact* the travel agent through which you booked...  
 g. Should you have any query or complaint regarding this insurance *please contact* HCI.

The collocates *yes* and *do* occur in the context of agreeing to something (as in examples (6) a-c). The frequency of *yes* is 308. Although the frequency of the collocate *do* is 721 in BNC, in the majority of cases, it is used in a negative request as in example (6) e. Just a few examples of the emphasised agreement with the use of *do* (as in example (6) d) could be found.

- (6) a. One of these will do? *Yes please, yes please*,  
 b. Shall we do that now? *Yes. Please*.  
 c. Are we coming down Saturday? *Yes, please*.  
 d. *Yes. Please do* Den.  
 e. *Please do* not hesitate to contact me if...

## 5.2. The use of the Polish equivalents of *thank you*, *sorry*, and *please* – *dziękuję*, *przepraszam*, *proszę*

### 5.2.1. *Dziękuję* (‘thank you’)

The infinitive form of *dziękuję* is *dziękować*. It is a verb that means “to express gratitude, to give thanks” (Drabik et al. 2018: 180). The equivalent of *thanks* in Polish is *dzięki*, which is a more informal way of giving thanks. The most common collocates of *dziękuję*,

as evidenced in the NCP, are *bardzo* and *mocno*, which are intensifiers meaning ‘very’, as well. *Panu* and *pani* are the objects in a V-form. The most common collocate of *dzięki* is *wielkie*, which literally translates into ‘big’ and is an intensifier. The use of an object is optional so the main difference between the English *to thank* and the Polish *dziękować* is that the former is transitive and the latter intransitive.

### 5.2.2. *Przepraszam* (‘sorry’)

The infinitive form of the verb *przepraszam* is *przepraszać*. It is a transitive verb that means “to ask for forgiveness by explaining oneself and giving excuses” (Drabik et al. 2018: 773). It may also be used to politely get someone’s attention. Other phrases also described by Ogiermann (2012) which are used for apologising are *przykro mi* and *wybacz*. The meaning of *przykro mi* is the closest to the English *I’m sorry*. *Wybacz* means ‘forgive me’. The most popular collocations of *przepraszać*, according to NCP, are *mocno* and *bardzo* – the intensifiers that are used for *dziękuję* as well. *Przepraszać* and *sorry* are different parts of speech so their grammar patterns are different.

### 5.2.3. *Proszę* (‘please’)

*Prosić* is an infinitive form of the Polish equivalent of *please*, *proszę*. It means not only “to ask somebody for something”, but also “to encourage someone to pay us a visit or to get somewhere” (Drabik et al. 2018: 746). The verb is transitive and its most popular collocations in the NCP are the objects *panią* and *pana* (‘Mr’ and ‘Ms’). It may be used with the collocate *o* (‘for’). *Prosić* and *please* are different parts of speech, so their patterns of use differ.

## 5.3. *Thank you, sorry, and please in Polish*

### 5.3.1. *Thank you*

First of all, it is worth noting that the use of *thank you*, according to the NCP data, is not common in spoken communication in Polish. There were no search results in the spoken part of the NCP when searching for any of the variations that appeared in the written corpus. The reason for that may be the difficulty of pronouncing the sound /θ/ because such dental fricatives do not exist in Polish. That is why some assimilated forms such as *tenks*, *tenkju* or *fenks* emerged. Furthermore, the basic form *thank you* (as opposed to *thanks*) was not very common in the written part of the NCP and in the majority of cases it was used as a citation or a part of a title. In these utterances, the phrase was surrounded by other English words. The most common collocates of *thank you* in the NCP were the English words *very* and *for*, and *powiedzieć* (‘to say’) which is a reporting verb and is used for citations in the corpus. The primary results consisted of 872 texts (1251 occurrences) in which the phrase *thank you* could be found. After

excluding the results with common collocates that would suggest the English context, such as *for* and *in advance*, there were 326 texts (395 occurrences) found, many of which still consisted of longer English phrases or were a part of intercultural Polish-English discourse. *Very* and *much* were not excluded because the phrase *thank you very much* could be observed in the Polish context. There were just a few occurrences of *thank you* in the Polish context and all of them were used in the Internet-mediated interactive communication. The examples were as follows:

(7) a. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2005:

*Thank you very much za wysłuchanie*

[Thank you very much for listening to me]

b. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2006:

ohh, *thank you*, Ja ya, czaję bazę

[ohh, thank you, (Ja ya), I get it]

c. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2006:

*Thank you from the mountain; PP*

d. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2007

*O thank you very much Mankid. Przynajmniej Ty jedna sie ze mna zgodzilas.*

[Oh thank you very much Mankid. At least you've agreed with me.]

The utterances in (7) show that *thank you* in Polish was used according to the English pattern. What is interesting, example (7) c shows a humorous, literal translation of the Polish phrase *z góry* (lit. 'from the mountain'), which means 'in advance'.

*Thanks* was used more commonly in the NCP data. The search without excluding any phrases gave 907 texts (1211 occurrences). After excluding the same collocates as with *thank you*, i.e. *for* and *in advance*, the search gave 450 occurrences in 404 texts. Although the numbers of occurrences and texts with *thank you* and *thanks* did not differ considerably (395 vs 450 occurrences and 326 vs 404 texts), an analysis of the random selection of 10 consecutive examples of the use of *thank you* and *thanks* from the corpus showed clearly that there were many fewer examples of English or intercultural discourse in the case of *thanks*. As shown in Table 1, there are no examples of the use of *thank you* in the Polish context (example 8 is a metalinguistic comment), while as shown in Table 2, the majority of instances exemplify the Polish context (with the exception of number 4 and 6 in which *thanks* appeared as a part of a webpage address).

Table 1. An excerpt from the search results for *thank you* in NCP

1.	Benedykt XVI powiedział „	<i>thank you</i>	”
2.	dom, czy wszystko u niego w porządku na pewno odpowie: I'm fine,	<i>thank you</i>	... ? Po dwudziestu latach pobytu za oceanem Jerzy Skolimowski jest

3.	Semsaladem - 0 pkt, 34,91s; 2. Claudia Gisler (Irlandia)	<b>Thank You</b>	- 0 pkt, 38,21; 3. Cian O'Connor (Irlandia) - 0 pkt, 35,00.
4.	z miejscowymi - wręcz nadużywać tych ich wszystkich: "please", "	<b>thank you</b>	" i "I'm sorry". Choć to tylko forma. Bez tego możesz uchodzić za
5.	va bien? Merci ale: Obruni, obruni, How are you? I'm fine.	<b>Thank you</b>	. czyli: Biały, biały, jak się masz? Dobrze. Dziękuję.
6.	Sinatra – owacja na krawędzi powstania, ale nikt nie wstał. "	<b>Thank you</b>	, you can sit down" - rzucił w stronę sali. I dopiero wszyscy
7.	oklaski i okrzyki: "Glory!"; "Allelujah!"; "Praise the Lord!"; "	<b>Thank you</b>	, Jesus!"; "Amen!", potwierdzają zachwyty zebranych wobec takiego
8.	szukran odpowiada, że tu już nie mówi się szukran, tylko	<b>thank you</b>	. Bo ta wojna toczy się też o język.
9.		<b>THANK YOU</b>	, PROFESSOR!
10.		<b>Thank you</b>	, Steven

Table 2. An excerpt from the search results for *thanks* in NCP

1.	news:1uht26y1tcurr\$.109nz344o3439\$.dlg@40tude.net...	<b>Thanks</b>	, a jak długo - jeśli można spytać, bo to już czwarty tydzień się
2.	ewentualnie adres witryny na której się znajduje.. z góry	<b>thanks</b>	
3.	gubila nie	<b>thanks</b>	:)) wszystko w przyszłości, jakby nie było erased
4.	biuletynu informacyjnego. [ więcej ] <a href="http://www.humanista.pl/">http://www.humanista.pl/</a>	<b>thanks</b>	. phtml / może ja serio jakoś inaczej myślę i tylko dla mnie to jest
5.	okazać tragiczne w skutkach :) :-): : Witamy w Klubie :)	<b>Thanks</b>	! : Moja intencja nie jest pisanie, ze okazac sie moze to dla nas
6.	w wiadomości news: d88m3v\$b1t\$1@inews.gazeta.pl...	<b>Thanks</b>	. -- rkcybere
7.	go skomentował - taka kobieta-dragon (nie mylić ze smoczycą);)	<b>Thanks</b>	, anyway. Saulo
8.	wymagam numerów Dialogu, może być też jakiegokolwiek inne źródło.	<b>thanks</b>	from the mountain AD
9.	jest kultura polska." Istotnie, warto ten wywiad "zaliczyć"...	<b>Thanks</b>	za link... Jdr "Ja bym chciał, żeby nie tylko Litwini,
10.	lodowaty Który wybrać? Może polecicie jeszcze jakiś inny?	<b>Thanks</b>	from mountain ;) pozdrawiam -- JjF [ mailto:

Despite the fact that there were many occurrences of *thanks* in the Polish context in a given random selection, not many Polish collocations could be found in the NCP and none of them was in the top ten in terms of frequency. The top Polish collocation was

*góra* ‘mountain’, which forms the phrase *z góry thanks* meaning ‘thanks in advance’ as in examples (8) a and (8) b. The phrase is an example of a hybrid, i.e. a combination of a native element with a foreign one. There were 11 occurrences of this collocation in the NCP. What is interesting, there were 29 occurrences of the expression *thanks from the mountain*, which is the already mentioned humorous, literal calque of the Polish phrase *z góry*. This word combination can be noticed among the randomly selected examples in Table 2 point 10.

- (8) a. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2000  
 Za wszelką pomoc *z góry thanks* bardzo!!  
 [For all the help, thanks a lot in advance!!]
- b. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2002  
*Z góry thanks* za pomysły.  
 [Thanks in advance for the ideas.]
- c. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2004  
 Fenk ju so macz!  
 [Thank you so much!]
- d. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2007  
 Ewentualnie trzymającym kciuki - wery fenkju  
 [To the ones who’ll their keep fingers crossed - thank you very much]
- e. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2005  
 – Shadie 5 avek mi sie podoba z tych co dałas  
 – tenkju  
 [- Shadie, I like 5 avatars from the ones that you’ve given  
 – thank you]
- f. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2005  
 Fenks za przypomnienie, zapomniałem o tym.  
 [Thanks for reminding me. I’ve forgotten about it.]
- g. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2003  
 Tenks za pocieszenie. :)  
 [Thanks for comforting me. :)]

As already noted, the Polish language does not have the fricative sound /θ/. For a Polish person, this sound is somewhere between /f/ and /t/. Polish spelling and pronunciation are closely connected. If there is the sound /t/ in a word, it is represented as *t* in spelling. The sound /j/ that is present in *you* has a corresponding letter *j*. Thus people may spell *thank you* and *thanks* with the use of the letters mentioned above. This is why variants like in examples (8) c-g, such as *fenk ju*, *fenkju*, *tenkju*, *fenks* and *tenks* are also present in the corpus.

Apart from *thank you*, *thanks*, and the phonetically assimilated forms, in Polish internet-mediated communication some abbreviated forms, such as *thx* and *tnx* could be noticed. Especially the former appears to have gained some popularity. The search results for *thx* gave 3628 examples from 2616 texts (after excluding common English collocations, there were 3476 examples in 2513 texts); the results for *tnx* gave 111 examples in 99 texts. The most common collocations were similar for both abbreviations. The most frequent was the already mentioned *góra* and *za* ('for'). *Góra* appeared 577 times in relation to *thx* and 12 times with *tnx*; *za* appeared 426 times with *thx* and 24 times with *tnx*. Another common collocate was *big* (example (9) c.) which is a literal translation of the Polish phrase *wielkie dzięki*. This collocation appeared 35 times in the corpus.

(9) a. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2008

Z góry *thx* za wszystkie opinie na ten temat.

[*Thank you* in advance for all the opinions on this subject.]

b. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2006

*Thx* za każdy komentarz...

[*Thx* for each comment...]

c. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2006

...a tak a propo to *big thx* za odpowiedzi...

[...by the way, *big thx* for your responses...]

Noteworthy is the fact that, although *thank you* and its derivatives are not very common in Polish, the corpus data indicate that they are fairly often used in phraseologisms that are translated literally from Polish. The examples are *thank you from the mountain* and *big thx*.

### 5.3.2. *Sorry*

*Sorry* is the politeness marker that, according to Görlach (2001b), has been present in Polish since the 1980s. The corpus data confirm that it is used frequently in Polish. There were over 20,000 examples of search results for *sorry*. Some assimilated forms such as *sory*, *sori*, *sorki*, *sorka* and *sorunia* could also be found. These variants show graphemic and morphological assimilation and prove that *sorry* has entered the mental lexicon of the speakers of Polish. Similar findings have already been reported by Zgólkowie (1992) and Piotrowski (2003).

As can be seen in Chart 1, *sorry* is the prevalent form in written internet-mediated interactive communication while in the spoken part of the corpus *sory* is more widespread (Chart 2). The third most common version is *sorki* (Chart 3), which is a diminutive form of *sorry*. It usually appears in internet-mediated interactive communication but is visibly less widespread. Moreover, *sorry* appears in literature and internet non-interactive

sources but in these cases, it is not used as a spontaneously uttered IFID. *Sori* and *sorka* have not been included in the charts because their frequencies are too low to be graphically presented as in most of the discourse types their frequency is below 1 per 1 million words. The charts present the most significant types of discourse in which the frequency equals at least 1.

Chart 1. The frequency of *sorry* in NCP per 1 million words in different types of discourses.

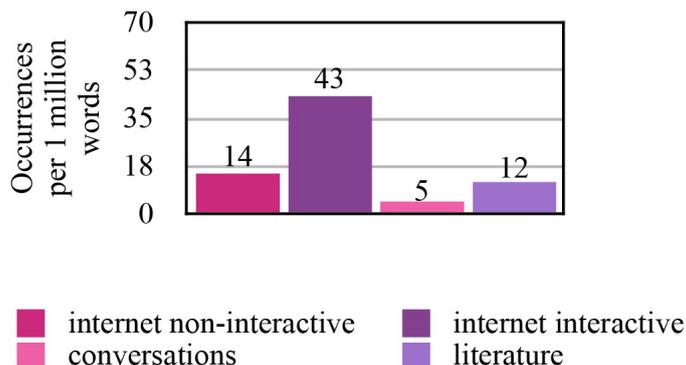


Chart 2. The frequency of *sory* in NCP per 1 million words in different types of discourses.

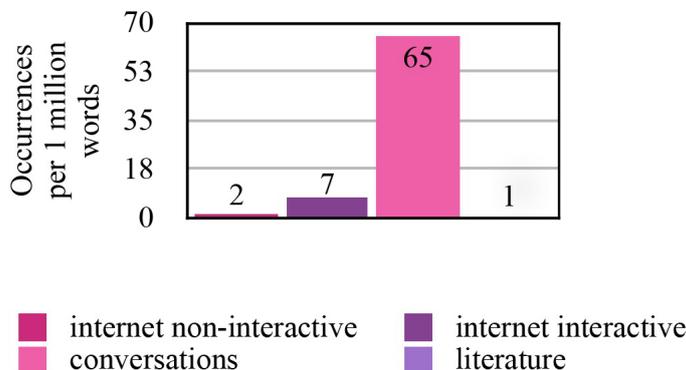
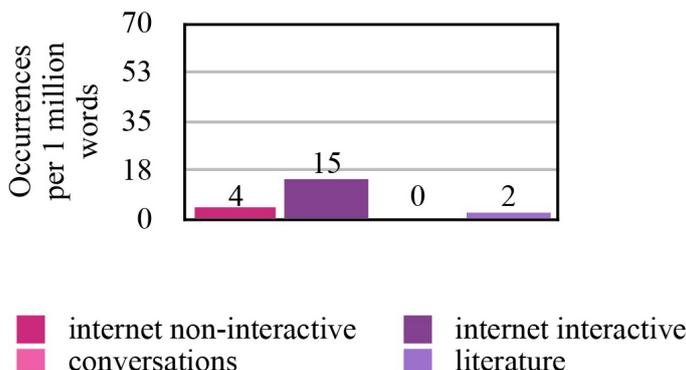


Chart 3. The frequency of *sorki* in NCP per 1 million words in different types of discourses.



Another piece of evidence for the entrenchment of *sorry* and its derivatives in the Polish language is the fact that they are used with a number of native collocates such as *ale, za, to, że*, etc. the NCP and 1 occurrence in the spoken part. It may sound appealing due to the alliteration and the rhyme. The meaning of the phrase is “*sorry*, it is as it is” or “*sorry* you have no choice” accordingly like in (10) a and (10) b.

- (10) a. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2006

Sytuacja jest jeszcze w miare zdrowa gdy akcjonariuszy jest dwóch, trzech  
I zasiadają oni w zarządzie ale jeśli jest ich 1000 to *sorry Gregory*...

[The situation is quite healthy when there are two or three shareholders who are  
on the board of directors. When there are 1000 then *sorry Gregory*...]

- b. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2003

Albo bierzesz zaawansowany albo początkujący. Jeżeli jednak to co chcesz  
wybrać miałeś w szkole średniej to *sorry gregory* ... musisz brać poziom  
zaawansowany.

[You take an advanced or a beginner (course of a language). If you had the  
language you want to choose in high school, *sorry gregory*, you have to take an  
advanced (course).]

*Sorry, Winnetou* comes from an old joke, in which a child is asked who was the greatest leader in history, and, in order to get a good grade, he gives the name Lenin (or Stalin, or Napoleon depending on a version) and then whispers to himself (or to a picture of the Native-American fictional character) “*Sorry, Winnetou*, business is business”. The child uses this phrase to apologise to a fictional leader for betraying him and their common ideals because “the reality is as it is”. The profit serves as an excuse. As can be seen in (11) b, (11) c, (11) d, (11) e and (11) g, the phrase is often used in a similar context and with some equivalent of the “business is business” part. There are different ways of spelling business in (11) d and (11) e, there is a straightforward translation in (11) c, and there are different excuses such as the war in (11) b or law in (11) g. There are also examples in which there is no excuse given and the phrase is used as an embellishment like in examples (11) a, (11) f and (11) h. What is more, there are at least four spelling variations of the character’s name as in (11) a, (11) b, (11) c and (11) e and two variants of spelling the word business, which may be an indication, that the users of the phrase are not really fluent in English.

- (11) a. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2001

*sorry winnetou*, nawet w media markt jest tańsze...

[*sorry, Winnetou*, it’s cheaper even in Media Markt...]

- b. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2002  
*sorry, Winnetou*, wojna jest, to i straty muszą być...  
 [*sorry, Winnetou*, it's the war so there must be some casualties...]
- c. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2003  
*Sorry, Winetou* - interes to interes...  
 [*Sorry, Winnetou* - business is business]
- d. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2003  
*Sorry Winetou*, Biznes is biznes...  
 [*Sorry, Winetou*, business is business...]
- e. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2007  
 Porządność porządnością ale *sorry Vinnetou*, business is business...  
 [Decency is decency but sorry, Winnetou, business is business...]
- f. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2007  
 Jeśli w Twoim domu jest z tym problem, to *sorry Winetou*, ale to nie moja sprawa.  
 [If your family has a problem with that, *sorry, Winnetou*, it's not my problem.]
- g. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2008  
 ...*sorry Winnetou* prawo jest prawem...  
 [... *sorry, Winnetou*, the law is the law...]
- i. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2009  
*Sorry Vinnetou*, ale najwyraźniej pochodzę od innej małpy niż Ty...  
 [*Sorry, Winnetou* but I, apparently, come from a different kind of monkey  
 than you do...]

*Winnetou* and *Gregory* are the collocates that did not, in general, occur with the assimilated forms of *sorry*. There were only 8 occurrences of *sory, Winetu*, a phrase in which both words are assimilated to Polish spelling rules. There are no occurrences of such collocations with other forms.

Among the collocates, there is one that is excluded from the analysis, namely *I'm*, as it suggests English context – a citation or an intercultural discourse. On the other hand, some erroneous use of this collocate could be found. The collocate *I'am* (12) does not appear in many examples (33 occurrences) but it shows that the calque of the whole English phrase is used by people who probably do not speak English too well.

- (12) a. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2003  
 I'am *sorry* ..mam awarie serwera...  
 [I'm *sorry*... there's a server failure]
- b. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2005  
 to był zart...I'am *sorry* 2005  
 [it was a joke... I'm *sorry*.]

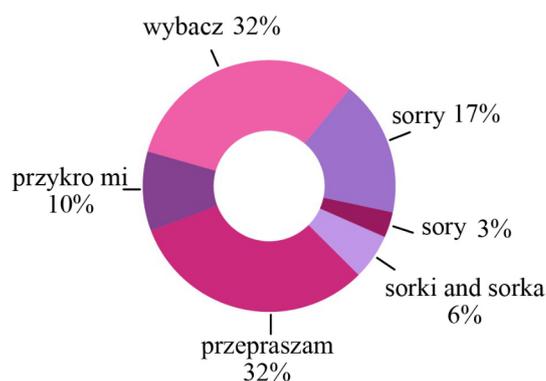
c. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2006

No tak .... I'am *sorry* Piotrze.

[Oh yes... I'm *sorry* Peter.]

The most common collocate for *sorry* was *ale* ('but'). It may suggest that *sorry* is used as a softening device when a face-threatening act is about to be performed. In fact, when the numbers of occurrences of the Polish phrases *przepraszam*, *przykro mi*, and *wybacz* and the four English-derived variants were compared, it transpired that the combined number of the latter constituted more than twenty-five per cent of the IFIDs in this context (Chart 4). It may be a signal that in situations which, according to Ogiermann, may comprise one-fourth of apologetic behaviour in Polish (Ogiermann 2012: 35) English politeness markers have started substituting the Polish counterparts.

Chart 4. The use of politeness markers with the collocate *ale*



Other common collocates of all variants of *sorry* are *za* and *że*, both of which may be translated as ‘for’ or ‘that’. They are introductory phrases after which the description of an FTA or a guilt admission should follow.

*Sorry* and its derivatives shared collocations such as *ale* and *za* with their Polish counterparts, but they did not collocate with the most common collocates of *przepraszam*. There were no search results neither for the intensifiers such as *bardzo* or *mocno*, nor for the V-form objects *panią* and *pana*. It suggests that *sorry* and the derivatives are not used in a formal context and that their pattern of use is different from the Polish verb.

### 5.3.3 Please

According to Görlach (2001a: xxiv; 2001b: 235), in Poland *please* is “known mainly to bilinguals and is felt to be English”. However, the corpus data suggests that it has changed. It is true that the corpus data shows *please* to be used less frequently than *sorry*, but there seem to have occurred some assimilation processes that may enhance the use of this politeness marker in the future. The use of the primary form may seem

problematic due to the *ea* cluster that does not appear in Polish very often (and if it does it is pronounced with the sounds /e/ and /ʌ/). Thus some derivative forms emerged. The first two are *plis*, which is a phonetic spelling, and *pliska*, which is a diminutive of the phonetically spelt form. Another form is *pliiis*. The addition of the vowel *i* (one or even more) imitates the English pronunciation of the sound /i:/ which does not exist in Polish.

The search results for *please* consisted of 5126 examples in 3245 texts. Examining them confirmed that they were in fact used primarily in the English context as a citation or as a title, as their collocates included the English words *reply*, *please*, *signature* and *upgrade* etc. However, there were some examples, mainly from Internet forums, in which *please* was used as a pragmatic borrowing. They were mainly requests for help as in examples (13) a-c.

- (13) a. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2006  
 Szukam danych o jakimś zabytku z powiatu limanowa / to takie wypracowanie / więc trochę więcej tych danych potrzeba / *please* pomóżcie....  
 [I'm looking for some information about any monument from Limanową district.  
 It's for an essay so I need a bit more data. *Please* help me...]
- b. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2007  
 Dajcie chociaż z 1 przykład:) *Please* :) Bede wdzieczny...  
 [Give me at least one example. *Please*. I'll appreciate (it)...]
- c. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2008  
 Nikt nie jest w stanie tego zrobic? *please*...  
 [Is nobody able to do that? *please*...]

What is more, the search result for the phrase *please o* ('for') which is a calque of the Polish phrase *proszę o* and may be translated into 'I'm asking you for', gave 16 examples of sentences in which *please* was used as a verb. Examples (14) a-c show such use of the interjection *please*.

- (14) a. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2001  
*please o* informacje...  
 [I'm asking you for some information...]
- b. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2005  
*please o* wiadomość prywatna...  
 [I'm asking you for a private message...]
- c. the excerpt from an internet forum from 2006  
*please o* interpretacje...  
 [I'm asking you for an interpretation...]

As one could anticipate, searching for the assimilated forms of *please* only gave the results in the Polish context. For *plis*, there were about 100 search results in 39 texts, for *pliska* there were 198 results in 98 texts, and 52 results in 47 texts for the elongated forms from *pliis* to *pliiiiiiiis*. All of the examples are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Randomly selected examples of search results for the derivatives of *please*

1.	ale nie ma aplikacji. Podajcie jakies inne programy niz gg rpc	<b><i>pliska</i></b>	.
2.	kasienka:) kochani	<b><i>pliska</i></b>	trzymajcie kciuki we wtorekkkk.. .bardizom plosee...boja chyba nerw
3.	juz kiedyś>>>jak coż wiecie na ten temat,niom to	<b><i>pliska</i></b>	piszcie..... buzaicki i z gory dzieki
4.	Hmm.. I taka mała prośba.. Jakby ktoś znalazł ten program to	<b><i>pliska</i></b>	.. napiszcie mi PW, bo w tych tematach rzadko siedzę i może mnie
5.	nic nie zniknęło. Co mam robić? Jak całkowicie zresetować gadu?	<b><i>Pliska</i></b>	, pomocy!!!!
6.	forum o takich rzeczach nie gadac jestem jeszcze dzieciakiem. I	<b><i>pliska</i></b>	wykasujcie tego bloga!!!!!!!
7.	CYTAT(stokrotka1500 @ 28.08.2008, 10:24) "MAGPIS odblokuj!!!!	<b><i>plis</i></b>	" No odblokowałam CYTAT(stokrotka1500 @ 28.08.2008, 10:24)
8.	aliase_zaczarowana dacie prawdziwy e-mail od danzela	<b><i>plis</i></b>	ja dopiero zaczęłam kolekcjonować autografy
9.	autograf to zalatwia aktorow z teraz albo nigdy" to ja też chcę...	<b><i>plis</i></b>	!!!!
10.	uczestników JOŚ IV edycji chce ktoś to mogę powiedzieć" powiedz	<b><i>plis</i></b>	!
11.	AguUu(L)a	<b><i>plis</i></b>	
12.	na mój bylejaki filmik Dziwny ten Swiat Rafal oczywiscie 5 gwiazdek	<b><i>plis</i></b>	
13.	[snapback]149205[/snapback] "uzywalem go ale sie troche gubi"	<b><i>pliis</i></b>	kto moze wyslac mi snickersa bez znaczenia ktora wersja na malia
14.	jest... niech no mi ktoś zaspoileruje co tam można zobaczyć!	<b><i>pliis</i></b>	! :) ) Pomożecie? Q

15.	LPR -	pliis	do sądu mnie, za gebę, za ryj!!!!!!!
16.	Azor, normalnie	pliiis	, bo mnie przepona wysiada. --- Moje poglądy nie są homologowane
17.	Jimi wrote: Ła! mógłbyś napisać dokładniej gdzie?	pliiis	pamiętam że widziałem chyba ze dwa odcinki tego dawno temu - i
18.	napisana?" [służba głoszenia] Napiszesz mi, kidy to się stało?	Pliiis	, nie ukrywaj prawdy. Naprawdę zamierzasz je iszbin:
19.	bądź taki, powiedz jak tam było na tej wojnie z tym perskim, plis,	pliiis	pliiis, powiedz choć trochę. wapniak -- Wysłano z
20.	news:bk21as\$ika\$1@opal. futuro.pl... tylko nie Żelazna,	pliiis	narpawde NAJLEPSZA, gdzie szkoli sie lekarzy pediatrów z całej

The search for *pliska* and *plis* resulted in the selfsame collocates, namely *odpisać* ('reply') and *pomoc* ('help'). There were also a number of phrases with the Polish preposition *o* ('for') with both *pliska* and *plis*, where the assimilated forms were used as verbs. It means that *please* has undergone graphemic, morphological, and syntactic assimilation.

#### 5.4. The English vs. Polish markers of politeness: a comparison of functions in the National Corpus of Polish

Although the English and Polish politeness markers discussed in this paper essentially serve very similar functions, i.e. they are used respectively for thanking, apologising and asking for something, they cannot be used interchangeably in Polish. First and foremost, in order to use the English politeness markers, the gravity of an FTA which they are supposed to soften in Polish cannot be too heavy. In the corpus data, they were usually used in internet-mediated communication. In such communication the participants do not normally know each other nor can they see the recipient of the message so the importance of saving each other's faces is not that high. What is more, the Face Threatening Acts themselves are not of a very threatening nature because of the superficial relationships between the participants. This finding is consistent with the observation made by Zgólkowie (1992), who note that when *sorry* is used in Polish it is restricted to situations involving small offences. Terkourafi (2011) observes that in Cypriot Greek, English politeness markers are ranked lower in terms of both appropriateness to be used in a formal context and their sincerity to convey feelings. The use of diminutive forms of *sorry* (*sorka*, *sorki*, *sorunia*) and *please* (*pliska*), as well as the preference of Polish speakers for *thanks* over more formal *thank you* confirms the observation that the borrowed politeness markers tend to be preferred in informal situations, and are less suitable for contexts involving serious face threats than the native ones.

Moreover, it appears that the English politeness markers can be utilised within one of the positive politeness strategies, i.e. claiming common ground with the use of jokes and humour (Brown and Levinson 1987: 103-125). Such seems to be the function of their diminutive forms and their use in informal phrases alluding to jokes (*sorry Winnetou*) and rhyming expressions (*sorry Gregory*). These results confirm those of Peterson and Vaattovaara (2014), who also found that borrowed politeness markers serve positive politeness by positioning the interlocutors within the common ground.

One of the analysed politeness markers, *sorry*, occurs visibly more often than the others, and was observed to be used frequently in one specific context – for introducing and apologising for an FTA before it was committed. In the corpus data, the English-derived forms in the possible spelling variants were used in twenty-six per cent of phrases collocated with *ale* ('but'). It may suggest that, contrary to my initial hypothesis and to the findings of Terkourafi (2011), English politeness markers may replace the native ones in some contexts, as they may become even the preferred ones in the future. Such findings should be tested in a newer corpus and in a corpus focusing on spoken utterances.

## 6. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to examine the use of the English politeness markers *thank you*, *sorry* and *please* in Polish, as evidenced in the National Corpus of Polish. The initial hypothesis was that these politeness markers are used in Polish, but they do not have enough pragmatic force to replace their Polish counterparts, as they seem to be rarely used in formal contexts or to refer to situations involving serious face threats.

The hypothesis of the study was largely confirmed. The English politeness markers *thank you*, *sorry* and *please* have been incorporated into the mental lexicon of Polish speakers, and are particularly common in internet-mediated interactive communication. The corpus data shows that their frequencies differ, *sorry* being the most common and *please* the least common. The form *thank you* is rarely used in Polish; *thanks* is much more common. There are numerous assimilated forms such as *sorka*, *sorki*, *plis*, *pliska*, *tenk ju*, *fenks*, *tenks* etc., and the abbreviation *thx*. Such abbreviations are typical for Internet-mediated communication. The use of such assimilated forms may suggest that they are no longer used by bilinguals. They are comprehensible and accepted also by monolingual speakers, who use them with Polish spelling and Polish pronunciation. The existence of such forms may suggest that they are likely to be used more often in the future, as it facilitates their pronunciation and makes them more familiar. This study confirms the earlier findings reported by Zgólkowie (1992) and Terkourafi (2011) that borrowed politeness markers tend to be used for FTAs with a low estimated risk of face loss, and are preferred in informal contexts. It also supports Peterson and Vaattovaara's (2014) observations concerning the employment of borrowed politeness markers in

speech patterns associated with positive politeness (informal humorous phrases, diminutive forms of the borrowed items). This study has also identified a context which seems to be characteristic of the use of *sorry* in Polish, namely softening an FTA that was going to be committed by introducing apologies before it happened.

However, some limitations of this study should be pointed out. The analysed corpus could not show the most recent processes due to the time it had been collected. The NCP was chosen because of its size. It consists of approximately 1.5 billion words in Polish from the period between 1988 and 2010 (see Przepiórkowski et al. 2012: 8). It is possible that a newer corpus could exemplify a wider use of the politeness markers in question because of the rapid development of technology and the ubiquity of the Internet. What is more, spoken and semi-spoken data constitutes only up to 10% of the NCP (see Przepiórkowski et al. 2012). The study of pragmatic borrowings requires focusing on the spontaneously articulated utterances so more such data would be desired.

This article may serve as a starting point for the future investigation of the functions of borrowed politeness markers in Polish. It would be useful to perform an acceptability test similar to the one of Peterson and Vaattovaara (2014) to test in what contexts English politeness markers would be accepted by representatives of different social and age groups in order to analyse the more recent developments.

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