

## **A pragmatic Analysis of Polite\_ impolite Dialogues Between Hamlet and Ophelia in Shakespeare's Hamlet**

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**Keywords:** Hamlet, Ophelia, politeness, impoliteness, power.

### **Summary:**

The present study attempt to decipher polite and impolite exchanges taken place between Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark and his beloved Ophelia. Politeness and impoliteness exchanges are considered important that are used in daily life situations in order to uncover the hidden part of the speakers. There is a lack of awareness of the use of these terms among the readers and septation of drama. To achieve this objective, the study adopts models of Leech and Brown and Levinson of politeness and Lachenicht's of aggravation and Culpeper's of impoliteness for this purpose.

A powerful participant has more freedom to be impolite, because he can reduce the ability of the less powerful participant to cope with impoliteness. The study is rounded off with some findings that can be employed to achieve communication. It also tries to check how the principle of politeness might be linked to help people communicate persuasively since that in some circumstances politeness and impoliteness play a key role.

### **Introduction:**

Language can be employed to highlight, enhance or discourage smooth communication or even cause conflict between the speakers. Sometimes, the speakers try to hide their reality behind language yet, many times they fail. The speakers may be polite in order to keep communication go smoothly. In some other cases, they tend to be impolite. This paper uncovers that the demarcation which splits politeness and impoliteness is opaque.

Most of the exchanges produced by Hamlet and Ophelia lead to broken conversations where the effect they trigger is funny. Such a ridicule is expressed, to a large extent, through many flaws and missed connections of speech.

In this paper we will try to apply some pragmatic theories of politeness and impoliteness of Shakespeare's famous play-Hamlet.

The problem of this study is the polite and impolite debates which lead to misunderstanding of the two characters; i.e., Hamlet, the prince of Denmark and his beloved Ophelia. "No sentence is inherently polite or impolite. We often take certain expressions to be impolite, but it is not the expressions themselves but the conditions under which they are used that determine the judgement of politeness" (Fraser & Nolen, 1981, p. 96).

### Hypotheses

In this study, it is hypothesized that:

- 1-power plays a vital role in making impolite role.
- 2-The identification of politeness and impoliteness of any utterance without reference to the situation in which it occurs is inadequate. Therefore, an accurate analysis of politeness/ impoliteness should account for syntax and pragmatic.
- 3- Politeness and impoliteness maxims are employed to reach successful ends in developing the characterization of both Hamlet and Ophelia.
- 4-In producing polite/ impolite utterances speakers need to take into account the utterances they produce and the language they

### Procedures

The following procedures will be followed in order to achieve the study.

1. Presenting the most salient definitions of politeness and impoliteness.
2. Discussing some of the polite and impolite models.
3. Pinpointing the polite and impolite cases while the role of dialogues is incurred between Hamlet and Ophelia.

4. Presenting the findings obtained from the exchanged conversations.

#### Aims of the Study

This study aims at:

1. Investigating the use of polite and impolite utterances and showing how they are used by the two speakers, viz, Hamlet and Ophelia.
2. Uncovering the role of politeness and impoliteness in the interaction of communication.

#### Models of Politeness and Impoliteness

There are many models of politeness such as Leech (1980a-1983), Brown and Levinson (1987), Wilson and Sperber (1995).

##### 5.1 Leech's Modal

Leech suggests a model which consists of a set of maxims and scales.

1. The Tact Maxim: The injunction carried by this maxim can be summed up as: Don't cause offence.
2. Generosity Maxim, (a) minimize dispraise to self, (b) maximize cost to self.
3. Approbation Maxim: (a) minimize dispraise of other, (b) maximize praise of other.
4. Modesty Maxim: (a) minimize praise to self, (b) maximize dispraise to self.
5. Agreement Maxim: (a) minimize disagreement between self and other, (b) minimize agreement between self and other.
6. Sympathy Maxim: (a) minimize antipathy between self and other, (b) maximize Sympathy between self and other (Leech, 1983, pp. 104-105; 1980b, pp. 13-14).

##### Brown and Levinson's (1987) Model

Brown and Levinson sum up polite behavior as follows:

1. Bald on Record Strategy.

It is performed in the most direct, clear, and unambiguous and concise way as possible. It is the most effective way for the sparker to get his message through to the hearer.

## 2. Positive Politeness Strategy

Joking is the basis positive politeness because it creates humor. Brown and Levinson (1987: 163) have divided this strategy into three main groups:

### 1. The speaker claims common ground.

- Notice, attend.
- Exaggeration.
- Intensity interest.
- Use in-group: identity markers such as address forms, dialect, jargon or slang.
- Seek agreement.
- Avoid disagreement.
- Presuppose.
- Joke

### 2. The Speaker conveys that he and the hearer are co-operators:

- Assert or presuppose the speaker's knowledge.
- Offer / promise.
- Be optimistic.
- Include both the speaker and the hearer in the activity.
- Give or ask reasons.
- Assume or assert reciprocity.

### 3. The speaker fulfils the hearer's want for something:

- Give gifts to the hearer, sympathy.

## Negative Politeness Strategy

This strategy performs the function of minimizing the particular imposition of the face threatening acts (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 129). The strategy pays attention

to the negative face by showing the distance between the interlocutor and avoiding intruding on each other's territory.

- Be indirect.
- Be conventionally indirect.
- Don't presume / assume.
- Questions, hedges.
- Don't coerce the hearer.
- Be pessimistic.
- Give defense.
- Communicate the speaker's want not impinge on the hearer.
- apologize.
- Impersonalize.
- State the face threatening as a general rule.
- Nominalize.
- Redress.

#### 4. Off-Record Strategy

It is used by the speaker to achieve a communication intention indirectly.

1. A trigger serves notice to the addressee that some interfered action must be made.
2. Some mode of interfere.
  - Give hints.
  - Give association.
  - Presuppose.
  - Understate
  - Overstate.
  - Use contradictions
  - Be ironic.

- Use metaphor.
- Use rhetorical questions.
- Be vague of ambiguous.
- Over – generalize.
- Displace the hearer.
- Be incomplete, use ellipsis.

#### 5. Don't Perform the Face Threatening Act

Brown and Levinson (1987) do not discuss this strategy but it is the others who do. Some utterances pose no face threat out all but it is a matter of interest of social harmony.

#### Lachenicht's Model of Aggravation (1980)

Lachenicht (1980, p. 607) considers the use of aggravation language as a "rational attempt to harm, hurt or damage the hearer/addressee". He considers four aggravation super strategies. They are:

1. Off Record which includes ambiguous insults, hints, and irony.
2. Bald on Record, which includes impositions, such as "shut the door", "Do your homework ... etc.
3. Positive Aggravation, which implies an attack to the social position of the hearer.
4. Negative Aggravation. It is an aggravation strategy that is designed to impose on the addressee, to interfere with his freedom of action, and to attack his social position and the basis of his social action.

#### Culpeper's Model (1996-2003-2011) Of Impoliteness

Impoliteness is the use of strategies that are designed to have the opposite effect that of social disruption. According to Culpeper, impoliteness plays a central role in a specific discourse such of army training, interactions between car-owners and traffic wardens, exploitative Tv and literary drama (Culpeper, 2011, p. 25). He (1996, p. 335) says that "in an equal relationship, the impoliteness depends on power of the

participants as the most powerful participant can use the impoliteness to reduce the other participants ability to retaliate and to threaten with retaliation if she or he acts impolitely". The strategies followed by him are:

1. Bald or record which is seen as typically being deployed where there is much face at stake and where there is an intention on the part of the speaker to attack the face of the hearer. The utterances are deployed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in situations where faces not irrelevant or minimized (Culpeper, 2005, p. 41).
2. Positive impoliteness: it involves the use of strategies to damage the hearer's positive face wants. He (ibid) enlists to the following examples:
  - Ignore, snub.
  - Disassociate.
  - Be disinterested.
  - Use inappropriate identity markers.
  - Use obscure or secretive language.
  - Seek disagreement – select a sensitive topic.
  - Make the other feel uncomfortable.
  - Use taboo words, abusive or profane.
  - Call the other names – use derogatory nomination.
3. Negative impoliteness, which involves the use of strategies which damage the hearer's negative face wants. They include:
  - Frighten.
  - Condescend, scorn or ridicule.
  - Invade the other's space-literally.
  - Associate the other with negative aspect-personalize, use pronouns: "I" and "you".
  - Put the other's indebtedness on record.

- Hinder or block the other physically or linguistically.
- 4. Sarcasm or mock politeness, which constitutes the use of individual strategies which remain on the surface and appear to be appropriate. It functions to faster social-intimacy when it is clear to all parties that the impoliteness is untrue (Mills, 2003, p. 124).
- 5. Withhold politeness (Be quiet or fail to use politeness where it is expected). Culpeper (1996, p. 357) notes that impoliteness may be realized through “the absence of politeness work where it would be expected”. In this strategy the speaker does not perform politeness and when the hearer would expect. Being silent is also with holding politeness, Culpeper (2011, p. 56) explicates that per-linguistic features can also help in the interpretation of utterance, as polite or impolite.

#### Literary Pragmatics

The linguistic analysis of literature is one of the most active areas of literary studies. Pratt (1977, p. 16) believes that “there are formal similarity between natural narrative and literary narrative”. This similarity emerges from the fact that both are utterances of the same type.

It is the reader who decides whether a text is a piece of literature or not.

Literary pragmatics takes, for granted, that no account of communication will be complete without an account of literature (Sell, 1992, p. 30).

The author is the producer of the literary text and the reader is a consumer of the text (Mey, 2009, p. 551). A text is not the exclusive work of the author but always presuppose the active collaboration of the readers. Our interpretation and understanding of literary texts require understanding of the historical and social conditions of the text in general. We must infer people's intentions if we want to understand their utterances. Thus, the espousal between literature and pragmatics, becomes inevitable.



## Data and Discussion

In the discussion below there is an attempt to analyze Hamlet and Ophelia's speech according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness and Culpeper (2011) of impoliteness. The text used is Shakespeare's Hamlet (Shakespeare, 1968).

Hamlet soft you now!

The fair Ophelia \_\_\_\_

[To Ophelia] Nymph, in thy orisons

Be all my sins remembered. III. i. 99

In the first meeting between Hamlet and Ophelia, Hamlet addresses Ophelia with a direct speech. It seems modest to a large extent. Ophelia responds to that utterance:

Ophelia Good my lord (how does your honour) III. ii. 99 reflects respect towards Hamlet. She uses address forms which means that she is following a positive strategy. Hamlet: I humbly thank you well, well, well. III. ii. 99

Now Hamlet begins with impoliteness when he repeats the word (well) three times. The above conversation between Hamlet and Ophelia proves that bald on record strategy is used. Hamlet tries to attack Ophelia's face directly. Hamlet's utterance is a clear intention to be maximally offensive.

Ophelia: My lord, I have remembrances of yours

That I have longed long to re -de liver

I pray you, now receive them. III. i. 99-101

Ophelia uses the sub strategy of positive politeness (offer) when those gifts are to be given back to Hamlet.

Hamlet: I never give you aught. III. i. 101

This denial by Hamlet means that he had never given her of real value such as his heart life. The above interaction occurs between Hamlet and Ophelia. He issues heavily sarcastic utterance when he says 'I gave you aughts' in fact it is a mock impoliteness. It is clear that Hamlet follows a face attack.

Ophelia: My honored lord, you know right well you did.

Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind. III. i. 101

Ophelia seeks agreement and gives gifts which means that she follows a positive politeness strategy.

Hamlet: Ha, ha! Are you fair?

That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty. III. i. 101

This conversation illustrates Hamlet's impolite behaviour. He uses bald-on-record impoliteness strategy. Hamlet wants to maintain his power by damaging Ophelia's face want. Hamlet makes an absurd comment.

Ophelia could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty? III. i. 101

Ophelia asks the above question following a negative politeness strategy. Hamlet as, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd ... III. i. 101

Hamle's interpretation involves a look in face on the part of Ophelia. His impolite behaviour depends on the conflict between them. It denotes a negative attitude toward Ophelia. The whole utterance could be identified as bald on record impoliteness as it occurs in a direct face interaction.

Hamlet gives the answer paradoxically together with some bad words "bawd". These words attack aspects of face relating to Ophelia's freedom of action. This expression is interpreted as a threat in which Hamlet threaten Ophelia to be careful. Ophelia confirms that she is forced to believe in Hamlet's philosophy. Hamlet is very harsh with Ophelia. He reaches the climax when he confirms that he had loved her not, by which Ophelia was "the most deceived".

Hamlet Get thee to a nunnery. III. i. 101

Hamlet extends his attack and ridicule towards Ophelia. A nunnery has several meanings. According to the Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the

Language (Grove, 2002), it means (1) establishment housing a community of nuns (2) an order of nuns, sisterhood. Therefore, Ophelia goes to a nunnery in order to preserve her virginity and shield from marriage, romantic relationship, and the possible representatives of hanging around with sinners.

The word "nunnery" of the meanings above involves an extremely negative attitude of Hamlet towards Ophelia. He uses a negative impoliteness of frightening Ophelia. Such a warning is used here to threaten Ophelia and it will lead to physical violence between them. Obviously, Hamlet intends to gain power over Ophelia by means of impoliteness. The following words on are used as mock impoliteness "breeder of sinners. Ophelia confirms to Hamlet that her father was at home. Hamlet's response "Let the doors be shut upon him. Simply looking of this dialogue, it is clear that Hamlet behaves impolitely with Ophelia when he says "let the doors be shut upon him".

Ophelia (Aside), O, help him, you sweet heaven indicates intensification of interest which implies a positive politeness strategy. III. i. 101

Hamlet: if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what Monster you make of them. III. i. 103

In the same utterance, Hamlet calls Ophelia, in particular, and women in general, a monster maker.

Ophelia (Aside) Oh, heavily powers restore him! III. i. 103

She uses a positive impoliteness strategy.

Hamlet: I have heard of your paintings too well enough.

Hamlet continued, using insults, so he insults Ophelia by using.

Ophelia by using negative words "paintings", "jig", "amble", lisps" III. i. 103. These words imply a threat and this will turn to physical violence. This extract combines positive impoliteness of threatening / frightening.

Ophelia's soliloquy in the following lines indicates a deep sorrow towards Hamlet, perfection of love". She describes him with many epithets: "the glass of fashion, the mound of form.

Scholar's eye, tongue, sword, the observed of all observers". These words point out a positive impoliteness strategy: the substrategy of using in-group makers and address form dialect.

Ophelia: Oh, what a noble mind is here o'er thrown!

The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword ...

O, woe is me

To have seen what I have seen see what I see! III. i. 103

She ends her soliloquy by using positive politeness strategy. According to (Holmes, 1995, p. 4) "politeness is an expression of concern for the feelings of others".

Hamlet lady, shall I lie in your lap?

(lying down at Ophelia's feet)

Ophelia No, my lord. III. ii. 111

This extract reveals that Hamlet uses impolite words. He implies positive impoliteness of taboo words. The function of taboo is that it indicates that this scene is observed. It combines between the two substrategies of positive impoliteness calling the other names and taboo words. Taboo words are useful here to describe Hamlet's impoliteness behaviour with Ophelia. He uses swear words, or abusive or profane language. Thus, he follows a positive impoliteness strategy. In the above dialogue, Ophelia's first rejection suggests that she has never interpreted Hamlet's words to lie in your lap". The term might be seen as euphuisms for his male genitalia. The subsequent terms imply sexual connotation. Ophelia takes Gertrude's part and Hamlet takes his father's part (Glaz, 1961, p. 144).

The words "country mother" are used as a pun involuting a vulgar team for female genistein. This is according to the Oxford English Dictionary (1989) (1) vulgar,

Obscene thing that occurs in many rustics in rural areas, (2) female genital mothers (3) the lack of symphony (4) obscene of – male – reproductive organ (5) Naught, zero. It is not worthy that Searle's corollary "a sentence may have more than one literal meaning (ambiguity) or its lateral meaning may be detective or uninterpretable no seen use) is proved" (1979: 117). Hamlet's utterance can be identified as a negative impoliteness strategy. The tension is increased between Hamlet and Ophelia:

After the entrance of the dumb-show, Ophelia says:

Ophelia's what means -this- my lord? III. ii. 113

An innocent query with an address form which denotes positive politeness strategy.

Hamlet: Marry, this is miching Malicho it means mischief.

Ophelia: be like this show imports the argument of the play.

An import reply which follows positive impoliteness since it carries obscure words.

Ophelia continues in her innocent questions. This is a positive politeness strategy.

Ophelia: will he tell us what this show meant?

Hamlet: Ay, or any show that you'll show him. Be not you showed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means. III. ii. 113

Hamlet uses a positive impoliteness since he resorts to use obscure words.

When Ophelia dislikes the prologue being very short, Hamlet has in mind the love of his mother:

Hamlet "As women's love". A positive impoliteness strategy.

Thus, Hamlet does not neglect any occasion to express his hatred towards women in general. Hamlet's reply illustrates his impolite behaviour with Ophelia. He uses bald on record impoliteness.

Ophelia: You are as good as a chorus my lord.

Hamlet: If I could interpret between you and your love; I could see the puppets dallying.

Ophelia: You are a keen my lord you are a keen.

Hamlet: It would cost you a grooming to take off my edge.

Ophelia: Still better and worse. III. ii. 119

Ophelia: asks Hamlet tactful questions which denote positive politeness strategy.

Hamlet uses a positive impoliteness since he resorts to the use of obscene words.

When Ophelia says "you are naught" she means a polite comment.

Hamlet continues in his filthy speech towards Ophelia who talks mildly to him. He is quite indecent. He says if you accept my desire, it will cost you too much pain. He refers to this groaning of a woman when she delivers her baby.

At last, on the pages 163-173 Ophelia becomes mad. We feel sorry for her. The feigned madness of Hamlet produces real madness in Ophelia.

Ophelia: By Gist and by Saint charity

A lack, and fie for shame IV. V. 165

She continues:

Ophelia: They bore him barefaced on the bier's;

Hey non nonny; nonny, hey nonny IV. V. 171

Thus, Hamlet's pretended madness is contrasted with the reality of Ophelia's madness (Camden, 1964, p. 249).

Conclusion:

The study comes out with the following conclusions:

1. No utterance is inherently polite or impolite. Sometimes we take a certain expression to be impolite, but in reality, it is polite and vice-versa.
2. Impoliteness is likely to occur in situations where there is an imbalance of power.
3. The fact that the play, Hamlet. Was written in the seventeenth century would require separate and lengthy argumentations.
4. Hamlet, being the major character in the play; used impoliteness strategies to get his goals achieved.
5. The polite/ impolite extracts reveal that their interpretation is based on previous and mutual knowledge between the interlocutors which can be based on the ongoing events.

6. Impoliteness and politeness expose the speakers' intentions. They also expose his/ her hidden inner identity. The model selected for the analysis of politeness and impoliteness is based on amalgamation of the above-mentioned models. The first step in the analysis involves utilizing the contexts in which the exchange is introduced then identifying the polite/ impolite maxim and eliciting the behavior and the function that this exchange is identified, i.e. the structure in which this exchange is expressed.
7. The concept of turn-taking firms an important factor in the conversation, because it means that the participants have to exchange their roles at interval times. Turn-taking is affected by the rank and power attributed to the participants

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## تحليل تداولي للحوارات المؤدبة وغير المؤدبة بين هاملت وأوفيليا في مسرحية شيكسبير (هاملت)

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الكلمات المفتاحية: هاملت، أوفيليا، التأدب، عدم التأدب، القوة  
الملخص:

تحاول الدراسة الحالية أن تكشف التبادلات المؤدبة وغير المؤدبة الحاصلة بين هاملت، أمير الدنمارك، وحبيبته أوفيليا. تعتبر التبادلات المؤدبة وغير المؤدبة مهمة في الاستخدامات الحياتية اليومية وذلك لغرض كشف الجانب المستور للمتكلمين. هناك نقص في استعمال تلك المفاهيم بين قراء ومشاهدي المسرحية. لغرض انجاز هذا الهدف. تتبنى الدراسة نماذج ليج وبراون ولفنسون في التأدب ولاخنخت في الأساءة ونموذج كليبر في عدم التأدب. ان مشارك قوي له قدر أكبر من الحرية لكي يكون غير مؤدبا وذلك لأن يمكنه اخضاع القدرة لدى من هو أقل قوة ليتماشى في عدم التأدب. تنتهي الدراسة مع بعض النتائج التي يمكن استخدامها لغرض تحقيق الاتصال. كما انها تحاول التحقق من أن مبدأ التأدب يمكن أن يرتبط لمساعدة الناس من التواصل بصورة مرضية بما انه في بعض الأحيان تلعب كل من التأدب وعدم التأدب أدوارا رئيسية.