

PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE DIALOGUES IN ARTHUR MILLER'S DRAMA "DEATH OF A SALESMAN"

Mulyanto¹

¹Fakultas Sastra Universitas Dr. Soetomo

Abstract—Ever since its publication in 1949, *Death of a Salesman* has attracted much attention for its tragic theme and vivid characterization. Reviews on *Death of a Salesman* have been numerous and various in approaches. The present study mainly adopts pragmatic theories as its analytic approaches and analyzes the dialogues in *The Death of a Salesman*. It intends to find out how characters achieve their communicative purposes when they produce their utterances. Moreover, it is expected that this study may help shed some light on the pragmatic approach to the interpretation of drama. In this study, 16 fragments of dialogues are taken as the data for analysis. This study applies the Speech Acts Theory, the turn-control strategies, the Cooperative Principle, the Politeness Principle and the methods of Critical Discourse Analysis in data analysis. The turn-control strategies could help us learn how and why the character yields or claims a turn, and help us understand the communicative strategies of the participants. In a drama, dialogues between the characters are important ways of completing certain speech acts. The analysis of the dialogues may help us understand the real intentions of the characters. The present study carries implications for English teaching, the appreciation of drama and daily communication. Teaching turn-control strategies to students can help them communicate more successfully. The study of the theories and methods of Critical Discourse Analysis may improve students' critical language awareness. The application of pragmatic theories to the appreciation of drama contributes to the revelation of the real intentions of characters, and helps us understand how the playwright displays the story, portrays the characters and expresses his /her intentions through various language skills.

Keywords—critical discourse analysis; *Death of a Salesman*; pragmatic analysis; speech acts; turn-control strategies

I. BACKGROUND

Ever since its publication in 1949, *Death of a Salesman* has attracted much attention for its tragic theme and vivid characterization. Reviews on *Death of a Salesman* have been numerous and various in approaches. The present study mainly adopts pragmatic theories as its analytic approaches and analyzes the dialogues in *Death of a Salesman*. It intends to find out how characters achieve their communicative purposes when they produce their utterances. Moreover, it is expected that this thesis may help shed some light on the pragmatic approach to the interpretation of drama. The term "pragmatics" was first introduced in *Foundation of the Theory of Signs* by Morris (1938: 6), who contrasts pragmatics with semantics and syntax. For Morris, pragmatics is the branch of linguistics that deals with the relation of signs to interpreters and users. It reflects the relationship between speech and context, and accounts for what syntax and semantics cannot account for. Other linguists offer definitions which are more or less different from the one given by Morris.

Stalnaker (1972, p. 383) takes pragmatics as "the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed". Leech (1983, p. 1) defines pragmatics as "the study of how utterances have meanings in situations". Mey (1993, p. 42) has the idea that "pragmatics is the study of the conditions of human language uses as these are determined by the context of society". Levinson (1983, pp. 9-27) lists a series of definitions in the first chapter of his *Pragmatics*,

however, he himself finds none of his definitions satisfying. One issue over the pragmatic studies is whether the pragmatic mechanisms have any explanatory power over literary text. Mey (1993, p. 236) in his *Pragmatics: An Introduction* puts forward such questions as what is the significance of pragmatics for the study of written text? How does literature relate to pragmatics? It is commonly agreed that pragmatics studies the role played by language users. Literary language users use language to convey meanings. They also obey rules of language use just as other language users do. Cook (1994, p. 46) states it clearly that literature can be studied as conversations in his insightful book *Discourse and Literature*. Therefore, pragmatic factors which are closely associated with conversations should be paid attention to when studying literary language.

As we all know, a discourse, no matter what genre it has, is a part of communication which naturally involves the language user's intention in certain context. Taking a method without considering how or why the language is used, the meanings obtained will be only on the surface level, and the implied meanings will be overlooked. Alongside with the rapid development and achievement in the field of pragmatics, more and more scholars hold that meaning is not a stable and absolute thing, but depends on the dynamic process of interpretation by language users. Verschueren (1995, p. 514), "literary stylistics rests on the assumption that the theories and methods developed within linguistics can be appropriately and fruitfully applied to the study of literature". Pragmatics, as a branch of linguistics, functions as a useful tool in the analysis of literature.

This study will adopt a pragmatic approach to study the dialogues in *Death of a Salesman*. The dramatic dialogue, as the art that uses language, is unique on the one hand, and is similar to daily life dialogue on the other hand. As the refined and polished imitation of everyday speech, dramatic dialogue should be studied in the context. Thus, the analysis of dramatic dialogues cannot exclude pragmatic theories and principles which are originally employed to investigate real life communication.

Besides, as a written form, dialogues in drama are different from that in daily life. It is necessary to offer substantial reasons for why exactly pragmatics can be adopted to study the conversations in literary works and to present the similarities between dramatic dialogues and naturally occurring conversations. It is no doubt that spoken and written communication has their own distinctive features. However, the similarities between them cannot be ignored.

In literary works, characters, like people in daily life, also have their different personalities, thoughts, psychological activities and so on. The kinds of speech acts which are performed by characters should be proper to the specific situations as people do in daily life. Leech and Short (1981, p. 151) have pointed out that one cannot understand the nature of fictional language without seeing it as a special case of the ordinary referential, truth-reporting function of language, which should be pay attention to when analyzing dramatic dialogues. We may get the conclusion that pragmatic theories and principles, such as the Cooperative Principle, the Politeness Principle and the Speech Act Theory, which are based on oral communication, can also guide written communication.

This study chooses drama as the research object, because drama as one of three major types of literature, that is novel, drama, and poem, has been the least studied in either literary criticism or stylistics. For one thing, while drama is an important literary genre, it is very often not taken as literature, since it is one of the most complex forms of art. For another, drama poses the greatest challenge to literary criticism and dramatic text analysis. While theatrical critics deliberately neglect the literary aspects of dramatic text, literary critics do not normally think that it is their business to comment on drama. Thus, drama has become a borderline area to which neither of the neighbors along the fence has paid enough attention. It is only in recent years that dramatic study has seen happy moments in stylistics. Some stylisticians, equipped with theories of pragmatics and discourse analysis, have been trying to change the situation Short (1989, p. 152). Because of the limited space, we cannot deal with all dramas, in this study, we prefer *Death of a Salesman* for

the following reasons. In the first place, Arthur Miller is one of the most influential playwrights in America; moreover, *Death of a Salesman* is his best contribution to American drama. Meanwhile it has aroused heated debates in the critic circle both at home and abroad. In the second place, most previous studies of the play pay attention to creative skills, dramatic techniques and tragic themes, compared with which the dialogues in it have been paid little attention to, let alone a study of it from the pragmatic perspective. To sum up, *Death of a Salesman* is a good one to choose as the object of the present research.

Therefore, the pragmatic approach to dramatic dialogues is not only valid but also of great practical and theoretical significance. It analyses texts related to context rather than an absolute aesthetic artifact. An interpretation or analysis of literary works without taking pragmatic elements into consideration is not complete. The pragmatic approach makes clearer the historical, cultural, social and mental states of the particular phase when author wrote the play. The pragmatic analysis of drama will be more satisfactory. Pragmatic theories are very important in literature analysis, and scholars have been making researches in this field.

This thesis is composed of three parts besides the Introduction and the Conclusion. The Introduction mainly includes a brief introduction of the topic, the orientation of the current research and the organization of the thesis. Chapter 1 is to review the previous studies of the pragmatic analysis of literature, the Speech Act Theory, Conversation Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis and *Death of a Salesman* both abroad and at home. Chapter 2 is to illuminate how the data is collected and selected and the methods used in this thesis. Chapter 3 is to analyze the dialogues in *Death of a Salesman* by making use of the turn-control strategies, illocutionary speech acts, the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle. The implications, limitations and further research are presented in the Conclusion.

II. CHAPTER ONE LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review the previous studies in the relevant fields. A brief introduction to the Speech Act Theory will be made first, including Austin's classification of Illocutionary Acts and Lu Fei's model of Infelicities. Then, Conversation Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis will be illuminated. At last, a brief introduction will be made to the relevant studies of pragmatic analysis of literature and *Death of a Salesman* both abroad and at home.

A. SPEECH ACT THEORY

Speech Act Theory is the first major theory in pragmatics, initially proposed in the 50s and widely discussed in the 60s and 70s (Jiang, 2000: 197). The basic thing advocated by Speech Act Theory is that to say something is to do something. In recent years, Speech Act Theory has also been applied to the study of literary works. In the following part, the classification of illocutionary acts proposed by Austin and the model of infelicities modified by Lu Fei will be illuminated.

1) Austin's Classification of Illocutionary Acts

Austin (1962) suggests that there are three senses in which saying something may be understood as doing something. The first sense is an ordinary one. That is, when we speak, we move our vocal organs and produce a number of sounds, organized in a certain way and with a certain meaning. In this sense, when somebody says "Morning!", we can ask a question like "What did he do?" instead of "What did he say?" and the answer could be that he produced a sound, word or sentence—"Morning!".

The act performed in this sense is called Locutionary Act. The locutionary act can be subdivided into three parts. The first part is "to perform the act of uttering certain noises" Austin (1962, p. 96). This is the phonetic act. The second part is the phatic act of "uttering certain vocables or words" (p. 96). The third, or rhetic act, is "to perform the act of using the phoneme or its constituents with a certain more or less definite

'sense' and a more or less definite 'reference'" (p. 100).

In fact, when we speak, we not only produce some units of language with certain meanings, but also make clear our purpose in producing them, the way we intend them to be understood, or they also have certain forces as Austin prefers to say. In the example "Morning!", we can say it has the force of a greeting. This is the second sense in which to say something is to do something, and the act performed is known as an Illocutionary Act. The Illocutionary act is related to the speaker's intention. To determine what the illocutionary act of the utterance is, one should know what the speaker intends to achieve or bring about by the utterance. An illocutionary act is not performed, in Austin's view, unless the hearer recognizes the speaker's intention to perform this act. He says that "the performance of an illocutionary act involves the securing of uptake" (ibid, 117). Uptake occurs when the hearer understands the illocutionary force of the utterance.

The third sense in which to say something can mean to do something concerns the consequential effects of a locution upon the hearer. By telling somebody something, the speaker may change the opinion of the hearer on something, mislead him, surprise him, or induce him to do something, etc.. Whether or not these effects are intended by the speaker, they can be regarded as part of the act that the speaker has performed. This act is called a Perlocutionary Act which depends not only on the speaker but also on the hearer. It is concerned with the result of the utterance.

Austin attempts a preliminary classification of illocutionary act. Under the notion of the illocutionary forces of utterances, which in turn are made clear by explicit performative verbs in the utterance, he classifies illocutionary acts into five types: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives and expositives. It should be pointed out that Austin himself is "far from equally happy about all of them" and he is "not putting any of this forward as in the very least definitive" (p. 151).

A verdictive is essentially giving a finding as to something—fact or value—which is for different reasons hard to be certain about (p. 151).

Verdictives are concerned with the delivery of a verdict, a finding, a judgement, or an assessment, official or unofficial, upon evidence or reasons about value or fact (p. 153). Verdictives can be judged by true or false, sound or unsound, and fair and unfair.

An exercitive is the exercising of power, right or influence and the giving of a decision in favor of or against a certain course of action or advocacy of it (p. 151). It is a decision that something is to be so rather than a judgment that it is so. A commissive is typified by promising or otherwise undertaking; they not only commit you doing something, but also include declarations or announcements of intention (pp. 151-152). A commissive is to commit the speaker to a certain course of action.

A behabitive includes the notion of reaction to other people's behavior and of attitudes to someone else's past conduct or imminent conduct (p. 152). It is a statement of feelings and a description of attitudes and social behaviors. In the case of behabitives, besides the usual liability to infelicities, there is a possibility for insincerity (p. 161). An expositive is used in acts of exposition involving the expounding of views, the conducting of arguments, and the clarifying of usages and of references (p. 152). It manifests how our utterances fit into an argument or conversation.

Austin (p. 152) thinks that the last two types of illocutionary acts are troublesome. The behabitives is a very miscellaneous category, and the expositives is difficult to define. He does not deny that his classification is not clear enough, and that maybe some types are cross-classified. Along with the development of Speech Act Theory, scholars have successfully applied this theory to the fields of philosophy, psychology, anthropology, literary criticism, etc. Scholars both at home and abroad have made a lot of researches on the feasibility of the application of Speech Act theory to the analysis of literary works. Pratt (1977, p. 25) believes that "literary language" is no other than "ordinary language", so theories which are used to study "ordinary language" can also be used in literary criticism. As one of the most important theories in pragmatics, Speech

Act Theory has been put into actual use by many researchers. The detailed information will be illuminated in the last two parts of this chapter.

B. CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

Conversation Analysis is interdisciplinary, and it is used to study conversations in a wide range from institutional talks (such as those in courts, clinics and classrooms) to literary works. According to a summary made by Wood and Kroger (2000, p. 172), there is now a lot of such researches. For example, Heritage and Greatbatch have considered the distinctive turn-taking procedures in news interviews (1986, pp. 110-157); Akinson and Drew considered features of turn organization and design in court, including the production of accusations and of defenses (1979, pp.1006-1022).

While reviewing conversation analysis, a term should be paid close attention to, that is "turn". It is proposed by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974: 702) who think that a "turn" is everything one speaker says before another speaker begins to speak. Harris (1951, p.14) defines turn as "a stretch of talk, by one person, before and after which there is silence on the part of that person".

Goodwin (1977, pp. 41-42) defines the "turn" as "a static unit with fixed boundaries". He does not accurately describe its structure and regards the "turn" as "a time-bound process". Levinson (1983, pp. 295-296) gives the definition of "turn", that is, "a turn is a time during which a single participant speaks, within a typical, orderly arrangement in which participants speak with minimal overlap and gap between them".

All in all, researchers have different views on "turn", and sometimes they even describe turn for their own sake. Every conversation consists of turns and is characterized by turn-taking: one participant talks and stops; another participant starts, talks and stops. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974, pp. 696-735) suggest that the mechanism that governs turn-taking is a set of rules which ordered options on a turn-by-turn basis. They also build a turn-taking system for casual conversations. Due to the limited space, the author is not to explain the system in detail

in this study.

Francis and Hunston (1992, p. 383) analyze everyday conversation by adapting Sinclair-Coulthard model put forward in 1975. The two analysts discuss a complete telephone conversation between two native speakers of English from the concepts of acts, moves, exchanges, transactions and interactions. The above elements form a rank with acts at the lowest and with integration at the highest of the discourse level of language patterning. Their exploring of the structure and function of moves, exchanges, transactions, interactions provide useful hints for part of the present study. In the literary field, Coulthard (1985), starting from conversational analysis, studies in detail the questions and answers of one text, *Othello*, and he reaches the conclusion that *Othello's* suspicion is roused by a sequence of unanswered questions, not simply because the questions are unanswered, but because they are avoided clumsily and deliberately.

Coulthard carries out the study with an attempt to apply insights derived from conversational analysis to illuminate techniques in simulated interaction. He disagrees with those who work on written discourses as monologue because he thinks they "ignore the fact that as he reads, the reader interacts with the text, and thus an interactive model might also be appropriate for written discourse" Coulthard (1985, p. 192).

C. CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Critical Linguistics was first proposed by Fowler et al in the book of *Language and Control* in 1979. According to Van Dijk (1998:143), Critical Discourse Analysis (commonly abbreviated as CDA) is a field that is concerned with studying and analyzing written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of bias, power, dominance, discrimination and inequality.

After many years' development CDA has gained recognition in the field of linguistics. In the following part, a review of the contributions of the major CDA researchers will be conducted. Fowler (1991: cited in Li, 2007, p. 15) expounds the framework of CDA and applies it to the analysis of specific news in the book *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*.

Fowler holds that language use is not neutral. Any form of language choice incorporates ideological meanings. In his point of view, CDA is an exercise in "instrumental linguistics" (Fowler, 1991: 85). He also shows how tools provided by standard linguistic theories can be used to uncover linguistic structures of power in texts. Drawing on functional linguistics, he studies transitivity, transformation, modality, lexical classification and coherence in news discourse. Fowler illustrates that systematic grammatical devices function in establishing, manipulating and naturalizing social hierarchies.

Fairclough (1989, p. 116) put forward the social theories underpinning CDA, as in other early critical linguistic works. A variety of textual examples are analyzed to illustrate, its aims and methods of analysis. Later in his *Discourse and Social Change* (1992) he explains and elaborates some advances in CDA, showing not only how the analytical framework for investigating language in relation to power and ideology develops, but also how CDA is useful in disclosing the discursive nature of much contemporary social and cultural change. Particularly the language of the mass media is scrutinized as a site of power and as a site where language is apparently transparent. He contributes a lot to the development of CDA.

D. RELATED STUDIES ABROAD

Since the 1970s, linguistics has witnessed a number of interdisciplinary approaches: language as act (the Speech Act Theory), language as interaction (conversation and discourse analysis), language and context (pragmatics, and Halliday's functional linguistics and socio-semiotic theory), anthropological linguistics, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics. The pragmatic study of literature has experienced a short history, and it also can be traced back to the 1970s.

Although Morris claims that there is a close relationship between pragmatics and rhetoric when he proposes the definition of pragmatics in 1938, the term "literary pragmatics" is first proposed by Van Dijk (1976). Levinson (1983, p. 36) believes that pragmatics has potential applicability in all fields including the study of rhetoric and literature.

Ohmann (1971, pp. 1-19) starts the study in this field by defining literature as a type of discourse where normal conventions for illocutionary value of utterances are suspended, so that literary sentences convey pretended rather than genuine speech acts. In another article, Ohmann (1973, pp. 47-63) emphasizes the important role that illocutionary acts play in literature, although literary works are discourses with usual illocutionary rules suspended.

Besides, many other scholars have contributed a lot to the pragmatic study of literary works from different perspectives. Van Dijk (1976, pp. 44-49) defines "literature" as discourse that systematically subverts Grice's Cooperative Principle and all its maxims. According to Pratt (1977, p. 78), literature is a particular speech context which involves a specific set of conventions and expectations concerning the relationship between the author and the audience, the preparation and selection of texts. Pratt applies the Cooperative Principle to some literary texts, and it is only when the maxims are intentionally flouted that we can get the implicature.

Fowler (1986, p. 95) argues that the theory of implicature enriches our view of how discourse works, and provides numerous insights for linguistic criticism. He explains that implicature is central to dialogic structure in a good deal of modern drama and to dialogue in witty and ironic or stylized novels. In literary works, the maxims are applauded as producing aesthetically or conceptually agreeable verbal effects. He then explores the use of the Cooperative Principle in an excerpt of a play.

However, other scholars have conducted their researches from the perspectives of the Politeness Principle, deixis and presupposition. When the Politeness Principle is involved in literature, the result becomes more complicated. Because the three determining factors which are social distance, power and rank of imposition for the choice of politeness are vital to the development of theme and character in literature. Hardy (1991, pp. 343-362) finds out that the framework of politeness strategy is especially well suited for literary interpretation. He also proves this through his analysis of Hemingway's

The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber.

Nevertheless, Culpeper (1996, pp. 349-367) considers the notions of inherent and mock impoliteness, and discusses contextual factors associated with impoliteness. He attempts to build an impoliteness framework which is parallel but opposite to Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness (1987). He further demonstrates that in some contexts of army training and literary drama, impoliteness is not a marginal activity, and we need an appropriate descriptive framework in order to account for it.

As far as presupposition is concerned, Chapman (1999, pp. 159-178) confirms that presuppositions operating between characters in the novel, and between the novel and the reader, are reliable to failure, without catastrophic effect on the discourse.

The aforementioned studies have made great contributions to the development of pragmatic analysis of literature. Since the present study takes *Death of a Salesman* as its research object, it is necessary to review previous studies of this famous play by Arthur Miller. Generally speaking, critics at home and abroad deal with this play from the following aspects, e.g. the theme, tragedy and the employment of techniques.

Wilson studies Miller's theory of social drama in *Death of a Salesman*, and he considers that "a playwright like Arthur Miller can say as much about American society in *Death of a Salesman* as Reisman or Whyte can say in carefully documented social studies" (1959:53). McMichael in his *Concise Anthology of American Literature* notes that Miller writes of ordinary people who cannot fully understand their fate, who are stricken by events that are mundane yet overwhelming (1998:58).

Blumberg concludes in *Arthur Miller: New Perspectives* that in this play, "Arthur Miller gives the audience his powerful, definitive portrait of the prototype of the alienated white-collar man in the character of Willy Loman" (1982:55).

After the performance of *Death of a Salesman*, some critics blame Miller for having a narrow vision of tragedy in this play. They say that Miller's "common man" heroes are "little" and in the worst case, just common people, and

that his heroes are not genuinely human enough to qualify as tragic figures at all. Gassner holds a cautious attitude to Miller's tragic character. He speaks of Willy Loman as a hero of "low tragedy" who raises pity but does not rise to tragic exaltation, which is different from the "high tragedy" of earlier ages (1960, p. 23, cited in Hu, 2007).

The employment of techniques in *Death of a Salesman* is another important subject for critics. In her book *Arthur Miller: as a Critic of Drama*, Dutta (2004:37) stresses the importance of technical means in *Death of a Salesman*. She says that Miller takes pains to find the technical means to let the conflict develop properly. Dutta takes the hallucinatory interludes in *Death of a Salesman* as an example. These hallucinatory interludes are not short cuts to a dramatic design, but are a necessary device to get the audience to see the outside world from the protagonist's point of view.

Wyatt praises Miller's creative expression, and says that the closest parallel to Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* is *Death of a Salesman*, where every action in the present works towards revelation of the past (cited in Welland, 1961: 6-7).

The above are the relevant studies of *Death of a Salesman* made by western scholars, the studies at home will be illuminated also in this order in the last section of this chapter.

III. Research Method

In this chapter, the author will first explain how the data are collected and how the samples are selected. Then the analytical tools of the present study will be introduced, that is, the Turn-control Strategies, the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle. CDA methods shall be introduced in the final section.

A. DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE SELECTION

The present study aims to investigate how the pragmatic theories are used to analyze literary texts, and find out the meanings implied in the dialogues between the characters of the play. The data for the study are extracted from *Death of a*

salesman, and the samples are chosen from the dialogues in this play. The author chooses the data which can best represent the theories used in this thesis. For the length of the study, 23 examples are selected as samples. Various pragmatic theories have been used by stylisticians to analyze literary works written in English or Chinese. As one of the classics in Western literature, *Death of a Salesman* is really a great play which deserves more attention from both readers and critics. As a representative of tragic drama, this play, with its profound social significance and incomparable artistic charm, has a strong appeal to the readers, audience and critics.

Death of a Salesman was first introduced to the author of this study in the American Literature course in 2003. Overwhelmed by the tragic life of Loman, the author chooses some of the dialogues in *Death of a Salesman*'s data for the present study.

B. TURN-CONTROL STRATEGIES

The turn-taking model, proposed by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974, pp. 696- 735) has been applied in the study of naturally occurring conversations, and can be described in terms of two components, that is, turn-construction component and turn-allocation component, and a set of rules. Turn-construction component means "a turn can be made up of sentences, clauses, phrases or words" (p. 702). Turn-allocation component means "the current speaker may allocate the turn to the selected next speaker, or the participant self-selects to be the next speaker" (p. 703). The simplest system for the organization of turn-taking in conversation, proposed by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), is as follows. Here C means the current speaker, N means the next speaker, and TRP means the recognizable end of a turn-constructive unit:

"Rule 1 —applies initially at the first TRP of any turns.

(a) If C selects N in current turn, then C must stop speaking, and N must speak next, transition occurring at the first TRP N —selection;

(b) If C does not select N, then any (other) party may self-select,

first speaker gaining rights to the next turn;

(c) If C has not select N, and no other party self-selects under option (b), then C may (but need not) continue (i.e. claim rights to a further turn-constructive unit).

Rule 2 —applies at all subsequent TRP."
(Sacks et al, 1974: 704)

The Turn-control Strategies is made up of turn yielding, holding the turn, turn claiming, and feedback. There are different ways and signals for the current speaker and the next speaker to yield the turn, hold the turn or claim the turn. The present study will apply some turn yielding and turn claiming methods, that is, "nomination", "self-selection", "insertion", "overlap" and "interruption", to the analysis of the dialogues in *Death of a Salesman*. The methods will be introduced in the following passages.

Nomination means that the current speaker nominates the next speaker, and sets the topic for discussion. For example,

Tom : What do you think of Mr. Smith, Jane?

Jane : He is a good teacher, but ...

Self-selection means that the current speaker sets the topic for discussion by requesting or asking questions, but the listeners self-select to be the next speaker. For instances: in class, the teacher may ask, "who would like to say something about it?", then the students may self-select and answer the question.

Insertion means that the next speaker begins to speak at the possible ending of the current speaker's utterance. Insertion happens when the current speaker has expressed a complete meaning. If the next speaker begins to speak in the middle of the current speaker's utterance, this phenomenon is called interruption rather than insertion.

Overlap refers to simultaneous speeches, caused by a speaker who begins to speak at the very close to a possible transition place in the current speaker's utterance. Overlaps may be

resolved in two ways. First, one speaker may insist on the completion of the turn leading to the other speaker's withdrawal. Second, both utterances may be completed with neither speaker withdrawing or with both speakers withdrawing Itakura (2000, p. 1870).

C. THE COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE

It is Grice who first proposes the Cooperative Principle at the William James Lectures at Harvard University in 1967. According to him, communication is guided by a set of universal principles and sub-principles (called Maxims) which systematize the process of inferencing and ensure the success of communication. All communications are based on the general tacit assumption of cooperation: all participants will make their contribution "such as required, at the stage where it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange" (Grice, 2002:33).

Within the Cooperative Principle, Grice distinguishes four maxims: Quality, Quantity, Relation and Manner, which play a guiding role in conversation:

- "1) The maxims of QUALITY:
 - a) Do not say what you believe to be false.
 - b) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- 2) The maxims of QUANTITY:
 - a) Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange).
 - b) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
- 3) The maxims of RELATION:
 - Be relevant.
- 4) The maxims of MANNER:
 - a) Avoid obscuring of expression.
 - b) Avoid ambiguity.
 - c) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
 - d) Be orderly."

(Grice, 2002: 26-27)

Communication will be carried out most efficiently by following the maxims. But different from the grammatical rules, the above-mentioned maxims are not always fulfilled in communication. According to Grice, the maxims can be: "1) observed: in this case no implicature is generated; 2) Violated: in this case, no implicature is generated and the utterance is potentially misleading; 3) Flouted: in this case, an implicature is generated."

As one of the most important ideas in pragmatics, conversational implicature may mean more than what is literally expressed by the conventional sense of the linguistic expressions uttered. As we will see in the next chapter, flouting the maxims is very important for the analysis in present study, because it is quite common in the dialogues of the drama. Flouting the conversational maxims is used to convey meanings indirectly.

D. THE POLITENESS PRINCIPLE

The Cooperative Principle cannot explain why people flout its maxims and indirectly convey what they really mean. It is for these reasons that Leech (1983) proposes the Politeness Principle. Since the Politeness Principle deals with the relationship between participants, "self" refers to the speaker, while "other" refers to hearer, including the addressees and the people designated by third-person pronouns. Thus the maxims of the Politeness Principle go in pairs as follows:

- "1) TACT MAXIM
 - a) Minimize cost to other
 - b) Maximize benefit to other
- 2) GENEROSITY MAXIM
 - a) Minimize benefit to self
 - b) Maximize cost to self
- 3) APPROBATION MAXIM
 - a) Minimize dispraise of other
 - b) Maximize praise of other
- 4) MODESTY MAXIM
 - a) Minimize praise of self
 - b) Maximize dispraise of self

- 5) AGREEMENT MAXIM
 - a) Minimize disagreement between self and other
 - b) Maximize agreement between self and other
- 6) SYMPATHY MAXIM
 - a) Minimize antipathy between self and other
 - b) Maximize sympathy between self and other"

(Leech, 1983:132)

Compared with the Cooperative Principle, the Politeness Principle is more useful in explaining why speakers often breach the conversational maxims and convey indirectly the force of their utterance in certain case. However, with this approach, it is not likely to assess the scale of politeness required in a given situation. The problem is settled by Brown and Levinson (1987) who go a step further by arguing that politeness in context is determined by the configuration of three contextual variables: the social distance (D) between the speaker and the hearer, in effect their degree of familiarity; the relationship power (P) of the speaker and the hearer; and the absolute ranking (R) of the various impositions in the given culture (Blum-Kulka, 1997).

The central concept to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is face. "When individuals interact, they are concerned with presenting and maintaining a public image of themselves, that is, 'face'. It refers to that emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize" (Yule, 1996: 60). Brown and Levinson claim that maintaining face is a basic motivation of human interaction and that face has two dimensions: "positive face" and "negative face". The former means the desire to be liked, approved, respected and appreciated by others, and the latter means the desire not to be imposed on and to have freedom of action. Both positive face and negative face may be maintained, damaged or enhanced through interaction with others. A person should balance the satisfaction of their own positive and negative face needs with the face needs of others. The need to balance face needs derives from the fact that most acts

of communication tend to damage and threaten another person's face. Such acts are called "face-threatening acts" (shorted as FTAs). The degree of politeness depends on the weightiness of the face loss involved which is in turn determined by the size of the FTA.

E. CDA METHODS

In the Literature Review, the author has introduced the origin and development of CDA. Now the author will briefly introduce the analytic devices of CDA, which are mainly based on systemic-functional linguistics developed by M. A. K. Halliday (1985). In present study, only some effective analytic devices, such as lexical classification and modality will be adopted. In the next part, these methods will be introduced in detail. What kind of words the speaker use reflects his/her thoughts or ideas consciously or unconsciously. Vocabulary is the representation of the world.

It is an elementary task for the critical analysts to note just what terms habitually occur in the discourse he/she is studying. In Halliday's linguistic theory, the system of lexical classification is simply a choice of vocabulary when words are used to describe the happenings in the world Halliday, (1971, pp. 332-334).

Just two further lexical processes will be mentioned briefly in the sense of lexical classification. First, "re-lexicalization" means the promotion of a new term where it is claimed that a new concept is at issue. Fairclough (1992, p. 194) says that "re-lexicalization is generating new wordings which are set up as alternatives to, and in opposition to, existing ones". A typical example of re-lexicalization is that "Black", "person of color" and "African-American" become the substitutions of "negro".

Second, "over-lexicalization" means "the existence of an excess of quasi-synonymous terms for entities and ideas that are a particular preoccupation or problem in the culture's discourse" Fowler, (1991, p. 85).

Over-lexicalization uses the synonyms or quasi-synonyms such as "euphemisms, affective terms, appreciative terms, pejorative terms, and neutral terms" for the same entities or concepts.

Modality refers to the area of meaning that lies between yes and no—the intermediate ground between positive and negative polarity Halliday (1985: 356). It has to do with the different ways in which a language user can intrude on his/her message, expressing attitudes and judgments of various kinds Suzanne, (1994, p. 179).

Modality is commonly realized through modal auxiliary verbs (“must”, “may”, “will”, “can”, “should”, “ought to”, etc.); adjectives (“likely”, “possible”, “obvious”, etc.), and adverbs (“possibly”, “probably”, “certainly”, “definitely” and soon). In addition to modal auxiliary verbs, adjectives and adverbs, personal pronouns and verbs like “hope”, “think”, “feel”, “want”, “like”, “seem”, “wish”, and “try” etc. can also realize modality. Modality represents the speaker’s belief, commitment or attitude towards a certain issue.

In this chapter, the author has introduced the data collection and sample selection procedure as well as the analytical methods used in this thesis: including the Turn-control Strategies, the Cooperative Principle, the Politeness Principle and CDA methods. In the following chapter, these analytical devices shall be applied to the pragmatic analysis of dialogues in *Death of a Salesman*.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is the main part of the whole thesis. Based on the relevant theories and an introduction to the drama which will be made in the first part of this chapter, the author is to carry out the pragmatic analysis of some dialogues in *Death of a Salesman*, with the application of Turn-control Strategies and the Speech Act Theory. In the last part of this chapter, specific attention is to be paid to the violation of the Cooperative Principle and Politeness Principle in the dialogues among the characters of the play. Besides, CDA methods, such as lexical classification and modality are applied as analytical tools in this study.

A. TURN-CONTROL STRATEGIES

One of the characteristics of drama language is that the characters speak alternatively. When

the characters have dialogues, they are facing the problem of how to maintain or give up the right to speak. In the present study, specific attention will be paid to turn-control strategies, including nomination, self-selection, overlap, insertion and interruption. In the follow passages, how speakers claim or yield the turn and what kind of turn-control strategies they adopt will be illuminated.

1) Nomination

If the current speaker wants to yield turns, he/she will use nomination. Among the turn-yielding methods, nomination is the most powerful one. In the present study, we attempt to use nomination to analyze the dramatic dialogues which are very similar to daily conversations. More often than not, every nomination is followed by a question, which is also applicable to the example selected by the author.

(1) Linda :Willy, he was just saying—

Willy : I heard what he said!

Happy, trying to quiet Willy: Hey, Pop, come on now...

Willy, continuing over Happy’s line: They laugh at me, heh? Go to Filene’s, go to the Hub, go to Slattery’s, Boston. Call out the name Willy Loman and see what happens! Big Shot!

Biff : All right, Pop.

Willy : Big!

Biff : All right!

Willy : Why do you always insult me?

Biff : I didn’t say a word. To Linda: Did I say a word?

Linda : He didn’t say anything, Willy.

(Miller, 1949: 62)

This dialogue takes place after Willy comes back home and hears Biff’s talk with Linda. Infuriated, Willy blames Biff for being a worker on a farm. Biff doesn’t have confidence in his father after he discovers his father’s clandestine love affair with The Woman. Biff isn’t willing to

quarrel with Willy, so he adopts a turn-yielding method—nomination. Nominating his mother with the question: “Did I say a word?”, Biff gives up the turn.

Thus, the head-on clash between father and son is avoided. From this, we can see that the relations between Biff and Willy are strained. The example proves that nomination is an effective method to yield a turn in dramatic dialogues, which are similar to day-to-day communication. Biff's attitude toward Willy reflects one theme of the play, namely, betrayal. In Willy's eye, Biff used to be a perfect son, and likes to do anything to please him. However, the reality is so cruel that it breaks Biff's idol. Biff finds out that Willy is not so powerful and successful as he imagines before, then he chooses to betray his father as well as his ambition.

That is what Willy cannot dispel from his bosom throughout the play. Another linguistic phenomenon in Example (1) that we should pay attention to is Willy's choice of words to describe himself. He maintains that he is a “big shot” in the sales world, and repeats the word “big”. This kind of selection of words has its special meaning, that is Willy strives perseveringly for success in the business world. In the following paragraphs, the author will analyze another example, which is a little different from the above one.

- (2) Biff starts for Willy, but is blocked by Happy. In his fury, Biff seems on the verge of attacking his father.

Biff : I am not a leader of men, Willy, and neither are you. You were never anything but a hard-working drummer who landed in the ash can like all the rest of them! I'm one dollar an hour, Willy! I tried seven states and couldn't raise it. A buck an hour! Do you gather my meaning? I'm not bringing home any prizes any more, and you're going to stop waiting

for me to bring them home!

Willy, directly to Biff: You vengeful, spiteful mut!

Biff breaks from Happy. Willy, in fright, starts up the stairs. Biff grabs him.

Biff, at the peak of his fury: Pop, I'm nothing! I'm nothing, Pop. Can't you understand that? There's no spite in it any more. I'm just what I am, that's all.

Biff's fury has spent itself, and he breaks down, sobbing, holding on to Willy, who dumbly fumbles for Biff's face.

Willy, astonished: What're you doing? What're you doing? To Linda: Why is he crying?

Linda: He loves you, Willy!

(Miller, 1949: 132-133)

This dialogue takes place in the house after they come back from Frank's Chop House. At the moment, Biff has acknowledged that he is nothing, and neither is Willy. However, Willy cannot accept the fact, and turns out to be helpless and threatening. At last, Willy asks Linda for help.

He nominates Linda with a question: “Why is he crying?” Actually, what Biff has done and said is unexpected. Here, we can take the nomination as a means of seeking help.

Willy repeats “What're you doing?”. From the repetition, we also can see how astonished and helpless Willy is. Furthermore, from his choice of words, such as, “vengeful” and “spiteful”, we can image how disappointed Willy is at that moment. Actually, Willy always believes that he has the right to expect Biff to realize the expectations that he places on him. When Biff abandons his promise to Willy's ambitious hope for him, Willy takes this rejection as a personal offence. It ultimately reflects Willy's inability to realize the American Dream—the product in which Willy himself believes most faithfully. Willy assumes

that Biff's betrayal stems from his discovery of Willy's amorous affair with The Woman—a betrayal of Linda's love. Whereas Willy feels that Biff has betrayed him, Biff feels that Willy has betrayed him with his unending lies. Biff's sentence "We never told the truth for ten minutes in this house" (Miller, 1949: 131) reflects his kind of

feeling properly.

To sum up, as a method of yielding the turn, nomination is effective and powerful. In the present study, Biff uses nomination to avoid conflicting with Willy, while Willy uses nomination to ask for help or an answer. It implicates that we should learn the motivations if a nomination occurs when appreciating literary works.

2) Self-selection

Self-selection is done with a question without nomination under the situation that some information about the topic has been given. In other words, the current speaker asks questions and the listener self-select to be the next speaker.

(3) Willy : That's because he likes you.
If somebody else took that
ball there'd be an uproar.
So what's the report, boys,
what's the report?

Biff : Where'd you go this time,
Dad? Gee we were lonesome
for you.

(Miller, 1949: 30)

Example (3) takes place when Willy goes home after a self-traveling. At that time, Biff and Happy were in their high school, and the Lomans live a delightful life. In the example, Willy puts forward a question without nominating Biff or Happy to answer it. Biff self-selects to answer it.

Totally different from Example (1), here Biff takes his father as an idol and willing to talk with him. Due to the respect and love, Biff answers Willy's question voluntarily. Under these circumstances, we can take the self-selection as cooperation with the previous speaker, and reflection of attitude to the previous speaker.

Reading over the whole play, we can see that between his two sons Willy obviously shows favoritism to Biff. Happy tries to get his father's attention and approval several times in the play, but fails. Actually, Willy's favoritism to Biff shows that he is unable to let go of his commitment to the American Dream, so he places tremendous pressure on Biff to fulfill it for him. Through the description of the disruption of the family connections, we come to one theme, that is, the delusion of the American Dream, since one prominent element of the American Dream is the solid family. Though Willy intends to build a harmonious family, his way of doing things is not successful. In the example below, the motivations and functions of self-selection is not the same as that in Example (3).

(4) Linda : Where were you?

Happy, trying to laugh it off: We met two girls, Mom, very fine types. Here, we brought you some flowers. Offering them to her: Put them in your room, Ma.

She knocks them to the floor at Biff's feet. He has now come inside and closed the door behind him. She stares at Biff, silent.

Happy : Now what'd you do that for? Mom, I want you to have some flowers—

Linda, cutting Happy off, violently to Biff: Don't you care whether he lives or dies?

Happy, going to the stairs: Come upstairs, Biff.

(Miller, 1949: 123)

The above dialogue takes place after Biff and Happy come back home. According to the play, Biff, Happy and Willy get through an awful night at Frank's Chop House. Apparently, Linda asks where they are instead of blaming them. By her utterance, we can know that she does not select the next speaker between Biff and Happy. However, Happy self-selects and fudges

the answer. He wants to divert Linda's attention. Moreover, Miller portrays the character of Happy as a peacemaker in the family. Here he tries to calm down Linda through self-selection. Self-selection is a polite way to start a turn. From the above examples, we can see that, if a person adopts self-selection, then he/she shows respect to the previous speaker. In English teaching class, in order to lighten the students' pressure, teachers could encourage self-selection instead of nomination.

3) Insertion

Generally speaking, insertion means that people are capable of predicting the possible endings of the current speaker's utterance, and insert utterances in the transitional relevance place (TRP) to claim the floor, evaluating the former speaker's ideas, expressing their own opinions or answering the former speaker's questions. In the following passages, the author will analyze insertions in the selected examples.

(5) Biff : Well, I spent six or seven years after high school trying to work myself up. Shipping clerk, salesman, business of one kind or another. And it's measly manner of existence. To get on that subway on the hot mornings in summer. To devote your whole life to keeping stock, or making phone

Happy : Well, you really enjoy it on a farm? Are you content out here?

Biff, with rising agitation : Hap, I've has twenty or thirty different kinds of jobs since I left home before the war, and it always turns out the same. I just realized it lately.

Happy : You're a poet, you know that, Biff? You're a—you're an idealist.

(Miller, 1949: 22-23)

The dialogue takes place in the boy's room, and the Loman brothers talk to each other before sleeping. Happy puts a question to Biff by predicting the possible endings of Biff's utterances. The second time Happy gets the floor in the transitional relevance place by means of concluding Biff's utterances. Therefore, through questions and evaluations, the speakers can insert utterances and claim the turn.

We notice that Biff uses the word "measly" to describe his life. The choice of word reflects that in those days he seems less self-assured. Biff uses several parallel structures here, and he repeats that he wastes his life. He hops form job to job after high school and is disappointed in himself.

However, from the choice of the words, "poet" and "idealist" we know that, in Happy's eyes, Biff is still an idol and Happy recognizes him as a "poet". Next example is a dialogue between Willy and Biff.

(6) Willy : He was sitting in the hotel lobby.

Biff : What'd he say?

Willy : He said, "Morning!" and I said "You got a fine city here, Mayor." And then he had coffee with me. And then... and on to Portland and Bangor and straight home!

Biff : Gee, I'd love to go with you sometime, Dad.

(Miller, 1949: 30-31)

The above dialogue happens when Willy goes back home after a journey. Willy tells his sons his experiences in Providence. In this dialogue, Biff expresses his opinions by insertion at the possible ends of Willy's utterances. When Biff is still a child, he considers Willy as an omnipotent father. He seldom interrupts when Willy talks to him, and it is totally different from what happens later. In Biff's eyes, at that time, Willy is a successful salesman in the business world, and he is admired and respected by the family members. We can find out that insertion may be a polite form. According to the above examples, people adopt insertion

frequently to show friendliness and respect to the counterpart in conversation.

4) Overlap

One of the most important discoveries made by Sacks is that people take turns at talking: in a given conversation, there is only one person talking at a time, only when he stops will another begin to talk. In Sack's words, "at least and no more than one party talks at a time" (1992: 59).

However, people notice that for various reasons, overlaps occur frequently in conversations. Although drama language is very similar to words and expressions in everyday use, it is conceived seriously by the playwright. Thus, overlap is not a common phenomenon in the script. The example given below takes place when Linda explains to Biff that Willy has been trying to kill himself.

- (7) Linda : It seems there's a woman...
 She takes a breath as Biff, sharply but contained: What woman?
 Linda, simultaneously: ... and this woman ...
 Linda : What?
 Biff : Nothing. Go ahead.
 Linda : What did you say?
 ...
 Linda : Well, it seems she was walking down the road and saw his car. She says that he wasn't driving fast at all, and that he didn't skid. She says he came to that little bridge, and then deliberately smashed into the railing, and it was only the shallowness of the water that saved him.
 Biff : Oh, no, he probably just fell asleep again.

(Miller, 1949:59)

In this dialogue, the use of "sharply" reveals Biff's feelings exactly. Biff cannot refrain from thinking of his father's betrayal of his mother's love. Hearing "a woman", the image of the

Woman who has some amorous affairs with Willy immediately flashes across Biff's mind. He cannot help saying "what woman". Overlap occurs at a possible transitional place. Though Linda doesn't complete her expressions, Biff begins to speak when Linda has a slight pause, which is considered as a stop by Biff. Then this overlap is resolved in the way that Linda insists on her turn, and Biff withdraws. After hearing Linda's explanation, Biff makes a response as "he probably just fell asleep again". The modal adverb "probably", has its special meaning, and with an implication that Biff cares for his father. Though Biff doesn't like his father, and cannot get along with him very well, from his bottom of heart, he cannot accept the fact that his father wants to commit suicide. He would rather take it as an accident. From the example below we can see that Biff still loves his father.

- (8) Willy : Loves me. Wonderingly:
 Always loved me. Isn't that a remarkable thing? Ben, he'll worship me for it!
 Ben, with promise: It's dark there, but full of diamonds.
 Linda : Willy?
 There is no answer. ...
 Linda, with real fear: Willy, answer me! Willy!
 There is the sound of a car starting and moving away at full speed.
 Linda : No!
 Biff, rushing down the stairs: Pop!

(Miller, 1949: 136)

Example (8) takes place before Willy commits suicide. Overlap occurs when Linda and Biff hear "the sound of a car starting and moving away at full speed". Here, we can see a revelation of Biff's true feelings. Despite his aversion to Willy's unreal dream, Biff still loves his father in his heart of hearts. And this overlap proves Biff's feeling to Willy. Moreover, Ben's description of the jungle ("It's dark there, but full of diamonds") is metaphorical.

This sentence turns Willy's suicide into a moral struggle. Committing suicide, for Willy, represents both a final ambition to realize the Dream and the ultimate selfless act for his sons. According to the analysis in the present study, overlap always occurs without planning. Sometimes, overlap can be taken as the revelation of the speakers' feelings.

5) Interruption

Interruption has been seen as "not a thing that people are supposed to do in conversation" (Sacks et al, 1974: 68) and a "violation" of the current speaker's right to complete a turn. Thus, it is the least polite form and exhibits the strongest power. With different purposes, people use interruption in their dialogues, let us see the examples below:

(9) Willy, to Biff: Is that where you had the drinks?

Biff : Yeah, he gave me a couple of —no, no!

Happy, cutting in: He told him my Florida idea.

Willy : Don't interrupt. To Biff: How'd he react to the Florida idea?

(Miller, 1949: 108)

Example (9), Happy interrupts to conceal the facts. Happy gets the floor not very naturally in transitional relevance place, and he plans to transfer Biff's topic. Example (9) happens in Frank's Chop House. Biff explains to Happy that he has waited for six hours to see Oliver, Oliver not even remember him. Happy advises Biff to tell Willy that Oliver is thinking over his business proposition, claiming that eventually the whole situation will fade away from their father's memory. When Willy arrives, he reveals that he has been fired, and states that he wants some good news to tell Linda.

Despite this pressure, Biff attempts to tell the truth. When Biff is determined to tell the truth, Happy cuts in telling a lie to Willy. Applying interruption, Happy achieves his primary purpose, and temporarily cheats Willy with into the belief

of his "Florida idea". Biff wishes to leave behind the façade of the Loman family tradition so that he and his father can begin treat each other honestly. Willy, on the other hand, wants his sons to aid him in rebuilding the elaborate fantasies, and denies being defeated man. Willy forces Biff to produce a falsely positive report of his interview with Oliver, and Happy is all too willing to comply.

When Biff fails to produce the expected glowing report, Happy, who has not had the same revelation as Biff, chimes in with false information about the interview. Though both Biff and Happy want to help their father, their ways of thinking are entirely different. Biff is determined to let his father know who he is, and urges Willy to accept their own commonness. However, Happy resolves to carry out his father's dream by becoming a top businessman. Sometimes, interruption is considered to be impolite. Example (10) will show how rude Howard is when he talks to Willy.

(10) Willy : That is lifelike, isn't it?

Howard: Seven years old. Get that tone.

Willy : Ts, ts. Like to ask a little favor if you ...

The whistling breaks off, and the voice of Howard's daughter is heard.

His Daughter: "Now you, Daddy."

Howard: She's crazy for me! Again the same song is whistled. That's me! Ha!

He winks.

(Miller, 1949: 77-78)

This example is taken from Act II, in which Willy goes to Howard's office for getting an office job instead of traveling as a salesman. Willy tries to express his intention at the very beginning, but Howard turns a deaf ear and plays with his recorder. So Willy is forced to talk with him about the recorder. In the process of their talking, Willy attempts to interrupt Howard in order to show his purpose of coming, but fails each time.

On the contrary, every time Howard succeeds in interrupting him in a rather impolite way. In this dialogue, Howard interrupts Willy for 5 times, and he controls the topic all the time. Besides, we notice that Willy uses modal adverbs several times, such as “very”, “certainly” and “really”. However, Howard even doesn’t let him complete an utterance. Through Willy’s choice of words, we can infer how urgently Willy wants to get help from Howard. At the same time, we can see clearly how merciless Howard is.

Through the above analysis, we can see the unbridgeable gap between the two men as far as social status is concerned. By describing the dialogue between Willy and Howard, Miller fully reveals their contrasting features of personality to us. Willy goes to Howard full of hopes, and naively thinks that for the mere sake of his hard working and contribution for the company in the past decades, his demand should be satisfied.

However, Howard shows little notice to him, let alone friendliness or respect. He is a stone-hearted, cold-blooded creature, and looks down upon any person who is inferior to himself in social status. By his frequent interruption, we can conclude that he is egocentric, focusing on himself and having others focus on him.

Standing in a sharp contrast, Willy is so cautious and meticulous that he has to stoop to compromise. His coward personality completely fails him to challenge authority. He would sacrifice his own interest and dignity just to cater to his superior’s taste.

Dialogues in plays have all the pragmatic functions, which can be found in real-life conversations. The playwright always uses kinds of turn-control strategies to design the characters more vividly in the play.

In the section 3.1, the author analyzes 10 examples by adopting turn-control strategies and finds out that: (1) Nomination is a powerful way of taking turns; (2) when speakers self-select, he/she wants to show respect or a cooperative attitude to the former speaker; (3) Insertion has the same function as self-selection. It is a polite way to take turns and show respect to the previous speaker; (4) Overlap occurs without planning. It is a revelation of feelings; (5) Interruption may

be adopted when the speaker wants to withhold the truth.

B. ILLOCUTIONARY ACTS IN THE PLAY

A speaker, in making an utterance, must satisfy three main conditions, that is (1) the speaker must observe a certain convention, and the speaker should be qualified for performing a certain speech act; (2) the speaker must harbor sincerity for speech acts proclaimed to carry out; (3) the speaker shouldn’t go back on his words (Lu, 2004: 25).

In *Death of a Salesman*, in order to convey their intention or to realize their goals, the characters often violate the felicity conditions. As a matter of fact, disobeying felicity conditions forms the necessary condition for a successful performance of conveying their intentions. The following passages will focus on the dialogues from *Death of a Salesman*, in order to analyze the illocutionary acts.

C. VOID

Void is thought to be a disallowed act. In producing of an utterance, the speaker violates the social conventions shared by people, or the speaker cannot speak appropriately in suitable circumstances, including time, place, etc. The author will analyze void in the following passages.

(11) Willy, stopping the incipient argument, to Happy: Sure, he’s gotta practice with a regulation ball, doesn’t he?
To Biff: Coach’ll probably congratulate you on your initiative!

Biff : Oh, he keeps congratulating my initiative all the time, Pop.

Willy : That’s because he likes you. If somebody else took that ball there’d be an uproar. So what’s the report, boys, what’s the report?

(Miller, 1949: 30)

In this dialogue, when Willy knows that Biff steals a football from the locker-room, instead of blaming him, Willy brags about Biff's behavior. Obviously, what Willy says doesn't suit the prevailing conventions, because as a bad conduct, stealing should be criticized. Therefore, Willy's word is void for its violating the social conventions. One reason for Willy's reluctance to criticize Biff for his theft seems to be that he fears doing damage to Biff's ego. Thus, he offers endless praise, hoping that Biff will fulfill the promise of that praise in his adulthood. It is also likely that Willy refuses to criticize Biff because he fears that, if he does so, Biff will not like him. We find out that Willy does nothing to discourage Biff's compulsive thieving habit.

The modal verb "will" in Willy's words shows the assurance of the coach's attitudes toward Biff's "borrowing" the ball from the locker-room. Willy's words convince Biff that he is favored, and that no matter what he does, other people will not blame him.

Moreover, we notice that Willy uses the word "initiative" to describe Biff's theft. Choice of words is always regarded as the reflection of one's attitudes towards the relevant object or affair. Cited from Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2002, p. 785), "initiative" originally means "the ability to make decisions and take action without asking for help or advice of others". Obviously, it is inappropriate for Willy to use a commendatory term to depict the action of stealing. As a father, Willy imbues his sons with distorted values. He encourages competition and even unlawful behavior. Petty thievery and cheating are justified as a means to get ahead. As a consequence of his improper education, his sons, though love him, lack respect for him. The dialogue below is a good example to illustrate Biff's attitude to his father.

(12) Charley: Yeah. He was a happy man with a batch of cement.

Linda : He was so wonderful with his hands.

Biff : He has the wrong dreams. All, all, wrong.

Happy, almost ready to fight Biff: Don't say that!

Biff : He never knew who he was.
(Miller, 1949: 138)

This dialogue takes place at Willy's funeral. It is unsuitable for Biff to blame his own father at the funeral. Thus, Biff's speech act is void, which indicates that he is deeply disappointed with his father. Meanwhile, Biff considers Willy's life as a failure, because he thinks that Willy has wrong dreams. He spends too much time convincing himself that he could be a successful salesman. If he had followed the right dreams, and used his abilities in a realistic and honest way, he might not have been a failure, and his life might not have ended this way.

Though what Biff says is quiet reasonable, we cannot totally agree with him. We know that Willy commits suicide to get the insurance money that he thinks would finally allow Biff "to be magnificent". He is motivated to buy back Biff's respect and earn his worship. Therefore, we have to say Biff is too merciless to blame his father at the funeral. In creating the character of Willy, Miller characterizes the ordinary man and his actions. The audience may sympathize with Willy, largely because he is an ordinary man who is subject to the same temptations as the rest of us. Willy's plan fails because his life insurance policy doesn't cover suicide.

Willy always convinces himself and his sons that success is a product of being favored. However, let's see how he treats the neighbor's boy. In Act One, when Bernard asks Biff to study with him, Willy comments on this in this way:

(13) Bernard: Biff, where are you?
You're supposed to study with me today.

Willy : Hey, looka Bernard. What're you looin' so anemic about, Bernard?

...

Bernard: But I heard Mr. Birnbaum say —

Willy : Don't be a pest, Bernard! To his boys: What an anemic!

(Miller, 1949: 32-33)

For such a person as Willy who has a talent for speaking in the suitable environment to please every person, such comment on a boy is clearly inappropriate. By reading this void speech act here, a clever reader may infer how jealous Willy is of his neighbors, thus he even cannot let off a child. Moreover, according to the choice of words, for example, “pest” and “anemic”, we can reach the same conclusion that what Willy says here is inappropriate. Bernard wears glasses and studies hard, but they think he is not favored. Being instilled with distorted values, Biff and Happy turn out to be nothing for good in their adulthood. In the above passages, the author analyzes void from three perspectives individually, that is, the speaker does not follow the widely acknowledged conventions, the speaker speaks in the wrong time or place, or the speaker is not in the position to produce such utterances.

1) Breaches

Breaches mean “one’s doing contrasts with what he said previously” (Leech, 1981: 236). It refers to the fact that a speaker doesn’t keep his words, but goes back on his words. Miller creates his hero Willy as a person who is full of contradictions. The following 2 examples illustrate that he contradicts what he has already said.

(14) Willy : A man who can’t handle tools is not a man. You’re disgusting.

Charley: Don’t call me disgusting, Willy.

(Miller, 1949: 44)

Reading through the whole play, we learn that great changes have taken place in Willy’s attitude toward Charley. In the above example, Willy directly says that Charley is “disgusting”, moreover, things like this often happen between them. But let’s have a look at his later speech act at the near end of the play. After Howard fires him, Willy goes to Charley to ask for help. Willy said that Charley is the only friend he gets.

(15) Willy, on the verge of tears: Charley, you’re the only friend I got. Isn’t that a remarkable

thing? He goes out.

(Miller, 1949: 98)

It is obvious that Willy goes back on his previous words. Willy’s breach reveals that he achieves part of self-realization or self-knowledge at the end. Originally, he envies Charley for his success in both family and business. Later, he regards Charley as his only friend, since it is Charley who helps him when he is in need. Meanwhile, the modal adverb “only” indicates Willy’s embarrassment appropriately. A person who claims to be favored for his whole life should have lots of friends; on the contrary, the only friend for him is the person whom he is disgusted with for his life time.

Through the analysis, we see there are discrepancies between what Willy says and what he does. Through the breaches committed by Willy, Miller portrays this petty man who is full of contradictions.

2) Insincerities

Sincerity forms a necessary condition in committing any speech act. However, in communication, people sometimes say something that is against their real intentions. An insincere speech act indicates that the speaker promises or declares a speech act, but in fact, he or she has no intention to keep it or conduct it (Lu, 2004: 27). For example,

(16) Howard: I don’t want you to represent us. I’ve been meaning to tell you for a long time now.

Willy : Howard, are you firing me?

Howard: I think you need a good long rest, Willy.

Willy : Howard—

Howard: And when you feel better, come back, and we’ll see if we can work

something out.

Willy : But I gotta earn money, Howard. I’m in no position—

(Miller, 1949: 83)

After refusing Willy's request, Howard even does not want Willy to represent his company anymore. Willy keeps lowering his salary request, explaining his financial situation, but Howard still fires him, with the vague implication of reemployment after a period of "rest". Obviously, Howard's promise will turn out to be empty, and he just makes a speech act of insincerities.

He just wants to forsake Willy who cannot make benefit for him. As a typical capitalist, he preys on his subordinates both physically and mentally, remaining indifferent with an overbearing air. Actually, the company betrays Willy. Howard's treatment to Willy is a big satire to Willy's dream as well as to the American Dream. He does not become successful, but is neither known nor welcomed.

Different from Howard, Willy says insincere utterances, which reveals his vanity and his expectations of Biff. In the following passage, the author will show you another example.

(17) Linda, suddenly remembering: Oh, I forgot! You're supposed to meet them for dinner.

Willy : Me?

Linda : At Frank's Chop House on Forty-eighth near Sixth Avenue.

Willy : Is that so! How about you?

Linda : No, just the three of you. They're gonna blow you a big meal!

Willy : Don't say! Who thought of that?

(Miller, 1949: 74)

This dialogue takes place in the next morning. When Willy awakes, Biff and Happy have already left, Biff to see Oliver and Happy to go to work. Linda informs Willy that Biff and Happy want to take him to dinner. Then, Willy makes a speech act of insincerities. Actually Willy wants to know who thinks of this idea, however, he says "Don't say! Who thought of that?". To some extent, Willy wants to know who thinks the idea, and expects the answer is "Biff". On the

one hand, through the speech act of insincerities, we know what vanity Willy has, even confronts his own son. On the other hand, Willy is moved and excited by his sons' dinner invitation.

Different persons may not speak out their real intentions in different circumstances. We should pay attention to what the utterances really mean. In this section, the author discusses the illocutionary acts in the play; specific attention is paid to the disobeying of felicity conditions. In the next section, violation of the Cooperative Principle and Politeness Principle will be illustrated.

D. VIOLATION OF THE CP AND PP

In section 1.3 and 1.4, the author has already elaborated the Cooperative Principle and Politeness Principle in detail. In this section, through the analysis of the selected dialogues of *Death of a Salesman*, the author wants to find out why and how the characters violate these principles. This has some implications for English teaching and the appreciation of drama.

1) Violation of the Cooperative Principle

As mentioned in section 2.3, Grice's Cooperative Principle consists of four maxims: maxim of quality, maxim of quantity, maxim of relation and maxim of manner. Actually, when having conversations, people sometimes deliberately violate or flout the maxims to various degrees, thereby creating conversational implicature. The following examples show how the characters violate the Cooperative Principle.

For Willy goes to Howard to ask for another job so that he doesn't need to travel, and Biff who goes to his former boss to ask for a loan, but fails. Happy is waiting for them, and he is flirting with a pretty girl named Miss Forsythe when Biff arrives.

(18) Biff : Isn't Dad coming?

Happy: You want her?

Biff : Oh, I could never make that.

Happy: I remember the time that idea would never come into your head. Where's the old confidence, Biff?

Biff : I just saw Oliver—

Happy: wait a minute. I've got to see that old confidence again. Do you want her? She is on call

(Miller, 1949: 102)

Biff asks Happy "Isn't Dad coming?", which shows that Biff is concerned about his father Willy; however, instead of answering his question, Happy asks a question in reply. Happy flouts the maxim of relation in CP—"Be relevant", then creating the conversational implicature that Happy never cares about others, even his own father, and that the only thing he wants to do is satisfy the needs of himself. Biff abides by the maxim of relation, answering "I could never make that". And then Happy still asks Biff a question in reply, he says "Where's the old confidence, Biff?". Biff follows the maxim of quality—"say what you believe to be true", he tries to explain that his plan of asking loan from Oliver fails and wants some help and consolation from Happy. Nevertheless, Happy interrupts him and violates the maxim of relation again, and changes the topic of dialogue to the girl. This example once again illustrates that Happy doesn't show solicitude for others, and that he just follows after the matters of his own interest. Through the analysis of Happy's violation of the maxim of relation, we conclude that Happy is the incarnation of Willy's worst traits and the embodiment of the lie of the happy American Dream. He is one-dimensional and static throughout the play. His empty vow to avenge Willy's death by finally "beating the racket" provides evidence for his critical condition: for Happy, who has lived in the shadow of the inflated expectations of his brother, there is no escape from the Dream's indoctrinated lies. Happy's diseased condition is irreparable—he lacks even the tiniest spark of self-knowledge or capacity for self-analysis. He does share Willy's capacity for self-delusion, pretending to be the assistant buyer at his store, when, in reality, he is only an assistant to the assistant buyer. He does not possess a hint of the latent thirst for knowledge that proves to be Biff's salvation. Happy is a doomed figure, destined to be swallowed up by the force of blind ambition.

Let's look at another example.

(19) Charley: What're you doin' home?

Willy: A little trouble with the car.

Charley: Oh. Pause. I'd like to take a trip to California.

Willy : Don't say.

Charley: You want a job?

Willy : I got a job, I told you that. After a slight pause: What the hell are you offering me a job for?

Charley: Don't get insulted.

Willy : Don't insult me.

Charley: I don't see no sense in it. You don't have to go on this way.

Willy : I got a good job. Slight pause. What do you keep comin' in here for?

(Miller, 1949: 43)

In the above example, Willy is obviously violating the maxim of Quality in order to spare his own feelings. Actually he has already lost his salary and works only on commission. Willy borrows fifty dollars a week from Charley, and pretends that it is his salary. It is the reason that why Willy becomes mentally unbalanced. Under this circumstance, Willy still tells a lie that he gets a good job. Miller portrays the common hero as a man who is bogged down in a quagmire of lies, delusions and self-receptions. Despite his desperate searching through his past, Willy does not achieve the self-realization or self-knowledge typical of the tragic hero. He is too driven by his own type of thinking to recognize the slanted reality that his desperate mind has forged. Willy believes wholeheartedly in the American Dream of easy success and wealth, but he never achieves it.

2) Violation of the Politeness Principle

In this section, through the application of the Politeness Principle, why the characters deliberately violate those maxims of the Cooperative Principle will be interpreted. Brown

and Levinson (1987) illustrate the issue of polite language in detail, and the core concepts used by them are "face" and face-threatening acts. In the following, the author takes the dialogues between Willy and Charley as examples to illustrate how Willy violates the Politeness Principle.

(21) Willy : What're you doing up?

Charley: Couldn't sleep good. I had a heartburn.

Willy : Well, you don't know how to eat.

Charley: I eat with my mouth.

Willy : No, you're ignorant. You gotta know about vitamins and things like that.

Charley: Come on, let's shoot. Tire you out a little.

(Miller, 1949: 42)

After knowing that Willy doesn't want to follow his brother Ben to Alaska to make a fortune, Charley comes to Willy's home in order to comfort him. Instead of welcoming Charley, Willy raises a question—"what're you doing up?". Questioning itself is a Face Threatening Act, since it imposes restrictions on the freedom of the listener's Speech Acts; therefore it threatens the negative face of the listener. This kind of expression indicates that Willy is agitated and depressed and not willing to see Charley at that moment. Charley observes the Cooperative Principle by saying "Couldn't sleep good. I had a heartburn." After that, Willy flouts the approbation maxim—"Minimize dispraise of other" by saying that Charley doesn't know how to eat, which deeply threatens Charley's positive face.

Through the analysis of the examples above, we find out that the way in which one character addresses another is a revealing indicator of tone. Whether the speakers stick to the Politeness Principle or not depends on the relations between them.

E. IMPLICATIONS

In this section, the author discusses the implications of this study from three aspects.

They are the implications for English teaching, the implications for the appreciation of drama, and the implications for communication.

1) Implications for English Teaching

Due to the great importance of mastering English, a new task facing English teachers now is how to enhance learners' communicative ability. In the effort of conducting an analysis of dialogues in the drama, the thesis provides a possibility of developing a more harmonious and effective way of teaching. In classroom, the teachers should avoid frequently adopting nomination as their means of questioning. The teachers can encourage students to self-select when they intend to answer questions.

Compared with nomination, self-selection can bring less pressure to students. Then, the students will become more active in classroom. Moreover, clarifying the transitional places of the students' utterances, the teachers should avoid interrupting students. They can insert utterances if necessary. Interruption makes the students feel less self-confident. However, when the student has difficulty in answering questions, the teacher can resolve the embarrassment by inserting some utterances to make them relaxed. Besides, if an overlap happens, the teachers would apply some methods to resolve it. At that moment, nomination can be taken as one of the methods. In this thesis, the author has interpreted turn-control strategies in dialogues in *Death of a Salesman*.

In addition to the turn-control strategies, some other linguistic theories, such as the Speech Act Theory, the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle are examined. In order to express themselves politely or appropriately in various situations, students should try to identify the illocutionary forces of speakers in communication. With the help of interpreting the violation of the maxims and illocutionary acts, the students' communicative competence could be improved. The careful analysis of the dialogues by applying these theories will definitely contribute a lot to improve the quality and effectiveness of English teaching and learning.

V. CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters, the thesis has conducted a pragmatic analysis of dialogues in *Death of a Salesman*. This chapter aims to draw a conclusion of the whole study by summarizing the study, providing implications, pointing out its limitations and suggesting areas for further research.

A lot of work has been done by literary critics and stylisticians in the analysis of this play. However, drama, as one of the most important literary genre, has not attracted enough attention of linguists. In this thesis, by applying the turn-control strategies, the Cooperative Principle, the Politeness Principle, the Speech Act Theory and CDA methods, the author analyzes 20 fragments of dialogues in this play.

The study has tried to demonstrate how pragmatic analysis can reveal the implied meanings of dialogues by studying how characters adopt turn-control strategies to claim or yield turns, and by analyzing how characters violate the pragmatic principles and their concomitant maxims.

The thesis begins with the reviews of pragmatic theories and their application to literary works. It shows the need to apply these theories to study drama. Written language in dramatic dialogues has a lot of similarities with naturally occurring conversations, and literary communication resembles real life interaction very much. This is why pragmatic theories can be applied to the analysis of literature.

Following the review of previous studies is methodology and data analysis. The dialogues are interpreted in detail mainly from the turn-control strategies, the Speech Act Theory, the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle assisted by the application of CDA methods. It

expounds how the characters use the communicative strategies, and what the implied meanings are in certain contexts.

This study has some implications for English teaching and learning, the appreciation of drama and communication. In the English classes, teaching turn-control strategies to students can help them communicate more effectively. The learning of Critical Discourse Analysis may

improve students' critical language awareness and make them become sensitive to the implicit meanings of dialogues.

Pragmatic analysis of literary works empties fresh blood into the appreciation of literature. In other words, it provides a new perspective to approach literary works. The present study combines linguistic studies and literary studies, especially applying pragmatic theories to there search of dramatic dialogues. The pragmatic explanation of the dramatic dialogues will result in a more systematic, more explicit and more convincing interpretations to the works. This kind of analysis can reveal the psychological states, social environment and physical contexts of characters.

Besides, it helps literature appreciation develop toward a more profound direction. The present study broadens the research scope of pragmatics, which originally takes spoken language as its object, to literary language and written conversation. Moreover, it benefits conversational analysis in that it studies literary text in context. It enriches the researches of stylistics and stylisticians begin to pay more attention to contextual factors.

Although the present study offers a new perspective of appreciating *Death of a salesman*, it is not free from limitations. For one thing, because of differences in cultural backgrounds and ways of thinking, it is inevitable that the author's interpretation of the play and its dialogues may not be what Arthur Miller originally intended, which might be a setback to an adequate analysis of the subject matter.

Besides, due to the limitation of the insufficiency of relevant literature and the pressure of research time, the author may not conduct a profound and comprehensive analysis of the data. So the analyst should be more sensitive to literature, and be equipped with literary knowledge in the further research.

In addition, the thesis mainly focuses on the contexts related to characters in the drama and, to some extent, does not give due consideration to the contexts related to the playwright. The author suggests that further research still needs to be done. As a great masterpiece, *Death of a*

Salesman is worthy of study from many aspects. For example, pragmatic analysis of this play may be based on other pragmatic theories, such as, Relevance Theory and Adaptation Theory.

Accordingly, analyses of this play by the applications of other theories will enrich the present research of Death of a Salesman. Besides, the pragmatic analysis of the dialogues in *Death of a Salesman* will not only shows the communicative skill and strategies of the characters, but also some hints for the social status of each character. This study adopts CDA as an aid to the analysis; however, due to the limited reference this combination is not fully extended. The author believes that the employment of CDA methods to explore the social factors will be very promising in the future.

Since the present study is a tentative attempt of the author, and there must be some problems unsolved and much room for improvement, the author hopes that the follow-up researchers will broaden the application of pragmatic theories to the analysis of literary works.

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