

## THE PRAGMATICS OF BREAKING SINCERITY CONDITION IN THE SCARLETT LETTER

دراسة تداولية لخرق مبدأ الصدق في رواية سكارلت لتر

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### Abstract

Based on Hester Prynne's illocutionary acts in The Scarlet Letter, this study seeks to determine the classifications and roles of speech acts. Furthermore, this study tries to uncover the traits of 17th-century American society as depicted in the speech of Hester Prynne's actions in the novel. The "Scarlet Letter" is a novel talks about a strong woman named Hester Prynne fights against religion's dominance in America in the 17th century. The dominance of religion in society, as presented by Prynne's speech acts, a characteristic of American society in the 17th century, because Religion dictates all social norms, such as how people should dress, speak, determine who gets punished, observe mourning periods, and how women should live in society.

**Key words:** Hester Prynne, Pearl, sin, scarlett letter.

الكلمات المفتاحية: هستر براين، بيرل، الخطيئة، الحرف القرمزي.

### خلاصة

بناءً على الأفعال الإلقاءية لهيستر برين في الحرف القرمزي، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد تصنيفات وأدوار أفعال الكلام. علاوة على ذلك، تحاول هذه الدراسة الكشف عن سمات المجتمع الأمريكي في القرن السابع عشر كما صورها خطاب تصرفات هستر برين في الرواية. "الحرف القرمزي" رواية تتحدث عن امرأة قوية تدعى هستر برين تحارب ضد هيمنة الدين. في أمريكا في القرن السابع عشر. هيمنة الدين على المجتمع، كما قدمتها أفعال برين الكلامية، هي سمة من سمات المجتمع الأمريكي في القرن السابع عشر، لأن الدين يملئ جميع الأعراف الاجتماعية، مثل كيف يجب على الناس ارتداء الملابس، والتحدث، وتحديد من سيعاقب، ومراقبة فترات الحداد، و كيف ينبغي للمرأة أن تعيش في المجتمع

### 1. Context of the Research

We frequently use utterances in both written and spoken forms of communication in daily life. It is well recognized that those statements

have intentional meanings that listeners and speakers may interpret. The theory of speech act is one pragmatics theory that controls the utterances being understood. It is simple to understand a speech act as a method of doing an activity by using words. It is theoretically possible to categorize utterances into three distinct categories: perlocutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and locutionary acts. However, the consideration of illocutionary acts is the exclusive focus of this work. Saying something out loud is referred to as an illocutionary act. It has to do with the speaker's aim, which includes giving instructions, making promises, offering an apology, etc. To determine whether or not an utterance is appropriate, it is necessary to comprehend not only the notion of illocutionary act but also the concept of felicity condition. Speech success is correlated with the condition of felicity. Thus, the purpose of this study was to determine, using the principle of felicity condition, whether or not an utterance is appropriate. It was carried out in line with Austin's (1962) concept of felicity condition.

## 2. Problems of the Research

The analysis in this study focuses on characterizing felicitous conditions and illocutionary acts from the utterances spoken by women. The following research problems were formulated in light of the background mentioned above: 1. What kinds of illocutions were present in the speech of the female characters in the book *The Scarlett Letter*? 2. How was the felicitous condition explained in each illocutionary act? 3. In what ways does *The Scarlett Letter* violate the condition of sincerity?

## 3. Aims of Research

The first goal of this study is to identify the different kinds of illocutions that women use in the utterances that they make in the novel *The Scarlett Letter*. To explain the happy state in which women's illocutions occur in the book *The Scarlett Letter*. To look into the novel *The Scarlett Letter*'s condition of broken sincerity.

## 4. Pragmatics

The phrase "favority conditions" refers to the prerequisites and requirements that must be met for a speech act to accomplish its goal in speech-act theory and pragmatics "the study of how to do things with words". To put it another way, a sentence needs to be felicitous, or appropriate for the situation, in addition to being grammatically correct (Lieberman, 2019:23). For example:

"Have you ever asked yourself why the words 'I now pronounce you husband and wife' do not create a legal marriage between two people when uttered in the context of a film set?"

Despite exchanging promises before the Spanish justice of the peace says "I do," the actors are not actually legally wed. The goal of this speech act is to get the "bride" and "groom" into a legally binding marriage, but the requirements and conditions are not met for this to happen. Furthermore, the celebrant is not legally able to declare the couple to be husband and wife. Consequently, in the marriage scene of the movie, the speech act is not happy(web source 1).

## 5. Types Felicity Conditions

There are various kinds of favorable circumstances, such as the following:

**-Propositional content**, which calls for language comprehension rather than acting theatrically

**-Preparatory**, where the speech act's circumstances and the speaker's authority allow for a successful performance

**-Sincerity**: when the speech act is delivered in a sincere and serious manner -**Essential**: when the speaker wants the addressee to take action after hearing them out.

An utterance is felicitous in linguistics and philosophy of language if it is pragmatically well-formed. An utterance may be infelicitous if it contradicts itself, is trivial or irrelevant, or is otherwise out of place in the context of the utterance. Similar to how syntacticians use grammaticality judgments, semantics and pragmatics researchers employ felicity judgments. To mark a sentence as infelicitous, use the pound sign.

The terms felicitous and infelicitous were first introduced by J. L. Austin in his theory of speech acts. He claims that depending on a number of factors, the interpretation of a performative utterance's felicitous or infelicitous nature changes depending on whether it is a declaration.

("I sentence you to death"), a request ("I ask that you stop doing that"), or a warning and is neither true nor false. ("I warn you not to jump off the roof").

- Condition for propositional content: it is a future event
- Preparatory preconditions: 1) The speaker thinks the event will happen and hurt the hearer; 2) The speaker thinks the hearer won't realize the event will happen.
- Sincerity condition: the speaker sincerely thinks the hearer will suffer as a result of the event
- Essential condition: the statement is regarded as the speaker's attempt to persuade the hearer that a future event will be harmful

### 6. Sincerity Isn't Always the Same Truth

The foundation of wise relationships is open sincerity between partners. This straightforward paradigm actually encompasses healthy coworker and family relationships in addition to romantic ones, as well as friendships and management relationships. We even discuss transparency in the context of politics and the economy.

Sincere communication and connection are lost when we struggle with someone else's emotional distance. In these situations, the poignant importance of sincerity becomes even more crucial. Not long after, this causes disappointment, betrayal of that initial spark between the two of you, loss of trust, and distance(web source 2).

It appears that truthfulness is the only path back. However, there is a dark side to sincerity that begs the question of why, despite all of its advantages, it is so difficult to achieve.

### 7. Being sincere goes beyond simply "opening up"

When communication is stifled or absent in a relationship, it makes sense to be open to "raw" conversation and discussion (including family relationship, friendship, partnership, etc.). One issue with such unadulterated honesty is that we frequently can't truly "open up" without unleashing a torrent of emotions.

When we think about being real with someone who is more emotionally closed off, we could try to make up for their lack of willingness to share by feeling twice as much. Maybe if we can just let go of all those feelings and be vulnerable, then maybe they will too .

Maybe it will jar them, making things more transparent and honest. as they formerly were. But when we allow ourselves to be fully vulnerable by embracing our emotions (akin to choosing "to be or not to be"), a lot of emotionally charged material also surfaces in addition to the original content we intended to convey(web source 3).

The residue that has accumulated since our closure is the first thing to come out. Things like stored-up doubt, rage, and frustration. fleeting feelings. arbitrary charges. Pain that, although it's not an accusation, sounds like one.

Many emotions that are prone to misunderstanding. Even though that residue seems entirely "sincere" at the time, it becomes clear after a while that this "raw stuff" wasn't the main point of what we intended to convey to the other person when we consider how we expressed our emotions. Maybe that's why they never really understood and, instead, confusion increased.

### 8. Characterizing truth and sincerity

As strange as it may seem, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary can be used to define interpersonal relationships as well as words. This is due to the close connection between our relationships with words and people. According to the MW definition, truth and sincerity are not the same thing. Despite coming from the same womb, they have a few distinct characteristics:

Sincerity: mental integrity and lack of hypocrisy

Truth is the collection of actual objects, occasions, and data.

In other words, truth is a concrete, factual idea, whereas sincerity refers to the speaker's (and addressee's) mental state. Nobody is able to verify your sincerity. Based on the facts, anyone can demonstrate whether you are speaking the truth. The definition of truth is so antiquated that it might hold the key to its meaning. The original meaning of the word was constancy and fidelity. Because of this, we still occasionally use it to declare that we are "true" to someone or something. Understanding truth as fidelity could help us better grasp the feeling we hope to arouse by being sincere" and anticipating the same in return.

### 9. Truth's Significance in The Scarlet Letter

Dimmesdale, Chillingworth, and Hester are the three main characters in Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel The Scarlet Letter whose lies destroy the other characters. Every character has lied at least once, either about who they are or what they are not. First of all, Dimmesdale is a well-known preacher in the neighborhood. However, the residents of the town are unaware of his and Hester's liaison.

He doesn't want to lose his standing as a minister, so he lies. Because of his deceit, he feels guilty, believes that he "sold himself to the devil," and, ironically, he is revered by many. (Hawthorne :193). Next is Chillingworth, an elderly man who is well-known in the neighborhood for being the town physician and pharmacist. Mistress Hibbins approaches Dimmesdale as she watches him leave the forest after they had a meeting with Hester and Pearl.

Declaring to Mistress Hibbins that he was alone in the forest with his friend Apostle Eliot, Dimmesdale lies. The fact that Dimmesdale not only knows Hester but also is the father of her child and a minister—ministers do not lie because they have a close relationship with God—makes his statement noteworthy. A witch named Mistress Hibbins claims to have seen Dimmesdale and Hester together in the forest.

*“So, reverend Sir, you have made a visit into the forest . . . Ha, ha, ha, we must needs talk thus in the daytime! You carry it off like an old hand! But at midnight, and in the forest, we shall have other talk together!”* (Hawthorne :193).

Because Dimmesdale is lying, she is laughing and torturing him. She also makes fun of him by implying that they are having a relationship and that it should be made public during the day(web source 4).

#### 10- Analysis

The Puritans defined truth as "the self-expression of God," and they defined it as the word of God or each and every verse found in the Bible. The Puritans relied heavily on the Bible for their life lessons and took it very seriously. Roger Chillingworth recognizes Mr. Dimmesdale's shortcomings in The Scarlet Letter and is determined to learn the secret that is killing him from the inside out. Chillingworth sets out to discover the truth. While Dimmesdale is unconscious from the drugs Chillingworth gave him, Chillingworth has the chance to do so. As Chillingworth is investigating the truth at this point, he opens Dimmesdale's chest and discovers the red letter imprinted there—exactly what he was looking for. Right away, Hawthorne corrects himself, stating that Chillingworth is closer to *“a sexton delving into a grave, possibly in quest of a jewel that had been buried on the dead man’s bosom”*.

Chillingworth's obsession with discovering the truth is highlighted by these analogies between him and a miner, a sexton, and gold and a jewel."The leech," Chillingworth, is by Dimmesdale's side making him ill. Dimmesdale's condition worsens the longer Chillingworth stays with him. His quest for the truth has become his newfound passion, and he won't give up on it easily. Hawthorne also says that Chillingworth will only discover corruption and death in this section, even though these were the things he was looking for.

The characters that Hawthorne creates are complex, distinct, and challenging to fully comprehend. The main heroine of this tale is Hester Prynne, a young, elegant, and tall woman. It is with shame that independent, strong-willed Hester bears the scarlet letter. She is racked with emotion and

yearns to escape her mark, but she also refuses to accept that society's punishment is the end of her. In *The Scarlet Letter*, Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale plays a supporting role as Hester's covert adulterous partner.

He drives himself to physical and mental illness because he is conflicted and grieving over his secret act. Though he has a strong desire for Hester, is it wise for him to jeopardize his divine status by telling the truth? She burns like Hester, Dimmesdale. The third primary character is Pearl, the offspring of Hester and Dimmesdale's sin. She is intense, sensual, fiery, and remarkably symbolic; early in the book, she is referred to as "*the scarlet letter endowed with life!*" Pearl is naturally overrun with inquiries concerning Dimmesdale, her mother, and herself

At least nominally a Puritan, Dimmesdale passes away because he is aware of his impending doom. He makes an effort to run away from his guilt, but because he eventually chooses to stay religious, his load becomes too much for him to bear, and it kills him both physically and spiritually. Hester, on the other hand, survives because she feels liberated. Her happiness, though, is rooted in pride and ignorance.

She refuses to acknowledge that death and judgment are inevitable for everyone. Part of the reason for Dimmesdale's tragic demise is ignorance. He acknowledges that he is truly condemned, but sadly, he is unaware that he is also capable of forgiveness and restoration. True happiness is found in the truth of forgiveness via Christ, not in ignorance. The red A on Hester Prynne's clothing reads "adulterer." Hester's Puritan neighbors are aware that her daughter Pearl was impregnated by someone she wasn't married to, which is wrong because Pearl was born more than nine months after she and her husband left England to travel to America(web source 5).

The meteor A honors the transgressions of Arthur Dimmesdale. Arthur Dimmesdale is paradoxical in more ways than one. Although he is a saint in the eyes of the saints, he is a true sinner, even though everything appeared to be calm on the surface. He is the victim and the spokesperson for Puritanism in his capacity as a pastor. He finds himself torn between love and faith. He disregarded human nature and the divine, denied even the most basic human needs, and even saw his own humanity as an example of God's betrayal. He is therefore constantly in spiritual pain.

He is unsure of his best option. Whether he should own up to his transgression and live only to survive, or whether he should own up to his transgression and accept responsibility for his punishment in order to set the guilty mind free. Hester, Pearl, and Arthur Dimmesdale, for instance, were standing hand in hand on the scaffold on a mysterious night in early May. There's a flash of light in the sky before he finishes his speech. The pastor raised his head and saw the typical meteor light as letter A, denoted by a dark red line.

When he saw this meteor A, he came to the realization that admitting his sin was required, and that this letter A stood for the forgiveness of his transgression. The novel ends with Pastor Arthur Dimmesdale concluding his sermon. He went to the scaffold with Pearl in Hester's arm, facing the public and the other pastors. With all of his strength and a dreadful voice, he stood there and freely acknowledged his transgressions. He broke the holy hoop and left the chest open, revealing the letter A at that moment. He passed away in his cherished arm after Pearl kissed him. His entire sins were erased by Pearl's kiss. Hawthorne employed shooting stars to represent a spirit. In this instance; the inaccuracy is not incorrect per se, but if we conceal errors, they will eventually become errors. Before a man passes away, how many mistakes should he make in his lifetime? The solution is enigmatic. But *The Scarlet Letter* shows us that letting go of sin is not a disgrace; rather, sin is a meteor that falls from the heart and ushers in a new life (Li Shiqiang, 2008)

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