A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF LARRY BENSKY'S INTERVIEW WITH HAROLD PINTER

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ABSTRACT

Interview is a kind of conversation that is conducted for various purposes, including getting information and establishing an effective communication. A successful interview is achieved by the collaboration between the interviewer and interviewee, who is supposed to answer the questions asked by the former. As it is the interviewer who initiates and controls the interview, he/she has the superior position in an interview. Interviews are akin to drama in terms of discourse structure; therefore, they can be studied by using the methods of stylistics employed for analysing drama, including speech acts, turn-taking, and politeness. Larry Bensky's interview with Harold Pinter (1966) displays the discursive relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. Speech acts give clues about the linguistic interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. While Bensky's role is more limited to asking questions, Pinter generally provides information for the interviewer, thus Bensky, who depends on Pinter for information about his artistic life, is the less powerful participant in the interview. Turn-taking mechanisms used in the interview also show that Pinter is the powerful participant as it is Pinter who interrupts Bensky and controls speech turns in most cases by changing speech topics or evading Bensky's questions about his art. Bensky, on the other hand, tries to resist Pinter's interruptions and attempts to control the course of interview by threatening his negative and positive faces in a bald or redressed way. Pinter, in turn, threatens Bensky's negative face either by not giving the answer he wants or preventing him from asking questions. The present study makes a stylistic analysis of the interview between Bensky and Pinter in order to explain the reasons why the two make peculiar linguistic choices.

Keywords: Larry Bensky, Harold Pinter, stylistic analysis, speech acts, turn-taking, politeness, linguistic power

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LARRY BENSKY'NİN HAROLD PINTER İLE RÖPORTAJININ BİÇEMSEL BİR İNCELEMESİ

ÖZ

Röportaj, bilgi almak ve etkili bir iletişim kurmak gibi çeşitli amaçlarla yapılan konuşmaya benzeyen bir türdür. Başarılı bir röportaj, röportaj yapan ile kendisine sorulan sorulara cevap vermesi beklenen röportajın yapıldığı kişi arasındaki iş birliği ile sağlanır. Röportajı başlatan ve kontrol eden röportajı yapan kişi olduğundan, röportajda üstün konuma sahiptir. Söylem yapısı açısından röportajlar dramaya benzer; bu nedenle, sözeylemler, sıra alma ve incelik dahil olmak üzere dramayı analiz etmek için kullanılan biçembilime ait yöntemler kullanılarak incelenebilirler. Larry Bensky'nin Harold Pinter ile yaptığı röportaj (1966), röportaj yapan ve röportaj yapılan kişi arasındaki söylemsel ilişkiyi gösterir. Sözeylemleri röportajı yapan ile röportaj yapılan kişi arasındaki dilsel etkileşim hakkında ipuçları verir. Bensky'nin rolü daha çok soru sormakla sınırlıyken, Pinter genellikle röportajı yapan Bensky'e bilgi verir, bu nedenle sanatsal hayatı hakkında bilgi almak için Pinter'e bağımlı olan Bensky röportajda daha az güçlü katılımcı konumuna sahiptir. Röportajda kullanılan sıra alma mekanizmaları da Bensky'nin sözünü kesen ve çoğu durumda konuşma konularını değiştirerek veya Bensky'nin sanatıyla ilgili sorularından kaçınarak konuşma sıralarını kontrol eden Pinter olduğu için, Pinter'ın güçlü katılımcı olduğunu gösterir. Bensky ise olumsuz ve olumlu yüzlerini açıkça veya yumuşatılmış bir şekilde tehdit ederek Pinter'ın sözünü kesmesine ve röportajın gidişatını kontrol etme çabalarına karşı koyar. Bunun karşılığında Pinter, Bensky'nin olumsuz yüzünü ya istediği cevabı vermeyerek ya da soru sormasını engelleyerek tehdit eder. Bu çalışma, Bensky ve Pinter arasındaki röportajın biçemsel bir analizini yaparak, ikisinin neden özel dilsel seçimler yaptıklarının nedenlerini açıklar.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Larry Bensky, Harold Pinter, biçemsel inceleme, sözeylemler, sıra alma, incelik, dilsel güç

1. INTRODUCTION

Interview is considered as "a conversation, whether face-to-face or through other media, between or among interlocutors" (Barrot, 2012, p. 94). Interviews can be conducted to get information, hire, or promote a person, or ensure an effective political, academic, and professional communication (Barrot, 2012). The success of an interview rests on the collaboration between the interviewer and interviewee: the interviewer should ask his/her questions first and the interviewee should answer them (Martínez, 2000). Although the interviewee might have a superior socio-economic status in real life, it is the interviewer who has the superior position in an interview since he/she initiates and controls the interview by "open[ing] and clos[ing] the encounter, mak[ing] questions and thus allocat[ing] next turns, and manag[ing] topic shift" (Martínez, 2000, p. 98). Stylistics can be applied to the analysis of interviews, which are akin to conversational speech, since it studies "certain aspects of language variation" and analyses types of deviation from normal

speech pattern to "shed interpretative light on texts that incorporate discursive interaction in the form of (re)presented conversation" (Crystal & Davy, 2013, p. 10; Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010, pp. 100-101). In *Stylistics*, Verdonk defines stylistics as "the study of style in language" and "the analysis of distinctive expression in language and the description of its purpose and effect" (2002, pp. 3, 4). Stylistics is a linguistic sub-field that emerged to give a scientific quality to literary criticism, thus stylisticians attempted to "substitute precise and rigorous linguistic descriptions, and to proceed from those descriptions to interpretations for which they can claim a measure of objectivity" (Fish, 2017, p. 53). The roots of stylistics can be traced back to Russian formalism, an influential literary movement in the early twentieth century that aimed to "defamiliarise the familiar in order to generate for the viewer or reader a new perspective on the topic of the piece of work under consideration" (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010, p. 2). In so doing, Russian formalists emphasised "the power of literature to present something in a striking and/or unexpected way so as to make it stand out and demand a reader's attention" (Giovanelli & Mason, 2018, p. 8). The influence of Russian formalism on stylistics can be seen in the notion of foregrounding, an important concept in stylistics which "emphasises how meaning is dependent on patterns that are built up through individual word choices" (Giovanelli & Mason, 2018, p. 9). Stylistics studies the forms of utterances to understand "why a particular form was chosen rather than another" and to make a group of linguistic features "based upon a view of their function in the social context" (Jucker, 1992, p. 33; Crystal & Davy, 2013, p. 10). Mick Short argues that stylistics "appears to suggest an overall concern with the study of *style*," but more recently stylistic analysis has attempted "to understand the relationship between the literary text, on the one hand, and how we understand it, and are affected by it, on the other" (1996, p. 12). Stylistics tends to focus on the study of literary texts (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010, p. 1). Nevertheless, in recent years stylistics has started to be concerned with non-literary texts, including speeches, advertisements, and academic papers (Hashim, 2017, p. 3).

Interviews are non-literary works that have affinities with drama in terms of style and discourse structure, so they can be studied by using the methods of stylistics employed for analysing drama. Plays are akin to "spoken conversation" since they are "designed to be 'overheard' by an audience" (Culpeper et al., 2002, p. 3; Short, 1996, p. 168). Differing from poems and novels, drama "largely consists of character-to-character interaction, and it is for this reason that the most profitable areas of language analysis to apply to drama are those developed by linguists to describe face-to-face interaction" (Short, 1996, p. 168). Moreover, plays have at least two discourse levels, namely the author-audience/reader level and the character-character level. Like plays, interviews have similar patterns with speech and have a doubled discourse structure:
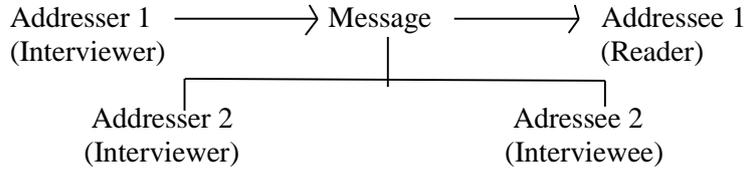
Addresser 1 ——————→ Message ——————→ Addressee 1
(Interviewer)   (Reader)

Addresser 2   Adressee 2
(Interviewer)   (Interviewee)

Figure 1

The interview between Bensky and Pinter has also two levels of discourse. The structure resembles the structure of a work of drama. However, in this structure the interviewer can be considered both as an author and a character because it is Bensky, the interviewer, who both publishes and holds the interview. Therefore, while the interaction between Bensky and the reader is direct (Bensky directly speaks to the reader at the very beginning of the text), the interaction between Pinter and the reader is indirect as Pinter's message is not conveyed directly by himself but by Bensky, who acts like a mediator. The reader learns something about Pinter's ideas and behaviours through the interviewer, who at the beginning of the text gives some background information about the playwright. This doubled structure also enables the reader to have an opinion about the interviewer and interviewee as they have a chance to evaluate their words from a certain distance. On the other hand, at the interviewer-interviewee level, both Bensky and Pinter have less knowledge than that of the interviewer and the reader at level 1 because at level 2 (interviewer-interviewee), Bensky asks questions, but he does not know what Pinter's answers will be. In the same way, Pinter does not know what Bensky's next question will be. However, at level 1, having done the interview, Bensky knows each word of Pinter and he conveys them to the reader.

As this study claims that interviews have similarities with plays in terms of discourse structure, it employs the techniques of stylistics to explore the language of drama while studying the relationship between Bensky, the interviewer, and Pinter, the interviewee. There are various methods and forms of stylistic analysis to evaluate prose, poems, and plays, like turn-taking and sound patterning (Short, 1996, p. 10). Although these techniques "have become associated with one particular genre," they "can be used on any genre and any text" (Short, 1996, pp. xii, 10). Speech acts, turn-taking, and politeness are among the techniques used to make a stylistic analysis of drama. Therefore, it is crucial to explain these techniques, which will be used to explain the discursive interaction between Bensky and Pinter.

Speech act is a technique used to evaluate the language of plays. According to Short when people speak "[t]hey also perform *acts* by saying what they do" (Short, 1996, p. 195). Therefore, they are "linguistic acts" and there are different kinds of speech act: "promising, threatening, pleading, stating, suggesting, asking, challenging, contradicting and so on" (Short, 1996, pp. 195, 199). These speech acts give some clues about the speakers and

the relationship between them. In dialogues if "[the] exchange is chiefly mental, the conversational contribution amount to a giving of information or a seeking of information", but "if the exchange is chiefly physical, the contribution amounts to a giving, or seeking of goods and services" (Toolan, 2002, pp. 143-144). These acts of giving and seeking, in turn, are divided into four conversational acts: offers, requests, informs and questions. As offers and requests "concern future proposed action by one interactant or the other, they are called Proposals" and "since Informs and Questions provide or seek information, they are called Propositions" (Toolan, 2002, p. 144). The Request category consists of "commands, demands, requests, begging, praying, etc." (Toolan, 2002, p. 144). Offers, on the other hand, "are proposed future actions or services on the part of the speaker, ostensibly to the benefit of the addressee" (Toolan, 2002, p. 145). The Inform category includes "claims, warnings and compliments," and Questions "are acts designed to obtain the kind of information that Informs supply" (Toolan, 2002, p. 145).

Turn-taking is another technique used while making a stylistic analysis of plays. The 'turn' means "the enactment of a speaker's right to speak by taking an opportunity to speak in a speech event or situation," and when the speaker speaks "he or she takes a turn at speech and as speech alternates, turns alternate as well" (Herman, 2002, p. 19). The system of turn taking is regulated by two components: turn-allocational component and turn-constructional component (Herman, 2002). The turn-allocational component regulates the transitions between turns: "one participant talks, stops, the next participant talks, stops and so on," which is called "one-party-speaks-at-a-time" rule (Herman, 2002, p. 20). However, turn-taking mechanism is disrupted when the turns of the interviewer and the interviewee lapse. Such cases are considered to be examples of "interruption" (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010, p. 102). Interruption occurs when one speaker does not allow the other speaker to complete his/her turn (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010).

Politeness, like speech acts and turn-taking, can be used to understand "[the] relationships between characters" (Short, 1996, p. 212). Politeness in linguistics is studied to understand the interaction between the speaker and addressee. There are various terminologies pertaining to politeness. Face is a concept that is defined as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman, 1967, p. 5). Brown and Levinson (1987) categorize 'face' into two groups: positive face and negative face. Positive face is defined as "the desire (in some respects) to be approved of" and positive politeness is paying attention to satisfy a person's need to be approved of (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 13). Enhancing someone's positive face, on the other hand, is to sincerely satisfy the addressee's wants, interests, and needs, using nice expressions about him/her, or his/her possessions and goods (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For instance, a speaker might enhance an addressee's positive face, saying, "You look amazing!" or "Your baby is so cute!"

However, if the speaker does not satisfy the hearer's wish to be approved of, he/she is likely to threaten the addressee's positive face (Culpeper, 2002).

Negative face is "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others" and negative politeness is to respect "[the addressee's] want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 62, 129). This can be done by not interrupting people and by helping them to achieve their goals (e.g. helping an old person to cross the road, carrying some parcels for someone). If someone helps people to achieve their goals, he/she enhances their negative face, but if he/she prevents people from fulfilling their aims, he/she threatens their negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Face-threatening Act (FTA) is an act (linguistic or non-linguistic) that threatens someone's positive or negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). A speaker might threaten an addressee's negative face by indicating he/she "does not intend to avoid impeding H's [the addressee's] freedom of action" (e.g. the speaker indicates directly that he/she does not like the addressee's acts, wants, beliefs or goods) (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 65). A speaker might also threaten an addressee's negative face, by stating he/she "does not care about the addressee's feelings, wants, etc." (e.g. the speaker might offend or embarrass the addressee by indicating directly that he/she does not value the addressee's feelings and values) (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 66).

An FTA may be bald, redressed, on record or off record. If an FTA is bald, it is not accompanied by any mitigation or redressive action, thus it is done "in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible" (e.g. the speaker might make a bald request, saying "Bring my notebook!") (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69). An FTA is on record if it makes clear who it is aimed at. For instance, "Leave me alone, Tom" is a bald on-record FTA and "Please could you leave me alone, Tom" is an on-record FTA, which is redressed by "softening mechanisms that give the addressee an 'out', a face-saving line of escape, permitting him to feel that his response is not coerced" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 70). On the other hand, if an FTA does not make explicit whom they are directed at, it is an off-record FTA, which enables the speaker to "get credit for being tactful, non-coercive" and "avoid responsibility for the potentially face-damaging interpretation" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 71).

The interview conducted by Larry Bensky with Harold Pinter in 1966 is an example that reveals the discursive interaction between speakers. Larry Bensky (1937-) is a teacher and a literary and political journalist. He worked as Paris editor of *The Paris Review*, which published his interview with Harold Pinter, between 1964 and 1966. When he returned to New York, he started to write daily book reviews for *The New York Times Book Review* (Radio Proust, 2020). Harold Pinter (1930-2008), on the other hand, is an important absurdist playwright whose works reveal the breakdown of language through using

everyday speech which is full of pauses and silences (Abrams & Greenblatt, 2006). The interview between the two is published in *Writers at Work* (1967) and it is seventeen-page long, containing 6134 words. It is hold in Harold Pinter's office facing Regent's Park in London and opens with Larry Bensky's, the interviewer's, description of Pinter's office. Bensky delineates the view seen from the office: he talks about autumn landscape that distracts Pinter's attention away from the interview. Bensky also points to Pinter's deep voice and his manner of speech, giving a hint that he suffers when he turns his ideas into words. Moreover, he emphasizes the fact that Pinter was uneasy as he was not writing anything at the time when the interview was carried out. In so doing, he suggests Pinter bases his happiness on his works. Bensky also gives some brief information about Pinter's writing career and his gradual rise on the social ladder. Later, he provides some details about the interior of Pinter's office (e.g. bookshelves, a velvet chaise longue, a small final balance sheet showing the income received from the production of *The Birthday Party*). After disclosing this background information about Pinter and his office, Bensky gives a full text of the interview which is about the playwright's writing career, his ideas about politics and the relationship between him and his audience. Although Bensky, as the interviewer, is supposed to be the one who controls the interview, it is mostly Pinter, the interviewee, who tends to allocate turns and manage topic shift through speech acts, turn-taking mechanisms, and the concept of linguistic politeness. Accordingly, this study aims to explain the discursive interaction between Bensky and Pinter by making a stylistic analysis of the interview between the two.

2. A Stylistic Analysis of the Interview between Larry Bensky and Harold Pinter

2.1. Speech Acts

Speech acts, which have been studied in the previous part, give some clues about the positions of the speaker and the addressee. In Offers and Questions the addressee is superior to the speaker, whereas in Requests and Informs the speaker is superior to the addressee (Toolan, 2002). These speech acts can be studied to explain the discursive relationship between Bensky and Pinter.

> INTERVIEWER: Do you get impatient with the limitations of writing for the theater?
> PINTER: No. It's quite different; the theater's much the most difficult kind of writing for me, the most naked kind, you're so entirely restricted. … I'm not a very inventive writer in the sense of using the technical devices other playwrights do—look at Brecht! I can't use the stage the way he does, I just haven't got that kind of imagination, so I find myself stuck with these characters who are either sitting or standing, and they've either got to walk out of a door, or come in through a door, and that's about all they can do.

INTERVIEWER: And talk.
PINTER: Or keep silent. (Bensky, 1967, p. 355)

The interviewer asks Pinter a question ("Do you get impatient with the limitations of writing for the theater?"), which puts him in an inferior position because he does not know the thing known by Pinter, so he seeks some information from the playwright. Pinter, on the other hand, is in a superior position because he has the knowledge and informs the interviewer about writing plays ("[T]he theater's much the most difficult kind of writing for me, the most naked kind, you're so entirely restricted"). The fact that Pinter makes a request also makes him superior. He wants the interviewer to "look at Brecht," however this is not a true Request but an Inform because he informs the interviewer about the fact that one should look at the work of Brecht to learn how technical devices are used. Again, Pinter has more knowledge than the interviewer. However, in turn 3 the interviewer tries to have linguistic superiority by using a statement involving an Inform about the fact that Pinter's characters talk. Pinter, on the other hand, does not want to be put in an inferior linguistic position, so he immediately uses a statement involving an Inform about the fact that sometimes his characters prefer to remain silent ("Or [my characters] keep silent"). In so doing, he manages to restore his linguistic superiority. It is important to note that the exchange between Pinter and Bensky is mental, meaning they give or seek for information. This shows that both the interviewer and interviewee are sophisticated speakers.

Speech acts in the aforementioned extract are formed by an interrogative structure ("Do you get impatient with the limitations of writing for the theater?"), a request ("[L]ook at Brecht!") and declarative structures which involve Informs (e.g. "[T]he theater's much the most difficult kind of writing for me, the most naked kind, you're so entirely restricted"). While the interrogative structure used by Bensky points to his linguistic inferiority, the request and declarative structures used by Pinter prove that he is the powerful participant in the exchange because he gives rather than takes information. In the interview speech acts are sometimes formed with hybrid structures (e.g. declarative + interrogative structure). For instance, the interviewer asks: "Acting was your profession when you first started to write plays?" (Bensky, 1967, p. 354). In fact, this speech is a statement turned into a question by putting a question mark at the end. This hybrid structure (declarative+ interrogative structure) might show Bensky knows that Pinter used to work as an actor when he first started to write his plays, but he wants his readers to learn this fact, or Bensky has suspicion about whether Pinter worked as an actor when he wrote his early plays, thus he wants to be confirmed by Pinter.

2.2. Turn-Taking

Short claims that "speech acts are often connected together into sequences of turns in conversation" (1996, p. 205). Therefore, turn-taking is another technique that can be used to analyse interviews. A successful interview is

based on the harmonious relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, who are supposed to follow turn-taking mechanism that "regulates turn change and assumes that only one speaker may speak at a time" (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010, p. 102). This question-answer process should progress respectively without any disruption (Martínez, 2000). An extract from Bensky's interview can be given to understand how turn-taking system works:

> INTERVIEWER: Your wife, Vivien Merchant, frequently appears in your plays. Do you write parts for her?
> PINTER: No. I've never written any part for any actor, and the same applies to my wife. I just think she's a very good actress and a very interesting actress to work with, and I want her in my plays. (Bensky, 1967, p. 353)

In this quotation the interviewer wants to learn whether Pinter writes parts for his wife, so he asks a question and lets the playwright give an answer. Pinter, in turn, answers the interviewer's question when the latter stops speaking. In so doing, they give one another an opportunity to express their thoughts without interrupting each other's speeches, thus they engage in a harmonious dialogue.

The turn-constructional component regulates "the size or length and linguistic texture of a turn" (Herman, 2002, p. 21). In the interview Pinter has usually long turns while talking about the topics he wants to speak:

> INTERVIEWER: Did you go to a lot of plays in your youth?
> PINTER: No, very few. The only person I really liked to see was Donald Wolfit, in a Shakespeare company at the time. I admired him tremendously; his Lear is still the best I've ever seen. And then I was reading, for years, a great deal of modern literature, mostly novels.
> INTERVIEWER: No playwrights—Brecht, Pirandello . . . ?
> PINTER: Oh, certainly not, not for years. I read Hemingway, Dostoevski [sic], Joyce, and Henry Miller at a very early age, and Kafka. I'd read Beckett's novels, too, but I'd never heard of Ionesco until after I'd written the first few plays. (Bensky, 1967, p. 354, emphasis in original)

In this quotation Pinter is the powerful participant of the conversational behaviour as he fits Short's description of powerful speaker, who "initiate[s] the conversational exchanges, control what is talked about and who talks when, and interrupt others" (1996, pp. 206-207). In turn 4 Pinter interrupts the interviewer when Bensky asks him whether he read such modern playwrights as Brecht and Pirandello in his youth. In so doing, Pinter imposes his linguistic power on Bensky and he does not let the interviewer complete his question. Pinter also initiates and controls the topic of the interview. For instance, in turn 2 he shifts the topic from drama to novel ("I was reading, for years, a

great deal of modern literature, mostly novels"). Although in turn 3 the interviewer insists on talking about drama, in turn 4 the interviewee does not let him to do so by referring to modern novelists ("I read Hemingway, Dostoyevsky, Joyce, and Henry Miller at a very early age, and Kafka"). The short turns taken by Pinter, on the other hand, shows his indifference:

> INTERVIEWER: Do you have a particular interest in psychology?
> PINTER: No. (Bensky, 1967, p. 362)

In this extract Pinter reveals that he is not interested in psychology by giving a monosyllabic answer ("No"). However, it does not show that Pinter is the powerless participant in this dialogue because the fact that he evades this question by a short answer also shows his linguistic power: when he does not want to answer the interviewer's question, he prefers not to take a long turn to suggest that he wants to change the topic.

2.3. Politeness

Terminologies related with politeness can also be used to understand the discursive relationship between Bensky and Pinter much better. Both Bensky and Pinter use FTAs to assert linguistic power over one another or to mitigate the damage on their positive or negative faces. For instance, Bensky questions Pinter's linguistic power by threatening his positive face: "Most people would agree that the strength in your plays lies in just this verbal aspect, the patterns and force of character you can get from it. Do you get these words from people you've heard talking—do you eavesdrop?" (1967, p. 359). At first, the interviewer enhances Pinter's positive face by talking about "the strength in [his] plays," thus suggesting that he is a good writer, but then he threatens Pinter's positive face by asking, "[D]o you eavesdrop?" In this case, Bensky calls Pinter an eavesdropper and this question is a bald on record FTA because it is without any mitigation or redress, and it is clear it is directed to Pinter. As such, the interviewer challenges Pinter's linguistic superiority through this bald FTA.

In another instance the interviewer threatens Pinter's negative face by using the word "Pinteresque," a term Pinter does not want to hear: "Have you ever seen anything in a film or theater that struck you as, well, Pinteresque?" (Bensky, 1967, pp. 365-366). On hearing this word, Pinter gets angry: "That word! These damn words and that word 'Pinteresque' particularly" (Bensky, 1967, p. 366). Threatening Pinter's negative face Bensky achieves power on linguistic level. Pinter, in turn, threatens the interviewer's negative face by not letting him ask why he continues writing although he suffers a lot during the writing process: "Don't ask me why I want to keep on with plays at all!" (Bensky, 1967, p. 367). This is a bald on record FTA as Pinter directly speaks to the interviewer without using any redress. In so doing Pinter becomes the powerful participant in the exchange as he controls the interviewer's turns. Bensky uses linguistic redress as a tactic to resist Pinter's linguistic power.

For instance, he tries to get answers he wants from Pinter by mitigating the threat on the playwright's positive face:

> INTERVIEWER: Do you think you'd ever use freer techniques as a way of starting writing again?
> PINTER: I can enjoy them in other people's plays ... .
> INTERVIEWER: Does this make you feel behind the times in any way?
> PINTER: I am a very traditional playwright... (Bensky, 1967, p. 367, emphasis in original)

In turn 1 the interviewer wants to learn if Pinter thinks about giving up his conventional writing techniques, but he asks his question, using mitigation in order not to call him directly old-fashioned. He starts his question with "Do you think" to make Pinter feel that he regards his opinions and uses the positive phrase "freer techniques" instead of "modern techniques," a phrase which might suggest that the playwright is old-fashioned. This indirectness, in turn, enables Bensky to get an answer from Pinter in turn 2 ("I can enjoy them in other people's plays"). In turn 3 Bensky again asks a redressed question: "Does this [the use of traditional techniques] make you feel behind the times in any way?" Here, Bensky does not ask directly "Do you feel yourself conventional?" but he uses a figurative expression ("to feel behind time") in order not to threaten his positive face. Through acting indirectly and being polite, the interviewer manages to make Pinter accept that he is "a very traditional playwright." Accordingly, linguistic redress enables the speaker to control the addressee's response without being coercive.

3. CONCLUSION

The structure of the interview between Bensky and Pinter resembles the structure of a work of drama in that it has two levels of discourse: interviewer-reader and interviewer-interviewee. This structure enables the reader to understand better the discursive relationship between the interviewer and interviewee as they have a chance to listen to both. Speech acts give clues about the relationship between Pinter and Bensky. Generally, it is Pinter who gives information and Bensky is the one who seeks knowledge from the playwright, which makes the interviewer inferior to the interviewee. Turn-taking mechanisms in the interview also prove Pinter's superiority in controlling turns because it is Pinter who interrupts Bensky by not letting him complete his questions or changing and initiating the topic of the interview. Moreover, the study of the terminologies of the Politeness Theory also provides information about the interaction between Bensky and Pinter at the discursive level. The interviewer tries to challenge Pinter's attempts to control the interview process by threatening his negative and positive faces in a bald or redressed way to get answers for his questions. Pinter, in turn, threatens Bensky's negative face either by not giving the answer he wants or preventing him from asking questions. Moreover, Pinter is more direct, and he does not

use any linguistic redress when he threatens the interviewer's negative face. Accordingly, it's Pinter's ability to manage speech acts, turn-taking and politeness that makes him the powerful participant of the conversational behaviour in the interview.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding this research.

ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL / PARTICIPANT CONSENT

Ethics committee approval is not required for this study. There are no participants in this study.

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