

# **Pragmastylistics: The Integration of Pragmatics and Stylistics**

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## **Abstract**

The goal of this paper is to give an account of the relationship between pragmatics and stylistics which has led to the birth of pragmastylistics or pragmatic stylistics wherein various pragmatic theories are exploited in interpreting literary discourse. Among these theories are the speech act theory, the cooperative principle and conversational implicature theory, in addition to politeness theory. Hence, to form a vivid picture about this newly born field of study, it seems necessary to account for the narrative structure and the corresponding method of analysis.

**Key words:** pragmatics, stylistics, pragmastylistics, narrative structure

## **1. Pragmatics, Stylistics, and Pragmastylistics**

Leech (1983: 5) states that meaning is "derived not from the formal properties of words and constructions, but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered". Investigating such a kind of relationship is the concern of pragmatics which is, according to Leech (ibid.), a theory of appropriateness. Following Levinson (1983: 5), pragmatics is not directly interested in language, but in what people do with language, its uses, and users. Thus, the simplest definition of pragmatics is that it is "the study of language use" (ibid.). Speakers try by language to change either the world (e.g., by getting another person to do something) or the state of mind or knowledge of others (for instance, by telling them something new). Pragmatics, as such, investigates what language users mean, what they do and how they do it in real situations.

As for stylistics, Babajide (2000: 123) defines it as "the study of style" wherein style is "the effectiveness of a mode of expression". The determinates of any stylistic choice are many: "speaker's emotional attitude towards his message, his hearer, or the world in general at the moment of communicating, as well as the context or situation" (ibid.). Style is often said to involve deviation from the norm or standard use of language in order to achieve rhetorical and persuasive effects. In practice, stylistics is divided into 'literary' and 'non-literary' stylistics although the methods used in either case are based on linguistic insights and terminology (ibid.). In an earlier account, Leech (1969: 1-2) has defined literary stylistics as "the

study of the use of language in literature"; he has regarded stylistics as "the meeting ground of linguistic and literature". According to Fabb (2002: 16) and Norgaard et al. (2010: 6), there are various branches of stylistics, the most prominent of which are linguistic stylistics (which studies the devices in language and their structural patterns), literary stylistics (which is concerned with the relationship between the form and the meaning of the literary work), and pragmatic stylistics (which is defined by Huang (2012: 19) as "the application of the findings and methodologies of the theoretical pragmatics to the study of the concept of style in language".

Out of the various models of stylistics, Crystal and Davy's (1969) and Leech and Short's (2007) models are influential ones. The former consists of certain categories that are situationally based with reference to sets of linguistic features. These categories are individuality, dialect, time, discourse, medium, province, status, modality, and singularity. The latter model is divided into the following four categories: lexical, grammatical, figures of speech, and cohesion and coherence. Yet, these two models lack a pragmatic component which renders them inadequate as pragmastylistic models unless they are modified to be related to the pragmatic component and the context which governs producing the target piece of discourse <sup>(1)</sup>.

According to what has been discussed above in relation to pragmatics and stylistics, it can be concluded that pragmatics is a theory of appropriateness, whereas stylistics is a theory of effectiveness.

Basically, then, pragmatics, as Hickey (1993: 578) points out, coincides with stylistics in that both are directly interested in speaker's choices from among a range of grammatically acceptable linguistic forms. Yet, pragmatics looks at choice as the means chosen to perform actions (request, inform, etc.), whereas stylistics studies choice within particular interest in the consequences on the linguistic level and the effects produced on the hearer (aesthetic, affective, etc.) (ibid.). Consequently, one can argue that style is a contextually determined language variation, while pragmatics is an area of study which analyzes the relationships between language and context. However, the context tends to be perceived somewhat differently in each case. For stylistics, context is usually the situation that makes a certain way of speaking more likely, whereas pragmatics sees a context as composed of the knowledge, beliefs, assumptions, earlier utterances of the language user themselves so that "The dog bit John" is used to talk about the dog and "John was bitten by the dog" to talk about John (Hickey, 1993: 578).

(1) For Crystal and Davy's model, see Crystal and Davy (1969: 66-76). For Leech and Short's model, see Leech and Short (2007).

Stylistics has been moving toward pragmatics seeking explanations for aspects of language use that it alone can not adequately provide. Modern stylistic studies have shown an interest in pragmatics in addition to the study of the form of linguistic utterances. The resultant studies are called pragmastylistic studies. Pragmastylistics, accordingly, attempts to provide a framework for explaining the relations between linguistic form and pragmatic interpretation and how the style of communication varies as the speaker aids the hearer to identify the thought behind an utterance.

Pragmastylistics is, thus, stylistics but with a pragmatic component added to it (Hickey, 1993: 578). According to Davies (2007:106), it is concerned with showing the extent to which pragmatics contributes to the study of literature; it looks at the usefulness of pragmatic theories to the interpretation of literary texts. To elaborate, pragmastylistics offers more complete explanations for many unexplained phenomena than stylistics or pragmatics can do alone (ibid.). It is a branch of stylistics which applies ideas and concepts from linguistic pragmatics to the analysis of literary texts and their interpretation (ibid.).

Pragmastylistics, thus, involves the study of all conditions which allow the rules and potential of a language to combine with the specific elements of the context to produce a text capable of causing specific internal changes in the hearer's state of mind or knowledge (ibid.).

Conclusively, it is possible to state the difference between linguistics, stylistics, pragmatics, and pragmatic stylistics by displaying the following questions stated by Hickey (1993: 583) with some modifications by the study since Hickey's presentation of the questions is not well-stated: linguists ask: **what do you say or what aspects of language are used?**, stylisticians ask: **how do you say what you say?**, pragmatists ask: **what do you do with what you say?**, and pragma-stylisticians ask: **how do you do, what you do?**

### **1.1 Foregrounding vs. Automatization**

One of the important notions in pragmastylistics is that of foregrounding (defamiliarization), the opposite of automatization. A distinction between the two notions is introduced in the following lines:

Foregrounding means deviations from linguistic or other socially accepted norms; it includes "the analogy of a figure seen against a background". The notion of foregrounding, which is initially coined by members of the Prague School of Linguistics, is used by Leech and Short (1981: 48) to refer to "artistically motivated deviation". It, as Leech (1969: 47) has previously stated, refers to "the range of stylistic effects that occur in literature", whether at the phonetic level (e.g., alliteration, rhyme), the syntactic level (e.g., inversion, ellipsis), or the semantic level (e.g.,

metaphor, irony). Poetic metaphor, a type of semantic deviation, is the most important instance of this type of foregrounding (ibid.).

In literature, defamiliarization is intended for aesthetic ends. Thus, difficulty and length of perception are increased for aesthetic effects. The two types of foregrounding are: parallelism and linguistic deviation. Leech (1969: 47) classifies deviation into various types: lexical, grammatical, phonological, and graphological. Thus, Foregrounding can occur at all levels of language: **phonology**, **graphology**, **morphology**, **lexis**, **syntax**, **semantics** and **pragmatics**). It is generally used to highlight important parts of a text, to aid memorability and to invite interpretation (ibid.).

Automatization is the opposite of foregrounding. It refers to "the common use of linguistic devices which do not attract particular attention by the language decoder, for example, the use of discourse markers (well, you know, sort of, kind of) in spontaneous spoken conversation". Hence, automatization correlates with the usual background pattern or the norm (ibid.).

## **2. Literary and Non-literary Discourse**

In recent years, it has become a conventional wisdom to say that there is no principled way to distinguish between literary and non-literary discourse. The same linguistic resources are used in the spoken and written language; figures of speech such as metaphor and simile are found in speech and all kinds of writing (Black, 2006: 2). Yet, the same devices are more effective in literary than in non-literary discourse. For example, the impact of some metaphorical structures is greater in literary texts than in non-literary ones because they make a greater contribution to meaning than the random use of metaphors and similes in everyday conversation (ibid.).

Context is important in the interpretation of discourse in general. It is understood as referring to the immediately preceding discourse and the situation of the participants. The context in which the discourse takes place is identified as the discourse -world, while the topic is the text- world (ibid.). Another view of context is developed by Sperber and Wilson (1986). They argue that context is the responsibility of the hearer who accesses whatever information is necessary in order to process an utterance on the assumption that it has been made as relevant as possible by the speaker (ibid.).

## **3. Pragmatic Theories Exploited in the Interpretation of Literary Texts**

The usefulness of pragmatic theories to the study of literary texts has been first emphasized by Pratt (1977). Pratt, in "Towards a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse", concentrated on exploiting speech act theory in pragmastylistics. Other pragmatic theories include Grice's co-operative principle, and politeness theories.

### **3.1 The Interpretation of Literary Texts by Means of Speech Theory**

The concept of speech acts, as introduced by the British philosopher J. L. Austin (1962), is one of the ingredients of pragmatics. Austin (ibid. 8) develops the first systematic theory of utterances as human actions. Following Grundy (2000: 53), a speech act is "the act or the intent that a speaker accomplishes when using language in context, the meaning of which is inferred by hearers". Hence, it can be argued that speech act theory concerns the language user's intention to attain certain communicative goals by performing acts through the use of language (ibid.).

In producing an utterance, speakers are engaged in three acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. A locutionary act is "the production of a well-formed utterance in whatever language one is speaking". It is the act of producing sounds and words with their referential meaning. An illocutionary act is the meaning one wishes to communicate. It is the act which results from the locutionary act. More technically, illocutions are acts defined by social conventions, acts such as naming, admitting, and the like. A perlocutionary act is "the effect of the speaker's utterance on the hearer; this could be intended or unintended". In other words, perlocutions are acts of causing certain effects on the hearer, such as convincing, misleading, persuading, and the like (Verschueren, 1999: 23). Within the fictional discourse, characters certainly have perlocutionary aims. Without knowing the intentions of the authors, it would be difficult to look for the perlocutionary aim of most literary works.

In various pragmatic accounts of literature, a central concern is given to the definition of literature as what seems to be a **peculiar type of speech act**; fiction appears to make assertions, but clearly without truth conditions (Mey, 2009:1052). In an earlier account, Pratt (1977: 50) has argued that literary features such as meter, rhyme, and assonance in the poetic illocutionary act signal the unusual nature of its illocutionary force. Pratt (ibid.) has appended that "literary speech acts are mimetic of non-literary speech acts".

For a speech act to be well-formed, certain conditions known as felicity or appropriateness conditions must be satisfied. These conditions, according to Austin (1962: 6), include using the right words by the right person(s) in the right situation. Searle (1969:23-4) systematizes Austin's intuitions about felicity conditions proposing a framework of rules governing the successful production of speech acts which are commonly used in everyday communication. The violation of these conditions renders the act infelicitous. These conditions, following Searle (ibid.) include:

1. Propositional Content Conditions: These conditions concern the propositional act.
2. Preparatory Conditions: These are about "background circumstances and knowledge about speakers and hearers that must hold prior to the performance of the act".
3. Sincerity Conditions: These concern speakers' intentions, beliefs, and desires.
4. Essential Conditions: These are related to "the illocutionary point of an act, namely, what the utterance counts as."

Searle (ibid.) differentiates between two kinds of acts: **direct speech acts** and **indirect speech acts**. Direct speech acts occur when there is a direct correlation between the grammatical form of an utterance and its illocutionary force as in "Open the window". Indirect speech acts occur when the mapping between form and function is not straightforward as in "Why don't you confirm the flight?" which is intended to make an order.

As for the use of indirect speech acts in literary texts, Black (2006: 19) gives the following example: "Stop it. Harry, why do you have to turn into a devil now? I don't like to leave things behind". In this example from Hemingway's "The Snow of Kilimanjaro", the question is clearly a complaint, not a request for information. As such, indirect speech acts means using one speech act rather than another and leaving the hearer or reader works out the intended meaning.

Indirect speech acts are often used for reasons of politeness. In English, for instance, the imperative is normally avoided except in specific circumstances (of great intimacy, in the military, in addressing small children, etc). So, "Can you turn the radio down?" addressed to an adolescent is a polite way of avoiding the imperative.

Searle (1969) (cited in Black, 2006: 19) distinguishes five major classes of speech acts; each constitutes a host of other sub-acts which can be distinguished from each other by their felicity conditions. These include:

1. **Representatives**(Assertives): these are acts that have "truth-values which state what the speaker believes to be the case or not". They are "statements and descriptions" in using them; the speaker fits his words to the world. Examples include asserting, concluding, stating, and the like. Black (2006: 20) argues that "much fiction consists largely of representative speech acts; in particular, much of the narrator's activity consists of representative speech acts".
2. **Expressives**: these are acts that reveal the speaker's feelings and attitudes. They indicate the psychological state of the speaker in statements of pleasure, pain, dislike, joy, or sorrow. In using an expressive act, the speaker does not get the world or the words to match

each other. Examples are thanking, apologizing, welcoming, and the like. They have an interpersonal function (ibid.).

One may expect to find more of them in the discourse of characters within fiction than in the narratorial voice. An example is found in the introductory section of Ellis's "The Other Side of the Fire": "She fell in love with her husband's son. Bloody heli! ". It seems difficult to attribute the exclamation to any but the narrator's voice, since no other has yet been heard. Here, we are presumably invited to adopt a particular view of this illicit love (ibid. 21).

3. **Directives**: these are essentially positive or negative commands expressing the speaker's wants. They include: command, order, request, suggest, advice, and so forth. In using a directive, the speaker attempts to make the world fit the words via the hearer. Directives are more likely to be found within character to character discourse. "Directives addressed to the reader occur rarely in the narrator's voice for the obvious reason that readers exist outside the communicative framework of the fiction" (ibid.)
4. **Commissives**: these are acts in which the speaker commits himself to some future course of action. They indicate the intention of the speaker. Acts such as promise, threat and offer are of this kind of acts. In using a commissive, the speaker undertakes to make the world fit the words. "Commissives are common in the discourse of characters in fiction, but rare in the narrator's discourse, though the beginnings of some novels function as a commissive". For example, "Once upon a time" might be regarded as "a commissive including the implied promise of a particular type of story" (ibid.22).
5. **Declarations**: these are speech acts which in their production, the world is altered. Declarations are performed appropriately if the speaker has a specific institutional role in a special context. The successful performance of declarations depends on the status of the speaker and the precise circumstances surrounding the event. Declarations include sacking a worker, performing a marriage, and sentencing a criminal. Since declarations are not real acts (i.e., lacking sincerity conditions), they hardly occur within literary discourse except as a "pseudo-speech act", as when characters marry, or are sent to prison (ibid. 23).

### **3.2 The Interpretation of Literary Texts by Means of Grice's Cooperative Principle**

According to Yule (2000: 37), Grice's cooperative principle (CP) describes how people interact with one another. It reads as follows "make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of talk exchange in which you are engaged."

This means that the CP describes how effective communication is achieved in common social situations (ibid.).

The CP principle is supported by four maxims called Gricean Maxims. These maxims, as presented by Yule (ibid.) are the following:

1. Quantity maxim

- a. Make your contribution as informative as is required.
- b. Don't make your contribution more informative than is required.

2. Quality maxim

- a. Don't say what you believe to be false.
- b. Don't say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

3. Relation maxim

- Be relevant

4. Manner maxim

- a. Avoid obscurity of expression.
- b. Avoid ambiguity.
- c. Be brief.
- d. Be orderly.

Cooperation is important for the continuation of human interaction. Therefore, the CP and the Gricean Maxims are not specific to conversation but to verbal interactions in general. Some interactions such as quarrels are inherently uncooperative. We all lie, from time to time, for good or bad reasons. We all say irrelevant things, but are irritated when others do so. Black (2006: 24-5) mentions that, in literary texts, "the maxims are not always observed, and the failure to do so can take a number of forms":

1. **"Opting out"**: "making clear that one is aware of the maxim, but is prevented for some reason from observing it". Politicians and reporters are in this situation.
2. **"Violating a maxim"**: is known as lying because it is intended to mislead.
3. **"A clash"** occurs when someone is not fully cooperative". For example, fulfilling the maxim of quantity might require breaking the maxim of quality, particularly when someone is uncertain of the accuracy of some of the information he says.
4. **"Flouting a maxim"** is the most interesting way of breaking a maxim". The assumption is not that communication has broken down, but that the speaker has chosen an indirect way of achieving it. The maxim of manner, for example, is flouted through the use of a metaphor or irony.

Implicatures are rooted into the situation in which they occur, and must be interpreted taking the context into account (ibid.26). Leech (1983: 79) has previously argued that "interpreting an implicature is the responsibility of the hearer". It may be the most economical way of saying something, or



it may simply add to the interest of an utterance. For instance, my grandfather used to introduce my mother as "My daughter by my first wife". In fact, he had only one wife. The implicature is that he must have had more than one, since he was so specific. The maxims of quantity and relation are clearly flouted.

Moreover, the use of rhetorical questions often generates implicatures and tends to involve the maxim of manner as in the following literary example which is cited in (Black, 2006: 26).

*"Why can't you be a sport, Uncle Clarence, and stand up for me? Can't you understand what this means to me? Weren't you ever in love?"*

(Wodehouse, Lord Emsworth and Others)

Similarly, replying to a question about the weather with an answer about groceries would be senseless because it flouts the maxim of relevance. And, responding to a yes/no question with a long answer is regarded as a violation of the maxim of quantity. Many times, flouting is manipulated by a speaker for the sake of producing a negative pragmatic effect, as with **sarcasm** or **irony**. Sometimes, the Gricean maxims are flouted on purpose as done by comedians and writers who flout the maxims either to hide the complete truth or to manipulate their words for the effect of the story. Thus, the Gricean Maxims serve a purpose both when they are followed and when they are flouted (ibid.).

The idea of applying Gricean maxims to the analysis of literary texts has been developed most fully in Van Dijk's "Pragmatics and Poetics" (1977) and Pratt's "Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse" (1977). Van Dijk (1977: 46), for instance, has stated that all Gricean Maxims are violated in literary communication that the CP does not hold<sup>(1)</sup>.

control of the speaker or writer.

Flouting the maxims is one of the most crucial aspects of Grice's theory for the interpretation of literary texts since flouts generate implicatures. On the character-to-character level, characters may violate the maxim of quality by lying, exaggerating, or concealing. The manner maxim is flouted when the characters use irony or metaphor (ibid. 27).

Black (2006: 28) argues that the quantity maxim is difficult because it is not easy for anyone except the writer to judge the appropriate and required amount of information in a fiction or other literary work. Thus, we have to take it on trust that the narrator has judged appropriately and given us all that is required. Yet, there are interesting exceptions to this generalization such as James' "The Turn of the Screw" where the amount of information offered is insufficient to allow secure interpretation; there are permanent gaps which are never filled (ibid.).

<sup>(1)</sup> It should be noted that the maxims of quantity, quality, and relation refer to what is said, while the maxim of manner refers to how it is said, and so is under the most direct

### **3.2.1. Character-level Interaction and Implicatures**

On the character- to- character level, the maxim of quality operates in a way analogous to real-life interactions. Characters may exaggerate, lie, or conceal. The communication of implicatures is not only between characters, but between narrator and reader. An example is the following dialogue from the end of Hemingway's "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" (cited in Black, *ibid.* 28). The story tells of a disastrous safari: *"Macomber runs away from a lion; his wife sleeps with Wilson, the white hunter; finally Macomber regains his courage and is confronting a wounded buffalo when his wife shot at the buffalo . . . as it seemed about to gore Macomber and had hit her husband about two inches up and a little to one side of the base of his skull"*. The narrator is thus committed to the proposition that the shooting of Macomber was an accident. There is a distinction between 'shooting at' (and missing), and 'shooting' (and hitting). This is an example of a conventional implicature, which depends upon our knowledge of the grammar of a language (see Levinson 1983). As MrsMacomber weeps, Wilson says:

*"That was a pretty thing to do," he said in a toneless voice. "He would have left you too."*

*"Stop it," she said.*

*"There's a hell of a lot to be done," he said . . . "Why didn't you poison him? That's what they do in England."*

*"Stop it. Stop it. Stop it," the woman cried.*

*. . "Oh, please stop it", she said. "Please, please stop it."*

*"That's better," Wilson said. "Please is much better. Now I'll stop."*

Wilson violates the maxim of quality since he did not see what happened; nor is he in a position to predict the future. The maxim of manner is involved too: this is a most inappropriate way to address a widow. The implicature is that she murdered him; this is not true, as the narrator points out. Further, he has no evidence of this, so the quality maxim is violated. It is also grossly inappropriate to demand politeness, in the manner of a nanny, at such a juncture. The maxim of manner is thus violated throughout. Wilson has no problems with any clash, but is happy to say "that for which he lacks adequate evidence". Thus, the implicatures generated here are partly available only to the reader: the communication of implicatures is not only between characters, but between narrator and reader (*ibid.* 28-9).

### **3.2.2. Higher-level Interaction: Narrator-reader Implicature**

Here, the contribution that each of the maxims can make to the interpretation of literary works, notably fiction, is considered.

**The maxim of quantity** requires offering the appropriate amount of information. At the beginning of "A Painful Case" by Joyce, readers are offered a description of the room inhabited by the protagonist, which he furnished himself. The colours are predominantly black and white, with a black and scarlet rug. The books are arranged by size. The selection of books seems to trace his intellectual development. This may suggest that the narrator intends that the preceding description of the room encourages the reader to interpret the character via his surroundings. That is, *metonymic discourse* of this type may be interpreted through the maxims of the CP. We may also find that the same incident is told more than once, thus, the writer violates the maxim of quantity (ibid.29).

Detective stories and thrillers work on the principle of uninformativeness with the superordinate goal of creating and maintaining suspense. For instance, this is done, in one of Agatha Christie's stories, by embodying the consecutive inexplicable death of twelve people. By the twelfth murder, the readers are completely intrigued. All the necessary information is given at the end of the story and the partial violation of quantity maxim has a clear "aperitif function".

**The maxim of quality** has to do with the truth or falsity of an utterance. Characters within fictions will lie, or exaggerate, or conceal; narrators may do so as well. More interestingly, discrepancies between the views of narrator and character may emerge. In 'A Painful Case' the neglectful husband tells the inquest into his wife's death that their marriage had been happy until his wife had taken to drink a couple of years before. The narrator has already offered another view: the captain is so uninterested in his wife that it never occurs to him that she might be attractive to someone else. The reader is left free to reconcile these views, bearing in mind that an omniscient narrator's views normally take precedence over those of a character (ibid.).

Prior to that, van dijk (1977: 48) has argued that the maxim of quality is valued by speakers much more highly than the other maxims because its violation amounts to moral offence. Thus, "violation by the author of the maxim of quality, that is, being insincere, or expressing or advocating ideas he does not believe in, is considered immoral" (ibid.). In a similar direction, Pratt (1977: 53) has pointed out that violating the maxim of quality results in lying. Metaphor and irony, for example, flout the maxim of quality giving rise to certain implicatures.

**The maxim of manner** refers not to what is said, but to how it is expressed. It is most firmly under the control of the speaker or writer. On the highest level of textual organization, any departure from chronological

order involves this maxim and that of relation. Any figure of speech breaks the maxim of manner since a metaphor, for instance, is not literally true; ironies are often expressed in terms either of exaggeration or a contrafactual statement. Instances of re-phrasing suggest different views of an event, and also involve this maxim (black, 2006: 30).

Antecedently, Leech and Short (1981: 66) have stated that it is difficult to make a clear-cut distinction between the first two sub-maxims of manner maxim (i.e., avoid obscurity of expression; avoid ambiguity) in a literary text. Literary genres such as fables and parables are cases in point. "Indirectness of expression and ambiguity are the constituent features of the genres in question". These two sub-maxims of manner maxims are flouted in these texts giving rise to implicatures. So in fables and parables, flouting the maxim of manner is in conformity with a major dynamic goal, that is, to influence the reader (ibid.). In a similar vein, van Dijk (1977: 50) has mentioned that in texts that are obscure, ambiguous, or disorderly, the author challenges the readers' creativity and invites the readers to participate in building up the meaning". Lack of orderliness has long been known in literature. Changing the order of events and relocating characters to new settings has become a norm in literary texts. Accordingly, the partial violation of the sub-maxim of orderliness is conventional in literary texts (ibid.).

As regards **the maxim of relation**, one assumes that everything within a fiction will be relevant. This maxim is crucial for the interpretation of figures of speech, where one is invited to consider the relevance they may have to the narrative. The account of Duffy's meals can be considered here. This short story begins with a description of the suburb and house where Duffy lives. From his windows he could look into a derelict distillery. Duffy's lunch consists of beer and dry biscuits: this sounds like a parodic communion. We are told that his friendship with MrsSinico nourished him. Taking the emphasis on food and nourishment together, one may conclude that the initial reference to the distillery is highly relevant: it begins a chain of metaphors, metonymies and similes which together illuminate Mr Duffy's miserable existence. Just as Duffy has rejected the consolation the Church could offer, so he refuses also MrsSinico's companionship, and condemns himself to a solipsistic existence. Even the apparently trivial (and so violating the maxim of relation) reference to the distillery can be interpreted as encouraging a particular reading of the text. It is not suggested that this reading is only available through consideration of the maxims: that is plainly not the case (ibid.).

According to Brown and Levinson (1978: 220-33), the whole process can be stated as follows:

1. Flouting the maxim of quantity results in: understatement, overstatement, or tautology.
2. Flouting the maxim of quality results in: irony, metaphor, or rhetorical questions.
3. Flouting the maxim of manner results in: ambiguity, vagueness, or ellipsis.
4. Flouting the maxim of relation would result in no figure of speech, but, sometimes, the irrelevant situations may lead to comic scenes. Such flouting may take the type of changing the subject suddenly.

#### **4.3. Assessment of the Contribution of CP to the Interpretation of Literary Discourse**

There are different views concerning the applicability of the interpretation of literary texts through approaching Grice's maxims. Some argue that Grice's maxims offer one way of approaching literary texts and any kind of deviation from the maxims may be significant. As such, it is clear that the maxims guide interpretations. Others argue that the CP as well as the maxims are not applicable to literary discourse. For instance, Cook (1994: 34), in a discussion of the limitations of the CP, argues that it applies primarily to relations between acquaintances and the maxims are regularly broken in quarrels, when we are repetitive, irrelevant, and probably do not pay much attention to the truth. Cook (ibid.) proposes that the crucial function of literary discourse is the refreshing of schemata (especially, our pre-existing knowledge structures, whether of our world-view or of language or text structure).

Black (2006: 33) states that Cook does not seem to have found the answer to what "literariness" is, arguing that speech act theory and the CP were not designed to answer this question, but they offer an explanation of how texts may be processed, some of the attitudes readers bring to the processing of text, and why we arrive at certain interpretations.

Leech (1983: 87) proposes that there is an "interest principle", analogous to the CP, which would explain many aspects of literary language. The existence of understatement or litotes, hyperbole, irony, and metaphor may be accounted for under this heading. Litotes is common in old English poetry; in the modern language, it survives primarily for self-deprecation and as Leech suggests as a counterweight to the very common use of hyperbole. Leech (ibid.) points out that these formulations apparently violate the maxim of manner to attract our attention and to amuse us. Leech has drawn via this principle to what is one of the major motivations for reading literature: self-enjoyment. He states that the

"interest principle" can be handled via the maxim of manner, so we are prepared to admit that a major motivation in a lot of language use is not transactional, but is designed to entertain.

While Cook (1994) argues that the Gricean maxims apply only to a very limited range of conversational situations, and are unhelpful for the interpretation of literary discourse, Eco (1984) explores the possibility of applying them to explain the interpretation of symbols (Black, 2006: 35).

### **3.4. The CP and Symbolism**

An interesting pragmatic approach to symbolism is offered by Eco (1984) who approaches symbolism via the maxims. The use of the Gricean maxims for the interpretation of symbolism 'naturalises' it, showing that it forms part of the normal communicative resources we use in interaction. Eco's view is that readers will vary in their interpretations according to their encyclopaedic knowledge and what they are able to bring to the text, in the way of deriving appropriate implicatures via the Gricean maxims. Eco stresses that symbols are allusive and elusive; they are not easy to pin down because they suggest, rather than making explicit statements (ibid.)

Eco's (1984) definition of symbol is narrow. In his analysis, a symbol is idiolectal, that is, it has value only in its context: anything else is only an emblem, or the quotation of a previously existing symbol. Thus many items that are commonly described as symbols are, for him, emblems, or quotations of a symbol. Many such emblems are visual rather than verbal; they are particularly common in the visual arts, as well as in daily life – from crosses on churches to road markings, Remembrance Day poppies, and mourning colours are not symbols, but signs with a single clear meaning, though the meanings are culturally conditioned (ibid.).

Eco's definition of symbol also excludes using the term in relation to items such as fire, which is often interpreted to signify domestic comfort, warmth and hospitality. It can equally represent destruction, according to the context in which it is found. These meanings are conventionalised, and therefore not symbolic. In Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954/1958), the children light a signal fire in the hope of being rescued from their island (ibid.).

Eco (1984) argues that the potential for a symbolic interpretation is triggered by an apparent violation of one or more of the maxims – particularly those of quantity, manner or relation. An excessive attention to some textual detail, which appears to be insufficiently motivated by the surrounding co-text and the stylistic norms of the text, invites symbolic interpretation on the grounds that it is otherwise unjustifiable.

Symbolism is thus seen as an example of textual implicature, which invites the reader to explore possible meanings in the usual way. Eco stresses that a symbolic interpretation is an optional extension of meaning. A symbolic passage is always interpretable on a literal level: it is up to the reader, on the basis of experience of the text, the genre, and encyclopaedic knowledge, to go further. The violation of one or more of the maxims results in an 'over-encoding' of meanings. One feature shared by allegory and symbol is that both usually require some cultural knowledge to interpret them.

Why do writers use symbolism? The reasons are that they think that such literary device makes their work interesting and that they intend to add a new layer of meaning. The writer Robert Burns, for example, writes 'My love is like a **red, red rose**'; this is one type of symbolism used in literature. A metaphor and its cousin simile use comparisons between two objects or ideas. In this case, by comparing 'love' and 'a red, red rose,' Burns uses the rose as a symbol for romantic love (Black, 2007: 75).

Elements of a literary work like plot, setting, characters or objects in the text might be symbolically used. For example, the main character Edna in Kate Chopin's "The awakening" represents how women are trapped by society's expectations about them. This is achieved by the use of a parrot and a mocking bird in a cage as symbols of Edna's feelings of being trapped (ibid).

### **3.5 The Interpretation of Literary Texts by Means of Politeness Theory**

Grundy (2000: 71) argues that Brown and Levinson (1987) have developed an interesting theory of politeness, which they consider as "cross-culturally valid". According to this theory, language users are following their need to maintain their "face" which is the need to be approved of by others, and to maintain a sense of self-worth. Grundy (ibid.) proceeds that face has two aspects: negative face, i.e., the right to freedom of action and freedom from imposition, and positive face, i.e., the need to be appreciated by others, and to maintain a positive self-image". Black (2006: 72) assumes that positive and negative face needs can be conflicting. For example, asking someone for a loan leads to threatening his negative face; if he makes the loan because he is maintaining another's face at the expense of his pocket.

Bousfield (2010: 112) emphasizes that face-threatening acts lead to another pragmatic phenomenon which is impoliteness: "the issuing of intentionally gratuitous and conflictive face-threatening acts (FTAs) that are purposefully performed unmitigated and/or with deliberate aggression". Bousfield (ibid.) appends that successful impoliteness should imply the intention of the speaker (or 'author') to 'offend' (threaten/damage face).

Conversational interaction is common in both authentic and literary data. Thus, politeness and impoliteness theories can be applicable to both.

### **3.5.1 Politeness: Narrator and Reader Level**

Black (2006: 73) states that politeness needs to be considered on different levels of narrative organization. On the level of author/narrator and reader, the interaction is essentially one-way: our only recourse if we do not like something is to stop reading since readers may regard the act of reading as an imposition. When the narrator tells or writes a story he is threatening the face of his readers. Thus, authors should be sensitive to the potentially FTA of narration by attempting to establish a relationship with readers, and marking the end of their novels with formal partings.

The choice of the topic is one type of an FTA. In this regard, many fictions are considered as causing offence to some readers: an extreme example is Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, which led to a *fatwa* being pronounced against him. Similarly, Joyce experienced great difficulties in getting *Dubliners* published: it was deemed so offensive that a printer destroyed the plates (ibid.).

Another type of an FTA is the use of quotations from Latin which is now considered as an exotic language that contemporary readers will not get it and, hence, have their positive face threatened because of the loss of in-group identity (ibid.).

Figures of speech can also cause face-threat because their intended meaning might not be easily understood by all readers. Leech (1983: 77), for example, argues that irony is used to convey an offensive remark without violating politeness principles. This means that it seemingly saves the hearer's positive face, while it is intended as a negative comment. Thus, it is too simple to say that irony is "implying that one means the opposite of what one says" that is why irony is basically a face threatening act because an extra processing effort is required in interpreting its meaning. Metaphor poses similar problems since metaphoric expressions are sometimes employed to show politeness and other times to show impoliteness (ibid.).

Conclusively and substantially, Black (2006: 77) emphasizes that any breaching of Grice's maxims is intended to show either politeness or impoliteness.

### **3.5.2 Politeness: Character to Character level**

Black (ibid.) argues that a dialogue containing inherently polite interactions is not particularly easy to find, perhaps because it is not very interesting as in the following dialogue from Hemingway's "The Snows of Kilimanjaro":

'Wouldn't you like some more broth?' The woman asked him now.

'No, thank you very much. It is awfully good.'



In the above example, an inherently polite offer is made and its refusal is softened by praise because an offer potentially affronts the positive face of the speaker. For Black (ibid.), the previous dialogue is not interesting because it is polite and politeness is the norm, whereas quarrels or impolite dialogues, which are violations of the norm, are considered interesting because they are exciting. For instance, the following dialogue, in which the same characters are involved, is more interesting than the previous one because it includes impolite expressions:

‘... You can’t die if you don’t give up.’

‘Where did you read that? You’re such a *bloody fool*.’

In the above dialogue, the married couples are bald on record due to the use of expressions that affront the positive face of each. Such expressions are unlikely to be used except where the interactants are intimates, or there is a strongly asymmetrical relationship between them.

#### **4. The Structure of Narrative**

The structure and organization of a narrative offers vital clues to interpretation. The following are the important pragmatic notions regarding the structure of narrative.

##### **5.1. Schemata**

Brown and Yule (1983: 241–50) state that readers make use of their knowledge and experience of textual and real world; this pre-existing knowledge that enable readers to process discourse quickly and enable them to have a kind of automatic understanding of texts is called schemata and scripts. For instance, a reference to a restaurant will allow reference to waiters, tables, napkins, menus and so on as part of the ‘given’ elements in the situation, whereas mentioning a transport café will more likely suggest a menu on a blackboard.

The assumption that schemata exists, Black (2006: 101) mentions, rests in part upon the speed with which we are able to process language. Moreover, writers do not mention some necessary details about, for example, the elements of context because of their assumption that their readers carry these schematic structures.

##### **5.2. Genre**

Genre, as Black (ibid.) puts it, functions in a similar way to schemata since it draws on readers' previous knowledge and experience, and offers a framework for interpretation. It is "a kind of pre-setting device, which predisposes the reader to approach a text in a particular way". Thus, it tells readers whether what follows is likely to be a joke, business discussion, chat, novel or poem (ibid.). For instance, readers are always aware that an informative text is set out in columns: as in newspapers, dictionaries and

encyclopedias. Similarly, they are aware that poetry is set out in line breaks indicating rhythm. All of these things guide readers' initial approach to a text (ibid.).

In other words, there are physical clues to the genre to which a text belongs. Hence, it is essential to a full understanding of a text to know what generic conventions the author is invoking, and the system of expectations that a competent reader brings to its interpretation (ibid.).

### **5.3. The Competent Reader**

Black (ibid.) argues that competence is developed through experience of texts; one might regard it as the awareness of genres and the kinds of schemata that readers expect to find in a particular type of discourse. An English speaker, for example, learns early that "Once upon a time" usually signals the beginning of a fairy tale, and expects it to end in "and they lived happily ever after" or some variation of the formula.

### **6. Conclusions**

The following conclusions can be set out on the basis of what has been presented and discussed in this study:

1. The relationship between pragmatics and stylistics has led to the birth of pragmastylistics which seeks explanations for some aspects of language that can not be solved by pragmatics or stylistics alone, but through their collaboration together.
2. Pragmastylistics is a branch of stylistics which applies pragmatic theories to the analysis of literary texts and their interpretation.
3. A very important notion in pragmastylistics is that of foregrounding or defamiliarization, which is the opposite of automatization.
4. Foregrounding is an artistically motivated linguistic deviation. It is the violation of the scheme.
5. Automatization is the common use of linguistic devices which does not attract particular attention by the language decoder.
6. Context is important in the interpretation of discourse, whether literary or non-literary discourse. It refers to the immediately preceding discourse as well as the situation of the participants.
7. The usefulness of pragmatic theories to the study of literary texts has been first emphasized by Pratt (1977) who concentrated on exploiting speech act theory in pragmastylistics. Other pragmatic theories include Grice's cooperative principle, and politeness theories.
8. The basic ingredients of speech act theory can be used in the analysis and interpretation of literary texts. These ingredients include: felicity conditions, direct and indirect speech acts, and the classes of speech acts

9. The idea of applying Gricean maxims to the analysis of literary texts has been developed in Van Dijk's (1977) "Pragmatics and Poetics" wherein van Dijk states that "all Gricean Maxims are violated in literary communication that the CP does not hold".
10. Symbolism is seen as an example of textual implicature, which invites the reader to explore possible meanings in the usual way.
11. Politeness theory and its reverse (i.e., impoliteness) are evident in the analysis of literary works. Yet, impoliteness is more interesting than politeness because it is more exciting in analysis. Politeness is considered as the norm, whereas impoliteness as the violation of the norm.

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