

**A Pragmatic Study of Shakespeare's  
"King Lear": King vs. Father**

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## **A Pragmatic Study of Shakespeare's "King Lear": King vs. Father**

### **Abstract**

This study aims pragmatically at investigating the linguistic behavior of the main character, Lear, in Shakespeare's masterpiece "King Lear". It specifically applies John Searle's Speech Act Theory (1977), and Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987) to Lear's utterances to his three daughters in order to explain how these two pragmatic tools amazingly add further insight into understanding Lear's character perfectly and help unveil his true relation to his daughters as being a king or a father. The study uses both the quantitative and qualitative methods for detecting and interpreting Lear's utterances throughout the play. The conclusion proves that Lear's relation to his daughters is rather a kingly one.

**Keywords:** pragmatics, speech acts, politeness, Lear.

## دراسة تداولية لمسرحية "الملك لير": الملك مقابل الأب

### مستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق التداولي من السلوك اللغوي للشخصية الرئيسية ، لير ، في تحفة شكسبير "الملك لير". طبقت على وجه التحديد نظرية جون سيرل في أفعال الكلام (1977)، ونظرية التأدب لبراون وليفينسون (1987) على أقوال لير لبناته الثلاث من أجل شرح كيف أن هاتان الأداتان التداوليتان تضيفان مزيداً من التبصر في فهم شخصية لير بشكل مثالي وكيف أنهما تساعدان في الكشف عن علاقته الحقيقية ببناته كملك أو كأب. تستخدم الدراسة كلاً من الأساليب الكمية والنوعية لتتبع وتفسير كلام لير خلال المسرحية. يثبت الاستنتاج أن علاقة لير ببناته هي بالأحرى علاقة ملكية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التداولية ، أفعال الكلام ، التأدب ، لير

## 1. Introduction

The present study aims at investigating pragmatically Lear's relation to his daughters through applying Searle's Speech Act Theory (1977) and Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategies (1987) to Shakespeare's masterpiece *King Lear*. It is mainly an investigation, classification and analysis of the types and functions of the speech acts and the politeness strategies implemented in the dialogue of the main character, Lear, with his three daughters throughout the play, with special reference to that how his linguistic behaviors completely affect his relation with them as being a father or a king. Thus, this study is only limited to Lear's utterances to his daughters.

## 2. Literature Review

On doing a massive research on the Speech Act Theory (SAT) and Politeness Strategies (PS) applied to the Shakespearian plays, I find out that a small number of studies have been conducted. There are about sixteen studies dealing with SAT and about three studies on PS in Shakespeare's plays. However, out of the sixteen, only five focus on the application of SAT and one applies PS to *King Lear* (the play under investigation).

At first, I am going to shed light on a number of the studies which investigate Shakespeare's *King Lear*: regarding SAT, five studies are found to utilize this pragmatic theory for analyzing *King Lear*: Shortslef (2015) focuses on the speech acts of complaint-lamentations, accusations, supplications for exploring and theorizing "the largely unexamined relationship between complaint and tragedy in light of the fact that in the early modern period, "complaining" was cultural shorthand for ineffective, effeminate, and shameful responses to loss and injury". In *King Lear*, Shortslef manifests "how speeches and scenes of complaint were central to the construction of tragic plots and characters and to the genre's didactic and affective objectives". He explores how Lear's speech attributes ethical values and political efficacy to complaining.

Tackling a different aspect of SAT, Taylor (2015) explores "the

various literary functions of riddles in medieval and early modern British literature—poetic, narrative, rhetorical, philosophical”. She attempts to investigate the “enigmatic language” of the “pointed speech of Shakespeare’s fools” through explaining “how do riddles work to create meaning as well as reference, and how do they contribute to the conversational negotiation of understanding and power, either among speakers in the text or between the text and its reader?” She also concludes that “riddles draw attention to the perlocutionary force of the speech act and thus the way that speech acts play out rhetorically in context”.

Maley’s (2010) treatment of SAT in *King Lear* is different. At first, he explores how “tragic figures regularly get themselves into trouble by using language”: Lear’s disavow of Cordelia in the first scene makes him spend “the rest of the play trying to avoid the consequences of that utterance”. That’s why he tries to question the function of the performative work of language on the tragic stage concerning language’s ordinary social work, as well as the contribution of the dramatic work of language to the operation of tragedy. In other words, he attempts to investigate the words used by tragic figures as common tools of daily communication, and reflects on how this forms the “agonistic and consequential speech situations on the stages of tragedy”.

Busse (2008) focuses specially on a large range of directives in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, stating that “Lear’s own use of directives throughout the play mirrors his downfall from a position of power into destitution and madness”. In his attempt to assess the precise discourse functions of Lear’s directives in terms of “their coercive force or manipulative strength” on one hand, and their politeness on the other. He precisely provides a scene-by-scene analysis of the play to show that Lear needs to show a little amount of politeness at the beginning of the play “while the other characters react with polished politeness”. However, when he has to show some politeness after things start to change, he does not use “true politeness”.

Shaheen (2006) investigates the perlocutionary effects of Lear’s speech acts, explaining that his intended perlocutionary effects at the

beginning of the play match his real intentions. However, in Act II, there is “almost no match at all between his intended and actual perlocutionary effects”. She concludes that “*King Lear* explores a central paradox for the Elizabethan audience, and explores it through the way in which Lear and other characters use speech acts”. (P: 7)

For the application of PS on *King Lear*, there is only one study. Hassanein (2011) explores, “in a systematic way, the relation between language use and the social relationship of the speakers”. Precisely, she investigates the changing way Lear’s older daughters manipulate politeness strategies throughout the play; “before the division of the kingdom they use politeness strategies to deceive Lear, as soon as they become the rulers of the kingdom they become very rude and start insulting him”.

After investigating all the above-mentioned studies, I find out the lack of sufficient study of *King Lear* as a whole, and that a scrutinizing study of Lear’s character in relation to his daughters is due.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

This study is basically a pragmatic one. It applies two outstanding theories of Pragmatics: Searle’s Speech Act Theory (1977) and Brown & Levinson’s Politeness Strategies (1987). So, first, a brief summary of the history of Pragmatics and its development is introduced. Then, comes the two selected theories in short.

Since it has a long history, the linguistic field of Pragmatics receives various definitions by many scholars who give it a special tent in order to differentiate it from other linguistic disciplines such as Semantics, Syntax and Stylistics.

Interestingly, there has been a role assigned to Pragmatics to help understand utterance(s) meaning rather than sentence(s) meaning. However, "To do this successfully we have to be able to interpret utterances, not simply decode them" (Finch, 2003, p. 153). That’s why, numerous definitions of Pragmatics have been introduced: it is

"the study of speaker meaning", "the study of contextual meaning", "the study of how more gets communicated than is said", and "the study of the relative distance" (Yule, 1996, p. 3). Hence, the domain of Pragmatics is "the additional meaning" as for Birner (2013). In addition, Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (11 th Ed) provides two relevant definitions of Pragmatics: it is "a branch of semiotics that deals with the relation between signs or linguistic expressions and their users", and is "a branch of linguistics that is concerned with the relationship of sentences to the environment in which they occur". In a similar broader concern Senft (2014) understands that "Pragmatics is the transdiscipline that studies these language and culture specific forms of language use". One of the most interesting and frequently studied and investigated part of Pragmatics is the Speech Act Theory (SAT).

### 3.1. **Speech Act Theory**

The basic idea upon which SAT is oriented is that saying something reflects doing something. The Spanish philosopher Jesús states about the role of intention in the performance of speech acts that "whether we consider, with Austin, that speech acts "imply" mental states or, with Searle, that they "express" them, we could only make sense of this idea if we considered utterances as criteria for intentions, and not as alleged behavioral effects of hidden mental causes" (Navarro-Reyes, 2010, p. 145). In addition, Charlow (2011) adds more potential to speech acts which exceed the static-semantic meaning(s) of an utterance, stating that "speech act accounts provide natural and theoretically satisfying explanations, where a representational account provides none".

### 3.2. **J.L. Austin:**

A prominent interest and minute analysis was basically dedicated to SAT through William James Lectures presented by the outstanding philosopher and linguist, J. L. Austin (lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955). They were compiled in his valuable, edited book *How to Do Things with Words* (1962).

Clearly, Austin abandons his performative/constative distinction for the locutionary/ illocutionary one as an excusable transition from the special to the general; concluding that the "total speech act" can only be investigated within a "total speech situation", there are a great number of illocutionary acts. Nevertheless, there are five more general classes of illocutionary acts about which Austin is not satisfied: Verdictives, Exercitives, Commissives, Behabitives, Expositives. Simply, they are the act of giving a verdict, the exercising of power, promising, attitudes and social behavior, and using words in argumentations, respectively. As Austin aforementioned he has just produced a program that paved the way for more research and investigation.

### 3.3. **John Searle:**

Carrying the scientific burden for providing some answers to Austin`s controversial inquiries, Searle, one of Austin`s distinguished colleagues, "developed a reasoned classification of illocutionary acts into certain basic categories or types". He also sought to check "the appropriateness or inappropriateness of Austin`s previous classifications of the illocutionary acts". Lastly, he explored "the syntactic nature of the different types of the illocutionary acts" (Searle, 1979, 1).

Searle gives a more systemized categorization and a successful refinement of Austin's SAT. Searle re-conceptualizes Austin`s five classes of illocutionary acts:

1 - Assertives are defined in terms of the direction of fit that they make

words fit the world because they "commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition", and psychologically, to express a kind of belief. Finally, they are "assessable in the True—False dimension" (p. 13).

2- Directives are simply defined as attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something. Those attempts vary in degree with regard to the kind of the directive used; an invitation, a suggestion, or an



order; yet, they are basically used to "fit the world-to-words and the sincerity condition is want (or wish or desire)". And for them: "the propositional content is always that the hearer H does some future action A" (p. 14).

3- Commissives refer to "those illocutionary acts whose point is to commit the speaker (again in varying degrees) to some future course of action". They use the same "direction of fit" as Directives that they aim "to fit the world-to-word". However, their "sincerity condition is intention" (p. 14).

4- Expressives denote expressing one's psychological state about a state of affairs. Thus, no direction of fit is implemented in performing an expressive. That is, "the speaker is neither trying to get the world to match the words nor the words to match the world".

5- Declarations are the acts which bring "a state of affairs into existence" in a way that relates words to reality through the successful performance of that specific act. And, because there is no distinction between illocutionary force and propositional content, there is no "surface syntactical structure of many sentences used to perform declarations". Nevertheless, for a successful direction of fit, "there must exist an extra-linguistic institution and the speaker and hearer must occupy special places within this institution". However, the existence of a "linguistic competence by the speaker and hearer is not in general sufficient for the performance of a declaration". In this certain type of speech acts, "the direction of fit is both words-to-world and world-to words", with no sincerity condition (p. 18).

After investigating the illocutionary verbs syntactically in favor of finding some guiding tools to help decide and differentiate between the various types of the illocutionary acts, Searle draws the conclusion that it is hard to find clear markers. Therefore, the syntactic analysis may be one tool for determining the kind of the illocutionary act in use. That's why utterances like "I insist" and "I suggest" can act as both a directive and an assertive.

### 3.4. **Indirect Speech Act:**

As a generalization, a speaker "means exactly and literally what he says". However, he wants to make the hearer recognize his message and hence gets his intended illocutionary effect in accordance with the hearer's prior knowledge and shared culture with the speaker. In some other cases "the speaker may utter a sentence and mean what he says and also mean another illocution with a different propositional content". For example, "Can you pass me the salt?" gives the look of a question and also does the act of a request (Searle, 1979, p. 30).

To initiate his analysis, Searle chooses Directives, stating that "in Directives, politeness is the chief motivation for indirectness". He starts with describing the conventional criteria about directive sentences, noting that, first, they may concern H's ability to perform A; for example, "Can you reach the salt?" Second: they may express S's wish or want that H will do A; for example, "I would like you to go now". Third: they may reflect H's doing A; for example, "Officers will henceforth wear ties at dinner". Fourth: they may indicate H's desire or willingness to do A; for example, "Would you be willing to write a letter of recommendation for me?" Fifth: they may invoke reasons for doing A; for example, "You ought to be more polite to your mother". Sixth: they may contain one of the previous elements inside another; or "an explicit directive illocutionary verb inside one of these contexts"; for example, "Would you mind awfully if I asked you if you could write me a letter of recommendation?" (Searle, 1979, pp. 36-39)

To prove his hypothesis of indirectness, Searle advocates his theory by recounting the reasons or may be the facts why he considers the aforementioned examples of directive sentences as indirect utterances, declaring that they "do not have an imperative force as part of their meaning", they can clearly indicate an imperative illocutionary force and a non-imperative illocutionary force at the same time; hence, they can be used to express Directives, they are far from being used as idioms; or else for a word-for-word translation, they would not produce a meaningful

sentence. However, they can imply some idiomatic reference for using a rather indirect desired meaning; they also have a literal meaning beside the indirect one. Besides, for a speaker literally means what he says, he may also mean or want extra things; that's why, sentences of this case can imply both the literal and the indirect meanings. This may also indicate the performance of both acts (pp.39-43).

Searle admits that there is no definite syntactical criterion for the theory; that is, "why is it that some syntactical forms work better than others?" as it is the case for (Can you) and (Are you able to). However, he solves that problem by relating it to the principle of conventionality. In other words, there are numerous certain forms of each illocutionary act which are conventionally understood and accepted and that "it is not incorrect to say they are idioms," so he assures that the general case is to "Speak idiomatically unless there is some special reason not to." (p. 50)

### 3.5. Politeness:

As a universal phenomenon of human social interaction, politeness receives a great deal of investigation and study by linguists. One of the most prominent theories on this part is Brown and Levinson's (1989). Brown and Levinson (B&L), at first, presumes some generalization upon which they set forth their hypothesis of politeness. Those generalizations draw on B&L's major concepts of the theory. They assume that every adult person in the society has a "Face, the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (B&L, 1987, p. 61).

That Face has three crucial components: Negative Face, which is simply everybody's right to "freedom of action and freedom from imposition"; Positive Face, which denotes the desire to be "appreciated and approved of"; and Rationality. They understand the concept of Face as being equivalent to the concept of wants that every member of the society desires to satisfy.

They then explore the specifications required for keeping the

Positive Face. That is, the interlocutor's want goes vast to include "non-material as well as material things: for values (love, liberty, piety), or for actions (like going to the opera or to the races, or playing tennis)" (p. 63).

Bearing in mind that successful communication is mainly based on mutual cooperation and respect between S and H, it is normal that both of them pay considerable attention to avoid making FTAs or even to minimize their effects. Later, B&L manages to provide a more scrutinized categorization of their previous theorization of FTAs.

Taking into consideration three potential levels of FTAs impact on H's Face (the want to communicate the content of the FTA, the want to be efficient or urgent, and the want to maintain H's face to any degree), S can use one of the following strategies:

1 - To go On Record: it is the case when S's intention to do A (a future action) is unquestionable; that is, he goes on record by promising to do A.

2- To go Off Record: it is the case when S's intention is somehow ambiguous; that is, he does not declare his real intention outright. That includes using "metaphor and irony, rhetorical questions, understatement, tautologies, all kinds of hints as to what a speaker wants or means to communicate, without doing so directly, so that the meaning is to some degree negotiable" (p. 69).

Now, I am going to write forth the excerpts selected from each stage of the three depending on numbering of lines stated in Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine's edited copy of King Lear .

First, the excerpts used for applying the Speech Act Theory. These excerpts count seventy-four in all.

**Excerpts Selected for SAT from Stage One:****Table (1). The excerpts are taken successively from Act 1, Scene 1**

1.	Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.	Line 37
2.	Know that we have divided	Line 39
3.	Tell me, my daughters [Since now we will divest us both of rule, Interest of territory, cares of state— Which of you shall we say doth love us most, That we our largest bounty may extend	Lines 52-57
4.	We make thee lady	Line 72
5.	what can you say to draw A third more opulent than your sisters'? Speak.	Lines 94-95
6.	Nothing	Line 97
7.	Nothing will come of nothing	Line 99
8.	Here I disclaim all my paternal care, Propinquity, and property of blood, And as a stranger to my heart and me Hold thee from this forever.	Lines 125-128
9.	Avoid my sight	Line 138-139
10.	Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her	Line 145
11.	But now her price is fallen	Line 225
12.	with those infirmities she owes, Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate, Dowered with our curse and strangered with our oath	Lines 231-234
13.	The sway, revenue, execution of the rest Belovèd sons, be yours, which to confirm, This coronet part between you	Lines 153-155
14.	Since now we will divest us both of rule Interest of territory, cares of state	Lines 54-55
15.	Only we shall retain The name and all th' addition to a king	Lines 151-152

**Excerpts Selected for SAT from Stage Two:****Table (2). The excerpts are taken successively from Act 1, Scene 4 and 5; Act 2, Scene 4 and Act 4, Scene 6**

1.	Who am I, sir?	Line 654
2.	How now, daughter? What makes that frontlet on?	Line 770
3.	Methinks you are too much of late i' th' frown.	Line 771
4.	Are you our daughter?	Line 800
5.	Does any here know me?	Line 807
6.	This is not Lear	Line 807
7.	Does Lear walk thus, speak thus? Where are his eyes?	Lines 808-809
8.	Your name, fair gentlewoman?	Line 819
9.	Degenerate bastard	Line 839
10.	I'll not trouble thee	Line 839

11.	Yet have I left a daughter	Line 840
12.	Woe that too late repents	Line 843
13.	Ingratitude	Line 846
14.	I will forget my nature. So kind a father	Line 979
15.	To take 't again perforce	Line 986
16.	O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven	Line 992
17.	I would not be mad	Line 993
18.	What's he that hath so much thy place mistook To set thee here?	Lines 1375-1376
19.	No	Line 1379
20.	No, I say.	Line 1381
21.	By Jupiter, I swear no.	Line 1383
22.	They durst not do 't	Line 1385
23.	They could not, would not do 't	Line 1386
24.	Thou might'st deserve or they impose this usage, Coming from us	Lines 1390-1391
25.	Where is this daughter?	Line 1424
26.	Follow me not. Stay here	Lines 1426-1427
27.	Fetch me a better answer.	Line 1458
28.	Vengeance, plague, death, confusion!	Line 1463
29.	I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.	Line 1466
30.	The dear father Would with his daughter speak, commands, tends service	Lines 1471-1474
31.	Tell the hot duke that— No, but not yet. Maybe he is not well	Lines 1477-1478
32.	Good morrow to you both.	Line 1501
33.	Regan, I think you are.	Line 1504
34.	Belovèd Regan	Line 1509
35.	My curses on her.	Line 1523
36.	Ask her forgiveness?	Line 1531
37.	Never, Regan.	Line 1538
38.	All the stored vengeances of heaven fall On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones, You taking airs, with lameness!	Lines 1542-1544
39.	No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse.	Line 1552
40.	Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give Thee o'er to harshness. Her eyes are fierce, but thine Do comfort and not burn. 'Tis not in thee To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train, To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes, And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt Against my coming in. Thou better know'st The offices of nature, bond of childhood,	Lines 1553-1562

	Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude.	
41.	Thy half o' th' kingdom hast thou not forgot, Wherein I thee endowed	Lines 1563-1564
42.	Who put my man i' th' stocks?	Line 1566
43.	O heavens, If you do love old men, if your sweet sway Allow obedience, if you yourselves are old, Make it your cause. Send down and take my part	Lines 1578-1580
44.	Return to her? And fifty men dismissed?	Line 1599
45.	I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad.	Line 1611
46.	I will not trouble thee, my child	Line 1612
47.	I'll not chide thee	Line 1618
48.	I can stay with Regan, I and my hundred knights.	Lines 1623-1624
49.	Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favored When others are more wicked. Not being the worst Stands in some rank of praise	Lines 1653-1655
50.	I'll go with thee	Lines 1655-1656
51.	Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty, And thou art twice her love	Lines 1657-1658
52.	I will have such revenges on you both	Line 1680
53.	O Fool, I shall go mad	Line 1687
54.	No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even The natural fool of Fortune. Use me well	Lines 2941-2942

### Excerpts Selected for SAT from Stage Three:

**Table (3). The excerpts are taken successively from Act 4, Scene 7 and Act 5, Scene 3.**

1.	If you have poison for me, I will drink it.	Line 3130
2.	I know you do not love me, for your sisters Have, as I do remember, done me wrong. You have some cause; they have not	Lines 3131-3133
3.	let's away to prison	Line 3259
4.	Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia, The gods themselves throw incense	Lines 3272-3273
5.	A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!	Line 3575

Second, the excerpts used for applying the Politeness Strategies. These excerpts count 52 in all.

**Excerpts Selected for PS from Stage One:****Table (4). The excerpts are taken successively from Act 1, Scene 1**

1	Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.—	Line 37
2	Know that we have divided In three our kingdom	Lines 39-40
3	Tell me, my daughters	Lines 52-53
4	Which of you shall we say doth love us most, That we our largest bounty may extend	Lines 56-57
5	We make thee lady	Line 72
6	what can you say to draw A third more opulent than your sisters'?	Lines 94-95
7	Nothing will come of nothing	Line 99
8	Here I disclaim all my paternal care, Propinquity, and property of blood, And as a stranger to my heart and me Hold thee from this forever.	Lines 125-128
9	avoid my sight	Lines 138-139
10	Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.	Line 145
11	But now her price is fallen	Line 225
12	with those infirmities she owes, Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate, Dowered with our curse and strangered with our oath,	Lines 231-234
13	The sway, revenue, execution of the rest, Belovèd sons, be yours, which to confirm, This coronet part between you	Lines 153-155
14	Ourself by monthly course, With reservation of an hundred knights By you to be sustained, shall our abode Make with you by due turn. Only we shall retain The name and all th' addition to a king	Lines 148-152

**Excerpts Selected for PS from Stage Two:****Table (5). The excerpts are taken successively from Act 1, Scene 4 and 5 and Act 2, Scene 4**

1.	How now, daughter? What makes that frontlet on?	Line 770
2.	Methinks you are too much of late i' th' frown.	Line 771
3.	Are you our daughter?	Line 800
4.	Does any here know me? This is not Lear.	Line 807
5.	Dost thou know me, fellow?	Line 603
6.	Does Lear walk thus, speak thus? Where are his eyes?	Lines 808-809
7.	Your name, fair gentlewoman?	Line 819
8.	Degenerate bastard	Line 839



9.	I'll not trouble thee	Line 839
10.	Yet have I left a daughter.	Line 840
11.	Woe that too late repents!	Line 843
12.	Ingratitude	Line 846
13.	Where is this daughter?	Line 1424
14.	Vengeance, plague, death, confusion!	Line 1463
15.	The dear Father Would with his daughter speak, commands, tends Service	Lines 1471-1474
16.	Good morrow to you both.	Line 1501
17.	Regan, I think you are.	Line 1504
18.	Belovèd Regan	Line 1509
19.	My curses on her.	Line 1523
20.	Ask her forgiveness?	Line 1531
21.	Never, Regan	Line 1538
22.	All the stored vengeance of heaven fall On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones, You taking airs, with lameness	Lines 1542-1544
23.	No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse.	Line 1552
24.	Thy half o' th' kingdom hast thou not forgot, Wherein I thee endowed	Lines 1563-1564
25.	Who put my man i' th' stocks?	Line 1566
26.	I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad.	Line 1611
27.	I will not trouble thee, my child	Line 1612
28.	I'll not chide thee	Line 1618
29.	I can stay with Regan, I and my hundred knights.	Lines 1623-1624
30.	Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favored When others are more wicked. Not being the worst Stands in some rank of praise	Lines 1653-1655
31.	I'll go with thee	Lines 1655-1656
32.	Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty, And thou art twice her love.	Lines 1657-1658
33.	I will have such revenges on you both	Line 1680
34.	O Fool, I shall go mad!	Line 1687

### Excerpts Selected for PS from Stage Three:

**Table (6). The excerpts are taken successively from Act 4, Scene 7 and Act 5, Scene 3.**

1.	Be your tears wet? Yes, faith. I pray, weep not. If you have poison for me, I will drink it. I know you do not love me, for your sisters Have, as I do remember, done me wrong. You have some cause; they have not	Lines 3129-3133
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2.	let's away to prison	Line 3259
3.	We two alone will sing like birds i' th' cage.	Line 3260
4.	Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia, The gods themselves throw incense	Lines 3272-3273

Now that a comprehensive account of the data of the research has been introduced, the analysis of this data is going to be presented.

### **Analysis of Lear`s Selected Utterances through Using John Searle`s Speech Act Theory (1977)**

This study provides a considerable analysis of Lear`s speech acts with regard to their classification, frequency, and whether they are direct or indirect. In my attempt to detect and locate Lear`s speech acts, I find out that Lear`s life in the play undergoes three phases, each of which is marked by special kinds and frequency of speech acts: first, when Lear is a king (in power); second, when he steps down his throne for his two older daughters; third, when he meets his daughter Cordelia, the Queen of France, at the end of the play.

Lear starts his ceremonial speech, in Act 1, Scene 1, by making a Commissive, "We shall express our darker purpose". Expectedly, Commissives have optimistic impressions regarding both sides; the speaker and the hearer. However, in Lear`s case, it sounds different. Although Lear`s use of the word "darker" can be inferred as equal in meaning to the word "deeper", Lear`s certain choice of this word exposes his violent and corrupted nature altogether. He is so anxious. As Smith (2016) elucidates "Much of the anxiety Lear elicits for Early Modern and contemporary audiences alike, is the play`s treatment of a kingdom being utterly torn apart: it is, as Northrop Frye puts it, `an image of nature dissolving into its primordial elements, losing its distinctions of hierarchies into chaos`" (P:114).

In addition, by making that utterance, Lear breaks the sincerity condition of promising apart. Actually, he wishes nothing

good for his addressees. Because Lear is a dictator, Ng (2017) states that: "by rejecting subjects' right to give counsel, Lear declares himself not accountable to the people" (p. 178). His materialistic look upon the world and his imaginatively divine state he bestows upon himself leads him not only to misjudge the faithful persons around him but also to abuse their rights. That is why, Smith (2016) exposes Lear's materialistic view of life, stating that "Lear perceives people as objects, as symbols of his power, and he consistently underestimates the value of both humans and nonhumans" (p. 8). Lear's utterance here can also indirectly be a Representative as it discloses the degree of love and care he holds for his daughters. Obviously, nothing of that love exists. Of course, that sheds light on what comes next!

In the first phase, owing to being in power, Lear has the validity, which lasts for short, to make declarations because, as Searle (1977) states "Lear belongs to an extra-linguistic institution" in which he occupies a special place; that is, he is the ruling king. To Ng (2017), "kings are lawmakers upon the ground of property" (p. 180). Lear's first worthy-noting declaration; "Know that we have divided / In three our kingdom," (Act 1, scene 1) ascertains his early downfall. Smith (2016) states that "Like [Michel de] Montaigne's old man, Lear does not realize in time what or who he is. Lear's divestment, like the binding gift of property, is the external manifestation of the old man's detachment from reason" (p. 9). That is the division after which Lear never enjoys a quiet life. Lear uses an Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) to make a Declarative and to announce his division of his kingdom upon his three daughters using the form:

I (hereby) Vp you (that) U

He tries to convince his daughters that he loves them and cares for their future.

Scenes go fast. The second phase is at hand. In Act 1, scene 4, Lear moves to Goneril's palace to spend his first monthly residence. He becomes extremely furious when Oswald, the steward of his

older daughter, Goneril, ignores him and replies to his Directive, "Who am I, sir?" by Oswald's answering, "My lady's father". Actually, Lear does not inquire for something he knows well; he is the ex-king. However, Oswald's reply disrupts Lear's state of joy and shakes the royal ground Lear pertains for himself. It puts Lear on the edge of a shocking reality; Lear has lost his kingly majesty and is in need to appeal for the father-daughter love bond for the first time, or else he will definitely become empty-handed.

Now Lear has to speak softly, "How now, daughter? What makes that frontlet on?" In this Directive, Lear asks for an explanation of Goneril's frowning face. He is not used to that from his oldest daughter, Goneril. It seems that, in the past, Goneril had to hide her disgust and disregard towards her father, but now, she declares that baldly. It seems as if Lear is asking Goneril: where is that always smiling face that is used to flatter the king? It is also an Expressive which reveals part of Lear's fears and doubts once he gets ignored.

Nevertheless, in the last phase (in Act 4, Scene 7) Lear shows regret to Cordelia, the queen of France and his youngest sensible daughter who rescues him from inevitable insanity and eminent death, "If you have poison for me, I will drink it". Cunningly, this conditional Commissive lacks sincerity; Lear does not want to die, he could have killed himself if he wanted that. Indeed, he knows well how kind-hearted Cordelia is; she would never punish or banish him in return for his former criminal act against her. His Representatives, "I know you do not love me, for your sisters / Have, as I do remember, done me wrong / You have some cause; they have not", confirm how well Lear masters the art of language. He is sure that the first step to gain other's acceptance is to confess either one's gratitude or sins. In the mood of a poor father, Lear uses these Representatives to make Cordelia forgive him. Lear's words prove that he did not go into complete madness; mad people lose the ability to remember and judge things well.

At the end, after the death of Cordelia, Lear views all the

attendants including Kent as traitors; traitors to his past selfish dream of both giving up kingly burdens and enjoying kingly treatment and dictatorship, "A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!". Although it seems that Lear dies out of grief on Cordelia's murder, it has been clear that Cordelia, for Lear, is just a source of joy and psychological peace more than being a daughter. His Commissive elucidates how he views the world. He wishes that a plague would kill all the attendants leaving nothing of them behind as they killed his last spring of happiness and relaxation and left him nothing forever. Lear's false pride, egocentrism and tyranny make him pay a very heavy cost. Clearly, Lear's selfishness leads him to abuse his daughters, and his arrogance leads him to act violently and to seek revenge.

### **Analysis of Lear's selected utterances through using Brown and Levinson's 'Politeness' Theory (1987)**

Unquestionably, the father-daughter relationship is so much sacred divinely and socially; one that is endowed with mercy, fed with love, and empowered with harmony. It is full of unpaid sacrifice and continuous evidences of loyalty. Nevertheless, apart from the pure human nature which supports that eternal call of mutual respect and politeness between fathers and daughters, the case is never the same for Lear.

At a very crucial moment of his life, Lear decides to step down his throne, yet he still wants to keep his dominance over his kingdom at all costs, even if to kill a lover or to torture a fellow. Smith (2016) explains that "In the play's first scene, Lear deploys objects as a representation of his power, but because the play interrogates social structures and their concomitant ontological confusions, the use of objects fails Lear throughout the play" (p. 3). Lear wants to manipulate his daughters; he wants to enjoy the royal privileges meanwhile carrying no burdens of authority and responsibility. He only cares for his own happiness and satisfaction.

Due to his rashness and harshness, Lear starts his pleasant moment of false stepping down of the throne by cunningly

concealing his main purpose beyond that action. By spelling out his promise; "We shall express our darker purpose"; his daughters are expectedly overwhelmed with happiness. However, Lear's Commissive implies a Face-threatening Act (FTA) directed by Lear to his daughters. Hence, once Lear mindfully describes his purpose as "darker", a big wave of gloom is anticipated. Lear uses the Off-Record Strategy (OFFR) to avoid exposing his real intention. He uses an ambiguous word "darker" to distract his listeners and to maintain their false impression of delight. Lear's utterance foresees an incurable conflict. When he mistakenly steps down his throne for his two older daughters, he loses the authority tools that give him power.

Now, Lear is about to make a declaration that would be destructive not only to Lear's kingdom and majesty but also to all his family members. So, Lear starts his plan by giving his deceitful declaration, "Know that we have divided / In three our kingdom," (Act 1, scene 1). Lear utilizes this Positive-politeness Strategy (PP) to gain his three daughters' content and to win them as a future subjects and faithful allies. He tries to show them how graceful he is to them in a way that guarantees their full obedience to him in the future. Ng (2017) cites Jaffa (1964) who confirms that "The love-test 'was to supply [...] pledges of support for the division of the kingdom which [Lear] was in process of announcing', whereby Cordelia would inherit the richest part of the kingdom, and thus support was sought especially from the other sisters who might conceivably object". However, Lear conceals his intentional FTA by giving an (OFFR) utterance; indeed, Lear aims at getting rid of kingdom burdens and responsibilities meanwhile he wants to keep enjoying the kingship privileges. Thus, he seeks to rest himself while involving his daughters in kingdom burdens and problems. Lear's actions indicate in advance how he perceives his father-daughter bond. Till the moment he is acting like a king, not a father.

At the end of his unjust scenario, Lear is extremely ill-tempered and gives Cordelia a long-life exile, "with those infirmities she owes / Unfriended / new adopted to our hate / Dowered with our

curse and strangled with our oath". After this Bold-On Record (BOR), Lear ends up his dragon-like mood of wrath. However, it marks the start-point of his downfall and loss of power.

On the other hand, Lear demonstrates his full content of Goneril and Regan's fake flattery and compliments with this Positive Politeness (PP), "The sway, revenue, execution of the rest / Belovèd sons, be yours; which to confirm / This coronet part between you". Lear wants to score a point through exhibiting intimacy or friendliness. He seeks to minimize the distance between him and his two older daughters via conveying that they are cooperators and have mutual interests.

Now, after moving to Goneril's palace, when Lear makes sure that there is no use of maintaining his talk with Goneril, he starts his curses against her using BOR, "Degenerate bastard". However, unlike the way he treated Cordelia, Lear uses Negative Politeness (NPs), "I'll not trouble thee". This might be a part of his diplomatic plan. That is why, Lear does not disown Goneril. Moreover, because Lear has lost his power and rank as a ruling king, he doesn't not take risk in disavowing her. For the other half of his kingdom belongs to Regan, Lear still has a hope that she would give him a hand.

However, at the end, he cannot escape his egocentrism and selfishness. After the defeat of Cordelia's French army, and Lear and Cordelia being captured by Goneril and Regan's British army, we find out that Lear seeks only his own benefits. With this fake PP, "let's away to prison", instead of defending Cordelia in front of her two older evil sisters, he again imposes his will and decision on Cordelia and wrongly presupposes that prison is the best place for them at the moment. He is still practicing impingement; he does not wait for Cordelia to share talk or even to express her opinion. He involves another tricky PP, "We two alone will sing like birds i' th' cage", claiming a shared interest in going to prison between him and Cordelia.

He adds further evidences and reasons that he appreciates her sacrifices most in order to persuade her to accept his previous

suggestion using this PP, "Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia, / The gods themselves throw incense". However, Craig (2003) uncovers Lear's betrayal to Cordelia's various sincere sacrifices viewing Lear metaphorically as "a brutal rapist of his youngest daughter, —The hatred and violence that result from Lear's metaphorical rape of Cordelia and his commodifying and colonizing of her sisters' maternal sexuality makes *King Lear* one of Shakespeare's most disturbing plays".

#### 4. Conclusion

Depending on the previous pragmatic analysis of the data collected from Shakespeare's masterpiece *King Lear* using John Searle's Speech Act Theory (1977), and Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategies (1987) as the linguistic tools of this analysis, Lear has a catastrophic flaw; he is not able to decide when to be father and when to be king. This shortcoming leads him to misjudge, disowns and harshly treats his faithful daughter, Cordelia, when he is in power and social rank as a ruling king, forgetting that he is her father. Whereas, after losing his kingdom and power for his two wicked older daughters, Goneril and Regan, he tries to deceitfully act friendly with them as a kind father. According to the critic, Frank Kermode, "the play offers neither its good characters nor its audience any relief from its cruelty". Also, Bergeron (1993) assures that "we can fault Lear for asking such an unfair question... For him, saying things makes them true--a flaw in his royal character that the play will tragically exploit". Hence, it has been proved that Lear savagely and deliberately tries to verbally manipulate his three daughters through using certain frequencies of speech acts through which he shows intimacy and closeness or social distance between him and his daughters. Moreover, he deviates from Brown and Levinson's rational Model Person (MP) altogether. He cannot follow the usual norms a real social life needs. His overall aim is to live a kingly life with no regard to being a father at the same time. Till the end of the play, he is not right for the role of a father. "His patriarchalism" as Ng (2017) states "revises the meaning of the word 'natural' to elevate political fatherhood above



biological". Lear's unlimited, false pride prevents him from directly asking for help till the moment he dies. In addition, throughout the play, Lear is proved to have acted like a harsh king in the first phase, as a cunning negotiator in the middle, and as an escapist at the end; all of which have nothing to do with being a father. Likewise, Miola (1994) accuses Lear for being the chief ruthless agent in the play stating that —Lear is not merely a victim, but also an agent, not merely rejected, but also and emphatically rejecting. Refusing their terms, Lear in a sense locks out his daughters, choosing self-validating isolation to self-degrading society. Moreover, Smith (2016) assures Lear's confusion, "The drama resulting from this contradictory ontological system ultimately derives from an interior ontological confusion". That is why, Lear does not think of being a father very often. By the end of the play, Lear's flaw makes him lose everything and gets nothing.

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