

Learner Resource 3 Dramatic effect in Scene 6

Page references are to the Heinemann edition of the play but quotations appear in chronological order so shouldn't be hard to find.

Line from the play	Features of spoken language/literary devices	Dramatic effect
Is that streetcar named Desire still grinding along the tracks at this hour? (67)	Key symbol of the play.	Shows Blanche's cynicism about desire and its mechanical nature.
Good boy! I guess you – want to go now. (68)	Condescending endearment + scripted non-fluency + conversational implicature	Shows Blanche's condescension, her lack of desire for Mitch, and her indirect efforts to persuade him to leave
It was the other little familiarity – that I – felt obliged to – discourage. (68)	Euphemism, scripted non-fluency.	Shows Blanche's well-bred sense of social tact; is the hesitation genuine? Is she really discouraging him or playing hard to get?
I guess you are used to girls that like to be lost. The kind that get lost immediately on the first date! (69)	Conversational implicature, euphemism, Blanche flouts Grice's maxim of manner.	Again, Blanche implies her awareness of Mitch's desire for her and of the courtship rituals they are going through. The word 'lost' is interesting – lost in the sense of socially compromised - but also more literally – lost in an alienating world.
<i>Vouslez-vous couches avec moi ce soir? Vous ne comprenez pas? Ah, quell dommage!</i> (70)	Blanche diverges upwards by using a phrase in a foreign language she knows Mitch won't understand. She also flouts Grice's maxim of manner.	Shows her education, the social gulf between them, and undermines her apparent reluctance to respond to Mitch's 'little familiarity'.
Oh. Light weight alpaca. (70)	Polite back channel behaviour.	Shows how dull Blanche finds Mitch.
Well, you're a tall man and you can carry a good deal of weight without looking awkward. (71)	Blanche conforms to Leech's approbation maxim.	Shows Blanche flattering and indulging Mitch, but she's playing a role.
I said unhand me, sir. (72)	Use of an elaborated code. Anachronistic language.	Reinforces the sense of role-playing; Blanche as a damsel in distress. The literary, archaic language connects her to equally archaic codes of Southern chivalry.
B: Has he talked to you about me? M: Oh – not very much. B: The way you say that I suspect that he has. M: No, he hasn't said much. (73)	Adjacency pairs in the form of question and answer. Scripted non-fluency. Conversational implicature.	Pragmatics more important than semantics. Blanche tries to find out if Stanley has shared Shaw's revelations with Mitch, and, if he has, whether this has influenced his attitude to her. Mitch's hesitation betrays his embarrassment.

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I didn't have a penny last year and so I had to come here for the summer. That's why I have to put up with my sister's husband. (73)	Much simpler and direct language. Shorter sentences. No use of figurative or elaborate language.	Shows greater honesty on Blanche's part, her contempt for Stanley, and the precariousness of her financial position.
Of course there is such a thing as the hostility of – perhaps in some perverse kind of way he – No! To think of it makes me ... (74)	Scripted non-fluency + conversational implicature	Shows Blanche's latent attraction to Stanley which here is literally unvoiced. The dramatic contrast between her indifference towards Mitch and the seeming intensity of her feelings for Stanley is crucial.
You talked to your mother about me? (74)	Blanche flouts Grice's maxim of relevance.	Blanche keeps up the pretence; playing a role again.
I think you have a great capacity for devotion. You will be lonely when she passes on, won't you? (75)	Blanche conforms to Leech's approbation maxim/Lakoff's politeness principle.	Shows Blanche's self-conscious attempts to engage with Mitch's emotional situation.