Research Article

Somboon Pojprasat*

A pragmatic analysis of Shylock's use of *thou* and *you*

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Abstract: Shakespeare's Shylock has been so debatable a character since its introduction to the English stage. According to the existing literature, there is an on-going debate as to whether this Jewish character is a villain or falls victim to the anti-Semitic community. The current study applies deictic theory of pronouns to examine the relationship between this character's employment of *thou* and *you*, and his affect based on the hypothesis that a person's use of pronouns, among other function words, can reveal their sense of self. Findings have shown that Shylock uses both pronouns in the normative way considerably more than in the pragmatic way; that he adheres to the normative use of the terms more than do his Christian counterparts; and that when he pragmatically uses them, expressions of his negative emotions often appear. Findings also suggest that (fictional) persons' use of second-person pronouns reflects to some degree their sense of freedom and reciprocity relative to others. In this case, the rather restrictive and abusive employment of *thou* and *you* by the Jew indicates him being suppressed and alienated from society, which in turn drives him to wreak vengeance on the Christians – the culminating action that makes him meet his eventual downfall.

Keywords: Shakespeare, pragmatics, deictic pronouns, affect

1 Introduction

Scholars agree to the fact that Shakespeare subtly employed a wide array of linguistic features to craft his characters for intended dramatic effects, one of which is to imitate the real world and people (*e.g.* Archer and Gillings 2020, Murphy et al. 2020, Wales 2018, Archer and Bousfield 2010, Culpeper 2009, 2001). A recent notable work by Archer and Gillings (2020), whose findings are somewhat comprehensive, supports this claim to another astonishing degree. In their study entitled *Depictions of deception: A corpus-based analysis of five Shakespearean characters*, Archer and Gillings aim to identify any language features the playwright used to "depict, appositely, human traits such as falseness, cruelty, gullibility, folly and manipulation" from five deceptive characters (2020, 24). They adopted the keyword approach and found that, first, Aaron from *Titus Andronicus* uses certain words that strongly suggest this character's deceptive spirit. These words notably include "black" indicating "the dark-skinned Moor's propensity for iniquity," "gold" "his ambitions for wealth and power" and "villainy" the skill that this character prefers to hone, practise and be admired for (2020, 7). Second, Tamora from the same play deliberately uses "sweet" to achieve her duplicitous scheme. For example, when she "brags about her sweet-talking abilities to her cuckolded husband (Saturninus)[, s]he tells him she will enchant the old Andronicus [*i.e.* Titus], with words more *sweet*, and yet more dangerous than baits to fish, or honey-stalks to sheep" (2020, 8). Next, there are six

* **Corresponding author: Somboon Pojprasat,** The English Programme, Faculty of Liberal Arts Mahidol University, 999 Phutthamonthon 4 Road, Salaya Sub-district, Phutthamonthon District, Nakhonpathom 73170, Thailand, e-mail: somboon.poj@mahidol.ac.th

important keywords, *i.e.* "money," "purse," "Roderigo," "lieutenant," "sleep" and "angry," that Iago from *Othello, the Moor of Venice* uses so frequently that readers can at some point perceive a sense of deception in him. Prominently, this character repetitively uses the fifth keyword to imply "an illicit affair between Desdemona and Cassio" (2020, 8). In one particular instance, Iago tells Othello that he "could not sleep" because "There are a kind of men,/So loose of Soul, that in their sleeps will mutter/Their Affairs: one of this kind is Cassio:/In sleep I heard him say, sweet Desdemona" (III, iii). As planned, this statement leads "Othello and Iago [to] begin to plot together to kill Cassio and Desdemona" (2020, 9). Fourth, Lady Macbeth from *The Tragedy of Macbeth* implicitly shows her manipulative disposition through her use of the words "would," "without" and "bed," the first of which is employed "when ruminating on whether Macbeth will take (what she believes are) the necessary steps to make himself king" (2020, 9). Last, Falstaff from *The First Part of King Henry IV* is found to have the most keywords of the five characters, including "counterfeit," "honour," "hang," "plague," "cowards," "Poins," "lad," "Hal," "rogue," "company" and "sack." For me, the first keyword is perhaps the most strongly suggestive of this character in a dramatic manner. In Act 5, scene iv, when he says "I am no counterfeit" (l. 5), the last word ironically "constitutes the antithesis of what Falstaff's turns" (2020, 9). Besides, Archer and Gillings also found additional language features associated with deceptive behaviours of these five characters, such as the employment of negation (*not*), modal verbs, stance markers (*think*), exclusivisers (*e.g. just*) and hedging, as well as the co-occurrence of the keywords and these additional features.

Indeed, language features in fiction can be as many as a real person is born with or desires to creatively produce, ranging from the general and particular as well as conventional and non-conventional use of segmental sounds, rhythm and accent to that of sentence structures, vocabulary words and discourse markers, that is to say, all forms of linguistic performance. In the current study, the use of pronouns is the focal point. I believe that pronouns also serve as a route into understanding a person's affect since the choice a person makes naturally identifies their own social power and emotion in relation to their addressee's both at the particular time of speaking and perhaps in general. Prominent psychologist Pennebaker (2011) asserts that a person's use of pronouns alongside other function words, such as articles, prepositions, conjunctions and auxiliary verbs, "offers deep insights into his or her honesty, stability, and sense of self." Pragmaticists Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990, 207) maintain that "pronominal grammar provides a window to the relationship between themselves and the outside." Narratology also embraces this notion to the fullest degree – it holds that use of pronouns "is a fundamental part of the construction and manipulation of narratorial or poetic voices (or voices of speakers, in drama)" (Gibbons and Macrae 2018, 2). In effect, pronominal choice reveals an indexical relationship between the speaker and the addressee or even the things when these words are being used (McGregor 1997, 311), and as such evokes "readers' empathetic, emotional and ideological relations with and responses to narratorial, poetic and other speaking voices and characters in literature" (Gibbons and Macrae 2018, 3). All that said, it is most likely that the writer takes into account what and how characters call themselves and address others as an integral part of their spiritual manifestation both in the story and to the reader.

More specifically, the present study examines how Shylock uses the second-person pronouns, *thou* and *you*, with the other characters, for this pronominal usage may tell of his psyche about and towards them. The chosen character and pronouns are of particular importance. For the former, there has long been an arresting schism regarding this very character's *status quo* and eventual downfall in the play. According to the existing literature, one group considers Shylock a villain or devil not least because of his crudity, greed and longing desire to revenge (Dawood et al. 2014, Campos 2002, Bloom 1998, Bronstein 1969). In the play, the Jewish moneylender gives no mercy to bond-breaking Antonio, refuses any requests to spare Antonio's life and insists on only a pound of his flesh. Cohen also affirms the Jew's villainy but proceeds to assert that evil nature is constructed in order to reflect the past stereotype that "a Jew with power is a terrible thing to behold, [and] is capable of the vilest sort of destruction" (1980, 63). This construction, he believes, is the playwright's willingness "to use the cruel stereotypes of that ideology for mercenary and artistic purposes" (1980, 63). Viewing the play from the comparative perspective, Heller points out that Shylock is presented in sharp opposition to "the youth of Venice, although faultless, [who] are involved in far more noble things such as love and friendship" (2000, 157).

On the other hand, other literary scholars express sympathy for Shylock since he is despised as Jew, devil, evil or even dog due to the past Christian prejudices against his identity. In the end of the play, he has been bereft of his wealth and pride, and is even forced to convert to Christianity. As a consequence, the Jew appears to fall "victim" to his society (Yu 2015, Ganyi 2013, Thornley and Roberts 1984). Harp even argues that "some of Shylock's anger can be justified as a response to the contempt with which he is treated" (2010, 43). In one instance in the play, Shylock's response to Christian merchants Solanio and Salerio not only implies the unjust feeling of being alienated that he has long suffered but evokes the reader's sympathy towards him:

> I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? (III. i. 51–9)

As for the latter, notwithstanding the bulk of studies on Shakespeare's use of *thou* and *you* in his works (*e.g.* van Dorst 2019, Nonomiya 2013, 2014, Walker 2007, Busse 2003, Mazzon 2003, Stein 2003, Calvo 1992), a close investigation into how his characters' pronominal choice reflects the characters' psyche still remains a vacuum since most of the previous works were limited to a single research discipline, *i.e.* either linguistic or literary approach, with the exception of Milicev (2014). I hope that this study will cast more and perhaps new light on one of the Shakespearean characters through a methodology combining the two. By doing this, it will probably help solve the long-lasting predicament voiced by Jakobson more than half a century ago that "a linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and unconversant with linguistic methods are equally flagrant anachronisms" (1960, 377), which has still been felt until today as "tensions between linguistic and literary approaches [which] are all too familiar to the stylistic scholar" (Culpeper and Archer 2020, 192).

2 Review of related literature

2.1 *The Merchant of Venice* and the Jew

William Shakespeare penned *The Merchant of Venice* presumably between 1596 and 1598, and it appeared in the first quarto in 1600. The play was probably first performed by the Lord Chamberlain's Men at the Theatre, but not until 10 February 1605 when the performance was recorded for the first time – this time at court, acted by the King's Men. As for its story, the play contains two plots in parallel, a love affair between the Christian merchant Bassanio and a rich heiress Portia, and a revenge act between another Christian merchant, Antonio, a friend of Bassanio's, and the Jewish moneylender Shylock. The two plots converge quickly yet smoothly when Antonio takes a loan from Shylock to help Bassanio to court Portia. As the story turns out, the Christian cannot repay the loan, so the Jew appeals in court to demand a pound of flesh prescribed in the bond they mutually forged. Upon learning the bad news, Portia, now Bassanio's wife, decides to help her husband's friend by disguising herself as a lawyer. At the end of the story, she saves Antonio and the Jew is obliged to forfeit his goods and convert to Christianity. All the Christians reunite happily.

The fact that the play ends with Shylock in misery and the Christians in bliss, although it is one of the latter who broke the bond, promptly presents the ethical dilemma this Jewish character is caught in. This ending has led to a more serious inquiry about the existence of this Jew alongside his Christian counterparts that the play portrays and perhaps problematizes. For most critics, *The Merchant of Venice* is anti-Semitic (Oldrieve 1993, Cohen 1980), or at least contains instances of anti-Semitism (Lanier 2019), since the central character Shylock "stands a representative of the Jewish character in general" (Manifi 2018, 3) – the stereotype that Jews are malignant, so-called "Jew-villain" (Bronstein 1969, 4), and so despised, hated and

abused by Christians. Cohen (1980, 54) explains that "Jews have been hated for a number of reasons, the most potent among [which is] that they were the killers of Jesus Christ." As a dire consequence, Jews gradually acquired negative connotations of malevolence and wickedness. They were confined to live among themselves under the measures and policies of the country – the treatment that engenders the native citizens' consideration of Jews as "other" or "alienated" to another extent (Yu 2015, 41). This national engenderment took place not only in England but also in other countries including "sixteenth-century Venice," where *The Merchant of Venice* is set and so seen to be historically realistic (Dickson and Staines 2009, 236). Bronstein (1969, 6) speculates that another Jew-villain in *The Merchant of Venice* is created merely because the playwright "needed this familiar type to absorb the interest of the populace." In fact, as Leveen (2014) observes, Shakespeare's depiction of "Jew-villain" permeates his writing, notably including that in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Macbeth* and *Henry IV, Part I*.

2.2 Deictic theory

2.2.1 Personal pronouns as personal deixis

Personal pronouns, such as *I*, *she* and *them*, function as linguistic markers (Mazzon 2003), for they indicate certain grammatical functions, for example, the discourse roles in the speaking situation, as either the speaker (the first person), the hearer (the second person) or the person being talked about (the third person), as well as in the case of English, number (singular or plural), gender (male or female) and case (*e.g.* nominative, accusative or genitive). In pragmatics, personal pronouns are part of what is referred to as "personal deixis" since it "invites participants to identify the relevant discourse role(s) in the context" (Culpeper and Haugh 2014, 23–4). Without the relevant context, identification of the speaker's use of the pronouns cannot be correctly made. Take this utterance as an example: *I think I won't give it to him*. The addressee in the conversation should automatically comprehend that *I* refers to the speaker, but outsiders cannot, let alone the other pronouns used. On the contrary, if any person is provided with the context, they will be able to identify the referents in question. For instance, the speaker named Jane, who is sulking about her boyfriend for keeping her waiting in front of a concert hall for about an hour, is now turning to talk to her friend Pamela about another concert ticket which she had planned to give to him. We can assume that *I* in the aforesaid utterance refers to Jane, *it* the concert ticket, and *him* Jane's boyfriend.

It should also be noted that personal pronouns can be used non-pragmatically, that is, the entity to which they refer can be immediately identified without recourse to context. In such case, they are non-deictic (Grundy 2000). Compare the following utterances.

[1] *You* have to empty the bin and *you* have to clean the board.
[2] *You* should abide by the law.

You in example [1] is a personal deixis: the listener may not be able to identify who the speaker is referring to without the appropriate context. Contexts, such as gestures of the speaker's pointing, can be of help in identifying the persons addressed. In contrast, without any apparent context can it still be understood that *you* in example [2] refers to any individuals. This is a generalized use of *you*.

2.2.2 *Thou* and *you* in English

The pronominal system in the English language has evolved in many ways, among which are their orthography (*e.g.* from the Old English *þu* to the Early Modern English *thou*) and their grammatical function (*e.g.* from *ye* assuming a nominative case in Old English to that assuming both nominative and accusative cases

in Middle English) (Hope 2003). As regards the current study, the second-person pronoun used by the Jewish character Shylock in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* serves as the focal point. Not only does it show the significant change of the pronominal system in the history of the English language, but it is also seen to be purposefully used to reflect the character's affect when he makes choice between the two second-person pronouns to address his listeners. In order to carry out a sound analysis of this character's pronominal usage, the historical evolution of the English pronouns in question is worth investigating. To begin, Old English had two forms of the second-person pronoun, *i.e. thou-forms* and *you-forms*, separated by number. The former was used for singular units and the latter for plural units. Each of them has different forms according to the syntactic role they take in an utterance. *Thou* is used as a subject, *thee* an object, *thy* and *thine* possessive adjectives, and *thyself* a reflexive pronoun. *Thy* often precedes a word beginning with a consonant sound and *thine* before a word that starts with a vowel sound, *e.g. thy* love and *thine* eye. This rule is, however, not strictly followed. *You* has six forms: *you* and *ye* (now outdated) as the subject and object, *your* the possessive adjective, *yours* the possessive pronoun, and *yourself* and *yourselves* the reflexive pronouns.

However, in Middle English, the choice between the two forms had shifted to be more dependent upon social factors. Brown and Gilman (1960) argued that power and solidarity are the most crucial in determining their normative use. Power refers to different (or non-symmetrical) statuses, and solidarity involves a symmetrical relationship between equals. Drawn from Brown and Gilman's concept, Walker (2007) also pinpoints that the speaker's power is associated with their social status which can be categorized into four main classes, which Nonomiya (2014, 217) taxonomizes as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Categories of social status

Category	Subcategory	Description of subcategory	Example
Upper	U1	Nobility	Royalty, duke, baron, feudal lord
	U2	Knights and baronets (*Sir*)	Knight, baronet
Upper-middle	UM	Gentry	Gentry
Middle	M1	Wealthy merchants and those in profession	Retailer, clergyman, medicinal doctor, citizen, military officer
	M2	Craftsmen and farmers	Weaver, tailor, blacksmith, inn keeper
Lower	L1	Servants	Servant, labourer, chambermaid
	L2	Unemployed and criminals	Whore, thief, unemployed

Given the status between the speaker and the listener in the Middle English Period, it was common that the speaker used *thou* to call those who were lower, and *you* to those who were higher than them. Among equals, *you* was preferred by the upper class while *thou* was used by the lower class. The criterion for these pronominal choices is conceptualized in Bruti's axis, as shown in Figure 1. This use of the two second-person pronouns is categorized as the normative use in the present study.

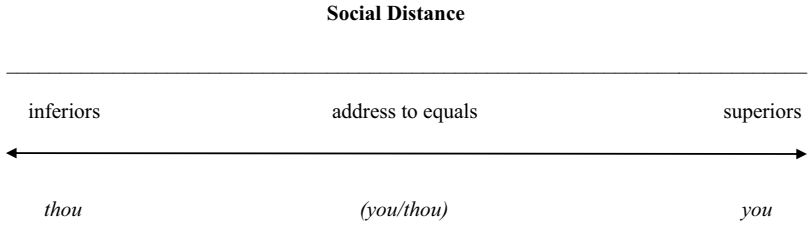

Figure 1: The axis of social distance.

Culpeper and Haugh (2014, 24) assert that this new usage of the two English pronouns "had taken on a stronger social deictic role, rather than just personal" not least because the pronominal choice the speaker makes almost always signals their social connection and interaction with their addressee.

Even further, as England moved to the Early Modern Period (the time when Shakespeare lived), other specific contexts, rather than social status, were seen to have played a more determining role in interpreting the appropriate meaning of these two pronouns (Busse 2002). These include affection, good-humoured superiority, anger or contempt, poetic style (Abbott 2009), reciprocity (Hope 1994) and politeness (Hope 1994, Brown and Gilman 1989). Regarding the latter situational context in particular, *you* was used more extensively as a singular pronoun than *thou* to show the speaker's respect. This is perhaps one of the reasons why *thou* finally fell out of use in standard eighteenth-century English (Baugh and Cable 2012, Barber et al. 2009). As regards the Shakespearean works in particular, Busse (2002, 283) finds "a regression of T[hou] forms over time," in almost all genres except romances. Today, *you* is used in all contexts while *thou* is in use only in some areas of Yorkshire and Lancashire (Culpeper and Haugh 2014) and is considered a distinctive characteristic of some Australian and Irish speakers of English (Horvath 1986).

To illustrate the idea in a more tangible way, Bruti (2000, 35) provides an axis conceptualizing the relationship between pronominal choice and emotion factors as shown in Figure 2.

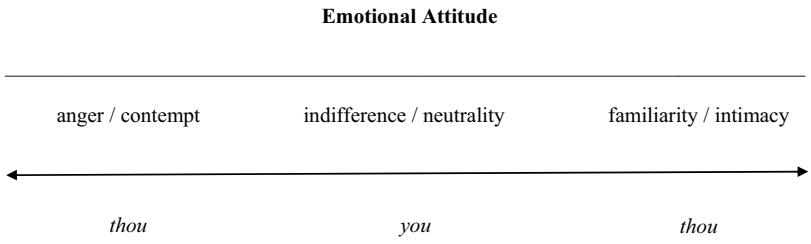

Figure 2: The axis of emotional attitude.

In contrast to the usage illustrated in Figure 1, when the speaker of lower rank calls their listener *thou*, or when the speaker of higher rank calls their listener *you*, they express their intimacy for the first scenario or even respect for the latter scenario. This use of the two pronouns is categorized as the pragmatic use in this study. One might consider that the first (labelled as normative in the present study) use of the pronouns is already pragmatic in nature, for such contexts as power and status are involved in using the pronouns, when compared to that in Old English, whose criteria of usage lied solely on their grammatical rules. However, since power and status are more or less static factors, and emotions vary greatly depending on the situation, the use of second-person pronouns according to social status becomes the norm while that according to feelings appears to be pragmatic. Besides, this criterion will be more helpful in establishing the relationship between Shylock's employment of the second-person pronouns and his affect.

3 Materials and analysis

The text used for this study was Collins Classics' *The Merchant of Venice* published in 2013 by Harper Press (Shakespeare 2013). As regards the reliability of the chosen material, I compared especially the occurrences of *thou* and *you* in the text with those in the original provided by MIT's website *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (Hylton 1993). No alterations regarding the second-person pronouns between them were found. The analysis was done in both quantitative and qualitative manners following this procedure. First, a close reading of the story was done to identify any occurrence of the two second-person pronouns, *i.e. you* together with its forms, such as *your* and *yours*, and *thou* with its forms, such as *thee* and *thy*. Note that the present study presents both the overall frequency of the two pronouns and, more importantly, the frequency of the pronouns used by Shylock. The overall presentation includes all forms of *thou* and *you*, with each of their forms being counted as individual frequencies. The presentation of Shylock's pronominal usage treats *thou* and its variant forms as well as *you* and its variant forms as the same form, and this part is explained in greater detail. Plural and generalized *you* was not counted for analysis since its use is largely determined by the grammatical rules and cannot indicate the character's affect, except its conclusion in

order to show the overall frequencies of the two pronouns in the text. Second, Shylock's pronominal choice was categorized into either the normative or the pragmatic use, with the former referring to any standard use of the two pronouns based on his social status alone as illustrated in Figure 1, and the latter to any use of the pronouns in deviation from the standard as illustrated in Figure 2. Then, explanations about relevant contexts with respect to the pronominal choice made in specific situations were given. Last, an analysis of the relation between Shylock's pronominal choice and his affect was made to account for the dramatic purpose the playwright had in order to depict this character. The quantitative data, *i.e*. frequencies of the pronouns, were displayed in table format, and the qualitative data, *i.e*. explanations of the normative and pragmatic uses of Shylock's employment of *you* and *thou*, were provided in narratives.

4 Findings

This section shows the overall occurrence of the second-person pronouns in *The Merchant of Venice* and in particular those employed by Shylock, the specific contexts in which the pronouns are used both in the normative and in the pragmatic way, as well as a stylistic analysis of the relation between the character's pronominal choice and his affect.

4.1 General statistics of *you* and *thou*

The play employs 13 forms of the second-person pronouns, which are *you*, *your*, *yours*, *yourself*, *ye*, *plural you*, *plural your*, *plural yours*, *thou*, *thy*, *thine*, *thyself* and *thee*, used and/or received by 21 characters. The *you* form appears 646 times, 37 of which are in plural, and the *thou* form 234 times. Table 2 shows the occurrences of each of the pronoun forms.

Table 2: Frequencies of all *you* and *thou* forms

Pronouns	Frequency	Character (*N* = 21)
You form (*N* = 646)	*you* (417)	18
	your (170)	18
	yours (15)	5
	yourself (4)	2
	ye (3)	1
	plural you (31)	10
	plural your (5)	3
	plural yours (1)	1
Thou form (*N* = 234)	*thou* (103)	13
	thy (59)	13
	thine (4)	4
	thyself (3)	2
	thee (65)	13

The statistics show some general interesting points. First, the occurrence of the *you* form is much higher than that of its counterpart, almost three times (the ratio is 2.76:1). Second, *you* is employed by more characters than *thou* with the maximum number of 18 and the latter pronoun 13. Next, 15 of 21 characters (71%) use both *you* and *thou*, except Father Abram who makes no speech and the minor characters Stephano, Bellario, two man servants and Portia's father, who use only *you*. Fourth, the possessive and reflexive forms (*i.e. yours*, *yourself*, *thine* and *thyself*) are far less employed than the other pronominal forms. Last, *ye* and plural *yours* occur the least.

4.2 Shylock's pronominal choice

4.2.1 From *you* to *thou*

In the play, Shylock appears on stage in only 5 of 20 scenes (*i.e.* Act I, scene iii; Act II, scene v; Act III, scene I; Act III, scene iii and Act IV, scene i). Twelve characters are in direct contact with him, namely Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano, the Duke of Venice, Portia, his friend Tubal, his daughter Jessica, his servant Launcelot Gobbo, the gaoler, Father Abram, Solanio and Salerio. All of them converse with Shylock except Father Abram from whom the Jew receives no responses in return. Shylock uses plural *you* when talking to Solanio and Salerio. Among these characters, Shylock is by norm obliged to address seven characters with *you* and three characters with *thou*. Table 3 shows his normative use of *you* and his pragmatic use of *thou*.

Table 3: Frequencies of normative *you* and pragmatic *thou*

Person Shylock talks to	You (normative)	Thou (pragmatic)
Bassanio	12	3
Antonio	34	2
Father Abram	2	—
Gratiano	—	5
Duke	26	—
Portia	5	4
Gaoler	—	2
Total	79	16

As shown in Table 3, Shylock's use of normative *you* is almost five times more frequent than that of his pragmatic *thou*. While Father Abram, the Duke, Gratiano and the gaoler do not see the Jew's change in pronominal choice, Bassanio, Antonio and Portia are addressed *you* on some occasions and *thou* on others. Among the former group, Gratiano and the gaoler receive only pragmatic *thou* from Shylock, which suggests an apparent anomaly in his speech. From the story, the Jew uses *thou* with Gratiano and the gaoler in order to show his anger and then disrespect to them.

4.2.2 From *thou* to yo*u*

There are only three characters whom Shylock can normatively call *thou*. They are his servant Launcelot Gobbo, his daughter Jessica and his friend Tubal. Table 4 shows the frequency of both his normative use of *thou* and his pragmatic use of *you* with them.

Table 4: Frequencies of normative *thou* and pragmatic *you*

Person Shylock talks to	Thou (normative)	You (pragmatic)
Launcelot Gobbo	5	1
Jessica	2	6
Tubal	5	—
Total	12	7

Again, the number of Shylock's normative use of the pronoun is greater than that of his pragmatic use (the ratio is 1.71:1). For me, the fact that Shylock shifts to use pragmatic *you* is of particular interest since this pronoun, when used to address intimates especially with his daughter, lends a note of distance and seriousness, suggesting his detachment or even loneliness to some degree. An in-depth discussion is provided in Section 4.3.4.

4.3 Contexts for Shylock's use of *you* and *thou*

The overall statistics of Shylock's normative and pragmatic uses of *you* and *thou* strongly indicate certain factors contributing to his pronominal choice especially in a pragmatic manner. Just as Brown and Gilman (1960), Walker (2007) and Nonomiya (2014) assert that power, solidarity and social status determine the speaker's normative use of the two second-person pronouns, this principle applies to fictional Shylock, who employs *you* to Father Abram, the Duke of Venice, Christian merchants Bassanio, Antonio and Gratiano, Portia, disguised as a lawyer, and the gaoler, all of whom are more or less the same rank as him, *i.e.* middle classes, except the first two who are higher. As for *thou*, he should use it to address his servant Launcelot Gobbo, his friend Tubal and his daughter Jessica, all of whom are intimate with or inferior in status to him. More appositely when the Jew employs the two pronouns in a pragmatic manner, his true spirit becomes more apparent to the readers since this pronominal employment often comes with natural, strong and sudden feelings, either conscious or unconscious, that can reflect his true spirit. At least he liberates himself from the norm by way of speaking. In this regard, Shylock's pragmatic (or deviant) use of the pronouns accords with the assertion that emotive effects are also very instrumental in the speaker's pronominal choice (Milicev 2014, Bruti 2000). The subsections below in turn discuss normative and pragmatic uses of the two pronouns by way of contextualizing each use in specific situations to investigate why he chooses one over the other and how that choice reflects his emotional states.

4.3.1 Normative *you*

Shylock is obliged to use *you* with seven characters, namely Father Abram, the Duke, Bassanio, Antonio, disguised Portia, Gratiano and the gaoler, who are superior to or more or less in the same status as him. The play shows that the first five characters receive *you* from the Jew and only the last two do not, suggesting the Jew's somewhat strict conformity to the norm. Illustrative thereof is the fact that Shylock speaks to the patriarch of Judaism: "Pray you, tell me this:/If he should break his day, what should I gain" (I. iii. 158–9). Likewise, the civilian Jew always addresses the Duke of Venice with *you*, regardless of his attitude and emotion towards him. The first time he encounters the Duke in the court, he salutes him: "I have possess'd your Grace" (IV. i. 35), and even though Shylock later feels some bias due to the ruler's apparent favor for Antonio, he still *yous* him. In one instance when Shylock insists on the pound of Antonio's flesh, he says in an intimidating tone to the Duke: "If you deny me, fie upon your law!" (IV. i. 101).

In Act I, scene iii, Shylock meets Bassanio for the first time to make a bond. The Jew *calls* him *you*, and his friend Antonio, who later comes to bail himself as the guarantor. Shylock asks Bassanio: "How many months/ Do you desire?" (ll. 53–4). To Antonio, Shylock also says *you*, "Rest you fair, good signor" (l. 54). Later in this scene, despite the loan the Jew gives to his friend, Antonio confesses that he will "spit on thee [Shylock] again, to spurn thee too" (l. 126). The Jew manages to suppress his anger and then replies with the polite *you*:

> Why, look you, how you storm!
> I would be friends with you, and have your love,
> (ll. 133–4)

Nevertheless, the revelation of the Jew's desire to get revenge on the Christian is at last made known when he warns that

> If you repay me not on such a day,
> In such a place, such sum or sums as are
> Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
> Be nominated for an equal pound
> Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
> In what part of your body pleaseth me.
> (ll. 142–7)

Portia is another person Shylock addresses with *you*. A wealthy heiress, she disguises herself as a lawyer when she meets him in the court in order to render assistance to her man's friend. In Act IV, scene i, Shylock asks her: "I charge you by the law,/Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar/Proceed to judgment" (ll. 236–8).

4.3.2 Pragmatic *thou*

Among the seven characters in the upper and middle classes, Shylock also pragmatically calls five of them *thou*. The situations in which the pronoun in question is used are important, for they not only account for the factors to such usage but may also reveal his affect and attitudes towards the Christian characters at those specific times. As the play progresses, Shylock uses this *thou* both in a disparaging and in an admiring manner. For the former, Shylock scorns in a fury Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano and the gaoler, the last two of whom are addressed only *thou*. To illustrate this one by one, in Act III, scene iii, when the Jew happens to meet Antonio again on a street after his knowledge about the latter's shipwreck, he insinuates that the Christian would forfeit the bond. A feeling of disdain overwhelms Shylock so greatly that for the very first time he calls the poor Christian Antonio *thou*: "I'll have my bond. I will not hear thee speak" (l. 12), although the Christian begs him "I pray thee, hear me speak" (l. 11). It is somewhat evident at this point that the Jew uses *thou* in this instance because he feels he is currently assuming legal advantage over the Christian, so it is justified for him to use it in an authoritative, and perhaps despising, manner. In contrast, the same address term used by Antonio rather suggests efforts in maintaining his good relationship with the Jew.

In this same scene, Shylock also rebukes the gaoler who, he thinks, is trying to prevent Antonio from being kept in prison.

> Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond
> To come abroad with him at his request.
> (ll. 9–10)

Shylock's fury and perceived superiority becomes more obvious in the court scene when his pragmatic use of *thou* abounds to an astonishing degree. First, shortly after the Duke's unsuccessful request for his mercy upon Antonio, Shylock begins to call Bassanio *thou* back when the Christian labels him "thou unfeeling man" (IV. i. 63). The Jew responds, "I am not bound to please thee with my answers" (l. 65). The Jew moves on to *thou* Gratiano, a friend of Antonio and Bassanio's, who scolds him, "O, be thou damn'd inexecrable dog!" (l. 128). Shylock loses his temper and addresses him with *thou* in every dialog he holds with him, including when he admonishes the Christian merchant Gratiano, "Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall/ To cureless ruin. I stand here for law" (ll. 141–2).

For the latter use of *thou*, Shylock is shown to express some positive feelings. In the same court scene, Shylock addresses Portia with *thou* to show acceptance and some kind of intimacy. The Jew praises the disguised lawyer when perceiving that she takes sides with him, "A Daniel come to judgment! Yea, a Daniel!/O wise young judge, how do I honor thee!" (IV. i. 221–2). The relationship between the choice of pronouns and emotion comes into better view when Shylock creates distance between him and the lawyer when the former feels upset about the latter's plea for his mercy on Antonio by calling the lawyer *you*: "It doth appear you are a worthy judge" (l. 233). This marked change in pronominal choice gives a strong indication to wise Portia of the Jew's belief that people who think the same as him are the only ones whom he can trust and make friends with. Besides, Shylock's use of *you* in the quoted utterance suggests a feeling of anger and disappointment. In order to handle the case in the most favourable way for her husband's friend, Portia deceives him again by ensuring him of a pound of Antonio's flesh, and the naïve Shylock returns to assume amicable friendship with her, addressing her *thou* again, "'Tis very true. O wise and upright judge'/How much more elder art thou than thy looks!" (ll. 248–9). That is indeed the last time he addresses her *thou*, for he at last recognizes her scheme against him. At last, the lawyer wittingly agrees to his request by warning him that only a pound of Antonio's flesh can be taken,

nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair –
Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.
(ll. 328–30)

Once the case has been settled, Portia leaves Shylock with a sarcastic remark: "Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture/To be so taken at thy peril, Jew" (ll. 341–2). Portia's addressing the Jew *thou* at this time does not seem to imply a sense of her intimacy with him, but rather a sense of her power or contempt.

In sum, Shylock's use of *thou* in a pragmatic manner is accompanied by expressions of either his negative feelings, such as in the case of him berating, reprimanding or feeling angry with the other Christian characters, or in some occasion, his positive feelings particularly when he shows acceptance. In either case, it is perhaps incorrect to say that this specific use of the pronoun is largely affected by the actions of those in contact with him. That is to say, psychologically, his choice of pragmatic *thou* exhibits a level of instability in the Jew's mind.

4.3.3 Normative *thou*

Shylock's use of normative *thou* is limited to three characters who are close to or inferior to him. First, to his servant Launcelot Gobbo, Shylock normally gives *thou*. For example, in Act II, scene v, the Jewish master says, "Well, thou shalt see; thy eyes shall be thy judge,/The difference of Old Shylock and Bassanio" (II. 1–2). In one instance, when the Jewish master shouts for his daughter, his servant helps him to do so, but is rebuked for the unrequested help: "Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call" (ll. 7).

Second, to his daughter Jessica, Shylock has control over her and normally addresses her *thou*. In Act II, scene v, when Shylock and Jessica encounter the first time in the play, the father reprimands the daughter:

What, Jessica! – Thou shalt not gormandize
As thou hast done with me – What, Jessica! –
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out –
Why, Jessica, I say!
(ll. 3–6)

Last, Shylock employs *thou* when conversing with his Jewish friend Tubal. In Act III, scene i, Shylock inquires him about his daughter who has eloped with a Christian man, "How now, Tubal, what news from Genoa?/Hast thou found my daughter?" (ll. 70–1). Later, Shylock thanks Tubal for telling him about Antonio's shipwreck, "I thank thee, good Tubal. Good news, good news" (l. 93). Interesting here is Tubal's calling him *you* in return. He answers, "Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, one night" (l. 95). Tubal's differing pronominal choice triggers some possible interpretations about him, his friend or both. First, Tubal, albeit a Jew, may consider Shylock's calling him *thou* inappropriate since their status as wealthy merchants in the city also deserves some level of respect and prestige, one element of which is the use of *you* among themselves, akin to their Christian counterparts who normally use this pronoun to address one another. However, Tubal's calling Shylock *you* seems not to be effective enough to change the way his friend addresses him – the latter never addresses the former with the same pronoun. Second, the formal role or official function that Tubal has in reporting news of his friend's daughter might determine his use of *you*. That is to say, Tubal gives more importance to this specific role than to his relationship with Shylock, hence choosing the pronoun in question. Last but not least, Tubal's sense of friendship with Shylock is perhaps not so close as the latter's with him; therefore, their differing use of the second-person pronouns hints at some distance between the two friends. In any case of the above or else, the fact that these two Jewish friends are at variance cannot be denied. For Shylock's side in particular, he is depicted to have lived a lonely and estranged life even within his own community.

4.3.4 Pragmatic *you*

Shylock's change of normative *thou* to pragmatic *you* is just as important as his opposite, for it also reveals his inner personality even to another extent. Its special note lies in the fact that throughout the play he only pragmatically addresses two people *you*, *i.e.* his daughter and his servant, both of whose relationships with him are close. Shylock's pragmatic use of *you* again lends a note of negative feelings rather than positive ones that this character possesses. There are a few important instances. First, once Shylock feels assured of his servant's departure to work for Bassanio, he immediately establishes a distance between him and Launcelot Gobbo by calling the latter *you*. Shylock requests his ex-servant to tell his new Christian master that he will meet him soon, dryly asking, "Go you before me, sirrah;/Say I will come" (II. v. 37–8). But Launcelot Gobbo responds to the Jew by addressing him *you* in every speech as he did before to show his unwavering respect for Shylock. This abrupt unwelcome change in pronoun use indicates that the Jew has lost trust in the servant perhaps merely because of Launcelot Gobbo's transfer to render service to the person he hates. At this very point, the Jew seems to be inflicted with intolerance and hatred; he resists to any changes especially affected by those who are intimate with him, and in comparison with his servant, the Jew master's emotions and actions are easily affected by others.

Besides, Shylock's pragmatic use of *you* comes with fear and seriousness. When he instructs his daughter Jessica to ensure the safety of his estate prior to departing to meet Bassanio, he always calls her *you* – this is in sharp contrast to his normative use of *thou* with his daughter earlier in this scene which indicates a more decompressing tone. The Jew commands:

> Lock up my doors, and when you hear the drum,
> And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,
> Clamber not you up to the casements then
> Nor thrust your head into the public street
> To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces;
> (II. v. 28–32)

He also stresses that

> Perhaps I will return immediately.
> do as I bid you, shut doors after you
> Fast bind, fast find –
> (II. v. 51–3)

Unknown to him is that that is his last face-to-face conversation with his daughter before she elopes with the young Christian man named Lorenzo. Jessica says when his father has left the house, "Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost,/I have a father, you a daughter, lost" (ll. 55–6). Specifically important in this scene is the play's suggestive distanced and strained parent–child relationship in which the father and the daughter are never presented to embrace intimacy or tenderness to each other, not even by their friendly use of address terms. For dramatic effects, Shakespeare portrayed another parent–child relationship in which love and trust flourish. The playwright hints at this warm relationship through the use of pronouns as well. In Act II, scene ii, Old blind Gobbo, who is finding the way to Shylock's house, meets a young man and then asks: "Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to Master Jew's?" (ll. 30–1). At first, the father does not know that the man in front of him is his boy, so he addresses him *you* in every speech he makes, but later when Launcelot tells him the truth, the old man immediately asks him about his well-being, but now calls him *thou*: "Lord, how art thou chang'd! How dost thou and thy master agree?" (ll. 93–4). Based on this comparison, Shylock's feelings of being alone and detached become even more obvious.

In sum, the fact that Shylock uses pragmatic *you* only with his intimates and only in the situations where he expresses mistrust, fear and seriousness rather suggests that this character is utterly suffering even in his own sphere. The Jew does not feel secure or assimilated with his intimates, the close servant and his daughter. Perhaps, the latter feel the same thing towards him, so they choose to leave the Jew alone.

4.4 Shylock's pronominal choice and his (suffering) affect

Throughout the play, Shylock is portrayed to be alone, fearful, furious and revengeful, which is in sharp contrast to the Christian characters who are filled with companionship, trust, joy and compassion. Apart from what they act, these contrastive abstract qualities come into view via the characters' employment of address terms when they talk to each other. Shakespeare assigned the Jew and his Christian counterparts to use the second-person pronouns, *you* and *thou*, in a significantly different manner. Based on the findings, the Jew adheres to the normative use of the terms more than do the Christians (normative *you* versus pragmatic *thou*, 79:16; and normative *thou* versus pragmatic *you*, 12:7). The overall stylistic use of the pronouns by the Jew suggests a high level of confinement and rigidity that he is facing in his society. From a psychological perspective, one who has less freedom to do and speak tends to have suffered more than those who enjoy more freedom. This is particularly corroborated by the plays' presentation that Shylock pragmatically uses the two pronouns rather in a disparaging and agonizing manner. To requote some striking instances here, Shylock yells at Antonio after knowing the latter's shipwreck, calling him *thou* for the first time, "I'll have my bond. I will not hear thee speak" (III. iii. 12), and in the court scene, he addresses every Christian with *thou* except the Duke, to show indifference and superiority in legal terms. Even with his daughter and servant, Shylock uses a pragmatic *you* to create a distance and coldness that he intends to throw at them. At one time the Jew reveals his meanness towards Jessica, crying "I would my daughter were dead at my foot" (III. i. 78).

In contrast, when the Christian characters use the two pronouns, albeit preferring *you*, they are depicted to be more relaxed and flexible in using them for a wider range of purposes, and feelings that come with the pronoun usage are often positive including intimacy, cheerfulness or trust (*e.g.* Gratiano employs the second-person pronouns 53 times, 29 of which are in the pragmatic way, Antonio 11 out of 64 times and Bassanio 17 out of 95 times). That is to say, their pronominal choice exhibits so high a level of flexibility that the parameters of using the pronouns either in the normative or in the pragmatic manner have often become unclear. In contrast, their pronominal choice is much less strict than Shylock's, which is seen as either strictly conforming to or deviating from the norm. There are a number of instances throughout the play that reveal the Christian linguistic freedom. For example, when the male merchants Salerio, Solanio, Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano and Lorenzo talk to each other, they interchangeably use these two pronouns both in serious and in light-hearted situations, depending largely on the contexts in which they are used. At one point, when Antonio ensures his love for his friend Bassanio, he says "You know me well, and herein spend but time/To wind about my love with circumstance" (I. i. 153–4), but later when the former offers himself to borrow money from Shylock in order to help his friend court Portia, he asserts "To furnish thee to Belmont to fair Portia" (l. 182). When Bassanio talks to Gratiano, who desires to accompany him to Belmont, the former addresses the latter *you* and *thou* indiscriminately even in the same turn of dialog, "Why, then you must, But hear thee, Gratiano:/Thou art too wild, too rude, bold of voice" (II. ii. 167–8). Portia, who usually addresses her waiting-maid Nerissa *thou*, chooses to call her *you* when she tells the latter her scheme to help her own and the latter's husbands in court: "I have work in hand/That you yet know of; we'll see our husbands/Before they think of us" (III. iv. 57–8). At some point, Nerissa responds to her mistress, "Bassanio, Lord Love, if thy will it be!" (II. ix. 101). Last, most of the time Gratiano addresses Shylock with *thou* in their first encounter in the court, but he also shifts to call him *you* although still in disdain: "Now, infidel, I have you on the hip" (IV. i. 332).

5 Conclusion

The first aspect to be specified is that I am not going to vouch for the fact that Shylock is a villain or that he falls victim as some critics have hitherto argued. The findings of the current study have alternatively provided some interesting linguistic information and in particular a clear reflection of Shylock's affect derivable from his pronominal choice. As for the former, the study has revealed a significant existence

of *thou* in relation to *you* in *The Merchant of Venice* that the former is used much less than the latter. In this way, Shakespeare constructed his fictional world to be similar to the real world just as Shiina (2005, 86–7) asserts that "the playwrights construct the characters in their dramatic world based upon the language use in the real world of the period," particularly in the way that "the disappearance of THOU was likely already in progress around this time" (Calvo 1992), and "the 'prestige' norm plays a central role in 'imposing' language change" (Broś 2015). The play employs the *you* form almost three times more than the *thou* form. The main factor, as the story implies, lies in the greater freedom and privilege that the Christians possess to act and speak – using the two pronouns indiscriminately is one piece of evidence. Another interesting point involves the normative use of *you*. It is perhaps not incorrect to add formality and official function as another important factor that determines the speaker's employment of these two pronouns alongside power and social class. The most representative examples would be Shylock's normative use of *you* to address the Duke in the court scene even though the former is unsatisfied with the latter's action, and Tubal's pragmatic use of *you* with the Jew when he takes the role in delivering the somewhat serious news.

As far as literary criticism is concerned, I agree with Bronstein (1969) and Cohen (1980) that Shakespeare may have intended to make Shylock villainous and despicable in order to present the past stereotype of "Jew-villain" who possesses destructive feelings and attitudes, such as hatred, fear and mistrust, perhaps due to his "other" identity in the Christian-dominating society, and those bad qualities in turn put him in fated doom. The findings that the Jew closely adheres to the normative use of the second-person pronouns more than do his Christian counterparts and that his rather limited pragmatic use of the terms often comes with the expression of his negative emotions and attitudes strongly suggest that he is agonizingly inferior to or at least different from the latter. Stylistically speaking, this particular use of the pronouns in question (in this case, fairly restrictive and abusive) is deliberately created to characterize the Jew who harbours utter suppression and alienation from the society, dramatically in sharp contrast to the seemingly kind, happy Christian characters who use the same pronouns in a much freer and more cheerful sense. In the play, Shakespeare both dramatizes the Jew's suffering affect partly reflected by his pronominal choice through a series of such actions as his obvious resistance to the mainstream Christian way of living, his justifiable hatred and desire to get revenge on those who ridicule his identity, and even the abandonment from his servant and daughter and, at the same time, problematizes the ethical issue as to whether the source of such agony is from the society or from himself who chooses to stay 'other'. By way of a postscript, I hypothesize that the merchant in its singular form in the play's title rather refers to Shylock, the one who calls for a great deal of reconsideration about his suffering *status quo* and eventual downfall.

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