

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of the study, and answers the research questions. This chapter also includes the discussion and the recommendations of the study. The meaningful issues related to the study are also presented in this chapter.

#### **Findings**

Along with the data analysis and interpretation, the conversational implicatures observed in this study are also identified in the descriptive analysis in Chapter 4.

The data analysis and interpretation, together with the identification of the conversational implicatures, are made in response to the four research questions stated in Chapter 1.

#### **Response to the Research Questions**

According to the Research Question 1, the conversational implicatures observed in this study are identified along with the data analysis and interpretation. The findings of the data analysis and interpretation reveal that a

variety of conversational implicatures are found across the 75 samples of the utterances produced by the film characters in the three selected films.

According to the findings of the study, it is found that the conversational implicatures observed in this study are generated mostly through the flouting of the maxim of quality. The data analysis reveals that the use of verbal tools, such as figures of speech, idioms, or expressions, for instance, created most of the conversational implicatures. Examples of such utterances and their conversational implicatures are shown below:

**Utterance:** *“Never dip your nib in the office ink.”* [Sample 11]

**Conversational Implicature:** You should not have an affair with your boss.

**Utterance:** *“Then why do I feel like I’m in Times Square buck naked?”*

[Sample 19]

**Conversational Implicature:** I’m extremely nervous.

**Utterance:** *“I wasn’t born with that thick Hennings skin.”* [Sample 22]

**Conversational Implicature:** I can’t tolerate being criticized.

**Utterance:** *“Honey, Wade Corporation is not people. It’s a heartless profit machine.”* [Sample 56]

**Conversational Implicature:** People at Wade Corporation are cruel and do not care about others.

**Utterance:** *“Hey. We didn’t raise you to sit on the sidelines.”* [Sample 74]

**Conversational Implicature:** I don’t want you to give up protesting against heartless capitalists.

The flouting of the maxim of quality in this study is also found when the matters of fact are found obviously false. It is obvious to the hearers at the time of the utterances that the speakers have deliberately and ostentatiously failed to observe the maxim of quality. It can be said that the falsities of the matters of fact in the utterances give rise to the conversational implicatures. In other words, the speakers use these falsities to create conversational implicatures and convey their intended meanings. Following are examples:

**Utterance:** *“Come and look at your gravy, Pam. I think it’s going to need sieving.”* [Sample 2]

**Conversational Implicature:** Come here and leave them alone

**Utterance:** *“Did they run out of soap down at the Piggly Wiggly since I left?”*  
[Sample 30]

**Conversational Implicatures:** You look awfully dirty.

Furthermore, the conversational implicatures are found second most frequently when the maxim of quantity is flouted. The analysis shows that a variety of conversational implicatures are created when the speakers either give weaker, less informative statements or give more informative statements. It can be observed that a piece of information or part of what is being said in the utterance is usually included in the conversational implicatures created from the flouting of the maxim of quantity. Examples of the utterances and their implicatures are as follows:

**Utterance:** *“Goin’ on three years. ‘Course, it ain’t Tiffany’s. But then again, you can’t believe everything you hear on TV.”* [Sample 42]

**Conversational Implicature:** I’m engaged with Wade.

**Utterance:** *“Why ask me?”* [Sample 52]

**Conversational Implicature:** I don’t want to tell her.

**Utterance:** *“I’m surprised you have to ask.”* [Sample 73]

**Conversational Implicature:** You should know that I will help you.

The conversational implicatures created or generated when the maxim of relation is observed are found in the third rank in this study. When the maxim of relation is observed, the hearers or the addressees usually make use of the common knowledge, the specific knowledge, and the mutual background knowledge shared between the speakers and the listeners according to the context where the utterances are located. Below are some examples of these utterances and their conversational implicatures:

**Utterance:** *“Ah, yes, Mark. Just give me time. Give me time.”* [Sample 6]

**Conversational Implicature:** I’ve set myself a goal to achieve a relationship with Mark sometime in the future.

**Utterance:** *“Man, I set you up with your wife. You owe me one!”* [Sample 37]

**Conversational Implicature:** You have to help me escort Melanie out in return.

**Utterance:** *“Polly, I was not born yesterday.”* [Sample 75]

**Conversational Implicature:** You can't fool me; I don't believe you that you are pregnant.

In answering to Research Question 2, the findings show that the conversational implicatures observed in this study arise in three main ways: when the speaker of an utterance observes one or more of the conversational maxims, when a speaker flouts one or more conversational maxims, and when a speaker violates one or more conversational maxims. However, the findings reveal that the conversational implicatures observed in this study are generated mostly by only one way out of the three main ways and fewer of them are generated by at least two ways out of the three main ways simultaneously.

Interestingly, the findings clearly show that most of the conversational implicatures observed in this study are generated when one or more kinds of the conversational maxims are flouted. In respect of the flouting of the maxims, it is found that the maxim of quality is flouted the most, followed by the maxim of quantity, the maxim of manner, and the maxim of relation, which is flouted the least. The examples of the conversational implicatures that arise when one or more maxims are flouted are as follows:

**Utterance:** “*Mmm. Eat up. Eat up. Two more lovely courses to go.*”

[Sample16]

**Kinds of maxim(s) being flouted:** The maxim of relation

**Utterance:** “*Oh, I love this. Stella McCartney’s gonna kill herself.*” [Sample 18]

**Kinds of maxim(s) being flouted:** The maxim of quality

**Utterance:** “*Then why do I feel like I’m in Times Square buck naked*”

[Sample19]

**Kinds of maxim(s) being flouted:** The maxim of quality

**Utterance:** “*He asked me to go to Ireland for Christmas.*” [Sample20]

**Kinds of maxim(s) flouted:** The maxim of quantity and the maxim of relation

**Utterance:** “*Are you sure? I mean, a-a-are you really sure? Because if you’re not sure, we could just go back to the car.*” [Sample 23]

**Kinds of maxim(s) being flouted:** The maxim of quantity and the maxim of manner

**Utterance:** “*Oh, my God. I’m still shaking. Yeah. But I have to tell you, Miss Kelson, you are a legend there.*” [Sample71]

**Kinds of maxim(s) being flouted:** The maxim of quantity

The conversational implicatures are generated the second most frequently when one or more of the conversational maxims are observed. Furthermore, it is found that the maxim of relation is observed the most, followed by the maxim of quantity, while the maxim of quality and the maxim

of manner are rarely observed. The examples of the conversational implicatures that arise when one or more maxims are observed are as follows:

**Utterance:** *"Wouldn't you?"* [Sample 28]

**Kinds of maxim(s) being observed:** The maxim of quantity

**Utterance:** *"Whitney Truesdale, lawyer, San Francisco."* [Sample 32]

**Kinds of Maxim(s) being observed:** The maxim of quantity and the maxim of manner

**Utterance:** *"Man, I set you up with your wife. You owe me one!"* [Sample 37]

**Kinds of Maxim(s) being observed:** The maxim of relation

**Utterance:** *"Should I get the car?"* [Sample 57]

**Kinds of Maxim(s) being observed:** The maxim of relation

**Utterance:** *"Have I ever come to the meeting?"* [Sample 72]

**Kinds of Maxim(s) being observed:** The maxim of quantity

The conversational implicatures observed in this study are generated least often when one or more kinds of the conversational maxims are violated. In respect of the violation of the conversational maxims, it is found that the maxim of quality is violated the most, followed by the maxim of quantity and the maxim of manner, in equal percentages, while the maxim of relation is violated the least. The examples of the conversational implicatures arising when one or more kinds of the maxims are violated are as follows:

**Utterance:** *"He's gonna ask you a lot more than that."* [Sample 21]

**Kinds of Maxim(s) being violated:** The maxim of quantity and the maxim of manner

**Utterance:** *“I thought perhaps I should introduce myself.”* [Sample 33]

**Kinds of Maxim(s) being violated:** The maxim of quality

**Utterance:** *“Maybe I am. So what?”* [Sample 44]

**Kinds of Maxim(s) being violated:** The maxim of quality

As stated above, the conversational implicatures observed in this study are generated in three principal ways: the maxims being observed, the maxims being flouted, and the maxim being violated. However, when it comes to the conversational implicatures that arise by at least two out of the three ways simultaneously, it can be said that there is no significance found in the data analysis and interpretation since there is no fixed rule for the conversational maxims being observed, flouted and violated simultaneously. In other words, the conversational maxims are observed, flouted or violated simultaneously according to the speakers' conversational purposes and the situational context in which the utterances are located.

In answer to Research Question 3, when conveying the intended meaning, a speaker usually expects the listener to decode the implicature correctly and arrive at the speaker's intended meaning by using five items of information, as proposed by Grice. The data analysis and interpretation made in Chapter 4 reveal that the ways the speakers of the utterances convey their intended meanings and the ways the listeners recognize the intended meanings

vary according to the kinds of conversational maxims and the information used to help calculate the conversational implicatures.

As shown in Table 8, in Chapter 4, the flouting of the maxim of quality takes the biggest percentage out of a whole and is found in a significant number of occurrences. The maxim of quality is flouted either when the semantic meanings of the utterances are found to be non-conventional or when the utterances are found obviously false.

When the semantic meanings of the utterances are found to be non-conventional, the speakers convey their intended meanings principally by exploiting verbal tools, such as figures of speech, idioms, or expressions that have particular meanings, which are different from the meaning of the individual words in the utterances. The listeners of such utterances, in the same way, make the use of the knowledge of the verbal tools being exploited by the speakers to figure out the meanings of contextual expressions in order to determine the appropriate referents. Therefore, it can be seen that the conventional meaning of the words used in the utterances plays the prominent role in the calculation of these conversational implicatures. The listeners or the addressees of the utterances, when hearing such utterances, have to draw the inference and sometimes need to look for the local context in order to arrive at the speaker's meaning.

Furthermore, when the utterances are found obviously false as to matters of fact, the speakers convey their intended meaning without the intention to utter such the false utterances, but take for granted that what they say is correct or true. The listeners of such utterances, however, make the use

of the common knowledge, specific knowledge or mutual background knowledge shared between the speakers and the listeners to figure out the intended meaning.

When it comes to the flouting of the maxim of quantity, it is found that the speakers most often provide less information than they were asked for. It is also found that the utterances are spoken with various reasons: the speakers are not willing to answer the questions being asked, and sometimes the speakers take for granted that it is not necessary to answer the questions being asked as the listeners are supposed to know or already be informed.

With regard to the conversational implicatures which arise when the maxims are observed, the maxim of relation is observed the most. Interestingly, when the maxim of relation is observed, the speakers often observe, flout, or violate one or more maxims at the same time. When conveying their intended meaning, the speakers usually expect the listeners or the addressees to share some background knowledge in order to arrive at their intended meaning. To arrive at the speakers' intended meaning, the listeners or the addressees, however, make use of the mutual background knowledge, together with the assumption that the speakers are being cooperative and observing the maxim of relation.

In respect of the violation of the maxim of quality, it can be seen that the speakers' intended meaning is hardly recognized by the addressees when the speakers deliberately lie. However, although such violations do not lead to the conversational implicatures and the listeners or the addressees cannot arrive at the speakers' intended meanings at the time of the utterances, they

can still arrive at the speakers' intended meaning later when the truth is revealed. Moreover, the speakers also violate the maxims by deliberately supplying insufficient information or by saying something ambiguous or irrelevant, and the conversational implicatures that are generated are well understood by the listeners or the addressees.

The clashes between the two maxims are found very little in this study. Nevertheless, it should be noted here that both the speakers and the listeners of the utterances make the use of the assumption that the speakers flout a maxim in order to preserve another maxim. It is observed in this study that when it comes to the clashes of the maxims, the conversational implicatures are well-understood and the speakers' intended meaning are well-recognized when the listeners or the addressees make the use of such assumptions.

In answer to Research Question 4, it can be seen that few sub-areas of context are found to contribute greatly to the utterance interpretation. The findings yielded from the data analysis and interpretation suggest the frequent uses of the contextual knowledge in the interpretation of the utterances in which the conversational implicatures situated and the calculation of conversational implicatures.

The data analysis and interpretation reveal that when studying film dialogues of the three selected films, the physical context contributes greatly to the interpretation of utterance and the calculation of the conversational implicatures. The physical context here is considered in terms of where the conversation is taking place, what objects are present, what actions are occurring, and so forth. This can be illustrated by Sample 47 [See Appendix

B, Excerpt 34]. Although the utterance “Soon-to-be ex-daughter-in-law” can be interpreted literally itself without the help of the physical knowledge, the speaker’s showing the engagement ring on her finger actually contribute to the calculation of the conversational implicature. The utterance, therefore, implies that the speaker is engaged to another man, apart from the literal meaning that she is divorcing the son of the addressee.

When it comes to the epistemic context, it contributes greatly to the interpretation of the utterances and the calculations of the conversational implicatures observed in this study. Sample 58 [See Appendix B, Excerpt 43] best describes how the epistemic context contributes to the information that can be used as background knowledge and also mutual knowledge between the speakers and the listeners of the utterances.

The utterance “Sun Tzu didn’t have a daughter” cannot be interpreted pragmatically and the conversational implicatures cannot be calculated without the help of the epistemic knowledge (the knowledge about Sun Tzu, a Chinese military strategist and general and the author of *The Art of War*). Some other distinctive examples of epistemic knowledge are those concerned with the common greetings, as in Sample 5 [See Appendix B, Excerpt 5] and Sample 49 [See Appendix B, Excerpt 36]. The common knowledge about a common greeting here is an epistemic knowledge that is shared by native speakers of English.

Furthermore, it can be seen that social context that refers to the social relationship among the speakers and the hearers also contributes to the utterance interpretation and the conversational implicature calculations.

Sample 31 [See Appendix B, Excerpt 25] best describe the contribution of this kind of context to the interpretation of the utterance and the calculation of the conversational implicature. The social context allows the hearer to apply social knowledge, i.e., that a woman should not be called “honey” anymore when her relationship with that man has been changed. The utterance “Don’t you ‘honey’ me, honey!” is then interpreted pragmatically with the help of the social knowledge. Such utterance then implies “I’m not your same old wife.” Noticeably, linguistic context hardly contributes to the interpretation of the non-conventional utterances and the calculation of the conversational implicatures in film dialogues.

### **Conclusion**

The answers to the research questions above bring out the conclusion of this study. Therefore, it can be concluded here that the conversational implicatures found and observed in this study are generated most frequently when one or more maxims are flouted, second most frequently when one or more maxims are observed, and least often when one or more maxims are violated.

Furthermore, the conversational implicatures are generated most frequently when the maxim of quality is flouted, followed by when the maxim of quantity is flouted, when the maxim of relation is observed, when the maxim of manner is flouted, when the maxim of relation is flouted, when the

maxim of quantity is observed, and when the maxim of quality and manner are observed.

The findings also reveal that verbal tools, particularly figures of speech, idioms, and special expressions, are used extensively to create conversational implicatures. Moreover, there is no fixed rule about when one or more maxims may be flouted, observed, or violated; it depends on the speakers' conversational purpose.

### **Discussion**

The study has accomplished its purposes. It should be pointed out here that the utterances and the conversational implicatures observed in this study are analyzed and interpreted from the researcher's perspective, which could be different from that of the three films' script writers. This is because there is no fixed rule to interpret the utterances and conversational implicatures.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, film dialogues are artificially constructed by script writers, who may edit or modify people's real talk into meaningful sequences for dramatic purposes. It should be noted that although Grice's cooperative principle and conversational maxims are applicable to film dialogues; the way the film characters produce the utterances is not based on the concept that the cooperative principle and the maxims are the prescriptive guidance to direct people's conversation.

In other words, the script writers apparently write the dialogues without the intention of employing any theory, not even Grice's principle and maxims.

Therefore, there are some limitations and obstacles when applying Grice's theory in this or any study.

Comparing this study's findings with those of related studies, it can be said that the results of this study somewhat agree with those of Devakul na Ayudhaya (2005), who conducted a study on conversational maxims and their violations in *Beetle Bailey* comic strips. The results of the study of *Beetle Bailey* comic strips and the results of this study have somewhat in common, i.e., both yield similar findings in respect of the maxim that is flouted the most and the maxim that is observed the most. Moreover, the results of this study reveal that the conversational implicatures are generated the most frequently when one or more maxims are flouted, whereas the results of a study of *Beetle Bailey* comic strips reveal that the conversational maxims are flouted only and not violated at all. The findings of this study also confirm the findings yielded from an unpublished thematic paper entitled *An Analysis of Speech Acts in Drama Dialogues* (Sarabanchong, 2005), which noted that a high number of utterances, in all sentence types, do not correlate with their communicative functions, and some sentences in the play dialogues convey indirect meanings that are distinct from what those sentences literally mean, by the use of figures of speech, such as metaphor and hyperbole.

Additionally, the findings of this study also confirm a notion in the discussion made by Jaiyen (2008), who claimed that there is no fixed rule for observing one or more conversational maxims, but the reason for observing the conversational maxims depends on the speaker's conversational purpose.

## **Recommendations**

This study has shown that the notion of conversational implicature is applicable to film dialogues. For those who are keen to conduct further research employing pragmatic explanation for the interpretation of the language use in conversation, this researcher recommends that more studies should be conducted and extended to in-depth analysis or should be planned to explore and analyze people's real talk. Nevertheless, for those English language learners who have little or no prior background in pragmatics, the finding yielded from this study could be a useful guideline of how pragmatic explanation accounts for the study of conversation or spoken language in conversation.

## **Summary**

This final chapter summarizes the findings of the study. The research questions are answered and discussed in detail. And the meaningful issues related to the study are presented for the benefit of the related future research.