

Conversational Implicature in Oprah Winfrey TV Interview with Criminals: A Pragmatic Perspective

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Abstract

Objectives: This study aimed to explore how offenders employ conversational implicature in handling questions relating to their offences during interviews in media. Special emphasis is placed on comprehending the roles and tactics of implicating criminals concerning their responses.

Methods: In adopting a descriptive qualitative approach embedded in pragmatic theories, this research targets a case study of Aaron, a former American convicted of murdering his wife in 2004, and a subsequent interview on the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN) on December 11, 2004. Frameworks include Grice's Cooperative Principle of 1975, the conversational implicature of 2020, the politeness theory of 2019, and the newly developed facework and evasion techniques of 2022.

Results: The study results showed that criminals often violate Cooperative Principle maxims while using language to express another message that exonerates them of blame. The study results also showed that among all the implicature strategies, the use of evasion is most common as it ensures the criminal does not respond in a way that will be compromising and does not appeal for forgiveness. This discussion situates criminals in media interviews as actors who rely on implicature while responding to shape how the audience perceives them without being forced to tell the truth.

Conclusions: This study has reached some conclusions, the most important of which is that criminals employ indexical communication patterns by violating Grice's CP maxims or flouting them. These are not only techniques for controlling and managing information but also tricks helpful to hide one's guilt and prevent one from being held responsible.

Keywords: Pragmatics; rational conversation; common ground; dishonesty in communication

الاستلزام الحواري في مقابلة أوبرا وينفري التلفزيونية مع المجرمين: منظور تداولي

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ملخص

الأهداف: هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف كيفية توظيف الجناة التضمين الحواري في التعامل مع الأسئلة المتعلقة بجرائمهم أثناء المقابلات في وسائل الإعلام. وكما هدفت الدراسة إلى التركيز بشكل خاص على فهم الأدوار والتكتيكات الخاصة بتورط المجرمين فيما يتعلق باستجاباتهم.

المنهجية: من خلال الاعتماد على المنهج النوعي الوصفي المتضمن في النظريات التداولية، عمدت هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة حالة آرون، وهو أمريكي مدان بقتل زوجته عام 2004، وقد تم عمل مقابلة معه من قبل شبكة أوبرا وينفري في كانون الأول عام 2004، وتضمنت أطر الدراسة مبدأ غرايس التعاوني 1975، والاستلزام الحواري، ونظرية التأديب 202، وتقنيات المواجهة 2022.

النتائج: أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن المجرمين غالباً ما يخالفون قواعد المبدأ التعاوني أثناء استخدام اللغة للتعبير عن رسالة أخرى تبرئهم من اللوم. وكما أظهرت الدراسة وأنه من بين جميع استراتيجيات الاستلزام، أن استخدام التهريب هو الاستراتيجية الأكثر شيوعاً لأنه يضمن عدم استجابة المجرم بطريقة فيها جانب من تجريمه أو تهديده ولا يطلب من خلالها العفو عن فعلته. وتظهر نتائج الدراسة أن مناقشة هذه الاستراتيجيات تضع المجرمين في المقابلات الإعلامية في موقف الممثلين الذين يعتمدون على التضمين أثناء الاستجابة ليتلاعبوا بنظرة الجمهور إليهم دون إجبارهم على قول الحقيقة.

الخلاصة: خلصت هذه الدراسة إلى بعض الاستنتاجات والتي من أهمها أن المجرمين يستخدمون أنماط الاتصال المؤشيرة من خلال مخالفة قواعد المبدأ التعاوني لغرايس وانتهاكها. ولا تشكل هذه القواعد تقنيات للتحكم في المعلومات وإدارتها، ولكنها أيضاً حيل مفيدة لإخفاء ذنب الشخص ومنع تحميله المسؤولية. الكلمات الدالة: البراغمية، المحادثة العقلانية، الأفضية المشتركة، عدم الأمانة في التواصل.

1. Introduction:

Social communication is critical to the stability of interactions between individuals, conveying that language is central in facilitating interactions in social associations and cultures. Language is discussed in several ways but is best defined as written and spoken communication. Current research, for instance, Valencia Robles and García Laborda (2022) define communication as sharing knowledge through a message by the sender to the receiver. People are both the buyers and sellers of language communication by using vocal signals (oral) or visual signals in writing on paper (written). Language consists of three core components, as shown by Page (2012) sound, form, and meaning. Phonology looks at sound, while morphology and syntax treat the form of language. Semantics and pragmatics focus on meaning. When sending information, a communication process depends on the sender and how the receiver receives the information. Lack of clarity is one of the main causes of misinterpretation because people may convey their ideas or plans in a way others will not understand. As per Kroeger (2018), recent pragmatics studies reveal that norms of interaction enable the control of these problems since they define the organization of the exchange of information. The Cooperative Principle by H.P. Grice, whose early formulations were made in the early 1970s, can still be relied upon today in explaining how individuals in an exchange generate and comprehend particular meanings of what has been said, as per Gioroceanu (2022). Grice's principle comprises four maxims: Mode of communication, quality of communication, quantity of communication, relation, and manner, which all pertain to aspects of communication. For example, the maximum quantity is described as saying enough but no more than what is required, as discussed by discussed.

The Maxim of quality requires a speaker not to lie unless she can back it up with evidence. This accords with the existing literature on communication ethics by Santoso and Wardani (2021), who adhere to the 'maxim of relation' by ensuring that any information passed on is relevant to the current conversation. Rojek (2014) optimizes the value of manner to clear and reduce ambiguity with clear and concise language and through organization. These maxims are blended in the real world, as discussed below. For example, intangible assets, such as values like honesty taught during childhood, correlate with the Maxim of quality, as per Çirakoğlu and Koşaner (2024). Honesty and support of actions backed with facts do not lie; they arrest the spread of fake news. Secondly, the maximum quantity indicates that a speaker should not disseminate excessive information at a particular moment to cause the speaker's audience to switch off Wijaya and Haristiani (2024). Each of these maxims can be violated, and deviation from any of them impacts the manner of the conversation.

Occasionally, these maxims intentionally flout to give rise to conversational implicature. Archer and Parry (2019) categorize conversational implicature into two types: categorical and specific in nature, which are still used up to the present in conversations regarding meaning and inference in communication. Most of these violations result in richer layers that can only be understood concerning the context of the conversational setting. Generalized conversational implicature occurs in a general and global manner so that the audience does not need any specific knowledge to understand the speaker's intended meaning. In contrast, particularized conversational implicatures depend on context features to be processed in the full sense of the term. Ingham (2024) states that such a situation happens when the speaker consciously follows maxims for deriving conversational implicature, which everyone can meet in everyday conversations. According to Léger (2024), the specificity of words or phrases that replace or extend an utterance's literal meaning is considered figurative language. Some of the most used figures of speech are personification, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, irony, litotes, metonymy, synecdoche, and oxymorons.

Subsequent research has, therefore, encouraged furthering the analysis of conversational implicature. For example, Gheorghiu (2018) explored the complexity of conversational implicature and the existence of implicit meaning in human interaction using an annotated dataset. Pratama et al. (2019) stress that, in general, people rely on Sar Cast assumptions because, during a conversation, humans tend to interpret implied meanings, whereas computers do not know how to interpret these messages. Likewise, as per Krüger (2024), conversational implicature is complex in describing the interaction. Further study in virtual digital contexts is required to show how contextual polarity and secularity create difficulties in automating and identifying figurative or implied understanding of human talks.

2. Research Gap

Conversational implicature has considerable relevance in communication within media, which involves critical interviews and strategies for obscuring, avoiding, or deflecting meaning. Interviewees can twist the information that will go into the public domain by violating the maxims of Grice while still not providing direct answers known in political, legal, and criminal interviews. Such subtle trickery demonstrates why media communication is as much about what is communicated as it is about what is suggested between the lines of discourse and towards setting up a social and moral agenda. Nevertheless, there is little research on conversational implicature despite the increased literature on implicated content in direct quotations in unstructured news interviews with accused persons or criminals.

2. Literature Review

This study is based on recent and relevant literature on pragmatics, especially conversational implicature. The research studies by Bernardi et al. (2024), Bullard-Swift (2024), Council (2023), Del Saz-Rubio (2024), Laborda (2019), and Rafael (2024) investigate how speakers use implicature to convey an intended message in different situations. For instance, Bernardi et al. (2024) employ Grice's Cooperative Principle in discussing specifically *Buried Child* by Sam Shepard to show how characters deliberately flout the maxims to convey what could be an intended meaning but merely convey an unintended meaning. A good example is when a character's ambiguous words and actions are veiled, family issues that the viewers need to get out of hand. Bullard-Swift's (2024) work demonstrated that implicature is important in determining the second-level conveyance of characters in a scripted story.

In the same way, Del Saz-Rubio (2024) also examined the conversational implicature in English contextualized discourse in plays, films, and novels. For instance, he explored works like *A View from the Bridge*, Laborda (2019), and Rafael (2024) to demonstrate where, when, and with whom implicature works. Their work focused on the functions of the narrative context, where such activity as discovering the implicature is situated, indicates that the cooperation of the characters and their surroundings is crucial. An implicature research explores how people, especially criminals, employ implicature to avoid simple answers and hide the truth. Robeyns (2024) investigates an equal amalgamation of conversational data that focuses on the example of unscripted talk, where identity and reputation issues are acutely sensitive. The question is also examined by Çirakoğlu and Koşaner (2024) reflecting the necessity of the pragmatic investigation of real-life spoken language in media and legal contexts. Eisenberg (2024) analyzed implicature in political interviews and identified that politicians violate the maxims to be credible while seeming to provide relevant or explicit replies. They show that implicature is often employed as a strategic means of avoiding direct blame or shifting it through manipulating interpretation schemes, which are common in criminal interviews. In another related study, Creed (2024) examined implicature in the courtroom, particularly how lawyers and witnesses deploy implicature to more or less support the intended meaning of some evidence or testimony. The presented results conform to the topics of the present study specifying criminal interviews in which references to evasion and ambiguity are employed to maintain the interviewee's image.

The application of conversational implicature in two interviewing channels of two crucial political figures shows that speakers deliberately violate maxims to avoid unwanted questions or to sustain a positive image. Penco (2024) reveals how people strategize while presenting their selves over media with special reference to responding to an accusation or moral prosecution's condemnation. Huang and Li show us that with implicature, a complex real-life work, the interviews with the public are created, and the public's perceptions are influenced. Saleh (2024) focuses on conversational implicature using unscripted high-stakes interview data. The study broadens the field of implicature examination by addressing what might occur throughout actual media experiences with criminal and interviewer interactions in explaining truth, avoidance, and responsibility using Grice's maxims.

3. The Concept of Implicature

Implicature is a situation where the meaning of the word a speaker uses exceeds the ordinary definition listeners understand. According to Constantinou (2023), conversational implicature is as follows: It concerns what is implicated in conversation, that is, what goes unsaid in real-life discourse. According to Balirano et al. (2024), implicature entails assumptions that participants make over and above the actual verbal and literal interpretation of what they say. For example:

1. A: Smith seems not to have a girlfriend in the current generation.

B: Lately, he has been making numerous visits to New York.

In this exchange, B suggests that Smith has a girlfriend in New York but does not state this directly. The following is an example of how implicature works beyond the indexical use of words despite its literal reading out of B's statement.

4. The Model of The Analysis

There are two pragmatic theories to analyze implicature in a criminal interview: Politeness Theory, Cooperative Principle by Grice and Politeness Theory by Brown & Levinson. These frameworks are crucial when studying implicature in conversation, particularly when the speaker wishes to regulate face or when he wants to say one thing but means something quite different. The case is a high-stakes criminal interview in which topics such as drugs are explored; therefore, this implicature and face management techniques are expected. The chosen interviews for the analysis are open media sources, meaning we can examine the material that is recognizable in the real world while adhering to ethical and academic norms. The interviewee avoids direct answers, and these are patterns in the responses that refer to Grice's Cooperative Principle and Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory.

4.1 Cooperative Principle

Grice shows how people come to think of the content of the intended meaning when the other person is speaking. He argued that there is common sense that ordinary people follow when carrying out a conversation, where it becomes easy for the listener to work out the speaker's intention, as per Labagnara (2024). The Sustainable Principle (CP) plays an important role, requiring speakers to behave suitably in conversations. Participate in responding to the variant in a manner that is relevant to the intended goal or topic at the point in the interaction into which you are entering.

The CP consists of four maxims that relate efficiently to how Supply Chain Managers wire their communication; these include Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. Quantity maxim refers to a situation whereby a speaker gives the extent of information required and doesn't overprovide or underprovide information. In criminal interviews, Neu (2024) says that this Maxim can be either breached or mentioned irregularly with certain consequences regarding the motives or knowledge of the interviewee. The Maxim of quality, in this case, is that speakers should refrain from saying anything that is either false or about which they have insufficient evidence. As per Chouliaraki (2024), when an interviewee withholds information or gives wrong information, they violate this Maxim, and the interviewer and the audience are left to guess meanings that may not exist. The Maxim of relation suggests that the speaker should provide messages appropriate to the conversation. If an interviewee gives irrelevant or excessive information and seemingly wants to avoid certain questions, they generate implicature that suggests they are guilty. The Maxim of Manner insists on the communication to be clear and ordered. When making a point, it is usually possible for a speaker to be somewhat unclear, making an aspect of the conversation a matter that can be taken to implicature (Butler, 2024). Criminal suspects purposefully violate all of these maxims during interviews, and observing such violations indicates attempts to control their appearance or shifts from an inability to recall events to outright lying.

4.2 Politeness

Working with Grice's Cooperative Principle, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory provides a foundation for interpreting how to be involved in social interactions and maintain face. They assume that every person has a "face" that employees within an organization care for and their overall reputation (Simanjuntak & Simatupang, 2024). This paper will show that in communication, both the sender and the receiver try to maintain the face of the other person, especially where the situation calls for it, such as the criminal Interviews.

Brown and Levinson identify two types of face: Positive face, which is the need to be approved, and negative face, which refers to the need to control one's actions. In the criminal Interview, the interviewee will be aware of looking to build up the interviewer's positive face by asking for approval or empathy, but at the same time, the interviewee will also look to protect their negative face by not submitting to pressure. They also include bald on-record, positive, negative, and off-record strategies, such as politeness. As per Chouliaraki (2021), bald on record is a blunt manner that may be incompatible with a sensitive form of an interview since it freights face-threatening acts. On the other hand, Agovino et al. (2024) say that a positive politeness strategy includes aspects where an interviewer shares sentiments with the interviewee or

compliments them regarding a certain matter, will not threaten their face, and will thus make them comfortable even to utter wrong or incriminating statements.

Various negative politeness strategies include hedges and apologetic expressions to recognize the interviewer's power and not impose themselves when speaking about something unpleasant. All these strategies can bring a certain distance to the interview process and make asking tough questions easier (Sari, 2024). Off-record strategies focus on indirect communication through which the speakers can make their points without necessarily saying what they want. This can be so, especially in criminal interviews where an interviewee may use ambiguous statements or make an innuendo instead of saying he is guilty. Thus, by supplementing Grice's Cooperative Principle with Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory analyzed here in this study, everyone will be better informed on how implicature works in criminal interviews (Agovino et al., 2024). The co-construction of the interview process and the concept of face on the part of interviewees proposed here affords a much richer understanding of interviewees' acts of disclosure and discretion and of how they balance the twin concerns of disclosure and the preservation of face rather than the simpler binary choice between them.

Grice further categorizes the Cooperative Principle into four maxims, each with sub-maxims:

- Quantity Maxim: Give the proper information.
- Quality Maxim: Try as hard as possible to ensure your contribution is honest.
- Relevance Maxim: Be relevant.
- Manner Maxim: Wijaya and Haristiani (2024) remark that the principle of cooperation has four specific requirements, namely being clear, concise, orderly, and avoiding ambiguity.

Speakers can engage with these maxims in the following ways:

- Observing the Maxims: Grice's maxims are followed by the speakers so that the contributions made to the conversation are simply super-informative, truthful, relevant, and easily comprehensible.
- Violating the Maxims: There is always a possibility that speakers might violate a maxim to deceive the hearer, which is always found in deceptive utterances.
- Flouting the Maxims: Different from violating, flouting takes place when the speakers violate the Maxim with the disregarding of the truth. The aim is to send another message other than the face value.

Aside from breaching maxims, there are other reasons why people employ metaphorical language because it is proficient for metaphorization; ironies, euphemisms, and hyperboles are proficient for another reason, namely to say things indirectly or to be less obvious while still conveying fresh messages (Çırakoğlu & Koşaner, 2024). Third, speakers may not choose to obey a maxim for ethical or legal purposes at all. This is, for instance, when a clergyman, a therapist, or a police is asked to reveal information that by the professional code of ethics or law cannot release such information.

4.2.1. Face

Politeness is the proper utilization of language. Sari (2024) notes that politeness is defined not by what is being thought or even what a person believes. This is particularly because of politeness as a basis for using implicature in the pragmatics study, as Agovino et al. (2024) note. According to Brown and Levinson, face is crucial in their politeness theory, which defines politeness as an intricate system of mitigation of face-threatening acts. Chouliaraki (2021) identifies two main aspects of the face in interactions: Positive face, "the desire that others do not wish for him and all his wants should be undesirable to at least some". The other is Negative face, "every 'competent adult member's' desire that his behavior should not be constrained by another".

Positive politeness refers to the process in which the speaker supports the positive face claims of both self and others. Negative politeness is when the speaker recognizes the desire of both self and others to be independent and free from imposition (Agovino et al., 2024). In social interactional situations, speakers assume that their interlocutors will observe their public image, called 'face' by Brown & Levinson, and any action that violates this face is referred to as the 'Face-Threatening Act' (Aporbo et al., 2024). Speakers also employ strategies to regulate FTAs to minimize face threats within the conversation. This is a Face-Saving Act (FSA).

Brown and Levinson have proposed that adult speakers tend to minimize FTAs or at least dampen their impact through

strategies classified into two types, on-record and off-record. An on-record strategy is a situation where a speaker explicitly communicates without necessarily being vague (Alvarez & Wolfe, 2024). Within this category, bald on-record means direct talk, which does not soften the words where the purpose of the talk is fully comprehensible and unadorned (Aporbo et al., 2024). On the other hand, off-record refers to indirect and implicit ways of getting tense across: this gives the speaker a way of getting a message across without stating it directly.

5. Strategies of Implicature

Emphasis is a pragmatic device used to down-tone a statement and lessen the speaker's accountability for the message's truth. Kroeger (2018) observes that mitigation enables the speaker to modify the message content and the intended force of the message. For example, hedges such as 'perhaps,' 'I think,' or 'it seems' enable the speakers to do so because assertions threatening the recipient's face are closely avoided. As per Agovino et al. (2024), hedging empowers speakers to appreciate the strategic potential of a soft approach to avoid confrontation or to engage in any conflict, for it offends. Negotiveness is well observed in occasions that require special caution when talking, especially when in trouble, or during an interview with the police and the media when the individual or a group of people will seek to avoid blame or accountability or give guarded answers to searching questions.

5.1. Interjections

Phatic expressions are unfocused, unprepared, and usually brief, indicating the speaker's emotive response to the environment. Deal et al. (2021) rely on voice quality and interjections like Oh, Wow, and Oops to indicate feelings that are not necessarily fluent linguistic forms but are crucial to regulating interaction. The interlocutors can use short, passionate words such as a timekeeper's pause, which can help them think or even estimate the situation, for example, if the person speaks under pressure. Thirdly, interjections can mitigate potential threats of face-threatening acts or express hesitation so they do not pose a threat (Dingemanse, 2024). Disarming comments are regularly directed in the course of the Interview or rather in any emotionally charged discussion, which may imply that interjections are used as an attempt by a subject to step back momentarily from a distasteful topic.

5.2. Irony

It is a figure of speech in which one affirms one thing while the opposite is intended. According to Saroj and Pal (2024), irony is one of the forms of implicature in which the speaker violates the Maxim of Quality, telling a lie, in other words, consciously to give the opposite of his intended meaning of the utterance. Speaking of irony, it would express criticism, humorous or sarcastic, without fans, and it would indirectly allow the speaker to say something negative or socially inexperienced. For example, when Oprah gets a sarcastic repetition of Aaron's attitude, who claims he does not remember any of the events, the author uses irony to express disbelief, as per Lokke (2020). This tactic enables her to challenge Aaron to task without necessarily claiming he is wrong, thus building the tension of the conversation while at the same time being rather indirect.

5.3. Evasion

Evasion is a verbal response in which a speaker actively avoids directly answering the question formulated by another interlocutor. According to Wijaya & Haristiani (2024), an evasive response does not attempt to answer the question that has been asked. A self-protective strategy that people may use in stressful circumstances, for example, when faced with a trial or an interview, is flight. Evasion not only gives rise to implicature in that the speaker presupposes something he does not directly state, thereby leaving the hearer to figure it out or even when he employs allusion obscuring the truth (Dekoninck et al., 2024). In criminal interviews, evasion is used in a defensive way where the interviewed person can partially deny any involvement while at the same time giving the impression of assisting the interviewers.

5.4. Metaphor

A metaphor is an employed figure of speech that involves describing one object in terms of another. According to Grice (1975), metaphorical comprehension involves employing conventional or implied meaning not communicated by the speaker's words. Using metaphors, the speaker can convey messages that might be uncomfortable to convey directly. From a strictly conversational standpoint, metaphorical language affords the speaker the means of expressing information that otherwise might have been transmitted in such a way as to violate Grice's Cooperative Principle. For example, when a

suspect says that they were drowning in lies, it does not mean that the suspect was drowning in water; it is another way of saying how deep or complicated the lie was without actually saying that they committed the crime. Metaphors add depth to what somebody is saying, and the listener is supposed to understand multiple meanings of what that person is saying.

5.5. Circumlocution

Circumlocution means talking in a roundabout way or elaborate manner using as many words as are required to say what you are trying to say but in a coded language. According to Tilton-Bolowsky et al. (2024), Circumlocution is a technique through which a speaker can give their message politely or indirectly to avoid confrontation or to give a vague message. Circumlocution is also among the pragmatic resources that Ouma (2024) points out, which creates implicature, particularly when the speaker may feel uneasiness about the particular content of the message they want to convey to the listener. Circumlocution helps the speakers to convey difficult or sensitive messages, preserving conversation politeness or ambiguity. In interview contexts, circumlocution can be used purposely by suspects or interviewees to evade uncomfortable questions, implying, hence, the implicature that the original intention of the speaker is inferred from the audience's utterance.

One kind of implicature often used by criminals during their interactions is threat implicatures during planning and/or confrontations. These threats could be oral or in form or gesture. For example, the defendant who makes a gun sign to a witness threatening to shoot her gives a threat in court, though this is done non-verbally. The don and the hitman threat might be verbal but can be more direct, as when a criminal tells a witness, "Something is going to happen to you." Hence, this statement carries a menace that is not very glaring as you try to read between the lines (Ouma, 2024). The court is justified in understanding any statements, such as threats if they have been made to discourage the witnesses (Tilton-Bolowsky et al., 2024). Table 1 shows the total number of each implicature strategy used by the interviewee, along with the percentage of each. Evasion appears to be the most frequently used strategy, followed by hedges. This suggests that the interviewee may use evasion primarily to obscure direct answers, while hedges soften statements or reduce commitment.

Table 1: Frequency of Implicature Strategies Used by the Interviewee

Strategy	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Hedges	45	25.7
Interjections	30	17.1
Irony	20	11.4
Evasion	50	28.6
Metaphor	15	8.6
Circumlocution	15	8.6
Total	175	100

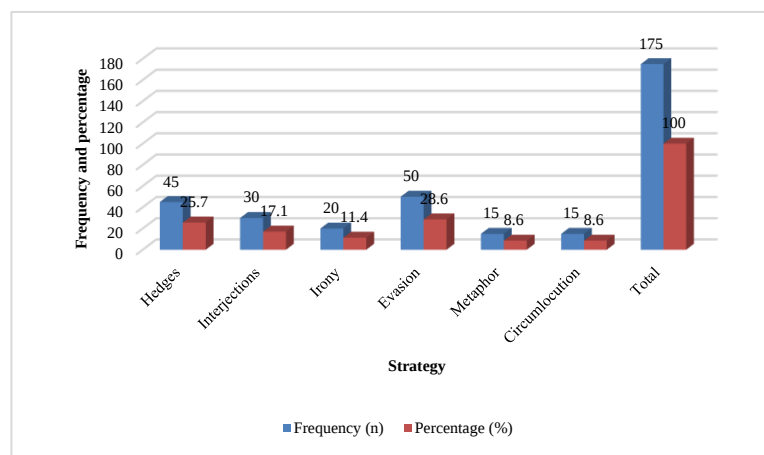


Figure 1. Frequency of Implicature Strategies Used by The Interviewee

6. Results and Discussion

The Interview conducted by Oprah with Pastor Aaron, who murdered his wife, Naomi, took place in a maximum-security prison outside Charlotte, North Carolina, and was shown on the OWN TV channel in December 11, 2004.

Text: 1

“Opera: What else did she say?”

Aaron: That? uh, maybe I, I, I, you know, “you shouldn’t be alive if that’s the way you want a struggle ensued.” We struggled, we fought, and then we started fighting, and it never escalated to this point where I was fighting back, but I was afraid...

Opera: Mm-hmm.

Aaron: The next thing I remember is I’m in jail because it didn’t hit me too; a few days after I was in jail, why I was there, and at that point, I isolated, cried, and asked God to forgive me.”

In this Interview, Aaron describes the event that he had a fight with his wife and later killed her. During the conversation, Aaron learns to avoid incriminating himself directly, even while arguing with Tim. His speech contains numerous examples of breaking Grice’s conversational maxims, especially through hesitation, interruption, and paraphrasing. These gadgets allow him to hide all the facets of the crime and put up a better face forward. For example, when Aaron has said, ‘That? He might take it they think maybe, ‘Perhaps I might consider it,’ he hesitates and interrupts himself, not directly did he answer her words during the argument. This reluctance and ambiguity are unmistakable signs of evasion; he nowhere explains the whole circumstances of the quarrel.

Aaron also leaves out most of the fight and the killing and recounts the events, saying, “The last thing I remember is being in the pound.” This Ambiguity is intentional in an attempt to avoid the maximum quantity by not offering extra details, which he knows will offend Miss F. Moreover, he pretends that he cannot remember any of the events that happened to put him behind the bar. In this way, Aaron violates the Maxim of Quality, providing false or at least misleading information about his actions.

Text: 2

“Opera: Mm-hmm. Well, you’re gonna have to do better than that for me.

Aaron: Okay,

Opera: You’re gonna have to do better than that because this is where you lose me, this is where you lose me, you lose me with, we’re in the fight, and now I don’t remember anything, I don’t remember anything.

Aaron: I mean, I could get into that. She swung at me, and all I meant was, I re... I remember to a certain point.

In this exchange, Aaron seeks to carry on with efforts to shift the blame by pretending to have forgotten important aspects of the murder. Oprah, who is fully armed with the factual account from the police, discredits Aaron’s unadulterated ‘truth.’ Thus, affirming and reinforcing Aaron’s story with “You’re gonna have to do better than that,” Oprah puts pressure on him regarding his denial of abuse and aggressively exposes his avoidance technique.

Aaron’s last action distorts the Maxim of Quality because, having said he doesn’t remember anything that happened later than the fight, he stated, “I remember it to a certain extent.” This contradiction lies in his attempt to cover up the truth. His stutters and pauses like, ‘I, I re... These sections min in an attempt to undermine his efforts to avoid self-inculpation and the fact that he still remembers saying; ‘I remember.” Thus, the first exclamations, “Mm-hmm” and “Well,” are pragmatic markers in Oprah’s speech, which reflect a skeptical attitude. These responses have what CNs call ‘implicatures,’ meaning that the recipient is expected to infer that the woman does not believe Aaron’s story. Her questioning keeps Aaron personally accountable and tries to make him keep a positive persona. However, for him to explain and fail without any strong reason collapses his credibility.

Text: 3

“Opera: You do not remember.

Aaron: I remember.

Opera: Because you are accused of battering her,

Aaron: I know.

Opera: With a marble rolling pin,

Aaron: I know.

Opera: And then dragging her body in a comforter and placing it in the car,

Aaron: I know,

Opera: And she then somehow, after being battered with the rolling pin, becomes conscious,

Aaron: I know.

Opera: And you are accused and pled guilty.

Aaron: I did.

Opera: Okay, then hitting her with a rock and then strangling her with the seatbelt.

Aaron: Yeah, and I'm telling you ...

Opera: And you're gonna now sit here and tell me you don't remember that?

Aaron: Not"

In Text 3, Oprah directly states the chronology of violent acts committed by Aaron, then realia one by one to him. When Aaron says, "I know," repeatedly, he accepts Oprah's story, but at the same time, he attempts not to pay much attention to the truth. That reply is an obvious effort to deflect the blame even though he is told he pleaded guilty.

Oprah's account of the terminology and particularization ("battering her with a marble rolling pin," "dragging her body in a comforter") is about bald-on-record, another approach WHO targets to make Aaron face the reality of his deeds. This strategy removes any possible way that Aaron would alter reality and keep himself from recognizing the events of his crime.

His response, of severing any connection with Oprah, which was "Absolutely not," to her rhetorical question, "Are you now asserting that you have no recollection of any of that?" acts as the final stage of his evasion narrative. He contradicts his previous assertions, 'I know,' in this case, he violates the quality maxim established earlier. Therefore, In this case, Oprah's rhetorical question acts as a scolding as she exposes Aaron as a liar and contradicts his attempt at posturing. Its purpose is that through her questions, her primary interest is not in obtaining new information but in questioning his lies.

Text: 4

"Opera: Tell me what happened.

Aaron: She chased me out of the kitchen; she swung at me in the kitchen with the rolling pin. And I'll be very honest: at times, I wish I would have put my hands down and let her hit me. I ran"

Again, Oprah goes straight to the point and orders Aaron to tell her exactly what happened. "Tell me what happened" is a bald-on-record assertiveness prompt that she most likely used to avoid any possible run-around and obfuscation. That is why emotion is from the reception side, and Oprah excludes any attempts Aaron might make to come up with an emotional justification. This directness also removes any possibility on the part of the character Aaron to twist the facts or even make facts for appearance's sake.

Aaron's response, however, also impliedly tries to shift the blame. When recounting his actions, he also uses an apology beforehand by saying, "The following is going to sound harsh at times; I'll be very honest at times." This is an offloading technique aimed at making Oprah believe he did not act intentionally when it was planned. Nevertheless, this statement remains in gross violation of the Maxim of Quality. This is while it serves to deceive because it cloaks otherwise wicked actions in the garb of so-called honesty. When laying himself as a man who wished he had let Naomi contact him to hit him, Aaron plans to deceive Oprah into believing he never intended to harm, thereby evading culpability for the murder.

Text: 5

"Aaron: The thing I remember.

Opera: You're telling me, you're telling me, Aaron, you do not remember taking the rolling pin and hitting her with the rolling pin.

Opera: (narrates) In his confession, Aaron told police that he grabbed the rolling pin and struck Naomi twice because

she was fighting back.

Aaron: I remember nothing from that.”

Aaron is still creating a lot of unnecessary warding off by giving ambiguous answers most of the time. His first assertion, “The thing I remember,” does not give any tangible or implicating information; it fails the Maxim of Quantity in every way possible. Oprah seems to know when he avoids answers and immediately poses blunt questions. By repeating, “You’re telling me,” Karen questions Aaron and stresses to him the contradiction of the story.

Oprah then goes on to play Principle Aaron’s police confession, where he confesses to hitting Naomi with the rolling pin. This bare-on-record declaration defeats Aaron’s defense that he suffered from memory loss. In this way, Oprah manipulatively utilizes facts so that Aaron cannot evade the blame for one second. That’s why the contrast between his words, “I just wanted to say that I remember nothing from that,” and the words he said earlier violates the Maxim of Quality, as he lies.

Aaron’s simulation of ignorance after the expiation is trying to disown himself from the repercussions of confessing. His behavior also frustrates Oprah because his decision to deny the facts attacks her positive face by trying to belittle her authority and credibility in the Interview. This concern shows how he persists in breaching the Maxims of Quality and, more so, quantity, which necessitates discrediting any reliability to his claims as he strives to manipulate.

Text: 6

“Opera: You don’t remember putting a body in a comforter and dragging it to the car?”

Aaron: I... I...

Opera: Do you remember that?

Aaron: I do not... things become dreamlike.”

Oprah’s options are a rhetorical question, ‘You don’t remember putting a body in a comforter and dragging it to the car?’ represents Oprah’s frustration with Aaron’s shifting and unresponsive responses. They also use a record approach; she reads him the lines, all of which she supports with police evidence. Oprah pins Aaron down through this kind of question formulation, knowing he cannot effectively deny the event’s occurrence. While using this appeal, he is discredited, and his favorable image of self is defeated.

Aaron immediately stammered out, “I...” I...,” which reveals that he is unsure and afraid of coming to the truth, the truth he wants to deny. The fact that he still uses ‘become’ to attempt to put the preferable tense is still evident, as is the dreamlike assertion when he says, ‘Things become dreamlike.’ Here, Aaron tries to achieve estheticization by using the dream as a metaphor, implying the impossibility of his actions and actions in general as in a dream. This comparison directly violates the Maxim of Quality, as Aaron’s story is not only a lie but a lie meant to deceive.

In addition, Aaron’s response does not include specific or informative information, thus violating the Maxim of Quantity. Instead of explaining the situation to the audience, he raises more confusion about whether he had forgotten something in the event. Metaphor also goes against the Maxim of Manner because it creates extra obscurity, making his statements more difficult to understand. Lastly, Aaron, in turn, shifts the context of discussion into a non-relevant area (dreams), thus mocking the Maxim of Relationship. His actions were forced, involuntary ones towards his spouse. This metaphor breaks the rule according to the Quality maxim.

Text: 7

“Aaron: The dreamlike part is, I remember, saying, I’ve got to help her. I tried to...

Opera: I’ve got to help her! That’s why you dragged her to the car?

Aaron: Yes. I am..., yes... I tried lifting her, but I couldn’t

Opera: Uh- huh!

Aaron: She was heavy.

Opera: Uh-huh!

Aaron: I knew I had to get her downstairs.

Opera: Uh-huh!

Aaron: It was a two-story house.

Opera: Okay!

Aaron: That was how I got her,

Opera: in the car?"

Aaron remains as consistent as ever in deferring and procrastinating for another way of avoiding responsibility for his actions. By this, Aaron gives a long-winded explanation about another staff member's mistake while never accepting responsibility for his own. He says he forcibly tried to 'assist' her, and he goes ahead to describe how he moved Naomi's dead body to his car. That is why his statement about trying to help her instead of calling an ambulance or seeking medical help is rather an attempt to justly justify the severity of the actions, as he had already beaten her brutally. This attempt at justification denies the validity of the Maxim of quality because Aaron's rationale is far from plausible and could simply be construed as self-justifying.

Oprah replies that I have to assist her! This is why you dragged her to the car?" is an example of an ironic expression. Such repetition reveals the absurdity of Aaron's attempt at an excuse, as echoed by her. Oprah uses irony by repeating his phrase and then challenging the reason he came up with it in the first place. The lady's response is exclamatory, showing her disbelief as she asks questions to deride Aaron's logic. This also shows that Aaron is shifting the blame while Oprah slowly eliminates his story.

Oprah has startled reactions to Aaron's words with nods and 'uh-huh' and 'okay' filled with doubt. These interruptions occur several times and parody her disbelief and Aaron's story. Aaron continues using vague material like jig-sawed answers like describing Naomi as "heavy" or saying he "had to get her downstairs," which is equally inapplicable to the Maxim of Manner since it introduces annoying qualifiers. This is true because not only does he constantly derail or avoid answering questions outright and give evasive answers, which does not help the conversation be relevant to the topic at hand, which violates the Maxim of Quantity because he is not being truthful and cagey, keeping important information to himself.

Text: 8

"Opera: (addressing Aaron) See, the reason why I'm not believing this is because you put her in the car,

Aaron: I could...

Opera: You then clipped her again with a rock, you then strangled her,

Aaron: I don't think ... (silence)

Opera: And left her there in the car.

Aaron: I cannot...

Opera: Not only that, you pulled her pants down. So it would look like somebody else had done it.

Aaron: I don't remember any of it.

Opera: You don't remember any of it!

Aaron: I'm telling you the truth.

Opera: There is no excuse for what you did.

Aaron: There is none, I agree."

Aaron has violated the Maxim of quality and consistently denies his misdeeds despite concrete proof. He even says that he doesn't recall any of it, contrary to statements he had made to the police earlier, and thus takes part in shifting blame. This also violates another presupposition in the Maxim of Quantity; to provide accurate information, Lex could give vague answers about his actions and responsibilities to avoid the truth by playing amnesia.

With Aaron shifting the blame and trying to avoid the issue, Oprah turns up the heat, using more and more appeals to press the issue and get Gary to own up. Her literal words, "A you were putting her in the car," When Aaron tries to dodge responsibility by pretending not to know what the other people did to Naomi next, her next shockers are: You strangled her

with a rock, you tore off her pants, and You almost choked her – all are aimed at bringing him to his senses. Any of them is a substantive charge against Aaron, making it even more difficult for him to downplay or dismiss the evidence against him. When Aaron says, ‘I could...’ and ‘I don’t think...’ he is just halfway in responding to the crime, or if not, he is not willing to, fully. Short breaks in his speaking demonstrate that he tries to think of a proper counterargument and is violating the Maxim of Manner as he becomes increasingly unclear and unhelpful.

Aaron’s “I’m telling you the truth” is also unparallel to the Quality maxim because his denial contradicts other confessions and the facts. By the end, Oprah gets to the story’s moral when she says, ‘There is no excuse for what you did.’ It is important to note that because of this declaration, which Aaron failed to address, it is incorrect to justify his misconduct. Aaron’s reply, “There is none, I agree,” looks like a genuine surrender, though it is quite infrequent in the narrative. Nevertheless, even in this concession, there is no real depth of feeling, no hint of repentance in Aaron’s final statement: ‘I have a plan;’ Still, there is plenty of self-interest and further evidence that Aaron’s death mask may be a vain effort to resume his policy of avoidance.

7. Comparison with Other Interviews

In the given case, Aaron’s answers are often unclear and encompassing, and he often says that he did not understand some of the implications of the described actions or does not remember. This way, he can justify not admitting something, avoiding lying bald in the middle, yet he is somewhat escaping responsibility. Similarly, in interviews, e.g., politicians during the Watergate scandal, which involved then-US president Richard Nixon, would avoid clear accountability. Nixon often used terms such as ‘I don’t recall’ and was vague enough to make it seem like he made much less contribution. It prevented the Interviewers from detailing him, thus creating a hazy scenario that created doubt about his level of involvement.

Examining Aaron’s communication style more closely, the audience can see that whenever Oprah raises an uncomfortable topic, he immediately tries to shift focus to the context surrounding him and other people’s behaviour to distract from actual decisions that, one might assume, he made. A similar approach is observed with such celebrities as Lance Armstrong during his interview with Oprah. It was noted that when Armstrong was on the receiving end of doping allegations, he often shifted focus to talk about professional cycling pressures and the general competition culture. It assisted him in presenting his actions as being of a system rather than a personal lapse, thus decentralizing his liability.

Throughout the interview, Aaron hesitates, avoiding eye contact, shifting in their seat, and taking a long time to answer questions, as evidenced by Aaron’s interview. His nonverbal communication implies that he is minimizing information, which makes verbal communication more of an illusion. A similar example can be seen in Bill Clinton’s television interviews on the Monica Lewinsky scandal. Clinton’s non-verbal communication, especially the phrase “I did not have sexual relations with that woman,” consolidated by the expressionless face and shrugged shoulders, was studied as non-mimetic evasion. His non-verbal communication was rebellious and welcoming; as such, this was a clear way of avoiding other questions that could be asked of him.

8. Conclusion

Examination of interview transcriptions shows that criminals use a strategic violation of the maxims of Grice’s Cooperative Principle to use indexical communication and avoid responsibility. Through managing the Maxims of Quality, Manner, Quantity, and Relevance, such persons as Aaron in this study’s context successfully skew responsibility and, therefore, work at developing hidden meanings that mask their real intents. As seen in Aaron’s responses, this strategy involves deliberate non-cooperation, usually coupled with rejecting the interviewer’s request for factual information that would ease the fact-finding process.

Aaron and Oprah’s conversation also reveals the important issue of the power relations bound to these interviews. Some of Oprah’s questions are tough, and much of her language is sarcastic, leading Aaron to the defensive side escalating the conversation’s conflict. Therefore, This push-pull relationship forms the basis of how face threatening acts are managed and can be used to show that each participant seeks to maintain or contest social and moral status. Finally, this work shows

how violating the principle of conversation in high-stakes interviews is a practical way of managing the impression. Through analyzing such pathogen strategy, this present research enriches the understanding of the process by which people avoid guilt, for the development of qualitative study on human communication in conflict.

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