An Analysis of Conversational Implicature Found in "the Silence of the Lambs" Movie

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Abstract

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach to examine Conversational Implicatures found in "The Silence of the Lambs" Movie using Grice's Cooperative Principle theory (1975). The objective of the study is to identify the prevalent type of Conversational Implicature and characterize its pattern of usage. The results indicate that Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI) accounts for 42.2% of the total implicatures, while Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI) represents 57.8%. Notably, Particularized Conversational Implicature emerges as the dominant type. The patterns identified within Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI) are (1) conveying additional messages without needing to explain in detail or explicitly,(2) responses that do not require additional explanation, and (3) brief and succinct responses. However, Particularized Conversational Implicature patterns generated are (1) based on the specific context of the situation, (2) based on specific knowledge of the case and the context of the conversation, (3) use of cryptic language and allusions, (4) manipulation of hearing sympathy or understanding by sharing personal desires,(5) the psychological dynamics between the characters,(6) use of indirect questions.

Keywords: *Cooperative Principle, Conversational Implicature, Pattern, Movie*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif untuk mengkaji Implikatur Percakapan yang ditemukan dalam Film "The Silence of the Lambs" menggunakan teori Prinsip Kerjasama Grice (1975). Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi jenis Implikatur Percakapan yang dominan dan mengkarakterisasi pola penggunaannya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Implikatur Percakapan Generalized (GCI) menyumbang sebesar 42,2% dari total implikatur, sementara Implikatur Percakapan Particularized (PCI) mewakili 57,8%. Terutama, Implikatur Percakapan Particularized muncul sebagai jenis yang dominan. Pola yang diidentifikasi dalam Implikatur Percakapan Generalized (GCI) adalah (1) menyampaikan pesan tambahan tanpa perlu menjelaskan secara rinci atau eksplisit, (2) tanggapan yang tidak memerlukan penjelasan tambahan, dan (3) tanggapan yang singkat dan padat. Namun, pola Implikatur Percakapan Particularized yang dihasilkan adalah (1) berdasarkan konteks spesifik situasi, (2) berdasarkan pengetahuan khusus tentang kasus dan konteks percakapan, (3) penggunaan bahasa yang samar dan sindiran, (4) manipulasi simpati atau pengertian dengan membagikan keinginan pribadi, (5) dinamika psikologis antara karakter-karakter, (6) penggunaan pertanyaan tidak langsung.

Kata kunci: *Cooperative Principle, Conversational Implicature, Pattern, Movie*

Introduction

Communication is a fundamental aspect inherent to human interaction throughout history, and its primary benefit lies in the exchange of information between individuals. Language serves as a pivotal tool in communication, allowing people to convey their thoughts, emotions, arguments, and ideas to others. As a means of communication, language must be effectively understood by both the speaker and the listener to prevent misunderstandings regarding the context of a conversation. In linguistics, the field that studies the relationship between the broader context of language and the intended meaning of utterances through the interpretation of the speaker's situation is called pragmatics.

Pragmatics according to Yule (2006) is the examination of how communication conveys more than just the words spoken. This implies that listeners need to consider the speaker's intended meaning when interpreting a conversation. Implicature is a technical term in the pragmatics subfield of linguistics, which was first coined by Grice (1975). He argued that implicature is used purposely by the speaker and may or may not be understood by the audience. It is critical to grasp the implications of the speech to avoid misunderstanding and to determine the meaning that the speaker wishes to convey in communication. Grice juga mengemukakan Cooperative Principle, The Cooperative Principle is defined as "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice, as cited in Kroeger, 2022:138). It means the cooperative principle is the ground rules that we observe when speaking and interpreting utterances.

The relationship between cooperative principles and implicatures often emerges when speakers breach these principles. Violations of the maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner can give rise to implicatures. Quantity violations result in an excess or inappropriate provision of information, while quality violations entail inaccurate or inappropriate information. Relation violations introduce irrelevant information, whereas manner violations entail ambiguous or challenging terms. These breaches can impact the speaker's communication intent and convey specific messages. Violating the maxims of cooperative principles can significantly affect the speaker's communication, leading to ambiguity and inaccuracies that impact communication intent, trust, and openness in interpersonal relationships. Understanding this relationship enhances comprehension of everyday conversations and improves communication effectiveness.

There are two types of implicature according to Grice (1975), namely Conventional Implicature and Conversational Implicature. In this study, the focus is on Conversational Implicature. Conversational Implicature is further divided into two types: (1) Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI). Grice (as cited in Levinson, 1983) stated that generalized conversational implicature that arises without any particular context or special scenario is necessary and (2) Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI) is a type of conversational implicature that emerges under specific contextual conditions (Grice, as cited in Huang, 2014).

Example of Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI).
Context   : A friend is advising a friend who just finished reading a book.
Question   : "What did you think of the book?"
Answer   : "It's... interesting."

The General Conversational Implicature (GCI) arises because of the use of the word "interesting" without giving furthera details or specific praise of the book. The implication is that the book may not be entirely appealing or satisfying. The use of words that lack concreteness gives a general evaluative impression.

Example of Particularized Conversational Impliacture (PCI)
Context   : Two friends are talking about plans for a birthday party event.

Question : "Can you bring a cake for the party?"
Answer   : "I don't have time to cook today."

 PCI occurs because of the special information included in the answer, namely that the person doesn't have time to cook today. This answer implies that the person cannot bring the cake due to time constraints on that day. This implicature is specific to the context or context of the conversation related to the availability of time on that day.

 The Silence of the Lambs, a 1991 thriller by Thomas Harris, is a powerful medium with humor, character understanding, and psychological complexity. The movie, influenced by Sastra and critical theory, won five major Oscars in 1992, earning it praise from critics and audiences. The researcher found numerous conversational implicatures in the film. The researcher is studying conversational implicature in the psychological thriller film "The Silence of the Lambs" to understand its intricate storylines, complex characters, and psychological depth. Despite numerous studies on the film, there is currently no specific exploration of conversational implicature in the genre. This research aims to provide insights into how conversation and communicative implicatures contribute to the film's narrative layers.

 Based on the passage above, the researcher chose to employ Grice's theory in this study because it has proven to be a robust foundation for understanding conversational implicature. Grice's (1975) theory provides a systematic framework for analyzing communication and the implicatures that are implicit in language. By adhering to the principles of cooperation and its maxims, this theory allows the researcher to identify, classify, and comprehend the implicatures that arise in conversations in "The Silence of the Lambs" movie.

Method

 From the scope of its study, this research falls under the category of interdisciplinary study as it combines the fields of linguistics and literature, both of which belong to the humanities discipline. Literary research with an interdisciplinary approach is highly limited. Interdisciplinary research is one of the steps toward enriching the results of studies. This study employs the qualitative descriptive research method. Creswell (2018) explains that the qualitative descriptive method often involves collecting data through interviews, observations, or document analysis. Kleinheksel et al. (2020) state that content analysis rests on the assumption that texts are a rich data source with great potential to reveal valuable information about particular phenomena.

 The data source was the movie itself, with duration of 1 hour and 59 minutes, directed by Jonathan Demme and starring Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins, and Scott Glenn in 1991. The film is based on the 1988 novel of the same name by Thomas Harris. The researcher watched the movie "The Silence of the Lambs" through the following link: https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8qi2sz. Additionally, to facilitate the research, the researcher also used the transcription of the dialogues downloaded from the following link: https://subslikescript.com/movie/The_Silence_of_the_Lambs-102926. Meanwhile, the data consisted of conversation utterances containing the floating maxims of the characters in "The Silence of the Lambs" movie.

 The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014:22). The data collection steps are as follows: first, determining the research object; second, highlighting the parts of the transcription text containing implicatures, namely utterances that flout maxims; and third, classifying the types of conversational implicatures. As for the data analysis steps: first, carefully watching "The Silence of the Lambs" movie, focusing on dialogues between characters involving

implicature; second, identifying whether there was a violation of conversational maxims in the conversation; third, simplifying the data to categorize the types of implicatures used in the conversations; fourth, evaluating and organizing the data to identify the types of conversations featured in the movie's dialogues; and finally, concluding.

Results

In this thesis research, the researcher found there are 23 Conversational with the conthext the movie "The Silence of the Lambs". There are 45 data or utterances that involve Conversational Implicature, with 19 utterances classified as Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI) and 26 utterances classified as Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI). The findings of this research are presented in the table below.

Table 4. 1 Percentage of Conversational Implicature

No	Type of Conversational Implicature	Number	Percentage
1	Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI)	19	42.2%
2	Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI)	26	57.8%
	Total	45	100%

The research reveals that there are 23 Conversational Implicatures related to the movie "The Silence of the Lambs", with 45 data or utterances involving Conversational Implicature, with 19 being Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI) and 26 being Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI). In the data, the researcher found that the type of conversational implicature in the study of conversational implicatures found in the Silence of the Lambs movie Particularized Conversational Implicature is the most dominant.

Generalized Conversational Implicature

First, Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI) was found in the Silence of the Lambs Movie. These implicatures generally arise from conventional linguistic principles and are not as specific to the context of the conversation. For instance:

Stacy : Is that a good job, FBI agent? You get to travel around and stuff? I mean better places than this?

Clarice Starling : ***Sometimes you do.***

In the conversation between Stacy and Clarice Starling above, Clarice's response "Sometimes you do" can be considered a GCI, which could be applied to similar situations outside their specific conversation.

Implicature of general conversation (Generalized Conversational Implicature) according to Yule (2006) is when additional meanings are conveyed without requiring specific knowledge or context. Meanwhile, Levinson (1983) in his book emphasizes more on pragmatic aspects and context in conversational implicature. For example, in the context of a conversation between two people outdoors with a cloudy sky, when one person says "He's bringing an umbrella," the general conversational implicature is that it's likely to rain based on the current context.

Pattern of Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI)

Based on the 19 of General Conversational Implicature provided, resercher observe several patterns of Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI) that emerge in each interaction. Here, researcher summarizes the GCI patterns that appear in each conversation along with the reasons why they are classified as GCI type:

1. **Conveying additional messages without needing to explain in detail or explicitly:** The GCI pattern is reflected in the responses of Clarice Starling and Dr. Lecter in utterance "***Yeah. Jack Crawford must be very busy indeed if he is recruiting help from the student body***", where additional messages are conveyed without needing to be explained in detail or explicitly. Dr. Lecter's ambiguous response to Clarice creates implications about a broader situation and the dynamics between the characters. Similarly, Jack Crawford's ambiguous language when sending Clarice to meet Dr. Lecter creates implications that extend beyond the specific context. The ambiguity in Dr. Lecter's response indicates that the conveyed message has implications that can be broadly applied across different contexts without requiring additional explanation. Similarly, in Dialog 10 "***I just wish I was in on it, that's all***", there is additional meaning conveyed without being explicitly explained. The ambiguity in Jack Crawford's language creates broader implications that can be applied across various contexts, allowing the message to have additional meaning without needing explicit explanation.

2. **Responses that do not require additional explanation:** The GCI pattern is evident in Clarice Starling's responses, implying that as an FBI agent, she has the opportunity to travel to better places. Her responses do not require additional explanation. Clarice's short responses indicate that the conveyed message has implications that can be broadly applied across various situations without needing additional information "***Sometimes you do".*** Additionally, the utterance "***I have no plans to call on you, Clarice***", the GCI pattern is reflected in the hidden message conveyed by Dr. Lecter about his whereabouts and interest in Clarice. He uses indirect language to convey the message. The indirect language used by Dr. Lecter creates broader implications that can be applied across various contexts, allowing the message to have additional meaning without needing explicit explanation.

3. **Brief and succinct responses:** The GCI pattern is observed in Clarice Starling's responses, where she does not provide specific information about the progress of her investigation. Her responses are short and lack detail, yet they convey implications that can be broadly applied across different situations. For example, when Clarice states that ***"Yes. We may be",*** they may be close to catching someone, the brief and succinct nature of her response implies a broader understanding without requiring additional information.

In conclusion, based on the analysis referring to Yule and Levinson's perspectives on Generalized Conversational Implicature in each conversation, the GCI pattern is reflected in the way additional messages are conveyed without detailed explanations, responses that do not require additional elaboration, and brief, succinct responses. These characteristics allow the messages to have implications that can be applied broadly across various situations, classifying the utterances as Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI).

Particularized Convrsational Implicature (PCI)

In the context of "The Silence of the Lambs" film, the researcher found that the most dominant type of conversational implicature is Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI), which accounts for the majority of the identified implicatures. This indicates that in the dialogues among characters in the film, the implicatures generated are highly dependent on the specific context of the situation, the personalities of the characters, the motifs, and the overall storyline. For example:

Clarice Starling	: Was it a butterfly?
Dr.Lecter	: Yes. A moth. Just like the one we found in Benjamin Raspail's head an hour ago.
Clarice Starling	: Why does he place them there, Doctor?
Dr.Lecter	: The significance of the moth is change*. **Caterpillar into chrysalis or pupa... and, from thence, into beauty. Our Billy wants to change too.***

The conversation between Clarice Starling and Dr. Lecter mentioned in this research, Dr. Lecter responds rich in meaning when asked about the significance of a moth. His response implicitly reveals the motif of the criminal Buffalo Bill, who desires to change akin to the metamorphosis process of a moth. This is an example of PCI, where the implicit meaning conveyed in Dr. Lecter's response is highly specific to the context of their conversation.

Exchange in the film doesn't happen randomly but is closely related to the situation or case being discussed. Every word and action carries deep and relevant meaning to the story's development, enriching the audience's understanding of the characters and plot. For example, in the conversation between Clarice Starling and Catherine, the implications generated are based on the specific context of the situation, which is the attempt to rescue Catherine by FBI agents. Clarice and Catherine have in-depth knowledge about the situation, and their exchange of information occurs in a highly specific context.

Pattern of Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI)
Deep understanding of each character or the situation being discussed

Characters in the film have a profound understanding of the situation being discussed, influencing their interactions with each other. This understanding enriches the dialogue and strengthens the dynamics between characters, presenting more complex conflicts and resolutions. For instance, in the conversation, Dr. Lecter demonstrates a deep understanding of the situation and their relationships, using this information to make disturbing comments and create an uncomfortable atmosphere.

Used of cryptic language and allusions

Dr. Lecter's use of cryptic language and allusions, as seen in the statement ***"Tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk. Anthrax Island,"*** exemplifies a pattern of particularized conversational implicature. Cryptic language refers to language that is mysterious, obscure, or difficult to interpret, often requiring deeper analysis or understanding to grasp its meaning. In this case, the repetition of "tsk" followed by "Anthrax Island" creates an enigmatic expression that prompts Clarice to decipher its significance.

Allusions, on the other hand, are indirect references to people, events, or things that are not explicitly mentioned but are implied through context. In Dr. Lecter's statement, the reference to "Anthrax Island" alludes to a specific location or concept related to the case files, hinting at its relevance to the ongoing investigation. This indirect reference serves to engage Clarice intellectually by challenging her to connect the dots and uncover the underlying meaning behind the reference.

Overall, Dr. Lecter's deliberate use of cryptic language and allusions demonstrates his cunning and manipulative nature. By employing these linguistic devices, he not only engages Clarice intellectually but also unsettles her emotionally, exploiting her psychological vulnerabilities. Furthermore, his nuanced understanding of Clarice's investigative process and vulnerabilities allows him to exert control over the conversation and subtly influence her thoughts and actions.

Manipulates hearer sympathy or understanding by sharing personal desires

Dr. Lecter's statement ***"I've been in this room for eight years now, Clarice...and I know they will never, ever let me out while I'm alive. What I want is a view. I want a window where I can see a tree or even water."*** serves as an example of manipulating the hearer's sympathy or understanding by sharing personal desires.

In this statement, Dr. Lecter reveals his longing for a basic human need - the desire for a view of the outside world. By expressing his wish for a window and the opportunity to see nature, he appeals to Clarice's empathy and understanding, manipulating her sympathy toward his plight as a prisoner confined to a windowless room for years.

Through this expression of his desire, Dr. Lecter humanizes himself and portrays himself as a vulnerable individual seeking simple comforts and connections to the outside world. This manipulation of sympathy or understanding aims to evoke compassion from Clarice and potentially alter her perception of him, casting him in a more sympathetic light despite his notorious reputation as a serial killer.

The psychological dynamics between the characters

The question ***"Do you think Jack Crawford wants you sexually***?" serves as an example of Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI) in the conversation between Clarice Starling and Dr. Lecter. The implicature of this conversation is specific to the context of the conversation, highlighting Dr. Lecter's interest in exploring or examining the dynamics of the relationship between Clarice and Jack Crawford, especially in the context of sexual desire.

Dr. Lecter indirectly expresses interest or curiosity in understanding Clarice's perspective or thoughts about their relationship with Jack Crawford. Although not explicitly stated, the implications of this question lead to a discussion about the personal or interpersonal aspects of their relationship, emphasizing Dr. Lecter's interest in the psychological dynamics between the characters. Therefore, this question illustrates how Dr. Lecter subtly expresses his interest in the psychological aspects of the relationship between Clarice and Jack Crawford, which can have profound implications for the narrative and character development in the film "The Silence of the Lambs". It is said "The psychological dynamics between the characters" because the question "Do you think Jack Crawford wants you sexually?" highlights the psychological aspects of the relationship between the characters, particularly between Clarice Starling and Jack Crawford. By posing this question, Dr. Lecter not only explores the potential feelings or sexual desires of Jack Crawford towards Clarice but also the emotional and psychological implications associated with the dynamics of their relationship. This includes understanding the motivations and perceptions of the characters, as well as the complex dynamics of power and interpersonal interaction.

Used indirectly questions

In this analysis, the researcher will focus on a specific conversation excerpt from the film "The Silence of the Lambs," The question to be examined more closely is ***"Did you breast-feed her?"*** in the context of the conversation between Dr. Lecter and Senator Martin. The question "Did you breast-feed her?" is considered an indirect question because, although its content is clear and direct, its implications are not directly expressed within the context of the question itself. The term "breast-feed" is used with a broader intention here, not only to refer to the literal act of nursing but also to highlight the role of a mother in general. Thus, the question indirectly touches on the sensitive topic of the mother-child relationship, which may have deep emotional or psychological consequences for the question's recipient, in this case, Senator Martin. Therefore, although the question is direct, its implications are more complex and not explicitly expressed within the words of the question itself.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis, the Silence of the Lambs Movie identified 45 instances of conversational implicature. These instances were categorized into two types: Generalized (GCI) and Particularized (PCI). The study found that PCI was more dominant, constituting 57.8% of the implicatures, while GCI was 42.2%. This indicates that Particularized Conversational Implicature is more prevalent than Generalized Conversational Implicature. Besides, the researchers also identified the Conversational Implicature patterns found in the Silence of the Lambs movie. The patterns that appear in General Conversational Implicature (GCI), are: (1) Conveying additional messages without needing to explain in detail or explicitly. (2) Responses that do not require additional explanation. (3) Brief and succinct responses. Meanwhile The findings indicate that conversational implicatures in "The Silence of the Lambs" are predominantly Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI), with instances: (1) The implications generated are based on the specific context of the situation. (2) Based on specific knowledge of the case and the context conversation. (3) Used cryptic language and allusions. (4) Manipulates hearer sympathy or understanding by sharing personal desires. (5) The psychological dynamics between the characters. (6) used indirect questions.

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