



PRAGMATIC AMBIGUITY AND EMOTIONAL CONFLICT IN '*HILLS LIKE WHITE ELEPHANTS*': A SPEECH ACT APPROACH

Jawad Ur Rehman

Ph.D. Scholar, Department of English, University of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan & Lecturer, Department of English, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sheringal Dir Upper, KPk, Pakistan

Email: jawad.sbbu@gmail.com

Dr. Shaukat Ali

Email: shaukat143all@uom.edu.pk

Associate Professor, Department of English, University of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Dr. Sajid Iqbal

Email: sajid.iqbal@uom.edu.pk

Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Abstract

This paper employs a pragmatic approach that incorporates elements of Speech Act Theory, theory of implicature, and politeness strategies to explain the communicative dynamics and expressivity in Hills Like White Elephants written by Ernest Hemingway. In examining the minimalist exchanges between the American man character and Jig the following research unearths the strengths of such elements as indirect speech, tactical politeness and being silent as strong methods of communication of emotional tensions, power structures and psychological levels of abstraction. The language employed by the characters, i.e. the euphemisms, general instructions and avoidance of direct answers lies in this approach to avoid directly addressing an issue which is very much understood to be abortion but never named, e.g. creating a level of practical ambiguity. Gricean implicature helps to show how much information conveyed throughout the story is implied, as well as the strategy of politeness and avoiding narrative shows some emotional aversion and manipulation. This paper has identified that the minimalism used by Hemingway in the great iceberg theory hides the psychological tensions that are in the dialogue. This makes the research valuable by connecting the linguistic theory and literary analysis with each other revealing the interpretive power of pragmatic tools in unlocking emotional subtexts and strategies of communication in literary fiction.

Key Words: pragmatics, Speech Act, implicature, politeness, emotional, communicative

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Pragmatics as linguistics sub-discipline deals with the role that context plays in meaning in the language. However, unlike semantics where the meaning of words is understood in isolation, pragmatics examines the way in which words are used by the speaker when in social relation as well as the interpretation intended by the speakers when they speak (go beyond literal meanings) (Yule, 1996). Of the significant approaches with pragmatics is Speech Act Theory which was first initiated by Austin (1962), then elaborated by Searle (1969) which looks at utterances not



merely to carry information but also to accomplish an action like requesting, commanding and even apologizing.

On the literary level, pragmatics gives a vigorous articulation of focusing on the aspects of dialogue, silence, implication, and indirectness to detect an essence of character motivation and thematic aspects. Literary texts also tend to parallel the use of a natural language; therefore they are fertile grounds to pragmatic pursuit. Leech (1983) affirms that pragmatics can assist readers to track the irony, politeness strategies, and tensions among people that may be inferred through narratives. Furthermore, literature like Mey (2001) and Black (2006) has pointed out that through pragmatic analysis of literature, it is easier to capture the elements of character relationship, social cultural values and subtlety in power and conflict tendency in the way literature is presented in discourse. A conversation in many cases runs on various pragmatic levels. Simpson (1997) sees pragmatic stylistics used as the method of revealing the social relations and hidden psychology that drives the interaction of the characters. Interpersonal relationships, emotional subtexts, and power wielding are built through the use of indirect speech acts or implicatures (Grice, 1975) or the strategy of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and deixis in literature.

The current study is built on the following theoretical foundations to discuss a short story by Ernest Hemingway, titled *Hills Like White Elephants*, a text that can be characterized, in terms of its brevity, and sparse language. The application of the speech act theory to the dialogue of the characters will help the research uncover the nature of the pragmatic features on the construction and reflection of the interpersonal conflict and emotional tension (may include: the construction and reflection of interpersonal conflict and emotional tension through use of indirect speech acts, use of conversational implicature, use of politeness strategies etc.).

1.2.About Ernest Hemingway

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) was a major American writer of the 20th century whose literary style, stoic figures and exploration of the experience of war, masculinity, love and loss made him a central figure in American literature. As a journalist, novelist and short story writer, Hemingway is widely known to write in short terse, prose writing and his theory of omission, better known as the iceberg theory. In this theory, the underlying meaning of a story is not supposed to pop out clearly on the surface but only come out by the subtext, so much like the volume of an iceberg that is underwater.

The first published work was written by him when he was in his twenties and was already projected through the lenses of his experiences in his life, as an ambulance driver in World War I, and a journalist in the Spanish Civil War and World War II. In his works it is possible to observe existential dilemmas, emotional suppression, and vulnerability of human relations burdened by pressure. Among the best of his works are *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), and *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), which earned him the Pulitzer Prize. In 1954, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature.

His short stories such as *Hills Like White Elephants* are characteristics of his supremacy in the realm of dialogue, pathos, and realism. In this work, his sparse style compels readers to find meaning in what could not be mentioned, and creating meaning through implication and silence as opposed to overt explanation. The influence of Hemingway can be observed throughout generations of writers and it is his legacy that is still the foundation of modernist literature.

1.3. Summary of the Short Story

The short story of *Hills Like White Elephants* by Ernest Hemingway is short but very effective short story taking place in a train station in Spain where an American and a young woman, called Jig are waiting to board a train to Madrid. The storyline revolves around their polite though worried dialogue concerning, what is implied to be by far, an abortion. Hemingway displays awareness of the inability to understand one another both within the characters and in their relationship through using indirect speech and symbolic relations-dry, barren land and fertile river valley, etc.

The hills are actually white elephants which denote some unwanted or subconscious meaning which can either be the unborn child or the baggage in their relationship. Although the man is attempting to make light of the situation by convincing the woman that the operation will be easy and nothing at all out of natural, it seems that she is torn emotionally and it feels like she is needing some form of assurance that there is more to their relationship that she has been longing to get.

The story is in Hemingway iceberg theory style in which we get to know the deeper emotional and psychological tensions just below the lining of the dialogue which is bare. It depicts such themes as failure of communication, gender issues and relations, emotional apathy, as well as inability to make tough choices.

1.4. Statement of the Research Problem

Hills like white elephants by Ernest Hemingway is one of the most famous works which is considered rather minimalistic, having unclear conversation and the hidden meaning of the emotional stress. The most crucial part of the overall fight of the story is the emotionally-charged dialogue between a man and a woman that was wrestling with an unspecified but crucial choice, which is almost entirely expressed via indirect speech, ellipsis and the slight variations in tone. This leaves most of the meaning up to the reader to figure out leaving a lot of interpretation to the reader and creating pragmatic ambiguity therefore making the reader struggle to determine the intentions and feelings and ways relations are constructed. Though much has been written about the style of Hemingway, not much research has been done to explicitly address that speech act and pragmatic operations (indirectness, conversational implicature and politeness) give rise to emotions conflict and ambiguity in the conversation. The current paper fills that gap by employing the Speech Act Theory and pragmatics insights to discuss how Hemingway builds upon the explicit meaning and how the characters of the story show their passions and their intentions. It is impossible to read the story without fully comprehending this practical makeup, without which it would be difficult to understand the background and certain psychological depth along with the dynamics of communication in the work.

1.5. Objectives of the study

- To explore the ways in which speech acts and indirect language contribute to pragmatic ambiguity in the dialogue of *Hills Like White Elephants*
- To analyse how pragmatic features reflect emotional conflict between the characters

1.6. Research Questions

- In what ways do speech acts and indirect language contribute to pragmatic ambiguity in the dialogue of *Hills Like White Elephants*?



- How do pragmatic features such as implicature, politeness strategies, and silence reflect emotional conflict between the characters?

1.7. Significance of the study

The research is important in terms of the linguistic practices and especially pragmatics but also in terms of the literary analysis. The contribution that the research makes to the wider context of the understanding of the construction of the meaning based on indirect language, use of silence and implied intentions is through application of Speech Act Theory to the work of Hemingway in this famous work, the *Hills Like White Elephants*. Although the story has received a lot of coverage through literature, only a few works have focused on the dynamics of pragmatic principles, as deployed in the story to reflect a hidden emotional struggle.

Linguistically, this study highlights how such pragmatic instruments as indirect speech acts, conversational implicature, and politeness maneuvers could effectively be employed in the interpretation of literary materials. It exemplifies the uses of pragmatic analysis to reveal the latent levels of connotation, speech intent, and face-to-face processes that are not explicitly stated as manifested in the text language. Therefore, it fills the gap between linguistic theory and literary discourse.

To readers and literary critics, the paper provides a new way of bringing out analysis and does not follow the conventional theme or symbolism analysis. It reveals the way the minimalistic style and the judicious application of ambiguity by Hemingway is not merely the question of aesthetics, but a specific linguistic method of representing deeper emotional and psychological truths. This has the potential to strengthen pedagogical application in such modernist literature, pragmatics, and stylistics.

Furthermore, the results of this work may be employed in future cross-sectional research of linguistics and literary research, and also might be of utility in the cross-evaluation of dialogue in the literature of various authors, genres, and in individual cultures. It makes the readers think how a typical human communication principles, including indirectness, inference, and emotional reserve, are studied in texts of fiction through linguistic approaches.

2. Literature Review

Pragmatics is an area of linguistics that is focused upon issues of how context affects the interpretation of meaning within communication. In contrast to semantics where the literal meaning of words and sentences is the concern, in pragmatics, the mode of using language by speakers and interpretation of utterances by listeners is gone into beyond the literal sense of the words and sentences (Yule, 1996). Pragmatic theories have over time been diversified into many sub-theories e.g., speech act theory, implicature, deixis, presupposition, politeness theory and relevance theory.

Speech Act Theory is one more approach to pragmatics whose origin dates back to Austin (1962) and further development carried by Searle (1969) who classified utterances as actions realized with the help of language--asserting, posing a question, ordering something, promising, and so on. These are the speech acts which are separated into three levels, locutionary (literally meaning), illocutionary (agenda of a speaker) and perlocutionary (what it does to a hearer). This framework was cartographically used to investigate the interaction of various cultural and institutional setups (Searle, 1969).



Cooperative Principle proposed by Grice (1975) brought to the fore the phenomenon of conversational implicature according to which speakers use shared assumptions and conversational maxims (there are four of them: quantity, quality, relation, and manner) to convey the meanings indirectly. This theory emphasises the degree to which all human communication relies on the inference and not making things explicit is the basis of understanding irony, sarcasm and politeness.

Another highly impactful theory is the Politeness Theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) that applies the concept of face (public self-image) to the mechanisms employed by the speakers in order to reduce face-threatening actions. The theory singles out two key approaches, positive politeness (bolstering the ego of the listener) and negative politeness (putting an imposer on a minimum). This model has made significant contributions to pragmatics across cultures, where there are major differences in social norms of politeness across languages and cultures (Leech, 2014).

Relevance Theory was suggested by Sperber and Wilson (1995), as it aims to set the emphasis on meaning-making of communication in the cognitive process, sandwiching the notion that it is the hard-wired desire of human beings to find the most adequate meaning of an utterance with the minimal amount of consumption or processing of thinking. It gives prominence to the inferential skills of the listener and the obligation of the speaker to put across sufficient contextual clues and presents a very psychologically uprooted perspective of pragmatics.

The most recent studies discussed pragmatics across various activities which included computer mediated communication, gendered discourse and political rhetoric. As a telling example, Haugh (2013) confirms the increased demand in the interactional pragmatics, the focus of which is the collaborative construction of meaning in the real-time conversation. In an analogous manner, there have been new pragmatic practices and conventions brought about by digital communication e.g. emoji usage, online courtesy and asynchronous turn-taking (Tagg, 2015).

Kecskes (2014) proposed the dynamic context category as a premise that communication is always co-existent between the commission of previous personal experiences (egocentric context) and the requirements of the situation at the course (sociocentric context). His contribution harmonizes the classical pragmatics and the cognitive linguistics, claiming that meaning emerges due to the collaboration of the speaker intentions and the hearer sense construction based on prior knowledge and social prescriptions.

Thomas (1995) critically reviewed the difference between the pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics emphasizing on the significance of both grammatical and social knowledge in attaining the pragmatic competence. The socio-cultural variability that is present in her work points to the direction of pragmatic failure and misunderstanding particularly in second language acquisition.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) have carried out cross-cultural researches with respect to the phenomena of a speech act especially on request and apology strategies. The results of their studies also present a picture of diversity in the pragmatic norms of different cultures and the significance of contextual adequacy in communication. They were also early protagonists of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) which formed the background of comparative pragmatics.



Mey (2001) further developed his theory of a pragmeme, a theory suggesting that each speech act takes place within an overarching pragmatic act or pragmeme the context of which is physical, social and cultural. His perspective was that of pragmatics in the society, which takes the field a step further of looking at language in real life power relations and social contexts.

Tannen (1993) made a great contribution to pragmatics by researching gendered discourse and style of conversations. Although not a pragmaticist in the strict sense of the term, she did investigate the pragmatic variations in indirectness, interruption and overlapping according to gender and culture and thus making miscommunication and conflict more likely to arise.

Aijmer (1996) concentrated on the use of the pragmatic markers like well, you know, and I mean, in the oral talk. Her corpus-based strategy established empirical data with regards to the pragmatic use of these makers as a means of controlling interaction, expressing stance and organizing discourse. This led to the more usage-based pragmatics.

Also, Fraser (1990, 1996) contributed a lot to comprehending discourse markers dividing them into such types as contrastive markers, elaborative markers, inferential markers. His point was that even though these elements tend to be ignored as fillers they are practical in that they reflect speaker attitudes and indicate direction of conversation coherence.

The work by Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) gave a great deal of insight into interlanguage pragmatics, in particular the study of acquisition and application of the norms of pragmatics in the field of non-native speech. They worked on the significance of language teaching that may result in prudent competence in language learning outcomes because, apart from grammatical errors, learners may end up failing because they are inappropriate in using language in given contexts.

Most recently, Barron (2003) describes pragmatic development in second language learners pointing out the progression of the learners who move on to more contextually suitable use of language. Her longitudinal work helps us to gain information concerning the way pragmatic competence develops with time.

The ideal of a more extensive and even more integrative pragmatics was proposed by LoCastro (2012), whose argument included identity and ideology and globalization. Her contributions have been made in the intersection of critical pragmatics, where the author challenges the traditional models directly to see ways in which existing inequalities and power structures in society can be reflected through language uses and instead reinforce it.

3. Methodology

This paper uses a text-oriented, qualitative approach to research that has addressed the meanings people can create beyond language, using the tools offered by pragmatics, namely, Speech Act Theory, to further investigate the construction of the meaning in a text in a story written by Ernest Hemingway, *Where the Hills are like White Elephants*. The selection of qualitative design can be attributed to the interpretative aspect of the study as to identify latent meanings, emotional undertones, the presence of underlying tensions in the discourse between the two primary characters. The writing style of Hemingway, commonly known as the iceberg theory, is dependent upon subtext, implication and ambiguity. This gives his short fiction the perfect candidate to present some pragmatic analysis because there is much more going on in the communicative content that is beneath the words that are spoken as the listener.



The theoretical background of the research is based on pioneering studies by J.L. Austin (1962) and John Searle (1969) who in the Speech Act Theory of their research base their argument on the functionality of utterances as actions. Under this theory, an utterance can be studied at three states, they include the locutionary act (the actual meaning of the utterance), the illocutionary act (the desired meaning or state) and the perlocutionary act (the impact of the utterance on the hearer). This work is specifically intrigued by the illocution of the characters since they suggest, refuse, request, and avert, and the illocutionary acts indicate the underlying emotional subplot and the lack of resolution in communication between the characters. In order to carry further the investigation of the ambiguity and the metaphorical meaning of the dialogue, another theory applied in the study is on conversational implicature which argues Grice (1975) on how speakers commonly or commonly represent a negative conversational maxim (such as quantity, quality, relevance and manner) to mean more than what they literally said. The given theoretical approach is of particular concern to the text by Hemingway, in which characters often imply things that they do not mention directly.

The study also applies the Politeness Theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) that can be used to explain how the characters attempt to deal with face-threatening actions, emotional distancing, and power situations by using language that is formal--or polite. Their categorisation of the positive politeness (methods used to establish a rapport / solidarity) and negative politeness (methods used to avoid imposition) can be used to understand how the characters approach a delicate issue. The deliberate use of indirect language, hedging, and silence by the characters is discussed as a face-saving device of an emotional conversation. The pragmatic reading, thus, permits a layered understanding of the narrative, which resolves to the fact that Hemingway utilizes the minimalistic dialogue in order to entrench the psychology of the characters and the tension in the relations between the characters.

To draw the data, the research employs the entire conversation between the American man and the woman (Jig) in *Hills Like White Elephants*. Every utterance is taken out, coded and classified in terms of its pragmatic function. The contexts of analysis concern not the expressive words only, but also pauses, interruptions, and silences, which are taken into consideration as the meaningful parts of the conversational construction. These are the key elements in a story such as this one by Hemingway where much of what goes on is what is not said. A further step is a deliberation of the presence of the speech acts (e.g., directives, expressives, commissives), a charting of the presence of implicature, and politeness strategies within context. The purpose is to identify the patterns in which these features of language interact to produce pragmatic ambiguity and to capture the emotional conflict, indecision, and power struggle of both of the characters of the story.

The approach can be a rich context-based analysis of literary dialogue, which facilitates the bridge between linguistics and literary studies. Instead of the external symbolic or psychological interpretations, the pragmatic approach acknowledges the language context of the text and makes reference to the communicative action of characters in the text, which are made to speak. By doing that, the study contributes to the increasing amount of reciprocities that attempted to employ linguistic theory to focus on the texts concerning literature and depict the usefulness of pragmatics as a way of revealing layers or strata of meaning and emotional richness present through the fiction texts.



4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Speech Acts and Indirect Language Creating Pragmatic Ambiguity in “*Hills Like White Elephants*”

Ernest Hemingway uses indirect speech acts and minimalistic dialogue in his story *Hills Like White Elephants* to introduce pragmatic ambiguity, especially around the main obstacle, which remained unspoken, the operation, commonly understood as abortion. Ambiguities of the story includes the unwillingness of the characters to use explicit words, evolve to implicature, and deploy evasive or indirect semantics, making it impossible to recognize each other and allows a vast amount to be left to the reader. The most noticeable is probably the recurrent of the American calling the abortion a thing which is perfectly simple:

“It’s really an awfully simple operation, Jig,” the man said. “It’s not really an operation at all.” (Hemingway, 1927, p. 2)

In this case, the speech act has been in the form of a directive that is camouflaged as a reassurance. It seems to appease Jig at face value, and this is the illocutionary impact it is having on her to be compliant. The man also does not use the word abortion and this results in pragmatic ambiguity whereby the listener (Jig) will be forced to determine the actual meaning through conversational implicature (Grice, 1975). Jig’s response shows resistance but remains ambiguous:

“Would you please please please please please please stop talking?” (Hemingway, 1927, p. 5)

This holds obvious syntactic features of a request (the directive speech act), but the perlocutionary effect caused by it lets the man be silent, denoting emotional upset and distaste of his stand. The repetitive nature of her talk signifies emotional pressure and avoidance of society to discuss the issue and therefore the ambiguity and indirectness of the conversation is heightened. We have also another example early in the story where Jig observes:

“They look like white elephants,” she said. (Hemingway, 1927, p. 1)

This metaphor is a representative speech act, which is symbolic in nature. The white elephant is a symbolically burdensome piece that usually refers to the unborn child. The dismissive answer that the man gave; I have never seen one, the man sipped his beer. As noted in Hemingway (1927, p. 1), not only does he evade the situation but also refuses to involve himself to her point of view, which further enhances communicative breakdown. The literal interpretation of what he said goes against the deeper meaning, which is also a characteristic of pragmatic ambiguity. Also, Jig employs the use of sarcasm in saying:

“That’s all we do, isn’t it—look at things and try new drinks?” (Hemingway, 1927, p. 4)

This hypothetical speech act is a way of expressing dissatisfaction, yet with the cover of indirectness. The sarcasm enables her to express dissatisfaction without open confrontation as the sarcasm is representative of her and the other character not being emotionally direct. This in-definition prolongs the constant tension that was not solved and illustrates the emotional and communicative alienation of the characters. Jig feels emotional about it, and this leads to the belief she may read the sub-texts of the language but she does not:

“Then I’ll do it. Because I don’t care about me.” (p. 3)

The above statement is very ambiguous. It seems to be first, a commissive speech act, a promise to have the abortion but emotionally it is either an indication of distress or even passive defiance.



This is because there is a contradiction between the form and the intent so that the statement is pragmatically unstable. Does she really assent? Is she giving up? In the next thing that the man says, he does not clear up the ambiguity:

“I don’t want you to do it if you feel that way.” (p. 3)

This appears to be thoughtful, yet is a manipulative rhetoric. He really wants her to do it and at the same time, he exonerates himself by suggesting an escape route, which is not a practical one. This whole matter is a double-bind, further inflicting pragmatic ambiguity.

Silence is another form of communicative action employed by Hemingway and this phenomenon is studied in terms of interactional pragmatics. Silences, lack of reaction and shifts in topics are strategic in this story. As in the case when Jig asks:

“Doesn’t it mean anything to you? We could get along.” (p. 5)

There is no direct response to the man. His refusal to speak is an act of ignoring her request when it comes to his affection or even rejecting her. Either way, there is no response on the verbal level, which in itself is a pragmatic step, which broadens the communicative distance. The man always puts his requests in form of choice offers, e.g.:

“If you don’t want to, you don’t have to. I wouldn’t have you do it if you didn’t want to.” (p. 2)

Although it may appear to be polite, there is some strategy behind it, as it helps Jig feel that she is responsible in making the decision, yet she is subtly but firmly put under pressure. This is in line with negative use of politeness to avoid imposition as much as possible but to result in the request given (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The same repetition of such statements, though, is telling of the manipulative pragmatics of such statements, and how feelings are sugarcoated.

4.2. Pragmatic Analysis of Implicature, Politeness, and Silence in Hemingway’s *Hills Like White Elephants*

In the analysis of *Hills Like White Elephants* by Ernest Hemingway, empirical elements include implicature, politeness strategies and silence which are unique decorations on the language usage between Jig and the American man in order to exhibit the emotion conflict between the two characters. These details expose the unspoken fears, lust and mismatched intentions and turmoil of the characters under the external dialogue.

Brown and Levinson (1987) further claim that the polite face-saving strategies help release face-threatening acts and ensure social peace. In *Hills Like White Elephants*, the American seeks to conceal pressure that, through positive politeness signifies care. He says, “I don’t want you to do it if you don’t want to. I’m perfectly willing to go through with it if it means anything to you” (Hemingway, 1989, p. 4). Superficially, he grants Jig independence, but his sheer following throughout the dialogue is an indicator that it is not the case. His tactical niceness is a form of emotional coercion, and it strips her of any autonomy, all in the name of being nice.

Jig uses negative politeness and irony as a way of keeping the other at a distance and avoiding confrontation. The words, “That’s all we do, isn’t it – look at things and try new drinks?” (p. 4), seem casual, yet criticize the hollow nature of their relationship. The irony highlights her displeasure and there is a lack of correlation between what they superficially experience and what she desires in actually feeling.

One such vivid demonstration of the polite form that covers up the high emotion level takes place when she speaks of saying, “Would you, please, please, please, please, please, please, stop talking?” (p. 5). Framed as a request, the repeated use of please makes this phrase an emotional



outburst once again, seeing how she is in distress, tired, and in need of some emotional distance. Her overdone politeness turns out a very sort of protesting against irrationalizing of the man. Implicature has been described by Grice (1975) as the meanings implied which are not stated directly as a result of contexts. In the story, characters do not express the main problem, abortion, just using more or less indirect language. As an instance when Jig in response to her inquiry, asks Jig, and, “And if I do it you’ll be happy and things will be like they were and you’ll love me?” (Hemingway, 1989, p. 4), she does not sincerely question thus, she is actually implicating a guy to doubt and emotional insecurity, showing that she has already believed that the procedure will not produce any effect on their relationship. Implicature is further demonstrated in the repetition of the euphemism by the American as he continues to say, “It’s just to let the air in” (p. 4). The linguistic use of his language takes away the sense of emotional and moral impact of the situation and puts pressure on Jig without directly attacking her.

Silence is also one of the effective reflections of the emotional conflict. Hemingway is consistent in increasing the narrative to indicate the uneasiness and the withdrawal of feelings by Jig through inaction and break. As an example, a stern-looking conversation resulted in, “The girl looked at the ground. The table was in the shade between the legs of the tree” (p. 3). This descriptive lack of dialogue represents an indication of her desire not to participate and retreat in an emotional sense. According to Jaworski (1993), silence is a very communicative approach as it indicates resistance or worry. The other incidence, which stands out outstandingly is the desperate plea by Jig who says: “Would you please please please please please please please stop talking?” (Hemingway, 1989, p. 5). By being overly polite, by repeating instead of saying no, and shortly afterwards being silent, she demonstrates that she has reached a psychological breaking point. Although it is formally polite, it serves the emotional purpose, which is highlighted by her overwhelm and frustration. Coming out of heated dialogues, there are scenes of calm as Jig struggles within herself. A case in point is when the girl and the man are talking about the hills; when they finally talk, they had their discussion about the hills by saying, “The girl looked across at the hills on the dry side of the valley and the man looked at her and at the table” (Hemingway, 1989, p. 2). The absence of words leaves room full of meaning- Jig looking at the hills is an action of thinking, and this thought can be related to motherhood or-- something more fundamental, whereas the man looking at Jig shows his indecisiveness.

Much later, when Jig does not say anything and merely stares at the ground, her nonverbal reaction turns into withdrawal, which demonstrates that she is not emotionally involved in the reasoning of the man. The denial of the talk during the story is the rejection of the simplistic thinking of the man and the distance between the two men is shown by the use of silence.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

This paper has shown how a practical approach that possesses an anchor point in Speech Act Theory, the theory of implicature formulated by Grice and politeness theory by Brown and Levinson provides an effective perspective through which it is possible to discuss the affective and communicative profundity of the *Hills Like White Elephants* by Ernest Hemingway.]TS[The very minimalism of dialogue has not been very neutral and it has been indirect and evasive and silent. As a matter of fact, it is an advanced machine to convey emotional struggle, power and distance between characters.



The present study has demonstrated through a close analysis of speech acts how the characters, especially the American man and Jig, go about conveying a troubled and ethically messy business by not referring to it directly at all. The dissimulation of orders in re-assuring postures, dissimulation of expressive speech acts containing disguised sarcasm and disguise of commissives contaminated with emotional acceptance of resignation exemplify pragmatic ambiguity that infuses their discussion. Constructed to sound polite, the words used by the American personify manipulation, whereas Jig, because of the underlying irony or repetition of lines, shows how exhausted she is by her feelings and passive defiance.

In addition, Gricean implicature is key to knowing how meanings are stated but with the dialogue of something strongly implied. The fact that the word abortion is avoided and such phrases like letting the air in are used points to the ways both characters make an effort not to complicate the emotional load of the situation. It is not only that such indirect references contribute to the ambiguity, but also they should be accepted as a method to reflect the whims of emotional evasiveness and absence of direct contact among the characters.

Silence is also brought out as an important communication tool. The role it plays is not one of communication breakdown, but rather active determination in emotional withdrawal, opposition, and mental struggle. The silences, eyes, and even passive answers of Jig betray that dictate what words cannot: the inner conflict of a character, her feeling of an alien to this surrounding, and the unwillingness to be imposed a decision that she does not absolutely adhere to. These nonverbal references add to the subtext of the text and point towards the genius with which Hemingway incorporated the iceberg theory, i. e. the surface text to a rich subtext.

To conclude, this pragmatic approach has shown that this story cannot be reduced to one about a couple who are having a bad decision to make, but a rich one that shows how language with all its structure, omission, and enunciation can speak to other truths. The communicative techniques or in-absence of same portrayed by characters can be used to show their psychological conditions as well as to illustrate their relationship issues, indicating how in minimalistic literature, less can provide much more in the way of interpretation. The convergence of the theories of literary translation with reality helps in giving more understanding about how language is not only something which is expressed but also a reflection about human struggle, passion and uncertainty.

5.2.Recommendations

In light of the results of the present study, it would be expedient to conduct additional research and investigate the pragmatic aspects, namely speech acts, implicature, and politeness strategies of a greater number of short stories by Hemingway, or any other minimalist authors to check whether there would be any common pattern of emotional dormancy and communicative indeterminacy. Comparative study would be a possibility to examine how female and male figures in various texts place language to negotiate power, identity and the relation tension. Also, it would be interesting to apply multimodal discourse analysis, taking into account body language, description of setting and narrative voice, which have to be incorporated and interpret how meaning is created off the dialogue. It could also be useful in future studies of looking at reader reception and interpretation in order to know how pragmatic ambiguity might affect the emotional and moral judgments of the readers. Lastly, a cross-cultural pragmatic interpretation



should be able to be used to gain insights into the way the indirectness and silence are interpreted by the people of differing sociolinguistic settings.

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