

Investigating Politeness Strategies in Albee's Play 'The Zoo Story'

دراسة إستراتيجيات الآداب في مسرحية ألي "قصة حديقة الحيوانات"

*Moulai Hacene Yacine**
University of Ibn Khaldoun
Tiaret / Algeria
Moulaiyacene.y@yahoo.com

Benyoucef Radia
University of Abdelhamid Ibn
Mostaganem / Algeria
Benyoucefradia@yahoo.com

Received: 11/08/2021 Accepted :25/10/2021 Published :31/12/2021

Abstract:

The present study attempts to analyse and interpret Albee's (1958) play 'The Zoo Story' by investigating the politeness strategies as a stylistic tool. Indeed, it examines the extent to which politeness strategies that characters employed in 'The Zoo Story' highlight the intended meaning of the play.

To this effect, the researcher adopted a stylistic textual analysis whereby he employed the model of linguistic politeness that was developed by Brown & Levinson (1978). The findings of the study mediate a contrast in the politeness strategies that the two characters employed which reflects the contrast that exists between the social classes that the two characters belong to.

Key words: Politeness strategies, Edward Albee, play, The Zoo Story, stylistic.

المخلص:

تحاول هذه الدراسة تحليل مسرحية ألي (1958) المعنونة "قصة حديقة الحيوانات" وتفسيرها من خلال التحقيق في إستراتيجيات الآداب كأداة للدراسة الأسلوبية. حيث تدرس مدى إبراز إستراتيجيات الآداب التي تستخدمها الشخصيات في مسرحية "قصة حديقة الحيوانات" للمعنى المقصود من المسرحية. لهذا الغرض ، اعتمد الباحث تحليلاً نصياً أسلوبياً استخدم بموجبه النموذج اللساني الذي طوره كل من براون وليفنسن (1978).

* *Corresponding author.*

كما توضح نتائج الدراسة تبايناً في استراتيجيات الآداب التي استخدمت من طرف الشخصيتين (بيتر و جيرى) في المسرحية ، وهو ما يعكس التباين الموجود بين الطبقات الاجتماعية التي تنتمي إليها الشخصيتان. **الكلمات المفتاحية:** استراتيجيات الآداب، إدوارد ألبى، مسرحية، قصة حديقة الحيوانات، الدراسة الأسلوبية.

1. Introduction

The notion of politeness is based on the concept of “face” which was introduced by the sociologist Goffman (1955). Goffman defined face as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact”. (cited in Bouchara 2009, p.8). Such a concept was adopted by the linguists Brown and Levinson (1978) in their model of linguistic politeness. In such a model, the face is of two types, namely positive and negative. Positive and negative faces were defined by Brown and Levinson (1978, p. 62) “Negative face: the want of every competent adult member” that his actions be unimpeded by others. Positive face; the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others”. (as cited in Bouchara 2009, p. 9)

Certain speech acts as requests threaten the addressee’s negative face. While others’ speech acts as criticism threatens the addressee’s positive face. Such acts are accordingly dubbed face threatening acts (FTAs). However, in certain cases FTA’s cannot be avoided. When faced with cases that involve FTAs, speakers are exposed to three options. The first option is to perform the FTA (go on –record) in a bald and redressive manner (Simpson, 1993) as in “close the door”. The second option is to be indirect and avoid performing the FTA (go-off record) as in “it’s a bit draughty in here” (p. 172) rather than “close the door”. The third choice is to perform the FTA, but use certain strategies that reduce the threat of the speech act on the addressee’s positive or negative face as in “could you please close the door?” The last option represents linguistic politeness and the strategies that are used in order to reduce the threat of an FTA are dubbed politeness strategies. Politeness strategies are divided into positive politeness strategies and negative politeness strategies Brown & Levinson (1978). The focus of the present study will be on negative politeness strategies as they are more frequent in the text that will be analysed than positive politeness strategies (see Watts 2003 for a detailed account of positive politeness strategies).

According to Simpson (1995) Negative politeness strategies are summed up into seven strategies and are as follows:

- **Hedges** which are linguistic devices such as the phrases “sort of”, by any chance and “as it were”, hypothetical modal verbs such as “could”, “would”, “might” on particles such as “ahh” and “umm”. These devices are used to mitigate an FTA such as the request in “would you mind closing the door.?”
- **Indicate Pessimism** is another negative politeness strategy which indicates the speaker’s uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of an FTA. instances that indicate pessimism include “perhaps you could take these now”, “you could not possibly lend me your notebook.?”
- **Minimize the Imposition** is a negative politeness strategy that reduces the imposition of a given act on request on the hearer and makes its threat to the hearer’s negative face look less serious. The statement “could I borrow a tiny wee bit of paper?” exemplifies this strategy.
- **Indicate Deference** is another strategy of negative politeness that is achieved through the use of honorifics as sir, madam or by humbling oneself, capacities and possessions (Simpson, 1993, p. 198). Examples of this strategy include “it’s not much of a meal, but it’ll fill our stomachs” (humble one’s, capacities).
- **Apologize** is another negative politeness strategy that signals the speaker’s unwillingness to perform the FTA. Such a strategy is achieved through one of four strategies, namely to admit the impingement on the hearer’s negative face as in “I know this is a bone, but... I would like to ask you a big favour”. Another indicated strategy of apologize is unwillingness or reluctance as in “I hate to have to ask you this”. Give overwhelming reasons in another strategy of apologize and is illustrated in “I’ve been very busy lately, so, could you help me with this?”. Beg forgiveness is still another strategy of apologize and is illustrated as in “please forgive me if...”. (Simpson, 1995, p. 176)
- **Impersonalize** is another negative politeness strategy in which the speaker disassociates himself from the FTA. Such strategy is achieved through avoidance of the use of personal pronouns as I, you which could be replaced by such impersonal sequences as “it would be desirable....” Rather than “I want you....” On through the use of the plural form as in “we regret to inform you.”....

- **Acknowledge the Debt** is a negative politeness strategy in which the speaker expresses this gratitude to the hearer in order to reduce the effect of the FTA. Instances of such a strategy include “I’d be eternally grateful to you if you would...”, “I’ll never be able to repay you if you.”....

Three factors are taken into account, while applying the politeness strategies outlined above. Such factors include, as indicated by Watts (2003), namely the power that the addressee has over the speaker, the social distance between the interactants and the degree to which the action required of the addressee is rated as an imposition. Indeed, the power that the speaker has over the hearer pushes him to use or not to use a politeness strategy. A boss, for example, would not use any politeness strategy while requesting something to be done by an employee. The employee will; on the other hand, need a politeness strategy when asking something from his employer. The kind of relationship also determines the necessity or unnecessariness of a politeness strategy. A neighbour needs to apply a politeness strategy when asking to borrow a hammer from his neighbour. Yet, a parent would not need to use any politeness strategies when asking his child to do the charges. The degree of imposition is culture-bound x may bay access, cultures. In fact, borrowing the lawnmower (Watts 2003), could be imposing on the hearer in some cultures and could be regarded as having a minor imposition in other cultures. The first subtitle opens with an introduction that presents the specific problem under study and describes the research strategy.

2. Literature Review

The model of linguistic politeness sketched above was adopted by a number of stylisticians in their analysis and interpretation of certain literary texts. Considering politeness strategies, it was said too much about the sort of relationship that exists between characters as well as the power they exercise and the sales they assume in a given literary work.

Simpson (1989) indicated that the use of negative politeness by the professor and the pupil reflect the different roles that each one of them assumes at different stages in the play. At the beginning of the play, the professor uses politeness strategies as hedges, apologize, indicate deference in sentences such as “I suppose you really are...the new pupil?”, “I hope you will forgive me”, “I don’t know quite how to apologize....” (p. 177) The use of the above strategies by the professor

indicates that the professor is in an inferior position at this point of the play. Around the middle of the play, both the professor and the pupil use the negative strategy of indicate deference in the sentences "I can't have snack myself understood properly", "it's doubtless my fault" (professor), "or, no sir. The fault is entirely mine" (p. 180). The use of politeness strategies by both characters signal that the characters assume equal positions at that point. A reversal in the roles played by the characters is signalled towards the end of the play where the professor uses bald and non-redressive FTAs such as "listen", "watch, carefully, be quiet". While, the pupil uses deference through honorific "sir" (p. 182).

Similarly, short (2017) studied the politeness strategies used in "Romeo and Juliet" by Shakespeare to reflect the social tension that is portrayed by the play. In the play Lord Capulet uses bald and non-redressive FTAs that threaten Juliet's positive and negative faces. FTAs as "out" "fettle your fine joints against Thursday next, or I will drag you on a hundle thither" (Short, 2017, p. 215) threatening Juliet's negative face. While FTA's as "you green-sickness carrion! Out you baggage! You tallow-face!" (p. 215). Such FTA's were a response to Juliet's refusal to marry Paris which is a threat to her parents' social status and thus their positive faces.

Abdesslem (2001) analysed the politeness strategies that characters in the play the philanthropist in order to indicate the difference in power between three characters, Viz Don, Philip and John. Don is infusion to both other characters which is reflected in his use of hedges when he accepts Philip's offer of a drink which threatens Philip's negative face by imposing on him. The hedges used are included in the sentence "oh, yes, thanks, er... Philip". (Abdesslem, 2001, p. 123).

Abbas and Suleiman (2011) analysed the politeness strategies used by the character Anne in the novel 'Anne of Green Gables' which were interpreted by Abbas and Suleiman (2011) as reflecting the character's maturation and social integration. Instances of the politeness strategies that Anne used include hedging in the sentence "But oh, Marilla, will you let me make cake for the occasion?" (Abbas and Sulieman (2011, p. 574). Hedging is established here through the use of the auxiliary "will".

It appears, from the above report that a considerable number of studies applied Brown's and Levinson's model of politeness in analysing literary texts, chiefly plays and novels with successful outcomes. The present study applies Brown's and Levinson's model of linguistic

politeness in analysing and interpreting the play ‘The Zoo Story’ by Edward Albee. Thus, the present study attempts to answer the following question: do the politeness strategies that characters employed in ‘The Zoo Story’ clarify the intended meaning of the play? Do the politeness strategies of the play reflect what the playwright implies and aims at highlighting? The following hypotheses may be deduced from the aforementioned research questions:

- The politeness strategies that characters employed in ‘The Zoo Story’ clarify the intended meaning of the play which is to highlight the struggle of outcasts and marginalized slice of the society and expose the dark nature of the civilized and norm-respecting slice of the society.
- The politeness strategies of the play reflect what the playwright implies and aims at highlighting the struggle between different classes of the society.

3. *Scope and Methodology*

The present study includes an analysis of the play ‘The Zoo Story’ which was written by Edward Albee (1958); a famous American playwright of the modernist era. After being considered as part of the theatre of the Absurd, the play takes place in a park where two characters, namely Peter and Jerry meet. The two characters enter a conversation that degenerates into a fight over a bench, culminating in the suicide of the character Jerry with Peter’s involuntary help.

The present study identifies the politeness strategies that the two characters in the play employ. Such strategies will then be used as a basis for interpreting the play.

4. *Politeness Strategies in the “The Zoo Story”*

The two main characters of the play employed different negative politeness strategies. The subsequent sections present the politeness strategies that were used by Peter and Jerry respectively.

4.1. *Peter’s Politeness strategies:*

a. *Hedges*

JERRY: I've been to the zoo. [PETER doesn't notice.] I said, I've been to the zoo. MISTER, I'VE BEEN TO THE ZOO!

PETER: Hm? . . . What? . . . I'm sorry, were you talking to me? (p. 12)

The passage indicates that Peter employs the negative politeness strategy of hedges in the sentence “Hm?... what?... I’m sorry, were you talking to me?”. This strategy is achieved through the use of the particle “hm”. Peter opts for this strategy in order to mitigate the FTA that he performed by requesting if his interlocutor was talking to him. Such FTA is minor with respect to the imposition it causes to the introduction. Thus, the use of politeness strategy with such imposition reflects Peter’s well mannered & Civilized behaviour. Hedges tend to send the assumption that is encoded in the request tentative as indicated by Simpson (1989: 176).

b. Impersonalize

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

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

JERRY: And the zoo is around Sixty-5th Street; so, I've been walking north.

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

JERRY: Good old north.

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

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

PETER: I ... well, no, not due north; but, we ... call it north. It's northerly. (p.13).

The above passage demonstrates that “Peter” dissociates himself from the FTA in the sentence “I...well, no, not due north; but we... call it north. It’s northerly. In this sentence, Peter uses the plural form “we” to reduce the effect of connecting the interlocutor when he said “due south”.

c. Indicate deference

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

PETER: [looks up, a little annoyed, then smiles] No, sir. Not from this. (p. 13)

JERRY: I've been to the zoo.

PETER: Yes, I think you said so ... didn't you? (p. 15).

JERRY: And when you're bewildered you become patronizing?

PETER: I ... I don't express myself too well, sometimes. [He attempts a joke on himself.] I'm in publishing, not writing. (p. 20).

Peter uses a set of Linguistic devices in order to demonstrate his respect towards Jerry and diminish the threat that the speech acts that he produces have on his interlocutor's negative face. In the sentence "no, sir, not from this", Peter uses the honorific "sir" to indicate deference and reduce the effect of the FTA which is a disagreement with the interlocutor's beliefs. Peter then humbles his capacities in the sentences "yes, I think you said so, didn't you (p. 15) and "I don't express myself too well sometimes" (p. 20) in order to indicate deference and mitigate the FTA's that both sentences caused to the interlocution's negative face. Indeed, when Peter says "I think you said so", he is reducing the effect of informing the interlocutor that he is repeating himself. Furthermore, when Peter says "I don't express myself too well sometimes", he humbles his capacities in order to reduce the imposition on the interlocutor's negative face as Peter, causing some confusion to Jerry.

d. Apologize

JERRY: I've been to the zoo. [PETER doesn't notice.] I said, I've been to the zoo. MISTER, I'VE BEEN TO THE ZOO!

PETER: Hm? . . . What? . . . I'm sorry, were you talking to me? (p. 12)

JERRY: Now I'll let you in on what happened at the zoo; but first, I should tell you why I went to the zoo. I went to the zoo to find out more about the way people exist with animals, and the way animals exist with each other, and with people too. It probably wasn't a fair test, what with everyone separated by bars from everyone else, the animals for the most part from each other, and always the people from the animals. But, if it's a zoo, that's the way it is. [He pokes Peter on the arm.] Move over.

PETER: [friendly] I'm sorry, haven't you enough room? [He shifts a little.] (p. 40).

PETER: My dear fellow, I ...

JERRY: Don't my dear fellow me.

PETER: [unhappily] Was I patronizing? I believe I was; I'm sorry. But, you see, your question about the classes bewildered me.

JERRY: And when you're bewildered you become patronizing? (p. 20).

The two passages introduced above indicate that Peter employs one particular sub-strategy of apologize which is beg forgiveness. Such sub [-strategy is observed in such sentences as "... I'm sorry, were talking to me?" (p. 12), "I'm sorry, haven't you enough soon?" (p. 40). In both sentences, Peter mitigates the FTAs which are respectively to ask if the addressee was talking to him and whether the addressee has enough room

on the bench by begging forgiveness from his interlocutor through the use of such formulas as "I'm sorry".

Another sub-strategy of apologize that Peter used was acknowledge the impingement on the imposition on his interlocutor's negative face by saying "was I patronizing you, I believe I was, I'm sorry" (p. 20).

e. Off-record Statements

PETER: Oh; you live in the Village! [This seems to enlighten Peter.]

JERRY: No, I don't. I took the subway down to the Village so I could walk all the way up Fifth Avenue to the zoo. It's one of those things a person has to do; sometimes a person has to go a very long distance out of his way to come back a short distance correctly.

PETER: [almost pointing] Oh, I thought you lived in the Village. (p.21).

The foreman's two passages demonstrate that Peter does also opt for indirect requests in order to avoid committing the FTAs altogether. Indeed, Peter goes off-second in sentences as "*I thought you lived in the village*" (p.21). which is an indirect request about where the interlocutor lives (if. Where do you live?). Peter does similarly go off-second in the sentence "*I'm sorry, haven't you enough room?*" which is an indirect request about whether the addressee has enough room or not and which is used instead in order to avoid performing the FTA that would result from a more direct request of the sort "*why are you pushing me?*".

f. Direct and non-redressive FTAs

As Jerry's questions become too personal and his comments inappropriate, Peter abandons his politeness strategies and utters direct and non-redressive FTA's that are closer to the impolite extreme of the politeness continuum.

PETER: I ... uh ... I have an executive position with a ... a small publishing house. We ... uh ... we publish text books.

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

PETER: [still cheerful] Now look here! (p. 18).

JERRY: And you threw them away just before you got married.

PETER: Oh, now; look here. I didn't need anything like that when I got older. (p. 26).

The above passages show that Peter uttered bald and non-redressive FTAs at two different stages in the play. The first FTA which is included in the sentence "now look here" (p.18) was uttered when

Jerry asked Peter how much money he earns from his job, the second bald FTA was produced by Peter in the sentence “now look here” when Jerry assumed that Peter had pornographic cards when he was young and threw them before marrying.

PETER: I really should get home; you see . . .

JERRY: [tickles Peter's ribs with his fingers] Oh, come on.

PETER: [he is very ticklish; as JERRY continues to tickle him his voice becomes falsetto.] No, I ... OHHHH! Don't do that. Stop, Stop. Ohhh, no, no. (p. 38).

JERRY: And it's a hot day, so all the stench is there, too, and all the balloon sellers, and all the ice-cream sellers, and all the seals are barking, and all the birds are screaming. [Pokes Peter harder.] Move over!

PETER: [beginning to be annoyed] Look here, you have more than enough room! [But he moves more, and is now fairly cramped at one end of the bench.] (p. 40).

The above passages exemplify other bald and non-redressive FTAs that were performed by Peter. Such FTAs are included in the sentences “Don't do that. Stop. Stop” (p.38) when Jerry started to tickle Peter, and “look here, you have more than enough room” (p. 40) when Jerry started to push Peter in order to have more room on the bench.

JERRY: Hey, I got news for you, as they say. I'm on your precious bench, and you're never going to have it for yourself again.

PETER: [furious] Look, you; get off my bench. I don't care if it makes any sense or not. I want this bench to myself; I want you OFF IT! (p. 44).

PETER: GET OUT!

JERRY: No.

PETER: I WARN YOU!

JERRY: Do you know how ridiculous you look now?

PETER: [his fury and self-consciousness have possessed him] It doesn't matter. [He is almost crying.] GET AWAY FROM MY BENCH! (p. 44).

JERRY: [rises lazily]: Very well, Peter, we'll battle for the bench, but we're not evenly matched. [He takes out and clicks open an ugly-looking knife.]

Towards the end of the play, and after the conversation between the two characters degenerated to a flight over a bench, Peter started to use impolite FTAs such as “look you. Get off my bench. I want you off it!” (P. 44), “Get away from my bench” which threaten Jerry's negative face. Other impolite FTAs include ‘you are mad! You are stark naming

mad!; (P. 46), "You monster" (P. 47) which threaten Jerry's positive face. Impoliteness reaches its peak when Peter uses profane and obscene vocabulary such as "God da...mn you" (p43). It appears that Peter was quite polite at the beginning of the play. Indeed, given the social distance between the two characters who are foreigners who just met, politeness strategies are necessary so as to reduce the effect of the threat, certain speech acts may produce heaven's faces. However, such strategies are quickly abandoned by Peter after he was provoked by Jerry and loses his self-control, eventually using quite a side term.

4.2. Jerry's Politeness strategies

a. Hedges

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

PETER: [obviously minding] Why . . . no, no. (p. 14).

PETER: What were you saying about the zoo... that I'd read about it, or see ...?

JERRY: I'll tell you about it, soon. Do you mind if I ask you questions? (p. 17).

The above passages indicate that Jerry employs hedges in the sentences "do you mind if we talk?" (P.14), "do you mind if I ask you questions?" (P.17). Hedges is achieved in the former sentences by the use of the formula "do you mind" which mitigates the FTAs of asking Peter to talk on asking him a set of questions.

b. Apologize

JERRY: [angry] Look! Are you going to tell me to get married and have parakeets?

PETER: [angry himself] Forget the parakeets! And stay single if you want to. It's no business of mine. I didn't start this conversation in the ...

JERRY: All right, all right. I'm sorry. All right? You're not angry? (p. 26).

The passage indicates that Jerry uses the sub strategy beg forgiveness which appears in sentences such as "All right, all right, I am sorry, all right?" "You're not angry?" (P.26). In this sentence Jerry repairs for the inappropriate comment he made to Peter when he said "look"! Are you going to tell me to get married and have parakeets?"

c. Positive Politeness strategies

PETER: [uncomfortable] A prosthesis?

JERRY: The very thing! A prosthesis. You're an educated man, aren't you? Are you a doctor?

PETER: Oh, no; no. I read about it somewhere: Time magazine, I think. [He turns to his book.]

JERRY: Well, Time magazine isn't for blockheads.

PETER: No, I suppose not. (p. 13).

JERRY: You're a funny man. [He forces a laugh.] You know that? You're a very ... a richly comic person.

PETER: [modestly, but amused] Oh, now, not really. [Still chuckling.] (p.37)

PETER: [stares glumly at his shoes, then] About those two Empty picture frames ...?

JERRY: I don't see why they need any explanation at all. Isn't it clear? I don't have pictures of anyone to put in them.

PETER: Your parents ... perhaps ... a girlfriend ...

JERRY: You're a very sweet man, and you're possessed of a truly enviable innocence. (p. 23)

The above passages indicate that Jerry uses positive politeness strategies which contribute to the elevation of Peter's positive face. Such strategies are expressed through compliments made by Jerry to Peter in utterances as "... Time magazine is not for blockheads" (P.13), "You're a funny man. You're a very... a richly, comic person", 'you're a very sweet man, and you're possessed of a truly enviable innocence". In all former utterances, Jerry, compliments Peter and his intelligence and kindness which satisfy Peter's desire to be admired by members of his society on his positive face.

d. Direct and Non-redressive FTAs

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

PETER: Why ya; yes, it is.

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

PETER: That? Oh, that's Seventy-fourth Street. (p. 12).

PETER: Oh, my; oh, my.

JERRY: Oh, you're what? But that was a long time ago, and I have no feeling about any of it that I care to admit to myself. Perhaps you can see, though, why good old Mom and good old Pop are frame less. What's your name? Your first name?

JERRY: I'd forgotten to ask you. I'm Jerry.

PETER: [with a slight nervous laugh] Hello, Jerry. (p. 24)

JERRY: Don't go. You're not thinking of going, are you?

PETER: Well ... no, I don't think so.

JERRY: [as if to a child] because after I tell you about the dog, do you know what then? Then ... then I'll tell you about what happened at the zoo. (p.29)

Most of the speech acts that are produced by Jerry are bald and non-redressive FTAs that threaten Peter's negative face at different stages in the play. Indeed, at the beginning of the play, Jerry asks Peter about the name of a street without having recourse to any negative politeness strategy. Indeed, Peter utters the sentence "And what is that, cross street there, that one, to the right?" (P.12). a polite alternative would be "excuse me but, could you please tell me what that cross street over there is?" in which both apologize and hedges are used.

Jerry does also go on-record when he asks Peter about his name in "what's your name? your first name?" which threatens Peter's negative face, by imposing on him the action of revealing his identity. Moreover, if one analyses the request, one finds it very bold and daring as Jerry did not stop at asking Peter about his name, but did go further and asked about his first name. Another non-redressive FTA that Jerry produces is "don't go, you are not thinking of going, are you?" which limits Peter's freedom of action and thus threatens his negative face. Indeed, this speech acts in an order that is devoid of any politeness strategy.

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

JERRY: Skip it. (p.21)

PETER: [laughing faintly] You're ... you're full of stories, aren't you?

JERRY: You don't have to listen. Nobody is holding you here; remember that. Keep that in your mind. (p.29).

[JERRY stops tickling Peter, but the combination of tickling and his own mad whimsy has PETER laughing almost hysterically. As his laughter continues, then subsides, JERRY watches him, with a curious fixed smile.]

JERRY: Peter?

PETER: Oh, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. What? What?

JERRY: Listen, now. (p.39)

PETER: [friendly] I'm sorry, haven't you enough room?

[He shifts a little.]

JERRY: [smiling slightly] Well, all the animals are there, and all the people are there, and it's Sunday and all the children are there.

[He pokes Peter again.] Move over. (p.40)

JERRY: Listen to me, Peter. I want this bench. You go sit on the bench over there, and if you're good I'll tell you the rest of the story.

PETER: [flustered] But ... whatever for? What is the matter with you? Besides, I see no reason why I should give up this bench. I sit on this bench almost every Sunday afternoon, in good weather. It's secluded here; there's never anyone sitting here, so I have it all to myself.

JERRY: [softly] Get off this bench, Peter; I want it. (p.41)

JERRY: [laughs] Imbecile! You're slow-witted!

PETER: Stop that!

JERRY: You're a vegetable! Go lie down on the ground. (p. 42)

JERRY: You put things well; economically, and, yet ... oh, what is the word I want to put justice to your ... JESUS, you make me sick ... get off here and give me my bench.

PETER: MY BENCH! (p.42)

Jerry then shifts from bald and non-redressive FTA's to rude and quite impolite speech acts. Instances of impoliteness are included in the sentence "skip it" in which Jerry interrupts Peter when he speaks about his favourite authors. Other impolite speech acts include "you don't have to litem. Nobody is holding you here; remember that keep that in your mind", "listen now", "move over", "get off this bench Peter", "... go lie down on the ground", "get off here and give me my bench" which do all threaten Peter's negative face not only bald and non-redressive FTAs, but also quite rude.

PETER: Stop it. What's the matter with you?

JERRY: I'm crazy, you bastard (p.41)

JERRY: [laughs] Imbecile! You're slow-witted!

PETER: Stop that!

JERRY: You're a vegetable! Go lie down on the ground. (p.42)

PETER: POLICE! I warn you, I'll have you arrested. POLICE!

[Pause.] I said POLICE! [Pause.] I feel ridiculous.

JERRY: You look ridiculous: a grown man screaming for the police on a bright Sunday afternoon in the park with nobody harming you. If a

policeman did fill his quota and come sludging over this way he'd probably take you in as a nut. (p.43).

Jerry does also utter FTAs that threaten Peter's positive face. Such FTAs include "I'm crazy, you bastard" which is an insult and which threatens Peter's reputation as it portrays him as an illegal child. Other FTAs which threaten Peter's positive face include "you're a negatable!" "you look ridiculous" which are also insults.

The tendency in Jerry's speech appears to be toward bald and non-redressive FTAs. At the beginning of the play Jerry asks Peter questions in a direct manner that is devoid of politeness strategies and is inappropriate given the social distance that exists between the two characters as they are strangers to each other. As the fight between the two characters started, Jerry's FTAs became rude and impolite.

The ultimate FTA that Jerry produces is when he commits suicide through the contribution of Peter. Such an act threatens Peter's positive face as it would ruin his reputation if he is uncovered. Furthermore, such an act is a serious threat to Peter's negative face as it limits his freedom of action.

5. Interpretation of the Play on the Basis of the Characters' Politeness Strategies

The previous analysis of politeness strategies used by the characters Peter and Jerry reflect a contrast in the linguistic behaviour of peter and Jerry. Indeed, Peter's utterances are polite and conform to the conventions of conversation as well as the social distance that exists between him and Jerry. Peter's utterances embody a considerable number of politeness devices that reduce the threat to his interlocutor's positive and negative face. Jerry's utterances are; on the other hand, direct, bald and non-redressive and are at odds with the conventions of conversation. Such contrast in linguistic behaviour minors the contrast in the world that characters pertain to. Indeed, it appears from the analysis of the politeness strategies that the characters employ that they belong to two different worlds and no intersection between such worlds seems possible. The two worlds in question are in fact two classes of the American society, normally the middle class and the lower class.

The gap between these classes is so wide that it appears that then members seem to be of different worlds. Peter is the prototype of a middle-class man with his civilized and sophisticated behaviour which

is reflected in the polite manner in which he addresses Jerry. Jerry is a typical representative of low-class members with a behaviour that lacks manners and sophistication ... and utterances which are devoid of any politeness strategies. Furthermore, it appears that Jerry's behaviour is rude because he belongs to a class of people who are marginalized by society and thus their behaviour is at odds with its conventions and norms of appropriate behaviour.

6. Conclusion

The present study indicated how consideration of linguistic politeness strategies within the play “the zoo story”, contributes to the interpretation of the play. Indeed, the negative politeness strategies that were employed by Peter contrasted with the bald and non-redressive FTAs that Jerry used. Such linguistic contrast reflects the contrast that exists between the middle class that Peter belongs to which is associated with civilization, sophistication and manners and the lower class which is attributed the features of plenitude and lack of class. Consideration of linguistic behaviour also demonstrates that the speaker tends, to abandon the use of politeness strategies once he is provoked and loses control over himself regardless of the conversations and the moves of behaviour of his class as it was the case for Peter towards the end of the play. The present study scrutinized negative politeness strategies as they were the most dominant in the play, further studies on the play could emphasize positive politeness strategies to provide a more detailed interpretation of the play.

7. References

- **Albee, E.** (1975). *The zoo story*. New American Library.
- **Bouchara, A.** (2009). *Politeness in Shakespeare: Applying Brown and Levinson's Politeness theory to Shakespeare's comedies*. Diplomica-Verlag.
- **Carter, R., & Simpson, P.** (2016). *Language, Discourse and Literature: An Introductory Reader in Discourse Stylistics*. Routledge.
- **Short, M.** (2017). *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays and Prose*. Routledge.
- **Watts, R. J.** (2003). *Politeness*. Cambridge Univ. Press.
- **Abbas, N. F., & Suleiman, R. R. R.** (2011). Politeness: Characterization and literary discourse. *Politeness: Characterization and Literary Discourse*, 11, 569–585.

- **Abdesslem, H.** (2001). Politeness strategies in the discourse of drama: A case study. *Journal of Literary Semantics* , 30(2), 111–138.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/jlse.2001.001>
- **Wang , X.** (2005). Politeness in English literary discourse: A diachronic study (Unpublished dissertation).