

## An Analysis of Implicature in Drew Lynch's Stand-Up Comedy

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**Abstract:** Misunderstandings often arise in stand-up comedy, leading to varied audience reactions. Since individuals come from diverse knowledge backgrounds, they must grasp the implicit meanings to fully understand the context of a comedian's speech. However, not all audience members can successfully interpret the context of the jokes. In stand-up comedy, comedians frequently violate the maxims of Grice's (1975) cooperative principle, which creates humor through implicature. This study focuses on analyzing the types and uses of implicature in Drew Lynch's American stand-up comedy performances. Using Grice's (1975) implicature theory, the research employs a descriptive qualitative method, with data collected by listening to and transcribing performances to examine discourse aspects. The findings reveal how Drew Lynch uses implicature to share his opinions, experiences, and emotions humorously, making it easier for the audience to connect with his material. Additionally, the study highlights Lynch's use of lexical items, categorized as references, inferences, and presuppositions, to aid audience comprehension. The study encourages future researchers to delve into other dimensions of implicature, such as its social aspects, or explore its application in different mediums like movies or comics.

**Key words:** Conventional, Conversational, Implicature, Stand-Up Comedy

### INTRODUCTION

Humor plays a significant role in human communication, often relying on implicature to convey meanings that extend beyond the literal interpretation of words. Stand-up comedy, as a distinct form of humor, frequently employs implicature to engage audiences and deliver punchlines effectively. Implicature, a concept introduced by Grice (1975) in his Cooperative Principle and Maxims, refers to the implied meanings that arise from utterances based on context, shared knowledge, and conversational principles. In analyzing humor, it is crucial to understand the different types of implicature utilized by comedians to enhance their performances and connect with their audiences.

This study explores the use of implicature in the stand-up comedy performances of Drew Lynch, an American comedian recognized for incorporating his stutter into his comedic style. By analyzing Lynch's performances, the study aims to identify the types of implicature he employs and how they contribute to the humor in his routines. Specifically, the research focuses on distinguishing between conventional implicature, which relies on established linguistic conventions, and conversational implicature, which arises from context and the flouting of conversational maxims (Grice, 1975; Carston, 1988).

Previous studies have examined implicature in various comedic contexts, including sitcoms (Fawaida, 2018; Qiu, 2019; Fitriani, Nasir, & Fonna, 2020) and stand-up comedy performances (R Indah, 2016; Rahmi, 2020; Sahri, 2021). These studies provide insights into how humor is constructed through implicature, revealing how comedians strategically employ language to create humorous effects. Additionally, research on humor strategies (Utami, 2018) and pragmatic perspectives on verbal humor (Kamensky & Lomteva, 2018) highlight the cultural and linguistic elements that influence audience reception. Drew Lynch's unique comedic

style is influenced by his speech disfluencies (Saputri, 2018; Hardianti & Indah, 2020), providing a rich case for analyzing the interplay between humor and pragmatics. By examining his routines, this study builds on existing research by offering a detailed analysis of how implicature functions within his stand-up comedy, contributing to the broader discourse on humor and language use.

Through a qualitative descriptive approach, this study collects data from Lynch's performances by transcribing and analyzing his utterances. The analysis categorizes instances of implicature based on Grice's framework and considers how they align with existing research on humor production in stand-up comedy (Nugraheni, 2010; Febri, 2013). The findings aim to enhance understanding of how implicature contributes to humor effectiveness and audience engagement in stand-up comedy.

By integrating theoretical perspectives from Bach (2010) and Carston (1988) with empirical studies, this research provides a comprehensive exploration of implicature in humor. It offers valuable insights for linguists, humor researchers, and stand-up comedy enthusiasts into how implicit meanings can create laughter while fostering deeper connections between comedians and their audiences.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### ***Research Design***

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative design, aiming to systematically and accurately explain the subject matter by presenting factual evidence to support the analysis. The data utilized in this study is secondary data, specifically drawn from several performances of Drew Lynch's stand-up comedy videos available on his YouTube channel. To collect the data, the researcher downloaded and transcribed the scripts of these performances directly from the channel.

### ***Data Source***

According to Wasito (1992:69), secondary data refers to information collected by a second party, typically documented or recorded from the original source. In this study, the data consists of monologue transcripts from Drew Lynch's stand-up comedy performances.

The researcher obtained these transcripts by downloading the video from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WTXM2lBzsQ> and carefully watching the performance. Notes were taken during the viewing, and the transcript was reviewed and cross-checked to ensure completeness and accuracy for analysis.

### ***Data Collection***

The researcher collected data from Drew Lynch's YouTube channel, specifically focusing on his stand-up comedy videos. The process involved several steps:

1. Watching and listening to the videos from the first to the second parts on Drew Lynch's channel.
2. Transcribing the content of the videos to create an accurate written record of Drew Lynch's performance.
3. Identifying and classifying each utterance that includes implicature, organizing the data into sentences containing implicit meanings for further analysis.

### ***Data Analysis***

After collecting the data, the researcher analysed it through several steps to focus on identifying the types of implicature present in Drew Lynch's stand-up comedy. First, the researcher carefully read the transcriptions while watching Drew Lynch's videos multiple

times to ensure a thorough understanding of the context. The initial viewing was to grasp the overall context of the performance, followed by subsequent readings to pinpoint utterances containing implicature.

Next, the researcher classified these utterances based on Grice's (1975) theory of implicature, distinguishing between conversational and conventional implicatures. Each utterance identified as containing implicature was categorized and analysed to determine its type.

The discussion of findings centered on the types of implicature used in Drew Lynch's performances, supported by examples and explanations derived from Grice's framework. The analysis emphasized how the utterances fit within the categories of conversational or conventional implicature without delving into the methods of usage. The final step involved summarizing the findings and drawing conclusions about the types of implicature identified in Drew Lynch's stand-up routines, contributing to a better understanding of how implicature manifests in comedic contexts.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Findings***

The researcher analysed data from Drew Lynch's stand-up comedy performances on YouTube, each focusing on different topics: Drew's life with a stutter and the contrasting viewpoints between Joe Biden and Trump supporters. Both topics engaged the audience, with Drew's delivery entertaining them. However, for those unfamiliar with stand-up comedy, understanding some of the humour may be challenging. This study aims to help audiences better grasp the essence of Drew Lynch's comedic style.

The analysis identified a total of 10 instances of implicature across Drew's performances, which were categorized and numbered (Datum 1, Datum 2, etc.). Each datum was examined within the context of Drew's stand-up routines, which included the subtext, punchline, and follow-up, as well as instances where Grice's maxims were flouted to reveal the implied meanings behind his utterances.

The findings revealed that Drew Lynch's performances include both conventional and conversational implicatures, with 5 examples of each. This indicates that Drew uses both direct and indirect statements, embedding implicit meanings within his words. Conventional implicature is used in his delivery to convey meaning through commonly understood phrases, while conversational implicature occurs when Drew flouts conversational maxims to communicate indirectly.

Overall, the study highlights the use of conventional and conversational implicature in Drew Lynch's stand-up comedy. By using these types of implicature, he helps the audience interpret his humour more effectively, ensuring that the jokes are understood and enjoyed without confusion. The study also identified the recurring elements in Drew's performances, such as storytelling, satire, and sarcasm, which are conveyed through both conventional and conversational implicatures.

### **Types of implicature used in Drew Lynch's Stand-up Comedy**

This study identified two types of implicature in Drew Lynch's stand-up comedy: conventional and conversational implicature. Out of the ten utterances analyzed, five were conventional implicatures and five were conversational implicatures. These were distinguished based on the literal meaning of the statements, and whether the utterances were made directly or indirectly.

## **Conventional Implicature**

### **Datum 1a**

“hey hi hey, it's it's it's another whit white guy, okay good good good to be here. uh uh uh my name's drew lynch. um I li uh I stutter I uh have to say that every show otherwise people look at me like does he know um?”

In this data, Drew Lynch greets the audience at the start of his stand-up routine. He introduces himself, assuming that some people may not know who he is. The phrase "Does he know um?" subtly points out his stutter, which became a part of his identity as a stand-up comedian after a throat injury in 2015. Since then, he has stuttered, and he often mentions it in his performances to remind the audience of his unique experience. Most of the audience understands this reference, so the utterance is classified as a conventional implicature.

This utterance serves to inform the audience about his stutter. Drew Lynch repeats this information because some people may not know, while others are already familiar with it. The humor comes from the context, and the audience laughs after he says "does he know um?" which shows that the delivery works as intended.

### **Datum 2a**

“they are uh they're they're they're so different though oh man so different those two therapies like in speech therapy they only care about the way you you say things, not the things you say, and they'll make you say some pretty ridiculous things they give you little alliteration anecdotes things that you would never say in real life, for example, my mother milks my mushy marbles.”

In this part of his routine, Drew Lynch talks about the difference between speech therapy and regular therapy. He says, "In speech therapy, they only care about the way you say things, not the things you say," which refers to how speech therapy often focuses on pronunciation and articulation, using word games to practice. He adds more details with the conjunction 'and' to help the audience better understand his point. This line doesn't require much context to make people laugh, and the audience can easily grasp the humor, so it's an example of conventional implicature.

The main point of this utterance is to inform the audience about his experience with speech therapy. Since most people may not know what speech therapy involves, Drew Lynch shares his personal experience, including how he practiced saying silly, nonsensical phrases like "my mother milks my mushy marbles." This line is funny because it's absurd, and the audience laughs at the oddity of it. It's a typical comedic approach in American culture, where humor often comes from playful or exaggerated speech. The intention is clear: to entertain, and the audience understands it as such.

### **Datum 3a**

“um i took a trip uh uh uh pretty recently I was in I was in Hawaii uh as you as you can see from my mom's shirt”

Drew Lynch used these lines to transition to a new topic, talking about his trip to Hawaii. He says, "I was in Hawaii, uh, as you can see from my mom's shirt," which suggests that his mom's t-shirt is evidence of the trip. The shirt probably has a Hawaiian design or something that hints at Hawaii. In Indonesia, for example, people often assume that someone wearing a Bali shirt or a shirt with beach motifs has recently visited that place. There's no deep context needed for this, so it falls under conventional implicature because Drew Lynch clearly conveys his point.

The purpose of this line is to inform the audience about his trip. He starts by mentioning Hawaii and then jokes that the shirt his mom is wearing proves they went there. While the

audience doesn't know for sure if it's true, they assume it's a valid clue, just like how people often use t-shirts as "evidence" of their travels. The humour comes from the casual way he makes the connection between the shirt and his trip.

#### **Datum 4a**

"I want Joe Biden to win here's what hang on here's what he's a person who who stutters, that's the only reason why. [Applause] that's the only reason why that shit gets me so hard."

Drew Lynch expresses his desire for Joe Biden to win the U.S. presidential election, stating that his support stems from the fact that both he and Biden are stutterers. The phrase "hang on here is what he's a person who stutters, that is the only reason why" suggests that Lynch identifies with Biden due to their shared experience of stuttering, implying a sense of solidarity and potential for connection between them. This statement can be classified as conventional implicature, as it conveys a literal meaning while also hinting at deeper implications.

Drew Lynch's intention is to clarify why he voted for Biden. While the audience might expect a more complex rationale, Lynch humorously reveals that his sole reason is their commonality in stuttering. This revelation elicits laughter from the audience, who find the reasoning relatable because of their shared experiences.

#### **Datum 5a**

"here's what i love about trump supporters, if you are someone who votes for Biden and you tell a Trump supporter for the most part they are still respectful of your opinion okay they can respect your opinion they're not gonna hate you because of your opinion they might uh hate you because of your race or religion or sexuality but not your opinion."

The context of the utterance above is Drew Lynch's joke aimed at Trump supporters. The statement "they might uh hate you because of your race or religion or sexuality but not your opinion" suggests that Trump supporters may be racist towards those who oppose them. Drew Lynch clearly indicates that while Trump supporters might not dislike differing opinions, they do harbor negative feelings about people's race, religion, and sexuality. This adds another layer of meaning, as it conveys an unexpected perspective. The utterance can be classified as conventional implicature.

The intention behind the statement is to humorously critique Trump supporters. Initially, Drew Lynch claims that Trump supporters are respectful towards others, but then he makes a surprising remark that reveals his satirical approach. The audience laughs when Drew Lynch points out that Trump supporters dislike Biden voters not for their opinions but because of their race, religion, and sexuality. This statement becomes humorous because Lynch delivers it with a smooth and clever quip.

### **Conversational Implicature**

#### **Datum 6b**

"it's just a it's just a very slight speech impediment. I'm sure you've heard it's just every so often. I I uh repeat myself um not because I'm disabled but you know because you're dumb um"

The context of the utterance above explains why Drew Lynch has to repeat his words when speaking. The statement "I uh repeat myself um not because I'm disabled, but you know, because you're dumb" suggests that he repeats himself to ensure the audience understands him, as they might be slow to grasp his points. He mentions that his stutter is a minor speech issue that people are usually familiar with. By jokingly saying he repeats himself because the audience is "dumb," he playfully teases them, which prompts laughter. This remark can be seen

as a form of conversational implicature because it requires the audience to interpret its meaning beyond the literal context.

The purpose of this utterance is to poke fun at the audience. When Drew Lynch says "because you are dumb," he is teasing them to elicit laughter. The audience understands that he repeats himself due to his stutter, but he humorously twists the truth to create a joke.

**Datum 7b**

"did you did you get it uh so i i go to uh uh speech therapy and uh regular therapy because i i want my problems to sound good"

After discussing his stuttering in the previous statement, Drew Lynch talks about speech therapy and regular therapy. The statement "I want my problem to sound good" indicates that he attends speech therapy not to eliminate his stutter but to improve its presentation. His stutter has become a distinctive part of his identity as a stand-up comedian. Thus, this statement can be classified as conversational implicature, as it requires a specific context to fully understand its meaning.

The purpose of this utterance is to inform the audience about speech therapy. Since the audience might not be familiar with these therapies, they may simply accept what Drew Lynch says. He does not explicitly say that the therapy aims to cure his stutter; instead, he cleverly suggests that he is undergoing therapy to make his stutter sound better. This implicit message is what makes the audience laugh.

**Datum 8b**

"When I was 20, I was playing shortstop on a softball team, and a grounder had blunted me in the throat from which I had fallen and hit my head, and that day, I had a minor vocal contusion with a major concussion, and I went home, and I went to sleep on the concussion which you were you're not supposed to do, and then I woke up the next day, and so now I have a career so um."

Drew Lynch shares the story of how he became a stutterer, starting with a serious tone as he recounts an injury he sustained while playing softball. He explains that a ball hit his throat, causing him to fall and suffer a concussion. Drew hopes the audience listens attentively, believing in the truth of his story. However, he lightens the mood with humor, shifting from seriousness to jokes. His statement, "I woke up the next day, and so now I have a career, so um," suggests that his stutter led him to become a stand-up comedian. People recognize him for his unique comedic style that incorporates his stuttering. This line should be understood in a broader context, as it plays with expectations and can be seen as conversational implicature.

Drew's intention is to share his experience with stuttering. The audience is eager to hear his story, but they unexpectedly laugh when he makes a seemingly unrelated comment about getting a career after waking up. Although it doesn't logically connect, they grasp the humor in his words.

**Datum 9b**

"When my plane landed in hawaii one of the flight attendants was like "hey just so you know you cannot touch the the sea turtles here or they will fine you up to ten thousand dollars" and i was like i don't appreciate you assuming that i have a history of touching turtles, I don't like that i was the only person she told either. I say "you think I you think I'm the guy I give a strong turtle touch and vibe for you know your market why don't you you tell me what what part of a turtle looks fun to touch at all you think i was like oh i i can't wait to rub it it's bald head run my hands over that dirty igloo it's carrying i never wanted to touch a turtle until she told me i couldn't now i'm curious i'm like why Hawaii? will it cure me why?"

In this statement, Drew Lynch shares his experience with a flight attendant who made him uncomfortable by warning him not to touch the sea turtles in Hawaii. He humorously

remarks, "it is carrying I never wanted to touch a turtle until she told me I couldn't; now I am curious. I am like, why Hawaii? Will it cure me why?" This implies that he felt offended by the warning, which suggested he might have a history of touching turtles. Initially, he had no intention of interacting with the turtles, but the flight attendant's caution sparked his curiosity. This statement can be seen as conversational implicature, as it carries a deeper meaning beyond its literal interpretation and plays with expectations.

Drew's intention here is to express his frustration towards the flight attendant. He was taken aback by her sudden warning about the potential \$10,000 fine for touching a turtle. The audience quickly understands his annoyance. They laugh when he jokingly teases the flight attendant, especially when he expresses his irritation in an exaggerated manner, which adds to the humor of the situation.

#### **Datum 10b**

"He stutters that's empowering to to to me someone who stutters I see him I'm like ah "that's just like me" same thing for for for for when Obama was in office there were black people who were like "wow that's just like me" and when trump first got elected there were there were people with tiny hands were like "that's just like me!"

Drew Lynch discusses how he relates to Joe Biden as a fellow stutterer. He expresses, "someone who stutters I see him I am like ah 'that's just like me.'" This statement suggests that it's inspiring for someone with a speech impediment to see a president who shares that experience. It indirectly conveys a message of motivation, showing that even those with challenges can achieve greatness, just like a president. Lynch highlights the idea that we all share similarities and are equal in some way. This remark can be classified as conversational implicature because it carries a deeper meaning beyond the surface level and plays with expectations.

Lynch's intention is to humorously critique others while discussing Biden's impact on stutterers. He starts by expressing admiration for Biden's support of people who stutter, but then he playfully mocks the way he speaks, suggesting he's imitating others. He draws comparisons, saying that just as people who stutter might relate to Biden, individuals with different backgrounds might find similarities with other leaders, like President Obama for his race or President Trump for his hand size. The audience finds this humorous because it contrasts with the reality that Trump is known for having larger hands, creating an unexpected and funny twist in Lynch's routine.

#### **Discussion**

This study investigates the types of implicature present in Drew Lynch's stand-up comedy, focusing on how he employs both conventional and conversational implicatures in his performances. Drawing upon Grice's (1975) theory of implicature, the research explores how Lynch utilizes reference, inference, and presupposition to convey implicit meanings within his comedic routines. Conventional implicatures in Lynch's stand-up rely on general meanings that audiences can easily understand without requiring specific context or cooperative principles. In contrast, conversational implicatures emerge when Lynch intentionally flouts Grice's maxims, creating humor through indirectness and layered meaning (Grice, 1975; Fawaida, 2018).

The findings indicate that Lynch frequently flouts the maxim of quality (4 instances), followed by the maxims of quantity, manner, and relevance, with some utterances overlapping multiple maxims. The maxim of quality is often violated when Lynch delivers exaggerated or fictional statements to emphasize the oddities of his life, a technique also observed in other comedic works (Rosasenja, 2012; Fitriani, Nasir, & Fonna, 2020). The study also found that

Lynch flouts the maxim of quantity by over-explaining or repeating details for comedic effect, enhancing humor through excessive elaboration (Lynch Morris, 2010; Nurhaliza & Sahri, 2021). Violations of the maxim of manner occur when Lynch deliberately introduces ambiguity or obscurity in his speech, compelling the audience to infer meaning based on context (Taufiqurrahman, 2013). Meanwhile, his flouting of the maxim of relevance is evident when he introduces seemingly unrelated statements, which later tie into his storytelling, adding an element of surprise to his jokes (Rolesta, 2016; Jaufillaili, 2017).

A significant aspect of Lynch's comedic style is the overlapping of maxims, where a single utterance can simultaneously flout multiple principles, thereby enhancing the comedic impact. For instance, his statement about "getting a career after waking up" flouts both the maxim of relevance and quality, as it humorously contradicts common expectations and exaggerates reality. Such overlapping implicatures align with previous studies on humor in media, which highlight the interplay between different maxims to create comedic effects (Kamensky & Lomteva, 2018; Qiu, 2019).

In addition to implicature, Lynch employs anaphoric references to maintain audience engagement and facilitate understanding. By referring back to previously mentioned ideas, Lynch ensures clarity and enhances the flow of his performance, a technique commonly used in stand-up comedy to avoid confusion (Utami, 2018; Hardianti & Indah, 2020). This aligns with Bach's (2010) distinction between implicature and explicature, where stand-up comedians often blend implicit and explicit communication for comedic impact.

Overall, the study concludes that Drew Lynch's stand-up comedy relies heavily on implicature, combining both conventional and conversational elements to craft engaging and humorous narratives. His strategic use of Gricean maxims, combined with references, inferences, and presuppositions, effectively creates humor while ensuring the audience's comprehension and enjoyment (Carston, 1988; Ahmed & Shazali, 2010). This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how implicature functions in comedic discourse, supporting existing literature on verbal humor and pragmatics (Nur, 2016; Fawaida, 2018; Saputri, 2018; Jipang, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

In summary, Drew Lynch skillfully employs both conventional and conversational implicature in his stand-up comedy. He reveals the meanings behind his jokes through references, inferences, and presuppositions. Additionally, he intentionally bends the rules of the cooperative principle by flouting various maxims and using specific word choices to enhance his humor. Lynch's comedy allows him to express sarcasm, emotions, opinions, and personal experiences related to his life as a stutterer. Ultimately, his use of implicature serves to share insights and feelings while providing a humorous critique of social issues.

The audience's reactions help clarify the implicit messages Drew Lynch conveys. As a speaker, he deliberately chooses not to adhere strictly to cooperative communication norms to express his opinions and experiences, which aligns with Grice's (1975) theory of conversational maxims. By doing so, he aims to elicit laughter from the crowd. He also uses carefully chosen words and phrases that aid the audience in understanding his points without confusion. These elements references, inferences, and presuppositions help prevent misunderstandings during his performance. In the end, Lynch's playful violations of conversational norms are intended purely for entertainment and comedic effect. This approach is consistent across various performances he has given, indicating that his stand-up comedy blends satire, sarcasm, humor, and storytelling into a unique style.



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