



Application of Culpeper's Impoliteness Framework in the study of Shaw's *Pygmalion*

Elaf Muslim, M.A. Student of English language and Literature, Ferdowsi University

Email: sofiwe678@gmail.com

MahmoudReza Ghorban Sabbagh, Ph.D., Assistant professor Ferdowsi University of
Mashhad, Department of English Language and Literature

mrg.sabbagh@um.ac.ir

ABSTRACT

This paper presented a theoretical investigation of impoliteness in an extract of Pygmalion by Bernard Shaw. The chosen extract could be considered as a turning point in Pygmalion, since it shows climactic movements besides the birth of an independent spirit in the characters. The impoliteness super-strategies used in this study were suggested by Culpeper (1996). These super-strategies were applied to analyze the lingual manner of two central characters, Eliza and Higgins, and answer the main question of the study: 'how can impoliteness be investigated as an element of characterization in Pygmalion?' The results showed how the participants' language characterized them in the dramatic interaction.

They also indicated that the choice of impoliteness strategies differed from one character to another in terms of the social level they belonged to. Finally, the linguistic study of Pygmalion could showed the condition in which the work was created and the way the author used this drama to criticize the society of 19th century in Britain.

Keywords : (im) politeness strategies, Pygmalion, Social class, Turn-taking



1. INTRODUCTION

Study of politeness began in 1970s and covered different area of studies such as linguistics, pragmatics, sociology, and psychology. The republication of Brown and Levinson's (1987) seminal book - originally published in (1978) - and the work of Goffman on 'face' that brought out an increase of interest in cross-cultural and cross-linguistic contrastive pragmatics. In addition, the work of Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983), and Grice's cooperative principles have been greatly effective on politeness maxims (Wales, 2011, p. 327). Due to the complex nature of impoliteness and its serious implications in the society and interpersonal communications, it deserves concentrated academic studies. Thus, the current study mainly aims to review the literature on politeness and impoliteness as technical terms. The presentation will cover the followings: the definition of politeness and impoliteness and some of their most widely used models in literature, namely (1) Politeness strategies, and (2) Impoliteness strategies, and (3) Impoliteness in drama. Then it deals with methodology, in which Culpeper's impoliteness super-strategies are described. Subsequently, by the application of Culpeper's framework, research questions are answered in discussion section. Finally, concluding remarks are presented.

2. Review of related literature

2.1 Politeness strategies

The theory of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) has remained the most influential starting point for cross-cultural and cross-linguistic contrastive pragmatics, although it has always been warmly received by critics. They derive their notion of "face" from Goffman by which they mean the public self-image every member of a society wants. Face can be either lost or enhanced. Generally speaking, it is assumed that everyone within a society finds it best to help each other maintain face. The basic position that they take is that politeness can be seen as a rational strategy for handling face-threatening acts. Their model considers politeness in a plausible manner and pays attention to the various strategies people use to create politeness (Kuntsi, 2012). They outline the possible strategic choices for dealing with FTAs in the following manner: (1) Bald On-record politeness: This strategy is used in situations where people know each other well or in a situation of urgency. (2) Off-record: This strategy is more indirect. The speaker does not impose on the hearer. As a result, face is not directly threatened. This strategy often requires the hearer to interpret what the speaker is saying. (3) Positive Politeness: This strategy tries to minimize the threat to the hearer's positive face. This can be done by attending to the hearer's needs, invoking equality and feelings of belonging to the group, hedging or indirectness, avoiding disagreement, using humor and optimism and making offers and promises. (4) Negative Politeness: This strategy tries to minimize threats to the hearer's negative face. An example of when negative politeness would be used is



when the speaker requires something from the hearer, but intends to maintain the hearer's right to refuse. This can be done by being indirect, using hedges or questions, minimizing imposition and apologizing (Fauziati, 2014).

Leech (1983) proposes the maxims of politeness principle tending to go in pairs as follows: 1. Tact maxim (in impositives and commissives) a) minimize cost to other, b) maximize benefit to other. 2. Generosity maxim (in impositives and commissives) a) minimize benefit to self, b) maximize cost to self. 3. Approbation maxim (in expressives and assertives) a) maximize dispraise of other, b) maximize praise of other. 4. Modesty maxim (in expressives and assertives) a) minimize praise of self, b) minimize dispraise of self. 5. Agreement maxim (in assertives) a) minimize disagreement between self and other, b) maximize agreement between self and other. And 5. Sympathy maxim (in assertives) a) minimize antipathy between self and other, b) maximize sympathy between self and other. Lakoff (1989) extends the examination of politeness to two discourse types of which conflict is an intrinsic element: psychotherapeutic discourse and the discourse of the American trial courtroom. In these contexts, non-polite behavior could be systematic and normal. Furthermore, a distinction is proposed for genres like these, between 'non-polite' and 'rude', and consequences are discussed in terms of power relations between participants.

Werkhofer (1992) sees politeness as a means which is placed between individuals and between the individual and the social. He states that although politeness is socially constructed, individuals do not play a role. However, their actions on the other hand cannot be totally individually decided, since the rules of politeness somewhat control them.

2.2 Impoliteness strategies

Regarding the fact that none of the aforementioned studies have focused comprehensively on impoliteness in an attempt to improve our understanding of its operation and its theoretical basis, impoliteness strategies are going to be reviewed in the present section.

According to Leech (2005), politeness is always a matter of degree, and can be affected by a number of caveats which could be listed in the following manner: 1) people are not always polite, and politeness principles could be violated, flouted or suspended, 2) positive politeness and pos-politeness (Leech defines positive politeness more narrowly than B&L to exclude what Lakoff called camaraderie. On the other hand, Leech gives pos-politeness a bigger role that is allowed for by B&L), 3) irony and banter, 4) the maxims or constraints may compete or clash with one another, 5) we use different scales (such as vertical distance, horizontal distance, weight or value, strength of socially-defined rights and obligations, self-territory and other-territory) to assess the appropriate degree of politeness, 6) attributing politeness to hearer (what is polite from speaker's viewpoint is impolite from hearer's viewpoint).

Bousfield (2008) argues that power is an important aspect in the study of impoliteness. According to them, power is a vital part of interaction and "impoliteness is an exercise of

f power". Moreover, impoliteness brings about restrictions in the ways people can respond to the impoliteness or to the face-attack, and the restriction of one's options to act is of course the use of power.

Culpeper (1996) uses the label 'impoliteness' to describe the linguistic strategies to attack face – to strengthen the face threat of an act. He presents a framework of impoliteness which is based on the theory of Brown and Levinson (1987). Culpeper (1996) defines five impoliteness super-strategies which are opposite of Brown and Levinson's politeness super-strategies. He describes the five super-strategies as follows:

(1) Bald on record impoliteness - the FTA is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimised. It is important to distinguish this strategy from Brown and Levinson's Bald on record. For Brown and Levinson, Bald on record is a politeness strategy in fairly specific circumstances. For example, when face concerns are suspended in an emergency, when the threat to the hearer's face is very small (e.g. "Come in" or "Do sit down"), or when the speaker is much more powerful than the hearer (e.g. "Stop complaining" said by a parent to a child). In all these cases little face is at stake, and, more importantly, it is not the intention of the speaker to attack the face of the hearer.

(2) Positive impoliteness - the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants.

(3) Negative impoliteness - the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants.

(4) Sarcasm or mock politeness - the FTA is performed with the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, and thus remain surface realisations. [...]

(5) Withhold politeness - the absence of politeness work where it would be expected. [...] For example, failing to thank somebody for a present may be taken as deliberate impoliteness. (Culpeper, 1996, pp. 8-9)

Culpeper (1996) also states that there are many non-verbal and paralinguistic acts (such as shouting or avoiding eye-contact) which are considered as face-threatening, and could be more vividly shown in dramas.

2.3 Impoliteness in Drama

Impoliteness is a type of aggression and aggression has been a source of entertainment for thousands of years. But impoliteness is not thrown in haphazardly in drama for audience entertainment; it surely serves other purposes. It is important to note here that in a fictional context such as a drama, there are two reasons why any character's behavior carries more interpretative significance than would the same behavior in real life. Firstly, having the complete set of behaviors that constitute a particular character is impossible in real life. Secondly, the audience knows that any character behavior is not just determined by the fictional personality, but it could be the result of the motivated choice of the writer. In real life, impoliteness is mostly perceived as unexpected or foregrounded behavior which could be simply unintentional. But in fiction, impoliteness could be interpreted as a message from the author about an aspect of the fictional world which will be of futur



e consequence. Given the value of impoliteness in plays, an extract from Pygmalion is chosen to analyze (Culpeper, 1998).

3. Methodology

The present study aims to assess impoliteness in a dramatic conversation. For this purpose, Pygmalion (1913) by Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) has been randomly selected. Regarding the fact that it is beyond the scope of this article to assess impoliteness in the whole play, thus only an extract has been chosen for analysis. The dialogue occurs between the two main characters, Liza and Higgins while in quarrel. But prior to starting the analysis, it is necessary to mention that Culpeper's super-strategies have been chosen as the theoretical framework of the present paper since it is considered as a valuable theory in the study of drama and is about the tactical handling of language. It also aims to examine the socially appropriate manners.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Impoliteness in Pygmalion

Pygmalion is a comedy by Bernard Shaw which was produced in German in Vienna in 1913 and in England in 1914. It turns out the claim made by Professor Higgins (a character based on the scholar Henry Sweet) that he could pass off Liza, a Cockney flower girl, as a duchess by teaching her to speak properly. In the course of her education she emerges not merely as a presentable lady but as a beautiful woman of increasing sensitivity. To Higgins, however, she is just a successful experiment and the play ends with Eliza rejecting him. What is going to be done in this study is to see the way impoliteness super-strategies presented by Culpeper have been applied in the following dialogue and what is meant by them. This excerpt which can be considered as a climax in Pygmalion belongs to Act IV. Eliza protests against being treated as an object. She forces Higgins to reconsider what a woman could be.

At the beginning of this act, the trio of Higgins, Eliza and Pickering return to Higgins' Wimpole Street laboratory, exhausted from the night's happenings. They talk about the evening and their great success, though Higgins seems more tired and concerned with his inability to find slippers. While he talks absentmindedly with Pickering, Eliza slips out, returns with his slippers, and lays them on the floor before him without saying a word. Higgins and Pickering speak as if Eliza is not there with them, saying how happy they are that the entire experiment is over successfully, agreeing that it had become rather boring in the last few months. Both professors then leave the room to go to bed. Eliza is clearly hurt, but Higgins and Pickering are oblivious to her. Higgins pops back in, once again mystified over what he has done with his slippers, and Eliza promptly flings them in his face. Eliza is furious; she thinks that she is not as important as his slippers. At Higgins' retort that she is presumptuous and ungrateful, she answers that no one has treated her badly, but that she is still left confused about what is to happen to her now that the bet has been won. Higgins says that she can always get married or open that flower shop,

but she replies by saying that she wishes she had been left where she was before. She goes on to ask whether her clothes belong to her, meaning what she can take away with herself without being accused of thievery. Higgins is genuinely hurt, something that does not happen to him often. She returns him a ring he bought for her, but he throws it into the fireplace. After he leaves, she finds it again, but then leaves it on the dessert stand and departs (Sparknotes1, 2017).

The extract (Shaw, 2003, pp. 131-134):

HIGGINS: Well, Eliza, you've had a bit of your own back, as you call it. Have you had enough? And are you going to be reasonable? Or do you want anymore?

LIZA: You want me back only to pick up your slippers and put up with your tempers and fetch and carry for you.

HIGGINS: I haven't said I wanted you back at all .

LIZA .Oh, indeed. Then what are we talking about ?

HIGGINS: About you, not about me. If you come back I shall treat you just as I have always treated you. I can't change my nature; and I don't intend to change my manners. My manners are exactly the same as Colonel Pickering's .

LIZA: That's not true. He treats a flower girl as if she was a duchess .

HIGGINS: And I treat a duchess as if she was a flower girl .

LIZA: I see. [She turns away composedly, and sits on the ottoman, facing the window]. The same to everybody .

HIGGINS: Just so .

LIZA :Like father.

HIGGINS: [grinning, a little taken down] Without accepting the comparison at all points, Eliza, it's quite true that your father is not a snob, and that he will be quite at home in any station of life to which his eccentric destiny may call him. [Seriously] The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls: in short, behaving as if you were in Heaven , where there are no third-class carriages, and one soul is as good as another.

LIZA: Amen. You are a born preacher .

HIGGINS: [irritated] The question is not whether I treat you rudely, but whether you ever heard me treat anyone else better .

¹ - <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/pygmalion/section4.rhtml>

LIZA: [with sudden sincerity] I don't care how you treat me. I don't mind your swearing at me. I don't mind a black eye: I've had one before this. But [standing up and facing him] I won't be passed over .

HIGGINS: Then get out of my way; for I won't stop for you. You talk about me as if I were a motor bus .

LIZA: So you are a motor bus: all bounce and go, and no consideration for anyone .But I can do without you: don't think I can't .

HIGGINS: I know you can. I told you could .

LIZA: I know you did, you brute. You wanted to get rid of me .

HIGGINS: Liar.

LIZA: Thank you. [She sits down with dignity].

HIGGINS: You never asked yourself, I suppose, whether I could do without you .

LIZA: [earnestly] Don't you try to get round me. You'll have to do without me .

HIGGINS: [arrogant] I can do without anybody. I have my own soul: my own spark of divine fire. But [with sudden humility] I shall miss you, Eliza. [He sits down near her on the ottoman]. I have learnt something from your idiotic notions: I confess that humbly and gratefully. And I have grown accustomed to your voice and appearance. I like them, rather .

LIZA: Well, you have both of them on your gramophone and in your book of photographs. When you feel lonely without me, you can turn the machine on. It's got no feelings to hurt .

HIGGINS: I can't turn your soul on. Leave me those feelings; and you can take away the voice and the face. They are not you .

LIZA: Oh, you are a devil. You can twist the heart in a girl as easy as some could twist her arms to hurt her. Mrs. Pearce warned me. Time and again she has wanted to leave you; and you always got round her at the last minute. And you don't care a bit for her. And you don't care a bit for me .

HIGGINS: I care for life, for humanity; and you are a part of it that has come my way and been built into my house. What more can you or anyone ask ?

LIZA: I won't care for anybody that doesn't care for me.

HIGGINS: Commercial principles, Eliza. Like [reproducing her Covent Garden pronunciation with professional exactness] s'yollin voylets [selling violets], isn't it ?

4.2 Impoliteness super-strategies in the Extract

The observed conversational behavior in Pygmalion comes as something of a surprise. We might have expected much politer behavior, given that Higgins is a professor. The extract is full of impolite utterances using different impoliteness strategies employed by the characters, Higgins and Liza. By the application of Culpeper's framework, the applied super-strategies could be listed as follows.

4.2.1. Bald on record impoliteness

According to what was discussed, bald on record is the first impoliteness super-strategy in Culpeper's theory which can be defined as a strategy which is employed when there is much face at risk and when a speaker aims to damage the hearer's face and thus the impolite utterance will be performed straight and visibly. In the above extract, Higgins applies bald on record in turn 15 (get out of my way), since he intends to attack Eliza's face directly and clearly.

As a reaction to the Higgins' behavior against Eliza, she practices bald on record in turn 28 (I won't care for anybody that doesn't care for me). Their utterances have clear purposes to be outstandingly offensive. It is observable that their expression, especially Higgins', has a rising intonation which is negatively assessed in this context.

4.2.2 Positive impoliteness

Super-strategy of positive impoliteness, which is defined as the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants, could be classified into the following sub-strategies: Ignore, snub the other - fail to acknowledge the other's presence. Exclude the other from an activity. Disassociate from the other - for example, deny association or common ground with the other; avoid sitting together. Be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic Use inappropriate identity markers - for example, use title and surname when a close relationship pertains, or a nickname when a distant relationship pertains.

Use obscure or secretive language - for example, mystify the other with jargon, or use a code known to others in the group, but not the target. Seek disagreement - select a sensitive topic. Make the other feel uncomfortable - for example, do not avoid silence, joke, or use small talk. Use taboo words - swear, or use abusive or profane language. Call the other names - use derogatory nominations (Culpeper, 1996).

Regarding the above classification, turn 19 (liar) told by Higgins and turns 12 (You are a born preacher), 16 (you are a motor bus), 18 (you brute), and 26 (you are a devil) told by Eliza could be considered as positive impoliteness in which sub-strategy of inappropriate identity markers are used to refer to each other. In turn 10 (Like father), Eliza is seeking disagreement to make Higgins uncomfortable. Furthermore, turn 14 (I don't care how you treat me. I don't mind your swearing at me. I don't mind a black eye: I've had one before this. But [standing up and facing him] I won't be passed over) shows Eliza's being disinterested and unsympathetic with the hearer (Higgins) which is another indication of positive impoliteness.

4.2.3 Negative impoliteness



Super-strategy of negative impoliteness, which is defined as the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants, could be classified into the following sub-strategies: Frighten - instill a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur. Contend, scorn or ridicule - emphasize your relative power. Be contemptuous. Do not treat the other seriously. Belittle the other (e.g. use diminutives). Invade the other's space - literally (e.g. position yourself closer to the other than the relationship permits) or metaphorically (e.g. ask for or speak about information which is too intimate given the relationship). Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect - personalize, use the pronouns 'I' and 'you'. Put the other's indebtedness on record (Culpeper, 1996)

The most frequent sub-strategy of this category may be associated with ridiculing the addressee such as turns 1 (are you going to be reasonable), 3 (I haven't said I wanted you back at all), 23 (I can do without anybody. I have my own soul: my own spark of divine fire. But [with sudden humility] I shall miss you, Eliza. [He sits down near her on the ottoman]. I have learnt something from your idiotic notions: I confess that humbly and gratefully. And I have grown accustomed to your voice and appearance. I like them, rather), 24 (Well, you have both of them on your gramophone and in your book of photographs. When you feel lonely without me, you can turn the machine on. It's got no feeling to hurt), and 29 (Commercial principles, Eliza. Like [reproducing her Covent Garden pronunciation with professional exactness] s'yollin voylets [selling violets], isn't it?). Other sub-strategies of negative impoliteness are also observed such as frightening in turn 5 (If you come back I shall treat you just as I have always treated you), or scorning in turns 6 (He treats a flower girl as if she was a duchess), 13 (The question is not whether I treat you rudely, but whether you ever heard me treat anyone else better), and 26 (You can twist the heart in a girl as easy as some could twist her arms to hurt her. Mrs. Pearce warned me. Time and again she has wanted to leave you; and you always got round her at the last minute. And you don't care a bit for her. And you don't care a bit for me). In turns 15 (You talk about me as if I were a motor bus), 18 (You wanted to get rid of me), and 22 (Don't you try to get round me), the addresser explicitly associates the addressee with a negative aspect.

4.2.4 Sarcasm or mock politeness

This super-strategy is performed with the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere. For instance in turns 8 (I see) and 20 (Thank you), Eliza is apparently polite, while her utterances are not sincere.

4.2.5 Withhold politeness

This super-strategy refers to the absence of politeness work where it would be expected. For instance, when Eliza in turn 2 (You want me back only to pick up your slippers and put up with your tempers and fetch and carry for you) refers to some indications of Higgins' bad tempers, he does not care or apologize. Even he refuses that he wants Eliza to come back.

4.3 A brief introduction to Shaw's socio-political ideas

Born in 1856, George Bernard Shaw grew up during the apex of the British Empire, known as the Victorian Age. English industry was at that time the most advanced in Europe; the government's censorship laws were the most liberal of their kind; and the overtaking of the aristocracy by the bourgeoisie was well underway. In this politically liberal and intellectually rich period, Shaw attempted to create his works on the basis of his strongest assets: his quick wit, his keen insight into cultural and political issues, and his potentiality to express himself in both written and spoken forms (Morgan, 2013).

Shaw learned economics from George and Jevons, but it was Marx who converted him to socialism. His thought can be understood only in terms of the England in which he came intellectually to life. Basically, Shaw is the product of two great decades- the eighties and the nineties. The nineties were to make him a creative evolutionist; the eighties made him, together with a great many other people, a socialist (Irvine, 1946). As a leading prolific author, Shaw, frequently spoke and debated at meetings for social and political causes, for several years he was a municipal officeholder, an early and active member of the Fabian Society, and co-founder of the Labour Party (Kauffmann 1986, as cited in Çakirtaş & Şekerci, 2015). Upon his encounter with Henry George during a lecture on Progress and Poverty, and after his close reading of Progress and Poverty (1879), Shaw announced that "I immediately became a Socialist, and from that hour I was a man with some business in the world" (Schwartzman 1990, as cited in Çakirtaş & Şekerci, 2015). His socialist leanings and his outburst as a political activist encompassed all his life and were echoed in nearly all his plays (Chestreton 1909, as cited in Çakirtaş & Şekerci, 2015). Shaw echoed the very basic uneasiness of society using his pen as a 'political weapon' and he created a public opinion against "scrofula, cowardice, cruelty, hypocrisy, political imbecility, and all other fruits of oppression and malnutrition" (Shaw, 2014).

5. CONCLUSION

Any analysis of dialogue in plays needs to be sensitive to the social dynamics of interaction. Impoliteness analysis attempts to describe how participants manipulate their message to face. It should be taken into consideration that such attacking face not only has the general potential to be entertaining, but more importantly, can bring about further characterization and plot in a play such as Pygmalion or any other work of fiction. In Pygmalion, impoliteness is central to the construction of characters. Thus, the current study was designed to determine the role of impoliteness strategies in an extract of Pygmalion by Bernard Shaw. For this purpose, Culpeper's super-strategies were applied which could be listed in the following manner: 1) bald on record impoliteness, 2) positive impoliteness, 3) negative impoliteness, 4) sarcasm or mock politeness, and 5) withhold politeness. The results of impoliteness analysis in this paper showed a significant number of impoliteness strategies. It could be a sign of social disagreement and also, developments in both characters. The other result was that the choice of impoliteness strategies differed from one character in terms of the social level they belonged to; for example, Hig

gins, in comparison to Eliza, mostly talked in a bossy manner and used negative impoliteness sub-strategies while Liza who belonged to a lower class made more use of the positive impoliteness sub-strategies.

Pygmalion projected the idea of poverty and its unavoidable influences on the harsh conditions of human beings. Shaw emphasized his socio-political goals in writing this play. This study could be consistent with Griffith's (1993) study which asserts Shaw's search for equal life standards and his purpose of reaching the ethos of tolerance, the crucial intellectualism and exclusiveness led him also to "turn upon mutual intellectual interests in Ibsen and a concern for the relationship between socialism and sexual equality" (Griffith, 1993). Furthermore, examining Shaw's views and the socio-political background of his period indicated that he rejected art for art's sake, and his dissatisfaction with the conditions made him an iconoclast as well as a Fabian. In this respect, the dramatic method in his plays was on the basis of the conflict of ideas from his socialist viewpoint. Thus, findings of this study could be consistent with Jang's (2006) who showed how the characters in Shaw's plays were all unconventional realists who had no illusions about life.

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