

**A PRAGMATIC STUDY OF CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE IN  
SELECTED NOLLYWOOD FILMS**

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## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify this study was carried out by **Dorcas Iyanuoluwa OKELEJI (MISS)** with Matriculation number **ART2100296** in the department of English and Literature, Faculty of ARTS, University Of Benin, Benin City and is adequate in scope and qualify for the partial fulfillment of the B.A (Hons) degree in English and Literature.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for his grace, wisdom and strength throughout the course of this research, and to Nollywood scriptwriters, whose creativity inspired this study. I also dedicate it to everyone, including myself, who continues to pursue knowledge with passion and perseverance.

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines conversational implicature in three Nollywood films *Lionheart (2018)*, *The Wedding Party (2016)*, and *King of Boys (2018)* focusing on how dialogue conveys implied meaning and reflects Nigerian cultural values. Using a qualitative approach and Grice's Cooperative Principle as an analytical framework, the research identifies instances where characters flout the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. The study highlights the role of linguistic elements such as proverbs, code-switching, innuendo, idioms, and humor in creating and interpreting conversational implicatures. Findings reveal how indirect speech shapes character development, advances plot progression, and reinforces thematic concerns, including hierarchy, social negotiation, and interpersonal relationships. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of pragmatic meaning in Nollywood cinema and demonstrates how Nigerian filmmakers employ dialogue to communicate cultural, social, and narrative significance.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Purpose of Study

This study seeks to explore how conversational implicature functions within selected Nollywood films, specifically, *Lionheart*, *The Wedding Party* and *King of Boys*. By analysing the dialogues, the research seeks to uncover the ways implied meanings are constructed and interpreted by characters and audiences, and to examine how cultural and linguistic elements influence these meanings by contributing to narrative development, character portrayal, and reflection of Nigeria cultural values.

#### 1.2 Background of the Study

Charles Morris (1901-1979), an American philosopher and semiotician, introduced the term “pragmatic” as part of his theory of science. He defined it as the study of the relationship between signs and their users, essentially how meaning is shaped by context and use. Basically, pragmatics simply use language in context. It is concerned with understanding how meaning goes beyond what is explicitly stated in everyday conversation.

One of the key concepts in pragmatics is conversational implicature. It refers to what a speaker means that is not explicitly stated, based on the context of the conversation. Conversational implicature therefore highlights what is “said” and what is “meant”, which portrays communication as more than just a simple exchange of words. Understanding conversational implicature is important in the Nollywood industry as dialogues presented often carry hidden meaning, humour, proverbs, idioms, and social commentaries etc. different from normal day-to-day communication.

Paul Grice, a British philosopher of language, whose work made a huge impact on the

field of pragmatics, especially how people communicate meaning beyond the literal meaning of words, was interested in how speakers communicate meaning to listeners and how listeners interpret these implied meanings, which was why he emphasized that communication is not just about what is explicitly said but what is suggested or implied in a particular context.

Grice introduces the concept of conversational implicature to explain this phenomenon. He argues that in everyday conversation speakers often implied more than what they directly state while listeners in turn, use their own innate understanding to get what the speaker meant to say. For instance, when someone says “it is getting late” the implied meaning might be that the speaker is suggesting that it is time to leave, even when they did not explicitly say “let us go”.

To understand how this implicature works, Grice introduces his theory of cooperative principle which assumes that participants in a conversation generally aim to cooperate in order to make communication effective. He introduced four Maxims to buttress his point: Maxim of Quantity, Maxim of Quality, Maxim of Relation and Maxim of Manner.

In the maxim of quantity, speakers are to give adequate information for the listener to understand but not so much that it becomes irrelevant. It builds on the principle of “say neither too little or too much”. For example:

Jennifer: Where is the meeting?

Dorcas: It is in room 203, on the second floor.

Here “Dorcas” provides sufficient information without unnecessarily giving too many details about the rooms interior design.

In the maxim of quality, it focuses on truthfulness and accuracy. A speaker should provide adequate information they believe is true and avoid false statements. It builds on the

principle of “do not say what you believe to be false”

The maxim of relation emphasizes that contribution should be important to ongoing conversation, that is, when a speaker engages in a conversation, he or she should try to stay in line within the topic discussion rather deviating to irrelevant matters which can confuse the listeners or disrupt communication. For example, Speaker A might ask a question on “do you know what time the movie start?” Speaker B might reply with “I like popcorn and ice-cream” which is completely irrelevant and violates the maxim of relation as the relevant answer to that question should be “yes, it starts at 7pm.”

In the maxim of manner, the speaker expresses themselves clearly and organizes their messages in an understandable way. Here, ambiguity, obscure language, and complicated sentences are avoided to help the listener interpret meaning correctly.

With Grice’s introduction of the maxims, one is able to understand how people convey meaning indirectly and how listeners recognise and interpret the meaning which is important and useful for analysing dialogue in films and other communicative contexts.

In the context of Nollywood films, Grice’s theory of cooperative principle allows one to examine how characters in Nollywood films communicate their intentions, culture and social norms often depending on conversational implicature rather than explicit statement.

### **1.3 Objective of Study**

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify and classify the types of conversational implicatures present in the dialogue of *Lionheart*, *The Wedding Party* and *King of Boys*.
2. Examine how cultural and linguistic elements, such as code-switching, proverbs, innuendo, and humour, influence the creation and interpretation of implicatures in these

films.

3. Examine how conversational implicatures reveal themes and reflect Nigerian cultural values through narrative and character interactions.

#### **1.4 Statement of Problem**

While many scholars explore conversational implicature, they usually examine literary works such as novels, political speeches, and everyday conversations. This paper focuses on Nollywood, a significant yet often neglected field. As one of Africa's largest cultural producers, Nollywood provides a rich insight into Nigerian society. Ignoring this area makes it harder to understand the implied meanings in scripted film dialogue. Film dialogue showcases culture and reflects societal norms, values, and identity. It differs from day-to-day conversation because it's designed to support the story and themes. This valuable yet often overlooked source is ideal for pragmatic analysis. Studying conversational implicature in Nollywood shows how culture links to communication in Nigeria today.

#### **1.5 Research Question**

**The objectives of this study are operationalized in the following research questions:**

1. What types of conversational implicature is present in the dialogue of *Lionheart*, *The Wedding Party* and *King of Boys*?
2. How does cultural and linguistic elements, such as code-switching, proverbs, and humour, influence the creation and interpretation of implicature in these films?
3. In what way does conversational implicatures reveal themes and reflect Nigerian cultural values through narrative and character interactions.

#### **1.6 Scope of Study**

This research examines conversational implicature in three Nollywood films: *Lionheart* (2018), *The Wedding Party* (2016) and *King of Boys* (2018). These films were selected for their diverse genres which are political thriller, family drama, and romantic comedy, providing a broad range of cultural and linguistic data. The study focuses on how dialogue conveys implied meanings and reflects Nigerian cultural values within Nollywood cinema.

It analyzes dialogues that feature code-switching, proverbs, idioms, innuendos, and humor, all of which contribute to the creation of conversational implicature. While the study relies on the available subtitles and transcripts, the researcher also interprets local dialects, pidgin expressions, and culturally dynamic utterances to capture the original intent and pragmatic meaning of the speakers. The research is limited to films produced between 2016 and 2018 and is situated within Nigeria, reflecting the cultural context of the selected works while acknowledging their global audience and international reach.

The study adopts a qualitative approach, drawing on Grice's Cooperative Principle and the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner as analytical tools. The focus is restricted to dialogue excluding other cinematic elements such as cinematography or music, the chosen films provide a rich foundation for understanding conversational implicature in Nollywood and its connection to Nigerian cultural and social realities.

### **1.7 Operational Definition of Terms**

1. Pragmatic: is the field of linguistics that studies how language is used in context and how meaning is interpreted beyond the literary word spoken.
2. Conversational Implicature: It is the unspoken expression that a speaker meant in an utterance without explicitly stating them.
3. Cooperative Principle: Grice's principle that effective communication is achieved when speakers adhere to certain conversational maxims.

4. Nollywood: The Nigerian film industry, renowned for its prolific output and its reflection of diverse Nigerian cultures and experiences.
5. Maxims of Conversation: The set of rules which are: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner proposed by Grice to guide cooperative and meaningful exchanges in conversation.

### **1.8 Limitation of Study**

1. The study focuses exclusively on verbal dialogue, excluding other areas like non-verbal cues and other cinematic devices.
2. The availability and reliability of film transcripts or subtitles may affect the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the analysis.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF RELATED SCHOLARSHIP**

## **2.1 Theoretical Background**

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is grounded in H. P. Grice's theory of conversational implicature, a key concept in pragmatics. Grice first introduced this idea in his William James Lectures in 1967, later published in *Logic and Conversation* (1975). His central argument is that a speaker does not merely produce utterances; rather, their speech often conveys implied meanings beyond what is explicitly stated.

To account for this, Grice proposed the Cooperative Principle, which he defines as: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice 26). To further explain how conversation works, he outlined four conversational maxims that guide everyday interactions:

Maxim of Quantity – make your contribution as informative as required; do not provide more information than necessary (Grice 26).

Maxim of Quality – make a truthful contribution; do not say what you believe to be false.

Maxim of Relation – ensure your contribution is relevant.

Maxim of Manner – be clear, avoid ambiguity, and present information in a brief and orderly way.

Grice also argued that meaning is often generated when these maxims are deliberately flouted. For example, a speaker may withhold information, provide false statements, offer irrelevant details, or use ambiguity. When this occurs, the hearer is led to derive an

implicature, an implied meaning that goes beyond the literal words. For instance, if someone is asked their name but instead begins narrating the history of their community, such an individual has flouted the maxim of relation.

Grice's theory is particularly useful for this study because it provides a systematic framework for analyzing how implied meanings are communicated, especially in Nollywood films where dialogue is deliberately crafted to reflect social, cultural, and character relationships. The Cooperative Principle allows for an understanding of how Nigerian cultural realities are embedded in conversations, often through the use of proverbs, humour, code-switching, and cultural innuendos.

Although Grice's theory forms the primary analytical framework for this research, other scholars have expanded on his ideas. Levinson, in his work *Pragmatics* (1983), elaborates on conversational implicature by identifying the conditions under which implicatures are generated and understood. He distinguishes between generalized conversational implicatures, which do not rely on "specific contextual assumptions" (Levinson 16), and particularized conversational implicatures, which depend heavily on context (Levinson 101). Levinson's distinctions provide more detail to Grice's theory, although this study prioritizes Grice's model for its clarity and structured approach.

Similarly, Sperber and Wilson, in their *Relevance Theory* (1986), "argue that communication is driven by a single principle: the search for relevance". They contend that hearers interpret utterances by drawing on the most accessible contextual and cognitive resources (Sperber and Wilson 60). While this theory offers valuable insights into how the mind interprets utterances, this research adopts Grice's framework because its maxims provide a structured step-by-step approach for analyzing film dialogue. In summary, while

the contributions of Levinson, Sperber, and Wilson are acknowledged as part of the wider scholarship in pragmatics, this study primarily employs Grice's Cooperative Principle as its analytical framework. This choice allows for a focused examination of how conversational implicature operates in Nollywood films, thereby revealing how implied meanings reflect Nigerian cultural values and communicative strategies.

## **Conceptual Review**

**Pragmatic** is a branch of linguistics that studies how language is used in context. It is concerned with how speakers use language in interaction and how hearers interpret the utterances based on context or situation.

**Conversational implicature** refers to the implied meaning of an utterance that goes beyond what is explicitly stated. According to Grice, such meanings arise when speakers appear to violate the cooperative principle and its maxims, leading hearers to derive additional meaning that the speaker intends to communicate (Studies in the Way of Words 22–40). This makes communication richer, allowing speakers to express themselves indirectly. For this study, conversational implicature is crucial because Nollywood dialogue often incorporates proverbs, humour, code-switching, and cultural innuendos that require interpretation beyond the literal meaning.

**The Cooperative Principle and Maxim** "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice's 26) This principle is explained through four maxims: Quantity (be informative), Quality (say the truth), relation (what is relevance), and Manner (be clear, avoid ambiguity). When these maxims are deliberately flouted, implicature has occurred.

**Nollywood Films** Nigeria film industry is one of the largest film industries in the world and it reflects the social realities and cultural practices of Nigeria societies. Nollywood films

dialogue often use real life communicative patterns, blending English, pidgin, and indigenous languages together. Thus make Nollywood film a key area for studying conversational implicature, since characters in films often use sarcasm, proverbs, idioms, and humour to convey implied meaning.

## **2.2 Review of Related Scholarship**

Olaniyi and Oyinbo examine *Gricean pragmatic and English language in Nigeria*. In the study, Olaniyi and Oyinbo focus on how Nigerian expressions include implied meaning. The work shows how conversational implicature in Nigeria English rely on shared context, using the theory of pragmatic to incorporate mutual contextual belief in Nigeria discourse. Olaniyi “Without a Common Ground shared by Nigerians in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural contexture and relative affinity, accurate meaning interpretation and understanding of the English Language spoken and written by Nigerians may have been continuously unrealizable” meaning the speaker and the hearer must have a background knowledge of what is being discussed before a listener can derive meaning from an utterance.

Chioma and Chinedu Ezebube research on *Pragmatic Analysis of Conversational Implicature in Krisagbedo's ... a Darkling Plain*. The study shows that characters in Nigerian fiction often flout Grice's maxims to convey implied meaning which means the listener must derive meaning of an utterance from the context in which it is spoken. It shows that people do not often say what they mean directly and must rely on implicature for communication.

According to Odey and David *A Study of Conversational Implicature in Selected Political Interactive Programmes*. The study concludes that the implicatures identified are a reflection of some prominent Nigerian politicians who use indirectness when discussing crucial matters. The implicatures were both consciously and unconsciously used.” This means the study shows how Nigerian political speakers use indirect speech to communicate sensitive topics on TV shows.

Kinanti et al. examine how conversational implicatures are used in the American television series *Prison Break* (Episode 2). The study reveals that characters frequently flout Grice's maxims intentionally to conceal motives, express tension, or navigate power relations within the prison setting. Their findings show that particularised implicatures dominate, meaning most utterances depend heavily on situational context and shared knowledge between interlocutors (Kinanti 132). This work is useful for my research because Nollywood films often employ similar strategies, characters use indirect speech and context-dependent meanings to convey emotion, authority, or hidden intentions within culturally rich interactions.

Yang Junjiao explores how English listening comprehension among high school students can be analyzed through Grice's conversational implicature theory. By focusing on travel-related listening texts, the study shows that speakers often flout the maxims of Quantity and Manner to create implicit meanings that require listeners to infer unstated information (Yang 130). The research emphasizes that successful listening involves more than understanding words, it requires interpreting hidden intentions and contextual cues. Yang concludes that incorporating pragmatic awareness into English teaching can improve students' comprehension of implied meanings and enhance overall communicative competence.

Anggi Lastri Pinayungan, Lastri Wahyuni Manurung, and Carolina Pakpahan analyze conversational implicatures in *The Silence of the Lambs* using Grice's Cooperative Principle. Their study reveals that particularized conversational implicatures (57.8%) occur more frequently than generalized ones (42.2%), showing how meaning in film dialogue depends heavily on context and character psychology (Pinayungan et al. 1680). The research further illustrates how indirectness and subtle conversational cues heighten tension and emotional depth in character interactions, making the film a rich site for pragmatic interpretation.

Ken Ndubuisi examines how language in Nigerian home videos, popularly known as

Nollywood films, expresses pragmatic features such as context, presupposition, implicature, and the cooperative principle. Drawing on the theories of Austin, Searle, and Grice, his study explores how meaning in film dialogue is shaped not only by what is said but also by what is implied or left unsaid. Ndubuisi observes that characters in Nigerian films often flout conversational maxims to express desire, assert power, or maintain politeness, showing that communication in film mirrors real-life social interaction (Ndubuisi 12). The research deepens the understanding of how pragmatic elements contribute to character development and narrative tension in Nigerian cinematic storytelling.

Khaliq and Rahman (2022) examine *The Last Metaphor* (2014) by Usman Ali through the pragmatic framework of H. P. Grice's theory of implicature (1975). Their study explores how the dramatist deliberately flouts conversational maxims to expose deep moral and social concerns within absurdist fiction. They argue that non-compliance with conversational principles is not a linguistic failure but a conscious artistic strategy that enhances dramatic tension and stylistic richness. The researchers further observe that the dramatic and stylistic effects of the play emerge through intentional flouting of Gricean maxims, creating metaphoric meanings that transcend literal interpretation. By doing so, Ali transforms ordinary language into a vehicle for irony, sarcasm, and exaggeration all of which contribute to the play's semantic depth and interpretive complexity. Khaliq and Rahman (2022) also emphasize that the apparent violations of syntax and grammar in *The Last Metaphor* do not undermine meaning but rather extend it. The study concludes that adherence to Grice's maxims is not the only route to linguistic meaning; avoidance and creative deviation can equally yield powerful pragmatic significance. This insight establishes flouting as a purposeful stylistic device, enabling the play to achieve metaphorical and critical value.

Putri & Rahayu (2022) examine the character Maurice in the film *Beauty and the Beast* through a qualitative lens, applying H. P. Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975) and its four conversational maxims (quality, quantity, relevance, manner). The study is motivated by

a concern for efficient language use that is meaning messaging that is unambiguous, clear and inter- subjectively understood. They analyze the film's dialogues and find multiple instances where Maurice violates each of the four maxims, thereby generating implicatures that contribute to misunderstanding, dramatic tension and character complexity. Their results show that while all four maxims are breached, the maxim of quality (making truthful, evidence-supported contributions) is most frequently violated; this is followed by breaches of quantity, relevance and manners. The authors argue that such violations are not random communication failures but deliberate pragmatic strategies that enrich the narrative via implicature and contribute to the film's expressive effect.

**Justification of Study:** Although studies have shown how conversational implicature operates in Nigerian everyday conversation, politics, literature, little attention has been paid to Nollywood films despite its wide cultural influences. They have not been studied as a site where implied meanings are deliberately scripted and conveyed. This study is justified because it is closing the gap by examining how Nollywood dialogue reflects socio-cultural patterns of indirectness and shared context as a significant part of Nigerian communication. This examines how cultural and linguistic elements influence these meanings by contributing to narrative development, character portrayal, and reflection of Nigeria cultural values.

**Thesis Statement:** The research argues that conversational implicature in Nollywood films operate through humour, proverbs, innuendo, idioms, and code switching, reflecting the cultural pattern and how meaning is often conveyed indirectly through context and shared knowledge.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

A qualitative research design is adopted in this study to enable a detailed and interpretative analysis of how conversational implicatures function within film dialogue, with particular emphasis on the contextual and cultural factors that shape communication.

### **3.2 Sampling Techniques**

This study employs purposive sampling to select scenes and dialogues from the selected films that most effectively illustrate the use of conversational implicature. Within each film, focusing on political thriller, family drama, and romantic comedy. Eight excerpts from each film are deliberately identified for analysis on the basis of their inclusion of proverbs, humour, idioms, code-switching, and cultural references, all of which provide rich material for pragmatic analysis. This deliberate selection ensures that the data reflects both the linguistic creativity of Nollywood dialogue and the socio-cultural context within which implied meanings are constructed and interpreted.

### **3.3 Method of Data Collection**

The data collected for this research is the dialogue from the selected Nollywood films. Each selected film was carefully watched, and relevant scenes that contained conversational implicature were identified. These scenes were transcribed to form the corpus and the transcripts provide the textual material for analysis, ensuring that utterances are preserved in their original linguistic and cultural context.

### **3.4 Method of Data Analysis**

The data were analysed using Paul Grice's theory of conversational implicature as the analytical framework. The transcribed dialogue was examined in relation to Grice's cooperative principle and the maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Manner.

The analysis identifies where these maxims were flouted and interpreted the implied meaning conveyed. Attention was given to the socio-cultural strategies, humour, proverb, innuendo, and idioms, in order to show how Nollywood films reflect authentic Nigerian communication practices

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis**

This section presents and analyzes the data collected from three selected Nollywood films: *Lionheart* (2018), *The Wedding Party* (2016), and *King of Boys* (2018). The analysis focuses on how conversational implicatures are used in these films to convey meanings beyond the

literal content of the dialogue.

The data are organized into three broad analytical categories:

1. It identifies instances where characters flout Grice's maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner to convey implicit meanings within dialogue.
2. It examines how Nigerian socio-cultural and linguistic elements such as code-switching, proverbs, innuendo, and humour shape the creation and interpretation of these implicatures.
3. It explores the pragmatic functions of conversational implicature in advancing the plot and developing characters, showing how indirect communication contributes to narrative tension, characterization, and thematic expression.

Selected dialogues are presented with their context, their identified implicature, and an analysis of how they flout Grice's maxims. This approach ensures that the findings are systematically examined in relation to the research objectives, providing insight into the role of conversational implicature in Nollywood films.

### **Analysis of *Lionheart* (2018)**

**Summary of the Film:** *Lionheart* (2018), directed by Genevieve Nnaji, is a Nigerian comedy drama that tells the story of Adaeze Obiagu, a young woman determined to prove her leadership ability in a male-dominated business world. When her father, Chief Ernest Obiagu, falls ill and the family's company, Lionheart Transport, faces a major financial crisis, Adaeze must work with her humorous and unconventional uncle, Chief Godswill Obiagu, to save the company from collapse.

Their partnership blends Adaeze's modern, disciplined approach with Godswill's traditional wisdom, symbolizing the union of modernity and tradition, and female ambition and male

mentorship. Together, they navigate business challenges, internal betrayal, and cultural expectations to restore the company's stability through a merger with Mikano Motors.

The film highlights key themes such as gender equality, family loyalty, cultural identity, business integrity, and national unity. It portrays Nigeria's diversity through its use of English, Igbo, and Hausa, and emphasizes communication, respect, and collaboration across regional and gender circles.

Finally, *Lionheart* celebrates female empowerment and ethical leadership, presenting Adaeze as a symbol of the new Nigerian woman, intelligent, resilient, and visionary. Through humor and strong cultural grounding, Genevieve Nnaji delivers a story of progress, unity, and the balance between old and new values in Nigeria's evolving society.

### **Excerpt 1**

**Male interviewer:** Your company, IG motors, and Lionheart are both the front runners for the recently announced Enugu state BRT contract. Sir, but of recent light of the unfortunate incident with Mr. Obiagu, do you think this puts your company at an advantage?

**Igwe Pascal:** oh, stop that young man. This is not the place or time. However, let me make this point. Our transport division is one of the most successful in the entire state. For your Information, IG motors has the capacity to take on new contracts or new companies as the case may be for the benefit of the people.

**Female interviewer:** By companies, are you referring to Lionheart company?

**Igwe Pascal:** Young woman, this is not the time, or the place, However, my deepest condolences... sorry, my best wishes to him...

**Context:** This dialogue takes place during a media interview about a competitive BRT contract in Enugu State which the two companies are both front runner of. The interviewers ask Igwe Pascal (Managing Director of IG Motors) whether the recent incident (sickness) involving Mr. Obiagu (Managing Director of Lionheart Transport Company) gives IG Motors a competitive edge over Lionheart.

**Analysis:**

Pascal flouts the maxim of Quantity by withholding detailed information about whether the incident will be in favour of his company or not, and the maxim of Relation by shifting the focus to his company's strengths rather than responding to the question. The dialogue highlights several cultural and linguistic elements. Pascal's repeated phrase, "*This is not the time or place,*" reflects politeness, showing the indirectness of Nigerian formal language. The phrase, "*Our transport division is one of the most successful in the entire state,*" uses innuendo, implying the superiority of IG Motors without directly criticizing Lionheart. These strategies demonstrate how language is carefully shaped by cultural norms to communicate meaning indirectly while maintaining professionalism.

In terms of theme development and character insight, Pascal's cautious responses reveal his strategic thinking, professionalism, and social awareness. The dialogue emphasizes the theme of competition in a professional context. It also reflects broader Nigerian cultural values, indirect communication, and tact in formal interactions, showing how conversational strategies contribute to both narrative tension and character portrayal.

**Excerpt 2**

**Adaeze:** But you said he was resting?

**Abigail Obiagu:** Don't ever come between two brothers.

**Context:**

This dialogue takes place at the Obiagu's household, Adaeze comes home intending to speak with her father about the acting Managing Director position given to her uncle. Her mother stops her from going to her father's (Chief Obiagu) room to avoid disturbing him. Meanwhile when the uncle arrives, he is given free access to the room. After the uncle leaves, Adaeze expresses her frustration, asking, "But you said he was resting?" Abigail responds, "Don't ever come between two brothers."

**Analysis:**

In this exchange, Abigail violates the maxim of Quantity by giving a brief and indirect response that does not answer Adaeze's specific question. She also violates the maxim of Relation by deviating the focus from Adaeze's inquiry to a broader warning about family dynamics, implying the potential consequences of interfering in the relationship between the brothers.

The dialogue highlights the use of innuendo to convey meaning indirectly. Abigail's statement implies the seriousness of family boundaries and the possible conflict that could arise, without explicitly stating it.

In terms of theme development and character insight, this dialogue emphasizes themes of family loyalty, and boundaries. It also portrays Abigail as a careful mediator who manages delicate situations within the household. The conversation reflects Nigerian cultural values of respect for families.

**Excerpt 3**

**Adaeze:** Uncle are you sure?

**Chief Godswill Obiagu:** Look, Ada-nna. If you want to spray insecticide on cockroaches, snakes and scorpions you take yourself, get yourself a vantage position. Here is a vantage position, so I can have my lens all over them. Don't worry.

**Context:**

This dialogue takes place at the Lionheart Transport company. Adaeze offers her uncle the use of her father's office, suggesting he take it as his own since he is the acting MD (Managing Director). Chief Godswill refuses, saying the office belongs to the chief and cannot be taken over. Adaeze is then directed to a staff area by her uncle, which prompts her to ask, "*Uncle, are you sure?*" Chief Godswill responds, "*Look, Ada-nna. If you want to spray insecticide on cockroaches, snakes, and scorpions you take yourself, get yourself a vantage position. Here is a vantage position, so I can have my lens all over them. Don't worry.*"

**Analysis:**

In this exchange, Chief Godswill flouts the maxim of Quantity by giving more information than needed and the maxim of Relation by responding with a metaphor instead of answering Adaeze's question directly. By comparing the sitting position to spraying cockroaches and scorpions, he communicates indirectly that the spot he suggests is just right for keeping an eye on things.

The dialogue also shows how Chief Godswill uses innuendo and figurative language to guide and reassure Adaeze without stating it outright. This indirect approach keeps the audience engaged while highlighting his authority and cleverness.

When it comes to themes and character, the exchange emphasizes mentorship, guidance, and supervision. Chief Godswill wise, confident, and playful, shows how his way of communicating adds tension to the story and reveals important aspects of his personality.

#### **Excerpt 4**

**Adaeze:** Good morning, Uncle.

**Chief Godswill:** You miss the morning devotion.

#### **Context:**

This dialogue takes place in Adaeze's office at Lionheart Transport company after the morning devotion. Adaeze arrives a bit late and misses the morning devotion which was made compulsory for every staff member. She greets her uncle, saying, "*Good morning, Uncle.*" Chief Godswill responds, "*You miss the morning devotion.*" Adaeze quickly apologizes, explaining that she's been busy with work.

#### **Analysis:**

Here, Chief Godswill flouts the maxim of Relation by hinting at her responsibility rather than directly reprimanding her. His words communicate disapproval while reminding her of expectations.

The dialogue shows how innuendo and understatement can be used to guide someone without being harsh. Chief Godswill's approach highlights his ability to lead with tact, while Adaeze's response shows her respect and awareness of her responsibilities.

In terms of themes and character, the exchange emphasizes accountability and mentorship. Chief Godswill is seen as wise and thoughtful, and Adaeze's reaction demonstrates her conscientiousness, showing how everyday interactions reveal character and the dynamics within the family and workplace.

#### **Excerpt 5**

**Adaeze:** You knew Uncle Godswill was coming?

**Abigail Obiagu:** Well, your daddy and I discussed it.

**Context:**

This dialogue occurs during a private conversation between Adaeze and her mother, Abigail, following the announcement that Adaeze's uncle, Chief Godswill, would serve as the acting Managing Director of Lionheart. Adaeze, surprised by her mother's composure, asks, "*You knew Uncle Godswill was coming?*" to which Abigail responds, "*Well, your daddy and I discussed it.*" The brief exchange exposes Adaeze's sense of betrayal and her mother's attempt to balance honesty with sensitivity.

**Analysis:**

Abigail's response flouts the maxim of Quantity by offering minimal information, withholding the full details of the discussion she had with her husband. This deliberate choice of words softens the emotional impact of the revelation, allowing her to avoid conflict while still answering her daughter's question.

Abigail's tone and phrasing reflect cultural restraint, values often emphasized in Nigerian family discourse, where elders communicate difficult truths indirectly to maintain respect and peace. The understated nature of her reply also carries an implicit message of loyalty, to her husband's authority and to family unity.

In terms of theme development, the dialogue reinforces the theme of loyalty and hierarchy within family and business structures. It also reflects the quiet tension between personal ambition and family obedience that shapes Adaeze's journey throughout the film. Through this exchange, the film reveals how power and decision-making in Nigerian families often operate through subtle negotiation and unspoken understanding rather than open

confrontation.

### **Excerpt 6**

**Adaeze:** We have the track record, the collateral but most importantly, we have an impeccable reputation.

**Manager:** Lionheart. Impeccable reputation indeed

**Adaeze:** I'm sorry, what's that supposed to mean.

### **Context:**

This dialogue occurs during a meeting between Adaeze, her uncle, and a loan manager as they attempt to secure financial assistance to help Lionheart pay off its debts. Adaeze speaks confidently, emphasizing the company's credibility by saying, "*We have the track record, the collateral, but most importantly, we have an impeccable reputation.*" The manager's response, "*Lionheart, impeccable reputation indeed,*" carries a sarcastic undertone, to which Adaeze retorts, "*I'm sorry, what's that supposed to mean?*"

### **Analysis:**

Here, the maxim of Quality is flouted through the manager's irony. While his words appear to affirm Adaeze's statement, his tone implies disbelief, suggesting that Lionheart's reputation is questionable. The maxim of Manner is also flouted, as the manager's sarcasm introduces ambiguity, his message is understood through tone rather than literal meaning. Adaeze's quick response reveals her discomfort and defensive stance, showing that she perceives the underlying insult.

Culturally, the exchange mirrors a common Nigerian conversational pattern where sarcasm and tone are used to express doubt or criticism indirectly. Instead of openly accusing

the company, the manager couches his skepticism in irony, maintaining professional decorum while asserting his authority.

In terms of theme and character development, this dialogue highlights credibility, confrontation, and resilience. Adaeze's assertive tone demonstrates her determination to defend the company's image, while the manager's sarcasm underscores external distrust toward her leadership. This interaction deepens the narrative tension between confidence and doubt, revealing how communicative strategies reflect both hierarchy and emotional control in Nigerian business settings.

### **Excerpt 7**

**Mrs Godswill:** Are you people feeding her?

**Abigail Obiagu:** Can't you see food everywhere. You ask if she is being fed

### **Context:**

This dialogue takes place in the Obiagu household during a dinner scene. Mrs. Godswill visits her husband, Chief Godswill, and joins the family for dinner. When Adaeze walks in, Mrs. Godswill notices her slim appearance and jokingly asks if the family has been feeding her. Mrs. Obiagu responds with mild sarcasm, pointing out the abundance of food on the table to imply that her daughter is well taken care of.

### **Analysis:**

Abigail flouts the *maxim of Relation* by giving a sarcastic reply that shifts focus from the literal question to the visible evidence around them. Her statement, "Can't you see food everywhere?" carries an implied meaning that it is unnecessary to ask such a question when the answer is obvious. The implicature suggests mild irritation or defensiveness, showing that she interprets the question as a subtle criticism of her care as a mother.

Through this exchange, the dialogue reveals social dynamics between the two women, a mix of politeness, rivalry, and protective maternal pride. It also adds a touch of humor and realism to the family interaction, showing how implicature is used to express emotions indirectly while maintaining conversational courtesy.

### **Excerpt 8**

**Adaeze:** I will tell them to set up a meeting, and then well...

**Chief Godswill:** No, no, no, no. Don't be so fast Adanna. *Ị ga-ebu ụzọ bulie osisi dị n'elu tupu nke dị n'okpuru* (You need to take the log of wood from the top before the one below).

### **Context:**

This dialogue occurs after several attempts by Adaeze and her uncle to find a solution to Lionheart Transport Company's financial struggles. Chief Godswill mentions a magazine article about Mikano Transport in Kano planning a merger with a transport company in Enugu. Adaeze, seeing this as a breakthrough, eagerly suggests setting up a meeting to finalize the deal. However, her uncle cautions her, using a proverb to remind her that some steps must be taken in proper order, particularly consulting her father, the Managing Director, before moving ahead.

### **Analysis:**

Chief Godswill flouts the maxim of Relation by responding indirectly to Adaeze's suggestion. Instead of saying plainly that she should speak to her father first, he uses a proverb: "*You need to take the log of wood from the top before the one below.*" The figurative expression implies that actions must follow a natural order of authority and procedure. Through this proverb, Chief Godswill communicates wisdom and caution while maintaining respect and subtlety. The linguistic choice reflects the pragmatic use of language to convey meaning indirectly, avoiding confrontation while ensuring understanding.

This exchange features both code-switching and the use of a proverb, reflecting linguistic richness and cultural depth. Chief Godswill switches from English to Igbo when delivering the proverb, demonstrating how bilingual expression is often used in Nigerian contexts to add emotional weight, cultural familiarity, and authority to speech. The proverb itself symbolizes wisdom and hierarchy, encouraging patience and respect for order. Through code-switching, he not only reinforces his cultural identity but also emphasizes that some meanings are best expressed in one's native language.

The dialogue emphasizes themes of leadership, mentorship, and respect for hierarchy. Chief Godswill's measured response portrays him as wise, reflective, and guided by cultural principles. His advice teaches Adaeze that leadership is not about haste but about understanding process and structure. The scene strengthens his role as a mentor while underscoring the film's broader theme that progress in both family and business requires patience, communication, and respect for authority.

### ***Analysis of The Wedding Party (2016)***

**Summary of the Film:** *The Wedding Party* (2016), directed by Kemi Adetiba, is a romantic comedy that follows the lavish yet chaotic wedding of Dunni Coker, a sweet young art gallery owner, and Dozie Onwuka, a wealthy IT entrepreneur. Their union brings together two Nigerian families from different ethnic and social backgrounds, the flamboyant, middle-class Cokers and the elite Onwukas, whose rivalry and pride create tension throughout the celebration.

What begins as a glamorous ceremony soon descends into chaos when ex-lovers, uninvited guests, and even thieves disrupt the event. Amidst the confusion and misunderstanding caused by the unexpected discovery of a pantie in Dozie's suit pocket, coupled with the scene where the wrong flash drive reveals footage of Dozie's reckless lifestyle, tension arises between

Dunni and Dozie, putting their love and trust to the test. However, Dozie's sincere apology and Dunni's forgiveness restore harmony, leading to a joyful reconciliation between both families.

The film humorously portrays the extravagance, drama, and cultural mix of Nigerian society, showing that love and understanding can triumph over pride, class differences, and unexpected chaos.

### **Excerpt 1**

**Obianuju:** Only young culture will keep people like this

**Felix:** Please, Obianuju not anymore

**Obianuju:** Felix, they had better hurry up with this or we are done.

### **Context:**

This exchange occurs at the wedding venue where the groom's parents, Obianuju and Felix, are waiting impatiently for the ceremony to begin. The bride has yet to arrive because her wedding gown tore, though the groom's mother, Obianuju, is unaware of this. Her irritation stems not only from the delay but also from her disapproval of the bride, whom she already considers unsuitable for her son. Felix, the groom's father, tries to calm her down and prevent a scene.

### **Analysis:**

Obianuju flouts the Maxim of Relation by turning a situational delay into a broader critique of "young culture," indirectly accusing the younger generation and by implication, the bride,

of irresponsibility. She also flouts the Maxim of Manner, as her comments are intentionally indirect and laced with sarcasm rather than a straightforward complaint. Her tone suggests frustration and social superiority while maintaining a façade of restraint.

The dialogue draws on sarcasm and cultural humour, elements often used in Nigerian discourse to express disapproval without direct confrontation. Obianuju's choice of words "Only young culture will keep people like this" is a culturally grounded expression of generational disdain. Felix's calm interjection, "Please, Obianuju, not anymore," mirrors a typical Nigerian patriarchal response that prioritizes composure and face-saving in tense family situations.

This interaction shows themes of class consciousness, generational conflict, and social image. Obianuju's tone reveals her obsession with appearances and societal judgment, while Felix's response portrays patience and maturity. The scene captures the tension between pride and restraint, exposing deeper issues of prejudice and ego beneath the polite surface of family life. Through their exchange, the film reflects Nigerian social values where indirect communication, humour, and reputation management shape how people navigate conflict in public spaces.

## **Excerpt 2**

**Phone call:** Danni sorry oh, we are almost there

**Danni:** Where are you guys now? You promised you would be here by 6:30

**Phone call:** Babe calm down, you calling me a million times is not going to make me get there faster.

**Context:**

This exchange occurs on the morning of Dunning's wedding. She is having her makeup done but is visibly anxious because her chief bridesmaid and friends are not yet around. As she calls to find out where they are, her friend tries to reassure her that they are on their way, but her tone shows impatience and mild irritation. The situation reflects Dunning's tension as the bride and her desire for everything to go as planned.

**Analysis:**

The speaker on the phone flouts the Maxim of Quantity by giving less information than Dunning expects, she doesn't clearly state their location. She also flouts the Maxim of Manner through her slightly sarcastic tone ("you calling me a million times..."), implying annoyance without saying it directly

The dialogue mirrors everyday Nigerian conversational style, marked by code-switching and informal expressions such as "sorry oh" and "babe calm down." These features add warmth and authenticity while also revealing the closeness between the two speakers. The tone balances between familiar teasing and genuine frustration, a common dynamic among Nigerian friends who can express irritation without sounding confrontational.

This conversation highlights themes of friendship, emotional stress, and cultural expectations of perfection on wedding days. Dunning's repeated calls reveal her anxiety and desire for control, while her friend's response portrays the laid-back attitude typical of close peers who rely on humour to defuse tension. The implicature here is that Dunning should relax, her impatience won't change anything. Thus, beneath the surface humour, the dialogue subtly reflects the emotional pressures and social expectations placed on brides in Nigerian weddings.

**Excerpt 3**

Tinuade: Who is paying for the wedding?

Obianuju: You are the one who wanted to marry into money, not so?

Context:

This exchange takes place at the wedding reception when it is time for the couple's families to dance. A disagreement arises between the bride's mother, Tinuade, and the groom's mother, Obianuju, over who should take the first dance. Tinuade questions who is paying for the wedding to assert her perceived right and financial contribution, while Obianuju responds sharply, reminding her that it was her daughter who wanted to "marry into money." This brief but charged dialogue reflects the tension between the two families and their differing social classes.

**Analysis:**

Obianuju's reply flouts the Maxim of Relation and the Maxim of Manner. Instead of answering Tinuade's direct question ("Who is paying for the wedding?"), she offers a sarcastic, indirect response that carries a sting of mockery. The implicature here is that Tinuade has no moral ground to demand precedence since her daughter's marriage is already an upward social move. Her statement implies superiority and subtly ridicules the bride's family.

The exchange demonstrates a typical Nigerian conversational strategy, using sarcasm and indirectness to express class tension and insult without open confrontation. The phrase "marry into money" is a culturally loaded expression, reflecting societal attitudes toward wealth, prestige, and marriage alliances. Obianuju's tone is both condescending and self-satisfied, while Tinuade's question, though simple, is confrontational and laced with pride.

Thematically, the dialogue highlights social class conflict, pride, and rivalry between in-laws. It also reveals character traits: Tinuade's assertiveness and defensiveness against

perceived disrespect, and Obianuju's arrogance and sense of superiority. Through this short exchange, the film uses implicature and sarcasm to portray how language functions as a weapon of social hierarchy, turning a simple question into a battle of status and ego.

#### **Excerpt 4**

**Felix:** Let me go check up on the children to make sure they are okay.

**Obianuju:** Phillis, for crying out loud, where are you going?

**Felix:** Listen, if our children manage to get through tonight, you have no choice, in fact will make sure that you have no choice than to accept her.

#### **Context:**

This dialogue occurs at the wedding reception after the wrong flash drive was mistakenly inserted during the best man's speech, revealing embarrassing footage of the groom's reckless past. The incident causes tension and humiliation for both families. In the heat of the moment, Felix tries to calm the situation by checking on the couple, while Obianuju reacts irritably. Felix's calm but firm response suggests that if the children can survive this crisis, Obianuju must accept the bride and move on.

#### **Analysis:**

Felix flouts the maxim of Relation by not directly answering Obianuju's question ("Where are you going?") and instead shifting to a broader moral statement about acceptance and consequence. His utterance also flouts the maxim of Manner, as his expression "you will have no choice" carries an implied threat rather than a clear explanation, leaving the meaning open to interpretation. Through this, Felix communicates an implicature of finality, that the issue of disapproval should end once the current crisis passes.

Felix's speech combines authority and restraint, typical of an elder male figure within Nigerian family dynamics. His statement avoids open confrontation, yet it asserts control through implication. The use of "our children" reflects a communal sense of responsibility, a hallmark of Nigerian social values where family unity overrides individual pride. The conditional structure ("if our children manage to get through tonight") also softens the tone, signaling hope and reason amid chaos.

The dialogue reveals themes of family tension, authority, and reconciliation. Felix emerges as a stabilizing force who values peace and resolution over continued conflict. Obianuju's reaction reveals her pride and emotional instability, while Felix's firm yet calm tone portrays him as a figure of maturity and control. This exchange contributes to the film's broader message on forgiveness and social balance, showing how authority and empathy are used to restore harmony after public disgrace.

### **Excerpt 5**

Nonso: What do you want?

Dozie: Nonso, do you know him?

Thief (Lukeman): How would you know me? How? All these spoilt little rich kids like you. All these Instagram boys, *Awon ti snapshots. If you see me for road, you go notice me?*

Nonso: Okay, who are you? What are you doing here?

Lukeman: What am I doing here? What am I doing here? What does it look like I'm doing here, *abi I resemble father Christmas for your eye? I be thief; you fit call me Lukeman.*

Context:

This scene occurs at the wedding venue, in the room where the wedding gifts are kept. After

the chaos caused by the wrong flash drive nearly ruins the ceremony, the groom, Dozie and his brother, Nonso, retire to the room to regain their composure, unaware that a thief named Lukeman has already infiltrated the space with the intention of stealing the wedding gifts. The confrontation that follows quickly turns tense as Lukeman holds them at gunpoint. His speech blends mockery, anger, and sarcasm, reflecting resentment toward the privileged background of the two brothers.

### **Analysis:**

Lukeman flouts the maxim of Relation and the maxim of Manner. Rather than directly answering Nonso's question ("Who are you? What are you doing here?"), he responds with sarcasm and rhetorical questions, deliberately exaggerating his frustration. He repeated "What am I doing here?" and "I resemble Father Christmas for your eye?" violate the expectation of clarity, creating an implicature that his criminal intent should be obvious. Through this, Lukeman expresses both aggression and social criticism without stating it plainly.

Lukeman's dialogue is marked by code-switching between Standard English, Nigerian Pidgin, and Yoruba ("*awon ti Snapchat*"), capturing the linguistic diversity typical of Nigerian urban speech. His use of sarcasm and repetition intensifies his hostility and mocks the brothers' ignorance. The informal and confrontational tone also reflects a power reversal, Lukeman, though socially and economically disadvantaged, temporarily dominates the upper-class brothers through verbal and physical control.

This exchange explores themes of class tension, social resentment, and power dynamics. Lukeman's tone and language reveal his bitterness toward the wealthy, framing the encounter as more than mere robbery, it becomes a symbolic clash between privilege and struggle. His aggression shows both defiance and vulnerability. Nonso and Dozie's cautious responses, on the other hand, highlight their fear and confusion. The scene uses implicature and figurative speech to dramatize class divides and the unpredictable nature of confrontation

in tense social hierarchies.

### **Excerpt 6**

**Lukeman:** You thought this is a joke eh

**Felix:** Please my son didn't mean any harm.

**Bamidele Coker (Bride's daddy):** Yes, their son didn't mean any harm. Like I said, I'm not a member of their family.

### **Context:**

This scene unfolds in the middle of the chaos at the wedding venue when the thief, Lukeman, holds the groom's family at gunpoint in the gift room. The fathers of the bride and groom, Felix and Bamidele Coker, walk into the scene unexpectedly. Felix tries to calm the tension by pleading for his son's safety, while Bamidele quickly distances himself from the situation, attempting to protect himself. The scene blends fear, panic, and humor, reflecting both class anxiety and human instinct for self-preservation.

### **Analysis:**

Bamidele flouts the maxim of Relation by responding irrelevant to the immediate danger. Instead of focusing on calming the situation or helping Felix, he shifts the discussion to his disassociation from the groom's family. This violation implies cowardice and self-interest, as his words carry the hidden meaning that he wants no blame or risk in the crisis. Lukeman also flouts the maxim of Manner, using rhetorical questions and a confrontational tone that heighten the tension.

The dialogue uses irony and understatement to balance tension and comic relief. Bamidele's line, "Like I said, I'm not a member of their family," is humorous in its timing but reveals a social divide between the two families. The mixture of formal speech ("Please,

my son didn't mean any harm") and Lukeman's street-inflected tone emphasizes the contrast between upper-class refinement and street-level aggression. The tension between politeness and fear also reflects the characters' attempts to preserve dignity amid chaos.

This exchange highlights themes of class tension, fear, and social hypocrisy. Bamidele's reaction reveals his self-centered and class-conscious attitude; he prioritizes his own image and safety over solidarity. Felix's plea, on the other hand, reveals compassion and fatherly concern, creating a contrast between humility and pride. The scene's use of irony and indirectness contributes to the film's larger commentary on appearance, class pretension, and the fragile unity between families bound by marriage.

### **Excerpt 7**

**Tinuade:** I will give you anything 1million, 2million, 5million, 10million how much do you want

**Bamidele:** There is no money anymore, we are broke

**Tinuade:** Bam Bam why didn't you tell me. Didn't I marry you when you had nothing, you should have told me, Bam Bam, I love you, you would have told me that your money is finished.

**Lukeman:** Hey hey, what do you think you're doing?

**Tinuade:** Oga (Mr man) what God has joined together...

**Lukeman:** Oya (fem) shut up

**Context:**

This dialogue takes place during a chaotic confrontation in the gift room, where the bride and groom families are being held at gunpoint by Lukeman, a thief. Tinuade, in panic, tries to negotiate her family's safety by offering money, assuming that wealth can solve the situation. When her husband, Bamidele, admits there is no money left, she reacts emotionally, expressing both disbelief and affection in a dramatic outburst. Her words turn unintentionally humorous, contrasting the serious tension in the scene. Lukeman's interruption, delivered in Nigerian Pidgin, restores control over the situation with raw authority and impatience.

**Analysis:**

Tinuade flouts the maxim of Quantity by offering exaggerated amounts of money without considering the reality of the situation, revealing her desperation. She also flouts the maxim of Relation when she suddenly shifts from negotiation to emotional confession ("I love you, what God has joined together"), which is irrelevant to the life-threatening context. Lukeman's interruption, "Oya, shut up," flouts the maxim of Manner through its abruptness, reflecting his frustration and need for dominance.

The dialogue blends hyperbole, irony, and code-switching, showcasing the rich interplay of Nigerian speech styles. Tinuade's exaggerated offers of money portray upper-class panic and belief in wealth as power, while Lukeman's Pidgin interjection introduces a rough, street-level realism that contrasts sharply with her refined diction. The shift in tone from fear to absurd affection creates humor through linguistic clash and timing, a common feature in Nigerian cinematic dialogue

The scene explores themes of class tension, fear, and the illusion of control. Tinuade's agitated response exposes her reliance on wealth and her performative sense of status, while Lukeman's unfiltered language represents social frustration and power reversal. The mix of tension and humor captures how *The Wedding Party* reveals the fragility of high society when

confronted with chaos, turning a moment of danger into one of truth and irony.

### **Excerpt 8**

**Dozie:** I guess you've been here

**Dunni:** How did you find me?

**Dozie:** It's your favorite place in the world, it's our favourite place

**Dunni:** Leave me alone Dozie

**Dozie:** I'm never leaving you Dunni. Not for better not for worse not for richer not for poor

**Dunni:** It's not that easy Dozie, it's going to take a lot more than the words you picked from your play-boy handbook

**Dozie:** They aren't just words

### **Context:**

The scene unfolds at the beach, a symbolic space of calmness and reflection. Following the confusion and embarrassment that almost ruined their wedding, Dunni isolates herself, emotionally wounded. Dozie approaches her in a final attempt to mend their relationship. The setting's tranquility contrasts the emotional intensity of their dialogue, allowing the audience to witness an intimate negotiation between love, trust, and forgiveness.

### **Analysis**

Dunni deliberately flouts the maxim of Relation when she responds, "Leave me alone, Dozie," a statement that evades his emotional plea. Her sarcasm in "words you picked from your playboy handbook" also flouts the maxim of Quality, implying disbelief in his sincerity. Conversely, Dozie's repetition of marriage vows ("not for better, not for worse...") hyperbolically violates the maxim of Quantity, using exaggerated speech to communicate the

depth of his remorse and affection.

The dialogue is rich in romantic irony and figurative language. Dozie's rephrasing of the wedding vow blends solemnity with vulnerability, while Dunni's metaphorical reference to a "playboy handbook" injects humor and scepticism. The tonal contrast between her disbelief and his emotional persistence mirrors the wavering between pride and reconciliation. The diction is simple yet emotionally charged, embodying a realistic portrayal of post-conflict intimacy. This scene advances the film's themes of love, forgiveness, and vulnerability. The beach, as a setting of peace, reflects the couple's desire for emotional restoration after chaos. Dunni's resistance reveals her struggle between pride and affection, while Dozie's persistence exposes his transformation from a carefree lover to a man seeking redemption. The exchange reaffirms that genuine relationships demand honesty beyond mere words, reinforcing the film's central message that love must endure both glamour and imperfection.

### ***Analysis of King of Boys***

**Summary of the film:** *King of Boys (2018)*, directed by Kemi Adetiba, is a political crime thriller that explores power, ambition, and corruption within Nigeria's socio-political landscape. The film centers on Alhaja Eniola Salami, a powerful and influential businesswoman who also serves as a political godmother with deep connections to the criminal underworld. Ambitious and ruthless, Eniola seeks to transition from the shadowy world of power-brokering into legitimate politics, aspiring to become a major political leader.

However, her quest for greater authority sets off a chain of betrayal, revenge, and moral conflict. Those she once trusted, including her political allies and loyal gang members, turn against her, leading to the loss of her wealth, influence, and even her children. As the story unfolds, Eniola struggles to maintain control and survive in a world where loyalty is fragile and power is constantly contested.

Through its intricate plot and intense performances, *King of Boys* examines themes of greed, power, gender, and survival in a corrupt society. It portrays Eniola Salami as both a victim and a perpetrator, a woman shaped by ambition and resilience, fighting within a system that mirrors Nigeria's complex political reality.

### **Excerpt 1**

**Senator:** I hope you people have not forgotten your promise.

**Kemi:** Senator, my mother didn't get where she is today by breaking promises. There's been no official appointment yet, so until then, we wait.

### **Context:**

This dialogue occurs during Eniola Salami's lavish birthday celebration, a gathering that subtly doubles as a political networking event. The Senator's statement reveals anxiety about a political favor promised to him by Eniola and her circle. Kemi, Eniola's daughter, responds diplomatically, reassuring him of her mother's reliability while tactfully deflecting his impatience. The exchange reflects the atmosphere of power, patronage, and manipulation that defines the socio-political relationships in the film.

### **Analysis:**

Kemi's reply flouts the maxim of Quantity and maxim of Manner. Instead of directly confirming or denying progress on the Senator's request, she gives an indirect and polished answer "my mother didn't get where she is today by breaking promises." The remark is intentionally vague, avoiding specific details about the "promise." By doing so, she implies assurance without commitment, thereby creating an implicature that the Senator should remain patient and trust their influence.

The exchange employs political politeness strategies and strategic ambiguity typical of power discourse. Kemi's diction ("official appointment," "we wait") formalizes the interaction, maintaining decorum despite the Senator's pressure. The use of third-person reference ("my mother") establishes distance and reinforces hierarchy, showing Kemi as a mouthpiece of Eniola's authority. Her tone blends respect and control, a trait of calculated tact within elite circles.

The scene underscores *King of Boys'* central themes of power politics, loyalty, and manipulation. It illustrates how political alliances in the film are transactional, built on strategic promises and delayed gratification. Kemi's careful use of language demonstrates her training in political maneuvering and her mother's influence on her communication style. The implicature of her statement that influence takes time and discretion echoes the film's portrayal of corruption masked by courtesy.

## **Excerpt 2**

**Eniola:** Do we still have people outside?

**Kemi:** All the way down to the street, mum.

## **Context:**

This conversation takes place in Eniola Salami's clothing store, which also functions as a front for her philanthropic outreach. She has spent the day attending to a crowd of people seeking financial help and favors. Exhausted, she asks her daughter, Kemi, whether there are still people outside. Kemi's response reveals the overwhelming number of people waiting, indicating the extent of Eniola's influence and the public's dependence on her.

## **Analysis:**

Kemi's reply "All the way down to the street, mum" flouts the maxim of Quantity because

she exaggerates the number of people instead of giving a precise figure. The hyperbolic expression functions as an implicature suggesting not only that the line is long but also that her mother's generosity has drawn an almost uncontrollable crowd. The exaggeration conveys admiration mixed with concern for her mother's exhaustion.

This brief exchange contributes to the film's exploration of power, influence, and the burden of leadership. Eniola's character is portrayed as both powerful and overextended, adored by the public yet weighed down by the expectations that come with her status. The scene also foreshadows the tension between Eniola's benevolence and her darker pursuit of control, a recurring motif in *King of Boys*.

### **Excerpt 3**

**Makanaki:** Let's set time. The time is 8:25. No, 8:26

**Odogu Malay:** I don set an (I have set it)

**Makanaki:** The match go start by 10:01 on the dot, and the ball go end by 11:31. If Arsenal never enter champion league by den, na dem know. (The match is start at 10:01 and the match will end at exactly 11:31 if Arsenal isn't in the championship by then, they are on their own. We're out.)

**Odogwu Malay:** We go dey there, no worry, we go dey there (we will be there. Don't worry, we will be there.)

### **Context:**

This conversation takes place when Makanaki and Odogwu Malay were preparing for a robbery operation at politicians house. They were setting the exact time for the operation, but instead of speaking directly about the robbery, Makanaki used a football metaphor to disguise

their plan.

### **Analysis:**

Makanaki flouts the Maxim of Relation by discussing the robbery through unrelated football terms such as “*match*,” “*start*,” and “*end*.” He also flouts the Maxim of Manner, making his speech deliberately ambiguous and indirect to conceal the plan’s true purpose. The implicature here is that “the match” symbolizes the robbery, “10:01pm” is the start time, and “11:31pm” marks the end of the operation. His speech implies secrecy and precision without explicitly stating their criminal intent.

The dialogue demonstrates the use of metaphor, code-switching, and humor as linguistic tools. The football metaphor functions as a cover language to disguise their intentions while maintaining group understanding. The inclusion of Nigerian Pidgin, phrases like “*We go dey there*” adds authenticity and local flavor to their interaction, reflecting informal solidarity. The exaggerated comment about Arsenal’s championship serves as hyperbole, lightening the tone while maintaining the coded message.

This dialogue develops the film’s themes of secrecy, power, and criminal strategy. It portrays how Makanaki uses language as a weapon of control and leadership, emphasizing intelligence and subtlety in the underworld. The coded speech highlights the culture of distrust and the need for hidden communication in a corrupt environment. Through this exchange, the film underscores how criminal operations rely on linguistic creativity and coded loyalty among members.

### **Excerpt 4**

**Aare Akinwande:** What we are trying to do right now is clean up in our heads, this idea that you’re from another world

**Eniola:** Sir?

**Aare Akinwande:** You see, because. en?

**Eniola:** what do you mean by “different world”, sir. with all due respect

**Aare Akinwande:** Eniola, ma take e personal (Don’t take it personal) this is politics

**Context:**

This exchange takes place at Aare’s house, where Eniola visits to question why he has delayed fulfilling his promise of securing her a political appointment, despite her financial contributions and mobilization for his party. Aare’s response exposes the underlying discrimination and class boundaries that limit her acceptance within elite political circles.

**Analysis:**

Aare flouts the maxim of Quality by masking the truth behind polite expressions. His phrase “*clean up in our heads this idea that you’re from another world*” indirectly implies that Eniola does not belong to their social or political class, without stating it plainly. This deliberate vagueness creates implicature, suggesting exclusion under the guise of politeness. His further comment, “*this is politics,*” rationalizes insincerity, portraying deception as a norm within political practice.

The dialogue features code-mixing and euphemism. Aare’s use of “*ma take e personal*” blends Yoruba (*ma, e*) and English (*take, personal*), a common linguistic strategy in Nigerian discourse that conveys familiarity while maintaining hierarchical distance. This fusion softens the tension, signaling authority yet lessening offense. Additionally, “*different world*” functions as a euphemism, concealing bias under socially acceptable language. These linguistic choices demonstrate how code-mixing and polite indirection serve pragmatic

purposes to assert power while preserving social decorum.

This dialogue develops the theme of class discrimination and political hypocrisy. Through Aare's polite yet dismissive tone, the film exposes how entrenched elites use language to maintain social hierarchies while pretending inclusivity. Eniola's respectful but firm response reveals her awareness of this power play, setting up her eventual challenge to the political establishment. The scene underscores how speech in *King of Boys* functions not just as communication, but as a weapon of control and resistance within Nigeria's political landscape.

### **Excerpt 5**

**Impersonator (NCCC):** we have a warrant to search this building

**Officer:** What's going on?

**Impersonator (NCCC):** Oga Open this gate (man, open this gate)

### **Context:**

This scene takes place at a politician's house that Makanaki and his crew have come to rob. The robbers are disguised as NCCC agents and attempt to enact authority by claiming they hold a warrant. A real police officer on site questions the situation, and the impersonator responds with a blunt order in Pidgin "*Oga, open this gate*" to impose control and create the appearance of official action.

### **Analysis:**

The impersonator clearly flouts the maxim of Quality by asserting a falsehood: claiming a warrant when none exists. That deliberate lie generates an implicature that the speaker has legitimate authority, which the impersonator expects will silence questions and enable the

robbery. The officer's question, "*What's going on?*", is a request for relevant information; the impersonator's false claim attempts to short-circuit that relevance by substituting a fake justification.

Linguistically, the exchange relies on deceptive performative language and pragmatic force. The phrase "*We have a warrant*" functions as a performative utterance meant to enact legal authority; because it is false, it becomes a strategic act of deception. The impersonator's imperative "*Oga, open this gate*" (Pidgin/colloquial address) uses an authoritative, familiar address term to pressure compliance and to blend official command with street-level bluntness. This mix of formal-sounding legal language and informal Pidgin amplifies the illusion of legitimacy while also indexing local speech practices.

The scene reinforces themes of appearance versus reality, institutional vulnerability, and the fragility of law and order. By successfully adopting the language and trappings of authority, the robbers expose how easily power can be simulated and abused. The exchange also comments on public trust in institutions if a false claim of a "warrant" can momentarily override actual oversight, the film suggests a wider social anxiety about corruption and performative power. Character-wise, the impersonator's confident lying reveals resourcefulness and audacity, while the officer's initial uncertainty highlights institutional confusion in moments of crisis.

### **Excerpt 6**

**Impersonator (NCCC):** Who is in this building?

**Officer 1:** Sir, the building is empty, nobody stays in this apartment.

**Impersonator (NCCC):** I know that, but who is in the building right now?

**Officer 2:** Ehn, there is one old woman that comes with a very big ghana must go, she talk

say she wan drop clothe inside for her madam (she said she want to drop clothes inside for boss).

**Context:**

This conversation takes place in the compound of a politician's house, where Makanaki's gang, disguised as NCCC officials, arrives to carry out a robbery. The impersonator questions the police officers guarding the compound to know who is currently inside. Although one officer states that the building is empty, another adds unnecessary information about an old woman who had earlier visited and already left. This exchange shows a misunderstanding between authority figures and reveals how ordinary characters communicate with indirectness or irrelevant detail.

**Analysis:**

The officer flouts the maxim of Relation (Relevance) by giving an irrelevant and unnecessary response. Instead of answering directly that no one is in the building, he introduces unrelated information about an old woman who has already left. His off-topic explanation suggests a lack of focus or misunderstanding of the impersonator's question. This flouting creates an implicature that the officer either misunderstands the gravity of the situation or is trying to appear helpful by over-explaining, even when his response adds no useful detail.

This dialogue demonstrates code-mixing and the use of Nigerian Pidgin English as a key linguistic feature. The impersonator uses formal English ("Who is in this building?"), asserting authority consistent with his fake official role. The officer responds with mixed English and Pidgin ("She talk say she wan drop clothe inside for her madam"), reflecting his social status and informal speech pattern. This switch captures the authentic linguistic diversity of Nigerian communication and highlights class distinctions between those who use Standard English to command authority and those who use Pidgin as a marker of everyday

identity.

Thematically, this exchange underscores authority, social hierarchy, and communication gaps. The impersonator's commanding tone and the officer's informal, off-topic reply illustrate the disconnection between formal and informal systems of authority in Nigeria. It also reveals the everyday tendency toward irrelevant elaboration and indirectness in Nigerian speech culture. By combining humor, misunderstanding, and class-coded language, the scene contributes to the film's larger themes of power, deception, and social realism, showing how language operates as both a tool of control and confusion.

### **Excerpt 7**

**Eniola:** Kitan, could you please give me like ten minutes? I need to speak to your sister.

**Kitan:** I'm in the middle of breakfast, mummy.

**Eniola:** Oko mi jo (please, my love) It's business discussion. Ten minutes.

**Kitan:** So you can discuss important business with her and you can't discuss with me?

**Eniola:** Get out! Get up from that table! Must you query me everytime I speak with you? How many sons give their parents wahala (trouble) the way you gave me? Shey o ti tun mu nkan yen ni? (Are you doing drugs again?)

### **Context:**

The conversation takes place in Eniola Salami's house, at the dining table. Kemi is trying to reach Aare's personal assistant but gets no response, which frustrates Eniola. She decides to speak privately with Kemi, asking her son, Kitan, to excuse them for ten minutes. Kitan, however, insists on staying, questioning why his mother discusses important matters with Kemi and not with him. Eniola's tone quickly shifts from calm to anger, accusing him of disrespect and even hinting that he might have relapsed into drug use.

## **Analysis:**

Eniola flouts the maxim of Relation and Manner. Instead of directly addressing Kitan's question about exclusion from the business discussion, she abruptly switches topics and rebukes him for his attitude. Her outburst "Must you query me every time I speak with you?" and her sudden accusation about drugs imply frustration, disappointment, and deeper emotional tension rather than direct communication. The implicature here suggests that Eniola's anger is not just about the breakfast interruption but about her son's perceived irresponsibility and lack of discipline, which she associates with his past behavior.

This excerpt demonstrates code-mixing and the use of Yoruba expressions interwoven with English dialogue. Phrases such as "*Oko mi jo*" (please, my love), "*wahala*" (trouble), and "*Shey o ti tun mu nkan yen ni?*" (Are you doing drugs again?) serve emotional and cultural functions, adding depth to Eniola's speech. The mixture of Yoruba and English reflects her social identity as a powerful yet traditional Nigerian woman who switches languages to express affection, authority, and anger. This linguistic blend mirrors everyday Nigerian communication, where code-mixing conveys both intimacy and dominance.

Thematically, this scene highlights family tension, authority, and generational conflict. Eniola's exchange with Kitan exposes her struggle to balance her role as a mother and a powerful businesswoman. Her language reveals both affection and frustration "*Oko mi jo*" shows maternal tenderness, while the shift to accusation underscores emotional exhaustion. Kitan's resistance and Eniola's reaction reveal underlying themes of power, control, and fractured family relationships, which run through *King of Boys*. The scene deepens character development, showing Eniola not just as a political figure but as a mother burdened by conflict within her own home.

## **Excerpt 8**

**Kemi:** Mummy, are they treating you well?

**Eniola:** Kemi, They are closing in on me. All of them *Won gbo'run eje* (They can smell blood) *Won fe mu mi* (They want to get me)

**Context:**

The conversation takes place at the NCCC station, after Eniola Salami's arrest on charges of money laundering and bribery. Kemi visits her mother, expressing concern about how she is being treated in detention. Eniola, overwhelmed by betrayal and the realization that her political allies have deserted her, voices her fear and disappointment. Her words reflect her awareness that those she once empowered and protected are now turning against her in her moment of vulnerability.

**Analysis:**

Eniola flouts the maxim of Quantity by providing more information than Kemi's simple question requires. Instead of giving a direct response about her treatment, she speaks figuratively about betrayal and danger, using emotionally charged expressions to imply her distress. The implicature here suggests that Eniola feels hunted and abandoned, revealing her psychological state and loss of control. Her words move beyond the literal to communicate a sense of defeat, implying that her enemies political and personal are ready to destroy her.

The excerpt employs code-mixing and metaphorical expressions drawn from Yoruba and English. Phrases such as "*Won gbo'run eje*" (They can smell blood) and "*Won fe mu mi*" (They want to get me) carry vivid imagery of predation and danger. This metaphor likens Eniola's political rivals to predators sensing weakness, intensifying the emotional weight of her words. The use of Yoruba adds authenticity, cultural depth, and emotional emphasis, showing how bilingualism serves expressive and symbolic purposes in Nollywood dialogue.

## **4.2 Discussion of Findings**

This section explains the findings of the study and highlights their significance in relation to the research problem. The analysis of dialogues from *King of Boys*, *Lionheart*, and *The Wedding Party* demonstrates how conversational implicature functions as a central mechanism through which characters convey meaning indirectly, negotiate relationships, and advance the narrative.

The study reveals that characters frequently violate Grice's maxims Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner, to communicate intentions, avoid confrontation, or emphasize strategic thinking. For example, in *King of Boys*, Igwe Pascal avoids giving a direct answer to sensitive questions, flouting the maxim of Quantity and Relation while using innuendo to imply superiority over competitors. This demonstrates how pragmatic violations are purposefully employed to convey layered meanings beyond literal dialogue, aligning with the first research objective.

The analysis also highlighted the role of linguistic and cultural elements in shaping implicature. Code-switching, proverbs, figurative expressions, and humor emerged as significant tools through which characters negotiate social hierarchies, express authority, or mediate tension. Chief Godswill's use of the proverb, "You need to take the log of wood from the top before the one below," in *Lionheart* is a prime example of using figurative language to communicate caution and procedural hierarchy without direct instruction. Similarly, characters' use of code-mixed English and local dialects allowed the audience to interpret subtleties of social power, familiarity, or disapproval. These findings address the second objective, illustrating the interplay between linguistic choices and cultural context in Nollywood dialogues.

Finally, conversational implicatures were found to play a critical role in theme development, character portrayal, and narrative progression. Indirect speech facilitated mentorship, strategic decision-making, tension in business and political dealings, and even

comedic relief. By leaving certain meanings implicit, the films invite audiences to engage actively with the narrative, deepening understanding of character motivations and social dynamics. This fulfills the third research objective, demonstrating how pragmatic strategies in dialogue not only reflect Nigerian social and cultural realities but also enhance narrative complexity and thematic depth.

In conclusion, the findings advance understanding of the research problem by showing that conversational implicature in Nollywood films is a deliberate, culturally informed strategy that shapes meaning, mediates social interaction, and drives storytelling in ways that go beyond literal speech.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1 Summary

This study examined conversational implicature in three Nollywood films: *Lionheart* (2018), *The Wedding Party* (2016) and *King of Boys* (2018). Using Grice's Cooperative Principle and the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner, the study explored how dialogue communicates meaning beyond the literal words spoken.

The research identified how characters flout Grice's maxims to convey implicit meanings and examined how cultural and linguistic elements such as code-switching, proverbs, innuendo, figurative language, and humor shape these implicatures. It also considered how conversational implicatures develop character, create narrative tension, and convey themes.

Findings show that characters use indirect speech strategically to navigate social hierarchies, assert authority, and mediate conflicts. The study also demonstrates that Nigerian cultural values are embedded in dialogue, influencing how meanings are created and interpreted. Conversational implicature plays a key role in moving the plot forward, enriching characterization, and highlighting themes like power, mentorship, and family dynamics.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Conversational implicature is a vital tool in Nollywood films for adding depth to dialogue and reflecting Nigerian cultural and social realities. Characters' flouting of Grice's maxims and use of cultural-linguistic strategies make the dialogue more engaging and meaningful. The study shows that implicit communication in Nollywood is both a stylistic and functional element, shaping audience understanding of social interactions, character motivations, and narrative development.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

1. **Further Research:** Future studies could include non-verbal cues, body language, and other cinematic elements to provide a more complete understanding of meaning-making in Nollywood films. Research could also explore films in local dialects to assess the role of language diversity in conversational implicature.
2. **For Practitioners:** Screenwriters, directors, and actors can use these insights to craft dialogue that is culturally authentic, enhances characterization, and engages audiences through indirect communication.
3. **For Society:** Awareness of conversational implicature can improve media literacy and audience appreciation of Nigerian cinema, showing how culture, language, and narrative interact in storytelling.

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