A Sociopragmatic Study of Verbal Bullying in the Novel: "Matilda"

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ABSTRACT:
Bullying is a social phenomenon characterised by interactions that are viewed as negative, repetitive, persistent, and directed towards one or more individuals. The problem of this study is manifested in how to analyse verbal bullying linguistically, relate it to pragmatic theories, and identify some of the social scales related to it. The study aims at Describing and identifying the speech act of bullying. Identifying what impoliteness strategies and functions are employed in bullying performance. Showing the sociopragmatic factors which affect the speech act of bullying and identifying the impolite language used by those who bully. The study concluded that verbal bullying in its most basic form can be an insult that comes with an impolite function and power differences. Bullying is associated with using power to gain or increase the bully's benefits from the situation. Bullies use verbal bullying to force people to do things using their social power.
Keywords: bullying, verbal bullying, verbal action.

Introduction

In social interaction, individuals use language to exchange ideas and information to develop connections. They communicate to express their thoughts, and also to convey their intentions to listeners. According to Yule (1996), speech acts are activities accomplished through language. Any spoken language containing speech acts serves to command, warn, request, or indicate the speaker's intentions. As in novels, language also plays a role in the bullying phenomenon. In which language becomes the primary factor that influences the action of verbs. Bullying is a social phenomenon characterised by interactions that are negative, repetitive, persistent, and directed towards one or more individuals (Olweus, 1994). In actual bullying situations, there must be power differences between the parties, which can be a difference in age, gender, social standing, intelligence, or another factor (Olweus, 1994; Kiv, 2012).

Literature review

When individuals interact with one another, they are generally selective with their word choices. They use polite language in various ways to ensure that the communication process runs well. On the other hand, some individuals do not consider their word selections. When people

neglect their word choices, they often use inappropriate language to communicate their sentiments to someone. Impoliteness may be linked to anything that disrupts social contact and promotes social disharmony. It is conceivable that a particular statement can be regarded as polite in one scenario but impolite in another. Bullying is considered an example of systematic impoliteness whose force does not diminish. (Cutting, 2014).

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is one of the most active and rapidly expanding areas of linguistics and language philosophy. It has recently been a critical topic in cognitive science, artificial intelligence, informatics, neurology, language pathology, anthropology, and sociology (Huang,2017). Pragmatic knowledge is a portion of our understanding of how to use language correctly and may be broadly defined as the study of language use in context. Like other aspects of language ability, our pragmatic competence is implicitly known at some level but not usually available for explicit investigation (Mey,2001). Implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and deixis are essential pragmatic themes. The philosophers Charles Morris, Rudolf Carnap, and Charles Peirce participated in it in the 1930s; thus, it has philosophical underpinnings. (Huang,2007). Furthermore, according to Leech (1983): pragmatics is the study of meaning concerning speech contexts. He says that pragmatics may be viewed as a technique to handle difficulties that may develop, both from the standpoint of the speaker and the listener. Besides this, Mey (1993) described pragmatics as studying the state of human language use within the social context.

Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory is an utterance analysis approach that connects grammatical forms with linguistic functions in specific settings (Sotillo, 2017). Speech acts, according to Searle, are derived from the supposition that language is employed to conduct actions. Searle links the study of language to speech acts. As a result, this relates what the speaker means, what the sentence stated denotes, what the speaker tends to, what the listener realises, and what the rule regulating the linguistic elements is. According to Austin (1962), there are three types of speech acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. To analyse speech acts, this study partly looks at illocutionary act categories. Austin (1962) defines the illocutionary act as the execution of an act in stating something. According to Huang (2007), Austin divided speech acts into five categories: Verdictives, Exercitives, Commissives, Expositives, and Behabitives. However, Searle challenged Austin's classification of speech acts, claiming that Austin's classification was solely for English illocutionary verbs. Illocutionary acts are divided into five groups by Searle (1976): Representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. Bach and Harnish (1979) offer a combination of Austin's and Searle's models in which a communicative speech act consists of four acts: utterance Act, locutionary Act, Illocutionary Act, and Perlocutionary Act. They differentiate six broad categories based on the psychological condition or attitude of the speaker. Conventional speech acts include verdicatives and

effectives, while communicative speech acts include directives, Commissives, constatives, and acknowledgements.

The most persuasive classification is Searle's (1979) because it characterises illocutionary acts in terms of their communication functions within society.

Searle proposes five illocutionary act macro-classes, which are as follows:

Assertives: According to Yule (1996), it is the kind of speech act that expresses whether the speaker thinks something to be true or not.

Commissives: According to Searle (1976), commissives are speech acts that commit the speaker to some future course action.

Directives: Directives are speech acts used to persuade someone else to do something (Yule, 1996).

Expressives: According to Cutting (2002), the expressive group includes acts in which the words indicate how the speaker feels, such as "apologising" "congratulating" "deploring" and "regretting".

Declaratives: This class's illocutionary goal is to effect immediate changes in the existing state of affairs. In this class, no psychological state is conveyed. declaring war, discharging from work, and selecting a candidate judge to punish criminals are instances of speech acts of this sort.

Impoliteness

According to Bousfield and Locher (2008), impoliteness is a facial exaggeration that occurs under certain circumstances. Impoliteness is defined by Culpeper (2010) as a negative attitude toward certain behaviours happening in specific settings. According to Culpeper (2011) the topic of impoliteness may be connected to scholarly disciplines such as psychology, sociology, media studies, conflict studies, business studies, history, and literary studies. As a result, impoliteness is a multifaceted and complex issue to investigate. Furthermore, whereas Leech's (1983) Politeness principles focuses on promoting refined behaviours while limiting impolite ones, Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness approach recommends strategies to decrease polite expressions while increasing impolite ones.

According to Mills (2003), Culpeper (1996) takes Brown and Levinson's four super-strategies and inverts them to characterise impoliteness, while the purpose of these strategies is flipped to damage rather than strengthen the addressee's face. These are the strategies:

Bald on record impoliteness: a strategy in which the face threatening act is carried out in a direct, clear, and concise manner in situations when the face is neither irrelevant nor diminished (Culpeper, 2005).

Positive impoliteness: is a method that uses strategies that harm the addressee's positive face desires (Culpeper, 2005).

Negative impoliteness: using strategies to damage the addressee's negative face desires (Culpeper, 2005).

Sarcasm or mock politeness: is a tactic in which the FTA is carried out with the use of simply false politeness strategies, resulting in surface realisations. (Culpeper, 2005).

Withhold politeness: a tactic that denotes the lack of politeness in situations when it is anticipated.

The Functions of Impoliteness

Culpeper (2011) offered three impoliteness functions: affective impoliteness, coercive impoliteness, and entertaining impoliteness. Each of them is shown below:

1) Affective impoliteness: This function entails an emotional outburst during a dialogue between the impoliteness producer and the impoliteness target. Culpeper (2011) defines affective impoliteness as the targeted exhibition of highly elevated emotion, like anger, implying that the target is responsible for producing a bad emotional state.

2) Coercive impoliteness: It is impoliteness to seek a value realignment between the producer and the target in which the producer gains more or has their present advantages reaffirmed or safeguarded (Culpeper, 2011).

3) Entertaining impoliteness: This impoliteness function exploits the target or possible target of impoliteness by providing enjoyment at their expense (Culpeper, 2011).

Sociopragmatics

According to Yule (1996), understanding language via pragmatics allows one to discuss people's intended meanings, assumptions, purpose or objective, and the kind of behaviour they conduct when they communicate. Cornelia and Neal (2018), says that sociopragmatics, is seen as an appropriate home for a diverse range of theoretical viewpoints employed by researchers. They think the region where sociolinguistics and pragmatics meet is known as sociopragmatics.

According to Leech (2003), sociopragmatics is the proper discipline to investigate politeness. This is because this field's purpose is primarily focused on explaining communicative behaviour. On the other hand, Impoliteness is concerned with analysing certain communication behaviours in social interaction. In a nutshell, socio pragmatics is a study that combines sociolinguistics with pragmatics and focuses on the examination of fundamental patterns of interaction, namely speech acts.

Social Dimensions Theory (Holmes, 1992)

Holmes proposed four social dimensions which are:

1. A scale of social distance (solidarity) based on participants connections.

This scale is excellent for emphasising how well we know someone in terms of linguistic choice.

2. A status scale that focuses on participant connections.

This scale emphasises the importance of relative status in particular linguistic decisions.

3. A formality scale based on the situation or type of conversation.

This scale can examine the impact of a social situation or kind of interaction on language choice. The language used in a formal transaction, such as the bank manager in his office or at a ceremonial ceremony in a church, will be impacted by the formality of the situation.

4. Two functional scales related to the interaction's aims or topic.

Language may transmit objective, referential information and indicate how others feel.

The researcher will take the social distance scale to explore the relations between verbal bullies and their victims. Moreover, because the social distance is connected with formality and status scales, they will be illustrated below and then used to analyse the extracts from the selected British novels.

Bullying

Bullying has been characterised as "a systematic abuse of authority" in studies on school bullying (Smith & Sharp, 1994). According to Farrington (1993), Bullying may be physical or psychological, and it is an act meant to injure or damage another person. Bullying is distinguished from general aggression by its repetition and power imbalance, with the victim in a weaker or more vulnerable position (Besag, 1989).

According to Monks (2011), There are many types of bullying, but the most common types include:

1- Physical: striking, kicking, punching, stealing, or destroying property.

2- Verbal: mocking, threatening, teasing.

3- Social exclusion - the systematic exclusion of an individual from social groups ('You are not welcome to play with us').

4- Indirect: spreading bad rumours, telling people not to play with someone, and so on.

5- Cyberbullying: using new modes of communication such as text message, email, and website bullying.

Verbal Bullying includes the following: Name calling, Harmful teasing, making fun of someone, Harmful sarcasm, Offensive comments, insults, or jokes about someone or their family based on their race, culture, religion, disability, or sexual orientation, and Mean comments about someone's body or general appearance such as their weight or height, Harmful comments about the way people dress or behave, Inappropriate sexual comments; and threatening to hurt someone (Coloroso, 2008). Verbal bullying has a severe impact on a person's self-image, as well as emotional and psychological well-being. This form of bullying may result in poor self-esteem, depression, and other complications (Cowie & Jennifer, 2008).

Bullying, like impoliteness, may occur across a series of time-separated incidents, each repeating the pattern established by the prior ones. This historical trend might make a new act of impoliteness much more severe than it seems (Culpeper,2011).

Method of Analysis

The present research adopts a combination of both qualitative and quantitative analytic methods. The researcher starts with a qualitative descriptive approach. To provide a thorough and rich description, a qualitative method often relies on specific observations (Knudson& Morrison, 2002). In quantitative analysis, the researcher uses the SPSS 26 program, which generates the frequencies and percentages of the types and methods that the researcher desires to quantify. Frequencies and

percentages are shown using tables and figures. Finally, the researcher analyses the results and conclusions in light of qualitative and quantitative study findings.

The present study's data is taken from the British novel "Matilda". The original text is obtained from the internet as (pdf.) document. It is selected because it is packed with texts that correspond to the description of verbal bullying offered erlier. The data of this research are in the form of linguistic units, such as words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. Meanwhile, the context of the data is the main characters' dialogues.

Model of Analysis

This research applies four theories which are preceded by the types of verbal bullying by Coloroso (2008). Each one of these theories tackles specific perspectives. They are presented logically to satisfy the requirements of the analysis.

To achieve that, the researcher follows the following steps:

First: The researcher detects verbal bullying types by applying (Coloroso,2008) criteria to each utterance.

Second: An analysis of the kinds of speech acts used to convey bullying is based on Searle's (1979) model.

Third: The researcher used Culpeper's (2005) impoliteness theory to examine how bullying was shown in the selected novels.

Fourth: To analyse the functions of impoliteness in the verbal bullying extracts, the researcher adopted Culpeper (2011).

Fifth: following Holmes (1992) model of social dimensions, solidarity, status and formality scales are analysed within the extracts of verbal bullying.

Qualitative Analysis and Findings

In this section, the researcher analyses 6 extracts from the selected novel focusing on the extracts that reflect verbal bullying clearly.

Extract (1): "If you don't like it then don't eat the food in this house"

Context: After Matilda heard her father talk about how he treats cars to cheat people, she told him that cheating on people who trust you is disgusting. He said this sentence, proving to Matilda that she eats from the profits he gets from this dirty job.

Verbal bullying: There is a threat or warning from the father to Matilda that she may not eat in his house if she does not accept what he does with cars.

Speech act: An illocutionary act of threatening is used by the father in this extract against his daughter and transmitted as a commissive speech act.

Impoliteness: A negative impoliteness strategy is used here since the father makes Matilda feel indebted to him as she eats from the money he gets from his work.

The function of impoliteness: The father did not want his daughter to talk about his job in the wrong way, so he used his power as the one who paid for food and tried to force her not to speak by reminding her that she eats from his profits, and this context goes with the coercive function of impoliteness.

Social distance: There is a high solidarity level.
Formality: low formality is apparent because we are discussing a family setting.
Status: this utterance is from a superior person to a subordinate, so high status is marked for this utterance.
Extract (2): "Keep your nasty mouth shut so we can all watch this program in peace"
Context: The speaker here is Matilda's mother, who supports her father when he tells Matilda that she is an ignorant, unimportant little child and asks her to be quiet with offensive words so the family can watch TV.
Verbal bullying: the mother made a mean comment about Matilda's mouth: **"Keep your nasty mouth shut",** describing her mouth as nasty because Matilda said something she did not like. She said so using her power as a mother, knowing that her daughter can do nothing about it.
Speech act: a directive speech act of command is found when the mother orders Matilda to keep her mouth shut, and she uses a negative adjective with it.
Impoliteness: the mother employs a negative impoliteness strategy in **"Keep your nasty mouth shut"** when she attacks Matilda's negative face, belittles her, and calls her with an offensive adjective.
The function of impoliteness: affective impoliteness function from the mother toward Matilda when she describes her father's work as cheating. as a reaction, the mother verbally attacked Matilda with the adjective **"nasty mouth."**
Social distance: this utterance is said by Matilda's mother to her, so there is a high solidarity level.
Formality: formality level is low because this utterance is from a mother talking to her daughter.
Status: the mother enjoys high status as a superior person.
Extract (3): "Be quiet! Just keep your nasty mouth shut!"
Context: In this sentence, the father is ordering Matilda to be quiet and shut her mouth with an angry voice after she spoke to him about his hair and tried to give him advice for him to cut it straight because his hair was looking awful after he cut some of it to release it from his hat that got stuck to his head with glue.
Verbal bullying: verbal bullying is apparent when the father makes a mean comment about Matilda's mouth and forces her to be quiet.
Speech act: two directive speech acts of ordering are found in this utterance; the first is represented in **"be quite"** as an order from the father to Matilda, while the second is represented in **"keep your nasty mouth shut"**.
Impoliteness: The father uses a negative impoliteness strategy against Matilda's negative face. He excluded her from talking about his hair and called her with bad adjectives.
The function of impoliteness: A coercive impoliteness occurred when the father attacked the negative face of Matilda by telling her to keep quiet and

shut her mouth, meaning that she must not talk to him and mind her own business.

Social distance: Because of the family setting, there is a high level of solidarity.

Formality: there is a low level of formality appearing in the context.

Status: the speech is done from high status person to low status.

Extract (4): "Don't butt in, your brother and I are busy with high finance."

Context: In this extract, the father commands Matilda not to interrupt his talk with her brother and tries to exclude her from their conversation about the profits they made from selling second-hand cars, even when she calculated the exact number of profits and told her father the correct result.

Verbal bullying: The yelling at Matilda by her father and asking her not to interact with his conversation even when she gives him the correct answer is a clear example of verbal bullying that happened against her without any good reason.

Speech act: This extract begins with a directive speech act of commanding against the little girl Matilda. Through this command, the father tries to ignore Matilda and exclude her from his conversation with her brother.

Impoliteness: The father employs a positive impoliteness strategy to attack Matilda's need to be accepted as an intelligent girl who could interact with the family and solve its problems. Instead, he excludes her from his activity with her brother with offensive language.

The function of impoliteness: Mr wormwood performs a coercive impoliteness against Matilda. He tries to show that he is an intelligent businessman, a state which gives him the advantage of verbally insulting Matilda, who, in his view, cannot understand his work and does not have the right to interrupt him.

Social distance: Interaction has a high solidarity level since interlocutors know each other well.

Formality: low formality level since the interlocutors are talking in an informal setting.

Status: the superiority of the speaker is clear, so this utterance is marked with high status.

Extract (5): "A thief! A crook! A pirate! A brigand! A rustler!"

Context: When the Trunchbull found that someone ate her cake, she accused a student named Bruce Bogtrotter that he was the one who ate it and started to insult him with different kinds of verbal insults, using her social power as a manager and knowing that he could not do anything about it.

Verbal bullying: The Trunchbull used name calling to insult Bruce verbally, and the continuous use of these insults using her social power is considered a clear type of verbal bullying.

Speech act: A direct assertive speech act is used several times by the Trunchbull against Bruce to insult and accuse him of robbery.

Impoliteness: The Trunchbull used a positive impoliteness strategy through different verbal insults against Bruce.

The function of impoliteness: An affective impoliteness strategy is employed by the Trunchbull against Bruce as a reaction to what he did, as she thinks he is the one who stole her cake.

The utterance is said from a headmistress to a student, so formality and solidarity levels are:

Solidarity: low solidarity level is found in this utterance.

Formality: the formality level appears to be high since the setting is a school headmistress's office.

Status: The Trunchbull was speaking from a high status or superior position to a subordinate one.

Extract (6): "Stand up, you disgusting little cockroach!"

Context: this sentence was said to Matilda from the Trunchbull because she thinks that Matilda put a newt into her water jug.

Verbal bullying: the Trunchbull insulted Matilda by calling her a disgusting cockroach

Speech act: a directive speech act of ordering is employed by the Trunchbull to make Matilda stand up with insults.

Impoliteness: positive impoliteness strategy is employed by the Trunchbull to attack Matilda's face by insulting her

The function of impoliteness: the Trunchbull used affective impoliteness because she thinks that Matilda is the one who put the creature in her water, so she insults her as a reaction to what she did.

Social distance: low solidarity. The headmistress does not like children and has no good relationship with them.

Formality: high formality since the context is a class at school and the interlocutors are a headmistress and a student.

Status: The Trunchbull enjoys high status as a headmistress.

Table 1 summary of the qualitative analysis of the novel: Matilda.

Ex	Types of verbal bullying	Speech act types	Impoliteness strategies	Impoliteness functions	Social dimensions		
					Solidarity	Formality	Status
1	Threatening	Commissive	Negative	Coercive	High	Low	High
2	Mean comment,	Directive,	Negative	Affective	High	Low	High
3	Mean comment	Directive, directive	Negative	Coercive	High	Low	High
4	Yelling,	Directive	Positive	Coercive	High	Low	High
5	Name calling, insults	Assertive	Positive	Affective	Low	High	High
6	Insult	Directive	Positive	Affective	Low	High	High

Quantitative analysis

Table 2 The Frequency and Percentage of verbal bullying

Verbal Bullying		
Type	Frequency	Percent
Insults	2	28.6
Mean comment about body…	2	28.6
Name calling	1	14.3
Threatening	1	14.3

Yelling	1	14.3
Making fun of someone	0	0
Offensive comment	0	0
Harmful sarcasm	0	0
Spreading rumours	0	0
Inappropriate sexual comments	0	0
Total	7	100

Table 3 the frequencies and percentages of the speech act types of verbal bullying.

Speech Acts		
category	Frequency	Percent
Assertives	1	14.3
Directives	5	71.4
Commissives	1	14.3
Expressives	0	0
Declaratives	0	0
Total	7	100

Table 4 The Frequency and Percentage of Impoliteness Strategies

Impoliteness		
strategy	Frequency	Percent
Negative	3	50
Positive	3	50
Bald on record	0	0
Off record	0	0
With hold	0	0
Total	6	100

Table 5 impoliteness functions percentages and frequencies

impoliteness functions		
Function of impoliteness	Frequency	Percent
Coercive	3	50
Affective	3	50
Entertaining	0	0
Total	6	100

Table 6 level of solidarity, formality and status.

Solidarity		
level	Frequency	Percent
high	4	66.7
low	2	33.3
Total		100
Formality		
level	Frequency	Percent
low	4	66.7
high	2	33.3
Total		100
Status		
level	Frequency	Percent
high	6	100
low	0	0
Total		100

Discussion of the Findings
1. The most used form of verbal bullying were insults and mean comments about people's body shapes or disabilities.
2. Assertives and directives were the most used speech acts in performing verbal bullying.
3. Negative and positive impoliteness strategies formed most of the strategies employed in the selected novel.
4. Coercive impoliteness function appears to be the most related function to verbal bullying, followed by the affective impoliteness function.
5. Verbal bullying happens mostly in high solidarity relations, in low formality situations, and from a superior person with high status to a subordinate one.

Conclusions
1. People tend to use verbal bullying to force people to do things using their social power, and this is what happened in the Trunchbull talks with the students.
2. The continuous use of directive speech acts proves that bullies tend to use orders to express their needs to their victims.
3. low use of expressives to perform verbal bullying proves that the purpose of verbal bullying is to gain power or express power, not to express emotions.
4. The continuous use of negative and positive impoliteness strategies to perform verbal bullying proves that bullies purposely attack the victims' need to be independent or to be accepted by others.
5. Verbal bullying was found in different contexts: family, school, friends, and proves to exist everywhere and still needs to be investigated.
6. The continuous use of coercive impoliteness function, demonstrates that bullying is associated with using power to gain or increase the bully's benefits from the situation.
7. The high solidarity that came with most of the cases of verbal bullying proves that bullies tend to bully people whom they know well or have an intimate relationship with.
8. Verbal bullying happens the most in informal situations.
9. Bullying tends to happen from high-status people towards their subordinates most of the time.
10. Verbal bullying in its most basic form can be an insult that comes with an impolite function and power differences.

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دراسة اجتماعية تداولية عن التنمر اللفظي في الرواية: "ماتيلدا"

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الخلاصة

التنمـر ظـاهرة اجتماعيـة تتميـز بالتفـاعلات التـي يُنظـر إليهـا علـى أنهـا سـلبية ومتكـررة ومسـتمرة وموجهـة نحـو فـرد أو أكثـر. تتجلـى مشـكلة هـذه الدراسـة فـي كيفيـة تحليـل التنمـر اللفظـي لغويًـا، وربطـه بالنظريـات التداوليـة ، والتعـرف علـى بعـض المقـاييس الاجتماعيـة المتعلقـة بـه. تهـدف الدراسـة إلـى وصـف وتحديـد الفعـل الكلامـي للتنمـر. تحديـد مـا هـي الاسـتراتيجيات والوظـائف غيـر المهذبـة المسـتخدمة فـي أداء التنمـر. عـرض العوامـل الاجتماعيـة التـي تـؤثر علـى الفعـل الكلامـي للتنمـر والتعـرف علـى اللغـة غيـر المهذبـة التـي يسـتخدمها المتنمـرون. خلصـت الدراسـة إلـى أن التنمـر اللفظـي فـي أبسـط أشـكاله يمكـن أن يكـون إهانـة تـأتي مـع وظيفـة غيـر مهذبـة واختلافـات فـي القـوة. يـرتبط التنمـر باسـتخدام القـوة لكسـب أو زيـادة منـافع المتنمـر مـن الموقـف. يسـتخدم المتنمـرون البلطجـة اللفظيـة لإجبـار الناس على فعل أشياء باستخدام قوتهم الاجتماعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التنمر، التنمر اللفظي، الفعل الكلامي.