



Conversational Implicature Through Maxim Flouting: A Pragmatic Analysis of *Purple Hearts*

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the conversational implicatures in the movie *Purple Hearts* through maxim flouting. The study of implicature has become increasingly relevant in understanding how meaning is conveyed beyond literal expression, especially in audiovisual media where context and emotion play crucial roles. According to Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, effective communication is achieved when participants adhere to four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, manner, and relation (relevance). However, implicature arises when these maxims are deliberately or unintentionally not observed. A descriptive qualitative method is used in this research to analyze conversational implicatures in selected dialogues from the film. This research specifically focuses on the phenomenon of flouting maxims. Based on the research, the flouting of the Maxim of Relation was the most frequent, appearing in 4 out of 10 cases (40%). This was followed by the Maxim of Quantity, Maxim of Quality, and Maxim of Manner, each occurring in 2 cases (20%). The findings are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of pragmatic meaning and its implications for communication studies and film analysis.

Keywords: *Conversational Implicature; Cooperative Principle; Pragmatics*

Introduction

1. General Background of Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics that studies how context and social interactions contribute to the meaning of language, including how speakers and listeners interpret utterances beyond their literal meaning. Yule (2006) states that pragmatics is the study of how to convey more than what is said (Sofyan et al., 2022). According to Huang and Yan (Dey, 2023), pragmatics focuses on understanding meaning based on context, considering factors such as the speaker's intended meaning, the listener's expectations, and social and cultural norms. It considers how factors such as the relationship between speakers and situational contexts affect

interpretation. Particularly, pragmatics examines how meaning can shift depending on the listener's background knowledge, contextual factors, and mutual understanding, and how miscommunication may arise when the speaker's intended meaning differs from the listener's interpretation.

Pragmatics focuses on the relationship between signs and their interpreters. It examines how context influences the interpretation of meaning, emphasizing the role of intentions and social factors in the communicative process. When a speaker communicates with another person, the speaker's utterance carries both denotative meaning, referring to the literal or dictionary definition of the words, and connotative meaning, which arises from how the words are interpreted within a particular context (Makhmudova, n.d.).

1.2 Conversational implicature and maxims

A key outcome of this development in pragmatics is the idea of conversational implicature, which was introduced by philosopher H.P. Grice in 1975. Implicature refers to the act of conveying a meaning that differs from the literal expression, or to the implied meaning itself. Allott (Sailas Nandimo & Githiora, 2024) maintains the speaker implies that conversational implicatures in making an utterance; part of the content of the utterance does not contribute to direct utterance content, beyond the literal linguistic meaning of the utterance. Implicature guides how people interpret meanings that are not directly stated in their speech (Archer et al., 2012, as cited in Mega Safitri et al., 2024).

Grice introduced the Cooperative Principle and a set of conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner, which describe how effective communication relies on the assumption that interlocutors will behave in a rational, cooperative way. Grice (1975, as cited in Mega Safitri et al., 2024) asserts that cooperative communication and the use of maxims are necessary for both the speaker and the listener to comprehend one another's meanings. However, in many cases, speakers deliberately or unconsciously fail to observe these maxims to convey a message that goes beyond the actual meaning of an utterance; this is where implicature arises. It is crucial to recognize that implicature can be categorized into two types, each of which has a different point of view in interpreting the meaning of words.

The first is conventional implicature, which refers to the direct or literal meaning of the speaker's words, and the other type is conversational implicature, which refers to the meaning that goes beyond the literal or linguistic form (S. I. Putri & Ambalegin, 2022). Through the classification of these two categories, we can better analyze how speakers rely on context to convey implied meanings in a conversation.

Conversational implicature refers to the idea that speakers often imply more than what is explicitly stated, and listeners rely on shared assumptions and contextual cues to infer the intended meaning. Several factors influence conversational implicature, such as the context of the interaction, the participants

involved, the topic being discussed, and the setting in which the conversation occurs (Liliyan et al., 2023a). The difference between the spoken words and their intended meanings leads the interlocutor to rely on linguistic and non-linguistic contextual cues to deduce the underlying message (Alsmari, 2024).

1.3 Flouting maxims

Conversational implicatures often occur when speakers do not fully observe Grice's maxims. Grice categorized such cases as non-observance of maxims, which include flouting, violating, infringing, opting out, and suspending a maxim. Each type represents a different way in which speakers fail to follow the Cooperative Principle. Among the different forms of non-observance, the most relevant to this study is flouting a maxim.

However, the non-observance of maxims does not necessarily indicate that communication has failed. This is done, in some cases, as a strategy by the speaker to achieve a certain purpose, such as being humorous, polite, or avoiding sensitive topics. In other situations, it may be unintentionally caused by factors like nervousness, lack of knowledge, or limited language ability. Therefore, it is necessary to understand that non-observance is not the cause of communication failure, but rather another way that the speaker uses to express thoughts in a different context according to the communication goals that they want to achieve.

Flouting a maxim means intentionally giving another implied meaning behind the utterance that is delivered. The speaker expects the listeners to be able to understand the other meaning indirectly during communication. As Hossain states that flout takes place when a speaker deliberately violates a maxim with respect to the literal meaning of their utterance, for the purpose of conveying an implicature (Ni Kadek Lili Anto Nela & I Gusti Ayu Vina Widiadnya Putri, 2024).

Referring to Amelia & Hendar in their work, flouting maxims can be categorized into several types. First, flouting the maxim of Quantity occurs when a speaker provides either too much or too little information than what is required. Second, flouting the maxim of Quality takes place when the speaker deliberately says something that does not reflect their true belief. Third, flouting the maxim of Manner involves a lack of clarity, in which the speaker's communicative intention is expressed indirectly. Finally, flouting the maxim of Relation is evident when the speaker gives a response that appears irrelevant to the ongoing discussion through a sudden change of topic, or by avoiding the interlocutor's main purpose in asking a question (Amelia & Hendar, 2024).

Movie conversations are designed to resemble natural conversation and represent real-life interaction; therefore, conversations can be a vast source for analyzing how meaning is created, conveyed, and even implied. With a good understanding of conversational implicatures, they can use these implicatures to convey messages more effectively and avoid misunderstandings (Liliyan et al., 2023).

1.4 Research gap and objective

Grice's Cooperative Principle has been applied in a number of studies to examine conversational implicature in particular movies, but most of this research is limited to individual instances and does not systematically examine optimal frequency or contextual functions across dialogues. Additionally, there aren't many studies that specifically look at how relational and emotional settings affect how disregarded maxims are used and distributed in film discourse. up order to fill up these gaps, this study examines the kinds and frequency of maxim flouting in specific Purple Hearts dialogues, emphasizing how the emotional and interpersonal interactions in the movie convey pragmatic meaning.

This study aims to analyze the conversational implicatures through maxim flouting in the movie Purple Hearts to reveal how pragmatics contribute to the development of character interactions. This movie was directed by Elizabeth Allen Rosenbaum and written by Kyle Jarrold and Liz W. Garcia. The film was produced by Alloy Entertainment and distributed by Netflix, with a runtime of approximately 122 minutes. The movie's creator intentionally incorporated a flouting maxim into the dialogue so that the audience could infer and understand the hidden meaning being conveyed by adjusting the context of the scene being shown (Sari & Jamaris, 2024).

Therefore, this study is conducted to:

1. Identify the types of conversational implicatures found in the movie Purple Hearts.
2. Analyze the types of flouted Gricean maxims used by the characters in the movie.
3. Determine which type of maxim flouting occurs most frequently in the selected dialogues.

Method

In this research, the researcher uses the descriptive qualitative method to analyze the conversational implicature through maxim flouting found in the Purple Hearts movie. Qualitative research is considered appropriate for this study because it allows the researcher to explore and understand the context in which the data occur, providing deeper insights into how the participants or objects of study address particular issues or problems ("Justification for Adopting Qualitative Research Method, Research Approaches, Sampling Strategy, Sample Size, Interview Method, Saturation, and Data Analysis," 2021). The analysis will be guided by the principles of pragmatics, particularly H.P. Grice's theory of conversational implicature. This method enables the researcher to systematically describe the conversational implicatures through maxim flouting found in the movie dialogues and to interpret how they contribute to the character's communication.

The researcher conducted several steps to identify and interpret conversational implicatures in the movie dialogue. First, the writer carefully watched the movie multiple times to become familiar with the context and interactions between characters. Then, the writer identified dialogues that contained indirect or implied meanings. Each selected dialogue was analyzed using H. P. Grice's theory of conversational implicature, focusing on the Cooperative Principle and the four conversational maxims. Therefore, the researcher examined how each maxim was flouted to generate implicature and interpreted the unstated meaning. Finally, the findings consist of the original dialogue, the flouted maxim(s), the inferred implicature, and a brief interpretation of the implied meaning.

The data were selected based on their relevance to conversational implicature, their representativeness of different types of maxim flouting, and the clarity with which the implicatures could be identified within the dialogue context. To ensure data validity, peer checking was conducted by discussing and reviewing the analysis of conversational implicatures with a fellow researcher to minimize subjective interpretation.

The movie *Purple Hearts* was selected for this study due to the richness of its dialogue, which frequently involves implied meanings, indirect expressions, and emotionally driven interactions. These characteristics provide substantial data for examining conversational implicature and the flouting of Gricean maxims within cinematic discourse.

Results

The distribution of flouted conversational maxims found in the selected dialogues is summarized in Table I.

Table I. The findings.

Type of Flouted Maxim	Frequency	Percentage
Maxim of Relation	4	40%
Maxim of Quantity	2	20%
Maxim of Quality	2	20%
Maxim of Manner	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Flouting Maxim of Quantity

(Datum 1)

Luke : Uh, I'm Luke, by the way. What's your name?

Cassie : Your waitress/bartender. Have a fun night, Luke.

The conversation above began when Cassie felt offended because one of Luke's friends made an inappropriate remark toward her. Luke approached Cassie and tried to ease the tension by apologizing for his friend and introducing himself. After Cassie responds by saying, "Your waitress/bartender. Have a fun night, Luke," she immediately leaves, ignoring Luke's question. However, Cassie was reluctant to answer Luke's questions directly and refused to get personally involved, especially regarding her identity.

Thus, it can be observed that there is an implicature when Cassie tries to maintain professional boundaries by only mentioning her occupation at that time, which was as a waitress. This illustrates a case of flouting the maxim of quantity, where the information provided is less informative than required, resulting in a conversational implicature that conveys an implied meaning beyond what is explicitly said. According to the theory of Halliday & Hasan (1985, as cited in J. W. Putri & Marantika, 2023), the context in which linguistic interaction takes place gives the participants a great deal of information.

(Datum 2)

Frankie: So, what's the big question, girl?

Cassie : It's uhh... It's gonna sound a little crazy.

The conversation above occurs when Cassie approaches Frankie, one of her close friends who serves as a marine, to ask something that seems embarrassing for both herself and Frankie. Cassie feels awkward because Frankie is her close friend whom she is about to ask to marry her for benefits. The reason Cassie intends to engage in a fake marriage is that she found out six months ago that she has type 1 diabetes, and her current insurance does not cover the insulin she needs. Then, one of Frankie's friends suggests that Marine spouses receive full health benefits and extra pay upon marriage, so Cassie thinks that both she and Frankie would benefit from the fake marriage.

This situation is something she is forced to do due to her urgent circumstances. Cassie's health condition requires a large amount of money, along with the cost of her rent. It can be seen that the maxim of quantity is being flouted because Cassie does not provide enough or complete information to answer Frankie's question. By giving an incomplete response, an implicature arises in which Cassie's utterance carries an additional meaning. In this case, it can be inferred that she feels uncertain or embarrassed about the question she wants to ask Frankie. When communicating, the intended message is not always delivered correctly (Tauchid et al., n.d.).

Flouting Maxim of Quality

(Datum 3)

Luke : Okay, guys, I want you to listen to a song. All right, ready for this?

(He plays the song)

Luke : She's my new favorite artist.

Cassie : (smiling softly) I hate you.

When spending time with family in the backyard, Luke plays Cassie's latest song. He says, "She's my new favorite artist" because he feels proud of Cassie, finds her song pleasant to listen to, and admires her beautiful voice. Cassie looks at him and responds, "I hate you," while smiling at Luke. This creates an implicature in their conversation, showing that Cassie doesn't actually hate him, but rather feels touched and appreciates Luke's support for her song. By saying something contrary to what she truly means, the implicature arises as a result of the flouting of the maxim of quality. Grice (1975, as cited in Studi Sastra Inggris Fakultas Bahasa Asing et al., 2022), said that if flouted, it may be difficult to locate, but a gesture or tone of voice in the right situation will reveal the flouting maxim.

(Datum 4)

Cassie : (sighs) I can't believe I have this show tomorrow. (chuckles) Tonight.

Luke : You don't look great, Cass. You, okay?

Cassie : No, I'm fine

Luke : When was the last time you ate?

Cassie : Um..I don't know

The conversation above occurs when Luke notices that Cassie doesn't seem to be in good condition. Cassie looks pale, weak, and helpless, possibly about to faint due to her worsening diabetes and which leaves her in urgent need of assistance. However, when Luke tries to approach her and asks if she is okay, instead of admitting how she truly feels, Cassie responds by saying, "I'm fine." This shows that Cassie is trying to hide her true condition. Cassie flouts the maxim of quality by saying something she knows is not true. Although she insists that she is fine, her condition clearly shows the opposite. The implicature of this utterance is that she is concealing her weakness to appear strong and to prevent Luke from worrying about her.

Therefore, context plays a crucial role in determining the meaning of an utterance. Culture and context contribute to the presentation of the meaning of language (Eripuddin et al., 2022). The same utterance can convey different interpretations depending on the situational, social, and even psychological factors during the conversation. Without considering the context, the true meaning or intention of a speaker's utterance may be misunderstood by listeners. As emphasized by Janssens and Schaecken, the interpretation of communicative utterances relies heavily on the content of the arguments, indicating that both context and content

play a fundamental role in the process of interpreting implicatures (Airenti & Plebe, 2017).

Flouting Maxim of Manner

(Datum 5)

Luke : You know, you really look the part.

Cassie : What does that mean?

The day finally arrived when Cassie and Luke would hold the wedding ceremony they had planned. Cassie looked stunning, wearing a graceful and elegant white gown. When they arrived at the civil marriage office, Luke walked side by side with Cassie, glanced at her, and said, "You know, you really look the part." Then Cassie sought clarification about what Luke meant by asking, "What does that mean?". From this context, this means that she now looks like a real bride. Even though it is a fake marriage, Luke's tone shows that he is genuinely impressed and touched by Cassie's appearance.

The Maxim of Manner emphasizes clarity and order in communication to prevent confusion or ambiguity. The implicature in this conversation arises because of the flouting of the maxim of manner, where Luke's utterance sounds ambiguous and incomplete. The Maxim of Manner requires speakers to be unambiguous. Instead of directly telling Cassie that she looks beautiful, Luke chooses to use the phrase "the part", which eventually creates another implied meaning. The phrase "the part" becomes unclear in meaning if the listener does not understand the actual context. Horn and Ward (2004, as cited in Sravanthi et al., 2024) proposed that pragmatics deals with the study of meaning that depends on context; those aspects are systematically abstracted away from, in the construction of content or logical form.

In other words, not all aspects of meaning can be fully captured by grammar or logical structure alone. By saying this, Luke's utterance above can also be interpreted as Luke may have started to feel something genuine, a deeper emotion beyond the fake marriage they had planned for practical reasons. This reflects what Gazdar (in Sofyan et al., 2022) defines as implicature, namely a proposition implied by an utterance in context, where the intended meaning is not directly expressed in the literal words.

(Datum 6)

Luke : You know you can let a guy help you and still be a feminist, right?

Cassie : (chuckles) I'd rather have a broken knob than have you lecture me on feminism.

The conversation takes place while Cassie and Luke are having a meal on Cassie's apartment balcony. Without Cassie's knowledge or permission, Luke had secretly tried to help her by fixing the broken doorknob. In the middle of their meal,

Cassie glanced toward the doorknob and asked Luke, "Did you fix the doorknob?" Luke responded only with a mumble, appearing relaxed as he continued eating. The atmosphere became awkward, as shown by Cassie's surprised gesture that Luke was willing to help her without being asked.

After that, Cassie thanked Luke with hesitation, and the conversation above occurred, where Luke looked at Cassie and said confidently, "You know you can let a guy help you and still be a feminist, right?" On the other hand, his remark offended Cassie, leading her to assert that she'd rather have a broken knob than have Luke lecture her on feminism. This aligns with the view that gesture is a fundamental component of language, contributing meaningful and unique information to a spoken message and reflecting the speaker's underlying thoughts and emotions (Clough & Duff, 2020).

In this case, Cassie flouts the maxim of manners by using sarcasm and figurative language instead of responding directly. Flouting the maxim of manner occurs when the speaker makes ambiguous responses and cannot be clear and orderly in conversation (Cutting, 2002, as cited in (Saefudin et al., 2023) Cassie's statement implies that she rejects Luke's help and feels annoyed by his comment about feminism. The possibility that Cassie already understands feminism or feels that Luke is not the right person to talk about it makes her defensive and leads her to avoid discussing feminism.

Flouting Maxim of Relation

(Datum 7)

Luke : Could you throw in some lemon slices with that?

Cassie : How about you pace yourself, bro?

The conversation above shows an implicature arising from the flouting of the maxim of relation. It begins when Cassie talks with a group of marines at a bar and offers them drinks. Some of them ask for a brand of liquor, while one of them, Luke, only asks for a coke and adds a request to put some lemon slices in it. Cassie laughs and says, "How about you pace yourself, bro?". This can be seen from Luke's request to Cassie, which she responds to with something unrelated or not directly addressing his request. Cassie indirectly suggests that Luke has been drinking too quickly and should slow down, rather than adding more lemon slices. Her response implies a subtle warning about his behavior, highlighting her awareness of his state and her attempt to guide him without explicitly criticizing him.

This indirectness shows politeness to convey the intended message. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983, 2014), indirectness is generally considered more polite than explicitness (de Oliveira Fernandes & Oswald, 2023). Alexandra Kallia, in her paper titled Linguistic Politeness, politeness can serve as a strategy to facilitate smooth interaction and to convey messages indirectly to the addressee (Yanti, 2017).

(Datum 8)

Mom : Cassie, you got a letter
Cassie : Mom, don't open that
Mom : Cass, you didn't pay your rent?
Cassie : I said don't open that.

This moment occurs when Cassie and her mom return home to her apartment after a long day. Her mother, who intended to open the apartment door, accidentally found a letter. She told Cassie that she had received a letter, but Cassie didn't pay much attention to it because she knew it was a bill for the unpaid apartment rent. Here, Cassie speaks firmly to her mother, telling her not to open the letter. Instead of directly answering her mother's question about whether she had indeed failed to pay the rent, Cassie responds, "I said don't open it," avoiding the topic, and then she quickly opened her apartment door to hurry inside.

This implies that she has not paid the rent and does not want to talk about it. Cassie perceived it as a form of pressure due to her unfavorable condition, and she preferred not to involve her mother in her personal issues. This is where the implicature in the conversation arises because one of the maxims, the maxim of relation, is flouted. The Maxim of Relation requires speakers to make contributions that are relevant to the ongoing conversation. Moreover, Cassie intentionally gave a response that did not correspond to her mother's question to conceal the truth, hoping that her mother would grasp another implied meaning from her utterance. The analysis of conversation involves two or more participants. Elements such as gaze, gestures, body orientation, and their combinations are also regarded as forms of utterance (Elmahady et al., 2022).

(Datum 9)

Cassie : How long have you been up?
Luke : Since 3:00 a.m. I went for a run
Cassie : (chuckles) You went for a run at three in the morning?
Luke : I couldn't sleep.

This scene takes place in Cassie's apartment after they have started living together as a married couple. Cassie wakes up from her sleep and sees that Luke is already awake. She checks the time, looks at the clock, and asks when Luke has been up. Luke replies that he has been awake since three in the morning and went out for a run. The flouting of the maxim of relation is clearly seen in the conversation above, where Cassie asks Luke, "You went for a run at three in the morning?" Instead of answering to the question directly, he gives a vague, minimal reason that doesn't truly address the point.

The Maxim of Relation requires speakers to give relevant responses. He deliberately gives an incomplete answer, showing emotional depth without direct confession. Luke responds with, "I couldn't sleep," which is unrelated to Cassie's question because she did not ask for the reason why he ran at three in the morning. This implies that he went running because he could not sleep. Additionally, it is possible that Luke has an inner conflict or has a lot on his mind.

(Datum 10)

Cassie : Is Luke's brother here by any chance? It's important.

Jacob : I'm Luke's father. What's he done? What's he done now?

Cassie and her band members were celebrating the success of their new song, which had gained a lot of attention from listeners. While enjoying the celebration, one of Cassie's friends told her that her phone was ringing. Cassie answered the call as she walked out of the room. A commander from the Marine Corps informed Cassie that her husband, Luke, had been wounded in action.

After hearing the unfortunate news that Luke was injured during a military operation, Cassie immediately took the initiative to contact and visit Luke's brother, who has the same name as Luke's father. When Cassie looked up the address and went to the residence, it turned out to be Luke's father, not his brother. Cassie asked about the whereabouts of his brother because of the urgent situation. Instead of answering where Luke's brother was, Luke's father responded by stating that he was his father and asked what had happened to Luke and what Luke had done. This implies that he assumes Luke is in trouble again and reveals their strained relationship due to a past issue. The case above shows an implicature arising from the flouting of the maxim of relation.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the most common type of maxim flouting in the movie *Purple Hearts* is the violation of the Maxim of Relation. This outcome is in line with earlier research on conversational implicature in cinematic discourse, which discovered that characters commonly express implicit meanings through indirect responses. These results imply that a typical pragmatic strategy in cinematic dialogue is relevance-based implicature.

The dominance of the Maxim of Relation can be attributed to the nature of film discourse, which often relies on indirectness to express emotions, avoid sensitive topics, and develop interpersonal conflict. In *Purple Hearts*, characters tend to respond irrelevantly when faced with personal questions, prompting the audience to infer hidden intentions or hidden meanings. Compared to other maxims, ignoring the Maxim of Relation is more context-dependent and effective in creating implicatures without disrupting narrative coherence.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings highlight the importance of teaching pragmatics in EFL contexts. Film dialogues provide authentic and contextualized examples of conversational implicature, helping learners understand that meaning in communication often extends beyond literal expressions. Therefore, movies such as *Purple Hearts* can be valuable resources for developing pragmatic awareness and interpretive skills in EFL learning.

Conclusion

The analysis and observation of conversational implicatures in *Purple Hearts* demonstrates that the most frequently observed implicatures arise from flouting the maxim of relation, which speakers often use to avoid sensitive topics, express sarcasm, create humor, or deliver messages indirectly.

By understanding conversational implicatures in a movie, viewers are able to interpret the characters more deeply, both in terms of their emotions and internal conflicts. Additionally, the emotional and humorous nuances built into the movie can be directly felt by the audience, leading to a more meaningful and engaging viewing experience.

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