

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Communication relies on language not merely to exchange information, but also to express intention, attitude, and meaning that is never directly stated. In everyday interaction, speakers often communicate meanings indirectly, relying on shared knowledge, situational context, and pragmatic inference rather than explicit linguistic forms. As a result, understanding meaning in communication cannot be separated from the context in which an utterance is produced and interpreted. This phenomenon is studied within the field of pragmatics, which focuses on how meaning is constructed beyond the literal interpretation of words. The study of implied meaning in communication has become increasingly relevant in an era of global media consumption, where spoken dialogue crosses linguistic and cultural boundaries through translation.

Pragmatics is concerned with the relationship between language and its users, particularly how meaning is inferred in context (Yule, 1996; Levinson, 1983). One of the central concepts in pragmatics is conversational implicature, introduced by Grice (1975), which refers to meaning that is implied rather than explicitly stated. Through implicature, speakers are able to communicate more than what is directly expressed in their utterances. This implicit meaning arises when speakers adhere to or deliberately deviate from the Cooperative Principle and its conversational maxims, prompting listeners to infer the intended meaning based on contextual cues. The study of implicature has proven particularly productive in audiovisual contexts where spoken dialogue carries layers of meaning that extend beyond its literal content.

Grice (1975) further separates conversational implicature into two categories: Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI) and Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI). GCI arises from general conversational norms and scalar conventions and does not require specific contextual knowledge to be understood, whereas PCI depends heavily on the particular situation, the

relationship between characters, and background knowledge shared by speaker and listener. Because PCI hinges on this shared understanding, it is especially prone to being lost or altered once translated. Recognizing this distinction matters for examining how implied meaning survives, or fails to survive, subtitle translation.

The complexity of conversational implicature becomes more evident in spoken discourse such as film dialogue. Films frequently employ indirect language, emotional nuance, and context-dependent expressions to portray character relationships, conflicts, and intentions. Research by Sudrajat et al. (2024) on the *Fast Five* movie highlights this prevalence, showing that conversational implicature frequently appears in cinematic dialogue and requires audience inference to understand implied meanings. Similarly, Pinayungan et al. (2024) found that both GCI and PCI are commonly used in film dialogue, with PCI dominating due to its dependence on situational context. These studies confirm that film dialogue is a rich and appropriate source for the analysis of conversational implicature.

This interpretive challenge intensifies once a film is watched through subtitles in another language. As a form of audiovisual translation, subtitling converts spoken dialogue into written text under strict technical limits, including restricted space and reading time (Gottlieb, 1992; Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2007). Meeting these constraints often forces translators to condense dialogue, simplify expressions, or leave out certain elements of meaning, which can alter, weaken, or erase the implicit meaning carried by conversational implicature. Subtitle translation therefore becomes a particularly productive site for observing how pragmatic meaning is negotiated across languages.

Translation, and subtitle translation specifically, is not simply a matter of transferring words from one language to another; it is a process of negotiating meaning. Nida and Taber (1982) describe translation as the effort to produce the closest natural equivalent of a source-language message in the target language, in both meaning and style. Molina and Albir (2002) build on this by proposing a framework of 18 translation techniques that operate at the micro-level, giving researchers concrete tools for examining how individual translation units are rendered. Because subtitle translators must preserve pragmatic meaning, sound

natural in the target language, and satisfy technical constraints all at once, applying this framework to conversational implicature makes it possible to analyze translator decision-making with precision.

This concern becomes especially relevant in contemporary films built around emotionally layered, context-specific dialogue. *My Oxford Year* (2025), a romantic drama directed by Iain Morris and written by Allison Burnett and Melissa Osborne based on the novel by Julia Whelan, presents conversation deeply shaped by situational context, character relationships, British cultural codes, and emotional subtext. Many of its characters' lines convey meaning indirectly, requiring viewers to read between the lines to grasp what is truly meant. Once such dialogue is rendered into Indonesian subtitles, linguistic, cultural, and technical pressures create the potential for meaning to shift, making this film a rich and fitting corpus for studying conversational implicature in subtitle translation.

Previous studies on conversational implicature have predominantly focused on identifying types of implicature and analyzing maxim violations in film dialogue without addressing how these implicatures are translated into another language. On the other hand, studies on subtitle translation often emphasize translation techniques and technical constraints, but rarely examine the transfer of pragmatic meaning. This indicates a research gap at the intersection between pragmatics and translation studies, a gap that this study addresses by integrating both dimensions of analysis within a single empirical study of a contemporary film. The present study therefore responds to a genuine need in the field for research that bridges pragmatic analysis and translation technique analysis.

Accordingly, this study examines the types of conversational implicature present in the dialogue of *My Oxford Year* and the translation techniques used to render them in its Indonesian subtitles. The findings are expected to deepen the understanding of pragmatic meaning in audiovisual translation and to offer both theoretical and practical insight for subtitle translation practice, of use to scholars in pragmatics, researchers in translation studies, and practitioners working in subtitling.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Drawing on the background above, this study poses the following research questions:

1. What types of conversational implicature are found in the movie *My Oxford Year*?
2. What translation techniques are used to translate conversational implicatures into Indonesian subtitles?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

In line with the research questions above, this study aims to:

1. To identify the types of conversational implicature found in the movie *My Oxford Year*.
2. To determine the translation techniques used in translating conversational implicatures into Indonesian subtitles.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research contributes both theoretically and practically to the fields of pragmatics and translation studies, offering value to students, researchers, translators, and educators working at the intersection of pragmatic theory and translation practice.

On the theoretical side, this study deepens the understanding of conversational implicature within audiovisual translation by examining how implied meaning is identified through Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle and how that meaning is rendered using Molina and Albir's (2002) translation techniques. In doing so, it enriches the broader discussion of pragmatic transfer in subtitle translation and helps close the gap between pragmatics-oriented research, which seldom considers translation, and translation-oriented research, which seldom considers pragmatic dimensions of meaning. For students and researchers in English Literature and Translation Studies, this study also models a

methodological approach that brings two complementary frameworks together within one empirical study.

On the practical side, this research is intended to benefit subtitle translators and other language practitioners by documenting which translation techniques are most effective at preserving conversational implicature in Indonesian subtitles, a record that can inform future translation practice and curriculum design in English Literature and Translation Studies programs. The annotated set of 80 utterances compiled for this study can also serve as authentic teaching material for courses in pragmatics, audiovisual translation, and cross-cultural communication.

1.5 Methodology of the Study

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method. A qualitative approach suits this study because it centers on interpreting meaning, specifically conversational implicature, which cannot be reduced to numbers and instead requires analysis grounded in context and pragmatic inference. Creswell (2014) notes that qualitative research is well suited to exploring the meanings individuals or groups attach to social or human problems. The descriptive method fits this aim because the study seeks to describe and explain the types of conversational implicature and the translation techniques applied in the subtitles, without manipulating any variables.

The data for this study come from the movie *My Oxford Year* (2025), a romantic drama directed by Iain Morris and written by Allison Burnett and Melissa Osborne, based on the novel by Julia Whelan. Starring Sofia Carson and Corey Mylchreest, the film was released on Netflix on August 1, 2025. It was chosen because its interpersonal dialogue is emotionally nuanced and strongly context-dependent, making it well suited for analyzing conversational implicature. The story follows Anna De La Vega, an American Rhodes Scholar studying at Oxford University, who develops a complex romantic relationship with her lecturer, Jamie Davenport. Their exchanges are marked by indirect expression, emotional tension, and context-bound meaning, all of which regularly give rise to conversational implicature.

Data collection and analysis followed these steps: (1) the researcher watched *My Oxford Year* repeatedly to understand the context of each scene and to identify dialogue containing conversational implicature; (2) selected utterances were recorded along with their English dialogue and corresponding Indonesian subtitle translations; (3) the data were classified by implicature type, GCI or PCI, using Grice's (1975) theory; and (4) the data were analyzed using the 18 translation techniques proposed by Molina and Albir (2002). This analysis involved pinpointing the specific words, phrases, or expressions that generate the implicature and determining which translation technique was used to render them in the Indonesian subtitle.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to conversational implicature found in the movie *My Oxford Year* (2025) and its Indonesian subtitles. Its scope covers (1) the types of conversational implicature, GCI and PCI, as classified by Grice (1975), and (2) the translation techniques as classified by Molina and Albir (2002). The analysis includes all 80 utterances identified as containing conversational implicature through systematic viewing of the film, along with their corresponding Indonesian subtitle translations.

This study is confined to the Indonesian subtitle translation of the film and does not address other dimensions such as dubbing, audience reception, or pragmatic features beyond conversational implicature. Scenes whose dialogue lacked an accompanying Indonesian subtitle, or whose subtitle text was unreadable during data collection, were also excluded from analysis. Because the analysis is restricted to the 80 identified utterances, any generalization beyond this corpus should be made with caution.

1.7 Status of the Study

Several recent studies have examined conversational implicature and subtitle translation in audiovisual media. Reviewing them here clarifies the novelty

of the present research and situates it within current scholarship in pragmatics and translation studies.

Sudrajat et al. (2024) analyzed conversational implicature in *Fast Five* and found PCI to be the dominant type in action-movie dialogue, largely because of its heavy reliance on situational knowledge. While their study identifies and classifies implicature according to Grice's theory, it does not examine how these implicatures are translated into Indonesian subtitles. The present study builds on this approach by adding translation technique analysis alongside implicature classification, thereby combining two dimensions that Sudrajat et al. treat separately.

Pinayungan et al. (2024) examined conversational implicature in *The Silence of the Lambs* and likewise found PCI to be dominant, driven by the film's psychological and situational complexity. Although their Gricean analysis of implicature types is thorough, it too stops short of examining translation techniques or how implicature is rendered in another language. The present study addresses this by adding a translation dimension and by focusing on a different genre, romantic drama, in which PCI emerges through mechanisms distinct from those of a psychological thriller.

Muslimah and Valiantien (2025) investigated the translation techniques used in the Indonesian subtitles of *Encanto* and identified reduction as the dominant technique, largely a response to subtitle space constraints. Their study does not analyze conversational implicature or consider how translation choices affect the transfer of implied meaning. The present study connects translation technique analysis with pragmatic outcomes by examining how each technique preserves or alters conversational implicature in the source text, offering a fuller picture of what subtitle translation gains and loses.

Hermawan (2024) studied audiovisual pragmatics in Netflix movie subtitles, focusing on how translation techniques preserve pragmatic meaning in directive and expressive speech acts. While closely related to the present research, this study addresses pragmatic function broadly rather than conversational implicature specifically. The present study narrows its focus to conversational implicature as a distinct pragmatic phenomenon and examines its translation

through Molina and Albir's (2002) framework, offering more precise typological distinctions than Hermawan's broader scope.

Putri and Sari (2024) examined the translation techniques applied to illocutionary acts in the Indonesian subtitles of the Netflix animated film *Orion and the Dark* (2024), analyzing how four techniques, literal translation, adaptation, transposition, and modulation, were used to preserve illocutionary force from English into Indonesian. Their findings show literal translation as the most dominant technique, valued for the structural fidelity it offers direct assertive and commissive speech acts, while modulation and adaptation appear where cultural or pragmatic adjustment is needed. This study is directly relevant to the present research since it applies Molina and Albir's (2002) framework to the same English-to-Indonesian subtitling direction and draws on the same Netflix medium. However, Putri and Sari do not treat conversational implicature as a distinct pragmatic category and do not distinguish between GCI and PCI. The present study fills this gap by combining implicature classification with translation technique analysis, offering a more detailed account of how pragmatic meaning is carried across in subtitle translation.

Taken together, these studies point to the novelty of the present research: its integration of conversational implicature analysis and translation technique analysis within a single empirical study of the film *My Oxford Year* (2025). Combining Gricean pragmatics with Molina and Albir's translation techniques in the context of a contemporary romantic drama constitutes this study's distinctive contribution, setting it apart from prior work through its simultaneous application of both frameworks and its focus on a film whose dialogue is especially rich in British cultural implicature.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized into four chapters.

1. Chapter I presents the introduction, including the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose, significance, methodology, scope and limitation, status of the study, and organization.

2. Chapter II presents the review of related literature, covering theories of translation, translation techniques, Molina and Albir's (2002) framework, subtitling, pragmatics, conversational implicature, GCI, and PCI.
3. Chapter III presents findings and discussion: the Findings section summarizes the overall research results in the form of frequency tables and interpretive discussion, while the Discussion section provides detailed analysis of selected representative data items.
4. Chapter IV presents conclusions and suggestions. The complete dataset of all 80 annotated data items is provided in the Appendix.

