



## THE STUDY OF CONVENTIONAL AND NON-CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURES WITH THE REFERENCE TO R.K. NARAYAN'S NOVEL THE GUIDE

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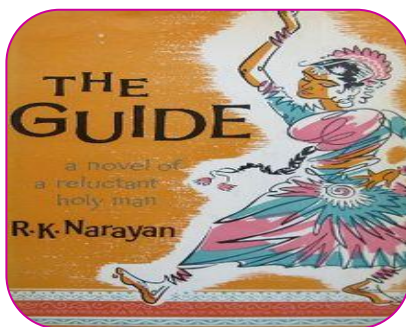
### ABSTRACT:

*The present paper aims at exploring the nature and function of pragmatic entities conventional and non-conventional implicatures in R.K. Narayan's fiction The Guide. H. P. Grice, a British Philosopher was the pioneer to have introduced the notion of 'Implicature' in Pragmatics. The term 'Implicature' stands out as a significant notion of for several reasons. Truly speaking, the entity 'Implicature' unfolds varied underlying processes of the phenomenon 'communication' which occupies vital importance as far as characters in the novels are concerned. This term mainly focuses on how characters in the novels in particular and speakers in general in day-today-life meant more than they actually say. This paper also gives rise to the thought that meaning is basically situation or context oriented on the basis of the difference between Pragmatics and Semantics. In Semantics meaning is studied purely as a property of expression. It may neglect various aspects of context while calculating the meaning of the given expression since such expression of meaning lies beyond the scope of Semantics.*

**KEYWORDS:** Conventional, Implicature, Pragmatics, Interlocutor, Maxim, Flouting.

### INTRODUCTION:

The idea here is that conversation is basically a goal-oriented activity where interlocutors involved in this activity come from different cultures. It is possible that they may mean more than what appears in their actual proposition. The assumption in this paper is that if we apply the theory of implicature to these conversational passages from the novel, we can definitely arrive at some additional meaning attached to these utterances. The selected utterances will be analyzed by taking into consideration conventional inferences as well as those inferences calculated on the basis of violation or flouting of conversational maxims. In other words, effective conversation relies on inference process in context. The conversational maxims and contextual factors can throw light on the various characters, their relationship, their attitude, their intention and also authorial point of view. This paper reveals the fact that how the analysis of given utterances in the context they occur can contribute to our understanding. The purpose of this paper is that to find out maximum ways of analyzing a work of art.



### IMPLICATURE:

The British philosopher H. Paul Grice introduced the term 'implicature' in 1967. Basically, the notion of 'implicature' was introduced by Grice for the purpose of explaining how in conversation characters mean more than what they actually say. The use of the entity 'implicature' is carefully restricted to speaker intended meaning which is not part of 'what is said'. Simply speaking, a conversational implicature is part of what is non-conventionally either inferred or implicated.

‘An implicature is a special, non-conventional inference which is intended by the speaker.’

(Grice, 1975)

The meaning derived from utterance is the additional force than the sense the utterance has in conversation. Brown and Yule say (1983: 31) ‘The notion of conversational implicature which is derived from a general principle of conversation plus a number of maxims which speakers will normally obey. In conversation, it is implicature that saves utterance from simply being a faulty contribution to a piece of interaction which takes place among the characters. As Grundy Peter (2000: 78) has rightly said ‘there are guiding principles which govern talk. Knowing these principles (maxims) enables an addressee to draw inferences as to the implied meanings (implicatures) of utterances’.

The view that inference of the meaning can be made on the basis of either conventional or non-conventional devices forced Grice to postulate that there are two kinds of implicatures, viz. i. Conventional Implicature ii. Conversational Implicature. Conventional implicatures have nothing to do with conversational maxims since they are attached by convention to particular lexical items or expressions. On the other hand, conversational implicatures are inferences derived from contextual factors and maxims of cooperative principle.

There seems to be different kinds of implicatures. Different pragmaticists have viewed a theory of implicature from different angle. Grice classified implicatures into two major categories. viz. I) Conventional Implicature II) Conversational Implicature

### CONVENTIONAL IMPLICATURE:

Grice does not speak much on conventional implicature as it seemed him less interesting. He restricts his discussion on this type with the role of particular words. There are elements of linguistic meaning which do not contribute to the propositional content or utterance. Therefore, conventional implicatures are linguistically or conventionally specified. Yule (1996: 45) observes ‘conventional implicature are not based on the co-operative principle or the maxims. They don’t have to occur in conversation and they depend on special context for interpretation. They are attached with specific words and results in extra meaning attached to those words.

Levinson quotes Grice’s explanation (1983: 127): the word ‘but’ has the same truth conditional content as the word ‘and’ with an additional conventional implicature to the effect that there is some contrast between the conjuncts.

The other example is the word ‘therefore’ which Grice holds contributes nothing to the truth conditions of the expressions it occurs within (Grice: 1975: 44). Let us consider Grice’s example:

‘He is an English man; he is, therefore, brave.’

Thus the existence of the word ‘therefore’ in the above sentence shows that his being brave is consequence of his being an Englishman. The implicature arises as a result of the conventional meaning attached to the use of the word ‘therefore.’ Consider following pair of sentences as an example of conventional implicature:

A: Even John came to the party.

B: He even helped tidy up afterwards.

(Yule’s example; 1996: 45)

In the above example, the implicature arises by virtue of non-truth conditional properties of the word ‘even.’ It carries the additional meaning that is context-free. There are, in fact, two incidents described in the above example. i.e. John’s coming and John’s helping which are contrary to expectation. It is to be observed that the intensity of the sense attached to second ‘even’ is undoubtedly more than first one.

Let us consider the following utterance made by Velan, a peasant, villager from the village, Mangal:

**'Even the date of the wedding was fixed, but do you know, sir, what the girl did?'**

Narayan R. K. (1958) The Guide (P: 15)

The above utterance is made by Velan at the onset of the novel. The novel begins with Raju's release from jail. He takes shelter in a deserted temple on the banks of the river Sarayu, close to the village called Mangla. The villagers consider him to be Mahatma. Consequently they begin to worship him and come there with a lot of edibles. The first villager who encounters with Raju is Velan at the temple. Velan narrates his serious problem to Raju telling about his sister's marriage proposal. Above utterance is the best example of conventional implicature. The words 'even' and 'but' in this utterance do not contribute to the propositional content. In this case, the implicature arises by virtue of the particular non-truth conditional properties of the word 'even' and 'but'. Both the expressions consist of meaning that is context-free. Unquestionably, the intensity of Velan's urge about what he narrates to Raju is only because of the presence the word 'even' in this utterance. The existence of the expression 'even' increases here the force of the utterance without any specific context. Similarly, the use of word 'but' conventionally implicates some sort of contrast or unexpectedness to what Velan has said earlier in the above utterance. In this way it can be said that conventional implicature is the inference or meaning attached traditionally to some lexical items.

#### CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE:

Conversational implicatures are the inferences which are non-conventionally calculated on the basis of the contextual assumptions. Therefore, conversational implicatures are also known as non-conventional implicatures. These are special kind of pragmatic inferences and cannot be thought of semantic. The context in which the conversation takes place plays significant role in the interpretation of the utterance. The total meaning of utterance is derived by making extensive inferencing and locating the context of an utterance. As per the situation and use of certain linguistic items, there are different kinds of conversational implicatures.

#### PARTICULARIZED IMPLICATURE:

Mostly, our conversation takes place in particular context in which people acknowledge some common assumptions. These locally accepted assumptions help infer conveyed meaning that results from particularized implicature. Hence, particularized implicature is the inference which is calculated on the basis of contextual knowledge.

#### Consider following exchange on particular occasion:

**'I know what your problem is, but I wish to give the matter some thought. We cannot force vital solutions. Every question must bide its time. Do you understand?'**

**'Yes, sir' Velan said. He drew his fingers across his brow and said 'Whatever is written here will happen. How can we ever help it?'**

Narayan R. K. (1958) The Guide (P: 21)

The context of this utterance is time exactly after Velan's first meeting with Raju at the temple. It is for the second time the villager, Velan appears there along with his sister whose marriage has been fixed. Velan's sister is ready to accept the proposal of this marriage and comes there to find out solution for it from Raju. If we study this pair of utterance in isolation, one may not comprehend what Velan intends to convey from his expression 'whatever is written here will happen'. On surface level, Velan's reply seems to be an example of non-adherence to relevance. Because Velan is here expected to reply either 'yes' or 'no' to Raju's question 'Do you understand?'. Then Raju is here forced to draw implicature on the basis of some assumed contextual knowledge. After a lot of inferencing, Raju will arrive at the point that Velan desires to say about happening in the fate of his sister. It is the context that helps Raju to understand the meaning of his

utterance 'whatever is written here will happen'. It is to be noted that Raju can arrive at the fact only because of his shared knowledge with Velan in particular context. For the time being, if we analyze above utterance in isolation, the possibility here is that one may misinterpret it as if Velan is talking about his own fate while drawing his fingers across his brow. But the source of additional meaning i.e. particularized implicature is surely context in which this piece of conversation takes place and also the shared knowledge between the participants like Raju and Velan involved in it.

Analysis of implicatures will differentiate between what the speaker initially says and what he implicates by his actual utterance. The analysis of utterances increase the overall impact of the novels.

### Let us consider one more example:

**Raju asked, 'Where are you from?' dreading lest the other should turn round and ask the same question.**

**The man replied, 'I'm from Mangal'.  
Where is Mangal?'**

**The other waved his arm, indicating a direction across the river, beyond the high steep bank. 'Not far from here,' he added. The man volunteered further information about himself. 'My daughter lives near by.' I had gone to visit her; I am now on my way home. I left her after food. She insisted that I should stay on to dinner, but I refused. It'd have meant walking home at nearly midnight. I'm not afraid of anything, but why should we walk when we ought to be sleeping in bed?' 'You are very sensible', Raju said.**

Narayan R. K. (1958) *The Guide* (P: 1)

Raju, on whose life and ups and downs in his life this novel throws light, has been released from prison at the outset of this novel. Taking shelter in an old, deserted temple on the banks of the river Sarayu, he has been waiting for someone just to get relief from loneliness. His desire gets fulfilled since the man stands gazing at his face with reverence for Raju. Feeling amused and embarrassed, Raju requests him to be seated. Without uttering single word, other accepts his suggestion and goes down the river to wash his feet and face in accordance with our rituals. He takes his seat two steps below the granite slab on which Raju was sitting cross-legged. Having deep respect for Raju, the man does not dare to initiate the talk with Raju. Therefore Raju opens the conversation as mentioned in the above passage.

As we know that conversation is basically an instrumental act, it is also a cooperative and collaborative pursuit. Speakers talk in order to have an effect on their listeners. Speakers begin with the intention of affecting their listener in a particular way. In an analysis of any passage, the concern is not with the sentence and its part but with how sentences and utterances form cohesive and coherent discourse. If in conversation only one of the two participants goes on talking, the other will naturally feel excluded. Hence in order to communicate accurately and effectively, speakers and listeners try to cooperate with one another. To be precise, speakers try to be informative, truthful, relevant and clear. In other words speakers and listeners follow the cooperative principle.

It is easy to see how communication can be blocked, if speakers do not adhere to these maxims. It is also easy to notice that how implicatures arise as an outcome of the violation of these maxims.

In the above passage, the conversational participants are Raju and Velan. The first utterance by Raju 'Where are you from?' is simple wh-question to the villager Velan. As we assume that wh-question is asked either to seek information or enquire about something and consequently requires an answer in either one or two sentence. Of course, the length of an answer will depend on the nature of the question. But the above question asked by Raju definitely of that nature that needs to be answered simply in one sentence. Accordingly Velan has replied in one sentence as 'I'm from Mangal'. Here it could be asserted that Velan has not violated any one of the four maxims if he is truthful with Raju.

On the contrary, if we observe the second question asked by Raju 'Where is Mangal?' and the given by Velan, *'The other waved his arm, indicating a direction across the river, beyond the high steep bank. 'Not far from here,' he added. The man volunteered further information about himself. 'My daughter lives near*

by. 'I had gone to visit her; I am now on my way home. I left her after food. She insisted that I should stay on to dinner, but I refused. It'd have meant walking home at nearly midnight. I'm not afraid of anything, but why should we walk when we ought to be sleeping in bed?' is certainly elaborative or explanatory comparatively with the first one. The way Velan has replied the question really violates the maxim of quantity here. In fact, this depends on the relationship that exists between the interlocutors or the nature of situation in which the conversation takes place. This situation of the context may compel the people to violate or flout the maxim either by extension or contraction. From the answer given by Velan it is absolutely clear that his elaborative answer seems to have violated the maxim of quantity in this piece of conversation. Velan unnecessarily proceeds with a number of things which have nothing to do with the question 'where is Mangal?'. Though at surface level, Velan seems to have breached the maxim of quantity but somewhere at deeper level it seems that the context or the situation forces him to respond in this manner. If we apply inference mechanism to Velan's reply here, the above cited piece of answer implicates that various family problems have fully pressed Velan and consequently he behaves in such way here. It is also possible that from the face of Raju, he must have found some intimacy in Raju. The passage also implicates that villagers are openhearted people so that he tells everything to Raju even though there is no detailed enquiry from Raju. Therefore, this passage certainly reflects cultural aspects of a village. It also implicates the human tendency where people being harassed by varied problems tend to be either less or more informative. They try to seek solutions being more informative in some situations. It is true of Velan in this conversational act.

#### GENERALIZED IMPLICATURE:

Grice states one more type of implicature i.e. generalized implicature. In this case the use of certain form of words in an utterance carries a certain implicature. No special knowledge in particular context is required to draw inference in this kind of implicature. Simply speaking, an expression involving a phrase with an indefinite article like 'a/an x' normally has a generalized conversational implicature that 'x' does not belong to the speaker.

Let us consider following utterance made by Raju:

**'if you show me a single home without a problem.....'**

Narayan R. K. (1958) The Guide (P: 15)

Here, by using the form of expressions 'a home' and 'a problem' implicate that 'a home' and 'a problem' do not belong to or is not closely connected with some identifiable person. Obviously, the implicature is present because the speaker has failed to be specific. As soon as we, as a reader observes this utterance, the speaker Raju neither speak about his own home and problem nor Velan's as well. This additional conveyed meaning is the result of due to presence of indefinite article 'a'.

#### SCALAR QUANTITY IMPLICATURE:

It is a kind of implicature arising from quantitative scales. Scalar predicates are contrastive linguistic expressions belonging to the same grammatical category expressing values on a quantitative scale. These can be organized in a linear order by degree of informativeness or semantic strength.

In conversation, when the speaker is expected, quantitatively, to inform something, he has a number of linguistic expressions, denoting quantity, on the scale of value. He is expected to pick up a word that expresses one value from the scale of values. Yule suggests following scale where terms are listed from the highest to the lowest value:

<all, most, many, some, few>

<always, often, sometimes>

Let us consider following utterance an example of scalar implicature:

**'Appearances are sometimes misleading'**

Narayan R. K. (1958) The Guide (P: 32)

The context here is that one evening Raju hides himself behind the temple. As usual, the villagers come there and talk about the absence of Raju at the temple. They discuss where Raju might have gone. Among the crowd one says 'Do you know sometimes Yogis can travel to the Himalays jus by a thought?', another replies 'Appearances are sometimes misleading.'

Here when the villager produces an utterance 'Appearances are sometimes misleading', he selects one word from the scale which is most informative and truthful. In the above example, when the villager chooses the value 'sometimes' he creates an implicature 'not always'. The fundamental principle of this implicature is that when one value from the scale is selected, all values from the scale are negated. In the above example, the villager has selected value 'sometimes' it negates rest of the values like always often etc.

### CLAUSAL IMPLICATURE:

Levinson illustrates this kind of implicature by citing the case of how the choice of a disjunction in preference to a conjunction gives rise to implicatures.

Let us see following example of clausal implicature:

**'When shall we have the trains coming in here?'**

**'About six or eight months.'**

Narayan R. K. (1958) *The Guide* (P: 23)

Here, if we apply the notion of entailment, it is clear that neither one of these two embedded sentences is entailed by the whole. Since the speaker has provided two choices, he does not know which disjunct is true. Therefore, when one utters expression like this, it implicates several things as follows:

1. It is possible that we will have trains within six months.
2. It is possible that we won't have trains within six months.
3. It is possible that we will have trains within eight months.
4. It is possible that we won't have trains within eight months.

Thus, an utterance 'About six or eight months', throws light on the fact that the speaker is not in position to commit himself to the truth of either one or the other or both of the embedded propositions.

### CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it follows that conversation is multidimensional activity which exhibits several distinct features to be analyzed. It also throws light that conversation is purposeful activity where no person talks without purpose. The participants in conversational act try to use every linguistic strategy to communicate his message to addressee. Hence, the pragmatic strategy an implicature is one of the several strategies used by participants. The hearer requires an ability to uncover the speaker's intention as the difference always lies between what is said and what is implicated. Thus implicature analysis is useful to understand what is implicit.

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