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**ASSERTIVE AND EXPRESSIVE SPEECH ACTS IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*: A STUDY**

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**Abstract:**

*This article offers an in-depth analysis of the significant examples of the utterances of the characters selected from Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small things* (1997) from the perspective of Searle's typology of Speech acts particularly Assertive and Expressive. Important examples of utterances are selected from the above novel as they help to understand the expert use of language employed by Arundhati Roy. Socio-linguistic aspects cannot be ignored while making the pragmatic analysis, especially for her involvement in environmental and human rights causes. The study of speech acts in a fictional discourse are fully loaded with intentions and goals, such as stating a fact or an opinion, making a promise, confirming or denying, making a request an offer, issuing a threat, order or permission, and criticizing etc. The principles of pragmatics in general and the theory of speech acts in particular prove to be useful and effective approach to the study of such utterances. There is in literary text complex socio-cultural situations which generate a great variety of speech acts beyond sentences. These speech acts are produced in a realistic social setting by characters involved in complex social and interpersonal situations.*

**Keywords:** *Speech Acts, Stating, Promise, Denying, Criticising Permission, Threat, and Order etc.*

**Introduction:**

Language is means of communication that is used to transfer information, ideas, and feelings from one person to another. The communication in language cannot take place without society. Society controls the use of language through norms and conditions imposed on the human actions. While commuting People use of language for expressive and communicative purpose. Pragmatics deals with the use of language in particular context by the humans while communicating with each other. The use of language in the human society is determined by interrelations of the human beings and the cultural norms in the society. It is pragmatics which tries to grapple with the problem of actual usage of language in the interpersonal communication in the society.



In Linguistics sentence is hypothetical to be the basic unit of syntax. But in Pragmatics, speech acts is the central concept for the pragmatic analysis of any discourse. Speech, rather than writing, acquired importance with the development of linguistic theory, which considered speech to be primary and writing a derivation of speech. J.L. Austin developed his theory of Speech Act in his set of lectures published under the title *How To Do Things With Words* (1962).

J. R. Searle criticizes Austin's classification of speech acts saying that should be reasoned classification of illocutionary speech acts into certain basic categories or types. He states that Austin's criteria for classifying speech acts are overlapping. Austin, in his classification, emphasizes speech act verbs, but Searle points out that classification, emphasizes speech act verbs cannot be a criterion for such classification. He divides illocutionary speech acts taking into account the illocutionary point such as to get the listener to do something, commit the speaker to do something. Searle (1976) wanted to have a scheme of classification based on felicity conditions, and proposes five basic kinds of actions.

This research paper is trying to apply the framework of Pragmatics to the analysis of speech acts occurring in the fictional discourse. While reading a literary text, the reader, in a way, recreates what the author has written. In that sense it is an innovative process. The speech acts in the fictional work can be analyzed in terms of the typology of speech acts stated by Searle's ideas. Searle's typology states five major speech acts. Pragmatics is essentially concerned with the use of language. But, both Austin and Searle illustrate the typology of speech acts taking examples of single sentences. I have to pay attention to the contextual aspects or conditions that obtain in the case of speech acts in a fictional discourse, taking into account the social, cultural aspects and interpersonal relationship between the characters that interact. In view of this, the above discuss here only two major speech acts such as Assertives and Expressives occurring in *The God of Small Things* of Arundhati Roy.

### **Pragmatic Analysis:**

In assertive speech act, the speaker states the things which he believes to be true. This act is based on the truth value of the utterances that conforms the speaker's belief. Most of the characters in the novel under consideration tend to assert through their utterances the facts or beliefs which they believe to be true to the best of their knowledge. In other words, by assertion, they represent the world as they believe to be the case. It can be seen in the novel that the characters try their best to assert and justify their actions, stating, beliefs, criticizing, replying, concluding, predicting, denying, disagreeing, assumptions, suggestions etc.

### **Utterance:**

**Ammu:** "When you hurt people, they begin to love you less. That's what careless words do. They make people love you a little less." (Chapter 04, P.48)

**The Addressee:** Rahel is one of the twins and protagonists of the novel. He is an energetic, imaginative girl. She and Estha are so close as to almost consider themselves one person, though their appearances and personalities are different.

**The Addresser:** Ammu is Estha's and Rahel's mother. She married Babu in a glamorous ceremony, but she soon became disillusioned with their marriage because her husband was an alcoholic.

**The Context:** The above utterance occurs in the novel when one day the all family goes to the cinema hall, Abhilash Talkies. Ammu, Baby Kochamma, and Rahel go into the girls' bathroom and take turns peeing into the same toilet. Rahel enjoys the intimacy this activity creates. They walk through the lobby and the Orangedrink Man offers Rahel a sweet, but she is repulsed by his yellow teeth and turns away. As they are walking out Ammu compliments the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man's friendliness, and Rahel unthinkingly says why you don't marry him then everyone freezes, and Ammu tells Rahel



that when you hurt someone, they love you a little less. Rahel feels Pappachi's moth land on her heart, and she is terrified that Ammu now loves her less.

### **Speech Situation and Speech Event:**

Ammu, in the above speech act, explicitly states that suggests that Rahel should not speak impolite manners with Orange drink man. The above utterance is intends that Ammu's intention is that while talking Rahel should use appropriate language. It seems that the character and behavior of Rahel through her utterance. It also informs Rahel's active imagination, the moth becomes an eerie image of fear and sadness. Ammu's social standing is a sensitive subject, as she is basically living as a disgraced woman because she is divorced. She becomes disappointed. The illocutionary force of this speech act is that Ammu's reality of her life situation is very critical. It is quite an ambiguous utterance. Unfortunately, Ammu and the family are more concerned with the impression they will make on Sophie Mol than worried about Estha's health. Estha feeling unsafe at home will also contribute to his future this incident is very important in protagonist's life because she is a vigorous, inventive girl. Therefore, this event is the first step in the protagonist's life toward gaining the social identity. Through the Assertive speech acts speaker commits the reality of life.

### **Utterance:**

**Mammachi:** "He can't help having a Man's Needs" (Chapter 8, P 80).

**Addressee:** Pappachi is a younger sister, a staunch Syrian Christian who loves Father Mulligan when she is young. Baby Kochamma grows as a bitter, jealous woman who betrays Ammu and the twins to save herself.

**The Addresser:** Mammachi is the mother of Chacko and Ammu, a violinist and pickle-maker who sees the world in strict divisions of class, wealth, and caste. She endures Pappachi's violence without complaint, but after Chacko stops Pappachi, Mammachi comes to love Chacko with an almost sexual love.

**The Context:** The above utterance occurs in the novel when Mammachi thinks about Margaret Kochamma, whom she has never met but despises anyway. Mammachi hates her for her working-class background and for marrying Chacko. The day Chacko stopped Pappachi from beating Mammachi; Chacko became Mammachi is only Love. She forgives his affairs with his factory workers, calling them "Men's Needs." Mammachi even built a separate entrance to Chacko's room, so his utterance "Needs" didn't have to go through the house, and she pays his lovers so they seem more like prostitutes to her.

### **Speech Situation and Speech Event:**

Mammachi, in the above speech act, explicitly criticizes and states to Pappachi and all male. She is indirectly emphasis on male attitudes towards female. This piece of utterance is an excellent instances how people use language skillfully to fulfill their motives. The illocutionary speech act of the above utterance criticizes the mindset that Mammachi transfers all her feelings, even romantic ones, from Pappachi to Chacko, so her hatred of Margaret is also jealousy. Mammachi ignoring Chacko's "Men's Needs" is tragically hypocritical considering Ammu's disgrace and exile. The word 'Needs' is highly meaningful in above utterance. It shows how men are womanizer. Mammachi observes the world in strict divides of class. Therefore, considering Margaret working-class and Chacko loves prostitutes she makes it easier to scorn and hate them. Therefore, Mammachi attitude becomes negative towards men. She states her mind sets, and fulfills her intentions. This is a sign of future events, when the violent will be given power over the weak.



**Pragmatic Analysis:**

The expressives represent the speaker's psychological state in spoken utterances. This speech acts express feelings and attitudes. This class includes praising, condoling, thanking, congratulating, pardoning, blaming, deploring, regretting and apologizing, pains, likes and dislikes, happiness, grief, welcoming, greeting, and accepting, etc. The inner feeling or psychological condition of the speaker is put via words. It also represents the speaker's state of pleasure, pain joy and sorrow. Hence, it is a common rule of the expressive speech act that a speaker has to use the verbs which express the illocutionary force in order to perform an act effectively.

**Utterance:**

**Rahel Ipe & Estha Ipe:** "The twins looked up at her. Not together (but almost) two frightened voices whispered, "Save Ammu" (Chapter 19, P. 147).

**The Addressee:** Ammu is mother of the twins, an independent woman who is both a loving mother and has an "unsafe edge." Ammu was beaten cruelly by Pappachi as a child, so she grew up with a natural distrust of patriarchal Indian society.

**The Addresser:** Rahel is one of the twins and protagonists of the novel. He is an energetic, imaginative girl. She and Estha are so close as to almost consider themselves one person, though their appearances and personalities are different. Estha is more serious and well-behaved than Rahel, and he also experiences more of the harshness of the world at an early age.

**The Context:** The above utterance occurs in the novel when Baby Kochamma was introduced at the novel's beginning, we only see the true extent of her sins now. She is basically willing to sacrifice the lives of Estha, Rahel, and Velutha to preserve her own safety and the Ipe family name. Baby Kochamma is able to weave convincing tales, and the twins helplessly go along with her, just wanting to escape in fantasy. Inspector Mathew leaves Baby Kochamma alone with the twins, and she accuses them of murdering Sophie Mol. She says there is no forgiveness for this crime, and that they will have to go to jail and Ammu will too. She then describes the horrors of prison. The only way to lessen the damage done, she says, this to "save Ammu" from jail.

**Speech Situation and Speech Event:**

The above utterance is very significant in the novel. Rahel and Estha, in the above speech act, they express and confession, apology to Inspector Mathew and he will have to charge Baby Kochamma for false witness. Rahel and Estha emotionally expresses apologizing, and accepting their own mistakes. They seem that guilty in the beginning of a lifetime. They do not want to break their personal relations and they are in shock and deceived by Baby Kochamma, but they also succumbed too easily to set their future consciences at ease.

They explicitly intend to express apologize and accepts her mistakes. The perlocutionary effect is that express psychological attitude of Ammu. They indirectly say that it is mine fault and regret. In a way they are like Baby Kochamma, willing to sacrifice a man's life to protect the family. Baby Kochamma is terrified, and she offers to try and convince the children to change their story.

**Utterance:**

**Omniscient Narrator:** "If he touched her he couldn't talk to her, if he loved her he couldn't leave, if he spoke he couldn't listen, if he fought he couldn't win" (Chapter 11 P. 104).

**The Addressee:** Ammu is mother of the twins, an independent woman who is both a loving mother and has an unsafe edge. Ammu was beaten cruelly by Pappachi as a child, so she grew up with a natural distrust of patriarchal Indian society.

**The Context:** The above utterance is highly symbolic and it occurs in the novel when with Ammu's dream, which can only be interpreted as her version of The God of Small Things, who is an



embodiment of strong irrepressible urge for love and sex. Since this God of Small Things does not recognize and accept the social conventions and restrictions, he is bound to come in conflict with history and traditions and that too without any chance of success. This kind of love as personified in the novel.

### **Speech Situation and Speech Event:**

The present utterance is highly philosophical and very significant in the novel. It has very deep meaning. Velutha is a Paravan (Untouchable) who grew up with Ammu and is very skilled with his hands. He is an excellent carpenter and fixes all the machines in the pickle factory, but is still treated as second-class. He grows into a handsome young man and is beloved by the twins. Ammu know that the world isn't perfect. The only thing you can do is do what's right by the people you love. Velutha grows into a handsome young man and is beloved by the twins. His love with Ammu shows scarifies and devoted towards her. The speech act explicitly expresses love of Ammu and Velutha. The utterance is intendeds Velutha, whom Ammu had been admiring moments and pleasure about her. Thus, the illocutionary force in this speech act is expresses their feeling and emotions about each other. The perlocutionary effect is that in this dream Roy connects Velutha's forbidden love with the matter of small things. He can only do one thing at a time in loving Ammu, just as stories and history only consist of one small moment after another. He abandons his life for Ammu.

### **Conclusion:**

The selected utterances from the novel, is attempt to make the pragmatic analysis to establish the authenticity of the speech situation and the characters in the above-stated novel. Literature teaching can be made more exciting, if teachers equipped with a pragmatic knowledge of the fictional world, take the students through the novels and help them explore hidden ideas with the help of pragmatic principles. In the present paper attempt has been made to analyze the novel *The God of Small Things* within the limitation of major speech acts proposed by John Searle. Only two speech acts i.e assertive, and expressive are prominently used by the characters in these novel.

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