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## A STUDY OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES IN GIRISH KARNAD'S *Hayavadana*



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**Abstract:**-Various philosophers and linguists have expressed different views on the use of language and have put forward the innovative theories to illustrate the complicated network of meaning. Language is a means of communication and is an essential matter of fact to study the nature of it by the various angles developed by the various scholars of language and literature across the world. Therefore, an attempt is made in this paper to study some of the selected pieces of conversation in Girish Karnad's well-known play *Hayavadana*, by the pragmatic point of view in general and the conversational principles in particular, to dig-out the implied meanings of it. However, the research in this field has already proved that pragmatics is really a significant branch of linguistics to understand the human nature. As the meanings of the utterances vary as the context gets changed; therefore, the pragmatic approach helps to study the deeper/unstated levels of meaning more logically.

**Keywords:**Dramatic Discourse, Pragmatics, Utterance, Conversational Principle, Context, Speech Situation.

### INTRODUCTION

H.P. Grice first introduced the term '*implicature*' in the William James lectures, which he delivered at Harvard University in 1967. According to him, the concept of implicature is essentially a theory about how people use language to get the things done. The study of implicature facilitates the study of meaning not only in oral communication but also in the interpretation of any piece of literature including dramatic discourse. Grice (1975) defines implicature as “a *special, non-conventional inference which is intended by the speaker*”.

Grice introduced the term '*implicature*' basically to explain how, in conversational activity, the speakers mean more than what they actually say. Obviously, the term contrasts with logical consequences and entailment [logical conclusion]. Therefore, the meaning derived from implicature does not involve the meaning, which we try to deduce from 'What is said'. It is where the concept of implicature differs from 'entailment' and 'presupposition'. The unsaid is conveyed non-conventionally via implicature. It requires the mechanism of *interdecine* on the part of the hearer. Thus implicature conveys extra meaning/additional meaning attached to it but not expressed by truth condition of the said expression.

Grice wanted to explain addressers and addressees' cooperative use of an inference in the human linguistic exchange. He argued that an implicature could be predicted after examining the maxims of the cooperative principle and the interpersonal relationships. Gazdar (1979) rightly observes implicature as “a proposition that is implied by the utterance of a sentence in a context even though that proposition is not a part of an entailment of what was actually said”. It is explicit from the above definitions that there is a difference between entailment and implicature. Grice

broadly classified implicatures into two major types such as- Conventional Implicature and Conversational Implicature:

#### 1. Conventional Implicature

In conventional implicature, what is implicated is determined by the conventionality. For example, from the utterance, "The Maratha warriors were brave", one may deduce that the 'Maratha's' were brave in the days of the king Chhatrapati Shivaji in Maharashtra. Here, it is interesting to notice that conventional implicatures are very similar to presuppositions. A conventional implicature does not take into account the four maxims of cooperative principle i.e. quality, quantity, relevance and manner.

#### 2. Conversational Implicature

On the other hand, conversational *implicature* is non-conventional in nature, and is based on the shared knowledge of the speakers and the hearers. It does take into account the maxims of the cooperative principle i.e. quantity, quality, manner and relation. Conversational implicature arises mainly by following three reasons: from the Flouting of Maxims, from the Observance of Maxims and from the Violation of Maxims.

#### Implicatures from the Flouting of Maxims

Grice (1989:33) says that the speakers deliberately flout a conversational maxim to convey an additional meaning which is not expressed literally. In this case, a maxim is flouted for the purpose of getting in conversational implicature by means of something of the nature of a figure of speech. These implicatures arise due to breaching the maxim bluntly. Levinson notes “these inferences are based on the remarkable robustness of the assumption of co-

operation: if someone drastically and dramatically deviates from maxim type behavior, then his utterances are still read as underlying co-operative if this is at all possible” (1983:109). At the level of 'what is said' the speaker seems to have violated some maxims. In this situation, the hearer is expected to go through an extensive inference to arrive at the end. When hearer perceives what is not said, it indicates that the speaker has observed cooperative principle somewhere at deep level. Therefore, via inference mechanism, the hearer succeeds in making out meaning even though the speaker seems to have violated some maxims at the level of 'what is implicated'. Generally, implicatures like these arise from the use of figures of speech like tautology, metaphor, irony, hyperbole etc. Consider the following utterances as example:

i. Women are women.

**ii. War is war.**

**[Grice's example, 1975.rpt.1989:33]**

The words 'women' and 'war' seems to be infringed the maxim of quantity at the surface level 'what is said' and apparently seems to be non- informative but they are informative at level of 'what is implicated'. It is hearer's task to identify the additional content irrespective of the violation of quantity maxim. Let us consider the utterance that is an example of metaphor: 'My house is oven in summer'. Here, the speaker has breached the maxim of quality by the comparison made between the house and oven. But it is easy to find out 'what is said' at the surface level for any hearer because everybody knows that the speaker's house cannot be oven in the true sense. Therefore, he is cooperative at the level of 'what is implicated'. Here, the derived implicature is that the speaker's house gets increasingly hot in summer.

**Implicatures from the Observance of Maxims**

In this case, conversational implicature arises from the observance of Maxims. Surprisingly, the speaker here seems to have observed the maxims but needs to depend on certain assumption. Levinson quotes (1983:104) Grice's example where the speaker is to be observing maxim and implicating more than what is communicated.

A: [to passerby] I have just run out of petrol.  
B: Oh, there is a garage just around the corner.

In the above example, the speaker 'B' implicates that he must be assumed to believe in order to preserve the assumption that he is observing the maxim of relation. In this case, it's not so difficult to calculate meaning since the unstated connection between 'B's' reply and 'A's' remark is so clear that one cannot say that 'B' has violated any maxim in this piece of conversation.

**Implicatures from the Violation of Maxims**

In this case, it is to be noted that the violation may be either deliberate or inadvertent [resulting from the speaker's belief based on wrong or inadequate knowledge or information] or an apparent violation of a maxim which may be explained by the assumption of a clash with another maxim (Grice 1989:30). Consider the following utterance for example:

A: Where does C Live?  
B: Somewhere in the South of France.  
[Grice's example 1975 rpt 1989:32]

In this case, 'B' apparently seems to have violated the sub maxim 'make your contribution as informative as required for the current purpose of the exchange', which falls under the maxim of quantity suggested by Grice. From the 'B's' reply, it is clear that 'B' is not very much sure about the accommodation of 'C'. His unawareness of 'C's' residence compels him to use the word 'somewhere' that seems to be less informative. Supposing, 'B' would have informed any place where 'C' doesn't live, then he would have infringed the second sub maxim 'do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence' which falls under maxim of quality. Thus the word 'somewhere' used by 'B' gives rise to implicature that he doesn't know in which town 'C' lives.

**Girish Karnda's Hayavadana**

Girish Karnad's Hayavadana was first published in 1970. It has won the 'Kamaladevi Award of the Bharatiya Natya Sangh' for the best Indian play of the year. The play revolves around three characters via Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini. Karnad presents a comprehensive picture of the human being in search of perfection and completeness. Opening of the play reflects Indian culture where all good actions begin with prayer to Lord Ganesha. Being a son of Brahmin, Devadatta stands for intelligence. On the other hand, Karnad projects Kapila, as a symbol of power and manliness. The heroin of the play, Padmini, is accountable for the plight of both Devadatta and Kapila. Padmini is projected as a fuel that sets fire between Devadatta and Kapila. The play raises a problem of ownership of love. Karnad illustrates how Padmini's stubborn nature for completeness makes Kapila and Devadatta suffer a lot.

**Analysis**

Let us see the following pieces of conversation which occur in the beginning of the play between Hayavadana and Bhagavata. The play opens with the moving tale of Hayavadana's life. Hayavadana is the product of unequal marriage between a human being and a horse. Bhagavata, the omnipresent narrator of the play, is surprised to see this strange creature. All the actors on the stage are greatly astonished to find it real. The curiosity is too much for them and they exhort Hayavadana to reveal to them how he came to this state. After this, Hayavadana narrates his sad-plight before Bhagavata. He is troubled with his existence mainly because of the uncanny physical deformity.

Hayavadana: What should I do now, Bhagavata Sir?  
What can I do to get rid of this head?

Bhagavata: Hayavadana, what is written on our heads cannot be altered.

Hayavadana: [Slapping himself on the forehead]  
But what a forehead? What a forehead—You must help me to become a complete man, Bhagavata Sir, But how? What can I do?[Long Silence. They think.]  
Bhagavata: Banaras? (P. 9)

In the above passage, the first few questions asked by Hayavadana reveal his extreme crave to get rid of his

horse-face. He also presents the face that his personal life is without any blot or stigma. It is also revealed from Hayavadan's speech that he has visited many places, a number of sages but nothing helped him. Therefore, Hayavadana begs Bhagavata for a solution or remedy to this incurable problem by asking questions. The questions, 'Bhagavata Sir, But how, What can I do?', asked by Hayavadana are 'Wh-questions' and are an open ended. 'Wh-questions' are usually asked to enquire something or to gather information from the hearer. These kinds of questions demand at least one sentence. Here, in this context of the play, these questions are certainly expected to have comprehensive clarification for Hayavadana's intense urge, which seems to be insoluble and unsatisfied. Therefore, here, Bhagavata is definitely expected to present the various remedies elaborately for Hayavadana's consolation and satisfaction. Hence, Bhagavata's answer having single word 'Banaras' is inadequate reply on the part of the hearer, Hayavadana. The word 'Banaras' fails to impart the full meaning. So, apparently, Bhagavata has infringed the maxim of quantity and we, on the ground, feel that he is not cooperative in his conversational act. However, Bhagavaat, is cooperative at the deeper level of communication. Bhagavata, at implicit level, wants to suggest Hayavadana that 'Banaras' is a holy place of pilgrimage in India. It is believed that people from different parts of India visit and revisit this place to get their problems solved, to get salvation, to lessen the sin committed by them in their previous lives, to be blessed by this sacred place etc. Hence, the hidden intention of the single word 'Banaras' is that the 'Banaras' is the place where Hayavadana can be untied from his everlasting and vexed problem.

Let us see another example of conversation which occurs between Kapila, Devadatta and Padmini when they are on the way to Ujjain. The speech situation is that Kapila and Devadatta are close friends. Kapila is frequent intentional visitor of Devadatta's house. Kapila is wrestler and handsomely built man. Padmini gets fascinated towards Kapila's strong body and her interest in Kapila makes him [Kapila] fall in love with Padmini. This intangible love affair is clearly sensed by Padmini's husband, Devadatta.

Kapila: Here you are. The Fortunate lady's flower.

Padmini: And why a 'fortunate Lady', pray?

Kapila: Because it has all the marks of marriage a woman puts on. They yellow on the petals-then red round patch at the bottom of the petals-like on your forehead-then-here-that thin saffron line-like in the parting of your hair-Then uhm...oh yes-her near the stem of row of black dots-like a necklace of black beads-----

Padmini: What imagination! [To Devadatta] You should put it in your poetry. It is good for a simile.

Devadatta: Shall we go? It's quite late. (P. 26-27)

On the way to Ujjain, Padmini notices a tree covered with flowers, Kapila tells her that the tree is called 'The Fortunate Lady's Flower' in the above utterance. Padmini asks the reason 'why Fortunate lady's pray?' Kapila replies in a poetic way. Padmini admires Kapila for his imagination and poetic words and advises Devadatta to use

these lines in his poetry. So, the utterance, 'What imagination! You should put it in your poetry', is an offer made by Padmini. As we know that an offer is either accepted by saying 'yes' or is rejected by saying 'no'. But, Devadatta, instead one of these two possible replies, interrogates Padmini as 'shall we go?'. Devadatta's reply seems to be irrelevant at surface level and, therefore, he seems to uncooperative with Padmini. But Devadatta's interrogative question 'shall we go?', though seemingly incoherent, has more than one implications. First, Devadatta comes to know about the secret developing love like fire between Padmini and Kapila. Secondly, Devadatta is from Brahmin family known for intelligence and poetry. In addition, Devadatta has taught poetry to Kapila. Therefore, how Devadatta can tolerate the poetic domination of Kapila who is his rival in love. So the question, 'shall we go?' asked by Devadatta has infringed the maxim of relevance. But at the deeper level, Devadatta is cooperative through implications. It is implied that Devadatta does not want Kapila to be praised by Padmini in his presence. Similarly, he does not want to be belittled, though not directly by Kapila. Hence, throwing this unexpected and irrelevant question, Devadatta also wants to change Kapila's subject.

#### CONCLUSION

The analysis of the selected passages, by the point of view of the conversational principle, reveals that the maxims demand the interlocutors' extra contextual knowledge. Of course, the context of utterance and the situation help the interlocutors' to connect their apparently irrelevant utterances into a coherent discourse. In the text, the author makes use of several references and the hearer and the reader make best use of these references and attempt to establish and to maintain the connections between the utterances.

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