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شبكة المعلومات الجامعية

التوثيق الالكتروني والميكرو فيلم

# جامعة عين شمس

التوثيق الالكتروني والميكرو فيلم

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شبكة المعلومات الجامعية



# بعض الوثائق الأصلية تالفة

*Ain Shams University  
Faculty of Arts  
Department of English*

# **A LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO DRAMATIC DISCOURSE:**

**An Analysis of Some Lexicogrammatical Forms  
in O'Neill's Selected Plays**

*A Dissertation Submitted in Fulfillment of the Ph.D. Degree  
in Linguistics*

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B  
O O V E

**2002**



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قالوا سبحانك لا علم لنا

إلا ما علمتنا أنك أنت

العليم الحكيم



البقرة - آية ٣٢

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*I would like to express my gratitude and indebtedness to Professor Nadia Hafez, Ex-Vice Dean and Professor of American Literature at Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University, who acted as my Ph.D. Thesis Advisor and gave time and attention to my work. Her careful review and useful remarks were of great help for the thesis to see light.*

*I'm also grateful to Professor Faisal Abdallah, Assistant Professor of Linguistics at Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University, who acted as my thesis co-advisor, for his patience, support and extended help. His comments and remarks are real contributions to the thesis.*

*I also wish to thank Dr. Sedqi Hasan, a lecturer of English Literature at Faculty of Education, Tanta University, Kafr El-Sheikh Branch, for his thoughtful suggestions and relentless encouragement to produce this work.*



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# ***Introduction***

# Introduction

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to study the structure of spoken discourse in literary texts. It seeks to give a linguistic analysis of the dramatic language of the American dramatist Eugene O'Neill in his two plays: **The Hairy Ape (1922)** and **Long Day's Journey into Night (1956)**. The intention is to study the interactional aspects of some lexico-grammatical forms constituent of the conversational exchanges between the characters in the two plays. The thesis is also intended to study conversational exchanges in terms of verbal and non-verbal interactions to highlight the coherence of the dialogue which facilitates communication and understanding between interactants. Besides, the thesis tries to answer the question: does the study of interactional aspects of dramatic discourse help in interpreting the meanings and thematic issues implicit in the conversational exchanges of a dialogue?

Chapter one sheds light on the increasing interest in the linguistic analysis of literary discourse by linguists and discourse analysts. It shows that literature is no longer approached from a literary perspective as its language has become a focus of attention. Even earlier attempts of studying literature from a linguistic perspective have been concerned with the semantic relations between words and sentences rather than the text as a whole. Chapter one also gives an account of the literary theories developed by literary schools like Russian Formalism, Structuralism and Post-Structuralism. As the formalists' concern has always been with language as a



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medium and not with the semantic structure of a text, their theory has failed to interpret literary texts, which has precipitated the rise of Structuralism.

Chapter one also highlights the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's contribution to Structuralism by dividing language into 'langue' and 'parole'. 'Langue' stands for the whole language system in contrast to 'parole' which represents an act of speech produced from that system. Saussure's influence on Structuralism is his development of 'semiology' as a new science of signs which involves all types of signifying systems. Saussure's contributions to the linguistic theory have encouraged Roman Jakobson to develop his linguistic views of what is meant by poetic and non-poetic. He has come to realize that it is a linguistic aspect that marks the difference between the two genres. Jakobson's conversion from Formalism into Structuralism has had its impact on his approach to poetics. He has started to lay greater emphasis on the 'message' or the meaning contradicting the formalists' view which distinguishes poetry from non-poetry by the 'medium' or the language.

Chapter one brings into focus Post-Structuralism that has been influenced by the French Philosopher Jacques Derrida who has given prominence to the medium again. Derrida's approach elevates writing above speech which contradicts with Saussure's. His deconstructive approach to literary texts has had its impact on the interpretation of literature. That is to say, unlike Saussure, Derrida is not concerned with the meaning or 'message', as it is left for the reader to develop his own

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interpretation of texts. The growing interest of linguists in elevating the linguistic form above the content or meaning has helped the linguistic description of literature to develop from being sentence-centered to be text-centered. The sentence is no longer regarded as the upper unit for linguistic investigation as it used to be. The development of theories of language organization has encouraged the linguistic description of texts beyond the sentence level. Linguistic theories of Chomsky, Lakoff, Pike, Gleason and Halliday have all competed in interpreting texts.

This chapter also points out to Chomsky's theory of transformational grammar which emphasizes the relationship between surface structure and deep structure of an utterance. As Chomsky's theory has no interest in the functions of language, it has given way to Halliday's functional theory to arise. Nevertheless, with the increasing interest in the functions of language, a new theory about the context of situation has developed. This has encouraged discourse analysts to approach the context for the interpretation of discourse. The present chapter is concerned with giving a background of the development of both literary and linguistic theories in order to provide a global view of early approaches to the study and interpretation of literature and also to introduce the proposed theoretical framework that will be discussed in Chapter two.

Chapter two is concerned with presenting a framework for the linguistic description of spoken discourse. It aims to provide a study of the interactional aspects that characterize literary discourse, and particularly dramatic dialogue. It sheds

light on the impact of philosophy on the development of discourse analysis in terms of Austin and Searle's linguistic investigations of the major aspects of the structure of discourse. Chapter two also discusses various linguistic approaches to the analysis of spoken discourse. It highlights Austin and Searle's contributions to the theory of speech acts, Sinclair and Coulthards' Birmingham descriptive apparatus and the ethnomethodologists' approach to conversational behaviour, adjacency pairs and turn-taking system. Each attempt of those approaches to describe spoken discourse is discussed comparatively to the other ones.

The ethnomethodological approach to conversational organization and conversational analysis is given greater emphasis as it will act as the theoretical framework of the present study. Aspects of interaction that characterize spoken discourse in terms of verbal and non-verbal features are introduced in relation to their occurrence in naturally-occurring conversation to examine their applicability in dramatic dialogue as a guided conversation. As adjacency-pair sequences act as the basic structural units in conversation, they are introduced and discussed along with their aspects of interaction: ellipsis, embedding and repairing.

Chapter three deals with the language of modern drama that has been neglected by literary critics and stylisticians since Ibsen used the daily life prose form in his works. This chapter sheds lights on the development of the language used in writing the dramatic dialogue from the poetic to the prose form. It also highlights the role played by Eugene O'Neill in



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introducing European dramatic techniques to modern American drama. Besides, O'Neill's problem with dramatic language is discussed to show why it has been there and how it has come to an end. His versatile dramatic techniques throughout his career as a dramatist in relation to his contemporary dramatists are discussed too.

This chapter begins with overshadowing Ibsen's contribution to modern drama for using the prose form, which used to be given to clowns and servants in Shakespearean dramas to structure the dialogue of his plays. He has made his characters speak the language of ordinary people by having it replace the old verse form used by kings and queens in their castles. O'Neill, influenced by Ibsen's naturalistic technique, has reproduced the speech of uneducated men into his domestic drama. His adoption of the low-colloquial form or prose style has been criticized by his critics who have come to believe that O'Neill's ideas need a great medium to lift them beyond the banality of his language. However, there have been some critics who are fair enough to defend O'Neill's use of the vernacular as it is used to refer to modern man's inarticulateness to express his suffering that is caused by his lag behind technology and industrial progress.

For most of O'Neill's critics, the dialogue he writes falls far below the level of his characters. Also, O'Neill himself admits the truth about his dramatic language as a major weakness in his plays. He even records his inarticulateness in the speech of one of his major characters in his play **Long Day's Journey into Night**. To make up for the weakness of