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**The Analysis of the Interpersonal and  
Declaratory Acts of the Humorous  
Utterances  
In  
Bernard Shaw's Comedy You Never Can  
Tell  
A Pragmatic Study**

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**Abstract**

It is believed that there are certain factors which affect the proficiency in understanding the message from the stand point of the receiver and the sender. These include the words used (including the text and the different meanings transmitted through it). The second factor is the unstated words in which it does not matter what you say but how you say it.

Four parts constitute this paper. The first part briefly describes the types of Speech Acts according to the authors presenting them. These are followed by a discussion of the interpersonal and Declaratory Acts. Third, these special types are sought and analysed in Bernard Shaw's You Never Can Tell with special attention devoted to the influence of the type of speech Act on the humorous utterances.



The adopted model of analysis is that of Allan's (1986) which is seen as the most comprehensive model with its detailed classification of Speech Acts.

The analysis reveals that Shaw develops his characters by assigning them distinctive styles of speaking and consequently making them adopt a certain attitude towards language.

To some degree, all comic dramatists deal with different characters or "types" that have the same attributes of appearance, behaviour, and language. This justifies the parallel and almost equal rates found in both the Interpersonal and Declaratory Acts among Shaw's characters in the comedy under investigation.

### **Introduction**

Speech Act(s)(henceforth SA(s)) is one of the aspects of pragmatics. It is a term suggested by Austin (1911-60) and used widely in linguistics. It analyses the role of utterances in relation to the speaker's-hearer's behaviour in interpersonal communication. It is a communicative activity, i.e., a locutionary act that is defined with reference to the speaker's intentions during speaking and the effect they have on listeners.

There are several categories of SAs. The verbs that are used to indicate them which are intended by the speaker are sometimes known as performative verbs. The criteria which have to be satisfied to make an SA successful are known as felicity conditions.

Subsequent to the works of Austin, Grice, and Searle, two opposing views about SAs have appeared. One is Searle and Vanderveken's (1985) developed in Vanderveken's (1990) in which he tries to construct a formal theory of SAs which can be accommodated within the system of Montague Grammar. The other, is Sperber and Wilson's (1986) in which they believe that there is no norm, or need for a theory of SAs. So they dismiss the



presence of an SAs theory. They question Levinson's (1983:226) assumption that:

**Speech Acts remain, along with presupposition and implicature,  
Central phenomena that any general pragmatic theory must  
account for.**

Sperber and Wilson conclude from such questioning the following statement:

**The vast range of data that speech act theories have been concerned  
with no special interest to pragmatics.**

(Sperber and Wilson (1986:243)

But their above statement still leaves some space for an SA theory in linguistics or pragmatics.

Van Dijk (1977:198) criticizes this statement giving specific and general criticism of Sperber and Wilson's theory. However, according to Searle (1971:39) an SA is not , as has generally been thought , the "symbol" of words or sentences , or even "token" of linguistic communication , but rather it is the " production" of the token in the performance of the SA which is the basic unit of linguistic communication . To be more precise, the production of the sentence taken under specific conditions is the illocutionary act, i.e. SA which is "the minimal unit of linguistic communication" (ibid).

Some linguists use "SAs" or "linguistic acts" to refer to "intentional" successful communicative acts (cf. kearns, 1994:50).

**SAs and SA Verbs**



Austin in *How to Do things with Words* made a shift from the view that performatives are types of sentences with certain syntactic and pragmatic properties, to the view that there is a general class of performative utterances which includes both explicit and implicit performatives.

Austin (1970) suggests three basic senses in which in saying something one is doing something and accordingly three kinds of acts are simultaneously performed:

1. Locutionary act: the utterance of a sentence with determinate sense and reference.
2. Illocutionary act: the making of a statement, offer, promise, etc. in writing a sentence, by virtue of the conventional force associated with it ( or with its explicit paraphrase).
3. Perlocutionary act : the bringing about of effects on the audience by means of uttering the sentence , such effects being special to the circumstances of utterance.

Austin concentrates on the illocutionary act. For instance:

(1) Shoot her !

This may have the illocutionary force of ordering, urging or advising the addressee to shoot her; but the perlocutionary effect of persuading, forcing or frightening the addressee into shooting her.

Thus, the illocutionary act, directly achieved by the conventional force, is associated with the issuance of a special kind of utterance which agrees with a conventional procedure and is determinate consequently. However, a perlocutionary act is specific to the circumstances of issuance, and is, as a result, not conventionally achieved only by that particular utterance, and includes all those effects , intended or unintended often indeterminate that some particular utterance in a particular situation may cause (ibid:240).



Searle (1977:34-8) points out that there are five basic kinds of action which can be performed in speaking, by means of the following types of utterance:

1. Representatives, which commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition (paradigm cases: asserting, concluding, etc.)
2. Directives , which are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something (paradigm cases : requesting , questioning)
3. Commissives , which commit the speaker to some future action (paradigm cases : promising , threatening , offering ).
4. Expressives, which express a psychological state (paradigm cases: thanking, apologizing, welcoming, congratulating).
5. Declarations , which effect immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs and which tend to rely on elaborate extra – linguistic institutions ( paradigm cases : excommunicating , declaring war , christening , firing from employment ).

But when there are many things that one could be doing with one's words, one cannot always depend on one's audience to recourse to using explicit performative , i.e. , saying what one is doing (Hornsby , 1994 :195) .

Mey (1993:133) calls the verbs which denote SAs “Speech Act Verbs” (SAVs henceforth). But there is a kind of assymetry in the relationship between SAVs and SAs proper:

1. not all SAs are represented by specific SAVs, but they could be represented by several ( with the exception of the institutionalized SAs like baptize) . Therefore an SA like ‘to order’ can be expressed in various and often indirect ways:

- (2) a. I ordered you to shut the door.
- b. Shut the door.
- c. You will shut the door.



2. not every SA has a corresponding SAV of its own . The act of pronouncing a jury's finding is called ('to render a verdict', however, there is no SAV to verdict's) e.g.:  
(3) I promised to come.

The above example shows that the speaker has performed a promise of coming and it binds the speaker to his promise. So the above sentence when uttered explicitly performs this promise for the hearer. But in the following sentence: (4) I promised to come, there is no explicit performative. It just describes a state of affairs that has happened once upon a time. It is not an SA of promising, in spite of the use of the word 'promise'.

Mey (ibid:134-35) concludes that "explicit performatives are the most extreme cases of SAVs in that they can perform , and necessarily , perform certain SAs for which they are designated".

Among the standard SAVs are verbs like 'to announce', 'to declare', 'to enquire', and so on. There is also a strange category of verbal expressions which have the property of denying what they are doing, or doing what they explicitly are denying. For instance:

(5) I am not threatening you, but if I ever see

Your face again around these parts ....

The speaker, in the above example, explicitly performs an act of not wanting to threaten the addressee, while he actually does exactly that (and maybe want to as well). Mey (ibid: 37) considers performativity as a property which is not specifically bound up with SAVs.

Many classifications of SAs have been proposed by many philosophers. Searle's classification, for example, belongs to the category called the "lumpers", i.e. those which lump together their SAs into a few, large categories. Opposite these, there are



the “Splitters”, which split up their SAs into a great number of classes; the number could be between five hundred and six hundred (1975:10). The individual SA realizations could range from 1,000 to 9,999 or even go up into the tens of thousands.

Because it is not easy to follow the splitters in this research, the “lumpers” will be adopted and the researcher will try to mention a certain number of verbs that are connected to SAVs.

To start with Searle (1977: 39) , he mentions some of the English verbs and verb phrases which are associated with illocutionary acts ( or SAs because according to him , they are the same ) : State , assert , describe , warn , remark , comment , command , order , request , criticize , apologize , censure , approve , welcome , promise , express , regret , express approval . It was suggested that there are over a thousand of such expressions in English.

Leech (1983:203-06) classifies illocutionary verbs, depending on Searl’s taxonomy of sentence types into:

1. Assertive verbs: e.g. affirm ellege, assert, predict, announce, and insist.
2. Directive verbs: e.g. ask, beg, bid, command, demand, forbid, recommend, request.
3. Commissive verbs: e.g. offer, promise, swear, volunteer, vow.
4. Expressive verbs: e.g. apologize, commiserate, congratulate, pardon, thank.

Leech (ibid) recognizes a fifth category called:

5. Rogative verbs which include question-introducing verbs like: ask, inquire, query and question.

Sometimes the category of Rogative verbs is treated as a subclass of directives.

But it is not because it is distinguished by the selection of an indirect question as complementizer .





Moreover, there is a category of “Compound SAVs” which can be described as verbs that are fit into more than one category like: advise, suggest, and tell. They can be either “assertive” or “directive”, for instance:

- (6) She advised us that there had been a mistake  
suggested  
told us
- (7) She advised us to arrive early  
suggested that we (should) arrive early  
told us to arrive early

This shows that the lexicon of SAVs should include multiple entries. The verb warn can also be both assertive and directive, for example:

- (8) a. They warned us that food was expensive.  
b. They warned us to take enough money.

Another class of verbs is called “non SAVs”. These are verbs like: name, classify, describe, define, identify, and attribute that are not illocutionary verbs. Some of them like classify, and identify are not SAVs at all, but rather ‘cognitive verbs’. Others like define are locutionary acts (to do with “said” meaning) rather than illocutionary.

In addition, performative verbs are omitted from SAVs. Leech (ibid: 215) assumes that all SAVs are potential candidates for the performative role of self reference:

- (9) \* I ( hereby) persuade you to be quiet.

This is unacceptable because it is grammatically uncooperative (and impolite) to use a perlocutionary verb like persuade and amuse performatively . He also asserts that most linguists have tended to judge the grammaticality of performative verbs out of their contexts, but the acceptability of these verbs is different





from one cultural context to another. Leech (ibid: 138) believes that sentences not verbs which matter in SAs. He states:

**It seems clear ... that speech acts, as well as SAVs , only make sense when we see them used in their proper contexts . As isolated lexical items, or members of a set, they have very little to tell us.**

Some linguists like Bach and Harnish (1979) and Allan (1986) base their classification on semantic similarity between English verbs. They identify two main categories which Allan (ibid: 192) calls 'Interpersonal Acts' and 'Declaratory Acts'. He bases his SA classification on the different types of values found to obtain for various classes of SAs (cf. Allan, ibid: 192-203).

Harnish (1994:444-53) suggests different types of SAs for different

sentences types (see table (1)). These are:

- A. Imperative
- B. Interrogative
- C. Declarative
- D. Free Fragments

For more information about their subtypes and examples about each type see (Harnish: 419,441,444).

Table (1) below gives the various suggested types of SAs by different authors. Yet Allan's (1986) model is put in a separate table due to its being the most comprehensive model and gives a detailed classification of SAs and consequently adopted as a model for analysis in this study.



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Table (1)  
Suggested Types of SAs by Different Authors

State	Searle (1977:34-8)	Leech (1983:205-06)	Tsohatzidis (1994:1)	Alston (1994:32-42)	Sadock (1994:401-02)	Declarative	Interrogative	Imperative	Free Fragments *2	Sperber and Wilson *3 (1986:243-6)
State Assert Describe Warn Remark Censure Approve Welcome Promise Express regret Express approval	1. Responsive (asserting, concluding, etc.) 2. Directive (requesting, questioning, etc.) 3. commissive (promising, threatening, offering, etc.) 4. Expressive thanking, apologizing, welcoming, congratulating, etc.) 5. Declarations (excommunicating, declaring war, christening, firing from employment)	1. Assertive Verbs (affirm, elege, assert, forecast, predict) 2. Directive Verbs (ask, beg, bid, command, request) 3. Commissive Verbs (offer, promise, swear, volunteer, vow) 4. Expressive Verbs (apologize, congratulate, pardon, thank) 5. Rogative Verbs (ask, enquire, question) 6. Compound Verbs (advise, suggest, tell) 7. Non-SAVs (name, classify, describe, define, identify, attribute)	1. give 2. wish 3. ask 4. predict 5. object	1. insist 2. Predict 3. urge 4. congratulate 5. complain 6. object 7. blame 8. censure 9. upbraid 10. correct 11. reproach 12. take to ask 13. call to account	1. state 2. request 3. promise 4. apologize 5. ask 6. accuse 7. criticize	1. make 2. state 3. make claims 4. retell stories	1. gain information 2. alternative questions 3. alternatives 4. rhetorical questions 5. surprise questions 6. self-addressed questions 7. speculative questions 8. prompting questions	1. request 2. give orders 3. Make suggestions 4. emphatic 5. plea 6. offer 7. permission 8. warning 9. exhortation 10. wishes 11. healing 12. hocus-pocus 13. advice 14. threats and dares 15. predetermined cases	1. Team work(exhortation) 2. My friend (Sarcastic) 3. My lunch (exclamation) 4. Your move (request) 5. The time (request for the time) 6. Near the window! 7. On the stairs! 8. On the table! 9. The gobhins 10. All of you with beards, 11. Lord threshing ham 12. A beer, please 13. The left shoulder, please	Category I Institutional kind Category II Are not identified as such by some predictions Category III General kind, saying, jelling asking
								Harnish *1 (1994:419,441,444)		
										Sperber and Wilson *3 (1986:243-6)

- 1.\* Harnish (ibid :423) defines over one hundred acts in terms of expressing attitudes like belief and desire.
- 2.\* Free Fragments are pieces of sentences. They are free because they can be free-standing contributions to a talk exchange, and fragments because they do at least seem to be fragments of larger sentences. The NPs (from 1-5) which are not derivable from full sentences but can be used and often with the same force as full sentences. The prepositional phrases (from 6-8) can be uttered with directive or exclamatory force. The NPs (from 9-13) convey a request, order, warning, threat, etc.
- 3.\* Sperber and Wilson (1986) classify SA types under three categories (I, II, III) and then argue that only one of these categories (III) deserves to be accommodated within a linguistic theory.



Table (2)  
Classification of SAs (After Allan, 1986:238)

SPEECH ACTS							
Interpersonal Acts						Declaratory Acts	
Constatives	Predictives	Commissives	Acknowledgement	Directives	Interpersonal Authoritatives	Effectives	Verdictives
1. Assertives	Forecast Predict Prophecy etc.	1. Promises  promise, swear, vow, etc.	1. Apologize	1. Requestives  ask, beg, implore , insist, invite, petition, plead, pray, solicit, summon, tell, urge, etc.	1. Permissives  agree to , allow, authorize, bless, consent to , dismiss, excuse, exempt, forgive, grant, leave, permission , license, pardon, permit, release, etc.	baptizing, marrying, appointing, inaugurating, sentencing, knighting, etc.	casting, verdicts, declaring, empowering, refereeing, decision, judging, vetoing, voting , etc.
Affirm , indicate, maintain, allege, propound, assert, declare, say, claim, state, submit, etc.		2. Offers  Offer , propose , volunteer , etc.	2. Condolences	2. Questions  ask, inquire, query, question, quiz , etc.	2. Advisories  admonish, advise, causation, counsel, propose, urge, warn, etc.		
2. Informative			3. Congratulations	3. Requirements  bid, charge, command, demand, dictate, direct, enjoin, instruct, order, prescribe, require, etc.			
Announce, disclose, Inform, insist, notify, Point out , regret , report, Reveal, tell, testify, etc.			4. Greeting	4. Prohibitives  enjoin , forbid, prohibit, proscrib, restrict , etc.			
3. Concessive			5. Thanks				
Acknowledge, admit, Affirm, allow, assert Concede, concur, grant Own, etc.			6. Farewells				



4. Retrodictives			7. Acceptance of acknowledgements, etc.				
Recount, report, etc.			8. Rejection of acknowledgements				
5. Dissentives			Refuse, reject, spurn, etc.				
Differ, disagree, dissent, reject, etc.							
6. Supportives							
Assume, hypothesize, postulate, stipulate, suppose, theorize							
7. Constatives/verdicts							
Approve, be of the opinion, classify, deem, Find, hold, judge, rate, etc.							
8. Descriptives							
Assess, classify, date, describe, diagnose, identify, rank, etc.							
9. Ascriptives							
Ascribe, attribute, predicate, etc.							
10. Retractives							
Abjure, deny, disavow, repudiate, withdraw, etc.							
11. Assentives							
Accept, agree, assent, concur							
12. Disputatives							
Demur, dispute, object.							
13. Responsives							
Answer, reply, r							



eter.							
14.Suggestives							
Conjunctive, gues, suggest							

## The Analysis

One of the striking features in Shaw's *You Never Can Tell* is that some of the humorous utterances carry more than one SA at a time as shown in Table (3) below which provides a breakdown of the types of SAs and information about their distribution according to characters producing them.

Now consider the following example:

Crampton: [rising and glaring at him] Young

Man: you owe me six weeks rent.

Valentine. I do

Crampton . Can you pay me?

Valentine. No.

Crampton . [Satisfied with his advantage] I thought not. [He sits down again] . How soon do you think you'll be able to pay me if you have no better manners than to make game of your patients?

Valentine. My good sir: my patients haven't all formed their characters on kitchen soap.

Valentine's last utterance carries three Constatative Acts namely: Informative, Dissentive and Criticism. This clash between the SAs is due to Valentine's implication that he deals with Crampton in that bad manner (by informing him) because not all his patients are as bad as him by forming his character on kitchen soap and consequently criticizing and disagreeing with him.

This proves what Wilson (1979:12) believes that something is funny when it is related simultaneously to two different classes



and is able to be interpreted into two entirely different ways. Consequently , Shaw follows the Dualistic theory of humour in which the world is divided into two types of components such as the animate and the inanimate , the spirit and the flesh , the good and the bad , the fat and the thin . So are the utterances which can carry two or more SAs simultaneously.

This in turn justifies the raise in the number of the speech act types performed over the total number of the humorous utterances of the characters as shown in table (3) below.





Table 3  
Breakdown of the Types of Humorous According to Characters in Shaw's You Never Can Tell

Total Humorous Utterances	INTERPERSONAL ACTS														Total Interpersonal Acts				Declaring Acts			Total of all types of SAs																
	Constatives														Commissives				Directives				Interpersonal Authoritative				Total No.	Effectives	Verdictives	Total No.	%							
	Assertives	Informative	concessive	retrodictive	Dissentive	Supportive	Constative	Descriptive	Ascriptive	Retractive	Assentive	Disputative	Responsive	Suggestive	Total No.	%	Promise	Offers	Invitations	Total No.	%		Requestive	Question	Requirement	Prohibitive						Total No.	%	Permissive	Advisories	Total No.	%	Predictive
95	17	28	0	2	15	3	2	0	1	0	0	7	0	75	6	1	0	3	4	3	47	8	1	4	0	28	24	0	1	1	0	2	1	11	2	4	3	11
92	2	26	1	0	6	0	0	0	0	3	0	5	0	53	5	0	0	1	1	1	47	1	1	5	0	45	45	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	1	0	10	
79	4	23	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	45	3	0	2	2	3	3	47	1	6	1	0	28	37	0	1	1	0	0	76	2	2	3	78	
46	6	15	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	36	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	3	1	0	21	35	0	2	3	0	0	59	1	0	1	60	
49	5	6	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	4	0	1	0	42	6	1	0	1	1	47	6	1	8	0	24	36	0	1	1	0	0	68	0	0	0	68		
37	9	15	1	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	36	5	0	0	0	0	0	47	0	5	7	0	13	2	0	0	0	0	62	0	0	0	62		
18	6	7	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	21	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	9	0	0	0	0	23	0	0	0	23			
16	4	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	0	10	48	0	0	0	0	21	2	0	2	23			
11	3	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	12	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	4	24	0	1	6	0	0	17	0	0	0	17		
31	7	13	2	2	5	3	2	0	2	7	0	4	0	33	6	2	2	3	8	45	1	4	6	0	17	33	0	6	6	1	2	52	7	3	1	53		
26	6	0	8	2	5	8	2	0	2	0	2	2	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	6	1	5	39	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	4			



Another feature found in this play is that the rate of the interpersonal Acts is more than that of the Declaratory Acts. They stand at (98%) out of the whole humorous SAs while the Declaratory Acts constitute only (2%) of them.

Now the question arises is: What does Shaw's excessive use of Interpersonal Acts serve? This yields intensification through going deep into the behaviour of the characters in the present comedy. On the one hand, Shaw's characters are committed to the truth of their utterances, interested in the future actions and get the addressees do what they want them to do. His characters are strong and effect very strong reactions, i.e. perlocutionary acts, on both the addressees in the play and the audience or the readers outside the play when they make them laugh or reject their actions and speeches.

On the other hand, because the whole comedy is about a social event, i.e. family affairs, there are very few Declaratory Acts which are connected to social activities such as declaring and deciding except for all the other Acts which are not related to family affairs.

The next feature of Shaw's style that captures the attention on most of the humorous utterances throughout *You Never Can Tell* is the playwright's excessive use of certain subtypes of SAs over others. This is clearly shown in the rate of the Constative SAs (63%) over the rest of all the interpersonal Acts which stand at (37%) out of the whole humorous types of SAs. This indicates that the humorous language concentrates on the informativity sides of speech which in turn reveal a humorous effect.

The next highest rate of Interpersonal Acts is that of the Directive SAs which stand at (33.3%). This is an indication of the character's emphasis on directing each others during their frequent quarrels and demands to achieve their goals. Consider the following example:



Mrs. Clandon [horrified] Oh Dolly! Dolly! My dearest: How can you be so rude? [To Valentine] Will you excuse these barbarian children of mine, Mr. Valentine?

Valentine. Don't mention it: I'm used to them .Would it be too much to ask you to wait five minutes while I get rid of my landlord

Dolly. downstairs? Don't be long. We're hungry.

Mrs. Clandon [again remonstrating] Dolly, dear!

P326, 2,3

In the utterances above, Mrs. Clandon wants her daughter to stop talking by performing a requestive Act and apologizes to Valentine because she does not approve of her children's conduct and Valentine in turn takes her permission to dismiss his landlord , ironically her husband . Dolly keeps asking Valentine to hurry up to eat early and her mother keeps asking her to stop talking.

All the other rates of Interpersonal Acts are very low and consequently insignificant. The rate of the Commissive Acts is (1.45%), the Interpersonal Authoritative Acts (1.8%) , the Predictive Acts (0.38%) , and the Acknowledgement Acts (0.36%). Such low rates reveal that such SAs are the least sources of humour that Shaw uses. These SAs require a very high rate of politeness which most of the characters lack.

Within the Declaratory Acts, there are only (7) Effective SAs which constitute (70%) of the Declaratory Acts and the rest is that of the Verdictives (3) which stands at (30%) . This means that the humorous language does not resort heavily on Declarations but on Acts that result from the most frequent communicative family affairs. There is nothing humorous in performing a baptizing or sentencing SAs.

Within the Constative SAs, the two highest rates belong to both the Informative SAs (39%) and the Assertive SAs (23%) .



This is due to the characters' being talkative and repeat each other to reveal their own feelings without any hesitation. For example:

M' Comas [ nettled ] I hope you intend to take what I have to say seriously.

Philip . [ with profound gravity ] I hope it will deserve it ,  
Mr M ' Comas . My knowledge of human nature teaches me not to expect too much.

Mrs. Clandon . [remonstrating] Philip

P. 647:4

Philip's above utterance includes a constative / Assertive SA because he wants to assert to M' Comas that he does not expect too much from him because of his knowledge of human nature and consequently he is praising himself directly and dispraising M ' Comas indirectly .

As an instance of the Informative SAs, consider the following example:

Philip. Because I have seen the gentleman; and he is entirely unfit to be my father, or Dolly's father, or Gloria's father, or my mother's husband.

M' Comas. Oh, indeed! Well, sir, let me tell you that whether you like it or not, he is your father, and your sister's father, and Mrs Clandon's husband. Now! What have you to say to that?

p.648:8

M'Comas' utterance is informative because he repeats what Philip has said in a different way informing him that Crampton is the father of the whole family and the husband of their mother.

The next two rates of constatives are those of Dissentive and Responsive SAs . This means that humorous language relies somehow on disagreement and responding intentionally or



unintentionally to the behaviour and speech of each others. For instance:

Valentine [desperately] on my honor I am in earnest.  
[she looks searchingly at him . His sense of humor gets the better of him; and he adds quaintly] Only, I always have been in earnest; and yet - ! Well, Here I am, you see.

Mrs. Clandon . This is just what I suspected.

[Severely] Mr. Valentine: you are one of those men who play with women's affections.

p.682:10

Mrs. Clandon's response is expected because whenever Valentine tries to defend himself she interrupts him and now she attacks him because he is playful and not earnest; therefore uttering the Responsive SA.

The rates of all the other Constative SAs are insignificant namely the Commissive SAs( 1.45%) , Interpersonal Authoritative SAs (1.8%) , Predictive SAs (0.38%) and Acknowledgement SAs (0.36%) . This indicates that because the characters are not serious they do not commit themselves so much to anything and because most of their behavior lacks politeness, there are few Acknowledgement SAs.

Three of the Constative SAs are not performed by any character in the comedy. These are the Ascriptive , Disputative and the Suggestive SAs . The characters do not seem to be interested in such acts.

At the level of individuals as shown in Table (4) below the highest rates of recurrence of Constative SAs belong to Valentine (22.65%), Philip (17.82%) and Dolly (16.0%) . These three





characters are the very talkative ones who argue a lot and have the highest rates of humorous utterances in the play.

For example:

Philip. I was christened in a comparatively prosaic mood. My name is –

Dolly [completing his sentence for him declamatorily] 'Norval. On the Grampian hills' –

Philip [declaiming gravely] 'My father feeds his flock, a frugal swain' –

Notice that all the utterances are incomplete and interrupted by Dolly who imposes herself within the speech of others though it is not her turn. Moreover what Philip says has no relation with his previous utterance. But at the same time all the above utterances are Constative / Informative SAs.

The next highest rates of Constative SAs are performed by Crampton (12.68%) and Gloria and Mrs. Clandon (10.87%) . The least rates belong to the three minor characters: M'Comas (6.34%), the Waiter (3.62%) , and Bohn (3.32%) . Their being non-central characters does not require them to perform such acts.

As for the Directive SAs, Dolly carries the highest rate (25%). This significant rate is due to Dolly's demanding character. All through the comedy, she keeps asking questions and inquiring.

Crampton, [growling contemptuously] London society!

London society! You are not fit for any society, child.

Dolly [losing her temper] Now look here, Mr Crampton. If you think-

Dolly. The servants come in Lent and keel down before you and confess all the things they've done; and you have to pretend to forgive them. Do they do that in England, William?

p.655:6, 7



Dolly in the above utterance rejects being addressed as a 'child' by her father; therefore performing the Directive / Requestive SA in an impolite way. This significant rate of Directive SAs may be attributable to the fact that Dolly is a spoiled young girl who does not care much about the requirements of etiquette.

The next two characters who perform the same rate of the Directive SAs are Valentine and Philip (16%) . In the following utterance Philip is addressing M'Comas and asking him about his figure and how it is changed.

Philip. [seconding her warmly] Where the beard?  
The clock? The Poetic exterior?

P.644.3

The utterance is full of Directive As and the humour arises from both repeating the same structures said by Dolly and the implication that M'Comas looks different and consequently making fun of him.

Mrs. Clandon and Crampton perform two approximate rates of Directive SAs, namely (13.71%) and (12%) respectively . In spite of being a husband and a wife, they do not perform a high rate of Directive SAs because Crampton has not seen or lived with his family and the mother , Mrs. Clandon , cannot control her son and daughter.

The lowest rates of recurrancy of Directive SAs are performed by Gloria (7.42%) Bohn (5.71%) ; the Waiter (2.28%) and M 'Comas (1.14%) . These characters are not in the position of directing others; on the contrary, they are supposed to do what they are required to do. All the variety of rates of the Directive SAs is an evidence for the humorous language which makes not so much use of such acts.

The rates of the predictive As and Acknowledgement As are insignificant. The rate of the predictive As is (0.38%) and that of the Acknowledgement As is (0.36%). These insignificant rates





show that the characters do not have the power of predicting. Their speech is full of nonsense and repetitive utterances. And performing Acknowledgement As, requires a very high standard of politeness which almost all the characters lack. The only one who performs the Predictive SA is Valentine who utters only (2) instances of them out of (534) of the Interpersonal SAs. The two characters that perform Acknowledgement As are Valentine and Dolly (1) instance for each.

Table (4)

A Breakdown of the Constative SAs According to Characters  
Out of the total Constative SAs

Characters	Total SA Types	Number of Constative SAs	%
Valentine	119	75	22.65
Philip	78	45	17.82
Dolly	101	53	16.0
Crampton	68	42	12.68
Mrs. Clandon	60	36	10.87
Gloria	62	36	10.87



M 'Comas	23	21	6.34
Waiter	17	12	3.62
Bohn	23	11	3.32
	534	331	63

Table (5)

A Breakdown of the Directive SAs According to Characters  
Out of the total Directive SAs

Characters	Total SA Types	Number of Directive SAs	%
Dolly	101	45	25.71
Valentine	119	28	22.65
Philip	78	28	16
Crampton	68	24	13.71
Mrs.	60	21	12



Clandon			
Gloria	62	13	7.42
Bohn	23	10	5.71
Waiter	17	4	5.71
M 'Comas	23	2	1.14
	534	175	

Table (6)

A Breakdown of the Declaratory SAs According to Characters  
Out of the total Declaratory SAs

Characters	Total SA Types	Number of Declaratory SAs	%
Valentine	119	4	40
Philip	78	2	20
Bohn	23	2	20
Mrs. Clandon	60	1	10
Dolly	101	1	10



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Gloria	62	0	0
M 'Comas	23	0	0
Crampton	68	0	0
WAITER	17	0	0
Total	534	10	2

## *Conclusion*

The variety of rates in the study shows that the Interpersonal SAs are more widely used than the Declaratory SAs and consequently affecting the rate of the humour evoked from such SAs.

The result of the analysis shows that one of the main sources of humour in Shaw's play rests in the choice of the Constative and the Directive Interpersonal SAs. It also reveals that Shaw develops his characters by assigning them distinctive styles of speaking and giving each a certain attitude towards language.

To some degree, all comic dramatists deal with different characters who have the same attributes of appearance, behaviour and language and Shaw's characters are of no exception. The approximate rate of recurrancies of all the SAs distributed among the characters is a good evidence of this.

Another result is that neither verbs nor sentences determine the SA of an utterance but it is what is unsaid and unstated in the utterance that does so. In addition some utterances carry one SA and some others carry more than one SA at a time to create an intensified humorous effect.



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