

A PRAGMATIC OVERVIEW OF ISMAIL KADARE'S BROKEN APRIL**Lindita SKENDERI¹, Nertila RAMADANI²**¹ *Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Philology, University of Tetova*² *Department of Albanian Language and Literature, Faculty of Philology, University of Tetova***Corresponding author e-mail: lindita.skenderi@unite.edu.mk***Abstract**

Ismail Kadare is one of the most prominent figures in the history of Albanian literature. He left behind literary works that have been translated into many different languages. This paper aims to go through a pragmatic analysis of *Broken April*, one of his well-known novels. The objective of the study is to go through the use of speech acts and politeness strategies in the novel. The interpersonal tensions that are subject of this novel are presented in the narrative and dialogues through sharp use of speech acts, from representatives, directives and expressive. In addition to the speech acts use, this paper also focuses on a further analysis of politeness strategies, trying to see how the characters use these strategies, more exactly face, to build relationships, mitigate positions or even manage situations. This paper sheds light on the pragmatic patterns that Kadare uses in such a dramatic novel where the situations are intense, deep and go further beyond a personal conflict.

Keywords: pragmatic, analysis, speech acts, literary pragmatics.

Introduction

Kadare's literary works have been analyzed in different aspects and dimensions, but the pragmatic analysis has not been in the interest of researchers a lot. Studies have shown that analyzing spoken language is easier when it comes to politeness strategies; however, it is also very important to offer insights to the study of literary works. Pragmatics has a key role in understanding language within real-life context, whereas literary pragmatics applies these rules in the process of interpreting literary works (Sinha, K. K., 2021). There is a strong connection between literary pragmatics, linguistic pragmatics and semiotics, and in the last decade, literary pragmatics has gained more interest and become the subject of research for many researchers. Even though literary pragmatics has been seen as a separate field (Levinson, 1983) it shouldn't be practiced as such.

Considering it separate from basic pragmatics, takes it outside of the corners which shape the real meaning and role of pragmatics. There have been many theories on defining and classifying speech acts, but the most used one is Searle's Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts, which kind of appeared due to Austin's weakness on his taxonomy of speech acts. In 1976, Searle created a five-category division for speech acts.

Allan (1986) added that Searle differentiates speech acts by using their illocutionary point (the intention of the speech act), direction of fit (the way speech acts fit the world), expressed psychological state (speaker's state of mind), and propositional content (what the speech act is about/related to felicity conditions) (p. 191). Here are the speech act classifications made by Searle (1976): A representative speech act binds the speaker to the truthfulness of the proposition presented. In this case, the direction of adequacy is from words to the world, since

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the speaker embodies a state of affairs, which is true. Examples include: confirm, declare, remind, assert and the like.

A directive speech act's aim is to make the speaker try to get the listener to do something. The direction of adequacy is the opposite or from the world to the words because the aim is for the statement propositional content to exist in reality, and the actual adequacy depends on whether the listener acts. Examples: request, order, beg, plead, command, pray, implore, invite, allow, advise, challenge, etc. In commissive speech acts, the speaker is committed to performing a specific action in the future. The direction of appropriateness is the opposite or from the world to the words because the aim must be to bring future reality in to possible content of the proposition and success depends on the speaker.

Examples: promise, commit, threaten, swear, assure, accept, reject, offer, bet, etc. It is the psychological state of the speaker that is revealed through the expressive speech act. In this case, there is no direction of appropriateness, because the speaker is simply expressing, rather than seeking to make the world correspond with the utterances or make the utterances correspond with the world. It merely expresses (Ashfira, K. D., & Hardjanto, T. D. (2021). Mey (1999), defines literary pragmatics as a field of study that aims to look at how writers tentative to influence their readers by using language effectively.

The whole point is the creation of cooperation between the author and the audience/readers. However, he states that to do this in a successful way, authors must use the language carefully, especially in situations when they address a specific audience, such as readers of literary works. As a part of a pragmatic analysis of this novel, the paper also deals with the politeness strategies used in the novel. Research on this type of literary pragmatics is not rare in the world literature, but in the Albanian literature world it is not quite common to come across this type of research.

Research methodology

Aiming to ensure an insightful analysis of the pragmatic element in Kadare's Broken April, this study employs a qualitative research approach, choosing content analysis to examine the speech acts and politeness strategies in the chosen novel. The content analysis method is particularly suited for this research as it allows for an in-depth examination of the text, focusing on the language used by characters and the context of their interactions. The novel will be thoroughly analyzed in order to find and identify Searle's speech acts five category division and Brown and Levinson's (1987) categorization of the politeness strategies, bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. Additionally, the paper also includes some examples of Face -threatening acts towards positive and negative face.

Analysis of speech acts content in the novel

Below there are some examples of Representative speech acts, which are extracted from the novel.

1. Representatives

- "You can't see anything yet," he explained. "We're far away from them."
- "Sensation: The writer, Bessian Vorpsi, and his young bride are spending their honeymoon on the Northern Plateau!"
- "You'll be escaping the world of reality for the world of legend."
- "The article was rather vague."
- "The real mountaineers are up there, on the Rrafsh," he had said to her one night, lifting his arms towards the celestial heights beyond the horizon.
- "We are entering the shadow-land," he said, as if talking to himself.
- "They have rifles slung on their shoulders," she said.

2. Assertives

- “The eleventh.” → This assertive speech act is produced by Bessian I as an answer to Diana's question.
- “The truce he had been granted was to end around mid-April, wasn't it?” → an assertive statement made by Diana to get confirmation for an information.
- “Yes, that's right, just in mid-April.” → A clear assertive response by Bessian.
- “From the village over there.” → An answer given to the coachman by the old woman.
- “Most of the men are cloistered in the towers.” → A fact about the village provided in an assertive way by the old woman.
- “It's enough to make you howl.”
- “The art of surveying has never suffered a greater insult.” →

3. Directives

- “What do you want?” → This is a question conveyed by Diana through the production of directive speech act while she is clearly expecting an answer to that question.
- “What day is it?” → Diana wanting to get information from Bessian.
- “Let's take her with us.” → Bessian produces this directive speech act to urge Diana to take action.
- “What's the matter, good mother?” → Bessian expecting to receive informative feedback by the old woman.
- “Where are you from?” → a question by the coachman to the old lady, a directive one which expects to result in information.
- “Look up there on that slope.” → Diana[s attention is drawn on that Bessian's statement.
- “Look, there are still some more of them.” → a directive production towards Diana's gaze.
- “Do you see the black ribbon on his right sleeve?” → A question made to Diana, expecting a confirmation.

4. Expressives

- “Thank you, my son.” → an attitude expressed by the old woman.
- “Ah, I spent the whole morning all alone by the roadside.” → A feeling of relief and to some extent a situation of helplessness expressed by the speaker.
- “For no good reason.” → expressing an indifferent tone.
- “Pardon me for having troubled you. Especially you, madam, please.” Statement of an apology.
- Diana's response, “What do you want?” shows her irritated tone, which can also show disgust from the situation.

5. Commissives

- “Pardon me for having troubled you” → This is a desire signaled to avoid imposition.
- “Let's take her with us” → In this situation, Bessian shows commitment to help the woman.
- “I'll be safe,” Bessian thinking to convince himself on this idea.
- “That's what I'll do,” Gjorg's decision to wait for the downfall of the night.

Politeness Strategies

Politeness strategies can be analyzed in terms of how characters try to mitigate or cause face-threatening acts (FTAs). There are two types of politeness strategies, **positive** and **negative politeness**. Brown and Levinson's theory on politeness strategies has found use not only as a research objective in linguistics, but in other fields too. In the last three decades, the interest of

research on politeness strategies has been increasing rapidly (Sapitri, P. A., et al, 2019), including here in the literary analysis, putting the focus on the power that politeness has in the interaction between language users (Chapman, 2012). Their theory has to do with maintaining a “face” in the pragmatic courtesy, which also affects the hearer/listener, and as such is known by the term face threatening acts. So, researchers call the notion of “face” as central to Brown and Levinson’s theory (LoCastro, 2013). There are two types of these FTA, positive and negative FTAs. Positive face is seen as self-image whereas negative face expresses the need for autonomy and freedom in conversation. Leech (1983) also suggested the concept of politeness through the choice of principles.

1. Negative Politeness

Below we can see some examples of negative politeness where the speaker makes it clear that his intentions are not to impose the hearer.

- **Example:** The man’s apology, *"Pardon me for having troubled you. Especially you, madam, please,"* is a form of negative politeness. By apologizing, he acknowledges that he has imposed on Bessian and Diana, trying to soften the imposition.

- **“Pardon me for troubling you.”** → While not present in this passage, it could be a form of negative politeness if the old woman or others had used it to show deference.

- **“Let’s take her with us.”** → This is Bessian’s suggestion in a collaborative way (“Let’s”), showing respect for the autonomy of those around him by reducing imposition softly.

2. Positive Politeness

- **Example:** The man’s attempt to bow theatrically can be seen as a misplaced attempt at positive politeness—he may be trying to show respect or earn approval, but his alcohol-affected state makes it seem insincere or inappropriate.

- **“Thank you, my son.”** → The old woman expresses gratitude to Bessian, using familial language (“my son”) to appeal to positive politeness, showing warmth.

- **“Good day, daughter.”** → The old woman greets Diana with positive politeness, using the respectful, warm term “daughter,” conveying friendliness.

- **“What’s the matter, good mother?”** → Bessian’s use of “good mother” softens his inquiry and shows care for the old woman’s wellbeing.

Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs)

1. FTAs to the Man’s Negative Face

Negative face: Desire for autonomy and not to be imposed upon.

- **Example:** Diana’s cold, direct question, *"What do you want?"*, is a face-threatening act. She doesn’t soften the question or show regard for the man’s autonomy, demonstrating her disregard for his feelings. Her tone of disgust further emphasizes the FTA.

Desire for freedom and autonomy.

- **“I have been waiting since morning for one of God’s creatures who could help me.”** → The old woman’s statement implies that her negative face has been threatened since no one has come to her aid, leaving her in a vulnerable position.

- The villagers’ failure to help the woman can also be seen as a broader threat to her positive face, making her feel neglected by her community.

2. FTAs to Diana’s and Bessian’s Positive Face

Positive face: Desire for approval and respect.

- **Example:** The man’s behavior, such as his smell of alcohol and somewhat aggressive bowing, threatens Diana’s and Bessian’s positive face, violating their expectations of respect and appropriate social behavior.

Desire to be liked and respected.

- **“For no good reason.”** → Diana’s repetition of this phrase becomes an FTA to Bessian’s positive face. He feels emotionally hurt and interprets her comment as dismissive, showing how language can hurt without being explicitly insulting.

- Bessian feels self-pity when Diana seems indifferent to his attempts to maintain conversation, indicating a threat to his positive face through her emotional distance.

3. Mitigating FTAs

Strategies used to soften FTAs.

- **Example:** The man’s apology, *"Pardon me for having troubled you,"* mitigates the FTA caused by his intrusion. By apologizing, he acknowledges that he has overstepped, especially given his inappropriate mannerisms.

Analysis of interaction

In the world of Pragmatics, power dynamics is seen as control through speaking. This does not only have to do with dominance, but hidden ways in through which individuals are formed in their social circles (Baloch, Khan, & Jabeen, 2024). In literary dialogues, power can also be seen in the way how an individual uses speech acts such as requests and commands.

Power Dynamics and Politeness

Diana’s cold attitude toward the man reflects an imbalance in power. She feels justified to be very direct and bald-on, sometimes cruel too, without even trying to soften her face-threatening acts towards him. On the other hand, the man is shown as bowing (even though theatrically) which indicates his social standing is lower and not close to any type of intrusion.

Impact of Social Norms

- The interaction highlights social norms regarding deference and respect, especially toward women and people of higher social status (e.g., Bessian and Diana). The man’s apology reflects the cultural expectation to show respect, despite his inappropriate behavior (e.g., smelling of alcohol).

Emotion and Politeness

- Diana’s disgust overrides any politeness considerations she might have had. Her disregard of feelings is an FTA, and the lack of effort to show politeness indicates her emotional state—she feels offended and doesn’t see the need to preserve the man’s face.

Emotional Disconnection

- Diana’s comment, *“For no good reason,”* is particularly powerful as a face-threatening act. Bessian as a man interprets this as dismissive of his feelings, triggering a strong emotional response. This shows how casual remarks or indifference can threaten face, even without explicit insults.

Community and Isolation

- The old woman’s grieving highlights the contrast between her desire for positive face (acknowledgment, respect, help) and the isolation she experiences. Her emotional distress reveals how the failure of her community to help her threatens her sense of belonging and respect.

Conclusions

This study reveals the importance of literary pragmatics, in terms of speech acts and politeness strategies in the novel *Broken April*. As said above, speech acts have been analyzed quite a lot in spoken production, but not in the written one, especially in literary works in the Albanian literature world. Following Searle’s theory as well as Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies, this research shows how language gives shape to the social dynamics, power dynamics and interpersonal communication of the characters in the novel.

The qualitative research conducted here shows how speech acts are not only means of communication, but means for implying and imposing authority in the social hierarchies. Characters in the novel impose control through assertive and directive speech acts, as the examples show. The authors also accomplish to show how navigate social relations navigate through expressive speech acts, whereas use commissives to commit actions. Very importantly, the analysis shows that power shifts based on whom of the characters controls the direction and flow of conversation and how politeness manages to be used for mitigating or reinforcing dominance.

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