

A Pragmatic Analysis of the Lexical Choices Used in Divorce Scenes of Pakistani TV Dramas

Uzma Imran¹, Zehra Batool² and Fatiha Wajahat³

<https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2024.13.4.70>

Abstract

This study explores the pragmatic implications of lexical choices in divorce-related dialogues in Pakistani TV dramas, analyzing their adherence to Grice's Cooperative Principles. Dialogues from five popular TV dramas aired between 2020 and 2024 were examined using a qualitative research approach. The analysis focused on violations of conversational maxims, particularly those of quality and manner, to uncover the implicatures that reinforce patriarchal ideologies. The findings reveal that these dramas often depict divorce as a tool for control and humiliation, with lexical choices perpetuating negative stereotypes of women as subservient and disposable. Dialogues frequently flout maxims to create implied meanings that normalise male dominance and diminish female agency, positioning women as passive recipients of societal control. This language use underscores hierarchical family structures, with men exerting authority and women bearing the blame for marital discord. By highlighting the significant role of media in shaping societal attitudes, this study underscores the urgent need for responsible portrayals of sensitive topics like divorce. It advocates for balanced narratives that challenge regressive gender roles and promote gender equality. This research contributes to the discourse on language, media, and gender, emphasizing the power of lexical choices in shaping cultural norms and public perceptions.

Keywords: Pragmatic Analysis, Lexical Choices, Divorce Dialogues, Pakistani TV Dramas.

Introduction

TV dramas function as a source of entertainment by providing engaging stories, relatable characters, and dramatic events that attract viewers. Despite their commercial value, TV dramas subtly perform several functions. Dramas often highlight social, moral, and cultural issues, helping to educate viewers about topics such as family dynamics, societal norms, and ethical dilemmas. Dramas contribute to the shaping of personal and collective identities by portraying relatable characters, views, or ideologies. As stated by Cortez (1979), one of the most important components of the societal curriculum or informal curriculum, television has received increasing scholarly attention. Dramas influence how we perceive ourselves or others in society. It has been noted that the influence of TV programs on our societal values is

¹MPhil, Linguistics & TESOL, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: Uzmaimran.uzma1@gmail.com

²Sr. Lecturer, Riphah Institute of Language & Literature, Riphah International University, Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: syedazehra.batool@riphah.edu.pk

³MPhil, Linguistics & TESOL, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: Fatiha.wajahat@gmail.com



profound (Wear & Sillicorn, 2009). As a keen viewer of Urdu dramas, regularly aired on various TV channels like HUM TV, ARY, and GEO, to name a few, it came to the researcher's notice that divorce-related content forms a significant percentage of dramas being aired regularly.

Many studies examine the application of Grice's maxims in analyzing dialogues from TV dramas. Multiple researchers found that characters in various TV series frequently flout or violate conversational maxims (Szczepanski, 2015; Subagyo, 2023; Damanik & Hanidar, 2021; Yulianti & Ambalegin, 2021). The maxim of quality was most flouted in "Firefly" and "Brooklyn Nine-Nine (Szczepanski, 2015; Subagyo," 2023), while the maxim of relation was most frequently flouted in "Broadchurch" (Damanik & Hanidar, 2021). In "Pretty Little Liars," all maxims were violated, with the maxim of relation being the most dominant (Yulianti & Ambalegin, 2021). The studies reveal that maxim flouting serves various purposes, including creating humor (Subagyo, 2023) and reflecting character personalities (Szczepanski, 2015). Gender differences in flouting strategies were also observed, with male characters preferring irrelevant statements and female characters favoring obscure expressions (Damanik & Hanidar, 2021).

The disturbing realisation that lexical choices being used in dialogues in such dramas serve as a mechanism of control and subjugation of the female characters dawned through mindful observation. Conniving relatives and domineering husbands uttered these lexical choices to instill fear and compliance in women, pressuring them to surrender personal freedom to fulfill societal expectations. "While some dramas portray women as bold and assertive, many still represent them in submissive roles, perpetuating patriarchal ideologies (Chaudry, et al, 2021; Ahmad & Wahab, 2019

Rationale of the Study

Pakistani dramas often depict divorce as a traumatic and catastrophic event. While divorce itself is a complex and deeply personal decision, its portrayal in TV dramas reduces its purpose to a tool of oppression, instead of a formal process aimed at dissolution of marriage. These portrayals can negatively impact viewers' mentalities and blur Islamic values. (Tabassum & Amin, 2021.) The concept of divorce being shown in Urdu dramas ignores this purpose and the proper procedure to which it should adhere. In all the dramas, divorce is given orally by men proclaiming the word "Talaq" thrice, thus annulling the marriage. This immediate dissolution is against the legal framework of Pakistan which necessitates the verbal proclamation to be followed by a waiting period and opportunities for reconciliation (Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961).

Divorce is seen as a permissible but disliked act in Islam. Narrated by Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar, the Prophet (PBUH) said, 'Of all the lawful acts the most detestable to Allah is divorce' (Sunan Abi Dawud, Vol 2178, Book 13, Hadith: 4"). However, in TV dramas, this serious and sensitive phenomenon is reduced to a means of threatening females and empowering males. Studies have noted that such portrayals reflect deeply ingrained patriarchal norms, using divorce as a narrative to reinforce societal control over women.

The problem lies in how such portrayals normalise and perpetuate the idea of divorce as a societal failure tied exclusively to women. Instead of challenging these regressive norms, dramas often validate them by embedding them into the storyline through disparaging language, moralistic dialogues, and oppressive cultural constructs. Despite some dramas highlighting women's rights issues, this representation is often paradoxical, as it may be used

to advance political interests rather than genuinely empower women (Ahmed & Wahab, 2019). This practice not only perpetuates a derogatory self-image among women but also reinforces patriarchal power structures that systematically limit their agency. Furthermore, it can contribute to forging new stereotypes for the coming generations (Aziz & Saadia, 2021).

The significance of the study is threefold. First, it provides a critical examination of the lexical terms used in divorce scenes in Pakistani dramas. By focusing on how language shapes familial hierarchies, the study uncovers how certain phrases or threats serve to enforce compliance and diminish women's sense of self-worth. Next, the study explores the broader discourse of gender inequality and cultural subjugation in South Asia. Lastly, divorce, while often portrayed as a social failure for women, is rarely examined as a tool of psychological control. Through applying the cooperative principles, the study seeks to highlight how the language used in media reinforces societal mechanisms that normalise women sacrificing their freedom for the sake of their families.

Literature Review

In our society, language plays a dual role, first as a medium of communication and secondly as a tool for shaping social perceptions. Language not only shapes our understanding of the world but also influences how we communicate and interact with each other. Without language, there would be no songs, no stories, no conversations, and no civilisation, as we understand the term (Rahman, 2010). Cultural norms, values, and ideologies are conveyed and propagated through language. Prominent linguists like Sapir (1929) and Whorf (1956) argued in their famous Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that language shapes the reality of an individual. Their theory suggested that the language we speak shapes the way we perceive and understand the world. Within this context, the study of Pragmatics offers a sound framework for grasping the undercurrents of meanings beyond literary meanings.

The theoretical framework of Grice's cooperative principles serves the purpose of analysis of the lexical choices used in divorce-related scenarios. The Grice's Maxims were introduced by British philosopher, H.P Grice in 1975 to explain how effective communication works. According to Grice, participants in a conversation generally adhere to a Cooperative Principle, meaning, they try to communicate in ways that are helpful, informative, and useful. The principles include the maxim of quality which states that truth should always be told, and the maxim of quantity which states that the right amount of information should be provided, neither too much nor too less. The third maxim is of relevance and the fourth one is of Manner, which states that one should be orderly and clear in their utterances, to avoid ambiguity. It is important to recognise these maxims as unstated assumptions we have in conversations. According to Yule (1996), the basic assumption is that otherwise indicated, the participants are adhering to the cooperative principles and the maxims.

Grice also introduced the concept of Implicature, which refers to what is being implied by a speaker even if it is not explicitly stated. Sometimes the speaker violates the maxims intentionally and the listeners can understand the implied meaning. A flout according to Grice in Thomas (1995, p. 65) occurs when a speaker intentionally fails to observe a maxim in their utterances to create an implicature. As it is important to note that it is the speaker who communicates meanings via implicatures, and it is listeners who recognise those communicated feelings via inference (Yule, 1996). Implicature is divided into two categories, generalised conversational implicature and particularised conversational implicature. The difference between the two lies in the fact that the former does not require background

knowledge of the utterances whereas, in particularised conversational implicature, the context is relevant to the meaning.

Based on these definitions, Implicature in dialogues related to divorce would include indirect stigmatisation through the choice of words. Various studies suggest that Visual media has a strong effect on the ethical principles, moral values, and behaviour of its viewers as they passively absorb a lot of what they view daily through the media (Chafee, 1986; Ward, 2003). Television viewership is a non-resistant activity and most households have at least one television as it is considered a cheap source of entertainment through the programs aired like shows, dramas, news, and films.

Several research that has been conducted on Grice's maxims on TV shows have proved that characters often violate the four maxims deliberately to create special effects and convey subtle meanings. According to Szczepanski (2015) and Subagyo (2023), The maxim of quality is often flouted the most in scripted conversations to develop character personalities and generate humor. Xue & Hei (2017) found in a study of a Chinese sitcom that flouting and violating maxims were the most common techniques to create humorous effects. Karim & Mohammad (2019) stated that the non-observance of Grice's maxims is not limited to fictional settings but is also prevalent in TV interviews, where politicians and artists violate these maxims for strategic conversations. Thus, we can state that the language used in TV dramas can also be used to impact the thinking and ideas of the viewers unconsciously. Language plays an important part in the building of ideologies because Language is not neutral but a highly constructive mediator (Fowler, 1991).

In PTV dramas, divorce is portrayed as a cultural and moral catastrophe, particularly for women. The dialogues used in these scenarios promote language that stigmatises the female characters openly. Divorce-related threats or accusations use irrelevant details when characters divert from the topic to assert control. An example of this is seen in findings from *Madraset al-Mushaghbeen*. A popular Egyptian comedy film was released in 1973 (Al Zubairy, 2020). Ambiguous or disorganised dialogues can obscure the intentions behind threats of divorce. According to Fatima et al., (2023), violations studied in Arabic comedy and Urdu drama often manipulate characters into compliance by creating uncertainty. To summarise, it can be stated that the junctions of media, language, and gender have been widely studied, with scholars highlighting the role of discourse in shaping and reinforcing unfair images of women in marital relationships. Media texts are not merely reflective but constitutive of societal ideologies, often embedding dominant power structures in seemingly mundane language use as pointed out by Fairclough (1995).

Research Gap

It became evident, according to previous research, that Grice's cooperative principles were not applied when analysing divorce-related lexical choices used in dramas. While some studies (Siddiqui & Ahmad, 2020; Ali, 2017) talk about the cultural dimensions of divorce, they do not incorporate theories like Gricean principles with contextual social commentary to do detailed linguistic analysis. Moreover, studies (Khan, 2015; Bilal & Rafique, 2019) have analysed language in dramas but have not linked their research to Gricean concepts and their role in creating implicature. Other existing studies (Siddiqui & Ahmad, 2020; Ali, 2017) focus more on thematic content analysis rather than in-depth exploration of linguistic structures used to show implicit messages. A range of studies explore themes regarding gender stereotypes in Urdu dramas without analysing how language usage in divorce-related dialogues perpetuates

such stereotypes.

This study aims to address this gap by conducting a detailed analysis of related content with Grice's maxims to address the issue in a serious social context and to identify where and how those principles are violated. The outcome would provide actionable insights into creating a more balanced and progressive media representation of sensitive subjects like divorce.

Research Questions

1. Do the divorce scenes in Pakistani TV dramas adhere to the Gricean Maxims?
2. How do these depictions contribute to the portrayal of women?

Research Methodology

Qualitative research methodology is used to conduct this study as a qualitative approach is best suited to examine the hidden and implied meanings in utterances. (Khan, 2015) divorce-related discourse in Urdu dramas is deeply intertwined with societal values. A qualitative approach captures these nuances, which are often lost in quantitative methods (Siddiqui & Ahmad, 2020). Gricean principles focus on implied meanings and conversational norms, which require interpretive analysis (Grice, 1975). Qualitative methods are better suited for uncovering these implicit meanings.

Data for the Research

The data of the study is 5 Pakistani TV dramas that were aired on popular TV channels like Express TV, ARY Digital, and GEO from 2020-2024. These dramas were selected through a purposive sampling technique based on their popularity and cultural relevance to ensure that the database represented contemporary discourse on divorce. Criteria for selection included divorce as a central or recurring theme and accessibility of recorded dialogues for analysis.

Data Collection Procedure

The data was collected from dramas available on YouTube. Scenes related to the topic were excluded and the relevant dialogues were transcribed with back-to-back translations from an English expert and then in Urdu from a language expert. The focus was on conversations addressing divorce, threatening, and pressurising dialogues, and derogatory remarks made by the characters in relevant scenes. Supplementary video recordings of the selected episodes were used to analyse tone, pauses, and other nonverbal cues that contribute to implicature, the selected scenes were then saved for reference purposes. The selected dialogues were then analysed using Grice's Maxims and Implicature based on adherence to or violations of the four maxims (quantity, quality, relation, and manner). The following details were applied in the analysis.

Maxim of quantity was the information provided by the speaker adequate or incomplete, or were there certain details emphasised or omitted?

Maxim of quality were the statements uttered in the scenes truthful, or did they contain overstatements, falsifications, or hidden biases?

Maxim of relation were the dialogues relevant to the context?

Maxim of manner was the language unambiguous?

After identifying the violations or flouting, implicature was identified and explained according to the context of the scenes. Each dialogue was analysed within its dramatic and cultural context, considering factors such as character roles, and the narrative's moral framing.

Ethical Considerations

- As Divorce is a sensitive topic in Pakistani society, care was taken to ensure that the findings respect cultural norms and do not stigmatize individuals or communities.
- Publicly available dramas were selected and analysed while anonymity was preserved for individuals involved in the production.

Data Analysis

“Noor Jehan” is a Pakistani family drama that centers around the dynamics of familial relationships, and traditional gender roles, with a strong female lead as its center. The story focuses mainly on Noor Jahan’s authority as mother and mother-in-law.

Sample I

“Sab ke saamne ye kaaghiz is lye sign karaya he ke sab ye jaan lein ke mere betay mere kehne par, apni biwion ko chorne mein ek minute nahin lagate”

1. According to the maxim of quantity, the speaker provides enough information to convey her intended point, but by emphasising her control over her sons and, publicly announcing it, she flouts it slightly. The unnecessary detail about the "one minute" suggests the power she holds and adds a performative aspect to the statement. This subtle exaggeration emphasises that she does not value the marital relationship beyond her dominance.
2. The maxim of quality states that one must be truthful in their utterances. This dialogue flouts this maxim as only one of her sons obeys her command. The others refuse to do so. The speaker uses hyperbole to emphasise her power and control. This violation exposes the intention to intimidate and dominate the daughters-in-law.
3. According to the maxim of relevance, the speaker should provide relevant information, but it is seen that this maxim is flouted as Nur Jahan highlights the signing of the divorce papers, though her actual purpose is to assert dominance. The speaker indirectly points out that the daughter-in-law’s status is fragile and dependent upon obedience to family authority.
4. The maxim of manner indicates that the utterances should be clear, orderly, and unambiguous. The spoken statement is clear enough and adheres to this maxim, but the directness of the phrase lacks emotional consideration for marital relationships and the feelings of the people involved in this decision.

Sample II

The second dialogue is of the same serial but extracted from a different episode, Nur Jahan’s sons have a dispute among themselves because of property allocations but their mother blames her youngest daughter-in-law without any proof and demands from her son to divorce his wife immediately.

“Is ki waja se mere baitoun ki larai huwi, us ko mein is ghar mein nahin rehne doon gi. Noor Bano ko talaq do”

1. This particular dialogue adheres to the maxim of quantity as Jahan Ara provides the right amount of information for her intention to be clear. The emphasis on *“jis ki waja se”* suggests that Nur Bano, the youngest daughter-in-law is being blamed for the discord among men. The specific emphasis on Nur Bano creates an implicature that women especially bahu’s are responsible for maintaining family harmony and when they fail, should be punished with divorce.

2. The maxim of quality is flouted here as Jahan Ara assumes that her daughter-in-law is the sole cause of the fight between her sons without sharing any evidence. Flouting of the maxim of quality points to the bias against the daughter-in-law as her perceived actions are enough to justify severe consequences. The command to divorce her is suggestive of the condition of a woman's role in maintaining harmony and subservient behaviour.
3. This dialogue flouts the maxim of relation as there seems to be no relevance between the command of divorce and the sons' dispute in the absence of any evidence that Nur Bano caused the rift. Jahan Ara's intent on implicating Nur Bano without any evidence is suggestive of her unfair attitude towards her daughter-in-law. It implies her thinking that Daughters-in-law are disposable if they disrupt family solidarity.
4. The maxim of manner is adhered to by this dialogue as the speaker's communication is delivered with clarity and leaves no room for confusion. The explicit demand however implies the speakers' dominance and Nur-Bano's powerlessness. It portrays a lack of empathy and reduces the concept of an emotionally and socially significant act to a mere agent of punishment.

We can say that the dialogue between Nur Jahan and her sons flout Grice's maxim of quality, relation, and manner to suggest that women can be blamed, silenced, and disposed to preserve family harmony. The lexical choices support the undignified treatment of women depicted in Pakistani dramas.

Sample III

The third dialogue is taken from the drama "Nand" which revolves around unhealthy power structures within a household where family members become involved in toxic relationships. This prime-time drama explores themes of jealousy and control. The character of Nand (sister-in-law) is portrayed as a manipulative and dominant person who disrupts the lives of her brothers and their wives.

"Ye mere shohar ke saath gulchare ura rahi hai. Ise isi waqt talaq de do".

1. Gohar accuses her Bhabhi of infidelity without any evidence, so this utterance violates the maxim of quality. The purpose of the accusation is to degrade the sister-in-law and justify her immediate divorce, by implying that she is morally lax.
2. The maxim of quantity is not violated as the speaker provides enough information to accuse the sister-in-law. While enough to demand her immediate divorce, the speaker deliberately gives only her side of the story. The withheld information aims to manipulate judgment while pushing for immediate action to not give any chance to the accused to defend herself.
3. The maxim of relation is met by this statement as it is relevant to the context of demanding a divorce, even though the accusation is false. The speaker uses accusation to assert authority and control, pointing towards the alleged immorality of the woman, rather than any marital issues.
4. The statement adheres to the maxim of manner as the statement is clear and direct. The use of words like *"gulchare ura rahi he"* (flirting) and *"isi waqt talaq do"* (divorce her immediately) are suggestive of an emergency and vilification. The choice of words and the way of communicating are indicative of accusations and force for an irreversible solution, implying social ostracism and deception.

Sample IV

The fourth dialogue is taken from “Meher posh’ a drama series that tells an emotionally charged story of love, betrayal, and societal pressures. The main characters, Mehru and Shah Jahan are central to the plot. Shah Jahan secretly loves Mehru but never confesses his feelings. Tragedy strikes when Mehru’s marriage is abruptly broken due to false accusations surrounding her character. Her husband accuses her of impropriety after witnessing Shah Jahan helping her during wedding preparations and divorces her on the wedding night which ultimately causes societal backlash and humiliation for Mehru

“Tum jaisi larkion ko dhake maar kar ghar se nikal dena chahiye. Mein tumhen talaq deta hoon”.

1. The speaker does not adhere to the maxim of quantity by providing more information than necessary. *“Tum jaisi larkion ko ghar se nikaal dena chahiye,”* the speaker, elaborates on how women like the addressee should be treated. The added statement, *“Dhake maar kar”* intensifies the aggression and humiliation. The detailed explanation implies disgust and destroys the addressee’s moral standing.
2. The speaker is violating the maxim of quality by saying something that is not the truth but what he believes to be true. The statement about girls like his wife deserving such treatment is an assumption based on the speaker’s biased opinions, rooted in patriarchal values. The speaker presents his views as they are universal truths and implicitly strengthens his authority and moral judgment while belittling the wife.
3. The maxim of relation is not flouted as the speaker adheres to this maxim. This dialogue is relevant to the conversation, initiated by an incident, The speaker sees divorce as a suitable punishment for the wife’s alleged moral failure. This emphasises gender imbalance and implies that woman’s worth is determined solely if her behaviour confirms her husband’s perceptions.
4. The speaker flouts the maxim of manner by using harsh, explicit, and brutal language that is unnecessary in this situation. The husband could have verified his suspicions before pronouncing the judgment, in a polite manner. The tone and word choices emphasise the wife’s imagined guilt. The words imply an irreversible solution, linking societal stigmas around divorce and infidelity.

Sample V

The fifth sample dialogue is taken from the drama “Razia.” The drama sheds light on the struggles of a girl child born in a patriarchal society that devalues daughters and glorifies sons. The story begins with Razia's father, who desperately wishes for a male heir, even at the cost of his wife's health. When Razia is born, she is treated as a burden, a theme carried throughout her early life as she is denied the love and privileges given to her younger brother. When she marries and has daughters, her husband divorces her because she cannot present him with a son. The drama *Razia* sheds light on the struggles of a girl child born in a patriarchal society that devalues daughters and glorifies sons.

“Koi umeed mat paalna ke mein is bojh ko yahan paloon ga. Agar koi umeed hai to use bhi khatam kar deta hoon. Ulte paon chali jao apne maan baap ke ghar. Mein tumhein talaq deta hoon”.

1. The speaker partially adheres to the maxim of quantity. He provides sufficient information about his intent. The repetition in the dialogue is a bit excessive. (e.g., *umeed mat paalna* and *agar koi umeed hai to use bhi khatam kar deta hoon*) The

repetition emphasises the speaker's intention of eliminating all hopes of reconciliation with his wife based on her being unable to give birth to a son.

2. Alluding to the wife and daughter as a burden flouts the maxim of quality, as the statement is hyperbolic and subjective. The speaker reduces the worth of his wife and newborn daughter by labelling them as a burden. His blaming implied that they were an unacceptable presence in his life.
3. The maxim of relation is not flouted as the speaker maintains relevance throughout the dialogue. The utterances focus on his wife's departure and the declaration of divorce. The language used by the speaker is relevant but emotionally intense, making divorce feel final and unresolvable.
4. This dialogue adheres to the maxim of manner as the speaker is unambiguous in his declarations. The use of imperatives adds to the clarity of the utterance. The directness of the speaker's statement leaves no confusion in the mind of the listener. It highlights the authority of the speaker in rejecting his wife and daughter.

The dialogue is successful in its adherence to the maxim of relation (relevance) and manner (clarity), while it partially flouts the maxims of quantity (excess repetition) and quality (emotional exaggeration). This flouting could be intentional to increase the emotional effect of the dialogue.

Findings

The analysis of the dialogues related to divorce in PTV dramas revealed that lexical choices used by the speakers, both male and female, were targeted towards the "Bahu" or daughter-in-law. The weakest and the most targeted relation in a family setup is the wife or the daughter-in-law. Through Grice's Maxims, the speakers often adhered to the maxim of relation and manner, ensuring that their utterances convey a direct message of rejection or termination of the marital relationship. The maxim of quality was flouted repeatedly through overemotional phrases and metaphors, to threaten and blame the wife, daughter-in-law, or sister-in-law. The maxim of quantity was occasionally flouted through repetition and excessive detail. The implicature common in all dialogues revealed themes of male authority, control, and rejection. The findings draw attention to how the lexical choices depicted in divorce-related scenes in PTV dramas present family relations as a hierarchy, where the males are the most powerful and their mothers after them. In all instances, the wife or the spouse is blamed for incidents of which she has no control. The term divorce is being used as a punishment without any regard for her feelings or self-respect. It was also revealed in the dialogues that dramas are promoting a confused and warped concept of divorce, one which has no relation to the original concept. Divorce in an Islamic society is a balanced provision—neither forbidden nor encouraged unnecessarily. It reflects Islam's realistic understanding of human relationships and offers a dignified way to resolve marital challenges when staying together becomes detrimental to the individuals and their families, none of which is being shown or portrayed in the divorce-related scenes of Pakistani TV dramas.

Discussion

The results of the analysis of the divorce-related dialogues, through the application of Gricean cooperative principles, provided the researcher with the answers to the relevant questions. The theoretical framework of Grice's Maxims and Implicature proved to be just as efficient in analysing a serious topic like divorce in the context of PTV dramas, in contrast to previous

research where the maxims had been applied to texts or comedy shows. A study by Nur (2018) highlights how violations of these maxims in Henrik Ibsen's "The Wild Duck", reflect characters' underlying motivations and conflicts. (Nur, 2018). Similarly, the use of maxims in Urdu dramas provides insights into how societal norms and expectations are reflected through them but in a humorous context. Zeb (2019) studied comedic dialogues in the Pakistani series *Bulbulay*, showing how flouting the maxims of relevance and quantity generates humor while simultaneously reflecting cultural norms.

TV dramas portray divorce as a tool to threaten, implicate, and humiliate women which deviates from its purpose. In an Islamic society, divorce serves as a last resort when the marital relationship may become irreparable due to incompatibility or persistent conflicts. The purpose of divorce in such cases is to provide a lawful and compassionate way to extricate themselves from a union that has become toxic. According to the guidelines of the Quran, Justice and the well-being of both parties should be a priority. It is stated in the Quran, "*And if they separate, Allah will enrich both of them from His abundance...*" (Surah An-Nisa, 4:130), highlighting that divorce, while permissible, should be approached with dignity and respect.

Islamic divorce laws aim to protect the rights of both men and women. It ensures women are not abandoned or oppressed. The procedure of divorce includes measures to prevent hasty decisions, such as mandatory waiting periods (Iddah) and mediation between families to encourage reconciliation. The findings from the analysis revealed that a mockery of this serious institution is being represented in PTV dramas in the guise of entertainment. Previous research has highlighted the role of language in shaping thoughts. Language thoughts and culture cannot be separated from one another. "Linguistic meaning is inextricable from the social practices (language games), in which language is used. The mastery of a language is embedded in, and in important ways formative of, one's cultural background" (Zlatev, 1997, p. 5). Language of the kind used repeatedly in the media will influence the cultural practices of the viewers as a study conducted by the Harvard Kennedy School, has shown that media can persuade individuals to accept new norms by providing information that becomes common knowledge within a community, thereby facilitating social coordination and behavioural change. The influence of the media and the language used in it is instrumental in the continuing evolution of societal norms.

The study becomes relevant in pointing out the need for care for the dissemination of information and portrayal of cultural narratives on the Media channels. If the information is not relevant, it is grave negligence on the part of media writers and producers to portray insufficient and psychologically harmful content in their shows. Daily consumption of these messages can formulate habits and ideologies in viewers that would promote harmful practices. Language can be a powerful tool for empowerment or oppression, and its use in popular media must be carefully executed to challenge harmful stereotypes and promote gender equality.

Conclusion

The analysis of PTV dramas highlights how lexical choices, including insults and dismissive statements, devalue women and reflect a cultural acceptance of gender inequities that reinforce patriarchal structures. Media, as a powerful tool for shaping perceptions, normalizes unequal gender roles through repeated portrayals, creating a cyclical reinforcement of societal norms and drama narratives. These depictions influence viewers, especially the youth, fostering gender biases that associate women with weakness and blame while normalizing male aggression and dominance. Additionally, misinformation on sensitive issues like divorce

further harms societal perceptions. Media creators must embrace their responsibility to present accurate and balanced narratives, using their platform to challenge outdated practices and promote a more inclusive and progressive society.

References

- Bilal, H. A., & Rafique, S. (2019). Linguistic analysis of stereotypes in Pakistani drama discourse. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 5(4), 12–23.
- Blumberg, R. L. (2008). The invisible obstacle to educational equality: Gender bias in textbooks. *Prospects*, 38(3), 345–361.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (5th ed.)*. SAGE Publication.
- Cutting, J. (2002). *Pragmatics and discourse: A resource book for students*. Routledge-Fairclough, N. (1992). *Critical Discourse Analysis and Social Semiotics*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analyzing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London And New York: Routledge.
- Feby, Z., & Subagyio, Z. (2023). An Analysis of Flouting Maxims in TV Show Brooklyn Nine- Nine: Season 5 based on Pragmatics Approach, *Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Studi Amerika* 28(02), 2023 pp.36-42 P-ISSN: 1410-5411. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.20961/jbssa.v28i2.54033>
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics: Speech acts* (Vol. 3, pp. 41–58). Academic Press.
- Kartika, Y., & Ambalegin. (2021). Maxim violation in pretty little liars TV series. *Journal of Applied Studies in Language*, 5(2), 301-308.
- Khan, N. (2015). Pragmatics and representation of gender in Pakistani television dramas. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 35(2), 145–157.
- Kurniati, M. & Hanidar, S. (2018). The flouting of the Gricean maxims in Insidious and Insidious 2. *Lexicon* 5(1), 65-76.
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. Longman Group Limited. Ramadhan, L. (2017). *Flouting and violating Grice's maxims in The Flash series done by Bary Allen*. Unpublished undergraduate thesis. Universitas Gadjah Mada.
- Lerner, G. (1986). *The Creation of Patriarchy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mill, J. S. (2015). *The Subjection of Women*. Global Grey.
- Nur, M. U. (2018). Violation of Grice's Cooperative Principle on the Dialogue of "the Wild Duck" By Henrik Ibsen. *Journal of Research on Applied Linguistics, Language and Language Teaching*, 1(2), 163–168. <https://doi.org/10.31002/jrlt.v1i2.289>
- Patel, R. (2010). *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Pakistan*. Oxford University Press.
- Rahman, T. (2010). *Linguistics for Beginners*. Oxford Press.
- Setiawati, R. (2016). *Flouting maxims of skin care advertisements found in Elle Canada magazine*. Unpublished undergraduate thesis. Universitas Gadjah Mada.
- Stokes, R. (Producer) (2013). Broadchurch [Television Series]. ITV, STV, UTV.
- Tabassum, I., & Amin, S. (2021). Portrayal of Women in Pakistani Dramas and its Impact on Pakistani Society and Culture. *Human Nature Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(1). 22-30.
- Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. Routledge.
- Wang, F. (2015). Just entertainment: effects of TV series about intrigue on young adults.

doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00529.

- Ward, L. M. (2002). Does television exposure affect emerging adults' attitudes and assumptions about sexual relationships? Correlational and experimental confirmation. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 31(1), 1-15. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:101406803153>.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford Press.
- Zeb, S., Khan, U., & Ajmal, M. (2021). The recontextualization of Ideologies: A Critical Study of Tabooed Representation in Pakistani TV Dramas. *Sir Syed Journal of Education & Social Research*, (89-97) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36902/sjesr-vol4-iss1>
- Zlater J & Bloomberg J. (2015). *Language may indeed influence thought*. Front. Psychology. Damanik, A. Y., & Hanidar, S. (2021). The Flouting of Conversational Maxims by Male and Female Characters in the British TV Series Broadchurch. 96-104 <https://doi.org/10.22146/lexicon.v8i2.66001>

Appendix A

Appendix A includes the names of dramas, the channels, and Urdu, Roman English, and English transcriptions.

Drama one

“Noor Jahan” (ARY Digital.)

Dialogue one

Timestamp: 1:38-1:46.

Urdu Transcription “سب کے سامنے یہ کاغذ اس لیے سائن کرایا ہے کہ سب یہ جان لیں کہ میرے بیٹے میرے کہنے پر، اپنی بیویوں کو ”چھوڑنے میں ایک منٹ نہیں لگاتے“

Roman English Transcription. “Sab ke saamne ye kaaghiz is lye sign karaya he ke sab ye jaan lein ke mere betay mere kehne par, apni biwion ko chorne mein ek minute nahin lagate.”

English Transcription: "I had these papers signed in front of everyone so that they know my sons do not take a minute to leave their wives if I ask them to."

Dialogue two

Timestamp: 0.01-0:8.

Urdu Transcription. جس کی وجہ سے میرے بیٹوں کی لڑائی ہوئی، اُس کو میں اس گھر میں نہیں رہنے دوں گی۔ نور بانو کو طلاق دو۔

Roman English Transcription: “Jis ki waja se mere baitoun ki larai huwi, us ko mein is ghar mein nahin rehne doon gi. Noor Bano ko talaq do.”

English Transcription: “The one because of whom my sons fought; I will not let her stay in this house. Divorce Noor Bano.”

Drama two

“Nand” (ARY Digital)

Dialogue

Timestamp: 38:24-38:50

Urdu Transcription. - "یہ میرے شوہر کے ساتھ گلچھڑے اڑا رہی ہے۔ اسے اسی وقت طلاق دے دو۔"

Roman English Transcription: "Ye mere shohar ke saath gulchare ura rahi hai. Ise isi waqt talaq de do."

English Transcription: "She is having an affair with my husband. Divorce her right now."

Drama three

"Mehtar Posh" (GEO)

Dialogue

Timestamp: 5:02-5:011

Urdu Transcription. "تم جیسی لڑکیوں کو دھکے مار کر گھر سے نکال دینا چاہیے۔ میں تمہیں طلاق دیتا"

Roman English Transcription: "Tum jaisi larkion ko dhake maar kar ghar se nikal dena chahiye. Mein tumhen talaq deta hoon."

English Transcription: "Girls like you should be thrown out of the house. I divorce you."

Drama four

"Razia" (Express TV)

Dialogue

Timestamp: 0:10-0:21.

Urdu Transcription. "کوئی امید مت پالنا کہ میں اس بوجھ کو یہاں پالوں گا۔ اگر کوئی امید ہے تو اسے بھی ختم کر دینا ہوں۔ اللہے پاؤں چلی جاؤ" "اپنے ماں باپ کے گھر۔ میں تمہیں طلاق دیتا ہوں"۔

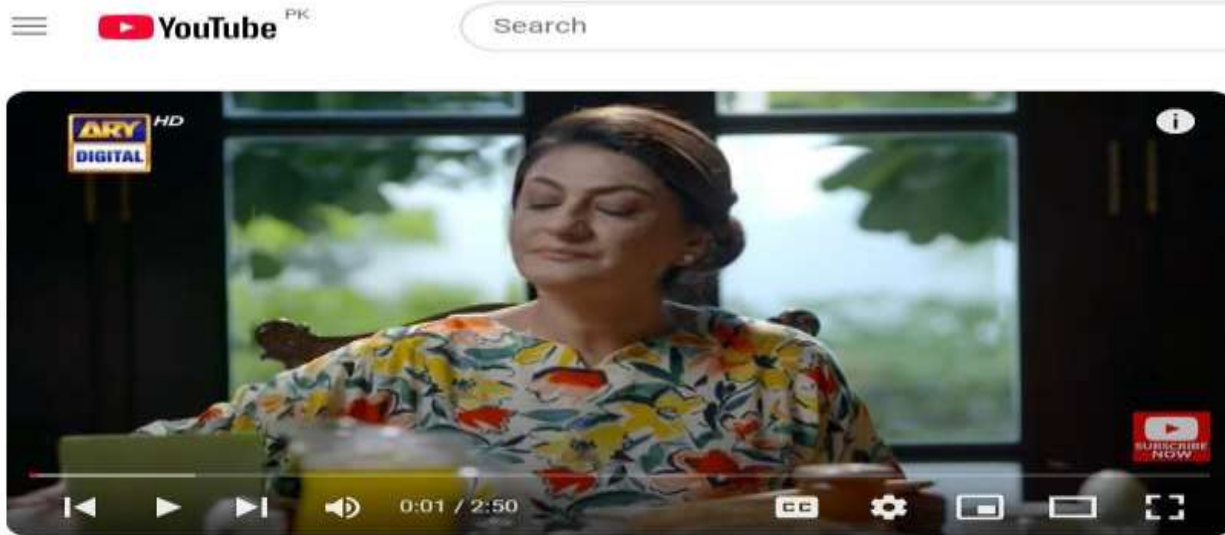
Roman English Transcription: "Koi umeed mat paalna ke mein is bojh ko yahan paloon ga. Agar koi umeed hai to use bhi khatam kar deta hoon. Ulte paon chali jao apne maan baap ke ghar. Mein tumhein talaq deta hoon."

English Transcription: "Do not harbor any hope that I will carry this burden here. If there is any hope, I will destroy that too. Turn back and go to your parents' house. I divorce you."

Appendix B

This appendix includes the sources and screenshots of the dramas.

Figure 1: Drama one “Noor Jahan” (ARY Digital)



Divorced Papers Per Sign Karo ❤️🔥 #noorjahan #kubrakhan

ARY ARY Dig... Subscribed 267 Share

Source: The video was taken from the ARY Digital HD channel on YouTube.

Figure 2: Drama two “Nand” (ARY Digital)



Main Tumhain Talaq Deta Hon [Sad Scene] Minal Khan & Shehroz Sabzwari

Source: The video was taken from the ARY Digital HD channel on YouTube.

Figure 3: Drama three “Mehtar Posh” (GEO)



**Shuhar ne Pheli Raat Biwi ko Talaq tum Jaisi larki Nikha kisi Seor
Ishq kisi|Ep7|Mehtarposh|DramaBazaar**

Source: The video was taken from Drama Bazaar on YouTube.

Figure 4: Drama four “Razia” (Express TV)



Shohar ne Razia Ko Talaq De Di ... #Razia #ExpressTV #entertainment

Source: The video was taken from the Express TV channel on YouTube.
