



Conversational Implicature in *Steve's Talented Kids*: An Analysis of the "Extraordinary Kids Edition" Episode

Dwi Hanifa¹, Lida Holida Mahmud²

¹ dwihanifa@gmail.com

² holidajohar@gmail.com

^{1,2} Universitas Pamulang

Abstract

Keywords:

Conversational implicature, cooperative principles, maxim

This study aims to identify how conversational implicature is used in selected videos from Steve's TV Show, specifically the episode titled "Extraordinary Kids Edition" featuring "Steve's Talented Kids." The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach and applied Grice's (1975) theory of conversational implicature as the analytical framework. Based on the analysis, seven instances of conversational implicature were identified. The findings indicate that violations of the maxim of quality occurred more frequently than violations of other maxims, making it the most dominant source of conversational implicature in the data. Overall, the analysis revealed violations of several Gricean maxims, including quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. One instance involved a violation of the maxim of quantity, reflecting an imbalance in the amount of information provided. Three instances violated the maxim of quality, suggesting the use of inaccurate or exaggerated information. One instance violated the maxim of relevance, where the response was not directly related to the conversational context. Finally, two instances violated the maxim of manner, indicating unclear or overly complex expressions. These violations of conversational maxims contributed to the emergence of implicature through various pragmatic strategies, such as incomplete information, inaccurate statements, irrelevant responses, and ambiguous or indirect modes of expression.

© 2026 Universitas Pamulang

✉ Corresponding author:

B3 Building, Kampus Viktor, Pamulang, Tangerang Selatan Indonesia 50229 E-mail:

dwihanifa@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a fundamental human activity through which individuals exchange information, intentions, and meanings across social contexts. It involves not only the transmission of explicit messages but also the interpretation of implied meanings shaped by context, shared knowledge, and interactional norms (Yule, 1996). For communication to function effectively, speakers are expected to convey information clearly and coherently, while listeners are required to actively interpret and respond to the message. Nevertheless, communication does not always proceed smoothly. Misunderstandings frequently arise due to ambiguous expressions, differing assumptions, or limited contextual awareness (Akmal & Yana, 2020). To minimize such breakdowns, participants in interaction generally rely on cooperative behavior, adjusting their utterances to ensure mutual understanding (Levinson, 2000).

This cooperative behavior is theorized in Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, which posits that interlocutors typically engage in conversation with the shared goal of effective communication. Grice proposes four conversational maxims that guide this cooperation: quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. The maxim of quantity requires speakers to provide an appropriate amount of information; the maxim of quality emphasizes truthfulness and evidential support; the maxim of relevance requires contributions to be contextually appropriate; and the maxim of manner concerns clarity, brevity, and orderliness in expression. When these maxims are observed, communication tends to be efficient and intelligible. However, speakers do not always adhere to these maxims in a literal sense.

Crucially, in pragmatic interaction, speakers may intentionally appear to breach conversational maxims not to deceive or disrupt communication, but to generate additional, implied meanings. This phenomenon gives rise to conversational implicature. Grice (1975) explains that implicature emerges when listeners assume that speakers remain cooperative despite apparent deviations from the maxims and therefore infer meanings that go beyond what is explicitly stated. It is important to distinguish here between *violating* and *flouting* maxims. A violation occurs when a speaker covertly breaks a maxim with the intention to mislead, whereas flouting involves an overt and recognizable departure from a maxim that invites the listener to infer an implied meaning. In many communicative contexts, especially those involving humor, exaggeration, or entertainment, speakers predominantly flout maxims rather than violate them. Humor, for instance, does not constitute a violation of the maxim of quality unless the speaker intends the listener to accept false information as true. Instead, humorous utterances often rely on shared understanding and intentional flouting to achieve pragmatic effects.

Conversational implicature is therefore not merely a consequence of maxim non-observance but a sophisticated interpretive process through which interlocutors "read between the lines." It enables speakers to communicate indirectly and allows listeners to derive meanings based on context, assumptions, and social norms. As Akmal and Yana (2020) argue, the study of conversational implicature is essential because much of everyday communication depends on implied rather than explicit meaning, and misinterpretation of implicature can significantly affect understanding.

In contemporary discourse, conversational implicature is increasingly observable in mass media and digital platforms, including television programs and online videos. One notable example is *Steve's TV Show*, particularly the episode titled "*Extraordinary Kids Edition*" featuring "*Steve's Talented Kids*." The show presents interactions between the host and children with exceptional abilities, creating a unique communicative environment in which humor, exaggeration, simplification, and indirectness frequently occur. Such interactions are rich sites for pragmatic analysis, as they often involve deliberate flouting of conversational maxims to

entertain audiences, encourage participation, or accommodate the communicative needs of the children.

Despite the popularity of media discourse as a research object, studies on conversational implicature in talk shows involving children remain limited. This study therefore aims to analyze how conversational implicature is constructed in *Steve's Talented Kids* by examining instances of maxim non-observance within the framework of Gricean pragmatics. By carefully distinguishing between maxim violation and maxim flouting, this research seeks to provide a more conceptually accurate account of how implicature functions in televised interaction. The findings are expected to contribute to pragmatic studies of media discourse and to enhance understanding of how indirect meaning operates in communicative contexts involving humor, entertainment, and interaction with extraordinary children.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to examine the use of conversational implicature in televised interaction. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aims to provide an in-depth interpretation of pragmatic meaning rather than to produce statistically generalizable findings. As Creswell (2008) explains, descriptive qualitative research is particularly useful for exploring how linguistic phenomena operate within specific contexts and for capturing nuanced meanings embedded in discourse.

The data source consisted of selected video segments from *Steve's TV Show*, specifically the episode titled "*Extraordinary Kids Edition*" featuring "*Steve's Talented Kids*." This episode was selected purposively due to its interactional characteristics, which include humor, exaggeration, and indirect communication between the host and child participants. These features create a rich context for the emergence of conversational implicature. The unit of analysis in this study was individual utterances that prompted inferential interpretation based on Grice's Cooperative Principle.

A total of seven utterances were identified as containing conversational implicature. Although the dataset is limited in size, it was sufficient for the purposes of qualitative pragmatic analysis. In qualitative research, depth of analysis and contextual interpretation are prioritized over quantity of data. Each selected utterance was examined closely to reveal how implicature is constructed through contextual cues, shared assumptions, and non-literal language use. Accordingly, the findings of this study are intended to be illustrative rather than representative and do not aim to establish dominance or frequency patterns across broader discourse contexts.

Data analysis followed the qualitative procedures outlined by Creswell (2008). First, the selected video segments were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy of linguistic detail. Second, the utterances were coded based on their pragmatic features and classified according to Grice's conversational maxims, with particular attention to instances of maxim flouting that generated implicature. Third, interpretive descriptions were developed to explain how each utterance produced implied meaning within its conversational context. Finally, the findings were presented in a narrative form, integrating theoretical explanation with contextual interpretation to demonstrate how conversational implicature operates in the selected interactions.

By adopting this methodological approach, the study provides a focused and conceptually grounded analysis of conversational implicature in media discourse. While the limited dataset restricts broad generalization, the analysis offers valuable insights into how implicature

functions in televised communication involving humor and interaction with extraordinary children.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Conversational Implicature through Flouting the Maxim of Quantity

This study identified seven instances of conversational implicature arising from non-observance of Grice's conversational maxims in the episode *Steve's TV Show: Extraordinary Kids Edition*, titled "*Steve's Talented Kids*." The discussion below presents an illustrative analysis of these instances, demonstrating how implicature functions within humorous televised interaction rather than making claims of statistical dominance or generalization.

One instance of conversational implicature was identified through the flouting of the maxim of quantity. The interaction involves Steve, the host, and Javon, a gymnast, who demonstrates a gymnastic move using Steve's desk. The relevant excerpt is presented below:

Instance 1

Steve: "Now I heard that you're also a gymnast."

Javon: "Gymnastics is a great sport, and I love it. Can I show you a little something? I'm gonna use your desk quick."

Steve: "You're gonna use the desk? Okay, go ahead."

(Audience cheers as Javon performs a gymnastic move)

Steve: "Y'all saw a flip; I saw a lawsuit."

(00:11:56–00:11:59)

At the literal level, Steve's utterance does not provide information about the gymnastic performance itself. Instead, it introduces an exaggerated and unexpected reference to legal consequences. Pragmatically, the utterance generates conversational implicature by providing more information than is contextually required, thereby flouting the maxim of quantity. Rather than offering a straightforward evaluative response—such as praise or admiration—Steve deliberately overstates the situation to humorous effect.

Importantly, this utterance should not be interpreted as a violation of the maxim of quality, as Steve does not intend to mislead the audience or assert a false proposition. The reference to a "lawsuit" is clearly non-literal and functions as a humorous exaggeration. In Gricean terms, this constitutes maxim flouting rather than maxim violation, since the speaker openly departs from the cooperative norm while still assuming that the audience can infer the intended meaning.

The implicature conveyed is that Javon's performance was impressively risky, prompting an exaggerated reaction from the host. The humor arises from the contrast between the audience's perception of an entertaining gymnastic display and Steve's mock concern about potential legal consequences. This type of implicature relies heavily on shared contextual knowledge, including the conventions of talk shows, the role of humor in host-guest interaction, and the audience's expectation of playful exaggeration.

This example illustrates how conversational implicature in televised discourse often emerges not from communicative failure, but from strategic and cooperative manipulation of conversational norms. In interactions involving children, such implicature functions to maintain a light, engaging atmosphere while still acknowledging the potential seriousness of the situation in an indirect and socially acceptable manner.

Conversational Implicature through Flouting the Maxim of Quality

According to Grice (1975), the maxim of quality requires speakers to provide information that is truthful and supported by evidence. Non-observance of this maxim may give rise to conversational implicature, particularly when speakers intentionally depart from literal truth in ways that are recognizable to listeners. Importantly, such departures do not always constitute violations intended to mislead; rather, they frequently involve maxim flouting, especially in humorous or informal interactional contexts.

In the episode *Steve's TV Show: Extraordinary Kids Edition*, titled "*Steve's Talented Kids*," three instances of conversational implicature were identified in which speakers appeared to depart from the maxim of quality. These instances are discussed below as illustrative examples, not as representative patterns.

Instance 1

In this interaction, Steve responds humorously to Caitlyn's confident assertion that she is a good student:

Steve: "What grade are you in?"

Caitlyn: "Fifth."

Steve: "Fifth. Very good. You're a pretty good student?"

Caitlyn: "I'd say so."

Steve: "I've never been able to say that."

(00:05:48–00:05:50)

Steve's utterance, "*I've never been able to say that*," is not intended as a factual claim about his academic history. Rather, it functions as a humorous self-deprecating remark that highlights Caitlyn's achievement. Pragmatically, this utterance generates conversational implicature by flouting the maxim of quality, as the speaker intentionally departs from literal truth in a way that is easily recognizable to the audience.

The implied meaning is that Steve admires Caitlyn's academic confidence and contrasts it playfully with his own past. This implicature relies on shared assumptions about humor, adult-child interaction, and the conventions of television talk shows. Because no deception is intended, this instance should be classified as maxim flouting rather than violation. The implicature is generalized, as similar humorous responses can occur in a wide range of conversational contexts.

Instance 2

Another instance involves a humorous exchange following a discussion of anatomical terminology:

Steve: "All right, Caitlyn, can you show me the clavicle?"

Caitlyn: "This is the clavicle."

Steve: "That's a collarbone."

Chandra: "The clavicle is the same thing as the collarbone. That's what she said."

(00:07:19–00:07:20)

The expression "*That's what she said*" is a well-known pragmatic formula used to create humour through deliberate reinterpretation. Chandra's utterance does not provide factual information; instead, it draws attention to the structure of the prior statement and invites a playful, teasing interpretation.

This example does not constitute a violation of the maxim of quality. Rather, Chandra flouts the maxim by producing an utterance whose literal meaning is clearly not intended. The

implicature arises from shared cultural knowledge of the phrase and its conventional humorous use. The audience is expected to recognize that the statement is not meant to convey truth, but to produce amusement and ease the interaction.

Instance 3

The following interaction occurs during a discussion of the liver and its medical functions:

Steve: "Caitlyn, where is the liver?"

Caitlyn: "The liver is right here."

Steve: "Okay, Chandra, do you know anything about the liver?"

Chandra: "The liver is one of the organs that we can donate, and it regenerates itself."

Steve: "I know something about the liver too. If you skillet-fry it with brown rice and gravy and some sautéed onions, it's delicious."

(00:08:30–00:08:32)

Steve's statement deliberately shifts the topic from medical knowledge to culinary humor. While the information about cooking liver is not literally false, it is contextually inappropriate within a scientific discussion. Therefore, the non-observance here is better explained as flouting the maxim of relevance, rather than quality.

The conversational implicature signals that Steve is intentionally disrupting the seriousness of the discussion to create humor and maintain audience engagement. The audience is expected to infer that Steve is joking, not providing medical information. This again demonstrates cooperative communication, where speakers rely on shared contextual understanding rather than literal meaning.

Conversational Implicature through Flouting the Maxim of Relevance

According to Grice (1975), the maxim of relevance requires speakers to make contributions that are directly related to the ongoing topic of conversation. When a speaker produces an utterance that appears irrelevant on the surface but is nonetheless interpretable within the shared context, conversational implicature may arise. In such cases, the speaker is typically understood to be flouting, rather than strictly violating, the maxim in order to convey an implicit meaning.

In the episode *Steve's TV Show: Extraordinary Kids Edition*, titled "Steve's Talented Kids," one instance of conversational implicature was identified that involves non-observance of the maxim of relevance. This example is presented as an illustrative case rather than a representative pattern.

Instance 1

In this interaction, Steve invites Jamal to comment as he prepares to receive a haircut from an eight-year-old child. Instead of responding directly to the procedural context of the haircut, Jamal produces a humorous and indirect remark:

Steve: "I think you need to start cutting. Anything you'd like to say, Jamal?"

Jamal: "I mean, can y'all just pray for me a little bit? I ain't never let an eight-year-old do nothing for me."

(00:03:18–00:03:19)

Jamal's response does not directly address the immediate action suggested by Steve. Instead, he highlights the unusual nature of the situation—allowing a very young child to cut his hair. Pragmatically, this utterance generates conversational implicature by flouting the

maxim of relevance. Although the response appears tangential, it remains meaningful within the interactional context.

The implied meaning is that Jamal feels uncertain or slightly anxious about the situation, while simultaneously framing it as humorous. This inference relies on shared cultural expectations regarding age, responsibility, and professional competence. The utterance invites the audience to recognize the contrast between everyday norms and the exceptional circumstances presented in the show.

Importantly, Jamal's utterance is not intended to disrupt communication or confuse the interlocutors. Rather, it functions as a humorous commentary that enhances audience engagement and contributes to the informal, entertaining tone of the program. For this reason, the instance is more accurately described as maxim flouting rather than violation. The conversational implicature arises from the listener's ability to infer relevance at a pragmatic level, despite the apparent topical shift.

Conversational Implicature through Flouting the Maxim of Manner

According to Grice (1975), the maxim of manner requires speakers to communicate clearly, briefly, and unambiguously, avoiding obscurity and unnecessary complexity. When speakers intentionally depart from these expectations—often through indirect, exaggerated, or stylistically marked expressions—conversational implicature may arise. In many such cases, the maxim is flouted rather than violated, as the speaker assumes that listeners can infer the intended meaning despite the apparent lack of clarity.

In *Steve's TV Show: Extraordinary Kids Edition*, titled "*Steve's Talented Kids*," two instances were identified in which conversational implicature emerges through non-observance of the maxim of manner. These instances are discussed as illustrative examples, not as evidence of dominance or frequency.

Instance 1

In the following interaction, Steve asks Scooby whether he has ever made a mistake while cutting someone's hair. Instead of providing a direct answer, Scooby responds with a rhetorical question:

Steve: "Now, Scooby, have you ever messed up somebody's hair?"

Scooby: "Now do I look like I messed up someone's hair before?"
(00:01:41–00:01:42)

Scooby's response does not directly answer the question posed. Rather than explicitly stating "no," he uses a rhetorical construction that relies on shared assumptions about professional appearance and competence. The conversational implicature conveyed is that Scooby is highly confident in his abilities and implies that making mistakes is incompatible with his professional identity.

From a pragmatic perspective, this utterance flouts the maxim of manner. The response is indirect and stylistically informal, yet it remains interpretable within the interactional context. The humor arises precisely from this indirectness, which invites the audience to infer the implied meaning rather than receive it explicitly. Importantly, this is not a communicative failure; instead, it is a strategic use of ambiguity to produce humor and self-assurance.

Instance 2

In another interaction, Steve attempts to initiate a question with Javon. However, Javon unexpectedly reverses the turn-taking structure by asking Steve a question first:

Steve: “Let me start asking you a question.”

Javon: “Let me ask you a question.”

Steve: “Did I pee on myself? Yeah. Go ahead.”

(00:12:09–00:12:10)

Steve’s utterance, “Did I pee on myself? Yeah,” is not meant literally. Instead, it functions as a humorous expression of surprise and momentary disorientation caused by the sudden shift in conversational roles. The implicit meaning is that Steve did not anticipate the interruption and responds with exaggerated self-mockery to maintain a lighthearted atmosphere.

This utterance flouts the maxim of manner by deliberately introducing obscurity and exaggeration. Steve does not provide a clear or relevant response to Javon’s turn-taking move; instead, he exploits ambiguity to create humor and manage the interaction smoothly. The audience is expected to recognize the non-literal intent and infer the implied meaning based on shared pragmatic knowledge.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the use of conversational implicature in *Steve’s TV Show: Extraordinary Kids Edition*, focusing on how non-observance of Grice’s cooperative maxims contributes to meaning construction in an entertainment-oriented media context. Rather than functioning as communicative failures, instances of maxim non-observance in the program operate as pragmatic resources that enable speakers to convey humor, manage interactional dynamics, and engage both child participants and the viewing audience.

The findings suggest that conversational implicature in this context is primarily shaped by playful departures from literal meaning, particularly through exaggerated, ironic, or joking utterances. Such pragmatic strategies allow speakers to create affective resonance and shared amusement without compromising mutual understanding. In this sense, the show prioritizes interactional and relational goals over the efficient transmission of factual information, reflecting a broader tendency in media discourse to exploit implicature as a means of audience engagement.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to Gricean pragmatics by demonstrating how implicature emerges in interactions involving children, a context that has received relatively limited attention in previous research. The analysis shows that maxim non-observance—especially through humor and exaggeration—functions as an adaptive communicative strategy that accommodates spontaneity, unpredictability, and the asymmetry of adult–child interaction. This extends prior studies on talk shows and online media by highlighting how implicature operates not only to entertain but also to sustain inclusive and supportive communicative environments.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of viewing conversational implicature as a dynamic and context-sensitive phenomenon. In media settings such as *Steve’s Talented Kids*, pragmatic meaning is co-constructed through shared expectations, cultural norms of humor, and the strategic use of non-literal language. Future research may further explore how implicature functions across different media genres or developmental contexts, particularly in

interactions involving children, to deepen our understanding of pragmatics in contemporary mediated communication.

Reference

- Akmal, S., & Yana, D. U. (2020). Conversational implicature analysis in "Kingdom of Heaven" movie script by William Monahan. *Buletin Al-Turas*, 26(2), 335–350. <https://doi.org/10.15408/bat.v26i2.15356>
- Gudykunst, W. B. (2003). *Cross-cultural and intercultural communication*. SAGE.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics* (Vol. 3, *Speech acts*, pp. 41–58). Academic Press.
- Nafi', M. A. L. J., Yuliasri, I., & Pratama, H. (2025). Flouting of grice's maxims in creating humor in "steve TV show" youtube clips. *Rainbow : Journal of Literature, Linguistics and Culture Studies*, 14(1), 31–40. <https://doi.org/10.15294/rainbow.v14i1.22009>
- Krisdwiyani, I., & Hanidar, S. (2022). The production of conversational humor by flouting Gricean maxims in the sitcom The IT Crowd. *Lexicon*, 9(1), 11. <https://doi.org/10.22146/lexicon.v9i1.72803>
- Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pertiwi, W. E., Dadang Sudana, & Andika Dutha Bachari. (2023). Conversational implicature forms of Banyumasan humorous utterances on YouTube. *Journal of Research on English and Language Learning (J-REaLL)*, 4(1), 11–17. <https://doi.org/10.33474/j-reall.v4i1.19314>
- Rafika, R., Yuliasri, I., & Warsono, W. (2020). Flouting of Grice's maxims in the humorous utterances in American situation comedy 2 Broke Girls. *English Education Journal*, 10(4), 474–479. <https://doi.org/10.15294/eej.v10i4.39465>
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.