



**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENGLISH:
LITERATURE, LANGUAGE & SKILLS**

Volume 10 Issue 3 / October 2021
ISSN 2278-0742 / www.ijells.com

~Editor's Note~

Dear Readers & Contributors,

Welcome to the October 2021 issue of IJELLS.

From the references to Ramayana in the 'Adventurous Return before Lockdown' to the representation of Ravan in Annadurai's The Swooning of the God of Justice, the modern scholarship engages with the cultural encyclopaedia of Ramayana in an attempt to decode it. The papers on 'Dark Humour' and 'Gamification' are interesting to read along with the other papers.

International Journal of English: Literature, Language and Skills - IJELLS extends its service into publishing books. We have started the enterprise IJELLS Publishing. This is a platform where we help the authors self publish their work. Check out our webpage at <https://www.ijells.com/ijells-publishing/> to understand more.

Happy Reading and Happy Sharing!

Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju
Chief Editor

~ Chief Editor~

Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju, Department of English, Osmania University is trained from EFLU and a Doctorate from Osmania University. She prefers the designation of a trainer and a writer. She has presented several academic articles to international and national seminars, conferences, journals, and magazines. Casual and creative writing is also her forte. She is a prolific reader and writer. Her areas of interest are Post colonial Literature, Gender Studies, Film Studies, English Language Teaching, Contemporary Literature and Communication Skills. Find her analysis on Film and other media at Facebook page 'thevisualcritique'.

~Board of Editors~

Dr. Thirunavukkarasu Karunakaran
English Language Teaching Centre,
University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

Dr. Isam M Shihada
Al Aqsa University,
Gaza strip

Dr. Ravi Bhushan
Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila Vishwavidyalaya
Khanpur Kalan, Sonipat,
Haryana, India

Dr. G. Venkata Ramana,
BVRIT, Narsapur,
Telangana, India

~Contents~

Editor's Note.....	02
Editorial Board	03
Contents.....	04

~English Creative Section~

Idiomatically and Poetically Speaking	
ES Chandrasekaran	05
Adventurous Return before Lockdown	
Seema Sarkar	07
The Ghost in the Kitchen	
Sharmila Deshmukh.....	10

~English Literature~

Iconic and Historic Mea Culpa in CN Annadurai's <i>The Swooning of the God of Justice</i>	
V Anbarasi Sundaram.....	14
Domestic Violence against Women during COVID Pandemic - An analysis	
Clara B Reshma.....	22
Exploration of 'Black' in Buchi Emecheta's <i>Second-Class Citizen</i>	
Jeevan S Masure.....	27
Religion as a political instrument in Aziz's <i>The Queue</i>	
Jishnu Prasad	33
Victimization of the 'other' Gender in Shobha De's <i>Second Thoughts</i>	
Alapati Purnachandra Rao & G Nageswara Rao.....	37
'Almost Ridiculous'- Dark Humor in Upamanyu Chatterjee's <i>The Revenge of the Non-Vegetarian</i>	
Rekha Karini and Rama NH Alapati.....	44
Observance and Violation of Cooperative Principle in <i>The Sunset Club</i>	
Rohidas Nitonde & Chandrakant R. Patil.....	49
Exploring 'In-betweenness' in Manjushree Thapa's <i>Tilled Earth</i>	
Shalini Shah & Tamishra Swain	56
Ecological Perspectives in Jhumpa Lahiri's <i>The Lowland</i>	
Mamidyala Srinivas.....	62
Scaffolding in Gamification: 'Metroidvania' and Cognitive Behaviorism	
Tushnim Gangopadhyay & Ananya Acherjee.....	66
<i>Kanthapura</i> : The Manifestation of Caste, Nation and Spirituality	
B Venkat Rao.....	74

~English Language Teaching~

Gender and English Language Classrooms	
Asma Rasheed.....	85
Author Profiles.....	94

Images Courtesy

- Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay
- <https://pin.it/339TNPI>
- #maortmsy7
- <https://imgbin.com/png/1K5Us4D7/barbed-wire-black-and-white-font-png>

Observance and Violation of Cooperative Principle in *The Sunset Club*

Rohidas Nitonde & Chandrakant R. Patil

Abstract:

Cooperative Principle in communication, as advocated by H P Grice, involves four maxims viz. quantity, quality, relation and manner. These maxims are utilized by the characters in a novel in conversations that need to be studied carefully from the perspective of pragmatics. The reader arrives at convincing interpretation considering the context, speech situation, speech event, and the actual utterances having locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary dimensions. In the novel *The Sunset Club* by Khushwant Singh, one comes across varied and typical conversations of the characters in which certain maxims are either observed or violated for specific purposes. The three main characters of the novel are Boota, a Sikh; Baig, a Muslim; and Sharma, a Hindu. When they form the Sunset Club, they are in the evening of their lives. The characters either observe or violate certain maxims to fulfill their communicative goals. The observance and violation of certain maxim is an inevitable part of the Cooperative Principle. It is not true that the violation of any maxim amounts to arrogance or impoliteness of the interlocutors. The present article is devoted to the study of observance and violation of the Cooperative Principle.

Keywords: Cooperative Principle, Maxims, Quantity, Quality, Relation, Manner, Observance, Violation, Locutionary, Illocutionary, Perlocutionary, Interlocutors, Intentionality, Communicative Goals

Introduction

The present article offers an analysis of interesting conversations from Khushwant Singh's last novel, *The Sunset Club* (2010), in which romantic experiences of the three retired old friends residing in Delhi's posh localities are depicted. Here, an attempt is being made to elucidate the selected pieces of conversations of the characters involving either the observance or violation of certain maxims of the Cooperative Principle depending on the context. It is the contextual knowledge of the talk exchanges of the characters that play a pivotal role in interpreting the novel from pragmatics. The strategy of code-mixing and code-switching adopted by the novelist plays a significant role in the observance and violation of certain maxims. The deictic expressions are inseparable parts of the maxims utilized by the characters.

Critical Review of the novel 'The Sunset Club.'

In the 'Apologia' of the novel *The Sunset Club*, it has been acknowledged by Khushwant Singh himself, that he started writing this novel at the age of ninety-five, and he was not sure

whether he would be able to complete the same in his lifetime. Having nothing to do, he became restless. On the advice of Sheela Reddy, a famous journalist that time associated with the magazine titled *Outlook*, he began to write on his dead friends about whom he often talked too much. The writer has also acknowledged that the novel he was writing would be unacceptable in the polite society since its contents were replete with verbal obscenity. He was gratefully thankful to Diya Kar Hazra and Nandini Mehta of Penguin Books to make the book into a readable shape.

The members of the Sunset Club are Sardar Buta Singh (a Shikh), Pandit Preetam Sharma (a Hindu) and Nawab Barakatulla (a Muslim), who often meet at the sunset time in the Lodhi Garden, sit on a particular bench and endlessly engage themselves in talk exchanges that include love, lust, sex, domestic politics, current events, international politics and the activities taking place in the vicinity. Anuradha Goyal (2010), in her online book review, remarks:

Very aptly named, this book *The Sunset Club* is about a year in the life of three friends in the late eighties who have been meeting at a particular bench in Lodhi Gardens for more than 40 years. The author takes you through the 12 months of Delhi, through the conversations between three of them.”¹ (p.1)

The novel is a romantic trajectory of the lives of three friends of the said club who do not hide anything secret. The plot of the novel begins on the 26th January 2009 and ends on the 26th January 2010. The writer sketches the characteristic features of their personalities in minute details. The readers get to know about their idiosyncrasies, fantasies of old age, psychology and physical appearance. Khushwant Singh leaves no stone unturned in describing their illicit relations with the women and their sex life.

To put it in a nutshell, the novel explores the inevitable old age and the fantasies associated with it. The friendship of all the three friends Sardar Buta Singh (a Shikh), Pandit Preetam Sharma (a Hindu) and Nawab Barakatulla (a Muslim) spanning more than four decades, has been the focal point in the novel. Their past experiences, recollection of past memories and their opinions about the past, present and the future are described in the tongue-in-cheek narrative. Nimny Chacko (2011), while reviewing the book on her blog, said:

As is apparent from their names, each of them belongs to a different religion; and therefore quite understandably, they allow squabbles over matters of faith to creep now and then into their colourful conversations while maintaining their staunch friendship.”²(p.1)

Indian political leaders of their times also figure in their long conversations while they meet at the Sunset Club meetings in the Lodhi Garden of Delhi. There are references to eminent personalities such as Manmohan Singh, M. F. Husain, Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Menka Gandhi, Varun Gandhi and many others. The historical incidents during the Mughal period, British Raj in India and the Nehru era also form the inevitable part of this novel.

Observance and Violation of Cooperative Principle in the Novel *The Sunset Club*

On scrutiny of the utterances of the interlocutors in the glaring conversations, one realizes that they are fully loaded with pragmatic meaning. It is interesting to note that the utterances considered as speech acts fall in the category of Cooperative principle, for they contain the philosophy of laughing and violation of maxims. There are indirect forms of expressions that are used in British society to show politeness to others. Therefore, G. N. Leech has suggested four categories of maxims to be observed by the participants in a conversation such as Tact maxim, Generosity maxim, Approbation maxim and Modesty maxim.

This maxim expects the conversational partners of the ongoing conversation to provide the required information neither less nor more to achieve the communication goal. Grice H. P. (1975) has put it in the following words:

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.”³ (p.46)

Now, let us discuss Grice’s Cooperative Principle and its four maxims, viz. Quantity, Quality, Manner and Relation maxims through the novel *The Sunset Club* as follows:

On the evening of the 14th February 2009, Sharma is in a hurry to disclose to the members of the Sunset Club that he had received Valentine cards from four women declaring their love for him. The following conversation takes place between Boota and Sharma:

Boota: So did you make love to them?

Sharma: I went to Khan Market and got four Valentine Day cards. I tell you, it was quite a problem. They keep them hidden in their drawers lest these goondas of the Shiv Sena and Bajrang Dal smash up their shops. They think it is against Indian culture and should be put up down by force, if necessary. The fellow sold me the card because he knows me. I sent them by courier to all the four ladies”.⁴ (p.54)

In reply to the question asked by the first speaker, the second speaker uses too many sentences as a violation of the quantity maxim of the Cooperative Principle. Sharma has violated this maxim for the simple reason that his answer does not ensemble the question asked by his friend Boota. The question asked by Boota is straightforward. He asked whether his conversational partner had made love to the four women in the context. The personal deixis ‘them’ refers to the four women from whom Sharma had received Valentine Day cards which are treated as a symbol of love between man and woman. It is customary to celebrate Valentine Day on the 14th February every year to commemorate the Christian saint by the said name. Boota’s question here demands either a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ reply from his conversational partner. But instead of answering the question put forward by Boota either positively or negatively, Sharma provides more information than is needed in the context. Sharma’s violation of the quantity maxim speaks profusely about his emotional world. He is so excited that he takes pride in telling his old friends about the love letters he had received from the

four ladies. His utterances also reveal the attitude of the political organizations such as Shiv Sena and Bajarang Dal, which are associated with hardcore Hinduism. These organizations oppose Christen saints such as St. Valentine. They do not like open forms of expressions of love. Openly sending love letters, according to them, is against their religion and culture. Even though Sharma has violated the maxim of quantity, his utterances have deep meaning if interpreted from the perspective of pragmatics. The cultural clash between the Hindus and the Christians is implicated in the utterances of Sharma. He belongs to the Hindu religion but scared of the Shiv Sena and Bajarang Dal because he is afraid that the members of these political organizations might thrash him for violating their dogma. Regarding culture-specific context, George Yule (1996) observes:

It is possible to treat politeness as a fixed concept, as in the idea of ‘polite social behaviour, or etiquette, within a culture.’⁵(p.60)

All three friends met on the 15th February 2009. Thereafter, the attendance at the Sunset Club became irregular. The next day Boota did not turn up. The following conversation took place between Sharma and Baig:

Baig: What has happened to the Sardar?

Sharma: No idea. I will send my servants across to find out.⁶ (p.56)

On noticing Boota’s absence on that day, the first speaker asks a simple question to his conversational partner about the reason for the Sardar’s non-attendance. The reply given by the second speaker is a glaring example of the observance of quantity and relation maxims of the Cooperative Principle. The utterance of Sharma is apt and precise. Therefore, it is treated as the observance of the quantity maxim. It is also an instance of the observance of relation maxim because it is absolutely relevant in the context of the above conversation. The conversation is viewed from pragmatics; one realizes that both the conversational partners are concerned about their friend Boota. They want to know the reason for Boota’s absentee. Sharma is ready to send one of his servants to the house of Boota to know his whereabouts. One comes to know that there is a strong bond of solidarity in their friendship.

All the three members of the Sunset Club know each other very well. The commissive speech act of sending servants to Boota’s house indicates Sharma is also worried about him. The next day also Boota does not attend the regular meeting of the Sunset Club. It was Sharma who tells Baig the reason for Boot’s nonappearance at Lodhi Gardens. He informs Baig that Boota’s elder brother was no more. His elder brother was three years older than him. He had been in the wheelchair for over five years. When he died, his daughter came from America to attend the funeral. She was holding her father’s hand when he breathed his last.

On the 2nd of March, all the members of the Sunset Club meet and begin the conversation on the general parliamentary elections in India due to the ending of the five-year tenure of Manmohan Singh as the Prime Minister. There are references to Sonia Gandhi, the chief of the Congress Party, Narasimha Rao, former prime minister, etc. Sharma and Boota go on admiring Manmohan Singh’s personality. In Sharma’s opinion, Singh was a scholarly

student at Cambridge University. He also informs his conversational partner that Singh wanted to become a professor of economics at Chandigarh University. However, he got a job in the UN that fetched him a fat dollar salary. It was Prime Minister Narasimha Rao who made Singh finance minister. In Boota's opinion, Manmohan Singh was the best Prime Minister of India because he was scholarly, highly experienced and very polite in his behaviour. When he underwent heart surgery, there were prayers in temples, mosques, churches, gurudwaras all over the country. Boota wanted to know Baig more about Manmohan Singh. Let us study the following piece of conversation from the perspective of pragmatics in general and Cooperative Principle in particular:

Boota: What do you have to say, Baig?

Baig: Bhai, I don't involve myself in politics. I go along with my Begum: she says Manmohan is a *bhalamanas*, *sharif* and *mita hua*- a good man, a gentleman and self-effacing. What more can you ask of a prime minister? ⁷ (p.58)

In reply to Boota's question on the qualities of Manmohan Singh as the Prime Minister, Baig holds his wife's comment in high esteem. Baig addresses his conversational partner using the honour term 'Bhai', which means 'brother' in the Indian context. The term 'Bhai' is respectfully used while addressing the males in the Hindi language. Baig seems to be very honest in admitting that he goes by his wife's opinion as he does not indulge in the politics of the country. Here, Baig has observed the relation maxim of the Cooperative Principle as his statements are relevant in the context of the above conversation. It is a pragmatic value because his thoughts on politics are genuine as he holds Manmohan Singh in high esteem. He tells Boota that the former Prime Minister is a thorough gentleman from top to toe. The conversation throws light on the qualifications of Manmohan Singh, the former Prime Minister of India. From the pragmatic perspective, Baig's analysis of the personality of Manmohan Singh is a representative opinion of the Muslim community in India. All the Muslims generally support the secular political parties such as the Congress of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi. Muslims in India support the congress because it is an all-inclusive political organization in India. Therefore, the people from the Muslim community prefer the Congress Party to Janata Party in general.

The Congress Party made Manmohan Singh the Prime Minister of the country because of his merit and polite behaviour. The qualifications of Manmohan Singh are the central point in the above conversation, which speaks volumes about his unblemished personality. Baig uses the strategy of code-mixing in his conversation with Boota. The Hindi words such as '*a bhalamanas*', '*sharif*' and '*mita hua*' have been inserted in the English sentences to establish the validity of Manmohan Singh's personality helm of affairs. There are many instances in the novel where the characters use the strategy of code-mixing and code-switching as a tool of the pragmatics of Indian English. For instance, when the members of the Sunset Club met on the 9th March 2009, Baig announced that he would not come the next day for the meeting of the club. Study the following conversation:

Baig: I will be not able to come tomorrow evening.

Sharma: *Khair to hai*- all is well?

Baig: *Allah ka shukar hai*-God be thanked.⁸ (p.64)

On close examination of the above conversation between Baig and Sharma at the Sunset Club in Lodhi Gardens, Delhi, it appears that both have adopted the strategy of code-switching as they make use of the Hindi expressions followed by English sentences. The use of Hindi expressions in the Indian English novel is a collective phenomenon that adds to the beauty of Indian English. The linguistic strategy of code-mixing and code switching is like ornaments of Indian English, broadly known as the pragmatics of Indian English. It has been observed that when the characters become emotional, they tend to use the strategy of code-mixing and code-switching. Therefore, Raja Rao, a famous Indian writer in English, once said that English is the language of our intellectual makeup, whereas; mother tongue is our emotional makeup. When it comes to express strong emotions, the characters in the Indian English novels take the help of their regional language to display their emotional world. The linguistic strategy of code-mixing and code-switching is a vital tool used by the writer to show Indianness. In the above conversation, in response to Baig's statement, Sharma uses the Hindi expression, "*Khair to hai*", meaning whether all is well with his conversational partner. Baig also responds to Sharma's remark using the Hindi expression, "*Allah ka shukar hai*," meaning it is due to God's blessing that everything is well in his life. Both the conversational partners have observed the manner and relation maxims of the Cooperative Principle as their utterances are unambiguous and relevant respectively as far as the topic of the conversation is concerned. There is clarity in what they are trying to say. Similarly, the use of a code-switching strategy is absolutely relevant in the context of the conversation.

As the novel progresses, the readers are acquainted with the son of Boota, who comes to visit his old father once in a blue month. The son hardly has time to talk to his old father. As he comes back home at midnight and gets up at 10.30 a.m., he does not have time to spend with his father. Once, the old man fell from his bed at midnight, and the doctor was called for immediate examination and treatment. Dr. Malhotra came to his house at 7a.m. as his clinic was nearby and began to give treatment. He took his BP and found that it was normal. As he pricked the finger of the patient, the following conversation took place:

Dr. Malhotra: What happened?

Boota: Nothing. I fell off my bed at midnight."⁹ (p.85)

In the above conversation, Boota seems to have observed the quality, quantity, relation, and manner maxims of the Cooperative Principle for the simple reason that his answer to the question asked by the doctor is precise, truthful, relevant and unambiguous, respectively in the present context. It has been observed that Boota, the old man in his late eighties, seems to be very cooperative in the ongoing conversation with his doctor while being treated. It goes without saying that one is expected to give truthful answers to the questions asked by a doctor so that one can get the proper treatment. The relation between the doctor and the patient seems to be congenial as far as the above short conversation is concerned. After imparting

certain instructions to his son regarding his father's sleeping position, the doctor leaves the place. He charges fifteen hundred rupees for his visit. Boota thinks that it was not necessary to call the doctor at his house. The son was reluctant to spend more money for his old father's sleeping arrangement as suggested by the visiting doctor, for he could not afford to buy some furniture needed to avoid the fall of his old father from the bed.

Conclusion

From the previous discussion, it becomes crystal clear that the characters in the novel *The Sunset Club* either observe or violate certain maxims of the Cooperative Principle as a linguistic strategy to fulfill the very purpose of their communicative goals. Khushwant Singh's characters occasionally use linguistic strategies such as code-mixing and code-switching to show Indianness. One finds some expressions of Hindi in the continuation of Indian English sentences in the novel. The contextual background helps to analyze the utterances of the characters in a more convincing way. The characters utilize the four maxims-quantity, quality, relation and manner for the smooth communication between the interlocutors against the backdrop of the prevailing speech situation and speech event.

Funding Disclosure/Acknowledgement

The present article is an outcome of UGC Scheme for Transdisciplinary Research for India's Developing Economy (STRIDE). The authors are grateful to the University Grants Commission and Principal MSP Mandal's Shri Shivaji College Parbhani for their funding to the project.

References

1. Goyal, Anuradha. "Review of *The Sunset Club* at www.anureviews.com", December 17, 2010, p.1
2. Chacko, Ninmy. "Review of *The Sunset Club* on helter-skelter.com", February 15, 2011, p.1.
3. Grice, H. P. "Logic and Conversation. P. Cole & J. Morgan (eds), Vol 3." Academic Press, New York, 1975, p.46.
4. Singh, Khushwant. "*The Sunset Club*." Penguin Books, Ravi Dayal Publisher, Delhi, 2010, p.54.
5. Yule, George. (1996), *Pragmatics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p.60
6. Singh, Khushwant. "*The Sunset Club*." Penguin Books, Ravi Dayal Publisher, Delhi, 2010, p.56.
7. *Ibid.*, p.58.
8. *Ibid.*, p.64.
9. *Ibid.*, p.85.

Web sources

<http://www.pragmatics-reviews.org>

<https://www.thedailystar.net/book-reviews/review-the-sunset-club-1584973>