INTRODUCTION

0.1 Preliminaries

0.2 Main Issues

0.2.1 Communication

0.2.1.1 Types of meaning in communication

0.2.1.2 Models of communication

0.2.1.2.1 Code Model

0.2.1.2.2 Inferential Model

0.2.2 Discourse

0.2.2.1 Types of discourse

0.2.2.2 Discourse structure

0.2.3 Context

0.2.4 Approaches to language: formal and functional

0.2.5 Sense and Force

0.2.6 Sentence and Utterance

0.2.7 Syntax, Semantics and Pragmatics

0.2.8 Conversational implicatures

0.3 Justification

0.4 Scope

0.5 Data and Method

0.6 Plan of the Thesis
INTRODUCTION

0.1 Preliminaries

The present study aims at exploring the nature and function of conversational implicatures in fiction. The term ‘conversational implicature’ was first introduced by the British philosopher H. P. Grice, in his William James lectures at Harvard University in 1967 (Grice, 1975: 25). ‘Conversational implicatures’ is one of the core issues in pragmatics. A study of conversational implicatures involves consideration of a striking, and perhaps the most significant, phenomenon in linguistic communication, namely, the phenomenon of how speakers mean more than what they actually say. It involves exploration into the pragmatic implications of a linguistic discourse. In pragmatics, meaning is defined relative to a speaker or user of a language, whereas in semantics meaning is defined purely as a property of expressions in a given language, without any reference to particular situations, or speakers and hearers. Such an exploration lies beyond the scope of semantics.

In order to delimit the scope of the present study, therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between the two domains of inquiry within linguistics, namely, semantics and pragmatics; and corollary to the distinction, consider the dichotomies resulting from the formalist and the functionalist approaches to language such as ‘sentence and utterance’ and ‘sense and force’. At the same time the nature and scope of pragmatics as well as the metalanguage relevant to the discussion of the issues concerned will also be taken into account. This involves consideration of concepts such as discourse, communication, context of utterance, features of speech situation and speech event, etc. The aim here is simply to highlight these related issues, and not to attempt an exhaustive survey, or an evaluation, of available literature on the topic, or conclusive definition of concerned notions, concepts and issues.
0.2 Main Issues

0.2.1 Communication

Communication is an interpersonal phenomenon involving at least two persons or agents using some medium for exchanging ideas. Sperber & Wilson (1986:1) describe communication as ‘a process involving two information-processing devices’ where ‘one device modifies the physical environment of the other’ as a result of which ‘the second device constructs representations similar to the representations already stored in the first device’. Communication requires the presence of thought or idea- i.e. communicational content, transfer and interpretation of the said communicational content. Transfer of thought or information may occur from natural or non-natural source. Moreover, it may be intentional or unintentional. For example, the natural phenomenon of black clouds gathering in the sky may, for a sensible person, be a signal or an indication of a possibility of imminent storm and rain. Similarly, a careful observer may acquire substantial amount of information from the conscious or unconscious linguistic, non-linguistic or paralinguistic behaviour of another person. The meaning so inferred cannot be said to be intentionally transferred.

The notion of communication, here, refers to only the cases of intentional transfer of thought by means of non-natural means. On the basis of this basic assumption, Communication could be classified into two broad categories- human and non-human communication. Human communication maybe further classified into two sub-categories: linguistic and non-linguistic communication. Human linguistic communication serves a variety of purposes, and it assumes a variety of forms. We, for example, communicate our knowledge and our ignorance, our anger and our pleasure, our needs and our intentions. We may communicate with a torrent of words, or with a single word, with a grunt or with silence and so on and so forth. It can be in the form of speech or writing. These facts allow for a tremendous variety in the act of communication. The present study is concerned with written communication, especially with the study of conversations in fiction.
An act of linguistic communication requires at least four elements: thought or idea, sender, receiver, and medium. Different philosophers have proposed different technical terminologies for these elements. The present study makes use of the terms ‘thought’ for ‘message’, ‘meaning’ or ‘ideational content’, ‘speaker’ for the ‘sender’, ‘hearer’ for the ‘receiver’ and ‘utterance’ for the particular item that the speaker selects from among those available in the medium to be the vehicle of his act of communication. However, we use the terms ‘speaker’, ‘hearer’ and ‘utterance’ extensively. ‘Speaker’, here, stands for any communicator using any means of communication available to him; ‘hearer’ stands for the addressee, the bystander and the eavesdropper; and, following Grice (1968: 55; 1969: 161), the term ‘utterance’ is used to mean any gesture invented for the occasion of communication to convey meaning. It need not be a linguistic item. However, since we shall be dealing primarily with linguistic communication, it is natural here to think of this terminology as applying primarily to cases in which language is the medium and the utterances in question are linguistic utterances.

0.2.1.1 Types of meaning in communication

We can derive from the four elements of communication stated above at least three types of meaning:

Speaker Meaning (i.e. the thought the speaker intends to communicate).

Utterance meaning (i.e. what the actually uttered expression means), and

Hearer’s meaning (i.e. the meaning the hearer ascribes to the speaker).

What we communicate is meanings—information, propositions, thoughts, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, etc. An act of communication requires approximation of hearer’s meaning with that of speaker’s meaning. Communication cannot be said to have taken place unless the interpreter recognises the speaker’s intended meaning. The existence of the speaker’s meaning, thus, is not in itself enough to guarantee communication. Ideally, thus, the two sides understand the utterance in the same way, i.e. the speaker means precisely what the hearer understands him to mean. But this ideal is not always achieved. There are several ways in which a particular communicative act may
fall short of the ideal. The interpreter may fail to figure out what the utterance is supposed to mean, or he may misunderstand the speaker’s intention. Where the hearer ascribes some meaning to the speaker (hearer’s meaning) which is not the same as the speaker’s meaning (i.e. when the two meanings diverge), an act of communication does not take place. On the contrary, in cases where the conventional meaning of an utterance does not match with the speaker’s meaning, in so far as the hearer understands what the speaker meant, the act counts as a successful communication (although a defective one). Thus, an ideal case of communication (i.e. the successful and non-defective one) is that in which the speaker’s meaning and the hearer’s meaning are the same, and the medium chosen is an appropriate one.

Different types of discourse communicate different things in different ways. What a religious ritual communicates is quite different from what is communicated by a Railway timetable or chart list of stock exchange rates. Even within the domain of verbal communication, a poem and a legal document seem to communicate two very different things. There are thus several types of meaning and there are several factors affecting the meaning of an utterance. Meaning is thus a culture specific domain. As there are so many variables affecting meaning, what the hearer infers can hardly ever be exactly the same as what the speaker means. What the hearer infers, even in the case of the so-called ideal case of communication, is, strictly speaking, only an approximation of what the speaker means. The variation at any two or more levels of meaning may result in communication gap. Communication gap or miscommunication can have serious interactional consequences. In face-to-face interaction however, much of the misunderstanding is cleared by means of what Taylor and Cameron (1987) refer to as ‘architecture of intersubjective accountability feature’.

Referring to Grice’s distinction between ‘incidental transfer of meaning’ and ‘intentional transfer of meaning’ seems to be pertinent here. For in considering communication, we are concerned primarily with the ‘intentional transfer of meaning’ (Grice’s meaning-). Following Grice, we can say that it is only the ‘intentional transfer of meaning’ that constitutes part of communication. For the
hearer cannot be said to receive by way of communication what the speaker does not intend him to understand. The hearer in such a case can be said to have inferred the meaning rather than saying that it has been communicated to him. To understand the total signification of an utterance is thus to understand the speaker intended meaning. The total signification is the product of the interaction between the sentence meaning and the speaker intended meaning. Features of context modify the sentence meaning such that the utterance systematically encodes the speaker’s intention. This makes it possible for the hearer, given appropriate contextual knowledge, to retrieve that intention. Encoding and retrieving speaker intended meaning is possible only when both speaker and hearer act in accordance with a set of shared conversational principles and assumptions. These assumptions pertain to certain very general norms of rational communicative behaviour tacitly known to users of a language.

0.2.1.2 Models of communication

0.2.1.2.1 Code Model

A typical Code Model describes communication as encoding and decoding process. According to the Code Model, communication is achieved by the encoder encoding message(s) in signal(s) and the decoder decoding the message(s) from the signals. A code is a system which pairs messages with signals, enabling two information-processing devices (organisms or machines) to communicate. A message is a representation internal to the communicating devices. A signal is a modification of the external environment, which can be produced by one device and recognized by the other. A message originating in an information source can be duplicated at a destination as a result of a communication process. The source and the destination, here, are central thought processes, the encoder and the decoder are linguistic abilities, the message is a thought, and the channel in case of spoken communication is air which carries an acoustic signal.

From a semiotic point of view, the existence of an underlying code is the only possible explanation of how communication is achieved. An eminent psychologist, Vygotsky (1962: 6), states how communication would be
impossible in the absence of a code. It is in fact obvious that understanding between minds would be impossible without some mediating expression such as ‘a system of signs, linguistic or other’. Semioticians argue that communication cannot be studied without postulating an underlying system of signs. The task of the semiotician has always been that of reconstructing this underlying system.

0.2.1.2.2 Inferential Model

From Aristotle to modern semiotics, all theories of communication were based on a single model - the Code Model. Recently, however, several philosophers, notably H. Paul Grice has proposed a quite different model - the Inferential Model. According to the Inferential Model, communication is achieved by producing and interpreting evidence. The Inferential Model is essentially a pragmatic model of communication. The speaker, in this framework, tries to achieve his aims within constraints imposed by principles and maxims of ‘standard communicative behaviour’, whereas the hearer tries to solve his problem using the same mechanism (for the purposes of analysis and interpretation). This view of communication visualizes the interactants (i.e. the speaker and the hearer, or participants in the interaction) as trying to achieve their respective goals within the constraints imposed by the principles and maxims of standard communicative behaviour. The co-operative principle and the politeness principle play seminal role in the Inferential Model of communication. Leech (1983) calls this a rhetorical approach to pragmatics because it considers pragmatics as essentially goal directed and evaluative. The speech act model falls in the inferential category. It explains communication in terms of the types of illocutions and kinds of meaning they convey. It examines the contextual status of utterances in terms of the functions they serve in a particular speech event. A specific type of illocution is appropriate for, and is therefore used to convey a certain meaning on a certain occasion.

The Code Model and the Inferential Model are not incompatible. They can be combined in various ways. The work of pragmatists, philosophers of language and psycholinguists in the recent years has shown that verbal communication involves both coding and inferential processes. In trying construct an adequate
description of these two types of mechanism and their interaction, it is important
to realise that they are intrinsically independent of one another, and that
communication in general is independent of either. Code Model and Inferential
Model both significantly contribute to the study of communication.
Communication can be achieved by coding and decoding messages, and it can
be achieved by providing evidence for an intended inference. These models are
each adequate to different modes of communication; and, therefore, upgrading
either to the status of a general theory of communication is a mistake. Both
coded communication and inferential communication are subject to general
constraints which apply to all forms of information processing.

0.2.2 Discourse

‘Discourse’ is a frequently used concept in literary discussions today. Different
discourse analysts have tried to define it in different ways so as to delimit the
scope of this vast domain to suit the needs of their individual purposes.
Consequently one comes across different, and sometimes contradictory,
definitions of the term. However, it is possible to state some generally agreeable
features of discourse and define it for the present purpose.
Broadly speaking, the term ‘discourse’ may be said to cover a whole range of
human interactive behaviour. Ashok Thorat (2000: 9) argues, for example, that
any meaningful interaction between or among interactants could legitimately be
labelled as discourse. In a discourse, utterances do not occur at random. They are
connected by means of certain logical, chronological, or psychological links.
Discourse thus means any continuous composition the utterances in which show
different levels of anchorage. Discourse, for Van Dijk (1977: 3), is ‘a sequence
of sentences or utterances on any particular topic, on a particular occasion’. In a
novel, for example, it is not only the sentences or utterances that are interlinked;
paragraphs, chapters, and even whole sections of the novel are intertwined. In
fact, the whole of a novel displays certain markers of the beginning, the middle
and the ending, which gives it a sense of organic unity. It is in this sense that
even the novel as a whole might be said to constitute a discourse.
A discourse characteristically has as its organising principle, the fundamental properties of coherence and cohesion. Logical and cohesive devices combine separate linguistic units into stretches of meaningful discourse. Coherence, generally speaking refers to the connectivity of the elements of a text. The connectivity of the elements of a text, according to Lyons (1981: 199) is essentially a matter of meaning and reference - a matter of content rather than form. Semantically, coherence refers to the 'intra-textual semantic relations' (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 4), which are 'primarily non-structural' (Halliday, 1978: 133). For Halliday, coherence means 'discourse well-formedness in terms of discourse relevance and discourse topic'. Coherence thus is the general principle that facilitates the production and interpretation of human interaction. Coherence may be viewed from two perspectives - local and global. Local coherence refers to organisation of propositions at the level of sentences, whereas global coherence refers to the further organisation of ideas at the level of higher units like paragraphs, chapters, sections, volumes/books, etc within the text. Local coherence is the organising principle underlying the structure of a paragraph, while global coherence is the organising principle underlying the structure of the text as a whole. At both local and global levels, there is both semantic and pragmatic coherence, the first defined in terms of propositions, and the latter in terms of speech acts (Patil, 1994: 23). Coherence may be viewed as functional or rhetorical device. Two propositions may be said to be functionally coherent if one has a function with respect to the other. For example, in a sequence of two propositions, the second may be a specification, an illustration, contrast or conclusion of the first. The same can be said of the higher units of discourse. On the rhetorical plane coherence serves the function of reinforcement of ideas and embellishment of form using stylistic devices. Coherence at the local level may be fairly easy to define, or it may be quite complex depending upon the nature of the interaction, the topic under discussion or the relationship of interlocutors. If it is complex, it may call for careful expert analysis. This is where the model of Implicature Analysis presented here is most relevant. The coherence at the global level, on the other hand, is a much more
complex matter. It requires a global perspective of the text. It may or may not be possible to sum up the global coherence of a text in terms of a single speech act. And even if it is possible to do so, such a summing up is bound to be a very general statement about the text. In the case of a complex work of art like fiction, it is almost inevitable that several perspectives with convincing arguments of their own collide and clash, and get meshed into one argument or present several ones, thus leaving the text open-ended to the taste and discretion of the reader.

0.2.2.1 Types of discourse
Discourse could be classified into two major categories - verbal and non-verbal discourse. Non-verbal discourse (e.g. mimes) is by definition non-linguistic. On the basis of the medium of expression, verbal discourse could be classified into two sub-categories, namely spoken and written discourse. Depending on the nature and role of interactants' mutual participation, spoken or written discourse could be classified into two major categories: 'monologic' and 'dialogic' discourse. A monologic discourse consists in an uninterrupted flow of communicative activity on the part of one person. Any piece of written communication is essentially a monologic discourse-type. A dialogic discourse, on the other hand, consists of one or more utterances by two or more interlocutors on a given topic, on a given occasion (Van Dijk, 1977: 3). A dialogic discourse may, however, be embedded into a monologic discourse. A narrative story telling embedding face-to-face interaction is a classic example of this phenomenon. There are several models classifying discourse in accordance with the form and function of language it is adapted to serve on a particular occasion. Spielmann (1989: 104), for example, classified discourse types into narrative, procedural, hortatory, explanatory, argumentative, and conversational. The present study is confined primarily to the consideration of verbal, especially written conversational discourse in fiction.

0.2.2.2 Discourse structure
Discourse structure is an essential feature of any written or oral communication (i.e. of any textual and interpersonal interaction). As a natural corollary to the
distinction between the structuralist and the functionalist approaches to language, discourse also may be studied from two perspectives - the formalist (i.e. structuralist) perspective and the functionalist perspective. The structurally based analysis of discourse aims at identifying structural constituents (i.e. smaller linguistic units) of discourse. It tends to find constituents that have particular relationships with one another and that can occur in a restricted number of (often a rule governed) arrangements (Grimes, 1975; Stubbs, 1983). However, discourse analysts seem to vary on the point of what constitutes the basic unit of discourse. Some analysts consider the basic unit of discourse to be ‘the morpheme’ (and combination of morphemes into sentences) (e.g. Harris, 1988); others take it to be ‘the clause’ (Linde and Labov, 1985); some consider ‘the proposition’ to be the basic discourse unit (e.g. Grimes, 1975; Mann and Thomson, 1988), while others consider it to be ‘the sentence’ (Stubbs (1983). Polanyi (1988) allows structures to be comprised of units as varied as sentences, turns, speech actions, and speech events (cf. Schiffrin, 1994: 24). In many structural approaches, discourse is viewed as a level of structure higher than the sentence. The structuralist perspective is concerned with identifying regularities, i.e. discovering and describing the recurrent structures or patterns of language use. The functionalist perspective focuses on the role the structural units of discourse (and their combinations) play in actual communication. A prototypical functionalist definition holds discourse as ‘language use’. Functionalists consider ‘utterance’ as the minimal structural unit of conversational discourse. Building on the structuralist descriptions of language use, the functionalists try to construct theories that explain the structural regularities by relating them to the purposes or functions these language usages are adopted to serve. The functionalist discourse analysts make use of the observations, discoveries or the findings of the structuralist studies as tools for further analysis. The pragmatic model of Implicature Analysis proposed here is an essentially functionalist enterprise.
0.2.3 Context

Using language successfully involves much more than the knowledge of the grammar of that language. This is the reason why, improving upon Chomsky’s notion of competence. Dell Hymes (1971) proposed the term ‘communicative competence’ to refer to the knowledge that underpins successful communicative behaviour. Communicative competence exceeds mere grammatical proficiency and includes knowledge of what can be said on which occasions, by whom and to whom. These are discursive rules governing discursive practices, sensitive to the functions and contexts of communication, not just abstract linguistic rules governing the well-formedness of sentences in texts.

Communication is a social affair. It takes place within the context of a fairly well-defined social situation. Features of context such as the physical setting of utterances, participants’ personal background knowledge and beliefs (or their world view), their goals and intentions, their attitudes toward each other, the socio-cultural assumptions concerning role and status relationship, the social values associated with various message components, etc play important role in the planning and interpretation of utterances. The role of context in language use has, however, been most forcefully asserted in the studies associated with non-traditional linguistics - the kind of studies we normally associate with names like Malinowski, Firth, Goffman, Fishman, Halliday, Hymes, for example.

Context, however, is a problematic concept. As Jacob Mey (1993: 8) observes, it is a notoriously hard concept to deal with. Linguists have time and again expressed their inability to provide exact characterization of the notion (e.g. Bar-Hillel, 1970: 80; Ochs, 1979: 1). Levinson (1983: 24), after examining several different formulations of the notion, remarks - ‘since we have failed to produce a clear notion of context, what we include in context is likely to be whatever we exclude from semantics by the way of meaning relations’. However, despite of the vagueness associated with the notion of context, we shall try to formulate a sort of working definition of the notion relevant to the present study along the lines suggested by Lyons and Ochs. Lyons (1977 a: 574), for example, suggested
as features of context the following over and above universal principles of logic and language usage:

(i) Knowledge of 'role' and 'status' (where role covers both role in the speech event, as speaker or addressee, and social role, and status covers notions of relative social standing)

(ii) Knowledge of spatial and temporal location

(iii) Knowledge of formality level

(iv) Knowledge of the medium (roughly the code or style appropriate to a channel, like the distinction between the written and spoken varieties of a language)

(v) Knowledge of appropriate subject matter

(vi) Knowledge of appropriate province (or domain determining the register of a language).

Besides the aspects of context referred to above, communicative context also includes the knowledge of the linguistic and socio-cultural resources available to a particular speech community and of the psychological world in which the language user operates at any given time. For Ochs (1979 c: 5), the scope of context includes minimally ‘language users’ beliefs and assumptions about the temporal, spatial and social settings; prior, on-going and future actions (verbal and non-verbal), and the state of knowledge and attentiveness of those participating in the social interaction in hand’. For both Lyons and Ochs, ‘context’ includes linguistic features as well because such features often invoke the relevant contextual assumptions. In addition to these, Levinson (1983: 23) proposes participants’ beliefs about most of the above parameters, including the place of the current utterance within the sequence of utterances that makes up the discourse.

0.2.4 Approaches to language: formal and functional

A linguistic theory is primarily concerned with the explanation of the phenomenon of natural language usage. There are two ways of studying language, viz. the formalist perspective and the functionalist perspective. What Newmeyer (1983) called a formalist paradigm is, however, similar to Hymes’ (1974) structuralist paradigm and to what Hopper (1988) called ‘apriori’ grammar; whereas the functionalist paradigm is sometimes also called ‘emergent’ (Hopper, 1988) or ‘interactive’ grammar. (Mey. et al. 1992. c.f. Schiffrin, 1994: 20). The formalist perspective tends to provide explanations of the phenomenon by means of identification of rule-governed systems within the
phenomenon. Grammar gives a theoretical reconstruction of such a particular rule system. It accounts for the grammaticalness (or ungrammaticalness) of utterances in terms of phonological, morphological, and syntactic systems of the language (cf. the notion of well-formedness). Apart from these properties of form, a grammar is also required to specify the meaning structure related to these forms. A grammar is, therefore, usually roughly characterized as ‘a theoretical form-meaning rule system’ (Van Dijk, 1977: 2). Different levels of linguistic analysis such as phonology, morphology, and syntax contribute in their own ways to the explanation of meaning associated with language usage. A study of these aspects of meaning falls within the domain of semantics. Meaning beyond this is ‘contextual’ or ‘situational’ meaning. A study of this aspect of meaning is the central concern of the functionalist perspective. Geoffrey Leech (1983) makes a distinction between ‘grammatical meaning’ and ‘pragmatic meaning’. In his view ‘phonology, syntax and semantics together make for grammatical meaning; and semantics together with the context of utterance leads to pragmatic meaning’ (Leech, 1983: 12). In Leech’s framework, grammar (in the wider sense inclusive of phonology, syntax and semantics) and pragmatics (i.e. the principles of language use) are complementary domains within linguistics. He maintains that we cannot understand the nature of language without studying both these domains and the interaction between them. Leech, therefore, takes the complementarist position and says that pragmatics studies language as a communication system; that it is concerned with the use of language as distinct form, but complementary to language itself seen as a formal system (Leech, 1983: 3 - 4). Generally speaking, the formalist / functionalist dichotomy can be said to be useful in delimiting the domains of semantics and pragmatics. Similarly, the distinction between ‘sentence and utterance’ and ‘sense and force’ seems to rest on the formalist / functionalist dichotomy in so far as the formalist approach is concerned with the study of the structural aspects of language and the functionalist approach addresses itself to the functional aspects of language. The one studies language at the level of sentences, while the other studies it at
the level of utterances; the one is concerned with the sense of the utterance, while the other is concerned with the force of the utterance.

0.2.5 Sense and Force

'Sense’ and ‘force’ may be said to represent different types of meaning. Sense refers to the content that is inherent or ‘given’ (cf. the Saussurean notion of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign). It represents literal or face value meaning (cf. Morgan, 1978; Searle, 1979; Gazdar, 1979), which can be described by means of a semantic representation in some formal language or notation (Leech, 1983: 30). Sense, thus, refers to what Leech (1983: 35) calls grammatical meaning, or what Levinson (1983: 14, 17) calls sentence meaning or conventional content of an utterance. It represents the propositional content of a text irrespective of any reference to particular situations. Such meaning is abstract without any force. The term (illocutionary) force, on the other hand, refers to the meaning that is ‘relative to speech situation’, i.e. to the user of the language and the context of language use (Leech, 1983: 15). It is also variously referred to as situational, contextual, or inferred meaning. It represents the illocutionary intent of an utterance which maybe described in terms of an implicature (or a set of implicatures) arrived at by some sort of informal reasoning (Leech, 1983: 30). This does not exclude or rule out the possibility of an utterance having the same Sense and Force as its meaning components. In fact, it is quite natural for an utterance to have the same Sense and Force.

In Austin’s (1962) framework, Sense may be said to refer to the locutionary act, while Force refers to the illocutionary act. In the Gricean (1957) parlance Sense may be said to denote what is said (in the favoured sense of the word ‘said’), while Force denotes what is implicated. It is necessary, however, to keep in mind the bond between the two: ‘Force includes Sense, and is also pragmatically derivable from it’ (Leech, 1983: 17). In order to specify the difference between the Sense and the Force of an utterance, however, we need to have separate terms to represent entities at three levels - namely, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels. The terms ‘declarative’ ‘interrogative’ and ‘imperative’, for example, are typically used to represent syntactic categories of basic sentence
types. They are conventionally distinguished from corresponding semantic categories referred to by such terms as ‘assertion’, ‘question’, and ‘command’. These conventional semantic categories are often used to represent entities at both semantic and pragmatic levels. However, if we are to clearly specify the difference between Sense and Force of an utterance, we need a further differentiation between categories on semantic and pragmatic levels. Leech (1983: 114) proposes to differentiate between the two categories by calling the respective semantic categories ‘proposition’, ‘question’, and ‘mand’, and reserving the terms ‘assertion’, ‘asking’, and ‘impositive’ to represent the respective pragmatic categories. Leech explains the terminological differences and their interrelations in a tabular form as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>LEVELS</th>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SYNTACTIC</td>
<td>DECLARATIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>INTERROGATIVE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IMPERATIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SEMANTIC</td>
<td>PROPOSITION</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>MAND</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>PRAGMATIC</td>
<td>ASSERTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ASKING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IMPOSITIVE</td>
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The sense of an utterance (of a declarative, an interrogative, and an imperative type) may then be represented in terms of semantic categories like a proposition, a question, a mand, etc; whereas its force may be stated in terms of pragmatic categories such as assertion, asking, and an impositive, etc. It could be seen from the table above that there is one to one correspondence between the syntactic and the semantic categories, whereas the link between semantic and pragmatic categories is less clear-cut. The reason for this is that the strategies of indirectness available to the users of a language (used varyingly for various pragmatic purposes) ensure that every semantic type can be matched with a variety of pragmatic types. Thus, a proposition or a question, for example, may have the force of an impositive, and vice-versa.
0.2.6 Sentence and Utterance

Sentence / utterance distinction is crucial to delimitation of the domains of semantics and pragmatics in so far as it could be said that a study of sentence meaning (i.e. Sense) falls within the domain of semantics, whereas that of utterance meaning (i.e. Force) falls within the domain of pragmatics. The terms therefore need some explication. A sentence, for Bloomfield (1933: 70), is ‘an independent linguistic form not included by virtue of any grammatical construction in some larger linguistic form’. For Chomsky (1957), a sentence is ‘a string of words with an abstract representation mapping sound to meaning’. Such a representation, according to him, is derived in a certain way, that is, it is generated by rules. The term ‘utterance’, on the other hand, refers to the actual use of the conventional linguistic signs such as lexical items, expressions, sentences, etc in communication. For many linguists, utterances are contextualised sentences. Hurford and Heasley (1983: 15), for example, make the following distinction:

A sentence is neither a physical event nor a physical object. It is conceived abstractly - a string of words put together by the grammatical rules of a language. A sentence can be thought of as the ideal string of words behind various realizations in utterances and inscriptions.

(Schiffrin, 1994:39)

Distinguishing between the notions of ‘sentence meaning’ and ‘utterance meaning’ on the basis of Bar Hillel’s (1984) distinction between ‘sentence’ and ‘utterance’, Levinson characterizes the terms as follows:

A sentence is an abstract theoretical entity defined within a theory of grammar, while an utterance is the issuance of a sentence, sentence analogue, or a sentence fragment, in an actual context.

(Levinson, 1983: 18)

Levinson, however, notes that empirically, the relation between an utterance and a corresponding sentence maybe quite obscure. The utterance, for example, may be elliptical, or may contain some sentence fragments or false starts: but it is, he says, customary (after Bar-Hillel) to think of an utterance as the pairing of a sentence and a context, namely the context in which the sentence is uttered. And we shall abide by this usage of the terms ‘sentence’ and ‘utterance’ in the present
study. Besides, some philosophers of language (for example, Grice and Martinich) use the term ‘utterance’ extensionally to cover up cases of non-linguistic communication as well. However, since we are here primarily concerned with linguistic communication, we shall restrict the use of the term to refer to the use of linguistic signs in communication.

0.2.7 Syntax, Semantics and Pragmatics

Traditionally, linguists and philosophers of language have divided the study of language into three branches. The philosopher Charles Morris (1938: 6), for example, distinguished syntax, semantics and pragmatics as three distinct branches of inquiry within linguistic semiotics. He defined syntactics (or syntax) as the study of ‘the formal relation of signs to one another’, semantics as a study of ‘the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable (their designata)’, and pragmatics as the study of ‘the relation of signs to the interpreters’. Building on this initial Morrisian usage, Rudolf Carnap (1938) adopted the following version of the trichotomy:

If in an investigation explicit reference is made to the speaker, or to put it in more general terms, to the user of the language, then we assign it [the investigation] to the field of pragmatics. If we abstract from the user of the language and analyse only expressions and their designata, we are in the field of semantics. And, finally, if we abstract from the designata also and analyse only the relations between the expressions, we are in (logical) syntax.

(Carnap, 1938:2; cf. Levinson, 1983: 2-3)

Levinson (1983: 5), however, suggests that in order to accommodate the kind of work that currently goes on under the label of linguistic pragmatics, Carnap’s definition of pragmatics as ‘investigations making reference to users of the language’ might be amended to something like: ‘those linguistic investigations that make necessary reference to aspects of the context’.

Syntax, thus, is the study of the configurations formed by words in grammatical sentences. In terms of Martinich (1984: 10-11), the goal of syntax is ‘to specify a finite vocabulary and to formulate recursive rules that generate all the grammatical sentences of a language and no ungrammatical ones’. Semantics is basically ‘the study of the meanings of words and sentences’ (Saeed. 1997: 3). A semantic theory accounts for the context-free meaning associated with linguistic forms, whereas Pragmatics, defined in a rather pretheoretical manner, is ‘a study
of language use (of linguistic communication in particular) in relation to language structure and context of utterance’ (Akmajian, et. al. 1995: 343). It is concerned with the further interpretation of those forms in a context.

Pragmatics is centrally concerned with the issue of utterance interpretation, which is closely linked with the analysis of conversational implicatures. It tries to account for the way the users of a language encode and communicate meaning and the way they understand each other. It tries to explain how quite often speakers implicate rather than explicitly state what they want to say; how they make use of the various resources, devices and mechanisms such as deixis, presuppositions, implicatures, etc to encode features of context; and generally, how they, consciously or unconsciously, make use of the various available strategies for effective communication. Speakers use different discourse strategies in different types of discourse. For analysing and interpreting utterances, we require an explicit knowledge of the strategies available to the users of a language.

0.2.8 Conversational implicatures
Grice used the technical term ‘implicature’ to signify the communicational content not covered in ‘what is said’ (in the favoured sense of the term). It was intended to serve as a blanket term to cover a whole lot of other words like imply, suggest, implicate, indicate and mean (Grice, 1967, 1989). In order to distinguish implicatures, Grice distinguished between three categories of meaning, viz. (i) what is said, (ii) what is conventionally implicated, and (iii) what is non-conventionally implicated. Grice, accordingly, distinguished between conventional and non-conventional implicatures. He further classified non-conventional implicatures into two categories- conversational and non-conversational implicatures. In a conventional implicature, what is implicated derives from ‘the conventional meaning of the words used’ (Grice. 1967, rpt. 1989:25). Conventional implicatures, however, are not a very interesting category. In fact, the main focus of Grice’s analysis is to identify and explain conversational implicatures’, which belong to the category of non-conventional implicatures. A conversational implicature, for Grice, is a proposition which is
part of the total signification of the utterance of a certain sentence’ which is ‘a conversational (or more generally, a non-conventional) implicatum of that utterance’ (Grice, 1967). In the strictly Gricean sense, what is implicated is ‘what it is required that the hearer should assume the speaker to think in order to preserve the assumption that he is observing the Co-operative Principle (and perhaps some conversational maxims as well) if not at the level of what is said, at least at the level of what is implicated’.

0.3 Justification

Language is a complex phenomenon. Semantics alone cannot cope with it. Linguistic semantics, in the narrow technical sense generally adopted by linguists, explains only a small portion of meaning involved in language use. It accounts for only the propositional content of an utterance. Such meaning is abstract and without any force or illocutionary intent. The sense of the utterance ‘Can you close the door’, for example, will be understood as a question as stated by the proposition made therein. In the actual use of that proposition in a particular context, however, it may be understood to mean a request. And it is also likely that the hearer promptly obliges the speaker by closing the door. It is evident in this case that the hearer’s response is based on his understanding of the implied request and not on the stated face-value meaning of the utterance. In order to bring out this implied meaning of an utterance, it is required that the hearer interprets it in the light of his understanding of the principles of language use. Contextual information is required to bring out the implied meaning of an utterance. That is to say, a deeper analysis of the utterance is necessary for establishing its communicational content. A study of conversational implicatures can yield significant insight into the functioning of language and into the very nature of human communication.

Linguistic behaviour is an important clue for the understanding of a person or character in a literary work. A careful analysis of the choice of the topic of conversation, selection of words, phrases and expressions can throw substantial light on the personality of the speaker and his relationship with others. These features can be explored by systematically analysing conversations.
A literary artist is often very conscious and careful about the use of language. Form and presentation are, for him, the stylistic domain; and he uses them for aesthetic purposes. Conversational interaction is introduced in the narrative design not simply for the sake of variety in the mode of expression. The novelist makes a purposeful use of subtle conversational devices in character delineation and in building up a complex socio-cultural network of relationships between characters. One can get at the heart of this complex network of relationships by exploring the conversational implicatures in a work of art. Since conversations are part of the aesthetic structure, and as they play important role in the artistic design and communicative value of the text, a study of conversations can yield substantial insight into the text. It can add to our understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of a literary text.

A study of conversational implicatures can throw light on the hidden agenda of the characters as well as on their political, religious, socio-cultural ethos. In fact it would not be a very tall claim to say that a study of conversational implicatures in a particular novel can help us to enter the psyche of the characters in that novel as well as that of their arbiter. It can certainly help in the unravelling of the mystery of a work of art.

The present study analyses selected conversational passages from two novels by Vikram Seth in terms of conversational implicatures so as to examine whether and how far such an analysis can facilitate our perception and appreciation of the works. The contention here is that such a study facilitates our understanding of the thematic and structural aspects of a novel and thus leads to better appreciation of the work. It ultimately contributes to the final impression a work of art makes on the reader.

0.4 Scope

Language plays a very important role, and serves a wide range of functions in human life. It is the most effective means of communication. Most of the human communication would be impossible in the absence of language. Besides communication, language also serves several other functions. As Chomsky (1975: 60–61) observed, for example, it is used ‘to clarify one’s own thoughts, to
express one’s own emotions, to rehearse one’s ideas before giving a speech or a lecture’. However, the present research is confined to the consideration of the communicative function of language. It is confined to the study of conversational implicatures in written communication, especially in fiction. Though language is a means of communication, it is not the only means of communication. Besides, much communication takes place without language. The present study is confined to linguistic communication. But then linguistic communication does not stop short at the boundary of verbal activity. It involves an exchange of many other types of signals besides linguistic signs. For example, normal day-to-day human linguistic communication is accompanied by several features of verbal and non-verbal behaviour. The semiotic environment of language in a prototypical conversation maybe said to include linguistic, paralinguistic and non-linguistic content carriers. We are informed by our eyes as well as by our ears. Linguistic communication is frequently, though not necessarily, accompanied by prosodic (e.g. rhyme, rhythm, repetition, etc), paralinguistic (i.e. features carried on linguistic expressions, e.g. tone, pitch, speed, etc), and non-linguistic features (i.e. kinesic devices such as body language, gestures, glance, etc). These features accompanying language use modify and supplement the linguistically encoded message. They are therefore an important part of the communicative event. Devices like these may or may not be conventional. And even if they are, they are not the kinds of conventions that one can treat as part of the language. This is because these conventions are not recursive and do not make it possible to construct infinitely many expressions from finite signs as linguistic items do. However, these paralinguistic and non-linguistic features occur prominently in actual face-to-face interaction. Since the present study is confined to examining conversations in fiction, the focus here will be on linguistic communication. Other devices of communication shall feature in the present study only in so far as they form a part of the explicitly stated environment of the concerned conversational interaction. That is to say that paralinguistic and non-linguistic features shall be
considered only in so far as they are encoded in the graphic representation as features of context or as additional supporting mechanisms.

A study of conversational implicatures involves analysis and interpretation of conversations within the framework of their context. It is a type of Conversation Analysis. ‘Conversation Analysis’, in the very general sense in which the term is used here, refers to a broad area covering a number of very different models representing different trends and schools of thought. Unlike the Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis, this analysis takes into consideration the discoveries and the models and methods of different approaches to conversation arising from different academic disciplines. Gricean approach is just one of these many schools of thought. Since conversation is a discourse-type, this analysis also shares the several concerns of Discourse Analysis.

Analysis of conversational implicature involves extensive inferencing in context. For establishing the communicative context of utterances in question, we shall draw mostly upon the information supplied in the texts and on our intuition (i.e. the rationality based inferencing mechanism). Since implicatures are triggered by following, violating or flouting/exploiting the principles of standard type of conversational interaction (i.e. the generally observed rules, conventions, norms, and the expectations resulting from them), we shall discuss the same within the limited framework established for the purpose of analysis. However, no finality is claimed for the inventory either of the so-called norms of conversational behaviour or of the types of implicatures discussed. The purpose here is to explore the possibility of analysing fictional conversations and the pedagogic utility of the proposed type of pragmatic analysis.

0.5 Data and Method

The data for the present study consists of selected stretches of conversational interaction from two major novels by Vikram Seth, an eminent Indian writer in English, viz. *A Suitable Boy* and *An Equal Music*. Of these two novels, the first, the massive 1349 page novel - *A Suitable Boy*, is the winner of the 1994 Commonwealth Writers Prize For Best Literature. It reflects contemporary
reality and truthfully depicts the social and political scenario of the post-independent India. The second novel *An Equal Music* is an equally ambitious and widely acclaimed work.

The present study proposes to examine the two novels with respect to the use of conversations in them. It is confined to the examination and analysis of conversational implicatures in these novels. It is but natural, therefore, that the focus will be on conversations. In fact, it is interesting, rewarding and also desirable to study the conversations from various points of view. But that is beyond the scope of the present study. The present study is confined primarily to the exploration into the conversational implicatures and their artistic motivation.

The data for analysis, therefore, comprises of significant conversations from these two novels. This will not cover all the conversations built into the novels; nor will it cover all the major and significant ones. The criteria for selection of conversational passages for analysis shall include the illustrative value of these passages. The aim here is to examine and illustrate the types of conversational implicatures generated, the strategies deployed by conversationalists in implicating the same, the uptake (or failure of uptake) by the co-locutors and their communicational consequences. The model for analysis adopted here is essentially an eclectic one. It takes into account the various approaches to the study of conversation resulting from a variety of academic disciplines. It draws upon the various methods and models and uses as tools the observations, findings and discoveries of the different approaches to conversation. These will also form data for the purpose of the study.

Implicatures are a central phenomenon in the communicative activity. It is hardly possible for interlocutors to arrive at the total signification of utterances, and at an advanced level, at the entire communicative import of a given speech event without considering this phenomenon. Since utterances are the basic units of communication, understanding an utterance is crucial to understanding the purpose and the general direction of the entire interaction. Understanding an utterance, however, is not simply a matter of knowing the meanings of words uttered and of the way in which they are combined. It also involves drawing
inferences on the basis of contextual knowledge and assumptions by relating ‘what is said’ to the general principles like CP and PP and their maxims. Understanding ‘what is said’ maybe said to be the first step towards understanding the utterance. And, as stated in chapter II, for arriving at ‘what is said’ in cases where the linguistic clue provided in the utterance is skeletal, and also in cases where the clue is in the form of a full sentence, involves choices and decisions concerning which sense and reference, from among all the possible ones that form the entire conventional content of the expressions used, is relevant and could possibly have been intended by the speaker. It is only after having made such choices and decisions concerning the possible senses and references involved, that the hearer or the analyst, can proceed in the direction of understanding or interpretation of an utterance. For arriving at ‘what is said’ in the form of ‘explicature’ of the utterance, thus, one has to depend on textual context as well as on one’s intuition and on the rationality based principles of interactional behaviour.

The method will be as follows: The selected conversations will be discussed from the point of view of (1) their significance in the given context (2) their placement in the narration in the novel and (3) their contribution to the final effect from the thematic and structural point of view. The physical structure in terms of language and information structure in terms of message will be considered. The method of presentation adopted is as follows:

The general pattern includes (i) actual text, (ii) conversational interaction in idealised form, (iii) textual background, (iv) significance of the interaction within the general framework of the novel, (v) analysis of implicatures, and (vi) the illustrative value of the selected interaction in terms of the aspects of implicature analysis highlighted. First the textual passage taken up from the novel for analyses is given as it occurs in the novel. This would provide the reader with a ready reference for judging the textual context. The text is then converted into ‘conversation form’ using editing notation conventions and idealisation methods. Since the purpose here is to illustrate the types of implicatures involved in the interaction, the method of idealisation followed is a
very general one (i.e. it is not a very technical and scientific idealisation). As the hearers in face-to-face interactions tend to discount the repeats, false starts, etc, in the process of idealisation they are removed, and wherever necessary, the relevant non-linguistic and paralinguistic cues supplementing and augmenting the communicative content are retained and presented in the idealised text in round brackets. The purpose is to enable the reader to grasp the emotional and attitudinal aspects which are evident in, and significantly contribute to, the meaning of the utterances in face-to-face interactional situation but are likely to be lost upon the reader due to the limitations of the written discourse. The idealised passage is then divided into turn-wise units. The purpose is to state the unit-wise structure of the interaction. Section (iii), textual background, explicitly states the relevant factual details of textual information so as to facilitate the analyses of individual utterances by situating the identified interaction in right perspective. Section (iv), significance of the interaction specifies the global context of the interaction in terms of its significance in the general framework of the novel. Section (v), analysis of implicatures, provides the actual utterance-wise analyses of the interaction specifying the implicated propositions with reference to their genesis and explains the relevant typological details. Section (vi) specifies the illustrative value of the selected interaction in terms of the aspects of implicature analysis highlighted.

The process of implicature analysis begins with the identification of what the speaker of the initial utterance says and what he ‘implicates’ by means of what he has said. What the initial speaker has said provides the hearer with a clue regarding the textual context of the utterance. Using shared background knowledge concerning the immediate interactional context as well as the larger social and cultural context of the utterance the hearer then makes an assumption or assumptions regarding what the speaker has said. And in case of the utterances loaded with implicatures, on the basis of such assumptions, the hearer proceeds to develop hypotheses concerning speaker intentions by relating ‘what is said’ to the principles and maxims of the conversational interaction. The process of heuristic analysis continues till the hearer arrives at the hypothesis or
the assumption which makes the utterance consistent with the overall assumption
that the speaker is following the CP. This process goes on in cyclic fashion
through the entire conversational exchange.

The utterances will be examined with reference to their conversational
implicatures, i.e. in what way, and to what extent, the conversational
implicatures reveal the participants in the conversation and their relationship
with the theme and structure of the novel.

Exploration into conversational implicatures involves the analysis of the
linguistic behaviour of a person and of the way the person manipulates
conversations to suit the purpose.

0.6 Plan of the Thesis

The introduction specifies the central concerns of the study and explains the
metalanguage used in the dissertation. It also highlights the aims and objectives,
plan, scope, data and method of study. Chapter one and two take a survey of the
prominent theories and views on ‘conversation’ and ‘implicatures’ respectively.
They clarify the researcher’s position on these core notions resulting in the
development of an eclectic model for analysis of conversational implicatures.

The third and the fourth chapters deal with the application of the model
developed by the researcher for analysing conversational implicatures in fiction.
In the third chapter the researcher analyses selected passages from *A Suitable
Boy*, a novel by Vikram Seth and in the fourth chapter he analyses selected
passages from *An Equal Music*, another novel by the same author, thus
exemplifying the validity of the model. The fifth chapter then sums up the entire
dissertation in terms of the findings of the researcher and their pedagogic
significance.