Reviews

María Rosa Cabellos Castilla (2005): Estudio de las formas de tratamiento y de la cortesía en la novela *Gone with the Wind*, de Margaret Mitchell. Alcalá de Henares: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alcalá, 208pp.

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Based on the ground-breaking sociolinguistic investigations by Brown and Gilman (1960) and Brown and Ford (1961) on the use of terms of address, honorifics and personal reference in society, as well as on Brown and Levinson's dominant model of politeness theory (1987 [1978]), *Estudio de las formas de tratamiento y de la cortesía en la novela Gone with the Wind, de Margaret Mitchell* focuses on the linguistic study of social interaction in this legendary novel.

Cabellos Castilla's demand for a sociolinguistic and sociopragmatic study of works of fiction brings us back to the 1980s and 1990s when a number of publications proliferated applying textual analysis to make discoveries about the structure and function of literary language (Mateo Martínez 1992; Herman 1995; Guillén Nieto 1995, 1998; Simpson 1997; etc). More precisely, under the influence of Burton's (1981) pioneering application of the discourse analysis model by the renowned scholars of the Birmingham School, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), dramatic dialogue in plays began to be studied as social interaction in the field of applied linguistics.

Among the main assets of modern stylistics, Simpson (1997: 4-6) drew attention to the following in his claim for the academic recognition of this discipline as a method of applied language study: (a) stylistics has a *heuristic value* because the method uses textual analysis to make discoveries about the structure and function of language. (b) Stylistics has a *critical potential* for literary study because it can assist critical readings by describing and explaining linguistic patterns in literary texts. (c) Stylistics has a *linguistic function* because it offers an invaluable testing ground for theories and constructs in linguistics. (d) Stylistics has an *intersubjective role* because it helps explain the multiple and varied responses to linguistic patterning which different readers experience when reading texts by using a systematic and principled method. And (e) stylistics has a *generic application* because it facilitates the comparison of different genres of language.

Cabellos Castilla's investigation is indeed heir to late 20th century literary stylistics tradition when she focuses on the North American novelist Margaret Mitchell's use of language in *Gone with the Wind* to promote different types of social interaction between the four main characters, namely Scarlett O'Hara, Rhett Butler, Melanie Wilkes and Ashley Wilkes, as well as to reflect social change and personal growth in the different ways in which they interact with each other as the plot unravels.

The investigation draws on two main hypotheses: (a) interpersonal communication between the characters in the novel may be determined by two sociolinguistic variables, namely *power* and *solidarity*, and (b) these two variables may be shown in the terms of

address and politeness strategies used in social interaction.

I will now proceed to summarise the main contents of each chapter briefly:

Chapter 1 (pp. 15-29) begins with a critical review of one of the classical issues in politeness theory: terms of address. Cabellos Castilla analyses the theoretical models by renowned linguists such as Brown and Gilman (1960), Brown and Ford (1961), and Ervin-Tripp(1969). Secondly, she examines how the sociolinguistic variables of power and solidarity may influence the type of social relationship that is established and maintained between interlocutors in interactional discourse, as well as the terms of address and politeness strategies used by them in a variety of languages. Then she moves on to discuss the terms of address commonly used in American English, which, as the reader may know, is Atlanta born Mitchell's mother tongue and language of expression of *Gone with the Wind*.

Chapter 2 (pp. 32-55) is devoted to politeness theory. Cabellos Castilla begins by analysing the philosophical foundations of the theory. After that she proceeds to review mainstream politeness theories, essentially those formulated in the English-speaking world: Lakoff (1973), Brown and Levinson (1987 [1978]), and Leech (1983). Lastly, she makes an extensive overview of empirical studies by other prominent scholars which have contributed to widen the scope of politeness theory. These contributions serve the authoress's purpose to illustrate how the pioneering formulations of Lakoff, Brown and Levinson and Leech, have been followed, reformulated and, despite wild criticism, extensively applied to a wide range of languages and fields of research.

Chapter 3 (pp. 57-81) provides the necessary historical background to understand the social and language practices at work in *Gone with the Wind*. The chapter opens by providing a full biographic account of the North American novelist Margaret Mitchell (1900-1949). After that, it presents an extensive review on the controversial views of the critics on *Gone with the Wind* (1936), and pays special attention to its main characters and the metaphorical values they embody. Finally, the chapter finishes by laying the ground for the linguistic analysis of the terms of address and politeness strategies used by the four main characters in the novel that will be carried out in subsequent chapters.

Chapters 4 to 7 (pp. 83-186) offer a discussion of the results obtained in the empirical research. Each chapter focuses on the social relationship between two of the main characters in *Gone with the Wind*. More specifically, chapter 4 analyses the relational communication between Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler (pp. 83-98); chapter 5 examines interactive discourse between Scarlett O'Hara and Melanie Wilkes (pp. 123-144); chapter 6 looks at the social interaction between Scarlett O'Hara and Ashley Wilkes (pp. 145-168); and chapter 7 considers the verbal interaction between Rhett Butler and Melanie Wilkes (pp. 169-186).

The Conclusions section (pp. 187-190) displays the most significant findings and concluding remarks, regarding the linguistic study of works of fiction and the creation of social interaction through linguistic expression. There is special reference to Mitchell's strategic use of terms of address and politeness strategies, whether direct or indirect, to foster a particular social relationship, whether of power/solidarity or of deference/intimacy, between the four main characters in *Gone with the Wind*:

Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler seem to evolve from a social relationship of power (+P) and deference (+D) to a social relationship of power (+P) and intimacy (-D), Rhett Butler being the interlocutor who always holds the control of power.

Scarlett O'Hara and Melanie Wilkes maintain their social relationship in terms of solidarity (-P) and intimacy (-D) all the way through.

Scarlett O'Hara and Ashely Wilkes preserve their social relationship in terms of Power (+P) and Intimacy (-P), Scarlett O'Hara being the interlocutor who always holds the control of power.

Rhett Butler and Melanie Wilkes uphold a social relationship in terms of solidarity (-P) and deference (+D).

As a critical evaluation, I think that despite the unquestionable academic quality of the book and its undeniable contribution to a literary stylistics revival in the field of applied linguistics, now that most linguists have turned their eyes to the stylistic analysis of other specialised languages, such as Business language, Legal language, and Forensic language, the reader may find some weaknesses in Cabellos Castilla's approach to social interaction in *Gone with the Wind*:

Although she formulates the main objectives and hypotheses of her dissertation quite clearly in the preliminary pages of the book (pp. 12-13), the reader will have to reach pages 80 and 81 to have a sketchy presentation of the research methodology used in the investigation and a rough description of the data examined. It is then when one may find out that a sample of sixty four conversations from *Gone with the Wind* has been selected, and within these conversations seventeen types of speech acts have been considered for linguistic analysis: six speech acts that may supposedly threaten the negative face of the speaker (*making requests*, *commanding*, *suggesting*, *giving advice*, *warning*, and *threatening*), ten speech acts that are likely to pose a threat to the positive face of the hearer (*criticising*, *complaining*, *making accusations*, *insulting*, *reproaching*, *making fun of somebody*, *looking down on people*, *giving bad news*, *making reference to inappropriate matters,* and *refusing to take action*) and one speech act that may threaten the positive face of the speaker (*confessing*).

The reader cannot help feeling frustrated when discovering that if s/he wishes to look at any of the sixty four conversations of the sample, s/he will have to consult the first annexe in Cabellos Castilla's unpublished PhD dissertation: *La expresión lingüística de las relaciones de poder y solidaridad en la novela <u>Gone with the Wind</u>*, de Margaret Mitchell (2003: 309-426). Deprived of the possibility of having a first-hand reading of the conversations to understand the sociopragmatic analysis at work, one must have blind faith in the proposed thesis.

For the purposes of analysis, Cabellos Castilla manifests that she has selected a sample of conversations in *Gone with the Wind*. As the reader may know, *conversation* as discourse is characterised by a fundamental structural principle: I-You-Here-Now. Social interaction implies speech in relation to another's speech and not merely the verbal expression of one character's part. Social interaction implies an exchange of ideas and opinions. This evocative quote from Herman (1995: 2) illustrates quite vividly the gist of interactional

discourse: "An *I* addresses a *you* who responds as *I* addressing *you*, who responds as *I* addressing *you* (…) and so on". From Herman's words one can infer that it is dialogic form, the deictic tie between an *I* (addresser) and a *you* (addressee) of the speech situation of conversation that makes the illusion of a face-to-face encounter.

Nevertheless, on reading chapters 4 to 7 one may also be disgruntled when realizing that the selected excerpts from *Gone with the Wind* do not show conversations between the characters, since speaker and addressee do not exchange their roles during the course of the conversation. There is simply no conversation between the characters but rather the expression of one character's part. Therefore, it is difficult to say whether the writer of this book has analysed conversations when one is only able to read single parts or speeches written in a formal literary style.

However influential and far-reaching Brown and Levinson's dominant model of politeness theory may be, undoubtedly if late refinements and reformulations of the theory had been taken into account by María Rosa Cabellos (Matsumoto 1988: 403-426; Wierzbicka 1985: 145-178, 1991; Spencer-Oatey 2004 [2000]; Watts, Ide and Ehlich eds. 2005 [1992]; Hickey and Stewart eds. 2005, etc.), the theoretical approach would have been much more accurate and in line with current trends in the study of politeness phenomena.

After thirty years, one may wonder if Brown and Levinson's dominant model and formulation of politeness theory may still be an adequate theoretical framework to study politeness in American English. One of the reasons why it has been severely criticised in the last few years is precisely for its Anglo-Saxon orientation towards the concept of face. So if politeness is not a universal principle but rather culture- and –language specific, the question is: Do North Americans share the same Anglo-Saxon individualist orientation toward the concept of face and politeness in language use as Britons? According to the most recent research, the answer is no, since North Americans seem to score higher on individualism and show preference for more direct forms of expression in verbal interaction than their British peers. (*cf*. Leaptrott 1996; Lewis 1999; Hofstede 2001[1980]; Walker, Walker and Schmitz 2003).

A good example of this non-universalist current trend regarding politeness theory can be found in House (2005: 13-28) who, building on Sperber's (1996) naturalistic approach to culture, suggests a ground-breaking and far-reaching socio-cognitive model for the understanding of politeness phenomena, uniting universal aspects with culture- and language- specific features.

Cabellos Castilla's classification of speech acts is hearer-oriented, and would need revision in the light of recent reformulations of Brown and Levinson's model, especially those by Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2005: 29-44), Sifianou and Antonopoulou (2005: 263-276) and Stewart (2005: 116-129) who claim that Brown and Levinson's classification of FTAs according to what aspect of the speaker's or addressee's face is threatened may obscure the fact that speech acts are *multidimensional*.

On explaining the multidimentionality of speech acts, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2005: 29-44) claims that both *face-threatening acts* (FTAs) and *face-flattering acts* (FFAs) coexist in the realisation of speech acts. Similarly, Sifianou and Antonopoulou (2005: 263-276) put

forward the idea that all acts can range on a continuum with *face threat* occupying one end and *face enhancement* the other. Moreover, Stewart (2005: 116-129), in outlining the British ethos, attempts to refine Brown and Levinson's face-saving model when she argues that linguistic politeness may serve a *face-protective function* for both the hearer and the speaker. Consequently, giving preference to indirectness and non-conventional politeness may stem as much from a need to protect one's own face as from any desire to be conventionally polite to others.

The concept of politeness belongs to two traditions: one primarily concerned with conventional courtesy, etiquette or good manners (*first-order politeness*), the other associated with strategic language usage in social interaction (*second-order politeness*). Brown and Levinson's model stands at the intersection of two different conceptions of politeness: on the one hand, a rational cooperation-based view and, on the other, one entirely determined by social convention (Danblon, De Clerck, and Van Noppen 2005: 45-57, and Stewart (2005: 116-129). The authoress's investigation does not discern whether the choice of certain terms of address and politeness strategies obeys cooperation in conversation or mere social convention.

María Rosa Cabellos' theoretical discussion of the evolution of T/V forms as terms of address (p. 17), may need, in my opinion, refinement and further elaboration. When she uses the term Spanish language, instead of that of Peninsular Spanish, in a generic way, she is, though rather unconsciously, overlooking the fact that the speakers' selection of T/V forms seems to function in a different way in other Spanish-speaking geographical areas such as the Canary Islands and many South American countries. In these places, people use "ustedes" instead of "vosotros" in the second person of the plural form, and they use "vos" instead of "tú" in the second person of the singular form, especially in Argentina and Uruguay.

Her approach to the linguistic behaviour of the four main characters of *Gone with the Wind* would have been more comprehensive, if she had considered the variable of the weight of imposition (+W, -W) of the speech act to be performed, together with the other two face systems used, namely power (+P, -P) and distance (+D, -D) (Scollon and Wong Scollon 1995: 41-46). This would have undoubtedly helped her to characterise the types of social relationship established between the four characters, as well as their strategic use of positive and negative politeness, and the impact of social change on their evolution more accurately. All things considered, I find this a helpful book for the novice researcher in literary stylistics. The reader will discover in its pages a systematic review of past literature and research in the field of social pragmatics since the 1970s, as well as abundant bibliography on Margaret Mitchell and her novel *Gone with the Wind*.

In *Estudio de las formas de tratamiento y de la cortesía en la novela <u>Gone with the Wind</u>*, María Rosa Cabellos Castilla does indeed leave the door open for the study of historical development of politeness norms and practices, which, being related to the issue of social structure, class, gender and power in a particular nation, has received very little attention so far, and would be essential to grasp the socio-cultural roots of politeness practices, as well as the impact of social change on linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour.

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