THE PHATIC FUNCTION IN THE SCENIC COMPOSITION OF "MACBETH"

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The present paper concerns linguostylistic significance of the phatic function of speech¹ in the drama. More particularly, it deals with structural and stylistic integrity of the phatic function in "Macbeth", on the one hand, and its author's consecutiveness in his adherence to and artistic exploitation of this function in the scenic composition and in the perfection of contact with the audience, on the other. Thus, the paper deals with questions of stylistics and communication through literary work².

Although the author of the present paper fully complies to the idea that linguistic and literary studies can hardly or should ultimately be separated [Серкова, 1982], any question concerning the language of literary work requires specification of the researcher's goals and obligations. The fact that various studies of the language of Shakespeare's works [Partridge, 1968; Colman, 1974; Doran, 1976; Mopo-30B, 1947; Ундерко, 1974; Аникст, 1977 and others] have never been concluded with mere linguistic generalizations is a testimony showing that, irrespective of the origin of the research problem, explorations of the language of great literature invariably lead to and demand metasemiotic, general philological and literary observations. The language of great literature establishes this demand on its student in its own right.

The linguist's problems in his approach to Shakespeare's language have been best defined by Professor Randolph Quirk who pointed out the need to study and distinguish between the language of Shakespeare's time and Shakespeare's language

¹ The phatic function is the contact-establishing function of speech: it usually occurs at the beginning and the end of speech acts and is present par excellence in what is known in English as small talk. Investigation of the phatic function means a study of contextually defined, non-finite stretches of speech, which, in respect to the drama, is fairly simple because of its overtly contextualized composition. It is feasible because of the expressive potential of this function, in general, and because of Shakespeare's awareness of the importance of contact with the audience, in particular [Jones, 1971, pp. 27-28].

² Communicative and speech act aspects of literary work have already been considered not only in general works on stylistics [Akhmanova et al., 1970; Spitzer, 1948], but also in Shakespeare studies [Porter, 1979].

within it. More particularly, these questions were assumed to involve a three-fold distinction: 1) English as it was about 1600, 2) Shakespeare's interest in his language, and 3) Shakespeare's unique use of English [Quirk, 1974, p. 37].

Defining uniqueness as linguistic distinction of the speech of the individual from the language of his time and from the speech of other individuals, Professor Quirk considered several aspects of the language of the period. To these he ascribed vocabulary, grammar and transmission, analysed them in detail and revealed differences between Modern English and the language of Shakespeare's time [Quirk, 1974, p. 38ff]. Finding lexical patterning presumably nearer the centre of Shakespeare's interest [Quirk, 1974, p. 61], Professor Quirk maintained that studies of interrelations of grammatical and lexical patterns should be major objectives in linguistic research because of their prospective contribution to literary scholarship [Quirk, 1974, p. 64].

Space alone forbidding a more detailed review of Professor Quirk's book, the above outline is quite sufficient for the statement of the problem of the phatic function in respect to Shakespeare's tragedy in a motivated way. The study of the phatic function in Shakespeare's tragedy does not seem to require any introductory study of the English of about 1600. The focus of attention will be on sentence types, their meaning and metacontents in the openings and closures of all the acts and scenes in "Macbeth". Since the phatic function is the function of the beginning and the end of speech acts, this study of the use of language in the scenic composition, i. e. in the framing of the scenes in "Macbeth", seems to be quite feasible. Moreover, since the phatic function presupposes the presence of certain conventional contexts of situation, topics and stereotypical units, the present study, if productive, may be also said to be partly a study of patterned language. It may also throw light on Shakespeare's unique use of English.

The present study requires, however, the knowledge of the use of English for socializing purposes, identified as the phatic function of speech today, in Shakespeare's time. Even though nearly all instances of Shakespeare's artistic exploitation of this function identify with respective instances of the phatic function in modern English, contextually, topically and even verbally, it would be too irresponsible to attempt a discussion of the artistic use of the phatic function in Shakespeare's tragedy guided merely by the knowledge of the realization of this function in late modern English.

Judging by certain customs of the Anglo-Saxons [Green, 1929, p. 3; Hazlitt, 1870: vol. 1, p. 248, vol. 2, pp. 11, 17] and, especially, by "The Book of the Courtier" [Castiglione, 1975], which "served as a pattern for Elizabethan gentleman"

³ "The Book of the Courtier", the English translation of the 'Cortegiano' of Baldaesare Castiglione (written between 1513-1519 and published in Italian in 1528) by Sir Thomas Hoby, was published in England in 1561. This book is said to have had considerable influence on the

Partridge, 1968, p. 331, Shakespeare's age had a developed use of language for socializing purposes, and it was significantly developed by the nobility. Among the various aspects of the life of the nobleman discussed in "The Book of the Courtier", questions of language and conversation recur time and again. According to the estimate of Sir Fredericke [Castiglione, 1975, p. 17], who is the important figure in the conversation of the Courtier, a gentleman's talk discloses his hidden virtues that may not be known about him from others [Castiglione, p. 124]; the Courtier's talk should be a means to "shield (him) against envie" and have "a good understanding with a certaine sweetnesse to refresh the hearers minds": it should provoke his companions "to solace and laughter, so that without being at any time lothsome or satiate, he may evermore delite" [Castiglione, p. 133]. Although the book under consideration does not offer any definite prescriptions, in several contexts it states that a nobleman's talk should not offend by words or topics both hearers and those mentioned in talk. Although observing general rules of talk and behaviour, the Courtier "may well varie his conversation, and frame himselfe according to the inclination of them he accompanieth himselfe withall" [Castiglione, p. 121], so as not to be boring. "The Book of the Courtier" thus may be considered a significant background source to make the query of the use of the phatic function in the scenic composition of "Macbeth" feasible and motivated5.

Metarealization of the phatic function of speech⁶ in openings and closures of all the acts and scenes in "Macbeth" occurs in about one fourth of the total of two

culture of all Europe, on the Elizabethan authors, and is known to have been appreciated by Dr. Johnson as "the best book that ever was written upon good breeding". The beauty of his writing deserving it, Castiglione is said to have written "for all ages". In his introduction to the 1975 edition of "The Book of the Courtier", Professor Whitfield concludes that "for those who still believe in a cultivated society this book will remain as the first genesis of that ideal".

⁴ It is noteworthy that the pleasures of life enjoyed by Queen Elizabeth I include conversation: "... Queen who was not only a multi-lingual scholar and astute politician but a woman who relished the pleasures of life: hunting and hawking, musicmaking and dancing, theatrical performance and conversation" [The Age of Shakespeare, p. 12].

⁵ The credibility of the question of the phatic function in respect to Shakespeare's works may be said to be enhanced by the results of the known study of Shakespeare's plays [Porter, 1979] which, in J. C. Austin's conception and terminology, testifies to the dominance of illocutionary acts in Shakespeare's Lancastrian tetralogy.

^e Originally going back to the Jakobson-Akhmanova's conception of the function of language/speech [Ахманова 1966], the phatic function of speech (see:p. 1) may have its realization in such forms of actual communication as, for instance, conversation, correspondence, scholarly papers and others. The phatic function may have its metarealization in imaginative literature in which this function may occur as a kind of speech characterizing environment and personages (cf.: novels by Margaret Drabble,) as a compositional and stylistic device (cf.: Shakespeare's plays), as a means of irony (cf.: novels by E. F. Benson and M. Drabble) and so on. Owing to its expressive potential, the significance of speech in the phatic function in English imaginative literature is extremely multiaspective [cf.: Драздаускене, 1969, 1970].

hundred and forty nine contexts. Judging by the first syntactical unit in the scene openings and closures, the phatic function of speech in the scenic composition of "Macbeth" has been found manisfested in: 1) the address, 2) the conventional question, 3) formulas of introduction, 4) greetings, farewells and other formulas of politeness, 5) regards, and 6) statements, opening socializing conversation or narrative. To reveal the significance of speech in the phatic function which occurs in scene openings and closures in "Macbeth", the meaning, metasemiotic and metametasemiotic significance of the formulas of introduction will be considered in detail.

Formulas of introduction open two and close two scenes in "Macbeth":

(1) Ross

Enter Macduff

Here comes the good Macduff. How goes the world, sir, now? Macduff Why, see you not? (Mac, II. 4)

(2) Sennet sounded. Enter Macbeth as King, Lady Macbeth, Lennox, Ross,

Macbeth

Here's our chief guest.

Lady If he had been forgotten

It had been as a gap in our great feast And all thing unbecoming (Mac, III. 1)

(3) First Witch

He will not be commanded. Here's another

More potent that the first.

Thunder. Second Apparition, a Bloody Child (Mac, IV. 1)

(4) Sevward He's worth more:

They say he parted well, and paid his score.

And so God be with him. - Here comes newer comfort.

Enter Macduff with Macbeth's head (Mac, V. 6).

One more scene in "Macbeth" has the formula of introduction removed from the very opening of the scene by a statement commenting on the immediate action:

(5) Macduff

Enter Macbeth

Our knocking has awaked him; here he comes.

Lennox

Good morrow, noble sir.

Macbeth Good morrow both (Mac, II. 3).

As is evident from the scenes above, the meaning of the stereotypical sentences 'Here's ...(smb)' (2 and 3) and 'Here comes ...(smb|smth)' (1, 4, 5), which identify as formulas of introduction, is direct pointing or the drawing of attention to some body who appears on the stage. Though the formula 'Here comes(smb | smth)'

⁷ For the method of research see: [Drazdauskienė, 1984].

is somewhat more exphatic and rhetorical than 'Here's (smb)', neither of them is restricted to scene openings or closures.

The general meaning of the formulas of introduction determine their contact establishing function. Since these openings and closures of the scenes focus attention of the appearance of a personage and at times identify him (1) and since such openings and closures, i. e. changes in the staging are analogous to new encounters or openings and closures of speech acts from the point of view of the audience/reader, the communicative effect of the phatic function simultaneously extends into the extralinguistic context. Otherwise stated, conventional verbal introduction of a new or a newly appearing personage at the point of the change of the scene stimulates the audience's attention and ensures contact with him. Thus the data of linguostylistic analysis of speech in the phatic function seem to confirm the idea of Shakespeare's concern and ability to maintain contact with the audience, which is known from literary studies [Jones, 1971, p. 3, et passim; Wilson, 1977, pp. 1—11].

This is, however, but a mere account of the operational aspect of the formulas of introduction in the scenic composition of "Macbeth". Irrespective of their stereotypical character, the formulas of introduction are significant metasemiotically. The essential part of the formulas of introduction is reference to the third person which is the variant component of the formula. It is on this component that its metasemiotic and artistic significance rests. As is evident from the material above (see: p. 7), reference to the third person is specified in each particular case. In (5), for instance, pronominal reference to the third person makes the meaning of the formula of introduction very general. The identity of the entering personage is defined by the context. Since Macbeth as the main personage needs not be identified in this scene either for the audience or for the development of the play. the formula of introduction 'Here he comes' would be merely a functional phrase rather than an identifying utterance. Therefore, metasemiotically, this formula gives the impression of the familiarity of relations. Since, however, it is uttered by Macduff who is to be the hand of doom in the tragedy, the familiarity which tends to imply friendliness simultaneously implies the pain of a premonition.

The significance of greetings in (5) should not be overlooked, either, especially that greetings represent only a different kind of formulas, are typical for the scenic composition of "Macbeth" and, in this case, is an extension of speech in the phatic function at the juncture of the scenes. Judging by its use in Shakespeare's plays and the data of dictionaries [cf.: C. E. of Oxford English Dictionary, p. 671], 'Good morrow' now obsolete, was a standard greeting and a sign of culture, what would make it conventionally neutral in the context of the tragedy. However, owing to the address, the metacontents of this greeting becomes dramatically significant. Lennox's greeting and his esteem for Macbeth expressed in 'noble sir' becomes

a glaring exposition of Macbeth's, the criminal's, status. This is how the unaltered genteel attitude in Lennox's greeting acquires cannotations of dramatic irony and the value of an unintentional moral trial on Macbeth. Contrasting profound trust and benevolence of the noble and the treacherous ferocity of the dehumanized criminal, Lennox's greeting and address acquire even metametasemiotic significance.

Macbeth's response that follows, 'Good morrow both' sounds quite casual owing to the familiarity of the superior suggested by the pronominal reference 'both' which, in Macbeth's greeting, replaces the address. However, since Macbeth's familiarity is not in accord with the thanes' greeting and since, in Macbeth's case, it cannot mean genuine ease, metasemiotically Macbeth's greeting suggests his attempt to conceal his disturbed conscience. Furthermore, Macbeth's pretence is the first public testimony of the criminal's behaviour: it arouses suspicion in the context of the play and causes repulsion in the audience and the reader. The opening of this scene (5) thus shows how profound the significance of speech in the phatic function may be apart from its operational role in the scenic composition in "Macbeth".

To continue with the formulas of introduction, (1) might be considered. The introduction of Macduff in (1) with 'Here comes the good Macduff' is significant on the semantic level: it is a thorough introduction of Macduff in the presence of the Old Man. This introduction is also much more significant metasemiotically than the previous one because of the qualifying reference to the third person. Since the appreciative 'good' is in agreement with Macduff's character and since Macduff is the active virtuous personage, this formula of introduction acquires metametasemiotic significance: it definitely singles out Macduff as a salient figure in the opposition to evil whose operation started so tragically in the previous scene of the play.

It should also be pointed out that Ross's introduction of Macduff (1) is followed by an exchange of conventional questions ('How goes the world, sir, now?' - 'Why, see you not?') which literally present an instance of the phatic function par excellence and are of special significance. Metametasemiotically, these conventional questions stand in glaring contrast with the following sentences ('Is't known who did this more than bloody deed?' | 'Those that Macbeth hath slain'), which they introduce and which, ironically, focus on Duncan's murder. Thus the functional meaning of the conventional questions to which there is no answer becomes the foundation of dramatic irony in this scene.

'Here's our chief guest' (2) introducing Banquo in Macbeth's words semantically is not an introduction because it does not identify Banquo. However, its conventional use and general introductory scene coinciding with the opening of the scene, this formula retains its contact-establishing function extralinguistically. Its

major significance is metasemiotic. The reference to Banquo as the 'chief guest' would ordinarily mean honour. However, since this meaning is contrary to Macbeth's actual intentions to get rid of Banquo, which get implied beginning with the witches' prophesy and which are put into action very soon after this utterance, it marks Banquo off. Since it is uttered when Banquo contemplates Macbeth's treacherous nature, metasemiotically, this formula implies danger.

'Here's another | More potent than te first' in (4) is introductory both in the linguistic and the extralinguistic context. Since the Bloody Child appears immediately after the formula of introduction, this formula may be said to be the most direct artistic employment of the phatic function in "Macbeth". The pronominal reference in it implies certain familiarity among the supernatural beings, on the one hand, and their power accompanied by certain secrecy in man's presence, on the other. Though this formula has no particular metametasemiotic significance, it seems to set off the supernatural world from the real world of the tragedy. It might be even said to imply distinct autonomy of the supernatural world and its superiority over the real world (cf.: an interpretation of the supernatural in the same tragedy [Drazdauskiené. 1984h).

Though metaphoric, 'Here comes newer comfort' in (4) is an instance of the analogous artistic exploitation of the phatic function. First of all this formula draws attention to the appearing personage, i. e. it establishes contact with him in the linguistic and the extralinguistic context. Since, in either context, Macduff needs not be identified in person by the end of the play, the focussing of attention on him is all that the establishment of contact requires in this scene. Reference to the approaching Macduff as 'newer comfort' is both ironic and comforting. Its irony derives from literal disagreement of the meaning of the word 'comfort' and the context of situation in which the thanes of Scotland remember friends lost in battle. However, since it is Macduff who appears with the head of the 'dead butcher' Macbeth, his appearance is comforting, in a way, because it signifies victory.

Linguostylistic analysis of only one type of sentences, viz., the formulas of introduction, realizing the phatic function and current in the scenic composition of "Macbeth" has shown the profoundness of Shakespeare's exploitation of this instance of the phatic function. On the semantic level, the formulas of introduction have been shown to have been used to identify the personage (1), to point him out and fix attention on him (3, 4, 5) and to address the personage indirectly by way of introduction (2). Operationally, the formulas of introduction have been shown to retain their contact-establishing function both in the linguistic and the extralinguistic context.

Although the formulas of introduction are distinctly patterned, even stereotypical, every formula of introduction has been found significant metasemiotically. Moreover, their significance in all the openings and closures of the scenes has been

shown to exceed mere metacontents and require generalizations on the metametasemiotic level. It is noteworthy that the metacontents of the formulas of introduction derives basically from the variant component of the formula, viz.: pronominal reference, qualifying words and, doubtlessly, intonation. The pattern itself may be said to be a fixed background against which the significance of the variant component becomes distinctly pronounced.

The nature of meaning and significance remaining the same, other syntactical units realizing the phatic function in the scenic composition of "Macbeth" have been found as significant. The significance of each particular syntactical unit realizing the phatic function at the junctures of the scenes in "Macbeth" being individual, it is impossible to present results of the analysis under review in generalizations. It is possible, however, to observe and center on certain regular traits in the metacontents of the phatic function pertaining to the speech of definite personages. For instance, the address solely establishing contact is typical only for the speech of the witches and the Apparitions. The address in Macbeth's speech is marked by impatient demand and exclamation, whilst the metacontents of the address in Lady Macbeth's speech varies from wicked or conceited appraisal to pretended grandeur. The address in the thanes and Duncan's speech is markedly more quiet: it implies distress, concern and kindness. A profounder presentation of the metacontents of the address at the juncture of the scenes in "Macbeth" would require as detailed consideration of each particular utterance as has been given above (see: pp. 9-10), in passing.

Though the significance of conventional questions has also been mentioned (see: p. 11, above), it might be noted that the conventional question 'How now?' is perhaps the only neutral phatic utterance in the scenic composition of "Macbeth". It is quite frequent and, whenever it occurs, it serves as a conventional means for the drawing of attention to the question that follows. Although its connotations would doubtlessly depend on intonation, functionally it seems to approximate a filler-in. Other conventional questions, such as: 1) What is your tidings? (I. 5). 2) What news? (I. 7). 3) How goes the night, boy? (II. 1). 4) What's your gracious will? (IV. 1). 5) What's your gracious pleasure? (V. 3) and others invariably reflect the atmosphere of the situations. Thus, (1) from Lady Macbeth before Duncan's arrival implies ferocious curiosity, whilst (2) right before Duncan's murder reflects her cold-blooded matter-of-factness. Contrary to its conventional casualness, (3) tends to imply restlessness and danger, partly because it is addressed to a child. It remains to add that, apart from verbal confirmation of readiness and attention, (4) and (5) may be said to imply courtesy of the inferior.

Even as cursory consideration of formulas of politeness, regards and statements opening socializing conversation at the junctures of the scenes in "Macbeth" would extend the present paper beyond any limit. Therefore, skipping the most various

aspects of their metacontents, it is possible to say that, metametasemiotically, all these syntactical units as instances of the metarealization of the phatic function seem to imply human reaction, kindness and grandeur of the suffering noble. This conclusion takes us straight to the point of generalizations concerning stylistic significance of the phatic function in the scenic composition of "Macbeth".

The material reviewed and analyzed above has hopefully been sufficient to show how regular the phatic function of speech is in the scenic composition of "Macbeth" and how profoundly it is integrated into the metacontents and metametacontents of the tragedy. Even though each conventional sentence realizing the phatic function at the junctures of the scenes has been said to abound in metacontents and have an individual bearing on the metametacontents of the tragedy, metametacontents of the speech realizing the phatic function in the scenic composition of "Macbeth" ultimately generalizes as human attitude, kindness, pain and grandeur of the suffering mind or the noble under tyranny.

The frequence of the occurrence of speech in the phatic function in the scenic composition of "Macbeth" alone would claim its stylistic significance. Its rich metacontents that is the essential matter of linguistic style and, still more, its metametasemiotic integrity confirms its definite stylistic significance. The point is that when style is assumed to be meaning⁸ [Hough, 1969, p. 8; Akhmanova, 1970; Halliday, 1973; Drazdauskienė, 1983], analytically, it may be seen as the meaning of semantic and metasemiotic relations that ultimately generalize as metametacontents, on the one hand, and the respective linguistic identity, on the other. Since speech in the phatic function in the scenic composition of "Macbeth" is fairly common, has a patterned character and definite metametasemiotic significance, its bearing on the linguostyle of "Macbeth" may be said to be proven beyond doubt. The question remains, however, of how the linguistic style of "Macbeth" might be defined.

Treating junctures of the scenes in "Macbeth" as salient points, the function of speech at them may be shown to outline the linguostyle of this tragedy. However, a definition of the linguostyle of "Macbeth" based on the function of speech in the scenic composition would require the knowledge of the metametasemiotic significance of all syntactical units framing the scenes in their immediate contexts. As is evident, the present paper has revealed only the significance of speech in the phatic function which was said to suggest human attitude, kindness and concern of the noble under tyranny.

As is known from preceding studies [Drazdauskienė, 1984], the referential function in the scenic composition of "Macbeth" realized through the imperative, the concrete and the summary statement, the question, the hypothetical conditional

The author of the present paper is guided by the following definition of linguostyle: linguistic style is the total significance of a specimen of speech (or literary work) of distinct linguistic identity, shared or individual [cf.: Drazdauskienė, 1983].

and other syntactical units has been found to contribute to the metameta contents of the tragedy through generalized metacontents of all syntactical units representing every type mentioned above. The referential function, thus, has been said to signify the assault of the dehumanized against the human, what seemed to be equivalent to an extraordinary unity of rationally organized communicative and semantic significance of English. Taken together, the metametasemiotic significance of both the phatic and the referential functions in the scenic composition of "Macbeth" may be said to allow the following tentative generalization: the struggle of the noble human against the assault of the dehumanized may be seen as a contrast between verbal barrenness subjected to a chain of action and limited intellect, on the one hand, and verbal scarceness, human attitude and action subjected to suffering, wisdom and concern, on the other. The language of "Macbeth" may be said to reflect this contrast in a perfected unity of the operational standard of English, on the one hand, and of rationally organized and emotively charged communicative use of English, on the other.

In conclusion, it has to be noted that the testimony of the phatic function in the scenic composition of "Macbeth" is not limited to its stylistic significance. Compositional and metametasemiotic inherence of the phatic function in "Macbeth" being analogous to the use of this function in Shakespeare's other plays, this study seems to suggest prospective research which, hypothetically, might concern the following: 1) the two-dimensional linguostyle of Shakespeare's plays combining the phatic and the referential functions and presenting the plays as complex speech acts, on the one hand, and as perfect artistic structures with linguistically and metametasemiotically accomplished equivalence estimated as their style, on the other; 2) the role of Shakespeare's language in the establishment of the operational standard of English as early as the sixteenth century.

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КОНТАКТОУСТАНАВЛИВАЮЩАЯ ФУНКЦИЯ В СЦЕНИЧЕСКОЙ КОМПОЗИЦИИ "МАКБЕТА"

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Резюме

В статье рассматривается композиционная и стилистическая интеграция контактоустанавливающей функции речи в трагедии "Макбет", определяется лингвистический стильданной трагедии и перспектива исследований, касающихся контактоустанавливающей функции в пьесах Шекспира.

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