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Conversational Implicature In Incredibles 2: Contextual
Meaning And Pragmatic InterpretationAlifah Ardiyanti^{1*}¹Universitas PGRI Semarang, Semarang, Indonesiaa.alifah@gmail.com¹

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Abstract. Conversational implicature is an important area of pragmatics because speakers frequently communicate meanings that extend beyond the literal interpretation of their utterances. This study investigates the types and contextual meanings of conversational implicature found in the dialogue of the animated movie *Incredibles 2*. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach. The data consisted of character utterances identified as conversational implicatures in the movie. The analysis followed Grice's theory of conversational implicature, particularly the distinction between generalized conversational implicature and particularized conversational implicature.

The data were collected by repeatedly watching the movie, identifying relevant utterances, classifying them according to their type, and interpreting their implied meanings based on conversational context. The analysis identified 20 utterances containing conversational implicature. Twelve utterances were classified as particularized conversational implicatures, while eight were categorized as generalized conversational implicatures. The findings show that particularized implicatures were more frequent because many utterances in the movie depend on relationships, shared experiences, situational knowledge, and events understood by the characters. Generalized implicatures, in contrast, tended to rely on meanings that could be inferred without extensive knowledge of the specific situation. The findings demonstrate that animated movie dialogue provides accessible examples of how speakers convey indirect meanings and how contextual knowledge influences pragmatic interpretation. The study also suggests that *Incredibles 2* can be used as supplementary material for teaching pragmatics, particularly conversational implicature, in English language education.

Keywords: conversational implicature; pragmatics; generalized implicature; particularized implicature; movie dialogue; *Incredibles 2*.

Introduction

Communication is not limited to the literal meaning of words. In everyday interaction, speakers frequently communicate additional meanings that are not explicitly expressed. Listeners therefore need to interpret an utterance by considering not only the linguistic form but also the context, relationship between participants, shared knowledge, and communicative purpose. This phenomenon is closely related to conversational implicature, one of the central topics in pragmatics.

Pragmatics examines how meaning is interpreted in relation to context. Unlike approaches that focus primarily on the semantic meaning of linguistic expressions, pragmatic analysis considers how speakers use language to communicate intended meanings in particular situations. An utterance may therefore communicate something different from, or more than, its literal interpretation. Such additional meaning requires the hearer to make an inference based on the circumstances of communication.

Grice's theory of conversational implicature provides an influential framework for understanding this phenomenon. Conversational implicature concerns meanings that speakers imply through their utterances and that hearers infer from the interaction between what is said, the conversational situation, and general principles of communication. In this framework, conversational implicature can be distinguished into generalized and particularized forms.

Generalized conversational implicature generally does not require highly specific contextual information. The implied meaning can normally be inferred from the utterance itself together with ordinary background knowledge. Particularized conversational implicature, on the other hand, depends strongly on a specific context. Without knowledge of the situation in which an utterance occurs, a hearer may have difficulty identifying what the speaker intends to communicate.

Movies provide valuable material for pragmatic research because dialogue represents communication between characters in different social and situational contexts. Animated movies are particularly useful for language analysis because they combine dialogue, characterization, visual context, and narrative events. The interaction between these elements allows viewers to observe how implied meanings are constructed and interpreted.

Incredibles 2, produced by Pixar Animation Studios and distributed by Walt Disney Pictures, provides numerous examples of indirect and context-dependent expressions. The movie follows the Parr family as they negotiate family responsibilities, superhero activities, public expectations, and interpersonal relationships. These situations create opportunities for characters to communicate indirectly through idioms, short responses, metaphorical expressions, and context-dependent statements.

The previous study underlying this article identified conversational implicatures in the movie and examined their meanings. The present article restructures that analysis into a journal-oriented discussion by emphasizing the

relationship between implicature type and contextual interpretation. The study focuses on two questions: (1) what types of conversational implicature occur in the dialogue of *Incredibles 2*; and (2) how are the implied meanings of these utterances interpreted from their contexts?

The study is expected to contribute to pragmatic studies by providing examples of conversational implicature from popular audiovisual discourse. It also has pedagogical relevance because authentic movie dialogue can provide students with contextualized examples of pragmatic meaning.

Materials (if any) and Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design. The design was selected because the objective was to identify, classify, and interpret conversational implicatures rather than to measure numerical relationships between variables. The primary theoretical framework was Grice's theory of conversational implicature, particularly the distinction between generalized conversational implicature and particularized conversational implicature.

The data source was the dialogue of the characters in the animated movie *Incredibles 2*. The movie was selected because it contains extensive character interaction and a variety of communicative situations involving family relationships, professional activities, conflict, humor, and superhero-related events. The data consisted of utterances considered to contain implied meanings. Twenty utterances were ultimately identified as relevant conversational-implicature data.

The data were collected through repeated observation of the movie. The researcher watched the movie several times to understand the context surrounding each utterance. Relevant dialogue was then selected from the movie script and compared with the situations presented in the movie.

The analysis was conducted qualitatively. First, each selected utterance was examined to determine whether it contained an implied meaning. Second, the utterance was classified by type of conversational implicature. Third, the contextual information surrounding the utterance was examined to identify the intended meaning.

Results and Discussion

Types of Conversational Implicature

The analysis identified 20 utterances containing conversational implicature in *Incredibles 2*. The utterances were divided into two categories.

Type of Conversational Implicature		Number Utterances	of Percentage
Particularized implicature	conversational	12	60%
Generalized implicature	conversational	8	40%
Total		20	100%

The results show that particularized conversational implicature occurred more frequently than generalized conversational implicature. Twelve of the 20 utterances depended on specific contextual information, whereas eight could be interpreted primarily through general background knowledge.

Particularized Conversational Implicature

Particularized conversational implicature was identified in 12 utterances. These expressions required viewers to understand the specific circumstances surrounding the characters.

One example is the exchange involving Dicker:

“Do you want out of the hole?”

“First you gotta put down the shovel.”

The expression “out of the hole” does not simply refer to a physical hole. Within the movie's context, the expression functions metaphorically to suggest that Mr. Incredible should stop or reconsider his involvement in an activity that has created problems. The meaning depends on contextual knowledge shared by the characters.

Another example is Violet's expression:

“The elephant in the room.”

The expression refers to an obvious but uncomfortable issue that the characters have not directly discussed. Its interpretation depends on the situation involving the Parr family. Without the surrounding context, the expression could be interpreted only as a conventional idiom rather than as a specific message directed toward the family situation.

A further example occurs in the exchange:

“If Jack-Jack wakes up...”

“I know the drill.”

Violet's response implies that she already understands what should be done if Jack-Jack wakes up. The meaning is highly dependent on the family's previous experiences with Jack-Jack. Therefore, the utterance is classified as particularized conversational implicature.

These examples demonstrate that particularized implicature in the movie frequently arises from shared experiences between characters. The audience must understand the narrative context before the intended meaning can be reconstructed.

Generalized Conversational Implicature

Eight utterances were classified as generalized conversational implicature. These utterances could be interpreted with less dependence on the specific narrative context.

One example is:

“How about ‘thanks’?”

The utterance indirectly suggests that the other participant should express gratitude. The implied meaning is relatively accessible because asking someone to say “thanks” commonly indicates an expectation of gratitude.

Another example is:

“Perfect!”

The expression can communicate approval, satisfaction, or positive evaluation depending on the immediate interaction. In the study, the utterance was classified as generalized because its basic pragmatic meaning can be understood without extensive knowledge of the movie's fictional world.

The expression:

“Math is math!”

Was also categorized as generalized conversational implicature. Its intended message can be inferred through ordinary understanding of the statement rather than through highly specific information from the movie.

An interesting case is:

“Smell the flowers. They don't bloom that often.”

The expression is metaphorical and refers to enjoying a temporary period of success or popularity. The speaker's intended message is that Elastigirl should appreciate her current success because fame may not last permanently. Although the expression occurs in a particular movie situation, its metaphorical interpretation can be understood through broader cultural knowledge.

Discussion

The findings indicate that conversational implicature is an important mechanism through which characters communicate indirect meanings in *Incredibles 2*. The identification of 20 relevant utterances demonstrates that the movie contains a substantial number of examples that can be examined from a pragmatic perspective.

The greater number of particularized implicatures suggests that contextual information plays a significant role in the interpretation of the movie's

dialogue. Twelve utterances required knowledge of specific events, relationships, or circumstances, whereas eight utterances could be interpreted through more general communicative knowledge.

The distinction between the two categories is particularly visible when comparing metaphorical or context-dependent statements with everyday pragmatic expressions. “The elephant in the room,” for example, has a generally recognizable idiomatic meaning, but its specific communicative function in the movie depends on what the Parr family is experiencing at that moment. Similarly, “I know the drill” is understandable as a statement of familiarity, but its precise implication depends on Violet's previous experience with Jack-Jack.

The analysis also demonstrates that pragmatic meaning cannot always be obtained from dictionary definitions. Expressions such as “Do you want out of the hole?” and “Smell the flowers” require interpretation beyond their literal lexical meanings. The listener needs to connect the expressions to the communicative goals of the characters.

Another important observation is that conversational implicature contributes to characterization. Characters do not always state their intentions directly. Instead, they use humor, metaphor, indirect questions, idioms, and short responses. These linguistic choices make the dialogue more natural and contribute to the personalities and relationships represented in the movie.

For language teaching, the findings suggest that movie dialogue can provide useful contextualized material for introducing pragmatics. Students can examine an utterance, identify its literal meaning, reconstruct the context, and then determine the implied meaning. Such activities can help learners understand why knowing vocabulary and grammar alone may not be sufficient for successful communication.

The findings are also relevant to courses dealing with Grammar, Meaning, and Discourse. The original study suggests that the selected movie examples can be used as supplementary learning material for conversational implicature. Rather than presenting implicature only through theoretical definitions,

instructors can use movie scenes to demonstrate how meaning is negotiated between speakers and listeners.

At the same time, interpretation of implicature is partly dependent on contextual judgment. A viewer who lacks relevant cultural or narrative knowledge may interpret an utterance differently. Therefore, pragmatic analysis should make the contextual evidence supporting each interpretation explicit rather than treating an inferred meaning as an unquestionable fact.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study examined conversational implicature in the dialogue of *Incredibles 2* using a qualitative descriptive approach based on Grice's framework. Twenty utterances containing conversational implicature were identified. Twelve were classified as particularized conversational implicatures, while eight were categorized as generalized conversational implicatures.

The findings indicate that particularized conversational implicature occurred more frequently in the selected data. This pattern reflects the importance of shared contextual knowledge in the characters' interactions. Many utterances require viewers to understand the relationships, previous events, and specific circumstances surrounding the conversation. Generalized conversational implicatures, in contrast, tend to rely more strongly on common communicative knowledge.

The analysis demonstrates that movie dialogue provides useful examples of how speakers communicate meanings indirectly. Expressions such as "The elephant in the room," "I know the drill," and "Smell the flowers" illustrate how contextual interpretation allows listeners to move beyond literal meanings.

The study also has pedagogical implications. Selected dialogue from *Incredibles 2* can be used as supplementary material in pragmatics and Grammar, Meaning, and Discourse courses. Students can analyze the

relationship between literal meaning, context, speaker intention, and implied meaning.

Because the study focuses on one movie and a limited set of selected utterances, the findings should not be generalized to all movie discourse. Future research could compare conversational implicature across several films, examine implicature in different genres, or investigate how English learners interpret the same utterances.

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