

# IMPLICATURE IN JOHN GREEN'S *THE FAULT OF OUR STARS*

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**Abstract:** Discourses on revealing meanings in utterances are widely discussed in some fields of linguistics, semantics, presupposition, and implicature. This study is an example of how implicature is employed in a novel, which is a depiction of real life conversation. The aims of this study are to reveal the use of implicature in a novel by using Grice's cooperative principle framework and to entangle the implied meanings in the conversations in terms of their maxim arrangement. Qualitative research design was used in this study. The result of the study shows that there are two kinds of implicature, namely generalized and particularized conversational implicature. It is also found that there are five patterns of maxims organization in generalized conversational implicatures and four patterns of maxims organization in particularized conversational implicatures.

**Keywords:** implicature, conversational implicature, generalized implicature, particularized implicature, cooperative principle

## INTRODUCTION

Language is used to exchange information, to connect and to communicate each other in everyday life. With the purpose of communication, it requires language users (both speakers and audience) to understand each other. However, a language user sometimes inclines to provide information clearly to others through various ways of expressions. In this case, a language user might intend to give more information implicitly rather than what it is explicitly conveyed. "What speaker meant is not appearing or being

part of what he said (Horn, 2006, p. 3).” This notion of language phenomenon is called implicature.

Grice is the first one who brought and accounted for the term implicature. Implicature is stated by Grice as a term “to account for what a speaker can imply, suggest or mean as distinct from what speaker literally says” (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 31). From that definition, implicature is divided into two. The first is conventional implicature, which is considered as the literal meaning of speaker’s utterance. The other type is conversational implicature that refers to the meaning beyond that mere linguistic form or literal meaning.

To account for conversational implicature, Grice proposed the understanding about how a speaker and a hearer engage in a cooperative effort while they are making conversation which is called Cooperative Principle. The concept is described in detail in the following term: “Makes your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (Grice, 1991, p. 26). Cooperative principle is considered as a group of maxims that derives the notion of conversational implicature and regarded as a key to understand and interpret the conversational implicature. Those are mentioned as *makes your conversational contribution such as is required* (maxim quantity), *at the stage at which it occurs* (maxim quality), *by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged* (maxim relation and manner).

According to Grice, conversational implicature occurs when the maxims are observed or flouted by the language users. Moreover, implicature has constricted relationship with context when and where the utterance is used and who utter it. In line with this notion, conversational implicature is divided into generalized conversational implicature (GCI) and particularized conversational implicature (PCI). Context-bound differs these two kinds in which GCI is not context-bounded while PCI is dependent on what context the implicature appears.

Implicature is regarded as the meaning beyond someone's saying in which language is used uniquely. The presence of implicature in discourse application in real language usage sometimes leads to misinterpretation in the meaning of the intended information in both spoken and written text. In spoken form of language usage, if the audience fails to catch the meaning of what the speaker says, the audience can ask for more clear and direct meaning of the unclear information. But in the case of written text, where the readers and the author are not in one and the same occasion, the chance of successful communication acquired by the readers seems to have lesser opportunity rather than the previous one.

Novel authors often use figurative words and sentence to express their idea that the readers should imply by themselves to get the meaning of what the author writes. It is quite difficult for the readers to have their own perception and understanding of the text while the author has his own intention in what he writes. It requires the readers to imply on what the author's intended information in his writing. This account leads to the potential occurrence of implicature in literary works, especially novels.

Tracing back to the notion of language phenomenon in communication in which language purpose contains more than what it is explicitly conveyed, the researcher's questions about any possibilities of this similar circumstance happens in written language such as in a literary work. Grice argued that speakers intend to be cooperative during the talk, hence, what if it can be true that the author and readers of a literary work try to be alike. Jacob L. Mey stated that "it is only through an active cooperative effort, shared between reader and author, that the interplay of voices can be successfully created and recreated ..." (Mey 2001, p. 796).

The reason why the notion of implicature in literary work, especially in novel, is so significant is that its role in determining how nature of written communication deals with author and readers' effort to be cooperative to each other as they reach a better comprehension on what they cope with. To serve a different spectacle

about analyzing literary work through pragmatics as well as to uncover how words made by author affects readers' thinking and cooperative effort and how they work pragmatically on practice lead to this study.

Considering the notion of emerging implicature in novel, the researcher attempts to account for this affair. The researcher conducts implicature analysis on John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* by exploratively making use of Grice's implicature theory. *The Fault in Our Stars*, well-known as TFiOS is one of John Green's novels published by Dutton Books in 2012. The reason why the researcher concerns on John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* is because of the reputation of the novel. *The Fault in Our Stars* was awarded as #1 New York Times Bestseller, #1 Wall Street Journal Bestseller, #9 The Bookseller (UK) Bestseller, #1 Indiebound Bestseller and New York Times Book Review Editor's Choice (John Green; [www.johngreenbooks.com](http://www.johngreenbooks.com)).

Dealing with this, the researcher puts her concern on implicature analysis on this novel. To scrutinize how implicature is organized is a matter since it is important to us to know how author makes some efforts to be cooperative with the readers to succeed the communication; in this case is through reading. This research attempts to investigate the organization of implicatures in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Implicature**

The term of *Implicature* was first introduced by H. P. Grice to encounter the issue that there is meaning or intention beyond what merely said or entailed in communication. Implicature is stated by Grice as a term "to account for what a speaker can imply, suggest, or mean as distinct from what speaker literally says" (Brown & Yule 1983, p. 31). It can occur in any kinds of communication written or spoken. Speaker's intention does not literally emerge on his utterances but beyond its meaning. There is something more than

what a speaker says or utters on the surface form of language which should be regarded as the real intended meaning of the speaker.

In his *Logic and Conversation*, Grice defends on how logic and conversation relates each other in language users' mind during the process of communication (Grice, 1991). In the nature of communication where one person speaks to others about certain thing, there is cooperative effort between them to reach eloquent communication. This effort engages the circumstances of linguistic form and intended meaning by the speaker and how audience can make distinctive interpretation amongst them. Likewise, implicature is defined as "information which is implied in a statement but cannot be derived from applying logical inferencing techniques to it" (Baker & Ellece, 2011, p. 59).

Thus, to account for this issue, Grice divided implicature into two types, they are conventional implicature and conversational implicature. Conventional implicature is considered as the conventional meaning of utterances said by speaker. It is regarded to be no more than literal meaning of linguistic form of the speech or writing. Conventional implicature is also determined as mere semantic meaning which is drawn not more from the lexical word form.

On the other hand, the notion of conversational implicature is closely related to the presence of general principle, which is proposed by Grice as a set of rule of maxims which is normally speaker and hearer will act during their talk, and context bound in which the conversation takes place. Conversational implicature apparently can be understood as what a hearer can interpret from what literally speaker says since they share the same knowledge of context bound that what speaker says does mean so even though it does not merely appear in the speech. This kind of phenomena possibly can occur when both speaker and hearer realize that they should be cooperative in communication.

Conversational implicature is a more complex version of implicature. The distinction between conventional implicature and

conversational implicature is not more than that conversational implicature takes more concerns in study than conventional one.

### **Cooperative Principles**

The concept of Cooperative Principle by Grice: “Makes your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (Grice, 1991, p. 26). In addition to the Cooperative Principle, Grice also proposes the four maxims. Cooperative principle and the maxims are regarded as a set of keys to interpret the conversational implicature. The four maxims are as follows (Grice, 1975, p. 26-27):

- a. Quantity:
  - 1) Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange).
  - 2) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
- b. Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true.
  - 1) Do not say what you believe to be false.
  - 2) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- c. Relation: Be relevant.
- d. Manner: Be perspicuous.
  - 1) Avoid obscurity of expression.
  - 2) Avoid ambiguity.
  - 3) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
  - 4) Be orderly.

In accordance with this notion, Borg defines conversational implicature as “propositions which a hearer is required to assume in order to preserve her view of the speaker as a cooperative partner in communication” (Borg, 2008). It shows that cooperative principle always copes with the conversational implicature.

### **Flouting and Hedging Maxims**

Flouting and hedging are two notions which indicate that a speaker does not obey at least one maxim in his utterance. When a speaker puts up with the maxims, it means that the implicature occurs since the maxims are fulfilled. It is like the hearer or reader regards that the speaker completes and obeys the cooperative principle. But sometimes, in the real communication, especially in such a kind of literary work, the cooperative principle is not always abided. The maxims of conversation can be flouted or hedged. Flouting maxims can be understood as the speaker's attempt to state what he means by disobeying at least one maxim in his utterance. It is like "whenever a maxim is flouted, there must be an implicature to save the utterance from simply appearing to be a faulty contribution to a conversation" (Grundy, 2000, p. 76). On the other hand, hedging maxims is the term to define the speaker's attempt to show his assertions to inform his audience of the extent to which they are abiding by the maxims. Hedging maxims can be regarded as speaker's comment on what he conveys rather than what he implies. Meanwhile, the hedges can be in the form of phrases, clause or sentence.

### ***The Fault in Our Stars***

*The Fault in Our Stars*, is a young-adult novel authored by John Green and first published by Dutton Books, an imprint of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. in 2012. This novel consists of 25 chapters and has 313 pages thickness. This novel tells a tragic-romance story about two teenagers suffering from cancer who find the meaning of love and life each other since they met. Hazel Grace Lancaster (main character) who is suffering thyroid cancer in her lungs met Augustus Waters (secondary main character), a boy a little older than Hazel who lost a quarter of his leg because of osteosarcoma in the occasion of Support Group meeting (a group in which several cancer survivors meet to share their cancer fighting survival stories). They had in common since the day they met in that bored support group and got closer

relationship since they shared each other about books they read until finally they fell in love each other.

TFiOS has good reputation as a literary work. It has several honorable awards since the publishing date and attracts a lot of attention from readers all around the world. It is awarded as #1 New York Times Bestseller, #1 Wall Street Journal Bestseller, #9 The Bookseller (UK) Bestseller, #1 Indiebound Bestseller, New York Times Book Review Editor's Choice.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study utilized a qualitative research design in which pragmatic approach is applied. This study aims at investigating the strategies applied by the characters in the novel in relation to cooperative principles used in their conversations both generalized as well as particularized implicatures.

The data in the form of utterances in monologues, narations and dialogues are taken from John Green's novel, *The Fault in Our Stars*. The research instrument of this study is the researcher herself who collected the data in the following steps:

- 1) Reading John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* completely from first chapter to twenty-fifth chapter.
- 2) Observing the presence of implicature in the novel using the Grice Maxims in the form of sentences, paragraphs and dialogues.
- 3) Selecting the data indicated as the implicature by making use of snowballing sampling which is a useful way to pursue the goals of purposive sampling in many situations where there are no lists or other obvious sources for locating members of the population of interest, but it does require that the participants are likely to know others who share the characteristics that make them eligible for inclusion in the study (Given 2008; 815).
- 4) Selecting and organizing the collected data to analyze.

The data was then analyzed through the following steps :

- 1) Presenting the data in details. (e.g. Data, Context, Analysis)
- 2) Describing the context of the collected data briefly based on the interpretation of each datum.
- 3) Interpreting the data with referring to the Grice's conversational implicature theory.
- 4) From the interpretation analysis, the researcher scrutinized the implicature arrangement in the context of the Grice's Maxims that observed in each implied sentences.
- 5) Categorizing the findings into maxim patterns based on Grice's Maxims.
- 6) After all, the researcher concluded the analysis.

## **FINDINGS**

The implicature utterances in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* are organized into two kinds of conversational implicature classification in which the patterns of maxims are found. There are ten findings of generalized conversational implicature and fifteen findings of particularized conversational implicature. In addition, the utterances that are regarded as generalized conversational implicature have five patterns of maxims while the utterances that are considered as particularized conversational implicature have four patterns of maxims.

### **Maxims Organization of Generalized Conversational Implicature**

The table of each implicature organization below represents how the implicature is organized based on the data type, type implicature, and how the engagement of patterns of maxims of conversation (Cooperative Principle).

Table 1 Generalized Conversational Implicature

No.	Data Type	Type of Conversational Implicature	Maxims organization
1.	Narration	Generalized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Manner Observed= Quantity, Quality, Relation
2.	Narration	Generalized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quality, Manner Observed= Quantity and Relation
3.	Dialogue	Generalized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quality Observed= Quantity, Relation, and Manner
4.	Dialogue	Generalized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quantity, Quality Observed= Relation and Manner
5.	Dialogue	Generalized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quality, Manner Observed= Quantity and Relation
6.	Dialogue	Generalized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quality, Manner Observed= Quantity and Relation
7.	Dialogue	Generalized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quality, Manner Observed= Quantity and Relation
8.	Dialogue	Generalized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quality, Manner Observed= Quantity and Relation
9.	Dialogue	Generalized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quantity, Quality, and Manner Observed= Relation
10.	Dialogue	Generalized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quantity, Quality, and Manner Observed= Relation

From the table 1, it can be concluded that generalized conversational implicatures in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* appear in 10 occurrences from which it can be derived the patterns of maxims organizations. According to the implicature type, there are five kinds of patterns of maxims organization.

**Maxims Organization of Particularized Conversational Implicature**

Below is table of particularized conversational implicatures in John Green's The Fault in Our Stars. It is presented based on the data type, type implicature and how the engagement of patterns of maxims of conversation (Cooperative Principle).

Table 2: Particularized Conversational Implicature

No	Data Type	Type of Conversational Implicature	Maxims organization
1.	Narration	Particularized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quality and Manner Observed= Quantity and Relation
2.	Narration	Particularized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quality and Manner Observed= Quantity and Relation
3.	Narration	Particularized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quality and Manner Observed= Quantity and Relation
4.	Narration	Particularized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quantity, Quality, Manner Observed= Relation
5.	Dialogue	Particularized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quantity and Manner Observed= Quality and Relation
6.	Dialogue	Particularized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quality and Manner Observed= Quantity and Relation
7.	Dialogue	Particularized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quality and Manner Observed= Quantity and Relation
8.	Dialogue	Particularized Conversational Implicature	Flouted = Quality and Manner Observed= Quantity and Relation
9.	Dialogue	Particularized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quantity, Quality and Manner Observed= Relation
10.	Dialogue	Particularized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quantity, Quality and Manner Observed= Relation
11.	Dialogue	Particularized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quantity, Quality, Manner Observed= Relation
12.	Dialogue	Particularized	Flouted= Quantity, Quality,

		Conversational Implicature	Manner Observed= Relation
13.	Dialogue	Particularized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quantity, Quality, Manner Observed= Relation
14.	Dialogue	Particularized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner Observed= -
15.	Dialogue	Particularized Conversational Implicature	Flouted= Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner Observed= -

From the table 2, it can be concluded that particularized conversational implicatures in John Green’s *The Fault in Our Stars* appear in 15 occurrences from which it can be derived the patterns of maxims organizations. According to the implicature type, there are four kinds of patterns of maxims organization.

## DISCUSSION

The presentation in table 1 shows that the generalized conversational implicatures in John Green’s *The Fault in Our Stars* are rarely found in the form of narrations and frequently found in the form of dialogues. Each of these data type has its own pattern. The data which is in the form of narration has two patterns of maxims organization.

First, flouted maxim of manner and observed maxims of quantity, quality and relation which represents by data 1. Second, data 2 represents the pattern of maxims organization which is flouted maxim of quality and manner and observed maxim of quantity and relation. Meanwhile, the data which is in the form of dialogue has four patterns of maxims organization. The first pattern is flouted maxim of quality represented by data 3, the second pattern is flouted maxim of quantity and quality represented by data 4, the third pattern is flouted maxim of quality and manner represented by data 5, 6, 7 and 8, and the fourth pattern is flouted maxim of quantity, quality and manner represented by data 9 and data 10.

In addition, the presentation of table 2 shows that in particularized conversational implicatures there are four patterns of maxim organization that are spread in two kinds of data type (narration and dialogue). The first pattern is represented by data 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 (flouted two maxims of Quality and Manner and observed two maxims of Quantity and Relation). The second pattern is represented by data 4, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 (flouted three maxims of Quantity, Quality and Manner and observed one maxim Relation). The third pattern is represented by data 5 (flouted two maxims of Quantity and Manner and observed two maxims of Quality and Relation). And the fourth pattern is represented by data 14 and 15 (flouted all the four maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner).

As a result, the findings of this study are that at least one maxim is flouted and three maxims are flouted at most in generalized conversational implicatures. Meanwhile, in particularized conversational implicatures, at least two maxims are flouted and four maxims are flouted at most.

Furthermore, the findings of this study also reveal that the pattern of flouted maxims mostly used in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* is the maxim of Quality and maxim of Manner. In addition, the pattern of observed maxim mostly used is maxim of relation. It shows that the novel author intends to make the readers experience not only reading a literary work of his novel but also to involve in the world created by the author. Besides, the author of this novel probably wants to bring his readers in an experience of reading in which the readers can involve in the talk of the characters to get closer to them and the storyline.

The frequent implicatures in which maxims of conversation are flouted and/or observed do not constitute that the author is failed to avail the readers an enlightening novel. In this case, Potts stated in his writing that the maxims of conversation "are not scientific generalizations in the usual sense. They are more like contractual obligations or laws of the land. If you break one, you do not falsify it.

You just generate interesting consequences” (2012, p.1). Thus, the author makes it more attractive to drag the readers’ attention and involvement to undergo his novel. In adherence with this issue, the way the author expresses his words, making his utterances obscured, ambiguous and prolix (indication of maxim of Manner flouted) and figurative utterances (flouted maxim of Quality), takes the readers’ cognition to understand and undergo the novel. Despite of the notion of flouted maxims, it shows that the maxim observed is mostly the maxim of Relation. Hence, it means that even though numerous utterances are flouted, the relevance between utterances that are impressively regarded as ambiguous, obscured, hyperbolic or less informative is still preserved to make the story and the wordings that are used lies in lucid wholeness.

Tracing back to the notion of maxims organization, the maxim of quality constitutes the notion of utterance should be truthful and sufficiently evinced. The infringement on it that employs figurative items (irony, metaphor, hyperbole, understatement etc.) does not constitute that the writer does not attempt to be truthful, otherwise, by applying such kind of utterances, the author tries to serve the readers a lucid imagination, deliberation the implicit rather concealed meaning of his words. Meanwhile, the maxim of manner constitutes the codes of how author talks and does in his work through the characters in the novel. Choosing to be obscured, ambiguous, prolix and neglecting the brief assertions are the ways of the author to invite the readers to his peculiar words and his inscribed ideas.

To write such a captivating novel is not as easy as directly mouthing someone with wordiness of some speech. It is assumed that written literary work, for example is novel, requires the readers to imagine every single part of it. It requires them to imagine what the characters might have said and how it is likely have sounded (Clark & Wege, 2001). The readers get the words written not uttered, meanwhile they have to imagine the voice, its accent, its emotional tone. The writer’s creative job is to find a way to present his novel to the readers in such a way that the readers want to read, imagine and

experience it. Mey (2001, p. 793) mentioned that "the author has to establish a universe of discourse that the reader is willing to accept on the writer's "author-ity"; that authority in its turn is dependent on how skillfully the author manage to arrange the events and persons she or he is depicting".

In line with the above elaboration, it could be said that what has been written by the author in this novel is what the author thought. It is the result of his ideas of how he can create such story in thousand words which is not only entertaining but also taking the readers' attention to witness how the characters (in which the author himself) talk in the story. By encoding the implicit meaning in the utterances in which the implicatures should be derived by achieving the pattern of maxims organization, the author's way to write gives a slight view that the cooperative principle functions in the writing and reading activity. In conformity with this notion, it is stated that "reading is a collaborative activity, taking place between author and reader. The work that the author has done in producing the text has to be supplemented and completed by the reader" (Mey 2001, p. 788).

In conclusion, authentic evidence of written language forms in the novel shows how the patterns of maxims are organized. This notion establishes how language in use is peculiarly practiced.

The study of implicature analysis on John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* brings contributions in many aspects of pedagogical implication. This study can be beneficial to both students and lecturers to be one of references in English learning and teaching. By making use of this study as one of the learning resources, the students can find authentic representations of language practices and the lecturers can consider it as a reference in studying English.

This study can be used in discourse analysis class to be an authentic example of how a theory in discourse analysis is applied. It can serve the students how discourse analysis does exist in their surroundings and stimulate their curiosity to conduct a more profound study about discourse analysis. Meanwhile, the lecturers

can make use this study one of references in preparing lecture and teaching materials for discourse class.

In addition, this study is also useable in reading class especially in advance reading or extensive reading. John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* is an authentic reading source that is suitable to intermediate and advanced readers because the language style used is easily understood. Reading this novel is like listening to a native English who uses English as a daily conversation style. Indeed, how the writer of this novel writes is as simple as real-life conversation. The vocabulary in this novel can enrich the students' vocabulary mastery and they will eventually learn how a native speaks or writes.

Furthermore, this study can be used in writing class, especially, which is discussing literature writing. By studying how the author of this novel writes, the students can be inspired through how nice the words and sentences are arranged. It is also beneficial to those who are interesting in writing novels. By understanding how implicatures are arranged in this novel, they can be inspired to create their own wordings and build their own storyline and learn how creative writing is processed.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research findings and discussion, the researcher could conclude that the implicatures in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* constitute two kinds of implicature type, namely generalized conversational implicature and particularized conversational implicature. Both implicature types are found in two kinds of data type, less found in narrations and found at most in dialogues. It is found that generalized conversational implicatures have five patterns of maxims organization while particularized conversational implicatures have four patterns of maxims organization.

Most findings show that maxims Quality and Manner are mostly flouted while maxim of Relation is mostly observed among the four maxims of conversation. It indicates that the implicatures deal with how far the author of the novel skillfully presents his words

in typically literary work and how he maintains the relevance in between. This notion is supposed to be an attempt to pursuit the readers' attention to get involved in the experience of beyond reading together with the characters, story and the author himself. Therefore, it gives a slight view of the writing style of certain literary author.

From this research, the researcher proposes some suggestions for some parties. Studying discourse analysis or pragmatics, especially about implicature needs deliberate understanding about what is going to be analyzed and how it is going to be scrutinized. Not only the knowledge of grammatical structure, lexical meanings and discourse itself, the logical interpretation and literary-bound interpretation is required if the major object to discuss is a sort of art work like novel, poems etc. Theoretical framework is also considered to be important to prepare before attempting a discourse study. For lecturers, especially for Discourse Analysis and Reading lecturers, it should be added an authentic instances of language phenomena in daily life which is closed to the students, for example, a novel. Not only studying discourse analysis, but it will also challenge the students to get more readings and apply the knowledge in practical works.

For those who want to do similar research, it would be better to consider various theories of implicature to give versatile references. To build a good reading habit, it is needed to involve in a cooperative and critical readings. In addition, to build a good reading source, it is needed to deliberate such a creative writing.

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