A CRITICAL PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF INVECTIVES IN "THE ART OF LETTING GO"

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Abstract
Language is generally seen as a medium or tool of communication between two or more people. It is used in diverse communicative contexts. However, when language is used to lampoon, antagonize, reproach, insult or ridicule oneself, it is seen as an invective. Therefore, invective is described as the critical, perfect and insulting manner of casting aspersion on a person in euphemistic manner. This study, through Critical Pragmatic Analysis, investigates invectives used in "The Art of Letting Go" by Roseline, as she extols hopelessness and total succumb to the reality of the moment. Specifically, this study focuses on Speech Act analysis of the message. The theory of the Pragmatic Act introduced by Jacob Mey (2001) and J. L. Austin (1962) is used as the theoretical foundation of the study. The data for the study is arrived at, through internet search. The passage for the analysis was selected based on the complex and diverse narratives, which categorically illustrate the hopelessness of the writer, and perhaps, her definitive decision to stand firm. Findings from the analysis indicate that the writer used a variety of speech acts, such as assertions, declarations, expressive utterances and commissives, to highlight her mood from the point of hopelessness to a definitive decision. In light of the above, the analysis reveals the depth of meaning and feelings of the writer, in her quest to admonish herself and, also encourage the reader on how language can be effectively used to effect a change of actions.
Keywords: Invectives, Pragmatics, Euphemistic, Speech Acts, Commissives.

1.1   Introduction

Judging from the complex nature of language, and its indispensability, it suffices to say that language is the vehicle of thought. Language is human essence. Cruse (2000) defines languages as the customary use of signs, sound and written symbols for self-expression and communication. Elusakin (2022) defines languages as a veritable tool of communication between two or more people. With Language, we learn, we take instructions, we express love, we exchange verbal altercations, we transact businesses, and sometimes go to war. According to Ordu (2022) in Oladeji and Enwere (2023), Language serves as our main instrument for coping with the majority of life's challenges. Language is also used to admonish, to praise, and perhaps create awareness. Precisely, Language is indispensable to man, with reference to communication and sociability.

 The most dramatic thing about language is that man is able to create an endless number of expressions, and with each carrying a unique meaning, by connecting a finite number of sounds and signs. The most intriguing aspect of language is that some expressions may be homograph in nature, yet differ in meaning, by connecting a finite number of sounds and signs. Also, some expressions may be homograph in nature, yet differ in meaning, either because of intonation, pronunciation, or contextual usage. Often than not, some figures of speech, such as metaphor, euphemism, irony and oxymoron, just to mention a few, add to the splendour of the use of language.

Without mincing words, language is a key part of everyday communication in social, economical and professional life. Furthermore, language helps to shape and structure thought, which can lead to better problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making. Language, among other things, is primarily geared towards the following functions, that is, informative, expressive and directive functions. Language is informative because it is used to communicate any information, with a view to stating facts clearly. It is expressive, because it helps us to convey our feelings, emotions and attitudes to other. And likewise, the directive function of language helps us to direct or command actions.

1.2   Elements of Language

There are six basic elements of language. That is, clarity, economy, obscenity, jargon, power and variety. A prefect language is expected to exhibit the above mentioned elements.

Clarity: this implies using language in a way that ensures the intended audience understands the idea that is being passed across.

Economy: That is being economic about how one speaks by avoiding any unnecessary language and using the appropriate word to communicate. It also means avoiding fluff or complicated vocabulary.

Obscurity: This refers to avoidance of curse words and hateful remarks.

Jargon or obscure language: Good communication is devoid of the use of specific language that the audience will find difficult to understand because they are not familiar with it.

Power: This implies using language to exert power or to influence others.

Variety: This is a speaker's ability to use a combination of all different types of language to successfully and creatively get ideas across to the audience (Elusakin, 2022).

1.3   Theoretical Framework

Sometimes, it is pretty difficult for a hearer or a reader to infer correctly, what a speaker or a writer means in an utterance or a write up, respectively. It is therefore, expedient to result to the adoption of some theories that will inadvertently help in bringing out the real interpretations in a discourse. To this end, pragmatist will put the speech act theory to a good use, for the adequate interpretations of the discourse. The speech act theory was propounded by Austin, J.L (1971) as a reaction against logical positivism that existed at that time. Speech Act theory has enhanced the functionality of language in

use. In light of the above, Critical Pragmatic Analysis, with emphasis on Speech Acts Theory will be explored to arrive at the presupposed inferences of the discourse.

1.4 Research Methodology
This research analytically surveys the use of rhetoric and invectives in a discourse sourced through the internet, and basically, the Facebook, on February 26, 2025, with the purpose of using critical pragmatic analysis to bring out the intended inferences.

2. Conceptual studies
2.1 Speech Acts: It is an act carried out by speech, such as promising, ordering, greeting, warning and congratulating. Yule (1996) in Makinde, Chikezie and Onebunne (2024) sees speech acts as actions, which are performed through utterances. Speech Act enhances language use, as language is full of implicit meanings. An expression form a speaker is not just ordinary; rather, there is something latent in the expression. Sahusilawe, et al (2023) state that one can perform three speech acts simultaneously, such as locutionary, illocutionary and perloutionary. Locutionary act has to do with the utterance of a sentence, which determines sense and reference. Illocutionary acts deal with the performance of acts by speaking or making pronouncement that has illocutionary force. Whereas, perlocutionary act deals with the bringing out of the effects or the terms used by the speaker, and their emotions and responses. Griffith (2006) lends credence to the relevance of speech acts by simply saying that speech act does not only refer to the act of speaking ,but also to the whole communicative situation, including the context of the utterance and semiotic features, which may clarify the meaning of the interaction.
In addition, Trosborg in Sahusilawe, et all (2023) highlights five categories of speech acts, that is, declaratives, representatives, expressives, directives, and commissives.

2.2 Categories of Speech Acts
Speech acts according to Searle (2005) can be categorized into five (5). They are Representatives, Directives, Commussives, Expressives and Declaratives.
   i.   **Representative Speech Acts:** Are the utterances that commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. The utterance are produced based on the speaker perception of certain things and followed by stating the fact or opinion based on the perception. For instance, if someone says; "He is very tall", the speaker can justify his or her utterance with a fact or just give an opinion about the height of the person. This is achieved when speakers have a firm understanding of the conditions in a setting or a thing. By that, the speakers invariably make listeners agree with what they are saying, by making them to have the same opinion on what is being discussed.   Representative act can be identified by some speech acts verbs, such as: remind, inform, report, describe, deny, state, agree, claim and so on and so forth.

   ii. **Directives:** They are speech acts that speaker use to get someone else to do something. The speech acts include requesting, questioning, commanding, ordering and suggesting. For instance, when someone says;" Could you give me some space?" the utterance represents the speaker's request that the hearer is expected to act upon, which leads to creating some space.

   iii. **Commissives:** These are speech acts that commit the speaker to some future course of action. The acts are committing, promising, refusing, threatening, vowing, guaranteeing and pledging. For example if a speaker says; "I will attend the party", it represents the speaker's assurance or promise of his or her attendance at the party.

iv. **Expressive:** These are used to express a psychological state. These speech acts include: thanking, apologizing, welcoming and congratulating. When someone, for instance, says; "Feel at home. My home is your home", the expression represents the speaker's intent of outright welcome and assurance.

v. **Declarations:** These are speech acts that the utterances effect immediate changes in the state of affairs, and tend to rely on elaborate extra-linguistic terms. These speech acts includes: declaring, approving, confirming, blessing, cursing, and excommunicating. For example, if someone says: "War is War, No Sentimentality", the implication requires extra-linguistic terms, though war has been declared. This is an illocutionary action that simply suggests that when an utterance is made, something or some consequences will definitely happen.

3.1

S/N	Linguistic Acts	Pragmatic Acts	Pragmatic Force	Invective Marker
1	I have arrived at the threshold, and I step over it. I do not ask for too much anymore, not because I have given up, but because I have grown.	Declarations	Asserting Declaring and Self Admonishing	Low
2	If you chose to leave, I will not block the door. If removing me from your life brings you peace, then go ahead. Drag me to the edge of your story and press delete.	Commissives and Expressives	Promising Welcoming Encouraging	Low
3	I will not chase, I will not plead. Love! When it is real, does not require pursuit. Effort! When it is mutual, does not leave one person breathless, while the other barely lifts a hand.	Declarations, Expressives and commissives	Declaring, Suggesting and Vowing	High
4	There was a time, when I made myself smaller, softer and easier to swallow. When I folded myself into the shape of what others needed, hoping they would see me, choose me and stay. But I have	Declarations, Commissives and Expressives	Declaring Asserting Vowing Apologizing Indicating Promising	High

	outgrown that version of myself, the one who begged to be held. I am done pouring from an empty cup, done holding out my heart like an offering to those who never meant to cherish me.			
5	This is not bitterness. It is clarity. It is knowing that love is not something you should have to convince someone to give. It is understanding, that real friendship does not hinge on apologies that only one person ever makes. It is realizing that you can miss someone and still let them go. So I do. I let go of the hands that do not reach back.	Declarations Expressive Representatives	Admonishing Confirming Declaring	High
6	I realize the weight of one-sided devotion. I stop explaining myself to those who are not listening in the first place. Instead, I turn towards the ones who stay. The ones who see me in my fullness, and never ask me to shrink. The ones who do not keep scores, because real love does not require tally marks	Representatives Declarations Expressives	Clearer Understanding of what love truly means. Self Admonishing Confirming and Approving	Low
7	So, take my advice. Guard you energy. Protect your heart. Stand tall in the knowledge that you are worthy of the effort, of reciprocity,	Directives Commissives Expressives	Requesting Guaranteeing Declaring Ordering	High

of love that does not ask you to prove yourself first. Your circle matters. Let it be filled with people who would never dream of leaving you behind.			

Data presentation and Critical Pragmatic Analysis
3.2. Critical Pragmatic Analysis

Since speech act does not refer only to the act of speaking but to the whole communicate situation, including context of the utterance and paralinguistic features which may contribute to the meaning of the interaction, the data will also be analyzed, using critical pragmatic analysis in order to bring out the perlocutionary act.

i.   Linguistic Act 1: As shown in the boxes, linguistic act 1 explicitly narrates the remorseful condition of the writer. Every effort the writer has made fails to yield good reactions. She has rescinded the thought of taking any other actions. Though, her situation seems hopeless, she has resorted to what fate has granted her. Her entire situation, here, revolves round hopelessness, self indictment and resolution, because she has suffered much more from love than hatred.

ii.   Linguistic acts 2: She is of low spirit here. She encourages her supposed partner to depart from her, if doing so will give peace to both sides. She expresses her worst fear and expectation of loneliness, which she is prepared to weather through.

iii.   Linguistic act 3: It reinforces the fact that her resolution is final, and she can live alone, if circumstances require her to do so. She is assertive and declaring her true state of mind, even more as a realist. Her statement is factual and uncompromising, perhaps, after she has realized her past futile efforts in keeping friendship at a huge cost.

iv.   Linguistic act 4: It revolves round the nostalgic feelings of the writer, especially, as she has made several efforts to make herself visible and admirable, but only to be rejected, disliked and hated. She thereafter elicits confidence and assurance that she has passed the stage. She promise to live her life the way providence has permitted her, and no more wasted efforts of striving to reach a compromise.

v.   Linguistic act 5: The writer is of high hope, and reality has dawned on her. She is ready to assert her personality, without any let or hindrance. She redefines love in its state or nature, stating categorically that love is unconditional, and that it is devoid of pains, regret and humiliation.

vi.   Linguistic act 6: She lays emphasis on love, as true essence of equilibrium between partners. Love does not weigh one down and uplift the other. Love should be balance, give and take. Love does not promote hatred, pride and inequality.

vii. Linguistic act 7: She summons courage to give practical advice to a few others in that same category, in order to liberate the oppressed souls, that have suffered much from the pains of hatred, that is often mistaken for love.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis given above, conclusion can be drawn that love is freely given and freely received without pains and strains, using Mey's Pragmatic Act theory. The idea of the writer is juxtaposed with what the Holy Bible says in John 4:18, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love". It can also be deduced from the messages of the writer that there should be a limit to every form of inconveniences. There should be a sense reawakening, and an courage to change the course of an unpalatable action. The writer also effectively explores Searle's pragmatic acts, which encompass assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives, to pass invectives against herself, with a view to advising and encouraging others, not to toe her own line of action, but to be resolute and face the reality of life. The message, as contained in the write up, is an eye opener, encourager, admonition and wisdom that can liberate the oppressed souls, and bring people out of depression, which can gravitate towards suicide. This publication is worth being globalised for the good of humanity.

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