
Understanding Power Dynamics Through Speech Act Theory from the Play *Final Solutions* Written by Mahesh Dattani

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Abstract

Mahesh Dattani's play Final Solutions highlights the ever-growing problem of Hindu versus Muslim rivalry in this play. The action of the play revolves around communal rivalry, gender discrimination and a dilemma of past and present. Hence, the present study focuses on the language used by the major and minor characters of the play. The power dynamics shown by the characters in this play through their utterances is the topic of discussion in this study. The dialogues where the characters perform some functions have been explored and analysed by applying the theory of speech act as discussed by J. L. Austin and John Searle in their books. After analyzing particular dialogues on locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts the real intention of the characters is understood. It is observed that the characters reveal their authority, nostalgia, subversiveness, anger, frustration, prejudices, through speech acts.

Keywords: Power dynamics, Speech act, Locutionary, Illocutionary, perlocutionary.

Introduction

The aim of this study is to show the way characters reveal their power, authority, dominance, pleading, submissiveness, care, anger, frustration with the help of language. The theory of speech acts is applied to the utterances where there is scope of analysis. The special words and sentences used by the characters have been analysed to show the dominating characters and the pleading characters. The terms locutionary speech act, illocutionary speech act and perlocutionary speech acts are handy in order to analyse the play. Merriam-webster dictionary defines dynamics as “a pattern or process of change, growth, or activity.” The pattern of power between male and female and between major and minority communities is studied in this paper. Michel Foucault says that “language is a mechanism of power; it is used to control, categorise and dominate.” It means language is not just a means of passing information. It can perform certain functions. In the play *Final Solutions*, the major as well as minor characters perform particular tasks through their speech. They reveal power, social position, intentions, meekness, weakness, helplessness and biases through their dialogues. The language used by the characters, the playwright Mahesh Dattani reveals the societal problems like communal rivalry and gender discrimination in his play.

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Michael Halliday states that “Language is a resource for making meaning and it is shaped by social and cultural context in which it is used. Hence, an attempt has been made to focus on the power dynamics as revealed by the characters in the play by applying the theory of speech act to the dialogues. Hardika, Ramnik, Smita, Aruna, Javed and Bobby are the major characters from the play. They reveal many things directly and indirectly through their speech. The minor characters too have something to show out of their dialogues. Such dialogues have been explored and assessed in this study.

Hypothesis

1. The locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary function of dialogues is different from one another
2. The characters of the play Final Solutions reveal their social status, authority, bias, anger and other intentions through their dialogues.

Significance of the Study

Lumanlan, Jhonas in his paper concludes that “the application of pragmatic theories of speech acts, cooperative principle and implicatures, and politeness shed light into how language is assisted by context to realize fully its use whether in speaking or in writing” In line to this, the study highlights the dialogues wherein the characters say something, convey something and the listeners/readers do something. The understanding and action of the characters and the readers depend on the context in which the dialogue is uttered. The context may be anything on which the meaning of an utterance depends. In order to understand the meaning of an utterance, one has to explore the past, social status, attitude, upbringing, experiences, the type of life and situation the person is in and many other factors. One may not be able to understand someone completely just by his behaviour and speech. But an attempt can be made to analyse the utterances to understand the intentions of the characters. In the drama Final Solutions, the type of language the characters use reveals their dominance, significance, care, anger, frustration, revolt, sympathy etc. They reveal about their past experience, the way they are treated by others, the way they have to tolerate the atrocities of others due to their gender, social status and religion. They use language as a tool to show their authority, social position, sympathy for others, empathy, sarcasm, anger, insult, aggression, frustration, guilt, trauma, dominance, hypocrisy and submissiveness.

People are not born with a particular mindset. They form a particular mindset and psychology based on their experience, social environment, the moral values they receive from parents and family members. In the play undertaken for the study, there are many characters who

have different opinions, different thinking and different attitudes towards one another. They reveal it through their language. Sometimes they assassinate each other's character directly and sometimes as a reader it is understood. Hence, it is an interesting study to know and understand the characters' real nature by applying the theory of speech to the dialogues uttered by these characters. The three subtypes locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act make the readers understand about the meaning of the dialogue, intention of the dialogue and the effect of the dialogue.

Scope of the Study

J. L. Austin in his book *How to Do Things with Words* states that “we use language to do things and to assert things”. Therefore, it is pivotal to explore the dialogues and speeches wherein the characters have something to reveal. The study goes beyond the dialogue to explore meaning embedded in the context. It is worth understanding the task the characters perform through speech. The power dynamics revealed by the characters through their speeches make the readers understand the implied meaning of the dialogues. Once, the readers go beyond the words and sentences of the dialogues, the true nature of the characters, their social status, their emotions and intentions are understood. It is the language that reveals the true picture so the study can be undertaken in various literary forms like, poems, plays, novels, speeches, comedy shows, TV serials, OTT shows, cricket commentary, movies, podcasts, lectures and many other genres. In the present study the core of the topic is to find out the way characters advocate their power, authority and the way they regulate others. It is an analysis of the power dynamics that the characters showcase through speech acts.

Limitations of the Study

The study explores the speech acts of the characters from the play *Final Solutions* written by Mahesh Dattani. The analysis of the dialogues has been done on the basis of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts. The speech acts like the assertive, commissive, directive, declarative and expressive have been taken into consideration for the analysis of the dialogues. Hence, the study revolves around the speech acts. The other aspects of pragmatic analysis of a literary work have not been applied comprehensively. Besides this, the study is limited to only one play of Mahesh Dattani. The finding may not be generalised and may not be applied for other speech events because the context may be different. The locutionary speech act may remain same but the perlocutionary and illocutionary acts may differ from person to person.

Research Methodology

The study is text-based. The dialogues of the characters from the play Final Solutions have been explored in order to apply the speech acts. In order to explore the power dynamics revealed through the speech, the selected dialogues of the characters have been analysed by considering the theoretical framework of speech act theory as coined by J. L. Austin and developed by J. R. Searle. It is qualitative and library research. The analysis is about what is said, what is intended, what is understood by characters and the actual effect of the dialogue.

Research Objectives

1. To apply the theory of speech acts to the dialogues of the play Final Solutions
 2. To find out the power dynamics revealed by the characters through their speech
 3. To analyse the dialogues on the basis of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts
 4. To explore the functions of the dialogues and categorize it into assertive, commissive, directive, declarative and expressive
- Theoretical Framework:

1. Speech act: It means the action that the speaker of any utterance wants his/her listener to do. In 1975, J. L. Austin developed the speech act theory in his books *How to Do Things with Words*. Speech act theory as pioneered by J. L. Austin has made a difference in the traditional function of language. Initially it was believed that language is a means of communication. It is used to share information and ideas. But Austin states that language can be used to perform tasks. He has given three types or functions of speech act.

2. Locutionary speech act: It is the literal meaning of the sentence which is uttered or written. It is the dictionary meaning of the utterance. It is the act of just saying something.

3. Illocutionary Speech act: It is the implied meaning of the utterance. The intention of the speaker or the writer is an illocutionary speech act. It focuses on what the sender expects the receiver to do or understand.

4. Perlocutionary speech act: It is the effect of the utterance on the receiver. It means whatever the receiver does after receiving the message from the sender.

Example: A: It is really hot and humid today.

Locutionary meaning: A is talking about weather.

Illocutionary function: A wants a glass of cool water from the receiver. Or A wants the receiver to switch on the fan.

Perlocutionary function:

1. The receiver may reply “Yes, it is hot and humid today.”
2. The receiver may switch on AC or fan.
3. The receiver may give a glass of water or cold drink.

The speech act theory of J. L. Austin was refined by his student John Searle. He has systematized the speech act theory with precision. He has given five different categories of illocutionary speech act.

1. Assertive speech act: It means to make the sender tell the truth about something.
2. Directive speech act: It means to make the receiver do something.
3. Commissive speech act: It means to make the sender commit a future course of action.
4. Expressive speech act: It means to make the sender express his/her state of mind and body.
5. Declarative speech act: It means the sender makes changes in the outer world just by declaring something.

John Searle has given more emphasis on shared background knowledge by senders and receivers. He states that the inferential meaning as per the context matters in order to understand the meaning of the utterance. Based on this dictum, the study has tried to explore the power dynamics that the characters showcase through their speech from the play Final Solutions.

Results and Discussions

Garima and Dr. Savita Ahuja state in their study that “By drawing attention to the voices of those who are disadvantaged and often suppressed within society, Dattani brings attention to the need of understanding and empathy across a wide range of socioeconomic strata. In present study the issue of patriarchal mindset and arch rivalry of Hindu and Muslim are analysed in the light of speech act theory. The play Final Solutions has been studied thoroughly and the dialogues of the major and minor characters that reveal the intentions of the characters have been analyzed and put forward. The play Final Solutions is full of communal problems. It highlights the prejudices that both Hindus and Muslims have about each other. The other issue of gender discrimination too has been discussed in the play. Hence, the dialogues of the characters are really worthy to be studied in the light of speech act theory. It

would be an important analysis to understand the intention that the characters want to convey out of their dialogues.

Sosnin and others conclude in their study that “in modern online communication hashtags appear to be a powerful autonomous instrument as far as mobilization or calling for action is concerned.” In this study gender and the number of communities matter in terms of revealing power and getting the things done. Hardika alias Daksha is one of the major characters of the play *Final Solutions*. She is an embodiment of dominating orthodox male dominated society and Hindu versus Muslim rivalry from the time of partition. Her self-identity is also lost after marriage. It is because her name is Daksha. Once she married Hari, she was given the name Hardika so that her name matches with Hari. So, her dialogues are full of meaning when taken into consideration from the point of view of speech act theory.

The meaning of power dynamics through language means the characters show their control, influence and authority through the words and the sentences that they use and the way they deliver those sentences and words. Power dynamic also takes into consideration the fact that who orders, who follows the orders, who takes the decision and why, how the role of authority is decided by society, culture and gender norms. Through the interaction of the characters mentioned in the play make readers understand the power and every individual. To simplify it, one may take the example of an employer's language and the language of an employee. The use of words and the sentences and the way those words and the sentences are uttered may reveal who is the boss and who is an employee. In the drama *Final Solutions* the characters use language to show their authority, parental care, anxiety, submissiveness, bias and prejudices etc.

HARDIKA: “All my dreams have been shattered. I can never be a singer like Noor Jehan. Hari’s family is against my singing film songs. His parents heard me humming a love song to Hari last night and this morning they told him to tell me.....” (Dattani 166).

The locutionary act- Hardika informs the readers about her in-laws who do not like her singing. She likes singing. She wants to be a famous singer.

The illocutionary-She wants to make readers aware about the male dominance of contemporary society. She wants to convey that females were not allowed to sing. So, she had to suppress her passion for singing. It is the assertive function that is being fulfilled here. Hardika is sharing some facts.

The illocutionary act- It may be different for different readers. The readers may sympathise with her. Some may feel angry. Some may curse Hardika’s in-laws and her husband. Some readers may agree with the stance taken by Hari and his parents. Some may empathise with

Hardika. Some readers may feel that the act of Hardika's in-laws was justified due to societal pressure.

Hardika alias Daksha is performing assertive function through her dialogue. She states about her dreams being shattered and the fact that she would never be a singer like Noor Jehan and she was found singing a song. She performs the expressive function too. She expresses her anger, guilt, sadness, regret and disappointment as she would never become a singer. Thus, she reveals her emotional state.

Power dynamics: Hardika alias Daksha is completely powerless. She conveys that her dreams have been crushed due to gender bias. Hardika wants to convey her plight out of the above-mentioned dialogue. She reveals her helplessness. She appears submissive in it. She portrays herself as a victim of gender bias. She has to accept the decisions taken by others. She appears to be defeated. She has accepted her defeat. She is not ready to fight. The power is in the hands of males. Females have to bear the price of sacrificing their passions for being females. Hari's parents are the authority here. They impose their decision. In fact, if one considers the social set of the time, one may understand the reason for Hari's parents opposing Hardika's singing of movie songs. At that time females singing movie songs was not considered appropriate. It was not accepted as an honour for the family. Thus, the parents of Hari have got the traditional authority. So, they enforce social norms and control the behaviour of their daughter-in-law. The husband Hari too is not seen as powerful in the dialogue. He appears to be just a mediator between wife and parents. He is described as a channel of patriarchal enforcement. Thus, a woman's voice is suppressed and she is controlled.

Hardika's following dialogue has different shades of meaning and power is distributed and exercised. It talks about gender discrimination but the discrimination is not from the opposite gender.

HARDIKA: "This morning I went with Kanta to the market. Gaju insisted that I go learn how to do the shopping now that my mehndi has faded away." (Dattani 168)

Locutionary act: In above dialogue Hardika asserts that she went to market with her friend Kanta and Gaju her mother-in-law wants her to learn shopping because it has been a while since her marriage. It is a declarative speech act. It is because Hardika is asked to learn shopping by her mother-in-law.

Illocutionary act: Hardika wants to show that her mother-in-law is making her work. She is just married but she has to do household work like shopping. She conveys her dislike for her mother-in-law out of the above dialogue. She calls her mother-in-law 'Gaju'. She has a story to share here. She calls her mother-in-law Gaju because her mother-in-law takes almost

twenty buckets of water to bathe. She splashes water loudly in the bathroom like an elephant. She wants to convey that the maid had to fetch too much water for her mother-in-law to take a bath.

Perlocutionary act: As a reader one may understand that a female troubles another female. It is not gender discrimination. It is about a mother-in-law torturing daughter-in-law. It is still relevant in India. A woman is a trouble for another woman.

Hardika performs assertive and directive functions via her speech. She asserts the truth that she went to market with Kanta and she is directed by her in-laws to go with Kanta to the market so that she can learn how to shop.

Power dynamics: Gaju means mother-in-law of Hardika holds power over here. Her insistence is as good as command. It also shows her control and pressure over Hardika. The mother-in-law has got the traditional household power. Therefore, Gaju directs her daughter-in-law Hardika to go to market for shopping. Hardika appears to be subordinate and submissive. She is tamed and trained to do household work like going to the market and learning to shop. Hardika does not oppose. It shows that she is at the bottom of the family hierarchy. She is given training in domestic work so that she fits in the role of a perfect wife and daughter-in-law. Hardika is given very little time to enjoy the new phase of her life. Once the mehndi marks of her palms are gone she is made to do domestic work. It shows that she has the least power in the family.

The bias, misunderstanding and anger of Hindu mob is seen in the following utterances.

CHORUS 1: The procession has passed through these lanes every year, for forty years!

CHORUS 2, 3: How dare they?

CHORUS 1,2,3: For forty years our chariot has moved through their mohallas.

CHORUS 4,5: Why did they? Why did they today?

CHORUS 1: How dare they?

CHORUS 2,3: They broke our rath. They broke our chariot and felled our Gods. (Dattani 168)

Locutionary speech act: The mob shares the information about the movement of the chariot. The Hindu Gods pass by the same route for forty years through the Muslim wards. But, this year the Muslim dare to break the chariot and God.

Illocutionary speech act: The mob reveals the fact that since past their God's chariot is moved from Muslim Mohallas. It is a usual phenomenon. So, no Muslim has the right to object to the movement of Hindu God. On the other hand, they break the chariot and God. That is why they have to face the consequences of the act.

Perlocutionary speech act: The readers may understand the arch rivalry of Hindu and Muslims. Any incident may trigger the riots. In the past as well as in present the fear of Hindu Muslim escalation is there.

The language and words of the majority Hindu suggest the incoming violence. The chorus is a faceless mob. The mob may resort to unlimited violence. The words like “How dared they”, “why did they” show the threat given to other religious groups. The power lies in the majority. It is seen in the language used by the chorus. The chorus is faceless but its action may be violent.

Power dynamics: In the above dialogues one may find a dominant communal voice. The voice is frustrated due to obstruction and challenge to its traditional authority. It shows the power that the majority group has. That is why majority group members assert ritual and spatial dominance. They do not like even the slightest resistance from minorities. The tradition of forty years has been used to have control over rituals and the procession without any opposition. The words like “How dare they” suggest that opposition from minorities to the rituals of majorities may be considered a counterattack. It may be dealt sternly by the majorities. The chorus shows through its language that power and religion go hand in hand. So, if one of them is resisted by minorities, it may be considered an attack on both. The dialogues of the chorus exhibit the collective power of the crowd. It can resort on violence though it is against law and order. Thus, the powerful chorus is seen to use traditional memory as a cause of communal conflict. The majority community expects compliance from the minority. The resistance by the minority community is considered as an act of encouraging violence. Thus, the chorus dialogues show that the power and control lies with the majority and the minority is marginalized.

CHORUS ALL: Throw them out. Give them to us. Open up. Or we will break your door. (Dattani 180)

Locutionary Speech Act- The mob threatens Ramnik Gandhi to open the door so that they can kill the Muslim boys named Bobby and Javed.

Illocutionary speech act. : Ramnik Gandhi wants to protect the Muslim boys even if they are Muslim. He is not a part of the mob. The mob is uncontrollable. They are not afraid of law and order. The mob wants the Muslim boys Javed and Bobby to be handed over so that the mob can beat the boys. So, the mob is using threatening language. The mob wants Ramnik to get scared and open the door.

Perlocutionary speech act- Ramnik Gandhi does not get scared. He stands strong and protects the boys.

As a reader, one can understand the fear these Muslim boys must have felt at the time of attack. Ramnik Gandhi deserves a standing ovation for his courage to stand against the mob in order to protect the boys. It shows the type of language a mob can use when it is out of control. At that moment, The mob is out of control. It is suggested by the type of threatening language they have used for both the boys as well as the Hindu Ramnik Gandhi, who wants to protect the Muslims.

Power dynamics: The crowd is seen as a dominant force. It is a collective voice. It has got the power and authority over here due to its size and unity. Therefore the mob is showing aggression and collective power in its language. That is why the mob is ordering and threatening Ramnik to throw the Muslim boys outside his house. The mob wants to beat the boys though they have not committed any crime. Even if they commit crime the law does not permit the mob to hit anyone. But the mob is using the threatening language. It shows that the mania of the crowd has lost its logic. The mob holds the physical and social power. Mr. Ramnik, who protects the Muslim boys, holds a moral power. The mob uses threats to make Ramnik vulnerable and submissive. The Muslim boys are seen as powerless, submissive and voiceless.

Whenever you are in need or whenever you are at the receiving end, the type of language suggests that you are at the mercy of the listener.

CHORUS ALL: Why won't you open the door?

JAVED: (Pleadingly to Ramnik.) Please don't. We beg of you! (Dattani 183)

Locutionary Speech Act- The violent mob wants Ramnik Gandhi to open the door so that they can beat the Muslim boys, Javed and Bobby. At that time, Javed earnestly requests Ramnik Gandhi not to open the door because if Ramnik Gandhi opens the door, they will be mercilessly beaten by the violent mob.

Illocutionary speech act- The mob is angry because the Muslim boys have taken shelter in the House of a Hindu, and the Hindu is also ready to protect them. The mob wants Ramnik Gandhi to get scared and open the door. On the other hand, Javed does not want Ramnik Gandhi to open the door. So, the mob is seen using threatening language and Javed is pleading.

Perlocutionary speech act- As a reader one may understand that the mob has gone berserk. It is not ready to spare the Muslim boys Javed and Bobby. It shows the animosity between the two communities. The mob wants Ramnik to open the door whereas Javed wants him to save their life. Ramnik listens to Javed and does not open the door.

The rivalry between Hindu and Muslim is seen in the above dialogue. The Samaritan Ramnik Gandhi is ready to fight against the mob of his own community. It requires significant courage to dissuade such mobs.

Power dynamics: The mob is shown as aggressive and out of control. The mob asks a blaming question to Mr. Ramnik. It means according to the mob to shelter the Muslim boys in the house by a Hindu person is a crime. Thus, the mob reveals the authority due to its number. Javed shows his fear, powerlessness and susceptibility. His submission, desperation and helplessness are seen in his pleading dialogue. He has no physical and social power. He is totally dependent at the mercy of mob and especially Mr. Ramnik. So, the only way to protect himself is to plead. Thus, the language of the mob reveals its aggression. The loyalty of Mr. Ramnik is also questioned by the mob. But he has the moral power not to succumb to the pressure of the mob and stand for morality and humanity against the will of his own religious group.

The power of being a majority in number is seen in the language of mob. The dialogues make it clear that the mob is fearless. Similarly, the communal rivalry of Hindu versus Muslim too is vividly inferred from the following dialogue.

HARDIKA: (sharply) Be careful, I said! (Almost to herself) The dogs have been let loose. (Exits) (Dattani 174)

Locutionary speech act: Superficially, it may be understood that Hardika tells her granddaughter Aruna to be careful. It is because the riots between Hindu and Muslim have started in their area.

Later, Hardika talks in a metaphorical manner. She says that the dogs have been let loose.

Illocutionary speech act: Hardika intends to convey that the violence is bound to be there due to riots. She has experienced murder of her father in the past. Hence, she warns her granddaughter to be careful and close the doors properly. Hardika says that the dogs are let loose. By dogs she means that as usual, the rioters from Hindu and Muslim religions have gone berserk. They destroy everything and kill people. There is no one to control them. Even some political figures support the riots. She suggests that the common people would be affected badly due to the violence. So, she wants her family members to be careful. She does not want to lose her family member. In the above dialogue, the directive speech act is there. Hardika directs her granddaughter and others to be careful. Later she is assertive in speech when she says that the dogs have been let loose.

Perlocutionary speech act: As a reader one may visualise the pain and loss the affected people must have faced. It may be understood from the affected people like Hardika who loses her father due to the communal riots.

Hardika reveals her horrifying experience that she had to face at the time of partition. She reveals the vulnerability of common Indians during such riots. She expresses her concern for the safety of her house and family members. Which is why she sharply asks Aruna if she has closed all the doors of the house or not.

Power dynamics: Hardika has bitter memories of partition time. She carries a grudge and resentment against Muslims. So, her language reveals the trauma, loss and pain that she has experienced when her father was killed. Hardika is seen scared here. Her language suggests that she is powerless. She has no control over the situation. So, she appears to be cautious and alerting other family members. Her metaphorical line “The dogs have been let loose” suggests that the political people have the power to provoke the communal groups to do violence. She knows that the common people like her and her family members have to pay the price of such violence. She understands and reveals through her speech that the violence may be repeated. So, she alerts all her family members to close the door and do not open the door unless the riots are over. Thus, the emotional trauma and damage is reflected in the dialogue of Hardika.

In the dialogue of the play, one may find the power dynamics hidden in the following dialogue.

Aruna: (sternly) Smita, go to Baa and sit with her till I call you.

Ramnik: I think Baa will be fine. There is no need.

Aruna: She hasn't spent any time with Baa. She must learn to be with elders. (Dattani 172)

In the utterance of Aruna, the locutionary speech act may be that she tells Smita to be with her Granny until she is called by her. The illocutionary speech act of Aruna is to order and to show her authority as a mother. It also shows her care to make her daughter disciplined. The perlocutionary speech act of Aruna's utterance would be her daughter Smita feeling the pressure to follow the command or maybe obliged to follow the instructions given to her happily or resentfully.

The Locutionary speech act by Ramnik is that he gives his opinion about Baa being fine and Smitha is not needed to go to her. An illocutionary speech act would be challenging the command of Aruna. He may be trying to show that he is the one who will decide what to do in the house. The perlocutionary speech act of Ramnik's utterance would be to create a dilemma in front of Smita whether to follow the command of her mother or the suggestion of

her father. He may be trying to pamper her. He shows that he doesn't support the idea of Smita spending time in the company of her Granny.

The locutionary speech act of Aruna's counter dialogue is to reinforce the fact that Smita has not spent enough time with Baa. She wants her daughter Smita to learn from the experienced and the eldest person of the family. The illocutionary speech act is that she is trying to justify and reinforce her authority as a mother and she is adamantly showing that her order is absolutely correct and beneficial to her daughter. She shows that Smita may learn more values and discipline by spending time in the company of her granny. The perlocutionary speech act is that Smita is having more pressure to oblige and comply with the order given by her mother. Her father Ramnik may feel that his intervention is not that much meaningful in the conversation.

In the above dialogue Aruna at first appears to be a directive. She is asking Smita to go to her Granny. She is making Smita act the way she says. On the other hand, Ramnik is performing the assertive task by his dialogue. He is expressing his opinion that Granny is fine. In the counter dialogue to Ramnik, Aruna appears to be assertive, directive and expressive because she states her opinion that Smita has spent very less time in the company of her Granny. She commands Smita to spend time in the company of her Granny. She expresses the importance of values that Smita may get by spending time in the company of elders like Granny.

In the above dialogue Aruna very strictly orders Smita. Her commanding tone and language shows who has the control and who has the authority as a mother. Mr. Ramnik, father of Smita, tries to make the situation a little lighter. He may be challenging and resisting the dominance of Aruna. He may be trying to establish himself as a decision maker. But Aruna appears to be adamant and proves that she has the control of the discussion. Through the language of Aruna Ramnik and Smita, we may understand that Aruna is a dominant figure because she uses commanding language. Ramni is trying to calm the situation down by using softer language but Aruna reinforces her stand in the conversation and makes it very clear that she is a dominant person in the occasion of conversation. The weakest person appears to be Smita because she keeps the silence and follows the orders.

The revelation of power dynamics is vivid in the following conversation.

Aruna: (screams and recoils) Oh!

Ramnik: What now?

Aruna: A lizard! It fell on the milk vessel. We will have to throw the milk away.

Ramnik: Didn't you put the lead on it? (Dattani 173)

The locutionary speech act of Aruna's dialogue is that she talks about a lizard that fell on the milk vessel and she suggests that the milk should be thrown away. The illocutionary speech act would be she is informing her husband Ramnik about the issue and expecting him to suggest a solution. The perlocutionary act of her dialogue would be her husband Ramnik feeling angry, worried or not interested in throwing the milk.

The locutionary function of Ramnik's dialogue is that if his wife Aruna covered the vessel in which the milk was stored. The illocutionary speech act of Ramnik's dialogue is that he is trying to question the carelessness of his wife. It is because he is not sure if she had covered the milk vessel. The perlocutionary function of Ramnik's dialogue is that his wife Aruna may defend herself or she may feel guilty about her carelessness.

Aruna performs assertive directive and expressive functions by her dialogue. It is because she has reported the matter about a lizard falling on the milk vessel. He performs the directive function by her dialogue by suggesting an action to be taken by the listener or herself. The action would be to throw the milk.

Aruna performs expressive functions by her language. Her words carry a kind of disgusting and shocking feeling at the instance of a filthy and poisonous creature lizard which fell on the vessel in which the milk was kept. On the other hand, Ramnik performs the assertive task by his dialogue. He states the fact that Aruna should have covered the milk vessel.

In the above conversation, Aruna is having a bit of control over the situation. But her language is driven by fear and disgust. Her language shows that she is not sure of her own authority and decision. She is not a final authority here. It shows that an Indian woman cannot decide even a petty issue of throwing milk. On the other hand, Ramnik is seen questioning the responsibility of Aruna. He suggests through his question that Aruna is being careless and it is her responsibility to take care of household responsibilities like covering the milk vessel. It shows the dominance of male gender. It appears that Aruna takes control of the situation and expresses her desire to throw the milk initially. But her husband resists her action and points out her negligence. Thus Ramnik undermines Aruna's authority and decision making.

The show of superiority and submissiveness continues in the following conversation.

Aruna: It hasn't fallen inside. It is gone. But still, it's bad enough...

Ramnik: Don't you dare throw it away. (Dattani 173)

The locutionary function of Aruna's dialogue is that she is giving an explanation about the lizard that did not fall in the milk but according to her the situation is still bad. The illocutionary function of her dialogue is that she is trying to justify her opinion and she is

defending her earlier response about the milk to be thrown away. The perlocutionary function of her speech is that her husband Ramnik may feel angry as his opinion was refused by her. He may oppose her decision or may not be convinced by her logic.

On the other hand, the locutionary function of Ramnik's speech is that he doesn't like the idea of throwing milk. So, he sternly tells Aruna not to throw the milk. The illocutionary function of his dialogue is that he is not ready to accept Aruna's decision. He intends to oppose the plan. The perlocutionary function of his dialogue is that his wife Aruna may be silenced and she may be made to follow the instruction of her husband and not to throw the milk.

Aruna performs the assertive task by stating the fact that the lizard has not fallen inside the milk and it has gone. Later, she performs the directive function by hinting that the milk should be thrown away. But her husband Ramnik warns her very strongly that she should not throw the milk. He is also performing the expressive task by conveying his anger and authority. It is because he is threatening her.

Aruna tries to justify her response of throwing the milk by giving the information that the lizard has not fallen inside the vessel. But her language appears to be defensive and hesitant. It shows that she is not confident. She is a bit of a weak person in front of her husband. Though she is logical; she cannot make her argument confidently and without hesitation. It shows gender discrimination. The power is there with male gender. Which is why the female is shown defensive and hesitant without having full confidence in her argument. On the other hand, the male character appears to be very direct, forceful and authoritative in his language. He straight away confronts her opinion and threatens her. By the speech of both the characters, it can be concluded that Ramnik, being a male is more dominant as compared to Aruna. Aruna shows less force so less power to her. On the other hand, Ramnik is commanding and is in control of the discussion. In a way Ramnik appears to be having full control over the conversation and comes out as a powerful figure.

The power of moral values and family dignity is revealed in the following dialogue.

Aruna: who were you talking to on the phone?

Smita: Oh, nobody. Justjust a friend of mine

Aruna: Always be pure. Pure in mind, in your deeds.(Dattani 173)

When Aruna asks a question to Smita, the locutionary function of the question is to know the person who is speaking with Smita on the phone. The illocutionary function of Aruna's question is a kind of suspicion or interrogation. She is curious to know the person is at the other end of the phone. She is showing doubt and concern for her daughter. She wants to

make sure that her daughter is not talking to a male. She wants to protect her daughter. The perlocutionary function of her question may make Smita guilty, defensive or it may force her to give explanation about the listener. The perlocutionary function of Smita's reply is to tell her mother that the person was not that important. It was just her friend.

The reply of Smita has a locutionary function; she wants to suggest that the person at the other end of the phone is not that much important to pay attention to. The illocutionary function of her reply is full of doubt. She may be trying to hide something from her mother and that is why she is simply trying to cut the discussion short. The perlocutionary function of Smita's reply may be to create more suspicion and disbelief in the mind of Aruna as well as it may give a little satisfaction to Smita for hiding who the person was on the phone.

The extra cautious mother Aruna advises her daughter Smita to be pure in mind and deeds. The locutionary function of her suggestion is that she wants her daughter to be pure in her thoughts as well as in her actions. It means she does not want her daughter to have a love affair that may bring bad name to the family. The illocutionary function of Aruna's suggestion is that she wants her daughter to understand that her mother is watchful. Smita is being observed, her actions and words are being taken care of by her mother. It is also a kind of hint for Smita. Aruna hints that Smita should behave properly and should not bring any defame or stigma for the family. The perlocutionary function of her suggestion is that it may cause guilt, defensiveness in the mind of Smita. Aruna may feel satisfied that she is guiding and controlling her daughter for her better future but her daughter Smita may take it otherwise and she may be defensive and extra cautious next time.

Smita performs an assertive function by presenting her claim that the person on the phone is just a friend. She performs the expressive function too. She uses the word 'just' twice. It shows her hesitation, discomfort and guilt. It shows that she is uneasy while answering the question of her mother Aruna. Aruna is performing the assertive, directive and expressive functions when she suggests her daughter Smita to be pure in thoughts and actions. Aruna suggests to Smita about the importance of being pure. Aruna orders Smita to behave in a certain way so that she remains pure in thoughts and actions. She also expresses her care, values and judgement about her daughter.

Power dynamics: The power dynamics revealed in the language of the above dialogue are about moral authority, social hierarchy and judgement. The mother Aruna shows her social position by asking a probing question to her daughter Smita. She shows that she has the right and authority to ask a question about her daughter's personal life. As a guardian Aruna advises Smita to be pure in her thoughts and deeds. The oral question asked by Aruna to her

daughter shows that she is superior to her daughter. Her question is a kind of disapproval for Smita. It shows Aruna does not want her daughter to talk to strangers. On the other hand, Smita's submissiveness and hesitation in her language suggests that she is weak, powerless and has to oblige to her mother's advice. It shows her lower status in the family. Aruna is formal, dominating and prescriptive in her language. It shows that society has given more power to mothers as compared to daughters. Therefore, the language of the daughter Smita is informal, submissive, vague and self-cautious. Thus, Aruna holds the moral and conversational authority and Smita has a subordinate position in the family. She becomes the tool to be controlled by moral policing.

In the intense situation of sheltering Javed and Bobby the husband and wife reveal the authority and dominance.

Aruna: (to Ramnik) why do you bring so much trouble on our heads?

Ramnik: What do you want me to do through them out so they will be butchered?

Aruna: (softly) No (Dattani 184)

The question of Aruna has a typical locutionary function to perform. She simply asks a question to her husband Ramnik about giving shelter to the Muslim boys Javed and Bobby. She is of the opinion that if they give shelter to those Muslim boys, the Hindu group will harm their entire family too. The illocutionary function of a question is to criticize and accuse the decision of her husband. She assumes that it is irrational to protect Muslim boys against the anger of Hindu group which is ready to kill them. Her question suggests that the decision of Ramnik is irresponsible and may prove dangerous for her family. The perlocutionary function of Aruna's question is that her husband may realise his fault and he may rethink his decision of providing safety to those Muslim boys.

On the other hand, Ramnik's rhetorical question has a kind of sympathy for the Muslim boys. The illocutionary function of his dialogue is that he is more sympathetic, a risk taker as compared to his wife. He is challenging Aruna's opinion of handing over the Muslim boys to the crowd. He is behaving like a true Indian by protecting the boys from the rowdy crowd. The perlocutionary act performed by Mr. Ramnik in his dialogue is that his wife will feel ashamed of herself and she might be more sympathetic towards the boys and she may help him protect those Muslim boys.

The locutionary act of Aruna's response to Ramnik's rhetorical question is a simple denial. The illocutionary act performed by Aruna in her denial is a kind of agreement. She accepts the human stand taken by her husband. The perlocutionary act performed by Aruna in her denial is a kind of reconciling or calming effect. She decreases the tension and the emotional turmoil

that took place between her husband and herself by showing her emotional maturity at the time of conflict.

Mr. Ramnik performs the assertive function through his dialogue. He asserts that the effects of throwing those Muslim boys out of the house will be deadly for them. The expressive function is also visible in his dialogue. His frustration and humanity are expressed in his speech over here. On the other hand, Aruna is performing an expressive function via her denial. She agrees with her husband reluctantly. She tries to balance the emotional turmoil and kind of escalation between a husband and wife.

Power dynamics: The husband Ramnik speaks with moral urgency of compelling and making his wife Aruna to face the consequences of her stand about the Muslim boys. He asserts dominance with his human logic. Aruna's response shows the shift of power from Aruna to Ramnik. Her soft response indicates her emotional vulnerability and reluctant agreement. She is submissive not because she is scared but the situation of saving the life of those Muslim boys makes her accept her husband's decision.

Conclusion: The language of males in the male dominated society shows authority and dominance. On the other hand, the females seem to be meek, accepting and tolerant in the language. They use submissive language. The use of language shows that the power is in the hands of male. Ramnik Gandhi represents the male dominated society. The female characters Hardika, Aruna and Smita are the representatives of the contemporary era. Another highlighted theme of the drama is Hindu Muslim rivalry. Here, the language of Hindu mob is threatening. The language used by Muslim characters Bobby and Javed is meek and weak. The Muslims are pleading and Hindu mob is threatening. The language suggests that the power lies with Hindu majority and the males of the society. The characters that represent the mob and the male reveal that they are powerful and commanding and self-confident.

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