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Original Article

Flouting Grice's Maxims as a Satirical Strategy in Bangladeshi Digital Diaspora Discourse

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Abstract: The current study investigates how Switzerland Probashi, a satirical Facebook page created by Bangladeshi people, creates humor by deliberately breaking Grice's (1975) four maxims, namely Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner. The research ends on the presence of maxims that break patterns, decoding the ideological information contained therein by the use of critical discourse analysis; how much the followers have understood; and the analysis of how the administrator has used language to a strategic effect. It used a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design, which consisted of discourse analysis of 22 posts, a follower survey (n=100), and semi-structured interviews with ten followers and one in-depth interview with an administrator. The results indicate that the satirical implicature feature of the structure of this corpus is multi-layered, maxim-breaking. Pragmatic comprehension (mean score) = 4.47/5.00. All ten interviewees confirmed that the humor would not be such in English. There are four cases of misinterpretation of Poe's Law. The article is the first Gricean analysis of online satire in the Bangla language.

Keywords: Grice's maxims, satirical discourse, digital pragmatics, Bangladeshi diaspora, Poe's Law

Introduction

In recent times, the satirical Facebook pages have become popular platforms of social commentary in the world. Bangladesh is one of the most prominent countries in case of Facebook users. Approximately there was 52.90 million active Facebook users in 2024 (Kemp, 2024) The country has the one of the biggest markets in the platform and the satirical content in Bangla has evolved to elaborate linguistic procedures to critique the activities of the community and cultural identity. Switzerland Probashi (Translation: Swiss Expatriate) is one of such bright ones. The page recounts a fictional story of a Bangladeshi migrant in Switzerland in a series of ten recurring characters and went around the country a few days after being published in early 2023, and followed by BBC News. Although there is already a lot of research available on pragmatics and humor in Western societies, none of the studies have used the Gricean maxim analysis to satirical Facebook posts in Bangladesh. Some studies regarding the problem of the Bangladeshi online conversation have been conducted in terms of the attitude towards the language instead of the process of humor production and reception. The empirical terrain of the pragmatic architecture of digital satire in Bangla is unexplored.

Switzerland Probashi offers a special corpus to be utilized in examining how cooperative norm-breaking is a strategically planned satire in an online environment in South Asia. The presence of identifiable linguistic devices throughout the page, the large audience that is culturally embedded and the fact that there is a page admin to facilitate interviewing provide conditions that allow a

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rigorous multi-method pragmatic analysis to be conducted. The research on satirical implicature in the discourse of the Bangla language has implications for the studies on digital humor, communication in minority languages, and the spread of political satire in non-Western social media.

The study was conducted on the contributions made in 2023-2026, which provides the complete history of the activity of the page at the time of data collection. The survey among the followers and the interviews were carried out in 2026. The primary objective of the study was to investigate the intentional violation of the four maxims in Switzerland Probashi as a satirical means and the way in which the satirical implicature is understood by the followers. However, the specific objectives were (i) to identify and classify the patterns of maxim-break in 22 posts using the Gricean coding scheme, (ii) to talk about the ideological content of satirical implicature using Critical Discourse Analysis, (iii) to measure the follower's pragmatic knowledge of satirical sense using survey data, (iv) To discuss the linguistic clues and cultural background that enable satire to exist, (v) To examine the deliberate use of the linguistic strategies by the page admin in the form of an in-depth interview, and (vi) to contribute to a Gricean analytical model that can be applied to South Asian-language digital satire.

Theoretical and Conceptual Underpinnings

Language The research is based on three complementary theories that are complementary. To begin with, the Cooperative Principle of Grice (1975) is grounded on the belief that there are four maxims that speakers assume whenever they engage in a dialogue. In case of an open violation of a maxim, the listener is implicated in a converse, i.e., it is more than something said. Second, the Relevance Theory developed by Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995) illustrates the re-process of re-cognition re-processing that takes place when a satirical posting is made evident as ridiculous: the reader re-writes his/her reading and the rewriting is not merely interpretive but entertaining. Third, the Incongruity Theory of humor has humor in the revelation of expectation and event (Morreall, 1983). It is the ideological layer that comes with Fairclough's (1992) Critical Discourse Analysis that shows what social criticism the implicature entails.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model, which is a four-stage process. Left to right Reading: Stage 1 (orange) has to do with the production of text through the breaking of deliberate maxims. Stage 2 (blue) is the satirical text. Stage 3 (lavender) is the reader's processing that is based on linguistic competence and cultural knowledge. Stage 4 (green) shows the three possible outcomes: complete satirical understanding, partial understanding, or Poe's Law misunderstanding. The feedback loop shows that the strategy of change is modified by the registered audience's misrecognition.

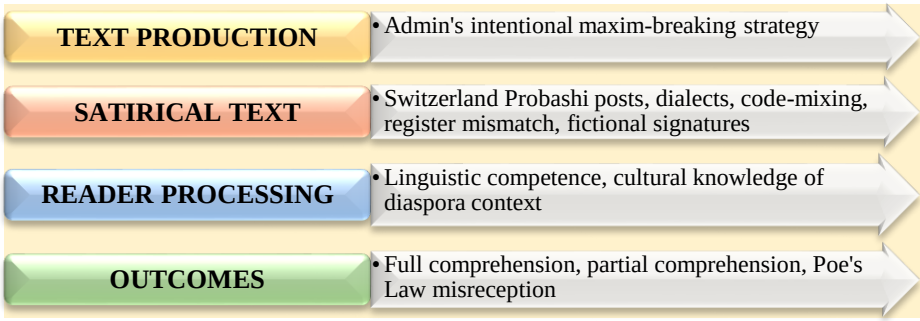


Figure 1. Four-stage framework grounded in Grice (1975), Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995), Morreall (1983), and Fairclough (1992).

Literature Review

Grice's Maxims and Humor

The Cooperative Principle put forward by Grice (1975) was as follows: in the instance that a speaker was not following a maxim of open communication, then the person listening to him or her would assume that there was another meaning to a literal meaning, conversational implicature. It is this mechanism that is behind irony, humor and satire as illustrated by Levinson (1983) and Thomas (1995). The Quality flouts were correlated with the script opposition that brings about comic incongruity as identified by the General Theory of Verbal Humor of Attardo and Raskin (1991). Expectancy vs reality is the basic form of humor that both Carroll (2014) and Morreall (1983) have found. The last theory of the cognitive processes that satirical re-processing is introduced into the scene whenever a failed overt meaning and an implied meaning are concerned is in the work of Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995).

Satire and Poe's Law

According to Simpson (2003), satirical discourse is the negative social judgement in the form of communicating by inference reconstruction and not in the form of stating something and hence the background knowledge of the reader is necessary. Hutcheon (1994) indicated that the lack of contextual frames makes satire more prone to misinterpretation since it involves more implicature. This was enshrined by Aikin and Casey (2009) as Poe's Law: the reader lacking the contextual background may not be able to tell the difference between the content of a satire and the truthful content, the deceptive content, and the truthful content. This effect of satire on social media was empirically illustrated by Caufield (2008) and Highfield (2016).

Critical Discourse Analysis in Digital Satire

Fairclough (1992, 2001), through his work on language, came up with the conclusion that language was a form of encoding ideological contents which naturalized social relations of power. Van Dijk (2001) utilised CDA to analyse online discourse. This was applied by Rodrigues and Niemann (2017) to South Asian social media satire, but in mostly visual material instead of textual Gricean analysis. Facebook comment sections can be characterized as collaborative assemblages of meaning-making, satirical frames shared by readers, as Page (2012) demonstrates.

Bangladeshi Digital Discourse

The pragmatic theory has not been invoked in the investigation of the satirical content in studying the Bangladeshi social media, but it has been used to study code-mixing and language attitudes (Canagarajah, 2013). Switzerland Probashi real-world referents are documented social processes of the Bangladeshi diaspora in Europe, which include labour exploitation and patriarchal dispositions towards domestic norms (Kabeer, 2007; Gardner, 2008).

The Gricean maxim analysis has never been applied to the situation of a digital satire in the Bangla language, nor has it investigated how the audience of the diaspora perceives the satirical implicature, or examined the ideological message of the diasporic satire via a hybrid Gricean/CDA analysis. The three gaps are addressed in this study.

Methodology

This investigation was a concurrent triangulated mixed-method study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) composed of three strands of data, which are post-discourse analysis, follower survey and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire included 100 respondents (followers of Switzerland Probashi) of whom most were the age group of 25-34 (52%), post-graduate (62%), and living in Bangladesh (68%). These participants were selected case-by-case, both via the comment section on the page and also through direct messaging, where the researcher selected ten individuals to have ten semi-structured follower interviews (20 to 30 minutes) without it being publicized on the page. These participants were selected at random in order to be diverse with respect to age, gender, location, and understanding experience. The pseudonyms are employed. An independent in-depth interview with

the administrators (30-45 minutes) was carried out.

The post analysis was carried out according to the stratified random sample of 22 posts, where all ten common characters had at least one representation. The four maxims of Grice (1975) and a three-dimensional CDA model by Fairclough (1992) were used to code posts. To be able to determine the inter-rater reliability, a second coder coded one fifth of the corpus, and it was found that only in the case of maximum identification were all in agreement, but all the items of contention were discussed. The bilingual survey had a pragmatic comprehension test that was based on Post 3 (the pizza post). Interpretation of interview data was done using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006); thematic saturation was reached by the tenth interview.

Findings and Analyses

Post Analysis

The maxim breaking profile of all the 22 corpus posts is given in Table 1. Quality is broken in 21 of 22 posts (95.5%), Manner in 16 of 22 (72.7%), Quantity in 13 of 22 (59.1%), and Relation in 12 of 22 (54.5%). No post is one that breaches more than two maxims. The corpus includes only one text that is completely cooperative, which is post 22. Nine ideological targets were identified by the coding with CDA, such as intra-diaspora labor exploitation, reproduction of anti-Black racism by South Asian migrants, enactment of the ideology of patriarchy by women, internalization of Islamophobic employment relations in the workplace, election to power as communal violence, personhood of the person as an ordinary person, and construction of the person as a communal threat.

Table 1. Maxim Breaking Across the 22-Post Corpus (Selected Posts)

Post	Character	Quality	Quantity	Relation	Manner	Primary Social Target
1	Kamruzzaman	✓	✓		✓	Labor exploitation
3	Osman Goni	✓	✓		✓	Expatriate paternalism
6	Ammo	✓	✓	✓	✓	Female reproduction of patriarchy [High risk]
10	Zakaria	✓			✓	Failed translation guide
11	Shamsunnahar	✓	✓	✓	✓	White partnership as immigration strategy
16	Saidul Islam	✓	✓			Communal violence as electoral preference [High risk]
19	Titu	✓	✓	✓		Islamophobia internalization
22	Basudev	–	–	–	–	Cooperative baseline — no implicature

Note: In table 1, tick mark indicates maxim broken; dash indicates cooperative compliance. High risk indicates elevated Poe's Law risk. Full 22-post table available in Appendix A.

Corpus Post 22: The Cooperative Exception

The only maxims not violated in any of the posts are Post 22 (Basudev Dhali). The post reads:

> ঢাকায় কেউ তেল না পেয়ে জিদ করে হুন্ডা সেল করে দিলে আমাকে বইলেন। ভাতিজার জন্য একটা কিনব।
>
> *Transliteration:* Dhakay keu tel na paye jid kore Honda sell kore dile amake boilen. Vatizar jonno ekta kinbo.
> *Translation:* If someone in Dhaka cannot get fuel and sells their Honda, please let me know. I want to buy one for my nephew.

All other characters identify themselves as Swiss Probashi just like Basudev. Sentence-level implicature is not present in this post. It is significant on a corpus-level: the man, who, per the call of an electoral demand, Post 16 suggested, ought his house to be burned down, lives on, in all his cooperative ordinariness, being.

Survey Findings

Table 2. Key Survey Results (n = 100)

Variable	Response	n	%
Q8: First impression	Identified as satire immediately	74	74.0
	Initially thought genuine expat	15	15.0
	Initially unsure	11	11.0
Q13: Comprehension score	5 – Very easy	63	63.0
	4	26	26.0
	3 or below	11	11.0
	Mean = 4.47 / 5.00		
Q14: Cultural knowledge needed	Yes	62	62.0
Q17: Deliberately mocks a type	Yes	72	72.0
Q19: Less effective in English	Yes	74	74.0

Note: In table 2, Q14: Would someone without expat culture knowledge understand the satire? Q17: Does the page deliberately mock a specific type? Q19: Would humor be less effective in English?

Interview Findings

The interviews of the followers were interpreted in order to come up with ten themes. Theme 1 was the most obvious cue of satire according to all ten participants. When Rafiq mentioned: "Real expatriates will make fun of people in Bangladesh as soon as they move to foreign nations, and feign leading a glamorous lifestyle, he was right. Such is the tone in which they spoke." Theme 8 documents misperception of Poe's Law in four respondents (Nadia, Priya, Sultana, and in part, Arnab), all of them who had not been exposed to the satirical frame of the page before. Nadia explains her total initial misconception: "I asked the reason why they were all laughing at them. The comment section included the whole context." Theme 6 made structurally untranslatable into English the humor, which all ten participants confirmed to be unanimously true. Farhan (UK born in Bangladesh) explained: "The broken English can only be effective in the opposition of the Bangla. When you get it all translated into English, the difference is lost." Kabir (a real Bangladeshi migrant in Switzerland) brought an aspect of an insider: "I have heard this tone, I heard it myself and of people around me. It is what makes it amusing yet a bit awkward."

Discussion

This generalization of previous models of verbal humor is the overall conclusion that no post will be contravening more than two maxims at a time. Attardo and Raskin (1991) put the opposition between single scripts as the source of humor. Switzerland Probashi sets up multi-maxim breaking, demonstrated in the present analysis, in that it poses a threat of breaking multiple maxims at once, thereby constituting multi-layered incongruity structures. The pattern of quality breaking (95.5) and Manner breaking (72.7) creates a consistent co-occurrence that establishes a satirical format of the page: a character makes a claim that cannot be made (Quality) with a register that cannot be made (Manner). The register it is that carries out the sincerity that the content is also undermining.

These four examples of misconceptions of Poe in the interviews substantiate the view that perception of satire is a contextual, and not a textual phenomenon. In both cases, the readers were given no background information about the imaginary world of the page and their understanding was received via community engagement via the comment section. This is in line with the fact that Poe's Law is an empirical phenomenon that has been recorded through a mixture of inferred effects that were captured by Page (2012) and the direct evidence of misreading and recovery by interview, as witnessed in the current study.

The impossibility of translating the humor into the English language can be universally validated only and demonstrates that there is structural linguistic interdependence which is not explained by the existing translation models (Vandaele, 2002). The Manner violation is a conditional (dependent on the presence of both sets of Bangli norms and the absence of one): the non-presence

of one of the elements of the opposition is lost in case the whole text is in English. In addition to the studies on code-mixing-based humor in multilingual online settings, the implications of this finding for this study are also included.

The corpus of cooperative ordinariness of post 22 is the most politically important discovery of the corpus. Trying to break the systematic maxims 21 times and being exposed to ideology, Basudev Dhali can only pose a question about a motorcycle. The person who is made a communal threat also writes off Switzerland Probashi as anyone would. The most basic claim of the satirical project might be in the following form: the person whose house Post 16 proposed to be destroyed is still alive, in ideal cooperative normality.

The following recommendations were drawn from the analyses of the findings that can be considered very effective in case of the designing, structuring and implementation of continuous assessments on the subjects of literature:

- The scholars, who use the Gricean analysis of the satirical discourse, are encouraged to cross the single-maxim scale and explore the multi-layered breaking as the norm of the structural organization of the satirical corpora.
- The digital researchers of satire need to incorporate empirical audience reception data together with the production-side analysis to record the risks of Poe's Law and the conditions of its understanding.
- Bangladeshi educators and media literacy practitioners, and those in the diaspora, need to take into account the importance of cultural background knowledge in satirical comprehension, especially when the reader is exposed to satirical posts out of context.
- To interact with content in communal or political subject matter, platform designers and content moderators need to be aware that structurally realistic satire (high Poe's Law risk) might need to be framed by the surrounding context or labeling systems to avoid misinterpretation.

Conclusion

This work has shown that Switzerland Probashi creates satirical humor through systematic multi-layered maxim breaking, of which Quality and Manner breaking is the most diffusive which coincides with each other. The principles of the satirical implicature in this corpus are structural: in a multi-layered breaking. The humor is structurally ingrained in the contrasts between Bangla-specific registers, which cannot be translated into English. Embedded readers are best understood in terms of their cultural and context-specificity: Poe's Law is misunderstood in a context of no background context, and the community interaction process of the comment section is the main recovery strategy. There are three contributions of the research. It is the first Gricean study of digital satire in Bangla. It demonstrates that multiple-layered maxim breaking is a development of single script-opposition models of verbal humor. It demonstrates that Gricean analysis and CDA complement each other in the range of approaches: Gricean analysis provides the answer to the question of how implicature is made; CDA provides the answer to the question of what kind of social reality it deals with. Further studies can utilize corpus-based techniques on the entire page corpus in order to measure the percentage of maxims violations throughout time. Research among the Swiss, Italian, and the United Kingdom followers of the diaspora would broaden the understanding of results with members of the satirized community. The synthesis and dissemination of satirical frames would be recorded through real-time analysis of comment threads through conversation analysis. A comparative analysis of satirical pages in other South Asian digital situations would test the hypothesis that the phenomenon of multi-layered maximum breaking is particular to this page or would give more general information about the genre.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Full Maxim Table (All 22 Posts)

Post	Character	Q	Qu	Re	Ma	Social Target	Risk
1	Kamruzzaman	✓	✓		✓	Labor exploitation	
2	Aminul Islam	✓	✓	✓	✓	Normalization of irregular migration	
3	Osman Goni	✓	✓		✓	Expatriate paternalism	
4	Golap Mahbub	✓	✓	✓	✓	Bollywood as an epistemological framework	
5	Osman Goni	✓	✓	✓	✓	Intra-diaspora labor exploitation	
6	Ammo	✓	✓	✓	✓	Female reproduction of patriarchy	High
7	Vabi	✓	✓	✓	✓	Class anxiety; matrimonial surveillance	
8	Ammo		✓	✓	✓	Property-solidarity conflation	
9	Zakaria	✓	✓	✓		Anti-Black racism in diaspora	
10	Zakaria	✓			✓	Failed translation; minority workers	
11	Shamsunnahar	✓	✓	✓	✓	White partnership as immigration strategy	
12	Shamsunnahar	✓		✓		Racial animalization; residence permit	
13	Ensemble	✓	✓	✓		Pragmatic religiosity	
14	Harun	✓	✓		✓	Intra-diaspora housing exploitation	
15	Saidul Islam	✓			✓	Cultural mistranslation	
16	Saidul Islam	✓	✓			Communal violence as electoral preference	High
17	Kamruzzaman	✓	✓	✓		Communicative powerlessness	
18	Kamruzzaman	✓		✓	✓	Ethics of precarity	
19	Titu	✓	✓	✓		Islamophobia internalization	
20	Titu	✓	✓	✓		Charitable employer ideology	
21	Kamruzzaman	✓	✓	✓		Cross-communal solidarity	
22	Basudev	–	–	–	–	Cooperative baseline	

Q = Quality; Qu = Quantity; Re = Relation; Ma = Manner. Tick = maxim broken. Dash = cooperative compliance. High = Elevated Poe's Law risk.

Appendix B: Interview Participant Profiles

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Location	Abroad	Poe's Law Experience
Rafiq	Male	25-34	Bangladesh	No	None
Arnab	Male	25-34	Bangladesh	No	Partial (political posts)
Sadia	Female	35-44	Other EU	Yes	None
Mehnaz	Female	25-34	Bangladesh	No	None
Tamim	Male	25-34	Bangladesh	No	None
Nadia	Female	35-44	Other EU	Yes	Full initial misrecognition
Priya	Female	25-34	Bangladesh	No	Initial confusion
Farhan	Male	35-44	UK	Yes	None; diaspora insider
Sultana	Female	18-24	Bangladesh	No	Full initial misrecognition
Kabir	Male	45+	Switzerland	Yes	None; actual community member

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