

Analyzing Pakistani Tertiary Classrooms Under Grice Principles - Getting the Meaning Across!

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ABSTRACT

Pragmatics and discourse analysis are not completely new in the field of linguistics, but still their general understandings are not standardized. Normally, in our classrooms teachers' and students' interactions don't turn out positively; other than motivation and feedback reasons can be seen in the conversational structures too. Application and understanding of the Grice's Cooperative Principle in such situations is difficult and complicated to construe. Interpretation of 'cooperative' sometime varies from Grice's original concept by causing slip-ups and specifically, violations. A close study has been attempted to highlight the outlying nature of generally occurring 'cooperation' from Grice's writings. Clear distinctions were observed between sentence meaning and speaker meaning, the idea of "systematicity" in language, and the centrality of rationality to human action. This paper has been concerned with the way in which Grice's Cooperative Principles are represented in Pakistani English Language Tertiary Classrooms, and the interpretations to which they can lead. Research has been kept qualitative by opting questionnaire, observation & interviews as tools for the study on tertiary level classrooms to observe the 'conversational cooperation' in the overall learning experience.

Key words: Conversational Maxims, Socio cultural theory, Discourse, Speech Acts, Pragmatics.

INTRODUCTION

Language learning is subordinate to discourse understanding, implication and analysis, which varies head to head. Utterance and their meanings are poles apart, which can positively or negatively affect conversation's gist. These utterances can be analyzed on micro and macro levels. Microanalysis is the word analysis that can be strong or weak whereas macro analysis is the speech act analysis¹.

Discourse occurring in the classrooms is of high importance as it can guide or confuse students with regard to their subject matter. Every teacher comes in the class, delivers the planned lecture and leaves but the interactions, turns and responses somehow create too many questions to answer. i.e. Have students learnt something? Was teacher clear to learners? Has the topic been comprehended as per expectation?

Conversation/communication is an art that specifically needs to be taught as the impulsive but inappropriate acts can falsify the whole conversational process. Mostly, people listen to, reply only and not to respond the actual gist because they don't try to comprehend things in first go, for example:

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17. Op. Cit., The World Mission of the Church, pp. 256-257
18. Ibid, p. 49-50
19. See for detail: Evangelism, Op. cit, p. 407
20. Op. Cit., Evangelism, p. 134
21. Op. Cit., The World Mission of the Church, pp. 24-26
22. Ibid, pp. 121-144
23. Ibid, pp. 102-114
24. Ibid, pp. 43-44
25. Ibid, pp. 151-156

The participants felt the necessity of joint planning and action in missionary enterprise and emphasized the need for cooperation among different Christian denominations. In this regard, Madras conference hailed the achievements in the direction of church union in various parts of the world, particularly in South India²⁵.

Before Madras Conference Delhi Conference had taken place on December 6 to 7 in 1938 for the evangelization of the Muslim world. Madras conference reviewed the implementation of the Delhi Conference agenda.

It was considered that a fruitful approach to Muslim evangelization would be to encourage the people to remain loyal to their social and political environment to which they belong before converting toward Christianity. It was suggested that it would be sufficient if the head of an indigenous Christian mission were a Christian. They also suggested to avoid reaction and gather Muslims gently from their strong social bonds towards Christianity.

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RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

Here, recommendations of Madras conference related to our topic will be analyzed one by one:

- The Madras conference recognized the moral value of the non-Christian religions. At the same time, it reaffirmed Christian mission to non-Christians. In this connection, the conference recommended the localization of Christian mission. The conference emphasized that Christianity should be expressed in indigenous forms of literature, institutions, architecture and so on. It further urged that the presentation of Christian mission should be in persuasive manner, not in aggressive style. The reason behind this changed stance was the awakening of the national consciousness among Asians. In this regard, the missionaries observed that presentation of Christianity, as a western religion has no attraction for locals. This led to the recommendation of indigenous Christianity²¹.

The Madras Conference observed the existence of social values in other religions such as the social teachings of Islam. They felt that Christianity lacks such social dimension. Furthermore, several recommendations of the Madras conference were focused on church and society, church and international order, and church and state. Main idea behind these focuses was to bring Christian teachings into practical life of individuals and society²².

- The delegates of the conference recognized the importance of missionary literature for the purpose of evangelization and passed several recommendations in this regard. The conference emphasized the publication of Christian literature and training of missionaries for this purpose. It was also recommended that the publication of literature should be undertaken keeping in view the local culture. Moreover, the conference emphasized that the foreign outlook of missionary literature must be avoided.
 - The Conference recommended the production of literature specific for each social group such as educated class, youth, blinds, and children. Journalism was seen as an important approach to non-Christians. It was emphasized that Christian missionaries have to create place for Christianity in the newspapers. The conference also recommended the use of drama, songs, and emerging communication equipment's like radio and cinema for the mission²³.
 - The conference reaffirmed the evangelistic purpose behind philanthropic activities like education and health services. It was further proposed that these activities must be controlled directly by missionaries. Apart from the fulltime evangelists in the field, the conference particularly recognized the contribution of students and women and considered their efforts helpful for Christian mission. The conference emphasized that opportunities must be provided to them to work in the field of evangelization²⁴.
 - The conference received reports from all over the world about development of Christian unity and cooperation among Christian churches. The conference considered church divisions a big hindrance in the evangelization of non-Christians.
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conducted this inquiry on the request of National Christian Council of India. The conference analyzed merits and demerits of Mass Movement for Christian mission. It was noted that this movement had little usefulness rather it had created difficulties for Christianity¹⁶.

However, this Movement accelerated the numerical growth of Christian church and played a big role in the expansion of Christianity in India. According to the estimates of J. W. Picket, 85 percent of Indians converted to Christianity because of this Movement. Only in Punjab American Methodist Church increased its membership from virtually nil to 35000 numbers in the span of 30 years. Similar results were achieved by other Christian denominations¹⁷.

(d) Survey of Indian and Muslim Missionary fields

One of the important themes of Madras conference was the Christian mission in relation to other religions. In this regard let us first mention their considerations about Hinduism:

The participants of the Madras conference observed that in reaction to Christian mission Hinduism had changed its Indian national character. For the first time in history Hindus tried to present their teachings globally. Furthermore, Indian nationalism strengthened the resurgence of Hinduism.

The participants of the conference observed the changing situation in the Muslim world after the rise of nationalism and abolition of caliphate. On the one hand, and the spread of secularism and materialism among Muslims on the other¹⁸.

In this connection, the Madras Conference appointed a group of 35 missionaries working among Muslims to survey the missionary field of Muslim world and to identify the problems that the missionaries confronted there.

The Madras conference committee for Muslims pointed out the weaknesses and discussed the failure of Christian missionaries in Muslim lands. The committee pointed out that the attitude of Muslims toward Christian mission was largely unresponsive. On the other hand, the committee also highlighted the opportunities in front of missionaries and urged to reaffirm Christian mission to Muslims despite all difficulties and hindrances¹⁹.

It is interesting to note that the Madras conference focused mainly on the Muslims of India. According to the details of the conference proceedings, there were more Muslims in India than any other country of the world. The Muslim population in India was 82 millions. The participants of the Madras conference also discussed the characteristics of Indian Muslims like their strong sense of being a single community, and their devotion to the imposition of Islamic law in certain Indian states²⁰.

- Christian missionaries to give Christian mission and church an indigenous cast and get rid of its image of being a western institution.
- The Madras Conference considered the emergence and popularity of communism as another challenge to Christianity. According to the report of Madras conference, communism at that time was impressing people on large scale, especially the youth of society.
 - The third perceived opposition to Christianity was the rising scientific skepticism. The reason behind this development was the thrust of scientific method, which demanded, according to many, that all religious beliefs need to be affirmed through scientific examinations and experiments¹³.

(b) Need for the Establishment of Indigenous Church in India

As discussed earlier, out of the central themes of the Madras conference, one was the institution of church from different aspects. In this regard, the important issues discussed were as follow:

- The role of the church in evangelization.
- The indigenous ministry of the church.
- Faith by which the church lives.
- The relation of the church and the state.
- The economic basis of the church¹⁴.

The above mentioned topics show that Madras conference recognized the important place of the church in evangelization and tried to remove the weaknesses of the church and to adjust it to the changing environment.

Apart from these issues, the need for indigenous church was emphasized especially for the younger churches. It is important to note that previously younger churches were under the control of western churches. Now due to the political changes, the rise of nationalism, and the awareness of Eastern people regarding Christianity's foreignness, the issue of indigenous church, independent from western influence, came to the fore in Madras conference.

In this regard, the conference suggested these younger churches to adjust to their native environment and convert the local people to independent self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating indigenous churches¹⁵.

(c) The Mass Movement in India

In India, Christian missionaries at first started their work among high caste Hindus and Muslims. However, by and large they failed to convert them. As a result of this failure Christian missionaries diverted their attention to the low caste Hindus. They found among them less resistance and succeeded to convert them in large groups. This approach is known as Christian Mass Movement in the missionary history of India. The Madras conference also analyzed the impact and results of Mass Movement in the light of inquiry of Bishop J. W. Pickett. He had

- (a) Doctrinal debates should be avoided because they provoked the Muslims to reject Christianity.
- (b) Christian believers should remain integrated in their former social and political group to avoid difficulty and resistance from native people. In this regard, the report suggested substitute for baptism¹¹.

For preparation of group reports, the participants were divided into eight sections. Each group comprised 55 persons. Finally, the details and findings of the Madras Conference were published with the title *The World Mission of the Church*.

Another important document of the Madras conference is the seven volumes of *The Madras series*. In this series, we find the discussions and papers presented in Madras conference.

THEMES OF THE CONFERENCE

As mentioned earlier, International Missionary Conference (Tambaram) Madras was an international gathering of Christian missionaries. The conference was held in the context of world changing situations, so the themes of this conference were not confined to a specific religion.

The major issues of Madras Conference were following:

- (a) The growing opposition to Christian mission.
- (b) Establishment of indigenous church in India.
- (c) Christian Mass Movement in India.
- (d) Survey of Indian and Muslim missionary fields.

(a) The Growing Opposition to Christian Mission

One of the important themes of Madras conference was the emerging opposition to the Christian mission in the changing world. As we saw earlier, the chief threat to Christianity which the participants of International Missionary Conference Jerusalem (1928) had noted was "Secularism" but at the International Missionary Conference Madras (1938) the participants considered the rise of "new paganism"¹² and revival of traditional religions a new challenge for Christian mission because they demanded complete loyalty and devotion from their followers.

Other challenges for Christian mission according to the conference report were as follow:

- The Madras conference considered the emergence of nationalism in following three types: Self-expressive, self-satisfied, and self-assertive. It was considered as a great emerging threat to Christianity. To deal with this challenge, the participants of the Madras conference discussed suitable Christian attitude toward nationalism. In fact, the rise of nationalism was in part a reaction against the West, so the nationalistic sentiments compelled

- Church and international order.
- The church and the state⁸.

Before the conference, preparatory literature was produced and later on distributed among the participants. In this regard, two books were most important and notable. The first book was *The Economical Basis of the Church* by J. Merle Davis. He discussed in his book the economical problems of the younger churches and suggested for their solutions. The second book was *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* written by the historian HendrickKreamer. He wrote this book on the request of the committee of the Madras conference. The main issue discussed by the writer was the Christian approach toward non-Christian religions and how to reaffirm Christian mission in the changing world. Hendrickkreamer and his book had immense impact on Madras conference⁹.

He tried in this book to respond to the liberal approach of Jerusalem Conference and to reaffirm the Christian mission. Due to his impact on this conference, some Christian writers have considered Madras conference as Hendrickkreamer's conference. The exclusive assumption of HendrickKreamer regarding Christianity provoked reaction among scholars like the former principal of Madras Christian College A. G. Hogg. He criticized Hendrickkreamer and rejected his exclusive assumptions¹⁰.

Another important preliminary work prepared for the Madras Conference was the inquiry conducted by Near East Christian Council on the subject of evangelization of Muslim world. Henry H. Riggs compiled this report. This report basically focused on two fundamental questions regarding Christian mission to Muslims:

- (1) What are the difficulties that make the evangelization of the Muslims unfruitful in comparison to other people?
- (2) Which missionary approach and attitude towards Muslims produce better results?

As regard the first question, it was concluded that there were two great hindrances in conversion of Muslims to Christianity:

First, certain Christian teachings are unacceptable for Muslims. Second, Muslim solidarity and brotherhood safeguarded them from conversion to Christianity.

Regarding the question of suitable attitude and approach towards Muslims, the inquiry report recommended the following suggestions: Christians working among Muslims should adopt a sympathetic approach towards Muslims and present Christian message in an acceptable manner to impress Muslims. The report further put forward the following recommendations: