FLOUTING OF THE COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES IN
RABINDRANATH TAGORE’S ‘PROFIT AND LOSS’

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ABSTRACT

Cooperative Principle (CP) put forth by H. P. Grice (1975) imposes certain restrictions on speakers of any communication with its maxims i.e., Maxim of Manner, Maxim of Relevance, Maxim of Quantity and Maxim of Quality. The focus of this research is to analyze the extent to which the conversational maxims are either violated or flouted by the main characters in “Profit and Loss”. In addition, it seeks to find if there are any instances in which the addressees opt out of the conversation. Descriptive qualitative method was adopted to gather, analyze and interpret data. The findings of this study indicate that in 18 occasions (the highest) the characters violated /flouted the maxim of quality and in 7 occasions (the least) they violated the maxim of relevance. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that although cooperative principle describes the best practices to be followed in communication in order to facilitate the smooth flow of conversation speakers often are non-adherent to these maxims: they flout, violate or opt out in order to achieve their purposes. This study on flouting of conversational maxims in Profit and Loss also identifies Rabindranath Tagore as the trail blazer of Bengali Renaissance by his portrayal of the new woman who was not terrified to question the social norms in her struggles for freedom and equality and who remained loyal to the prototype image of the traditional Indian womanhood.

Keywords: Floutings and Violations, Cooperative Principles, Profit and Loss

I. INTRODUCTION

Adequate and appropriate contribution is part and parcel of effective Communication as proposed by the Cooperative Principles. (H.P.Grice, 1975) Cooperative principle is based on four maxims: Maxim of quantity, maxim of Quality, maxim of relation and maxim of manner. According to Agustina and Ariyanti (2016) non-adherence to maxims is called the breaking of maxims. To quote Cutting (2002) flouting occurs when speakers fail in observing the maxim but expect their audience to recognize the implied meaning. Violating a maxim is intended to deceive the addressees or letting the hearer know the surface meaning of any utterance.

If speakers aren’t successful in observing a maxim ‘at the level of what is said, with deliberate intention on generating implicature’ it flouts a maxim as expounded by Thomas.(2013) He defines Flouting the maxim of quantity as ‘a speaker giving too little or much information.’ Cruse (2000) defines Flouting the maxim of quality as ‘an utterance that is not literally true.’ There are several strategies how flouting the maxim of quality occurs: banter, hyperbole, irony, metaphor and sarcasm. Flouting the maxim of relation occurs when the topic of conversation is altered, but still expects the addressee to realize and know about it. Flouting the maxim of manner happens according to Cutting (2002) ‘when a speaker does not talk clearly, appearing to obscure and tend to ambiguity.’

Since time immemorial communities around the world have always tended to assign specific roles, codes of behavior and morality, to men and women. Women were oppressed and suppressed. As years passed by, we may say that there’s a sea-change in the present day world. The credit goes to many feminists around the world. A share of gratitude can be given to writers whose vision and mission brought forth a newer world of Gender Equality. Short story, one of the literary genres was developed in the 19th century and by the end of 20th century it evolved as one of the major literary forms. This study is about the flouting of maxims in Profit and Loss, a short story of Rabindranath Tagore, the first Asian Nobel laureate, who is illustrious as a poet, novelist,
philosopher, painter, song-composer and social activist and who is also a feminist with volume of works having gender issues as the underlying theme.

The reason for the selection of *Profit and Loss* is that it deals with one of the social evils that is prevalent in India. The protagonist is a victim of Dowry. So a study on the flouting or violations of conversational maxims will highlight the approach of the characters to the social practice 130 years before. Moreover there is a great chance that there can be characters who have the most garrulous trait and may often either violate or flout the conversational maxims. Therefore, it is noteworthy to take a close look at conversational exchanges in this theme based story.

*Profit and Loss* is one of Tagore’s successful experiments with his female protagonists to make them manage to be strong against trials and tribulations. With his dexterously professional brushstrokes he creates a host of highly progressive female identities. The female protagonist Nirupama with her floutings of maxims raises strong voices of protest against all prejudices of the late 19th C Bengali Hindu communities specifically and Indian Community in general.

Research Questions

The present study explored *Profit and Loss*

1. To find out the number of utterances
2. To find out the number of floutings
3. To identify the Maxim that is flouted the Most
4. To identify the Maxim that is flouted the Least.
5. To identify the character who flouts/violates the Most.
6. To identify the character who flouts the least
7. Are there any evidence of their character traits in the floutings of Maxims?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tupan and Natalia (2008) studied in their research the violations of maxims by the characters in Desparate Housewives TV. The findings of the purpose of violating maxims was not to give the addressees a chance to take their turn. Kalliomaki, (2005) & Xiaohong, (2007) examined conversational exchanges in exclusive films and got here up with exciting outcomes.

Women are eulogized by Tagore in his essay “Woman and Home.” “What I have felt in the woman of India is the consciousness of this ideal –their simple faith in the sanctity of devotion lighted by love which is held to be divine. True womanliness is regarded in our country as the saintliness in love. (311) But at the same time he portrayed characters who are modern in their thinking. Madhumita Roy (2015) focuses on The Conclusion, The Wife’s Letter and Exercise Book to prove that Individual Scripting of women are thwarted by a high –handedness by social interventions.

In the light of the above studies this present study deals with the flouting of conversational maxims by the characters in *Profit and Loss*. Tagore’s short story with special emphasize on the female protagonist, Nirupama’s utterances.

III. METHODOLOGY

Since the data gathered was in the form of words Descriptive Qualitative Method was followed. This study used data analysis technique from Miles and Huberman (1994). Data Reduction, Data Display and Conclusion Drawing- the three phases of inquiry into qualitative Data analysis was followed.
Subroto (Prativi, 2012) states “data can be in the form of discourse, sentence, clause, phrase, word, or morpheme.” Profit and Loss, Tagore’s short story is the source of data of this analysis.

The researcher, the research Instrument (Lincoln & Guba State (Vandersteop & Johnson, 2009) selected the source: Profit and Loss, read it many times and chose the utterances by the characters.

Figure 1. Qualitative Data Analysis, Miles and Huberman (1994)

The researcher processed the data reduction by selecting the utterances used by the characters in Profit and Loss. Then, the utterances that contained flouting and violating towards conversational maxims were segregated. After that, the researcher simplified the data into the categories of each maxim. Brief description of some significant data (noteworthy floutings by 5 major characters) was also provided with.

Data is displayed in tables and graphs. The researcher explained the data comprehensively too. Conclusion drawing as per Miless and Huberman’s (1994) is “also verified as the analysis proceeds.” The conclusions are the number of floutings in each maxim, number of floutings by each main character in their utterances. Research questions 1 to 6 will be dealt with by tabulating and using graphs. Research question 7, i.e., the how and why of the floutings of maxims are detailed with justification to the character traits.

IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The utterances by the characters in Profit and Loss are listed in the following table.

Table 1 No. of Floutings in Profit and Loss

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Utterances</th>
<th>Maxim Of Quantity</th>
<th>Maxim Of Quality</th>
<th>Maxim Of Relevance</th>
<th>Maxim Of Manner</th>
<th>Floutings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot; if you can't hand the money to me now, the bridegroom will not be brought here. &quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Follows all the Maxims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;This haggling and bartering means nothing to me, I came here to marry and marry I shall.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flouting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;You see sir, how young men behave these days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flouting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;That because they have no training in morality or the Shastras.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flouting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;Will not they let me come and visit you, Father?&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Follows all the Maxims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;Why shouldn't they, My love&quot;, &quot;I will come and fetch you.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flouting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>‘How pretty the girl is – it’s a pleasure to look at her,’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Follows all the Maxims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>‘Pretty indeed! Pretty as the family she came from!’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flouting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
S.No | Utterances | Maxim Of Quantity | Maxim Of Quality | Maxim Of Relevance | Maxim Of Manner
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
9 | "Father, take me home for a while." | Flouting | | | |
10 | "Very well." | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
11 | "Yes yes, brother, there's still some money owing, I know. Every day I remember, and mean to come along with some of it, but then it slips my mind, I'm getting old, My friend." | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
12 | "Those are no use to me." | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
13 | Not now | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
14 | ‘This year I shall bring Nirupama home for the pūjā or else!’ | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
15 | "Grandpa, are you going to buy a cart for me ?" | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
16 | "This time I shall take you, my dear. Nothing can stop me." | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
17 | "Father, have you really decided to turn us out on the streets?" | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
18 | "Should I condemn myself to hell for your sakes? Won't you let me do what's right?" | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
19 | “Grandpa, Haven’t you bought me that cart? | Flouting | | | |
20 | ‘Auntie, will you buy me a cart?’ | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
21 | ‘Father,’ she said, ‘if you give a single paisa more to my father-in-law, I swear solemnly you will never see me again.’ | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
22 | ‘What are you saying, child?’ said Ramsundar. ‘If I don’t pay the money, the shame will be forever on my head – and it will be your shame too.’ | | | | |
| | ‘The shame will be greater if you pay the money,’ said Nirupama. ‘Do you think I have no honour? Do you think I am just a money-bag, the more money in it the higher my value? No, Father, don’t shame me by paying this money. My husband doesn’t want it anyway.’ | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
23 | ‘But then they won’t let you come and see me,’ said Ramsundar. | Flouting | | | |
24 | ‘That can’t be helped,’ said Nirupama. ‘Please don’t try to fetch me anymore.’ | Flouting | | | |
25 | “Let me see my father and brothers just once, Mother.” | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
26 | Nothing but a trick to get to her father’s house,’ | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
27 | ‘What a princess she is! A poor household’s fare is not to her liking!’ | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
28 | ‘Look at her. What a beauty! She’s more and more like a piece of burnt wood.’ | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting | Flouting
30. “It’s all put on.’

31. “I have made all necessary arrangements here, so please send my wife to me quickly.”

32. “Dear son, we have secured another girl for you, so please take leave soon and come home.”

RQ. 1 & RQ. 2: There are altogether 57 floutings of conversational Maxims in 32 utterances since there are multiple floutings. Eight utterances follow all the maxims.

RQ. 3 & RQ. 4: Out of the total 57 floutings the Maxim of Quality tops the list with 31.57% of floutings. Next in rank is the Maxim of Manner which is flouted 29.82%. Maxim of Quantity was flouted 26.31%. The least flouted Maxim is the quality of Relevance. (12.28%)

The number of non-adherence to floutings by the top five characters are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>No. of Floutings</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother-in Law</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father-in Law</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RamSundar</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nirupama</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nirupama’s Husband</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were 51 floutings by the top five characters.
RQ5 & RQ6: Nirupama’s mother-in-law flouted around 30% of the total total floutings of the Maxims. Ramsundar takes the second position (21%) as he’s so affectionate with his daughter and helpless in tackling the situation with pressing financial problems. Nirupama takes the third position (17.5%). She flouts the maxims to make her brother happy and also as Tagore has used a mouth piece of modern woman with progressive thought.

RQ7 Evidence of their character traits in the floutings of Maxims

Utterances 1, 5, 7, 14, 15, 16, 22 and 26 follow all the maxims. Utterances 4, 7, 15, 17, 19 and 20, are uttered by minor characters.

2. "This haggling and bartering means nothing to me, I came here to marry and marry I shall."

The bridegroom is flouting the maxims of Quantity, Quality and manner. Though he goes against his father’s decision to call off the marriage he doesn’t favour or talk against Dowry System. He is being ambiguous. He’s not to the point and using ambiguous terms too.

3. "You see, sir, how young men behave these days,"

Grice’s relevance maxim lays down that contributions should be relevant to the assumed current goals of the interlocutors. While the son takes the decision to marry Nirupama, no matter whether they do pay all of the dowry or not, the son actually ignores and disobeys his father’s words. The father evades the awkwardness in the situation and changes the subject by talking about the behavior of the new generation. He is obviously is changing the dialogue to another subject which implicitly signifies that he is not happy about the decision that his son has made, but he can’t stop him. So if one thinks that his father hasn’t heard him or just is ignoring him, it’s wrong because he is conveying his anger on his son's decision. So we can see that the father's flouting yields the implicature that he isn’t happy at his son’s decision. Thus by conveying in a roundabout manner his unhappiness, the father flouts the maxims of quantity, quality and manner.

9."Father, take me home for a while."

10."Very well,"

An implicature relating to the low end of the quantity maxim is giving too little information. The father's words though superficially sufficient reply, it’s actually very less than what is expected, because throughout the story her father is sad for not being allowed to see his daughter whenever he wants, they are straggling to see each other and even if they seize a chance the visit should be short and sometimes in the outer rooms of her husband's house. Nirupama and her father have no honour in that house. So the expected reaction for her daughter’s request is supposed to be more enthusiastic or convincing or consoling. On the contrary RamSundar doesn’t show any kind of these emotions. He also doesn’t mention any time or make any arrangements for the visit. His very short
answer, which doesn’t adhere to any maxim, implies that even if he wants her to go with him, the situation does not allow it. Both of the interlocutors know they are talking about impossible things. Their awareness is credited to previous similar outcomes. The daughter is fully aware of the situation. In spite she demands to go with her father, which is impossible for him to carry out. She flouts the maxim of Quality.

6. "Why shouldn't they. My love", "I will come and fetch you." 11. "Yes yes, brother, there's still some money owing, I know. Every day I remember, and mean to come along with some of it, but then it slips my mind. I'm getting old, My friend." 18. "Should I condemn myself to hell for your sakes? Won't you let me do what's right?" 24. But then they won’t let you come and see me,’ Ramsundar in all the four utterances flouts the maxim of Quantity. He flouts the maxim of quantity talking too much to his son (18). Actually he resorts to shouting at his son and thereby flouts the maxims of quality and manner too. He isn’t neither explaining the situation (the dire necessity for selling the house) nor tries to convince his son. For him his daughter’s life is more important than anything. In his conversation with the Zamindar Raibhahadur (11) he wants to show his humility and since he’s not able to provide him with the whole sum of Dowry amount he talks in a roundabout manner. He flouts in this utterance, Maxim of quantity and manner. The other two utterances are with his daughter. (6 & 24) He’s in apposition to console his daughter on both these occasions. But he flouts the quantity maxim by talking less as he himself is aggrieved- worrying about his daughter’s fate.

21. ‘Father,’ she said, ‘if you give a single paisa more to my father-in-law, I swear solemnly you will never see me again.’

23 “The shame will be greater if you pay the money,” said Nirupama. ‘Do you think I have no honour? Do you think I am just a money-bag, the more money in it the higher my value? No, Father, don’t shame me by paying this money. My husband doesn’t want it anyway.”

In the above two utterances as Banerjee, (2017) cites “Musolmanir Galpo,” “Wife’s letter” and or “The story of a Muslim Woman” to ascertain Rabindranath Tagore representation of his female characters as determined, strong-willed, undaunted, valiant, “and conscious of their identity,” we find Nirupama though flouts the Maxim of Quantity and Manner glows with feministic thoughts. By making his protagonist Nirupama defying the patriarchal norm of her times, Tagore champions the cause of emancipation of women and sets to free women from the shackles of Dowry system. Nirupama raises her voice against the biased patriarchal society though succumbs to it at the end.

8.Pretty indeed! Pretty as the family she came from!’

28 ‘What a princess she is! A poor household’s fare is not to her liking!’

29 ‘Look at her. What a beauty! She’s more and more like a piece of burnt wood.’

30 It’s all put on.’

32 ‘Dear son, we have secured another girl for you, so please take leave soon and come home.’

These are the six utterances by Nirupama’s mother in law. By depicting the mother in law as a cruel woman who often violates the maxims especially the maxim of quality he presents who favour Dowry system are negative people and inspires people to bring positive changes in their lives by creating characters like Nirupama’s husband.

There are also few occasions where the addressees opt out of a reply. For instance Nirupama doesn’t reply her nephew asking her: ‘Auntie, will you buy me a cart?’ Instead she sees to that the possibility of fulfilling the desire of the child by forcing her father not to pay her in-laws and return home with the money.

V. DISCUSSION

2."This haggling and bartering means nothing to me, I came here to marry and marry I shall.”

The bridegroom’s flouting of the maxims of quantity, quality and manner is against being cooperative in the conversation taking place in public. But by making him flout the maxims Tagore himself is the harbinger of tremendous reformation of late 19th C. In 1890s Tagore ought to have pinned his excessive hopes on the Indian
young men, as harbinger of an exceptional change with their educational background, who would rock the Indian society and also understand the immense value of woman and cease treating her as the potential of obtaining wealth through the social evil of dowry! Tagore’s perfect groom the Deputy Magistrate in the story takes a stand and refuses to buckle down in the front of his conservative father’s imminent threat to Ramsundar that he would call off the marriage ceremony, since he is unable to provide the dowry.

31. “I have made all necessary arrangements here, so please send my wife to me quickly.” The youth of India is on the right path, according to Tagore. So making him flout the maxim of relevance. He flouts since he’s ignorant of his wife’s death and he has no hand in the cruelty and injustice done to the female protagonist of the story.

The future Deputy Magistrate’s ideal character is again brought out when Nirupama flouts the maxim of quantity by adding: “My husband doesn’t want it anyway,” when she forces her father to take the money back home. In the same instance she earlier opines: “The shame will be greater if you pay the money,” said Nirupama. ‘Do you think I have no honour? Do you think I am just a money-bag, the more money in it the higher my value? No, Father, don’t shame me by paying this money.” - Here she flouts not only the Quantity and Manner Maxims, but also quality and relevance maxims. There’s no losing of any honour if she takes money from her loving father. Nevertheless, she knows about the dowry issue from Day 1. Tagore by making her flout all the maxims and by letting her voice her opinion about dowry extols her as a modern woman.

We see Tagore fully comprehended the innumerable torture women underwent in their in-law’s house and wanted to raise his voice. His women characters evolve from passive to active and to torch bearers for the cause of women.

VI. CONCLUSION

Tagore’s characters in Profit and Loss are constantly flouting Grice’s maxims of quality, quantity, relation, and manner for various reasons. Nirupama’s mother in law does so to shower abuses on her daughter in law who haven’t brought Dowry. Nirupama flouts the Maxims because she doesn’t want her father and brothers suffer for her sake. Tagore’s social point of view is obvious after all. The characters like Nirupama’s father in law and the person who supported him in criticizing the bridegroom on his bold decision, are typical portrayals of conservative personalities who flout maxims of quality and manner to show for instance how greedy they are for money, and how hypocrite and black-hearted without feeling sorry at Ramsundar’s or the bride’s pathetic situation they are since they consider that it’s their bounded duty to safeguard the social practice, which is timeless evil prevalent till today in India.

It is an interesting and enlightening to read Tagore from a Gricean point of view. This study casts light on the fact that Tagore’s characters flout the maxims to exhibit the societal situations and conditions which were completely unfavorable for women in the 19th and early part of 20th Centuries.

Recommendations: The floutings, Violations of the Conversational Maxims in different short stories or in different genres can be undertaken for future study. Since there are very few comparative studies with regard to floutings of maxims such studies are highly recommended.

REFERENCES

