



A Sociocultural Study in Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman

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Abstract

The choice of terms of address is a typical example to show the relational aspect of language. People will be addressed differently throughout the day. They will reciprocate depending on factors such as power, affect, distance or closeness. Using different words in different contexts show if the person has crossed the borders of socially accepted language or not. This research is going to focus on dialogues of the play "Death of a Salesman" according to Brown, Levinson and Wardhaugh's theories of politeness, taboo words, and power relation. A few examples were studied carefully and the researcher understood that different factors cause people use power and consider politeness in their speech or use taboo words .

Keywords: sociolinguistics, politeness, power, taboo words, Death of a Salesman

INTRODUCTION

The play "Death of a Salesman" has been written by Arthur Miller in 1949. It reveals different characters. Every character has his/her own ideology and own perspective with respect to the modern world. The play narrates the life of a man who attempts to survive his life and his family's life in America's capitalism society. Willy Loman, the main character, is disturbed between reality and illusion. Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman" focuses on a man's life that has a bad economic condition in Capitalist American State in 19th century. In a condition which a man is seen when he is beneficial and helpful and once he is inefficient, there is no place for him in society. Arthur Miller shows in his modern tragedy that a common man's failure is a representation of a society. He expressed his beliefs by dramatic terms. It seems that the play has an anti-Capitalist message. In fact, American Dream is the concept of success and chance. It means that everyone is useful, is deserved to have wealth and power. Willy Loman has an American Dream. He has two sons. He attempted his sons to be successful in their life. The younger son, Happy, is favored partly, but Biff, the older one, is unemployed at the age of thirty-four; while he was the family's hope. When he returned home, his father was unemployed

and his mental illness had increased strongly. These caused a conflict between them. Willy's wife, Linda, tries to calm them, but she's not successful. Willy in "Death of a Salesman" tries to reach a good position. Not only he fails to earn his desire, but also destroys his family. Willy thinks that he can improve his family's financial condition by committing suicide, and they can use the insurance money to make things better. But it is an illusion. Arthur Miller in "Death of a Salesman" shows decline of a society in a common man's life. It is agreed that Language is the mirror of the society's culture since it reflects the beliefs, norms, emotions and feelings of its members. In this line, Wardhaugh notes that the relationship between "language" and "culture" has attracted people from different backgrounds. In order to explain more this idea, he (2010: 229) argues that :

"The exact nature of the relationship between language and culture has fascinated, and continues to fascinate, people from a wide variety of backgrounds. That there should be some kind of relationship between the sounds, words, and syntax of a language and the ways in which speakers of that language experience the world and behave in it." Additionally, the relationship between the two has attracted scholars from different disciplines. Hymes (1964: 21) believes that —speech is so fundamental an activity of man, language so integral part of his culture||. In other words, language cannot be studied in isolation from the culture of the people who speak it .

Basically, Hudson (1996:73) also observes that culture is something that everybody has, in contrast with "the culture" which is only found in cultural circles – in opera houses, universities and the like. He (ibid: 71) further sees culture as the —know how|| and the —know what|| that an individual must have and use in his life. In short, it is the knowledge that the society has including music, literature and arts...etc .

Several researchers in the 1970s and 1980s argued that —politeness|| was a particular driving force in how people determine language choice and negotiate relational meaning. We can count the approaches by Lakoff (1973), Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), and Leech (1983) among the early and influential contributions to the study of politeness.

Working within a framework of pragmatics in the broad sense—the study of language in use—these researchers argued that there are not only syntactic rules in establishing grammaticality of sentences but also pragmatic rules that determine the appropriateness of language use. They thereby all endeavored to complement the cooperative principle (Grice, 1975). In brief, the CP postulates that interactants, in their process of interpretation, work on the assumption that people adhere to four maxims: the maxims of quantity (be informative), quality (no falsehoods; no utterances that lack evidence), relation (be relevant), and manner (avoid obscurity or ambiguity, be brief and orderly; Grice, 1975, pp. 45–6). If interlocutors do not follow these maxims in the production of an utterance (and they frequently do not), their non-adherence results in additional meaning when the interpreter tries to work out why it took place. Politeness is then argued to be a motivation for non- adherence (Leech, 1983, p. 80).

Leech (1983) introduces the so-called —politeness principle,|| which consists of six politeness maxims: the tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy maxims. When confronted with having to work out an implicature caused by the non-

adherence to one of the maxims of the cooperative principle, the addressees will then look for the motivation in one of the politeness maxims. Leech (1983, p.108) associates indirectness with politeness by saying that –indirect illocutions tend to be more polite (a) because they increase the degree of optionality, and (b) because the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be.

This link between indirectness and politeness is also notable in the most influential work on politeness by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). They gave currency to the notions of –face and –face-threatening act in the research community. Face, originally taken from Goffman (1955), is defined as –the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61), and it is split into a positive (involvement) and negative (distance) aspect. Negative face is thus –the want of every _competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others,|| while positive face is –the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others|| (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 62). Interlocutors are argued to be rational agents who take their own and the addressees' face wants into account when producing language. However, the need to serve the two sides of face and the face interests of both speaker and addressee can be in conflict with each other. Face-threatening acts (FTAs) are –acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker|| (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 65). Brown and Levinson equate politeness with the display of face consideration in the form of mitigation. Their theory can easily be called the most influential contribution to this field of research. All the subsequent studies contributed to the plethora of publications on politeness either by reproducing their study design (e.g., in an attempt to establish cultural differences with respect to the orientation to positive or negative face needs), or by criticizing and challenging their work.

As Lakoff (1973, p. 303) has already pointed out, –what is polite for me may be rude for you. Brown and Levinson's work represents a classic second-order approach in that they use the term –politeness|| as a technical term to describe face-threat mitigation (irrespective of the addressee's assessment of the utterance). This approach was replicated in the early works on impoliteness, which mirrored the Brown and Levinson politeness strategies and their ranking (Lachenicht, 1980; Culpeper, 1996; Kienpointner, 1997). More recently, researchers such as Bousfield and Culpeper (2008), or Terkourafi (2005), while still firmly arguing for the benefits of a second-order approach to studying politeness and impoliteness phenomena, also develop Brown and Levinson's or their own frameworks further. Bousfield (2010), for example, argues for the use of technical terms, which are, however, informed by lay people's understandings of these very concepts. Ultimately, he is aiming for a predictive theory of politeness and impoliteness.

In the same vein, Terkourafi (2005) explores a frame-based approach to politeness phenomena in that she investigates practices that come with expectations about appropriate behavior. She argues that a quantitative approach will help in capturing politeness phenomena and will allow for a certain level of prediction. Different groups of people may have different opinions about what counts as –polite. The term –politeness is only one of many possible labels in English to describe –relational work, where the latter –refers to all aspects of the work invested by individuals in the construction,

maintenance, reproduction and transformation of interpersonal relationships among those engaged in social practice (Locher & Watts, 2008, p. 96). Other English labels for face-maintaining and face-enhancing relational work might be *refined*, or *polished*, while face-aggravating behavior might be referred to as *impolite*, *rude*, *uncouth*, and so on. (Note that in this description —face-maintaining, etc., is used as a technical concept, while the lexemes in single quotes are emic terms).

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When considering —politeness as an evaluative concept embedded in a particular cultural context, it is self-evident that the term as such holds no entirely stable meaning. —Politeness, just like any other lexeme, can and does undergo semantic change over time. An important aspect of politeness, intimated in Sifianou's (1992) definition, is the notion that conventions of politeness and their linguistic realizations are mutually understood by the parties involved, and that it is anticipated that each party will observe these. Essentially, then, politeness is about participants in an interaction following the rules and expecting that they will be followed .

It should be noted that the term —politeness|| has a largely positive connotation in everyday language; witness the Oxford English Dictionary definition, for example: —courtesy, good manners, behaviour that is respectful or considerate of others.|| In linguistic studies, however, the term is used in a more neutral manner: Ide (1989) captures this difference very deftly, explaining that, —Just as *height* does not refer to the state of being *high*, *politeness* is not the state of being *polite*, rather it is a continuum stretching from polite to non-polite|| (p. 225).

Eelen suggests that Lakoff, Leech, Brown, and Levinson —can be considered the founding fathers of modern politeness research|| (2001, p. 23). Certainly it would be difficult, some would say impossible, to discuss politeness and theories of politeness without considering the work of Brown and Levinson, in particular their 1987 book, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*, originally published as a paper in 1978. Brown and Levinson, like Lakoff and Leech, build on Grice's CP. What they were hoping to develop, they said, was —a tool for describing . . . the quality of social relationships|| (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 55); an important element of this aim was to build—controversially—a single universal theory that addresses politeness phenomena in different cultures: —We want to account for the observed cross-cultural similarities in the abstract principles which underlie polite usage|| (1987, p. 57).

Taboo

Taboos have always existed in language and culture even though the term „taboo“ was not defined until 1777 when it was borrowed and introduced into English by Captain James Cook, who reported the word taboo from Tongan „Tapu“ or „Tabu“ meaning forbidden. In this respect, Radcliffe-Brown (1939:5f) states that:

"In the language of Polynesia the word means simply „to forbid“, „forbidden“, and can be applied to any sort of prohibition. A rule of etiquette, an order issued by a chief, an injunction to children not to meddle with the possessions of their elders, may all be expressed by the use of the word tapu." (Keith Allan and Kate Burridge, 2006, p.2). As suggested above, Trudgill also supports the point that a taboo is something which is prohibited to be uttered. In this respect, he (2000:18) describes the term as follows :

"A behavior which is believed to be supernaturally forbidden, or regarded as immoral or improper; it deals with behavior which is prohibited or inhibited in an apparently irrational manner".

Furthermore, Allan and Burridge highlight that the word taboo can be defined as a prescription of behaviour that affects everyday life. In the same sense, Farberow claims that taboos refer to forbidden acts and speech. He adds that they are seen as the norms of the society since they control the past, the present and the future of its members. In this regard, he (1963:2) defines the term as follows:

"Taboos are primarily backward-oriented, for by being essentially forbidding and prohibiting, they tend to preserve the past and to control the impingement of the future on the present. Of course, not all taboos are old. New ones constantly appears, taking various shapes and forms as the substance of the culture evolves, but they all serve the same goal-preservation of the status quo " .

In fact, the term taboo is difficult to define since every society has expressions or behaviors that are considered taboo. In this line, Trudgill claims that taboo topics are culture-specific since topics that are forbidden in one culture can be beneficial in another one. In this sense, he states (2000: 18) that –The type of word that is tabooed in a particular language will be a good reflection of at least part of the system||. In contradiction with this point of view, Wardhaugh (2010:236) maintains that taboo words are universal. This statement is better explained through his speech as follows:

Each social group is different from every other in how it constraints linguistic behavior in this way, but constrain it in some such way it certainly does. Perhaps one linguistic universal is that no social group uses language quite uninhibitedly.

With this purpose in mind, Wardhaugh further explains that people avoid certain acts or expressions that are forbidden because they result in embarrassment. In this sense, he (ibid: 239) defines the word taboo as follows:

"Taboo is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behaviours believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame".

Similarly, Laitinen (2009), argues for the above idea when he maintains that a taboo can be anything that is forbidden to be mentioned or spoken. He also adds that taboos are the result of cultural norms and historical practises shared by the members of a given speech community. For this reason, some expressions, that are considered taboo in a society, are not necessarily forbidden in another community. In the same line of thought, Allan and Burridge declare that since a community's members share the same principles, they have

also what is called "shared taboos". In this sense, they (ibid: 09) highlight the following statement :

"To an outsider, many prohibitions are perplexing and seem silly-but they are among the common values that link the people of a community together. What one group values, another scorns. Shared taboos are therefore a sign of social cohesion ".On the other hand, Hughes (1991: 464) claims that the definition of taboo has shifted from meaning —strictly forbidden|| to simply —offensive|| or —grossly impolite||. She (ibid: 462) strongly posits the view that today's taboo refers to a —prohibition against socially unacceptable words, expressions, and topics, especially of a sexual and racist nature||. In fact, Allan and Burridge share the same view when they maintain that any word, which causes harm or shame to either an individual or a community, is considered taboo since it results in injury and discomfort. In this regard, they (2006:27) argue that:

"They arise in cases where the individual's acts can cause discomfort, harm or injury to him-or herself and to others. Any behavior that may be dangerous to an individual or his, her community is likely to be subject to taboo, whether this is in the domain of the sacred or the otherwise metaphysical, or touches on earthly persons of power or concerns contact with dangerous creatures". This means that a taboo is —a proscription of behavior that affects everyday life (idem) as they have pointed out. They also claim that people always tend to avoid such unacceptable behaviors unless they intentionally tend to violate taboos. Besides, Anderson and Trudgill (1990: 55-56) observe that some taboos are —important elements in the structure and social life of a culture||, for example, sex does not mean that this area of life is forbidden, but it is regulated by conscious and unconscious rules.

Moving deeper in our analysis, it is worth mentioning that through using TL; people may feel free from social norms and succeed in hurting others since taboos can act as swearwords. In this respect, Trudgill (2000: 18) observes that —breaking rules (may) have connotations of strength or freedom which (people) find desirable||. He (ibid: 19) also adds that —taboo words are frequently used as swear-words [...] because they are powerful||. In connection with this, Jay agrees that language can be used to express unacceptable things that can harm others. In this respect, he (2009: 155) maintains that :

"Taboo words can be used to achieve a variety of personal and interpersonal outcomes that may be positive, negative, or inconsequential in terms of their impact on others, although some might argue all uses of taboo words are harmful to some degree ".

What emerges from the above discussion is that the use of TL depends largely on the consequences of speech. If it results in embarrassment, it will be eliminated, while if it leads to solidarity, humor and relaxation, it is favored. In this vein, Jay adds that —speakers will use curse words based on their social utility.

From what precedes, it is necessary to mention that the term taboo, from this standpoint, is difficult to define because it changes depending on certain reasons Moreover, many scholars suggest that, in a taboo area, we can find gestures, behaviours, words and expressions. However, our main concern is limited for studying taboo topics and words mainly sex and death .

"Discussion of verbal insults invariably raises the question of obscenity, profanity, 'cuss words,' and other forms of taboo language. Taboo words are those that are to be avoided entirely, or at least avoided in 'mixed company' or 'polite company.' Typical examples involve common swear words such as Damn! or Shit! The latter is heard more and more in 'polite company,' and both men and women use both words openly. Many, however, feel that the latter word is absolutely inappropriate in 'polite' or formal contexts. In place of these words, certain euphemisms--that is polite substitutes for taboo words--can be used. "What counts as taboo language is something defined by culture, and not by anything inherent in the language ".

The New Oxford Dictionary of English (2001) says, taboo (also tabu) is a social or religious custom prohibiting or restricting a particular practice or forbidding association with a particular person, place, or thing. Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary (Sixth edition) (2004) explains it like this, taboo is a cultural or religious custom that does not allow people to do, use or talk about a particular thing as people find it offensive or embarrassing; taboo words are words that many people consider offensive or shocking, for example because they refer to sex, the body or people's race. In Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (2000), taboo word is a term that is avoided for religious, political or sexual reasons and is usually replaced by a euphemism, e.g. rest room or bath room for toilet. In these dictionaries, the definitions of --taboo|| seemingly vary but basically they are the same .

Taboo subjects include: body functions about sex and excretion, private parts of the body, illness and death; words believed to be blasphemy; income, salary, age of ladies, etc.

Power

Social power is the ability to achieve goals even if other people oppose those goals. All societies are built on some form of power, and this power typically resides within the government; however, some governments in the world exercise their power through force, which is not legitimate. Power is the ability to get others to change their behavior even if they do not wish to do so .

The most general meaning of power found in the literature and everyday thinking is that it is the capacity to cause effects, to have an impact on or change things, to do work, either in the physical or social world. At this level of abstraction power belongs to things as well as people and affects things as well as people. A sub-category is power as the capacity in some way to affect people or society, to cause them to do things that they would not otherwise have done. A person, institution, physical event or idea may be described as powerful because it is having a big impact on society; it affects what people do and think and how they live. This category can be additionally restricted to effects produced by people, intended or unintended. The idea of a person or group having an impact on others, causing them to think, feel or act in ways they would not have otherwise, I shall term power as impact. A further sub-category is power as the capacity of people to have an intended influence on others and this is how most theorists have defined social power. It is the definition that permeates the standard theory. It rests on an analogy between the processes by which people influence others, to produce desired

changes in their psychological and behavioral states, and the way in which people can exert some physical power over objects. There are five bases of power defined by French and Raven (1960): Reward power: control over valued resources. Coercive power: ability to inflict punishment, possibly physical. Expert power: superior knowledge. Legitimate power: formal rank or position. Referent power: when people want to be like you .

What is the distinctive generative power of text? What in Hasan's terms is the semologic (Hasan 1999)? It is the power to socially produce, i.e. to work, in its textual moment; the power to produce texts. I shall refer to this as texturing, adapting the term texture from Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Hasan 1976). So the production of social life in social practices is partly the production of texts. The creativity of texturing as a mode of social production consists in generating new meanings through generating new combinations of elements of semiotic systems (including new wordings). Any difference of wording entails a difference of meaning, though the nature of that difference is a matter for social negotiation and renegotiation as wordings are repeated in shifting contexts (Derrida 1978, Hasan 1999).

METHODOLOGY

A number of definitions have emerged from the wealth of studies that have examined politeness phenomena, and these reveal subtly different emphases. For some researchers the key idea is that politeness serves as a means of reducing the possibility of conflict. Lakoff, for example, contends that —politeness is developed by societies in order to reduce friction in personal interaction|| (1975, p. 64), while Brown and Levinson (1987) view politeness as a means of softening acts which threaten the face of speakers. Kasper, in an overview of research into linguistic politeness, explains that these perspectives on politeness see communication —as a fundamentally dangerous and antagonistic endeavor|| (1990, p. 194), thus politeness would require strategies that can be used by participants in an interaction to reduce the danger and possibility of antagonism .

It is worth explaining in some detail the principles of their theory, given that it has become a point of reference for almost any research in the field of politeness. The theory is predicated on the notion of the model person (MP), explained as —a wilful fluent speaker of a natural language, further endowed with two special properties—rationality and face|| (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 58). A person's face is defined as the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting in two related aspects :

1. Negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction— i.e., freedom of action and freedom from imposition.
2. Positive face: the positive consistent self-image or personality '(crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants (p.61).

Face wants, they say, can only be satisfied by the actions of others, which means that —it will in general be to the mutual interest of two MPs to maintain each other's face|| (p. 60). Such a position, then, in common with Grice's CP, assumes that participants will adopt a cooperative approach to interacting, and will expect the same from other participants.

According to Wardhaugh (2000, p.234), taboo is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame. Consequently, so far as language is concerned, certain things are not to be said for certain objects can be referred to only in certain circumstances, for example, only by certain people, or through deliberate circumlocution, i.e. euphemistically. Tabooed subjects can vary widely: sex, death, illness, excretion, bodily functions, religious matters, and the supernatural. But quite often they extend to other aspects of social life.

The standard theory is not one specific formal theory but rather a set of general assumptions about the relationship between power and influence which is shared by all the classic theories of social influence (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Festinger, 1950, 1953, 1954; French & Raven, 1959; Kelman, 1958). The basic ideas are that power is the capacity to influence other people, that it is conferred by the control of resources (positive and negative outcomes, rewards and costs, information, etc.) that are desired, valued or needed by others and which make them dependent upon the influencing agent for the satisfaction of their needs or reaching their goals, and that different types of resources confer different types of power leading to different kinds of influence. The standard theory of power tends to conflate all the varieties of influence into one relationship of dependence for resources. Power is provided by control of resources and those without such resources are in the power of those who have them. In this view power is like some abstract commodity which exists in principle outside of social relationships and which can be used by the lucky few to impose their will on such relationships .

RESULTS

Sample 1: LINDA: Isn't that wonderful? WILLY: Don't interrupt. What's wonderful about it? There's fifty men in the City of New York who'd stake him. [To BIFF] Sporting goods? (Act I, page 49).

In this dialogue, Willy doesn't respect Linda. Because of his higher position, he ignores her! He uses his power to underestimate Linda's role in the dialogue. This is a legitimate power relation in this example .

Sample 2: BIFF: I'll see Oliver tomorrow. Hap, if we could work that out... LINDA: Maybe things are beginning to — WILLY] wildly enthused, to LINDA [: Stop interrupting! (To BIFF) But don't wear sport jacket and slacks when you see Oliver.(Act I, page 50).

In this dialogue Linda tries to speak but she gets interrupted by Willy and he doesn't let her talk. She is discouraged by hearing "stop interrupting ". This one is also an example of legitimate power .

Sample 3 :LINDA: Oliver always thought the highest of him — WILLY: Will you let me talk? BIFF: Don't yell at her, Pop, will ya? WILLY] angrily [: I was talking, wasn't I? BIFF: I don't like you yelling at her all the time, and I'm tellin'you, that's all .

WILLY: What're you, takin'over this house? (Act I, page 51).

Here Willy benefits from the hierarchy and discourages Linda one more time to speak but Biff tries to defend his mother politely. He tries to respect his father and give his opinion by just saying "I don't like you yelling at her all the time, and I'm tellin'you, that's all". Biff is tactful toward Willy. By saying "What're you, takin'over this house?" Willy emphasizes on his power and tries to ask his son to stop taking his mother's side .

Sample 4 :HOWARD: Seven years old. Get that tone. WILLY: Ts, ts. Like to ask a little favour 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.] WILLY: You're very good! (Act II, page 60)

Willy wants to ask Howard not to fire him but Howard is aware of it, so he doesn't let him talk and interrupts him by using the voice recorder he just bought. Howard's power as the boss is outstanding. In this dialog, both legitimate and expert power relationship is observable .

Sample 5: WILLY: I tell ya why, Howard. Speaking frankly and between the two of us, y'know — I'm just a little tired. HOWARD: Oh, I could understand that, Willy. But you're a road man, Willy, and we do a road business. We've only got a half-dozen salesman on the floor here. WILLY: God knows, Howard, I never asked a favor of any man. But I was with the firm when your father used to carry you in here in his arms. HOWARD: I know that, Willy, but — WILLY: Your father came to me the day you were born and asked me what I thought of the name of Howard, may he rest in peace .

HOWARD: I appreciate that, Willy, but there just is no spot here for you. If I had a spot I'd slam you right in, but I just don't have a single solitary spot.]He looks for his lighter. WILLY has picked it up and gives it to him. Pause.] WILLY] with increasing anger [: Howard, all I need to set my table is fifty dollars a week. HOWARD: But where am I going to put you, kid? WILLY: Look, it isn't a question of whether I can sell merchandise, is it? HOWARD: No, but it's a business, kid, and everybody's gotta pull his own weight. WILLY] desperately [: Just let me tell you a story. Howard — HOWARD: 'Cause you gotta admit, business is business. (Act II, pages 62-63).

In this dialogue Howard and Willy mostly speak respectfully to each other. This respect and polite language is due to Howard's position and Willy's age. In spite of the respect Howard has toward Willy he uses the word "kid" to show his power. Willy gets interrupted again here," Just let me tell you a story. Howard."

Sample 6 :

THE WOMAN [resisting]: But I've got to get dressed, Willy, I can't — WILLY: Get out of here! Go back, go back...] Suddenly striding for the ordinary [This is Miss Francis, Biff, she's a buyer. They're painting her room. Go back, Miss Francis, go back... THE WOMAN: But my clothes, I can't go out naked in the hall! WILLY] pushing her offstage [: Get outa here! Go back, go back! [BIFF slowly sits down on his suitcase as the argument continues offstage.] THE WOMAN: Where's my stockings? You promised me stockings, Willy! WILLY: I have no stockings here! THE WOMAN: You had two boxes of size nine sheers for me, and I want them! WILLY: Here, for God's sake, will you get outa here !

Willy insults his mistress by disrupting her and uses taboo language to vindicate himself in front of his son, who just got aware of his father's affair.

Sample 7: BIFF [his weeping breaking from him]: Dad... WILLY [infected by it]: Oh, my boy... BIFF: Dad... WILLY: She's nothing to me, Biff. I was lonely, I was terrible lonely. BIFF: You — you gave her Mama's stockings! [His tears break through and he rises to go.] WILLY [grabbing for BIFF]: I gave you an order! BIFF: Don't touch me, you — liar! WILLY: Apologize for that! BIFF: You fake! You phony little fake! You fake! [Overcome, he turns quickly and weeping fully goes out with suitcase. WILLY is left on the floor on his knees.](Act II, pages 92-95).

Willy doesn't let Biff to talk, because he is aware of his son's anger. He ignores him when he calls him several times. Biff uses taboo words to show his dissatisfaction with his father's sinful relationship.

Sample 8: 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 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. (Act II, page 104-106).

Willy swears at his son, Biff. Biff also swears at himself. He is angry by the situation his father put his family in .

CONCLUSION

Language is not a means to pass factual content from one person to another, it is also a tool to shape relationships and negotiate interpersonal meaning. When we use language, we also reveal something about ourselves and our relationships with others. Willy has lost his job and marriage. He is depressed and has no power any more, and commits suicide to end this situation. He thinks by committing suicide he can gain his power back and with his blood money, change his family's financial problem. Different sociocultural factors such as power, politeness, impoliteness, and taboo words were observed in the play "Death of a Salesman". Characters used different form of language. Their speeches and dialogues were influenced by their situation, gender, hierarchy, and age.

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