



شبكة المعلومات الجامعية  
التوثيق الإلكتروني والميكرو فيلم

# بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم



**HANAA ALY**



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## شبكة المعلومات الجامعية التوثيق الإلكتروني والميكرو فيلم



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# جامعة عين شمس

## التوثيق الإلكتروني والميكروفيلم

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# **Politeness Principle in the Dialogues of Two Plays by Arthur Miller: A Pragmatic Study of Face-Saving Modes**

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I love you, mother.



# *Abstract*



# *Abstract*

This study attempts to carry out a pragmatic analysis of some carefully selected dialogues in two of Arthur Miller's most popular plays; *All my Sons* (1947) and *The Crucible* (1953). It identifies the Face-Saving Acts applied by the playwright affecting both the characterization of the main protagonists and the plot in the two selected plays. It is divided into an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, an appendices section, and a reference list. The purpose of which is to verify the hypothesis proposed by the study that Face-Saving Acts comprise the main linguistic device that is tying and uniting the two selected plays. In order to verify this hypothesis, the study relies on the Politeness Theory; especially the notion of Face-Saving Acts as discussed by Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson in their Theory that they introduced in 1987.

To attain this goal, the study relies on Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory encompassing the interaction between playwright and audience/reader. Brown and Levinson's (1987) Theory introduces the concept of Face Threatening Acts (FTA<sub>s</sub>) which refers to speech acts dealt with as posing threats to the Face Wants of an interlocutor in any given conversational interaction. These threats work as a trigger for the hearer to try to save his/her face. Analyzing these acts helps to reveal the underlying relationships between the characters in the two selected plays, as well as their intentions.

Thus, the main purpose of the study is to linguistically prove that Face-Saving Acts represent the main formal pillar used in the two selected plays, invoicing the idea of Face-Saving Acts as introduced by Brown and Levinson in their discussion of the Politeness Theory (1987). The study also aims at highlighting the pragmatic importance of the progress of events in both plays. It shows how the notion of face operates as a very powerful linguistic tool in imposing Face Threatening Acts (FTA<sub>s</sub>) on the audience of the plays themselves, and on the society and its beliefs regarding its constructed norms and values at large in the playwright's large-scale dialogue with society. Therefore, this study ventures to be a valid contribution to the field of linguistic studies of literature, and it opens the door for further studies and investigation.

**Key Words:** *Pragmatics, Face, Politeness, FTA<sub>s</sub>, All My Sons (1947), The Crucible (1953)*



# *Introduction*



# *Introduction*

## **0.1 Aim of the Study:**

This study aims at analyzing the *Face Saving Acts* in two of Arthur Miller's most famous plays, namely; *All My Sons* (1947) and *The Crucible* (1953). These two plays are particularly selected to prove whether Miller intentionally or unintentionally used *Face Saving Acts* as a main linguistic device in both of them. They are also selected because they were written by Miller in subsequent years giving them the advantage of sharing the same political and historical timelines that is defined in Chapter One. Goffman (1967) states, "to study face-saving is to study the traffic rules of social interaction; one learns about the code the person adheres to in his movement across the paths and designs of others, but not where he is going, or why he wants to get there". He continues saying, "each person, subculture, and society seems to have its characteristic repertoire of face-saving practices". In conducting this analysis, the study uses Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory encompassing the interaction between playwright and reader. This Theory is used as it relies on the social situation of any given conversational encounter, which makes it significant and beneficial in this study, in particular, being suitable in analyzing the defined conversational social encounters defined in Chapter Two and Three. This study also aims at revealing how *Face-Saving Acts* are practiced by the characters in the two plays and how this device helps in drawing the character profiles and in the progression of the plot in each play. The concept of the *Face Threatening Acts* (FTAs) is used in the analysis as it refers to the threats imposed on any of the hearer's or speaker's *Face wants*, which serve as a trigger for the hearer to save his/ her face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), Face is "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself". There are two types of face; positive face wants and negative face wants. Positive face is defined by Brown and Levinson as "the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants". While negative face is defined by them as "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction". These acts help in the current study to reveal the underlying relationships and intentions between the protagonists in both of the selected plays. Hence, it adds further dimensions to the overall interpretation of Miller's two masterpieces; *All my Sons* (1947) and *The Crucible* (1953).

## **0.2 Defining Approach:**

As mentioned in the Introduction to the Reissue: A Review of Recent Work; "In the case of *linguistic pragmatics* a great deal of the mismatch between what is 'said' and what is 'implicated' can be attributed to Politeness, so that is concerned with the 'representational functions' of language should be supplemented with attention to the 'social functions' of language" (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Hence, this section is intended to define the approach adopted in this pragmatic study. It attempts to reveal the strong connection and eternal bond between linguistic and literary analysis, which constitutes one of the main hypotheses that this pragmatic study relies on. Newton declares that in literature, language is not "a superfluous backcloth of a social, or poetic reality which pre-exists it", but it is "literature being its very world" (Newton, 1997). Leech (1969) also presupposes that "the study of the use of language in literature" is essential to unravel certain "linguistic evidence" in "literary texts". Yet, the linguistic approach to literary works has experienced little luck throughout the years. Serious attention to such types of studies started by the end of the 1980s. Since then, interpretative strategies have been proven to be efficient as methods of interpreting and approaching literature in general and drama in particular. Widdowson (1980) claims that "the linguist's orientation leads him to focus on the means [...], he then continues arguing that "the literary scholar's orientation, on the other hand, leads him to focus on the ends [...].

It is a mistake to separate means and ends in this way [...] means and ends must be given equal weight and shown to be interdependent. Only in this way [...] can we ensure that a linguistic description of literary texts is not merely an arid analytic exercise and a literary description, not merely a piece of subjective self-indulgence”.

Moreover, as mentioned by Lowe, in Culpeper (1998), “one of the advantages that fictional dialogue has over natural conversation, however, is that we often have access to information that is denied to us in real-life situations; for example, an awareness of the truth or falsity of characters’ utterances often allows us to judge their integrity with greater accuracy than that of our real life conversations”.

Hence, this pragmatic study is intended to be an addition to the continually flourishing field of linguistic analysis of literature. It tries to combine the linguistic with the literary analysis as “how things are said are as important as what is said” (Hurst, 1987). This proves that the content and the form are considered as an integrated entity that cannot be separated or dissected. It also suggests that “the work of art is a project [...] composed of linguistic elements”, and any conducted study, “must lie between hard-line linguistics and subjective criticism” (Hough, 1969), as linguistics is not just the art of “describing language”, but also of “showing how it works” in texts (Turner, 1975). It shows how Miller was consciously or unconsciously aware of maintaining *Face-Saving Acts* in devising the frame of characterization of his protagonists and also in the continual progression of the plot from the exposition to the climax and finally to the denouement which constitutes the fate of both of the protagonists.

### 0.3 **Working Method:**

This section discusses the research method adopted in the study, the *Qualitative Research Method*. It also identifies the objects of study, selected data, and the reasons for the selection of the data. It also offers a concise preview of the division and rationale adopted by every chapter included in the study.

Gee (2010) writes, “Any method always goes with a theory. Method and theory cannot be separated, even though methods are often taught as if they could stand alone. Any method of research is a way to investigate some particular domain. In this case, the domain is language-in-use”. DÖmyei (2007) comments on research in general saying that it “simply means trying to find answers to questions, an activity one of us does all the time to learn more about the world around us”. Hence, it can be deduced that the word research has the connotation of seeking knowledge and truth. Also, Hatch and Lazaraton (1991) say that research is “the organized, systematic search for answers to the questions we ask”. Hence, research is considered to be the most important aspect in conducting any study.

This study adopts the *Qualitative Research Method* in analyzing the two selected plays. Bryman (2008) defines Qualitative Research as “a strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data”. Moreover, Sandelowski (2004) mentions that Qualitative Research “is an umbrella term for an array of attitudes and strategies for conducting inquiries that are aimed at discovering how human beings understand, experience, interpret, and produce the social world”.

According to DÖmyei (2007), *Qualitative Research* is the kind of research that “describe(s) social phenomena as they occur naturally [...] without any attempts to manipulate the situation under study”. He later adds that *Qualitative Research* is “concerned with subjective opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals and thus the explicit goal of the research is to explore the participants' view of the situation being studied”. Hence, it can be deduced that *Qualitative research* is the kind of research that considers the inner feelings and experiences of the subjects under study, as people normally bring their feelings into any given conversational encounter.

The objects in this pragmatic study are the protagonists; Joe Keller and John Proctor in the two plays; *All My Sons* (1947) and *The Crucible* (1953). The data of the study in Chapter Two and Chapter Three rely upon some of the dialogues present in the texts of the two selected plays. As for Chapter Two, the choice of the dialogues is based on the importance of the encounters in showing the similarity in the character profile of both protagonists; Joe Keller and John Proctor. This Chapter constitutes an attempt to prove whether Arthur Miller intended to draw both of the characters with many similarities in their character traits or it was by chance. Thus, the chosen encounters are based on the similar character traits that are believed they both share.

These character traits are, both being leaders, both being caught up in a lie, both having a wife who knows about their mischiefs, and both caring only about the honor of their names. However, in Chapter Three, the choice of the dialogues is based on the importance of the encounters in the progress of the plot.

Therefore, the chosen dialogues are the dialogues that constitute every stage in the progress of the plot. These stages are; the conflict in each play, the point of attack in each play, the climax in each play, and the resolution in each play. This choice is due to the fact these stages comprise the main *Face Threatening Acts* (FTAs) which trigger the *Face Saving Acts* of each character. This creates a clear insight into the *Face Saving Acts* of each character; which is the main linguistic feature under investigation. Moreover, the ultimate goal is to prove *Face Saving Acts* as a main linguistic feature used by Miller intentionally or unintentionally in both plays as means to impose a *Face Threatening Act(s)* against society and its beliefs at large, and also to help in the progression of the plot in each play.

After consulting the plays and with reference to Shmpoo (2021) , it was noted that in *All My Sons* (1947) the plot stages are most evident in the following conversational encounters respectively; Chris's announcement of his plans to marry Ann which takes place in Act One, George Deever's arrival which takes place in Act Two, Chris's reading of Larry's suicide letter which takes place in Act Three, Joe Keller's disappearance in the house which takes place in Act Three, and Joe Keller's suicide which takes place in Act Three as well. As for *The Crucible* (1953), these stages, according to Course Hero (2017), are most evident in the following conversational encounters subsequently: The girls' dance in the forest which takes place in Act One, the girls' confessions and their accusations of others which also takes place in Act One, the arrest of Elizabeth Proctor which takes place in Act Two, John Proctor insistence that Mary Warren will say the truth, The trials, Proctor's confession of his affair, Elizabeth's lie which all take place in Act Three, and John Proctor's attempt to save his "good name" which takes place in Act Four.

In collecting the data, the study depends on the documentation and observation methods with steps of collecting data as follows; firstly, the original drama scripts of the two plays, *All my Sons* (1947) and *The Crucible* (1953) are read. The reason why these editions are selected is because they are the original scripts written by Arthur Miller. Secondly, all the dialogues that are used in the study are marked. The last step in conducting the study is the grouping and analysis of all the data used by the characters to reach satisfactory results. It is also worth mentioning that the Theory used in the study is Brown and Levinson's 1987 Politeness Theory with a special focus on Face-Saving Acts. This manner of analysis is justified through this notion that an analyst "needs to begin with a theory of the linguistic scheme and relate it to particular speeches and writings" (Turner, 1975).