The Application of Discourse Analysis to Drama: A Cross-cultural Approach

Söylev Analizlerinin Tiyatroya Uyarlanması: Kültürlerarası Yaklaşım

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Abstract: This paper aims at briefly demonstrating how the major procedures of discourse analysis (i.e. speech acts, presuppositions, and the cooperative principle in conversation and general discourse relations) may be fruitfully applied to drama dialogue. Such a kind of purposive approach, in turn, makes it rather reasonable to distinguish between literary criticism and theatrical analysis, but not so that one is deemed to be superior to the other. "*Co-operative Labour Division*" is crucial because a production of a play is in effect "*a play–an interpretation of it*". In terms of this context, literary criticism should also take the text as its object of investigation and develop techniques of textual analysis to cope with the implied aspects embedded within a set of linguistic or sociological conventions. All this does suggest that the most important sets of linguistic conventions for interpretation are those which govern language use. This effect means treating the text as a series of communicative acts, not just as a configuration of elements belonging to various levels of language.

Keywords: Speech acts, politeness, Tu, Vous, Cordelia, King Lear, cross-cultural

Özet: Bu çalışma, konuşma ve genel söylev ilişkilerindeki konuşma eylemlerinin ve ön varsayım gibi belli başlı söylev analiz tekniklerinin başarılı birşekilde tiyatroya uyarlanmasını ele almaktadır. Amaca yönelik böyle bir yaklaşım edebi eleştiri ve tiyatro eleştirisi arasında bir ayrım yapmayı gerekli kılmak-tadır. Bu ayrım, her iki eleştiri türünün birinin diğerinden üstün olmadığı gerçeğini ortaya koymaktadır. İşbirliği ilkesi, bir oyunun sahnelenmesinin onun yeniden yorumlanması olduğu gerçeğini vurgulamada önemli bir etmendir. Bu bağlamda, edebiyat eleştirisi edebi bir metni inceleme konusu yapmalıdır. Ayrıca, bir dizi metin analiz teknikleri geliştirerek edebi bir metindeki örtülü dilbilimsel veya sosyolojik unsurları incelenmelidir. Bütün bunlar dil kullanımını düzenleyen yorumlayan en önemli dilbilimsel unsurlardır. Edebi metin, sadece farklı dil seviyelerine ait yapılandırmalarla ele alınmaz bir diz iletişim-sel eylemlerle ele alınır.

Anahtar sözcükler: İletişimsel eylemler, nezaket, Sen, Siz, Cordelia, King Lear, kültürlerarasılık

Introduction

The present cross-cultural study will examine politeness from a discourse-oriented perspective assuming that the strategies of politeness are not always arbitrarily chosen by speakers in interaction; rather, their choice is constrained by important contextual features such as the relative power of the speakers, the social distance of the speakers and what the speakers happen to be negotiating at the time (Simpson, 2005, 169-70). For Short, "*A servant cannot, given normal circumstances, threaten a master. Commands, like threats, mark clear social relationships*" (Short, 2005, 144).

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The discourse analysis model based on the interpretation of dialogues deals, in fact, with a particular kind of interpersonal communication within a definable kind of situation, thus opening the way for the wider study of interaction on several hierarchical levels, which "*echo*" the "*embedded*" nature of the discourse.

Discussion

The comparative/contrastive study in cross-cultural field on semantico-pragmatic aspects of language units has always had priority. Here, the issue, in terms of culture-specific "*potential*", has been approached in a manner which aims at interpreting politeness-oriented use of the second person pronouns in English, Russian and Turkish. Our challenge here consists in proposing that identification of the universal set of politeness primitives (i.e., the "*alphabet of human thoughts*") is an urgent task of linguistics.

In the opinion of Humboldt (1903, 36, V: 21-23), all languages revolve, both in grammar and lexicon, around a small number of universal concepts, which are determined completely a priori and these concepts "*can be sought and really found*" (Wierzbicka, 1992, 13). Liebniz's idea of "*building blocks*", as a possible set of indefinables, can "*generate*" all other words (and all the grammatical meanings) and be tentatively established on the basis of any human language.

The exact nature of the relationship between language and culture has fascinated, and continues to fascinate people from a wide variety of backgrounds. As Goodenough's well-known definition claims (1957, 167), a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to all members and to do so in any role that they accept for any one of "*themselves*". Those behaviours, as some scholars claim, are socially acquired; i.e., they are learned and do not come from any kind of genetic endowment (Wardhaugh, 2010, 229). Culture, in other words, is "*know-how*" that a person must possess to get through the task of daily living. Therefore, we find Hall's words (1997, 2) rather appropriate: "*To say that people belong to the same culture is to say that they interpret the world in roughly the same ways and can express themselves, their thoughts and feelings about the world in ways which will be understood by each other. Thus culture depends on its participants interpreting meaningfully what is happening around them and "making sense" of the world, in broadly similar ways*".

Whorf's opposite claim would be that the culture of a people finds reflection in the language they employ: because they value certain things in a certain way, they use their language in ways that reflect what they value and what they do. In this view, cultural requirements certainly influence how a language is used and perhaps determine why specific bits and pieces are the way they are. A third, "*neutral*", claim would be that there is little or no relationship between language and culture.

Johann Gottfried Herder argued that thinking is essentially identical with speaking and therefore differs from language to language and from nation to nation. "*The human spirit thinks with words*", he maintained (1877-1913), V. 21-19). *For him, thinking was nothing but inward language and talking is thinking aloud*" (V. 21-88). Consequently, "*every nation speaks... according to the way it thinks and thinks according to the way it speaks*". Humboldt also saw different languages as bearers of different cognitive perspectives, different worldviews; he wrote: "*Each language... contains a characteristic worldview... The same act which enables him [man] to spin language out of himself enables him to spin himself into language and each language draws a circle around the people to whom it adheres which it is possible for the individual to escape only by stepping into a different one*" (1903-36, v. 7-60).

Similarly, Whorf wrote: language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas

but rather is itself the shaper of ideas, the program and guide for the individual's mental activity... the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds –and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts and ascribe significance as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way– an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is, of course, an implicit and unstated one, but its terms are absolutely obligatory (1956, 213-14).

Some linguists regard languages differing from one another almost exclusively in form. Thus, Chomsky sees the lexicon of a language neither as a unique system of categorization imposed on external reality, nor as a "*shaper of ideas*", but essentially as a set of labels to be attached to concepts which are language-independent and are determined not culturally, but biologically: "*Language and thought are awakened in the mind, follow a largely predetermined course, much like other biological properties*" (1987, 25).

Cross-Cultural Aspects of Second Person Pronouns in English, Russian and Turkish Languages

While speaking, we must make choices of many different kinds: what we want to say, how we want to say it, and the specific sentence types, words and sounds that best unite the "*what*" with the "*how*". "*How we say something*" is at least as important as "*what we say*"; in fact, the content and the form are quite inseparable, being but two facets of the same object. One way of looking at this relationship is to examine a few specific aspects of communication: namely, pronominal choice between "*tu*" and "*vous*" in various languages as politeness markers. In each case we will see that certain linguistic choices a speaker makes indicate a definite social and interpersonal relationship that the speaker perceives to exist between him and the society, on the one hand, and him and the listener(s), on the other. Because in many cases it is impossible to avoid making such choices in the actual "*packaging*" of messages which takes place in different ways in different languages.

Many languages have a distinction corresponding to the "*tu-vous*" (T/V) distinction in French, where grammatically there was once the singular "thou" and the plural "yē" in English, which correspond to "*ty-vy*" in Russian and "*sen-siz*" in Turkish. But usage requires that you use each of these forms on certain occasions only. The "*T*" forms are sometimes described as the "*familiar*" or "*intimate*" forms and the "*V*" forms as the "*polite*" or "*power*" denoting forms. According to Brown and Gilman (1960, 25), the T/V distinction began as a genuine difference between singular and plural.

For some scholars, beginning from the 15th century, the plural forms of the Old English 2nd person "*ye*" and "*you*" were applied more and more generally to individuals. In Shakespeare's time these forms were widely used as equivalents of "*thou*" and "*thee*". Later (in the 17th or 18th century Old English 2nd person singular "*thou*" became obsolete in standard English and nowadays *it* can be met only in poetry, in religious discourse and in some dialects. In this sense, the intensive and parallel use of "*you*"/ "*your*" and "*thou*" (with its forms "*thee, thy*" and "*thine*") in Shakespeare, Shelley and Byron can hardly be regarded as an "*exception*":

> *But if thou live, remember'd not to be,*
> *Die single, and thine image dies with thee.*
> *Or I shall live your epitath to make,*
> *Or you survive when I in earth am rotten* (103).

The modern pronoun "*you*" comes from the Middle English objective "*you*" (OE Dative "*eow*");

its nominative case "*ye*" has become obsolete. Recall the use of "*ye*" in elevated poetic style: Arise, ye prisoners of starvation (Internationale) (Rastorguyeva, 1983, 103, 231-33).

Note: The syncretism of the dative and accusative cases of the personal pronouns began in early Old English and was completed in late Middle English.

Present day English has no active "*T/V*" distinction so far which is rather relevant to the explication of social relations. As is pointed out in Brown, & Gilman (1960, 253-60), the "*T / V*" distinction (for example 'tu/vous' in French and 'ty/vy' in Russian) is not just used to account for singular and plural but also to indicate nearness or remoteness in social status. This, consequently, gives rise to the possibility of productive use of such categories to emphasize swift variation of attitude along the closeness/remoteness scale. Interesting examples of the discussion of such variation (using "*thee*", "*thy*", "*thine*" and "*thou*") in Shakespeare can be found in Mullholand (1967), Quirk (1974), Short (2005), & Simpson (2005). Considerations of context, power, distance, formality, equality, etc., as relevant, are also brought into the reckoning. Moreover, in discourse usually "*more*" is meant than is "*said*" due to the "*implicatures*" generated by the utterances, which are not encoded in the propositions of the sentences of the text but may be "*worked out*" by the relevant processes of inference (Levinson 1983, 97-162).

In his analysis of pronouns and subjectivity, Benveniste (1971) argues that in some way Language puts forth "*empty*" forms which each speaker, in the exercise of discourse, appropriates to himself and which he relates to "*his*" person at the same time defining himself as "I" and a partner as "*you*". The instance of discourse is thus constitutive of all the coordinates that define the subject…" (227).

Consider the complications introduced into the interaction of Cordelia and King Lear (in Shakespeare's "*King Lear*") because of the use of pronouns such as "*thou*", "*thy*", "*thine*" and "*you*".

> *Cordelia: God my Lord,*
> *You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I*
> *Return those duties back as are right fit,*
> *Obey you, love you, and most honour you,*
> *Why have my sisters husbands, if they say*
> *They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,*
> *That Lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry*
> *Half my love with him, half my care and duty:*
> *Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,*
> *To love my father all.*
> *Lear: But goes thy heart with this?...*
> *Let it be so: thy truth, then be thy dower...* (823).

In "*King Lear*", 2nd person pronouns, as a term of address, provide rather broad and various expressive functions within relationships of "*King Lear*" and his subordinates/inferiors, on the other. These functions involve not only emotional but also social significance. In accord with the changing attitude to his youngest and dearest daughter Cordelia King Lear uses either "*you*" or "*thou*", whereas for the other two daughters (Goneril, & Regan) he constantly uses "*thee*" (the accusative case form of "*thou*") and "*thine*", e.g. while addressing to Goneril, his eldest-born daughter, he says:

> *We make thee Lady: to thine and Albany's issue.*

Be this perpetual (822).

The same can be seen in his appeal to Regan:

To thee and thine hereditary ever
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom (823).

When the turn comes to Cordelia, from whom he hoped to hear the warmest and highest praises, King Lear uses "*you*" as a symbol of his love and affection to her, in the presence of the others, saying:

Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least: to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interess'd; what can you say to draw a third more opulent
than your sisters? Speak (823).

Disappointed and agitated with her words, which were quite unexpected and harmful for him, king Lear once more addresses her using "*you*":

Lear: How, how, Cordelia! Mend your speech a little
Lest it may mar your fortunes (823).

Cordelia's sincere and cordial words wouldn't satisfy Lear's ambitious selfishness, which is the main reason of his use "*thou*" and its derivatives to disgrace her in the presence of all the people and particularly in the eyes of the vines of France and milk of Burgundy. More than that, he disclaims all his paternal care and property of blood and declares her a stranger to his heart and deprives her of everything, sharing her part between the other sisters:

Lear: But goes thy heart with this?
...as thou my sometime daughter (823).

Another paradoxical use of "*thou*" is met in the fool's address to King Lear, what he would not dare do never before:

Fool: Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,
Ride more than thou goest,... (827).

Fool uses very sharp and piercing words to humiliate king Lear because of his unjust attitude to Cordelia, but he remains faithful to him and dies in the battle in liberating England together with Cordelia, who dies in the arms of her father.

For Paul Friedrich (1972), 2nd person pronouns, as a term of address, also provide "*an expressive function*" within relationships and due to this function as a means of emotional and social significance. Thus "*cognitively universal or national aspects of culture*" can be inferred from the usage of 2nd person pronouns and the other forms of address. As for the deviant use of these forms between interactants, it can also signify some extra emotional load-contempt, surprise, complaint, etc., e.g. In Byron's "*To D-* ("*Hours of Idleness*")", written in February of 1803, the pain of death has found its emotional reflection in the complaints, hopelessness and to a definite extent, revolt of "I" in his address to the lovely person whom "*death had detached from his breast for ever*":

In thee I fondly hoped to clasp
a friend whom death alone could sever;
Till envy, with malignant grasp,
Detached thee from my breast for ever,
True, she has forced thee from my breast,
Yet in my heart thou keep'st thy seat;
There, there thine image still must rest,
Until that heart shall cease to beat,
And when the grave restores her dead,
When life again to dust is given,
And thy dear breast I'll lay my head-
Without thee where would be my heaven? (Byron, 1994, 3).

The Semantics of "*Polite*" Pronouns in Russian and Turkish

Though Brown and Gilman (1960) were well aware that the "*power*" and "*solidarity*" features of the "*T/V*" opposition take different shapes in different languages, they also assumed that the "*underlying features*" were the same.

We do share the opinion assuming that these same underlying features are at work in Russian and Turkish, but we want to suggest that the differences in the way "*T*" and "*V*" forms are used may be determined, to some extent at least, by the differences in the meaning of these pronouns. More precisely, we maintain that the "*T*" forms in different languages are semantically equivalent, whereas the "*V*" forms are definable and do differ in meaning from one another. For example, we believe that both the Russian and Turkish "*V*" forms differ in meaning from the French form "*vous*" – despite the fact that in Russian "*the "T/V*" contrast itself came in from above as a borrowing from French (Ervin-Tripp 1974, 234).

As an evidence we will adduce the fact that whereas in French prayers and meditations, God is commonly addressed as "*vous*", in Russian and Turkish God is always addressed as "*ty*" and "*sen*" respectively, since, as Wierzbicka states (1992, 320), any attempts to address God as "*vy*" or "*siz*" would produce an effect similar to addressing God in English as "Mr God". For example, in French, it may be unconventional to address God as "*tu*", but there is nothing comical and unacceptable about it (for example, Pascal uses both "*tu*" and "*vous*"); but in Russian and in Turkish, it would be comical and unacceptable to address god as "*vy*"/"*siz*".

As for the "*T*" forms, it may seem justified to assign to them (side by side with "*intimacy*" or "*solidarity*") some more features of this or that kind which could be defined contextually, i.e. without circularity. If, for example, one addresses God in Russian "*Gospodi, pomogi, mne*!" (Lord help me please), or in Turkish "*Tanrım bana yardım et*" (sg), in what sense can one claim that the singular pronouns convey intimacy? Or solidarity?

The reason why the Russian and Turkish second person plural pronouns are inapplicable to God is essentially the same as why the English Mr. is inapplicable: the meanings of both forms are unambiguously human and it invites an interpretation in terms of worldly politeness. Accordingly, as a first approximation, we propose the following formula:

Russian "vy": I want to speak to you the way people speak to people
whom they don't know and
Turkish "Siz": or whom they don't know well and who are not children
or who are superior;

The meaning, which can be applied to God using French "*vous*", should be interpreted in a

different way: I want to speak to you the way people don't speak to people whom they know well and to children.

If these explications are correct, the French "*vous*" has no positive prototype and is inappropriate in a given situation. By contrast, the Russian and Turkish 2nd person plural pronouns have a positive prototype (people seen as adult strangers or adult non-intimates). This explains why the French "*vous*" can be applied to God whereas the Russian and Turkish "*siz*" cannot. These explications, however, imply in that the latter languages "*siz*" has the "*distance*" component of the French title "*monsieur*" or of the English title "*Mr.*" and differs from those titles mainly in the absence of a concomitant "*respect*" component (as well as the absence of sex differentiation). It also fails to explain the fact that both "*vy*" and "*siz*" can be used, to some extent, among family members, whereas for "*monsieur*" and "*Mr.*" in present day usage this is absolutely impossible (except in jest, irony or sarcasm). For example, the Russian Marina Tsvetaeva, throughout her married life, addressed her husband Sergei Efron as "vy", although she addressed her great (Platonic) love, the poet Boris Pasternak, as "*ty*". "*Strangers*" or "*partial strangers*" are the main components of English "*Mr.*" and French "*monsieur*" which make their use inapplicable to family members.

But how is it possible that "*vy*" and "*siz*" can be used for family members? The only possible explanation for this fact is the "*politeness*" meaning of these pronouns. They do not imply a lack of familiarity; it may also imply lack of intimacy and non-intimacy may take place when one is speaking to the family member in the presence of some others or official people or addresses more than one person at a time. For example, the Chancellor usually communicates with his / her council member(s) using "*vy*" or "*siz*" in such cases. The reasoning leads to the following revised interpretation of "*vy*" and "*siz*":

I want to speak to you the way people speak to people:

a)   Whom they don't know, or whom they don't know well,
b)   Who are not children;
c)   Who are together with other people, or
d)   Who are more than one person at a time.

The "*d*" component of "*vy*" and "*siz*" would make the French "*vous*" inapplicable to God (one can hardly speak to God in the way people speak to more than one person at a time, while "*c*" interpretation is in complete opposition to the assumption "*no man is an island*"). Since the plural form of "*vous*" suggests a reference to plurality, the presence of this component could be achieved in the following way:

I don't want to speak to you the way people speak to people

a)   Whom they know well and,
b)   To children if they don't speak to more than one person at a time.

The formulae proposed suggest that "*vy*" and "*siz*" have a triple prototype (strangers, partial strangers, and also groups), whereas, the French "*vous*" has no positive prototype at all and is based on an avoidance of two prototypes: well-known people and children. Another consequence of this difference is that in human/family relations people can switch in mid-conversation from plural "*siz*" to a singular "*sen*", which is mainly characteristic of Turkish:

Atabey, Fahreddin'in elini sıkıp: ziyaretinizden memnun.. oldum (Ordubadı, 1983, 204).

Shaking Fahreddin's hand Atabey said: I am very pleased with your (pl.) visit.

But a few pages later Atabey switches to "*sen*" (singular "*you*" or "*thou*");

> *…seni büyük bir zevkle dinliyorum* (Ibid, 208)
> *I am listening to you (sg) with great pleasure*

Half page later, when Atabey's mood has changed from mild annoyance to strong and agitated interest, he again switches from the Turkish "*sen*" ("*you*"sg.) to the "*siz*" ("*you*" pl.), and this switch clearly reflects a change of attitude:

> *Öyleyse neden soruyorsunuz?*
> *If so what are you speaking of?* (208).

Conclusion

1) Conventionally assigned meanings of the 2nd person pronouns do not always overlap with their pragmatic use; in accord with altering social situations and personal attitudes as well as changing "*values*" of social status factors, logically or artifically arising shades of meaning have been imposed upon their central meanings, of which an element of culture is a part.

2) Interrelationship of language and culture, though indispensable, manifests itself in different ways and extents not only in different languages; social attitudes and values can also influence the cultural paradigm within various aspects/levels of one and the same language during its historical evolution.

3) The attitudinal meanings encapsulate accordingly, they can hardly be described only in terms of "*solidarity*", "*familiarity*", "*respect*", "*deference*", and "*distance*", because these features do not have any constant, language-independent value. In the constructed languages, culturally contextualized pragmatic meanings encoded in the 2nd person pronouns vary from language to language. Different forms of "*polite pronouns*" seem to be rather complex and transparent – both within a language and in a cross-cultural perspective.

4) Pragmatic meanings of the 2nd person pronouns, depending on the use of communicants have a "*prototypical*" semantic structure and present attitudes and emotions in terms of certain human relationships.

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