

Vol. 7, No. 3: CLRI August 2020 | p. 18-44

The Impact of Literature on Personality Development and Communicative Skills

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Abstract

An attempt has been made, in this paper, to establish that literature can exert a positive influence on young readers in developing their self-confidence, self-esteem and other personality traits along with their communicative skills. For this purpose, a novel, *Ladies Coupe`* (2001) by a contemporary writer, Anita Nair, is taken as illustration. For the analysis and description of the textual data, concepts like Co-operative Principle and Maxims of Successful Conversation proposed by H P Grice, and the notions of Speech Acts from Pragmatics have been employed. Anita Nair is a versatile and best-selling writer of fiction and poetry. She has also produced children stories, a novella, collection of essays, and a film script.

This paper attempts to show how literature influences personality development and effective communication, which has been portrayed by Anita Nair in the Akhila's character, the protagonist, of the novel.

Keywords: Communicative skills, personality, speech acts, pragmatics, co-operative principles.

Introduction

Literature has a definite and identifiable influence on readers. The great works of classical literature in the West and those of the Sanskrit literature in India are the living examples in this respect. Some works of literature have become inseparable and integral parts of the human culture and civilization in many nations of the world. Therefore, to emphasize the impact of literature on human thought process and behaviour is no overstatement. The assumption underlying the present paper is that such positive influence of literature can be underscored not only in the case of ancient and classical literature but also in the case of modern literature. To prove this assumption, a novel by an Indian writer in English, *Ladies Coupé* (2001) is considered here.

The novelist, Anita Nair is a contemporary Indian English writer, who produced fiction, poetry, essays, and children stories. She has begun her literary career with a collection of short stories *Satyr of the Subway* in 1997 and continued her fiction with her first novel *The Better Man* (1999) and second novel *Ladies Coupé* (2000) which has been

translated into more than 22 languages. Her later works include other novels, *Mistress* (2005), *Lessons in Forgetting* (2010), *Cut like Wound* (2010), *Idris: Keeper of the Light* (2014) along with her children stories like *Where the Rain is Born* (2003), anthology of poetry, *Malabar Mind* (1997) etc. Anita Nair is the winner of several prestigious awards.

Ladies Coupé is a novel that traces the gradual metamorphosis in the character of the protagonist of the novel, Akhilandeshwari (Akhila for short). Born in a lower middle class South Indian Brahmin family, Akhila has been brought up in very frugal, impoverished and tradition-bound restrictions. Her father, Pattabhi Iyer, is a clerk in the Income Tax Department while her mother, Chandra, is a traditional housewife. Unfortunately, Pattabhi Iyer died in a road accident and the family is about to collapse. Luckily Akhila has passed her PUC exam and she is given her father's job in the Income Tax Department on compassionate grounds. Thus Akhila becomes the protector of the family. She takes care of her widowed mother along with her siblings, two younger brothers Narayan and Narsi, and Padma, the youngest of all. Akhila's journey of life as a government clerk begins when she is 17 and she doesn't find time to think of her own happiness in life, having been preoccupied busily with the care of her family. By the time she realizes, she becomes forty. In the meantime, she educates her brothers and performs their marriages, and also Padma's marriage later. No one in her family including her mother never bothers about Akhila's marriage, happiness and comfort.

It is as if they suck her blood and her sacrifice of decades goes unnoticed and unacknowledged. By chance, she falls in love with a young man Hari by name, employed as a draftsman in the Railways. He is twenty-eight and she is forty. Even though Hari is willing to marry her, she drops the idea due to their difference of age. Thus Akhila's life gets suffocated and she decides to undertake a journey to Kanyakumari. In the train's ladies coupé five other women passengers also travel. They are Janaki, an elderly married woman, Prabha Devi, also a married woman, Margaret Shanti, a young married teacher, Sheela, a fourteen years old and Marikolanthu, a desperate, an uneducated woman. From her interaction with each of these fellow passengers, Akhila, who has been situated on the horns of a dilemma whether a woman can remain unmarried and happy in life, finds a final solution. By the time she reaches Kanyakumari, she is clear in her mind that a woman can be unmarried and live happy alone without the support of her husband. With such liberation, at Kanyakumari, she unhesitatingly makes love with a young man of twenty-five years, Vinod, who is also prepared to marry her. Affected by public scandal and common sense regarding their age difference, Akhila avoids him and leaves Kanyakumari for Chennai. After reaching Chennai she tries to contact Hari over the phone but the response she receives is ambiguous leaving her to her fate of loneliness and freedom.

Akhila's use of language, her conversation with others, her verbal responses in communicative situations reveal the

gradual development in her personality, her self-confidence, her self-esteem and the skills of her verbal behaviour along with her own self-sacrifice to protect her family and her sincerity. These qualities in Akhila's personality undoubtedly inspire the reader also and consequently he/she may emulate Akhila.

To analyse and explain Akhila's use of language in conversation, some well-known linguistic and pragmatic concepts have been used in this paper. They are explained below.

Speech Act Theory: J. L. Austin, a British philosopher in his work, *How to Do Things with Words* (1962) challenged the fundamental concepts of logical positivist philosophers, viz., that the declarative sentence is the basic type, and that the meanings of utterances carry truth or falsely value, stating that the purpose of utterances or sentences in languages is not only to describe the state of affairs but also to make questions, requests, expressions of surprise and wishes etc. and that it is not always possible to say whether utterances are true or false. Austin further argued that a speaker in his/her communication performs three kinds of speech acts as follows.

1. *A Locutionary Act: Saying meaningful and grammatically acceptable sentences in a language.*

E.g. My brother is going to England next week

2. *An Illocutionary Act: The act performed by saying something*

(E.g. request, question, command, warning etc.)

E.g. I request you not to disturb me! (or) Please, don't disturb me!

3. A Perlocutionary Act: The act of having a result or implication by saying something. (E.g. threatening, persuading, convincing etc.)

E.g. I'll shoot you, if you don't give me your wallet!

Austin (1962) pointed out that for a speech to be successful, certain felicity conditions should be satisfied. Later, John Searle (1969) further developed the theory of Speech Acts and proposed five kinds of speech acts: Representatives (asserting, concluding, reporting etc.), Directives (requesting, questioning, commanding etc.), Commissives (promising, threatening, offering etc.), Expressives (thanking, apologizing, congratulating, welcoming etc.), and Declaratives (declaring war, firing from job, christening etc.) (Searle 1969) It may be noted that Searle's classification of Speech Acts subsumes that of Austin.

A further refinement of Speech Act Theory was developed by H.P. Grice's 'Co-operative Principle (1975). According to Grice, speakers carry out purposeful and successful conversation by following the Co-operative Principle in terms of four maxims as follows:

The Maxim of Quality (Be true)

The Maxim of Quantity (Be to the point)

The Maxim of Relation (Be relevant)

The Maxim of Manner (Be clear)

This may be shown in a tabular form as follows:

Table – 1: Speech Acts and Maxims of Co-operative Principle

Searle's Speech Acts	Grice's Co-operative Principle and Maxims
Representatives	The Maxims of Quality (Be true)
Directives	The Maxim of Quantity (Be to the point)
Commissives	The Maxim of Relation (Be relevant)
Expressives	The Maxim of Manner (Be clear)
Declaratives	

The following dialogues from the *Ladies Coupé* are analysed on the basis of the Speech Acts and Maxims mentioned above. Each dialogue is introduced by its context, and is followed by its analysis and interpretation.

I. Context: Akhila plans to undertake a journey to Kanyakumari and requests Niloufer, her colleague, to book a rail ticket for her to Kanyakumari. In that context the following dialogue takes place between them.

Akhila: Can you get me a ticket on tonight's train to Kanyakumari?

Niloufer: Why?

What's happening there?

Akhila: Does anything have to happen there for me to want to go to a place?

(LC: 6)

Table – 2: Dialogue One

A: Directive act	Maxim of Quantity & Relation
N: Directive act	Maxims of Quantity & Relation violated
Directive act	Maxims of Quantity & Relation violated
A: Commissive act	Maxim of Quantity & Relation

A: Akhila, N: Niloufer

Analysis: Akhila's utterances are marked by two speech acts, one Directive Act and one Commissive Act and two Maxims of Quantity and Relation. Niloufer's utterances are marked by two DAs and two Maxims of Quantity and Relation (violated).

Interpretation: This indicates that in her conversation, Akhila is clear and to the point while Niloufer is overacting by asking irrelevant questions about Akhila. This suggests that in Indian society, men are irrelevantly curious about women in general, and spinsters like Akhila, in particular.

II. Context: While Akhila is going to the railway station in connection with her journey to Kanyakumari, Padma objects to her going alone in the darkness of the night. A dialogue takes place between them as follows.

Padma: How can you go by yourself to the railway station?

Akhila: I'm travelling alone, aren't I?

Padma: But it will be late when you leave home.

Akhila: Don't worry.

There are plenty of autorikshaws and they are very safe.

Besides, the station is not all that far away.

(LC : 7)

Table – 3: Dialogue Two

P: Directive act	Maxim of Relation
A: Representative act	Maxims of Relation & Manner
P: Commissive act	Maxim of Relation
A: Directive act	Maxim of Manner
Representative act	Maxim of Quantity
Representative act	Maxim of Manner

P: Padma, A: Akhila

Analysis: Padma's utterances are marked by one DA and one CA along with two Maxims of Relation of whereas Akhila's utterances are marked by three RAs and one DA besides three Maxims of Manner, one Maxim of Quantity and one Maxim of Relation.

Interpretation: This dialogue suggests that Padma, Akhila's younger sister is conditioned by the traditional, patriarchal view that an (un)married or married woman should not go out lonely in darkness. In contrast, Akhila's utterances denote her spirit of independence, self-confidence, enlightened trust on others as a modern woman.

III. Context: Akhila having been surprised by the fact that her mother, Chandra was married to her own uncle Pattabhi Iyer, when she was fifteen and he was twenty-

four, questions her mother about it. The following dialogue takes place in this context:

Akhila: But, Amma, how could you have agreed to marry your uncle?

It's so unnatural.

Amma: What's unnatural about it?

It is a perfectly accepted norm in our community.

Who do you think you are to question it?

(LC :11)

Table – 4: Dialogue Three

A: Directive act	Maxim of Relation
Representative act	Maxim of Quality
Am: Directive act	Maxims of Quality and Manner violated
Representative act	Maxims of Quality and Manner
Directive act	Maxim of Relation

A: Akhila, Am: Amma

Analysis: It may be noted that in Akhila's utterances, there is one DA and one RA followed by one Maxim of Relation and one Maxim of Quality. Chandra's (Akhila's mother) utterances consist of two DAs and one RA followed by two Maxims of Quality and Manner (one violated), and one Manner and Relation.

Interpretation: The analysis above indicates Akhila's doubt about the appropriacy of the marriage of her parents in view of their age gap. For her, as a modern girl, their

marriage seems to be unnatural. On the other hand, her mother takes it as natural because in traditional Hindu society there were several instances of an old man marrying a girl child. She emphasizes this point positively.

IV. Context: One evening Akhila and her mother Chandra happen to see Sarasamami and her teenage daughter standing a little afar on the street. The two families were very friendly but after the sudden death of Subramani Iyer (Sarasa's husband) their family collapsed financially. After some days Sarasamami was forced to allow her daughter to sell her character as a prostitute. Chandra felt outraged and tries to avoid Sarasamami and her daughter on the street. Then Akhila persuades her mother to talk to Sarasamami, because she feels that her mother is wrong in avoiding a close former friend of their family. Then her mother asks her to be quite and not to be unkind. Then follows this dialogue:

Akhila: Who is being unkind?

Are you accusing me of being unkind?

Not me.

It's you and your Brahmin cronies who have ostracized that poor woman and her family.

Chandra: I wish it weren't so.

But when one lives in a society, one has to conform to its expectations.

I am not one of those revolutionaries who can stand up to the world.

I'm a simple woman.

A widow.

And I need to belong to the society we live in.

Akhila: Do you realize it could have been us standing there, Amma?

Chandra: I know it could have been us.

Which is why I don't ever say a word against her, no matter how much the others have slandered her.

But I had you. (LC : 83)

Table – 5: Dialogue Four

A: Directive act	Maxim of Quality
Directive act	Maxim of Manner
Representative act	Maxims of Quality & Manner
Representative act	Maxims of Quality & Manner
Ch: Expressive act	Maxims of Quality & Manner
Expressive act	Maxim of Manner
Representative act	Maxims of Quality & Manner
Representative act	Maxims of Quality & Manner
Representative act	Maxims of Quality & Manner
Representative act	Maxims of Quality & Manner
A: Commissive act	Maxims of Relation
Ch: Expressive act	Maxims of Quantity

Commissive act	Maxims of Manner & Quantity
Representative act	Maxims of Quality & Manner

A: Akhila, Ch: Chandra

Analysis: In this dialogue there are two RAs, two DAs and one CA in Akhila's utterances whereas Chandra's utterances consist of three EAs, five RAs and one CA. So far as Maxims are concerned, Akhila's conversation implies three Maxims of Quality, three Maxims of Manner and one Maxim of Relation as against six Maxims of Quality, eight Maxims of Manner, and two Maxims of Quantity in Chandra's conversation.

Interpretation: This dialogue reinforces the fact that Akhila has evolved into a matured human being with a large heart and broad humanitarian outlook. She is dismayed when her mother avoids the members of a former friendly and intimate family and persuades her mother to greet Sarasamami and her daughter, Jaya. However, her mother, a representative of the earlier tradition-bound generation gives her own responses to Akhila's remarks. She is also aware of the fact, but for Akhila's concern and protection, her family also would be on the streets like Sarasa's family. Thus this dialogue faithfully presents two characters in contrast viz., a traditional and closed-minded mother and a modern and broad minded daughter. The daughter is Akhila, the protagonist of the novel.

V. Context: In her office, Akhila makes friendship with Catherine Webber. Sarala, another Hindu colleague of

Akhila, comments on Akhila's friendship with an Anglo-Indian colleague, Katherine. In this context the following dialogue takes place between Akhila and Sarala.

Sarala: Why are you so friendly with that Anglo-Indian girl?

Akhila: Why? What's wrong?

Sarala: Nothing is wrong.

But you know what they say about Anglo-Indians.

They eat beef and their flesh stinks.

Both men and women smoke and drink.

And they have no moral standards like us Hindus.

If you wanted a friend, there are so many other women in this office.

All from respectable families like yours.

Akhila: Don't be silly.

Katherine is a good girl and as respectable as you and me.

Just because she is not a Hindu doesn't automatically make her an immoral person.

Sarala: One of these days you will find out for yourself.

(LC : 86)

Table-6: Dialogue Five

S: Directive act	Maxim of Relation
A: Directive act	Maxim of Relation
Directive act	Maxim of Relation

S: Representative act	Maxim of Relation
Commissive act	Maxim of Manner
Representative act	Maxim of Quality
Representative act	Maxim of Quality
Commissive act	Maxim of Quantity and Manner
Representative act	Maxim of Quality and Quantity
Representative act	Maxims of Quality
A: Directive act	Maxim of Relation violated
Representative act	Maxim of Quality and Relation
Representative act	Maxims of Quantity
S: Commissive act	Maxim of Relation and Manner

S: Sarala, A: Akhila

Analysis: In this dialogue, Sarala's utterances embody one DA, five RAs and three CAs along with two Maxims of Relation, three Maxims of Manner, four Maxims of Quality and two Maxims of Quantity while Akhila's utterances comprise three DAs, two RAs besides two Maxims of Relation, one Maxim of Quality, one Maxim of Quantity and one Maxim of Relation (violated).

Interpretation: This dialogue reveals the following facts. Firstly, Akhila's conversation shows that she has a modern outlook and is unbiased in relation to race. She cares only for personality and not such features as religion and race. In contrast, Sarala being elder and senior to Akhila displays a closed minded attitude and she is biased in religious and racial matters. Therefore, Sarala, being

Hindu dissuades another Hindu colleague Akhila, from making friends with Katherine, an Anglo-Indian woman.

VII. Context: After their holiday at Mahabalipuram while returning home by train, Akhila bids goodbye to Hari. The following dialogue takes place between them.

Akhila: Hari, this is goodbye.

I will never see you again.

Hari: Why?

What are you saying?

What is wrong?

What did I do wrong?

Akhila: Everything is wrong, Hari.

All these days, I tried to tell myself that it didn't matter.

That we could bridge the years between us with love.

But I don't think I can.

Every time I look at someone watching us, I can see the question in their minds: what is he doing with an older woman?

That bothers me very much, Hari.

It bothers me that we are not suited.

That I am older and look older, and I can't live with the thought that someday you might regret this relationship, that you might turn away and I would be left with nothing—neither you nor my family.

Hari: Are you done?

Akhila: Yes.

I'm done and I will never see you again.

Please don't call me at my office or try and meet me.

You will leave me with no option but to leave this city.

I love you, Hari.

I will perhaps never love anyone else but this is not meant to be.

Won't you even give me a chance?

(LC: 153-154)

Table- 7: Dialogue Six

A: Representative act	Maxim of Manner
Representative act	Maxim of Quality
H: Directive act	Maxim of Relation
Directive act	Maxim of Relation
Directive act	Maxim of Relation
Directive act	Maxim of Relation
A: Directive act	Maxim of Quality
Representative act	Maxim of Manner
Representative act	Maxim of Relation
Representative act	Maxim of Quantity
Expressive act	Maxim of Quality
Representative act	Maxim of Quality
Expressive act	Maxim of Quality

Expressive act	Maxim of Quality and Manner
H: Representative act	Maxim of Manner
A: Directive act	Maxim of Manner
Representative act	Maxim of Manner and Quantity
Directive act	Maxim of Relation
Representative act	Maxim of Manner
Representative act	Maxim of Quality
Representative act	Maxim of Quality
H: Directive act	Maxim of Manner

A: Akhila, H: Hari

Analysis: In this dialogue, there are ten RAs, three DAs, three EAs in Akhila's utterances, while Hari's utterances are realized as five DAs, one RA. Furthermore, Akhila's conversation represents six Maxims of Manner, nine Maxims of Quality, two Maxims of Quantity and two Maxims of Relation, while Hari's is realized as two Maxims of Manner and four Maxims of Relation. That is Akhila's conversation is more marked by the Maxims of Quality followed Maxims of Manner whereas Hari's conversation is more marked by Maxims of Relation followed by Maxims of Manner.

Interpretation: This dialogue clearly displays Akhila's practical attitude to life and her maturity based upon the truth of things. That is the reason why she bids a final goodbye to Hari whom she has loved sincerely, but she realizes that their marriage cannot take place owing to the

difference between their ages. She is 40 and he is 25 years of age. This dialogue further throws light on Akhila's foresight in that she is able to see the future when both of them grow older that he might desert her and she might be left alone with the burden of her family. This dialogue clearly demotes a turning point in the emotional metamorphosis of Akhila because she decides and once for all that she has grown beyond the age of marriage. In other words, she has resolved her first problem in her life viz., marriage. That is, she has decided to remain unmarried.

VIII. Context: Karpagam's interaction with Akhila to advise her to live alone as she lives after her husband's demise which makes Akhila to think of living independently. Karpagam reinforces her advice to live alone before departing. Akhila heeds to Karpagam's advice so as to clear her dilemma of making herself independent.

Karpagam: So why don't you live alone?

Your sister is old enough to look after herself.

And it isn't as if she doesn't have a husband and family.

Akhi, you are educated....

Akhi, ask your sister and family to leave your home. That's the first thing you need to do.

Akhila: How can I live alone?

How can any woman live alone?

Karpagam: Look at me.

If I can live alone, why can't you?

Akhila: But you are married.

You don't live alone.

... ..

Akhila: So what do you suggest I do?

Karpagam: Whatever you think want to.

Live alone.

Build a life for yourself where your needs come first.

Tell your family to go to hell or wherever.

Akhila: Karpagam, are you real or are you some goddess
who has come here to lead me out of this [...]

(LC 201-202)

Table 8: Dialogue Seven

K: Directive act	Maxim of Manner
Representative act	Maxim of Quality
Representative act	Maxim of Quality and Relation
Representative act	Maxim of Quality
Directive act	Maxim of Quantity
Representative act	Maxim of Quality
A: Directive act	Maxim of Relation
Directive act	Maxim of Relation
K: Directive act	Maxim of Relation
Representative act	Maxim of Relation

A: Representative act	Maxim of Quality
Representative act	Maxim of Quality
A: Directive act	Maxim of Manner
K: Representative act	Maximum of Quantity
Commissives act	Maximum of Quantity
Commissives act	Maxim of Relation
Directive act	Maximum of Quantity
A: Expressives act	Maxim of Relation

Karpagam, A: Akhila

Analysis: In Karpagam's conversation, six RAs, four DAs and two CAs along with two Maxims of Quality, four Maxims of Quantity, four Maxims of Relation and one Maxim of Manner. Likewise in Akhila's utterances, there are three DAs, two RAs and one EA in addition to three Maxims of Relation, two Maxims of Quality and one Maxim of Manner. That is of the eighteen utterances twelve are uttered by Karpagam and six by Akhila.

Interpretation: This dialogue like the preceding one also reflects a turning point in Akhila's life. Akhila's dilemma in life consists on her attitude to marriage, whether it is indispensable and secondly, in her opinion on whether a woman can live alone. Her first dilemma, regarding marriage is resolved when she bids goodbye to Hari (see context VI) while her dilemma regarding a single woman living independently is resolved in this dialogue of Akhila with Karpagam. Therefore this dialogue plays a key role in

Akhila's psychic metamorphosis which is developmental and liberative in nature.

IX. Context: Akhila decides to buy a flat for herself and informs Padma of this. Padma's reacts in a negative way, which can be observed from the following dialogue.

Akhila: I'm thinking of buying a house.

Padma: I have also been thinking about it for some time now.

Soon these girls will be of marriageable age and how can we find them decent husbands if we don't even have a house of our own.

Akhila: Padma, I am buying a flat; a one-bedroom flat.

Padma: But how can we all fit in a flat that size?

Can't you afford anything bigger?

Ala: Padma, how much room does one person need?

Padma: What do you mean?

Akhila: I wish to be myself.

It is time I did this—lived alone. And it is time you did as well.

(LC 203)

Table-9: Dialogue Eight

A: Representative act	Maxim of Quality
P: Expressive act	Maxim of Relation
Representative act	Maxim of Relation
A: Representative act	Maxim of Quantity
P: Directive act	Maxim of Relation
Directive act	Maxim of Relation
A: Directive act	Maxim of Relation
P: Directive act	Maxim of Relation
A: Representative act	Maxim of Manner
Representative act	Maxim of Manner
Directive act	Maxim of Quantity and Relation

A: Akhila, P: Padma

Analysis: In this dialogue Akhila's speech is marked by four RAs, two DAs besides one Maxim of Quality, two Maxims of Quantity, two Maxims of Relation and two Maxims of Manner against Padma's speech, which is marked by one EA, one RA and three DAs besides five Maxims of Relation.

Interpretation: This dialogue reveals the different natures of the two sisterly characters viz., Akhila and Padma. After Akhila decides to live independently alone, she attempts to suggest to Padma to leave her and go away along with her family. Padma, with her family, has been staying along with Akhila for nine months. This indicates a turning point in Akhila's life as she has resolved her qualms about living

alone independently. On the other hand, Padma who is self-centered and doesn't have any concern for Akhila takes it for granted that whatever Akhila buys including a flat is for her own consumption and enjoyment along with her family. This dialogue illustrates a turning point in Akhila's life.

X. Context: Akhila travels to Kanyakumari by train. During her journey she meets five more female passengers in the ladies coupé. She expresses to her co-passengers her predilection to develop and stand by herself. Janaki responds to Akhila's inquiry as shown below:

Akhila: I am not who everyone thinks I am.

Janaki: I know that now.

But you hide behind such a stiff armour of control that most people must be in awe of you.

I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.

Akhila: You didn't hurt my feelings.

Not at all.

But I was thinking about what you said.

I wasn't always like this; so stiff and restrained.

I had to grow a shell around myself.

To protect myself.

To deflect hurt and pain.

If I hadn't, I would have gone insane.

(LC : 41)

Table 10 : Dialogue Nine

A: Representative act	Maxim of Manner
J: Representative act	Maxim of Manner
Representative act	Maxim of Manner
Expressive act	Maxim of Quantity
A: Representative act	Maxim of Manner
Representative act	Maxim of Manner
Representative act	Maxim of Relation
Representative act	Maxim of Manner
Representative act	Maxim of Quality
Representative act	Maxim of Relation
Representative act	Maxim of Relation
Representative act	Maxim of Manner

A: Akhila, J: Janaki

Analysis: In this dialogue Akhila's speech is represented by nine RAs and Janaki's speech is marked by two RAs and one EA. As far as Maxims are concerned, Akhila's are marked by five Maxims of Manner, three Maxims of Relation and one Maxim of Quality whereas Janaki's are marked by two Maxims of Manner and one Maxim of Quantity.

Interpretation: The analysis above reveals that Akhila's dialogue consists of only RAs which mean that she has grown to the level of asserting her opinions, reporting about her life to others and arriving at clear-cut

conclusions. Similarly, a majority of Maxims of Manner (5) of Relation (3) indicate that she expresses herself very clearly and relevantly in a given communicative situations. On the other hand Janaki's speech indicates her elderly nature and clear opinions. Thus this dialogue illustrates mirror to Akhila's maturity of thought and how she has learnt to protect herself from others with a superficial cover of reservedness. Her conversation holds mirror to her personality growth.

XI. Context: Akhila wants to seek the opinion of other fellow passengers whether a woman can live alone without a man. Their responses are as under:

Prabha and Margaret: So are we the ones who are going to do that for you?

Janaki: Don't mock at her. She is serious.

Can't you two see that?

Akhila: I don't know if you will be able to help me.

But you must tell me what you really think.

Can a woman cope alone?

Janaki: Is it advice you are looking for?

Akhila: I don't want advice.

I just want you to tell me if you think a woman can manage alone.

(LC: 21-22)

Table – 11: Dialogue Ten

P&M: Commissive act	Maxim of Quality
J: Directive act	Maxim of Quantity
Representative act	Maxim of Manner
Directive act	Maxim of Relation
A: Representative act	Maxim of Relation
Directive act	Maxim of Quantity
Directive act	Maxim of Quality
J: Directive act	Maxim of Manner
A: Representative act	Maxim of Manner
Directive act	Maxim of Quality

P: Prabha Devi, M: Margaret Shanti, A: Akhila, J: Janaki

Analysis: It can be noted from the above table that Prabha Devi and Margaret's joint question represents a CA while Janaki's dialogue embodies three DAs and one RA. Likewise, Akhila's dialogue consists of two RAs and three DAs. In relation to Maxims, Prabha and Margaret's question indicates the Maxim of Quality while Janaki's utterances comprise one Maxim of Quantity, two Maxims of Manner and one Maxim of Relation. Akhila's utterances indicate one Maxim of Relation, three Maxims of Quality, one Maxim of Manner.

Interpretation: This is also a key dialogue because Akhila seeks an answer from her fellow passengers to her dilemma whether a woman can live alone independently.

She gets a partial answer thought not a confirmation. All the three passengers Prabha Devi, Margret and Janaki seemed to have expressed their dissatisfaction with their married life which indirectly meant that they recommended a single and independent life to Akhila.

Conclusion

The discussion, analysis and interpretation above of the selected dialogues from Anita Nair's novel *Ladies Coupé* clearly reveal how the protagonist, Akhila's, personality develops gradually through different stages of her life and how she nurtures her self-esteem, self-confidence and communicative abilities such that she attains liberation from the feminine shackles imposed on her partly by herself and partly by society. Consequently a single spinster likely to be looked down upon by her own family and by the society, in this case Akhila, becomes a praiseworthy person with her sterling qualities like love of her family, love of her neighbours and colleagues irrespective of their race and religion and broad human sympathy and other traits like attractive looks, discipline and assiduity. In this way Akhila's character assumes a realistic mode and inspires the reader to emulate her qualities for a sense of fulfillment and success in life. Thus the present study proves the hypothesis that literature can have a positive impact.

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