
The Conversational Implicatures in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*: A Study

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Abstract:

The present research paper aims to study and analyze conversational implicatures in the novel *The Inheritance of Loss*, which was printed in 2006 and won the Man Booker Prize in the same year. She has used magic and socio-cultural realism techniques in her novels. *The Inheritance of Loss* requires background details on two major accurate movements in India. The first is British colonial rule, and the final is Indian independence. At the end of the 16th century, the British directed to challenge the Portuguese trade monopoly with Asia. This research paper aims to discover and analyze the various layers of meanings in fictional discourse and study the literary text from a pragmatic perspective. *Communication* is a social activity that conveys the different traits of human nature, including anger, affection, emotion, and intentions. Every utterance has a particular purpose behind it. If the purpose is fulfilled, then only the communication will be successful.

Keywords: Implicature, Pragmatics, anger, affection, emotion, and intention.

The *Inheritance of Loss* traverses the lives of characters trapped in India's class system, including the lower and upper classes. The characters' dreams are carried in the novel, along with their

eventual dream of immigrating to America and escaping their homeland's rigid caste system. The narrative is set in the 1980s in Kalimpong, located in northern India near Darjeeling. The prominent personality is Sai, a seventeen-year-old girl living with her grandfather, a judge. The Judge is an educated gentleman who attended Cambridge University but has been depraved in social situations due to the country's political disturbance. He carries the weight of having forsaken his wife, so he feels he is paying off his guilt by permitting his granddaughter, Sai, to live with him after her parents die. Gyan is Sai's tutor and boyfriend. Other principal characters are the Judge's Cook and his son, Biju. Biju went to America and worked illegally in kitchens in New York City.

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that examines linguistic meaning concerning context. While analyzing a speaker's meaning, more than the literal meaning of words and phrases must be interpreted. Context plays an essential role in understanding a speaker's meaning in an absolute sense. Context refers to the conversation's linguistic, physical, and social aspects. The speaker and listener depend on many shared assumptions and expectations for successful communication. In investigating these assumptions and expectations, pragmatics explains more conveyed meaning than said or written. Conversational Implicature in the novel "The Inheritance of Loss," selected for the study, is analyzed in the light of Paul Grice's theory of 'Conversational Implicature.'

Conversational analysis is a vital, active, and developing area in studying language, literature, and communicational varieties. As communication is an interpersonal phenomenon, it has two main functions- encoding and decoding the messages, without which the communication process is incomplete. Communication can get crushed if receivers' addressees fail to decode the message correctly. Though literature reflects society and culture, it is also a predominant source of language learning. Therefore, studying these novels in the light of conversational implicatures theory can give the reader a deep insight into them, resulting in an overall understanding of their characters and events.

The theory of Implicature is one of the unique phenomena in

language study. It is a core concept in pragmatics. It has two significant implications. First, it helps to articulate more than what is said, and second, it is a paradigmatic phenomenon in pragmatics as it deals with the meanings of the utterances in the given context.

H. P. Grice first introduced the concept of implicatures. Like other phenomena, implicatures do not have any historical preamble. It is just a critical term that Grice proposed in Kulham James lectures delivered at Harvard in 1967. Grice's early notion of conversational implicatures is similar to the concept of sign in structuralism, which is structural linguistics, where the meaning depends upon the sets of conversations. Structural scholars believe a sentence's meaning depends on a sign's appearance.

The Conversation Selected for Study:

The Cook said: "When I joined the household ... She was a great lady and never raised her voice to the servants. How much he loved her! It was such a deep attachment; itto look upon." "Did he love her so very much?" Sai was astonished.

"He must have," said the Cook. However, they said he did not show it." "Maybe he did not?" she then suggested.

"Bite your tongue, you evil girl. Take your words back!" shouted the Cook. "Of course, he loved her." "How did the servants know, then?"

The Cook thought a bit, thought of his wife. "True," he said. "Nobody knew, but no one said anything in those days ... not just the way of the movies-which is all you know. You are a very foolish girl. The greatest love is love that's never shown." "You say anything that suits you."

Conversational Passage (p. 87)

U1- When I joined the household ... made a cruel man out of your grandfather. She was a great lady and never raised her voice to the servants. How much he loved her! It was such a deep attachment; it turned one's stomach, for it was too much for anybody else to look upon."

U2- Did he love her so very much?"

U3- Must have," said the Cook. "But they said he did not show it." "Maybe he did not?"

U4- Bite your tongue, you evil girl. Take your words back!" shouted the Cook. "Of course, he loved her."

U5- How did the servants know, then?

U6- True," he said. "Nobody knew, but no one said anything in those days...not just the way of the movies-which is all you know. You are a very foolish girl. The greatest love is love that's never shown." "You say anything that suits you."

Speech Situation and Speech Event

The abovementioned incident, over Ppassage, is significant in Sai's life. The conversation is held between Sai, the Cook, and the Judge. When Sai becomes interested in other people's love affairs, she asks the Cook about the Judge's wife (Nimi). She says she was a great lady, and the Judge greatly loved her. The Cook then remembers the real story: the Judge did not like his wife at all, and she was mad. She had been the daughter of a rich man, who had only allowed her to marry the Judge because he was in the Indian Civil Service.

Implicature Analysis of the Passage

As mentioned above, this incident occurs when Cook tries to make his employer out to be better than he is. However, his thoughts about what happened introduce the injustice done to Nimi and the theme of misogyny that will run throughout the tragedy of her life. Here, the Cook calls her mad when, in reality, she has been abused by the Judge. In this U-1, the Cook's realization of the death of their grandmother is a glaring example of a particularized implicature. This implies that the Cook has much experience working for the Judge, and the second implication is that his utterance is an indirect speech act by which he informs the Judge that she is a great lady. It understands that his servant status is very much ingrained in him. It shows how he has to work hard to have a better life in America. Cook asked in U-2 is a fine example of a memorable conversation implicature; it implies that Cook feels closer to Sai, who works for Sai's grandfather and often treats her like a daughter. She becomes surprised about his support and care. U3- The Cook again shouted at her; it implied respect, recognition, and reflection. It implies that the interaction between Cook and her grandparents shows that respect is essential in creating a situation where everyone can see the humanity in each other. He

utters the word 'evil girl,' a dazzling example of a particularized implicature. Then, the Judge directly asks question U-4, suggesting that the servant knows everything about her family. Then the Cook replies U-5. It is an example of generalized Implicature; here, the Cook seems curious rather than judgmental, so he immediately feels at fault. When he continually listens and never interrupts anyone, This utterance violates the maxim of relevance by the Judge and Sai. It reveals the tragedy of servants; their silence is considered a sign of respect. The present conversation generally throws light on the kind of treatment the Cook got at this house. This conversation indicates the dominating and adamant nature of the Judge.

The Conversation Selected for Study:

She turned reluctantly to its pages; it had been a long time since they had looked at physics adequately. "If two objects, one weighing... and the other weighing... are dropped from the leaning tower of Pisa, at which time and at what speed will they fall to the ground?" "You are in an unpleasant mood," she said, yawning with luxury to indicate other, better options.

He pretended he had not heard her. Then he yawned, too, despite himself. She yawned again, elaborately like a lion, letting it bloom forward.

"Bored by physics?" she asked, encouraged by the apparent reconciliation.

"No. Not at all."

"Why are you yawning then?"

"BECAUSE I AM BORED TO DEATH BY YOU THAT IS WHY."

Stunned silence.

"I am not interested in Christmas!" he shouted. "Why do you celebrate Christmas? You are Hindu and do not celebrate Id or Guru Nanak's birthday or even Durga Puja or Dussehra or Tibetan New Year." She considered it: Why? She always had. Not because of the con- vent, her hatred of it was so deep, but..." You are like a slave; that is what you are, running after the West, embarrassing yourself. It is because of people like you that we never get anywhere." Stung by his unexpected venom, "No," she said, "that is not "Then what?" it."

Conversational Passage (p. 163)

U1-"If two objects, one weighing... and the other weighing... are dropped from the leaning tower of Pisa, at which time and at what speed will they fall to the ground?" "You are in an unpleasant mood," she said

U2- Bored by physics?" she asked.

U3- "No, not at all." "Why are you yawning, then?" "BECAUSE I AM BORED TO DEATH BY YOU THAT IS WHY."

U4- "I am not interested in Christmas!" he shouted. "Why do you celebrate Christmas? You are Hindu and do not celebrate Id or Guru Nanak's birthday or even Durga Puja or Dussehra or Tibetan New Year."

U5-...."You are like a slave; that is what you are, running after the West, embarrassing yourself. It is because of people like you that we never get anywhere." Stung by his unexpected venom, "No," she said, "that is not "Then what?" it."

Speech Situation and Speech Event:

The above conversation is held between Sai and Sai's twenty-year-old Nepali math tutor, though their relationship blooms into a romance. Gyan begins the novel as naïve as Sai, but eventually, he matures due to the GNLf movement in Kalimpong. He recognizes that he shares many of their complaints and concerns and marches in protest with them. One day, Gyan arrives at Cho Oyu, restless and moody. The house's luxury angers him, and he must walk a long way in the cold for such a small amount of money. Sai comments on his lateness, and he becomes annoyed with her. She begins to talk about the Christmas party, but he ignores her and opens the physics book. Gyan, now fueled by a sense of authority and superiority gained at the protest, begins to realize some of the unfairness in his circumstances: first, that he is forced to take this job, and second, that he must walk two hours for extremely minimal pay.

Implicature Analysis of the Passage:

Sai opened the conversation. She reluctantly turned book pages in her U-1, 2, and 3 and asked physics questions. It was a long time since they had looked adequately at physics. This is an outstanding example of a particularized implicature because he ignores her question. After all, what happened to him is not mentioned

in the context, but the particular implication of his utterance can be that he might have become confused and was bored by physics. In the U-3 No. Not at all. This is an excellent example of a scalar implicature by which he insinuates; it implies that he yells at her that he is bored by her. He shouts that she should not even celebrate Christmas. He says she is embarrassing herself by running after the West and calls her a fool. Sai's silence and gestures reflect that she avoids talking to the Gyan. His U-3 is a violation of the cooperative principles. He does not straightforwardly expose his purpose of communication.

Then She asks U-4 *Why do you celebrate Christmas?* Her question represents a conventional implicature as it does not add anything to the truth condition of the utterance. There are no cooperative maxims of quality. Here, he does not know about Christmas implies the approbation of the fact that he is certainly justified in addressing how the systems that reinforce her privilege also reinforce his poverty; his ability to do so is fueled by misogyny that was reinforced by an all-male protest environment. This is an outstanding example of a particularized implicature.

It also implies that he begins to attack her for cultural institutions that are not even hers but instead have been propagated by a system of globalization and colonialism.

In this U- 5, Gyan expresses indignation over Sai's Western behaviors and blames her for his oppression. Though Gyan is a victim of colonialism, it is an excellent example of generalized Implicature. There are some implications; as in the above sense, he fails to recognize that Sai, having grown up in a convent school and under the care of Judge Patel, also struggles to find identity in a society that condemns her heritage as inferior. Poverty and social stratification were part of the Indian cultural landscape before English colonizers ever set foot upon Indian soil. Gyan's misplaced vitriol evidences his feelings of impotence, as he cannot improve his family's situation through either education or political activism.

In the present paper, the researcher has analyzed Conversational Implicature in selected conversations from the novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. This research article primarily concentrates on the usage and occurrences of conversational Implicature at various

levels. The violation and observance of the cooperative and politeness principle are focalized in the paper. The essential nature of human beings is studied through the various characters and their utterances in the novel.

The theory of conversational imitations, a significant part of communication, can be used to understand and analyze the personal and psychological traits of the characters in the novels. In both novels, the characters reveal themselves by using different expressions. Of course, in this novel, the characters mainly use various conversational imitations to convey more than what is said. However, they are mainly used to bring out satire, irony, sarcasm, or humor in the novel.

Teaching and learning communication skills is a vital dimension of language studies. It is taught in the various sectors in all the institutions. Therefore, while dealing with such courses, the theory of conversational implicatures can be a significant factor in teaching and learning how to use language skillfully and multi-purposely. The conversational implicature theory is a core concept in pragmatics. It goes hand in hand with the other significant concepts in pragmatics, such as maxims of cooperative and politeness principle, presupposition, face-saving and face-threatening acts, etc.

Thus, while dealing with literature and language, a classroom can be made student-centered by giving enough space for the students to have their own opinions about a particular dialogue. For example, '*To be or not to be*' in Hamlet. This is one of the most famous but vague dialogues to understand. While dealing with such an obscure expression, the students can get puzzled to understand its meaning. If they are asked to analyze the inactivity of Hamlet in its discourse, it can be a simple way to understand, and the students can come up with their interpretations of such dialogues. Thus, the theory of conversational implicatures can be used as a productive tool to enhance students' thinking capacity and creativity.

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