

Speech Act of Complaining in Hamlet

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This study investigates the speech act of complaining in Shakespeare's Hamlet. As a problem of the study, it attempts to purchase the strategies of this speech act that Shakespeare utilize in manufacturing tragedy in the play. It aims at figuring out the strategies of complaining in Hamlet, their frequency and their roles in the drama. The study hypothesizes that different strategies of complaining are used with various frequencies to develop the tragic event of the play. As a model of analysis, the study adopts Trosborg (1995) and, Olshtain and Weinbach (1993) to find out the strategies of the speech act under scrutiny. The data of the study consist of a sample of situations taken from the play under scrutiny. Finally, some conclusions are reached validating the hypotheses of the study.

Key words: *Speech act, Complaining, Shakespeare, Pragmatics, Complaine.*

Introduction

Pragmatically, literary texts require professional put in order to make it distinguished in addition to attaining its communicative message. the pragmatic aspects of the text have the priority to attract readers' attention though, as Al-Duleimi and Al-Ebadi (2016: 64) mention, other factors are important such as "intonational contours, lexical or syntactic styles, rhetorical figures, local semantic structures, presence or absence of hedges, interruptions, doubt or certainty markers, specific forms of address, pronoun use and so on". Generally, this priority comes from the centrality of pragmatic interpretations in the process of communication. Communication, as (Al-Ebadi, 2012: 2) points out, is "an interactive process by means of language delivering messages among interlocutors. Since communication exists among interlocutors, it is inevitably influenced by factors related to them such as their attitudes, ideas, and social status and so on".

The significance of pragmatic aspects motivates the current paper to investigate the speech act (henceforth SA) of complaining that Shakespeare employs in his famous work 'Hamlet'. It attempts to answer the following questions: what are the strategies of complaining in Hamlet? Which ones are the direct and indirect? Which ones are most frequent in the data in question? The study aims to find out the strategies of this SA as well as their most frequent ones in Hamlet. As far as the hypotheses of the study are concerned, first, Shakespeare invests the SA of complaining via a variety of strategies. Second, the strategies of annoyance and blaming are the most frequent ones. Third, direct and indirect strategies seem equally important in expressing complaining in Hamlet's tragedy.

Literature Review

In general, the interpretations of the implied meanings as well as the influence of the context in particular occasions represent the main task of pragmatics (Yule, 1996: 4). In line with this, Black (2006: 1) emphasizes the importance of pragmatics in the study of literary works because pragmatics studies language in context and the ways in which writers create character and situation which are relevant to the interpretation of this type of discourse. As such, pragmatics contributes to the contextualization of the text and display hints to its interpretation. The scope of pragmatics covers investigating phenomena including SAs, conversational implicatures, presupposition, deixis and so on. The current study sets itself to be after SAs, namely the SA of complaining.

Speech Act Theory

Introduced and developed by Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and others, it shows that uttering a complex expression includes intents which are called illocutionary acts or SAs. It analyzes the role of utterance in relation to the behavior of speaker and hearer in interpersonal communication. It is not an act of speech but a communicative activity (Crystal, 2008:446). It actuates on the basic belief that language is primarily for communication (Kaburise, 2011:72). Hall, Smith and Wicaksono (2017: 83) indicate that SAs are utterances which behave as functional units in communication such as promises, requests, commands and complaining. As far as literary works are concerned, characters interact with each other via conveying such intents or SAs. In this regard, Yule (1996:53) mentions five types of general functions performed by SA: declarations, representatives, expressives, directives and commissives (Verschueren, 1999: 24). In the data under scrutiny, the investigation comes around only one of these types, expressives like complaining. Expressives express a psychological state, e.g. revealing the addresser's attitude such as congratulating, condoling or complaining (Levinson, 1983: 240). They possess a strongly interpersonal function (Black, 2006: 20). Regarding the data under study, Shakespeare employs such SAs to ripen the notion of tragedy in Hamlet.

Speech Act of Complaining

Complaining, as an expressive SA, stands as a part of communication which is used to show the dissatisfaction of someone's treatment way, displeasure or disapproval. Whenever people interact with each other, there may be something that is not agreed with theirs so they complain someone an unsuitable action to theirs . It is an umbrella term that consists of a group of speech behaviors (Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan, 2010:164). Complaining means "an illocutionary act in which the complainer expresses his disapproval, negative feelings etc. toward the state of affairs shown in the proposition (the complainable) and for which he holds the complainee responsible, either directly or indirectly" (Trosborg, 1995:311-2).

Complaining is of two types namely verbal and non-verbal categories. The former requires a considerable number of strategies such as explicit denial responsibility and implicit denial responsibility. In order to respond a complaining, the complainee does not just doing verbal complaining response strategy, but sometimes, the complainee using the non-verbal complaining response to react the complainer. The non-verbal complaining includes those like sighing, head-shaking and laughing (Khalifah, 2013:3-4).

This SA is considered as a face-threatening act since it is conflictive nature that might result in a breach of the social maintainance of comity and harmony between complainer and complainee (Leech, 1983: 55). It is usually directed to the complainee whom is responsible for the offensive action (Olshtain and Weinbach, 1993: 108). Moon (2001: 76) adds that complaining should be made carefully by the complainer in order not to hurt the complainee's feelings and hence impair the relationship between them. As with all SAs, Olshtain and Weinbach (1993: 108) specify certain felicity conditions for the SA of complaining to take place:

1. A complainee performs a socially unacceptable act that is contrary to a social code of behavioral norms shared by a complainer and complainee that means a complainee violates of the complainer's expectations.
2. A complainer perceives the social unacceptable act as having unfavorable consequences of herself, and/or for the general public.
3. The verbal expression of a complainer connects post facto directly or indirectly with the social unacceptable act, thus having the illocutionary force of censure.
4. A complainer receives the socially unacceptable act as: (a) freeing a complainer (at least partially) from the implicit understanding of a social cooperative relationship with complainee; a complainer therefore chooses to express her frustration or annoyance, although the result will be a conflictive type of illocution in Leech's terms; and (b) giving a complainer the legitimate right to ask for repair in order to undo the socially unacceptable act, either for her benefit or for the public benefit. It is the latter perception that leads to instrumental complaining aimed at "changing things" that do not meet with

our standards or expectations. The main goal of such instrumental complaining is to ensure that complainee performs some action of repair as a result of complaining.

Model of Analysis

To analyze the data, the study adopts an eclectic model which encompasses complaining strategies that are expected to be used in Hamlet. Below are the expected ones in the data:

Direct vs. Indirect Complaints

Generally, complaining is divided into two main types of strategies to express this SA. In turn, various sub-strategies are noticed within these main types. On the one hand, direct complaining strategies aim at complainees who are present in the scene and are directly responsible or accountable for the offence. On the other hand, indirect ones refer to those in which the complainees are not held responsible for the offence indirectly.

No Explicit Reproach

Implicitly, the complainer gives hints of his disapproval towards the complainee's offensive action. Put it another way, the complainable is not given directly in the utterance, but rather indirectly inspired as bad or offensive (Trosborg, 1995: 105). This strategy is perceived by various realizations that enable the speaker to avoid explicit mention of the offensive event or direct focus on the speaker. thus, it deliberately leaves room for the hearer's interpretation as to whether or not a complaining is actually voiced (Olshtain and Weinbach, 1993: 111).

Annoyance

This strategy shows the complainer's annoyance towards the complainee's offensive action. Two sub-strategies are involved here: expressing annoyance and stating ill consequences of the complainable (Trosborg, 1995:152). In addition, it requires different representations which are vague and indirect and do not explicitly mention the unfavorable act or its agent, but indicates general annoyance at the violation. It seems that open confrontation is avoided by the complainer, but makes it clear that there is a violation of some sort (Olshtain and Weinbach, 1993: 111).

Accusation

Here, the complainer establishes the agent of the complainable through attributing the offence to him. Again, this strategy involves two sub-strategies: direct and indirect accusations. The

former directly accuses the complainee of committing the offence whereas by the latter an indirect accusation establishes potentially the agent of the complainable (ibid.).

Blaming

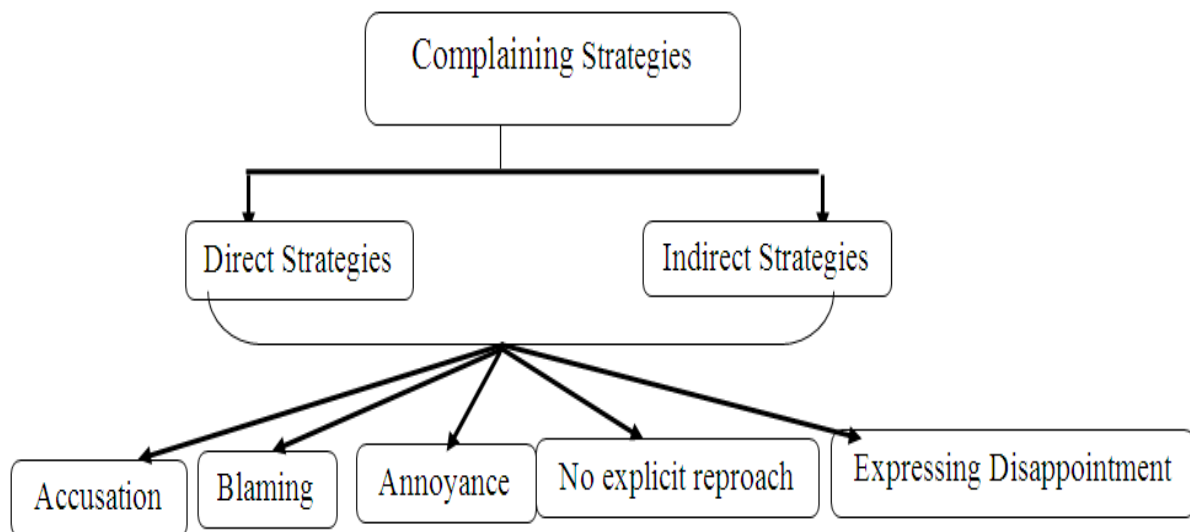
The current strategy is valued as direct, aggressive and more threatening complaining. Regarding its sub-strategies, there are three ones are recognized: modified blame, explicit blame used for blaming a bad action and explicit blame used for blaming an irresponsible person (ibid.).

Expressing Disappointment

By means of this strategy, the complainer shows his satisfaction and disapproval towards the complainee's offensive deeds (ibid.).

According to what has been surveyed above, the model for analyzing the SA of complaining can be schematized in Figure (1) below:

Figure 1. Modified Model for Analyzing Speech Act of Complaining in Literary Works



Data Description and Analysis

Data Description

The data under scrutiny is a collection of representative excerpts taken from Shakespeare's famous play 'Hamlet'. The main theme of these excerpts comes around Hamlet's and his murdered father's 'complaining' towards some offensive actions that are committed by Hamlet's unfaithful mother and her wicked husband.

Data Analysis

Method of Analysis

The current study is a qualitative one depending on a representative sample of data. The analysis aims to figure out the SA of complaining in the data and its strategy. It starts with giving an excerpt, showing its context, identifying it as the SA of complaining according to the modified model, and finally finding out the strategies of this SA.

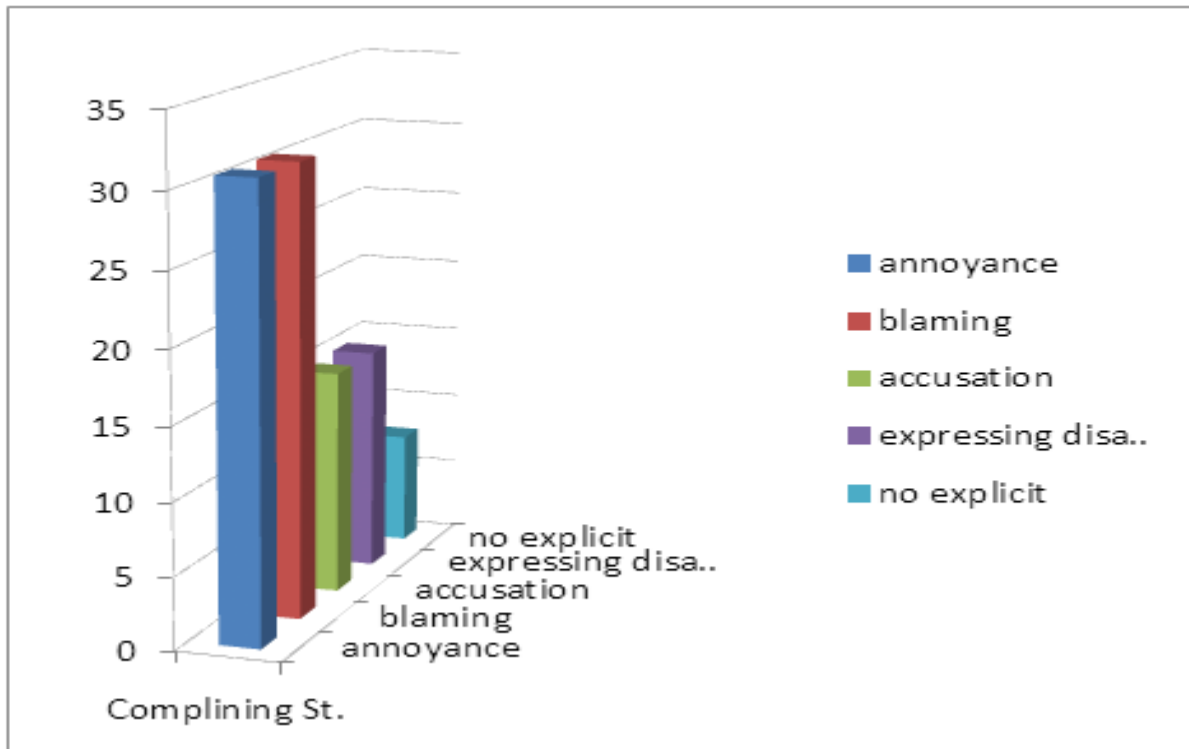
Overall Analysis

The analysis of the data, depending on the developed model (See 3), proves the role of the SA of complaining in developing the events of the play and reflecting the tragedy of its main characters such Hamlet and his murdered father. The use and frequency of this SA and its strategies indicates clearly such a role. Generally, the SA of complaining is used 6 times with 13 repeated strategies in the collected data. The employment of the SA is divided into direct and indirect uses: 3 direct complaining and 3 indirect ones including annoyance (30.76%), accusation (15.38%), blaming (30.76%), expressing disappointment (15.38%) and no explicit reproach (7.69%) (See Table 1 and Figure 2):

Table 1: Use and Frequency of Complaining and its Strategies

Text	Direct St.	Indirect St.	No explicit reproach	Annoyance	Accusation	Blaming	Expressing Disappoint
T 1		✓		✓		✓	
T 2	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
T 3		✓		✓		✓	
T 4	✓		✓		✓		
T 5	✓					✓	
T 6		✓		✓			✓
Total	3(50%)	3(50%)	1(7.69%)	4(30.76%)	2(15.38%)	4(30.76%)	2(15.38%)
	6 SA		13 St.				

Figure 2. Frequency of Direct and Indirect Strategies

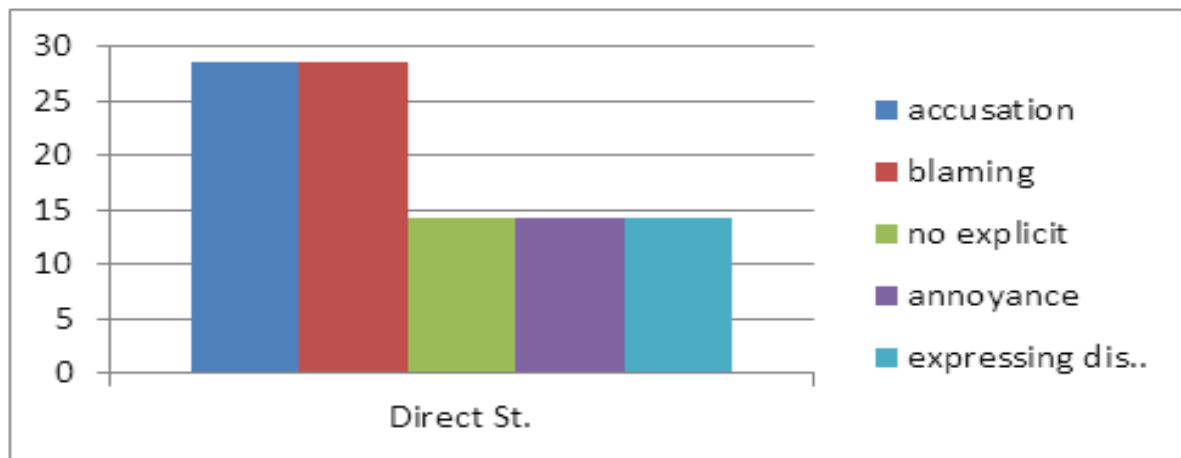


Regarding strategies, direct complaining include 5 direct strategies with 7 uses through the data: annoyance (14.28%), accusation (28.57%), blaming (28.57%), expressing disappointment (14.28%) and no explicit reproach (14.28%), as they are shown in Table 2 and Figure 3 below:

Table 2: Use and Frequency of Complaining and its Strategies

Text	No explicit reproach	Annoyance	Accusation	Blaming	Expressing Disappoint
T 2		✓	✓	✓	✓
T 4	✓		✓		
T 5				✓	
Total	1(14.28%)	1(14.28%)	2(28.57%)	2(28.57%)	1(14.28%)
	7				

Figure 3. Frequency of Direct Strategies

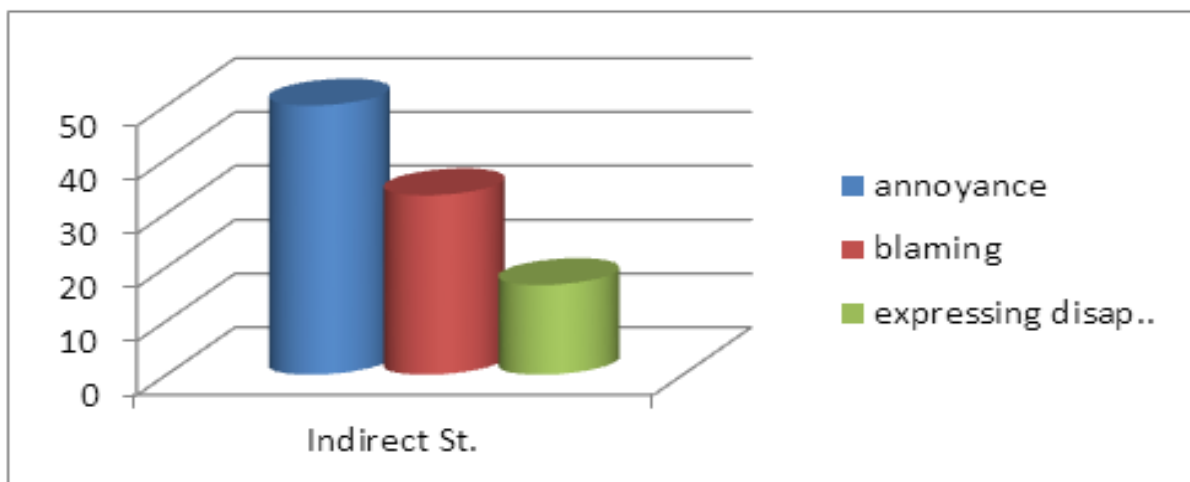


On the other hand, indirect complaining covers 3 strategies involving annoyance (50%), blaming (33.33%) and expressing disappointment (16.66%). They are utilized 6 times in the data, as Table 3 and Figure 4 below illustrate:

Table 3: Use and Frequency of Complaining and its Strategies

Text	Annoyance	Blaming	Expressing Disappoint
T 1	✓	✓	
T 3	✓	✓	
T 6	✓		✓
Total	3 (50%)	2 (33.33%)	1 (16.66%)
	6		

Figure 4. Frequency of Indirect Strategies





In relation to the most frequently used strategies in the selected data, 'annoyance' and 'blaming' occupy the first rank amounting to 30.76 % while 'accusation' and 'expressing disappointment' come second amounting 15.38 %, and finally 'no explicit reproach' is the less frequently used one amounting to 7.69 %. Table 1 and Figure 2 show.

Illustrative Pragmatic Analysis

Due to the limitedness of the research, it seems suitable to choose some representative excerpts to be analyzed here.

Excerpt One

**But two months dead! Nay, not so much, not two.
So excellent a king that was to this
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother,
That he might not betem the winds of heaven
(Act1/scene2)**

This excerpt deals with Hamlet's disapproval towards his mother's, the queen, an unacceptable act of getting married after two months only for her husband's death, Hamlet's father.

The excerpt above is recognized as complaining SA according to the FCs (See 2.2); the hearer, Hamlet's mother; the queen, performs the socially unacceptable act of getting married after only two months for her husband's death. For Hamlet, his mother's marriage in such conditions has unfavorable consequences upon him; it affects negatively Hamlet's reputation in the kingdom. Besides, Hamlet's speech is conducted directly to the issue of his mother's marriage.

As far as the strategies are concerned, following the model of the study (See 3), this SA of complaining is triggered as an indirect SA (See 3.1) because the H is not present in the situation. In addition, the strategy of 'annoyance' (See 3.3) is employed when Hamlet expresses his dislike and disapproval towards his mother's marriage after a very short period after his father's death "**But two months dead! Nay, not so much, not two**". Moreover, the strategy of 'blaming' (See 3.5) is also employed to carry out this SA. The complainer, Hamlet, blames his mother for her preference of her new husband, Hamlet's uncle and previous king's brother, upon her murdered husband who resembles Hyperion:

**"So excellent a king that was to this
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother,
That he might not betem the winds of heaven".**

Excerpt Two

**O God! A beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourn'd longer- married with my uncle,
My father's brother; but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules. Within a month,
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.
(Act1\scene2)**

This excerpt shows Hamlet's complaining towards his mother's unacceptable act of marriage. He compares his mother's behaviour to a beast one, giving preference to the beast behaviour. Besides, he compares his father to her new husband, his uncle, giving preference to his father. In addition, Hamlet blames his mother for the very short period after his father's death to marry again; a matter which hurts his feelings and heart.

The excerpt above is considered as the SA of complaining according to the FCs (See 2.2); it represents a queen's socially unacceptable act for certain reasons: the queen's marriage of her dead husband's brother, after short period of her husband's death, and non-observance of her son's, as the crown prince, feelings (See 2.2.1). This socially unacceptable act has unfavorable consequences upon Hamlet, the complainer; the complainees do not take into consideration to her son's feelings in addition to the new king usurps his right to be the future king of Denmark (See 2.2.2). Because of the preceding points, Hamlet's verbal expression of complaining stands as a type of censure (See 2.2.3).

As far as the strategies are concerned, following the model of the study (See 3), this SA is triggered as a direct SA (See 3.1) because the complainer is present in the situation. In addition, the strategy of 'annoyance' (See 3.3) is employed to express Hamlet's dislike of his mother's marriage after a very short period after his father's death:

**"O God! A beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourn'd longer- married with my uncle,"**



Furthermore, the strategy of 'blaming' (See 3.5) is utilized by which the complainer, Hamlet, blames his mother for her preference of her new husband who is unlike her murdered husband as he is unlike Hercules:

"My father's brother; but no more like my father, Than I to Hercules".

The strategy of 'accusation' (See 3.5) is also invested. The complainer accuses his mother of being a big liar. Before the redness of the most unfeeling tears had left from her eyes, she remarried:

**Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!**

'Disappointment' (See 3.6) is another strategy evolved to express Hamlet's frustration to her mother's act of getting married; her marriage in such a way is not good and it breaks Hamlet's heart:

"It is not, nor it cannot come to good. But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue"

Excerpt Three

**Ay, marry, is't;
But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach than the observance
This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nation;
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition; and, indeed it takes
From our achievement, though perform'd at height,
The pith and narrow of our attribute.
So, oft it chances in particular men
That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As in their birth, wherein they are not guilty,
(Act1\scene4)**

This excerpt shows Hamlet's complaining towards his uncle's traditions and customs which damage their royal reputation. This limitless and stupid unrestricted revelry makes them subjects of ridicule throughout the world, and blamed by other nations.

The excerpt above is recognized as the SA of complaining according to the FCs (See 2.2). The H, Hamlet's uncle, the king, performs the socially unacceptable act of obscene celebrations. It has unfavorable consequences upon the country. It affects negatively the reputation of the kingdom. The kingdom is blamed by other nations:

**"This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nation"**

As far as the strategies are concerned, following the model (See 3), this SA of complaining is triggered as an indirect SA (See 3.1) because the H is not present in the situation. In addition, the strategy of 'annoyance' (See 3.4) is employed when Hamlet absorbed the manner of the country:

**Ay, marry, is't;
But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach than the observance**
Moreover, the strategy of 'blaming' (See 3.5) is also employed to carry out this SA. The complainer, Hamlet, blames his uncle for the limitless and stupid unrestricted revelry because this thing affects the reputation of the kingdom:
**They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition; and, indeed it takes
From our achievement, though perform'd at height,
The pith and narrow of our attribute.
So, oft it chances in particular men
That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As in their birth, wherein they are not guilty,**

Excerpt Four

**Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wits, with traitorous gifts-
So to seduce!- won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming virtuous queen.
O Hamlet, what a falling off was there,
From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage; and to decline
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine!**



(Act1\scene5)

In these lines, the ghost complaining, for Hamlet, his wife's, Hamlet's mother, act of getting married of his incestuous and adulterous brother who seduces his virtuous queen with his enchanting talk and his deceitful accomplishments. The ghost describes his brother's devil and bad habits such as his murdering and getting marriage of his queen. In addition, it the ghost shows the differences between them.

The excerpt above is recognized as the SA of complaining according to the FCs (See 2.2); the ghost criticizes the queen's socially unacceptable act of marrying the evil person. Her marriage of her husband's murderer has unfavourable consequences; her new husband's gifts, behaviours and treatment are not like that of Hamlet's father, the king. In addition, this excerpt is related directly to her unacceptable act.

As far as the strategies are concerned, following the model of the study (See 3), this SA of complaining is triggered as an indirect SA (See 3.1) because the H is not present in the situation; the ghost criticizes his wife act in her absence. In addition, the strategy of 'annoyance' (See 3.3) is employed when the ghost expresses his dislike and disapproval towards the queen's marriage since the new husband does not deserve her:

**Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wits, with traitorous gifts-
So to seduce!- won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming virtuous queen.**

Furthermore, Shakespeare utilizes the strategy of 'expressing disappointment' (See 3.6). In other words, the ghost feels disappointed because her new husband could not present her rich or real gifts like that of him:

**Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine!**

Excerpt Five

**Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;
Calls virtue hypocrite; takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there; makes marriage-vows
As false as dicers' oaths.**

(Act3\scene4)

In this excerpt, Hamlet complains his mother's hypocrisy. Her an unacceptable act of treason damages the concepts of innocent love and marriage as well. Hamlet shows his mother dirty deeds.

The excerpt above is recognized as the SA of complaining according to the FCs (See 2.2). The H, Hamlet's mother, performs socially an unacceptable act of treason that hides the colour of modesty and calls virtue as hypocrisy. For Hamlet, this act makes innocent love hateful and labels as lechery:

Such an act

**That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;
Calls virtue hypocrite; takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there; makes marriage-vows**

As far as the strategies are concerned, following the model of the study (See 3), this SA of complaining is triggered as a direct SA (See 3.1) because the H is present in the situation. Moreover, the strategy of 'no explicit reproach' is invested here (See 3.2). Hamlet hints here the demerits of his mother's unacceptable act rather than mentioning her directly. In addition, the strategy of 'accusation' (See 3.5) is employed when Hamlet accuses his mother of hiding the colour of modesty which calls virtue as hypocrisy and makes innocent love seems hateful.

Excerpt Six

**Look here upon this picture and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See what a grace was seated on this brow;
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like mars, to threaten and command;
(Act3\scene4)**

This excerpt shows Hamlet's complaining towards his mother's an unacceptable act of substituting of her murdered husband, Hamlet's father by her new husband, Hamlet's uncle. Hamlet asks his mother to look on the picture to see what dignity resided on the brow, the curls of Hyperion, the sun-gods; the forehead of Jove; the magnificent eye of mars, which can command loyalty and threaten at the same time; a demeanour like that of the messenger of the gods, Mercury, just came down on a high mountain.



The excerpt above is recognized as the SA of complaining according to the FCs (See 2.2). The H, Hamlet's mother, performs the unacceptable act of preferring the new king upon Hamlet's father, the real king. The H, Hamlet's verbal expression relates directly to his mother's socially unacceptable act.

As far as the strategies are concerned, following the model of the study (See 3), this SA of complaining is triggered as a direct SA (See 3.1) because the H is present in the situation. The strategy of 'blaming' (See 3.5) is also employed to carry out this SA. The complainer, Hamlet, blames his mother for her preference of her new husband, Hamlet's uncle upon her murdered husband, Hamlet's father who resembles Hyperion.

Conclusions

The study comes with a number of conclusions:

1. It seems that the SA of complaining plays an effective role in the tragedy of the main characters of the play.
2. SA of complaining in Hamlet is expressed by such strategies as 'no explicit reproach, blaming, accusation, annoyance and expressing disappointment'. This conclusion validates the first hypothesis.
3. The strategies of 'blaming' and 'annoyance' are the most frequently used by Shakespeare to express the SA of complaining. Thus, the second hypothesis is valid.
4. Both types of strategies: direct and indirect are utilized to express the SA of complaining in Hamlet. As such, the third hypothesis is validated.



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