A Stylistic Analysis of *Waiting for Godot*

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August 1, 2017

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Mohakhali, Dhaka

A Stylistic Analysis of *Waiting for Godot*

A Thesis

Submitted to the Department of English and Humanities

Of

BRAC University

Submitted by:

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Of

Masters of Arts in English

August 1, 2017

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Abstract

Stylistics analysis refers to the process of the identification of patterns and usage of language in linguistics. In literature, such analysis examines the quality and meaning of text. The purpose of this thesis is to combine both areas to study the language in order to conduct a stylistic analysis of the play *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett. A literature based analysis has been done with reference to Martin Esslin's interpretation of the play as an absurd drama. The rest of the thesis are guided by the application of the cooperative principles and implicatures, Austin and Searle's Speech Act Theory and Deborah Schiffrin's discourse model to analyze the language of the play. Beckett breaks the norms of English language to get the reader's attention, develop interest and create absurdity in the play. This makes the language of *Waiting for Godot* ripe with material for stylistic analysis.

Keywords: Theatre of the Absurd, Cooperative principle, Implicature, Speech Act Theory, discourse model

Introduction

Theatre of the Absurd is a term that was used to characterize the works of a several European and American dramatists of the 1950s and early 1960s. The philosophical notion of Absurdism gained momentum after the publication of the essay, "Le Mythe de Sisyphe" by the French philosopher Albert Camus in 1942. In it, he argued that the human existence is fundamentally absurd and meaningless in a world that is indecipherable by nature. The European and American dramatists who subscribed to Camus' philosophy were identified as authors belonging to the Theatre of the Absurd**.** Though there has been no formal Absurdist movement, dramatists as diverse as Samuel Beckett, Eugène Ionesco, Jean Genet, Arthur Adamov, Harold Pinter, and a few others who shared a pessimistic vision of humanity and its struggle for meaning, have been associated with this genre.

The term Theatre of the Absurd was coined by Martin Esslin in his book *The Theatre of the Absurd* that was published in 1961. The genre reached its peak around 1950's and 60's centered in Paris and later became popular in other countries. The diverse cultural landscape of Paris along with its "highly intelligent theatre going public, which is receptive, thoughtful and as able as it is eager to absorb new ideas" (Esslin, 27) provided a ripe environment for the experimentation of such genre.

The origin of the Theatre of the Absurd is rooted in the avant garde experiments of art in the 1920's and 1930's in France. However, while the poetic avant- garde theatre pondered on the absurdity and uncertainty of human condition and disregarded the traditional axioms of drama, it was far less violent and grotesque in its depiction. The absurdist theatre was also strongly influenced by the traumatic experience of the Second World War. The extent of destruction witnessed during the war shook the foundation of values and conventions held dear by culture and society. It highlighted the precariousness of human life ruled by meaninglessness. Such atrocities tested the established power of religion over society and any sense of faith held by the individual. As Esslin put it, " The decline of the religious faith was masked until the end of the Second World War by the substitute religions of faith in progress, nationalism and various totalitarian fallacies. All this was shattered by the war" (23). Therefore, the genre shaped itself around the loss and sense of purposelessness felt around the time. Assuming a bizarre but innovative art form, it aimed to startle the audience by dismantling the conventional life of

everyday concerns with an approach that defied logic. The traditional form of theatre did not resonate with the reality of the meaningless, God- less post Second World War existence. Thus, the Theatre of the Absurd appeared as the rebellion that represented the new revelation of the age with its surreal and illogical art form that lacked any conflict or plot. Esslin concluded "The Theatre of the Absurd is a part of anti- literary movement of our time which found expression in.... its rejection of 'literary' elements" (26).

One of the prime example of the Theatre of the Absurd is by Samuel Beckett. First staged in 1953 at the Théâtre de Babylone in Paris, it became one of the greatest successes in the post-war theatre being viewed by more than one million spectators across the oceans in the first five years of production (39). Its complex, enigmatic, plotless narrative that refused to conform to any accepted ideas of dramatic construction found audience in Finland, Italy, Turkey, Israel, Czechoslovakia, Brazil, Mexico, Poland, Japan etc.

Waiting for Godot is a two act play that had almost the same things taking place in both acts. The Irish literary critic Vivian Mercier wrote in the Irish Times in 1956 that Samuel Beckett had "written a play in which nothing happens, twice" (1). Yet the play enjoys the same reverence to this day. As the director of the play's UK production in 2009, Sean Mathias, eloquently put it:

> This play speaks about what it is to be human at the most animal and spiritual level, so subtly that it's like a big beautiful poem or piece of music. It doesn't lecture you, it's not polemic, it's not coarse. It's written so subtly that its lessons are almost biblical. It teaches you in a very gentle, intelligent way and I think it's very relevant today. (2)

The universal appeal of *Waiting for Godot* is intriguing and promises a journey that can take one through a multifaceted experience. It has baffled and awed many generations with its meaningless appearance yet profound impact. This creates a mystery around the language of the play that is worth exploring. This thesis analyzes the elements of the play that contributes to both the literary and linguistics mechanics that achieve the play's ability to communicate despite missing the traditional elements of drama. Chapter one of this thesis investigates Martin Esslin's definition of the Theatre of the Absurd and how it applies to Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for*

Godot. Chapter two, three and four will look into the pragmatics of the Theatre of the Absurd that helps to communicate its expression.

Chapter 1

The Theatre of the Absurd

The Theatre of the Absurd truly defies the traditional sense of drama in its search to express its attitude towards life or rather existence. Esslin In his book *The Theatre of the Absurd*, Esslin defined absurdity as:

> Absurd' originally means 'out of harmony', in a musical context. Hence its dictionary definition: 'out of harmony with reason or propriety; incongruous, unreasonable, illogical' is what the applies to the play. (23)

In fact, Esslin cites an essay on Kafka by Ionesco who defined their understanding of the term as: "Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose... Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless' (23). This sense of metaphysical anguish at the absurdity of the human condition is the theme of Beckett's play. Esslin uses the concept of senselessness to define Absurdism as a genre and poses a working hypothesis that is based upon the premise of this concept:

> The Theatre of the Absurd strives to express its sense of the senselessness of the human condition and the inadequacy of the rational approach by the open abandonment of rational devices and discursive thought. (24)

The Theatre of the Absurd simply presents the absurdity of the human condition through concrete stage images rather than make arguments about it. Its anti- theatre qualities tackle the expression of absurdity through various artistic features such as the lack of a plot or traditional dramatic language. Anyone hoping to discover the key to understanding Beckett's plays in definite and exact terms will be disappointed because his plays do not subscribe to traditional patterns. It is rather that the uncertainties and irregularities are the essential element of its total impact. As Beckett himself pointed out in his essay on Joyce's " Work in Progress" that the form, structure, and mood of artistic endeavors cannot be separated from their meaning or conceptual content because a work of art as a whole is its meaning and cannot be separated from the manner in which it is said (44). *Waiting for Godot* produces that particular feeling of uncertainties- from hoping to discover Godot's identity to the repeated disappointment of never meeting him,

speculating suicide, suffering poverty and abuse from strangers with no hope for release from the situation- that are the essence of the play. Esslin explained the attempt to establish the identity of Godot or resolve any struggle faced by the characters through critical analysis as futile comparing it to the effort to find clear lines hidden behind the chiaroscuro of a painting by Rembrandt by scraping away the paint (45). So to understand the play, it is better to explain it through the lens of its artistic features of anti theatre.

Plot is the fundamental characteristic of drama that has been done away in the anti-theatre culture of the Theater of the Absurd. In traditional drama, a plot would feature time, location and the logical order of events. But the plot of an absurdist drama is all but fractured and scattered which takes away from the audience's ability to predict the flow of events and often leads to no resolution. *Waiting for Godot* has such qualities as the characters wait endlessly without reaching any result. Waiting is to experience time that constantly changes. Despite the changes in time from day to day, indicated by the appearance of leaves on the tree by the road on the second act, nothing seems to change for the two protagonists, Vladimir and Estragon thus creating only an illusion of time. As subject to the flow of time, human beings are never the same at any single moment. Yet, nothing real ever happens to the characters making the constant activity of time null and void. The more time changes, the more the reality for the characters stays the same. This is best described by Pozzo as he exclaims in his final outburst that one day is like another, and when we die it will be as if we never existed at all:

> POZZO. Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time?... One day, is that not enough for you, one day like any other day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we will go deaf, we day we were born, one day we will die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you... (86)

The location of *Waiting for Godot* is as laconically brief as it is vague- A country road. A tree. Evening- giving the bare minimum sense of the plays surroundings. The only other decoration is a low mound found in the first set of stage directions. This bleak appearance of the location resembles the attitude of the Theater of the Absurd towards life that it identifies as devoid of meaning. Even the topics of conversation between the characters rarely have any context throughout the play. Their vain attempt to wait for Godot who never arrives and talk incessantly of seemingly unrelated issues indicate the essence of human existence that suffers from

meaninglessness in the world of absurd dramas. So despite not having a plot, *Waiting for Godot* manages to express precisely what it aims to with its anti- plot approach to theatre. According to Esslin:

> Beckett's plays lack plot even more completely than other works of the Theatre of the Absurd. Instead of a linear development, they present their author's intuition of the human condition by a method that is essentially polyphonic; they confront their audience with an organized structure of statements and images that interpenetrate each other and thus must be apprehended in their totality", gaining meaning by their simultaneous interaction. (47)

The characters of *Waiting for Godot* lack the conventional development found in the characters of traditional theatre. They incessantly talk to themselves and others often repeating their dialogues. Their speech is distorted and mostly lacks any objective. In *Waiting for Godot*, pain and suffering are two themes that the characters live through as the struggle tires them out. Vladimir and Estragon are forlorn, decrepit characters with clumsy movements. They almost seem to accept the state of their being as Estragon nonchalantly tells Pozzo that his own feet stink and Vladimir's breath stinks. They are sick of body and mind and live on the fringes of sanity as they repeat their conversations and daily routine. They are put through such suffering for no overt reason defying the traditional build up of conflict in Greek drama or Christian notion of suffering. The only similarity between Greek protagonists and Beckett's characters is that both exhibit a tenacity to proceed through their struggle. However, while the Greek characters arrive at a resolution, the characters of the Theatre of the Absurd seem to be stuck in a limbo. Beckett was not interested in the deliverance of his characters.

> His plays reveal his experience of temporality and evanescence; his sense of the tragic difficulty of becoming aware of one's own self in the merciless process of renovation and destruction that occurs with change in time, of the difficulty of communication between human beings; of the unending quest for reality in a world in which everything is uncertain...(70)

Thus, when the director of the first American production Alan Schneider asked Beckett who or what Godot was, he replied, " If I knew, I would have said so in the play" (44). Godot is of

secondary importance to the experience of Vladimir and Estragon. In fact, Vladimir, Estragon, Lucky and Pozzo are not characters but rather the embodiments of basic human attitudes similar to the personified virtues and vices in medieval mystery plays (76). Based on that analysis, Vladimir is the hopeful one, Estragon is cynical, Pozzo is over- confident and self- centered and Lucky is the naive one who teaches Pozzo of truth, beauty and reason that seem fruitless in the purposeless world of *Waiting for Godot*. The audience responds to the play because they recognize the truth about their own human relationship in the sadomasochistic interdependence of Pozzo and Lucky and in the bickering hate- love between Vladimir and Estragon. The characters function as the driving force that make the audience confront their deepest fear and anxieties through a process of cathartic liberation that have only ever been vaguely experienced at a half- conscious level.

Beckett's plays are concerned with expressing the difficulty of finding meaning in an ever changing world where language reveals the limitations of itself both as a means of communication and as a vehicle for expression of valid statements or thought. His use of the dramatic medium makes it evident that he tried to move beyond the application of language. The mimeplays in his dramas can be understood without words even though the actions of the characters contradict their verbal expression. In *Waiting for Godot,* the two tramps say "Let's go" at the end of each play but the stage direction reveals that they do not move. The contrapuntal relationship between language and action on stage can help understand the facts behind language. The concrete, three dimensional nature of stage can be used to add new expression to language that can function as a medium of thought and a sense of self. However, the endless contradictory conversation between Vladimir and Estragon, the variety turn of Lucky's hat or Lucky's mindless babbling put the verbal expression of the play in question. Beckett's work deconstructs language to make sense of an environment that has no certainty or definite meaning. In *Waiting for Godot*, the different mode of disintegration of language range from simple misunderstanding, to clichés, repetitions, lack of the right word or punctuation, loss of grammatical structure, nonsensical dialogue all indicating the loss of language as a functional means of communication. Language's failure to capture the central struggle for meaning is demonstrated by Beckett in his characters' inability to maintain meaningful speech in one of the most lyrical passages in the play:

VLADIMIR.. You're right, we're inexhaustible.

ESTRAGON. It's so we won't think.

VLADIMIR. We have that excuse.

ESTRAGON. It's so we won't hear.

VLADIMIR. We have our reasons.

ESTRAGON. All the dead voices.

VLADIMIR. They make a noise like wings.

ESTRAGON. Like leaves.

VLADIMIR. Like sand.

ESTRAGON. Like leaves.

[*Silence*]

VLADIMIR. They all speak together.

ESTRAGON. Each one to itself.

[*Silence*]

VLADIMIR. Rather they whisper.

ESTRAGON. They rustle.

VLADIMIR They murmur

ESTRAGON. They rustle.

[*Silence*]

VLADIMIR. What do they say?

ESTRAGON. They talk about their lives.

VLADIMIR. To have lived is not enough for them.

ESTRAGON. They have to talk about it.

VLADIMIR. To be dead is not enough for them.

ESTRAGON.It is not sufficient.

    [*Silence*]

VLADIMIR. They make a noise like feathers.

ESTRAGON. Like leaves.

VLADIMIR. Like ashes.

ESTRAGON. Like leaves.

    [*Long silence*] (58)

Therefore, it can be said that in the loss of meaning is experienced in the system of language itself. Through the depiction of how language fails to construct meaning, Beckett devalues the system of language itself. Beckett's critique of language seems to emerge from his depiction of the lack of an absolute of meaning in the plays. As a consequence, language tends to become private, devoid of any structure of reference in a meaningless world.

The lacks of plot, character development or traditional dramatic language are what contribute to the absurdist nature of *Waiting for Godot*. Its deviation from the norm and the subtlety of its mechanics are what make the play such an impactful piece.

Chapter 2

Cooperative principle and conversational implicature in the language of *Waiting for Godot*

A pragmatic analysis of *Waiting for Godot* based on the cooperative principles and conversational implicatures can help understand the violation of maxims and how that contributes to the absurdity of the play. This chapter discusses the Cooperative Principles and conversational implicatures in the first section. The second section is about the application of such principles and implicautres to the language of the play. The chapter is concluded in the third section.

2. 1: Cooperative principles and conversational implicatures

People convey their wishes and intentions through linguistic elements. However, these elements are sometimes incapable of conveying specific meanings. For this, there are other intervening factors, such as the context in which an utterance takes place and helps understand its meaning. In other words, when a speaker says something, the hearer's understanding of that utterance must go beyond what linguistic elements- syntax or lexis convey. In effect, there is a great difference between what one says and what one implies. According to Grice, there are some principles both speakers and hearers share in their conversations. These are known as the co-operative principle and can be elaborated in four sub principles called maxims. The maxims consist of quality, quantity, manner and relevance. Grice believed that any deviations from these maxims lead to the emergence of conversational implicatures.

The objective of the cooperative principle is described as, "Make your conversational contributions as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged"(Yule, 37). There are four maxims. Making contribution that is true or has evidence is about the maxim of quality. Saying neither more nor less than is cooperatively necessary is about the maxim of quantity. Being relevant is about the maxim of relation. Being brief, orderly and understandable while avoiding ambiguity or obscurity is about the maxim of manner. Conversational implicatures are the additional unstated meaning associated that has to be assumed in order to maintain the cooperative principle (128). For example, saying the frame is nice implies the speaker may not like the picture in it. Implication is the conclusion that can be drawn although it is not explicitly stated.

Conversational implicatures is a type of extra or additional meaning that is not present at the surface level of utterances or sentences. Observation or violation of maxims results in conversational implicatures. Such violation of maxims hold more meaning than if they are obeyed. Violation happens when one or more maxims of conversation are not present in a conversation. Interlocutors try to implicate these violated maxims as truthful, enough, clear and relevant due to the lack of appropriate information.

The conversational passages in the next section are selected from *Waiting for Godot* and have been analyzed with reference to the cooperative principle and conversational implicatures. The process of analysis involves identification and categorization of conversations in terms of violation of the four maxims to see its effect over the language and the meaning in the play.

2.2: Application of the cooperative principle and the conversational implicature in the language of the play

When cases or instances of absurd language are identified it becomes easy to categorize them in terms of principle they disobey. Selection of the pragmatic principles, such as cooperative principle and its four conversational maxims is done here because it is one of the main building block of conversation. Authors, dramatists and poets flout or violate these four maxims to create absurdity in language.

Example 1:

ESTRAGON.: Do you remember the day I threw myself into the Rhone?

VLADIMIR. We were grape harvesting.

ESTRAGON. You fished me out.

VLADIMIR. That's all dead and buried. (51)

In this short conversation, Vladimir violates the maxim of quantity by saying we were grape harvesting instead of saying that he remembers the day. In the last dialogue, there is a violation of maxim of relation when Vladimir says that "that's all dead and buried." Instead of continuing the conversation he finishes it at this dialogue. Here it can be implicated that maybe he is trying not to remember his past. Here, the ambiguity of language arises because of communication gap.

There is no co-operation on behalf of Vladimir to convey the exact message of the character or author.

Example 2:

> ESTRAGON. (Looking at the tree). What is it?
>
> VLADIMIR.It's the tree.
>
> ESTRAGON.: Yes, but what kind?
>
> VLADIMIR. I don't know. A willow. (10|)

Here, Vladimir violates the maxim of quantity. Estragon asks about the tree's name or species but Vladimir just tells that it's a tree. Therefore it can be implicated that Vladimir doesn't understand what Estragon means at first but his dialogue creates a comic situation for a moment in the play.

Example 3:

> ESTRAGON. [Angrily] Use your head, can't you?
>
> VLADIMIR. You're my only hope. (14)

In this conversation, Vladimir is unable to answer Estragon's question and through such irrelevant reply, tries to avoid the situation. The implicatures arise from flouting the maxim of relation that tells us that Vladimir might not know the answer or maybe he is just trying to avoid Estragon's line of questioning.

Example 4:

> VLADIMIR. Where are your boots?
>
> ESTRAGON. I must have thrown them away.
>
> VLADIMIR. When?
>
> ESTRAGON. I don't know?

VLADIMIR. Why?

ESTRAGON. (Exasperated). I don't know why I don't know!

VLADIMIR. No, I mean why did you throw them away? (62)

Here again, in this conversation, there is the violation of the maxim of relevance and quantity as Estragon utters ambiguous statements to avoid the issue of having lost his boots and does not share any amount of information. This can also involve the violation of the maxim of manner as Estragon is being vague about the situation. Irrelevant replies imply absurdity in language causing readers to infer meaning according to their own perceptions.

Example 5:

VLADIMIR. don't you recognize us? We met yesterday.

POZZO. I am blind.

ESTRAGON. He can see into the future. (81)

Here, Estragon violates the maxim of relevance while talking to Vladimir as Pozzo says he is unable to see. Instead of sympathizing with him, Estragon thinks of something fantastical creating a humorous effect with language.

Example 6:

ESTRAGON. In the meantime let us try and converse calmly, since we are incapable of keeping silent.

VLADIMIR. You're right, we're inexhaustible.

ESTRAGON. It's so we won't think.

VLADIMIR. We have that excuse.

ESTRAGON. It's so we won't hear.

VLADIMIR. We have our reasons.

ESTRAGON. All the dead voices. (57)

The violation of the maxim of relevance and manner are found in this exchange between Estragon and Vladimir. The seemingly pointless exchange has no explicit relation to the interlocutors' surrounding. The abrupt language creates ambiguity in the play. It may be argued that the mention of dead voices and lack of thinking imply the futility of life in the context of an absurd drama.

Example 7:

VLADIMIR. Charming evening we're having.

ESTRAGON. Unforgettable.

VLADIMIR. And it's not over.

ESTRAGON. Apparently not.

VLADIMIR. It's only the beginning.

ESTRAGON. It's awful. (31)

In this conversation, there are flouting of maxims of manner and quantity as Estragon is obscure with his one word response. The use of the term unforgettable is ambiguous and does not help clarify if the characters are enjoying or having a horrible experience. However, Estragon eventually comes around to admitting the fact that he thinks the evening is awful.

Example 8:

VLADIMIR. At last!

(Estragon gets up and goes towards Vladimir, a boot in each hand. He puts them down at edge of stage, straightens and contemplates the moon.)

VLADIMIR. What are you doing?

ESTRAGON. Pale for weariness.

VLADIMIR. Eh?

ESTRAGON. Of climbing heaven and gazing on the likes of us.

VLADIMIR. Your boots, what are you doing with your boots? (50)

In this conversation of both interlocutors are flouting of maxims of relevance and quantity. At first Estragon ignores Vladimir's question and then he provides him with replies that lack sufficient information. It maybe implied that Estragon wants to be rid of this worldly existence of meaninglessness. The flouting of maxims create ambiguity and confusion in the language leaving readers or audience members to wonder what the playwright tries to convey through these characters.

Example 9:

ESTRAGON. (Aphoristic for once) We are all born mad. Some remain so.

VLADIMIR Wouldn't go so far as that.

ESTRAGON. No, I mean so far as to assert that I was weak in the head when I came into the world. But that is not the question.

VLADIMIR. We wait. We are bored. (He throws up his hand.) No, don't protest, we are bored to death, there's no denying it. (59)

In the example above, the characters flout the maxims of manner, quantity and relevance through ambiguous language which the readers or the audience maybe unable to comprehend. In the last case, maxim of relevance is flouted creating a humorous effect. Estragon is discussing a very serious topic but Vladimir just ignores him with his petty problem of being bored. Maybe the implication is that he does want to get into serious matters or it's really his foolish behavior towards worldly matters.

2.3: Conclusion:

From the analyzed examples, it is apparent that the characters continually violate or disobey the conversational rules even if it hampers their understanding of life. The purpose of this is to create humor and absurdity in the language. The point of discussion is the basic purpose of communication that makes clear, true and relevant. Pragmatics provides the conversational rules to fulfill the needs of effective communication. Meaning doesn't depend only on apparent structure but on its hidden references as well. The cooperative principle advises not to say more or less than required, be relevant with the topic, and always say what is true or have strong grounds. By following these rules people can communicate effectively. However, the absurdity of *Waiting for Godot* is achieved through such irregularity. The element of implicature play a key role in understanding the play's meaning. It helps to communicate its absurd nature. Characters communicate while they don't follow conversational rules so the result is ambiguity of the language. Sometimes it shapes humor and sometimes it reflects absurdity moving against the nature of conversation. Most prominent strategy used in the play is the flouting of the maxim of relevance that gives grounds to the absurd and ambiguous language.

Chapter 3
Application of the Speech Act Theory to *Waiting for Godot*

This chapter is concerned with the application of Austin and Searle's speech act to deconstruct the language of *Waiting for Godot* and establish meaning in its seemingly meaningless appearance. The irrelevant dialogues, unnecessary circumlocutionary utterances, random topic choices, sudden conversational moves are the kind of deviation from standard language that can be analyzed under Speech Act theory in order to establish their true meaning. The first section discusses the Speech Act Theory or Austin and Searle. The second section applies the speech acts to the language of the play. The third section concludes the chapter.

3.1 The Speech Act theory

Austin defined speech acts as the actions performed in saying something (Cutting, 13). The speech act is an utterance that helps an interlocutor performs an action with the purpose to communicate. The theory identifies utterances and turns as actual actions. It considers the language used by the speaker and change in the behavior of the speaker and the listener during communication. According to Elizabeth Black, Speech Act and Cooperative Principles are "the ground rules that that we observe when speaking and interpreting utterances" (4).

There are three related acts that construct the Speech Act Theory of Austin. The first act is known as the locutionary act which is the basic act of utterance. The second act, known as the illocutionary act, conveys what is done with the utterance. The force of an offer, an invitation or a request is examples of an illocutionary act. The third act is the effect of the utterance on the hearer known as the perlocutionary act. Austin describes the appropriate conditions for the acts to be recognized as intended as felicity conditions. Such conditions include the context and roles of participants to be recognized by all parties, the completion of the act, the complete understanding of the hearer, no play acting on the speakers part etc. The breakings of such conditions cause infelicity. There are four kinds of felicity conditions. These are content, preparatory, sincerity and essential conditions. Along with the felicity condition, characters must

also observe politeness principle. Offering help or addressing a question with proper information is polite while ignoring someone's request or inquiry are impolite and face threatening acts. To sum it up the deviations of speech acts occur when the illocutionary act does not meet with the intended perlocutioanry act.

Searle classified the speech acts into five micro- classes. These are: Declarations, Representative, Commissives, Directives, and Expressives. The words or utterances that change the world are Declaratives. Taking a wedding vow is an example of a declarative speech act. Words and utterances that state the belief of the speaker are Representatives. Describing, claiming, hypothesizing, insisting and predicting are representative speech acts. Commissives acts are consisted of words that commit the speaker to future action. Promising, offering, threatening, refusing, vowing, volunteering are commissive acts. Directives are words that aim to make the hearer do something. Commanding, requesting, inviting, forbidding, suggesting are examples of directive acts. Expressives state how the speaker feels. Apologizing, praising, congratulating, regretting are expressive acts

Literary writers often use deviation to set apart expressions that draw attention of the audience or reader. Such deviation may occur through departure from standard grammatical rules. Such deviation causes foregrounding. Forgrounding sets something apart from the surrounding words to draw focus. Deviations in plays leave a lot up to the reader or the audience to infer as it deals with face to face interactions between the characters. The Theatre of the Absurd thrives on such deviations that break down the formal rules of communication.

The futile nature of the play's language highlights a kind of uncertain condition for its characters. The Speech Act theory has been prescribed to the language of the play to reveal its techniques of creating such futility.

3.2 Application of the Speech Act theory to the language of *Waiting for Godot*

The marked utterances discussed below are examples of data taken from *Waiting for Godot* that exhibit cases of deviations from the Speech Act Theory. The analysis explains the context of the given utterances and interprets how the utterances deviate based on the Speech Act theory. The conclusion then sums up how the deviations affect the artistic representation of the play as a part of the Theatre of the Absurd.

Example 1:

> VLADIMIR : I'm glad to see you back. I thought you were gone forever.
> ESTRAGON: Me too.
> VLADIMIR: Together again at last! We have to celebrate this. But how? (He reflects.)
> Get up till I embrace you.
> ESTRAGON : (irritably). Not now, not now. (5)

In this scene in the first act, Vladimir is elated to see Estragon again. He joyfully wants to embrace him. Estragon does not feel the same joy to be back in the same place. The emotions are reflected in the utterances of the characters.

Vladimir's direct illocutionary speech act of joy expresses the perlocutionary act to have the same feeling reciprocated. However, Estragon does not comprehend the meaning of Vladimir's expressive speech act. His repeated refusal " Not now, not now" puts the response in the foreground indicating his strong desire to not participate. The directive "get up' and the commissive " we will have to celebrate this" can be described as request without any polite expression because they are friends. But Estragon's annoyed refusal makes the whole exchange fall apart. This causes a case of infelicity as Estragon does not recognize the context and the role of Vladimir. His rude rejection also violates the politeness principle. In the end, the lack of the perlocutionary effect of Vladimir's utterances on his friend causes deviation of speech acts.

The audience expects Estragon to respond to Vladimir with equal joy. However, his repeated refusal brings forth the hopeless state of mind of the character to the foreground making his utterance prominent for analysis. The expressive utterance of Vladimir on seeing his friend can be an exclamatory sentence but the lack of the exclamatory sign in the first dialogue makes the feeling expressed almost superficial. Meeting Estragon and waiting for Godot are routine parts of Vladimir's life which might have contributed to the lack of enthusiasm in his tone. However, in order to persuade Estragon, Vladimir seems to put in more spirit in the greeting to his friend when the says ' Together at last!'.Still, Estragon is more responsive to the futility of their daily routine and has no energy to celebrate.

Example 2

> VLADIMIR. Ah yes, the two thieves. Do you remember the story?
>
> ESTRAGON. No.
>
> VLADIMIR. Shall I tell it to you?
>
> ESTRAGON. No.
>
> VLADIMIR. It'll pass the time. (Pause) Two thieves, crucified at the same time as our Saviour. One _____
>
> ESTRAGON. Our what?
>
> VLADIMIR. Our Saviour. Two thieves. One is supposed to have been saved and the other…. (He searches for the contrary of saved)… damned. (8)

In this scene, in the first act, Vladimir wants to narrate the Biblical event of salvation and damnation of the two thieves who were crucified along with Christ. Estragon shows no interest in listening to it. He distracts Vladimir's attention by not giving him proper feedback. Estragon's lack of interest may stem from his fear of being the damned one out of him and Vladimir. Vladimir, on the other hand, focuses on the optimistic thought of being redeemed.

Vladimir questions Estragon if he remembers the story of the two thieves from the bible. Here, he performs an act that has the illocutionary force of a question. However, Estragon reveals that he does not know the story so Vladimir takes the commissive act in the form of an interrogative to politely offer to tell him the story. The perlocutionary effect of such an offer is usually acceptance. However, Estragon declines the offer negating felicity conditions and politeness principle through the act of defiance. His unexpected response makes it a foregrounded situation in the text. His unwillingness to listen to the story points to his fear of divine punishment demonstrated by the deviations of the speech acts.

Despite Estragon's short, almost curt replies that show his disinterest in the story, Vladimir makes an effort to tell the story and lead the conversation. The stage direction reveals that there is a pause due to Estragon's lack of response. Vladmir proceeds with the story anyways. At the mention of the noun phrase "our savior", Estragon asks his friend who the savior was. The repetition of the phrase induces a kind of pun in a mocking tone about the savior because the savior could not save himself. In the play, the two characters are waiting for someone named Godot who they believe would save them but ironically Godot never keeps his appointment with them which makes the whole situation a morose and sardonic. This negligence also fuels Estragon's fear of being the damned one since Vladimir is the one more interested in Godot and the biblical allusions of salvation.

Example 3:

VLADIMIR. You want to get rid of him?

POZZO. He wants to cod me, but he won't.

VLADIMIR. You want to get rid of him?

POZZO. He imagines that when I see how well he carries I'll be tempted to keep him on in that capacity.

ESTRAGON. You've had enough of him?

POZZO. In reality he carries like a pig. It's not his job.

VLADIMIR. You want to get rid of him?

POZZO. He imagines that when I see him indefatigable I'll regret my decision. Such is his miserable scheme. As though I were short of slaves! (All three look at Lucky) Atlas, son of Jupiter!... (28)

In this scene in the second act, Vladimir and Estragon are curious to know why Lucky does not put down the baggage he carries for Pozzo. Pozzo gives a different answer to this question every time the two protagonists ask him. He is unwilling to keep Lucky in his service and finally reveals his plan to sell him at the fair they are going to.

Here, Vladimir and Estragon's questions resemble statements. It is the sign of interrogation that identifies them as query instead of interrogative with normal grammatical structure. The repetition of Vladimir's question with the same syntax makes it a hybrid expression. Their timid directive speech acts as utterances make it evident that Vladimir and Estragon recognize Pozzo as someone superior. A lot of questions are asked throughout the play following the same construction and many go unanswered. The answers often do not relate to the topic of the questions deviating speech acts.

Similarly, Estragon's illocutionary act has the perlocutionary force of a question that requires a response from Pozzo. According to Short, "Relevant contextual conditions for the adequate performance of particular speech act include speaker/hearer intentions as well as states of affairs in the world", (Short, p. 199). Estragon observes that Pozzo has unfavorable feelings towards his slave Lucky. Like Vladimir, Estragon's inquiry into whether or not Pozzo has had enough of Lucky as a slave reveals his interest to take Lucky's place. However, Pozzo never really addresses the question violating the felicity conditions of recognizing the context and role of the participants.

The illocutionary speech acts of both the tramps are in need of a perlocutionary act from Pozzo. But Pozzo's lack of a relevant response makes it a deviation of speech act. As Elam put it, "The speech act cannot be successfully performed unless the speaker gets the listener to recognize his illocutionary intentions" (Elam, 163). The last two utterances of Pozzo "As though

I were short of slaves! (...) Atlas, son of Jupiter" are followed by the exclamation sign. The illocutionary act of his declarative (page, 371) speech act has the perlocutionary force of being perceived as a contradictory claim. Such irony makes it a foregrounded statement. His use of present tense in describing Lucky's situation with him, such as "wants", "imagines", and "carries" show that there is a habitual context to the words. Pozzo portrays himself as a victim of Lucky's "scheme" even though Lucky is the slave and he is the tyrannical owner who has no appreciation of Lucky's services for him. Through his illocutionary acts, he implies the perlocutionary force of denial of Lucky's service and worth. The real tragedy lies in the fact that, despite witnessing such abuse, Vladimir and Estragon still prefer Lucky's position to their own.

3.3 **Conclusion**

The marked cases of the deviations of speech acts of *Waiting for Godot* have two common kinds of deviation (372). There are frequent failures of listener to respond to the illocutionary force or recognize the intention behind the perlocutionary force. The lack of harmony between the illocutionary and perlocutionary effect create chaos. The mixing of expressive or directive speech acts with interrogative (372) show the incoherence of the modern inquiries of life. The deviations of the speech acts along with their violation of felicity and politeness conditions contribute to the absurdist expression of the play.

Chapter 4

Schiffrin's model of discourse on *Waiting for Godot*

This chapter applies the discourse model of Deborah Schiffrin to the analysis of the language in *Waiting for Godot*. The first section of this chapter will discuss the discourse model of Deborah Schiffrin. The second section will apply the model to the language of the play.

4.1 Schiffrin's discourse model

Discourse has focally to do with language, meaning and context (ref. preface, first page, green book). For many, particularly linguists, "discourse" has generally been defined as anything "beyond the sentence". In short, the study of discourse is the study of language use (Yule, 23) or Discourse is about the analysis of language in use.

The discourse model of Deborah Schiffrin illustrates different structures of a discourse. It helps understand how cohesion can be established through the interaction between the different components. Cohesion is described as the primary determinant of whether or not a set of sentences constitute a text. It is found both in monologue and dialogue. One way to create cohesion between dialogues is to study the dialogical pairs whose propositional completion depends on contributions from both speaker and hearer (Schiffrin, 25). For example, when a speaker proposes a yes- no question or a WH- question, the recipient would complete the proposition by filling in the WH- information or fixing the polarity (yes- no question). Schiffrin sums it up by saying that, "studies of cohesion indicate that the meaning conveyed by a text, is meaning which is interpreted by speakers and hearers based on their inferences about the propositional connections underlying what is said (9).

Doborah schiffrin proposed a model for coherence in talk which she also took to be a model of discourse (24). In discourse analysis, coherence is the quality of being meaningful and unified. Schiffrin's model focuses on local coherence. Local coherence is usually constructed between adjacent units in discourse but can also account for a more global dimension of coherence (24). The model shows contexts to which utterances are indexed. The top of the model is from the initial speaker and the bottom is from the hearer. The arrows in the diagram indicate the connection between the units both within and between the structures. They show the

relationship between the propositions, acts and turns. They also show the interconnections between the exchange structure, the action structure, the ideational structure, the information state, and the participation framework. The five elements discussed in the model are also known as the five planes of discourse.
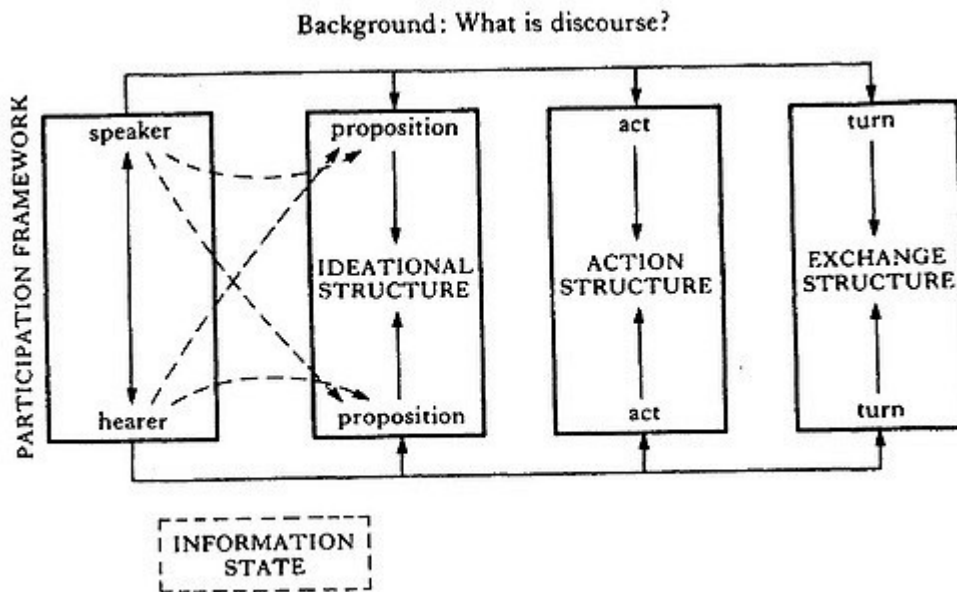
Background: What is discourse?

Figure 1: Discourse model (Schiffrin, 25)

In the model, Schiffrin distinguishes two kinds of non- linguistics structures. One is the exchange structure and the other is action structure. She identifies these two structures as pragmatic because turns and acts are not necessarily linguistics; they are realized through the use of language. Exchange structure is about the mechanics of turn- taking where the units of talk or turns include adjacency pair, question- answer, greetings etc. According to Schiffrin, exchange structures are the outcome of the decision produced by which speakers alternate sequential roles and define those alternations in relation to others (24). It also involves the system constraints of talk of Goffman (Farko, 277) that is concerned with the two way capability of sending adequate and interpretable messages, feedback, contact signal, turnover signals, etc. The other non -

linguistic structure is the action structure. In Schiffrin's model, this structure is about the sequencing of speech acts. It indicates that speech acts are situated in terms of preceding action, the intended action, the action intended to follow, and the action that does follow in reality. It must be noted that speech acts also involve the identities of the speaker and the social settings as well. Besides the situation of speech acts, the action structure is also concerned with ritual constraints of Goffman (Farko, 277) that take into account the interpersonal requirements of talk. This involves protecting the person and their relationships by not violating any appropriate standards of their demeanor or deference to one another.

Schiffrin identifies the third structure, the ideational structure, as semantic. It is concerned with propositions or ideas and the cohesive, topic and functional relations between them that contribute to the configuration of the structure. Cohesive ties are established when interpretation of an element presupposes information from a prior clause (Halliday and Hassan) because of the semantic relationships underlying the text (Schiffrin, 26). Due to the lack of a way to find topic and subtopic, Schiffrin described topic as a summary of the important part of the discourse content (26). Functional relations between ideas are the role that ideas play in relation to each other.

Besides the pragmatic and semantic differences between the three structures, they can also be differentiated based on their use on dialogues and monologues. Exchange structure can be found in dialogue only where action structure can be found in either. Idea structure are found in both.

The Participation framework is also pragmatic because it is about how language relates to the user. It takes into account what is being said, what is being meant and what is being done. So it is concerned with the types of relationships set up between the speaker and hearer and how that relates to turns, acts, and proposition.

The Information State is about the organization and management of knowledge. It takes into account the cognitive capacity of the hearer and the speaker, what they know, what they assume they know and how they organize knowledge. Since, there is a risk of sharing information that is irrelevant, this plane also involves an inferential process.

The discourse model of Shiffrin illustrates the different structures of discourse and can be used to establish cohesion between the components in a discourse. According to Schiffrin, a process of integration of all these discourse planes is needed in order to make communication successful (Furko, 278). Thus, an analysis of the language of *Waiting for Godot* can be conducted using the model to show its disordered and incoherent nature. The next section applies the model to the language of the play to examine its chaotic nature.

4.2 Application of Schiffrin's Discourses Model in *Waiting for Godot*

The linguistic behavior in Waitng for godot is not common in daily communication or traditional plays. Even though there might be some irrelevant exchanges that take place in real life, most of the time meaning can be deciphered using the setting, introduction of characters, shared knowledge between the interlocutors, conversational environment etc. However, it is almost impossible to infer the language of the play. In fact, Beckett designed the language in such a way that it defies the exchanges of traditional plays and create the effect of absurdity. The current study shows how the Discourse Model of Schiffrin explains the absurdity of the play's language.

The conversations of Waiting for Godot do not fit any structure of the discourse model. The exchange structure involves turn taking and adjacency pairs such as greetings and question-answer. However, the characters shift from having a conversation to silence to monologues or exchanges without proper turns or hints. For example, when Pozzo arrives he delves into a monologue without any prior inquiry of the other characters or any other reasons. The example is presented below:

VLADIMIR : Let's go.

ESTRAGON : But take the weight off your feet, I implore you, you'll catch your death.

POZZO : True. (He sits down. To Estragon.) What is your name?

ESTRAGON : Adam.

POZZO : (who hasn't listened). Ah yes! The night. (He raises his head.) But be a little more attentive, for pity's sake, otherwise we'll never get anywhere. (He looks at the sky.)

Look! (All look at the sky except Lucky who is dozing off again. Pozzo jerks the rope.) Will you look at the sky, pig! (Lucky looks at the sky.) Good, that's enough. (They stop looking at the sky.) What is there so extraordinary about it? Qua sky. It is pale and luminous like any sky at this hour of the day. (Pause.) In these latitudes. (Pause.) When the weather is fine. (Lyrical.) An hour ago (he looks at his watch, prosaic) roughly (lyrical) after having poured forth even since (he hesitates, prosaic) say ten o'clock in the morning (lyrical) tirelessly torrents of red and white light it begins to lose its effulgence, to grow pale (gesture of the two hands lapsing by stages) pale, ever a little paler, a little paler until (dramatic pause, ample gesture of the two hands flung wide apart) pppfff! finished(it comes to rest. But-(hand raised in admonition)- but behind this veil of gentleness and peace night is charging (vibrantly) and will burst upon us (snaps his fingers) pop! Like that! (his inspiration leaves him) just when we least expect it. (Silence. Gloomily.) That's how it is on this bitch of an earth... (34.)

In the beginning, the three characters are having a conversation where Pozzo asks Estragon his name. Asking someone's name in a conversation between strangers is usually an amicable gesture or a conversation starter. However, when Estragon replies to Pozzo, he does not pay attention and instead moves onto a monologue on his own. Thus, the turn- taking mechanics in their question- answer pair break down due the lack of his feedback. This shows how the exchange structure of the Discourse Model is disregarded in the play.

As described in the section above, action structure takes into account the sequencing of speech acts and considers what precedes the action, what action is intended, what action is intended to follow, and what action does follow. In the play, *Waiting for Godot*, there are several violation of speech acts through verbal and non verbal behaviors that create infelicitous conditions. An example of such violation is given below:

ESTRAGON. Ah stop blathering and help me off with this bloody thing.

VLADIMIR. Hand in hand from the top of the Eiffel Tower, among the first. We were respectable in those days. Now it's too late. They wouldn't even let us up. (Estragon tears at his boot.) What are you doing?

ESTRAGON. Taking off my boot. Did that never happen to you?

VLADIMIR. Boots must be taken off every day, I'm tired of telling you that. Why don't you listen to me?

ESTRAGON. (Feebly). Help me!

VLADIMIR. It hurts?

ESTRAGON. (Angrily). Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts! (6)

Here, Estragon struggles to take off his boots and asks Vladimir for help. Vladimir, however, goes on about his memories of visiting the Eiffel Tower and then asks what Estragon is trying to do indicating that he did not even pay attention to his friend's plea. Once he does hear Estragon's request, he still doesn't help him. Instead he tells his friends how to use shoes and asks if it hurts. The utterance or the behavior intended to follow does not take place. As in, the illocutionary act of his utterance does not meet with the expected perlocutionary effect violating the essential felicity condition. Thus the constrained sequence of the action structure falls apart.

The ideational structure is concerned with what is being discussed in the discourse and consists of ideas and propositions. The relationship between the ideas and propositions are built on their semantic affiliation with each other. Simply put, the ideas and propositions must be cohesive, topical and functional for the discourse organization to be satisfactory. In the previous example, Vladimir's reaction to Estragon's request violates the maxim of relevance breaking down the ideational structure. Talking about their trip to the Eiffel tower or advising Estragon on how to use boots is not a relevant response to Estragon's plea. Since the ideational structure breaks down, cohesion hardly exists between utterances in the language of the play.

Information state is concerned with the knowledge organized, shared and assumed between the interlocutors. In the play, the breakdown of information state can be seen in the example below:

Silence

ESTRAGON . (anxious). And we?

VLADIMIR . I beg your pardon?

ESTRAGON. I said, And we?

VLADIMIR. I don't understand.

ESTRAGON. Where do we come in?

VLADIMIR.. Come in?

ESTRAGON. Take your time. (15)

Here, Vladimir's inability to grasp Estragon's questions reveals that Estragon assumed too much of what Vladimir's knows creating the violation of the maxim of quantity. What the characters know about their propositions contribute to the ideational structure. A failure to build such shared or assumed knowledge destroys the information state of the play. Lucky's speech is another example of how the information state breaks down in the play. His incoherent speech full of repetition, without any punctuation and several non- existent words sheds doubts on whether or not he knows what he is talking about. Below is a fragment of Lucky's long speech:

LUCKY. Given the existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattmann of a personal Cod quaquaquaqua with white beard quaquaquaqua outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown but time will tell and suffers like the divine M iranda with those who for reasons unknown but time will tell are plunged in torment plunged in fire whose fire flames if that continues and who can doubt it will fire the firmament that is to say blast hell to heaven so blue still and calm so calm with a calm which even though intermittent is better than nothing but not so fast and considering what is more that as a result of the labors left unfinished crowned by the Acacacacademy of Anthropopopometry of Essy-in-Possy of Testew and Cunard it is

established beyond all doubt all other doubt than that which clings to the labors of men that as a result of the labors unfinished of Testew and Cunard it is established as hereinafter but not so fast for reasons unknown that as a result of the public works of Puncher and Wattmann it is established beyond all doubt that in view of the labors of Fartov and Belcher left..... (40)

Since, the participation framework studies the relation between the speakers and their utterances, the non- sense speech of Lucky is an example that shows how the participation framework of the play falls apart. In the example for exchange structure, Pozzo's treatment of Vladimir and Estragon shows the relationship dynamic between the characters. Both Lucky's speech and the interaction between Pozzo and the two tramps show that the interlocutors hardly relate to the turns, act and propositions of the play. This makes the participation framework break down.

4.3 Conclusion

The breaking down of all five planes of discourse demonstrates the absurdity of the language in *Waiting for Godot*. However, the dysfunctional language actually resonate with the audience of the Theatre of the Absurd as it proves the pervasive sense of meaninglessness of life created in absurdist dramas.

Conclusion

The conclusion sums up all the chapters to tie each of the analytical chapters of the play. The first chapter of the thesis is about the interpretation of absurdist drama by Esslin and how that relates to *Waiting for Godot*. It takes into account the socio- political environment of the time when the play was first performed to show the influence under which this genre of drama flourished. It also discusses the literary elements unique to the genre of absurd plays and how they are used. This chapter establishes absurdist qualities of the play that are later analyzed through the lens of pragmatics and discourse analysis.

The second chapter discusses the Cooperative Principle and conversational implicature that help examine the maxims that are flouted or violated in the play. As a result, it sheds light on how such violation can contribute to the absurdist nature of the language of the play. The third chapter is concerned with Austin and Searle's Speech Act Theory. The deviation of the speech acts help identify how absurdity is constructed in the play. The fourth and last chapter is about the discourse model by Deborah Schiffrin. It illustrates the planes of discourse in the model and how the violation of each of the plane explains the absurdist temperament of the play.

As the result of such analysis, it can be said that the absurdist language of Waitng for Godot is not an enigma that is incomprehensible yet interesting. The language of the play can be understood through the application of pragmatic and discourse analysis.

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