



## CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE IN DEFAMATION CASES: A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to uncover the implicit meanings contained in the utterances produced by Isa Zega in the defamation case against Shandy Purnamasari on social media by employing a pragmatic approach, specifically Grice's theory of conversational implicature. The research data were obtained from video content and excerpts of Isa Zega's statements circulating on TikTok, Instagram, and other online media platforms. A qualitative descriptive method was applied, with data analysis techniques focusing on identifying violations of conversational maxims that generate implicit meanings or implicatures. The findings indicate that Isa Zega employed various forms of conversational implicature that violated the maxims of quality, relevance, and manner to indirectly convey accusations or insults toward Shandy Purnamasari. Utterances such as name distortions, personal insinuations, and unsupported claims were used as covert communicative strategies that undermine the reputation of the targeted individual. These results demonstrate that pragmatic analysis, particularly implicature, plays a crucial role in revealing hidden intentions in defamation cases and may further contribute to forensic linguistic studies. In the context of language education, this study provides authentic discourse examples that can be utilized in teaching pragmatics, helping students develop critical awareness of implicit meaning, communicative ethics, and language use in legal and social media contexts.

**Keywords:** *Implicature, Maxim, Defamation, Pragmatics, Language Education.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Birner (2025), pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that investigates meaning in relation to the situational context of utterances. Language does not merely function as a tool for conveying explicit information; it also carries implicit meanings that listeners interpret through social, cultural, and situational cues. In pragmatics, this phenomenon is known as implicature an implied meaning that is not directly stated by the speaker but can be inferred by the hearer through logical

reasoning. The concept was introduced by Slavin (2019) through his theory of maxims and the Cooperative Principle, which explains how speakers and listeners collaborate to understand the underlying intentions within an utterance. Jenks and Lee (2020) further explains that implicature reflects the relationship between a speaker's utterance and the hearer's response, in which the intended meaning is not explicitly delivered but understood through its concealed or implied form.

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Applied linguistics is a branch of linguistic inquiry that focuses on identifying and addressing real-world issues related to language use across various contexts. One of its subfields is forensic linguistics, a discipline that examines language use in legal settings and forensic investigations (Susanthi, 2021). A particularly relevant type of linguistic data in forensic analysis is speech or utterances associated with defamation cases. Such cases provide rich linguistic material for uncovering meaning, intention, and legal consequences arising from language use in public communication. The connection between implicature and forensic linguistics is evident in situations where a speaker may not deliver a direct insult yet conveys defamatory implications implicitly.

In Indonesia, the legal framework regulating defamation in digital spaces is outlined in the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE) No. 11 of 2008, specifically Article 27(3). This provision states that any individual who intentionally and without authorization distributes, transmits, or makes accessible electronic information containing elements of insult or defamation is considered to have committed an unlawful act. The regulation demonstrates that delivering or disseminating insulting messages or defamatory content through electronic media regardless of form constitutes a legally punishable offense. Consequently, defamation conducted via digital platforms is categorized as a legal violation subject to judicial processing.

In line with technological developments, social media has become a major medium for delivering such content, including platforms like TikTok, which facilitates the circulation of short videos. Among the widely publicized defamation cases in Indonesia is the dispute involving a skincare entrepreneur, Shandy Purnamasari, and a social media personality, Isa Zega. This case is particularly noteworthy because various statements circulated on social media and mass media generated allegations of

defamation. The utterances used in this case exhibit pragmatic features that allow for the interpretation of harmful implied meanings directed at one party.

The defendant, Isa Zega binti Arsadul Zega, was reported to have produced several pieces of content on Instagram Stories, Reels, and TikTok containing alleged defamatory and slanderous remarks toward Shandy Purnamasari. In these posts, the defendant repeatedly distorted the name of the MS Glow product into “MS GLOW” and referred to Shandy Purnamasari by the nickname “Shaun the Sheep.” In May 2025, the Kepanjen District Court in Malang declared Isa Zega guilty and sentenced her to 3.5 years of imprisonment for defamation disseminated through TikTok. Presiding Judge Ayun Kristianto, S.H., M.Hum., stated that the charges under Article 45(10a) juncto 27B(2a) of Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE) were proven in the defamation committed by the defendant.

From the perspective of language education, understanding conversational implicature is essential for developing learners’ pragmatic competence. By analyzing authentic cases such as defamation discourse on social media, students can be trained to recognize implicit meanings, indirect accusations, and violations of conversational maxims in real-life communication. This knowledge equips learners with critical language awareness, enabling them to interpret media texts more responsibly, avoid pragmatic misunderstandings, and use language ethically in social and legal contexts. Therefore, pragmatic analysis of implicature not only contributes to forensic linguistics but also offers valuable pedagogical insights for teaching language use beyond grammatical accuracy.

Given these circumstances, this case becomes a compelling subject for further linguistic investigation using a pragmatic approach, particularly in examining the

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implicatures conveyed by Isa Zega in her statements.

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Studies on implicature within the field of pragmatics have been extensively discussed in previous research, particularly regarding the application of Grice's theory in analyzing implied meanings in utterances. Tran et al. (2024) introduced the concept of conversational implicature as meaning that is not directly expressed but can be inferred through the violation or observance of conversational maxims.

In the context of online communication, several studies have identified that utterances on social media often contain offensive implicatures (Anis, 2020), as digital platforms enable messages to be delivered freely, rapidly, and with minimal control (Eko Wahyunto, 2025; Hazan et al., 2025; Srg & Usiono, 2024). Previous studies demonstrate that implicatures are frequently expressed in the form of sarcasm, irony, name distortion, and insinuation, which are used to attack particular individuals without explicitly mentioning the intended target (Ariana & Slamet, 2024; Fauziyah et al., 2023; Ismiyatin & Prayitno, 2022; Kurniawan et al., 2024; Neyarasmı & Hasbi, 2025; Veronica & Abdullah, 2024). These findings indicate that implicature can serve as a powerful linguistic tool in shaping public perception of individuals.

Meanwhile, studies on hate speech and defamation on social media from a forensic linguistic perspective have also gained significant attention (Afal, 2022; Arimi & Adewati, 2024; Imaniyah & Sulistina, 2025; Stepani et al., 2023; Suryani et al., 2021). Research by Fitria (2024), Akbar et al. (2023), Puspita (2025), and Santoso & Apriyanto (2020) shows that linguistic analysis particularly pragmatics and discourse analysis can help reveal the communicative intentions of offenders in legal cases, including through the

examination of violated maxims used to convey accusations indirectly. However, most of these studies focus primarily on identifying general elements of hate speech rather than examining implicature specifically.

In the field of language education, several studies emphasize the importance of teaching pragmatics particularly conversational implicature to enhance learners' communicative competence and critical language awareness. Instruction on implicature enables students to interpret meanings beyond literal expressions, recognize indirect intentions, and evaluate the social and ethical implications of language use (Marduqi & Prihananto, 2021; Lesiana et al., 2023; Sujati et al., 2023). Classroom-based studies show that exposure to authentic discourse, such as media texts or legal cases, helps learners develop analytical skills in identifying implied meanings, sarcasm, and persuasive strategies (Rose, 2023; Gallacher et al., 2019; Jaya et al., 2025). As a result, teaching implicature not only improves pragmatic comprehension but also fosters critical thinking, media literacy, and responsible language use in real-world communication.

Thus, a research gap remains to be addressed, namely the limited number of studies that draw on real data from viral cases such as Isa Zega's utterances toward Shandy Purnamasari which can provide concrete examples of how implicatures are employed as communicative strategies that potentially damage an individual's reputation. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by conducting a pragmatic analysis of Isa Zega's utterances using Grice's theory of implicature to uncover the implied meanings that contribute to defamation. This study is expected to offer academic contributions not only to pragmatic studies but also to the development of forensic linguistics in the context of social media.

**3. METHODS**

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This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach grounded in pragmatic theory, particularly Grice's theory of conversational implicature (Tisdell et al., 2025; Neuman, 2019). This approach aims to identify and analyze the implicit meanings embedded within the utterances produced by the parties involved in the defamation case between Isa Zega and Shandy Purnamasari. By focusing on pragmatic interpretation, the study seeks to reveal how implied meanings contribute to the construction of defamatory content in digital communication.

The data for this study consist of linguistic expressions obtained from video uploads, online media excerpts, and public statements circulating on social media platforms (Instagram, YouTube, TikTok) as well as digital news outlets. The collected data include utterances both direct and indirect related to the conflict between Isa Zega and Shandy Purnamasari, particularly those that potentially contain implicatures or elements of defamation.

The data were gathered using documentation techniques and non-participatory observation of relevant digital content. The researcher identified utterances that exhibit potential defamatory elements and implicatures directly linked to the primary data source, namely the statements made by Isa Zega that were considered defamatory toward Shandy Purnamasari. Video transcripts were also used as primary material in the analytical process. The analysis focused on examining the pragmatic meanings, implicit messages, and conversational implicatures present within the selected utterances.

In relation to language education, the methodological procedures applied in this study offer a pedagogical model for teaching pragmatics, particularly conversational implicature. By engaging with authentic defamation discourse from social media, learners can develop pragmatic competence, critical thinking skills, and ethical awareness of language use in digital and legal contexts.

Thus, the methods employed in this study not only serve research purposes but also support the application of pragmatic analysis as an effective approach to language education.

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A pragmatic approach particularly the analysis of implicature forms the theoretical foundation of this study. According to Grice, (as cited in Rhamadani et al., 2022), implicature refers to a general term in pragmatics used to denote implied meaning that differs from the literal or semantic meaning based on the truth conditions of an utterance. Grice classifies implicatures into two types: conventional implicatures and conversational implicatures. Both serve to convey meanings that extend beyond what is explicitly articulated. However, conventional implicatures have stable meanings that remain constant regardless of context, whereas conversational implicatures are dynamic and context-dependent, allowing their meanings to shift according to the situation in which the utterance is produced.

Implicature arises in an utterance when certain conversational principles are violated. These conversational principles, which function as guidelines for both speakers and hearers, are essential for ensuring effective communication. They include the Cooperative Principle as well as politeness principles in language use (Johnson & Johnson, 2018).

Based on the analysis of selected video clips and excerpts of statements made by Isa Zega circulating on TikTok, Instagram, and various online media platforms, several utterances were identified as containing conversational implicatures. These utterances do not explicitly mention names or make direct accusations; instead, they implicitly guide public opinion toward forming a negative image of Shandy Purnamasari. This interpretation aligns with the testimony of a linguistic expert presented in court, Andik Yulianto, S.S., M.Si., a forensic linguistics specialist and lecturer at the Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Surabaya.

Table 1. Utterances

Utterance	Type of Implicature	Context
<p>“<i>Shandy Shaun the Sheep ini tidak mau mengotori tangannya, tapi membalaskan suatu kejahatan melalui tangan orang lain. Anda sangat licik sekali Shandy Shaun the Sheep. Shandy ajalah ya diperjelas saja. Apa? Marah Anda?...</i>”</p> <p>[<i>Shandy Shaun the Sheep</i> does not want to get her hands dirty, but she retaliates for a wrongdoing through someone else. You are very cunning, <i>Shandy Shaun the Sheep</i>. Let’s just clarify it Shandy, are you angry?]</p>	Conversational implicature through maxim violation	The repeated use of “ <i>Shandy Shaun the Sheep</i> ,” within the same utterance refers to the owner of a skincare business, thus implicitly pointing to Shandy Purnamasari.
<p>“<i>Ternyata di balik huru hara owner skincare ini ada dalangnya, dalangnya si MS GLOW dia sakit hati karena brand dia udah gak laku lagi</i>”</p> <p>[It turns out that behind all the chaos caused by this skincare owner, there is a mastermind <i>MS GLOW</i>. She is upset because her brand is no longer selling well.]</p>	Conversational implicature through maxim violation	The phrase “the chaos caused by this skincare owner” refers to Shandy Purnamasari, which is further emphasized by the distorted brand name “ <i>MS GLOW</i> ,” a mockery of the <i>MS Glow</i> brand owned by Shandy.
<p>“<i>Bersumpah di al-qur’an suruh mereka bersumpah di al-qur’an apalagi shaundesip itu lagi bunting kujamin mau gak...</i>”</p> <p>[Make them swear on the Qur’an tell them to swear on the Qur’an, especially that <i>shaundesip</i> who is pregnant, I guarantee she won’t dare...]</p>	Conversational implicature through maxim violation	The expression “ <i>shaundesip</i> who is pregnant,” combining the nickname <i>shaundesip</i> with “pregnant,” implicitly refers to Shandy Purnamasari, who was indeed pregnant at the time.

Based on the analysis of the utterances produced by Isa Zega, each data point demonstrates the presence of conversational implicatures that arise from violations of Gricean maxims. Such violations are sometimes intentionally made to generate implicature hidden meanings that go beyond the literal content of an utterance. In many cases, violations of the Maxim of Quality are deliberately employed as a rhetorical strategy to mock, insult, or disparage others (Jumeneng, 2012).

#### Data 1

“*Shandy Shaun the Sheep ini tidak mau mengotori tangannya, tapi membalaskan suatu kejahatan melalui tangan orang lain. Anda sangat licik sekali Shandy Shaun the Sheep. Shandy ajalah ya diperjelas saja. Apa? Marah Anda?...*” [Shandy *Shaun the Sheep* does not want to get her hands dirty, but she retaliates through someone else’s hands. You are very cunning, *Shandy Shaun the Sheep*.

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Let's clarify it Shandy. What? Are you angry?...].

According to Grice's theory, implied meaning or implicature emerges when the speaker violates the Cooperative Principle, yet the hearer can still infer the speaker's intended message through contextual cues and logical reasoning. The utterance above reveals several maxim violations that generate implicit meanings.

First, the expression "*What? Are you angry?*" constitutes a violation of the Maxim of Relevance, as it is not literally relevant to the preceding statements. However, implicitly, the question conveys a challenge or provocation, suggesting that the speaker is aware that the utterance is offensive and is intentionally provoking a reaction from Shandy or the public. This strengthens the inference that the speaker deliberately produces provocative language.

The repetition of the nickname "*Shandy Shaun the Sheep*" also carries significant pragmatic implications. The use of the label "*Shaun the Sheep*" a widely known animated character depicted as a sheep functions as a derogatory nickname intended to belittle the target. The distortion of Shandy's identity through a mocking alias constitutes an implied insult, strengthening the defamatory tone of the utterance by attacking personal dignity in a non-literal yet recognizable manner.

**Data 2**

*"Ternyata di balik huru hara owner skincare ini ada dalangnya, dalangnya si MS Glow dia sakit hati karena brand dia udah gak laku lagi"*. [It turns out that behind all the chaos caused by this skincare owner, there is a mastermind MS Glow. She is upset because her brand is no longer selling well].

The speaker implies that Shandy Purnamasari is the mastermind (*dalang*) behind certain conflicts and that she acts out of personal frustration over the declining popularity of her product. This utterance

demonstrates a violation of the Maxim of Quality, which, according to Grice (1975), states: "*Do not say what you believe to be false; do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.*"

The claims that someone is "upset" (*sakit hati*) and that their brand is "no longer selling well" are speculative evaluations presented without factual support. The emotional judgment lacks objective evidence, thereby constituting an evaluative attack rather than a factual assertion.

Furthermore, the distorted product name "*MS Glow*" a mockery of *MS Glow* functions as a linguistic strategy to guide the audience toward an implicit conclusion regarding the identity of the person being accused. This utterance constitutes a conversational implicature, as the speaker does not explicitly accuse Shandy, but encourages the audience to infer the intended meaning based on contextual cues and the linguistic distortion used.

Through this strategy, the utterance conveys indirect allegations and negative evaluations, enabling the speaker to criticize and defame implicitly rather than explicitly.

**Data 3**

*"Bersumpah di al-qur'an suruh mereka bersumpah di al-qur'an apalagi shaundesip itu lagi bunting kujamin mau gak..."* [Make them swear on the Qur'an tell them to swear on the Qur'an, especially that *shaundesip* who is pregnant, I guarantee she won't dare...].

This utterance is produced in a context of conflict and accusations directed at an individual referred to as "*shaundesip*," a phonetic distortion of "*Shandy Purnamasari*." The phrase "*shaundesip who is pregnant*" violates the Maxim of Quality, as the speaker asserts personal information in an accusatory tone without providing evidence, despite the confident stance indicated by the word "*guarantee*." According to the Indonesian dictionary (KBBI), *menjamin* refers to expressing

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something as true, further intensifying the speaker's presumption of correctness.

The nickname "*shaundesip*" serves as a mocking alias, functioning as an implicit insult intended to demean the target. At the same time, the reference to pregnancy although factually accurate according to court testimony operates as a personal, sensitive detail exploited for rhetorical attack.

Additionally, the invocation of religious authority (*swearing on the Qur'an*) is used as a form of social pressure, implying that the target would not dare to take such an oath, thus shaping public opinion that the accused person is dishonest or untrustworthy.

This utterance constitutes a conversational implicature that relies on implicit accusation, religious framing, and personal ridicule to guide the audience toward negative conclusions without stating them directly.

The findings of this study contribute to language education, especially in teaching pragmatics and critical language awareness. The utterances analyzed in this research provide real examples of conversational implicature in digital communication. They show how implied meanings can be used to persuade, insult, or defame others without being stated directly. These examples can be used in language classrooms to help students improve their critical listening and interpretation skills.

Through the analysis of defamation discourse on social media, teachers can help students identify violations of conversational maxims, understand indirect accusations, and recognize how language is used strategically to influence public opinion. In addition, using real cases from media and legal contexts can increase students' awareness of the ethical and social impacts of language, particularly in online communication. Integrating implicature analysis into language teaching also strengthens students' media literacy and critical thinking skills. Students become more capable of evaluating information, identifying implicit bias or

manipulation in digital discourse. Therefore, the pragmatic analysis of conversational implicature in this study not only supports forensic linguistic research but also offers practical value for language education in today's media-oriented society.

**5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis of Isa Zega's utterances in the defamation case involving Shandy Purnamasari, it can be concluded that conversational implicature functions as the primary mechanism for conveying implicit meanings that may potentially undermine an individual's reputation. The utterances analyzed in this study demonstrate systematic violations of Grice's maxims particularly the maxims of quality and relevance to deliver accusations indirectly. Through linguistic strategies such as the use of mocking nicknames, name distortions, and unsupported claims, the speaker not only expresses personal evaluations but also strategically shapes public perception of the targeted individual. These findings confirm that pragmatic analysis, especially implicature analysis, is highly relevant in forensic linguistics for uncovering communicative intentions that are not explicitly stated in legal and media discourse.

Beyond its contribution to forensic linguistics, this study holds important implications for language education. The findings highlight the need to teach learners how implicit meanings operate in real-world communication, particularly in digital and legal contexts. By incorporating authentic cases of conversational implicature, such as defamation discourse from social media, educators can help students develop critical listening and reading skills, enabling them to identify hidden intentions, indirect accusations, and persuasive strategies embedded in language use. Such pedagogical applications can enhance students' pragmatic competence, media literacy, and ethical awareness in communication. Therefore, this study underscores the value of integrating pragmatic analysis into language education to prepare learners to navigate complex social

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interactions responsibly and critically in contemporary digital environments.

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