Abstract

Studies of drama have largely concentrated on the literary and performance aspects. Little or close to nothing has been done on the linguistic aspects of drama. Drama text is unique in the sense that it consists of dialogues, interspersed with cues and prose. Nonetheless, drama is a written text, and hence text analysis theories should apply to drama text as well. It would be interesting thus, to investigate how a drama text is connected, in other words, how is it made to be a coherent whole, what are the devices employed to make it a coherent text.

This Academic Exercise attempts to answer these questions by applying Discourse Analysis theories to the drama text. Due to constraints in time and space, excerpts of Kuo Pao Kun’s play “Lao Jiu” have been chosen as object of study. Kuo is a famous local playwright who writes drama in both English and Chinese. “Lao Jiu” can be considered as a representative of his plays.

This Exercise uses three main theories of text connectedness to investigate the play. Firstly, I look at the cohesion of the text. In other words, how is the text connected in linear progression, what are the devices employed in connecting the text linearly. Secondly, I look at the coherence aspect of the text. This involves deduction of discourse topic and the relation between these discourse topics to form a coherent text. Lastly, pragmatic implicature theories such as Grice’s conversational implicature and Searle’s Indirect Speech Acts are also employed to see how the text is connected.

The study shows that pragmatic implicatures are most useful in express connectedness in drama text. This is because drama text by nature consists of a large amount of conversations in which the character’s thoughts and intentions are revealed. However, more often than not these thoughts and intentions are implied rather than straightforward, hence with the help of pragmatic implicatures,
one can unravel the meaning of what is said and how it is connected to other parts of the text.

Coherence is helpful in establishing connectedness in the structure of the drama text, by means of showing how the parts come to form a meaningful whole. Cohesion, though most easily detectable, is limited to text where explicit connections can be made, for example the narration in the drama text.

As a whole, all three aspects contribute in their different ways to establishing connectedness in the drama text with pragmatic implicatures being the most suitable device.