



PRAGMATIC LINGUISTIC MARKERS FOR SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL THEMES IN KAFKA'S METAMORPHOSIS: (HOW KAFKA CONVEYS MEANING THROUGH HIS CHARACTERS CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE, HAPTICS, PROXEMICS AND PARA LINGUISTICS).

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Abstract

The purpose of this research article is to identify linguistic markers and expressions that have underlying social and psychological themes. Hannah Arendt wrote about Kafka coming to share Marx's fate: "Though during his lifetime he could not make a decent living, he will now keep generations of intellectuals both gainfully employed and well-fed" Kafka's ability to condense the gloomiest and most twisted depths of the human mind and the collective mind-set within his characters has had a profound impact on many generations of novelists. Regarding himself the writer comments: "All I possess are certain powers that merge into literature at a depth almost inaccessible under normal circumstances. Complete indifference and dullness. A dried-up well, water in unreachable depths and uncertain even there." Through research on his writing style, biography, and a close reading of his metamorphosis. This has been accomplished by extensive reviewing of research Journals and an overview of the illnesses and demons that plagued the writer. The books and journal articles used as reference material were retrieved using an assortment of modern techniques; a large section of the information was also accessed via internet archives and published text a qualitative analysis of the reference material led to recognition of socio-psychological themes such as isolation, alienation, pressure of a familial circle and separation. This paper will analyze linguistic markers in the short story "the metamorphosis" that indicate the presence of these themes. The paper affirms that Kafka has had a weighty influence on the generations of authors that will contribute to society when they speak of similar themes of isolation, loneliness and melancholy.

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Keywords

Social, Psychological, Linguistic, Isolation, Alienation.

Introduction

The metamorphosis is Franz Kafka's most notable work; about the transformation of the protagonist one Gregor Samsa.

It may be contended, that Gregor Samsa never actually had the ability to talk and therefore didn't possess the capacity to convey his stifled sentiments of outrage, detachment, and dissatisfaction. He was never at any point in a situation that allowed him to express his views inside and out. (Sounding out the silence of Gregor Samsa.)

Correspondence, it appears, can scarcely stop for Gregor on the grounds that it never truly started. There is a considerable amount of underlying insidious erosion behind the familial facade story of never existing as opposed to prematurely ended, correspondence. Whatever the case, with the events that follow Gregor does in the long run prevail with regards to communicating, in an exceptionally surprising manner. Ironically, it is his transformation with its attendant loss of discourse that will enable his voice to wind up heard.

The dynamics of the relationship remain largely unchanged despite the metamorphosis. Gregor Samsa remains an object of disinterest. There is not much disintegration when it comes to emotional attachments because the Samsa family has a parasitic living; they depend on the earnings of Gregor alone without any occupations of their own. Interpersonal connections and the lack of correspondence remain unchanged by the mutation of Gregor Samsa; it is only the sister who shows little if any humanity towards her altered brother. For others it seems the mutation hardly matters because one way or the other they were always indifferent towards Gregor.

The silence of Gregor both as a person and a vermin and the lack of interaction between the characters made the identification of socio-pragmatic linguistic markers possible. Non-verbal communication, turning points in conversation, conversational implicature all feature heavily in the short story to give convey a message without it being overtly spoken.

Literature review

Stanley Corngold once described Gregor's predicament: "his body is the speech in which the impossibility of ordinary language expresses its own despair"

R. N. Srivastava and R.S. Gupta wrote that "Language is not merely instrumental; it is a powerful symbol of identity, a tool of cultural transformation and an important factor in social relationship, in short, an all embracing phenomenon of a man's social and personal existence."

International Encyclopaedia of Linguistics defined Sociolinguistics in these terms "Sociolinguistics as the name indicates, deals with language as a social phenomenon. Social life depends on language, so the scope of the discipline is potentially very wide. It encompasses large scale issues concerning the relations between language and social, cultural, and historical factors, as well as the fine details of the language behaviour of individuals and social groups in specific interactions and in various social contexts."

According to Fraser, Pragmatic linguistic markers are explained in the following way: "First, I assume that every sentence has a Direct Message Potential. Derived from sentence meaning, this is a specification of those messages that can be potentially communicated by the utterance of the sentence. The message potential of a sentence is seldom realized completely. Performance features and context typically modify what is actually conveyed by the utterance. Second, I assume that sentence meaning, the information encoded by linguistic expressions.....a sentence typically encodes a proposition, perhaps complex, which represents a state of the world which the speaker wishes to bring to the addressee's attention."

Poignancy and feeling are trademark perspectives where the distress and suffering of the characters are examined because of the individual connections that are contributed by society. The characters go to a lamentable destruction preceding condition of nothingness. Stylistically the pathos in the fiction of Kafka is communicated semantically and pragmatically. Kafka demonstrates his readers that the impact of estrangement, alienation and isolation are not unobtrusive. In *Metamorphosis*, Gregor was an introvert initially but was later forced into the confines of hermitage. Gregor might have been reticent, yet regardless he conversed with others, had plans for his future, hopes, morals and feelings. It was not the metamorphosis that put an end to these plans, but others responses to him. Those few times he ventured in to the

world he was forced back into his quarters. His powerlessness to convey was an obstacle that somebody been willing to establish a line of communication, yet each character remained emotionally remote, and withdrawn towards Samsa and didn't even attempt to communicate with him. "Gregor's eyes turned next to the window, and the overcast sky – one could hear raindrops beating on the window gutter-made him quite melancholy." In these lines Kafka shows the misfortune of Samsa rather than outright describing his sadness. He uses imagery of the cloudy sky to reflect the forlorn mood. So that the reader is able to draw parallels between the dreary weather and the general gloominess of the situation.

Roy Pascal author of Kafka's Narrators comments that "There is a good deal of humour in these early stories, as in the novels and later stories, but it is often ambiguous and can be overlooked" The humour that Pascal identifies is a macabre irony which mocks normative routines of life.

Kafka himself says "Every defence is a retreat, a withdrawal. A blow at the outside world is always a blow at oneself. For that reason every concrete wall is only an illusion, which sooner or later crumbles away. For Inner and Outer belong to each other. Divided, they become two bewildering aspects of a mystery which we endure but can never solve".

Allen Thiher remarks that "if the interpretive quest underlies the general structure of 'The Metamorphosis,' the story owes its affective specificity to the way that Kafka uses particular objects, images, and situations to mirror the quest and to force the reader to enter a diffuse hermeneutic labyrinth"

Research Methodology

The research was a qualitative analysis of verbal and non-verbal communication between the primary and secondary characters present in the short story. The primary sources included a translation of Kafka's Czech story The Metamorphosis. Secondary sources included articles, journals and websites which had analysed several other notable works of the author as well as general comments on the authors work.

Discussion and Analysis

Even though the title of metamorphosis seemingly refers to the physical changes that Gregor undergoes it is in actuality the transformation of the other characters which is the actual metamorphosis. The family evolve from a being dependant on Gregor to a

alienated him from other people. This boundary could have been broken had dynamic inhumane trio. Within two months his mother and sister start doing household work; his father who had been a drowsy and lethargic veteran, seems renewed now wearing the uniform of some local bank. The family come to terms with the fact that Gregor cannot provide for them any longer and they will have to fend for themselves. With this knowledge they take up miscellaneous occupations for livelihood to escape from their predicament.

In fact, Gregor's transformation into a mute creature reflects the realisation of his inferior placement within the family. He comes to realise that this muteness is not of the verbal sense but a failure to realise how substandard his position had always been and how apathetically he was always treated. In the lonely confines of his quarters where the dust and filth start to build up Gregor realises that all this time he served as an exploitable resource for the family and not as a family member.

The ability of language in separating and alienating two people has been indicated in this story. Kafka himself belonged to the Jewish community; the proverbial 'other' identity in an otherwise German speaking majority. The story is a description of not communication but the lack of it. Gregor's transformation not just starts from a deficiency, it exacerbates instead of remedying this familial weakness. Familial reticence has a deadening power, the expressive muteness that triumphs in the household only comes to the forefront when parents and daughter debate over their responsibilities. At this point, although mute Gregor is quick to express his dissatisfaction "hiss [ing] loudly with rage because not one of them thought of shutting the door to spare him such a spectacle and so much noise"

Gregor who was incapable earlier of communicating his dilemma when he was human, now has no control over human speech and has forced everyone else, from family members to boarders, to direct in words precisely what he had felt afflicting him for years. His equivalents, thereby compelling them to speak his thoughts and emotions. This shell represents his withdrawal, his isolation, and his alienation, but it also forces others to pronounce their disgusting thoughts, to make

intentions known for those who wish to hear. Through miming, Gregor requires for his loss Kafka as a writer is adept at showing this implied meaning; thinly veiled by actions, coy words and nonverbal communication. The following lines in the short story have implied meaning and underlying emotions/themes of anxiety, alienation, pretension and isolation. The real communicative function of these dialogues and non-verbal actions is also different from what they literally seem to convey.

1. "If I didn't hold back for my parents' sake, I'd have quit ages ago."

Here, Gregor talks of his limited life before the metamorphosis. How he was bound by monotony and performed obligations just for the sake of his parents. He played the part of just one insect in a hive, without any independent thoughts and aspirations. This one line has a backdrop of many years of dull labour, mind numbing routine and a requiem of Gregor's dreams.

2. "Yes, yes, thank you mother. I'm getting up right away."

Even after having transformed and no longer being able to move Gregor continues to show the civility and manners that he acquired as a human because he is so used to routinely performing acts of civility and hiding his true feelings.

3. "but congratulated himself on his precaution, acquired from travelling, of locking all doors during the night, even at home"

Again an old habit of Gregor's is mentioned here. The act of locking his door; this signifies the only security and privacy that the overworked protagonist is able to afford.

4. "First he wanted to stand up quietly and undisturbed, get dressed, above all have breakfast, and only then consider further action"

Gregor, still used to playing the rational, sensible human Gregor; instead of raising alarm or panicking his family decides to think the matter over in hopes that there will be a reasonable solution; one that does not involve chaos.

5. "Why was Gregor the only one condemned to work in a firm where, at the slightest lapse, someone

of words.

immediately attracted the greatest suspicion?"

The unusual condition of his circumstances begin to grip Gregor. Suddenly, he questions his present employment. Why he was employed there? And why he continued to stay there. This sentence signifies a toppling of Gregor's hitherto subaltern pattern of thinking.

6. "But at Gregor's first words the manager had already turned away, and now he looked back at Gregor over his twitching shoulders with pursed lips. During Gregor's speech he was not still for a moment but kept moving away towards the door, without taking his eyes off Gregor"

Kafka illustrates the complex emotion of disgust by the description of an instinctive human action. The manager is repulsed his body language shows him distraught, breaking away in the midst of the conversation. The emotions of shock and horror, Kafka shows, are what is needed to cut short human courteousness.

7. "But Gregor had this foresight. The manager must be held back, calmed down, convinced, and finally won over."

Gregor continues to display his old pattern of thoughts. A sensibility that no longer matches his present form. This is Kafka's way of implying that the metamorphosis is not yet complete.

8. "His father picked up a large newspaper from the table and, stamping his feet on the floor, he set out to drive Gregor back into his room by waving the cane and the newspaper"

Kafka describes the treatment meted out to Gregor by his own father. Out of horror and disbelief the senior Samsa refuses to believe that this insect is his son and starts treating him literally like one would treat an insect. Stamping feet and waving objects to frighten away the creature.

9. "The milk, which otherwise was his favourite drink and which his sister had certainly placed there for that reason, did not appeal to him at all. He turned away from the bowl almost

with aversion and crept back into the middle of the room”

Gregor begins to lose his human interests. The slow deterioration of Gregor’s mind is

10. “Gregor immediately took up a position by the living room door, determined to bring in the hesitant visitor somehow or other or at least to find out who it might be.”

However, as this next line shows Gregor Samsa has not quite lost his human touch. Now with nothing occupying him Samsa spends his time in idle curiosity. Observing his family, the visitors or the boarders of his house.

11. “The high, open room, in which he was compelled to lie flat on the floor, made him anxious, without his being able to figure out the reason, for he had lived in the room for five years”

Since Gregor is alienated and helpless in his condition there is not much he can do but worry. His anxiety is revealed by Kafka as a manifestation; pacing back and forth.

12. “She did not find him immediately, but when she noticed him under the couch—God, he had to be somewhere or other, for he could hardly fly away—she got such a shock that, without being able to control herself, she slammed the door shut once again from the outside.”

Disgust displayed by Gregor Samsa’s sister who in the past had maintained courtesy and manners with her brother but seeing him in his monstrous form she is no longer able to hide her true feelings and flees the room.

13. “She picked it up immediately, although not with her bare hands but with a rag”

The sister starts treating Samsa and everything associated with him with disgust. Even though she does not explicitly say this she behaves in this manner; fleeing at the sight of Samsa and putting distance between herself and his belongings. As if she fears what plagues him is contagious.

14. “She knew that Gregor would not eat in front of her”

Gregor’s sister being the non-judgemental persona that she is realises that Gregor no longer eats in front of her because he knows that she will be disgusted. In a brief moment of

demonstrated by Samsa who gives small dilexical clues that the metamorphosis is crawling towards completion; a total destruction of Samsa’s human mind.

mutual understanding his sister puts the food for Gregor on the floor and leaves. Thus, acknowledging that he is no longer fit to be served in a humane way.

15. “She thanked them for the dismissal with tears in her eyes, as if she was receiving the greatest favour which people had shown her there”

Kafka shows relief. The maid responsible for looking after Gregor is finally let go of. She expresses her gratitude with tears. As if a great burden was being lifted off her shoulders and though she does not say it Kafka describes her respite.

16. “Often he lay there all night long. He didn't sleep a moment and just scratched on the leather for hours at a time”

These lines show that his imprisonment is the result of his inability to be useful in a monetary way to his family. Therefore, through this description Kafka implies his restlessness on being alone day in and day out, and the only respite he has is meaningless task of scratching the sofa.

17. “He crept up on the window sill and, braced in the chair, leaned against the window to look out, obviously with some memory or other of the satisfaction which that used to bring him in earlier times”

Here Gregor makes a considerable effort to see outside of his prison walls, in hopes of recalling earlier days of happiness. When he was the sole earner and his family was not yet so accustomed to the comforts he provided that they later became indifferent to his contributions which morphed into expectations

18. “The entire time he trembled under the couch, and yet he knew very well that she would certainly have spared him gladly if it had only been possible to remain with the window closed in a room where Gregor lived.”

Time and again Gregor justifies his family members disgust for him by looking at things from their point of view, yet he is never given the same consideration. His sister invades the space he occupies with no consideration for

his needs and repeatedly frightens him because she can't stand to be in his room with the window closed.

Because his eating has become a ritual that constantly drives home the unpleasant fact that his new body repulses his sister, who is grateful when she doesn't have to see his unsightly body.

20. "For diversion he acquired the habit of crawling back and forth across the walls and ceiling"

Out of sheer boredom and his new disinterest in food, Gregor starts becoming more animalistic in his behaviours. Crawling over the walls is a pleasure as is the act of dropping from the ceiling. This allows him to move more freely in the confines of his room.

21. "To her the reverse seemed to be true; the sight of the empty walls pierced her right to the heart"

Gregor's sister despite her aversion is very attuned to the needs of his new body so she decides to take out the furniture which gets in the way of his crawling over the walls. But his mother looks at things for her own perspective and for her the empty walls which will allow him mobility are a source of grief therefore she assumes that they would aggrieve him too because she believes the his wishes are the same as before his transformation.

22. "Almost whispering as if she wished to prevent Gregor, whose exact location she really didn't know, from hearing even the sound of her voice"

His mother assumes that everything she feels must be the same as what Gregor feels because he has throughout his life put his family's needs before his own. Therefore she assumes that since she can't understand Gregor he must not understand her, and she doesn't want this intruder which has replaced Gregor to hear what she is saying.

23. "But now he was standing up really straight, dressed in a tight-fitting blue uniform with gold buttons, like the ones servants wear in a banking company. Above the high stiff collar of his jacket his firm double chin stuck out prominently, beneath his bushy eyebrows the glance of his black eyes was freshly penetrating and alert, his otherwise dishevelled white hair was

19. "Soon eating no longer gave him the slightest pleasure"

combed down into a carefully exact shining part"

Gregor cannot reconcile with the difference in his father's appearance. His father previously appeared old and infirm incapable of doing anything productive therefore all the burden of responsibility had fallen on Gregor's shoulders. Now that the family cannot use Gregor as a crutch his father seems to have gotten a job and looks attentive and well-dressed as is expected of a man with a job.

24. "His mother would now say, pointing to Gregor's room, "Close the door, Grete,"

After the incident with the furniture removal. The family opens the door to the living room so Gregor can see how his family is getting on without him. What he observes is not only him but everyone else has transformed, his sister is assertive and independent, his father has become stubborn. And amo gst their trouble Gregor has become even more invisible and the wound inflicted by his father festers as the door closes on him every evening.

25. "Hey, look at the old dung beetle!" Addressed in such a manner, Gregor answered nothing, but remained motionless in his place, as if the door had not been opened at all."

In comparison to his family members, the new cleaning woman did not get startled or disgusted by him, instead he is a source of curiosity for her and addresses him in a friendly way. It is important to note that a stranger is a first one to consider him capable of understanding language and worthy of being addressed directly. But Gregor is not receptive towards her at all and instead becomes aggressive.

26. "The cleaning woman, always in a hurry, simply flung anything that was momentarily useless into Gregor's room"

As a result of his reaction to the cleaning woman, she reciprocates his disregard and makes his living space into a storage room. he and other discarded things from the house collect dust in this prison

27. “The father hurried over to them and with outstretched arms tried to push them into their own room (lodgers)—with this he spat decisively on the floor—‘I immediately cancel my room’”

As a result of their financial problems the family starts renting the rooms in their house. The lodgers are very picky about their living condition and Gregor becomes even more confined. Yet when one evening when Grete plays piano, he is captivated and emerges out of the room as a result of which the lodgers see him and cancel their stay without payment. This incident show that the family goes above and beyond to take care of the lodgers need when pay them but Gregor who is no longer of any financial value is neglected.

28. Then all three left the apartment together, something they had not done for months now, and took the electric tram into the open air outside the city

After Gregor decides and dies after his sister expresses her desire to get rid of him, the family finally is able to move past their misfortune of Gregor’s transformation. They want no reminders of him and so fire the

cleaning lady who gets rid of his body. On the day of his death, their life begins anew and they celebrate by going to out together. The parents already start making plans to use their daughter’s marriage to solidify their new prospects and regain the footing they had lost on the social ladder.

Conclusion

Kafka channels an immense amount of distress into his writings. His own silence with his familial relations is reflected in his writings. Through implied language and nonverbal cues of his characters Kafka shows their disgust, their alienation, their torment, their relief. The analysis of linguistic (pragmatic, implied and diexical) markers in the short story “The Metamorphosis” indicates the presence of underlying themes. The paper affirms that Kafka has had a great influence on the generations of authors that will contribute to society when they speak of similar themes of isolation, loneliness and melancholy. Through this diexical reading it is possible to isolate these emotions and feelings thereby identify the real feeling of the character and implications behind their actions.

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