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THE CLASS CODE: LINGUISTIC PERFORMANCE AND SOCIAL STATUS IN GEORGE BERNARD SHAW'S *PYGMALION*

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ABSTRACT

The paper looks at how social class affects speech and how speech can be magically changed, which, in this case, means being creative with speech. Bernard Shaw wrote Pygmalion, which is one of the most famous plays of its time in Britain. It uses violent language that sounds like everyday speech to make its point.

Order to rule over people who can't read or write. In the play, Professor Higgins treats the lower-class flower girl Liza (Eliza) badly all the time, but Liza finally changes a lot because of the sound lessons she gets from her. Liza's social standing rises after learning phonetics, thus improving her language skills. Still, she also feels alone because she has to leave her class because of what she has learned and is not entirely accepted by the new class. Another way to say this is that Liza's schooling in phonetics helped her fit in with society, but it didn't really raise her social standing.

KEYWORDS: *Contemporary English Drama, Discourse of Authority, G B Shaw, Power, Standardization, Verbal Violence*

1.INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, the expression of violence is evident not solely through physical aggression but also through verbal means. Jacques Derrida observes, "In our network, everyday language is not neutral or innocent" (1981: p. 19). Conversely, language encompasses the authoritative framework of values and shapes individuals' perspectives on the world (Kumar, 2020; Bacha et al., 2021). As articulated by Albert Einstein, "most of our knowledge and beliefs are transmitted to us through language created by others" (1986: p. 13). The framework established by the governing authority asserts its dominance through the use of language, delineates what is considered 'normal,' and facilitates a process of 'standardization.' The established standards significantly influence individuals' lives, behaviors, and societal roles. The interplay among language (from one dialect to another), social status, and identity is examined in Pygmalion, alongside the occurrence of Professor Higgins employing education as a mechanism for social 'standardization.'

The use of verbal aggression—through manipulation, humiliation, and abuse—along with linguistic discrimination underscores the profound capacity to shape and dismantle individuals (Kumar, 2021).

The play Pygmalion made its debut in Germany in 1913 and was presented in England in 1914. The title references the Greek mythological sculptor Pygmalion, who developed an infatuation with the marble statue he created, ultimately becoming synonymous with the name Pygmalion. Aphrodite animated the statue in response to Pygmalion's fervent supplications to the deities.

In a manner akin to this narrative, the phonologist Professor Higgins instructs a quintessential flower girl in the play (Liza), who articulates with the 'Cockney' dialect (the vernacular employed by the lower classes in the eastern part of London) how to communicate and comport herself in alignment with established social conventions, thereby transforming her into a new Liza. Higgins, representing the ideals of education and authority within the narrative, aims to instruct Liza in the realms of etiquette and history, emphasizing the significance of fluency, stylistic nuances, and diction in the phonetic application of language, all crucial for her acceptance of Victorian London. Pygmalion serves as a contemporary reflection of the rhetorical tradition.

2.LITERATURE REVIEWS

In his work Rhetoric, Aristotle asserts, "A peasant and an educated urbanite articulate themselves neither in identical words nor a similar manner" (1995: p. 225). This disparity became more evident in the early 20th century. The most apparent and discernible signs of social class in England have always been an individual's speech and accent.

During this time, individuals exhibited pronounced biases on class awareness, while variations in pronunciation and accent established significant distinctions among people. (Brown, 1985, p. XX). Pygmalion scrutinizes the cultural biases of inferiority and superiority inside the educational system, highlighting disparities in speech as "class features." This is relevant to the context in which the drama is situated (Morgan, 1982: p. 9). This indicates that educational institutions are responsible for

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imparting societal norms and values to their pupils (Jabeen et al., 2022).

Both the UK and the US have shared dialects that individuals from various social strata choose. Standard English denotes the correct form of the English language. It is sometimes referred to as "King's English," "Queen's English," or "BBC English." The BBC National News is often linked to the most esteemed accent despite the absence of a standardized pronunciation (Thomas &Wareing, 2002: p. 119). Cockney English, Geordie English (spoken in the Newcastle, Tyne area), and Glasgow English are the predominant non-standard regional English dialects (Honey, 1989: p. 2).

Individuals' speech is not just linked to a specific location or social group within the social hierarchy; they are also expected to demonstrate 'behaviors' that correspond with their linguistic use (Thomas &Wareing, 2002; Mahmood et al., 2020).

Professional organizations, including administrators, legislators, and academics linked to higher education and societal moral standards, are anticipated to use a distinguished vernacular. This vernacular is linked to a diminished moral standard characterized by vulgar speech and accent and is identified as a trait of the lower class. Consequently, those seeking acceptance in an elite setting should adopt more prestigious speech patterns (Ajmal& Kumar, 2020; Çakmak et al., 2021).

George Bernard Shaw's emphasis on the significance of phonetics is seen in his creation of the character Higgins, a phonologist. Phonologists believed that altering local languages, which impeded accurate social categorization, may facilitate individuals' ascent to higher social classes. This could only be achieved by collaboration with a phonologist. Shaw unequivocally endorsed the novel scientific technique suggested by the phonologists since this approach eliminates the appropriate 'nonsense phenomena' from being seen as upper-class 'snobbery' (Crompton, 1970; Benyo& Kumar, 2020; Aslam et al., 2022).

3.RESEARCH METHODS

This article has a conceptual and theoretical advantage. The first chapter, "Introduction," delineates the context and objectives of the research and is divided into five principal components. The second chapter analyses the theoretical foundations of the language used and explores the impact of social class on speech and its uniqueness.

Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw. The third chapter delineates the research methodologies used in this study. The fourth chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the themes of speech and speech innovation in George Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion. The last chapter synthesizes the content from the preceding chapters.

4.DISCUSSIONS

The first act of the play depicts persons from diverse socioeconomic groups in London, highlighting language distinctions and personal biases. The congregation of St. Paul's Church includes a middle-class family (Mrs. Eynsford-Hill, her son Freddy, and daughter Clara), a rich gentleman (Uncle Pickering), and a phonetic note-taker (Professor Higgins), all with average financial situations. Liza, a flower girl, tries to sell flowers to customers waiting for a cab after the opera act.

Clara and Miss Eynsford-Hill approach Freddy and ask that he order a cab. Freddy is walking when the flower girl bumps her and drops her basket. The girl's first words in the Cockney accent were, "Look ahead, Freddy." According to Shaw (1957: p. 140), "you hit me badly, dear." Liza's speaking style suggests she belongs to a lower socioeconomic class and contributes to her negative social image. The flower girl greets Freddy by name, leading Ms. Eynsford-Hill to conclude she is a prostitute. She purchases a bouquet of violets from the flower girl to elicit a response and confirm her hypothesis. However, the girl informs him that she does not know her son (Shaw, 1957). Liza's use of colloquial language and messy demeanor, indicative of her socioeconomic position, are seen as ethically vapid.

After some time, the flower girl tries to sell her flowers to a different man she calls "Uncle Bey" (Master-Pickering), but he only gives her a small amount of money. Now, a man in the crowd says that someone behind the column recorded what Liza said. The man tells Liza that he thinks this person is a police officer.

You should give her flowers for the coins Uncle Bey gave her. So she doesn't have to deal with an evil charge like prostitution; the girl says she hasn't said anything important to the man.

Uncle Bey is then asked for help. "Oh, Uncle Bey, I love your eyes. That tongue hunter shouldn't be a complainer from me," he said. If I don't, they make me crawl out because they think I talked to a man from the boss.
"My name turns into a stamp, and my daughter loses her husband." (Shaw, 1957, p.143)
Finally, the person taking notes says that he is a phonologist and that he is writing down the flower girl's cockney accent in phonetic letters. Liza is a girl from a low-class family who Lisson Grove takes in. He asked her, "How did you get here?" which was a surprise. "You don't stop tying a dog" (Shaw, 1957: p.144), the flower girl sobbed. This makes it clear that she is not like the other "girls" they know. The girl says, "I am not one of the girls you know" over and over again in the first act because she knows that people think she is emotionally weak.

Someone from the lower class who hears what is being said says that the top class is not taking over from the lower classes (Shaw, 1957, p. 145). While the flower girl says, "I will not slander my name," the person taking notes keeps trying to figure out where everyone is from by listening to their accents (Shaw, 1957: p.147).

From now on, language and grammar are in charge (Kumar et al., 2022). The note-taker tells the flower girl she needs to work on

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her English. The note-taker continues to make fun of the flower girl while she cries about being abused. The flower girl thinks she has the same right to be there as everyone else, so she and the note-taker get into a fight.

The person taking the notes, Higgins, exhibits her distaste for the abuse of the English language by referring to language as having a higher worth.

Liza‟ 's inadequacy in using the language prevents her from getting on top in the discussion she has with the note-taker.
The note-taker finally makes an interesting claim:
The note-taker views good English language as a virtue that may assist lower-class women gain jobs, rather than allowing the lady to flaunt her position as a duchess. The note-taker and the "master" or "Uncle Bey" introduce themselves after hearing what the speaker stated. Henry Higgins, a phonologist and developer of the Universal Alphabet, takes notes while Colonel Pickering, a specialist in Sanskrit and other Indian languages, teaches. Before departing with Pickering for "27 A Wimpole Street," Higgins places some money in the young girl's basket. The flower girl utilizes this money to get into Freddy's taxi. He asks the taxi driver to take him to "Buckingham Palace" in a confident tone. After the automobile leaves, he gives the address to his impoverished neighborhood.

Act 1 is on how language relates to socioeconomic class, social roles, and identity. On one side, it demonstrates how individuals with greater social standing who use "standard" English may ridicule those who use "non-standard" English, regardless of their living situations or educational limitations. On the other hand, it shows how this can occur. On the other side, it represents the concern of individuals in positions of authority that a defenseless flower girl may be charged with prostitution or face legal troubles. Furthermore, the flower girl lacks the skills to defend herself against insults from the upper class.

The flower girl understands the power of words despite her lack of formal communication skills. He realized that he needed to learn how to speak "correctly" in order to better his quality of life (in Standard English). In Act II, the protagonist visits Higgins' house for a phonetic instruction. Higgins maintains his hostile approach towards Liza, as he had the previous evening. Higgins noticed him and instantly said, "Let's send it out." "I do not want you" (Shaw, 1957, p.152). When he discovered the cause for his visit, he asked Pickering, "Shall we go out?" "Shaw (1957: p.153) questions if we should chuck it out the window while holding it by the ear. Liza is hesitant to express to the two linguists her understanding of language's function in achieving success in life. She planned to enlist in a phonetics school to get a good job at a flower store. The two photographers were surprised and pleased by the girl's offer to take lessons. Pickering pays the complete expense of the experiment, echoing Higgins' allegation from the first act. He believes Higgins will not be able to elevate the flower girl to the status of duchess in six months.

Higgins accepts the criticisms in order to display his phonetic knowledge. According to Shaw (1957: p.155), he aspires to transform the moss under the bridge into a duchess. Higgins' use of verbal aggression in Liza's education is both degrading and motivating, encouraging her to work towards her goals.

Following that, Higgins will teach Liza about personality grooming. He instructs Ms Pearce to dispose of Liza's clothing and confine her to the toilet, threatening to punish her if she creates problems. Pickering cautions Higgins about causing emotional harm via shaming. Higgins claims that the girl has no sentiments to worry about. Liza, who is in great pain, stands up to go. Higgins attempts to persuade him by mentioning chocolates, cabs, money, and jewels (Shaw, 1957: p.159). Liza accepts chocolate and cab trips but rejects cash and jewels, saying, "Steal the gold and diamonds on my head!" "I am the name girl" (Shaw, 1957, p.159). People from various social backgrounds interpret the same statements differently. Liza saw Higgins' use of "money" and "diamonds" to manipulate her into fantasizing about a reunion as unethical.
The selection of words that Higgins uses communicates the authoritarian aspect of his persona. Considering that Liza is unable to fully describe herself, Higgins believes that it would be a waste of time to inform her about it because she is unable to articulate herself adequately. Because she is unable to respond to Higgins's question, Liza is in a vulnerable and dangerous scenario.

The majority of the play is comprised of verbal abuse. In the event that Liza is unable to communicate her wants, Higgins will not only continue to treat her as if she is nothing, but he will also verbally abuse her. The metamorphosis of Liza into a well-mannered young girl is continued by Miss Pearce, who accompanies Liza into the lavatory. The societal torture that Liza goes through in the second act includes having her garments burnt and being given a hot bath, both of which are meant to symbolize the "difficulties to be overcome in order to clean her soul and body" (Berst, 1973: p. 205). After this stage, Liza goes through a series of months of instruction in phonetics and etiquette in order to change her look. This continues until the day when she is revealed to the general public.

During the third act, Liza is put to the test in front of an audience for the very first time. The occasion takes place in Ms. Higgins' guest chamber. Having Mrs. Eynsford, Clara, and Freddy as their companions this evening is something that Higgins' mother has been looking forward to for quite some time. Liza recalled that she had witnessed them in the midst of a downpour in the neighborhood of Covent Garden. Nevertheless, Liza's present physical appearance, diction, and outfits are not even somewhat similar to what she wore during the last meeting. Higgins restricts the scope of the conversation to things that are innocuous and completely acceptable, such as "health issues" and "weather." Everything works out perfectly as long as he continues to imitate the conventional language and manners that Higgins has taught him.

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Nevertheless, in the Cockney jargon that he has managed to escape, his aunt explains to the cat how he was cared for, and ultimately, he is unsuccessful in the examination. In response to Freddy's inquiry about whether or not she is walking from the park to the exit, Liza gives a terse reaction such as, "Is she walking? Is there shit-walkers out there? (Shaw, 1957 on page 178). Higgins has said that the upper middle class has adopted this speech as "a new good luck." Freddy is astounded by the beauty and breadth of emotions that Liza displays, while Clara looks eager to employ Liza's "new sweetness," which is labeled as trendy. Freddy is also impressed by Liza's ability to express those feelings.

Higgins places a strong emphasis on the significance of education and language in the process of transforming persons and closing the gap between different social classes. On the other hand, getting rid of distinctions across classes is not as simple as it would appear. According to Higgins and Pickering, because they are unable to predict the ultimate outcome of the metamorphosis that they are attempting to bring about in Liza, they will spend their time dressing her up, training her like a doll, and "discovering new Lizas"

On top of that, they assert that after the experiment is finished, he will be the sole recipient of all the benefits, and he will be free to pursue his own interests. As opposed to this, Ms. Higgins asserts that Liza is unable to work as a lady, and in addition to this, she would be driven into sorrow due to the fact that she does not have a "lady income" (Shaw, 1957: p.183). After having this chat, Pickering and Higgins assert that they will be able to get a job that is ideal for Liza and is simple.

Higgins and Pickering accompany Liza to the embassy ball after she has taught for six months. Liza's training results meet Higgins and Pickering's expectations, and the Ambassador's wife is impressed, as are the other visitors. Liza has positioned herself as a duchess in London society.

The fourth act opens with Higgins, Pickering, and Liza leaving the embassy party and heading for Higgins' home. Pickering congratulates Higgins on his accomplishments and praises God for his efforts. Liza has adopted a cautious demeanour. Consider the entire chain of events that led up to the game's pivotal moment. Initially, language was viewed as a form of etiquette related to Victorian society and the environment. Inadequate language skills are a significant barrier to academic development. Liza challenges traditional English elitism, which emphasises linguistic proficiency. Higgins and Pickering seek to educate Liza in their snobbish mentality.

As Liza's linguistic skills improve, she experiences both personal strength and loneliness. This duality is addressed throughout the play. During her time alone with Higgins, Liza asks her trainer the same question that Ms. Pearce and Ms. Higgins had asked: "What will I be?"

"What will be my condition?" (Shaw, 1957; p.187). Liza's attention shifts from her ball success to overcoming a 'blockage' in her schooling. After Higgins taught her the ideal "standard" dialect, she realised she couldn't return to her prior life. Liza's perspective on life shifted in tandem with her understanding of the language and culture. Higgins' phonetic training for Liza has gone beyond its intended purpose, and she has become a part of the ordinary. Liza's acquisition of language skills has unintentionally "standardised" and "normalised" her past lifestyle in accordance with late Victorian societal norms. This has helped her achieve her primary goal of improving living circumstances.

Higgins proposes marriage to Liza. Liza declined the opportunity, stating that she would sell flowers at Covert Garden rather than herself. You have transformed me into a compassionate lady. "I have nothing left to sell" (Shaw, 1957, p.189). Liza, who reacted to Higgins' disrespectful attitude, now has the confidence to dispute with her trainer and even rebel against him. Liza is slowly seeing that Higgins and him are from different worlds and will always be such.

Liza now approaches Higgins as her employer and talks professionally, emphasising their class difference: "I'm sorry." I am a rude and ignorant florist. I need to understand my place. According to Shaw (1957: p.190), sentiments cannot be exchanged between commoners and gentlemen. Liza's attitude angers Higgins, who accuses him of being ungrateful, saying "God damn me for putting the knowledge I have acquired with a great difficulty on a heartless street slut like you, putting you in my house, my home" (Shaw, 1957: p.191). Both have valid points. He does not attempt to resolve Shaw's dispute during the game. The author's goal is to spark conversation, not provide a solution to the subject at hand.

Higgins argues that Liza cannot have her own beliefs, as they are imposed through linguistic schooling. Shaw demonstrates that Liza's schooling did not impose middle-class norms. Liza retains her "rebellious" qualities from the beginning of the game, indicating a unique outcome of these procedures.

The rendezvous in Miss Higgins' guest room concludes the game with a verbal war between Higgins and Liza. Liza expresses to Higgins that her schooling deprived her of independence and shackled her, wishing to return to her flower basket. [...] The world would feel weird. You have taken away my independence. Despite my fine clothes, I am now a slave. (208). Liza's announcement that she will marry Freddy would be the final straw for Higgins. The masterpiece he made (Liza) does not consider an average and featureless young guy like Freddy worthwhile.

However, the issue is insoluble, and Liza eventually marries Freddy and starts a flower store.
This conclusion is not satisfactory for either Higgins or Liza. Liza is stuck between two lifestyles: old and modern.

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Liza underwent 'normalization' under Higgins, who represented the phonetic standard throughout the novel. As a result, she became unidentifiable and fell beyond all identified classifications.

5.CONCLUSION

One of the many topics covered in depth in this drama is education. Shaw emphasizes the importance of education in determining one's social status. Even The play highlights the "dependent" position that many women face due to a lack of education, which limits their ability to select suitable partners. Women with higher education and intellect are more likely to marry someone from a prominent social class. The focus of this education is on behavior, communication, and etiquette. It's crucial to remember Shaw was a socialist. He wrote on issues that, in his perspective, were important to society as a result.

Pygmalion explores linguistic differences across social groups and the absurdity of class. Shaw's piece explores a number of language characteristics. Higgins and Pickering perform phonetic and linguistic research to study speech differences between ancestries. This drama ultimately mocks the concept of class and social rank. It highlights the adaptability of seemingly inflexible objects. Moving from one socioeconomic class to another is not as complicated as it may seem. Although there are downsides to mobility, Shaw emphasizes this in the play.

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