

IMPLICATURE ANALYSIS IN THE *DESPICABLE ME 4* (2024) MOVIE

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ABSTRACT

This article offers an examination of implicature in the animated feature “Despicable Me 4” (2024), emphasizing how characters communicate meanings that extend beyond the straightforward interpretation of their spoken lines. Employing H.P. Grice’s framework of conversational implicature, the study explores various examples of implicature throughout the film, illustrating how humor, sarcasm, and social interactions are conveyed through indirect means. By scrutinizing pivotal scenes and character exchanges, the research categorizes the types of implicatures utilized, such as generalized and particularized implicatures, and evaluates their influence on character development and the progression of the plot. The results indicate that implicature significantly enhances the film’s comedic aspects and emotional resonance, enriching the overall narrative experience. This analysis not only highlights the critical role of implicature in animated storytelling but also sheds light on the linguistic techniques employed by the filmmakers to captivate audiences across different age groups. From the research, the writers focus on examining 2 types of implicature and get the results of implicature data as much as 21 data. Here are the data, 13 conversational implicature and 8 conventional implicature data.

Keywords: Implicature, Conversational Implicature, Conventional Implicature, Despicable Me 4, Animated Film, Humor, Linguistic Analysis

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INTRODUCTION

In linguistics, there are two areas that study meaning. They are Semantics and Pragmatics. Semantics is the area that primarily focuses on the analysis of meaning. It is the study and representation of meanings of every kind of constituent and expression in human languages and also the meaning relationships between them (Keith, 2016 : 1). On the other hand, Pragmatics examines meaning within the situation or context and how it influences the way a language is used and interpreted. According to Seken (2015 : 3), pragmatics is the sub-study of linguistic field that views language is behavior which use depends and is constrained by context.

Within the area of pragmatics, we come to know about implicature. It is when someone speaks indirectly through choice of words that differ from the literal meaning of the word used.

(Putri, 2020 : 1). So instead of conveying the message explicitly, the actual meaning of implicature would require interpretation and inference according to the context and situation in time the message is delivered.

Naturally, people incorporate implicatures in their daily conversation without realizing it. Implicatures can be adopted in several ways in relation to the Gricean maxims, it can be for talking about topics that only the speaker and the interlocutor share the similar knowledge on. In some cases, it is for politeness or diplomacy to soften statements that may sound rude or offensive. Implicatures can also be found in sarcasm, ironic or witty comments for humor, particularly in movies. Hence, the writers decided to choose the *Despicable Me 4* movie to be the focus of this study. The objective of this study is to identify the implicatures and classify them according to their kinds to find the true or implied meaning of the utterances.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the definition of pragmatics by Green (1989) in Seken (2015 : 2), pragmatics is the study of meaning produced by the speaker using language to communicate in a social encounter with another person or a group of people. Specifically, it is the exchange of meaning between two or more people in a social interaction where the speaker conveys a particular intent while the listener tries to find the actual meaning within the utterance. This aligns with Levinson (1983, p. 9) who defines pragmatics as the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of a language that makes it likely for a difference in perceiving meanings between the speaker and the listener to occur. Hence, pragmatics requires analysis, especially from the view point of its users (Seken, 2015 : 2).

Context is an important element of pragmatics in analyzing utterances. It is a high determining that makes utterances unique (Lyons, 1997 : 570). Without context, there may be misinterpretations which can possibly lead to misunderstandings due to ambiguity and lack of clarity in exchanging information. There are several ways pragmatics involves context, one of them is through Implicature. Implicature, according to Horns (2006 : 3), is a component of speaker meaning that constitutes an aspect of what is meant. It is also stated by Grice (1975: 43) that implicature is the act of implying itself and between what is implied. Essentially, implicatures refer to the unsaid means underlying the utterance expressed. There are also types of implicatures according to Seken (2015 : 106), they are conventional implicature and conversational implicature.

Conventional implicature refers to what is said always implicates the same meaning regardless the context in which what is said is said. Its meaning is said to closely relate to the conventional meaning of the words or sentences uttered (Grice, 1975 : 44). its use is associated with conjunctions such as therefore, but, even, and, etc. Conversational implicature, on the other hand, refers to the case of what is said implicates the speaker's intended meaning which may differ depending on the context in which the utterance occurs (Seken, 2015 : 107). In communication, what is uttered sometimes does not necessarily mean, imply or suggest the true intention the speaker wishes to convey. It often comes with additional meaning the listener must infer (Akmal & Yana, 2020). Commonly, this type of implicature is expected to follow a certain social concept agreed upon by the speaker and the listener. We call this the Cooperative Principle.

In a conversation, the parties involved are assumed to be in a mutual cooperation to make a meaningful communication. This is the notion of the Cooperative Principle by Grice (1975). The cooperative principle is based on four maxims; (1) Maxim of Relevance, (2) Maxim of Quantity,

(3) Maxim of Quality and (4) Maxim of Manner. The purpose of these maxims is to make the required contribution in conversation, at the stage which it is occurred, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which one is engaged to.

METHODOLOGY

The source of this research is taken from the Despicable Me 4 movie. Using qualitative approach, the writers conducted analysis and interpretation on the collected data to describe about the implicatures found within the conversations or dialogues and the implied meanings in words accordingly with Gricean theory of implicature. The study emphasizes both conversational and conventional implicatures. In this case, there are some steps the writers take in the process of data collection; 1). Watching the Despicable 4 movie repeatedly to fully understand the story and plot of the movie, 2). Mark down implicatures contained in the conversations or dialogues, 3). Classify the implicatures according to their kinds, 4). Examine the implicatures to find the implied meanings in the utterances exchanged.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Upon examining and classifying the implicatures found in the Despicable 4 movie, the writers were able to identify two kinds of implicatures; conversational implicature and conventional implicature. The latter was articulated by Grice (1975) in his paper titled "Logic and Conversation". In total, there are 21 implicatures the writers discovered, where there are 13 conversational implicatures and 8 conventional implicatures.

Conversational Implicature

Datum 1

(03:41 – 04:01)

Maxime : Look who it is. If it isn't Gru the Loser.

Gru : Well, if it isn't Maxime Le Mal. You look —

Maxime : Magnificent? Yes, I know. What did you think, huh? I was gonna look like a bald loser with a dad bod? Oops, looks like you beat me to it, no?

For the context, Gru is a spy of the crime-fighting organization called the Anti-Villain League (AVL). The story begins with Gru who was in his mission to infiltrate the villain reunion held by his school. There, he ran into Maxime, an old acquaintance who was also the target of Gru's mission. In Maxime's utterance, specifically on the part where he said; "*What did you think, huh? I was gonna look like a bald loser with a dad bod? Oops, looks like you beat me to it, no?*", they were all pointing toward Gru's physical appearances which can function as an insult by referring them to as features of a loser.

Datum 2

(09:06 – 09:22)

Lucy : There's my favorite husband! Did you remember to get the milk?

Gru : Well yes. They had a few kinds. They got the almond milk, soy milk, hemp milk, oat milk, goat milk, chocolate milk, half-and-half, powdered and of magnesia.

Lucy : What about..regular milk?

Gru : No, they don't make that anymore.

For context, Lucy was asking about the milk she asked Gru to buy. Gru got almost every kind of milk, except for the normal one. This was shown in the utterance; *"No, they don't make that anymore."*, which can possibly imply Gru may have forgotten to buy the regular milk or missed it but the point stands, Gru did not get the regular milk.

Datum 3**(12:00 – 12:08)**

Gru : Don't worry. He can't get out of there. It's a maximum security prison.

Silas : Ah yes, well, um [clears throat] He escaped yesterday.

Gru : What!?

The context for this Datum, Gru and his wife received a sudden visit by Silas, the head of the Anti-Villain League. Silas showed the spouse a footage of Maxime, the villain Gru caught. The video was about Maxime's threat of revenge. In response, Gru tried to assure his wife that the threat was a bluff since he believed it was impossible for Maxime to escape the prison which was implied in the utterance; *"Don't worry. He can't get out of there. It's a maximum security prison."*

Datum 4**(12:09 – 12:16)**

Agnes : Leave our home?

Gru : Oh no, you're gonna love it. It's called the "safe house" and it's fun, and it's safe, and it's fantastic and we're going.

This conversation occurred after Silas reported that Maxime had escaped the prison. For safety reasons, it was decided that Gru and his family move out of the house. Gru did not directly answer his daughter's question but his response confirmed that they were going to leave their home.

Datum 5**(13:25 – 13:35)**

Edith : And you promise to take care of the other Minions?

Silas : They'll be safe and sound at the AVL Headquarters. I have big plans for them.

Gru : [scoffs] Good luck with that.

The utterance *"Good luck with that"* is a conversational implicature that implies Gru's doubt about Silas's plan. It can be said that managing the minions would not be an easy task.

Datum 6**(16:40 – 16:50)**

Silas : All right, now down to business. For your own safety, you'll all be assuming new identities

Gru : New identities? Is that really necessary?

Silas : It's not up for debate, Gru.

For context, Silas, Gru and his family had arrived in the Mayflower town. They were in the new safe house that Gru and his family would reside in. Silas brought up the matter about living a fake identity which Gru asked if it was necessary to which Silas confirmed in his utterance *"It's not up for debate"*. In other words, yes, it was necessary.

Datum 7

(20:53 – 21:04)

Maxime : No, no. Wait, wait. Not Maxime. What if I start going by “Cockroach Man”, huh?
Little on the nose, but it is very clear. It’s good, no?

Valentina : Ugh. I’m not calling you that stupid name.

For context, Maxime had gotten out of the prison and was in hiding. His girlfriend, Valentina, was with him. They were discussing about revenge plan on Gru when Maxime randomly brought up the idea of a new nickname. Valentina did not seem to be on board with the idea in her utterance “*Ugh. I’m not calling you that stupid name*” that can be implied as her finding the new nickname ridiculous.

Datum 8

(22:11 - 22:19)

Gru : Agnes, as your father, I command you to lie

Agnes : No

Gru : Yes, lie.

Agnes : Mm-mm.

Gru : You are walking on thin ice, little lady.

The utterance “*You are walking on thin ice*” is a conversational implicature as the meaning of the words used in Gru’s utterance differ from their actual meaning. Gru did not mean to say Agnes was literally walking on thin ice. It was an expression to imply that she would be in trouble if she did not follow his command. For context, Agnes refused to go along with the fake identity plan while Gru insisted that she must lie for her own safety.

Datum 9

(25:43 – 25:50)

Gru : Okay, cool. Any time you want to hang out, just hit me up with a text. He’s gonna text me.

Margo : That was painful.

The utterance “*that was painful*” by Margo implied that she was embarrassed watching his dad trying to get acquainted with the new neighbor. For context, Gru was going to drive Margo to school but he saw his neighbor and confidently tried to talk to him but the conversation did not go as smoothly as planned.

Datum 10

(31:20 – 31:32)

O’Sullivan : Now, am I gonna get any trouble from you?

Edith : Yeah, probably.

O’Sullivan : Excuse me? If you think I’m above fighting children, you picked the wrong dojo.

For context, Edith and Agnes were taking their first karate lesson. There they met O’Sullivan, the teacher of the dojo. First, O’Sullivan asked Agnes for her name. Agnes was not able to answer this because she couldn’t respond with her real name and because of this O’Sullivan punished her. For her sister, Edith protested and O’Sullivan challenged her. The utterance “*If you think I’m above fighting children, you picked the wrong dojo*” strongly implies that

O'Sullivan would not hesitate to fight kids. He would fight anyone regardless who the opponent is.

Datum 11

(38:36 – 38:56)

Gru : [stammers] Okay, alright..But tomorrow is not really good timing.

Poppy : Bummer for you. Because this is happening. Unless you want the whole world to know exactly who you are, Gru.

For context, Gru got his true identity discovered by the neighbor's daughter, Poppy. It was unclear how Poppy found it but she requested that Gru help her in a heist. In response, Gru tried to refuse her subtly but Poppy in her utterance that said "*Because this is happening. Unless you want the whole world to know exactly who you are, Gru.*", she was implying that she would expose Gru, particularly his past as a formerly well-known villain if he did not lend her a hand.

Datum 12

(42:33 – 42:40)

Maxime : Mark my words. Gru will not win. This won't be like the ninth-grade talent show.

Valentina : Ay, again with this.

From Valentina's response, her utterance "*Ay, again with this*" implied that she was bored of hearing the story because it could be that this was not the first time Maxime had talked about his certain past with Gru. For context, Valentina and Maxime were on a search for Gru.

Datum 13

(45:04 – 45:15)

Maxime : I'm trying to destroy my arch-nemesis! Now, give me 900 gallons on pump four, you idiot.

Clerk : Whoa! Please, don't hurt me.

Maxime : Oh I am not going to hurt you.

For context, Maxime had to make a stop at the gas station since his vehicle was running out of gas. When paying for the gas, Maxime had to use the card but the pump machine was not able to read his card. Maxime repeatedly tried to swipe the card but failed. This made Maxime upset. He went to ask for help from the gas station clerk but was not able to get any answer which made him angry. Out of anger, Maxime held the gas station clerk on his machine and demanded for the clerk to give him gas. In fear, the clerk begged for his life and Maxime, in his utterance "*Oh I am not going to hurt you*" could possibly imply that he was going to do something far worse. In this case, he was turning the clerk to a cockroach.

Conventional Implicature

Datum 1

(04:28 – 04:41)

Maxime : [laughs] What happened, Gru? All your dreams of becoming a famous villain, they go poof-poof, huh? [laughs]

Gru : Well I don't know if you know, but I did manage to steal the moon.

For context, Maxime was asking Gru about his goal to become a famous villain. He then made fun of the goal, suggesting how it vanished into thin air. Shortly, failed. But Gru responded back and from his utterance that says, *"Well I don't know if you know, but I did manage to steal the moon."*. This utterance was the way of Gru to remind Maxime that he had accomplished something amazing which was stealing the moon, to show that his goal was not in vain at all. This was regarded as conventional implicature due to the conjunction "but" that acted as a contrast to Maxime's insult.

Datum 2

(11:31 – 12:08)

Maxime : *Bonjour, Gru. I know you can't hear me so hear this. You think you can humiliate me and get away with it? Yes? But, no! When I break out of this prison, I'm coming for my revenge, Gru! But this time, I won't go so easy on you! [laughs] And, I know where you live! So you better sleep with one eye open, because you can't hide from me! Sweet dreams, Gruser!*

Gru & Lucy : [gasp]

The context of Datum 2 is that Maxime was conveying his message to Gru through the surveillance's recording. At the time, Maxime was in the custody of the Anti-Villain League because of Gru. His utterances contained threats directed at Gru for arresting him. The utterances; *"But this time, I won't go so easy on you. And, I know where you live! So you better sleep with one eye open, because you can't hide from me!"* was identified as conventional implicature for there was the usage of conjunctions "but", "and", "so" in which each uses implies different things. In whole, Maxime implied that he would not show Gru any mercy when he sees him again and that Gru must always be alert because he would come after him as soon as he broke out of the prison.

Datum 3

(13:09 – 13:24)

Silas : *Mayflower is a lovely town. A lovely, safe, boring town. Trust me, it is for the best, Gru.*

Agnes : *But what about Grandma? And Uncle Dru?*

Silas : *I am sorry. No one can know of your whereabouts, not even family.*

There are two conventional implicatures the writers identify in the dialogue. Starting from Agnes who asked if they could let Grandma or Uncle Dru know about their situation in her utterance; *"But what about Grandma? And Uncle Dru?"* and Silas's utterance which strongly implied that the information about their relocation must be strictly hidden as there may be dangerous consequences involved if they involved other family members.

Datum 4

(18:54 – 19:07)

Lucy : *You know what, Gru? Maybe this isn't so bad. We need a break from chasing down villains and dangerous missions, right? We can actually be a normal family for once.*

Gru : [gasps] *And, I can finally spend some real bonding time with the baby.*

For context, Lucy was trying to suggest Gru that with their fake identities, they could take a rest from their work and spend more time with their family. The utterance *"And, I can finally*

spend some real bonding time with the baby." from Gru implied that he agreed with what his wife said.

Datum 5

(21:48 –

Gru : Here you go, Britney.

Agnes : Wait, I can't say my name is Britney. That would be a lie.

Gru : Yes.

Agnes : But we aren't supposed to lie.

From the conversation in Datum 5, Gru called Agnes by her assigned name and Agnes protested that she couldn't call herself Britney because that was not her real name. In the utterance "*But we aren't supposed to lie*", Agnes was implying that it is not right to lie.

Datum 6

(28:23 – 28:42)

Silas : You will be the first to test our super serum. Designed to transform you into elite agents with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men. Or, you might just explode. We don't really know.

Minion : Eh? Huh? [shouts]

[Minions screaming]

In this Datum, the scenario was about Silas who was looking for volunteers among the minions, particularly those who were brave and strong to test the AVL super serum in order to take Maxime Le Mal down. From the utterance "*Or you might just explode. We don't really know*", Silas implied that it was likely for the super serum to result in failure as much as it was able to grant the volunteers extraordinary powers.

Datum 7

(38:16 – 38:35)

Gru : You want to pull a heist? [chuckles] Listen here, kid. I'm not going to-

Poppy : No, you listen, old man.

Gru : Ow.

Poppy : I own you. And I promise, you do not want to cross me.

The utterance "*And I promise, you do not want to cross me.*" came from Poppy who in this context was making emphasis to be taken seriously. It implied that there would be a consequence if Gru happened to make her upset or displeased. Poppy knew about Gru's true identity as a well-known villain and she wanted his help in her heist. When Gru dismissed her, Poppy made her point that she had his secrets and she used it to her leverage.

Datum 8

(50:33 – 50:43)

Poppy: All great villains start young. Didn't you steal the Crown Jewels when you were twelve?

Gru : [gasps] I was a lot younger than that. And no offense, but you're not me.

The exchange of the conversation in Datum 22 occurred in Poppy's treehouse where Gru reluctantly agreed to meet Poppy to discuss about her plan to heist his old school, Lycee Pas Bon,

a school for villains which happened to be the dream school Poppy aimed to get into. Here, Gru protested about Poppy being too young to plan a heist. In return, Poppy brought up about a certain crime Gru did in his youth, that was stealing the Crown. The utterance “*I was a lot younger than that. And no offense, but you’re not me.*” is a conventional implicature as not only did Gru indirectly confirm that he did steal the Crown Jewels, albeit, at a younger age, he also added that what he did was an accomplishment that not everyone could replicate.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of implicature in “Despicable Me 4” (2024) uncovers the complex ways language conveys meaning that extends beyond the literal interpretation. By analyzing both conversational and conventional implicature, the film presents a vibrant blend of humor, sarcasm, and emotional depth that enriches character dynamics and propels the storyline. This analysis reveals how characters utilize various forms of implicature—ranging from generalized to particularized—to craft comedic instances and strengthen relationships, making the dialogue appealing and relatable to audiences of all ages.

Additionally, the results emphasize the importance of implicature as a linguistic mechanism in animated narratives. Through the use of indirect communication, the filmmakers successfully engage the audience, enabling them to deduce meanings and emotions that are not overtly expressed. This approach not only enhances the viewing experience but also mirrors the intricacies of human interaction.

In conclusion, “Despicable Me 4” exemplifies the significance of implicature in film. The effective incorporation of these linguistic techniques adds to the film’s allure and demonstrates that even within animated formats, the nuances of language are vital to storytelling. Future studies could delve deeper into implicature in other animated features, offering a wider perspective on how humor and meaning are crafted within this genre. And from the analysis, the writers get the results of implicature data as much as 21 data. Here are the data, 13 conversational implicature and 8 conventional implicature data.

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