

Vol 4 Issue 11 Aug 2015

ISSN No : 2249-894X

*Monthly Multidisciplinary
Research Journal*

*Review Of
Research Journal*

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2249-894X

Review Of Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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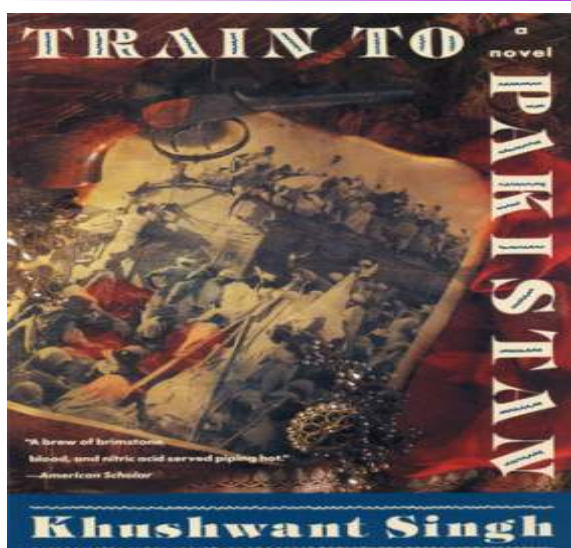
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DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS IN KHUSHWANT SINGH'S *TRAIN TO PAKISTAN*



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ABSTRACT

The pragmatic analyses of the utterances selected in Khushwant Singh's world acclaimed novel *Train to Pakistan*, in terms of the theoretical module presented by Austin, Searle and others can be insightful to study a literary discourse. In addition, Singh, being an Indian, projects the Indian cultural flavor in his fictional work. Therefore, it is apt to discuss the highly marked conversational chunks i.e. the speech acts in Singh's famous novel, *Train to Pakistan*, from pragmatic perspective. The present article attempts to apply speech act theory in identifying the implied force of utterances. The pragmatic approach studies the performative

function of language used by the speaker and the change in the state of behavior of the speaker as well.

KEYWORDS : *Pragmatic Analyses, Speech Acts, Utterances, Literary Discourse, Conversational Chunks*

INTRODUCTION :

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics and deals with the analysis of the role of utterances in relation to the behavior of speaker and hearer in interpersonal communication. It describes the linguistic conventions or procedure, which govern all conversations. These conventions identify the social roles, which the speaker and the hearer assume when they are engaged in conversation. Knowledge of these conventions is a part of the linguistic competence, which the interlocutors share in the production, and the interpretation of utterances. This idea indicates that theory of pragmatics is not relevant to the grammatical composition of sentences in a language, but it is concerned with the role in communication performed by people, particularly in their function as actual acts.

The pragmatic analyses of utterances from a literary discourse of Khushwant Singh, viz. *Train to Pakistan*, in terms of the theoretical module presented by Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and others can be immensely insightful to study a literary discourse. The speech acts selected extensively from the fictional work have been classified into five major types such as assertive, commissive, expressive, directive and declarative. There are almost negligible instances of speech acts of declarative kind in novel under consideration. Apart from this, the speech acts related to socially significant utterances

such as Address Terms, Greetings, Honorifics, Abuses, etc have also been selected and analyzed accordingly.

The novel, *Train to Pakistan*, is quite different from other novels of Khushwant Singh because it deals with social and religious differences aroused during the Indo-Pak partition. Thus, the characters and events in *Train to Pakistan* are interwoven on the background of the most gruesome historical event of the partition of the country into India and Pakistan. It is represented by the microcosmic world of the border town, Mano Majra, a predominantly Sikh village, with a few houses of the Muslims. The Sikhs are most of them peasants and the Muslims are weavers, day laborers, etc. In the begging of the novel, the social relationship between them is that of mutual respect and friendship. However, the novel minutely describes how the social harmony is spoiled and how gruesome it becomes at the end.

The Social Dimension

In *Train to Pakistan* the social milieu is that of the unlettered villagers who, are nevertheless, very hospitable and maintain social amity among the Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims. They are hardly aware of the meaning of the recently acquired freedom, which they think is only for the educated people, who are going to take place of the white people.

The interactions between Iqbal, a city-dweller and a party-worker, and Meet Singh, the keeper of the Gurudwara, as well as the villagers, who call on him, reveal the social dimension between them. Iqbal, who is highly educated, and coming from Delhi, is treated deferentially. He is addressed as '*Babu Sahib*' (P.61) a respectful Hindi term signaling social difference. Meet Singh's questions to him are polite directive speech acts. In the Indian culture, the strangers are often asked about their family, marital status, their means of livelihood, etc. These may strike to be nosy questions to the westerners. However, to the Indians, this is a normal interaction between the strangers. Iqbal faces these questions in the train also. When they ask his name, they say, '*What honourable noun does your honour bear?*' (P.52). The 'honourable noun' here is the translation of 'Shubha Naam' in Hindi, and the English address 'your honour' is used by the Indians for any government officer.

The social dimension influences the interaction between Meet Singh and Iqbal as well as the villagers who call on Iqbal in the Gurudwara. Iqbal is an educated city dweller, while the villagers are unlettered and uninformed citizens. Iqbal, being educated, is addressed as '*Babu Sahib*, because '*Babu*' is normally used in India for an educated person or a clerk in the office, and '*ji*' is a suffix indicating respect. Meet Singh's questions to Iqbal (directive speech acts) are polite, seeking information or asking if he needs anything. The social dimension of hospitality influences the speech interaction between Iqbal and the villagers. Banta Singh offers him milk (a commissive speech act) while Meet Singh asks if he would like to have some spinach. The interaction between Meet Singh and Iqbal is full of statements contrasting and comparing Christian and Hindu/Sikh Indians. The tone of Iqbal is that of a propagandist, he being a political worker, and the tone of Meet Singh is that of a moralizing man of religion.

Social dimension plays important part in the interaction between the Magistrate Hukum Chand and the Police Sub-Inspector. The Sub-Inspector addresses Hukum Chand as '*your honour*' (P.30), '*huzoor*' (in Hindi) or '*Sir*' (P.33). Meet Singh addresses the constable as '*Sentriji*' (P.69), when the police officers come to arrest Iqbal. The interaction between Hukum Chand and the Sub-Inspector is dominated by directive speech acts of Hukum Chand, and informative assertive speech acts of the Sub-Inspector. However, the social roles change when Hukum Chand informally advises the Sub-Inspector of being careful, using the speech acts of advice and suggestions. The question form is used by the Sub-Inspector for assertion, when he says to Hukum Chand '*Is it possible for me to have overlooked that?*'

(P.34) meaning he has already arranged for the entertainment of the magistrate; providing a girl and a troupe of musicians for Hukum Chand's pleasure and entertainment.

Social dimension in the interaction between the old woman and Hukum Chand reveals the exploitation of the poverty-ridden class of women at the hands of moneyed and power-wielding social class of official authorities. Hukum Chand almost ignores the old woman when she addresses him, heaping high praises on him. Her speech acts of address are translations from traditional Indian epithets of praising the wealthy and the persons of authority. The interactions between the Magistrate and the girl, Haseena, are characteristically different. Haseena, to begin with, is awed by the elderly and authoritative Hukum Chand and is almost uncommunicative, while Hukum Chand offers her tea or a drink and eatables. When there is thaw in the relationship, the girl becomes frank and communicative. The influence of social distance and of the age is lessened as a result of sexuality. Similarly, the interactions between Jugga and Nooran are marked by personal and emotional relationship between them. The interaction between them is marked by teasing and accusing (assertive speech acts) on the part of Nooran while Jugga's speech acts are sometimes commissives (humoring her) and sometimes peremptory assertive speech acts. Jugga makes demands as well as pleads, while Nooran protests and complains.

The interactions between the police officers and Iqbal and the police officers and Jugga as well as his mother are also characteristically different on account of the social dimension. Iqbal is aggressive, assertive and directive while reacting to his arrest. The police officers on the other hand are on the defensive and acquiescing to the demands of Iqbal when he tells to wait. However, with Jugga and his mother, the police officers are aggressive and demanding in their speech acts. The mother swears, entreats, and addresses them as '*brother policemen*' (P.71), while the police officers threaten and accuse (commissive and assertive speech acts). The social distance between Iqbal and Jugga's mother and Jugga forces the police officers to school their speech acts to suit this distance. We can note this difference in the interactions between the Sub-Inspector and Iqbal on the one hand, and the Sub-Inspector and Jugga on the other. They are also marked by the socio-cultural difference between Iqbal and Jugga. The Sub-Inspector is aware of Iqbal as an educated person, England returned, and one who can quote law. His interaction with Iqbal is of mock-politeness as well as threatening when necessary. His tone is peremptory and authoritative when he orders Iqbal to take off his clothes. However, his speech acts are conciliatory when he has to release Iqbal along with Jugga on the orders of the Magistrate. The sub-inspector uses directive and assertive speech acts with Jugga, and threats (commissives) because socially Jugga is a known criminal.

There is some variety in the interactions between Hukum Chand and the sub-inspector. They are conspiratorial when Hukum Chand instructs (directive acts) the sub-inspector to release Malli and his gang, and asks the police officers to make enquiries about Sultana Daku and the one called Mohammed Iqbal. The speech act of the Head Constable, though apparently a directive one, is being used here to insinuate suspicion against Iqbal, "*Did any one of you see or talk to a young Mussalman Babu called Mohammed Iqbal, who was the member of the Muslim League?*" (P.139) Here the expressions 'Babu' and the name 'Mohammed Iqbal' are purposefully used to remind villagers of Iqbal Singh.

There is very little scope for personal emotional drama in this novel, yet the interaction between Nooran and Jugga's mother is mainly made up of Nooran's pleading and confessing (assertive speech acts) and Jugga's mother's speech acts of stubborn refusal first (commissive act) and the relenting (expressive act), when she learns that Nooran is pregnant with Jugga's child. However, she helplessly tells Nooran to go for fear of the police, (directive speech act). Here, Nooran's speech act

"Bey bay, I have Jugga's child inside me. If I go to Pakistan, they will kill me." (P. 152) is a heart-rending expressive speech act bringing out human tragedy in the life of not only this girl, but also the whole community on both sides.

The partition tragedy brings out true color of the city intellectuals like Iqbal. It is interesting to note Iqbal's response to the head constable's statement *"Here is a warrant for your arrest...."* (P.66) (assertive speech act). Iqbal reacts, *"You have no right to arrest me like this"* (P.66). This is Iqbal's bewildered response, an expressive speech act. It is a typical example of the leadership bred and brought up in the brainy agitators from the city, who fear real life action.

The Cultural Dimension

The way people express themselves is influenced by their culture. In the Indian culture, especially in the rural area, the villagers treat the guest even in any family in the village, as their own guest. The news of the arrival of Iqbal in the Gurudwara spreads in the village quickly, and the villagers come to see him. Meet Singh offers Iqbal food, the Lambardar, Banta Singh brings for him a glass of milk. Banta Singh is apologetic in utterance when he says, *"I am ashamed for not having presented myself earlier --- Please forgive me. I have brought some milk for you."* (P. 60). This is a typical Indian or the Eastern culture in which the guest is supposed to be like god. Banta Singh would not take no from Iqbal. He puts the glass there. There is also an instance of cultural conflict here revealed in the interaction between Banta Singh and Iqbal. Iqbal, the city-bred educated young man is not used to this peremptory manner of the villagers in prevailing upon the guest to accept one thing or the other. Iqbal is also very self-conscious about cleanliness. He watches with apprehension as Banta Singh dips his fingers with very unclean nails into the glass of milk.

The conversational piece between Meet Singh and Iqbal brings out the cultural contrast between the East and the West. In a directive speech act, Iqbal asks Meet Singh, *"Do you like their (American Padres') preaching Christianity in your village?"* (P.49) And Meet Singh in his assertive speech act tells him, *"Everyone is welcome to his religion."* (P.49) For Meet Singh, in England, *"The Sahibs and their wives go about with other sahibs and their wives."* (P.49) They have no morals. The contrast between the Indian and the western moral point of view comes out in the interaction between Iqbal and Meet Singh. It is much more interesting to listen to Jugga's prophetic speech act, *"They cannot escape from God. No one can escape from God,"* (P.83). It is ironical as this moral apostrophe comes from a diehard criminal like Jugga. The Indian, whether he is a gentle religious person like Meet Singh or a known *"Budmash"* like Jugga, would certainly swear in the name of God. Jugga, who has no qualms in looting and killing, scolds Bhola, the tongawalla for beating the horse.

There are some unique cultural references coming out of the interactions Jugga and the police officers, as Jugga and Iqbal are brought to the custody at the police station. For example, *"father-in-law's house"* is a popular metaphor for the prison in the Indian culture. When Jugga is brought to prison, the policemen there tease him, *"Oye, you are back again. You think it is your father-in-law's house."* (P.87). The social cultural difference between Jugga and Iqbal, both as prisoners, is reflected in the treatment they get at the prison cell. The Sub-Inspector, before entering Iqbal's cell, asks, *"Have I your permission to enter?"* (P.89) The sub-inspector may be mock-polite in this directive speech act, but he addresses Iqbal as *"Mr. Iqbal"*. On the other hand, the sub-inspector does not even acknowledge the respectful greeting from Jugga. Jugga addresses the Sub-Inspector with a very respectful appellation *"King of Pearls"* (P.90) which is a translation of a Hindi honorific term, Motiyonka Raja.

In his speech act, expressing shock and surprise, the magistrate Hukum Chand uses interjection *"Harey Ram, Harey Ram"* (P.115), and in the further directive speech act he asks a rhetorical question,

"What else is Kalyug?" (P.115), meaning assertively this is the Kalyug. "Kalyug is the cultural reference to the different ages of Time- Satyayug, Dwaparyug, Tretayug and lastly the Kalyug (according to the Hindu mythology), which would bring up the end of the world.

Bureaucratic Interactions

Bureaucracy consisting of the Magistrate Hukum Chand, the police sub-inspector, and the police officers under him, the Lambardar in the village, and the 'Baira' and others at the guesthouse make up a cross-section of the bureaucratic society at Mano Majra. The speech acts used in the interactions between them are influenced by the hierarchical relationship that holds among the government servants.

The sub-inspector calling on the Magistrate to report the situation to him addresses him as *"sir,"* *"your honour"* and even *"cherisher of the poor"* (P.77) which is a translation of Garib Nawaj in Hindi, when the magistrate is displeased with him. The interaction between the sub-inspector and the Magistrate is varied. When the inspector officially reports and asks for further orders from the Magistrate, his speech acts are statements and requests. The speech acts of the magistrate, on the other hand, are directives seeking information, *"Who is he?"*, *"what is the name of the fellow you arrested?"*, (P.78) etc and imperatives like, *"Go and find out, whip him on his buttocks till he talks--- Go-----"* (P.78). He is also critical of the police officer when he says, *"Nice fellows you and your policemen!"* (P.79) which is an expressive speech act of voicing displeasure. The sub-inspector talking to the police officers at the police station is equally authoritative in his directive speech acts. For example, *"Search this man's clothes. Take him inside one of the Quarters and strip him. I will examine him myself."* (P.79)

He is equally peremptory in his interaction with Iqbal in his directive speech act, *"Take off your pyjama."* (P.79) The sub-inspector's directive speech act above has a hidden motivation of jealousy because he knows that Iqbal is highly educated and has lived in England for some years. He, therefore, uses his authority to slight and insult Iqbal.

The police officers, even the Lambardar, exercise their authority using directive speech acts, ordering people to do things. Hukum Chand's instructions to the sub-inspector about releasing Malli and his gang, nor registering their names in the police record, etc are all directive speech acts. However, they have a conspiratorial tone as Hukum Chand is planning something disastrous in the violently charged atmosphere.

The scene of the evacuation of the Muslims is a pathetic scene. The Muslim evacuees have to leave behind their property, bullocks and buffaloes, carts and heavy goods, their years of earnings, the very household. The Muslim as well as the Sikh officers are equally unconcerned. Their talk about the refugees in Pakistan is full of accusations and warning threats, while the poor Muslim evacuees plead and entreat (expressive speech acts). The officers are non-committal, while the criminals like Malli are rejoicing for having great chance of looting and plundering.

CONCLUSION

The pragmatic analysis of the interactions of major characters in *Train to Pakistan*, thus, effectively brings out the social dimension of the cross-section of the Indian society confronted with a great human tragedy in the wake of the Indian freedom in 1947. The interactions between the characters in this novel, thus, cast light not only on social scene but also on their interpersonal relations and motivations. The analysis also brings out simplicity and forthrightness and finally helplessness of the villagers, their human concern, and fellow feeling. On the other hand, the interactions between the

police sub-inspector and the magistrate Hukum Chand bring out their duplicity and cunning.

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