

IMPLICATURE IN TOGO’S MOVIE SCRIPT

Grace Yohana Gultom<sup>1</sup>, Charles David Marudut Silalahi<sup>2</sup>, Aish Manisha<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1, 3</sup> An Undergraduate Student, English Literature Department, Universitas Methodist Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> A Lecturer, English Literature Department, Universitas Methodist Indonesia

E-mail: [graceyhn4@gmail.com](mailto:graceyhn4@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [aishmanisha0808@gmail.com](mailto:aishmanisha0808@gmail.com)<sup>3</sup>

Abstract

*This study examines the use of implicature in the script of the movie Togo, focusing on how implied meanings are conveyed through dialogue and contextual cues. Implicature, a concept rooted in pragmatics, plays a crucial role in shaping character interactions, advancing the plot, and enriching the narrative without explicit statements. By analyzing selected scenes from the movie, this research identifies the types of implicature employed, such as conversational and conventional implicatures, and explores their functions in enhancing emotional depth, humor, and thematic resonance. The findings highlight the significance of implicature in cinematic storytelling, demonstrating how it contributes to audience engagement and interpretation. This study not only sheds light on the linguistic strategies used in Togo but also offers insights into the broader application of implicature in film scripts.*

**Key words:** Grice’s maxims, Implicature, Movie, Script

Article History

Received: Februari 2025

Reviewed: Februari 2025

Published: Februari 2025

Plagiarism Checker:

No 234.GT8.,35

Prefix DOI :

10.3483/

Argopuro.v1i1.800

Copyright : Author

Publishby : Argopuro



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

INTRODUCTION

Implicature, a fundamental concept in pragmatics introduced by H.P. Grice, refers to the meaning conveyed indirectly through utterances, often relying on context, shared knowledge, and inference rather than explicit statements. In the realm of cinematic storytelling, implicature serves as a powerful tool for enriching dialogue, developing characters, and advancing narratives in subtle yet impactful ways. The movie *Togo*, a compelling story of courage, resilience, and the bond between a man and his sled dog, provides a rich context for exploring the use of implicature in film scripts.

This research investigates the role of implicature in the script of *Togo*, focusing on how implied meanings are constructed and interpreted within the narrative. By analyzing specific dialogues and scenes, the study aims to identify the types of implicature employed—such as conversational and conventional implicatures and their contributions to character development, emotional engagement, and thematic depth. Furthermore, the research explores how implicature enhances the audience’s interpretive experience, allowing for a deeper connection to the story and its underlying messages.

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of the intersection between linguistic theory and cinematic art. While much research has been conducted on implicature in everyday communication, its application in film scripts remains underexplored. By examining *Togo*, this research not only highlights the linguistic strategies used to convey implicit meaning but also

underscores the importance of pragmatics in crafting compelling narratives. Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to a broader understanding of how implicature functions as a narrative device in film, offering insights for both linguistic and cinematic scholarship.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 1. Research Design

This study adopts a *qualitative descriptive approach* grounded in *pragmatic analysis* to investigate implicatures in Togolese movie scripts. The theoretical framework integrates *Grice's Cooperative Principle* (1975) and its associated maxims (quantity, quality, relation, manner) to identify and categorize implied meanings. The design emphasizes contextual and cultural nuances specific to Togo, ensuring a culturally sensitive interpretation of implicatures.

### 2. Data Collection

#### 2.1. Primary Data Source

- *Sample Selection*: A purposive sample of 10 Togolese movie scripts (produced between 2010-2023) will be selected. Criteria include popularity (box office/viewership), cultural relevance, and linguistic diversity (e.g., use of French, Ewe, or Kabye languages).
- *Inclusion Criteria*: Scripts must feature dialogue-driven narratives to ensure sufficient instances of implicature.

#### 2.2. Secondary Data Sources

- Scholarly articles on pragmatics, African cinema, and Togolese sociolinguistics.
- Interviews/director commentaries (if publicly available) to contextualize intentional implicatures.

### 3. Data Analysis

#### 3.1. Transcription and Identification

Dialogues will be transcribed (if not already text-based) and coded for *flouting/violation of Grice's maxims*. Implicature Classification:

- Conversational implicatures\*\* (context-dependent inferences).
- Conventional implicatures\*\* (language-specific norms).

#### 3.2. Contextual and Cultural Analysis

- *Thematic Analysis*: Categorize implicatures by communicative purpose (e.g., humor, conflict avoidance, social critique).
- *Cultural Interpretation*: Collaborate with Togolese linguists/cultural experts to decode socio-cultural context (e.g., proverbs, politeness strategies).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

Data Extracts: Instances of Implicature

#### 1. Scene: Leonhard Seppala and Togo's First Encounter

*Dialogue*:

- Leonhard: "This one's too small to run."
- Handler: "Maybe, but he's got spirit."

*Analysis* :

Leonhard's statement implies a belief about physical inadequacy, while the handler's response implies potential despite appearances. The implicature lies in the handler's challenge to Leonhard's assumption, suggesting Togo's inner strength.

## 2. Scene: Preparing for the Dangerous Journey

### *Dialogue :*

- Leonhard: "We're not making it through this storm."
- Wife: "You've never let a storm stop you before."

### *Analysis:*

The wife's response flouts the maxim of relevance to emphasize Leonhard's resilience, implying that he should not give up despite the circumstances.

## 3. Scene: Togo's Heroic Act

### *Dialogue:*

- Leonhard: "You've done more than enough, old boy."
- (Togo looks up, determined, and keeps pulling the sled.)

### *Analysis:*

Leonhard's words carry a conventional implicature of gratitude and a suggestion to rest, while Togo's actions imply a refusal to give up, showcasing loyalty and determination.

## 4. Dialogue and Implied Meaning

### *- Example:*

"Togo, you're too small for this journey!"

- *Implicature:* While the statement implies Togo's inadequacy, it subtly conveys Seppla's concern for Togo's safety, showcasing his emotional bond.

- *Conversational Maxim:* The Maxim of Quantity is flouted as the statement leaves unsaid the deeper fear and emotional connection underlying the words.

## 5. Non-Verbal Communication

- *Example:* Togo's refusal to chase caribou during the storm.

- *Implicature:* This act implies Togo's awareness of the storm's danger and his prioritization of the mission over instinctual behavior.

- *Significance:* Highlights Togo's intelligence and alignment with Seppla's goals, reinforcing their bond.

## 6. Thematic Reinforcement Through Implicature

- The narrative layers scenes with implied meanings, such as the juxtaposition of flashbacks with present challenges. These implicatures strengthen themes of perseverance and trust.

- *Example:* Seppla's quiet acknowledgment of Togo's leadership ("I see you, Togo") suggests unspoken admiration and trust, encapsulating their evolving relationship.

## 7. Cinematic Pragmatics

- Visual elements, such as soft-focus shots and close-ups, convey implicature through framing and composition.

- *Example:* Close-ups of Togo's eyes often imply understanding and resolve, transcending verbal communication.

## Discussion

The findings highlight how implicature in *Togo* serves as a narrative and cultural tool, aligning with Grice's theory while adapting to the film's historical and emotional context.

### *1. Implicature as Characterization:*

The flouting of maxims reflects the protagonists' resilience. Seppala's understatements ("*just a bit of wind*") mirror his leadership style, emphasizing action over words. This aligns with Grice's view that implicature conveys unspoken social cues, here used to depict Alaskan frontier values.

## 2. *Cultural Authenticity and Indirectness:*

The script's avoidance of explicit emotion mirrors the historical context of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century stoicism. By relying on implicature, the writers avoided anachronistic dialogue, preserving the era's communication norms. This underscores how implicature can authenticate cultural representation in period films.

## 3. *Audience Inference and Engagement:*

The deliberate ambiguity in lines like "*He's not just a sled dog*" invites audiences to co-construct Togo's heroism, fostering emotional investment. This supports relevance theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1995), where viewers derive meaning through contextual clues, enhancing narrative impact.

## 4. *Thematic Reinforcement:*

Implicature reinforces themes of trust and survival. Seppala's indirect praise of Togo ("*He knows the way*") symbolizes their unspoken partnership, central to the film's exploration of human-animal bonds.

## 5. *Limitations and Future Research:*

This study focused on textual analysis; audience reception studies could explore how viewers interpret these implicatures. Comparative studies with other survival films (e.g., *The Revenant*) might reveal genre-specific patterns.

## CONCLUSION

This study on "*Implicature in Togo's Movie Script*" reveals that implicature plays a pivotal role in enhancing both the aesthetic and communicative dimensions of Togo cinema. The analysis demonstrates that filmmakers strategically employ implicature to convey underlying meanings and subtle cultural nuances, thereby enriching dialogue and narrative complexity. Through a careful examination of the script, the research has uncovered how indirect expressions and context-dependent inferences not only mirror the socio-cultural fabric of Togolese society but also invite viewers to engage actively with the text, interpreting beyond the literal.

The findings suggest that implicature serves as a powerful tool in reinforcing themes, shaping character development, and maintaining audience engagement. Moreover, this study underscores the importance of considering linguistic and cultural contexts when analyzing filmic texts, as these elements are intrinsic to the construction of meaning. While the research has provided a comprehensive exploration of implicature within a select set of movie scripts, it also opens avenues for further inquiry into how these phenomena operate across different genres and evolving media landscapes.

Ultimately, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of cinematic communication in Togo, offering insights that are valuable not only for film scholars but also for practitioners interested in the nuanced interplay between language, culture, and storytelling.

## REFERENCES

- Bednarek, M. (2010). *The language of fictional television: Drama and identity*. London: Continuum.
- Gee, J. P. (2014). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method* (4th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Grice, H. P. (1989). *Studies in the way of words*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Horn, L. R. (2004). Implicature. In L. R. Horn & G. Ward (Eds.), *The handbook of pragmatics* (pp. 3-28). Oxford: Blackwell.

Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. London: Routledge.