

## A Pragmatic Study of Exaggeration in British and American Novels

Dr. Qassim Abbas Dhayef Al- Tufaili

College of Education for Human Sciences

University of Babylon

qassimdhayf@gmail.com

Fatima Rehman Mkheef Al- Jobori

College of Education for Human Sciences

University of Babylon

fatimajoubory@yahoo.com

### ملخص البحث:

يصب اهتمام الدراسة الرئيس في تناول المبالغة في مواقف بريطانية وأمريكية مأخوذة من روايتي السيدة دالوي و غاتسبي العظيم. فالمبالغة في مجال الأدب، من وجهة نظر تداولية، لم تحض بالاهتمام الكافي، لذا تتطوي هذه الدراسة على محاولة لتطوير نموذج لتحليل المبالغة تداولياً، وهكذا فإنها تهتم ببلوغ الأهداف الآتية: (١) تقصي أنواع الكلام التي تحدث من خلالها لغة المبالغة في روايتي السيدة دالوي و غاتسبي العظيم. (٢) تحديد وسائل المبالغة المستخدمة في روايتي السيدة دالوي و غاتسبي العظيم، (٣) إظهار الكيفية التداولية التي يتبعها المبالغون من خلال مبدأ التأدب ومبدأ التعاون في تلك الروايتين. (٤) اكتشاف الوظائف التداولية للمبالغة المستخدمة في كلا الروايتين.

يتم التحقق من الفرضيات الآتية وفقاً للأهداف المذكورة آنفاً: (١) استخدام أنواع متباينة من أفعال الكلام التي تحدث من خلالها لغة المبالغة في روايتي السيدة دالوي و غاتسبي العظيم. (٢) استخدام وسائل متنوعة للمبالغة في تلك الروايتين. (٣) تقترض الدراسة انتهاك مبدأ التأدب ومبدأ التعاون في غاتسبي العظيم أكثر منها في السيدة دالوي. (٤) وتقترض الدراسة كذلك أن هنالك وظائف تداولية مختلفة للمبالغة في تلك الروايتين.

ولقد اتبعت الدراسة الحالية الإجراءات الآتية لبلوغ أهدافها وإثبات صحة فرضياتها: (١) عرض نظري للمبالغة بشكل عام ولمنظورها التداولي بشكل خاص. (٢) تحليل لغة المبالغة تداولياً في السيدة دالوي و غاتسبي العظيم بما يتفق والنموذج الذي طورته الدراسة.

وتوصل البحث إلى إثبات الفرضيات الأولى والثانية والرابعة. أما الفرضية الثالثة فقد رفضت جزئياً وإثبتت جزئياً.

الكلمات المفتاحية : المبالغة، التداولية، أفعال الكلام.

### Abstract

The main concern of this study is to tackle exaggeration in British and American situations taken from Mrs. Dalloway and The Great Gatsby novels. From a pragmatic point of view, exaggeration in the field of literature has not been given enough attention. Accordingly, this study is an attempt to develop a model for the analysis of exaggeration pragmatically. Thus, it concerns itself with achieving the following aims: (١) investigating the kinds of speech acts through which the exaggeration language occurs in Mrs. Dalloway and The Great Gatsby novels. (٢) identifying the devices of exaggeration used in Mrs.

# A Pragmatic Study of Exaggeration in British and American Novels

Dr. Qassim Abbas Dhayef Al- Tufaili                      Fatima Rehman Mkheef Al- Jobori

---

*Dalloway* and *The Great Gatsby* novels.(ʔ)showing how exaggerators pragmatically proceed the Politeness Principle and the Cooperative Principle in these two novels.(ʔ)figuring out the pragmatic functions of exaggeration used in these two novels.

In relation to the abovementioned aims, the following hypotheses are tested:(ʔ) various kinds of speech acts through which the exaggeration language occurs can be used in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Great Gatsby* novels.(ʔ)a variety of devices of exaggeration are used in these two novels.(ʔ)the Politeness Principle and the Cooperative Principle are violated in *The Great Gatsby* more than in *Mrs. Dalloway*.(ʔ)there are different pragmatic functions for exaggeration in these novels.

To achieve the aforementioned aims, the following procedures are followed:(ʔ)surveying the relevant literature on exaggeration in general and its pragmatic perspective in particular.(ʔ)analyzing the exaggeration language pragmatically in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Great Gatsby* according to a model developed by this study.

The results of the analysis prove the first, second, and fourth hypotheses, whereas they partially reject the third hypothesis and partially verify it.

**Keywords:** Exaggeration, pragmatics, speech acts.

## 1.Introduction

Exaggeration is a representation of something in an excessive manner to make it more noticeable, or as being larger, better, or worse than it really is (Aristotle, 1976: 169). That is, to exaggerate is to say something beyond the restrictions of truth. As such, language users usually employ exaggeration to say or write things that should not be taken literally. Consequently, certain pragmatic exaggerated devices are more often appealed to by exaggerators in order to be effective in conveying what they intend to achieve.

Leech (1983: 146) states that exaggeration is a common feature of everyday language use. It has an important affective component which is that of describing, understanding, and evaluating an experience.

Studying the exaggerated use of language in the field of literature, specifically novels, is a problem which, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, has not been given enough attention, particularly, from a pragmatic perspective. Consequently, this study attempts to fill its gap throughout answering the following questions: (ʔ)what are the kinds of speech acts through which the exaggeration language occurs in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Great Gatsby* novels? (ʔ)what are the devices of exaggeration used in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Great Gatsby*? (ʔ)how the Politeness Principle and the Cooperative Principle are proceeded by exaggerators in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Great Gatsby* novels? (ʔ)what are the pragmatic functions of exaggeration in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Great Gatsby* novels?

The present study aims at:(ʔ)investigating the kinds of speech acts through which the exaggeration language occurs in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Great Gatsby* novels.(ʔ)identifying the devices of exaggeration used in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Great Gatsby* novels.(ʔ)showing how exaggerators pragmatically proceed the Politeness Principle and the Cooperative Principle in these two novels.(ʔ)figuring out the pragmatic functions of exaggeration used in these two novels. Accordingly, it is

hypothesized that: (١) various kinds of speech acts through which the exaggeration language occurs can be used in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Great Gatsby* novels.(٢)a variety of devices of exaggeration are used in these two novels.(٣)the Politeness Principle and the Cooperative Principle are violated in *The Great Gatsby* more than in *Mrs. Dalloway*.(٤)there are different pragmatic functions for exaggeration in these novels. To achieve the aforementioned aims, the following procedures are followed: (١)surveying the relevant literature on exaggeration in general and its pragmatic perspective in particular.(٢)analyzing the exaggeration language pragmatically in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Great Gatsby* according to a model developed by this study.

## ٢. Literature Review

Rose (١٩٦٦:٤٩) and Aristotle (١٩٧٦:١٦٥) state that the exaggerator has become a familiar figure in Western culture since the appearance of the alazon. The alazon refers to a stock character in Greek comedy, that is, a boaster who pretends to have distinguished qualities which he does not possess at all or he possesses it, but to a lesser degree than what he pretends. Thus, exaggeration is defined by Aristotle(ibid.) as a representation of something in an excessive manner to make it more noticeable, or as being larger, better, less, or worse than it really is.

Certain devices of exaggeration are more often appealed to by exaggerators in order to be effective in conveying what they intend to achieve. These devices are:

### ١. Hyperbole

Fussell and Krueuz (١٩٩٨:٩٤) define hyperbole as a figure of speech of bold exaggeration. It is used by speakers to make their feelings or states of mind as clear as possible. Thus, hyperbole can provide insight into why a particular statement has been said, such as:

١) *I have just watched the Pittsburgh football team lose for the thousandth time!*

Two kinds of hyperbole are identified by Claridge (٢٠١١:٤٠). One is basic and the second is composite. Spitzbardt (١٩٦٣:٢٧٨-٢٨٠) sets various forms through which hyperbole is realized as numerical hyperboles, adjectives, verbs, nouns, adverbs, and many others.

### ٢. Irony

Fussell and Krueuz(ibid.:٩١) assert that the use of exaggeration is "a reliable cue for determining ironic intent". The following example is a verbal irony if it is spoken during a thunderstorm:

٢) *What a gorgeous weather!*

### ٣. Simile

One of the devices of exaggeration is simile which is defined by Cruse (٢٠٠٦:١٦٥) as an explicit comparison between different things that have one similar characteristic. In simile, the word "as" or "like" is used to create a comparison in mind as:

٣) *Our soldiers are as brave as lions.*

#### ٤. Metaphor

One of the devices of exaggeration is metaphor through which an implicit comparison is conducted by exaggerators to convey their opinions, evaluations, and attitudes toward things ( Fussell and Kreuz, ibid.: ١٩٤). Accordingly, Moon (١٩٩٨: ١٩٤) assures that exaggeration is an important feature of metaphorical expressions. Yaseen (٢٠١٢: ٥٣-٥٩) identifies different kinds of metaphor, such as absolute, primary, conceptual, complex, conventional, personification, submerged, root, and many other kinds of metaphor.

#### ٥. Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is an effective device of exaggeration that might be used by exaggerators to persuade others of their ideas and beliefs. It is defined by Han (١٩٩٧: ٣) as a question which does not look for an answer rather, it involves an assertion, such as:

٤) *Can anyone doubt the wisdom of this action?* (Surely no one can doubt the wisdom of this action) (Quirk et al, ١٩٨٥: ٨٢٦).

### ٢. The Model of Analysis

The model intended to be developed in this section is the resultant of various pragmatic notions, such as speech acts, Grice's maxims, Leech theory of politeness, and the pragmatic functions of exaggeration. These notions are illustrated as follows:

#### ٢,١ The speech Act Theory and Exaggeration

The affiliation between speech acts and exaggeration is due to the fact that British and American people, who are the main concern of this study, use various types of speech acts pervaded with different devices of exaggeration. Searle's classifications of speech acts are relevant to literary texts and more particularly to the genre of novels which are chosen in the present study to be representative for the British English and the American English. These acts are of five types as mentioned by Mey (٢٠٠٩: ١٠٠٤) in the following:

representative(assertions, claims), commissives(inviting, promises), directives(requests, warnings), expressives(criticisms, praises), and declarations(christening, marrying). These acts can be performed effectively only under certain conditions 'felicity conditions'.

#### ٢,٢ Gricean Cooperative Principle and Exaggeration

There are many theories which contribute to the understanding of language. One of the most important contributions to pragmatics is that of Paul Grice's theory of implicature. According to Grice (١٩٧٥: ٤٤-٧), conversational implicature plays an important role in personal interactions. In conversation, people's speech is usually understood even when they do not express

their intentions directly because the hearer prospects that utterances should have certain principles. These principles are based on the supposition that interactors go after a general Cooperative Principle (CP) which is expressed as: "Make your conversational contribution *such* as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged". The CP comprises four basic rules. These rules are termed as conversational maxims and are briefly explicated as follows:

**Quantity Maxim** asks communicators to make their contribution as informative as is required for the recent purposes of the exchange; and not to make their contribution more informative than is necessary.

**Quality Maxim** requires saying what is true and avoiding that for which a tolerable evidence is lacked.

**Relevance Maxim** asks communicators to make their contribution as relevant as possible.

**Manner Maxim** asks communicators to be brief, orderly; and avoid ambiguity and obscurity of expression.

As far as the exaggeration language is concerned, Grice provides an account to the devices of exaggeration including metaphor, indirect request, irony, hyperbole, and understatement which have been viewed as special instances of generating implicatures. Grice states that the prominent feature of exaggerated utterances is that they are obviously false (١٩٧٥:١٥٩-٦٠).

That is, these devices flout obviously the maxim of quality which asks for not saying what is thought to be false, as in:

٦) *You are the cream in my coffee.*

The above example implies the exaggerated device of metaphor. Here, the hearer cannot be deceived as the falsity of the proposition which is expressed by the utterance is very obvious. Since the literal meaning is not intended, the hearer will draw an apposite implicature which is highly based on the context. Concerning the above example, the hearer may understand that the speaker likes to say that the hearer is important to him (ibid:٥٣).

The present study is going to show how and to which extent the exaggerated utterances which are used in the data of the study violate Grice's maxims.

### ٢,٢ Leech's Theory of Politeness and Exaggeration

Leech is one of the linguists who focuses on politeness as a pragmatic phenomenon. He proposes a model which consists of a series of maxims as an attempt to explain the way politeness operates in conversational exchanges. For Leech, politeness is a form of behaviour which maintains a harmonious relation. The present study deals only with the following three maxims:

١. Tact Maxim (in impositives and commissives): (a) minimize cost to other, (b) maximize benefit to other.

٢. Approbation Maxim (in expressives and assertives): (a) minimize dispraise of other, (b) maximize praise of other.

٣. Modesty Maxim (in expressives and assertives): (a) minimize praise of self, (b) maximize dispraise of self.

(Leech, ١٩٨٣:١٣١-٣٢)

Leech (ibid:١٤٥-٧) comments on the devices of exaggeration, stating that to understand such devices, one has to notice that truthfulness does not, to some extent, subject itself to make a clear-cut choice between truth and falsehood. As such, to

convey a truth might itself be a matter of degree in terms of the accurateness of a speaker in expressing something. That is, Leech believes that all these devices are associated by means of misrepresenting the truth and are all considered to be cases of politeness.

The exaggerated utterances which exist in *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Great Gatsby* novels will be investigated according to Leech's maxims of politeness to see which maxim a certain exaggerated utterance concerns itself with, and to which extent these maxims are obeyed or disobeyed by the users of the exaggerated utterances.

### **٣,٤ The Pragmatic Functions of Exaggeration**

The functions behind which the exaggeration language being used can vary in each occurrence in accordance with the purpose of the speaker himself. Thus, it is possible to draw some functions for exaggeration in its various devices. These functions are as the following:

**٣,٤,١.Emphasis** is the main and the most common function of exaggeration. Exaggerating an utterance for emphasizing is a way that is so common and in a live use among people in general. The amount of contrast that exists between literal and exaggerated expression will determine how strong an interpretation is chosen. That is, the greater the contrast, the greater the emphasis or intensity of the utterance will be. The contrast thus carries the attitudinal content of the message (Fogelin, ١٩٨٨:١٣).

**٣,٤,٢ Manipulation** implies the exercise of a form of dishonest influence by means of the manipulators' words. That is, manipulators make others believe or do things which are in the interests of the manipulators and against the will or the best interests of the manipulated persons (Van Dijk, ٢٠٠٦:٣٦٠-٦٢).

**٣,٤,٣ Humour** is one of the functions of exaggeration which is considered by itself as a universal comic device by some theoreticians of the comic (Draitser, ١٩٩٤:١٣٥).

### **٤. The Eclectic Model**

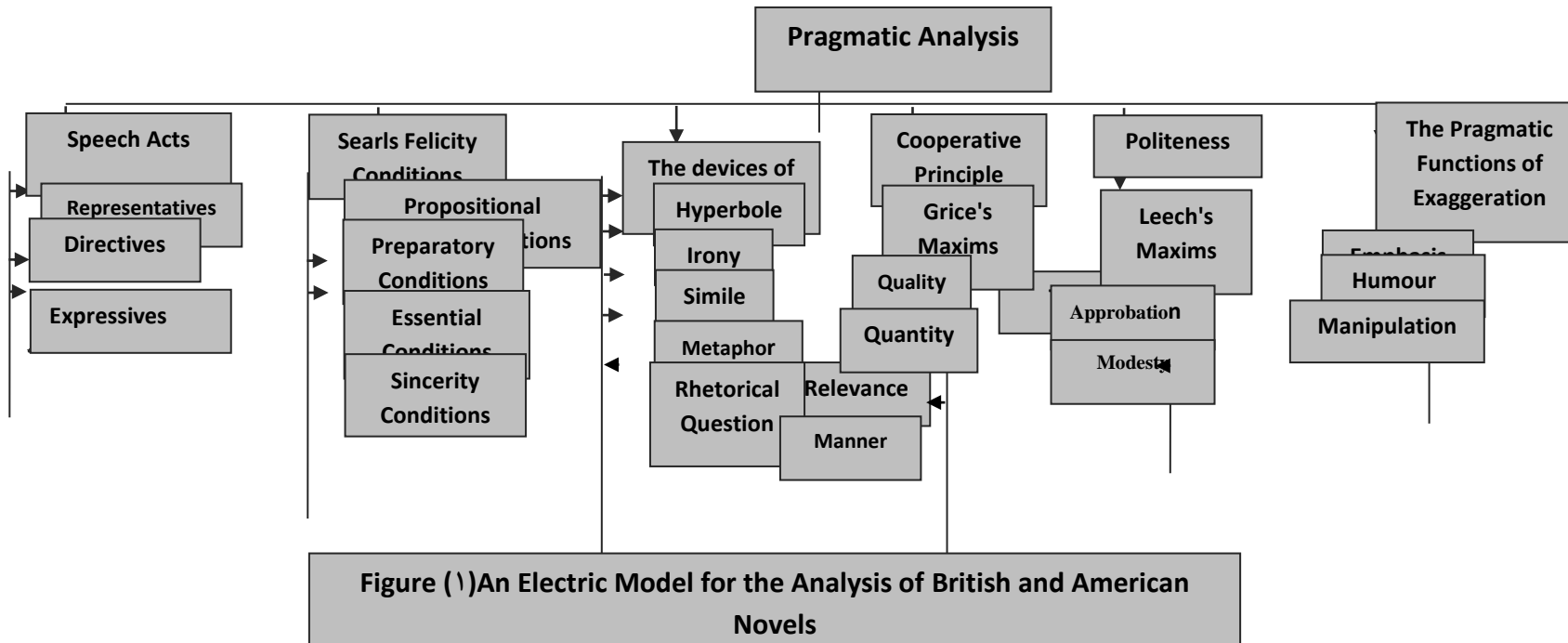
The analysis of exaggeration in the British and the American novels, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Great Gatsby*, will be carried out according to a pragmatic model intended to be developed in this study to include various notions mentioned in the previous sections (see Figure ١). Thus, For each novel, the kinds of SAs which are classified by Searle such as representatives, directives, and expressives are investigated, taking their felicity conditions into consideration. In fact, Searle's classifications of SAs are chosen to be applied in the present study, because they can cover all kinds of SAs through which the exaggeration language occurs in the data.

The devices of exaggeration such as hyperbole, irony, simile, metaphor, and rhetorical question are investigated as well. Moreover, Grice's maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner are examined to show how and to which extent a particular exaggerated utterance violates any of these maxims in the two sets of data.

Furthermore, the novels are also analyzed according to Leech maxims of politeness to see whether the exaggerated utterance is expressed to concern itself with the tact, approbation, or modesty maxim. This investigation will also help noticing the extent to which these exaggerated utterances obey or disobey Leech's maxims.

Finally, the pragmatic functions of exaggeration such as emphasis, manipulation, and humour are also investigated to see for which pragmatic function a particular exaggerated utterance is used.

This model will be the main instrument by which the two sets of data of this study are analyzed.





#### •.Data Analysis and Findings

Before analyzing the data, it is worthy mentioning that due to the limits of this study, three British and three American exaggerated situations are chosen for the purpose of testing the workability of the model developed by this study.

#### •,١ The British Data (*Mrs. Dalloway*)

Situation (١): "Instead of which I had a narrow pea-stick figure; a ridiculous little face, beaked like a bird's".

(P. ٨)

#### Speech Act: Expressive

The speech act of self-criticism is used.

#### The FCs of Self-Criticism

##### ١.The PCCs

a. Mrs. Dalloway is addressing herself.

b. She expresses herself as having a ridiculous little face which is beaked like a face of a bird and for having a narrow pea-stick figure .

##### ٢. The PCs

Mrs. Dalloway is criticizing herself for having a ridiculous little face and a narrow pea-stick figure.

##### ٣. The ECs

Mrs. Dalloway wants to emphasize that she is in a bad state.

ξ. The SCs

She sincerely feels very sad for having a ridiculous face and a narrow pea-stick figure.

### **The Devices of Exaggeration**

Simile and Metaphor

Mrs. Dalloway employs an implicit comparison between her figure and a narrow pea-stick by using a creative metaphor "I had a narrow pea-stick figure". She also uses another exaggerated device which is simile "like a bird's" to describe her face.

### **Grice's Maxims**

١. The Quantity Maxim

Mrs. Dalloway's contribution is as informative as is required.

٢. The Quality Maxim

Mrs. Dalloway violates this maxim by virtue of saying what is untrue and that for which she lacks an evidence "a ridiculous little face; beaked like a bird's".

٣. The Relevance Maxim

Mrs. Dalloway is relevant.

ξ. The Manner Maxim

There is no violation to this maxim because Mrs. Dalloway has been clear, brief and orderly.

### **Leech's Maxim**

Modesty Maxim

Mrs. Dalloway minimizes praise of self and maximizes dispraise of self.

### **The Pragmatic Function of Exaggeration**

Emphasis

Mrs. Dalloway wants to emphasize that she has become very sad and ugly after leaving her lover, using simile and metaphor to describe her state.

**Situation(٢): "But why should I ask all the dull women in London to my parties?"**

**(P.٩٨)**

### **Speech Act: Representative**

The speech act of asserting is used.

### **The FCs of Asserting**

١. The PCCs

a. Mrs. Dalloway is talking to herself.

b. Mrs. Dalloway is talking about her parties asserting that all women who attend her parties in London are dull.

٢. The PCs

Mrs. Dalloway wants to highlight that the kind of women who attend her parties are dull.

٣. The ECs

Mrs. Dalloway commits herself not to ask dull women to attend her parties, but what has happened is the opposite.

٤. The SCs

Mrs. Dalloway is sincerely upset because all the dull woman in London attend her parties.

### **The Device of Exaggeration**

Rhetorical Question

Mrs. Dalloway uses a rhetorical question by which she wants to assert the idea of "I should not ask all the dull women in London to my parties".

### **Grice's Maxims**

١. The Quantity Maxim

Mrs. Dalloway obeys the maxim of quantity.

٢. The Quality Maxim

Mrs. Dalloway has generalized her speech without giving an adequate evidence as in "all the dull woman in London".

٣. The Relevance Maxim

There is no violation to this maxim.

٤. The Manner Maxim

Mrs. Dalloway does not avoid ambiguity in her speech, thus, she has violated the maxim of manner.

### **Leech's Maxim**

Modesty Maxim

It is the modesty maxim which is followed by Mrs. Dalloway who minimizes praise to self and maximizes dispraise to self.

### **The Pragmatic Function of Exaggeration**

Emphasis

The rhetorical question is used in order to emphasize that Mrs. Dalloway should not ask those dull women in London to come to her parties.

**Situation(٣): "Fear no more, says the heart. Fear no more, says the heart, committing its burden to some sea, which sighs collectively for all sorrows, and renews, begins, collects, lets fall."**

(P.٣٦)

**Speech Act: Directive**

The speech act of advice is used.

**The FCs of Advice**

١. The PCCs

a. Mrs. Dalloway's heart is addressing her.

b. It gives her a piece of advice which is not to be afraid of anything and let all sufferings and burdens fall into the sea.

٢. The PCs

Mrs. Dalloway's heart believes that getting rid of fear will make Mrs. Dalloway get benefit.

٣. The ECs

The heart wants Mrs. Dalloway to take the act of getting rid of fear into account.

٤. The SCs

The heart sincerely believes that getting rid of fear will benefit Mrs. Dalloway.

**The Device of Exaggeration**

**Metaphor**

An implicit comparison is employed and clarified throughout the idea of the heart's saying and sighing for all sorrows. Simultaneously, the heart is "committing its burden to some sea" and advising Mrs. Dalloway not to fear anymore. The kind of these metaphors is complex metaphor in which combinations of primary metaphors are utilized.

**Grice's Maxims**

١. The Quantity Maxim

This maxim is violated because the contribution is more informative than is required.

٢. The Quality Maxim

This maxim requires true contribution, rather what is lacked here is truthfulness. In reality, the heart is not speaking to have the ability to give a piece of advice.

٣. The Relevance Maxim

There is no violation to this maxim.

٤. The Manner Maxim

There is no avoidance to the unnecessary prolixity which appears in repeating the sentence of "Fear no more says the heart". Thus, the maxim of manner is violated.

**Leech's Maxim**

**Tact Maxim**

It is the tact maxim which is activated above. This maxim suggests minimizing cost to other and maximizing benefit to other. Mrs. Dalloway receives a piece of advice from her heart which is treated as a character by itself.

### **The Pragmatic Function of Exaggeration**

#### **Emphasis**

Throughout the context, it is found that the function of the exaggerated device above is emphasis. Combinations of primary metaphors are used to heighten the force of the proposition which is getting rid of fear by making all sorrows fall into the sea.

#### **٥,٢ The American Data (*The Great Gatsby*)**

##### **Situation(١):**

**This is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air.**

(Ch٢, P.٢٦)

#### **Speech Act: Expressive**

The speech act of criticism of others is used.

#### **The FCs of Criticism of Other**

##### **١. The PCCs**

- a. Nick is addressing the readers.
- b. Nick is describing a valley of ashes as a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into hills.

##### **٢. The PCs**

Nick expresses his attitude to the look in front of him by saying that it is a fantastic farm.

##### **٣. The ECs**

Nick thinks that his criticism will potentially lead to a change.

##### **٤. The SCs**

Nick sincerely feels disappointed of the ugly look of that land.

#### **The Device of Exaggeration**

##### **Irony**

Nick employs the exaggerated device of irony "a fantastic farm" to mean the opposite. What Nick wants to say is that the farm has been full of dirt which grows like wheat that rises into hills and which takes the form of houses and chimneys. In addition to the use of irony, the device of simile "like wheat" is also used to refer to the ashes.

#### **Grice's Maxims**

١. The Quantity Maxim

Nick disobeys the maxim of quantity because of being more informative than is required.

٢. The Quality Maxim

Nick says what is thought to be false "a fantastic farm". Thus, he violates this maxim.

٣. The Relevance Maxim

Nick's contribution is relevant.

٤. The Manner Maxim

Nick violates this maxim because he has not been brief.

**Leech's Maxim**

Approbation Maxim

Nick minimizes dispraise of other and maximizes praise of other.

**The Pragmatic Function of Exaggeration**

Humour

Nick humourizes the dirty land that he reaches by describing it as "a fantastic farm". Actually, he uses an ironic humour which involves incongruity or discordance with norms, that is, the literal meaning of "a fantastic farm" is opposite to the intended meaning (a very ugly farm).

**Situation(٢): "Every one suspects himself of at least one of the cardinal virtues, and this is mine: I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known."**

(Ch٤,P.٦٥)

**Speech Act: Expressive**

The speech act of self-praise is used.

**The FCs of Self-Praise**

١. The PCCs

a. Nick is addressing the readers.

b. Nick suspects himself as being one of the cardinal virtues and one of the few honest people ever known.

٢. The PCs

Nick gives value judgment to himself by saying that he is one of the cardinal virtues and one of the few honest people. He wishes the readers to believe his speech and be in their interest.

٣. The ECs

Nick wants the readers to recognize that he is one of the cardinal virtues and one of the few honest people.

٤. The SCs

Nick feels that he is honest and few people are like him.

### **The Device of Exaggeration**

#### **Metaphor and Hyperbole**

An implicit comparison of root metaphor is employed to assimilate the target(Nick) to the source(the cardinal virtues). Such kind of comparison shapes the perception of readers to the world in which Nick lives. That is, every one views himself as a sacred person including Nick. Furthermore, there is another exaggerated device which is that of basic and conventional hyperbole of time "ever".

#### **Grice's Maxims**

##### **١. The Quantity Maxim**

Nick obeys the maxim of quantity because his contribution has been as informative as is required.

##### **٢. The Quality Maxim**

Nick disobeys the maxim of quality because he says what is thought to be false.

##### **٣. The Relevance Maxim**

Nick's speech is relevant .

##### **٤. The Manner Maxim**

Nick has been brief and orderly.

### **Leech's Maxim**

#### **Modesty Maxim**

Nick maximizes praise of self and minimizes dispraise of self directly "I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known" .As such, he is violating the maxim of modesty, thus, he is considered to be impolite.

### **The Pragmatic Function of Exaggeration**

#### **Manipulation**

Nick uses metaphorical and hyperbolic expressions in order to manipulate the readers' minds to believe him and see him as one of the greatest and few honest people all over the world.

**Situation(٣): "I tried to forget something very sad that had happened to me long ago". "Then came the war, old sport. It was a great relief and I tried very hard to die but I seemed to bear an enchanted life."**

(Ch ٤,P.٧١)

### **Speech Act: Expressive**

The speech act of complain is used.

### **The FCs of Complain**

١. The PCCs

- a. Gatsby is addressing Nick .
- b. Gatsby expresses his complain of having something very sad which has happened to him long ago. Thus, he views the coming of the war as a great relief, exerting his efforts to die in it.

٢. The PCs

Gatsby wishes Nick to believe that something very sad has happened to him, thus, the coming of the war has been a great relief to him.

٣. The ECs

Gatsby wants Nick to recognize that he suffers from something very sad to the extent that the war itself has been a source of a great relief for him.

٤. The SCs

Gatsby sincerely feels sad for what has happened to him.

**The Device of Exaggeration**

Irony

The exaggerated device here is a tragic irony because Gatsby is running towards his end and this is noticed by virtue of knowing the genre or the plot of the story. Thus, his efforts and hopes especially when he says "but I seemed to bear an enchanted life" is seen as ironic.

**Grice's Maxims**

١. The Quantity Maxim

Gatsby obeys this maxim because he has been as informative as is required.

٢. The Quality Maxim

Gatsby says what is thought to be false, thus, he violates this maxim.

٣. The Relevance Maxim

Gatsby's contribution is relevant.

٤. The Manner Maxim

Gatsby has been brief and orderly.

**Leech's Maxim**

Approbation Maxim

Gatsby maximizes dispraise of other and minimizes praise of other. Thus, he is violating the approbation maxim.

**The Pragmatic Function of Exaggeration**

Manipulation



Gatsby wants to manipulate Nick's mind to make him believe that Gatsby has been suffering very hard to the extent that the war itself has been a great relief for him. In fact, Gatsby's speech is an introduction to pave the way to a demand from Nick to arrange a meeting between Gatsby and Daisy.

### ٥,٢ Results of Analysis

The findings of the analysis of the British and the American novels are summarized in the following tables:

**Table (١): The Results of the Speech Acts**

The Speech Acts of the British Novel	Percentages	The Speech Acts of the American Novel	Percentages
Self-criticism	٣٣,٣%	Criticism of others	٣٣,٣%
Asserting	٣٣,٣%	Disagreement	٣٣,٣%
Advice	٣٣,٣%	Complain	٣٣,٣%

**Table (٢): The Results of the Devices of Exaggeration**

The Devices of Exaggeration in the British Novel	Percentages	The Devices of Exaggeration in the American Novel	Percentages
Simile	٢٥%	Metaphor	٢٥%
Metaphor	٥٠%	Irony	٥٠%
Rhetorical Question	٢٥%	Hyperbole	٢٥%

**Table (٣): The Results of Leech's Maxims of Politeness**

Leech's Maxims of Politeness	The British novel		The American Novel	
	Percentages	Flouting	Percentages	Flouting
Modesty Maxim	١٠٠%	٠%	٠%	١٠٠%
Approbation Maxim	٠%	٠%	٥٠%	٥٠%
Tact Maxim	١٠٠%	٠%	-	-

**Table (٤): The Results of the Pragmatic Functions of Exaggeration**

The Pragmatic Functions of Exaggeration	The British Novel	The American Novel
	Percentages	Percentages
Emphasis	١٠٠%	-
Humour		٣٣,٣%
Manipulation	-	٦٦,٧%

**Table (٥): The Results of Grice's Maxims**

Grice's Maxims	The British Novel		The American Novel	
	Percentages	Flouting	Percentages	Flouting
The Quantity Maxim	٧٥%	٢٥%	٧٥%	٢٥%

The Quality Maxim	٠%	١٠٠%	٠%	١٠٠%
The Manner Maxim	٢٥%	٧٥%	٧٥%	٢٥%
The Relevance Maxim	١٠٠%	٠%	١٠٠%	٠%

## ٦. Conclusions

It is concluded that:

١. The speech acts through which the exaggeration language occurs in the British novel, Mrs. Dalloway, are: self-criticism, advice, and assertion. These kinds of acts have the same percentage of (٣٣,٣%), while the speech acts of criticism of others, disagreement, and complain are all used in the American novel, The Great Gatsby, having the percentage of (٣٣,٣%) equally. Consequently, these results confirm the first hypothesis which reads, *Various kinds of speech acts through which the exaggeration language occurs can be used in Mrs. Dalloway and The Great Gatsby.*

٢. The devices of exaggeration of simile (٢٥%), metaphor (٥٠%), and rhetorical question (٢٥%) are employed in the British novel. The device of metaphor is highly used by the British. However, the devices of hyperbole (٢٥%), irony (٥٠%), and metaphor (٢٥%) are used in the American novel. It is clear that the device of irony is highly used by the Americans. In view of that, the second hypothesis has validated: *A variety of devices of exaggeration are used in Mrs. Dalloway and The Great Gatsby novels.*

٣. In exaggeration, keeping to the politeness principle is very important otherwise the interactants will be considered to be impolite. It has been evident that Leech's maxims of politeness have never been violated in the British novel, while some of these maxims such as the modesty and the approbation maxims have been violated in the American novel. The percentages of their flouting are: (١٠٠%), and (٥٠%) respectively. The analysis of the data has revealed that the conversational maxims are violated in the American novel and the British novel as well. Thus, the third hypothesis which reads, *the Politeness Principle and the Cooperative Principle are violated in The Great Gatsby more than in Mrs. Dalloway* is proved to some extent.

٤. In this paper, the pragmatic function of emphasis is amounted to (١٠٠%) in the British novel, whereas the functions of manipulation and humour are amounted to (٦٦,٧%), and (٣٣,٣%) respectively in the American novel. This means that the British exaggerate mostly for the purpose of emphasizing things, yet, the Americans more often exaggerate for the purposes of manipulating and humourizing. Hence, the fourth hypothesis which reads, *there are different pragmatic functions for exaggeration in Mrs. Dalloway and The Great Gatsby novels* is verified.

**A Pragmatic Study of Exaggeration in British and American Novels**  
**Dr. Qassim Abbas Dhayef Al- Tufaili**                      **Fatima Rehman Mkheef Al- Jobori**

---

◦.Exaggeration can be expressed by any device, that is, it is not particularized only by the devices mentioned in this study which is limited to two novels. In real life situations, exaggeration can be expressed by, for instance, idioms, indirect requests, puns, and many other devices.

**Bibliography**

Aristotle.(١٩٧٦). *Ethics*. New York: Penguin.

Cruse, A. (٢٠٠٦). *A Glossary of Semantics and Pragmatics*. Edinburgh:

Edinburgh University Press.

Claridge, C. (٢٠١١). *Hyperbole in English: A Corpus-based Study of Exaggeration*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Draitser, E.(١٩٩٤). *Techniques of Satire*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. PDF.

Fogelin , Robert J.(١٩٨٨). *Figuratively Speaking* . London: Yale University Press.

Fussell, S. and Kreuz, R.(١٩٩٨). *Social and Cognitive Approaches to Interpersonal Communication*. New York: Psychology Press.

Grice, H.P. (١٩٧٥). *Logic and Conversation*. In P. Cole & J.I. Morgan (Eds.).*Speech Acts*. New York: New York Academic Press.

Leech, G.(١٩٨٣). *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman.

Moon, R.(١٩٩٨). *Fixed Expressions and Idioms in English. A Corpus-based Approach*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Mey, J.(٢٠٠٩).*Concise Encyclopedia of Pragmatics*.Amestrדם: Elsevier.

Quirk, R., S. Greenbaum, G. Leech, and J. Svartvik (١٩٨٥). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London:Longman Group Limited.

Rose, H.J.(١٩٦٦). *A Handbook of Latin Literature*. London: Longman.

Van Dijk, T. A. ٢٠٠٦. *Discourse and Manipulation*. London: Sage.

Woolf,V. (١٩٢٥).*Mrs. Dalloway*. London: Alma Classics.

Yaseen, A.(٢٠١٣). The Commonest Types of Metaphor in English.

Al-Farahidi Journal, number ١٥. Tikrit University.