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**A Pragmatic Analysis of Speech Acts and Conversational
Implicature in the Dialogues of Thomasina and Septimus in
*Arcadia***



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Abstract

This study investigates the use of speech acts and conversational implicature in the selected dialogues of Thomasina Coverly and Septimus Hodge in *Arcadia*. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of speech act theory proposed by John L. Austin and John Searle, and conversational implicature developed by H. P. Grice, the research aims to explore how language functions beyond literal meaning to construct interpretation, characterize individuals, and develop thematic concerns. A qualitative research design is employed, focusing on close textual analysis of selected dialogues. The findings reveal that representative and directive speech acts are the most frequently used, reflecting the intellectual and pedagogical nature of the interaction between the two characters. Expressive and commissive acts contribute to emotional depth and relational continuity, while declarations are minimal due to contextual limitations. The study further demonstrates that conversational implicature is a key mechanism in meaning-making, with frequent flouting of Gricean maxims generating indirect, implied meanings. The interaction between speech acts and implicature yields layered, context dependent interpretation, requiring active engagement from the audience. The analysis also shows that characterization is largely constructed through linguistic choices, with Thomasina's direct and inquisitive language contrasting with Septimus's indirect, ironic, and controlled communication style. These pragmatic features also reinforce major themes of the play, including knowledge and uncertainty, order and chaos, time and irreversibility, and the relationship between emotion and intellect. The study concludes that a pragmatic approach offers a deeper understanding of the linguistic and dramatic complexity of *Arcadia*, highlighting the sophisticated use of language in Tom Stoppard's works.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Speech Acts, Conversational Implicature, Characterization, Thematic Analysis

Introduction

Language is not simply a system of signs used to convey information; it is a dynamic, context based medium that speakers use to take action, negotiate meaning, and create

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social realities. Pragmatics is a sub-discipline of linguistics concerned with how meaning is formed and received in context, not limited to the literal meaning of words and sentences. Pragmatics is the study of how speakers employ language in meeting communicative purposes and how listeners derive meanings that have not been explicitly expressed. It explores the complex interaction between language and context, and the actual interaction between people, pointing out that communication usually includes more than what is actually said.

Speech act theory and conversational implicature constitute the basic panache of pragmatic analysis for discussing meaning beyond the sentence level. In his initial work, J. L. Austin and, subsequently, John Searle introduced the idea of speech act theory, which suggests that utterances are not just statements, but actions undertaken by speakers. This theory suggests that speaking is an action in which an individual makes an assertion, question, request, or promise, each of which has a certain communicative intention (Searle, 1969). Broadly, speech acts are classified into three broad groups: the locutionary acts, the illocutionary acts, and the perlocutionary acts. Locutionary acts are those that entail the actual production of utterances; illocutionary acts are those that represent the intended purpose of such utterances. Perlocutionary acts are those that concern the consequences of those utterances on listeners (Babazade, 2025). The differences enable the researchers to examine language as both a structural system and a means of executing actions within certain social and cultural settings. Searle also categorized speech acts as representative, directives, commissive, expressive, and declarations, which are different communicative intentions and social functions (Widya, 2017).

Alongside the speech act theory, there is another concept, conversational implicature, suggested by H. P. Grice. Conversational implicature is the meaning that is implied rather than stated, arising from an assumed set of cooperative principles that speakers follow in communication. Grice suggested that there are maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner that participants in a conversation tend to adhere to, which regulate the meaning of utterances. If such maxims are broken or disobeyed, listeners can derive other meanings that result in implicatures (Grice, 1975). Pragmatic analysis is even more relevant in the world of drama, since plays are

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dialogic and performance oriented. In contrast to narrative literature, drama relies heavily on dialogue to develop characters, build the storyline, and present themes. Context, tone, and interpersonal communication tend to shape the meaning of utterances in drama, so speech acts and implicatures are the focus of interpretation in dramatic discourse. In a conversation, playwrights convey several levels of meaning, so that an audience can receive not only verbatim information, but also connotations.

Arcadia by Tom Stoppard is one of the fairest and most linguistically rich plays in modern English drama. Written in 1993, *Arcadia* is generally considered a masterpiece that incorporates elements of science, literature, mathematics, and human relationships. The action of the play shifts between two-time frames: the early nineteenth century and the present day, and the narrative structure is quite complex, which emphasizes the sophistication of knowledge and interpretation. It brings the topics of chaos theory, entropy, romanticism, and seeking truth that are expressed in the form of an advanced dialogue and intellectual interaction between the characters (Stoppard, 1993).

The current research focuses on qualitative methods in the discussion of the selected conversations in *Arcadia*. In the analysis, it will identify the various kinds of speech acts, such as locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, and Searle's classification of speech acts. Further, the paper examines examples of conversational implicature, examining how the maxims of Grice are observed or violated in the conversation. In this manner, the study will attempt to provide a comprehensive insight on the construction and interpretation of meaning in the play.

The study emphasizes the role of context, intent, and deduction in the interpretation of language use, especially in complex literary works. In addition, it shows how pragmatic theories can be applied to the study of drama and what insights they may offer for other works of literature. Conclusively, pragmatics provides an effective framework for the construction and interpretation of meaning in language. This paper aims to examine how speech acts and conversational implicature in *Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard connect the language and meaning in a complex manner. The research enriches the analysis of the play and its dialogue, exploring and understanding the implicit meaning of the conversation and the play itself. Finally,

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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this paper has reaffirmed the significance of pragmatics in linguistic and literary analysis and its capacity to uncover the concealed aspects of meaning in language.

Research Objectives

1. To identify different types of speech acts used in the dialogues of Thomasina Coverly and Septimus Hodge in *Arcadia*.
2. To examine the operation of conversational implicature in the interactions between the selected characters, with particular focus on the observance and violation of Gricean maxims.
3. To analyze the contribution of these pragmatic features to meaning construction, characterization, and thematic development in the selected dialogues of *Arcadia*.

Research Questions

1. What types of speech acts are employed in the dialogues of Thomasina Coverly and Septimus Hodge in *Arcadia*, and what communicative functions do they perform?
2. How are conversational implicatures generated through the observance or flouting of Grice's maxims in the interactions between Thomasina and Septimus?
3. How do speech acts and conversational implicatures contribute to the interpretation of meaning, characterization, and thematic development in the selected dialogues from *Arcadia*?

Significance of the Study

This research is important because it contributes to both linguistics and literature by using the principles of pragmatics, specifically speech act theory and conversational implicature, to examine a complex drama such as *Arcadia*. It shows how language in drama works beyond the literal meaning and how characters act, show intentions, and create implied meanings in dialogue. Focusing on the practical aspects of the play, the research improves knowledge of Tom Stoppard's stylistic use, in particular his wit, irony, and intellectual dialogue. Secondly, the study addresses a gap in the current literature by examining the intersection of speech acts and implicature in dramatic literature, a field where attention has been scarce. It also offers a practical approach to applying to other literary works and analysing them in a pragmatic context, thus helping students, researchers, and scholars in the fields of linguistics, discourse

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

analysis, and literary studies. Finally, this study underscores the significance of context, inference, and interaction in meaning-making, offering a more profound understanding of how language works in both fictional and real-world communication.

Delimitation of the Study

The given paper is limited to a practical analysis of the chosen excerpts from *Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard, with attention to speech acts and conversational implicature. It does not attempt any in-depth linguistic analysis of the complete play but rather focuses on selected passages that best exemplify the application of pragmatic features. It only analyses them within the framework of the theory of speech acts (as proposed by Austin and Searle) and Grice's theory of implicature, not within other pragmatic or discourse theories, such as politeness theory or relevance theory. Moreover, the research is limited to qualitative analysis and lacks quantitative and corpus-based techniques.

Literature Review

Pragmatics, Context, and Meaning-Making

Pragmatics has become one of the key areas of linguistics that study the construction, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning in real-world communication. This research underscores that pragmatics is essentially the study of context-related meaning, and, in this case, meaning is acquired through the application of linguistic expressions in social, cultural, and situational contexts (Umeh et al., 2024). The emergence of pragmatics as a field has been closely linked to other areas of linguistics, specifically semantics and discourse analysis. Modern studies point to the fact that pragmatics operates at the border between these areas and fills the gap between sentence-level meaning and the larger discourse interpretation. As an example, (Umeh et al. 2024) argue that pragmatics can shed light on how meaning is not just constrained to grammatical constructions but also encompasses other aspects, such as deixis, presupposition, and implicature. Likewise, recent research emphasizes that discourse analysis cannot be well understood without considering the principles of pragmatism, as meaning is frequently determined by circumstances and interactional issues rather than by linguistic forms alone (Davurova, 2024). This interdisciplinary quality of pragmatics has expanded its reach, enabling researchers to study language

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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across diverse social and communicative contexts.

One of the leading topics in pragmatic studies is the notion of speech acts, emphasizing the role of utterances as actions rather than as statements. New developments in pragmatics have expanded traditional speech act theory into other areas of study, such as cognitive and neurological work. As an example, neuropragmatic studies show that the human brain treats various speech acts differently, indicating that communicative intentions are rooted deep in cognitive processes (Egger, 2023). This view supports the point that language is not merely an instrument for passing information but also for social activities such as asking, promising, and apologizing. Moreover, modern studies on second language acquisition reveal that pragmatic competence, especially the appropriate use of speech acts, is a key to effective communication, and that pragmatic instruction should be emphasized more in language learning contexts (Derakhshan & Shakki, 2023).

Speech Acts and Conversational Implicature in Pragmatic Studies: A Contemporary Review

The theory of speech acts, first put forward by J. L. Austin and subsequently developed by John Searle, holds that language is an action. Instead of considering utterances fixed units of meaning, speech act theory theorizes them as performative acts that fulfil functions such as requesting, promising, or asserting. Recent research has shown that speech acts are key to understanding how language creates social reality. To take just one example, Salih and Othman (2024) contend that the theory of speech acts has greatly enriched the meaning theory by proving that language is not merely a description of the world but more a constructive process of forming it using language. This view has expanded the concept of pragmatics by connecting linguistic forms to social intentions and impacts.

Another major advancement in modern research has been the separation of various kinds of implicatures and their cognitive processes. As an example, Zakkou (2025) suggests the notion of entailed conversational implicatures, in which certain implicatures are more closely related to linguistic structures than one might have thought. This questions the classical perspective on implicatures as context-specific and opens new directions in the comprehension of the production and interpretation of

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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implicit meaning.

Moreover, recent research adopts a cognitive-pragmatic approach to implicature, with a focus on the possible role of mental activity in meaning-making. According to Su and Zhang (2025), conversational implicature has been substantially reinterpreted in post-Gricean pragmatics, where new theoretical frameworks have been advanced that distinguish between generalized and particularized implicatures. This is because these models emphasize that constructions of certain implicatures are based on traditional language usage, and others rely on specific contextual factors to a great extent. The difference has significant implications for the study of communication in various contexts, such as literature and real-life scenarios. The other prominent trend in the current research is the study of implicature on cross-cultural and multimodal communication. Indarti (2024) demonstrates that conversational implicature extends beyond verbal language to nonverbal cues, including gestures, facial expressions, and visual cues. Such a multimodal view is an expression of the broader concept of communication as an intricate interplay between language and non-linguistic variables. It also highlights differences in implicature across cultures, as various societies might interpret indirect meanings differently. Despite the abundance of criticism devoted to *Arcadia*, the vast majority of the existing literature focuses on the text's thematic issues, including time, chaos theory, epistemology, and the relationship between Romanticism and Enlightenment ideas (Fleming, 2008; Kelly, 2018; Delaney, 2020). Although these analyses can offer insights into the play's language, intellectual, and structural aspects, very little has been done to analyse it on a pragmatic level. Specifically, one can observe a lack of thorough research papers that examine the application of speech acts and conversational implicature in the play's dialogue.

Arcadia

Arcadia is generally considered one of Stoppard's greatest achievements, frequently described as a masterpiece of modern drama (Billington, 2015; Brantley, 2011). The play is remarkable for its complex plot, which alternates between two-time frames and combines themes of science, literature, and human relationships (Stoppard, 1993). The opponents underscore that the play's intellectual depth and linguistic refinement

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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render it a strong object of literary and linguistic study.

One of the most popular themes in scholarly discussions of *Arcadia* is knowledge and interpretation. The play's approach of contrasting the past and the present shows that meaning can be constructed from incomplete evidence and subjective interpretation (Zhou, 2019). According to researchers, this temporal duality serves as a depiction of bigger epistemological issues, especially the uncertainty of knowledge and the constraints of human knowledge (Delaney, 2020). The dialogue among characters from various eras shows that language is one means by which history can be restored and reinterpreted. Another crucial theme found in the literature is that of order and disorder, which can be defined in terms of scientific developments such as chaos theory and thermodynamics. According to scholars, the play employs these scientific concepts as metaphors for human relationships and communication (Gleick, 1987; Fleming, 2008). Sometimes the idea of entropy, e.g., is often trendy.

Methodology

This explains the methodological paradigm used to analyse speech acts and conversational implicature in *Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard. It gives research design, methods of data collection, procedures of data analysis, theoretical framework, and ethical considerations.

The proposed study adopts a qualitative research design because it aims to interpret and analyze linguistic characteristics rather than quantify them. The study is both descriptive and analytical in character, aimed at defining and describing the examples of speech acts and conversational implicature in the chosen text.

It is also a text-based, interpretive design, as it relies on a close reading of the play's dialogue to uncover the play's implicit meanings and communicative intentions. In this way, the research must analyze how language works in its context and how characters use speech to act and convey more meaning than the literal meaning.

Data Collection and Analysis

The excerpts are selected using purposive sampling, that is, instances especially rich in pragmatic features. Qualitative analysis of texts, namely pragmatic analysis, is used to analyze the data. The analysis follows the following steps:

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Determination of Speech Acts

The dialogues chosen are analyzed to determine various kinds of speech acts, such as locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. The illocutionary acts receive special attention because they indicate the speaker's intention.

Categorization of Speech Acts

The identified speech acts are divided as per the classification by Searle:

- Representative
- Directive
- Commissive
- Expressive
- Declaration

Conversational Implicature Analysis

The paper points out cases when there is an implication of meaning, but it is not stated explicitly. Such examples are evaluated in the light of the Cooperative Principle and the maxims of Grice:

- Quantity
- Quality
- Relation
- Manner

Theoretical Framework

There are two significant theories of pragmatics on which this study is based:

Speech Act Theory

Research is based on the works of J. L. Austin (1962) and John Searle (1969), who theorise about language as an action. Speech act theory offers a framework for analysing how utterances can fulfil functions such as asserting, questioning, or requesting. The communicative functions of the dialogues in *Arcadia* are grouped based on Searle's classification of speech acts.

Conversational Implicature

Conversational implicature is a concept developed by H. P. Grice (1975) that is applied to analysing the meaning implied in communication. The Cooperative

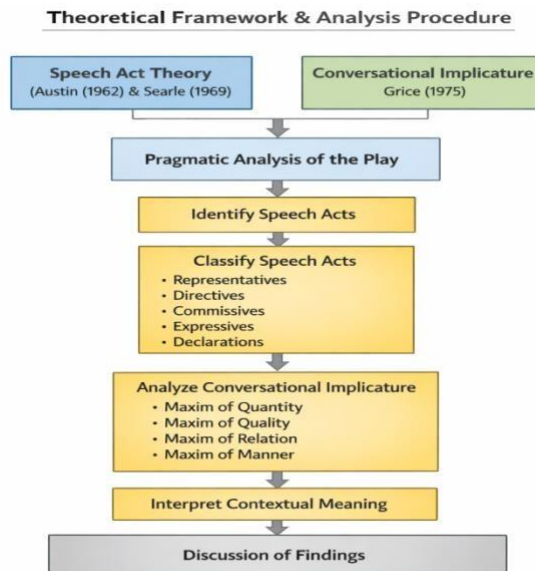
Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Principle and conversational maxims introduced by Grice can be used to determine how speakers convey indirect meaning and how listeners understand it. Combined, these theories offer an all-encompassing system of analysis of the explicit and implicit aspects of language used in the play.

Figure 1



Discussion and Analysis

The analysis and application of speech acts in the discussions between Thomasina Coverly and Septimus Hodge in *Arcadia* is completed. The approach to the analysis is based on the Speech Act Theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), which holds that utterances are actions that do not merely provide information.

Representatives (Assertives)

Representative speech acts represent those in which the speaker expresses opinion, narrates events, or states facts. The role of the representatives is especially important in the relationship between Thomasina and Septimus, as it expresses intellectual inquiry and philosophical searching. To give an example, Thomasina expresses her interest in knowledge and nature in rather assertive propositions: “When you stir your rice pudding, Septimus, the spoonful of jam spreads itself round, making red trails like the picture of a meteor in my astronomy book.” This statement is a representative speech act in which Thomasina reports an observation. However, it is more than just the literal meaning, as it reflects her early concept of science, such as entropy. The outspoken form not only conveys information but also reflects intellectual activity, which helps characterize her as a prodigious thinker.

The same can be said of Septimus, who frequently employs representatives to explain

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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or claim that he knows: “No, if you could stop every atom in its position and direction... you would have a formula for all future.” In this case, Septimus does us a service by offering us a deterministic perspective of the universe. The communicative role is didactic, and he is a teacher of sorts. Meanwhile, the statement's aggressive character also indicates the Enlightenment rationality around which the play's thematic issues revolve. Such instances indicate that the representative speech acts within the play are not purely descriptive but can serve as a means of philosophical discourse and thematic development.

Directives

Directive speech acts involve actions that get the hearer to do something, such as requests, commands, or suggestions. In the conversations between Thomasina and Septimus, the commands are rather often indirect or indirect in their manifestation, which corresponds to the relations between the teacher and the student.

For example:

“Septimus, what is a carnal embrace?”

Though this utterance is grammatically a question, it is a command because Thomasina is asking to know something. The vagueness of the command is a sign of her naivety, as well as the social barriers to the subject matter of sexuality.

Septimus also makes use of directive elements in his responses, notably when telling Thomasina what to learn:

“We must work, my lady.”

This statement stands as a weak ordinance. The must shows that it is obligatory, but the polite tone shows the social order and his position as tutor. The directive is watered down to keep the situation presentable, which illustrates how pragmatic the environment informs decisions. There are often dominance structures in the order of their dialogues. Septimus is in charge as a teacher; however, in some cases, Thomasina is intellectually assertive, altering the dynamic and creating a subtle play of control and curiosity.

Commissives

Commissive speech acts entail committing the speaker to a course of action in the future. These are not as common, but they still play an important role in the play.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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To give an example, sometimes Septimus connotes loyalty in his replies:

“I will explain it to you later.”

It is a pledgor thing, in which Septimus vows further elaboration. The role is both instructional and relational, which supports his position as a guide to Thomasina's intellectual development. The commissive behaviours of this nature help build trust among the characters. They also mirror the ongoing process of teaching and passing on knowledge, which is the key to the play's form.

Expressives

Expressive speech acts convey the speaker's feelings, attitudes, or mental state. *Arcadia* cannot pass without expressions, which are essential in determining the relationships between the characters.

Thomasina expresses her enthusiasm to learn in many dramatic ways:

“Oh, Septimus! You are teasing me.”

This is an emotive statement, not an informative one. It is her flirtatious annoyance and interest. The emotional role also gives her character value, as her intellectual activities are mingled with emotional reactions.

Septimus, in like manner, employs expressives to deal with people:

“I am ashamed.”

This is an emotive statement that acts as an expression. It shows ethical consciousness and helps a character grow, particularly in moral dilemmas.

Their conversations are filled with expressives, which make the intellectual communication more human, allowing rational communication to coexist with emotional undertones.

Declarations

Declarations are speech acts that cause a transition in reality by utterance. They are comparatively uncommon in the discussions between Thomasina and Septimus due to a lack of institutional authority. Nonetheless, some statements tend to reach the declarative force in the narrow context of their communication:

“You are not attending to your lesson.”

Although this statement is not official, it serves to reinvent the current state of

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

affairs. It reinvigorates the pedagogical frame of interaction and demonstrates how language can be used to construct social reality despite the absence of institutionalized power.

Analysis of Conversational Implicature in the Dialogues of Thomasina Coverly and Septimus Hodge

In the discussion, this section discusses the effect of conversational implicature in the conversations between Thomasina Coverly and Septimus Hodge in *Arcadia*, and it specifically addresses how the Cooperative Principle, as proposed by Grice (1975), and its four maxims, namely: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner, were adhered to or violated in the dialogues. Conversational implicature, unlike explicit meaning, occurs when speakers imply meanings that are not directly expressed. Implicature is central to the meaning of *Arcadia* in the witty, at times intellectual, dialogue.

Observance and Flouting of the Maxim of Quantity

The Maxim of Quantity requires the speakers to provide as much information as possible. In the relations between Thomasina and Septimus, this maxim is often violated, and the implicatures, which enrich the dialogue, are created.

As an example, when Thomasina questions about the carnal embrace:

“What is carnal embrace?”

Septimus answers evanescently, leaving out more information than is needed. Rather than making a straightforward explanation, he changes gears:

“Carnal embrace is the practice of throwing one’s arms around a side of beef.”

In this case, Septimus willingly breaks the Maxim of Quantity by giving an answer that is inadequate and false. The resulting implicature is that the actual meaning cannot be discussed as it is socially unacceptable, and Thomasina is too old. This vagueness is a sign of the play's historical context. What makes this exchange humorous is that the audience is aware of the difference between what is literally said and what is meant. The implicature is grounded in common cultural knowledge, which emphasizes the role of context in pragmatic interpretation.

Flouting of the Maxim of Quality

The Maxim of Quality is used when speakers are expected to speak the truth and not utter what they think is false. Septimus is often guilty of violating this maxim,

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

particularly in trying to evade delicate subjects. His definition of carnal embrace in the above example is false intentionally. He makes a false statement, thereby implying that avoidance, not deception, is present. The audience realizes that Septimus is actually trying to protect Thomasina, and not to deceive her. We also have another instance when Septimus employs irony:

“It is a defect of God’s humour that he directs our hearts everywhere but to those who have a right to them”.

Although this seems more of a philosophical sentence, there is an implicature regarding romantic relationships and emotional mismatch. This is not literally a false statement, but is an exaggeration to gain effect, so it is partially a breach of the Maxim of Quality by use of figurative language. The implicature is emotional truth and not facts. These are typical ironic and exaggerated uses of irony, which Tom Stoppard frequently employs, as meaning is often found behind the words people employ.

Flouting of the Maxim of Relation (Relevance)

The Maxim of Relation demands contributions to be topical to the conversation at hand. The characters in *Arcadia* often change the subject or answer obliquely, forming implicatures that must be interpreted. Speaking, say, of scientific inquiry: When Thomasina is involved in scientific inquiry, Septimus interrupts the discussion:

“We must look to the improvement of our minds, my lady.”

It might seem appropriate at first glance, but this reaction is often a tactical evasion. When Thomasina's questions are too complicated or socially unsuitable, Septimus switches to the general study. The implicature is that the line of inquiry at present before us ought to be dropped. This violation of relevance brings out the conflict between curiosity and control. Intellectual exploration of Thomasina goes too far, and Septimus tries to control the dialogue within proper limits. Another case concerns the information about entropy-like processes provided by Thomasina:

“You cannot stir things apart.”

When Septimus then replies with what appears to be an unconnected remark, the implicature is usually that he cannot or prefers not to give her the full benefit of her sophisticated thought. The total irrelevance indicates the absence of insight or

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

recognition.

Flouting of the Maxim of Manner

The Maxim of Manner dictates that clarity, conciseness, and avoidance of ambiguity are necessary. Ambiguity is a common usage in *Arcadia*, particularly in the speech of Septimus.

For example:

“The ordinary-sized stuff which is our lives...”

This is a vague, metaphorical statement, and it contravenes the Maxim of Manner. The implicature is not literal but philosophical, calling on the listener to interpret. This confusion indicates that the play is more interested in the question of uncertainty and boundaries of knowledge. Thomasina, however, tends to want to understand:

“I wish to know why...”

Her straightforwardness is the opposite of the (ambiguous) answers of Septimus. This opposition creates an implicature effect, as it raises the contrast between the wish for clear answers and the nature of reality.

Implicature and Humour

The play features a great deal of humour through conversational implicature. The popularity of *Arcadia* is largely due to the lack of correspondence between what is said and what is meant. An example of this is Septimus's playful reactions, which usually depend on the audience's ability to see the implicature in his statements. His ironic and evasive utterances form a compound structure of humour, making it work at both the linguistic and contextual levels. Thomasina's literary interpretations are at times inconsistent with Septimus's indirectness, which brings some comic effects. This interaction illustrates that implicature can serve as a meaning-making and entertaining tool.

Implicature and Power Relations

Implicature also indicates the power dynamics between Thomasina and Septimus. Septimus, as a tutor, can manage the flow of information, withholding or manipulating knowledge frequently through implicature. The violation of maxims helps him to be in control without confrontation. Thomasina, nonetheless, disrupts this relationship by asking many questions. Her efforts to extract meaning from

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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indirect replies explain how implicature may be bargained amongst speakers. This dynamic demonstrates that implicature is both a social and a linguistic phenomenon, embedded in relationships and hierarchies.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Contribution of Speech Acts and Conversational Implicature to Meaning, Characterization and Thematic Development

This part of the paper discusses the combination of speech acts and conversational implicature to build meaning, create characterization, and support thematic issues in the conversations between Thomasina Coverly and Septimus Hodge in *Arcadia*. Although Parts 1 and 2 examined these pragmatic features as distinct features, this section unites them to show how language is a dynamic system, through which deeper meanings are created. The evaluation reveals that meaning in the play is not determined or definite but must be negotiated in terms of interaction, inference, and context.

Pragmatics and Constructions of Meaning

In *Arcadia*, nothing is ever told directly. Rather, it arises from the interaction between speech acts and implicature. The speeches between Thomasina and Septimus are arranged in a manner that the literal meaning of the words is not usually the intended meaning.

E.g., as Thomasina observes it:

“You cannot stir things apart.”

At the representative speech-act level, it is merely a claim about physical processes. The utterance, however, has a more profound implicature to do with irreversibility and entropy. It does not have a clear meaning in the immediate context of the characters, but the audience can deduce its scientific meaning. This indicates that pragmatic features allow the construction of meaning in layers. On the same note, the answers provided by Septimus are usually indirect:

“We must work.”

This imperative seems to be simple, yet its implicature varies. It could mean avoidance, control, or a change of subject. The meaning itself is thus not inherent in the words which are said, but as a result of the interaction between the intention of the speaker and the interpretation of the listener.

These instances explain that meaning in *Arcadia* is made by drawing inferences. Interpretation of implicatures is an active process involving the audience, and so the process of communication is cooperative and not authoritative.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Pragmatics and Characterization

The play focuses on speech acts and implicature because these elements play a vital role in character development. The manner in which characters talk will tell about their intellectual, emotional, and social identities.

Thomasina Coverly

The character of Thomasina is formed under the influence of the directive and representative speech acts expressed by her in the form of questions and comments:

“Why do you say so?”

This command is an indication of her inquisitiveness and knowledge lust. Her questions tend to produce implicatures that transcend their immediate context and show how intellectually deep she is. As an example, her scientific observations suggest knowledge beyond her historical period, placing her as a figure who is insightful.

Her dependence on straightforward language is the opposite of the use of indirectness as laid by Septimus. This contrast not only shows her innocence but also her critical thinking. The implicatures that her utterances create tend to lead to concepts that are not quite understood throughout the time frame of the play, which creates dramatic irony.

Septimus Hodge

The use of indirect speech acts and frequent implicature characterizes the character of Septimus. He is fond of breaking Gricean maxims in order to control conversations:

“Carnal embrace is the practice of throwing one’s arms around a side of beef.”

This statement reveals Septimus's use of implicature in keeping the statement direct and to the point. His social awareness is also manifested in his indirectness and in his mediatorial role in knowledge. He has to juggle the requirements to teach Thomasina and those of decorum. The ambiguity, evasion, and irony are used to display a complicated personality. He is, on the one hand, rationality of the Enlightenment, as he asserts himself in his explanations; on the other hand, his dependence on implicature implies that he knows the boundaries of language and knowledge.

Pragmatics and Thematic Development

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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The practical aspects of the conversation play an important role in the great themes of the play.

Knowledge and Uncertainty

Knowledge and uncertainty are two of the main themes of *Arcadia*. This tension can be seen in speech acts and implicature, which indicate the boundaries of overt communication. The implications of the things that Thomasina is saying are not always completely clear:

“When we have found all the mysteries... we will be alone.”

This speech act is representative, meaning there is a philosophical issue concerning the implications of knowledge. The connotation is that full knowledge can cause isolation, and this theme of intellectual ambiguity is being reinforced.

Order and Chaos

The idea of order and chaos is also present in the form of dialogue itself. Whereas speech acts bring some order to the utterances by attaching labels, implicature brings ambiguity and unpredictability.

The indirect nature of the responses given by Septimus in most cases interrupts the supposed direction of the conversation, which reflects the idea of chaos. The efforts of imposing clarity by Thomasina are an expression of the want of order. The dialogue between these inclinations represents the broader theme of a clash.

Time and Irreversibility

The play revolves around the idea of time, most especially, its irreversibility. Pragmatic features contribute to this theme as they focus on the difference between intention and interpretation.

The implicatures of Thomasina which unknown to Septimus are not completely acknowledged are timeless. These statements are interpreted differently by the audience who are aware of the forthcoming scientific developments, which focus on the temporal aspect of meaning.

Emotion and Intellect

Pragmatic features are also mediators of the interaction between emotion and intellect. Emotional states are expressed through the use of expressive speech acts, whilst the use of implicature tends to bring about underlying feelings.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

For example:

“I am afraid.”

The direct communication of emotion is conveyed in this expressive act, but the context can carry an additional implicature, like vulnerability or uncertainty. It is a kind of a mixture of explicit and implicit meaning, which shows the way human experience is complicated.

Practicality and Theatrical Impact

The play uses speech acts and implicature to heighten the drama. The viewers must decode the implied meanings and download an experience with greater interest.

Pragmatic features bring about humor, irony, tension, etc.:

The comedy arises from the incongruity between the literal and intended meanings.

The implicature and awareness of the audience are used to create irony. The lack of meaning or the hiding of meaning brings about tension.

These effects show that pragmatics is not a tool that is purely linguistic, but also a dramatic means.

Findings

The selected Dialogues between Thomasina Coverly and Septimus Hodge in the play *Arcadia* have been analysed to understand how speech acts and conversational implicature impact meaning, characterization, and theme. The data indicates the presence of all of the main types of speech acts as defined by John L. Austin and John Searle, although the frequency and function of these acts differ from one another (Searle, 1969). Because dialogue is driven by intellectual discourse, assertive or representative acts tend to dominate other speech acts (Leech, 1983). Both participants use these acts to make claims, provide explanations, and discuss matters of philosophy and science. The speech acts of directives, in the form of interrogative and imperative statements, are also numerous, particularly in terms of instruction, and so emphasize the teaching role that Septimus assumes in relation to Thomasina. Expressive acts occur in the rational argument, and so, in the otherwise neutral exchanges, the emotional aspects are revealed. Commissive acts, though not numerous, promote relational continuity and trust due to the presence of explicit or implicit promises. Declarations are few in number because there is no locus of

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

authority within the framework of the dialogue, although some utterances are contextually appropriate for controlling the dialogue.

The results also suggest that the speech acts in the play extend beyond their communicative functions and assume several other communicative roles simultaneously (Yule, 1996). For instance, representatives are not limited to describing events; they are also interpreted as having more profound and philosophical implications, while directives are more than a request for information; they assume control, guidance, and intellectual steering. Furthermore, expressives also serve to communicate emotions, providing additional layers to the interaction.

According to H.P. Grice's cooperative principles, conversational implicature is key to how we create meaning (Grice, 1975). This study illustrates how frequently people flout the cooperative maxims of conversation. For example, the maxim of quantity is often violated; Septimus violates it by providing limited or no information about a topic, thereby creating implicatures that indicate he is avoiding or withholding something strategically (Thomas, 1995). Flouting the maxim of quality occurs through employing irony, exaggeration, and making purposeful misstatements; therefore, these words or statements will have created different meanings than the meanings of what was literally said. The maxim of relation was also flouted because answers were given indirectly or appeared irrelevant to the preceding conversation, signifying a change of topic or an attempt to avoid an uncomfortable topic. Furthermore, the maxim of manner was flouted by the ambiguity and figurative language in their responses, making it difficult to interpret what was said.

Collectively, these patterns suggest that meaning for the dialogue exists as a largely implicit form but relies on an audience's ability to use context clues to infer the speaker's implied meaning, often beyond the meaning expressed (Cutting, 2002). Another finding in the research is the interaction between speech acts and conversational implicature. The speech act provides the surface structure of communication, while the implicature provides the underlying meaning (Levinson, 1983). For example, a directive delivered as a question will lead to indirect interpretations that create new strata of meaning. Likewise, representative statements may carry implied philosophical or emotional meanings that extend beyond their

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

literal interpretations. This interaction illustrates that meaning does not occur within single utterances, but rather emerges from a combination of linguistic form, context, and inference.

The study also finds that meaning construction in the play is inherently layered, implicit, and context-dependent. The literal meaning of utterances is often insufficient to convey meaning; therefore, the interpreter must consider pragmatic cues (e.g., tone, context, and conversational dynamics) to discern meaning (Mey, 2001). Furthermore, everyday language has embedded scientific and philosophical ideas that create a dialogue that is accessible as well as intellectually sophisticated. The multi-layered construction of meaning adds richness to the text's interpretation.

Concerning Characterization, the results provided evidence that linguistic choices shape each character's identity. Thomasina characterizes herself through her use of directness (e.g., 'Where is it?'), curiosity (e.g., 'What is that?'), and intellectual engagement (using questions as directives). These examples of language usage suggest the character has a strong desire for knowledge and discovery. Conversely, Septimus characterizes himself through indirectness (e.g., utilizes implicature), wit, and control (i.e., withholding or redirecting), as evidenced by his frequent use of irony and ambiguity. His strategies of withholding or redirecting information demonstrate both his intellectual sophistication and social awareness (Culpeper, 2001); there is a clear contrast between the two characters' communication styles, which establishes a relational dynamic reflecting their differences in authority, experience, and perspective.

The findings indicated further support that the power relations present in the dialogue are negotiated through language. Although Septimus has formal authority as a tutor, his authority is not absolute. Through continuing to ask questions of him, Thomasina challenges his control over knowledge, thus creating an underlying tension between guidance and resistance. Directives and implicature represent key tools for negotiating this dynamic; Septimus maintains his authority through indirect means, and Thomasina asserts her agency through inquiry (Fairclough, 1989).

A connection exists between the way in which ideas and themes develop throughout the play and the way in which pragmatic features are employed within the

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

dialogue. The constant use of directives and representatives as a means of reinforcing the theme of knowledge and inquiry, in conjunction with the use of implicature and ambiguity to express the theme of uncertainty and limitation. The ordered structure of speech acts compared to the unpredictable nature of implied meanings is representative of the contrast between order and chaos. The balance of expressive and representative acts illustrates the balance between emotion and intellect. Many of the implied concepts related to time and/or irreversibility can be inferred rather than stated explicitly, thereby enhancing the overall thematic structure.

The contributions made by pragmatic strategies to the overall dramatic and aesthetic effect of the play are also evident in the data collected. Implicature generates humour, sarcasm, and a feeling of tension, yet allows for indirect involvement by the audience in constructing meaning. The multi-layered aspects of meaning present throughout the play lead to greater audience involvement in the text by making the dialogue both intellectually stimulating and dramatically impactful. Overall, the research indicates that speech acts and conversational implicature are essential components of the structure of both the linguistics and the drama of *Arcadia*. At the same time, their interaction provides for the construction of complex meaning, nuanced characterisation, and rich thematic representation of the literary and linguistic sophistication of Tom Stoppard.

Conclusion

This study has explored the use of speech acts and conversational implicature in Thomasina Coverly and Septimus Hodge's selected dialogues from *Arcadia*. It has been established that although the language used in *Arcadia* is 'communicative', it achieves more than simple information sharing. Speech acts achieve much more than sharing information; they create meaning, they provide relationship negotiation opportunities, and they contribute to thematic development. The predominance of representative and directive speech acts reflects the intellectual and educational nature of the characters' interactions, whereas expressives and commissives add the dimension of emotion and relational continuity.

Conversational implicature (CI) plays as important a role in the construction of meaning as does the use of speech acts. Through their extensive flouting of Grice's

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Online ISSN: 3006-5895

maxims, the dialogues encode indirect, layered, and contextually dependent meanings. The indirectness of the meanings encoded by both speech acts and CI requires the audience to interpret them actively, making the audience an active participant in the production of meaning. The interplay between speech acts and CI creates a complex, multi-layered communication system in which what is implied tends to be more important than what the speaker states directly.

By way of conclusion, *Arcadia* provides ample evidence of how powerful a role language can play in characterizing plays on the part of writers and performers. The characteristics of the six characters, developed throughout the course of the play, are presented through the linguistic choices they make, i.e., their speech and actions during their interactions with one another. For example, Thomasina's style of speech is one that demonstrates directness and inquisitiveness, while at the same time demonstrating her intelligence through her ideas and forward-thinking attitude. On the other hand, Septimus's use of language is often indirect and ironically so, demonstrating his intelligence through the use of wit and an ability to exert control over his environment. Therefore, each character's language use not only establishes the identities of each character but also sets the boundaries of how they will interact with each other in terms of power and authority.

In addition, the findings of the study also indicate that there is a strong connection between pragmatic characteristics of the language throughout *Arcadia* and the thematic structure of the play itself. The themes of knowledge/ignorance, order/chaos, time/irreversibility, and the relationship between emotion and intellect are all captured in the use of the language throughout the play. On the one hand, speech acts serve to create a clear structure and focus for the audience, while implicature creates ambiguity and depth of interpretation; both of which reflect the tension between order and chaos that exists within the story.

In light of the findings of the study, it is evident that a pragmatic analysis of *Arcadia* would provide a better understanding of the linguistic and dramatic intricacies of the play and demonstrate how a combination of both speech act theory and conversational implicature function as a powerful means of creating meaning, shaping the characters of the play, and expressing the themes of the play as a whole.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

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The sophistication of Stoppard's dramatic discourse is therefore significantly enhanced by the integration of both theory and practice in the creation of the play.

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Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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