

Analysing conversational implicatures in a synchronous online class on pragmatics

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Abstract - This study analyses conversational implicatures in synchronous online classroom discussions within the Philippine context, focusing on interactions between teachers and students through the lens of Grice's Cooperative Principle. Data were collected from verbatim transcripts of teacher-student exchanges and examined for instances of maxim flouting – violations of the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. Results show that both teachers and students produced conversational implicatures heavily influenced by contextual factors, reflecting the dynamic nature of virtual classroom communication. The teacher flouted maxims more frequently (18 out of 27 instances), particularly Quantity and Manner, often to encourage critical thinking and foster a less restrictive environment. Students also flouted these maxims (9 out of 27), mainly during recitations, as adaptive responses to participation demands. The Maxims of Quality were rarely flouted, indicating a general commitment to truthfulness, while no flouting of the Maxim of Relation was observed. Despite frequent maxim flouting, participants demonstrated pragmatic competence by successfully interpreting implied meanings, highlighting effective communication beyond literal statements. The study suggests further research comparing virtual and face-to-face settings to deepen understanding of conversational implicature's role in educational interaction.

Keywords: Conversational implicatures, Gricean maxims, cooperative principle, synchronous class, teacher-student classroom interactions

1. Introduction

Researchers have long been interested in computer-mediated online conversation because it differs considerably from face-to-face discussion in traditional classrooms. As Giesbers et al. (2013) note, the growing affordances of synchronous communication technologies have recently created new opportunities for online learning to more closely simulate face-to-face situations. These technologies also enable students and instructors to engage in class discussions at any time and from any location. What is more, Harasim (1990) suggests that online discussions allow more equal participation, giving students more chances to speak and making it less likely for anyone, including the teacher, to dominate the conversation. As a result, many scholars argue that online conversations tend to be more egalitarian and democratic than traditional classroom discussions (Ho & Swan, 2007).



Beyond these, the sharing of materials prior to class also helps create engaging online learning environments and plays a crucial role in improving student learning. Mahmood (2020) asserts that several factors contribute to the success of online learning, including flexible teaching and assessment methods and student feedback. Additional advantages include the ability to record online lectures and access assistance from teaching assistants (Bao, 2020). In such learning settings, listening and comprehension skills become pivotal aspects of online discourse. However, even learners with strong vocabulary knowledge and grammatical competence may struggle to understand spoken language in listening materials. Thus, English listening comprehension and the application of the Cooperative Principle concern overall language understanding and use rather than merely vocabulary and grammatical structures (Wang, 2011).

In this communicative context, understanding how meaning is conveyed beyond literal expressions becomes crucial. The Gricean explanation of conversational implicature rests on the assumption that conversational implicatures are fundamentally instances of speaker meaning, in which speakers intend to communicate more than what is explicitly stated (Buchanan, 2013). When speakers imply meaning beyond their literal utterances, they rely on hearers' ability to infer intended messages based on shared contextual knowledge and rational principles of communication. It is worth noting that meanings vary across cultures due to differing values and customs; hence, cultural and contextual knowledge are essential for accurately interpreting conversational implicatures (Bouton, 1988; Hashemian et al., 2016; Yoshida, 1999).

Understanding how conversational implicatures function in synchronous online classrooms is particularly significant because the absence of paralinguistic cues, such as facial expressions, gestures, and body language, places greater cognitive demands on participants to infer intended meanings from verbal content alone. In educational contexts, teachers frequently employ indirectness to mitigate face-threatening acts such as corrections or directives, while students may use implicatures to negotiate participation, express uncertainty, or build rapport without overtly challenging classroom hierarchies. Moreover, Levinson, as cited by Edwards and Westgate (2005), stressed that the importance of conversational implicature lies in its ability to offer functional explanations of linguistic facts, thereby making the study of pragmatics possible. It shows that a natural language expression, although it tends to have simple, stable, and unitary senses in its semantic core, often carries an unstable, context-specific pragmatic overlay, known as implicature. It also plays a normative role in communication and thus exists in everyday conversation (Oskooei, 2020). Analyzing these implicit communication patterns can shed light on how participants achieve mutual understanding despite the constraints of virtual environments, thus informing pedagogical strategies that enhance pragmatic competence and improve the overall effectiveness of online instruction and class management.

To explain how such implied meanings are interpreted, Grice proposed the Cooperative Principle and its associated conversational maxims. Grice's Cooperative Principle and its four related maxims are regarded as communication rules and as a fundamental concept in pragmatics that enable individuals to speak in a manner appropriate to the context or situation. These maxims not only help generate conversational implicatures but also serve as a successful illustration of how the principle governs human communication (Rosyidah, 2019; Wahyudi et al., 2020; Zhou, 2009; Andana, & Azwandi, 2024).

The value of conversational implicatures in indirectly communicating a message has long been established and has received considerable attention since Grice's original study (Bouton, 1994; Breheny et al., 2013; Grice, 1975). As emphasized by the Cooperative Principle and its associated maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner (Grice, 1975, 1981), participants in a discussion – whose primary aim is the sharing of information – expect everything a speaker says to be accurate, sufficiently informative, relevant, and clear. However, people are not always cooperative in conversation (Grice, 1975) and occasionally flout the maxims for various reasons (Yule, 2023). When a speaker's contribution appears to lack one or more of these qualities on the surface, they infringe the maxims (by being indirect, contradictory, or hyperbolic or exaggerated); thus, hearers assume they are expected to infer some alternative meaning that will more fully



satisfy the speaker's communicative intent. If they identify such a meaning, they consider it to be all or part of the message the speaker was attempting to communicate (Bouton, 1988; Hossain, 2021). While the Cooperative Principle provides a framework for analyzing implicit meaning, its application to synchronous online educational contexts requires specific investigation.

Several studies have examined classroom discourse and interaction. For instance, Dewi and Indriani (2020) examined conversational implicatures with a focus only on the quantity maxim, while Abdelhafez (2016) investigated implicature production among EFL learners. Similarly, Dewi et al. (2025) analyzed Grice's maxims with different research objectives, and Wandira et al. (2021) investigated flouted maxims during online classes in the pandemic context, though their study did not examine in depth the motivations for flouting. Despite these similar studies, research on conversational implicatures based on Grice's Cooperative Principle in synchronous online classroom discussions in the Philippines, particularly in higher education settings, remains limited.

The studies cover morphology, pragmatics, language teaching, digital communication, and emerging technologies. Comparative analysis shows differences in the form and meaning of reduplication across languages (Santuso & Sukarno, 2025), while laughter and refusal speech acts demonstrate how pragmatic strategies shape communication (Jahiu, 2025; Al Mseideen et al., 2025). In language education, problem-based and task-based learning promote communicative competence and speaking fluency (Sadiyani et al., 2025; Pastini & Hardina, 2025). Other studies highlight the use of virtual reality for cognitive improvement, adaptive memory for sentiment analysis, and pragmatic-narrative approaches to online gaming communication (Qin et al., 2025; Duan et al., 2026; Nensilanti et al., 2025).

The study examines the Japanese verb “giving” through the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach, highlighting how different giving expressions convey specific meanings depending on context and relationships. The study provides useful insight into Japanese semantic distinctions and the way meaning can be explained through simple semantic components (Sukma, 2024).

The study discusses the use of flipped classroom methods in English Language Teaching and shows how this approach can support more active and flexible learning. The findings suggest that integrating technology and learner-centred activities can improve students' engagement and participation in the learning process (Maulana et al., 2025).

The study analyses religious lecturers' speeches to street food vendors by combining pragmatic and sociolinguistic perspectives. It demonstrates how language structure, social relationships, and contextual factors influence the way messages are delivered and interpreted in interactions between speakers from different social positions (Paramita et al., 2025).

The study explores task-based language teaching in Indonesian classrooms for foreign learners. It emphasizes the use of meaningful tasks to encourage communication and active participation, showing that task-based learning can provide learners with practical opportunities to use Indonesian in relevant contexts (Pastini & Hardina, 2025).

Hence, this study aims to analyze conversational implicatures in synchronous classroom discussions using Grice's Cooperative Principle as the analytical framework. Specifically, this paper examines a synchronous class discussion in a Pragmatics course involving the course teacher and junior students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies program during the 2021–2022 academic year at Central Mindanao University. This paper aims to: (1) identify the conversational implicatures that occur during the discussion; (2) determine the assumptions operated from these implicatures; and (3) examine how the implicatures flout conversational maxims.

2. Method



This study utilizes qualitative pragmatic analysis, employing Grice's Cooperative Principle as the analytical framework to examine conversations from a recorded 90-minute synchronous class discussion in an undergraduate Pragmatics course. Qualitative research seeks to understand social phenomena by examining them in the contexts in which they naturally occur (Fossey et al., 2002). In this study, qualitative analysis allows the researchers to examine naturally occurring classroom interaction and identify how conversational implicatures emerge during discourse. Pragmatic analysis focuses on identifying the inferences that arise from utterances in context, allowing analysts to understand speakers' intended meanings and how meaning is communicated beyond the literal words or simply how meaning is established communicatively (Duffy, 2008; Levinson, 1983). Through this method, the researchers can analyze recorded classroom interaction, particularly the phenomenon of expressing ideas through conversational implicature (Buchanan, 2013).

The participants were the course teacher and junior students (Academic Year 2021–2022) enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies program at Central Mindanao University, specifically those taking the Pragmatics course. Students from the Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies program were selected because the program focuses on language use and communication. Moreover, to protect participants' privacy, individuals in the transcripts and analysis were labeled as "Teacher" and "Student" followed by a number (e.g., Student 1, Student 2). Because the classroom discussions were spontaneous, the utterances were a mixture of Cebuano and English, the primary languages spoken by most students in the class.

The language data consisted of a recorded synchronous class discussion on Politeness Theory (Part 1) lasting approximately 90 minutes. To identify conversational implicatures occurring during the discussion, the recording was transcribed verbatim to capture participants' utterances, pauses, and interactional exchanges necessary for analysis. This transcription enabled the researchers to examine the interactional context in which conversational implicatures emerged.

The analysis focused on interactions between the teacher and students that demonstrated participants generating conversational implicatures, particularly in relation to the conversational maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner (Grice, 1975). To determine and interpret the assumptions derived from these implicatures and to examine how they flout conversational maxims, this study applied the criteria of the Cooperative Principle formulated by Grice (1975) in *Logic and Conversation*.

Grice's Cooperative Principle and its conversational maxims were selected because the thoroughness and social applicability of Grice's principles of successful communication extend to online interactions (Ho & Swan, 2007). Moreover, this framework aligned with the study's aim of analyzing the nature of communication in the recorded synchronous class, particularly regarding the non-observance of conversational maxims, specifically flouting. Conversational maxims guide how individuals communicate to create effective and reliable exchanges where information is delivered as intended, such as when teachers and students interact to convey meaning and achieve communicative goals. One characteristic of conversational implicature is calculability, meaning that implicatures can be worked out by hearers from the literal meaning of utterances, using the Cooperative Principle and its conversational maxims (Davis, 2024). Thus, these maxims (also known as Gricean maxims) served as a framework for evaluating online class discussions and assessing how language was used to convey meaning.

In this study, each conversational maxim was operationalized as follows:

The Maxim of Quality served as the basis for assessing the truthfulness of utterances, specifically whether a speaker stated a fact or a falsehood (disguised falsehood). The fallacy of a statement, particularly when used deliberately to achieve a communicative intention, indicated failure to observe this maxim.

The Maxim of Quantity was used to analyze whether the information presented was proportionate to what was required in context, and whether the response provided just the right



amount of information, too much, too little, or no information at all. The latter three cases indicated non-observance of this maxim.

The Maxim of Relation (Relevance) was used to evaluate whether utterances were relevant to the conversational context; responses lacking relevance indicated failure to observe this maxim. Finally, the Maxim of Manner was used to assess whether utterances were clear, orderly, unambiguous, and not obscure. Failure to meet these criteria indicated non-observance of this maxim.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

Analysis of the recorded 90-minute synchronous discussion revealed twenty-seven (27) identifiable instances of conversational implicatures. Table 1 presents the distribution of these implicatures according to speakers and the conversational maxims flouted. The results show that the maxim of Quantity was most frequently flouted (12), followed by Manner (11), and Quality (4). This distribution suggests that online classroom interaction often relies on ambiguous and indirect communication (e.g., the use of idiomatic expressions, unnecessary use of discourse markers, and the utterance that contains more or less information than necessary, among others), which requires participants to rely on contextual cues to interpret the speaker's intended meaning. Notably, no instances of the relation maxim flouting were observed in either the teacher's or the students' utterances; they remained relevant in their responses despite strategically flouting other conversational maxims.

Of the 27 identified instances, six excerpts were purposively selected for detailed analysis: two each representing Quantity, Quality, and Manner flouting, to illustrate the range of pragmatic strategies employed by participants.

Table 1: Distribution of Flouted Gricean Maxims
Between Students and Teacher

Maxim Flouted	Students	Teacher
Quantity	4	8
Quality	2	2
Relation	0	0
Manner	3	8

3.1.1 Quantity

Excerpt 1. *A student asks the teacher if it is permissible to speak Cebuano.*

Student 1: Excuse me, ma'am... do we have to speak in English in giving the examples?
Or kanang... [*Excuse me, ma'am... do we have to speak in English when giving the examples?*
Or can we... (speak Cebuano?)]

Teacher: You can... you can speak.

In this excerpt, Student 1 flouted the Maxim of Quantity by trailing off with the discourse marker "Or kanang..." instead of completing the alternative question. On the surface, the completed question "do we have to speak in English" sought confirmation of the classroom requirement; however, the incomplete "kanang..." implicated a request for permission to use Cebuano instead. By providing incomplete information rather than explicitly asking "Can we speak Cebuano?", Student 1 generated the implicature that they were requesting permission to code-switch.

In this flouting, the teacher had to operate on several assumptions. First, the teacher had to assume that "kanang" referred to an unstated alternative to English. Second, the teacher had to



infer that Student 1 was seeking permission rather than merely requesting information. Third, the hesitation suggested that the student was reluctant to directly request permission to code-switch.

The results suggest that indirectness functions as a pragmatic strategy in classroom interaction. The student's incomplete utterance reflects the power imbalance between the teacher and the student, with the teacher holding authority in the classroom. As a result, the student strategically softened the request to avoid appearing disrespectful, allowing the student to negotiate the classroom language norm without directly challenging the teacher's authority.

This observation aligns with Abdelhafez (2016) and Dewi and Indriana (2020), who assert that students often negotiate their communication out of fear of negative evaluations or responses. In other words, students tend to protect their negative face by employing face-saving strategies, such as hedging or indirect expressions, to appear polite and respectful while minimizing the risk of negative evaluation and avoiding direct imposition on the teacher.

Excerpt 2: *The teacher asks the class to expound further on the notion of face.*

Teacher: Here, I'll show you the slide. So, anybody who can expound further this one? Wala? And therefore, I will call names... (laughs). Let's have Tamarra.

[Here, I'll show you the slide. So, can anybody expound further this one? None? And therefore, I will call names (laughs). Let's have Student 6.]

Student 6: (Silent)

Teacher: Hmm... gahuna-huna pa si Student 6... So, let's have... oh, yes, Student 1, go ahead. Then we'll have Student 7.

[Hmm... Student 6 is still thinking, so let's have... oh yes, Student 1, go ahead. Then we will have Student 7 (after Student 1).]

In this excerpt, the teacher flouted the Maxim of Quantity by failing to provide sufficient explicit information. Instead of directly stating that Student 6 had no answer, the teacher said, "Gahuna-huna pa si Student 6..." to indicate that Student 6 was still thinking. This indirect statement generated the conversational implicature that Student 6 likely had no answer to the question.

In this instance, the teacher appeared to interpret Student 6's silence as indicating that the student was unable to provide the information requested by the teacher's inquiry. The student's silence may also constitute a possible violation of the Maxim of Quantity, since the question required a response, but none was provided. To avoid embarrassing the student, the teacher reframed the silence as an indication that the student was still thinking rather than explicitly stating that the student had no answer. This interpretation prompted the teacher to immediately shift the floor to other students. Similarly, this result aligns with Dewi's (2021) findings, in which the teacher inferred the silence as an indication that the student had no answer or explanation and, instead of explicitly calling it out, shifted the focus to the discussion.

The results suggest that indirectness, in both cases (see Excerpts 1 and 2), functions as a pragmatic strategy for conveying meaning while maintaining politeness and social harmony. In classroom contexts, such indirectness reflects the negotiation of power relations between participants, in which teachers may soften their communication while students may soften their requests when necessary. On a similar note, Fahmi (2016) found that speakers tend to avoid direct communication to avoid appearing unfriendly or impolite. This is because speakers place a high value on politeness. She further added that social position affects communication, indicating that relationships influence how speakers and hearers communicate with and respond to one another. For instance, people tend to speak more freely and directly with friends than with a teacher.

3.1.2 Quality

Excerpt 3: *Casual interaction of students while waiting for the teacher's connection.*



Student 2: Bitaw, hulaton lang nato si ma'am. Pero kung mo-discuss si Student 5, okay kaayo! [*Let us just wait for Ma'am. But if Student 5 discusses, it would be nice!*]

Student 3: Ay, mo-support jud ko ana! [*I definitely support that (idea).*]

Student 4: Nice kaayo mag-discuss si Student 5! [*Student 5's discussion (in his report) was great!*]

Student 5: Patya na lang ko ninyo! (*chuckle*) [*Just kill me instead!*]

In this excerpt, Student 5 flouted the Maxim of Quality by responding in an exaggerated manner to the indirect request from Students 2, 3, and 4 to replace their teacher and continue the discussion. On the surface, the response may appear surprising to the hearers for its semantic meaning; however, the utterance is obviously untrue and does not literally intend to request being killed for being asked to discuss in place of their teacher. Instead, the exaggerated statement "patya na lang ko ninyo!" serves as a humorous way of saying "no," thereby generating a conversational implicature.

In this flouting, the hearers had to assume that the utterance "patya na lang ko ninyo!" followed by a chuckle was not meant to be taken literally. Rather than an actual request to be killed, it functioned as a humorous alternative, in this case, an exaggeration (Cutting, 2005), for refusing the suggestion. The exaggeration indicated that Student 5 was reluctant to accept the role his classmates suggested, while maintaining a playful tone throughout the interaction.

Excerpt 4: A student requesting permission to use Cebuano.

Student 5: Excuse me, ma'am. [*Excuse me, ma'am?*]

Teacher: Yes, Student 5? [*Yes, Student 5?*]

Student 5: Okay raba amoang convo is Bisaya lang, ma'am? [*Is it okay if our conversation is just in Cebuano, ma'am?*]

Teacher: Oo, tapos mag-translate ang imohang partner. [*Yes, but then your partner will translate it.*]

Student 5: (*small laugh*) Ahh, sigé ma'am. [*(small laugh) Ah, okay, ma'am.*]

In this excerpt, the teacher flouted the Maxim of Quality by responding sarcastically to Student 5's question. At face value, the response appears appropriate for the inquiry; however, in context, the teacher implies the opposite of what was said. Through this sarcastic response, the teacher deliberately provides a statement whose literal meaning is not intended to be taken as true. This generates the conversational implicature that the conversation is expected to be conducted in English and that using Cebuano would require translation, thereby indirectly discouraging its use during the activity. Consequently, Student 5 responded awkwardly because the remark threatened the student's positive face.

In this flouting, the student had to assume that the teacher's statement was not meant to be taken literally. The teacher's response suggests that the student was already aware of the class's language expectations. When Student 5 responded with "Ahh, sigé ma'am," accompanied by a small laugh, it indicated that the student successfully inferred the intended meaning behind the teacher's remark. The small laugh may also serve to mitigate the awkwardness of the situation and acknowledge the implicature conveyed by the teacher.

This suggests that speakers strategically flout the Maxim of Quality to manage interaction and interpersonal relationships in classroom discourse. As Zahra (2023) noted, utterances are context-dependent and rely heavily on the communicative situation. Hence, if the situation requires, speakers may therefore produce exaggerated or sarcastic remarks to indirectly convey their true intentions. Similarly, Szczepanski pointed out (as cited in Ayunon, 2018) that speakers flout the Maxim of Quality through sarcastic or ironic statements. Concurrently, Cutting (2005)

noted that flouting the Maxim of Quality involves indirectness in communication, such as metaphor, exaggeration, irony, hyperbole, and banter.

In these interactions, both the teacher and the student employed indirectness to mitigate potential face threats. The student did not directly refuse the indirect requests of classmates (see Excerpt 3), while the teacher also avoided explicitly saying “no” (see Excerpt 4). Instead, both participants used indirect strategies that made the responses less threatening to the hearer’s negative face (Tupan & Natalia, 2008).

These findings further suggest that such strategies are used to maintain politeness, manage interpersonal relationships, and sustain a cooperative atmosphere within the virtual classroom.

3.1.3 Manner

Excerpt 5: *The teacher presents a scenario for classroom discussion.*

Teacher: Now, umm... mao na siya... makita ninyo akoo slide? Okay... not that one... it seems not to be my day (chuckle) ... Okay. So earlier, I gave a scenario that I want you to think of... The situation is you want to borrow a pen. [*Now, um... that's it... can you see my slides? Okay... not that one. It seems not to be my day... Okay. So earlier, I gave a scenario that I want you to think of. The situation is you want to borrow a pen.*]

In this excerpt, the teacher flouted the Maxim of Manner by using an idiomatic expression. While asking the students whether the presentation was visible on the screen, the teacher accidentally displayed a different slide. This prompted a self-deprecating remark, “it seems not to be my day,” which generated a conversational implicature. Instead of explicitly stating that the wrong slide had been shown, the teacher indirectly conveyed that a minor mistake had occurred through the use of the idiomatic expression.

In this flouting, the students had to assume that the teacher’s remark was not meant to be interpreted literally as a statement about the entire day. Rather, the expression signaled that the teacher recognized a small mistake had occurred during the presentation. The students therefore relied on contextual cues, particularly the incorrect slide being shown, to infer that the teacher was referring to the presentation error.

The results suggest that flouting the Maxim of Manner can function as a pragmatic strategy for managing minor mistakes in classroom interaction. By framing the error as a matter of temporary bad luck rather than directly acknowledging the mistake, the teacher mitigated a potential threat to the teacher’s positive face. The addition of a small laugh further helped lighten the situation and prevented the interaction from becoming awkward or overly serious. This strategy also contributed to creating a friendly and approachable image of the teacher while maintaining a comfortable and relaxed classroom atmosphere, thus sustaining positive rapport between the teacher and the students.

Excerpt 6: *Student’s observation of polite word choice*

Teacher: ...what then can you observe? Base sa kaning word choice nila sa pag borrow ug simple object. Pen lang. Yes, Student 5?

[*...what then can you observe? Based on their word choice in borrowing a simple object? Just a pen. Yes, Student 5?*]

Student 5: Naggamit sila’g mga flowering words churva, and then, kuan ma’am, at the same time, very polite ang pag show.

[*They used some flowering words, churva (slang), and then (sort of), at the same time, it was shown very politely.*]

Teacher: Unsa na nga mga flowering words? [*What flowery words are those?*]

In this excerpt, Student 5 flouted the Maxim of Manner by being obscure or ambiguous in describing a certain situation. “Flowering words” or flowery language could mean that an



utterance is overly poetic, contains exaggerated vocabulary, uses unnecessary modifiers, or is overly dramatic in description. It may also simply mean that the utterance is too wordy or uses jargon (Lane, 2020). As can be observed, the teacher responded with “Unsa na nga mga flowering words?” because it was not quite clear what the student meant in the given context. Moreover, there is also the addition of the slang term “churva,” which functions as a placeholder marker to signal that it is also unclear what specific type of flowery word the student meant. This prompted the student to rely on a familiar vocabulary alternative, hence committing an implicature.

Furthermore, the flouting of the Maxim of Manner functions as a mitigating strategy for the student’s lack of knowledge of the subject. The student operated under the assumption that the teacher understood the context behind the marker, while the teacher had to assume that “flowering words” served as an alternative description of wordiness. While the teacher indeed knows the context behind the colloquial phrase “flowering words,” the teacher does not know the exact type the student is implying, as suggested by the presuppositional undertone in the question “Unsa na nga mga flowering words?” or “What flowery words are those?”

Overall, the flouting of the Maxim of Manner in both instances suggests that it functions as a pragmatic strategy for managing interaction in the classroom. The teacher uses indirect, unclear (Ayunon, 2018), and idiomatic language to soften a minor mistake and maintain a relaxed atmosphere, while the student employs vague expressions to mitigate uncertainty while still participating in the discussion. A similar analysis was presented by Dalle et al. (2025), who found instances of self-correction (manifested through indirectness or ambiguity) when teachers make mistakes as a way to redirect students’ attention and manage learning activities. Additionally, their study also noted that students sometimes employ mitigating responses, such as expressing themselves ambiguously, due to hesitation.

In both cases, indirectness helps maintain politeness and sustain cooperative classroom interaction, albeit in a way that does not disrupt the harmonious atmosphere.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, both the teacher and the students produced conversational implicatures that largely depended on the contextual situation. This indicates that interaction in the online classroom is highly dynamic, shifting from formal to less formal communication as participants adapt to the demands of the situation. Such shifts are influenced by factors such as instructional activities, the needs of the teacher and students, and the context of the discussion itself.

Out of the twenty-seven (27) instances of flouted maxims identified in the data, the teacher accounted for eighteen (18), while the students produced nine (9). Since the teacher holds authority in the classroom, it is expected that the teacher would produce more implicatures than the students. For the teacher, the Maxims of Quantity and Manner were the most frequently flouted. Based on the analysis, this suggests that more often than not, the teacher provides less explicit information than necessary and sometimes uses figurative language to indirectly convey meaning to encourage students to think critically and respond independently without direct guidance and at the same time to create a less restrictive communicative environment.

On the students’ end, although the number of flouted maxims is lower, the most frequently flouted maxims mirror those of the teacher, albeit for different reasons. Students tend to flout the Maxims of Quantity and Manner when answering or explaining their responses during recitations. In these instances, they provide incomplete or sometimes unclear information when responding to the communicative situation.

Both the teacher and the students were observed to flout the Maxims of Quality less frequently by the seldom use of humorous (exaggeration or hyperbole in this case) and sarcastic remarks, while there were no instances for flouting the Maxim of Relation, suggesting that participants generally remained relevant to the topic being discussed or to the situation occurring



at the time. Despite these instances of maxim flouting, as can be observed in the excerpts, both the teacher and the students, generally, were able to successfully infer the intended meanings behind the utterances by operating on the assumptions provided by the context in which the utterances were produced. This indicates that participants demonstrate a considerable level of pragmatic competence in interpreting conversational implicatures within classroom interaction.

Finally, further studies on conversational implicature may consider additional factors that may influence the production of implicatures, such as age, gender, language background, culture, humor, degree programs, and level of education, among others. Future studies may also explore comparisons between virtual and face-to-face interactions and employ a longitudinal approach with more participants involved and with the scope expanded to include other types of non-observance of maxims in order to collect richer data for comparative analysis of when, where, and how participants infringe maxims and for what purpose. Such investigations may provide deeper insights into the role of conversational implicature in human interaction.

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