

## CHAPTER II

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT OF THE STUDY

This study is about Eliza Doolittle's utterances in five acts of George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*. Since it is interesting to be analyzed, the writer decides to use *Pygmalion* as the object of the study because this play uses language as the basic of the characterization. Morgan mentioned in *Pygmalion's* notes that Eliza becomes a lady through the acquirement of new way of speaking, new manners and style of behaviour (61).

#### II.1. BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), as he was generally known, was a self-educated person. He was an Iris comic dramatist, literary critic, and socialist propagandist. The Nobel Prize for literature crowned his life work in 1925.

In literature he started writing novels. Then, he began to write plays. He created so many popular plays: "Man and Superman" (1905), which he called "A Comedy and Philosophy". The same doctrine is treated in "Heartbreak House" (1917).

In "Back to Methuselah" (1920) he demonstrates and examines the cause of the failure of our civilization, shattered by World War I, as he had done in his first comic play "Arms and the Man" (1894). While his "John Bull's other Island" (1923) attracts English politics.



Shaw wrote some fifty plays of which “Androcles and The Lion”(1909), “Pygmalion”(1913), “Saint John”(1923), and “On The Rocks”(1933) are best known (Bakker 113-114).

Possibly Shaw’s comedic masterpiece, and certainly his funniest and most popular play, is Pygmalion. It was claimed by Shaw to be a didactic drama about phonetics, and its anti-heroic hero, Henry Higgins, the phonetician; however, the play is humane comedy about love, language and class, about a cockney flower girl trained to pass as a lady and the repercussions of the experiment’s success. It has been filmed (1938), winning an Academy Award for Shaw for his Screenplay, and adapted into an immensely popular musical, “My Fair Lady”(1956) (Goetz 707).

## **II.2. SOCIAL BACKGROUND IN PYGMALION**

Long before the days of 20<sup>th</sup> century linguistics and phonetics, English novelist and dramatist, especially in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, were observing the relationship between the language and social class in Britain and using it as a basis for the characterization and social comment (Crystal 39).

Hillegass stated that Shaw was so convinced of the valuable potentialities of phonetics that he began about 1914 to make the public aware of the science and its possibilities by a play. As a result, he wrote Pygmalion. This comedy had two purposes: one was to show that people’s manner of speaking depends greatly on their success or failure in life; the second was to show that phonetics could enable one who speaks with a certain accent to change to another accent (20).

In this play Shaw accurately described the situation in the early 20th century. He criticized or attacked some weakness in society. In England a person's accent has traditionally determined one's social status. Those who speak with certain accent were not permitted to have a good job and could not gain social acceptance.

### **II.3. THE VARIETIES OF LANGUAGE USE IN PYGMALION**

In this play, Shaw used a considerable amount of cockney dialect, non-standard language and slang. Shaw gave strong emphasis to Eliza's utterances to describe that she was a poor flower girl with a language which indicates that she belongs to lower class in that time.

#### **II.3.1. Cockney Dialect**

This dialect is associated with less advantaged social strata of London. It arose in the 19<sup>th</sup> century among the navies, relatively unskilled day laborers. From there, it spread more broadly in the speech community (O'graddy 342).

In Pygmalion, mostly in the first stage, Eliza Doolittle, the flower girl, speaks by using cockney dialect, e.g.:

1. Nah then, Freddy: look wh'y' gowin, deah; which means: "Now then, Freddy: look where you are going, dear".
2. Theres manners f'yer! T -oo banches o voylets trod into the mad; which means: "There manners for you! Two bunches of violets trodden into the mud".

### II.3.2. Standard – Non-standard English

In the first stage of this play, Eliza mostly used non-standard language, e.g.: the use of “aint”, double negatives and the use of functional improprieties.

In the second stage Eliza’s utterances changed gradually after Higgins taught her. Her tendency to use more complex grammar was increasing.

### II.3.3. Slang language

Slang is a label that is frequently used to denote certain informal usage of nearly anyone in the speech community. The term was first attested in English in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, used in reference to special vocabulary used by any set of persons of low characters. It is also noted as the language of low and vulgar type (O’graddy 341).

In this play, Eliza used Slang language; for example “I can give you a tanner, kind lady”. The term *tanner* refers to a coin worth sixpence.

## **BAB III**

# **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA**