Journal of Social, Culture, and Language

Vol 4 No 2 pp 1-10

Conversational Implicature in the Animated Film "Up"

Amalia Hasan
Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Indonesia
220511100138@student.trunojoyo.ac.id

Amiril Achmed*
Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Indonesia
220511100115@student.trunojoyo.ac.id

Received 2 Februari 2026; Revised 3 Maret 2026; Accepted 7 April 2026
**Corresponding Author*

Abstract

Communication in human interaction often involves meanings that are not explicitly stated but inferred through context, a phenomenon known as conversational implicature. This study examines conversational implicature in the animated film "Up" (2009), focusing on the dialogues of the main characters, Carl Fredricksen and Russell. Drawing on Grice's theory of conversational implicature, this research distinguishes between generalized conversational implicature and particularized conversational implicature. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, the data were collected from selected dialogue transcripts and analyzed based on their contextual meanings. The findings reveal that both types of conversational implicature occur in the film; however, particularized conversational implicature appears more frequently than generalized conversational implicature. This dominance indicates that the interpretation of meaning in the film's dialogues largely depends on specific situational and relational contexts. The study demonstrates that conversational implicature plays an important role in conveying character relationships, emotional depth, and narrative development in animated films.

Keywords: conversational implicature, Grice's theory, "Up" (2009), animated film

INTRODUCTION

Not only is language a cornerstone of human interaction, but it is also much more than a medium through which thoughts, feelings, and attitudes are expressed. Its overt functions are more or less known, but language-its use-operates frequently on an implicit level where messages are implicated rather than stated (Sili & Setyowati, 2020). According to Martini (2018) conversational implicatures naturally appear in daily conversations. This implicature phenomenon, placed at the heart of human communication, comprises one of the main concerns of pragmatic inquiry. Previous studies have also examined conversational implicature in various contexts, including films and everyday communication (Putri, 2019; Rahardi, 2020). Particularly, the study of conversational implicature

developed by Paul Grice (1975) shows that communication often relies on implied meanings beyond the literal content of an utterance. Grice's theory of conversational implicature explains how speakers and listeners infer these implicit meanings through shared assumptions and conversational principles. Grice further divides implicatures into generalized conversational implicatures and particularized conversational implicatures. The study of implicature finds a compelling arena in artistic works, particularly films. Several studies have shown that films provide rich data for analyzing implicature due to their contextualized and expressive dialogues (Sari, 2021; Wulandari, 2020). Films, as powerful modes of artistically conveyed human experience, thus availed a rich dynamic platform "Up" on which conversational implicature analysis could be carried out. The dialogues in films quite often mirror the complexities that exist in day-to-day interactions while employing the use of implicit communication in order to tell the story and further elaborate on the characters at hand. Through embedding implicatures into their dialogues, filmmakers develop multidimensional characters and storylines that resonate with audiences (Iwan, 2020).

Previous research has analyzed conversational implicature in films such as *Jumanji and Knives Out*, revealing that implicature plays a significant role in conveying meaning and character interaction (Sili & Setyowati, 2020; Revaldo, 2022). This research focuses on the identification of types of conversational implicatures found between the two main characters in the animated film "Up" (2009), namely Carl Fredricksen and Russell, as well as their interactions with other characters. "Up", directed by Pete Docter, follows the heartfelt journey of Carl, a grumpy widower, and Russell, an optimistic young Wilderness Explorer, as they embark on an adventure to fulfill Carl's lifelong dream of traveling to Paradise Falls. Their journey, fraught with challenges and emotional moments, is driven by their contrasting personalities and interactions. The film's witty and nuanced dialogues provide an excellent opportunity to study conversational implicatures, revealing deeper insights into the characters' relationships and personal growth. This study focuses on two types of conversational implicature: generalized conversational implicature and particularized conversational implicature. The objective is to offer deeper insights for future researchers, particularly English department students conducting similar studies, by enhancing their understanding of conversational implicature in dialogue analysis.

The research objectives of the study are: (1) What types of conversational implicature are found in the *Animated film "Up"*? (2) What is the dominant type of conversational implicature found in the *Animated film "Up"?*

METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative design. Creswell (2012) states that qualitative research involves interpreting text and images to answer research questions. This approach emphasizes understanding meaning in context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Miles et al., 2014). This study aimed to examine the use of conversational implicatures by the main characters in the animated film "Up" (2009).

The data were collected through several steps. This procedure follows common practices in qualitative data collection, particularly in discourse and film analysis (Ary et al., 2010; Flick, 2018). First, the researchers watched the film repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the context. Second, the dialogues of the main characters were transcribed from the film. Third, the researchers selected utterances that potentially contained conversational implicatures.

The data were in the form of words, phrases, and sentences taken from the film's dialogues. The data were then analyzed using Paul Grice's theory of conversational implicature (1975), which has been widely applied in pragmatic studies (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996). The analysis was conducted in several steps: (1) identifying utterances that contain implicatures, (2) classifying them into generalized or particularized conversational implicatures, and (3) interpreting their meanings based on the situational context of the dialogue. This analytical procedure aligns with qualitative data analysis techniques involving data reduction, classification, and interpretation (Miles et al., 2014).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data and identifying the types of conversational implicature in the movie "Up" (2009), the findings are presented as follows:

The Frequency of the Types of Conversational Implicatures

No.	Types of Conversational Implicature	Frequency	Sample of utterances
1.	**Generalized Conversational Implicature**	**3**	***"Well, never outside." (47.28)*** ***"Yeah, I gave her some of my chocolate." (58.48)*** ***"We don't want to take advantage of your hospitality" (59.52)***
2.	**Particularized Conversational Implicature**	**9**	***"When I'm dead!" (15.06)*** ***"That's gonna be like a billion transfers to get back to my house," (29.28)*** ***"I'm tired. And my knee hurts." (35.22)***

TOTAL	11	

Based on the table above, both generalized and particularized conversational implicatures based on Grice's theory are found in the main characters utterances of the movie "Up" (2009). Specifically, there are 3 occurrences of Generalized Conversational Implicature, where the implied meanings can be understood without needing extensive context, and 9 occurrences of Particularized Conversational Implicature, which require specific contextual knowledge to be interpreted. This results in a total of 11 instances of conversational implicature throughout the film. The analysis reveals that the most prevalent type of conversational implicature in the data is particularized conversational implicature. Below are several examples illustrating the use of conversational implicature identified in the dialogue.

1. **Generalized Conversational Implicatures**

Generalized conversational implicatures in "Up" are understood without reliance on specific situational contexts, instead drawing from shared societal norms or general background knowledge. (Grice, 1975 cited in Saragi, 2011) explained that generalized conversational implicature is a type where the participants do not need specific background knowledge to understand the meaning of the conversation, as it relies on general conversational context that allows the interlocutor to immediately grasp the intended meaning. Here are some examples of generalized conversational implicature that was found in movie:

Datum Six
Carl: You've been camping before, haven't you? (47.25)
Russell: Well, never outside. (47.28)

Russell's response, **"never outside,"** shows that his experience of camping has only been indoors, which is different from what most people expect. Usually, camping means staying outside in nature, sleeping in a tent, making a fire, and being away from home. By saying he has never camped outside, Russell suggests that his version of camping might have been something like building a tent inside his house or having a sleepover that only felt like camping but didn't involve being outdoors.

The humor in Russell's reply comes from the way it goes against the usual idea of camping. Most people assume that camping is always done outside, so his answer is surprising and funny. It also shows that he doesn't realize how unusual his experience is, making him seem innocent and honest. Carl, as an older and more experienced person, probably expected a simple yes or no answer, but instead, Russell gives a response that changes the meaning of

what "camping" usually means. This makes Carl (and the audience) see that Russell has had a very different childhood, where he hasn't had many real outdoor adventures.

This is **Generalized conversational implicature** because the meaning is easy to understand based on common knowledge. Most people know that camping happens outside, so Russell's response is funny without needing extra explanation. The audience quickly understands that he has never experienced real camping, just by comparing what he says to what they already know about camping. This simple but effective dialogue helps show Russell's personality—he is innocent, honest, and not very experienced with outdoor life. At the same time, it also makes the conversation fun and engaging.

Datum Eight

Muntz: Chocolate? (58.47)

Russell: **Yeah, I gave her some of my chocolate. (58.48)**

Russell's statement, **"some of my chocolate,"** implies that he didn't give away all of his chocolate, but only a portion of it. This interpretation arises from the use of the word "some," which suggests that there was more chocolate left. If Russell had given away all of his chocolate, he would have likely said "all of my chocolate" instead. This small difference in wording changes the meaning of the sentence, showing that Russell kept some chocolate for himself while sharing only a part of it.

The choice of the word "some" is important because it naturally leads the listener to assume that there was more chocolate available but not given away. This subtle detail makes the conversation more meaningful, as it reflects Russell's childlike honesty. He openly admits that he gave some of his chocolate, which also implies that he was not willing to give all of it away. This small moment highlights his innocence and honesty in an amusing way.

This is **Generalized conversational implicature** because the inference drawn from "some" relies on a general linguistic convention of scalar terms (e.g., some vs. all). These scalar terms exist in many languages and function similarly, making this type of implicature universally recognizable. The meaning does not depend on any specific situation but comes from common knowledge of how words like "some" and "all" are typically understood. The audience does not need additional context to figure out the implication, as they naturally understand that "some" means "not all."

Datum Nine

Muntz: Oh, you're not leaving? (59.50)

Carl: We don't want to take advantage of your hospitality. Come on, Russell. (59.52)

Carl's response**, "We don't want to take advantage of your hospitality,"** implies that they have been overstaying their welcome or feel that they might be imposing on Muntz. Instead of directly stating that they want to leave, Carl frames his response in a polite and

indirect manner, suggesting that they do not want to be a burden. His choice of words reflects an awareness of social norms regarding hospitality, where guests are expected to leave before they become an inconvenience to their host.

The humor in Carl's response arises from its indirectness. Rather than bluntly saying, "We should go," Carl softens his statement by emphasizing politeness and social etiquette. His response also implies that he may be slightly uncomfortable staying any longer, but instead of expressing it directly, he chooses a more diplomatic approach. This adds depth to his character, showing that he values social manners and does not wish to offend Muntz.

This is **Generalized conversational implicature** because the meaning is understood based on a common cultural understanding of hospitality. In many cultures, guests are expected to leave at an appropriate time rather than overstaying, even if the host has not explicitly asked them to leave. The audience can easily infer Carl's true intention leaving without requiring further explanation or additional context. The phrase "take advantage of your hospitality" automatically suggests that staying too long would be impolite, making the underlying message clear.

2. Particularized Conversational Implicature

Particularized conversational implicatures dominate the dialogues in "Up", requiring interpretation based on specific relational and emotional contexts. According to Levinson (1983) particularized conversational implicatures occur when the meaning of an utterance requires a specific contextual understanding beyond its literal words. Here are some examples of particularized conversational implicature that was found in movie:

Datum Three

Carl: Tell your boss he can have our house. (15.02)
Construction Foreman Tom: Really? (15.05)
Carl: When I'm dead! (16.06)

Carl's response, **"When I'm dead!"** carries an implicit meaning: he will never willingly give up his house while alive. His statement emphasizes how deeply attached he is to his home and how he views it as an irreplaceable part of his life. The phrase suggests that only death could separate him from it, implying that no amount of persuasion, money, or external pressure will make him change his mind.

The construction foreman's reaction, "Really?" shows initial surprise, possibly thinking Carl has changed his mind. However, Carl's abrupt response quickly corrects that assumption, making it clear that he has no intention of leaving. His strong reaction highlights his frustration and resistance to the construction efforts around him. The humor in this exchange comes from the unexpected shift in tone Carl's statement initially sounds like he is agreeing to sell the house, but then he delivers a sharp punchline that completely reverses the meaning. The emotional weight behind Carl's words suggests that his house is more than just

a place to live it represents his past, memories with his late wife, and everything he holds dear. The audience, knowing Carl's backstory, understands that this is not just stubbornness but a deep emotional connection to his home.

This is **Particularized conversational implicature** because understanding Carl's remark depends on the situational context. The audience needs to know that Carl has no close family and feels deeply tied to his house. His home is not just property it is a symbol of his love for his late wife, Ellie, and the life they built together. Because of this emotional connection, the idea of selling the house is unthinkable for Carl. Without this background, Carl's response might seem like a simple refusal to sell, but the true meaning that Carl's house is untouchable during his lifetime might not be fully understood. This is why the implicature is particularized: it relies on knowledge of Carl's life circumstances rather than a general assumption that applies to everyone.

Datum Four

Carl: I'll give you some change for bus fare. (29.25)
Russell: Nah, I'll just use my city bus pass. **Whoah, that's gonna be like a billion transfers to get back to my house. (29.29)**

Russell's response, **"that's gonna be like a billion transfers to get back to my house,"** implicitly suggests the difficulty and absurdity of using a city bus pass for a long journey. The exaggeration about the number of transfers highlights how impractical it would be to get home this way. By using the phrase "a billion transfers," Russell does not mean the exact number but rather emphasizes how complicated and exhausting the trip would be if he actually attempted to use public transportation to return home.

Russell's response carries a humorous tone because of its exaggerated nature. The phrase "a billion transfers" is not meant to be taken literally but rather serves to express frustration and disbelief at the idea of using a city bus pass to travel such an enormous distance. The humor comes from the contrast between Carl's simple offer of bus fare and Russell's realization that getting home is far more complicated than a normal bus ride. Russell's statement reflects his innocence and lack of full understanding of the situation.

This is **Particularized conversational implicature** because the meaning behind Russell's statement relies on specific contextual information. To fully grasp the humor and the implication of his words, the audience needs to understand that Russell and Carl are currently on a trip to South America, far away from home. Without this background knowledge, Russell's response might simply seem like an exaggerated complaint about a long bus ride, rather than an acknowledgment of the impossibility of returning home using public transportation.

Datum Five

Carl: C'mon, Russell, would you hurry it "Up"? (35.21)

Russell: I'm tired. And my knee hurts. (35.22)

Russell's response, **"I'm tired. And my knee hurts,"** implicitly conveys that he cannot hurry up, even though he does not say it directly. Instead of explicitly refusing Carl's request, he provides a reason that makes it clear why he is unable to move faster. His words serve as an indirect way of saying, "I can't go any faster because I am exhausted and in pain."

Russell's response functions as an implicit refusal rather than a direct rejection. Instead of saying "No, I won't hurry up," he explains his physical discomfort, which makes it obvious that he cannot comply with Carl's demand. This way of responding is common in everyday conversations, where people often use explanations rather than outright refusals to soften their response. Russell's words emphasize his exhaustion and physical limitations, reinforcing the idea that he is a young boy struggling to keep up with Carl. His statement also highlights the challenges of their journey. By pointing out that he is tired and that his knee hurts, Russell reminds Carl (and the audience) that the journey is difficult, and he is not as physically capable as Carl.

This is **Particularized conversational implicature** because understanding Russell's implicit refusal depends on the situational context. The audience needs to know that Carl and Russell are walking on a long, challenging journey, which makes Russell's physical discomfort relevant to his inability to comply with Carl's demand. Without this background information, Russell's response might simply seem like a complaint rather than an indirect way of saying he cannot hurry up.

The results of this research are connected to and supported by specific aspects of a study conducted by Grice (1975), which states that conversational implicatures in daily communication serve certain purposes behind the spoken statements. In the context of the animated film "Up" (2009), the influential factors in analyzing the data include the situation in which the conversation takes place, the relationship between the characters, their personalities, body language, mood, tone of voice, and cultural background. These factors contribute to the way conversational implicatures emerge in dialogue, making some statements understandable only within their specific context. A single sentence can carry multiple meanings depending on how the speaker delivers it and how the listener interprets it based on logic and shared knowledge.

The results show that conversational implicatures in animated film "Up" (2009) are used to express emotions, create humor, and reveal the relationships between the characters. The way Carl and Russell communicate demonstrates how implicatures can reflect personality differences and character development. Russell, being a talkative and energetic child, often speaks in a way that indirectly conveys his feelings or intentions, sometimes using exaggeration or humorous remarks. Carl, on the other hand, tends to express himself in a more reserved and indirect manner, often using short and subtle statements that require the listener

to infer the deeper meaning. Their conversations, filled with hidden meanings and indirect responses, help illustrate their contrasting personalities while also strengthening their bond throughout the film.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that particularized conversational implicatures appear more frequently than generalized conversational implicatures in the film. This is because many dialogues depend on the specific context in which they occur. However, there are also instances of generalized conversational implicatures, where the meaning can be understood without additional context. These occur when the characters use common expressions or statements that rely on general knowledge.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the animated film "Up" (2009) employs both generalized and particularized conversational implicatures in its dialogues, with particularized implicatures occurring more frequently. The predominance of particularized implicatures indicates that many utterances in the film require specific contextual understanding related to the characters' situations, relationships, and emotional states. Rather than relying solely on general conversational conventions, the characters convey meaning indirectly through context-dependent expressions.

The use of conversational implicature in the film contributes significantly to character development and narrative progression. Carl's indirect and emotionally charged utterances reflect his personal loss and resistance to change, while Russell's exaggerated and expressive responses reveal his innocence and emotional openness. Through these implicatures, the film communicates complex emotions and interpersonal dynamics without explicit explanation. Therefore, this study highlights that conversational implicature functions not only as a pragmatic phenomenon but also as an effective narrative strategy in animated films, enhancing audience engagement and interpretative depth.

REFERENCES

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Sorensen, C., & Walker, D. (2010). *Introduction to research in education* (8th ed.). Wadsworth.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). Sage.

Flick, U. (2018). *An introduction to qualitative research* (6th ed.). Sage.

Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics*

(Vol. 3, pp. 41–58). Academic Press.

Iwan. (2020*). An analysis of conversational implicatures of the main characters in Into the Woods movie* (pp. 27–42).

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

Martini, A. (2018). Conversational implicature of Indonesian students in daily conversation. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 4(1), 93–100.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Putri, D. A. (2019). Conversational implicature used in movie dialogues. *Journal of Language and Literature,* 19(2), 120–130.

Rahardi, R. K. (2020). Pragmatics: Contexts and implicature in communication. *Journal of Pragmatics Research*, 12(1), 45–55.

Revaldo, A. (2022). *A pragmatic analysis of conversational implicature in Knives Out movie.* UIN Raden Intan Lampung.

Saragi, Y. M. (2011). *Flouting Maxims in Conversational Implicatures in the Ellen Degenerates Talk Show.* State University of Surabaya, Surabaya.

Sari, N. P. (2021). An analysis of conversational implicature in movie scripts. *Journal of English Language Studies*, 6(1), 15–25.

Sili, S., & Setyowati, R. (2020). An analysis of conversational implicature on *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* film. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 4, 506–514.

Wulandari, S. (2020). Conversational implicature in cinematic discourse: A pragmatic study. *Linguistics and Literature Journal*, 5(2), 78–89.

Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.