

**The Speech Act of Thanking in Shakespeare:  
The Case of *Romeo and Juliet* and *All's Well that Ends Well***

**Chahra Beloufa**

Department of Letters, Arts and Foreign Languages  
Djilali Liabes University  
Algeria  
[chahra.beloufa@gmail.com](mailto:chahra.beloufa@gmail.com)

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article History</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article Received February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022</li> <li>• Article Accepted March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022</li> </ul> <p><b>Keywords</b></p> <p>Thanking Speech Act Performatives Shakespeare</p>	<p>Shakespeare's written words are not innocent. Many individual words from his dramatic texts can be "obscure or impenetrable". They are not only meant to embellish the scene and the context, yet their elaboration is aimed to set up meaning and effect. In this part, we will analyze and look at how this utterance operates in characters' dialogues. We will try to highlight Shakespeare conventionalized thank you, which can be not only a sign of gratitude but a complex emotion that adds to the dramatic situation. In the construction of Shakespeare's dialogues in the plays, many linguistic features are omnipresent and do serve a variety of functions. From a linguistic perspective, thanking is a conversational routine such as advising, requesting and complementing, yet in the use of thanking expressions, there is genuine artistry that Shakespeare wittingly invented. Some words carry risks when negotiating actions. We might think primarily of insults, criticisms and curses. These negative speech acts are not the only damaging and threatening in speech, there is also thanksgiving, which can be regarded as an element bearing risks. The present study focuses on the speech act of thanking in the Shakespearean corpus. The word "thanks" and the formula "I thank you" occurred more than four hundred times in the 37 plays of Shakespeare. Was "thanking" a sincere speech act that acted in the fictional setting of the play? What are the reasons that lead to "thanks" in 16<sup>th</sup> century Shakespeare? Did Shakespeare succeed to use "thanks" as a successful performative speech act that acts when it is said, or are "thanks" a simple language ornament? To answer these questions, we are going to select specific scenes from Shakespeare's <i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> and <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> examining how the speech act of thanking operates in the plays.</p>



*The Speech Act of Thanking in Shakespeare: The Case of Romeo and Juliet and All's Well that Ends Well*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the Renaissance era, language was immensely affected by diverse socio-cultural events. Intellectuals and thinkers sought out to learn from Latin and Greek texts.<sup>1</sup> Such contact with other kinds of literature and books has led to the expansion of English vocabulary and lexicon. The prosperous reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) brought with it rich social changes. The language was exploited cleverly and differently from one context to another. In this period, Shakespeare's artistic skills were celebrated and performed on stage. The plays of Shakespeare encompass words and characters that were based on the audience's interest, dramatizing social issues and practices whether in a tragic, romantic, or comic style.

The choice of words in Shakespeare is what made him a distinguished and superior dramatist of his age. Shakespeare worked on the stimulation of the spectators' thoughts. That is why in studying his pieces of work it is compulsory to connect past events and present ones since as Lemke notes it "our meaning systems have a biological ground, a cultural set of historically specific resources, and a socially shaped set of commonalities with others."<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter, we are going to give definitions of thank, and the perception of this term in the early modern period. Our primary resource to achieve the latter is the database *Lexicons of Early Modern English (LEME)*. In LEME, early modern glossaries and dictionaries are compiled of renaissance lexicons within their context and definitions.

The recurrence of the word "thanks" in Shakespeare's plays is considerable. The use of "thanks" is not innocent since it potentially alters the dramatic situation. Mattias Jacobsson's study of "Thank you and thanks in Early Modern England" supports our idea that thanking is governed by the context and the relationship between characters. Jacobsson explores the Corpus of English Dialogues (CED)<sup>3</sup> which consists of different texts and speeches from diverse literary genres. For Searle (1969) "thank" is an illocutionary force indicating device (IFID). The rules which Searle has formulated for "thank" are as follows:

- Propositional content rule: past act A done by H (hearer)
- Preparatory rule: A benefits S (speaker) and S believes A benefits S.
- Sincerity rule: S feels grateful or appreciative for A.
- Essential rule: Counts as an expression of gratitude or appreciation.<sup>4</sup>

These are some thanking strategies set by pragmatics, although they are useful, they are frequently broken, for example when "thanks" is used ironically<sup>5</sup> or to close a conversation and even to show acceptance or refusal. Hence, would Shakespeare's "thank you" and "thanks" have intricately and specific use. The pragmatic approach does not give us full access to the meanings that lie beyond the frequent usage of "thanks" in the plays of

<sup>1</sup> On the birth of humanist culture and the influence of Greek and Latin in literature see Charles G. Nauert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Jay L. Lemke cited in Arthur F. Kinney. *Shakespeare's Webs: Networks of Meaning in Renaissance Drama*. NY: Routledge. 2004. (Introduction)

<sup>3</sup> *A Corpus of English Dialogues 1560-1760*. 2006. Compiled under the supervision of Merja Kytö (Uppsala University) and Jonathan Culpeper (Lancaster University). See more in: *Culpeper Jonathan, Merja Kytö. Towards a corpus of dialogues, 1550-1750*. In Heinrich Ramisch and Kenneth Wynne (eds.). *Language in Time and Space. Studies in Honour of Wolfgang Viereck on the Occasion of His 60th Birthday* (Zeitschrift für Dialektologie und Linguistik - Beihefte, Heft 97). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Culpeper, Jonathan and Merja Kytö. 2000. Data in historical pragmatics: "Spoken interaction (re)cast as writing". *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 1 (2): 175-199.

Culpeper, Jonathan and Merja Kytö. 2010. *Early Modern English Dialogues: Spoken Interaction as Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kytö, Merja and Terry Walker. 2006. *Guide to A Corpus of English Dialogues 1560-1760* (Studia Anglistica Upsaliensia 130). Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis.

<sup>4</sup> Searle John. *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1969.

<sup>5</sup> Eisentein, Miriam and Jean W. Bodman. "I very appreciate Expressions of gratitude by native and non-native speakers of American English". *Applied Linguistics* 7(2): 167-85. 1986.

Shakespeare, “thus it is clear that the functions of thanking... cannot be explained as an IFID<sup>6</sup> alone”.<sup>7</sup>

Shakespeare’s thanks are original and very complex. They are theatrical and designed for the stage. Holmes (1984) distinguishes between positive and negative affective speech.<sup>8</sup> A positive one can be boosted such as “thank you very much” while for him it is impossible to say “thank you a little”.

In the CED, we find what Aijmer calls “compound thanks” which are “combinations of different strategies” (1996: 48).<sup>9</sup> Jacobsson sets a table where he categorises gratitude expressions with intensifiers<sup>10</sup>.

Thank you + intensifier	Thanks+ intensifier
I thank you kindly (1)	Many thanks (3)
I thank you forsooth (2)	Thanks with all my heart (3)
I thank you a hundred (thousand) times (2)	Thankes with bowed hearte (1)
I thank you with all my heart (1)	A thousand (twenty, hundred) thankes (5)
I thank you hartily (3)	Great thankes (1)
I thanke you moch (1)	Most hartye thankes (2)
I humbly thank you (3)	

Table 1. Forms of Thank

What is intriguing about thanking is that both parties can utter it. The giver may give with thanks, and the respondent accepts or refuses with thanks and that is what we find in *As You Like It*. The table above can help us identify if similar constructions occur in Shakespeare's plays. As a matter of fact, in all the plays few examples bear the same structure. Shakespeare focuses on the question of thanking from different perspectives, sometimes on its quality, quantity and the manner, it is given. Furthermore, he is also meditating on the question of whom it is appropriate to give thanks?

<sup>6</sup> For thank you/thanks as an illocutionary force indicating device see: Karin Aijmer. *Conversational Routines in English: Convention and Creativity*. NY: Routledge. 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Mattias Jacobsson, “Thank you and thanks in Early Modern English”. *ICAME Journal* No. 26. p. 64. 2002.

<sup>8</sup> Holmes, Janet. “Modifying Illocutionary Force”. *Journal of Pragmatics* 8(3): 345-65. 1984.

<sup>9</sup> Aijmer, Karin. *Conversational Routines in English*. London: Longman. 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Jacobsson. p. 68.

<sup>11</sup> On politeness see: Kopytko, Roman. *Polite Discourse in Shakespeare's English*. Poznan: Adam Mickiewicz University

The table demonstrates how thanking is always regarded as positive, yet not for Shakespeare’s characters. As a polite expression<sup>11</sup> "thanks" is intended to achieve peace and communicate a good impression to the other. What if it is also a keyword, a key act that has a political authenticity and force to pacify or denigrate? The speech delivered by Martius in *Coriolanus* raise this question when he says:

*A certain number,  
Though thanks to all, must I select from all.  
The rest shall bear the business in some other fight, as cause  
will be obey'd.* (1.6.99-102)

Coriolanus is probably using “thanks” as an “impoliteness super strategy”<sup>12</sup> since he is not addressing them to all the members of the tribunes, but only to some of them. According to Jacobson “thanking is most frequent in the comedy text type with 58 instances of thank you and 31 of thanks”.<sup>13</sup> In Shakespeare's comedies, we find 192 occurrences of the word "thank". In tragedies, we find a total of 156, and lastly, 139 are to be found in history plays.<sup>14</sup> Jacobsson’s claim may be right yet what about non-verbal thanking? Are they primarily comical? If uttering “thanks” in comedy may be humoristic, how about serious and more real thanking in a tragic scene on the stage?

We may call a thanking that takes place in a comedy, to be a comic thanking, but what about the other existing thanks in tragedies and histories? Playing with “thanks” in a dramatic text can be funny; for it may be ironic. According to one's reading of the plays of Shakespeare. A scene of thanking never bears a tragic atmosphere. On the contrary, it is its absence that brings the characters' tragic fall. In this context,

Press. 1993. Kopytko, Roman. Linguistic politeness strategies in Shakespeare’s plays. In Andreas H. Jucker (ed). *Historical Pragmatics: Pragmatic Developments in the History of English*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 515-41. 1995.

<sup>12</sup> Culpeper Jonathan. “Towards an anatomy of impoliteness” *Journal of Pragmatics* 25: 349-67. 1996.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 70.

<sup>14</sup> Word occurrences are given by the *Online Shakespeare Concordance*.

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ingratitude is repelled by Shakespeare's characters. Viola in *Twelfth Night* expresses her contempt towards it:

*I know of none;  
Nor know I you by voice or any feature  
I hate ingratitude more in a man  
Than lying, vainness, babbling, drunkenness,  
Or any taint of vice whose strong corruption  
Inhabits our frail blood.* (3.4.370-375)

The expression of gratitude<sup>15</sup> can only be explained by looking at "sociolinguistic factors" (Aijmer 1996:55).<sup>16</sup> It is important to look at contexts and occasions. Jacobsson for this distinguishes between types of benefaction which he has set according to the instances of "thanks" he found in the CED. For him, "thanks" is an answer<sup>17</sup> to material things such as gifts, hospitality, services and visiting. And immaterial things like compliments, congratulations, well wishes, interest in one's health, carrying out a request, offer, promise, suggestion, invitation, a proposal to do something.<sup>18</sup> Pragmatists find it very challenging to set a pattern of thanks when it comes to Shakespeare's texts, "no discourse specific features were found in either CED or Aijmer's study of Modern English".<sup>19</sup> Consider the example of high complexity in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*:

Page: I am glad to see your Worships well; I thank you for my Venison Master Shallow.

Shallow: Master Page, I am glad to see you: much good doe it your good heart: I wish'd your Venison better, it was ill killed: how doth good Mistress Page? And I thank you always with my heart, la: with my heart.

*Page: Sir, I thanke you.  
Shallow: Sir, I thank you: by yea, and no I doe.*  
(1.1.78-86)

<sup>15</sup> Linguistic discussion on gratitude in: Colston, Herbert L. "Pragmatic Justifications for Nonliteral Gratitude Acknowledgements: Oh sure, any time" *Metaphor and Symbol* 17: 205-226. 2002.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 74.

<sup>17</sup> "Thank you" serves also to close a conversation. See Aston, Guy "Say *Thank You*: Some pragmatic constraints in conversational closings". *Applied Linguistics* 16: 57-86. 1995.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 75.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 76.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 78.

Pragmatic frameworks offer a partly guidance to decorticate the art of thanking in Shakespeare. Jacobsson finds that thanks in comedy are more "a rewarding subject for study since the context is always reasonably clear".<sup>20</sup> However, the present study explores all genres. Other genres of thanking exist other than comical and this is what we are going to highlight focusing not on the genre but the exchange and the context. The early modern English period had some "features which suggest that culture of politeness of the period was different of that of today".<sup>21</sup> The motives, the actions and outcomes of thanking are interesting to investigate. It may have a lasting or an ephemeral effect on the audience. The time of Shakespeare was said to be the era of "positive politeness" (Kopytko, 1993, 1995), which suggests great intimacy between speakers.<sup>22</sup> Thanking is an appropriate response to certain social situations. As Coulmas (1981) puts it:

The social relation of the participants and the inherent properties of the object of gratitude work together to determine the degree of gratefulness that should be expressed in a given situation. Differences in this respect are subject to cultural variation.<sup>23</sup>

By looking closely at thanking as a verbal activity, we are going to see how it has shaped social relations and for this reason looking at the social dimension is necessary. Stephen Greenblatt insists that "textual analysis conveys almost nothing of the social dimension of literature's power".<sup>24</sup> In her *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters* Lynne Magnuson analyses many discourses of Shakespeare's plays using politeness theory fully taking into consideration the social context and external milieu.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 78.

<sup>22</sup> Kopytko, Roman. *Polite Discourse in Shakespeare's English*. Poznan: Adam Mickiewicz University Press. 1993. See also Kopytko, Roman. "Linguistic Politeness Strategies in Shakespeare's Plays" In A. Jucker (ed), pp. 515-41.

<sup>23</sup> Coulmas Florian. "Poison to your soul: Thanks and apologies contrastively viewed" *Conversational Routine*, ed. 1981. By Florian Coulmas, pp. 69-91. The Hague: Mouton.

<sup>24</sup> Greenblatt Stephen, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. p. 5. 1988.

According to her, the speech of characters is always affected by “a motive of politeness and socially defined site of the subject”.<sup>25</sup> Thanking is, therefore, not always to acknowledge some benefit. It is decorum or a verbal expression that alters the situation. In *Henry VIII*, for example, Katherine confronts the king asking him to remove the taxes Wolsey imposed. Her request is introduced with a polite thankfulness:

*Thank your majesty  
That you would love yourself, and in that love  
Not unconsidered leave your honour nor  
The dignity of your office is the point  
Of my petition.* (4.2.13-16)

Katherine thanks king Henry for his offer "take place by us." Magnusson in her analysis of this speech does not consider "thank your majesty" as a performative. She assumes that “her words work to repair the risk of her suit by asserting a power difference between them.”<sup>26</sup> By looking at the context, thanking can be identified. The vocabulary and the type of relationship also help us mark the rhetoric of thanking. Since we are discussing the meaning, we are going to explore the definitions of thanking and other possible words that were used to refer to "thanks" or "thank you" between 1500 and 1600.

We will therefore study the context and discover "how verbal interaction shapes the social scene or context since Elizabethans enacted their relationships with a rhetorical complexity and eloquence that Shakespeare assimilated."<sup>27</sup>

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study of “thanks” can be inscribed within theories of linguistic politeness. Polite implies consideration for others and the adherence to conventional standards expected of a well-bred person. Civil suggests only the barest observance of accepted social images, it often means neither polite

nor rude. Courteous implies courtliness and dignity.<sup>28</sup> The concept of politeness and its study is more systematic, governed by rules, while civility and courtesy are terms with abstract notions, rather descriptions that differ from one era and culture to another. Differentiations for these terms are offered for example by the *American Heritage Dictionary* (1996):

Polite and mannerly imply consideration for others and the adherence to conventional social standards expected of a well-bred person. “The English are busy; they don’t have time to be polite” (Montesquieu); “It costs nothing to be polite” (Winston S. Churchill). Civil suggests only the barest observance of accepted social usages; it often means neither polite nor rude. “Always be civil to the girls; you never know whom they will marry” is an aphorism which has saved many an English spinster from being treated like an Indian widow” (Nancy Mitford).<sup>29</sup>

To see language and dialogue at the level of politeness is to permeate into the characters communicate a message and understand their behaviours “since conversation operates under social constraints”.<sup>30</sup> Beckerman (1970) cites that:

The conversation is primarily social, which is intended to create an atmosphere of civilization rather than reveal inner turbulence. It also resists revelation. In conversation, confidence does not readily spring forth but must be elicited by the effort of the listener. It is not a medium for conveying passion because passion is egotistical and conversation rests on implied truce: no one is to dominate completely.<sup>31</sup>

It is not a question of comparing between drama and real-life conversations, and if the latter reflects faithfully the former one, it is rather a question of "mechanics, in the exploitation by dramatists of underlying speech conventions, principles, and rules

<sup>25</sup> Lynne Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. 1999.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p. 27.

<sup>27</sup> Lynne Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters*. UK: Cambridge University Press. 1999.

<sup>28</sup> Robin Tolmach Lakoff, Sachiko Ide, *Broadening the Horizon of Linguistic Politeness*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 25.

<sup>30</sup> Vimala Herman, *Dramatic Discourse: Dialogue as Interaction in Plays*. London and New York: Routledge. 1995. p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

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of use, operative in speech exchanges".<sup>32</sup> What we intend to do in this part of our work is to study the conventions of thanking actions and interactions realised in scenes looking at it as a dramatic activity organised by social norms, modes of conduct and values. Dramatic speech is usually qualified as "deviant".<sup>33</sup> So, what thanks can convey in a natural context in society can be dissimilar to some extent to what it might do in a dramatic context.

A "thanks" is a polite formulaic utterance that occurs in most social interactions. Politeness is not only limited to verbal behaviour, it implicates both linguistic and non-linguistic behaviours. Watts (1989) defined political behaviour as "socio-culturally determined behaviour directed towards the goal of establishing and/or maintaining in a state of equilibrium the personal relationships between the individuals of a social group".<sup>34</sup> In this concern, not only do mannerly behaviours establish balance in a relationship, but words also can do things. Politeness research was largely influenced by the speech acts theory delivered by John L. Austin (1962) and John Searle (1969, 1975).<sup>35</sup> Thanking routines can well refer to future acts. Promises or invitations are cases in point here; if someone is invited for or promised dinner and thanks for it, this dinner has not yet taken place.<sup>36</sup> Intonation matters in giving thanks. Okamoto Robinson (1997) notes that: "how gratitude is expressed in terms of vocal features can moderate the significance of the form-even to the extent of reversing its meaning through sarcasm. Likewise, smiles, head nods, and other non-verbal acts can moderate the significance of what is said".<sup>37</sup> Bayraktaroglu (1991) and Watts (2003), among others, have explored the idea that politeness has the function of maintaining social equilibrium. Ochs identifies the following socio-cultural dimensions of

the communicative situation (other than time or place):

1. *Social identity* encompasses all dimensions of social personae, including roles (e.g., speaker, over hearer, doctor, teacher), relationships (e.g., kinship, friendship), group identity (gender, generation, class, ethnic membership) and rank (employer and employee).
2. *Social act* refers to a socially recognised goal-directed behaviour (e.g., a request, an offer) *Activity* refers to a sequence of at least two social acts, e.g., disputing, interviewing *Affective stance* refers to a mood, attitude, feeling, and disposition, as well as degrees of emotional intensity
3. *Epistemic stance* refers to knowledge or belief vis-à-vis some focus of concern, including degrees of certainty of knowledge<sup>[SEP]</sup> (Quoted from Ochs 1996: 410 with some abbreviations)<sup>38</sup>

Linguistic decorum is one of the main reasons why kings and queens of the Elizabethan era would refine their language in public speeches and ceremonies. The choice of language and particularly of words is regulated by the public image the monarch has to maintain. We will argue in this chapter, that thanking in some scenes of Shakespeare's plays are strategic responses and formulaic linguistic realisations. These are coded phrases where "thanks" happen to be a "non-gratitude strategy"<sup>39</sup> that perform illocutionary functions of politeness and conversation endings. Expressions of "I'm sorry" and "thank you" would not be accepted as expressions of regret and gratitude unless it could be proven by some independent test

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 11.

<sup>34</sup> Richard J. Watts, *Politeness*, UK: Cambridge University Press. 2003. p. 20.

<sup>35</sup> See Daniel Z. Kadar, Michael Haugh, *Understanding Politeness*, UK: Cambridge University Press. 2013.

<sup>36</sup> Sabine Jautz, *Thanking Formulae in English: Explorations across Varieties and Genres*. Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Co. 2013. p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p. 11. Some disagree on this matter. For example, Lindstrom (1978: 195) stresses that gratitude can be expressed only with falling intonation. (See also Knowles 1987: 195)

<sup>38</sup> Ochs, E. "Linguistic resources for socializing humanity". In J. Gumperz and S. C. Levinson (eds), *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1996. 407–37.

<sup>39</sup> Stephanie, W. Cheng, "A Corpus-Based Approach to the Study of Speech Act of Thanking". *Concentric: Studies in Linguistics*. 36.2 (July 2010): 257-274

that the speaker was so disposed".<sup>40</sup> the side of the plain saying our word is our bond.<sup>41</sup>

From Austin's declaration, we understand that saying "thanks" necessitates a high degree of accuracy, which depends on proving the word itself, that is doing something. For Stanley Fish (1976) a speech act theory "cannot serve as an interpretative key", it can't tell us anything about what happens after an illocutionary act has been performed (it is not rhetoric); it can't tell us anything about the inner life of the performer (it is not psychology); it can't serve as the basis of stylistics."<sup>42</sup> Speech act theory is about "language and its power; the power to make the world rather than mirror it, to bring about states of affairs rather than report them, to constitute institutions rather than (or as well as) serve them."<sup>43</sup>

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In thanking situation, we do believe that the act of thanking depends on how much gratitude the speaker feels towards the giver's service. Another thought is that thanking does not only include this transaction of giving and receiving as we may all think about when first we hear 'thanks'. The complexity of thanking is vague. And we need more than speech act theory to investigate its specificities in Shakespeare's plays.

Words can execute acts, that is true but for some speech acts like thanks if one says "I thank you", what has he done yet then? Did he change some status? After reading Austin's work, we arrive at the conclusion which we highlight in the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Act + utterances} &= \text{Explicit/successful Act} \\ &\quad \text{manifested} \\ \text{Utterances + No Action} &= \text{No Intention to} \\ &\quad \text{act} \end{aligned}$$

<sup>40</sup> Stanley Fish. "How to do things with Austin and Searle: Speech act theory and literary criticism". MLN, Vol. 91, No. 5, Centennial Issue: Responsibilities of the Critic (Oct, 1976), pp. 983-1025. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2907112>

<sup>41</sup> J. L. Austin. *How to do Things with Words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1975. p.9.

### Act + No utterance = Proved Utterance thus Implicit Act.

According to each linear rule, we will provide examples from Shakespeare's plays and we will see if it will be a working device to decode the workings of thanks. According to the etymological dictionary of the English language, the word "thank" is derived from "thought" "to think", it is an expression of goodwill. The verb "thank" denotes a human practice and activity. MacIntyre Alasdair describes virtue in his "after virtue" as: "...any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity are realized in the cause of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially..." (1984:187-88).<sup>44</sup>

Shakespeare employed this excellence in his plays purposefully since thanking is a human endeavour and sometimes the absence of it displays the cruelty of the soul as in many of Shakespeare's characters who were ungrateful such as Timon's friends, Jack Cade, etc. in a preface to Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson wrote that Shakespeare wrote without any moral purpose.<sup>45</sup> The use of the speech act of thanking denies the latter claim. Thanking sometimes is a kind of interaction between human beings. Reading closely Herbert Blumer's *Symbolic Interactionism*<sup>46</sup>, we come to link between Austin's concept of saying is acting, and Blumer's idea that an individual's action is not a mere release yet a constructed action. Individuals do not react according to a simple stimulus but provide and reconsider meaning to objects in their social situation.

As our concern is theatre, one might think that "thanking" can differ from the meaning of the applied and utilized in reality. The researcher believes that the existence of thanks abundantly in Shakespeare's plays commemorates human action to reside as an act which was enacted in those times of Shakespeare and

<sup>42</sup> Stanley Fish. p. 1023.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p. 1024.

<sup>44</sup> MacIntyre, A. *After Virtue* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. 1984.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Brian Roberts, *Micro-Social Theory*. UK: Palgrave MacMillan. 2006.

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still, in today's globe. A play is always meant to entertain the heart first then the mind. Even if theorists claim that speech acts are fictional, still thanking is not only a speech act, it can be in some cases, and it can be something else in others.

In Romeo and Juliet, act three scene two, lady Capulet announces to Juliet that she is going to be a bride in Saint Peter's church by next Thursday morning. Juliet however, was offended with these meant to be glad tidings. She showed her resolution to refute being submissive in front of the decree of her parents. When her father asked his wife about Juliet's response, lady Capulet said:

*Ay, sir, but she will none, she gives you thanks.  
I would the fool were married to her grave.*

The illocutionary force of the word "thanks" within lady Capulet's utterances was meant to describe Juliet's refusal. If Juliet has welcomed her marriage news with joy, the statement "she gives you thank" would seem more appropriate in this context. "Thanks" in this case are used ironically. Lady Capulet "give you thanks" provoked Capulet's anger and questioning to his daughter. Capulet asks his daughter:

*How, will she none? Doth she not give us thanks?  
Is she not proud? Doth she not count her blessed,  
Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought  
So worthy a gentleman to be her bride?*

We can understand that for lady Capulet and Capulet, "thanking" is the equivalent of giving "thanks". The attitude of Juliet is a mere thanking to her parent. Since it is not a literal language, words play is inevitable and especially in Shakespeare. We can remark that "thanks" was not as a decorative ornament in this sequence of scenes, we can feel that the tension raises, and the scenes move to be more dramatic. Action in this scene is not concrete based

on acts but in terms of effect. Actions are defined in terms of operators that are broken down into preconditions, effects and bodies, the latter being how effects are achieved (Cohen and Perrault 1979: 178).<sup>47</sup> When answering her father, Juliet stressed that she is more thankful; Juliet is being cooperative with the non-literal meaning her mother uttered at first. Juliet responds:

*Not proud you have, but thankful that you have.  
Proud can I never be of what I hate,  
But thankful even for hate that is meant love.*

Juliet defends herself, twice thankful she is as she claimed though the choice of her parents which is against her will; that is what is meant hate for her even if it is considered as something lovable for her parents.

*How, how, how, how? Chopped logic? What is this?  
"Proud," and "I thank you," and "I thank you not,"  
And yet "not proud"? Mistress minion you,  
Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no prouds,  
But fettle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next  
To go with Paris to Saint Peter's Church,  
Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither.  
Out, you green-sickness carrion! Out, you baggage!  
You tallow face!*

The term thanks is not used to be identical to the scope of its function. Capulet is not undertaking the act of thanking. The paradox was given a very interesting meaning when he said "thank me no thankings". He continues to humiliate Juliet's conduct seen as ingratitude and disobedience. What illocution was then performed when these statements were said? The fact that the word "thank" was repeatedly occurring within the three characters' discourses, explains how Juliet has failed to achieve a perlocutionary act. Juliet has failed to thank her parents. At the production of the tidings brought to Juliet, the perlocutionary act which was meant to take

<sup>47</sup> Cohen, Philip R. and C. Raymond Perrault, "Elements of a plan-based theory of speech acts". *Cognitive Science* 1979. 6: 177-212



place is a sincere welcoming and gratefulness. When Juliet affirms that she is thankful, with tears and kneeling for mercy and comprehension, we can say that Juliet performed an unhappy speech act, though being thankful (according to herself), to her father she was still to be considered as a disobedient wretch.

When Austin has categorized speech acts as illocutions and locutions, Wittgenstein proves the multiplicity of language games where thanking is among these. In the stage, dramatic discourse is overloaded with language games. We can cite a few examples as follows:

- Describing objects presumably present on stage
- Displaying objects, with accompanying verbal comments
- Using and referring to stage properties
- Requesting or indicating verbally a particular movement
- Employing a particular pitch, volume or intonational colouring of the voice
- Employing particular idiosyncrasies of pronunciation<sup>48</sup>

For Wittgenstein (1953) language game refers to the linguistic activity related to the context. Playing with the term "thanks" in a theatrical scene where disobedience is explicitly manifested seems quite thought-provoking. There exists an internal display of parent' conception of thankfulness when it comes to their children. As it is for the Capulet parents, thanking could have been framed by Juliet's acceptance of what was decided on her behalf. The mother was so ironic, the father felt so offended by this irony, Juliet still assures her father of her thankfulness, yet it seems that words without acts bear no effect.

Thank you and thank you not hence, do not have a denotative meaning in this sense, they do refer to something transparent. If Juliet has approved this marriage, then thanking would have its denotative meaning fulfilled. When lady Capulet said to her husband that Juliet gives him thanks, it was nonsense,

because the sentence is false. The verb "to thank" is considered as a performer to a polite speech act. Since thanking is viewed as positive, it must however enhance the addressee appreciation of the speaker.

According to leech (1983)<sup>49</sup> and Aijmer (1996)<sup>50</sup> thanking is inherently a polite speech act and its force can be maximized by boosting, using intensifying adverbs or by prosodic devices.

We find some examples in Shakespeare's plays such as in Henry VI part one wherein in the third scene of act five, the earl of Suffolk says: Reignier of France, I give thee kingly thanks (5.3.168). Also, in *Henry VI part three*, Queen says: I take my leave with many thousand thanks. (3.2. 56). Thanking strategies may vary and this is according to the persons involved in this activity. We can thank God, we can thank people, but what makes us express such gratitude? Does it bear a routinized effect in Shakespeare's plays?

In *All's Well that Ends Well*, Helen longing to marry Bertram decides to be a determinant woman who must have Bertram for herself. Helena's father was a physician. In love with Bertram, the count of Rousillion's son. When the count died, Bertram became the ward of the French king. The king was dying and many physicians try hardly to cure him. Helen wit informed her that she shall use her father's gift left to her and heal his majesty. The starting point of "thanking" transaction as I would call it when Helen has come to the king professing about her will to help him. Looking at some theories regarding gratitude expressions, we find an interesting one elaborated by Searle (1969) who considered thank (for) as an Illocutionary Force

Indicating Device (IFID) which is specified by a set of rules.<sup>51</sup> The rules are as follows:

1. Propositional content rule: past act A done by H (hearer)
2. Preparatory rule: A benefits S (Speaker) and S believes A benefits S.
3. Sincerity rule: S feels grateful or appreciative for A.

<sup>48</sup> Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1953.

<sup>49</sup> Leech, Geoffrey N, *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman. 1983.

<sup>50</sup> Aijmer, Karin, *Conversational Routines in English*. London: Longman. 1996.

<sup>51</sup> Searle, John R. *Speech Acts. An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1969.

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4. Essential rule: Counts as an expression of gratitude or appreciation.

We can view the King's thanking scene plotted on this model of gratitude pattern. Let us consider that Helen as the speaker, and the king as the hearer (H).

Helen said:

*The rather will I spare my praises towards him.  
Knowing him is enough. On 's bed of death  
Many receipts he gave me, chiefly one  
Which, as the dearest issue of his practice,  
And of his old experience th' only darling,  
He bade me store up as a triple eye,  
Safer than mine own two, more dear. I have so,  
And hearing your high Majesty is touched  
With that malignant cause wherein the honour  
Of my dear father's gift stands chief in power,  
I come to tender it and my appliance  
With all bound humbleness.*

(2.1.120-130)

Helen proposes to the king her help and tries one of her inherited magical recipes to cure him. The king thanks her, but refuses to try. The king feels appreciative for her proposed help yet reject it and tries to close the conversation thanking her. We can see that sometimes Searle's rules are broken. "Thank you" has the function of closing a conversation, or accepting/rejecting an offer. If we can break Searle's rules, we would say that and in coordination with the sociological approach, thanking is a supportive ritual associated with politeness. Of course, his majesty the king is polite and cannot reject the female doctor's offer to help without thanking her for her kind witty thought. Helen's pains are not the fruit of the king's rejection of her cure, but the missed gift she would possibly obtain when curing him.

Gently and humbly, Helen decides to dismiss her thoughts and offer and the king continues thanking her for his grace cannot be called ungrateful.

Near to death, He gives too many thanks to Helen who wishes him to live, but still, the king desperately knows his peril is much more than his hope. Helen cannot leave the king, leaving the king unconvinced would be leaving Bertram free of her love's charges. She insists:

*What I can do can do no hurt to try  
Since you set up your rest 'gainst remedy.  
He that of greatest works is finisher  
Oft does them by the weakest minister.  
So holy writ in babes hath judgment shown  
When judges have been babes. Great floods have flown  
From simple sources, and great seas have dried  
When miracles have by the great'st been denied.  
Oft expectation fails, and most oft there  
Where most it promises, and oft it hits  
Where hope is coldest and despair most shifts.  
When the king started to be attracted by her offer, his desire  
to live struggles with his doctors' claims about his illness, he  
tells her:  
I must not hear thee. Fare thee well, kind maid.  
Thy pains, not used, must by thyself be paid.  
Proffers not took reap thanks for their reward.*

(2.1.163-165)

The king feels so much obliged to close the conversation with Helen, he thanked her twice, and this time it is Helen's pains that will pay her since a simple offer or proposal cannot have the reward for it. A very interesting utterance Helen's pronounces when responding to the king's firm refusal is "Act of men". She shows to the kings that her offer is not directed by her greed but by her father's gift.

*Inspired merit so by breath is barred.  
It is not so with Him that all things knows  
As 'tis with us that square our guess by shows;  
But most it is presumption in us when  
The help of heaven we count the act of men.  
Dear sir, to my endeavours give consent.  
Of heaven, not me, make an experiment.  
I am not an impostor that proclaim  
Myself against the level of mine aim,  
But know I think and think I know most sure  
My art is not past power nor you past cure.*

(2.1.166-176)

The meaning of this utterance is zesty with Helen's spiritual beliefs about God. Her act is not the act of herself, but the help of heaven. So, the king should not count it as a woman's help, but a heaven's grace sent to him. Helen's speech changed the king's mind

at the end. Helen is confident; happily, she answers the king again with a strong presence of moral and spiritual beliefs.

*The greatest grace lending grace,  
Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring  
Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring;  
Ere twice in murk and occidental damp  
Moist Hesperus bath quenched her sleepy lamp;  
Or four and twenty times the pilot's glass  
Hath told the thievish minutes, how they pass,  
What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly,  
Health shall live free, and sickness freely die. (2.1.179-187)*

The king accepts Helen's offer by the end of her courageous persuasive speeches. He finally answers her:

*Sweet practicer, thy physic I will try,  
That ministers thine own death if I die. (2.1.205-206).*

When first the king thanks Helen, it was not "thanks" because he benefited from her offer, he only thanked her for the offer. He thanked her verbally but nothing changed in the fictional reality or the plot, the king only performed his role as a grateful majesty to a subject in service of his royalty. In the field of pragmatics and stylistics, scholars' assumptions about the role of the play-text concerning its performance as illustrated by the following citation:

The illocutionary force of the text of a play is like the illocutionary force of a recipe for a baking cake. It is a set of instructions for how something, namely how to perform a play<sup>52</sup>

<sup>53</sup>Now, Helen is going to benefit the king. The king gave thanks at the first meeting with Helen's offer. One may consider these thanks as being only a polite expression expressing sincere gratitude. What is specific about the speech act of thanking is that it is

an outcome of an act received first. Thanking is, therefore, consistent response to what a character thinks that this X or Y needs thanks. Helen's now succeeded to convince the king to test her cure; she commences the execution of her desired office; which is centred on Bertram's hand for marriage. Such an expensive hand can only be bestowed by his majesty's commanding hand.

Something which can be seen as immoral is Helen's direct wish to obtain something in return for her cure in case the king survived his peril. Without Helen's asking the king would have given her a gift when he'll be cured. Helen's offered action is not to benefit the king for god's grace. She said:

*If I break time or flinch in property  
Of what I spoke, unpitied let me die,  
And well deserved. Not helping, death's my fee.  
But if I help, what do you promise me? (2.1.207-210)*

The king does not feel offended by such behaviour; his only wish now is to be cured. He is inclined to show his gratitude. Margret Visser (2008) states that "where there is no gratitude, there is no meaningful movement: human affairs become rocky, painful, coldly indifferent, unpleasant, and finally break off altogether"<sup>54</sup> The philosopher Robert Roberts also describes gratitude as comprising of "givers, gifts, recipients, and the attitudes of giver and recipient toward one another. It is a deeply social emotion, relating persons to persons in quite particular ways."<sup>55</sup> In both descriptions, the term "gift" is mentioned. Helen's knew that the king's bounty would be offering a gift. It was immoral in some ways to choose it herself, and it would have been natural to be given by the king chosen according to his likings.

<sup>52</sup> Searle, J. R, "A Classification of Illocutionary Acts", *Language in Society* 5.1: 1-23.

<sup>53</sup> Short, Mick, "from dramatic text to dramatic performance", in Jonathan Culpeper, Mick Short and Peter Verdonk (eds), *Exploring the Language of Drama from Text to Context*. London: Routledge.1998.

<sup>54</sup> Margaret, Visser, *The Gift of Thanks*. USA: Harper and Collins Publishers, 2008.

<sup>55</sup> Kerry Howells, *Gratitude in Education: A Radical View*. Netherlands: Sense Publishers. 2012.

**IV. CONCLUSION**

Helen's wants a package of two gifts in one. She not only asks the king for a husband but to choose him herself. The king promises to give it to her whatever her choice will be. While her choice is already decided before she receives thanks. We can be very critical to Helen's attitude; a woman's in love ambition. When a man benefits us to advance his interests, he will not earn our gratitude, for he treats us simply to an end. As P.F. Strawson puts it:

If someone's actions help me to some benefit I desire, then I am benefitted in any case; but if he intended them to benefit me because of his general goodwill towards me, I shall reasonably feel gratitude which I should not feel at all if the benefit was an incidental consequence, unintended or even regretted by him, of some plan of action with a different aim.<sup>56</sup>

Bertram is Helen's gift by the king's hand as promised. The king's gift defines one example of what thanking is. Saying thank you is not a rhetorical statement to say what one feels but acknowledging goodness. Thanking depends on the situation, the distance between two persons or more. Thanking manners indicate intimacy, ingratitude, and also one's emotions. The verb "thank" is used in variant ways in all the thirty-seven plays in Shakespeare. In *Romeo and Juliet's* selected scene of Juliet's reaction to the brought tidings, Juliet's parents needed Juliet to perform her thanks and give them in form of acceptance. What we can deduce is that thanking or giving thanks is quite the same. Lady Capulet used "giving thanks" instead of "thanking". Yet in *All's Well that Ends Well*, the king employed both forms "such thanks I give" (2.1. 148) and "we thank you maiden" (2.1.132).

Some thanks are dramatically performed and some others are comically restored. These examinations lead us to hypothesize that the speech act of thanking in comedies differs from the one employed in tragedies and histories. The king had the intention to concretize his thanks. It is therefore a felicitous

condition where the act is performed so that all ends well.

Speech acts theory is a useful framework to analyse some of Shakespeare's scenes where the speech act of thanking exists. It demonstrates the multiplicity of perlocutionary effects, especially within Shakespeare's dramatic language where there is a great play in words, and invisible messages, which are meant to be visibly clear through the actors' performances. Speech act theory helps us unveil some of these aspects at the linguistic level. The performative dialogue is intended to make the world appear as if it is real, and this is our first impression when watching a globe theatre performance.

We would conclude this short examination of thanks by stating what an action is. Van Dijk describes it as follows "an essential component in the definition of action turned out to be the various mental structures underlying the actual doing and its consequences. This means that actions cannot as such be observed, identified or described, we have access to them only by the interpretation of doings."<sup>57</sup> This is only to illustrate our thought that action in a theatrical plot is not what we say in the performance yet, what we interpret as a certain action. Speech act theory helps us in achieving the latter. Through this analysis, one deduced that Shakespeare has used other terms to indicate "thanks", such as "gratis", "Gramercy", "gratitude", and "grace". The question which we have to ask here, is to what extent can speech act theory be applied as full when encountering all these concepts? Is the act of thanks conducted only with the performative verb "I thank you"?

Berger and Luckman (1966) state that language constructs immense edifices of symbolic representations that appear to tower over the reality of everyday life like gigantic presences from another world. Religion, philosophy, art, and science are the historically most important symbol systems of this kind. To name these is already to say that, despite the maximal detachment from everyday experience that

<sup>56</sup>John Simmons A. *Moral Principles and Political Obligations*. UK: Princeton University Press, 1979.

<sup>57</sup> Eli Rozik, "Speech Acts and the Theory of Theatrical Communication" Code, 12,1-2, 1989.

the construction of these systems requires, they can be of very great importance indeed for the reality of everyday life. Language is not only of constructing symbols that are highly abstracted from everyday experience but also of "bringing back" these symbols and apprehending them (presumably: abstractly presenting them to us) as objectively real elements in everyday life.<sup>58</sup>

Language differs, language particular to the law, religion and military for example. "In these languages, people have seen fit to standardize certain linguistic symbolization in order to perform certain, appropriate functions that are pertinent to the existence and survival of the institutions and their members"<sup>59</sup> The utterance "I baptize thee..." is fundamental in the performance of the act of baptism. "This particular language both guarantees, and vouchsafes, the exercise of a highly specific speech act, but it can only achieve it in as much as it is the performance of a highly institutionalized and empowered societal function."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Berger, Peter L. Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality*. New York: Doubleday. 1966.

<sup>59</sup> Jacob L. Mey. *Pragmatics: An Introduction*. p. 147.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p. 147.

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