Al Bahith Journal for Social Sciences
Homepage: https://journals.uokerbala.edu.iq/index.php/bjh

A Stylistic Analysis of Meaning-Making in Albee's The Zoo Story: Grice's Maxims, Politeness, and Turn-Taking.

Mohanud Al-Saadi
Iraqi Ministry of Education, Directorate General of Education in Holy Karbala Province.

Abstract in English

This style study uses Grice's maxims, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, and Short's framework for turn-taking to look at how people make sense of Albee's absurdist play *"The Zoo Story"* (1958). The research reveals that Albee purposely breaks the rules of language to make points about being alone, failed connections, and social stratification. This goes against the idea that absurdist theater doesn't use language to communicate. Jerry constantly breaks Gricean maxims (relation, quantity) by talking about things that don't matter, saying the same things over and over, and asking too many questions. This shows that he doesn't have many friends and makes it hard for him to have normal conversations. Peter, on the other hand, is polite and doesn't do things that could hurt his reputation, which makes the differences between classes even clearer. Jerry's long turns, changing the subject, and interruptions show how powerful he is. Peter, on the other hand, is passive because he only makes short turns and doesn't do much. These ways of using language show how the play criticizes modern loneliness (the "zoo" metaphor) and how important language is to Albee's absurdist theater. To fully understand what "theater of the absurd" means, the study found that pragmatics and discourse analysis play a big role.

Paper Info

Received: 1-1-2025
Accepted: 1-2-2025
Published: 1-3-2025

Keywords

Absurd, Discourse Analysis, Grice's Maxims, Politeness and Turn-taking.

doi: https://doi.org/10.63797/bjh.

1.1. Introduction

Styan wrote in 1963 in *"The Elements of Drama"* about how important performance is in analysing dramatic texts. He says, "A play is not an art of words, any more than a film is an art of pictures: it is the art of exercising them" (p. 68). Even though judges were given guidelines, the results of their reviews were very different because different versions of the same work were produced and performed.The way the play is performed slightly changes from performance to performance, depending on what each actor does, even though they only have a limited number of good versions to choose from. (Culpeper, Short , & Verdonk, 2002 , p. 10).

Researchers who study dramatisation have mostly looked at acting rather than the text itself, since most dramatic works are meant to be performed. Stanislavski (1968) asserted that a play can only be fully shown on stage in all of its complex and important parts (p. 115). As the performance is the spoken word version of a dramatic text, our focus is on the language of the play itself, not on what kind of drama it is, like absurdist, historical, tragedy, comedy, or another type. Language-based approaches, especially pragmatic and discourse analysis, have been used by critics to correctly explain how the play works.

According to pragmatics, the main goal of communication is to share knowledge. People usually talk to share their opinions and explain what they want. Grice's cooperative principle works both ways: speakers follow it, and viewers think that speakers are following it. There are things that aren't said directly but can still be understood, which are called "implicatures." Grice said that conversation should be based on the principle of mutual cooperation and that people should only say what they need to say at the time. This means that the cooperative concept works well in conversation a lot of the time. He came up with the word "implicature," which means that our conversations are naturally helpful to some degree.

"Conversational implicature" is an important part of pragmatics because it helps us understand etymological phenomena, keep track of different meanings, and make semantic representation easier. It is important to tell the difference between explicatures (what is literally said) and "implicatures" (what the author meant), which

are made up by users. There are two types of "implicatures": standard and conversational. Conventional "implicatures" add to the normal meanings of words and are based on rules and principles, like the partnership principle and maxims.

Edward Albee was a famous American playwright who lived from 1928 to 2016. His plays were praised all over the world for exploring the dilemma of humanity and the individual's battle to make meaningful connections in society. Albee's plays show how people fail in their attempts to connect with and understand their fellow citizens. Man is shown to be a separate being in Albee's plays, cut off from those around him. He lives alone and doesn't have any real ties. He had a big effect on the growth of American theatre, especially with *"The Zoo Story,"* which he wrote in 1958. Since Albee's *"The Zoo Story"* is an absurdist play, it doesn't have a normal story or characters that grow. This absence highlights themes of human futility and loneliness, along with other absurdist ideas that are communicated through its language (Esslin, 1980, p. 15). *"The Zoo Story"* is a one-act play that takes place in Central Park and is about a conversation between two characters, Peter, a middle-class man, and Jerry, an oddball homeless person. The first part of their conversation is honest, but it slowly turns angry until Jerry kills himself by pinning himself on a knife Peter is holding.

This research tries to explain what "absurdity" and "indecision" mean in the human situation as shown in Albee's absurdist play "The Zoo Story" (1958). The main point of this study is to show that language, which is often seen as not being useful for communication in the "theatre of the absurd," is actually an important part of how writers create dramatic effects. The goal of this study is to use Grice's maxims on certain parts of the play to find "implicatures" and figure out what the author was trying to say. According to Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness, the secondary goal is to find the character with the highest level of politeness and the character with the lowest level of politeness. Through the use of Short's ideas of "turn-taking" and "topic management," the goal is to find out which character has more power and controls the exchanges.

1.2. Literature Review: Albee's play and the "Theatre of the Absurd".

"The Zoo Story," a play by Edward Albee that he wrote in less than three weeks in 1958, is about people being confined, feeling alone, and trying to find their place in modern society. Al-Duleimi (2009) talks about the character of Jerry, who hides away and lives and dies in a metaphorical "zoo," looking for attention and forgiveness through media while living a nameless life. Albee shows modern man as a spirit locked away from society and lacking freedom and individuality, like an animal in a cage (pp. 1–12). Çalışkan (2024) also looks at *"The Zoo Story"* through a postcolonial view. He says that Jerry represents the "other" and Peter represents the "self." Çalışkan writes about hybrid identity, territory, art, and otherness. He says that otherness includes discourse and the rules that the ruling group follows. During the imperial era, Westerners put down groups like "Others" to show that they were better than them. Çalışkan says that Albee's story takes Peter on a shamanic trip that forces him to face his own otherness and identity as a coloniser, a colonised, and an animal, through Jerry's death (pp. 161–170).

Jianhua and Qing (2022) talk about themes that appear in many of Albee's plays, such as violence, the borderland between absurdism and reality, and attack on the optimism of the American Dream. They come to the conclusion that the play is full of absurdism, which makes the theory and practice of absurd theatre better and brings it to American theatre. Albee's plays are known as "theatre of the absurd" due to their powerful themes of disillusionment with the American Dream, existentialism, and communication failure. He is also connected to the "angry young men" of American theatre because he follows Antonin Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty" (pp. 98–103). According to Esslin (1980), absurdist dramatists show how pointless and empty life is and how hard it is to make basic social ties in Western society (p. 16).

Sharma (2021) says that after World War II, dramatists started questioning traditional theatre in the 1950s. This led to the rise of the "theatre of the absurd," which began in Paris and spread to New York. In *"The Myth of Sisyphus,"* Albert Camus, a major figure in existentialist thought, claimed that the absurdity of life is fundamental. Absurdist plays are different from regular plays because they focus on the inner struggles people have when they are in strange situations (p. 43). Roberts (1997) says that dialogue is

the most important thing to look at because it's how dramatists get their thoughts across (p. 7).

1.3. Methodology

Hadi (2013) says that Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) is one of the most important ideas in pragmatics and that cooperation is necessary for effective conversation. Grice's maxims—quality, quantity, relation, and manner—show how implication works by explaining what the listener should expect instead of telling them how to talk. Grice talks about three kinds of "implicatures": maxims that were flouted, challenged, or violated (pp. 69–72). Grice (1989) said that language looks for meaning and analyses the places where people communicate. He says that people in a talk should work together, which is something that is sometimes forgotten. Failure to follow Grice's rules shows what his model is really about (pp. 22–31). Thamir and Hassan (2018) added to Grice's maxims by saying that they are assumptions that listeners make and speakers accept. When speech goes against the maxims, we need to look for greater meanings. Quality needs accurate information, enough of it, relevant relationships, and a clear, concise, and organised style (pp. 1–16).

According to Simpson (1997), Grice says that breaking these rules makes it easier for a lot of different meanings to emerge in communication. When speakers break one of the maxims, they force the audience to use inferential reasoning to figure out what the speaker really meant. These secret meanings are called "implicatures." Speakers say things with a meaning that may be very different from what they actually say (p. 149). To flout "Grice's maxims" means to take advantage of someone by using vague or contradictory language or rhetorical devices like irony, metaphor, overstatement, understatement, tautology, and exaggeration.Grundy (2000) says that breaking a rule needs an implication so that the statement doesn't seem wrong (Thamir & Hassan, 2018, p. 10). Ladegaard (2008) says that we shouldn't just use the traditional view of language and speech that is shown in pragmatics. Instead, he says we should look at things from a wider angle. It is claimed that interactions between people can be irrational and

illogical, with pushback and non-cooperation possibly being the most preferred way to talk (Thamir & Hassan, 2018, p. 12).

The Politeness Theory, which was put forward by Brown and Levinson in 1987, is another useful view. According to Alabdali (2019), this theory looks at how national differences and similarities affect how people are polite, focussing on "face" or a person's "public self-image." In this group are "positive face" (the need for acceptance of one's self-image) and "negative face" (the need for independence). Saying things out loud can be "face-threatening acts" (FTAs), and people use tactics to mitigate their negative effects, which are influenced by sociocultural factors (pp. 73–74). Short (1996) also says that being polite means reducing FTAs (pp. 112-114). Bach and Harnish (1979) agreed that the rules about who can start a conversation change depending on the situation. Regulatory bodies may not only decide when to start and end a conversation, but also who leads and guides these exchanges. When starting, going through, or ending a talk, you should avoid breaking rules of politeness and other offences. Disruptions, the number of speaking turns, and the roles of questioners and replies are used to show how the authoritative speaker and the subordinate participant interact with each other (p. 107).

Finally, Turn-Taking analysis is very important for understanding how power works and how conversations happen in the play. Kadhim (2021) shows that taking turns is a dynamic process in which the speaker and listener constantly switch roles, with the speaker going quiet while waiting for their turn. If the speaker can't do their job, the person who is currently speaking may lose their turn. The person talking to someone else may use backchannels to let the person speaking know that they are paying attention and want the conversation to go on. There are times when the speaker goes overboard with talking, which makes the other person want a chance to talk. Still, psychological and social factors may make taking turns harder or impossible, based on the relationship between the person speaking and the person listening. This way of waiting for your turn is mostly used by players in theatre. Its pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic patterns are all organised in a unique way.Taking turns is one way to communicate, as shown on pages 1283 and 1284.

The statement by Short (1996) that "Turn-taking patterns and deviations from relevant turn-taking norms can easily become meaningful in texts" (p.205) is true. To fully understand how people take turns, it's not enough to just write down the speech acts that are used. It is rare for more than one person to talk at the same time when two or more people are talking. It also doesn't happen often that only one person talks when at least two are talking. It seems like everyone naturally knows when and how to switch roles. As a result, there is very little time between the turns of two different speakers, even when the talk gets very lively. It's clear that there are general connections between how people take turns and how heated the talk is. According to pages 206 and 207, powerful speakers have the most and longest turns in talks, can start conversations, decide what is talked about and who speaks when, and can cut other people off.

A qualitative research method, especially discourse analysis, would be used for this study. *"The Zoo Story"* by Edward Albee was picked as the main source of data because it has a lot of interesting dialogue between two characters, Jerry and Peter, which makes it easy to see how language works in communication situations. Certain parts of the talk between Peter and Jerry will be picked out and studied in more detail. For these conversations, we will pick dialogues that clearly show examples of following or not following Grice's Maxims, different ways of being polite, and different ways of waiting one's turn. For instance, patterns of who takes turns could be found in Jerry's long speeches and Peter's shorter, often confused answers. Grice's Maxim of Quantity could be used to look at situations where characters seem to be purposely hiding information, like when Jerry talks about his trip to the zoo.

This work was chosen because it has the ability to show how complicated human communication is by looking at it through the eyes of The Maxims of Grice Characters in the play, especially Jerry, often say things that seem to deliberately break Grice's Cooperative Principle and the four maxims that go with it (Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner). One example is Jerry's long, seemingly pointless stories can be looked at to see how they break the Maxim of Relation, which leads the audience to guess deeper meanings. The way Peter tries to follow normal verbal rules is very different from the way Jerry talks, which makes it easy to study "conversational implicature."

The way Peter and Jerry talk to each other shows different ways to be polite, or not to be polite. Jerry often doesn't care about what Peter's face needs and asks straight, bothersome questions that make Peter's face look bad. Peter, for his part, tries to be nice even though he feels uncomfortable. This dynamic gives us useful information for studying ideas like good and bad manners, saving face, and acts that threaten to do so. How to Take a Turn: The play is a good example of how to take a turn in dramatic conversation. Jerry often takes long turns leading the talk, while Peter has a hard time joining in or keeping his conversational space. The analysis would focus on how turns are started, kept, and given up, as well as how breaking the rules of normal turn-taking adds to the drama and helps the characters grow.

1. 4. Analysis and Discussion

Albee's *"The Zoo Story"* is notable for its violation of Grice's maxims, which serve as guidelines for facilitating cooperative communication in dialogue. Violating or flouting these maxims results in conveying a meaning distinct from the intended one. This phenomenon enables a deeper understanding of the play, as it allows us to interpret not only the explicit statements but also the underlying implications of the characters' dialogues through the application of the theory. According to the stage directions, *"The Zoo Story"* takes place in a park or open area. The protagonist, Peter, is reading a book on a bench when the antagonist, Jerry, approaches him. Here, our schema, which is defined as "the organized representations of background knowledge which readers bring along to texts" (pp. 227-231) according to Short (1996), has been activated. Jerry is expected to meet Peter or, at the at least, start the conversation with an emphatic comment in order to initiate dialogue with him, according to the chronological sequence of events in the schema. The chat actually begins as follows:

"JERRY: I've been to the zoo. [PETER doesn't notice.] I said, I've been to the zoo. MISTER,

I'VE BEEN TO THE ZOO!

PETER: Hm? . . . What? . . . I'm sorry, were you talking to me?

JERRY: I went to the zoo, and then I walked until I came here. Have I been walking north?

PETER: [Puzzled] North? Why . . I . . . I think so. Let me see.

JERRY: [Pointing past the audience] Is that Fifth avenue?

PETER: Why ya; yes, it is.

JERRY: And what is that cross street there; that one, to the right?

PETER: That? Oh, that's Seventy-fourth Street.

JERRY: And the zoo is around Sixty-fifth Street; so, I've been walking north.

PETER: [Anxious to get back to his reading] Yes; it would seem so.

JERRY: Good old north.

PETER: [Lightly, by reflex] Ha, ha.

JERRY: [After a slight pause] But not due north.

PETER: I ... well, no, not due north; but, we . . . call it north. It's northerly" (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, pp. 1-2)

At the beginning of the play, Jerry breaks the rule of relation by starting the talk with "I've been to the zoo," which is neither appropriate for engaging with someone you don't know nor relevant to what has already been said. In normal conversations, Jerry would ask Peter about the weather after greeting him, which would start a chat with someone he hasn't met before. It's clear that there is another violation at the start of the play, where the same sentence is said three times in a row. John says, "I went to the zoo. [Peter doesn't notice.] I said, I've been to the zoo. Mister, I've been to the zoo." This repetition goes against the rule of amount because it gives the audience a first look at Jerry's annoying personality and strange behaviour, which they will see a lot of in the play.

In the following conversations, Jerry constantly breaks the rules of quantity and relation by asking where the meeting is and insisting on the route. Enquiring about the path Peter has been taking, he asks, "Have I been walking north?" (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, p.1). Not only is Peter confused, according to the stage directions, "PETER: [Puzzled] North? Why...? I . . . I think so. Let me see." (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, p.1). The crowd is shocked because Jerry's questions are not

only unlikely, but they also make no sense to Peter. The breaking of the rules and the unusual start to the play are not what we expected based on how we usually think about these kinds of events and contexts. We get into the play's temporary fantasy world, which goes against what we normally think because it is absurdist. This happens due to its absurdist nature.

The "implicature" of the inappropriate statement in the play's introduction and the repeated violations of the Cooperative Principle show that language isn't enough in the theatre of the absurd. Nilan (1973) says that this is one of the two main themes of the play (p.1). It's a way for people to connect that shows how real life is and how hard it is to communicate in modern times. After a long and unusual conversation in which Jerry talked to Peter in a strange way, Jerry now wants to put the conversation back together in a normal way. Once he gets past the first two lines, he fails to reach his goal and goes back to the way he spoke at the start of the play.

“JERRY: [He stands for a few seconds, looking at PETER, who finally looks up again, puzzled] Do you mind if we talk?

PETER: [Obviously minding] Why . . . no, no.

JERRY: Yes you do; you do.

PETER: [Puts his book down, his pipe out and away, smiling] No, I really; I don't mind.

JERRY: Yes you do.

PETER: [Finally decided] No; I don't mind at all, really.

JERRY: It's ... it's a nice day.

PETER: [Stares unnecessarily at the sky] Yes. Yes, it is; lovely.

JERRY: I've been to the zoo.

PETER: Yes, I think you said so ... didn't you?" (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, pp. 3-4).

"He wears tweeds, smokes a pipe, and carries horn-rimmed glasses" (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, p. 1), which tells us that Peter is an example of a "upper-middle-class" person and Jerry is an example of a "lower-middle-class" person. ,"I live in a four-story brownstone rooming house" (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, p. 9). Jerry's inability to keep in touch with Peter shows how hard it is to bring people from different social groups together in American society. When Jerry asks Peter how much he makes, Peter breaks the relevance rule. Peter's main answer doesn't answer Jerry's question.

"JERRY: And you're not going to have any more kids, are you?

PETER: (A bit distantly) No. No more. (Then back, and irksome) Why did you say that? How would you know about that?

JERRY: The way you cross your legs, perhaps; something in the voice. Or maybe I'm just guessing. Is it your wife?

PETER: (Furious) That's none of your business! ...

JERRY: Well, now; what else? ... What do you do to support your enormous household?

PETER: I . . . uh . . . I have an executive position with a . . . a small publishing house..." (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, pp.5-6).

Politeness theory: This conversation shows how to do Face-Threatening Acts. Jerry keeps putting Peter's positive face (the need to be liked and approved of) and negative face in danger. It is a clear invasion of Peter's privacy to ask about having more children and to guess about his wife (negative face). Peter's angry response, "That's none of your business!" shows that he wants to protect his negative face. Maxim of Manner: Jerry's questions are meant to be annoying and not "perspicuous" (clear and short). His reason, "The way you cross your legs," is not clear and is meant to confuse rather than explain. Maxim of Quality (Truthfulness): Jerry's "guesses" about Peter's life aren't clear-cut between what he's observing and what he's making up, which makes Peter

question what they're talking about. Taking Turns: Jerry takes over the whole talk. He starts every new conversation with a straight, and sometimes rude, question. Peter's turns are mostly in response, with answers, deflections, or annoyed facial expressions. Jerry has permission to speak because he keeps asking questions.

"JERRY: That sounds nice; very nice. What do you make?

PETER: [Still cheerful] Now look here!

JERRY: Oh, come on" (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, pp. 6-7)

Peter can avoid answering the question by breaking the maxim of relevance. This approach keeps private or sensitive information that shouldn't be shared with people safe. The fact that "implicature" was broken shows that the two characters don't know each other, which means Jerry's questions aren't appropriate for a social setting. They are also from different social and economic groups because of the way they talk to each other. It was hard for Peter and Jerry to build a "true personal relation" based on mutual respect and worth (Ahmed, 2016, p. 8). At the end of this play, Albee says that American society splits people into two groups: those who believe they have reached the American Dream (Peter) and those who have not (Jerry).

"PETER: Well, I make around eighteen thousand a year, but: don't carry more than forty dollars at any one time ... in case you're a ... a holdup man ... ha, ha, ha" (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, p. 7).

Albee's goal in portraying the characters in this way is to give the audience a better understanding of these characters, since the play is short and can't hold more important details. Furthermore, when Jerry asks him about it, Peter violates the maxim of quantity by giving too many details after giving his main answer about his annual salary. When Peter tries to lessen the effect of the amount of money that was stated, he accidentally makes Jerry more confused by giving him more information.

"JERRY: [Ignoring the above] Where do you live? [PETER is reluctant.] Oh, look; I'm not going to rob you, and I'm not going to kidnap your parakeets, your cats, or your daughters.

PETER: [Too loud] I live between Lexington and Third Avenue, on Seventy-fourth Street" (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, p. 7).

When Jerry asks about Peter's house right after the instance we just mentioned, parallel flouting happens. For the same reason, Peter doesn't want to give his address to someone he doesn't know, like Jerry. But Jerry's dogged behaviour forces Peter to say his entire speech out loud. In these comments, Jerry breaks the maxims of quantity to make Peter feel safe, which makes it easier for him to get the information he wants about Peter.

Peter follows the maxims of quality and manners by giving his full address. Keeping in mind "Grice's maxims" shows how language can be used functionally. In this case, Peter wants to persuade Jerry by giving off an image of power and confidence, which goes against any fears or doubts that Jerry may have. When Jerry breaks "Grice's maxims," the play shows that he is rude and intrusive towards other people. It's also clear from the different answers that he is rude to Peter. When Jerry starts talking to Peter, he does not greet him, which is not common when two strangers are talking to each other, and he talks very loudly.

"JERRY: [After a slight pause] But not due north.

PETER: I ... well, no, not due north; but, we . . . call it north. It's northerly.

JERRY: [Watches as PETER, anxious to dismiss him, prepares his pipe.] Well, boy; you're not going to get lung cancer, are you?

PETER: [Looks up, a little annoyed, then smiles.] No, sir. Not from this" (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, p. 2)

On the other hand, Peter always talks to Jerry politely and calls him "sir" a lot of the time. He also follows Grice's maxims, which prove how to use words well. He sticks to the maxims, which means Peter uses formal, organised language to sound nicer. Peter, on the other hand, tries to avoid doing things that could hurt Jerry's face, both positively and negatively. When Peter stops reading and lets Jerry ask questions that he would rather not answer, that's an example of him trying to make Jerry's negative face less scary. To be polite, he doesn't show any signs of refusal, as shown in the following excerpts:

“JERRY: [He stands for a few seconds, looking at PETER, who finally looks up again, puzzled] Do you mind if we talk?

PETER: [Obviously minding] Why . . . no, no.

JERRY: Yes you do; you do.

PETER: [Puts his book down, his pipe out and away, smiling] No, I really; I don't mind.

JERRY: Yes you do.

PETER: [Finally decided] No; I don't mind at all, really” (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, p. 3)

And, “JERRY: I'll tell you about it, soon. Do you mind if I ask you questions?

PETER: Oh, not really” (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, p. 5)

From the main reading of the play, it seems like Jerry is in charge of all the conversations throughout the play. In many situations, it looks like Jerry is higher than Peter. This shows that Jerry is a more powerful speaker than Peter. The conversation always starts with Jerry, and Peter has to answer his ridiculous questions, even though he doesn't want to. By comparing Jerry's and Peter's sentences, we can see that Jerry's words are usually long, and some of them are especially long. On the other hand, Peter's statements are usually short, and sometimes they're just body language like head moves or gestures. In addition, Peter often has trouble expressing his thoughts when it's his turn to speak because he feels helpless because he isn't a good speaker. This is clear from the way he tries to lower the number or severity of face-threatening acts (FTAs) to be nice and protect Jerry's good or bad face. Jerry's interruptions also make it hard for him to talk to people, as shown in the following conversation:

“JERRY: All right. Who are your favorite writers? Baudelaire and J.P. Marquand?

PETER: [Wary] Well, I like a great many writers; I have a considerable ... catholicity of taste, if I may say so. Those two men are fine, each in his way. [Warming up] Baudelaire, of course ... uh ... is by far the finer of the two, but Marquand has a place ... in our ... uh ... national ...

JERRY: Skip it.

PETER: I ... sorry" (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, p. 8).

It's also important to remember that Jerry often says things that make Peter angry and make him respond in basic ways, as you can see from some of Peter's responses. At the end of the play, Jerry forces Peter into a fight, even though Peter has tried many times, both verbally and physically, to avoid any possible conflict with Jerry. These events show that Jerry is a strong speaker who isn't polite. They also show that he understands a key philosophical idea in the play, which is linked to the title, *"The Zoo Story."* The animal theme runs through the whole play, with Jerry talking about how people and animals relate to each other. In lines like "But you look like an animal man" (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, p. 6) and "you're an animal" (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, p. 27), he either compares Peter to an animal or calls him one. The author of the play wants to show how modern city life is like living with zoo animals, bringing out the loneliness and isolation that people feel. This idea comes through clearly in Jerry's speech.

"JERRY: I went to the zoo to find out more about the way people exist with animals, and the way animals exist with each other, and with people too. It probably wasn't a fair test, what with everyone separated by bars from everyone else, the animals for the most part from each other, and always the people from the animals. But, if it's a zoo, that's the way it is. [He pokes Peter on the arm.] Move over" (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, p. 20).

"JERRY: (The following long speech, it seems to me, should be done with a great deal of action, to achieve a hypnotic effect on Peter, and on the audience, too. ...) THE STORY OF JERRY AND THE DOG! ...

PETER: (PETER winces) Don't react, Peter; just listen. ...

JERRY: ... Please understand, Peter; that sort of thing is important. You must believe me; it is important. We have to know the effect of our actions. ...

PETER: I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

JERRY: (Furious, but whispering) That's a lie." (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, pp.14-18)

Turn-Taking: This is the worst case of unfair turn-taking in the play. Jerry interrupts the talk to give a long speech. According to the stage directions, his goal is to have a "hypnotic effect," which means he wants to silence Peter. Peter tries to speak up or respond ("Peter winces," "PETER indicates his growing displeasure"), but Jerry tells him straight out not to ("Don't react, Peter; just listen"). "I DON'T UNDERSTAND!" is Peter's last angry statement. He is desperately trying to get back a turn and make sense of the story he has been forced to hear.

Maxims of Quantity: Jerry breaks this maxims to a very high degree. He tells us a lot of things, much more than a normal conversational turn would allow. The amount of information is overwhelming, which helps him get through Peter's defences. Maxim of Relation: The story is about a dog, but Jerry ties it to bigger ideas about life, talking to others, and God ("WITH GOD WHO IS A COLOURED QUEEN..."). Peter was hoping for an easy story, but the story has nothing to do with what they were talking about on the park bench, which makes him confused. Politeness Theory says that Jerry's speech is a constant threat to Peter's negative face. It's not up to him to leave or talk. Later, Jerry gets angry when Peter says he doesn't understand. This is because his own good mood is being threatened, and he wants his story, and by extension, himself, to be understood and accepted.

“JERRY: (He pokes PETER on the arm) Move over.

PETER: (Friendly) I'm sorry, haven't you enough room? (He shifts a little)

JERRY: (Pokes PETER harder) Move over!

PETER: (Beginning to be annoyed) Look here, you have more than enough room! ...

JERRY: (Punches PETER on the arm, hard) MOVE OVER!

PETER: (Very annoyed) I can't move over any more, and stop hitting me. What's the matter with you?” (Albee, Richman, Daniels, & Klein, 1960, pp.20-21)

Taking Turns: The talk breaks down into a fight for control, both verbally and physically. The turns are quick, sharp, and rough. When Jerry pokes and punches Peter, he is stealing his turn and violently entering his space and right to be there. Politeness Theory: This is where Jerry's FTAs all come together. He goes from imposing himself verbally to attacking you physically. At first, Peter tries to be polite

("I'm sorry, haven't you enough room?"), but as Jerry gets more angry, Peter stops being polite and starts giving straight orders ("Stop hitting me") and questions ("What's wrong with you?"). The fight for the bench is a fight for the freedom to be, which is what negative face is all about. All of Grice's maxims have been thrown out. The way they're talking to each other is not at all nice or organised. Relation: It's no longer a talk; it's a real battle for power. Quantity and Quality: The dialogue is just threats and requests; it doesn't give any information. Maybe the only "truthful" thing said in this part is Jerry's "I'm crazy, you bastard," but it's a threat, not a way to talk things out.

1.5. Conclusion

This study shows that Edward Albee's *"The Zoo Story"* breaks up regular conversation on purpose to make a funny point about how lonely people feel in today's world. The fact that Jerry keeps breaking the rules of relation and quantity shows that he can't converse effectively and that he feels alone in the world. When we look at another big difference, we see that Peter is polite and from the middle class because he uses deference tactics and tries to avoid face threats. Jerry's rudeness, on the other hand, shows that he is on the outside of society and is fed up with the things that keep him out. Jerry is in charge because he sets the topics, gives long speeches, and talks over Peter, making it hard for Peter to leave the conversation.

All of these language patterns work together to support the play's main ideas. The "zoo" metaphor goes beyond Jerry's story to show how the characters are trapped and cut off from each other, which is like how hard it is for people to connect in a broken society. Albee's use of language in a way that goes against the rules shows that he was doing it on purpose and with power, which goes against the idea that absurdist theater ignores language meaning. Instead, pragmatic and discourse analysis show how breaking the rules of conversation—being rude, breaking maxims, and taking turns unevenly—can be used to make social commentary. This shows that language is essential to Albee's absurdist vision, in which failure to communicate becomes the very way to show existential disconnection.

1.6. References

Ahmed, S. S. (2016). The Zoo Story: Regeneration Through Communication. Journal of Language, Linguistics and Literature, 2(1), 8-13.

Alabdali, T. S. (2019). Revisiting Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory: A Middle-Eastern Perspective. Bulletin of Advanced English Studies, 2(2), 73-78. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.31559/baes2019.2.1.

Albee, E., Richman, M., Daniels, W., & Klein, A. (1960). The Zoo Story . Spoken Arts.

Al-Duleimi, H. I. (2009). The Caged Soul: A Study of Edward Albee's The Zoo Story. Al-fatih Journal , 1-12.

Bach, K., & Harnish, R. M. (1979). Linguistic communication and speech act. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England : The MIT Press .

Çalışkan, D. Ü. (2024). The Animal Other: Revisiting Edward Albee’s The Zoo Story’s Jerry and Peter from a Postcolonial Lens. World Journal of English Language, 14, 161-170.

Culpeper, J., Short , M., & Verdonk, P. (2002). Exploring the language of drama: from text to context. London and New York : Routledge .

Esslin, M. (1980). The Theatre of the Absurd (Third Edition ed.). New York: A Division of Random House, Inc.

Grice, P. (1989). Studies in the Way of Words . Mainland: Harvard University Press.

Hadi, A. (2013). A Critical Appraisal of Grice’s Cooperative Principle. school of language, culture & linguistics, Monash University, 3(1), 69-72.

Jianhua, L., & Qing, Z. (2022). A Probe into Absurdism in Edward Albee’s Play The Zoo. English Language, Literature & Culture, 7(4), 98-103.

Kadhim, H. S. (2021). A Pragmatic Study of Turn-taking in Some Selected English Plays. مجلة كلية التربية الاساسية، 27، 1282-1307.

Nilan, M. (1973). Albee's The Zoo Story: Alienated Man and the Nature of Love. Modern Drama, 16(1), 55-59.

Roberts, J. L. (1997). Edward Albee’s Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? New York: Hungry Minds, Inc.

Sharma, S. (2021). Edward Albee’s Plays: A Psychological Centrum of Alienation and Estrangement. A Global Journal of Humanities , 42-46.

Short, M. (1996). Exploring the language of poems, plays, and prose. London and New York : Addison Wesley Longman Limited .

Simpson, P. (1997). Language through Literature. An Introduction . LONDON: Routledge.

Stanislavski, C. (1968). Building a Character. (E. R. Hapgood, Trans.) London: Methuen.

Styan, J. L. (1963). The elements of drama. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thamir, S., & Hassan, R. (2018). A Linguistic Analysis of Grice Maxims. Al-Qadisiyah: University of Al-Qadisiyah.

تحليل أسلوبي لاستنتاج المعنى في مسرحية ادورد البي حديقة الحيوان: قواعد جرايس، أسلوب التهذيب، وتبادل الأدوار.

م.م مهند شاكر عبد الله السعدي

وزارة التربية / المديرية العامة للتربية في محافظة كربلاء المقدسة

الملخص

تستخدم هذه الدراسة الأسلوبية مبادئ غرايس، ونظرية الأدب لبراون وليفينسون، وإطار شورت لتبادل الأدوار للنظر في كيفية فهم الناس لمسرحية ألبى العبثية "قصة حديقة الحيوان" (1958). يكشف البحث أن ألبى يتعمد كسر قواعد اللغة لإيصال أفكار حول الوحدة، والفشل في التواصل، والتقسيم الطبقي الاجتماعي. هذا يتعارض مع فكرة أن المسرح العبثي لا يستخدم اللغة للتواصل. جيري ينتهك باستمرار مبادئ غرايس من خلال الحديث عن أشياء لا تهم، وتكرار نفس الأشياء مرارًا وتكرارًا، وطرح الكثير من الأسئلة. هذا يُظهر أنه ليس لديه الكثير من الأصدقاء ويجعل من الصعب عليه إجراء محادثات طبيعية. بيتر، من ناحية أخرى، مهذب ولا يفعل أشياء قد تضر بسمعته، مما يجعل الفروق بين الطبقات أكثر وضوحًا. تُظهر ادوار جيري الطويلة، وتغيير الموضوع، ومقاطعة الكلام مدى قوته. بيتر، من ناحية أخرى، سلبي لأنه يقتصر على الأدوار القصيرة ولا يفعل الكثير. تُظهر هذه الطرق في استخدام اللغة كيف ان المسرحية تنتقد العزلة الحديثة (مجازة "حديقة الحيوانية") ومدى أهمية اللغة في مسرح ألبى العبثي. لفهم معنى "مسرح العبث" بشكل كامل، وجدت الدراسة أن علم اللغة العملي وتحليل الخطاب يلعبان دورًا كبيرًا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العبث، تحليل الخطاب، قواعد جرايس، الأدب وتبادل الأدوار.