

# Accessing Text through Context: Padding Conversational Gaps in the Glass Menagerie and a Raisin in the Sun

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## Abstract

In natural conversation, people do not talk in sentences; fragmented speeches, slips of the tongue and repetition are common features of natural talk. In modern drama, the playwrights manipulate such techniques so that their texts will be close to audience or readers as much as possible. To understand this messy talk, people depend on personal context and cognitive context. Simpson (2004) clarifies that dialogue occurs in context and he divides context into three types: physical context, the actual setting in which interaction takes place; personal context, refers to the social and personal relationships of the interactants to one another, and cognitive context which refers to the shared and background knowledge held by participants in interaction. It is true that any interaction is affected by these three aspects of context at various rates, but the aim of this paper is to highlight the role of personal and cognitive contexts in making characters or members of a family understand each other though a good part of the utterances is remained unsaid, and how the audience or readers can get benefit from the same contexts to understand the relationship between the characters and the familial issues. The analysis will be conducted according to the basic tenets of critical discourse analysis to explore the literary and linguistic devices used by the authors to make dialogues in their plays understood. To achieve the aims of the research, some extracts will be selected from *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams and *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry.

**Keywords:** personal context, cognitive context, *The Glass Menagerie*, *A Raisin in the Sun*

## 1. Introduction

Though the general function of discourse analysis is to study the messy talk that occurs between people in a natural contact, its principles can be used to analyze dramatic dialogues. Of course, the dialogue that occurs between characters in a play is different from natural conversation, yet they share some important features, especially dialogue in modern drama. Modern playwrights try to be natural in their dialogues as much as they can and they depend on a language used in everyday conversation. The use of everyday language and naturally occurring talks are among the characteristics of modern drama.

Sanger (2001:34)

As well as attempting to make their dialogue sound more real by replicating some features of conversation, such as short utterances, ellipsis and informal language, some playwrights have gone a stage further and attempted to replicate – or, at least, suggest – some of the features of a regional or ethnic dialect.

According to Sanger, some playwrights do their best to make their dialogues look like everyday conversation, and to achieve this aim, they write the dialogues using a language which is specific to a certain group of people. For instance, Hansberry in *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) reproduces the language mainly spoken by African Americans, and Pinter is also very much known for having a sharp ear to record people's talks and reproduce them on stage realistically. Thus, this paper will explore some extracts from modern drama to explain how cognitive context help people understand each other while conversing.

## 2. Methodology

Discourse analysts who are concerned with analyzing language use in context also deploy the analogy of sentence structure and its internal constituents (such as subject, verb, object, or noun) since elements above the level of the sentence contain similar structures. Stylisticians apply discourse analysis as a modern approach to textual analysis because they believe that the meanings in dramatic dialogue cannot be detected through explaining or interpreting single words or sentences. The characters, while talking, discuss a subject matter by utilizing words or sentences which form a broader situation, discourse, in which the meaning is complete and can be explored. So, discourse analysts deal with dialogue at various levels in diverse situations, and they manipulate techniques of discourse analysis in analyzing dramatic dialogue because traditional textual analysis cannot penetrate deeply into drama texts to find out the implied meanings.

Carter and Simpson (1989:135)

As drama dialogue conveys implied meanings which go beyond the literal meanings of the words the characters speak, then the model of analysis should be one which can account for these implied meanings. Where traditional textual analysis has failed in this respect, a discourse-oriented approach can succeed, as it focuses on the text as communication within a set of linguistic and non-linguistic

conventions.

According to the views presented above, the best way to understand dramatic dialogue is to analyze the utterances which are related to areas of 'language-in-use'. This means that the speeches must be studied in the context of use. Simpson's division connotes that physical context, personal context and cognitive context affect the course of the dialogues, the language used and the psychological condition of the characters. Because of the knowledge they share and because of their background information, speakers understand the implied meanings, the meanings which are not directly said; they use short sentences and figurative language and they repeat and stress certain parts of sentences or phrases. These features are also manipulated by characters in modern drama so that their speeches seem to be the replication of natural talk. Whether it is natural dialogue or a communication between two interlocutors in a play, the speakers must share some background knowledge so as to understand each other because in conversations the speakers do not always say everything and thus they depend on the background knowledge to complete the thoughts which are left unexpressed in the sentences for certain purposes.

### 3. Accessing text through padding the conversational gaps in *The Glass Menagerie*

In dramatic dialogue, the unfinished or incomplete thoughts are significant for the audience to understand the relationship between the characters and also to understand their psychological condition. In this extract, taken from *The Glass Menagerie* (1945) by Tennessee Williams, the conversation takes place between Amanda, the mother, and her children, Tom and Laura.

#### Text 1

AMANDA [crossing out to the kitchenette, airily]: sometimes they come when they are least expected! Why, I remember one Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain—

[She enters the kitchenette.]

TOM: I know what's coming!

LAURA: Yes. But let her tell it.

TOM: Again?

LAURA: She loves to tell it.

(Williams: P. 7)

Amanda asks her daughter, Laura, to take care of herself and to be ready since a gentleman caller, a suitor, may visit them at any time, but Laura does not pay attention because she does not expect any gentleman caller and even she does not think about it. The mother understands her daughter's disappointment, but she still attempts to give her a hope. Amanda starts talking about her past experience, but her turn (utterance) ends with an {-Em} dash as she enters the kitchen. Williams exploits this pause to give a chance to the audience to think about what happened in Blue Mountain. The author does not say everything at once so that he can make the audience think, and even he makes them wait longer when Tom and Laura exchange their views about their mother's story but using pronouns only.

Amanda's going out to the kitchenette gives a chance to her children to talk because the cognitive context, the familial relationship, and the personal context help Tom and Laura to comprehend what Amanda wants to say, but the audience still have no idea about Amanda's past since the speakers use (em dash, what and it). Tom says (I know what is coming!) and Laura adds (yes). Although they use pronouns (what, it) when they refer to their mother's story, they understand each other because they are members of one family and their mother has told her story several times before and Tom's utterance (again?) and Laura's (she loves to tell it) support this view. The story is left untold and this is a gap for the audience. In order to access the text, they need to know what the (**em dash, what and it**) in the dialogue stand for. When Amanda returns, she continues her utterance and tells her story about the seventeen gentleman caller who visited her house just in one day. This story replaces the em dash in Amanda's first turn, but it has no value for her children since they already know every bit of it and they also know that returning to that past is not more than escaping from the current reality which is horrible. The information pads the gaps and the audience gets the knowledge needed to complete the dialogue, but actually it does not create any hope for Laura as she cannot be like her mother; she is crippled.

The story is important for Amanda herself through which she escapes from her current conditions and goes back to the happiest days of her life. It is also crucial for the audience as they see that Amanda is not satisfied with her present life because her husband has left her and now she has to take care of the family. Laura knows that the story will change nothing, but she still tells her brother (let her tell it), because she is conscious that the only thing which makes her mother happy at this moment is her past memories.

Mr. Wingfield left his family, but who takes the responsibility of the family is the point of struggle and dispute between Amanda and Tom. Tom is the bread winner, but the mother does not grant him the authority to run the family because she still believes that Mr. Wingfield is the head of the family. She has still kept his picture hanged on the wall and she does not allow Tom to criticize him. The second excerpt between Amanda and Tom shows this fact. Although they do not mention his name, Amanda understands Tom's sarcastic

statements and she comprehends Tom's point even though he does not use any specific rude words against his absent father. Again the personal and cognitive contexts play a great role in making the meanings of the utterances clear and in assisting the audience/readers to know Amanda's view regarding a man who has left her. The conversation also reveals the poor relationship between the family members and how the family is collapsing.

### Text 2

TOM: What in Christ's name am I—

AMANDA [shrilly]: Don't you use that—

TOM: — supposed to do!

AMANDA: — expression! Not in my—

TOM: Ohhh!

AMANDA: —presence! Have you gone out of your senses?

TOM: I have, that's true, *driven* out!

AMANDA: What is the matter with you, you— big—big—IDIOT!

TOM: Look! I've got *no thing*, no single thing—

AMANDA: Lower your voice!

TOM: —in my life here that I can call my OWN! Everything is—

AMANDA: Stop that shouting!

TOM: Yesterday you confiscated my books! You had the nerve to—

AMANDA: I took that horrible novel back to the library—yes! That hideous book by that insane Mr. Lawrence.

[Tom laughs wildly.]

I cannot control the output of diseased minds or people who cater to them—

[Tom laughs still more wildly.]

BUT I WON'T ALLOW SUCH FILTH BROUGHT INTO MY HOUSE! No, no, no, no, no!

To: House, house! Who pays rent on it, who makes a slave of himself to—

AMANDA [fairly screeching]: Don't you DARE to—

TOM: No, no, I mustn't say things! I've got to just—

AMANDA: Let me tell you—

TOM: I don't want to hear any more!

(Williams: P. 20-22)

Amanda and Tom are quarreling behind the door curtain. This is not the first time that they quarrel; they have argued several times about Tom's behaviors especially going to the movies and smoking. But this extract shows that the issue is more serious. In the beginning of Scene Three, Tom as the narrator of the story states that the family needs some extra money in spring to meet some needs. This issue stimulates the quarrel but it goes too far. Tom starts the argument with a rhetorical question. As Black (2006:27) points out, rhetorical questions often generate implicatures, and tend to involve the maxim of manner. Tom works in a warehouse, but here he implies that he cannot earn enough and his utterance shows his inability to get a well-paid job. He flouts the maxim of manner, but to make his mother understand this fact, he ends the question with an exclamation mark (!). Amanda understands the illocutionary act and thus she does not comment on his utterance, but she gets irritated at mentioning Christ's name.

Amanda does not answer the question since it is not a real question, but the expression (Christ's name) draws her into a discourse. As Fowler (1981) states, "any question has the effect of drawing the reader into the discourse" (qtd. in Black 2006, 42). In the extract, Amanda takes nine turns. Actually, the first triple can be regarded as one turn since in the second and third turns she only continues which she starts in the first turn. She is interrupted twice, so she needs to take three turns to complete her utterance. Anyhow, Amanda applies the speech act of directives eight times (five direct orders, a rhetorical question, a forbidding, and an overlapped assertive). Amanda always tells Tom how to eat, how to behave, how to dress and so on. Though Tom is fed up with such rude instructions and tough rules of his mother, Amanda continues on giving her instructions. The point which can be concluded from her persistence is that she wants to show her children that departure of Mr. Wingfield, she is the head of the family and she is responsible for organizing and leading its members. This dialogue shows this fact and indicates how Amanda tries to control her son, Tom.

In his first turn (what am I .....), Tom obviously expresses his repugnance to his financial condition and familial situation, but Amanda interrupts him since he utters the word Christ. In a western Judeo-Christian society, taking the name of Jesus in vain is guilt and it is offensive. Amanda's reaction is fierce (Don't use ...), and she orders her son not to use the expression (Jesus name) again. Searle (1975:355) argues that directives are "attempts of varying degrees; the attempt may be very modest when the speaker invites the hearer to do something or may be fierce if he insists that the hearer does the action. The propositional content is always that the hearer does some future action". The speech act represents her want and to achieve the aim she utters the illocutionary act forcefully; she shrills, uses direct order and uses 'you' for emphasis, but Tom does not care

about her reaction and interrupts her taking another turn to complete his first utterance.

Amanda is not satisfied with the perlocutionary act (the effect of her utterance and Tom's reaction); therefore, she takes the second turn to finish her utterance. She completes her utterance when she utters (expression), but to give more force to her order she adds (Not in my—). Again Tom interposes yelling (Ohhh!). Tom's reaction is related to the personal and cognitive contexts. Amanda's last word in the utterance is the first possessive pronoun "my". Depending on the personal relationship and the background knowledge they share, Tom feels that assumes that his mother tries to say "My house". This assumption is the outcome of Amanda's domineering behaviour who always criticizes Tom and shows that she takes care of him and the family. When the father is absent, the mother feels that she is the head of the family and this raises troubles between the mother and the son, particularly. A similar situation can be seen perceived in *A Raisin in the Sun*. The father (Big Walter) is dead and the mother (Mama) feels that she has the right to decide how to spend the insurance money and it creates problems between her and her son, Walter. Also when, Beneatha, the daughter, denies the existence of God, Mama obliges her to say "in my mother's house there is still God. A long pause" (Act I, Scene I; Pp. 51). We notice that Mama also uses (my house). It seems that after the father, the mother takes care of the family; thus Tom believes that his mother wants to say (Not in my house!). After the interruption, Amanda takes another turn and finishes her sentence, but instead of (house), she utters (presence). This word does not change the fact that Amanda exerts power because in her seventh turn, she says "MY HOUSE" and the whole sentence is in bald letters. In her third turn, she does not use (house) lest she should further upset Tom.

Amanda's bossy talks continue. In the third turn, she utilizes another speech act of directives in the form of rhetorical question (Have you gone out of your senses?). She uses this rude expression to calm down Tom, but she fails since Tom answers the rhetorical question in the same tone (I have...). In this turn, the author draws reader's attention to the word (*driven*) and it is italicized. Tom has his reasons to lose his mind. Though he does not directly say anything now, his father's disappearance, his family's financial crisis and obliterating his dreams are among the main reasons. Amanda comprehends this remark; she knows that it is difficult for Tom to carry the burden of the family, but she hides the feeling because she is afraid of losing him too. Amanda tries to lessen the effect of the situation on her son and to show that he does need to be so bored, she takes another turn. In fourth turn, she utters another rude expression (What is the matter....) which ends with an insolent word (IDIOT) and an exclamation mark. She states the sentence in anger as she does not want him to feel depressed while at home because growing such feelings in Tom's mind may have bad consequences. Amanda knows that Tom's going to the movie every night indicates his misery and later in Chapter Four, she tells him that his sister Laura feels that he is not happy at home and she is afraid that he will also leave home, as his father did.

Tom understands his mother's concern, but he gives justification for being bored. He emphatically states that he has nothing (I've got *no thing*...). He could have used the pronoun (nothing), but splitting the pronoun into two independent words shows that Tom states each syllable forcefully and both of the syllables are stressed so that his mother will understand his condition, both financially and psychologically. He repeats the utterance and gives it more force (no single thing). It seems that Tom raised his voice when he uttered (*no thing*); therefore, Amanda tells him not to shout. Amanda sharply interrupts him and orders him (lower your voice!). The tone indicates Tom's feelings, but Amanda focuses on the tone not on the feeling since she attempts to quench the feeling and end the argument here or at least moderate it. Amanda exerts power to control the argument and to achieve this aim she exploits familial relationship because she is the mother and the head of the family, but Tom does not listen and takes another turn to complete his broken utterance.

Tom continues; he believes that he has to pour out what is in his heart; he cannot hide his feelings anymore; time passes and the idea of aging without having anything of his OWN makes him more wretched. In his sixth turn, Tom complains that he cannot do anything in the house (my life here...) and he does not feel free at all. Using the adverb (here) indicates that Tom has the intention to leave the house because he believes that he can find freedom and find himself somewhere outside this house. Amanda cannot stand Tom's continuous nagging and thus she interrupts him once again. As usual, she commands him to calm down. Till now she only gives orders and does not comment on Tom's utterances since she may find some truth in his speeches.

Amanda's seventh turn obviously shows how she exerts power and how she wants to control everything in the house. Tom explains that he has no privacy and even he is not allowed to read the books he likes. Mentioning the word (books) upsets Amanda and it gives her an opportunity to insistently proclaim her authority in the house (BUT I WON'T ALLOW SUCH FILTH BROUGHT INTO MY HOUSE! No, no, no, no, no!). In this turn, Amanda uses the speech act of assertive, but it overlaps and becomes directive through which she indirectly warns Tom not to bring such kind of books into her house. The utterance contains some signs which assert her power. She feels no regret for taking back Lawrence's novel to the library (...to the library—yes!); the last sentence starts with (BUT) and the words are in bald letters to emphasize her strong objection to the (FILTH) caused by those books; the words (NOT ALLOW, MY HOUSE) and repeating (no) five times display her absolutism.

Tom cannot endure this marginalization any more. After his father left the family, Tom earns the living,

but he could not replace his father in leading the family. He takes a turn to react against his mother's tyrannical speeches and behaviors, but he only focuses on (house) as a symbol of power; the one who owns the house is the one who has power. Amanda says (my house) and Tom wants to pull the power of her hands; therefore, he gives some reasons to legitimize his authority in the house such as paying the rent. Tom's utterance contains two rhetorical questions starting with "who". Tom's utterance is sarcastic. By using the pronoun (who), he clearly refers to his father who was supposed to carry the burden. He indirectly blames his father, but the cognitive context helps his mother to understand him very well. Amanda cannot endure this insolent remark; therefore, she vigorously orders Tom not to affront his father. Although the word father or Wingfield is not mentioned in the utterances, Amanda's antiphon displays her objection of any rude words against her husband. The phrase (don't you DARE), especially when dare is totally capitalized, is not a normal order but it is a threat. In fact, Amanda does not complete her sentence, but Tom apprehends her and thus he interrupts her. Mother and son say what they want and thus they do not care about each other's concerns and needs.

The conversation is between mother and son and the cognitive and personal contexts play a great role in making the meanings clear. In most of the turns, they interrupt each other and they do not pay attention to the surface meaning of the utterances, but their reactions are related to the implied meanings. They flout the maxims of manner; in other words, they do not state their ideas briefly and clearly, but the personal relationships and the background knowledge they have about each other help them grasp the hidden meanings. The speeches of the characters are mainly affected by the personal and cognitive contexts and thus they are also significant for the audience or readers because through analyzing the utterances they can access the text; they can decode the meanings inserted into the speeches.

#### 4. Accessing text through padding the conversational gaps in *A Raisin in the Sun*

The first extract which is taken from the play is an argument between Walter, husband, and Ruth, Wife. The topic is about the insurance money that the family expects after the death of Big Walter. Walter needs the money to invest in a liquor store, but this idea is rejected by other members of the family, especially Mama, Walter's mother, who believes that it is against her religious beliefs. Walter needs his wife's support to get the money. He knows Mama loves Ruth so much and thus he asks her to exploit this point to convince Mama to give him the money. The family members know the check will come on Saturday, but Walter starts this argument today, Friday morning. At the very beginning of the play Walter asks Ruth whether "the check is coming today". He asks this question to drag Ruth into a conversation because Walter has got only one day to persuade his mother to give him the money.

Ruth cannot help her husband get the money since the money belongs to Mama and she does not want to force her or to exploit her love. Besides she also does not like the idea of the liquor store because Walter intends to go into business with his friends, Willy Harris and Bobo, and no one in the family trusts Willy and even Ruth calls him a "good-for-nothing loudmouth". This extract is part of the interaction which occurs between Ruth and Walter at the beginning of the play (Act 1, Scene 1) after Ruth refuses to help Walter get the money. The utterances or the manner of speaking in the dialogue clearly show that the husband and the wife pass through a very difficult time. They indirectly hint at several critical issues, but the personal and cognitive contexts help them decode the embedded messages.

##### Text 3

Ruth (Softly) Walter, that ain't none of our money.

Walter (*Not listening at all or even looking at her*) This morning, I was lookin' in the mirror and thinking about it...I'm thirty-five years old; I been married eleven years and I got a boy who sleeps in the living room—(*Very, very quietly*)—and all I got to give him is stories about how rich white people live...

Ruth Eat your eggs, Walter.

Walter (*Slams the table and jumps up*)—DAMN MY EGGS—DAMN ALL THE EGGS THAT EVER WAS!

Ruth Then go to work.

Walter (*Looking up at her*) See—I'm trying to talk to you 'bout myself—(*Shaking his head with the repetition*)—and all you can say is eat them eggs and go to work.

Ruth (*Wearily*) Honey, you never say nothing new. I listen to you every day, every night and every morning, and you never say nothing new. (*Shrugging*) So you would rather be Mr. Arnold than *be* his chauffeur. So—I would *rather* be living in Buckingham palace.

Walter That is just what is wrong with the colored woman in this world...Don't understand about building their men up and making 'em feel like they somebody. Like they can do something.

Ruth (*Drily, but to hurt*) There are colored men who do things.

Walter No thanks to the colored woman.

Ruth Well, being a colored woman, I guess I can't help myself none.

(*She rises and gets the ironing board and sets it up and attacks a huge pile of rough-dried clothes, sprinkling them in preparation for the ironing and then rolling them into tight fat balls*)

Walter (*Mumbling*) We one group of men tied to a race of women with small minds.

(Hansberry: P. 34-35)

Philosopher H. P. Grice in "Logic and Conversation" (1975) states that when two people converse, they want to co-operate to achieve their aims and they abide by cooperative principle and its regulative conventions. In this sense, the participants of a conversation try to cooperate with each other so that the communication will continue until the aims of the interaction are achieved. This is a general rule which can be considered for a dialogue in which the participants have mutual interests and enjoy the interaction. In face-to-face communication, the talks will not always go smoothly; therefore, Grice's cooperative principle cannot rule the turns. Lack of cooperation will dominate the communication if the interactants do not have the same concern or interest as it is clearly seen in this conversation. Lack of cooperation or flouting the cooperative principles and the associated maxims is quiet apparent at the beginning of the interaction. The characters say what they want not what the cooperative principles require.

In her first turn, Ruth is determined not to ask Mama for the money and she refuses her husband's request indirectly to avoid clashes with him. Instead of saying "I do not ask Mama for the money", for instance, she expresses the refusal by focusing on the fact that the money does not belong to them. Although she uses two negatives, the sentence still has a negative function. In Standard English double negatives is no allowed and the utterance becomes positive, but in Black English it is common. Green (2002:77) argues that "a traditional prescriptive 'rule' in general American English states that 'double' negatives are not grammatical because they make a positive. The formula multiplying two negatives yields a positive does not work for AAE". Ruth uses the double negatives to emphasize that she cannot help Walter get the money, and the personal and cognitive contexts make it easy for Walter to comprehend her point.

Ruth succeeds in delivering the message, but Walter attempts to find another strategy to persuade his wife since he terribly needs the money.

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1983: 24) state:

If the listener does not accept what has been said, he can indicate the necessity of problemization by expressing his doubts or issuing refutations, and the speaker (assuming that he wishes to stand by his words) will attempt to justify or defend what he has said, so that in principle a problemizing dialogue develops.

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst's 1983 comment clarifies that if the addresser cannot satisfy the addressee, when his turn comes, the addressee opposes the addresser and the same procedure is repeated in each turn. Ruth does not agree with Walter in opening the liquor store and thus she gives justification for not asking for the money (Ruth 1). She knows Walter does not like her views and opinions; therefore, she tries to be calm so that the situation remains under control (softly). Ruth makes the move to avoid troubles with her husband and also to persuade Walter not to talk to her about that issue, but she fails since Walter does not like Ruth's justification and thus he ignores her opinion (*Not listening at all or even looking at her*) and tries to attract her attention to the reality of their condition (Walter 1).

Ruth does not achieve her aim because Walter does not cooperate with her and tries to persuade Ruth to tell Mama to give him the money and in several points he gives reasons to make his request justifiable (I'm thirty-five years old, I got a boy who sleeps in the living room, stories about how rich white people live). In his utterance, Walter directly talks about himself and his inability to provide his son with a luxurious life. He uses the pronoun "I" four times without giving a hint about Ruth to show that providing the family needs is his responsibility. He applies this style to indicate that he feels depressed when he cannot financially guarantee the future of his family; therefore, he tries to exploit this chance to fulfill his dreams. This long and multidimensional utterance is answered by a very brief advice which makes Walter lose his temper. Ruth cannot deny the truth of her husband's speech about the terrible condition of the family, but she believes that going into business by using Mama's money is not a sound solution for this crisis; therefore, she produces an imperative sentence in order not to be affected emotionally and to oblige Walter to change the topic (Ruth 2), but she does not achieve this perlocutionary effect. Ruth advises Walter to have his breakfast. The utterance is short, but it is rich in information. Ruth flouts all the conversational maxims here and thus she makes a daring move to change the topic as she is helpless. The personal and cognitive contexts help Walter immediately grasp the implied meaning and understand that Ruth's imperative sentence is not only an advice but it is also a request to end the argument, but he refuses.

Walter's uncooperativeness becomes apparent in his second turn (Walter 2) when he shouts at her and curses the black people and the entire race of human being. He uses "egg" metaphorically and deploys the word "damn" twice to express disappointment and disgust over his race both as a human being and as a black man. First of all, the sentences are written in capital letters and the speech ends with an exclamation mark. These two features certainly draw the attention of the reader. The second point to be made about this speech is that it consists of two sentences and the meaning of the first sentences depends on the meaning of the second sentence. Both of the sentences have "eggs" as an object. If Walter only utters the first sentence "DAMN MY EGGS", the

word ‘eggs’ may refer to the eggs served by Ruth for breakfast, but the second sentence invalidates this possibility because Walter does not talk about himself alone. He rather hints at humanity and this assumption clarifies that the word “egg” in the first sentence is related to his race as a black man. This possibility sounds satisfactory because Walter has many social and financial problems and he associates them with his race, being black.

Ruth is certainly hurt, but she never expresses her anger openly in this manner. She stands against Walter by not paying attention to his anger and also by not cooperating with him. Again Ruth utilizes an imperative form to reduce the stress of Walter’s utterance and to make another attempt to end the dispute (Ruth 3). Ruth gives Walter another alternative (go to work). She believes that it is better for Walter to “have his breakfast” and “go to work” than arguing with her in vain. Ruth makes a link between her previous turn (eat...) and her new move (go...) by “then”. She implies that if Walter does not want to have his breakfast, then he must go to work. She utilizes this strategy to calm down Walter and to escape the argument as she has nothing else to say and she is not interested in the discussion at all. Walter gets annoyed at this utterance and clearly expresses that there is no cooperation between them at all because there is no harmony between their utterances and aims (Walter 3). Walter talks about “his dreams”, but Ruth tells him to “have breakfast and go to work”.

Walter realizes that talking in a wild or vehement way will not compel Ruth to change her mind. Consequently, he uses another strategy to persuade her to ask Mama for the money (Walter 3). He criticizes her for ignoring him and he tries to exploit the relative relationship (husband and wife) to achieve his aims, but he again fails as Ruth is fed up with this redundancy (Ruth 4). She wants to calm down the conversation and reduce the tensions by utilizing a word love “honey”, but it does not work because she still refuses to cooperate and what Walter needs now is cooperation to get the money not a love word. Walter’s problem is financial not emotional. Ruth performs this speech act to persuade him to stop dreaming and pay attention to his work, but her advice is answered rudely. Walter accuses all black women for not cooperating with their men (Walter 4), and belittles black women several times (Don’t understand .....make them feel....No thanks .....small minds) in this utterance and in his coming turns.

The conflict between Walter and Ruth surpasses the limits of a single family (husband and wife) and it becomes a gender conflict. Even the direction of the dialogue will change from attempts to persuade each other to conflicts to belittle and insult each other. Walter disparages the role of black women in family affairs. In this case, he violates the quality maxim several times and comments about the black women are not true because Ruth and Mama are two living examples who have made many sacrifices for their families. Maybe the effects of Walter’s insults are hard on Ruth. That’s why she reacts, but she does not generalize her criticism and she just puts the blame on Walter himself that he is not financially successful (Ruth 5). She implies that Walter is responsible for improving the socioeconomic status of the family. Ruth’s sarcastic remark coincides with her speech in her previous turn (Ruth 4) in which she tells her husband that he just talks about business without doing anything and words without action is useless, and that’s why she does not want to listen to him.

Cook (1994) notes that the maxims are regularly broken in quarrels, when we are repetitive, irrelevant and probably do not pay much attention to the truth (Black 2006:31). According to this view, flouting the conversational maxims and violating the cooperative principles in the extract are inevitable because Walter and Ruth are fighting. They violate the conversational maxims 27 times and use insulting words or sentences to attack each other. This lack of cooperation occurs since the aims of the interlocutors are different. The uncooperativeness takes various forms. It starts with rejecting each other’s requests (turns 1 & 2); then the characters criticize and reprove each other (turns 3 & 4) and finally they perform verbal attacks and severely insult each other (turns 5 & 6). The interlocutors use language in different forms, but in the whole dialogue one thing is repeated “lack of cooperation”. Ruth exploits her turns to show that she does not ask Mama for the money and Walter deploys diverse forms to persuade or even to compel her to submit to his will.

The occurrence of conflicts, misbehavior and manipulating abuse terms in a conversation between Walter and Ruth mark the dysfunctional family. The husband and the wife do not try to understand each other, but on the contrary they ridicule one another. Walter calls Ruth small-minded (Walter 6) and Ruth emphatically expresses that Walter is feeble and cannot carry out his duties as the head of the family. This animosity distances the husband and the wife from each other and causes discordance between them. This irrelevancy shows that there is a wide gap between the husband and the wife and there is no understanding between them. The interaction does not have a certain communicative end because the aims of the interlocutors are different. Thus the husband and the wife do not cooperate with each and consequently conflicts erupt between them. Readers/audience should pay attention to the language used in the conversation because the interactants imply the meanings instead of directly talking about their aims; thusly the linguistic features fill up the conversational gaps.

In *Logic and Conversation* (1975), Grice makes a general distinction between what is said by a speaker and what he means or implicates. In this extract, mother, Mama, and son, Walter, argue about crucial issues, albeit indirectly. They say something, but they mean something else. The personal and cognitive contexts build a

bridge between the two aspects of the utterances and thus they understand each other, but it does not mean that they are cooperative. In *A Raisin in the Sun*, the main discordance is between Mama, mother, and Walter, Son, because of the differences in their viewpoints toward life in the capitalistic society of America. Walter's problem with his mother is over masculinity and social status. After the death of Big Walter, his son, Walter Lee Younger, was supposed to be the head of the family, but he could not. Maybe it is because he does not earn enough to take this responsibility. Instead of Walter, now Mama runs the affairs of the family. Walter believes that he must be able to make a lot of money to regain his confidence and his power. He thinks that if he has money, he can run the affairs of the family and people will look at him with respect.

#### Text 4

WALTER Did it come?

MAMA (*Quietly*) Can't you give people a Christian greeting before you start asking about money?

WALTER (*To Ruth*) Did it come? (*RUTH unfolds the check and lays it quietly before him, watching him intently with thoughts of her own. WALTER sits down and grasps it close and counts off the zeros*) Ten thousand dollars—(*He turns suddenly, frantically to his mother and draws some papers out of his breast pocket*) Mama—look. Old Willy Harris put everything on paper—

MAMA Son—I think you ought to talk to your wife...I'll go out and leave you alone if you want—

WALTER I can talk to her later—Mama, look—

MAMA Son—

WALTER WILL SOMEBODY PLEASE LISTEN TO ME TODAY!

MAMA (*Quietly*) I don't 'low no yellin' in this house, Walter Lee, and you know it— (*WALTER stares at them in frustration and starts to speak several times*) And there ain't going to be no investing in no liquor stores.

WALTER But, Mama, you ain't even looked at it.

MAMA I don't aim to have to speak on that again.

(*A long pause*)

WALTER You ain't looked at it and you don't aim to have to speak on that again? You ain't even looked at it and you have decided—(*Crumpling his papers*) Well, you tell that to my boy tonight when you put him to sleep on the living-room couch...(*Turning to MAMA and speaking directly to her*) Yeah—and tell it to my wife, Mama, tomorrow when she has to go out of here to look after somebody else's kids. And tell it to me, Mama, every time we need a new pair of curtains and I have to watch you go out and work in somebody's kitchen. Yeah, you tell me then!

(*WALTER starts out*)

(Hansberry: P. 70-71)

The mailman is supposed to arrive at 10:30 and Walter has gone out to get the papers related to opening the liquor store. When he comes back, it is after ten thirty; hence, he rushes into the living room and directly enquires whether the check has arrived (Walter 1). Walter starts speaking without making any stereotypical remark to show his intention to open a conversation. In other words, he does not abide by the routine aspect of interaction which is known as phatic communion.

Simpson (1989: 42)

In general, phatic communion is taken to mean the kind of ritualistic linguistic behaviour which characterizes the beginnings and endings of conversations. This normally includes the formulaic gambits of greeting and parting (for example, 'Hello', 'Good morning'), along with a set of stereotypical remarks concerning the weather.

According to Simpson 1989, when someone wants to start a conversation, he or she needs to use some expressions to mark the intentions. Simpson explains that Malinowski (1972:151) actually coined the term in the 1920s and he defined phatic communion as "a type of speech in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words" (Ibid). Malinowski's definition clarifies that by using such tokens like "Hello", "Good morning" and some others, the speaker carries out a social function because the remarks carry out a social function and will become a bridge between the two participants to unite them in a communication. Speakers will not or cannot follow this system every time and the feedbacks they receive may be unfavorable and interaction may not occur as they wish. This happens in this dialogue between Walter and Mama.

In this interaction, Walter talks about money and his liquor store and Mama hints at Ruth's pregnancy and her decision to do abortion. Although Ruth's case mainly concerns Walter, it can be said that these two issues are not related because Walter does not care about anything except his liquor store and the insurance money. The interactants adamantly try to achieve their aims which are contradictory to each other; therefore, cooperation between them will never occur. The discordance between the mother and the son becomes quite apparent as they speak against each. The conflict between Mama and Walter is not simply over opening or not opening a liquor store, but in fact it is a struggle to achieve their dreams. In other words, it is an encounter between two contradictory views about pride and dignity. The tensions arise between them because they cannot achieve their aims concurrently. If Walter opens the store, Mama's dream to have a house of their own will not come true; if Mama insists on buying the house, Walter should forget about going into business and raising his

social status. Because of these reasons, they will not cooperate with each other at all.

In his first turn, Walter asks a brief and clear question. Although it is his first utterance and he uses the pronoun “it” as the subject of the utterance, the personal and cognitive contexts help Mama and Ruth understand what he wants. However, they do not cooperate with him and thus he receives no answer because he violates the quality and relation maxims. He rushes into the house, interrupts Mama and Ruth’s argument about the abortionist and directly asks a question which is inconsistent with the preceding discourse. He is supposed to salute them then start the interaction, but he ignores this social convention and he addresses the question to those who are there, but no one replies since his behavior is not normal. Instead, he is reprimanded by Mama (Can’t you give people a Christian greeting ...) because he does not show respect to those who are present in the living room (Mama 1). Mama flouts the four conversational maxims to react against Walter’s impolite behavior and to show him that there are other things which are more important than talking about money.

Walter thinks only of the money; therefore, he does not care about his mother’s criticism and in the second utterance he repeats his question addressing his wife. Walter again shows no respect and direct the question in the same tone, but this time the addressee is his wife. Walter exploits relative power to get his answer, but still his direct request (Did it come?) is regarded rude; therefore, Ruth (quietly) lays the check before him without uttering a word (watching him intently with thoughts of her own). Walter receives his answer and he is excited, but it does not guarantee full cooperation from his family. He needs to get the money and to achieve this purpose; he has to make a daring step which is convincing his mother to bestow him the sum. He is so excited about the money that he does not know how to behave (He turns suddenly, frantically to his mother) and thus he articulates an utterance which has nothing to do with Mama’s criticism. Walter violates the four conversational maxims of quantity, quality, manner and relation since he cannot directly tell his mother to give him the money. His utterance contains no sufficient information and this feature allows Mama to decline Walter’s request to look at the papers although she comprehends his purpose. He avoids mentioning the money and the liquor store to draw Mama’s attention to his concerns without annoying her, but he fails.

Walter again faces an uncooperative reaction from his mother because he talks about an undesired subject; a topic which Mama does not like at all. Mama ignores Walter’s request and again flouts the Gricean maxims (Son—I think...). Mama does not want to cooperate with Walter, but she also tries not to be very rude; therefore, she gently utters a motherly word “Son” and the phrase “I think ...” implies that there is something else more important than his project (Mama 2). Mama uses this strategy to avoid clashes with Walter and to make him understand that she does not give him the money. It is not only Mama who does not cooperate, but Walter also does not cooperate and very easily without any hesitation postpones talking to his wife (Walter 3). Walter observes the maxims in this turn but to show uncooperativeness and to implicate that he does not care about anything except the money. Although Mama flouts the quantity and manner maxims when she does not directly tell Walter about Ruth’s pregnancy and her plan for abortion, he also does not try to understand the implied meaning because money has occupied his mind and he believes that whatever his wife wants to talk about will not be more important than his project. Consequently, after refusing his mother’s request to talk to Ruth, he again asks Mama to look at the documents (Mama—look—). The use of two em dashes successively indicates that Walter is greatly excited and he is not ready to listen to anything not related to his business plan. Consequently, he again flouts the quality and relation maxims because his utterance (Mama—look—) is not consistent with Mama’s request.

Mama feels offended when Walter does not heed to anything except the liquor store, but she does not take it seriously because she knows that Walter does not know about Ruth’s pregnancy and her plan to terminate the baby. Consequently, she makes a move (Son—) to tell him these facts (Mama 3), but she is abruptly interrupted. Although Mama utters only one word (son), Walter realizes that this is a sign of uncooperativeness since Mama used this strategy in her second turn to refuse to look at the papers. Walter’s reaction shows that Mama flouts the conversational maxims and says what she wants not what Walter wants to hear; hence, he interrupts her. Walter does not allow his mother to continue her speech because he already knows she does not speak in his favor. Walter gets upset and this lack of cooperation makes him angry. To express his disgust toward his family’s indifference to his wishes, he shouts (WILL SOMEBODY PLEASE LISTEN TO ME TODAY!). Walter again flouts the conversational maxims and attempts to impose on his family to heed to his desires. He responds to Mama’s uncooperativeness harshly (Walter 4) and uncooperatively; hence, he increases the tensions and this manner of speaking leads the controversy to closure.

Walter shouts to oblige them to heed to what he intends to communicate, but again he fails because Mama cannot endure his behavior (Mama 4) and to end the chaos she authoritatively terminates his dreams (no investing in no liquor stores ...) and again in her coming turn (Mama 5), she reiterates her decision and prevents any future talks about the issue (don’t aim to have to speak on that again). Mama in her fourth turn flouts the manner and relation maxims to compel Walter to control his behavior and to convey the message that she is the head of the family and she has power to decide what should be done, and in the same tone she warns Walter not to speak about the store again (Mama 5). Mama uses power and speaks authoritatively because Walter refuses to

cooperate. In this turn, Mama speaks clearly and observes the conversational maxims except the manner maxim. She thinks that time has come to tell her son that she will not give him the money and she implies the message through talking about the liquor store metaphorically. In other words, the phrase (no investing in no liquor stores) simply means (no money). Mama's utterances indicate that from the very beginning of the dialogue she has realized that her son asks for the money to open the liquor store and she has already made up her mind to refuse the request, but she postpones revealing this decision in order not to be rude to him. At last Walter's dejection provides a suitable ground for Mama to disclose her decision about the investment because announcing her decision in this context will be compatible with Walter's impolite reaction and manner in his fourth turn.

After hearing his mother, Walter feels disappointed. Now he concludes that Mama will not give him the money. This lack of cooperation obliges Walter to end the interaction by blaming and criticizing his mother for not caring about her family and for not supporting Walter to end their financial crisis. Lack of cooperation in the interaction displays that the relationship between the participants will deteriorate and after each turn the distance between them becomes wider. The interlocutors do not care about what each says; hence, violating the maxim of relation is a common phenomenon at the start and in the middle of the conversation because each pole talks about a different issue and they refuse to negotiate their aims or to cooperate. The tone of the conversation becomes sharper toward the end of the interaction because the participants realize that they have to be more direct to make their aims clear. At the beginning, they flouted the maxims and did not want to cooperate mildly, but at the end they observe the maxims but to attack each other violently; therefore, the argument turns into a verbal fight. The discordance between the mother and the son is obvious because they have different dreams and they cannot cooperate with each other since the fulfillment of one's dream depends on abolishing the other's dream and even negotiation is not possible at this stage.

## 5. Conclusion

Researchers can use various devices to penetrate into the meanings that a text may have. In this paper, the main tool is the language used by the characters. Van Dijk (1979) states that interpretation may be formal, i.e., formulated in terms of an explicit (grammatical or logical) semantics, or it may be more subjective in the sense of a hearer/reader assigning some meaning to a discourse. Selecting the extracts is subjective, but the interpretation of the utterances is objective to a great extent since the focus is on the stylistic and linguistic devices.

The characters speak, but they do not say everything; a great part of the meaning is not delivered; therefore, readers or audience need to pay attention to the language the interlocutors use and also to the stylistic devices. In the excerpts taken from *The Glass Menagerie* (1945), the interpretation mainly focuses on the em dashes, interruptions and the pronouns; to comprehend the meanings which are conveyed by the characters in *A Raisin in the Sun*, I concentrated on the implicatures. In both cases, the aim is to fill the gaps which are left by the interlocutors while communicating. The characters are members of a family and they have information about each other's life and needs and they exploit this point to understand each other. The background knowledge the interactants share is also significant for the audience/readers because they can use it to access the text; the meaning delivered by the playwrights.

In these extracts, it is obvious that the authors mainly depend on language to highlight the issues or the topics of the arguments or conversations. The characters do not perform physical attacks to settle their disputes. The dramatists use language to render the familial disintegration and the tensions between the members of the household or simply to talk about a normal case in the family, as it occurs between Tom and Laura. Here critical discourse analysis explores the linguistic and stylistic devices manipulated by the writers through which the characters exchange ideas, impose power on one another, criticize or insult each other and express negative emotions such as anger and hatred, and at the same time to defend themselves and to perform counter attacks. In other words, language in the plays carries out everything whether the meaning is expressed explicitly or implicitly. The study shows that not only words or grammatical structures, but other features such as exclamation marks, hyphens and dots play a great role in manifesting the psychological condition of the interlocutors and the mood of the conversations because these features represent the amount of the information which is not or cannot be uttered due to some reasons, as explained in the analysis. The interpretations illustrate that studying the tenets of critical discourse analysis makes a great contribution to penetrate into texts and grasp the intended meanings.

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