

# A Stylistic Analysis of Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*

Seçil Varal\*

## Abstract

In the 18th century England 'comedy of manners' was quite popular as a way of entertainment for every level of the society through its violations of social standards and decorum, the use of stock characters, intrigues, love games and witty dialogues. However, beneath the laughter that aroused through such comical devices the playwrights intend to satirize the manners and morality of the Restoration society. Within this frame, Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1771) is quintessence of comedy of manners tradition through which Goldsmith aims at criticizing the hypocrisy and artificial manners of the contemporary society. In this work, the use stylistic approach paves the way for a better understanding of the playwright's hidden criticism through a scrutinized analysis of the dialogues between the characters, which are pivotal comical devices in the comedy of manners tradition. Therefore, the aim of this study is to analyze Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* within the frame of 'stylistic approach' in order to show how money and social status determine manners, discourses and the relationships of the Restoration society. In this regard, 'discourse analysis' and 'conversation analysis' will be employed in this paper to shed light on hypocrisy and artificiality of the characters. The paper will elaborate on the discourse of the characters through 'speech acts', 'presupposition', 'conversational implicatures', 'turn taking' and 'politeness' to reveal how money and social status change the manners of the characters.

**Key words:** Comedy of Manners, *She Stoops to Conquer*, Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis.

## Öz

### Oliver Goldsmith'in *She Stoops to Conquer* Adlı Oyununun Biçembilimsel İncelenmesi

'Töre komedisi' sosyal standartları ve adab-ı muaşeret kurallarını hiçe sayması, tip karakter (stock character) kullanımı, entrika, aşk oyunları ve nükteli diyaloglarıyla 18. yy İngiltere'sinde her kesime hitap eden oldukça popüler bir eğlence kaynağıdır. Öte yandan, bu tarz komik unsurların kullanılmasıyla ortaya çıkarılan gülmecenin ardında oyun yazarlarının Restorasyon Dönemi toplumunun tutum ve ahlakını hicvetme güdüsü yatmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Oliver Goldsmith'in *She Stoops to Conquer* (1771) adlı oyunu dönemin ikiyüzlülüklerini ve sahte tutumlarını eleştirmesiyle töre komedisi geleneğinin en iyi örneklerinden birini teşkil etmektedir. Bu çalışmada biçembilimsel yaklaşımın kullanılması töre komedisi geleneğinin odak noktasında bulunan 'diyalogların' detaylı bir biçimde incelenmesine olanak sağlayarak bu gizli eleştirinin daha iyi anlaşılmasına zemin hazırlamaktadır. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışmanın amacı Goldsmith'in *She Stoops to Conquer* adlı oyununu biçembilimsel yaklaşımla inceleyerek Restorasyon dönemi toplumunun söylem, tutum ve ilişkilerinde para ve sosyal statünün nasıl belirleyici bir rol oynadığını göstermektir. Bu bakımdan, bu çalışmada, karakterlerin ikiyüzlülüğü ve sahteliğine ışık tutmak amacıyla 'söylem analizi' ve 'konuşma analizi' uygulanmaktadır. Karakterlerin söylemleri ayrıntılı olarak incelenip, para ve sosyal mevkiinin karakterlerin tutumuna nasıl yön verdiğini ortaya koymak için 'sözedimi', 'önsayıltı', 'konuşma sezdirimi', 'konuşma sırası' ve 'incelik' üzerinde durulmaktadır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Töre Komedisi, *She Stoops to Conquer*, Söylem Analizi, Konuşma Analizi.

\* Arş. Gör., Ankara Üniversitesi, Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı.

## Introduction

*She Stoops to Conquer* or *The Mistakes of a Night* (1771) is a “comedy of manners” play written by Irish playwright Oliver Goldsmith. As a term ‘comedy of manners’ was popularized in the Restoration Period (1660–1700) though it originated in the New Comedy of Greek Menander. The term is mainly attributed to the comedies which aim to satirize the manners and morality of the Restoration society. To this end, the use of stock characters whose deficiencies and follies are depicted to arouse the comedy, violations of social standards and decorum, intrigues, love games and witty dialogues become frequently employed comical devices of comedy of manners plays. However, the Restoration comedies draw a rebuff due to the “immorality of situation and indecency of dialogues” which eventuates in the rise of “sentimental comedy” in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Abrahams, 1999, p.39). Contrary to satirical laughter of comedy of manners, sentimental comedy produces tears depicting a middle-class protagonist who has to overcome difficulties to reveal the inherent goodness of human beings. In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, certain playwrights notably Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Oliver Goldsmith reacted against the sentimental comedy believing that comedy was intended to arouse laughter. Hence, they revived ‘comedy of manners’ tradition by using its comical devices with the exception of indecent dialogues in their works.

Oliver Goldsmith revealed his criticism on sentimental comedy in his essay “A Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy” (1773) stating that “if we are permitted to make comedy weep, we have an equal right to make tragedy laugh, and to set down in blank verse the jests and repartees of all the attendants in a funeral procession” (p.752). In a similar vein, in the Prologue to *She Stoops to Conquer* he satirizes the contemporary sentimental comedy blaming it for the annihilation of the comic muse and he states that “I give it up –morals won’t do for me; / One to make you laugh, I must play tragedy” (1981, p.235). In the play Goldsmith, thus, aims to arouse laughter through criticizing the contemporary ostentatious society that pretends to be polite and mannerly contrary to their true self. In the play, thus, comedy mainly arises from the improper behaviors of the characters that emerge as a consequence of ‘mistaken identities’ and ‘dramatic ironies’. For instance, unaware of the Tony’s trickery, Marlow mistakes Hardcastle for an innkeeper and Kate for one of the maids at the so-called inn while the audience is aware of the fact that Hardcastle is the master of the mansion and Kate is his daughter. Within these complications, discourses of the characters which change according to their interlocutor’s social statues not only create a comic effect but also reveal the true face of hypocrite society.

Therefore, this paper aims to analyze Goldsmith’s *She Stoops to Conquer* within the frame of ‘stylistic approach’ in order to show how money and social status play a pivotal role

in relationships of the Restoration society. Within this context, ‘discourse analysis’ and ‘conversation analysis’ will be employed in this paper to shed light on the characters’ hypocrisy and artificiality. The discourse of the characters will be scrutinized through ‘speech acts’, ‘presupposition’, ‘conversational implicatures’, ‘turn taking’ and ‘politeness’ to reveal certain hints about their insincere relations, personalities and social statuses. To this end, in the ‘General Remarks’ part a short summary of the play will be given to make the stylistic analysis more apprehensible and the extracts that will be analyzed in this study will be briefly introduced. In ‘Speech Acts, Presuppositions and Conversational Implicatures’ true-self of the Restoration society will be revealed via focusing on the speech acts, presuppositions and conversational implicatures in the dialogue between Mrs Hardcastle and Tony. ‘Turn Taking and Politeness’ will elaborate on the change of discourse according to social status (e.g. master-servant relation) which will be displayed through the conversations first between Hardcastle and Diggory and later among Hardcastle, Marlow and Hastings. Finally, ‘Concluding Remarks’ will be given in order to reach an overall conclusion explaining the examples given in this study.

### **1. General Remarks**

The play is based on a rich squire Mr Hardcastle’s plan to wed her daughter Kate to his friend Sir Charles Marlow’s son Marlow who is also a rich young gallant. While Hardcastle is looking forward for the arrival of Marlow and his friend Hastings, his step son Tony plays a joke on Marlow and Hastings, when they stop at an inn to ask the way to Hardcastle house. Persuading Marlow and Hastings that they are far away from their target thus should rest at the best inn in the village (which is actually Hardcastle’s house), Tony paves the way for their misidentification of Mr Hardcastle as the innkeeper. Because of the impolite manner of Marlow, Mr Hardcastle finds him inappropriate for the marriage. Furthermore, being so embarrassed while talking to an upper class lady, Marlow does not look at Kate’s face during the conversation, thus, later mistakes her for the bar maid of the house. Meanwhile, in the subplot Miss Constance Neville, the niece of Tony, wants to marry Hasting and plans to elope with him since Mrs Hardcastle is determined to marry her son to her in order to keep her fortune in the family. However, Tony and Miss Neville hate each other, thus, when he discovers he is at the age to receive money that his mother hides from him, he objects to the marriage. Therefore, at the end of the play, everything is revealed and as Marlow learns the real identity of Hardcastle and Kate, he gets engaged to Kate while Hastings gets engaged to Constance Neville.

As one of the prominent examples of ‘comedy of manners’, the play portrays ironic situations that are originated from either misunderstandings or misidentifications of the characters.

Furthermore, the fact that almost all of the characters act as if they were polite and of high standing poses a paradox between what they say and what they really are. In this respect, the excerpts that are analyzed in this study are selected by virtue of their capacity to reveal the true self of the characters. For instance, in the first extract that will be analyzed under the subtitle “Speech Acts”, Mrs Hardcastle’s affectation is depicted through the change in her manners and discourse. In the extract, initially she displays polite requests which through the end of the interaction turn into impolite persistence. Likewise, in the “Turn Taking and Politeness” part of the study, the verbal interaction between Mr Hardcastle and his servant Diggory and subsequently among Hardcastle, Marlow and Hastings will be given in order to demonstrate the gap between Hardcastle’s true self and his attempt to adhere to the standards of polite behavior. Finally, the conversations between Marlow and Kate will be given twice in the first of which Kate is the daughter of Hardcastle while in the second one she pretends to be the maid of the house. In doing so, the fact that the manners change according to social status will be displayed so as to point out the affectedness of the society.

## **2. Speech Acts, Presuppositions and Conversational Implacatures**

Speech acts, presuppositions and conversational implicature are significant stylistic devices that are closely related to each other in a play. That is to say, ‘Speech acts’ are of importance since the characters not only utter words but also perform them. ‘Presuppositions’ “form a part of the preconditions for the felicitous production of speech acts” whereas; conversational implicatures infer interpretation of the conversations within the frame of maxims (Short, 1981, p.145). Thus, observing speech acts, presuppositions and conversational implicatures in a verbal interaction not only gives a clue about the interactants but also paves the way for making inferences about the relationship between them, and thus, render contextual inferences possible.

To be more precise, speech acts are mainly divided into three as “interrogative, imperative and declarative” in the grammatical structure level while in the speech act level they can change according to context. Thus, a declarative statement can sometimes be a ‘command’ depending on the contextual conditions. This is called ‘felicity conditions’. Likewise, presuppositions are divided into three categories as “existential, linguistic and pragmatic”. Yet, all of the presuppositions are basically pragmatic. On the other hand, conversational implicatures are handled in four categories that are called “maxim of quality”, “maxim of quantity”, “maxim of relation” and “maxim of manners”. The dialogue between Tony and his mother below demonstrates how speech act patterns, presuppositions and conversational implicatures give certain ideas about characters and their social relationship:

**MRS. HARDCASTLE.** Tony, where are you going, my charmer? Won't you give papa and I a little of your company, lovee?

**TONY.** I'm in haste, mother; I cannot stay.

**MRS. HARDCASTLE.** You shan't venture out this raw evening, my dear; you look most shockingly.

**TONY.** I can't stay, I tell you. The Three Pigeons expects me down every moment. There's some fun going forward.

**HARDCASTLE.** Ay; the alehouse, the old place: I thought so.

**MRS. HARDCASTLE.** A low, paltry set of fellows.

**TONY.** Not so low, neither. There's Dick Muggins the exciseman, Jack Slang the horse doctor, Little Aminadab that grinds the music box, and Tom Twist that spins the pewter platter.

**MRS. HARDCASTLE.** Pray, my dear, disappoint them for one night at least.

**TONY.** As for disappointing them, I should not so much mind; but I can't abide to disappoint myself.

**MRS. HARDCASTLE.** (detaining him.) You shan't go.

**TONY.** I will, I tell you.

**MRS. HARDCASTLE.** I say you shan't.

**TONY.** We'll see which is strongest, you or I. [Exit, hauling her out.] (I, p.238)

Here, the speech acts such as commands (e.g. "You shan't go") and threats (e.g. "You shan't venture out this raw evening", "We'll see which is strongest, you or I") hint on the social relations of the characters. The fact that they perform not only speech acts but also physical acts shows their social background which is most probably 'low'. However, joining a high class society through a marriage bond, Mrs Hardcastle tries to hide her low social background by looking down on Tony's friends "A low, paltry set of fellows".

To elaborate on the discourse analysis, Mrs. Hardcastle's first question "where are you going?" is quite remarkable as it reveals that she violates the maxim of manner by asking the question the answer of which she already knows. In this sense, the violation of the maxim of manner portrays that Mrs Hardcastle is so dominant and powerful that although she knows where Tony will go she wants to hear it from him so that she can deter him from going. However, just by saying "I'm in haste, mother; I cannot stay" Tony flouts the maxim of quantity. This can be implicature of two things: (1) Tony is really in hurry so does not have time to give an explanation; (2) Tony does not want to report his mother where he

will go. If Tony's personality is taken into consideration, the second implicature seems to be more possible. Moreover, the question "Won't you give papa and I a little of your company, lovee?" is a "hybrid statement" including both a "request" and "command" within itself. Furthermore, it implies that Mrs Hardcastle wants Tony to accompany them. On the other hand, Mrs Hardcastle not only performs the speech act of pleading "Pray, my dear, disappoint them for one night at least" but also makes an obvious example of "pragmatic presupposition" since the sentence presupposes that Tony accompanies her friends every night. Furthermore, his response to this pledging statement "As for disappointing them, I should not so much mind; but I can't abide to disappoint myself" displays the 'linguistic presupposition'. In this regard, the sentence 'presupposes' that Tony does not care about his friends and 'asserts' that he does not want to be deprived of the entertainment in the inn.

In brief, the change in her manner of speaking reveals the true face of Mrs Hardcastle who acts as if she was an upper class woman. Within this context, her discourse shifts from an indirect request to a command. Therefore, she performs the speech act of ordering which demonstrates that she is a dominant and bossy character while Tony is indifferent to his domineering manners. Their conflicting personality is also revealed through the maxim they broke. That is to say, Mrs. Hardcastle breaks maxim of manner by insisting on asking the question of which response she knows while Tony breaks maxim of quantity to escape from her mother's inquiry. The conversation ends with the participants' power struggle in which Tony challenges his mother with the words "We'll see which is strongest, you or I". The sentence can be regarded as both a speech act "threat" and "physical act" since he hauls her out of the stage using his power.

### **3. Turn Taking and Politeness**

Turn taking process, which refers to a participant's "taking an opportunity to speak" within an interaction (Herman, 1998, p.19), is one of the indissoluble elements of drama since plays are based on conversations of dramatis personae. During a conversation the alternation of turn order; the length of speeches; pauses and gaps are useful devices in terms of showing the true colors of the characters in the play. In *She Stoops to Conquer* turn taking mechanism and politeness mostly depict the social relations of the characters since the plot is established on a series of misunderstanding about social ranks of the characters. In this way, Goldsmith aims to criticize upper class people who try to follow the rules of politeness in a polite society in which 'politeness' conflicts with their 'true self'. In order to show this hypocrisy and pretensions of the society Goldsmith depicts characters such as Hardcastle and Marlow who unveil their true-selves through the discourses that change according to the participant's social rank. Within this context, firstly the verbal interaction between



Hardcastle and his servant Diggory and then between Hardcastle and his guests Hastings and Marlow will be analyzed. In the dialogue below as the master of the house, before the arrival of his guests Hardcastle gives instruction to his servants to make them pretend more mannerly than they normally do:

**HARDCASTLE.** You, Diggory, whom I have taken from the barn, are to make a show at the side- table; and you, Roger, whom I have advanced from the plough, are to place yourself behind chair. But you're not to stand so, with your hands in your pockets. Take your hands from your pockets, Roger; and from your head, you blockhead, you. See how Diggory carries his hands. They're little to stiff, indeed, but that's no great matter.

**DIGGORY.** Ay, mind how I hold them. I learned to hold my hands this way when I was upon drill for the militia. And so being upon drill——

**HARDCASTLE.** You must not be so talkative, Diggory. You must be all attention to the guests. You must hear us talk, and not think of talking; you must see us drink, and not think of drinking; you must see us eat, and not think of eating.

**DIGGORY.** By the laws, your worship, that's perfectly impossible. Whenever Diggory sees yeating going forward, ecod, he's always wishing for a mouthful himself.

**HARDCASTLE.** Blockhead! Is not a belly-full in the kitchen as good as a belly-full in the parlour? Stay your stomach with that reflection.

**DIGGORY.** Ecod, I thank your worship, I'll make a shift to stay my stomach with a slice of cold beef in the pantry.

**HARDCASTLE.** Diggory, you are too talkative.—Then, if I happen to say a good thing, or tell a good story at table, you must not all burst out a-laughing, as if you made part of the company.

**DIGGORY.** Then ecod your worship must not tell the story of old Grouse in the gun-room: I can't help laughing at that—he! he! he!—for the soul of me. We have laughed at that these twenty years—ha! ha! ha! (II., p.249)

In the interaction above, there is an equal distribution of the turns between interactants which is quite normal as the conversation takes place between two people (Since Roger is just addressed, he does not take part in the conversation here). Thus, the power relation between Hardcastle and Diggory as master and servant is hinted through “turn size”, “topic control” together with “politeness strategies” and “the negative face threatening acts” rather than turn order. In this sense, Hardcastle has longer turns than Diggory since he initiates

and controls the topic and bosses over Diggory. This unfolds Hardcastle's superiority over Diggory. Furthermore, his interruption of Diggory before he completes his turn not only violates turn-taking rules but also shows his power over him.

Politeness is another remarkable element that hints the power relation in the aforementioned verbal interaction. Hardcastle's use of impolite discourse is evidently seen in his use of "imperatives", obligatory modal verb "must" and "invectives". His impolite discourse not only threatens "negative face" that refers to "a speaker's freedom of action and freedom from imposition" but also "positive face" which is defined as "positive consistent self-image or personality" of Diggory (Simpson, 1995, p.173). Thus, the unmitigated incessant orders given to Diggory –the employment of semi column also underlines incessancy – (e.g. "you must see us drink, and not think of drinking; you must see us eat, and not think of eating") are explicit, bald and non-redressive negative face threatening act as they restrict the movement of Diggory. On the other hand, since "insults" pose a kind of threat to the interlocutor's public face Hardcastle's addressing to Diggory twice as "blockhead" baldly threatens his positive face. Furthermore, he makes a deprecating evaluation of the addressee's public self image and disapproving his personality by remarking twice that "you are too talkative" again threatens Diggory's positive face.

On the other hand, Diggory employs the "strategies of negative politeness" which is particularly "avoidance based" such as "impersonalize" and "indicate pessimism" (Simpson, 1995, p.189). For instance, in order to avoid imposing on Mr. Hardcastle, Diggory impersonalizes him calling him with a hyper-formal utterance like "your worship". Furthermore, Diggory indicates his pessimism on Hardcastle's ability of "not to think of eating and drinking" while watching his guests' dining with the words "by the laws, your worship, that's perfectly impossible". Here, apart from his polite discourse, Diggory's use of a different dialect is again an indicative of his lower social status. As a result, since Hardcastle is socially superior than Diggory his use of bald and non redressive acts shows that threatening Diggory's face is not a matter of concern to Hardcastle, besides, he has no fear for his face being treated by Diggory. On the other hand, Diggory avoids face threatening acts and utilizes negative politeness strategies as he is the inferior interactant of the conversation.

In a similar vein, the verbal interaction among Marlow, Hasting and Hardcastle in Act II hints on how the power relation in a conversation is determined by social statues of the participants. In the conversation, this time Hardcastle is in the position of servant while Marlow and Hastings are his masters. Because of Tony's (Hardcastle's foster son) misguiding, Marlow and Hastings suppose that they arrive at an inn of which Hardcastle is the innkeeper, therefore, they are quite rude to Hardcastle. They even ignore him since



they are masters while Hardcastle is the so called ‘servant’. In this regard, interruptions and overlaps in the conversation stem from Marlow’s misapprehension of Hardcastle’s social rank. Yet, being in the same social rank with Marlow and Hasting, Hardcastle believes that he has right to participate in the conversation whereas unaware of the situation Marlow and Hasting think that Hardcastle forgets his low status. Thus, the power struggle between the superior (Marlow) and the inferior (Hardcastle) is revealed explicitly through the broken conversation below which depicts the arrival of Hastings and Marlow at the mansion welcomed by Hardcastle:

**HARDCASTLE.** Mr. Marlow—Mr. Hastings—gentlemen—pray be under no constraint in this house. This is Liberty-hall, gentlemen. You may do just as you please here.

**MARLOW.** Yet, George, if we open the campaign too fiercely at first, we may want ammunition before it is over. I think to reserve the embroidery to secure a retreat.

**HARDCASTLE.** Your talking of a retreat, Mr. Marlow, puts me in mind of the Duke of Marlborough, when we went to besiege Denain. He first summoned the garrison—

**MARLOW.** Don’t you think the ventre d’or waistcoat will do with the plain brown?

**HARDCASTLE.** He first summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men—

**HASTINGS.** I think not: brown and yellow mix but very poorly.

**HARDCASTLE.** I say, gentlemen, as I was telling you, be summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men—

**MARLOW.** The girls like finery.

**HARDCASTLE.** Which might consist of about five thousand men, well appointed with stores, ammunition, and other implements of war. Now, says the Duke of Marlborough to George Brooks, that stood next to him—you must have heard of George Brooks—I’ll pawn my dukedom, says he, but I take that garrison without spilling a drop of blood. So—

**MARLOW.** What, my good friend, if you gave us a glass of punch in the mean time; it would help us to carry on the siege with vigour.

**HARDCASTLE.** Punch, sir! (Aside.) This is the most unaccountable kind of modesty I ever met with. (II, p.254)

As seen above, even though Hardcastle has the most turns (5) in the speech, he is the least powerful participant in the conversation as he is often interrupted by both Hastings and

Marlow. On the other hand, Marlow appears to be the most powerful participant since he is the one who interrupts Hardcastle most and who has the second most turns (4) in the conversation. However, Hardcastle attempts to create a new 'floor' with utterances like "Your talking of a retreat, Mr. Marlow, puts me in mind of the Duke of Marlborough". He, furthermore, repeats the same words "summoned the garrison" three times to introduce a new topic which is related to his past, yet, given the fact that he is not as powerful as Marlow, his attempts end with failure due to Marlow's interruptions. Thus, an 'asymmetrical situation' occurs since Hardcastle is excluded from speech according to the selection strategy. As the most powerful participant, Marlowe chooses the next speaker by not only addressing Hastings directly as "George" but also neglecting Hardcastle's speeches.

On the other hand, apart from Tony's deception, the case of mistaken identity also arises from Hardcastle's excessive use of polite speech acts. Especially, the use of "negative politeness strategies" by Hardcastle creates a social distance between him and his guests Marlow and Hastings and resulted in his being regarded as a low class innkeeper. For instance, in order to mitigate the amount of face threatening acts he utilizes humbling (e.g. "pray"), deference (e.g. "Mr") and hedge (e.g. hypothetical modal verb "may"). Hardcastle's use of status-marked vocatives like "Mr" and "gentlemen" conflicts with Marlow's use of direct and sincere address term "my good friend". As a result of both use of politeness strategies in the face of Marlow and Hastings's impoliteness and turn-graps in the conversation, Hardcastle seems to be the intruder, an uninvited speaker in the conversation between Hasting and Marlowe rather than a person who is interrupted by them.

Contrary to his reckless and snobbish manners in his interaction with Hardcastle, Marlow displays a personality change by turning into a shy and polite person in his first interaction with Kate, the daughter of Mr. Hardcastle. The conversation explicitly puts forward that in such a pretentious society not only people's behaviors but also their discourse –mainly the turn taking process and politeness– change in accordance with such constituents as the participant's gender, age, social statues etc.:

**MARLOW.** It's – a disease—of the mind, madam. In the variety of tastes there must be some who, wanting a relish—for—um—a—um.

**MISS HARDCASTLE.** I understand you, sir. There must be some, who, wanting a relish for refined pleasures, pretend to despise what they are incapable of tasting.

**MARLOW.** My meaning, madam, but infinitely better expressed. And I can't help observing—a—

**MISS HARDCASTLE.** (Aside.) Who could ever suppose this fellow impudent upon some occasions? (To him.) You were going to observe, sir—

**MARLOW.** I was observing, madam—I protest, madam, I forget what I was going to observe.

**MISS HARDCASTLE.** (Aside.) I vow and so do I. (To him.) You were observing, sir, that in this age of hypocrisy—something about hypocrisy, sir.

**MARLOW.** Yes, madam. In this age of hypocrisy there are few who upon strict inquiry do not—a—a—a—

**MISS HARDCASTLE.** I understand you perfectly, sir. (II., p.263)

In a healthy dialogue that turn-taking mechanism operates well, pauses, interruptions or overlaps are supposed to be minimal. Yet as seen in the above dialogue, there are many filled pauses and incomplete sentences which show that Marlow is not able to complete his turn although he shares equal turns with Miss Hardcastle. Both voiced fillers or hedging participles such as “um” and “a” and the frequent use of dashes explicitly reveal Marlow’s discomfort and embarrassment. That is to say, he is so embarrassed before Kate that he cannot make a proper sentence, thus, almost all of his sentences are incomplete. On the other hand, completing Marlow’s sentences with much better expressions than his, Kate is depicted as a quite self-confident girl who repeats the sentence “I understand you, sir” in order to relieve Marlow.

The repetition of the sentence also shows that Miss Hardcastle redresses positive face of Marlow by appreciating his self image stating that she understands him though she cannot understand exactly. Thus, contrary to Marlow’s naivety and shyness, Kate aims to mitigate face threatening acts. Likewise, Marlow displays quite polite language which conflicts with his previous dialogue with Hardcastle. For example, he employs honorific “madam” which indicates deference and Miss Hardcastle’s use of same kind of vocative “sir” reveals that they have the same social status. Furthermore, similar to Miss Hardcastle, Marlow pays a compliment to Miss Hardcastle self image by appreciating her expressions as is seen in his words “My meaning, madam, but infinitely better expressed”. However, Marlow’s discourse once more changes when he mistakes Miss Hardcastle for one of the maids of the inn and in response to Kate’s question that if he calls her he says:

**MARLOW.** No, no, I tell you. (Looks full in her face.) Yes, child, I think I did call. I wanted—I wanted—I vow, child, you are vastly handsome.

**MISS HARDCASTLE.** O la, sir, you’ll make one ashamed.

**MARLOW.** Never saw a more sprightly malicious eye. Yes, yes, my dear, I did call. Have you got any of your—a—what d’ye call it in the house?

**MISS HARDCASTLE.** No, sir, we have been out of that these ten days.

**MARLOW.** One may call in this house, I find, to very little purpose. Suppose I should call for a taste, just by way of a trial, of the nectar of your lips; perhaps I might be disappointed in that too.

**MISS HARDCASTLE.** Nectar! nectar! That's a liquor there's no call for in these parts. French, I suppose. We sell no French wines here, sir.

**MARLOW.** Of true English growth, I assure you.

**MISS HARDCASTLE.** Then it's odd I should not know it. We brew all sorts of wines in this house, and I have lived here these eighteen years. (III., p.278-79)

As it is seen above, there is an exact shift in Marlow's discourse that he becomes a womanizer which contradicts with his timidity in his previous interaction with Kate. The change of personality is mainly revealed through his speech as this time he achieves to make complete sentences and utter them with self-confidence, without hesitation. Even if Marlow displays non-fluency features such as unvoiced fillers and repetitions, they show that he is caught unprepared for his conversation and needs to gain time in order to think about what to say. In this sense, unlike his previous verbal interaction with Kate, Marlow's non-fluency does not proceed from his embarrassment but from his being fascinated by Kate's beauty.

As Marlow woos Kate supposing that she is a maid, he employs rather sincere discourse (unlike his previous formal discourse) which is evidently shown not only through his the use of vocatives such as "child" and "my dear" and but also through his paying compliments to her in a poetic language. Within this context, he utilizes off-record politeness strategy such as metaphor (e.g. "nectar of lips") and ironical statements (e.g. "Of true English growth, I assure you"), moreover, redresses her positive face by approving her public self image through his compliments (e.g. "you are vastly handsome") and endearment like "my dear". Furthermore, he employs hedges such as hypothetical modal verb "might" and "Suppose I" to mitigate negative face threatening acts. However, contrary to Marlow's sincerity, Kate keeps her distance using the negative politeness strategy "deference" with "sir" which also displays the relative social statues of the participants. The fact that Kate is the so-called maid and Marlow is the master is also displayed in the turn taking process that Marlow is the initiator of the topic and has longer turns than Kate while Kate is just the respondent. Thus, in the conversation Marlow is powerful and superior while Kate is powerless and inferior which shows that Kate is quite successful in her acting as a maid that she manages to deceive Marlow.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

It has been observed that stylistic analysis is of great use laying bare the hidden criticism in *She Stoops to Conquer* since comedy is conveyed through the verbal interactions between characters rather than their actions. In this regard, when the discourses are analyzed within the frame of discourse analysis techniques such as speech acts, presuppositions and conversational implicature, turn taking mechanism and politeness, it is seen that characters' discourses vary in accordance with the participants of the conversation. This depicts the hypocrisy and pretentiousness of the society which Oliver Goldsmith aims to criticize through the play. In this sense, certain hints about the characters' personalities and their relationship with others are revealed through discourse analysis. Within this context, the analysis of speech acts and conversational implicatures in the conversation between Mrs Hardcastle and Tony has revealed not only Mrs Hardcastle's low social status but also depicted Tony as the spoiled son of the family who does not care anybody except for himself and has no occupation except hooking up with his friends everyday. Thus, the analyzed extract taken from the very beginning of the play has unveiled Tony as the begetter of all the intrigues in the play. Moreover, due to his trick on Hastings and Marlow, the affectations of the characters are revealed which has been evidently shown through their discourse in their verbal interaction. Within this context, when analyzed in terms of the turn taking mechanism and politeness, the conversation between Marlow and Hardcastle explicitly demonstrates that Marlow is not polite to the working class people although he seems quite polite to the upper class. Furthermore, his class conscious discourse has been also given in his two interactions; one is with Kate as the daughter of the house master and the other is with Kate as the maid of the house. In this sense, it has been observed that, in his first interaction Marlow displays quite polite language and his uncompleted sentences reveal his shyness. On the other hand, his second interaction conflicts with the first one since he employs very sincere language. In this regard, the difference between two discourses is mainly revealed through the fact that in the first interaction Marlow employs 'negative politeness' which is avoidance-based while in the second one he employs 'positive politeness' which is approach-based. To conclude, by examining Oliver Goldsmith's play with a stylistic approach this paper has revealed that the discourse analysis explicitly displays the pretentious and hypocrite Restoration society in which money and status shape all the manners, morals and relations.

### **Works Cited**

#### **Main Source**

Goldsmith, O. (1981). *She Stoops to Conquer*. In J. M. Morrel (Ed.) *Four English Comedies*. (pp.233-315). Middlesex, England: Penguin Books.

#### **Secondary Sources**

Abrahams, M. H. (1999). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. USA: Heinle & Heinle.

Simpson, P., (1995). "Politeness Phenomena in *The Lesson*". *Language, Discourse and Literature: An Introductory Reader in Discourse*. Eds. Ronald Carter and Paul Simpson, London: Routledge, 169-192.

Short, M. (1981). "Discourse Analysis and the Analysis of Drama". *Applied Linguistics* II (2), 180-202

Nettleton, H. G. (1969). *British Dramatists from Dryden to Sheridan*. Boston: Houghton Miffling.

Herman, V. (1998). "Turn Management in Drama". *Exploring the Language of Drama*. Eds. Jonathan Culpeper, Mick Short and Peter Verdonk. London and Newyork: Routledge, 19-33.