

## Pragmatic Analysis of the Dialogues in Arthur Miller's Drama "The Crucible"

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### Abstract

Ever since its publication in 1953, *The Crucible* has attracted much attention for its tragic theme and vivid characterization. Reviews on *The Crucible* have been numerous and various in approaches. The present study mainly adopts pragmatic theories as its analytic approaches and analyzes the dialogues in *The Crucible*. It intends to find out how characters achieve their communicative purposes when they produce their utterances. Moreover, it is expected that this study may help shed some light on the pragmatic approach to the interpretation of drama. In this study, 16 fragments of dialogues are taken as the data for analysis. This study applies the Speech Acts Theory, the turn-control strategies, the Cooperative Principle, the Politeness Principle and the methods of Critical Discourse Analysis in data analysis. The turn-control strategies could help us learn how and why the character yields or claims a turn, and help us understand the communicative strategies of the participants. In a drama, dialogues between the characters are important ways of completing certain speech acts. The analysis of the dialogues may help us understand the real intentions of the characters. The present study carries implications for English teaching, the appreciation of drama and daily communication. Teaching turn-control strategies to students can help them communicate more successfully. The study of the theories and methods of Critical Discourse Analysis may improve students' critical language awareness. The application of pragmatic theories to the appreciation of drama contributes to the revelation of the real intentions of characters, and helps us understand how the playwright displays the story, portrays the characters and expresses his /her intentions through various language skills.

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### Introduction

The main objective in the study is to apply a pragmatic approach including Austin's speech act theory (1962) and Searle's contributions (1975) to evaluate the character relationship, the turn-control strategies, the Cooperative Principle, the Politeness Principle and the methods of Critical Discourse Analysis in data analysis. The turn-control strategies could help us learn how and why the character yields or claims a turn, and help us understand the communicative strategies of the participants. This thesis also sheds light on daily communication, especially the communication among family members, and help us learn how to communicate successfully and achieve communicative goals.

One issue over the pragmatic studies is whether the pragmatic mechanisms have any explanatory power over literary text. Mey (1993: 236) in his *Pragmatics: An Introduction* puts forward such questions as what is the significance of pragmatics for the study of written text? How does literature relate to pragmatics? It is commonly agreed that pragmatics studies the role played by language users. Literary language users use language to convey meanings.

They also obey rules of language use just as other language users do. Cook (1994:46) states it clearly that literature can be studied as conversations in his insightful book *Discourse and Literature*. Therefore, pragmatic factors which are closely associated with conversations should be paid attention to when studying literary language. As we all known, a discourse, no matter what genre it has, is a part of communication which naturally involves the language user's intention in certain context. Taking a method without considering how or why the language is used, the meanings obtained will be only on the surface level, and the implied meanings will be overlooked. Alongside with the rapid development and achievement in the field of pragmatics, more and more scholars hold that meaning is not a stable and absolute thing, but depends on the dynamic process of interpretation by language users. Verschueren (1995: 514), "literary stylistics rests on the assumption that the theories and methods developed within linguistics can be appropriately and fruitfully applied to the study of literature". Pragmatics, as a branch of linguistics, functions as a useful tool in the analysis of literature.

This thesis will adopt a pragmatic approach to study the dialogues in *The Crucible*. The dramatic dialogue, as the art that uses language, is unique on the one hand, and is similar to daily life dialogue on the other hand. As the refined and polished imitation of everyday speech, dramatic dialogue should be studied in the context. Thus, the analysis of dramatic dialogues cannot exclude pragmatic theories and principles which are originally employed to investigate real life communication.

Besides, as a written form, dialogues in drama are different from that in daily life. It is necessary to offer substantial reasons for why exactly pragmatics can be adopted to study the conversations in literary works and to present the similarities between dramatic dialogues and naturally occurring conversations. It is no doubt that spoken and written communication has their own distinctive features. However, the similarities between them cannot be ignored.

In literary works, characters, like people in daily life, also have their different personalities, thoughts, psychological activities and so on. The kinds of speech acts which are performed by characters should be proper to the specific situations as people do in daily life. Leech and Short (1981: 151) have pointed out that one cannot understand the nature of fictional language without seeing it as a special case of the ordinary referential, truth-reporting function of language, which should be pay attention to when analyzing dramatic dialogues. We may get the conclusion that pragmatic theories and principles, such as the Cooperative Principle, the Politeness Principle and the Speech Act Theory, which are based on oral communication, can also guide written communication. Newton (1997, p. 94) maintains that language for literature is not "a superfluous back cloth of a social, emotional or poetic.

This thesis chooses drama as the research object, because drama as one of three major types of literature, that is novel, drama, and poem, has been the least studied in either literary criticism or stylistics. For one thing, while drama is an important literary genre, it is very often not taken as literature since it is one of the most complex forms of art. For another, drama poses the greatest challenge to literary criticism and dramatic text analysis. While theatrical critics deliberately neglect the literary aspects of dramatic text, literary critics do not normally think that it is their business to comment on drama. Thus, drama has become a borderline area to which neither of the neighbors along the fence has paid enough attention. It is only in recent years that dramatic study has seen happy moments in stylistics. Some stylisticians, equipped with theories of pragmatics and discourse analysis, have been trying to change the situation (Short, 1989: 152). Because of the limited space, we cannot deal with all dramas, in this study, we prefer *Death of a Salesman* for the following reasons. In the first place, Arthur Miller is one of the most influential playwrights in America; moreover, *Death of a Salesman* is his best contribution to American drama. Meanwhile it has aroused heated debates in the critic circle both at home and abroad. In the second place, most previous studies of the play pay attention to creative skills, dramatic techniques and tragic themes, compared with which the dialogues in it have been paid little attention to, let alone a study of it from the pragmatic perspective. To sum up, *The Crucible* is a good one to choose as the object of the present research.

Therefore, the pragmatic approach to dramatic dialogues is not only valid but also of great practical and theoretical significance. It analyses texts related to context rather than an absolute aesthetic artifact. An interpretation or analysis of literary works without taking pragmatic elements into consideration is not complete. The pragmatic approach makes clearer the historical, cultural, social and mental states of the particular phase when author wrote the play. The pragmatic analysis of drama will be more satisfactory. Pragmatic theories are very important in literature analysis, and scholars have been making researches in this field.

### **Related Studies**

The recent developments of the late seventies and eighties of the twentieth century in discourse analysis and pragmatics have provided helpful tools to analyze the meanings of utterances in fictional dialogue. Some research work has recently employed these new linguistic studies to analyze a number of literary works. Such linguistic applications of linguistic theories open new perspectives for applied literary criticism and add invaluable insights into literary works. Some of these applications to plays are demonstrated below in chronological order.

One of the most important contributions concerned with the language of plays is the book entitled *Exploring the Language of Drama: From Text to Context*, edited by Jonathan Culpeper, Mike. Short and P. Verdonk. (1998). Valerie Lowe (1992), 'Unhappy' confessions in *The Crucible* A pragmatic explanation. Valerie Lowe outlines the approaches of Austin and Searle, and applies them, in connection with other pragmatic approaches, to the scene in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* where the black slave Tituba confesses to witchcraft. Lowe uses the speech-act distinctions between an utterance's illocutionary force and its intended and actual perlocutionary effects to show in various ways how Tituba's confession is 'unhappy', which compiled a number of distinct research work in the new interdisciplinary field. Among these researches is Amal Gouda Abdel Aziz, Ph.D, (2014): *Social Hysteria versus Individual Dilemma: A Pragmatic Study of Character Relationship In Arthur Miller's The Crucible*. He presented study attempts to examine the relationship of husband, John Proctor, and wife, Elizabeth Proctor, in Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* (1953) by clarifying how their use of language in communicating with each other reflects the nature and the development of their tensed relationship. Their relationship, though personal, yet it has been influential in setting in motion the disastrous events which upset the whole community of the 1697 Salem, Massachusetts.

Noorbakhsh Hooti (2011), presented analysis of "The Crucible" is to study the action of the play in terms of

the implication of quest for identity of the characters involved by scrutinizing the various dilemmas into which the characters find themselves. The self of an individual becomes foregrounded in the moment of crisis, which involves emotional, moral and social predicaments.

### **The Crucible: Historical Background and Critical Overview**

Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* was first performed in January 1953. It was intended to present the writer's view on the rise of McCarthyism during the late forties and early fifties of the twentieth century. The play's events were based on the historical witch hunt trials of Salem, Massachusetts in the late seventeenth century in which twenty people were found guilty of witchcraft and hanged, whereas some others, who had also been accused, saved themselves by confessing to witchcraft and accusing other people.

McCarthyism, after the name of U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy, came to mean "ruinous accusation without evidence" (Popkin, 1964, p. 139). It had been likened to a witch hunt, hence Miller wrote a play about a real one. Similarities between the Salem court and the McCarthy hearings that examined and interrogated radicals were clearly found. The play tacitly suggested that embracing leftist thought in America at that time was equivalent to an accusation of witchcraft in earlier times stirring panic and suffering in both cases. Moss (1972) argued that McCarthyism represents for Miller the source of moral and political collapse through the creation of hysteria and paranoia.

During McCarthy's congressional hearings, as in Salem's court, the proper process of justice was overlooked and hysteria prevailed through raving rumors and vengeful lies. Many witnesses found no escape but to deliver dishonest confessions and were forced to falsely accuse their friends and acquaintances to save their careers. As in the miserable instance of Salem, naming others was regarded as an indication of honesty and seriousness. Those who protested against the hearings were charged of collaborating with "the red devil" or communist Russia rather than simply the devil as in Salem. Miller in the introduction of *The Crucible* alludes to the play's contemporary reference and invites comparisons between the two widely separated events. With regard to the victims of the witch hunt of Salem he says: "One can only pity them all, just as we we will be pitied someday" (p. 22).

Miller in his notes to the play indicates that the witch hunt erupted when the repressions of order of the Salem theocracy were heavier than seemed necessary by the dangers against which the order was organized. It was a vicious expression of the terror which set in among all classes when the balance between the authority of the state and individual freedom began to turn toward greater individual freedom. The action takes place in 1692, at a time when people were living in a strictly unified society based on the puritan principles. Discipline and obedience were the primary rules and society believed that unity formed the best protection against both hostile nature and the Indian enemy. Such an unbendingly rigid society implies that any form of individuality will be considered rebellious or dangerous and generates doubts and fears among its members, that is why Miller refers to the strong propensity to mind other people's business. Bonnet (1982) observes that we have therefore a primarily explosive situation where unity imposed by a theocratic authority both ensures and jeopardizes the individual safety, thus the slightest violation in its defenses becomes a channel for all individual and hitherto unexpressed passions. The ordinary disagreements among its members such as envy, jealousy, revenge, lust for power and boundary disputes gradually expanded into a wider, extensive quarrel that soon gets out of control under the cover of accusations of witchcraft against the victims – the result being an intensification of the already inflated authority.

The elements of conflict, however, in such a situation are too large to be defined within the limits of a play. Thus, Miller offered the main character, John Proctor, as a nascent liberal who was victimized by the witch hunt because of his more or less conscious opposition to Puritanism (Walker, 1956). In addition, Proctor is troubled by an intolerable sense of personal guilt due to a love affair prior to the play's events with the maid girl, Abigail Williams, who ultimately accuses his wife of witchcraft. His moral obligation to save his wife from the charge and his pressing need to restore his self-esteem ultimately leads him to be accused and condemned as a witch. Bonnet (1982) stresses the dual structure of the play for it has the content of social hysteria based on the strife between the puritanical authority and the individuals; at the same time it takes the form of the interior psychological guilt-ridden conflict within the hero psyche concluded with his tragic downfall and triumph. It is through identifying with protagonist's moral dilemma that the audience becomes directly involved in the social tragedy that overtook Salem in the late seventeenth century.

Steinberg (1972) argues that the play is raised to true tragic status by means of the higher consciousness that Proctor achieves through his ordeal by fire. Moreover, Hogan (1972) maintained that it qualifies as a Greek tragedy because Proctor through overcoming the painful agony and remorse owing to his past unfaithfulness, he achieves social ethics which promote and liberate the community. Huftel (1972) focused on portraying the progress of Proctor's heroism arguing that he rejects conformity and adopts radical opposition to the the beliefs of an irrational society.

On the other hand, Proctor's heroism has been contrasted with Abby's evil madness. Alter (1989) asserted

that she represents the disorder created by the release of irrational energy and forces. Porter (1979) explains that she achieves awesome evil because of her firm resolution to lose everyone to her vicious purposes and her dangerous ability to pervert the sacred task of bearing witness. McGill, (1981) contends that Miller has captured one of the basic realities of Salem events: while characteristic of their times, they also represented a loss of balance, a breakdown in the conventions which make communal life possible and human life bearable. Today, the Salem witch hunt as well as the McCarthy era are far back in time. Nevertheless, *The Crucible* still has some political significance for our time since, as Miller maintains, "the balance has yet to struck between order and freedom" (p. 22). In addition, as audiences, many of us cannot help but admire the heroic suffering and courage of the victims.

### **Pragmatics and the Dramatic Analysis of *The Crucible***

Pragmatics, the study of "contextual meaning" (Yule, 1996, p. 3), is a type of study that involves a consideration of how speakers arrange what they want to say in reference to who they are talking to, where, when and under what circumstances. Hence, it provides a valuable framework for the analysis of plays since language can be regarded as the mainspring of the action.

Speech Act Theory is the first major theory in pragmatics, initially proposed in the 50s and widely discussed in the 60s and 70s (Jiang, 2000: 197). The basic thing advocated by Speech Act Theory is that to say something is to do something. In recent years, Speech Act Theory has also been applied to the study of literary works. In the following part, the classification of illocutionary acts proposed by Austin and the model of infelicities modified by Lu Fei will be illuminated.

Austin (1962) suggests that there are three senses in which saying something may be understood as doing something. The first sense is an ordinary one. That is, when we speak, we move our vocal organs and produce a number of sounds, organized in a certain way and with a certain meaning. In this sense, when somebody says "Morning!", we can ask a question like "What did he do?" instead of "What did he say?" and the answer could be that he produced a sound, word or sentence—"Morning!".

Austin (1962: 96), the act performed in this sense is called Locutionary Act. The locutionary act can be subdivided into three parts. The first part is "to perform the act of uttering certain noises". This is the phonetic act. The second part is the phatic act of "uttering certain vocables or words". The third, or rhetic act, is "to perform the act of using the phoneme or its constituents with a certain more or less definite 'sense' and a more or less definite 'reference'" (p. 100).

In fact, when we speak, we not only produce some units of language with certain meanings, but also make clear our purpose in producing them, the way we intend them to be understood, or they also have certain forces as Austin prefers to say. In the example "Morning!", we can say it has the force of a greeting. This is the second sense in which to say something is to do something, and the act performed is known as an Illocutionary Act. The Illocutionary act is related to the speaker's intention. To determine what the illocutionary act of the utterance is, one should know what the speaker intends to achieve or bring about by the utterance. An illocutionary act is not performed, in Austin's view, unless the hearer recognizes the speaker's intention to perform this act. He says that "the performance of an illocutionary act involves the securing of uptake" (p. 117). Uptake occurs when the hearer understands the illocutionary force of the utterance.

The third sense in which to say something can mean to do something concerns the consequential effects of a locution upon the hearer. By telling somebody something, the speaker may change the opinion of the hearer on something, mislead him, surprise him, or induce him to do something, etc.. Whether or not these effects are intended by the speaker, they can be regarded as part of the act that the speaker has performed. This act is called a Perlocutionary Act which depends not only on the speaker but also on the hearer. It is concerned with the result of the utterance.

Austin attempts a preliminary classification of illocutionary act. Under the notion of the illocutionary forces of utterances, which in turn are made clear by explicit performative verbs in the utterance, he classifies illocutionary acts into five types: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives and expositives. It should be pointed out that Austin himself is "far from equally happy about all of them" and he is "not putting any of this forward as in the very least definitive" (p. 151).

A verdictive is essentially giving a finding as to something—fact or value—which is for different reasons hard to be certain about (p. 151). Verdictives are concerned with the delivery of a verdict, a finding, a judgement, or an assessment, official or unofficial, upon evidence or reasons about value or fact (p. 153). Verdictives can be judged by true or false, sound or unsound, and fair and unfair.

An exercitive is the exercising of power, right or influence and the giving of a decision in favor of or against a certain course of action or advocacy of it (p. 151). It is a decision that something is to be so rather than a judgment that it is so.

A commissive is typified by promising or otherwise undertaking; they not only commit you doing something, but also include declarations or announcements of intention (pp. 151-152). A commissive is to

commit the speaker to a certain course of action.

A behabitive includes the notion of reaction to other people's behavior and of attitudes to someone else's past conduct or imminent conduct (p. 152). It is a statement of feelings and a description of attitudes and social behaviors. In the case of behabitives, besides the usual liability to infelicities, there is a possibility for insincerity (p. 161).

An expositive is used in acts of exposition involving the expounding of views, the conducting of arguments, and the clarifying of usages and of references (ibid, 152). It manifests how our utterances fit into an argument or conversation.

Austin (p. 152) thinks that the last two types of illocutionary acts are troublesome. The behabitives is a very miscellaneous category, and the expositives is difficult to define. He does not deny that his classification is not clear enough, and that maybe some types are cross-classified.

Along with the development of Speech Act Theory, scholars have successfully applied this theory to the fields of philosophy, psychology, anthropology, literary criticism, etc. Scholars both at home and abroad have made a lot of researches on the feasibility of the application of Speech Act theory to the analysis of literary works. Pratt (1977: 25) believes that "literary language" is no other than "ordinary language", so theories which are used to study "ordinary language" can also be used in literary criticism.

As one of the most important theories in pragmatics, Speech Act Theory has been put into actual use by many researchers. The detailed information will be illuminated in the last discussion.

### Lu Fei's Model of Infelicities

An illocutionary act carries with itself an illocutionary force, that is, what the speaker really intends to express. In analyzing speech acts, felicity conditions shouldn't escape our attention. These necessary conditions to be satisfied are as follows:

- (A1) there must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,
- (A2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
- (B1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and
- (B2) completely.
- (C1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further
- (C2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently." (Austin, 1962: 15)

For Austin, a successful speech act must involve three categories of felicity conditions consisting of six sub-rules. Since Austin's scheme is too ideal and complicated, and we adopt the modified one by Lu Fei.

This study will focus on three main forms of infelicities, that is: (1) Void: Act is disallowed and therefore void, because the speaker does not follow widely acknowledged conventions, or the speaker is not appropriate, or not in position, for the particular procedure invoked. (2) Breaches: By breaches, it means one's doing contracts with what he said previously. (3) Insincerities: Insincere speech acts mean that the speaker promises to perform a speech act, but actually he doesn't have the real intention to have it conducted (p. 27).

### Turn-control Strategies

One of the characteristics of drama language is that the characters speak alternatively. When the characters have dialogues, they are facing the problem of how to maintain or give up the right to speak. In the present study, specific attention will be paid to turn-control strategies, including nomination, self-selection, overlap, insertion and interruption. In the follow passages, how speakers claim or yield the turn and what kind of turn-control strategies they adopt will be illuminated.

### Nomination

If the current speaker wants to yield turns, he/she will use nomination. Among the turn- yielding methods, nomination is the most powerful one. In the present study, we attempt to use nomination to analyze the dramatic dialogues which are very similar to daily conversations. More often than not, every nomination is followed by a question, which is also applicable to the example selected by the author.

1. ELIZABETH—she doesn't want friction, and yet she must: You come so late I thought you'd gone to Salem this afternoon.  
PROCTOR: Why? I have no business in Salem.  
ELIZABETH: You did speak of going, earlier this week.  
PROCTOR—he knows what she means: I thought better of it since.

ELIZABETH: Mary Warren's there today.

PROCTOR: Why'd you let her? You heard me forbid her to go to Salem any more!

ELIZABETH: I couldn't stop her.

PROCTOR, holding back a full condemnation of her: It is a fault, it is a fault, Elizabeth—you're the mistress here, not Mary Warren. (Miller: P. 46)

The first scene opens Act II. John Proctor returned home after working all day in the fields. Elizabeth, his wife, put their children to sleep and served dinner for him. When couples discuss farming and dinner, the relationship between them seems distressed and distant. Elizabeth still cannot fully forgive John for his affair with their former servant, Abigail. Proctor isn't willing to quarrel with Elizabeth, so he adopts a turn-yielding method—nomination. Nominating his wife with the question: "Mary Warren's there today ?", Proctor gives up the turn "Why'd you let her? You heard me forbid her to go to Salem any more!" (p. 46). Thus, the head-on clash between husband and wife is avoided.

From this, we can see that the relations between Proctor and Elizabeth are strained. The example proves that nomination is an effective method to yield a turn in dramatic dialogues, which are similar to day-to-day communication.

In the following paragraphs, the author will analyze another example, which is a little different from the above one.

2. PROCTOR, wide-eyed: Oh, it is a black mischief.

ELIZABETH: "I think you must go to Salem, John. you must tell them it is a fraud" (p. 47).

In light of previous disturbing news, it was clear that Elizabeth was aware of Abigail's evil desire to get revenge on her and the women in Salem. He also saw clearly that the girl was a natural killer, "a murderer" as he later stated in the following scene (p. 104). Therefore, his request strongly implies a warning to listeners that if he doesn't go and tell the truth, the consequences will be dangerous for both of them. He returned quietly urgently.

To sum up, as a method of yielding the turn, nomination is effective and powerful. In the present study, Elizabeth uses nomination to avoid conflicting with Proctor, while Proctor uses nomination to ask for help or an answer. It implicates that we should learn the motivations if a nomination occurs when appreciating literary works.

### Self-selection

Self-selection is done with a question without nomination under the situation that some information about the topic has been given. In other words, the current speaker asks questions and the listener self-select to be the next speaker.

3. ELIZABETH: Let you go to Ezekiel Cheever—he knows you well. And tell him what she said to you last week in her uncle's house. She said it had naught to do with witchcraft, did she not?

PROCTOR, in thought: Aye, she did, she did. Now a pause.

ELIZABETH, quietly, fearing to anger him by prodding: God forbid you keep that from the court, John. I think they must be told.

PROCTOR, quietly, struggling with his thought: Aye, they must, they must. It is a wonder they do believe her.

ELIZABETH: I would go to Salem now, John—let you go tonight. (P. 47)

Example (3) takes place when Proctor Proctor was hesitant because, as he explained, without other witnesses, his words would be opposed by Abigail. Elizabeth was surprised to learn that she was alone with Abigail when she told the truth. Elizabeth puts forward a question without nominating Proctor to answer it. Proctor self-selects to answer it.

Totally different from Example (1), here Elizabeth takes her husband as an idol and willing to talk with him. Due to the respect and love, Proctor answers Elizabeth's question voluntarily. Under these circumstances, we can take the self-selection as cooperation with the previous speaker, and reflection of attitude to the previous speaker.

She quickly confronted him with his doubts and began interrogating him to find out in what circumstances he was alone with the girl. His interrogation in the form of several consecutive questions showed that he believed he still loved her and he tried to protect him. Proctor angrily cut it off and cut the question. He firmly stated that his affair with Abigail was over and forgotten. In addition, he sharply blamed Elizabeth because since Abigail left his house, Proctor had tried to please him but Elizabeth was cold and unforgiving. He hated his endless doubts which showed that he would not stand to judge him again. He warned him seriously.

In the example below, the motivations and functions of self-selection is not the same as that in Example (3).

4. ELIZABETH: John, you are not open with me. You saw her with a crowd, you said. Now you—

PROCTOR : I'll plead my honesty no more, Elizabeth. (P.49)

He even regretted that he once admitted his affair with Abigail to his wife thought that he would forgive him.

By her utterance, we can know that she does not select the next speaker between Elizabeth and Proctor. However, Proctor self-selects and fudges the answer. He wants to divert Elizabeth's attention. Moreover, Miller portrays the character of Proctor as a peacemaker in the family. Here he tries to calm down Elizabeth through self-selection. Self-selection is a polite way to start a turn. From the above examples, we can see that, if a person adopts self-selection, then he/she shows respect to the previous speaker. In English teaching class, in order to lighten the students' pressure, teachers could encourage self-selection instead of nomination.

### Insertion

Generally speaking, insertion means that people are capable of predicting the possible endings of the current speaker's utterance, and insert utterances in the transitional relevance place (TRP) to claim the floor, evaluating the former speaker's ideas, expressing their own opinions or answering the former speaker's questions. In the following passages, the author will analyze insertions in the selected examples.

5. PROCTOR: No more! I should have roared you down when first you told me your suspicion. But I wilted, and, like a Christian, I confessed. Confessed! Some dream I had must have mistaken you for God that day. But you're not, you're not, and let you remember it! Let you look sometimes for the goodness in me, and judge me not.

ELIZABETH: I do not judge you. The magistrate sits in your heart that judges you. I never thought you but a good man, John—with a smile—only somewhat bewildered. (P. 49)

The dialogue takes place when Proctor and Elizabeth talk to each other before sleeping. Proctor puts a question to Elizabeth by predicting the possible endings of Elizabeth's utterances. The second time Proctor gets the floor in the transitional relevance place by means of concluding Elizabeth's utterances. Therefore, through questions and evaluations, the speakers can insert utterances and claim the turn.

Next example is a dialogue between Elizabeth and Proctor

6. ELIZABETH: I don't judge you. The magistrate sits in your heart that judge you. I never thought you but a good man, John --with a smile—only somewhat bewildered.

PROCTOR, laughing bitterly: Oh, Elizabeth, your justice would freeze beer! He turns suddenly toward a sound outside. He starts for the door as Mary Warren enters. As soon as he sees her, he goes directly to her and grabs her by her cloak, furious. How do you go to Salem when I forbid it? Do you mock me? Shaking her: I'll whip you if you dare leave this house again! (p. 49)

In this dialogue, Elizabeth expresses her opinions by insertion at the possible ends of Proctor's utterances. Elizabeth's concern prompted her to use her male authority to end her long suffering and alienation at her home. He insisted on giving his demands.

We can find out that insertion may be a polite form. According to the above examples, people adopt insertion frequently to show friendliness and respect to the counterpart in conversation.

### Overlap

One of the most important discoveries made by Sacks is that people take turns at talking: in a given conversation, there is only one person talking at a time, only when he stops will another begin to talk. In Sack's words, "at least and no more than one party talks at a time" (1992: 59). However, people notice that for various reasons, overlaps occur frequently in conversations. Although drama language is very similar to words and expressions in everyday use, it is conceived seriously by the playwright. Thus, overlap is not a common phenomenon in the script.

The example given below takes place when Proctor explains to Elizabeth that he has been trying to confess.

7. PROCTOR, with great force of will, but not quite looking at her: I have been thinking I would confess to them, Elizabeth. She shows nothing. What say you? If I give them that?

ELIZABETH: I cannot judge you, John. Pause. (p. 121)

In this dialog, using "sharply" expresses Proctor's feelings appropriately. Proctor wants to root out suffering with recognition, in order to restore his honor. However Elizabeth has not fully trusted her husband's kindness.

This time Elizabeth interpreted her husband's intentions correctly by saying. He knows the essential goodness of his character. He also acknowledged the conflicts that occurred in his mind and soul. Even though they have been separated physically, the suffering they both experienced brought a recovery of their emotional and spiritual relationships. But Proctor is not entirely true for itself. Elizabeth refused to judge her husband's actions in the past even though her heart was still sick, but it all became a whip of life, because such blind jealousy became a very painful weakness because the situation became their way to prison.

8. PROCTOR, simply-a pure question: What would you have me do?

ELIZABETH: As you will, I would have it. Slight pause. I want you living, John. That's sure. (p. 122)

Earlier in their previous arguments in Act II, Proctor ironically refused Elizabeth's judgment for his actions to "see your own progress before you go to judge your husband".

According to the analysis in the present study, overlap always occurs without planning. Sometimes, overlap can be taken as the revelation of the speakers' feelings.

### **Interruption**

Interruption has been seen as “not a thing that people are supposed to do in conversation” (Sacks et al, 1974, p. 68) and a “violation” of the current speaker’s right to complete a turn. Thus, it is the least polite form and exhibits the strongest power.

9. DANFORTH: Proctor, you mistake me. I am not empowered to trade your life for a lie. You have most certainly seen some person with the Devil. Proctor is silent. Mr. Proctor, a score of people have already testified they saw this woman with the Devil.

PROCTOR: Then it is proved. Why must I say it?

DANFORTH: Why “must” you say it! Why, you should rejoice to say it if your soul is truly purged of any love for Hell!

PROCTOR: They think to go like saints. I like not to spoil their names. (p. 126).

Example (9), Danforth interrupts to conceal the facts. The scene ends with the entrance of court officials. Although Proctor thought that he had lost to the crime made by man himself, his wife's confession had become a force he had never gotten in separating between truth and evil and could be independently fully aware of the truth in maintaining honor and dignity human. Elizabeth's example of recognition and awareness will never be lost in her and her commitment proved to her friends proved to be greater than she believed.

Sometimes, interruption is considered to be impolite. Example (10) will show how rude Danforth is when he talks to Proctor.

10. DANFORTH: Proctor, you mistake me. I am not empowered to trade your life for a lie. You have most certainly seen some person with the Devil. Proctor is silent. Mr. Proctor, a score of people have already testified they saw this woman with the Devil.

PROCTOR: Then it is proved. Why must I say it?

DANFORTH: Why “must” you say it! Why, you should rejoice to say it if your soul is truly purged of any love for Hell!

PROCTOR: They think to go like saints. I like not to spoil their names. (p. 126).

Another strength was that he then tried to avoid signing his confession, arguing that his signature was not needed with so many witnesses around him. Under Danforth's orders, he reluctantly signed, then took the paper. He refused to give up his signed confession so as not to allow the court to use it for his evil purposes, namely to incriminate respectable innocent people, and to avoid crimes that were more ruthless by the authorities against others, to fulfill his evil desires.

Dialogues in plays have all the pragmatic functions, which can be found in real-life conversations. The playwright always uses kinds of turn-control strategies to design the characters more vividly in the play. The author analyzes 10 examples by adopting turn-control strategies and finds out that: (1) Nomination is a powerful way of taking turns; (2) when speakers self-select, he/she wants to show respect or a cooperative attitude to the former speaker; (3) Insertion has the same function as self-selection. It is a polite way to take turns and show respect to the previous speaker; (4) Overlap occurs without planning. It is a revelation of feelings; (5) Interruption may be adopted when the speaker wants to withhold the truth.

### **Illocutionary Acts in the Play**

A speaker, in making an utterance, must satisfy three main conditions, that is (1) the speaker must observe a certain convention, and the speaker should be qualified for performing a certain speech act; (2) the speaker must harbor sincerity for speech acts proclaimed to carry out; (3) the speaker shouldn't go back on his words (Lu, 2004: 25).

In *The Crucible*, in order to convey their intention or to realize their goals, the characters often violate the felicity conditions. As a matter of fact, disobeying felicity conditions forms the necessary condition for a successful performance of conveying their intentions. The following passages will focus on the dialogues from *The Crucible*, in order to analyze the illocutionary acts.

### **Void**

Void is thought to be a disallowed act. In producing of an utterance, the speaker violates the social conventions shared by people, or the speaker cannot speak appropriately in suitable circumstances, including time, place, etc. The author will analyze void in the following passages.

11. DANFORTH, considers; then with dissatisfaction: Come, then, sign your testimony. To Cheever : Give it to him. Cheever goes to Proctor, the confession and a pen in hand. Proctor does not look at it. Come, man, sign it.

PROCTOR, after glancing at the confession: You have all witnessed It—it is enough.



DANFORTH: You will not sign it?

PROCTOR: You have all witnessed it; what more is needed?

DANFORTH: Do you sport with me? You will sign your name or it is no confession, Mister! His breast heaving with agonized breathing, Proctor now lays the paper down and signs his name. (p. 127-28).

In this dialogue, when Danforth forced Proctor to sign his confession. One of the reasons for Proctor's reluctance not to sign his confession because he was worried would be misused by corrupt authorities to commit other crimes. Therefore the acknowledgment that is said and witnessed by several witnesses is considered sufficient by saying: "You have all witnessed it; what more is needed? ". In addition, we note that Proctor uses the word "witnessed" to describe claims that are truthful, not artificial, legal, and lawful. Obviously, Proctor's actions are an act of caution to avoid fraud that will occur and to prevent the fraud from being taken.

12. DANFORTH, as though Proctor did not understand: Mr. Proctor, I must have—

PROCTOR : No, no. I have signed it. You have seen me. It is done! You have no need for this.

PARRIS: Proctor, the village must have proof that—

PROCTOR : Damn the village! I confess to God, and God has seen my name on this! It is enough!

DANFORTH: No, sir, it is—

PROCTOR : You came to save my soul, did you not? Here! I have confessed myself; it is enough! (p. 128).

The coercion of Proctor is still being carried out by Danforth, but the effort will be in vain. Proctor remains in its position not to be signed in its acknowledgment. Although the Danforth said that his confession was not for himself, but for the name of the State, and the goodness of all people because there was tangible evidence of this recognition. Proctor does not need praise, and does not care about what people say, because he knows that God is all-listening, omniscient, and forgiving for everyone.

In the above passages, the author analyzes void from two perspectives individually, that is, the speaker does not follow the widely acknowledged conventions, the speaker speaks in the wrong time or place, or the speaker is not in the position to produce such utterances.

### Breaches

Breaches mean "one's doing contrasts with what he said previously" (Leech, 1981: 236). It refers to the fact that a speaker doesn't keep his words, but goes back on his words. Miller creates his hero Proctor as a person who is full of contradictions. The following 2 examples illustrate that he contradicts what he has already said.

13. DANFORTH: Then explain to me, Mr. Proctor, why you will not let—

PROCTOR, with a cry of his whole soul: Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name!

DANFORTH, pointing at the confession in Proctor's hand: Is that document a lie? If it is a lie I will not accept it! What say you? I will not deal in lies, Mister! Proctor is motionless. You will give me your honest confession in my hand, or I cannot keep you from the rope. Proctor does not reply. Which way do you go, Mister? (p.129)

A strong, full-hearted Proctor, a formidable hero, but he is still an ordinary man, crying with all his body and soul, realizing in the end that, to save his dignity and restore his dignity, his name must manifest his soul, consequently he chooses heroic death rather than life not honored. Proctor's spiritual odyssey is very personal but also social in nature because he finally has a high self-awareness through which he prefers to protect his honor rather than live in a society where deception and pretense are "institutionalized"

Through the analysis, we see there are discrepancies between what Proctor says and what he does. Through the breaches committed by Proctor, Miller portrays this petty man who is full of contradictions.

### Insincerities

Sincerity forms a necessary condition in committing any speech act. However, in communication, people sometimes say something that is against their real intentions. An insincere speech act indicates that the speaker promises or declares a speech act, but in fact, he or she has no intention to keep it or conduct it (Lu, 2004: 27). For example,

14. PROCTOR: I have three children—how may I teach them to walk like men in the world, and I sold my friends?

DANFORTH: You have not sold your friends—

PROCTOR: Beguile me not! I blacken all of them when this is nailed to the church the very day they hang for silence!

DANFORTH: Mr. Proctor, I must have good and legal proof that you—

PROCTOR: You are the high court, your word is good enough! Tell them I confessed myself; say Proctor broke his knees and wept like a woman; say what you will, but my name cannot—(p. 129).

With the return of his honor, Proctor immediately tore up the recognition forced by Danforth to be signed.

With consciousness, and a sense of responsibility as a dignified human he found an extraordinary path of light and strength and associated himself fully with the ideals of sincerity and honesty, with loyalty to his friends and with the destruction of the corrupt authority of the Salem court. By refusing to reject the corrupt court, he regained his honor that he was first defeated by Abigail's seduction. Finally he found his true identity and found a decent answer to a question that had stimulated him and made him depressed from the start.

In this section, the author discusses the illocutionary acts in the play; specific attention is paid to the disobeying of felicity conditions. In the next section, violation of the Cooperative Principle and Politeness Principle will be illustrated.

### **Violation of the CP and PP**

In the former section, the author has already elaborated the Cooperative Principle and Politeness Principle in detail. In this section, through the analysis of the selected dialogues of *The Crucible*, the author wants to find out why and how the characters violate these principles. This has some implications for English teaching and the appreciation of drama.

### **Violation of the Cooperative Principle**

As mentioned in the above section, Grice's Cooperative Principle consists of four maxims: maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relation and maxim of manner. Actually, when having conversations, people sometimes deliberately violate or flout the maxims to various degrees, thereby creating conversational implicature. The following examples show how the characters violate the Cooperative Principle.

15. PARRIS: Go to him! He rushes out the door, as though to hold back his fate. Proctor! Proctor! Again, a short burst of drums.

HALE: Woman, plead with him! He starts to rush out the door, and then goes back to her. Woman! It is pride, it is vanity. She avoids his eyes, and moves to the window. He drops to his knees. Be his helper! What profit him to bleed? Shall the dust praise him? Shall the worms declare his truth? Go to him, take his shame away!

ELIZABETH, supporting herself against collapse, grips the bars of the window, and with a cry: He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him! (p. 131).

Parris hopes Elizabeth as a wife is expected to seduce her husband, and hopes Proctor will give recognition as expected. But Elizabeth knew better: Proctor's sacrifice was not her shame but her honor. Out of love for her husband, she let her husband die with the "goodness" he had just discovered. With tears and almost fainting he exclaimed, He has his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him! "

We can understand the above description that in "*The Crucible*", Miller has placed individuals face to face with social, psychological and moral situations. Searching for Proctor's identity is characterized by two phases associated with attempted witch hunts. Initially, he was involved in all the socio-judicial processes of the trial unexpectedly and voluntarily. Before he even realized, he found himself in the midst of a very serious dispute, in which he was obliged to make a conscious choice. Thus, the second phase of his involvement in public controversy is what is activated and requires the search for his identity.

In the above passages, the author analyzes the violation of the Cooperative Principle in the dialogues of *Death of a Salesman*. Through the analysis, we are clear about why the speakers don't observe the Cooperative Principle, and what is indicated by the violation.

### **Violation of the Politeness Principle**

In this section, through the application of the Politeness Principle, why the characters deliberately violate those maxims of the Cooperative Principle will be interpreted. Brown and Levinson (1987) illustrate the issue of polite language in detail, and the core concepts used by them are "face" and face-threatening acts. In the following, the author takes the dialogues between Parris and Elizabeth as examples to illustrate how Elizabeth violates the Politeness Principle.

16. PUTNAM : I never heard you worried so on this society, Mr. Proctor. I do not think I saw you at Sabbath meeting since snow flew.

PROCTOR: I have trouble enough without I come five miles to hear him preach only hellfire and bloody damnation. Take it to heart, Mr. Parris. There are many others who stay away from church these days because you hardly ever mention God any more". (p. 25)

In the above dialogue, when talking to Putnam, Proctor chooses the least indirect kind of illocution, that is to say, the imperative sentence which is tactless. Proctor's obvious violation of the Tact maxim shows that Putnam has few optional choices so he has to do as what Proctor says, which implies the social relationship between them: Proctor is superior to Putnam.

In this dialogue, Proctor violates the Tact maxim by ordering him directly to " Take it to heart, Mr. Parris", which implicitly indicates the social distance and power. Through the analysis of the example, we find out that the way in which one character addresses another is a revealing indicator of tone. Whether the speakers stick to

the Politeness Principle or not depends on the relations between them.

### **Implications**

In this section, the author discusses the implications of this study from three aspects. They are the implications for English teaching, the implications for the appreciation of drama, and the implications for communication.

#### **Implications for English Teaching**

Due to the great importance of mastering English, a new task facing English teachers now is how to enhance learners' communicative ability. In the effort of conducting an analysis of dialogues in the drama, the study provides a possibility of developing a more harmonious and effective way of teaching. In classroom, the teachers should avoid frequently adopting nomination as their means of questioning. The teachers can encourage students to self-select when they intend to answer questions. Compared with nomination, self-selection can bring less pressure to students. Then, the students will become more active in classroom.

Moreover, clarifying the transitional places of the students' utterances, the teachers should avoid interrupting students. They can insert utterances if necessary. Interruption makes the students feel less self-confident. However, when the student has difficulty in answering questions, the teacher can resolve the embarrassment by inserting some utterances to make them relaxed. Besides, if an overlap happens, the teachers would apply some methods to resolve it. At that moment, nomination can be taken as one of the methods. In this study, the author has interpreted turn-control strategies in dialogues in *The Crucible*.

In addition to the turn-control strategies, some other linguistic theories, such as the Speech Act Theory, the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle are examined. In order to express themselves politely or appropriately in various situations, students should try to identify the illocutionary forces of speakers in communication. With the help of interpreting the violation of the maxims and illocutionary acts, the students' communicative competence could be improved. The careful analysis of the dialogues by applying these theories will contribute a lot to improve the quality and effectiveness of English teaching and learning.

#### **Implications for the Appreciation of Drama**

This thesis adopts pragmatic theories to analyze dialogues in *The Crucible*. The author believes that this research will definitely contribute to the appreciation of this play, and to the appreciation of drama. This study helps us understand how the playwright displays the story, portrays the characters and expresses his /her intentions by applying various language skills.

The previous studies of drama mainly focus on themes, the creative skills and rhetorical devices. They seldom pay attention to the questions such as: why the author chooses those words in that context? Why the characters use this kind of turn-control strategies instead of others? To find out the answers to these questions, we have to resort to linguistic theories.

We know that literature relates closely to linguistics. Literary works are composed of linguistic elements, no matter what kind of literary genre they to. Thus, interpreting drama by using pragmatic theories is supposed to be effective. However, how can we apply those theories in the appreciation of drama? With the help of the pragmatic theories, the appreciation of drama can develop to a deeper level.

The turn-control strategies are very useful in the appreciation of drama because it can help readers learn how and why the characters maintain or give up the current turn. Besides, the violation of the maxims of the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle can express the deeper meaning of the characters' utterances as well as their intentions.

This study applies the pragmatic theories, such as the turn-control strategies, the Speech Acts theory, the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle and CDA in the analysis of the dialogues in *The Crucible*. It hopes that this thesis can give a highlight to the appreciation of drama from the pragmatic perspective.

#### **Implications for Communication**

Communication is important in human life. To communicate is to care for each other. Communication is an important way to express their thoughts and feelings and maintain social relationships. As an exchange of message or meaning, communication varies in some aspects, such as, message sending and purposes. In order to communicate successfully, the participants should learn some communicative strategies.

Communication is not only a way to exchange information, but also a representation of social status or background of the participants. In this thesis, the author analyzes dialogues between father and son and between boss and employee. Their different roles determine the differences between their styles of speech. The analysis shows that the speech style of a person varies in different contexts. For example, Proctor is superior at home, however, when he confronts his weakness, the superior power transfers to the dignity. The author suggests that the participants should speak appropriately in different social contexts and in accordance with their social status.

The communication between family members is more complicated than people can image. It is the

foundation of a favorable relationship within a family. Through the analysis, the author suggests that respect and understanding to each other is an essential factor for successful communication. Besides, honesty is another significant factor which may influence the communicative effects.

In this chapter, sixteen examples are examined by applying turn-control strategies, the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle as well as CDA methods. In the above section the implications for English teaching, the implications for the appreciation of drama and the implications for communication are illuminated in detail. A Pragmatic analysis of dialogues in play may help us understand the communicative strategies of the participants

## Conclusion

In the previous chapters, the thesis has conducted a pragmatic analysis of dialogues in *The Crucible*. This chapter aims to draw a conclusion of the whole study by summarizing the study, providing implications, pointing out its limitations and suggesting areas for further research.

A lot of work has been done by literary critics and stylisticians in the analysis of this play. However, drama, as one of the most important literary genre, has not attracted enough attention of linguists. In this thesis, by applying the turn-control strategies, the Cooperative Principle, the Politeness Principle, the Speech Act Theory and CDA methods, the author analyzes 23 fragments of dialogues in this play.

The study has tried to demonstrate how pragmatic analysis can reveal the implied meanings of dialogues by studying how characters adopt turn-control strategies to claim or yield turns, and by analyzing how characters violate the pragmatic principles and their concomitant maxims. The study begins with the reviews of pragmatic theories and their application to literary works. It shows the need to apply these theories to study drama. Written language in dramatic dialogues has a lot of similarities with naturally occurring conversations, and literary communication resembles real life interaction very much. This is why pragmatic theories be applied to the analysis of literature.

Following the review of previous studies is methodology and data analysis. The dialogues are interpreted in detail mainly from the turn-control strategies, the Speech Act Theory, the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle assisted by the application of CDA methods. It expounds how the characters use the communicative strategies, and what the implied meanings are in certain contexts.

This study has some implications for English teaching and learning, the appreciation of drama and communication. In the English classes, teaching turn-control strategies to students can help them communicate more effectively. The learning of Critical Discourse Analysis may improve students' critical language awareness and make them become sensitive to the implicit meanings of dialogues.

Pragmatic analysis of literary works empties fresh blood into the appreciation of literature. In other words, it provides a new perspective to approach literary works. The present study combines linguistic studies and literary studies, especially applying pragmatic theories to the research of dramatic dialogues. The pragmatic explanation of the dramatic dialogues will result in a more systematic, more explicit and more convincing interpretations to the works. This kind of analysis can reveal the psychological states, social environment and physical contexts of characters. Besides, it helps literature appreciation develop toward a more profound direction.

The present study broadens the research scope of pragmatics, which originally takes spoken language as its object, to literary language and written conversation. Moreover, it benefits conversational analysis in that it literary text in context. It enriches the researches of stylistics and stylisticians begin to pay more attention to contextual factors.

Although the present study offers a new perspective of appreciating *The Crucible*, it is not free from limitations. For one thing, because differences in cultural backgrounds and ways of thinking, it is inevitable that the author's interpretation of the play and its dialogues may not be what Arthur Miller originally intended, which might be a setback to an adequate analysis of the subject matter.

Besides, due to the limitation of the insufficiency of relevant literature and the pressure of research time, the author may not conduct a profound and comprehensive analysis of the data. So the analyst should be more sensitive to literature, and be equipped with literary knowledge in the further research. In addition, the study mainly focuses on the contexts related to characters in the drama and, to some extent, does not give due consideration to the contexts related to the playwright.

The author suggests that further research still needs to be done. As a great masterpiece, *The Crucible* is worthy of study from many aspects. For example, pragmatic analysis of this play may be based on other pragmatic theories, such as, Relevance Theory and Adaptation Theory. Accordingly, analyses of this play by the applications of other theories will enrich the present research of *The Crucible*.

Besides, the pragmatic analysis of the dialogues in *The Crucible* will not only shows the communicative skill and strategies of the characters, but also some hints for the social status of each character. This thesis adopts CDA as an aid to the analysis; however, due to the limited reference this combination is not fully extended. The

author believes that the employment of CDA methods to explore the social factors will be very promising in the future.

Through this research, it shows that the pragmatic theories is not only confined to the study of daily communication, but also can be used to the study of literary works. Prof. Feng Zongxin put forwards a new interdisciplinary perspective of pragmatic analysis of literary works, named pragma-stylistics. He proposes that the violation of the Cooperative Principles and the Politeness Principle and their maxims should be studied on the macro-level, that is, the relationship between the author and the characters as well as the interaction between different factors should also be studied.

Since the present study is a tentative attempt of the author, and there must be some problems unsolved and much room for improvement, the author hopes that the follow-up researchers will broaden the application of pragmatic theories to the analysis of literary works.

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