

DISSERTATION AND ILLOCUTION: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS WITH EXAMPLES FROM BRADBURY AND IBSEN¹

Emilia Rébora, Fernando Castaños, Pamela Urdal

Introduction

Discourse analysis is the catalyst and the articulating axis of a revolution that has reached all the domains of foreign language teaching—from the distribution of chairs in the classroom to the teacher's attitude towards errors, from exercise formats to syllabus contents; from sociological research about the role of foreign languages to psychological studies about their acquisition.

What discourse analysis has done is to make it clear that to know a language is not only being able to compose grammatically correct sentences. It is, above all, being able to use the language in order: 1) to say that this is so, that that is such and such, 2) to invite, insult, order, protest, forgive... to perform speech acts. Being proficient is being able to say and being able to act. This statement summarizes, though very generally, what discourse analysis means for applied linguistics. And this statement is also what gave momentum to the revolution.

In more technical terms, to consider discourse analysis is to recognize in language levels of organization different from grammar. This implies the use, besides the sentence, of other units of analysis. In the current theories there are two more units: the proposition and the illocutionary act, which correspond to saying and acting. (These units have been established in Austin 1950, 1962, Searle 1969 and Widdowson 1973, following different approaches and for different purposes; these works have been discussed in many publications.)

It has been argued in Castaños 1982 and 1983 that it is necessary to introduce a fourth unit of analysis, which he calls 'dissertation act'. The central issue in his proposal is the distinction between dissertation and illocution. For Castaños, definition, and say classification, generalization are of very different nature from promises, bets and invitations. An illocutionary act will create or modify the conditions for the judgment of actions (and other

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illocutionary acts). Thus, an INVITATION will make it proper for somebody to come to the party, and an INSULT will open the possibility of responses that would otherwise be socially unacceptable. On the other hand, dissertation creates and modifies knowledge. For example, Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole* established a new way of looking at language. It is not that dissertation cannot affect action but that it does so in a different way from illocution. After a dissertation act, certain actions that were previously considered to be reasonable will become unreasonable and vice versa. In simple terms, the distinction between illocution and dissertation is the distinction between the socially acceptable and the reasonable.

It is the purpose of this paper to explore the proposed distinction between illocutionary acts and dissertation acts in the analysis of certain extracts taken from the literary works of Bradbury and Ibsen. Particular attention will be given to the inter-relations between the two domains of illocution and dissertation. (The extracts are reproduced on pp. 12 and 15.)

Utterance and sentence

The four units of analysis mentioned above (sentence, proposition, illocutionary act and dissertation act) should not be confused with the utterance. This is the actual string of words pronounced by the speaker. It includes pauses, fillers and particles, and has rhythm and intonation. By contrast, the four units are abstract re-constructions which the analysis produces to account for various kinds of regularities.

To show the point it will suffice to illustrate the distinction between utterance and sentence. Let us consider the following, taken from the excerpt by Ibsen:

R. (below her breath) What is it you want? Stay where you are.
The rain is dripping off you.

E. God's good rain, my girl.

R. The devil's own rain, that's what it is!²

The string "God's good rain", which we will call utterance 1, can be re-constructed into the full sentence: It is God's good rain. This reconstruction is equivalent to the interpretation that the 'incomplete' string would have in the context of the extract. But we should not, and we need not, be committed to the idea that the reader does reconstruct the sentence; the actual

² Henrik Ibsen, *Ghosts*, p. 7.

psychological mechanisms of interpretation are outside the scope of this kind of deliberation.

Let us now distinguish the four abstract units: sentence, proposition, illocution and dissertation.

In order to exemplify our method of exposition let us show briefly how it works, by demonstrating that one sentence can realize two very different illocutions. These two concepts will become clearer when they are distinguished from the proposition.

Sentence and illocution

A sentence is a grammatical unit defined by the words that compose it and the order they have. As we know, by varying the words or their order we can have different kinds of sentences: affirmative, interrogative, imperative. Care should be taken not to confuse these grammatical categories with the speech acts they are generally used to perform, namely: STATEMENT, REQUEST FOR INFORMATION and COMMAND. There is no one-to-one relationship between sentence types and illocutionary acts. For example, these imperative sentences are not used to realize the same act:

- (S 1) Forgive us our trespasses.
- (S 2) Please come to the party.

S 1 would normally realize an INTREAT, whereas S 2 would be an INVITATION or a REQUEST, depending on context.

Sentence and proposition

The proposition, on the other hand, can be seen as a unit of content. It is not defined strictly by the words used to express it, but rather by the value they acquire in context. A proposition is the association of:

- 1) something being referred to, and
- 2) a predicate.

A propositional formula may be constructed with an operator (standing for the predicate) and a name or the substitute of a name (designating the object or person being referred to). For example, if 'T' represents the predicate 'tall' and 'a' stands for someone whom we will call Richard, then the

proposition that Richard is tall may be represented by the formula: $T(a)$. Similarly, if:

London: b (argument)
big: B (predicate),

then the proposition that London is big has the formula: $B(b)$.

This is the kind of notation used in mathematical logic. But for our purposes, a more explicit notation will be more useful. Thus we will have:

tall (Richard)
big (London).

These two different propositions would be expressed with different sentences, for example:

Richard is tall.
London is big.

However, different sentences may express the same proposition. For example, the following proposition from Ibsen: *sleeping (Oswald)* can be expressed in a number of ways, such as:

The young master is lying asleep upstairs.
Master Oswald is sleeping upstairs.
Is he sleeping upstairs?
I mean that Master Oswald is upstairs and that he has not woken up.

Conversely, one sentence may express different propositions in different situations. Take for example the first sentence of the previous set:

The young master is lying asleep upstairs.

By way of this sentence, Regina, one of the characters in Ibsen's *Ghosts*, talks about Master Oswald: *sleeping (Oswald)*. But we can imagine another scenario: Verona, Italy, 1771, W. A. Mozart's admirers are in his host's living-room. They want to see him. His father says: "The young master is lying asleep upstairs". Obviously, the proposition he expresses with the sentence is not about Master Oswald, but about Mozart: *sleeping (Mozart)*.

Proposition and illocution

In order to show that proposition and illocution are essentially different, we need only to point out that two utterances may share the same proposition and express two different illocutions. We can do this if we look at the following utterance from Ibsen:

“The rain’s dripping off you.”

The corresponding sentence is:

The rain is dripping off you.

And the proposition being expressed is:

dripping (*The rain, Engstrand*).

In other words, the referents or arguments are ‘the rain’ and ‘Engstrand’ and what is being said about the arguments and shows the relationship between them is the predicate ‘dripping’.

The illocution in this case is REPROACH, but it supports the EXHORTATION which began when Regina told Engstrand to stay where he was. Some people might even wish to say that the former is part of the latter, but at this moment we prefer not to commit ourselves as to the exact relationship between the two illocutions.

It is not difficult to see how the proposition above: *dripping* (*The rain, Engstrand*), might also be used for other illocutions, such as SHOWING SYMPATHY, which could be expressed with:

“Oh! The rain is dripping off you; let me bring a blanket”

Nevertheless, we must point out that, while it could be used to express SYMPATHY, the sentence involved in the first part of the previous utterance somehow sounds wrong for such an illocution. This can be explained through the position of the elements in the sentence: ‘the rain’ is in the place of theme or topic, making it the central issue here; therefore, the sentence is inappropriate to expressions of SYMPATHY with ‘you’ and more appropriate to REPROACHES, as is the case in Ibsen’s play.

A simple switch of theme/comment can correct this while leaving the proposition intact:

“You are dripping with rain”

Instead of:

“The rain is dripping off you”

the full utterance might be:

“Oh! You’re dripping with rain; let me bring a blanket.”

Therefore, we can see that with a small change at the sentence level, one proposition can express two different illocutions.

Illocution and dissertation

To show that there is a basic distinction between illocutionary acts and dissertation acts, we will follow the same method we have adopted for the other distinctions. We will show that it is possible to have the same illocutionary act with different dissertation acts, and vice-versa, different illocutionary acts with the same dissertation act.

Let us consider an example which we have already discussed. We are interested in the utterance:

“God’s good rain, my girl”

and the reconstructed sentence:

It is God’s good rain, my girl.

In the extract from Ibsen² this sentence is being used to perform the dissertation act of *ASSERTION*. At a more delicate level of analysis, we might subclassify it as a *SORTING*, because it is placing the particular being referred to, namely ‘it’ in a certain class, God’s rain. Let us devise a notation for this:

SORTING. Inclusion: particular, class.

Here, a digression to consider two points might clarify the question.

1) We have a predication whose function is to include the particular in the class, but this predication is not realized by the verb alone. It is realized by a combination of the verb (copula) and the noun phrase which represents the class because of its being in the genitive case.

2) Two terms that have been used by other researchers for what we are calling *SORTING* are *IDENTIFICATION* and *CLASSIFICATION*. The three might be distinguished as follows:

IDENTIFICATION. Equation: particular, particular.

SORTING. Inclusion: particular, class.

CLASSIFICATION. Inclusion: class, class.

Now let's go back to an utterance we have considered previously:

"God's good rain, my girl!"

In its context this utterance performs a *CHALLENGE* to a *REPROACH*. But we can imagine a different context in which a different illocutionary act would be performed. For example, a farmer might say the same words, perhaps with a different intonation. These words would realize the same sentence:

It is God's good rain, my girl.

However, this sentence would not express the same proposition because the rain referred to would not be the same. In both cases we would have the same dissertation act, a *SORTING*. In the first case the *SORTING* would be associated with a *CHALLENGE*, whereas in the second case it would be associated with a *THANKS GIVING*, or something similar.

To see the converse, let us consider the following situation. Somebody has just arrived to visit Eloise. She utters:

"You must be tired"

At the same time she opens a bottle of cool white wine. Here we have another *ASSERTION*, but one to which the speaker is not one hundred per cent committed. Let us call it a *MITIGATED ASSERTION*. We might wish to subclassify it as a *HYPOTHESIS*, or something similar, but there is no need to get into that problem at the moment.

Now, instead of the previous utterance, Eloise might have uttered:

"Are you thirsty?"

In this case, the speaker would not at all be committed to the proposition expressed, namely: thirsty (You). We would have a *SUSPENDED ASSERTION*, but in both cases we have the same illocutionary act: an *OFFER*.

Interaction of units

Now, our being able to distinguish the units of discourse, and our being able to fix one while we vary another, does not mean that they operate separately. On the contrary, they usually complement and condition each other.

One example of the way the units complement each other is the reconstruction of sentences from utterances as we saw earlier. In these reconstructions, context plays an important role. But what do we mean by context? It is largely the knowledge which has been established through dissertation and the conditions of interaction, which have been established through illocution.

Thus, in Ibsen's excerpt, the utterance:

"God's good rain"

makes present the knowledge that the rain is God's and good. It is because of this *SORTING* and the *CHALLENGE* associated with it, that we take the utterance: "God's good rain", as equivalent to the sentence: It is God's good rain. If, by contrast, we had two farmers discussing at a saloon how to increase a crop's yield, the series of *GENERALIZATIONS* and *HYPOTHESES* that they would exchange would make us take the utterance: "God's good rain", as equivalent to the sentence: What we need is God's good rain.

One example of the way the units condition each other was seen in the choice between two sentences:

The rain is dripping off you.

You are dripping with rain.

These sentences would express the same proposition: *dripping (the rain, Engstrand)*. However, because of its thematic structure: The rain is dripping off you, would probably not count as an expression of *SIMPATY*, as was said earlier.

What we wish to do now is to explore this mutual complementation and conditioning of the units of discourse, with particular reference to illocutionary and dissertation acts, though we will also consider sentences and propositions if necessary. That is, we will show how dissertation can be directed at the felicity conditions of illocutionary acts. The reader will note an implicit use of Grice's cooperative principle and maxims.³

³ H. P. Grice, "Logic and Conversation", pp. 41-50.

Grice proposes as a general principle that "talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks... They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction." He then formulates a rough general principle which participants will be expected to observe, namely "make your conversation contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." Grice proposes to label it the 'Cooperative Principle'.

"On the assumption that some such general principle as this is acceptable, one may perhaps distinguish four categories under one or another of which will fall certain more

When we utter a string of words with the intention of giving an order, certain conditions have to obtain for the utterance to count as such, besides our having the said intentions. Certain conditions have to obtain also for the given act to be accepted. Among these is that the person that orders has the authority to give the order. What kind of authority is required depends on how sensible the action to be executed seems to both participants. And viceversa, how sensible an action has to be for a hearer to accept the order of executing it, depends on the kind and degree of authority the speaker has over him. A sergeant cannot but do what the meyor tells him; but a financial advisor can suggest a kind of report alternative to the one ordered by the bank manager.

When considering dissertation, we will take into account the elements we have already indicated:

specific maxims and sub-maxims, the following of which will, in general, yield results in accordance with the Cooperative Principle...

1) The category of Quantity relates to the quantity of information to be provided and under it fall the following maxims:

a. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the correct purposes of the exchange).

b. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required...

2) Under the category of Quality falls a supermaxim —'try to make your contribution one that is true'— and two more specific maxims:

a. Do not say what you believe to be false.

b. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

3) Under the category of Relation I place a single maxim, namely, 'Be relevant'...

Finally, under the 4) category of Manner, which I understand as relating not... to what is said but, rather, to HOW what is said is to be said, I include the supermaxim —'Be perspicuous'— and various maxims such as:

a. Avoid obscurity of expression.

b. Avoid ambiguity.

c. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolicity).

d. Be orderly."

A participant in a talk exchange may fail to fulfill a maxim in various ways. However, such failure may not, necessarily, mean that the speaker is violating the overall Cooperative Principle. To explain it, Grice proposes the notion of 'conversational implicature' which he characterizes as: "A man who, by (in, when) saying (or making as if to say) that *p* has implicated that *q* may be said to have conversationally implicated that *q*, PROVIDED THAT (1) he is to be presumed to be observing the conversational maxims, or at least the cooperative principle; (2) the supposition that he is aware that, or thinks that, *q* is required in order to make his saying or making as if to say *p* (or doing so in THOSE terms) consistent with this presumption; and (3) the speaker thinks (and would expect the hearer to think that the speaker thinks) that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively, that the supposition mentioned in (2) is required... A general pattern for the working out of a conversational implicature might be given as follows: 'He has said that *p*; there is no reason to suppose that he is not observing the maxims, or at least the CP; he could not be doing this unless he thought that *q*; he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I can see that the supposition that he thinks that *q* IS required; he has done nothing to stop me thinking that *q*; he intends me to think, or is at least willing to allow me to think, that *q* and so he has implicated that *q*."

1) The asserting force. That is, we will take into account whether we have an *ASSERTION*, a *MITIGATED ASSERTION*, or a *SUSPENDED ASSERTION*.

2) The kind of reference being made. We will, for example, take into account whether we have particular or generic reference. But we will be more detailed than that when necessary; we will, for example, consider whether we have specific or non-specific reference.

3) The kind of predication involved. We will, for example, take into account whether we have equative or ascriptive predication.

In the following extract taken from "The Sound of Summer Running" by Bradbury, we witness a negotiation within an established power structure. It is a very brief dialogue between a boy and his father. The boy opens the possibility of acquiring the shoes displayed near by. By asking for reasons to get any new sneakers, the father questions the boy's request and controls the situation. He denies or at least postpones his non's request.

'Dad.' He blurted it out. 'Back there in that window those cream-sponge Para Litefoot Shoes...

His father didn't turn. 'Suppose you tell me why you need a new pair of sneakers. Can you do that?'

'Well...'⁴

The first utterance: "Dad. Back there in that window those cream-sponge Para Litefoot shoes..." can be reconstructed into different sentences such as:

- 1) Dad, look back there in that window at those cream-sponge Para Litefoot shoes.
- 2) Dad, back there in that window are those cream-sponge Para Litefoot shoes I would like to get.

At this moment, it is the psychological context, the role played by the participants that enables us to propose such tentative reconstructions.

At the proposition level, we have the arguments 'shoes and window' and the predicate 'there are'.

The illocution of the utterance is open to a pair of illocutionary interpretations. It is open in the sense that the interlocutors could accept one or both interpretations.

- 1) The boy wants to start a conversation about the shoes.
- 2) The boy wants to suggest the possibility of getting the shoes.

⁴ Ray Bradbury, "The Sound of Summer Running", *R is for Rocket*, p. 179.

We may suppose that such an ambiguity is not a mere accident but a tactic. The ambiguity avoids a confrontation that might arise from the denial of a more definite REQUEST.

Though the illocutionary act is intentionally open, at the dissertation level the boy *ASSERTS* the existence of some specific shoes located in a specific place. So, on one hand we have a boy who seems not to want to commit himself to make a definite REQUEST, but who is absolutely certain of the shoes he is concerned with.

The father's reponse: "Suppose you tell me why you need a new pair of sneakers", is a complex sentence that expresses a complex proposition. It can be analysed as a main and two embedded propositions:

suppose (Us, tell (You, me, need (You, Sneakers)))

The father has recognized not only the first interpretation that we proposed previously, but he has also accepted the second one:

2) The boy wants to suggest the possibility of getting the shoes.

It seems as though the psychological relationship between father and son is very strong. The father doesn't need to turn back to check the existence of the shoes the boy refers to, and he doesn't doubt about his son's REQUEST. Besides recognizing the boy's intention, he poses a suggestion for an explanation: *suppose (Us, tell (You, Me))*. This suggestion counts at a direct COMMAND, due to the role of father and son.

At the dissertation level, it is a possible, suspended *ASSERTION*. The shoes are referred to in a non-specific and what we could call 'aphoric' way. An 'aphoric' reference differs from a cataphoric or anaphoric reference because the noun phrase with which the 'aphoric' reference is expressed doesn't need to be related to other nominal phrases in the text.

Let us consider the next utterance: "Can you do that?" The corresponding sentence can classify as simple and interrogative.

As a proposition it contains the previous proposition as its argument and predicates the boy's ability to fulfill the COMMAND.

At the illocutionary level, it *EXPRESSES A DOUBT*, it *QUESTIONS* the boy's ability to explain himself, to give reasons for acquiring the shoes. By focusing on this the command is reinforced.

At the dissertation level, with 'that' there is specific and anaphoric reference to the object of the previous request, therefore inheriting its non-specific character.

The fourth utterance is a particle: "Well . . ."

At the illocutionary level it may *EXPRESS A DOUBT* or reflect a mental state when one can't find an answer. The boy doesn't deny his father's in-

terpretation to his first utterance: REQUEST. It seems as though he has accepted it, but is unable to give an immediate reason to support it.

It is clear how the levels of analysis complement and condition each other. At the dissertation level, the non-specific and 'aphoric' reference used by the father reinforces the illocutionary force of the utterance. He not only questions the boy's request to get: "those cream-sponge Para Litefoot shoes", but the necessity to get any shoes at all.

With regard to the excerpt from Ibsen the reader could ask why we have chosen a translated work rather than one written originally in the language that is being analyzed. The answer to that question is that the fact that it is a translation has no relevance for the purposes of this work. That is, independently of the fact that it be a good or bad translation by some criteria, we do think that it can be recognized as an effective discursive unit. It is this effectiveness that we wish to explain.

Previous to a discussion of the relationships pertaining between dissertation and illocution in the passage from *Ghosts* by Ibsen,² it may be helpful to point out to the reader in somewhat general terms the situation which seems to be present in the passage. These are the opening lines of the play:

- R. (below her breath). What is it you want? Stay where you are. The rain is dripping off you.
 E. God's good rain, my girl.
 R. The Devil's own rain, that's what it is!
 E. Lord, how you talk, Regina. (Takes a few limping steps forward.) What I wanted to tell you was this.
 R. Don't clump about like that, stupid! The young master is lying asleep upstairs.
 E. Asleep still? In the middle of the day?
 R. Well, it's no business of yours.

The entire situation seems to be concerned with the establishing of social relations through the dialogue which is a sort of duel being fought out by the interlocutors. That is, they are engaged in the endeavor of establishing a power structure between them in order to, in turn, establish who has rights over the other. Each person is trying to establish authority on the basis of certain basic premises or values: Engstrand on the basis of his supposed morality and the ensuing rights he has over Regina as her father; Regina on the basis of her relationship with 'well-to-do' people.

Regina attempts to show that Engstrand's moral rights are unimportant. At the same time, she points out that Engstrand has certain characteristics which are contrary to well-to-do-ness (e.g., he is stupid and clumps).

However, Engstrand retaliates by attempting to show that well-to-do-ness is immoral (the implicit laziness of "the young master") and that, anyway,

she is not well-to-do (her language is not good). Also he shows no signs of being affected by Regina's attacks on his weaknesses, thereby demonstrating her impotence.

Regina's last remark shows signs of her acceptance of Engstrand's authority but probably because he has made her see a sign of the precariousness of well-to-do-ness and her position within it and not because she accepts his moral right over her (not until Engstrand attacks "the young master", Oswald, is there a distinct break in the discourse pattern marked by the particle "Well" in Regina's utterance).

In the above discussion no explicit mention of dissertative elements has been made. However, the following arguments will attempt to both support the interpretation of the illocutionary situation as described above and, at the same time, illustrate how dissertation can act upon and change the conditions for illocutions.

In this particular passage, it is possible to identify at least six ways in which elements of dissertation seem to be contributing to changes in the conditions for illocutions. We can call them tactics and they are:

- 1) Parallel "redissertation" acts which deny or modify previous dissertations thereby having repercussions on previous illocutions.
- 2) Varying types of reference to people as a means of pointing out certain qualities which can contribute to the power structure between interlocutors.
- 3) Varying types of predicating to show relationships with previous dissertations and illocutions thereby demonstrating the "coherence" of a particular illocution in relation to a previous one.
- 4) Varying types of reference to point out areas of shared knowledge on which a power structure can be based.
- 5) *SUSPENDED ASSERTIONS* present shared knowledge as if it were not shared, thereby "disguising" illocutions to look like requests for information when they are really reproaches or some other act.
- 6) *SORTING* of areas of concern to point out boundaries or limitations of an established (or almost established) power structure.

The following will not be an exhaustive analysis of the passage. Rather it merely represents an attempt to meet the stated objectives: a) support the interpretation of the illocutionary situation and b) illustrate the different ways in which dissertation has been found to affect the illocutions in this particular passage. Therefore, while attempting to exemplify each of the six tactics at least once, the analysis does not attempt to point out all the pertinent factors which could be pointed out at the various levels of analysis due to limited space.

Type 1 tactic:

"God's good rain, my girl."

In this case, it is only necessary to consider the type of reference involved in the address: "my girl". This is especially evident when one considers that the specific identification of the addressee is unnecessary in terms of the discourse since both parties are known to each other. Thereby making an interpretation of the *information that underlies the reference* relevant material for analysis. The reference informs us that Regina is a certain sort of girl: she is Engstrand's in some way. This knowledge is very pertinent to the power structure being established between the interlocutors since, if Regina is really in some way belonging to Engstrand, he will have certain definite and established rights over her.

Type 2 tactic:

"The Devil's own rain, that's what it is".

Regina is re-IDENTIFYING Engstrand's previous IDENTIFICATION of the rain thereby attempting to invalidate his illocutionary act which had been a challenge on moral grounds of her right to REPROACH him about his being wet. With the phrase "that's what it is", she makes her statement doubly strong by means of a parallel re-IDENTIFICATION.

Type 3 tactic:

(Takes a few limping steps forward) "What I wanted to tell you was this..." The predicate "was" indicates equation, not only between the referents in Engstrand's utterance, but also with a referent of Regina's first utterance: "What is it you want?" in which the referent of "it" has been left unspecified but partially identifies as something which Engstrand wanted. By showing that these are all the same referent and that it was Regina who mentioned it in the first place, he is reinforcing the "legality" of his utterance in terms of the discourse. That is, not only is it the response to the illocutionary act of REQUESTING INFORMATION in Regina's first utterance, but it is also referring to the same referent. Nonetheless, Engstrand's utterance is really an attempt to change the topic of conversation which has, until then, been in reference to the issues pertinent to the power struggle. At the moment, Engstrand has a certain advantage demonstrated by his challenging move toward Regina (takes a few limping steps) when she has explicitly ordered him to stay where he was. Therefore, if he can get her to

accept the switch in topics, then he has won and has established rights over her as shown through the discourse and his non-verbal actions.

Type 4 tactic:

“The young master is lying asleep upstairs.”

The specific reference to “the young master” implies that knowledge of him is shared by both interlocutors. The message is that the justification for Engstrand having to be quiet when the young master is asleep is so obvious that it is pre-suppositional. That is, the young master’s authority (and by extension, Regina’s) is unquestionable.

Type 5 tactic:

“Asleep still? In the middle of the day?”

Both the fact of Oswald’s (the young master’s) being asleep and the time of day at which he is doing it are now shared knowledge between the interlocutors. Therefore the questions are unnecessary and only act to, somewhat unobtrusively, disguise Engstrand’s reproach of Oswald’s actions.

Type 6 tactic:

“Well, it’s no business of yours.”

By pointing out the limitations on Engstrand’s power, Regina leaves the way open for the establishment of his authority over her. That is, she only points out that Oswald’s actions are “no business” of Engstrand’s but there is no implication that her own actions are included in the *SORTING OUT* of concerns.

The duel Regina and Engstrand have engaged in to establish who has rights over the other does not have a definite outcome.

Conclusion

We have proposed the necessity to include the dissertation level in discourse analysis, besides the already accepted levels, i.e. the sentence, the proposition and the illocution.

In order to explain and distinguish these levels, our working method has been to illustrate each one by means of examples drawn from the extracts

by Bradbury and Ibsen and, to contrast two levels at a time, in order to clarify their distinctive natures.

The main purpose of the paper has been to explore the difference between directed at the felicity conditions of illocutionary acts. Such exploration has illocutionary and dissertation acts and, to show how dissertation can be carried out in passages of two literary works. However, because all units of discourse somehow complement and condition each other, we have not limited the analysis of the two extracts to the illocutionary and dissertation levels.

Though the nature of this work is exploratory, we expect that the importance to include a fourth level of analysis as a necessary tool to explain the complex working of language has become evident.

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