



## RESEARCH PAPER

### Negotiating Emotion and Gender through Dialogue: A Pragmatic Study of *White Nights*

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## ABSTRACT

Based on the model of positive and negative politeness offered by Brown and Levinson and the ideas of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts presented by J. L. Austin, this study examines the process of communicating and managing emotions like love, loneliness, hope, and guilt through language. This novel '*White Nights*' is replete with the emotional discourse, like many other works written by Fyodor Dostoevsky. This research employs qualitative methodology to interpret the dialogues between the narrator and Nastenka. Selected dialogues are analyzed to understand how emotional meaning is organized through the careful use of language. The results indicate that emotions in *White Nights* are not expressed openly; rather, they are intermediated through politeness strategies that minimize the threat posed by emotions expression and preserve social harmony. The study also identifies gendered patterns of emotional expression, reflecting the social norms of the 19th century Russian society. Future researchers, along with other aspects of this novel, may investigate the shifting patterns of politeness strategies in communication and managing emotions by comparing this novel with contemporary novels from Russian society.

**KEYWORDS** Emotional Discourse, Politeness Strategies, Pragmatics, Speech Acts, Gendered Dialogue, Literary Discourse

## Introduction

Literature is not only a means of telling stories, it is also a reflection of the way people think, feel and communicate. Every dialogue in a story is not just a set of words it expresses emotions, relationships and social meanings. Language helps readers to understand how characters express love, anger, sadness, or politeness. In this sense, literature and linguistics are often hand in hand, since language provides emotional depth to literary works and influences the way readers see the inner world of the characters. Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics which is concerned with the way people use language in real-life situations. It does not just study the meaning of words but also how language is used to express feelings, build relationships and accomplish social goals. For example, when someone says, "Would you mind helping me?", they are not only asking for help, but are also showing that they are being polite. Similarly, in literature, the dialogue between characters has a meaning beyond the literal words, and implies emotions, social intentions, and relations. Pragmatic analysis is useful for uncovering the construction of meaning and emotion using language in literary texts. This paper is all about Fyodor Dostoevsky's novella *White Nights*, written in 1848, the story of a lonely young man who meets a girl

called Nastenka. Their short yet intense relationship reveals their emotional loneliness and desire for love. Although the plot is simple, the dialogues between the narrator and Nastenka are full of emotional and social content. Their conversations exhibit politeness, hesitation, care, vulnerability, and gendered behavior, which make the novella an ideal text for a pragmatic literary study.

The narrator symbolizes emotional sensitivity and romantic desire; whereas, Nastenka symbolizes innocence and emotional courage. Their conversations demonstrate the role that politeness strategies, speech acts, and gender communication patterns play in interactions. The narrator frequently speaks indirectly or hesitates in order not to cause offence, while Nastenka combines politeness and assertiveness, showing her agency and emotional intelligence.

This study is an attempt to examine the construction of emotional discourse and gendered dialogue in *White Nights* by means of pragmatic theories. By examining politeness and strategies for politeness, types of speech acts, and conversational rules, it attempts to demonstrate how the language shows the feelings conveyed, negotiates intimacy, and expresses gender roles. In doing so, the research makes an important contribution to the understanding of dialogue in literature as a form of not only storytelling, but also as a way of performing emotions and social behavior to gain insights into human communication and Dostoevsky's narrative artistry.

### **Literature Review**

*White Nights* is a novella by the author Fyodor Dostoevsky which he wrote in 1848. It narrates about a young man who is alone and residing in St. Petersburg and encounters a young woman called Nastenka. Throughout the four nights, they grow fondly emotionally and bring out the themes of love, longing, hope, and human vulnerability. It has generally been considered by critics as one of the most sentimental and psychologically rich novels written by Dostoevsky, in which emphasis is placed more on emotional experience than the moral or philosophical inquiry which prevails in his later novels (Yousefvand&Tatari, 2015). In contrast to the works by Dostoevsky like *Crime and punishment* or *The Brothers Karamazov* which explore the issues of crime, guilt, and existentiality, *White nights* is a close-up picture of human emotions and human interaction thus it will be particularly relevant in a dialogue and pragmatics analysis. *White Nights* is a literary work filled with emotions, relations, and genderized expressions presented deeply in the conversation (Kroó, 2012). Furthermore, its emphasis on interpersonal communication and its lack of emphasis on action (externality) enables scholars to examine the ways in which Dostoevsky expresses feelings, the bargaining of social rules and how meaning is created through language to create emotional significance. This qualifies it to be a perfect piece of literature to analyze the overlap of emotional discourse, gendered communication, and pragmatic strategies in literature. According to Kovecses, the expression of emotions is mediated by culture and language (Ogarkova& Soriano, 2014). They are not mere internal conditions but are rendered and perceived with help of some common language conventions. In this sense, the research of emotional discourse is the investigation of the way emotions are represented in speech, the way they are perceived by interlocutors, and the way they affect social interactions and relationships. Cameron (2008) also stresses on the relational nature of emotional discourse, which emotions are not phenomena in a vacuum but emerge and are formed in the process of interaction (Cameron & Maslen, 2010). This perspective is especially applicable to the field of literary analysis where dialogue is often the means with the help of which emotional experience is created and exchanged.

Gendered dialogue can be defined as how men and women vary in their language use as a result of social, cultural and contextual demands. Due to these reasons, Lakoff proposed that the language of women is usually focused on politeness, emotional sensitivity, and indirectness whereas the language of men is usually focused on authority, assertiveness, and dominance (Kozimovna, 2025). Subsequently, Tannen (1990) postulated that the difference between the two genders in communication is due to the difference in conversational goals: men are known to be preoccupied with status and independence claims, in contrast to the women who are concerned with the connection, empathy and intimacy in conversations (Tannen, 2005). These theoretical perspectives serve as an effective point of departure in attempting to analyze dialogue in literary works and language as an expression of personal feeling and general social conventions.

Gendered inclinations are evidenced through subtle yet important means in the conversations between the narrator and Nastenka in *White Nights* by Dostoevsky (Andrew, 2002). The narrator employs emotional self-disclosure, idealized language, and reflective language very often in order to reveal his loneliness and romantic emotion. His language is vulnerable and sensitive, which is typical of the relational and intimate aspirations normally linked to the expression of emotions by men in novels. Nastenka, in her turn, strikes the right balance between being polite and sensitive to the emotions and being careful when it comes to asserting about her decision and opinion. She is both empathetic and attentive without being socially or emotionally inappropriate, which can be seen as the cooperative, supportive, and hedging behavior styles that Holmes (1995) attributes to the linguistic style of women. Simultaneously, her speech acts, including statements of refusal or decision-making or reassurance, emphasize her agency in the parameters of the societal demands.

Coates (2004) and Mills (2003) among others stress that gendered discourse is socially constructed as opposed to being biologically deterministic (Mills, 2012). This school of thought brings out the way cultural norms influence how male and female speakers express and receive emotion. The *White Nights* setting of the 19th century Russian society required women to remain humble, subdued, courteous whereas men were supposed to show rationality, protectionism, and sensitivity within the confines acceptable to the society. They are affected by these cultural expectations on the politeness strategies, speech acts and emotional tones present in the conversation between the narrator and Nastenka..

The pragmatics study involves the examination of the issue of context and meaning in communication. Leech (1983) describes pragmatics as the study of meaning within the context of particular speech situations, and the point he makes is that the knowledge of language is not just about vocabulary and grammar (Leech, 2016). Pragmatics is useful in literary studies to study the ways in which fictional characters interact through language to convey intentions, emotions and social relations (Mey, 2001). Pragmatic literary analysis does not just look at the literal meaning of words, but does explore how meaning is implied or negotiated or deliberately left not to be said, providing information about the interactional and emotional aspects of dialogue.

Black (2006) argues that the gap that exists between linguistics and literary criticism is filled by literary pragmatics, which considers fictional dialogue to be a kind of conversation with pragmatic rules (Black, 2005). The characters in literature according to this perspective are real speakers that they apply politeness strategies, implicature, speech acts and conversational norms in order to reach objectives, negotiate relationships and express emotions. This approach enables scholars to get beneath the surface of meaning that could still be concealed in the conventional analysis of literature, and how the

linguistic decisions produce narrative, character growth, and social interactions within a text. The use of pragmatic frameworks in relation to the *White Nights* by Dostoevsky allows to comprehend deeper the process of creation of the emotional authenticity based on the dialogue (Bakhtin, 1984). The emotional intensity of the novella is not based on the events or the description of the story but rather is mainly formed by the delicate verbal interactions of the characters. To illustrate, the mixed feelings of the narrator in terms of hesitations, indirect speech, and confessions show weakness, whereas Nastenka is wellmannered, sympathetic, and assertive, which is both an indication of her emotional intelligence and social norms. These practical elements politeness strategies, speech acts, and relational cues enable the reader to read between the lines to gain an insight into the emotional and gender aspects of the dialogue.

The systematic approach to the study of the role of dialogues as a location of emotional negotiation is also provided by pragmatic literary analysis. Referring to how the characters deal with face, express intentions and emotional reactions, researchers can investigate how language creates relational meaning and social roles. In *White Nights*, this method brings out the interplay of emotion, social conventions, and gendered discourse and shows how the linguistic preferences of Dostoevsky help make the novella psychologically rich and popular. Pragmatics is a tool between language and literature and it provides methods to study dialogue as a form of emotional and social expression. The use of these principles to *White Nights* offers a subtle interpretation of how Dostoevsky builds emotional discourse, gendered communicative negotiations, and how he manages to attain the extraordinary psychological and relational realism to the novella.

### **Material and Methods**

This is a textual investigation of the dialogues in Dostoevsky's *White Nights* in order to investigate the way in which emotional discourse and gendered communication are produced.

Selected conversations between the narrator and Nastenka are analyzed systematically in the framework of the theories of politeness (Brown & Levinson 1978; Leech, 1982; Lakoff, 1972) and speech act (Austin, 1962). Each dialogue is analyzed for politeness strategies such as positive and negative politeness, off-record and on-record speech as well as maxims of tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. At the same time, it takes into account speech acts, locating locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary functions in the speech exchange between the characters.

The research also considers the importance of the emotional tone and patterned communication between men and women, examining how the narrator and Nastenka express emotions, the social and emotional boundaries, and how gender expectations are managed. By examining these features in dialogue and the languages used, this research will demonstrate the functionality of dialogue as a vehicle for emotion expression, politeness maintenance and gender identity construction.

This approach enables the study to provide a detailed and nuanced interpretation of the novella, how language itself allows for the depth of emotion and social relationship that defines the relationship between the characters.

This study is based on pragmatic theories on the function of language in social and emotional contexts. Three key theories are implemented: Politeness theory of Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson (1978), Leech's Politeness Principle (1982), Politeness rules by Lakoff (1972) and Speech Act Theory by Austin (1962)

## Results and Discussion

### Emotional Discourse by Politeness Strategies

Politeness strategies provided by Brown and Levinson are the key to the emotional interaction in *White Nights*. Politeness strategies have a strong influence on emotional discourse in *White Nights*. Dostoevsky forbids permit emotions to be harsh and abrupt. Rather, emotions are conveyed in a gradual, cautious, and polite manner. This is a manifestation of the sensitivity of emotions of the characters and the social values of the time. The theory of politeness presented by Brown and Levinson helps in understanding how emotions are regulated by the use of language so that no one of the speakers feels offended, harassed, or humiliated. The narrator and Nastenka are always trying to control each other using polite and careful words.

### Positive Politeness and Emotional Closeness

Positive politeness expresses concern, approval and emotional closeness. This is one of the strategies employed by the narrator in order to make Nastenka feel significant and important emotionally. He is not just speaking to her when he tells her how kind she is or how she knows him better than any other person, but rather reinforcing their connection with each other on an emotional level. These words make the speakers closer and bring about a feeling of unity.

*“God forbid! But I shall never forget an incident with a very pretty little house of a pink color. It was such a charming little brick house; it looked so hospitably at me, and so proudly at its ungainly neighbors that my heart rejoiced whenever I happened to pass it.”*  
(*First Night, P: 10*)

The passage discusses about a house and it has a very strong emotional tone. Pragmatically, this statement is an expressive speech act, in which the narrator demonstrates his emotional character and sensitivity. The words *“I shall never forget”* are used as the indication of emotional attachment and deep feeling, although the object of affection is not a person. This reveals the feelings and emotions of the narrator who feels deeply and recalls events that bring him emotional relief.

Concerning positive politeness, the narrator also portrays himself as an emotionally receptive and kind person. In presenting such a personal emotional memory, he is asking the listener and the reader to understand and be emotionally connected with him. This sort of emotional sharing makes distance less and intimacy more, even before he meets Nastenka. It gives the reader a readiness to view him as someone who appreciates emotional warmth and attachment. In gendered terms, the passage is an expression of a non-traditional emotional style of males. The narrator does not fear to show his happiness, love, and emotional reaction to the environment. This counters the notion of men being emotionally reserved and reveals him as sensitive and imaginative. This emotional openness subsequently influences his speech to Nastenka, which involves polite, caring, emotionally charged language. This literary evidence demonstrates that emotional speech in *White Nights* starts even before an actual conversation. The emotional tone of the narrator creates the background of the polite and emotional conversations that occur throughout the novella.

On a practical note, positive politeness will enable the narrator to show affection without necessarily requiring love as a response. This is significant since emotional assertions made directly are likely to disrupt social balance. Rather, emotional intimacy

builds up with soft appreciation and common emotions. In gender perspective, the narrator is often emotionally open, indicating a tender and sensitive male identity, something that is contrary to the traditional expectations of emotional control in men.

*"No, Nastenka, no," I answered, 'it shows that you love him more than anything in the world, and far more than yourself. (Second Night, White Nights p 61)*

This statement is an expressive speech act, with the help of which the narrator understands and speaks about the feelings of Nastenka. Pragmatically, it is a sign of good politeness as the narrator is emotionally sympathetic to Nastenka's feelings. Rather than condemn her attachment, he proves it by showing her love as pure and selfless. This directly serves the positive face of Nastenka, such that she feels respected and understood emotionally. The language of the narrator makes emotional proximity stronger as he positions himself to the emotional world of Nastenka. When she says that she loves him more than herself, he emphasizes on her emotional richness and ethical power. This brings them together and makes them trust each other, although the statement further isolates him by proxy, romantically, as well. The good politeness here is not intended to achieve romantic favor but emotional harmony.

Gender wise, Nastenka is portrayed as emotionally faithful and self-sacrificing, and this is in line with the gender demands of the 19th century that expected women to be emotionally loyal. Instead, the narrator assumes a supportive and emotionally sensitive role, interpreting her feelings and asserting them instead of his own. This demonstrates that gender roles in *White Nights* are built with the help of polite and emotionally cautious words.

Comprehensively, this textual evidence demonstrates that positive politeness in the novella is not merely applied to express affection but also to deal with emotional truth in a kind manner. Language is used to take care of the emotions, even in cases of personal loss or repression.

*"We shall meet, you will come to us, you will not leave us, you will be forever a friend, a brother to me. And when you see me you will give me your hand... you have forgiven me, haven't you? You love me as before?" P77. (Morning)*

This statement is a powerful piece of positive politeness by claiming common ground and shared identity. Nastenka works with such words as a friend, brother in order to redefine the relationship in a manner that allows the emotional proximity but eliminates romantic anticipation. Pragmatically, this enables her to keep harmony and emotional attachment without inflicting more emotional pain on the narrator. He kept asking questions, like, you have forgiven me? and you love me as I did before? Nastenka looks into the positive face of the narrator, and she takes care of his feelings, she wants to see that he does not feel hurt or neglected. This is done through politeness, which dilutes the emotional effect of her announcement of her marriage. Rather than breaking up the relationship, she employs loving and involving terms to safeguard the feelings of the narrator.

This is a strategy that is significant in a face-saving viewpoint. Nastenka does not focus on emotional distance but presents the narrator with an acceptable role in the society as a brother and a life-long friend. This enables continuity of emotions without violation of social boundaries. The emotional loss experienced by the narrator is handled by the use of friendly consolation instead of being left quiet or being neglected. This passage indicates emotional responsibility of female characters in terms of gendered dialogue. Nastenka is

mindful with the emotions of the narrator and demonstrates empathy, kindness and emotional intelligence. Her language is polite and caring, which was expected of women of the 19th century to be emotionally balanced and socially harmonious even in the hard circumstances.

In general, this verbal evidence enables one to understand clearly that positive politeness is an instrument of emotion in *White Nights*. A harsh language does not break emotional closeness but it is transformed by using polite and caring words. This proves that emotional talk in the novella is well mitigated by the use of language, politeness assists in changing emotional pain into acceptance and understanding.

### **Negative Politeness and Emotional Caution**

Negative politeness is manifested when the characters attempt to escape emotional pressure. The narrator constantly apologizes, pauses, or restrains his emotional requirements. By stating that he would not be bold to demand beyond friendship, he is guarding the emotional liberty of Nastenka. This plan is respectful and emotionally sensitive.

This kind of language is an expression of fear of being rejected and feeling insecure. The narrator is very emotional and does not overstep the mark at the same time. This shows how the social rules dictate the emotions in the novella. Nastenka also applies negative politeness by refusing romantic expectations in a soft manner. Her speech is peaceful and respectful demonstrating emotional maturity and social responsibility.

*"I am a dreamer; I have so little real life that look upon such moments again in my dreams. I shall be dreaming of you all night, a whole week, a whole year." P 20*

In a pragmatic prespective, this passage is more of an expressive speech act that has a high emotional intent. The narrator is not just telling about a dream habit, he is emotionally attaching with words. The fact that he freely states the intention of continuing to dream about Nastenka is his indicator of honesty and emotional attachment. Simultaneously, the fact that there is no direct demand is sensitive to her freedom, which is in line with negative politeness, because he makes his expression without dictating what should be done. In regard to emotional discourse, the repetition and time expansion (*all night, a whole week, a whole year*) add the emotional intensity of the moment. This hyperbolic temporal arrangement is romantic idealism and emotional obsession. The narrator turns a short encounter into a long internal experience, demonstrating how the feelings of *White Nights* are frequently felt inside instead of being acted out in society.

In context of gender, this statement strengthens the emotionally expressive and dependent nature of communication of the narrator. His readiness to express his longing in an open manner is in contrast with the more reserved and socially guarded reactions of Nastenka in the rest of the novella. The line creates a male identity that is constructed out of sensibility, imagination and emotional extravagance, defying the traditional masculine standards of emotional restraint. Thus, this text serves as an example of the influence of politeness and restraint on shaping emotional discourse. The language used by the narrator enables one to express deep emotions without putting a strain on the listener. Dostoyevsky introduces love as an internalized, imagery experience, emotionally charged, and gendered pattern of vulnerability, as a longing experience, not a possessive one.

*"Oh, forgive me, forgive me! I beg you on my knees to forgive me! I deceived you and myself. It was a dream, a mirage....My heart aches for you to-day; forgive me, forgive me!" P76*

This text illustrates primarily an expressive speech act, in which the speaker apologizes, regrets, and takes emotional responsibility when we take it pragmatically. The frequent request of forgiveness is an indication of trying to lessen the emotional load on the listener. It is an obvious example of negative politeness, the speaker does not impose his emotions to the listener, he understands that it hurts. In an emotional discourse point of view, the language carries guilt and emotional hurt but in a controlled manner. The phrase I lied to you and to myself and the phrase it was a dream, a mirage soften the emotional fact of rejection. These metaphors enable the speaker to show the distress but without confrontation, demonstrating how emotion is cautiously handled by using polite words.

On a gendered level, the excerpt shows socially acceptable feminine emotional conduct during the 19th century. The speaker embraces humility, blame on himself and apologize to maintain moral integrity and emotional harmony. Instead of making a claim of personal desire, she focuses on the emotional health of the listener. This section shows that negative politeness allows expressing emotions without being close but keeping a distance, which reflects the strong connection of pragmatics, gender roles, and emotional restraint in *White Nights*.

*"The dreamer – if you want an exact definition is not a human being but a creature of an intermediate sort. For the most part he settles in some accessible corner, as though hiding from the light of day ; once he slips into his corner, he grows to it like a snail, or, anyway, he is in that respect very much like that remarkable creature,' which is an animal and a house both at once, and is called a tortoise."*

The narrator uses hedging expressions such as "if you want a precise definition" and "or, anyway" which are traditional negative politeness techniques. Such language options reduce coercion to the message recipient, whether the listener or the reader, and the implication is that the explanation is being presented devoid of conviction and command.

His extended account of a dreamer is the locutionary act. An explanation of his state of emotions and psychology is the illocutionary act. The perlocutionary effect is that it will help develop empathy, understanding and engagement in the reader, and cautiously avoid imposing his feelings.

The image of the dreamer as a tortoise is a sign of withdrawal and frailty. The narrator indirectly expresses his vulnerability and inner isolation, he does not overburden the listener with his feelings. This approach enables him to convey strong emotional moods in a subtle manner, which corresponds to the theme of the novella of suppressed but strong emotional language.

In a gendered context, the manifestation of the narrator is in accordance with the rules of male emotions of the 19th century: the narrator is introspective, idealistic, and philosophical. Men are socially allowed to convey the emotions indirectly, often by metaphor, by unrealistic thoughts. This indirectness, coupled with shields and qualifiers, strikes a compromise between emotional self-disclosure and social manners without infringing on the emotional domain of this or the reader. It shows negative politeness that includes hedging, indirect self-description, and framing. It helps the narrator to express the emotion with a high level of autonomy in the interpretation of the reader. The interaction of pragmatics, gender norms, and emotional expression make it a powerful example of how Dostoevsky can control discourse of emotions and do it unconsciously and successfully.

### Off Record Strategies and Emotional Indirectness.

Emotions can be revealed indirectly through off-record strategies. The narrator refers to loneliness and dreams or happiness frequently without mentioning what he feels towards Nastenka. This indirectness provides Nastenka with spacing to learn emotions without being subjected to make a reply. Pragmatically, off-record strategies minimize the risk of emotion. They enable characters to defend themselves against potential rejection. The strategies are particularly significant during emotional sensitive situations. Indirect emotional language in *White Nights* shows the inner struggle between the desire and fear in the characters.

*"How fond we are of each other!" I cried. ("Oh, Nastenka, Nastenka," I thought, "how much you have told me in that saying! Such fondness at certain moments make the heart cold and the soul heavy. Your hand is cold, and mine burns like fire. How blind you are, Nastenka! P58.*

According to pragmatics, this passage is primarily an expressive speech act. The narrator does not suppress his feelings, and his thoughts show some meanings that cannot be expressed openly during a conversation. This division between words and thoughts indicates the off-record approach, when powerful emotions are hinted at, but not directly dictated to Nastenka. The narrator does not pressurize her with his deeper interpretation, which means he does not verbalize it, but rather respects her negative face.

The emotional discourse viewpoint has the contrast of warm and cold as the main focus. The symbolism of your hand is cold; mine burns like fire is the emotional imbalance. As passionately attached to the narrator, Nastenka is more levelheaded and reserved in her affection. This dissonance leads to emotional suffering, which is explained with the use of metaphors of heaviness and burning, which demonstrates how unexpressed emotions cause conflict within the heart and not outward.

In gender sense, the narrator once more seems emotionally intensed and inwardly expressive. He understands the words of Nastenka as emotional, whereas she probably means them in the form of loving and yet precautionary. His emotional surplus is the romantic male identity, full of imagination and desire, and the fondness of Nastenka is in line with feminine politeness that is socially regulated. Boundaries are safeguarded by her emotional reserve, and vulnerability by his emotional openness.

Overall, this text shows the way emotional politeness works by restraint and implication. The narrator is quite emotional but does not impose his emotions on verbal expression. Dostoyevsky employs inner monologue, metaphor and contrast to demonstrate that love in *White Nights* is defined by unequal emotional investment and caution in handling intimacy.

### Speech Acts in Emotional Dialogue

According to the speech act theory, dialogue in *White Nights* carries out actions that are emotional. The characters do not just talk but confess, promise, comfort, and reassure each other with words. Locutionary acts seem easy but they equip emotional meaning. Sentences concerning loneliness or waiting can be factual, but they have an emotional connotation. Emotional development is based on illocutionary acts. Emotional commitments are done through promises, signs of trust and confessions. When the narrator claims to trust Nastenka he is not merely saying he trusts but he is establishing emotional intimacy. The effect of speech is presented in perlocutionary acts. Language is an instrument of emotional transformation when characters tell that words made them

happier or calmer. This indicates the influence of dialogue in the novella in creating emotional experience.

*"Listen, my dear good Nastenka, listen; I swear to you that if I am ever in a position to marry, you shall make my happiness. I assure you that you are the only one who could make me happy. Listen, I am going to Moscow and shall be there just a year; I hope to establish a position. When I come back, if you still love me, I swear that we will be happy. Now, it is impossible, I am not able,, I have not the right to promise anything."* P50

On the locutionary level, the narrator is literally talking of facts concerning his current state and what he plans to do in future. He informs her that he is heading to Moscow, that he will be making better of himself, and that he will promise marriage under the condition that Nastenka continues to love him. The locutionary content expresses clear informational meaning, and emotional self-disclosure. The illocutionary force is mostly commissive since the narrator is trying to give promises regarding a potential future course of action. He promises a person emotions and commitment in his marriage by telling him: *"I swear to you... you shall make my happiness and we will be happy"*. Meanwhile, it has an expressive purpose, since he expresses profound love, desire, and helplessness. The recurring verbal instructions "Listen" are also mild directive acts, where the speaker asks the listener to listen and be emotionally involved. The perlocutionary effect is aimed at Nastenka, his emotional reaction. The narrator is to assure her of his genuine love, inspire patience and keep the hope of a future union. He also seeks to balance emotional intensity and caution without imposing on Nastenka which is a show of sensitivity to her emotions. This passage depicts the manner in which White Nights employs emotional discourse through the framework of Austin. The words of the narrator are functioning on several planes, to explain facts (locutionary), to promise and to say that he loves Nastenka (illocutionary), to affect the emotions of Nastenka towards feeling reassured and hopelessness (perlocutionary). This stratified method provides us with how Dostoevsky correlates pragmatics, emotion, and gender in conversation.

*"My Nastenka was so downcast, that I think she realized at last that I love her, and was sorry for my poor love. So when we are unhappy we feel the unhappiness of the others more; feeling is not destroyed but concentrated...."* P56

In terms of locutionary act, the narrator tells about the emotional state of Nastenka and how he sees it. In literal sense, he states that she looks depressed and her understanding that he loves her makes her sympathize. He also remarks on a general psychological observation that unhappiness increases the perception of the emotions of others. The illocutionary force is mostly assertive. The narrator is claiming a statement of emotional forces, both of himself and of the world in general. Furthermore, the text has an emotional element, since he describes his emotional experience of seeing her grief and his consideration of common human emotion. This gesture is an expression of empathy, where Nastenka cares about him and understands the emotional implications of love and unhappiness. The perlocutionary effect is supposed to cause empathy and emotional insight in the reader. The narrator makes the audience understand the richness of his and Nastenka emotional conditions by showing that unhappiness is a way to concentrate feelings instead of ruin them. It also enhances the emotional connection between the reader and the narrator and it produces sympathy and interest. According to pragmatic, emotional, and gendered perspectives, the statement is emotionally polite, in the sense that the narrator does not blame or judge Nastenka, but only admits his feelings. He puts his observation into a thoughtful, contemplative form, and he has paid attention to her emotional countenance. The line brings out the unity of collective emotional experience

and introspection. The fact that the narrator is conscious of her grief and his own demonstrates relational emotional discourse, the way emotions are shared and magnified.

The sensitivity and care of the narrator about the emotional state of another person indicates a romanticized masculine ideal, in which men are emotionally sensitive and introspective. Nastenka, who serves as the emotionally responsive female, affirms 19th-century gendered views of women as sensitive and responsive. This text shows how Dostoevsky develops emotional discourse based on observation, reflection, and empathy. The expressive and assertive speech acts of the narrator demonstrate the emotional richness whereas pragmatic consciousness and gendered norms define the meaning of the dialogue. It is an example of the communication of internalized emotions in *White Nights*, which is not expressed through definite action, but through language.

*"Goodness, what a friend you are!" she began gravely a minute later. "God sent you to me. What would have happened to me if you had not been with me now? How disinterested you are! How truly you care for me! When I am married, we will be great friends, more than brother and sister; I shall care almost as I do for him..."*

In the above passage Nastenka appreciates the narrator verbally at the locutionary level. She refers to him as a true friend, attributes his presence to have been sent by God, and accepts his care and selflessness. She also adds that she will be staying in his side even after she gets married. This passage has an illocutionary force that is predominantly expressive. Nastenka is thankful, admiring and emotionally appreciative. Meanwhile, it fulfills an assertive role, given that she determines the type of relationship they have. She puts emotional boundaries in place delicately by stressing on friendship and brotherly closeness. This is also pragmatically effective as a negative politeness since she is not directly rejecting anybody and she is safeguarding the emotional face of not only herself but also the narrator. The emotive impact on the narrator is emotional in nature. As much as the compliment might bring peace and confirmation, it is also probably hurtful since it gives a clear position of him in a non-romantic context. To the reader, the text causes a feeling of sympathy, as it draws the theme of inequality between emotional appreciation and romantic desire.

Nastenka employs politeness and praise to deal with an emotional sensitive situation. The implicit refusal is softened by compliments and gratitude, which makes the interaction socially and emotionally acceptable. There is emotional rectitude tempered in the passage. When Nastenka loves the narrator, she invests her feelings into her approved socially acceptable ways of expressing her friendship. In gender terms, the language used by Nastenka demonstrates the 19th-century demands on the emotional support and the moral conscientiousness of women. She develops the narrator emotionally and yet, she remains faithful to her spouse to come. Her politeness is an example of emotional intelligence which enables her to show appreciation without providing hope of romance. The selected passage demonstrates how emotional meaning in *White Nights* is created out of very selective wording. The speech acts of Nastenka are well balanced in terms of gratitude, affection, and restraint and show how the rhetorical strategies of politeness can influence emotional language. Dostoevsky describes the conflict between the intimate and the social distance using the expressive language that avoids offenses and using face saving expressions, which makes the discussion sensitive and moving.

The final below final line of the novella also depicts clearly, emotional discourse through expressive speech acts, with a strong philosophical and gendered emotional dimension.

*"My God a whole moment of happiness! Is that too little for the whole moment of the man's life?"*

It is a strong expressive speech act, as the speaker does not hide his inner emotional state and speaks out his feelings, instead focusing on other character. Pragmatically, he does not ask, promise or command but he does carry out an act of emotional assessment. He attributes the profound individual worth to the intensity of emotion in his claim that a moment of love, a moment, passes as a whole of happiness. The line is emotionally condensed in terms of the emotional discourse. The narrator embraces loss but puts it in a new context of significant satisfaction. Pain does not here eliminate emotion: it concentrates emotion to memory. This is in accordance with the description of emotion that Dostoevsky provided of it being inward, introspective, and persistent as opposed to being social and rewarding.

Gender wise, the line strengthens the idealistic masculinity of the narrator that is emotion-driven. He determines the life of a man not by the success or wealth, but the ability to experience the feelings. This is in contrast to the masculine restraint of the representation and makes emotional vulnerability one of the main characteristics of the male protagonist in *White Nights*. The rhetorical question also produces a perlocutionary effect on the reader, encouraging him to empathize and ponder over it, but not to judge it.

This is the last line that sums up the emotional essence of the novella. It demonstrates that one emotional experience, articulated by the language, could characterize a whole life, which is one of the best examples of emotional discourse in *White Nights*.

*"Come along! Look at the sky, Nastenka. Look!*

*Tomorrow it will be a lovely day; what a blue sky, what a moon! That yellow cloud is covering it now, look, look! No, it has passed by. Look, look!*

*"But Nastenka did not look at the cloud; she stood mute as though turned to stone; a minute later she huddled timidly close up to me. Her hand trembled in my hand; I looked at her. She pressed still more closely to me." P74*

On the locutionary level, the narrator generates a sequence of imperative sentences. He literally requests Nastenka to observe the sky, the moon and the cloud that is passing. The words used are plain and monotonous and filled with emotion.

The narrator is not just telling instructions illocutionally. His aim is in actual deception to distract, console and emotionally calm Nastenka. The repeated orders can be viewed as the effort to distract her inner troubles with the outer beauty and tranquility. This renders the utterance a directive speech act that is emotionally oriented, but not a command with power. The perlocutionary effect is well observable in the reaction of Nastenka. She does not even glance at the sky, but rather comes closer to the narrator trembling and requesting physical comfort. This presents the fact that the speech act does not create the physical action as required but rather an emotional reaction. The words used by the narrator cause comfort-seeking, vulnerability and emotional intimacy. Pragmatically, the repetition of the word *look* portrays emotional urgency and anxiety as opposed to authority. The helplessness of the care and emotional involvement of the narrator is manifested in the speech acts. Unlike being domineering, he reveals his dependency in emotions. This is in line with the entire emotional narrative of *White Nights* in which language mostly cannot order anything but can reveal inner conditions.

## Gendering Discourse and Expression of Emotions

Gender is a factor that has some significance in the expression of emotions. The narrator is free to speak of loneliness, dreams and emotional agony. His speech is around and heartfelt, male but not masculine due to his being sensitive as opposed to being in control. The language used by Nastenka is polite, careful, and not emotional. She shows emotions yet she puts boundaries. Her conversation is an indication of social demands on women to be emotional yet socially responsible. This is a contrast of gender role affecting emotional discourse. Both characters are emotional, however, they also do not express emotion in a similar way, as it is dictated by social norms. The following passage is one that highly represents the emotional discourse which is created in gender communication especially in the introspective and emotionally charged language of the narrator.

*"Yes Nastenka, one deceives oneself and unconsciously believes that there is something living, tangible in one's immaterial dreams! And is it delusion? Here love, for instance, is bound up with its fathomless joy, all its torturing agonies in his bosom..." P 35.*

This text is quite emotional discourse influenced by gendered communication, especially with the introspective and emotionally colored language used by the narrator. The narrator is philosophical and almost reflective as he explains how man is lying to himself that imaginary emotions are passion. The presence of such emotional vulnerability and confusion is evident in this self-directed discourse, which is not only encouraged but also expressed without shame. Emotionally, the language is very affective. Emotional extremity is demonstrated in words and phrases like true passion, fathomless joy, and torturing agonies. The narrator introduces the view of love as a strong experience in the inner world that is both pleasant and painful. Emotion here is not tamed or even civilized, but it takes over the speaker. This indicates that emotional expression in *White Nights* is frequently an inward suffering as opposed to a forthcoming action.

Gendered speech-wise, the passage proves the emotional expressive and idealistic masculinity of the narrator. In contrast with the classic masculine stereotypes of the control of feelings and the rationality, the narrator explicitly admits self-deception, illusion of emotions, and misery. His words are in the tone of a romantic, introspective, male voice that characterizes love by imagination and emotional extravagance. This is in opposition to Nastenka whose more socially inclined and practical displays of emotion in the rest of the novella. It is also through the use of abstract and metaphoric language that indicates a difference in emotional communication that is gendered. Emotion is intellectualized by the narrator, making love a philosophical and psychological battle, but the emotional expressions of Nastenka are mostly situational and relational. This imbalance demonstrates the influence of gender roles in the novella on not only the expression of emotions, but their articulation. So, this text shows that the expression of emotions in *White Nights* is highly gendered. This is created through the language of the narrator that creates the image of love as an internal emotion struggle of illusion, intensity, and anguish. This emotionally colored speech gives Dostoevsky a sensitive, introspective and emotionally vulnerable voice of a man, who breaks down fixed gender boundaries and emphasizes the heterogeneity of romantic emotion. Passage provides a clear view of the way language is employed in controlling emotion and behavior of women in particular, both in a family and social context. The conversation between Nastenka and her grandmother indicates well-rooted gender norms of the 19th century, according to which young women had to be morally shielded, emotionally sealed, and strictly controlled.

*"Grandmother agreed with gratitude, but kept asking of they were moral books, for if the books were immoral it would be out of the question, one would learn evil from them"*

*“And what should I learn, grandmother? What is there written in them?”*

*“Ah,’ she said, what’s described in them, is how young men seduce virtuous girls; how, on the excuse that they want to marry them, they carry them off from their parents’ houses; how afterwards they leave these unhappy girls to their fate, and they perish in the most pitiful way” P45.*

This extensive passage shows gendered communication, emotional control and moral discourse within a social and cultural context. On a pragmatic level, the conversation between Nastenka and her grandmother indicates the way in which language is employed to control behavior in particular, female behavior through caution, authority and moral imperative. In gendered dialogue perspective, the speech of the grandmother is an evident manifestation of the 19th century expectations of a woman. Her recurring use of the terms, “moral” and “immoral”, indicates a guarded and restrictive response towards the exposure of the young women to love, desire and independence. The threats of morally corrupt girls being seduced by young men enforce a social narrative where women are put at a disadvantage in emotional vulnerability and supervision is required. The role of Nastenka in this interaction is mostly passive and obedient which reveals that female agency is restricted in the family and social organization. In the emotional discourse perspective, the language of the grandmother is characterized by fear and anxiety. Her emotional reaction is not in the form of affection, it is represented as worry and moral panic. The emotions of Nastenka, on the contrary, are held back. She poses simple and polite questions, and she does not question the role of her grandmother. This emotional suppression is a manifestation of politeness that is enforced on young women, and obedience and silence are more valued than emotions. Pragmatically, the speech acts that the grandmother uses serve as primarily directives and warnings. She commands, interrogates, and denies Nastenka her actions. The constant checking of a love-letter demonstrates that there is suspicion and that language is employed to manage romantic possibilities. This politeness is also asymmetrical as the grandmother acts in a direct and authoritative manner, and Nastenka in her turn acts cautiously and respectfully, which reflects unequal power dynamics. Even the reference to the novels by Walter Scott has a symbolic meaning. These novels are romantic but are socially acceptable which means that they are exposed to emotion to some controlled extent. This demonstrates that emotional experience of women is only allowed within confines that are socially acceptable.

In general, this text demonstrates the ways gender roles, emotional control, and practical domination work out in the context of everyday conversation. This dialogue is used by Dostoevsky to demonstrate how the emotional life of Nastenka is determined, controlled and regulated by words, even before she has her first personal emotional experience with the narrator.

The climax of White Nights is emotional and it ends the inner struggle of the narrator in pain. In this case, actions are the primary means by which feelings are expressed, which demonstrates how strong emotions can transcend the verbal communication. A passage extracting in the novella will show how Dostoevsky relies on silence, movement and physical proximity to end the emotional ride of the characters.

*“My God, how she cried out! How she started! How she tore herself out of my arms and rushed to meet him!*

*I stood and looked at them, utterly crushed. But she had hardly given him her hand, had hardly flung herself into his arms, when she turned to me again, was beside me again in a flash, and before I knew where I was she threw both arms round my neck and gave me a warm, tender kiss.*

*Then, without saying a word to me, she rushed back to him again, took his hand, and drew him after her.*

*I stood a long time looking after them. At last the two vanished from my sight."*

According to a speech act approach, the perlocutionary effects are overpowering the speech in this passage. Despite the fact that there is very little dialogue that occurs, the actions that the narrator refers to create a great emotional effect on the reader. The abrupt motion, embrace and the kissing of Nastenka are non-verbal speech acts, which convey more emotion than words. The desired or the achieved consequence is emotional shock, pain, and ultimate realization to the narrator.

Pragmatically, the kiss of Nastenka is an action of emotion. It can be perceived as an expressive-perlocutionary act, while expressing gratitude, affection and goodbye simultaneously. Her act does not need any verbal explanation as it makes sense based on context. The perlocutionary effect is evident, as the narrator is utterly crushed, which means that the behavior has an emotional impact.

In terms of emotional discourse, the passage is emotional climax. Nastenka does not talk, but displays her emotions as a physical act, indicating the urgency and genuineness of the emotions. The silence and stillness of the narrator also create a contrast with her movement to emphasize the lack of emotional balance.

According to gender perspective, Nastenka is emotionally decisive. Whereas in the first part she speaks in polite and cautious words, this time, she takes action. This scene signifies change in gendered behavior, whereby the female character dominates emotionally, whereas, the male character is passive and overwhelmed with feelings. The role played by the narrator is the same as emotional vulnerability and loss; this aspect strengthens his persona as being a dreamer.

In general, this text is part of perlocutionary emotional language, where the meaning is not made through words but through an emotional action. It shows how Dostoevsky employs silence and movement as the means of conveying the emotional resolution, gender roles, and eventual devastation of the emotional world of the narrator.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis has examined the emotional discourse and gendered dialogue in *White Nights* by Fyodor Dostoevsky in a pragmatic manner of approaching the literary piece. The key aim of the work was to learn about how the emotions are produced, conveyed, and decoded in away using language, and how politeness initiatives, speech acts, and gender roles influence the way of how emotional interaction between the narrator and Nastenka is established. More than the treatment of emotions as abstract themes, this research viewed it as linguistic and social action which is carried out in dialogue and interaction.

Among the most important conclusions of this paper is the fact that *White Nights* is a dialogue-driven novella, in which the emotional meaning is being transported mainly through dialogue. Dostoevsky does not lean much on the use of long description of explaining the feelings. Rather, he leaves emotions to develop in the words spoken by characters, the manner of their speech, and what they do not say. This renders the novella particularly pragmatic to analyze, as the dialogues are quite similar to the dialogue in real life, influenced by the social standards, courtesy, and inter-personal sensitivity.

As it was shown in the analysis, emotional discourse in *White Nights* is well controlled by the politeness strategies. The model by Brown and Levinson offered a solid theory of how the characters defend the face of one another. The positive politeness is also displayed in the words of the narrator through compliments, signs of intimacy, mutual affections, and pledges. These are some measures that can be used to minimize emotional distancing and to build intimacy. Meanwhile, there is negative politeness to escape emotional imposition. The characters are mindful of the social and emotional boundaries as shown by apologies, hesitation, self-blame, and indirect expressions of love. Off-record strategies also enable the hinting at emotions instead of stating it outright, saving face and sparing feelings. These strategies, combined, demonstrate that love in *White Nights* is not carefree, violent, but cautious, patient, and very sensitive.

Another significant addition to the analysis was the usage of the Speech Act Theory. The research revealed that dialogue in *White Nights* is also an action and not an informational conveying process. Such speech acts like confessions, promises and guarantees of the narrator are commissive and expressive, and the reactions by Nastenka seem to strike a balance between emotional warmth and caution more than often. The literal meaning of the words is available in locutionary acts, however, the real emotional impact is the illocutionary intent and perlocutionary effects. Most utterances are aimed to comfort, convince or call upon reassurances and their ineffectiveness or effectiveness determines the path of affective flow of the story. Even silence, pauses, and non-verbal actions, particularly in the last scenes, serve as strong perlocutionary acts that trigger a strong emotional response. This proves the fact that the emotional meaning in the novella cannot be determined by words but rather it is generated by interaction.

The second major contribution of this work is that it dwells on the gendered discourse and emotional expression. In the analysis, it is evident that there is a difference between the expression and management of emotion between the male and female characters. There is emotional openness, idealism, and vulnerability at the language of the narrator. He writes a lot about his feelings and he has tended to be reflective in most cases and has written that love is a compilation of joy, pain, illusion, and longing. His emotional talk is passionate and self-induced giving out love as a conflict inside a person. This is a defiance of classic male rules of emotional restraint and is instead a sensitive and emotional male voice.

The emotional expression by Nastenka on the other hand is that of an equilibrium between being emotional and social. Her words are polite, cautious, and emotionally sensitive. She has supportive and empathetic language but does not show too much emotional expression. This is a sign of the gender roles of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when a woman had to be humble, emotionally accountable and responsible morally. Nonetheless, Nastenka is not a passive character as demonstrated in the study as well. She also applies language and action to stand her decisions particularly in decision making. Even though her last movements bring pain, they are emotional and clear. This ambiguity demonstrates that there are no rigid gender roles in *White Nights* but they are negotiated.

One of the major findings of the study is that emotion and politeness are closely interrelated. Emotional politeness is a mechanism of emotional relationships and emotional management. The characters keep modifying the language to prevent hurting one another emotionally, they care about the emotions of each other even at the time of personal pain. Love in *White Nights* is thus shown not as unbridled passion but as a feeling that is infused with empathy, restraint and moral duty. Civility does not undermine feeling, but it simply provides feeling a socially acceptable and humane structure.

This research also filled a significant research gap. Although *White Nights* has received much analysis regarding its romantic, psychological and philosophical aspects, it has hardly been viewed through the pragmatic and gender oriented linguistic perspective. The emotional depth that Dostoevsky has been known to possess in past studies has been more than merely highlighted and not discussed in terms of language forming that depth. Launched through the pragmatic approach to the theories of politeness and speech acts to the traditional literary work, this thesis illustrates the importance of pragmatics in the literary analysis. It demonstrates how linguistic analysis can bring out hidden patterns of emotional meaning that a literary criticism might be missing.

The methodology used in the study was qualitative and descriptive, as it concentrated on close textual analysis of selected dialogues. This enabled them to study the expression of emotion, politeness strategies, and speech acts in their narrative context in greater detail. The confusion of fictional dialogue with actual communicative interaction was useful in the discovery of how the functioning of emotions occurs in the context of social and gender frames. Reliability and validity of the analysis were made possible by the constant use of known theories.

To a larger extent, this study brings to the fore the role of language in determining human bonding. *White Nights* is a short story about the meeting of two lonely people, but their emotional connection is strong and long-lived as it is constructed out of mindful, meaningful conversation. Dostoevsky demonstrates that even the short-lived associations can leave the emotional impact that cannot be removed when the language is applied with honesty and compassion. The novella implies that human bondage is not characterized by a length of time but by emotional sincerity that is formed in terms of words.

To sum up, this thesis has demonstrated that *White Nights* is not merely a sentimental or romantic narrative but an extensive linguistic discussion of emotion and gender. Dostoevsky builds a fragile emotional space, where love, isolation, hope and loss are brokered using language, through politeness strategies, speech acts and gendered dialogue. The research is an addition to literary and linguistic research through the fact that it shows that pragmatics is an effective model of emotional discourse in literature. Future studies can build on this method in other works by Dostoevsky, contrast the use of emotions in discourse across cultures, or understand how emotion and gender are negotiated in literary texts today through language.

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