

**Pragmatic study of “heat lightning”**



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**I Dedicate this work to My Mother**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am thankful to Allah Almighty who gave me strength to accomplish this work and I am really grateful to Dr. Athar Khurshid (My Supervisor) who always steered my efforts in the right direction.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims at exploring the one-act play ‘Heat Lightning’ by Robert F. Carroll by applying pragmatic theories particularly observation, flouting and violation of ‘Cooperative principle maxims’. According to Grice (1975) for a successful communication human beings voluntarily observe certain principles, but it is the common observation that people often sacrifice these maxims. The maxims of cooperative principle are often applied on literary text to explore the possibilities of creating humour. I have investigated the flouting and violation of the maxims in the play ‘Heat Lightning’ to find out why, how and at what situation characters flout or violate these principles. The technique of purposive sampling was employed to select those utterances containing flouting and violation. The type of flouting and violation, the purpose and intention of the character and the effect that is achieved through flouting and violation is the focus of the study. The data is analyzed by applying descriptive qualitative approach as it is best suited because data is in form of words and utterances. The analysis shows that although all three characters in the play flout and violate the maxims but in their own way. Grundy (2000, p. 81) stated that an implicature is a result of an addressee drawing an inductive inference as to the likeliest meaning given in the context. The flouting on the part of the girl is in the form of the sudden emotional outbursts and is unintentional in the beginning but at the end of the play though the words are charged with emotions, is intentional. The man on the other hand tries to manipulate the situation and to elicit the required information from the girl. The second man flouts just to keep the flow of conversation. The analysis further reveals they violate the maxim to be sarcastic or to mislead others. The study is limited to a one-act play but can be helpful in shedding greater light on the meaning of the play and other literary genres through pragmatics. This kind of analysis scaffolds the reader’s creativity in interpreting the play.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study is an attempt to explore the one-act play 'Heat Lightning' written by Robert F. Carroll by applying pragmatic theory of flouting and violation of cooperative principle as propounded by H. P. Grice. The play is the part of the Book III for intermediate classes of Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board, Lahore.