

Politeness Strategies and Power Play in Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

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Received on : 04-10-2009

Accepted on : 26-06-2010

Abstract

This paper employs P. Brown and S. Levinson's discourse model of politeness in order to investigate the linguistic strategies of politeness in Albee's play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* It aims at showing how this discourse model can be utilized in analyzing the language of dialogues in literature. It attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the negative politeness strategies employed by the characters in the play?
2. What are the linguistic realizations of these politeness strategies?
3. How can such strategies help understand the relationship between the two main characters?
4. How can these strategies reveal the intricate power games that both characters try to manipulate?

The paper concludes that there is an intricate relationship between language, social relations and power.

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, the relationship between linguistics and literature has undergone a drastic shift. It has increasingly become, as Fowler (1986: 1-4) holds, one of collaboration, and complementarity rather than disagreement, or contention. This notion of complementarity has recently gained more support from researchers in both fields. Literary critics have started to gradually appreciate the role that linguistics plays in evaluating and understanding literary texts. The language of a literary text can be linguistically analyzed in terms of stylistic features including word order, diction, foregrounding devices, as well as patterns of sounds and rhythm. It can also be examined through a discourse-based approach in terms of speech acts, conversational principles, cohesion, coherence, as well as form and function. This discourse-based approach to the analysis of literary texts is often preferred and adopted by linguists interested in this field because it displays the connection between language use and social relationships amongst the interlocutors in a literary work. In his article "Linguistics in the Study and Teaching of Literature" Fabb (2009) states that "Literary texts include linguistic form, as well as specialized literary forms. Linguistics can offer to literary studies an understanding of these kinds of form, and the ways by which a text is used to communicate meaning."

Language is the medium through which novelists, poets, and dramatists convey their thoughts, ideas and views. It is the means that reflects the interactive social relationships among interlocutors in a play; it also reflects the roles of interactants and the level of power they exercise through the different stages of the literary work. The characters of a play usually employ a number of linguistic strategies in order to express their attitudes and to signal any change in their relative power. A major area of mutual interest to linguists and critics has been the study of the politeness phenomenon in drama. The characters in a play are in continuous verbal interaction with each other. In so doing, they employ a number of politeness strategies in order to reflect the development of events, and the progression of relationships amongst each other. Abdessalem (2001) conducted a study entitled "Politeness Strategies in the Discourse of Drama: A Case Study." In this study, He defines the domain of stylistics, reviews Brown and Levinson's

model for politeness strategies, and applies it to Christopher Hampton's play *The Philanthropist: a Bourgeois Comedy*. Abdessalem focuses on the power relationship between the triangle: John, Don, and Phillip illustrated in their discussion of the play that John wrote recently. The researcher demonstrates how the use of language by the three characters reflects the superiority that Don and Phillip enjoy over John. He suggests that the characters' utterances would make more sense if "they are not analyzed as individual units" (131). He also recognizes that Brown and Levinson's model of interpretation helps readers and critics alike to understand more thoroughly the subtleties underlying dramatic dialogues and to comprehend how humor works in a comedy (135).

The current study is an attempt to investigate how a discourse model can be used to analyze dialogues in literary works. It proceeds as follows: Section (2) below will present the objectives and rationale. The discourse model that will be utilized in analyzing the play will be briefly summarized in section (3). Section (4) will be devoted to analysis of the play according to the proposed discourse model. Finally, the conclusions and implications will be presented in section (5).

2. Objectives and rationale

The selection of a certain politeness strategy in the process of communication is not arbitrary; it is often constrained by pragmatic factors pertaining to the relationship between the interlocutors, the power each one enjoys in a certain context, the social distance between them, and the topic of conversation. Investigating how these factors interact with each other, and showing how they determine the linguistic realization in the process of communication may have significant pedagogical implications to the process of teaching language for the purpose of communication, especially in cross-cultural settings. Identifying the conventions of politeness employed by native speakers in natural settings may be utilized in designing teaching materials and exercises for foreign language learners who need to learn how native speakers express themselves politely. On several occasions, foreign language learners may erroneously be judged as being impolite. This is primarily due to the fact that they are not well-acquainted with the relevant conventions

and strategies of politeness used by native speakers in different contexts, or because of their L1 negative transfer. This means that politeness strategies and discourse structure in general are culture-specific.

Foreign language learners also need to be made aware of the politeness strategies used by native speakers and the consequences of misusing them in the processes of communication as well as in translating from one language into another. Such a study may help in identifying the various politeness conventions that foreign language learners need to be acquainted with. It also aims at identifying the realizations of the negative politeness strategies employed by the characters in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* In other words, the study aims at showing how a discourse-based model can be utilized in analyzing the language of dialogues in literature. Specifically stated, it is an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the negative politeness strategies employed by the characters in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*
2. What are the linguistic realizations of negative politeness strategies?
3. How are the changes in the relative power of the interlocutors signaled by their linguistic behavior during the course of the play?
4. What implications to teaching English Language and literature may such a study offer?

3. The discourse model

The conversational principle of politeness was first proposed by Lakoff (1973). Grice (1975) later developed the principles of politeness as well as the cooperative principle with its four maxims. Then, these principles of politeness were exquisitely modified by Brown and Levinson (1978) into a discourse model which can be employed in the analysis of literary verbal interactions or dialogues. This model can be used to describe the relationship between language use and social relations among the participants in a dialogue. In their book titled "Politeness," Brown and Levinson (1978:61-63) argue that constructing messages is strongly related to the expression of social relationships. In order to engage into social relationships, participants in a conversation usually acknowledge the face of each other. This means that they avoid trespassing upon each other's social territory. In other words, interlocutors normally seek to make each other feel good on the assumption that the same will be done for them. In this respect, Leech

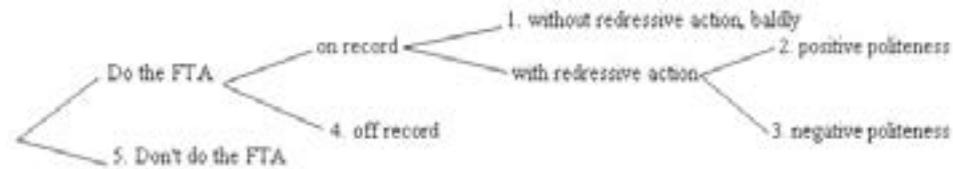
(1983:82) corroborates Brown and Levinson's concept of face by stating that the politeness principle is often employed by participants in a dialogue "to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relationships which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place."

The concepts of face and face-threatening acts (FTAs) are basic to understanding Brown and Levinson model of politeness. Face is viewed as the public image that interactants desire to maintain while engaging in social interactions. It involves two related aspects: positive and negative face. Positive face refers to the self-image that interactants desire to enjoy. It is the want or desire of the speaker that this image should be respected and approved by others. Positive politeness is often manifested in the attempt of the speaker to maximize the politeness of their illocutions. Negative face, on the other hand, refers to the speaker's claim to territories, personal preservation, and the right to non-distraction or freedom of action, or freedom from imposition. It is the desire of the speaker or hearer that his actions are unimpeded by others. Negative face involves utilizing certain linguistic strategies to minimize or mitigate the impoliteness of illocutions (Brown and Levinson 1978: 61-083).

In their model, Brown and Levinson hold that interactants in a conversation often perform acts that may threaten the negative or the positive face of addressees. These acts are referred to as Face-threatening acts (FTAs). For example, requesting your friend to lend you his / her car for a couple of hours involves encroaching on their desire/want to be free from imposition. Therefore, this act or request threatens the negative face of the addressee. On the other hand, insulting someone by accusing them of doing something wrong, or criticizing them for doing something unacceptable may threaten their positive face since such acts reflect a negative public self-image of this person, which he desires to maintain bright and untarnished.

Brown and Levinson (1978:61-69) identified five strategies for performing FTAs. The following figure summarizes these strategies.

Fig. 1. Possible strategies for doing FTAs



This model indicates the different politeness strategies that can be used to perform FTAs. The strategies are numbered from 1-5, with five being the most polite strategy and one the least. A speaker can choose not to perform an FTA. This means that nothing is imposed on the addressee. Strategy No. (4) comes next on the politeness scale since the speaker chooses to go off-record by using a strategy that is very indirect and not related to the topic or service that is implicitly demanded of the addressee. This strategy is often realized by using a declarative statement that implies no direct imposition or encroachment on the addressee. An illustrative example would be when the speaker wants somebody to open the window, or turn on the air conditioner by saying, "It is a bit stuffy in here." In so doing, the speaker avoided the responsibility of performing any face-threatening act to the addressee who also feels no obligation to do anything.

The third less polite strategy is number (3) in which the speaker is concerned about the wants or desires of the addressee by performing an FTA with redress to hearer's negative face by using a relevant linguistic structure that puts some indirect imposition on the addressee. This strategy performs negative politeness because the speaker imposes something on the addressee who feels that he has to respond to the speaker's request. An example of this strategy is the use of indirect requests such as:

- Could you please turn on the air conditioner?
- Would you mind turning on the AC?
- I wonder if you could turn on the AC?
- Can you turn on the AC?

Strategy number (2) threatens the hearer's positive face because the speaker uses a form that indicates that he cares a lot about the addressee's feelings,

wants, or desires. This strategy is performed by saying, "You must feel hot. The AC has not been working in this room for a while. How about moving to another room?" This is positive politeness because the speaker realizes that the hearer has a desire to be respected.

Strategy (1) is the least polite one in which the speaker explicitly, directly and unequivocally does the FTA and without any redressive action to mitigate face loss or damage on the part of the hearer. This strategy is often performed by using the imperative sentence with the typical verb used to express a certain function. For example, if you want the hearer to turn on the AC, you say, "Turn on the AC!" and if you want to criticize him for being late, you say, "you are late."

This discourse model has been employed by some researchers in the analysis of some literary text. Simpson (1989) analyzed politeness phenomena in Ionesco's *The Lesson*. He adopted Brown and Levinson's politeness model in order to examine how the change in relationship between the interlocutors in the play is reflected in their language. He was able to identify the politeness strategies employed by the interactants in the play. Finally, he recommended conducting further research by applying the same discourse model on more literary works. This study responds to Simpson's recommendations in order to give more validity to the use of discourse models in analyzing literary works.

4. Analysis

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf is perhaps the most known, taught, and performed play by Edward Albee. The play portrays the life of a couple, George and Martha, who invite another couple, Nick and Honey, to spend the evening with them. In the course of the play, and to their shock and surprise, the two guests become the audience for Martha's and George's elaborate and intricate games. The play is a set of verbal games Martha and George engage in. They start with Humiliate the Host, then Hump the Hostess, and finish with Get the Guests and Bringing up Baby. Through these games, George and Martha launch verbal and physical attacks on each other only to humiliate and insult each other, and strip away any illusion of happiness and normality that they might have maintained and sustained

for so many years of their marriage. Both Martha and George attack and insult each other in order to claim more space of power and control over the other. The balance of power keeps tilting sometimes to Martha's side, and sometimes to George's until the end when Martha gives in fragmented, broken, and defeated. At the end of the play, their illusions that sustained their marriage for so long, and allowed them to be together are shattered, and both are left with nothing to hold on to except each other. In a stark contrast to the rest of the play, the final closing moment is tender and touching but not without the deep, tragic and devastating outcome that has prevailed in the rest of the play.

George's and Martha's attacks upon each other are reflected in their subtle language given the fact that George is a university professor in history and "Martha's a devil with language" as George warns his guests and the audience (Albee, 21). To account for these verbal attacks and demonstrate the power games they both engage in, three excerpts have been chosen from crucial scenes that illustrate the linguistic strategies both adopt to strip their illusions away. These excerpts also show the change in the power relations between George and Martha and demonstrate how this change is reflected in the language each one uses. Below is the first excerpt:

MARTHA

I can't even see you... I haven't been able to see you for years...

GEORGE

... if you pass out, or throw up, or something...

MARTHA

... I mean, you're a blank, a cipher...

GEORGE

... and try to keep your clothes on too. There aren't many more sickening sights than you with a couple of drinks in you and your skirt up over your head, you know...

MARTHA

... a zero...

GEORGE

... your heads, I should say...

(The front doorbell chimes)

MARTHA

Party! Party!

GEORGE (Murderously)

I'm really looking forward to this, Martha...

MARTHA (Same)

Go answer the door.

GEORGE (Not moving)

You answer it.

MARTHA

Get to that door, you.

(He does not move)

I'll fix you, you...

GEORGE (Fake-spits)

... to you...

(Door chime again)

MARTHA

(Shouting... to the door)

C'MON IN (To GEORGE, between her teeth) I said, get over there!

GEORGE

(Moves a little toward the door, smiling slightly)

All right, love... whatever love wants... (16)

This first excerpt marks the breakdown of the social relationship between George and Martha. They are both trespassing upon each other's social territory. None of them is trying to establish a sound ground to carry on a meaningful conversation. Without this ground the conversation falls into a chaos of verbal abuse. Neither George nor Martha is willing to be cooperative enough to carry on a constructive decent conversation. This excerpt comprises such mounting violence and aggression between George and Martha towards each other. What is so striking in this scene is that

Martha not only performs her FTA “Go answer the door” so emphatically but also repeats it three times, and later repeats the same order with the same emphasis and bluntness. Martha’s FTA is on record and without any redressive action; it “has been done baldly,” as Paul Simpson (1989) explains. This strategy of negative politeness, without any expression to mitigate George’s face loss or damage on the part of Martha makes her act “clear, unambiguous and concise” (173). By doing so, Martha assumes full responsibility in performing her FTAs—a sign of her excessive power and confidence. She does not feel inhibited to impose upon the negative face of George i.e. his desire that his actions should be unimpeded by others. She does not see the need to respect George’s “freedom of action and freedom from imposition” (173) nor his claim to his personal and private space. Her FTA leaves no room for George to decline her order; the only alternative he is left with is to carry out her order regardless of his will and irrespective of his desires.

Martha’s impositions on George are direct and her encroachments heavy; in none of the face threatening acts Martha uses does she try to add more redressive action to mitigate the boldness and the impoliteness of her statement or to give face to George. When she rephrases her initial FTA “Go answer the door” to “get to the door, you,” the use of ‘you’ is not redressive; on the contrary it is diminutive and humiliating to George. As a matter of fact, Martha’s blunt FTA does not come as a surprise to the audience since she has already undermined George by calling him: “a cipher”, “a zero”, and a “pig”.

Martha seems to be in control of the situation in this scene. She is “angered”, “threatening”, “shouting”, “pouting” and refuses to take no for an answer. She seems to have George under her control; she labels him in every possible offensive and diminutive manner. His freedom is curtailed, his territories violated, his actions impeded, and his entity and identity reduced to nothing to ‘a zero’. Although George does not take Martha’s attacks passively, his responses are not as aggressive and verbally violent as her face threatening acts. In fact, George’s strategies of personal preservation are very limited. He tries in this scene to deflate Martha’s threats and impositions through humor. He “smile[s] slightly” in response to her anger. She calls him “pig” and he responds “Oink! Oink!” subscribing submissively to the very image

that Martha is projecting of him. When he says at the end of this excerpt “All right, love... whatever love wants.” The word ‘love’ brings some very strong ironic incongruity to the relationship between George and Martha for the audience is well aware at this point of the play that there is actually no love between Martha and George. The repetition of the word ‘love’ sounds rather empty yet reveals George’s submissiveness and humiliation.

If George took a rather passive response to Martha’s impositions in the previous excerpt, in the following, he seems to be more aggressive and threatening. This excerpt marks a change in George’s passive response.

GEORGE

I warn you.

MARTHA (Incredulous)

You what?

GEORGE (Very quietly)

I warn you.

NICK

Do you really think we have to go through...?

MARTHA

I stand warned! (Pause... then, to HONEY and NICK) So, I married the S.O.B., and I had it all planned out... He was the groom... he was going to be groomed. He’d take over some day... first, he’d take over the History Department, and then, when Daddy retired, he’d take over the college... you know? That’s the way it was supposed to be.

(To GEORGE, who is at the portable bar with his back to her)

You getting angry, baby? Hunh? (Now back) That’s the way it was supposed to be. Very simple. And Daddy seemed to think it was a pretty good idea, too. For a while. Until he watched for a couple of years and started thinking maybe it wasn’t such a good idea after all... that maybe Georgie-boy didn’t have the stuff... that he didn’t have it in him!

GEORGE

(Still with his back to them all)

Stop it, Martha.

MARTHA (Viciously triumphant)

The hell I will! You see, George didn't have much... push... he wasn't particularly... aggressive. In fact he was sort of a ... (Spits the word at George's back)... a FLOP! A great... big... fat... FLOP!

(CRASH! Immediately after FLOP! GEORGE breaks a bottle against the portable bar stands there, still with his back to them all, holding the remains of the bottle by the neck. There is a silence, with everyone frozen. Then...)

GEORGE (Almost crying)

I said stop, Martha.

MARTHA

(After considering what course to take)

I hope that was an empty bottle, George. You don't want to waste good liquor... not on your salary (84).

In this second excerpt the argument between George and Martha is taking a serious dramatic crescendo. Martha is still in full force though, however George is not responding to Martha's FTAs in the same submissive manner. The balance of power is tilting; Martha is starting to lose some of her grounds while George seems to be developing a thicker skin in dealing with her. This excerpt marks a transition from diffidence to dominance in the relationship between George and Martha—a transition reflected in the bald on-record of the imperatives: “stop it,” and “I warn you,” that George is using now. Actually George seems to be more threatening and impinging in this scene. He starts by issuing the FTA: “I warn you,” and finishes it by holding the end of a broken wine bottle as an ultimate FTA. It is obvious that George is gaining power as it can be clearly seen in the linguistic form he used. This form is the least polite, without any redressive action that could have been used to mitigate Martha's face loss or damage in front of her guests. George's warning is direct, explicit, and unequivocal. George's directness and explicitness are shocking to Martha. She answers George's FTA by questioning in disbelief “You What?” and George answers emphatically

repeating the same FTA: “I warn you.” This is not the position that Martha is used to assuming in her fight with George. She is used to having her upper hand on George, and to be in full control of the situation; thus her shock and disbelief to George's assertive aggressiveness. Indeed, this scene presents a sharp contrast to an early scene in the play when Martha “pouting” bosses George around: “Make me a drink,” and George responds in doubt “What?” and Martha stresses: “I said, make me a drink.” In order to capture the striking contrast of the two scenes, it might be worth providing a visual summary of both in juxtaposition:

Scene 1	Scene 2
MARTHA (Pouting) Make me a drink	GEORGE I warn you
GEORGE What?	MARTHA (Incredulous) You what?
MARTHA (Still softly) I said make me a drink. (8)	GEORGE (Very quietly) I warn you. (83)

The contrast between scene 1 and scene 2 is conspicuous; it presents a clear change in the situation and in the balance of power. Martha's on-record imperatives, devoid of any redressive actions, are now counterbalanced by George's. George is as impinging and threatening now as Martha was in the previous scene. The position enjoyed by Martha in scene 1 is now enjoyed by George in scene 2. Though the two scenes in juxtaposition reveal a sharp reverse in George's passive and deflating role since he is gaining more dominance, the audience cannot help noticing that Martha is still holding firm to her own territories. This reverse in the situation is neither total nor complete. Martha is not willing to give in and far from being defeated while George is not in full control of the situation yet. He does not have a total command and full grip of the situation. Martha's attacks are still vehemently passionate and intense. When George says: “stop it” she responds:

The hell I will! You see, George didn't have much... push... he wasn't particularly... aggressive. In fact he was sort of a ... (Spits the word at George's back)... a FLOP! A great... big... fat... FLOP!

Through her declarative statements and on-record negative politeness strategies, Martha is launching direct criticism and blame on George. She accuses him of not being aggressive and competitive, which drastically threatens George's positive face because all her comments project a negative image of him. She is not willing to let George defeat her. As it is clear here, she is determined to threaten George's positive face, i.e. his positive public image that he desires to maintain of himself in front of her and her company. Martha has no respect for George's positive face, his desires that his self-image should be respected and approved by others. Martha is on mission to tarnish and even to destroy George's image if possible. She is not willing to affirm or validate his public image. When she calls him: "S.O.B" and "FLOP! A great ... big... fat... FLOP!" Martha expresses her disappointment in George since he was not able to live up to the image that she and her father expected from him. Martha does not think much of George "He didn't have any... personality, you know what I mean? Which was disappointing to Daddy, as you can imagine" (85). She discloses a negative evaluation of George's public image. If this public image cannot be favorably affirmed and validated because of its defects, then it is left only with the option to be destroyed according to Martha.

Martha is still diminutive of George. He is not a mature and fully responsible man in her perception. She calls him "Georgie-boy" his masculinity is attacked. And if masculinity is often closely identified with how competitive and successful one is in his career and society, then there is not much left to George to defend or to be proud of. Martha is presenting George to her guest in an image of a dependent husband who relies on what her father is willing to offer him. George is totally devoid of any kind of autonomy. His status as a college professor is totally dependent on Martha's father who offered him a teaching position in the college. Later, Martha destroys the remaining of George's image as a male and a husband when she starts flirting, right in front of her husband George, with her guest Nick and praising him for his Adonis athletic body. Martha is till "viciously triumphant" (84) in this scene.

George reacts by performing an aggressive violent FTA. "CRASH! Immediately after FLOP! GEORGE breaks a bottle against the portable

bar stands there, still with his back to them all, holding the remains of the bottle by the neck" (84). In fact, this is not the first time George reacts to Martha's insults violently and aggressively. George aims a fake gun at the back of Martha's head when she proudly tells her guests how she hit George right in the jaw and how she thinks that such an incident "colored [their] whole life," (57) implying perhaps that since then she has enjoyed the upper position in her relationship with George. Though George causes no physical damage to Martha by pointing the fake gun to her, he is already announcing his own violent and aggressive colors as well. These violent face threatening acts speak for the serious threats that George is feeling and the despair in which he is sinking.

George is losing the verbal and rhetorical battle that they started early in the play; he does not seem to be capable of keeping up with Martha's command of these verbal attacks. He is irritated and frustrated, and still far from winning over Martha. Yet, he does not seem to be ready anymore to take any of her insults and threats to his negative and positive faces. He is not willing to deflate Martha's commands and trivialize her aggression with humor and mimicking. She has pushed him to the point of no return, and left him not with many options to strike back. With such broken ego, Martha should expect the worst yet to come from George for she left him with nothing more to lose. "Almost crying" George warned Martha for one more time, and perhaps for the last time. With tears and shattered ego, George is trying to pick up strength for the last battle with Martha.

The third and final excerpt selected for the analysis of the dynamics of the relationship between George and Martha in Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is taken from the third act, *The Exorcism*, near the end of the play. It comprises an episode where George is telling Martha that he decided to play one last game—the game of *Bringing up Baby* which is going to strip her of her ultimate illusion.

MARTHA (After NICK goes)

I don't like what's going to happen.

GEORGE (Surprisingly tender)

Do you know what it is?

MARTHA (Pathetic)

No. But I don't like it.

GEORGE
 Maybe you will, Martha.

MARTHA
 No.

GEORGE
 Oh, it's a real fun game, Martha.

MARTHA (Pleading)
 No more games.

GEORGE (Quietly triumphant)
 One more, Martha. One more game and then beddie-bye. Everybody pack up his tools and baggage and stuff and go home. And you and me, well, we gonna climb them well-worn stairs.

MARTHA (Almost in tears)
 No, George; no.

GEORGE (Soothing)
 Yes, baby.

MARTHA
 No, George; please?

GEORGE
 It'll all be done with before you know it.

MARTHA
 No, George.

GEORGE
 No climb stairs with Georgie?

MARTHA (A sleepy child)
 No more games... please. It's games I don't want. No more games.

GEORGE
 Aw, sure you do, Martha... original game-girl and all, 'course you do.

MARTHA
 Ugly games... ugly. And now this new one?

GEORGE (Stroking her hair)
 You'll love it, baby.

MARTHA
 No, George.

GEORGE
 You'll have a ball.

MARTHA
 (Tenderly; moves to touch him)
 Please, George, no more games; I...

GEORGE
 (Slapping her moving hand with vehemence)
 Don't you touch me! You keep your paws clean for the undergraduates!

MARTHA
 (A cry of alarm, but faint)

GEORGE
 (Grabbing her hair, pulling her head back)
 Now, you listen to me, Martha; you have had quite an evening... quite a night for yourself, and can't just cut it off whenever you've got enough blood in your mouth. We are going on, and I'm going to have at you, and it's going to make your performance tonight look like an Easter pageant. Now I want you to get yourself a little alert. (Slaps her lightly with his free hand) I want a little life in you, baby (208).

In this excerpt, George has claimed the territories that he seemed to have lost in the course of his marriage with Martha—a loss that has been emphasized and highlighted since the beginning of the play. The George

that we encounter in this scene is not the same George we encountered in the first excerpt. George is more confident in this scene, so much so that he can allow himself to be ironically 'soothing' and 'tender' but also capable of showing his teeth, threatening, and menacing whenever need be. George is in total control of the situation here. Right before the quoted above scene, he reminds Martha and her company in an indirect off-record FTA: "Who says so? You in a position to set the rules around here?" (216). George rhetorical question requires no answer; he is not willing to accept anybody's challenge of his power.

Martha, on the other hand, is relinquishing and surrendering to George's power. Although she claims that she doesn't "like what's going to happen," George is not willing to grant her a way out of the game he set up for her. Martha is weak, 'pathetic', as 'a sleepy child,' 'almost in tears' in the last scene of the play. Worried and concerned that George is going to strip away the illusion of having a baby through which she has sustained her marriage with George is 'pleading' him not to play this one last game. Martha is worried that if George destroys her illusion of having a baby, she will not have anything to hold on to continue living with him. To kill the baby, as George intends to through this game, is going to break the only bond that holds their marriage together as Martha believes. It is perhaps the first time in the play that Martha tries to minimize her imposition upon George by using the word 'please' in her plea: "No, George; please?" For many times, Martha is expressing her disapproval of this final game, but George is not willing to grant Martha her wish not to play this game. In fact, the more she begs him, the more encroaching and imposing he becomes. Martha is begging and pleading, and George responds to her genuine plea with irony and sarcasm. She expresses her fear of the final game that is yet to come, and expresses her desire not to engage in this game. But George responds: "Maybe you will, Martha," "it's a real fun game, Martha," "you'll love it, baby," "you'll have a ball." George is so on top of the game here and so confident that he can allow himself to be sarcastic and ironic. Martha cannot 'love' this final game since it is going to strip her away of the last illusion that she has held to in order to maintain her relationship with George. She will not definitely have 'a ball.' How can she while she is in tears pleading and imploring him to stop these "ugly games"? George's impingement

on Martha's negative face is achieved through irony and sarcasm, which speaks for the ease with which George is handling the defeated Martha at the end of the play. Martha is fallen, devoid of any means of resistance. She has used up all her arms and resources, and now she is left vulnerable to George's sarcastic and vicious attacks.

George's FTAs are performed off-record, and his declarative sentences contain no direct orders or impositions upon Martha. He states: "It'll be done with before you know it," "you'll love it, baby," "you'll have a ball..." None of George's declarative sentences contain explicit impingement from him on Martha to engage in the last game that he wants to play with her in front of her guests. Yet, though indirect, deferent, and off-record these FTAs are, George is as coercive and intrusive as he could possibly be. George's FTAs fall in the category of off-record FTAs which are considered to be polite strategies since the addresser tries to be the most indirect and the least encroaching on the addressee. However, George's irony undercuts such good intentions. On the surface these declarative sentences, because they are deferent, indirect, and off-record, may seem that they do not bear any face-damaging intentions, but in this case they do. Feeling the strong encroachments in George's declaratives, Martha expresses her desire neither to carry out these impositions nor to engage in this one last game in so many pleas and negations. These face threatening acts do not give redress to Martha's desire for "self-determination and freedom from imposition" (175). George's strategies of negative politeness do not recognize her negative face and freedom of action as these strategies usually do. In this scene, George is most unwilling to recognize and respect Martha's negative face, wants, will, or freedom of action. In Martha's weakness and frailty, George recognizes his opportunity to win his last game with her.

Now you listen to me...

This is a turning point in George's politeness strategies; George is shifting from off-record, deferent, indirect strategies of negative politeness, to more direct, blunt, on-record strategies. This FTA, done bluntly and without redress, draws on none of the politeness strategies which George may have at his disposal to mitigate such bald on-record FTA. Such bluntness makes George's encroaching upon her negative face direct, firmer and more

threatening. The form and the effect of this FTA is a clear indication that George is becoming not only more assertive but also the least considerate of Martha's freedom of action and non-distraction. Definitely being polite to Martha is George's last concern. George's demand: "I want a little life in you, baby" is not a display of genuine care and concern; his use of "baby" is not to endear Martha, but it is a condescending and patronizing term used by a superior George to an inferior broken, humiliated and scared Martha, who is slowly assuming her role of subservience. To add insult to injury, George supplemented his threatening blunt, non-redressive FTA with vehemence, "grabbing her hair," "pulling her head back," and shouting at her: "Don't you touch me! You keep your paws clean for the undergraduates!" In the same way as Martha was diminutive of George when she called him "a blank, a cipher...", "a zero" and "a pig" in excerpt two, now it is George's turn to ask her to keep her "paws clean for the undergraduates" degrading her to the status of animals, and denying her any kind of moral integrity that would have kept her from harassing the young students in her father's college. With such humiliation, there is not much left for George to defeat Martha except to orchestrate the final game with strong meticulous command to key Martha in her new role that he expects her to play.

The curtain falls at the end of the play with George assuming his new position of power and control singing and asking Martha "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" Tired and retired, Martha answers obsequiously: "I... am... George... I... am... George... I... am." George nods in approval. Martha's closing line is exhausted, in broken monosyllables and many ellipses. Though short, it reveals her fear, and ambiguously her self-effacement.

Conclusion

The above three scenes clearly indicate how change in the participants' relative power is reflected in the language each one uses. The following table provides a few illustrative examples:

	George	Martha	George
Martha and George on Equal terms		1. Go answer the door.	You answer it.
	2. Ignorance... such ignorance	Watch who you're calling ignorant! (199)	
Martha in control		1. Get that door you Get over there! Make me a drink	All right, love... whatever love wants.
		2. And you want to know the clincher? You want to know what big brave Georgie said to Daddy?	NO!NO!NO!NO! (136)
George in Control	1. Don't you touch me! You keep your paws clean for the undergraduates!... Now, you listen to me, Martha... I want a little life in you.	(A cry of alarm but faint)	
	2. I warn you	You what?	I warn you. (83)

These examples show how language reflects the relative power that each speaker enjoys at different times throughout the course of the play. Martha is dominating early in the play. She orders and controls, scolds and offends, threatens and humiliates George in front of his guests. Martha's superior

position is marked by the on-record, non-redressive negative face threatening acts that she uses. George resists with different strategies and degrees till the balance of power changes in the final act which was the straw that broke Martha's back. George hits vehemently at the end. His face threatening acts at the end of the play are not less encroaching than Martha's at the beginning, if not more sarcastic and imposing. The final game proves to be fatal and detrimental to her. Her world collapses, and the final act closes with her pleas and tears of defeat. George's commands and sarcasm in the final act mark the ultimate reverse of power since he becomes the dominant figure issuing commands to a yielding and deferential Martha.

This discourse model of politeness has allowed the researcher to mark the development of the two characters Martha and George, analyze the changes and the nature of communication between both characters, and probe into the complexities underlying their verbal utterances. Analyzing the play through this discourse model has also highlighted the shifting nature of the power structures and games that govern human relationships. Language embodies these structures; and the choice of certain politeness strategies is not arbitrary, it is rather governed by well-defined contexts i.e. the type of the relationship between the two interlocutors, their psychological motivations, and the goals that each interlocutor tries to achieve through communication.

Looking at literary texts from the lens of this discourse model gives instructors and students a focal point. Characters' motivations and development are not easy concepts for students to discuss, grasp and write about. The task may seem to them challenging and overwhelming. However, providing them with such a discourse model through which they can observe the characters, mark the changes that happen in the characters' interactions, analyze the motivations and goals behind these changes would help students focus on relevant aspects and key moments in the literary work; and turn the task of understanding and writing about a literary text less daunting. Ultimately, students will also realize the vital complementary relationship that exists between linguistics and literature on the one hand, and language and social relations on the other.

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أساليب التخاطب المؤدب ومفهوم الهيمنة في مسرحية " من الذي يخاف من فيرجينيا وولف"

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ملخص

تطبق هذه الدراسة نموذج التخاطب المؤدب الذي طوره براون و ليفنسون وذلك لتحديد أساليب الأدب في التخاطب التي تستعملها شخصيات المسرحية. وتهدف الدراسة إلى تحديد كيفية استخدام نموذج تحليل الخطاب في تحليل اللغة الأدبية المستعملة في المسرحية. وباختصار تحاول الدراسة الإجابة عن الأسئلة الآتية:

1. ما هي أساليب الخطاب المؤدب السلبية التي يستخدمها المشاركون في المسرحية؟
2. ما هي الصيغ اللغوية المستعملة في تحقيق هذه الأساليب؟
3. كيف تساعد هذه الأساليب في فهم تطور العلاقات بين شخصيات المسرحية؟
4. كيف تكشف هذه الأساليب عن درجة الهيمنة بين شخصيات القصة؟

وخلصت الدراسة إلى الإقرار بوجود نظام معقد ودقيق يحكم العلاقة بين اللغة والعلاقات الاجتماعية ومفهوم السلطة.

Women's Quest for Identity in Tennessee Williams

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Received on : 04-10-2009

Accepted on : 10-05-2010

Abstract

American woman's struggle for a better representation of her identity has never been easy. Her claim to an independent self, even after the patriarchal system in the Northern American society gave way to a more liberal gender representation early in the twentieth century, remained subjected to her relationship with man. However, in the decades that followed, echoes of woman's yearning for recognition were heard in the writings of many American dramatists, such as Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, and Tennessee Williams. This study aims at analyzing how Tennessee Williams demonstrates in his plays the means by which his female protagonists realize an inner power that helps them achieve an identity of their own. The study focuses its analysis on the role assigned to Hannah Jelkes, the major female character in The Night of the Iguana