Permission in Some Selected Plays

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ABSTRACT

This study deals with the speech act of permission as one of the various functions performed through the use of language. It is an attempt to investigate permission, which can be asked or given, depending on the authority of the hearer. To present and discuss the speech act of permission and its types, the study focuses on its pragmatic and syntactic aspects. Moreover, the study deals with the analysis of permission in three English dramatic texts including: "Flowering Cherry" and "A Man for all Seasons" by Robert Bolt, and "You Never Can Tell" by Bernard Shaw.

Key words: asking for permission, giving permission, refusing permission, politeness, plays

THE CONCEPT OF PERMISSION

According to Palmer (1979: 48), permission is defined as "giving or asking for someone's acceptance to do or have something". This means that permission can be given or asked. Asking for permission and giving permission are mainly characterized by different associations of authority. Thus, personal authority is an effective element that characterizes the act of permission.

On the one hand, asking for permission reflects the idea that the speaker has no power or authority over the hearer; rather he seeks permission to do a particular action, as such, he has to do his best to make people believe in the importance of his project (Allan, 1986: 64). This is clear in (**May I** go for a swim this afternoon, mother?) where the speaker represented by **(I)** seeks the hearer's permission to go for a swim, while the hearer, exemplified by **(mother)**, has the power to grant or refuse permission (ibid: 65).

Giving permission, on the other hand, reflects the fact that the hearer or the addressee has personal authority over the addresser as in **(Yes, you can** go out and play with Tommy) where the mother is exercising her personal authority to give the permission which she thinks her child desires (ibid.).

Lyons (1977:836) argues that the concept of permission is related to possibility and desire. In asking for permission, possibility is related to the hearer who makes it possible that someone does or has something. Moreover, asking for permission reflects the desire of the speaker to have permission to act. Consequently, the authority of the hearer, the desire of the speaker, and the possibility of the hearer are the basic components of asking for permission. Giving permission implies a kind of possibility which is related to the speaker. This illustrates that the speaker makes it possible that somebody does or has something. As such, permission is given if it is believed that it is desired by the addresser which means that the desire of the addresser is an important component of giving permission. Consequently, possibility of the addressee, authority of the addressee, and the desire of the addresser are the basic components of giving permission.

Searle (1979: 13) classes permission as a kind of directives which are attempts to get the hearers perform the action desired. However, Davies (1986: 41) argues that Searle's point of view seems inappropriate because in asking for permission the speaker is not so much expressing an intention that the hearer does something; rather, the speaker expresses his wish that the hearer removes what might be considered a reason not to do something

Bach and Harnish (1979: 44) distinguish six general classes of speech acts depending on the basis of the psychological state of the speaker: effectives, verdictives, directives, and acknowledgments. These acts are called interpersonal authoritative acts since they are typically directed at individuals. Bach and Harnish (ibid. 47) think that directives including **permission** express the speaker's attitude towards some prospective action by the hearer. They classify directive speech acts into six divisions: **requestives**, **questions**, **requirements**, **prohibitives**, **permissives**, and **advisories**. There will be a considerable concentration on the speech act of permission since it is the theme of this study.

For Bach and Harnish (1979: 49), permissives presume the addressee's authority in permitting the addresser to do an action. They express the addressee's belief and his intention that the addresser believes that the addressee's utterance constitutes a sufficient reason for the addresser to feel free to do a certain act. Thus, the obvious reason for issuing a permissive utterance is either to issue a request for permission or to remove some antecedent restrictions against the action in question. As such, permission can be asked or given taking into consideration that it cannot be given unless it is sought or asked. Permissive verbs include: **authorize**, **permit**, **allow**, **grant**, **license**, **agree to**, **sanction**, **release**, and **consent to**.

Allan (1986: 199) mentions that in asking for permission, the authority is related to the hearer (H), who may accept granting the speaker the permission he asked for or he may refuse it. Thus, in uttering an utterance (U), the speaker (S) seeks the hearer's permission to do or have an act (A) if the speaker expresses:
　　　- His desire to do A.
　　　- The intention that H accepts S's performing A.

Consequently, the following table indicates the felicity conditions for asking for permission taking into consideration that these conditions are based on Allan's felicity conditions for giving permission.

Table (1): Felicity Conditions (FCs) of Asking for Permission

Type of Condition	The Formulation of Condition in the Case of Asking for Permission
The Propositional Content Condition (PCC)	S seeks H's acceptance to do or have a certain act.
The Preparatory Condition (PC)	S believes that he is sanctioned to seek H's permission before doing A.
The Sincerity Condition (SC)	S believes that he may do A depending on H's authority.
Illocutionary Intention (II)	S intends his U to be recognized as a request for H to accept his A.

Allan (ibid: 199-200) presents a framework of FCs for the speech act of permission in the case of giving permission stating that in uttering a permissive utterance in the case of giving permission, the speaker (addressee) allows the hearer (addresser) to do a particular act if the speaker expresses the belief that his utterance, in virtue of his authority over the hearer,

entitles the hearer to act and if he expresses that the intention that the hearer believes that the speaker's utterance entitles him to act. As such, the researcher presents the following table which reflects Allan's felicity conditions for giving permission as a kind of interpersonal authoritative:

Table (2): Allan's Felicity Conditions for Giving Permission

Type of Condition	The Formulation of Condition in the Case of Giving Permission
PCC	The S permits the H to do A.
PC	The S is sanctioned to permit the H to do the A.
SC	The S believes that the H may do A on his authority.
II	The S reflexively intends the U to be recognized as an entailment for the H to do the A.

Permissive Performative Utterances
Permission can be issued through the use of explicit, implicit, and hedged performative utterances. So, it is interesting to distinguish these three types of permissive performative utterances.

Explicit Permissive Performatives
Explicit performatives are sentences which make explicit what one is doing with words (Akmajian et al., 2001: 392). According to Al-Hindawi (1999: 21), this type of performatives is used when a speaker wants to define his act as belonging to a particular category.

However, speakers might appeal to various means to identify their speech acts as belonging to this or that category. As for permission, there are many ways through which one can indicate the explicitness of permissive utterances. One of these means is the use of performative verbs via which various sets of explicit performatives can be distinguished (ibid.). This means that the performative verb, whose meaning is the essence of the illocution, is a crucial constituent of an explicit performative clause. In the case of permission, the verbs **authorize**, **grant**, **permit**, etc can be used to issue explicit permissive performatives (Allan, 1998: 168).

Usually, explicit performatives such as (I **authorize/permit** you to start teaching Arabic) are syntactically characterized by the following markers as illustrated by Austin (1962: 152): the subject is in the first person, the verb is in the simple present active tense, the indirect object, if it is present, is **you**, the adverb **hereby** meaning "in uttering this performative" can usually be inserted into a performative clause to mark the verb as performative and the sentence is not negative. Sometimes, the subject of the permissive sentence could be a third person where the performative is uttered on behalf of someone else by an authorized agent, as when an officer of the court says: (**The court permits** you to stand down).

Speakers, however, do not always produce explicitly performative utterances through using the permissive verb in the simple active tense. They might use the performative verb in the passive form. In this case, the subject of the permissive sentence may be a second person as in **(You are hereby authorized to** pay a sum not exceeding $ 500) (Al-Hindawi, 1999: 22).

In conclusion, it seems that explicitness, as mentioned by Al-Hindawi (1999: 24), is seen as a mechanism that allows the speaker to remove any possibility of misunderstanding the force behind any utterance since in issuing explicit performatives, the speaker indicates which

speech act is being performed in relation to the addressee. Hence, this type of utterances is quite straightforward and consequently avoided by speakers.

Implicit Permissive Performatives

As opposed to explicit permissive performatives, implicit ones are utterances which do not contain an expression that name the act. In such a case, performativity is achieved through implicit permissive performatives that have no performative expressions. Thus, the illocutionary force of such utterances is inferred pragmatically (ibid.).

One way of denoting implicit permissive performatives, as mentioned by Palmer (1984: 164), is through the use of the modal verbs **may**, **might**, **can**, and **could** preceded by second or third person subjects in declarative sentences denoting giving permission, and followed by first person in interrogatives indicating requests for permission. Palmer (ibid.) states that utterances containing modal verbs as in **(You can** take that book) are characterized by the fact of being implicit since each modal might express several meanings what results in some sort of ambiguity in relation to the meaning sought. This means that modals do not directly represent the meaning they refer to.

Another way to denote implicit permissive performatives is through the use of imperatives. In this case, the context in which the sentence occurs plays an influential role in determining the type of the speech act. Mey (1993: 117) points out that an imperative sentence like (**Shut the door**) may be a command, an advice, or giving permission. This reflects a sense of ambiguity regarding the type of the speech act it stands for. In such a case, the context of the utterance determines whether an expression counts as this or that speech act. Thus:

When clarity is not a critical issue, speakers prefer implicit to explicit performatives because, as Al-Hindawi (1999: 26) mentions, speakers regard using utterances prefixed with "**I permit**", "**I authorize**", etc. as a waste of effort and time since it is possible for them to perform these actions by means of shorter constructions lacking those prefixes. However, since there is no overt marker of the kind of the speech act involved in the implicit performatives, it is difficult to decide what kind of speech act a particular utterance refers to.

Hedged Permissive Performatives

In an attempt to mitigate the discourtesy of certain speech acts, speakers appeal to certain means of expressions such as hedging their performatives to minimize speakers' imposition on the addressees.

A hedge, as defined by Brown and Levinson (1979: 150) is "a particle, word or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set". The performatives which result from the speaker's use of some of these hedges are referred to as **hedged performatives**.

Hedged performatives have the general form of explicit performatives and hence signal the performance of the illocutionary act denoted by the performative verbs they contain. However, they are different from their corresponding performatives in that the performative verb co-occurs with a modal such as **can**, **might**, etc. or a semi-modal such as **be allowed to** and **be permitted to** as in (I **can** hereby **authorize** you to stay out) and **(Might I possibly be allowed to** use your pen?).This co-occurrence influences the meaning of the utterance (Fraser, 1987:194).

Permission and Politeness

In the study of politeness, as Coulthard (1988: 50) states, the most relevant concept is **face** which is a public self-image that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize. Face is a central concept in Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness. Within this vein, Brown and Levinson define politeness as "showing awareness of and consideration for another person's face."

Coulthard (ibid.) states that politeness is based on the notion that participants are rational beings with two types of face wants connected with their public self-image. A **positive face** is a person's need to be appreciated and valued by others, i.e., desire of approval. A **negative face** is the speaker's wish not to be imposed on by others and to be allowed to go about his business unimpeded with his rights to free and self-determined action intact. Thus, according to Verschueren (2000: 45), an act may threaten the positive face by belittling and the negative face by imposing, and any act that puts face wants at risk is a **face-threatening act** (FTA).

Consequently, Coulthard (1988: 51) illustrates that speakers should avoid threats to the face of the hearer by various forms of mitigation or indirectness through implicating their meanings rather than asserting them directly. Here appears the role of **negative politeness** which is an attempt to mitigate the inconvenience caused by FTA through various strategies. One strategy is **asking for permission** through the use of "**diminutives**" to minimize the imposition as in (**Can I** borrow an egg?). Or through acknowledging the imposition and apologizing for it as in the following example which includes an apology for the imposition (**I'm sorry to bother you, but can I** ask you a question?). Thus, negative politeness is typically expressed via questions that seem to ask for permission (**Might I ask**.....?) and (**Would you mind my**......?) which give the options of refusal (Cook, 1990: 33)

Consequently, asking for/giving permission is a matter of politeness so the forms used vary in different situations according to the status, power, authority, or importance of the people talked to. Sometimes, one has to be more polite than at other times.

In the light of this, the researcher adopts the following scales in order to show how Leech and Alexander's expressions vary from very polite to more casual as far as permission, asked and given, is concerned. Thus, the following scale shows variations in expressions in the case of asking for permission:

Expressions	**Degree of Politeness**
a. I wonder if you would mind if ...+past tense..., please? - Am I permitted/ authorized/ allowed to........? - Do you permit/ allow me to....?	Very polite
b. Would you mind if.......? - Do you mind if.......? - Is it ok if I.............?	Still polite
c. Might/ could I possibly....,please?	Polite but more direct
d. Can/ may I......?	More direct

The following scale, by contrast, represents variations in expressions in the case of giving permission:

Expressions	**Degree of Politeness**
a. No, I don't mind at all. That is quite all right. - You have the right/ license to…….	Very polite
b. Of course,……..free to……… - I permit/ authorize/ allow you to….. - You are permitted/ sanctioned to…….	Still polite
c. Yes, you can……..	Polite but more direct
d. Ok - Sure - No problem - Go ahead - Certainly	More direct

The Syntactic Realizations of Asking for Permission

Asking for permission can be mainly expressed through the use of **Yes/ No questions** that denote permission. Moreover, it can be issued through the use of other interrogative constructions denoting asking for permission.

Thomson and Martinet (1987: 13) state that questions about permission can be expressed by the modal auxiliaries **can**, **could**, **may**, and **might** referring to the present as well as to the future.

Following Alexander (1997: 216), requests for permission can be graded on a "hesitancy scale" ranging from a blunt request to a hesitant one. Firstly, **can** is the most informal. The idea of asking for a favour is less strong in **can** than in **could/ may/ might**. Secondly, **could** is more hesitant and polite than **can**. It is often used when the enquirer is not sure that permission will be granted. Thirdly, **may** is more formal, polite, and respectful than **can** and **could**. Fourthly, **might** is the most hesitant, polite, formal, and respectful. It indicates greater uncertainty on the part of the speaker about the answer.

Sometimes, the negative interrogative questions, as Alexander (1997:216) states, can be used as another way to seek permission where the negative forms **can't** and **couldn't** are often used as in **(Can't I** come with you?) Such a form is used when the enquirer hopes for an affirmative answer. Additionally, Thomson and Martinet (1987: 131) illustrate that questions denoting permission can be manifested through the use of **am/ is/ are+ allowed/ permitted to** as in **(Am I allowed to** use the car?).

Eckersly and Eckersly (1966: 247) mention other ways or patterns used to ask for permission. These include **I wonder if**….., **Would you mind if….+past tense** and **Do you mind if…+ present tense**. Leech (1989: 257) argues that prefixes like **I wonder/ was wondering if** make the requests for permission more diffident. Furthermore, according to Swan (2003: 151), **Do you mind…?** and **Would you mind…?** are used to ask for permission. In such cases both -**ing**

forms or **if-clauses** can be used as in **(Would you mind my opening** the window?) and (**Do you mind if I** smoke here?)

Moreover, Leech and Svartvik (1996: 163) mention that there are other constructions which are used to ask for permission including the following: **(Would it be all right if I..), (Might I possibly be allowed to..), (Is it okay if I..), (Mind if I..), (Would it bother you if I..)**, and (**Do you have any objection if I..)**. Over and above, Alexander (1997: 217) states that permission, literally, may be requested with the modal verb **shall** as in (**Shall I** ring?).

The Syntactic Realizations of Giving Permission
Giving permission can be expressed through the use of different sentence patterns including: declarative sentences and imperative ones, as well as, other constructions used to denote giving permission.

Quirk et al. (1985: 802) illustrate that one of the ways of expressing the idea of giving permission through the use of declarative sentences is the use of performative permissive verbs like **permit, allow, let, and authorize**, as well as the noun **permission** as in (**I give you my permission** to leave early). Alexander (1997: 216-17) says that speakers grant permission using declarative sentences with modals or semi-modals. The modals that are used for the purpose of granting permission are **can** and **may**; whereas the semi-modals include **be allowed to** and **be permitted to**. However, Alexander (1997: 217) states that permission, formally and literally, may be given by a speaker with **shall** in second and third persons as in (**You shall** do as you please). Alexander (ibid. 218) says that speakers might use declaratives that include **let** and **have** to denote giving permission as in (**I'll have you** know I did it myself) and (**I let them** stay a while). In addition, Alexander (ibid: 218) points out that speakers can make use of declarative sentences which contain formulaic expressions so as to give permission as in (**You have the right/ license to**..) and (**You are free to). Other formulaic responses include (**Please, don't hesitate to..), (You are welcome to..), Please, feel free to..), (By all means**), (**Why not?), (Go ahead**), (**That is ok/ fine), (No problem)**, (**Sure)**, (**Certainly)**, and (**Yes, of course).**

Quirk et al. (1985: 803) mention that imperative sentences can express various illocutionary forces such as advising, warning, suggestion, threatening, as well as giving permission such as (Get some rest) which is a suggestion to a friend who looked tired and (Come in) which is a permissive reply to a knocker at the door. Davies (1986: 41) argues that imperative sentences which express giving permission are mainly used by persons of authority when speaking to subordinates, such as a father to his son, or an employer to his employee.

ANALYSIS OF PERMISSION IN THE SELECTED PLAYS
In this section, certain texts indicating the speech act of permission will be chosen from three selected plays: **"Flowering Cherry"** and **"A Man for all Seasons"** by Robert Bolt and **"You Never Can Tell" by Bernard Shaw.** The texts will be analyzed on three levels: semantic, pragmatic, and syntactic. The semantic level implies the general meaning of each text, while the syntactic level reveals the syntactic devices used to issue the act in question. At the pragmatic level, the texts under scrutiny will be analyzed according to the modified felicity conditions of the act of permission. Then, the type of strategy, explicit, implicit, or hedged, used in each text will be mentioned.

Permission in "Flowering Cherry"
This play concerns a disillusioned unbalanced middle-aged man who escapes from reality into his fantasies of owing a cherry orchard. Cherry neglects his family and chases after his

unattainable dreams leaving his wife, Isobel, to hold the home together until she decides to leave him.

(Text 1)
Bowman (Cheerfully, off): **Can I come in?**
Isobel (Wondering): **Yes** (Bolt, 1967: 25).

Bowman, the seedsman, asks his neighbour, Isobel, whether he is allowed to come in to her house to see her husband, Mr. Cherry and speak to him.

1. Bowman: **Can I come in?**
1. PCC:
Bowman seeks Isobel's permission to come in.
2. PC:
Bowman is sanctioned to seek Isobel's permission before coming in.
3. SC:
Bowman thinks that he will come in if Isobel permits him to do so.
4. II:
Bowman intends his utterance to be recognized as a request for Isobel to accept his coming in.

2. Isobel: **Yes.**
1. PCC:
Isobel permits Bowman to come in.
2. PC:
Isobel is sanctioned to permit Bowman to come in.
3. SC:
Isobel believes that Bowman will not come in without her acceptance.
4. II:
Isobel reflexively intends her response to be recognized as an entailment for Bowman to come in.

Thus, pragmatically, the foregoing text conveys the illocutionary force of permission, asked and given. The first part of the text which is represented by Bowman's question is an implicit request for permission. Its implicitness is indicated by the presence of the modal verb **"Can"** and the absence of any permissive expression. By contrast, the second part of the text, exemplified by Isobel's response, is giving permission explicitly to the former to come in.

Syntactically, Bowman uses an interrogative structure to issue his request for permission, while Isobel uses the non-modal response **"Yes"** to give permission to the former to come in.

(Text 2)
Isobel: **I wonder if you'd mind me waiting in the front room.**
Bowman: **No, Of course not** (ibid: 29).

Isobel asks her neighbour, Bowman, whether she is allowed to wait in the front room of his house.

1. Isobel: **I wonder if you'd mind me waiting in the front room.**
1. PCC:
Isobel seeks Bowman's acceptance to wait in the front room.
2. PC:

Isobel is sanctioned to seek Bowman's permission before being able to wait in the front room.
3. SC:
Isobel believes that she will wait in the front room if Bowman allows her to do so.
4. II:
Isobel intends her utterance to be recognized as a request for Bowman to accept her waiting in the front room.

2. Bowman: **No, Of course not.**
1. PCC:
Bowman permits Isobel to wait in the front room.
2. PC:
Bowman is sanctioned to let Isobel do what she wants.
3. SC:
Bowman thinks that Isobel will not wait in the front room without having his permission first to do so.
4. II:
Bowman reflexively intends his utterance to be recognized as an entailment for Isobel to wait in the front room.

Thus, the pragmatic aspect of the previous text reveals the speech act of permission, asked and given. Isobel uses an implicit permissive utterance to issue her request for permission, while Bowman employs the expression **"No, of course not"** for the purpose of giving permission, i.e., he does not object Isobel's waiting in the front room. Syntactically, Isobel, on the one hand, uses the declarative construction **"I wonder if you'd mind…"** to issue a polite request for permission. Bowman, on the other hand, uses the non-modal response **"No, of course not"** to give permission to Isobel to do what she has asked for. In this case, **"No"** means **"I don't mind, I have no objection, it is all right, or I have nothing against it"**.

(Text 3)
Isobel: **I'm going to go. Am I allowed?**
Cherry: **All right. Go, if you like** (ibid: 84).

After a long discussion between Isobel and her husband, Isobel determines to leave him because he has left all his dreams. Cherry tries to prevent her but he fails, thus, as soon as he finishes his speech, she asks him whether she is allowed to leave.

1. Isobel: I'm going to go. Am I allowed?
1. PCC:
Isobel seeks Cherry's permission to leave.
2. PC:
Isobel is sanctioned to seek Cherry's permission before leaving.
3. SC:
Isobel believes that her leaving depends on Cherry's authority, which means that she will not leave without his permission.
4. II:
Isobel intends her utterance to be recognized as a request for Cherry to accept her leaving.

2. Cherry: **All right. Go, if you like.**
1. PCC:
Cherry permits Isobel to go.
2. PC:

Cherry is sanctioned to let Isobel do what she wants.
3. SC:
Cherry thinks that Isobel will not go without his permission.
4. II:
Cherry reflexively intends his utterance to be recognized as an entailment for Isobel to do what she wants.

As a result, the previous text, at the pragmatic level, represents the speech act of permission in the case of asking for/ giving permission. Isobel's utterance is an explicit request for permission due to her use of the explicit permissive expression **"Allowed,"** while Cherry's response is an implicit one due to his use of an imperative sentence to give permission to the former.

Syntactically, Isobel uses an interrogative structure to issue her request for permission. She employs the permissive expression **"Allowed"** to make her request direct or explicit. Cherry, by contrast, uses an imperative sentence to grant permission to Isobel.

Permission in "A Man for all Seasons"
This play is about the story of Sir Thomas More who is a dedicated Catholic. He is a close friend of King Henry viii, the king of England at that time. King Henry soon realizes that his Queen will not be able to provide him with a heir to his throne and therefore orders the Head of the Church to organize a divorce. More is against the divorce because it is against Catholic law. He is consequently imprisoned and, after a trail in which Cromwell, the assistant of the king, convicts him, executed.

(Text 4)
Steward: **Could we have a word, sir?**
Rich: **Yes... Well, I begin to need a steward** (ibid: 169).

1. Steward: **Could we have a word, sir?**
1. PCC:
The steward seeks Rich's permission to say a word.
2. PC:
The steward is sanctioned to seek Rich's permission before saying anything.
3. SC:
The steward thinks that he will say what he wants, if and only if, Rich gives him permission to speak.
4. II:
The steward intends his utterance to be recognized as a request for permission.

2. Rich: **Yes... Well, I begin to need a steward.**
1. PCC:
Rich permits the steward to say what he wants.
2. PC:
Rich is sanctioned to allow the steward to say what he wants.
3. SC:
Rich thinks that the steward will not say what he wants to say without his permission.
4. II:
Rich reflexively intends his utterance to be recognized as an entailment for the steward to say what he has in his mind.

Thus, pragmatically speaking, the illocutionary force of this text reveals the speech act of permission, asked and given. The first part of the text, namely the steward's question, is an implicit request for permission. Over and above, it is regarded as being a polite request due to the use of the modal verb **"Could"**. The second part of the text, represented by Rich's response, is explicit. He uses the word **"Yes"** besides an explanation **"I begin to need a steward"** to give the steward the impression that he knows what he will speak about (the steward wants to work for Rich).

From a syntactic point of view, the steward uses an interrogative structure to issue his request employing the modal verb **"Could"** which is regarded as being more polite if it is compared to **"Can."** Then, Rich makes use of a non-modal response, represented by **"Yes,"** to give permission to the steward to say what he wants.

(Text 5)
More (Hesitates): **Might I have one or two more books?**
Cromwell: You shouldn't have.
More (Turns to go: pauses. Desperately): **May I see my family?**
Cromwell: **No.** (More returns to the cell) (ibid: 187).

More is dismissed from his job as the Lord Chancellor of England for denouncing the king. Thus, he is imprisoned as a punishment for his denunciation. He is brought to meet Cromwell, the Assistant of the King.

1. More (Hesitates): **Might I have one or two more books?**
1. PCC:
More seeks Cromwell's acceptance to have one or two more books.
2. PC:
More is sanctioned to seek Cromwell's acceptance to have what he wants, but Cromwell refuses to give him permission to have one or two more books.
3. SC:
More believes that he will not have one or two more books unless Cromwell allows him to have some.
4. II:
More intends his utterance to be recognized as a request for permission.

2. Cromwell: **You shouldn't have.**
Cromwell strongly refuses to give permission to More to have more books, therefore, More is desperate. Yet, he asks permission for the second time, but concerning a different subject, that is of seeing his family.

3. More: **May I see my family?**
1. PCC:
More seeks Cromwell's permission to see his family.
2. PC:
More is sanctioned to seek Cromwell's permission to see his family. Yet, Cromwell refuses to grant him permission to see them.
3. SC:
More believes that he will be allowed to see his family if Cromwell gives him permission to do so.
4. II:
More intends his utterance to be recognized as a request for Cromwell to allow him to see his family.

4. Cromwell: **No.**

For the second time, Cromwell refuses to grant More permission to do what he wants, to see his family, using the word **"No"**.

Pragmatically, the previous text represents the speech act of permission, asking for permission in particular. More's requests for permission, i.e., his request to have more books and his request to see his family, are implicit requests for permission due to the absence of any explicit permissive expression denoting the act.

Syntactically, More uses interrogative sentences with the modal verbs **"Might"** and **"May"** to denote his requests for permission.

(Text 6)
More (Addressing Cromwell and Norfolk): **Oh, gentlemen, Can't I go to bed?** (ibid: 187).

As a punishment to his denunciation to the King of England, More is now imprisoned. He is brought by the jailor to meet Cromwell and Norfolk. When they finish their speech with him, he asks them whether he is allowed to go to bed.

1. PCC:
More seeks Cromwell and Norfolk's acceptance to go to bed.
2. PC:
More is sanctioned to seek Cromwell and Norfolk's permission before going to bed.
3. SC:
More thinks that he will not go to bed till Cromwell and Norfolk give him permission to go.
4. II:
More intends his utterance to be recognized as a request for permission.

Pragmatically, the previous text represents the speech act of permission, particularly, asking for permission. More's utterance is an implicit request for permission. It is a polite request in which More is pressing for a positive answer, but unfortunately, his request to go to bed is not answered positively by Cromwell and Norfolk.

Syntactically, More uses a negative interrogative question to issue his request for permission. Moreover, he employs the modal verb **"Can"** in its negated form **"Can't"**.

Permission in "You Never Can Tell"
This play is about a love story between Valentine, the dentist, and Gloria. At an English seaside resort, Valentine extracts a tooth from his first patient, Dolly who has just arrived with her family from Madeira. Her twin brother, Philip, appears and they invite the dentist to lunch. They are joined at the dentist's office by their mother, Mrs. Clandon and their elder sister, Gloria. Valentine falls in love with Gloria.

(Text 7)
Valentine (Desperately): **May I have a word?**
Philip (Politely): **Excuse us. Go ahead** (Shaw,1951: 236).

Valentine, the dentist, visits Mrs. Clandon's family in their house. He wants to speak to Philip, Mrs. Clandon's son, about his love to his elder sister, Gloria.
1. Valentine (Desperately): **May I have a word?**
1. PCC:

Valentine seeks Philip's acceptance to say a word.
2. PC:
Valentine is sanctioned to seek Philip's allowance before saying what he wants.
3. SC:
Valentine believes that he will not say what he wants till Philip gives him permission to speak.
4. II:
Valentine intends his utterance to be recognized as a request for Philip to accept what he will say.
2. Philip (Politely): **Excuse us. Go ahead.**
1. PCC:
Philip permits Valentine to speak to him.
2. PC:
Philip is sanctioned to let Valentine speak to him.
3. SC:
Philip thinks that Valentine will speak, if and only if, he gives him permission to speak.
4. II:
Philip intends his utterance to be recognized as an entailment for Valentine to speak.

Consequently, the previous text conveys the illocutionary force of permission, asked and given. The first part of the text, represented by Valentine's question, is an implicit request for permission. Its implicitness is indicated by the presence of the modal verb **"May"** and the absence of any permissive indicator. Contrastively, the second part of the text which is exemplified by Philip's words **"Go ahead"** is giving permission to the former to go ahead.

Syntactically, Valentine uses an interrogative structure to issue a request for permission directed to Philip, while Philip uses an imperative sentence to give permission to the former starting his speech by an excuse **"Excuse us"** to make his speech more polite.

(Text 8)
Gloria (Wearily): **Shall I ring?**
Mrs. Clandon: **Do, my dear.** (Gloria goes to the hearth and rings) (ibid: 238).

1. Gloria (Wearily): **Shall I ring?**
1. PCC:
 Gloria seeks Mrs. Clandon permission to ring.
2. PC:
Gloria is sanctioned to seek Mrs. Clandon's permission before ringing.
3. SC:
Gloria thinks that she will ring depending on Mrs. Clandon's authority what means that Gloria will not ring till Mrs. Clandon allows her to do so.
4. II:
Gloria intends her utterance to be recognized as a request for permission.

2. Mrs. Clandon: **Do, my dear.**
1. PCC:
Mrs. Clandon permits Gloria to ring.
2. PC:
Mrs. Clandon is sanctioned to let Gloria do what she wants.
3. SC:
Mrs. Clandon thinks that Gloria will not ring till she gives her permission to do so.
4. II:

Mrs. Clandon intends her utterance to be recognized as an entailment for Gloria to do what she wants.

Thus, pragmatically speaking, both Gloria's request for permission and Mrs. Clandon's response to give permission to Gloria are implicit.

Syntactically, Gloria uses an interrogative structure to issue her request through the use of the modal verb **"Shall"**. In return, Mrs. Clandon makes use of an imperative sentence to give permission to the former.

(Text 9)
 (The waiter returns) Waiter: Mr. M'Comas.
Mrs. Clandon: **Certainly. Bring him in** (ibid: 311).

Mrs. Clandon is speaking to Valentine about his love to her daughter, Gloria. The waiter comes to tell her that Mr. M'Comas wants to see her, thus, she asks him to bring Mr. M'Comas in.

1. PCC:
Mrs. Clandon gives the waiter permission to let Mr. M'Comas in.
2. PC:
Mrs. Clandon is sanctioned to permit the waiter to let Mr. M'Comas in.
3. SC:
Mrs. Clandon believes that the waiter will not let Mr. M'Comas in unless she gives him permission to do so.
4. II:
Mrs. Clandon intends her utterance to be recognized as an entailment for the waiter to bring Mr. M'Comas in.

Therefore, the pragmatic aspect of the foregoing text reveals the speech act of permission, particularly, giving permission. Mrs. Clandon uses an implicit permissive utterance to give permission to the waiter to bring Mr. M'Comas in.

From a syntactic point of view, the form of the previous text is expressed by an imperative sentence used for the purpose of giving permission.

To make a statistical percentages concerning the plays analyzed, the following tables show the frequencies of using the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic strategies of asking for/ and giving permission in the analyzed plays.

Table (1): Frequencies of Using the Pragmatic and Syntactic Strategies of Asking for Permission in the Analyzed Plays

Play	Explicit Permission	Implicit Permission							Total Number	Percentages	
		may	might	can	could	shall	others	N.I		Ex	Im
1	---	2	---	2	---	3	3	---	10	---	%100
2	1	7	1	2	---	4	1	1	17	%6	%94
3	---	7	1	---	---	3	---	2	13	---	%100

Notes:
(A)
1 = Flowering Cherry
2 = A Man for all Seasons
3 = You Never Can Tell

(B)
It should be taken into consideration that hedged permission is treated within explicit permission in this table and the following ones.

(C)
Ex= explicit
Im= implicit
N.I= negative interrogative

(E)
Others= requests with "would you mind" "I'm wondering if...," etc.

Table (2): Frequencies of Using the Pragmatic and Syntactic Strategies of Giving Permission in the Analyzed Plays

Play	Explicit Permission	Implicit Permission			Total Number	Percentages	
		Imperative	Declaratives	Non-modal Responses		Ex	Im
1	---	3	6	8	17	--	%100
2	---	4	3	5	12	--	%100
3	---	8	1	4	13	--	%100

CONCLUSIONS

1. The speech act of permission can be expressed in various syntactic ways depending on whether it is asked or given. Asking for permission is represented through the use of interrogatives, whereas giving permission is represented through the use of declarative and imperative sentences.

2. Permission can be personal or general. It is personal once the authority is related to the requestee, but it is general once it is based in its issuance on some arrangements made by an organization or a law.

3. The speech act of permission is characterized by certain characteristics that distinguish it from other acts. These include: possibility, authority, and desirability

4. The analysis clarifies that permission can be applied to dramatic texts by analyzing the pragmatic and syntactic aspects of the texts analyzed. This means that dramatic texts represent suitable samples of the speech act of permission, both asked and given.

5. The language of English playwrights is characterized by using implicit and hedged permission more than explicit permission in the case of asking for permission and giving permission since issuing permissive utterances through the use of performative verbs is avoided by speakers who prefer implicit to explicit performatives because they regard using utterances prefixed with "I permit/allow" or "Am I permitted/ allowed to...." as a waste of effort and time since it is possible for them to perform these actions by means of shorter constructions lacking those prefixes.

6. Asking for permission through the use of negative interrogatives is used when the enquirer hopes for an affirmative answer.

7. The use of the modal "might" in the case of asking for permission indicates greater uncertainty on the part of the speaker about the answer.

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