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Pragma-discourse Study of Conversational Implicatures in 'Death of a Salesman'

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Abstract

Pragmatics plays an important role to reach at the intentions of the speaker and underlying meanings of discourse. In dramatic discourse, conversation goes through like real life incidents and situations so dramatic text is more appropriate for the pragmatic analysis. In this given research the researcher has found out the conversational implicatures by applying Grice's theory of cooperative principles on the play 'Death of a salesman'. First it studies how the writer deviates from the cooperative principles to give implicatures and then how the writer reaches at his goal by giving conversational implicatures in the text. The nature of this research is descriptive. The data has been collected from the certain play and this research has carried out qualitative method. The results have been shown through discussion. It has been finalized that implicatures activate the plot and action of the play. Sometimes the writer/speaker avoids giving direct statement that can be a threat or impolite behavior towards interlocutor and at many times writer/speaker manipulate the audience/listener through implicatures. Moreover implicatures enhance the beauty of discourse and create effect.

1 Introduction

Man is a social animal and living in a society every human being requires a language to communicate with others. Every language has many constituents which formulate the language to make it meaningful. The scientific study of language is known as linguistics. Different people speak different languages so it is difficult to understand the literature comprehensively without having the knowledge of particular language.

Linguistics is the scientific study which deals with the study of language that plays a special role in man's life. In the domain of linguistics, Pragmatics is a sub branch of discourse which deals with different aspects of language in use. There are many activities depend upon linguistics like practical criticism and literary discussions (Hough, 1969). Pragmatics explores the intended meanings of discourse. Pragmatic theories prepare the base for critical analysis and reach the underlying meanings of text. Pragmatics describes the physical and psychological strands of language and investigates any piece of discourse with the assistance of thought and time (Cook, 1994). Literary criticism is a subjective approach towards literature as critics give biased analysis of text but pragmatics is an objective and unbiased approach to comprehend the text.

The main focus of Pragmatics is speech act theory, which tells that how people do things with words (Austin, 1962). Pratt was the first person who applied the speech act theory to literary discourse. This research shows that how interlocutors communicate with one another in a conversation. This research is also increased the interest of other researchers in this field.

In 1975, Grice presented the theory of cooperative principles. According to this theory, conversation plays as a role of collaborative activity that asks to follow certain rules for successful conversation. In 1983, Leech added the politeness principles in this theory. In which he argues that interlocutors demand polite behave to one another, as people respect each other. Moreover, Sperber and Wilson's Relevance theory describes that people should be relevant in their communication. In 1995, Grundy said that pragmatics is an effort to recognize the natural language and he also presented some methods for the application of pragmatic theories.

In view of Grice, there must be a link between reader and writer to establish comprehension of the text and cooperative principles are appropriate to create the reader/writer connection. Writers should follow the four maxims (Quantity, Quality, Manner and Relation) to show cooperation towards readers (Grice, 1975). According to Grice, deviation of these maxims leads towards implicatures and mostly writers deliberately flouts the maxims to give underlying or hidden meanings but sometimes it occurs unintentionally.

Dramatic discourse is more near to real life discourse because of its dialogic form. In dramatic discourse expressions occur with full force in action and pragmatic analysis makes it more interesting for readers. Van Dijk worked on pragmatics and he floated the idea 1st time that Grice's model of Cooperative principles can be applied on literary text. Van Dijk focuses on two level discourses in conversation. One is author to reader and the other is character to character discourse.

1.2 Cooperative Principles

The paper 'logic and conversation' by Grice elaborates that the formal rules of language use governed the conversational utterances. The conversation 'talk' should be cooperative and the participants of conversation engage in activity for the same purpose so they must be accommodative to each other (Grice, 1975). In any interaction, it is the genuine expectation of a speaker that listener must pay attention and vice versa. Grice 1989 as cited in (Lindblom, 2001) describes that "make your conversational contribution such as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged". For the purpose of being cooperative both the participants must follow the rules which he calls 'Cooperative Principles'. Grice describes that these cooperative principles are applicable on the conversation which have these three features:

- a) Same purpose of conversation
- b) Participants must be conditional to each other
- c) Continuation or discontinuation of conversation based on the will of both participants

According to Lindblom (2001) Grice has given four maxims which are called Cooperative Principles.

- i) The Maxim of Quality (QLM): There shouldn't be the chances of deception in the conversation. What participant says must be true with enough evidence.
- ii) The Maxim of Quantity (QTM): Participants of conversation should be aware of the length of their turn. Contribution shouldn't be so much lengthy or short.
- iii) The Maxim of Manner (MNR): The contribution in the conversation must be clear and in proper order. It shouldn't be ambiguous and confusing.
- iv) The Maxim of Relation (RLM): Don't be irrelevant. Participants should try to stick to the topic.

According to Grice (1975) non-fulfillment of Conversational Maxims takes place in four situations when participants of discourse fail to follow the maxims; violating: Intentional deviation, Avoid a Clash: deviation of one maxim to follow other, Opt Out: having the right to be silent and Flout: Exploitation of maxim.

1.3 Implicatures

Deviation of maxims gives rise to Implicatures. Paul Grice is the 1st who introduced the concept of Implicatures in his essay 'Logic and Conversation' (Lindblom, 2001). The term 'implicature' is related to the implied meanings. What speaker say and what hearer perceive by the utterance. There are always two types of meanings can be perceived by an utterance, surface meaning and deeper meaning. Intended meanings are the subject of pragmatics. According to Levinson (1983) "The apparently radical difference between logic and natural language seem to fade away of pragmatic implications are taken into account". Semantics is the study of surface meanings whereas implicatures are the deeper or contextual meanings. There is no connection between syntactic or semantic meanings with implicatures. Yule (2020) describes implicatures in these words "additional conveyed meanings".

Grice (1975) divides implicatures into two types; conventional implicatures and conversational implicatures. Conventional implicatures give the conventional meanings which are not changeable. It relies on the meanings of the words spoken by the speaker. Conversational implicatures relies on the inferences and depends upon the context in which utterance takes place.

1.4 Conversational Implicatures

Conversational implicatures are the intended meanings which speaker wants to convey and receiver perceived according to his/her own capability in an exchange. "Information which is implied in a statement but cannot be derived from applying logical inference techniques to it" (Baker & Ellece, 2011). According to Leech and Short (1983) implicatures are the 'extra meanings' which speaker actually wants to convey but restricted due to certain situations and reasons. Implicatures is the way of making more inferences of an utterance. There are some properties of conversational implicatures:

- **Calculability:** "The more or less transparent derivation of the inference from the premises that include the assumption of rational conversational activity." (Levinson, 1983).
- **Non- Conventionality:** Meaning is conventional but it is taken from pragmatic interactions (Lewis, 2008).
- **Indeterminacy:** "Conversational Implicatures are often a disjunction of several possible interpretations of an utterance and is often indeterminate"(Hirschberg, 1985) .
- **Non- detachability:** Some expressions have same content with coded Implicatures.
- **Re-Inforceability:** According to Levinson (1995) "It is often possible to add explicitly what is anyway implicated with less sense of redundancy than would be the case if one repeated the coded content".
- **Cancelability:** Conversational Implicatures are cancelable due to different inference and content.

1.5 Statement of the Purpose

Arthur Miller has been studied in many ways. Many stylistic and artistic analyses have been done on the writings of Arthur Miller. In the field of research, there is also a space to analyze Arthur Millers' writings in pragmatic perspective. That's a main reason to study 'Death of a Salesman' by applying Grice's modal of implicatures. The purpose of the present research is to explore limitless hidden meanings of an utterance. Pragmatic theories give many ways to identify the features of literary text.

Moreover, in literary discourse, writers use the more complex structure and indirect sentences which are not easy to comprehend by non-natives and sometimes natives as well. The present research is to explore the way of easy access to the exact meanings of literary discourse by applying pragmatic knowledge.

1.6 Significance of Study in Teaching Language

The process of decoding a message is a highly important to learn and teach foreign language. By the discourse and pragmatics the functional importance of language can be explained (Hallidayan). In 1989, Cook presented functional importance of language in detail. Hallidayan expressed that language can be shown as both function and form in detail (cited in Cook, 1989). For learning a foreign language or L2, to pronounce proper sentence with grammatically correct accent is not everything and is less important than language function. The current study aims to connect the form to function in a literary discourse and it enables the learners to know about this link. The significance of pragmatic theories in learning and teaching L2 can be understood by the model of language user's needs by Cook (1989:42).

1.7 Research Questions

- 1: How can Arthur Miller's dialogues be comprehended in a better way by applying Grice's theory of maxims?
- 2: What are the ways of inferences in the play of 'Death of Salesman'?
- 3: What functions do implicatures perform in the text?

2 Methodology

This is a descriptive research and to reach at generalization deductive reasoning has been taken. This is a text based study and all the events already have taken place. The researcher has delimited the study for pragmatic analysis by applying conversational implicatures on the dialogues of two characters as a variable. The independent variables are situations, context, relationships between characters, social and psychological factors.

2.1 Method

This research has been carried out qualitative method. Findings have been showed by using the words of thematic exploration. This research is qualitative and researcher has applied Grice's model of Conversational Implicatures on the selective dialogues of a character for interpretation.

2.2 Selection of Sample

This is a text analysis so the researcher has studied the whole text but it is impossible to analyze whole text in a single study. Some selective dialogues of a character have been taken for detailed analysis. Data has been selected through random sampling technique. The researcher has randomly selected dialogues of Willy Loman, leading character of the play with his wife Linda. The researcher has given line numbers to every dialogue according to own ease.

3 Data Analysis

This chapter comprises on data analysis. The researcher has been taken 1st three dialogues/conversations of the leading character, Willy Loman, from the play 'Death of a Salesman' and explained in the view of Grice's theory of Cooperative Principles. Context of every sample has also been given.

3.1 Text: (Line # 1-20)

[Linda: (hearing Willy outside the.....

WILLY: These goddam arch supports are killing me.]

Context:

The first dialogue opens with the conversation of Willy and Linda about his sudden arrival at home. He has just come back after hectic travelling. He is very tired and upset. He is distressed due to an accident on road during his travelling and also worried about his nostalgic condition. This is very first conversation between them when act one starts.

Flouts on Maxims & Implicatures in sample

Line No.	Flout on Maxim	Implicature
L.2,4,6	Quality (not true)	Willy Loman’s suffocated nature
L.2,6,12	Relation(irrelevant)	Change of subject
L.8,10,12	Quantity(more informative)	Irrelevant
L.14,16	Quantity(more informative)	Hides the realities
L.18 & 20	Relation(irrelevant)	Change of subject

“Willy: It’s all right. I came back.” (2)

“Willy: No, nothing happened.” (4)

“Willy: I said nothing happened. Didn’t you hear me?” (6)

Maxim of Quality is violated in L.2, 4, and 6 when Linda asks again and again same questions from Willy about incident, so, he irritates and flouts the maxim of quality by telling a lie. He flouts Maxim of Relation in line 2, 6, and 12 () by showing his bad attitude. He does not want to talk to anyone so when Linda asks questions he gets annoyed and changes the topic. But soon he realizes that he can’t escape from this situation as well as reality, so he decides to share his problem with her wife. The implicature is that he intends to turn the course of conversation towards his desired topic.

“WILLY: No, it’s me, it’s me..... keep my mind to it.” (14)

“WILLY: No, I see everything..... Yonkers.” (16)

L.14 and 16, flout the Maxim of Quantity when he accepts the truth and gives a lot of explanation to Linda about his depression. In L. 18 and 20,

“Willy: I just got back from Florida.” (18)

“Willy: I’ll start out in the morning.....killing me.” (20)

Willy violates the maxim of relation by suddenly changing the topic to blame the car company and other related things. He just wants to escape from reality. In his distressed situation, Willy again flouts the maxims of quantity and relation further in his conversation with Linda. This is the only time in the play when he is busy with more than one interlocutor at one and the same time. His discourse shows him with best tired mind. His responses are slow and are less collaborated. Somewhere, due to boredom, he flouts the Gricean maxims. This deviation is partly motivated by his relationship with his listeners and partly by the existing conditions. To show and impose his dominance, Willy violates the conversation rules in many places.

3.2 Text: (Line # 1-20)

[LINDA: Well, dear, life is a casting off. It’s always that way

WILLY (*with pity and resolve*):When he smiled at one of them their faces lit up. When he walked down the street...]

Context

In this sample, conversation between Linda and Willy about their son Biff, who is not successful in his life and always remains nervous to take his life’s decisions. Willy has a lot of expectations from him but Biff could not fulfill these expectations.

Flout on Maxims & Implicatures in sample 2

Line No.	Flout on Maxims	Implicatures
L.02,12, 14	Relation (irrelevant)	Change of subject
L. 4-8	Quantity (prolixity)	Obsessive expression
L. 6-10	Manner (obscure)	Loss of faith on Biff’s behavior
L. 16,26, 28	Relation (irrelevant)	Change the subject
L. 18,20	Quality (rhetorical figure) Quantity (more informative)	Metaphor, Willy’s affection for Biff Disappointment with Biff

Willy is deeply annoyed on Biff’s words and he flouts the maxim of Quality in L.02,

“WILLY: No, no, some people- some people accomplish something. Did Biff say anything after I went this morning?” (2)

when he compares the achievements of others people with Biff. In fact, Willy was not expecting such a blunt refusal from Biff on the spot. Rather, he expects more pleasant words from his son Biff because he wishes to attain the attention and love from Biff.

“WILLY: When the hell did I lose my temper? I simply asked him if he was making any money. Is that a criticism?” (4)

L.4 is a violation of quantity principle by Lakoff and Leech who assert the people to be polite in their communication for social relationship.

“WILLY: How can he find himself on a farm.....thirty-five dollars a week! ” (8)

Willy’s response ranging from L.4-8 flouts the maxim of Quantity and creates prolixity by saying too much. The implicating force of prolixity shows the intensity of his feelings. He disowns his son and breaks up all his relationship by saying that he has spent a lot of time in his life at farm but he could not find anything.

“WILLY: Biff Loman is lost.....he’s not lazy.” (18)

L.18 is ironical so violates Quality maxims. CP demands to avoid giving untrue information. Willy calls Biff ‘so lazy and so untended’ and doesn’t want to do anything. The truth value of Willy’s words needs to be testified by ‘model of reality’. We can infer that Willy is not in a state of recognizing his true son hence giving wrong opinion. The violation of Quantity Maxim reflects his tension and conflict with Biff.

“WILLY (*with pity and resolve*): I’ll see him in the morning; walked down the street” (20)

Willy continues the flouting of Quantity maxim in L.18-20 by showing his resentment at Biff’s laziness and expressing his split relationship with him. The implicature can be inferred that he is completely dismayed rather shocked at Biff’s heartlessness and attitude.

3.3 Text: (Line # 1-25)

[LINDA (*without hesitation*): Two hundred gross.....

WILLY: I don’t know the reason for it, but they just pass me by. I’m not noticed.]

Context

At present scene Willy is in kitchen and suffers in nostalgic condition. When he is a young sales man and Linda is young beautiful lady. In the beginning, Willy exaggerates everything in front of his family about his job and status.

Line No.	Flout on Maxim	Implicatures
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L.2,4,11	Relation (irrelevant)	Change of subject
L.2	Quality (untrue information)	Lame excuses in front of his Linda
L.6,8	Quantity (less talk)	Hiding reality from Linda.
L.13,18	Manner(without order)	Anger at situation & recognizing his own worth
L.15,17 & 19	Relation(Irrelevant)	Change of subject
L.21,25	Quantity (hyperbole)	Exaggeration of his personality
L.23,25	Quality (rhetorical question)	Suspension of his originality

Flout on Maxims & Implicatures in sample 3

Willy exploits Gricean maxims in his talk with Linda. She tells him about different expenditure of house especially about debt which they owed in form of things. Willy shows his indifference with all this and blames others.

He is deliberately ignoring the maltreatment what his wife are sensing. The question arises if he is too innocent or senseless to feel what is going on with him or just pretending in front of Linda. L.4 violates the Maxim of Relation through change the question. Pragmatics relies more upon the contextual background of the utterances in which they occur.

She argues these words while Willy is just pretending that he feels himself in a burden and worried about owe. But in case of Willy, he mostly remains impetuous and rash with her in play.

“WILLY: There’s such an undercurrent in him..... I left this morning?” (6)

“WILLY: How can he find himself thirty-five dollars a week!” (8)

L.6 and 8 break the Maxim of Quantity by being too less talk in form of answer more than required and justifies wrongly this negligence as deliberate carelessness. L.11 flouts the Maxim of Relation as he turns the course of the discussion towards debts and leaves the topic incomplete. Willy is angry and in rashness, his utterance is ambiguous and flouts the maxim of manner in L.13. L.19 flouts the maxims of manner and relation to show his dominance and importance not even in home but also in outside’s work.. He again flouts the maxim of relation in L.23 to show his inner weakness.

“WILLY: I know it when I walk in. They seem to laugh at me.” (23)

“WILLY: I don’t know the reason for it, but they just pass me by. I’m not noticed.” (25)

In L.23 and 25, he flouts Quality through sarcasm that he does not aware by reason of hate from people towards him. In reality, he knows that why people hate him and why don't give response to him. He asks her about his originality for his indifference behavior from people. But Linda consoles him and tells that he is wrong and people like and love him. Willy has abandoned his responsibilities as head of house but he still expects gentle treatment from his family and people. CP demands to elude from giving untrue information.

4 Conclusion

A coherent discourse is established and by applying these theories communicative competence of the students and common people is also increased. Samples from Willy's dialogues are analyzed and comprehended by applying Grice's model help to comprehend Willy's speeches well. At pragmatic level, this study explains the flouts taking place in the conversation and their effect on characters, action, plot and interpersonal relation. In case of Stylistics, it is helpful in explaining the parts of the text which we might not otherwise have understood. The linguistic features of the text are linked directly to the meaning and by using a systematic analytical technique we can ensure that our interpretation is explicit. Most of the violation of maxims by Willy in many place, are deliberate and intentional to convey his attitudinal meaning either to the listeners or to the audience or both at once. The breaking of cooperative principles is also a part of his personal discourse style. It is a reflection of his complex and highly imaginative mind.

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Annexure A

Linda: (hearing Willy outside the bedroom, calls with trepidation): Willy!	1
Willy: It's all right. I came back.	2
Linda: why? What happened? (Slight pause) Did something happen, Willy?	3
Willy: No, nothing happened.	4
LINDA: You didn't smash the car, did you?	5
WILLY (with casual irritation): I said nothing happened. Didn't you hear me?	6
LINDA: Don't you feel well?	7
WILLY: I'm tired to the death. (The flute has faded away. He sits on the bed beside her, a little numb.) I couldn't make it. I just couldn't make it, Linda.	8
LINDA (very carefully, delicately): Where were you all day? You look terrible.	9
WILLY: I got as far as a little above Yonkers. I stopped for a cup of coffee. Maybe it was the coffee.	10
LINDA: What?	11
WILLY (after a pause): I suddenly couldn't drive any more. The car kept going off onto the shoulder, y'know?	12
LINDA (helpfully): Oh. Maybe it was the steering again. I don't think Angelo knows the Studebaker.	13
WILLY: No, it's me, it's me. Suddenly I realize I'm goin' sixty miles an hour and I don't remember the last five minutes. I'm— I can't seem to — keep my mind to it.	14
LINDA: Maybe it's your glasses. You never went for your new glasses.	15
WILLY: No, I see everything. I came back ten miles an hour. It took me nearly four hours from Yonkers.	16
LINDA (resigned): Well, you'll just have to take a rest, Willy, you can't continue this way.	17
WILLY: I just got back from Florida.	18
LINDA: But you didn't rest your mind. Your mind is overactive, and the mind is what counts, dear.	19
WILLY: I'll start out in the morning. Maybe I'll feel better in the morning. (<i>She is taking off his shoes.</i>) These goddam arch supports are killing me.	20

Annexure B

LINDA: Well, dear, life is a casting off. It’s always that way.	1
WILLY: No, no, some people- some people accomplish something. Did Biff say anything after I went this morning?	2
LINDA: You shouldn’t have criticised him, Willy, especially after he just got off the train. You mustn’t lose your temper with him.	3
WILLY: When the hell did I lose my temper? I simply asked him if he was making any money. Is that a criticism?	4
LINDA: But, dear, how could he make any money?	5
WILLY (<i>worried and angered</i>): There’s such an undercurrent in him. He became a moody man. Did he apologize when I left this morning?	6
LINDA: He was crestfallen, Willy. You know how he admires you. I think if he finds himself, then you’ll both be happier and not figureht anymore.	7
WILLY: How can he find himself on a farm? Is that a life? A farm hand? In the beginning, when he was young, I thought, well, a young man, it’s good for him to tramp around, take a lot of different jobs. But it’s more than ten years now and he has yet to make thirty-five dollars a week!	8
LINDA: He’s finding himself, Willy.	9
WILLY: Not finding yourself at the age of thirty-four is a disgrace!	10
LINDA: Shh!	11
WILLY: The trouble is he’s lazy, goddammit!	12
LINDA: Willy, please!	13
WILLY: Biff is a lazy bum!	14
LINDA: They’re sleeping. Get something to eat. Go on down.	15
WILLY: Why did he come home? I would like to know what brought him home.	16
LINDA: I don’t know. I think he’s still lost, Willy. I think he’s very lost.	17
WILLY: Biff Loman is lost. In the greatest country in the world a young man with such — personal attractiveness, gets lost. And such a hard worker. There’s one thing about Biff — he’s not lazy.	18
LINDA: Never.	19
WILLY (<i>with pity and resolve</i>): I’ll see him in the morning; I’ll have a nice talk with him. I’ll get him a job selling. He could be big in no time. My God! Remember how they used to follow him around in high school? When he smiled at one of them their faces lit up. When he walked down the street... (<i>He loses himself in reminiscences.</i>)	20

Annexure C

LINDA (<i>without hesitation</i>): Two hundred gross. That's... (<i>She figureures.</i>)	1
WILLY: The trouble was that three of the stores were half-closed for inventory in Boston. Otherwise I would a broke records.	2 3
LINDA: Well, it makes seventy dollars and some pennies. That's very good.	4
WILLY: What do we owe?	5
LINDA: Well, on the first there's sixteen dollars on the refrigerator.	6
WILLY: Why sixteen?	7
LINDA: Well, the fan belt broke, so it was a dollar eighty.	8
WILLY: But it's brand new.	9
LINDA: Well, the man said that's the way it is. Till they work themselves in, y'know. (<i>They move through the wall-line into the kitchen.</i>)	10
WILLY: I hope we didn't get stuck on that machine.	11
LINDA: They got the biggest ads of any of them!	12
WILLY: I know, it's a fine machine. What else?	13
LINDA: Well, there's nine-sixty for the washing machine. And for the vacuum cleaner there's three and a half due on the fifteenth. Then the roof, you got twenty-one dollars remaining.	14
WILLY: It doesn't leak, does it?	15
LINDA: No, they did a wonderful job. Then you owe Frank for the carburetor.	16
WILLY: I'm not going to pay that man! That goddam Chevrolet, they ought to prohibit the manufacture of that car!	17
LINDA: Well, you owe him three and a half. And odds and ends, comes to around a hundred and twenty dollars by the fifteenth.	18
WILLY: A hundred and twenty dollars! My God, if business don't pick up I don't know what I'm gonna do!	19
LINDA: Well, next week you'll do better.	20
WILLY: Oh, I'll knock 'em dead next week. I'll go to Hartford. I'm very well liked in Hartford. You know, the trouble is, Linda, people don't seem to take to me.	21
LINDA: Oh, don't be foolish.	22
WILLY: I know it when I walk in. They seem to laugh at me.	23
LINDA: Why? Why would they laugh at you? Don't talk that way, Willy.	24
WILLY: I don't know the reason for it, but they just pass me by. I'm not noticed.	25