

# Examining the Role of Context in Understanding Generalized and Particularized Implicature in the Play *The Bear* by Anton Chekhov

Sonia Bokhari<sup>1</sup>, Shaukat Abbas<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Irshad Ul Haq<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor of English, Govt. Graduate College 6<sup>th</sup> Road Satellite Town Rawalpindi.

<sup>2</sup>PhD Scholar, Department of English, University of Education, Lahore.

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer English cum Deputy Incharge Academics, Leads Law College, Lahore.

Correspondence: [sonia.bokhari72@gmail.com](mailto:sonia.bokhari72@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

**Aim of the Study:** This study explores the significance of contextual cues in comprehending generalized and particularized implicatures by taking Anton Chekhov's play *The Bear*, as a case study.

**Methodology:** A purposive sampling technique was used in this research where 20 members were chosen to take part in the study. The play's dialogues were subjected to inquiry by means of qualitative analysis. The contextual factors were studied as part of the deeper understanding of the play *The Bear*. The individuals were interviewed to gain insights into the play, on the basis of their deeper understanding of the text and then qualitative interpretations were used by converting the bits of information into step-by-step coding by using John Ward Creswell's research guidelines.

**Findings:** It was revealed by the findings that contextual information plays a vital role to distinguish between generalized and particularized implicatures via usage of the literary text. Additionally, the study found that the familiarity of the text and its cultural background have strong connection of deeper meanings. Contextual cues tend to influence the participants' comprehension capability to interpret what they perceive from the text.

**Conclusion:** This study works upon the importance of inferred assumptions which cannot be directly derived from what is actually said in a dialogue. The study highlights the significance of the context to understand the implied meanings of a verbal expression with a single meaning. This phenomenon is known as contextual implicature. The study's findings could be utilized as a foundation for further research in the field of literary studies, where scholars can enhance their comprehension about the nature of implicature and its usage in literature. Additionally, this study's qualitative content analysis technique can be utilized in future studies for analyzing the contextual cues of various literary works.

**Keywords:** Context, Literature, Implicature, Anton Chekhov's *The Bear*, Cultural Background, Textual Analysis, Deeper Insights of the Literary Genre.

## Article History

Received:

June 23, 2023

Revised:

September 17, 2023

Accepted:

September 23, 2023

Published:

September 30, 2023

## **Introduction**

The role of context in understanding the implicature, is an important topic in the field of linguistics as well as literature. Implicature helps to refer to the intended meaning conveyed by the speaker which goes beyond the literal meaning of the words used. Studying implicature is essential as it endows readers with a better understanding of ways through which people communicate and interpret language. The current study aims at examining the role of context in understanding generalized and particularized implicature by taking an example, from one of Anton Chekov's plays: *The Bear*.

## ***Background of the Study***

The study of implicature can be traced back to the work of an American linguist, Herbert Paul Grice (1913-1988), who also proposed the "Cooperative Principle and Maxims of Conversation" between the speaker and the listener, as participants of an expected successful conversation. The concept was introduced in the form of pragmatic theory, that he presented in his essay *Logic and Language* published in 1975. The cooperative principle proposes that speakers should make their contributions to a conversation as informative, relevant, truthful, and clear as required. The conversation maxims go into additional detail as to how the four fundamental principles of quality, quantity, relevance, and manner help speakers of the dialogues accomplish these objectives. Since then, the study of implicature has broadened to encompass the investigation of a variety of implicatures, including generic and particularized implicatures.

Though different, the perceived meanings are not completely detached from the original utterance. This study will especially examine how context influences the understanding and interpretation of implicature in both spoken and written forms through an analysis of a literary text.

## ***What is Implicature?***

Implied meaning is a fundamental concept in language communication that allows speakers to convey ideas that go beyond the literal meaning of their conversation. Since implicature arises in the dialogue form of a conversation, it is known as conversational implicature. The term was first used by an American philosopher of language, Herbert Paul Grice in his landmark essay *Logic and Conversation*. In this essay that was initially presented during a lecture series at Harvard in 1967, he defined the concept as: "what is meant by an utterance, over and above what is explicitly stated by the words used" (1975). This definition implies that speakers can use a range of techniques to communicate meaning which may include the use of body language, general knowledge of the background, and vocal inflections. It refers to the meaning that is conveyed by specific words or phrases against specific contexts. Conversational implicature may occur in two basic forms as proposed by Grice i.e., conventional as well as particularized implicature. In order to help the reader recognize the impact of conversational implicature in its selected text, this study delineates in brief detail the true nature of the concept, that is basically two pronged.

## ***Generalized and Particularized Implicature***

The meaning that is inferred by default, when a speaker adheres to the cooperative principle and maxims of conversation is known as "generalized implicature." In contrast, the term "particularized implicature" describes the meaning that results from contextual elements, including voice inflection or common prior knowledge of the subject under discussion.

"Generalized implicature" refers to the meaning that emerges from abiding by cooperative principles and conversational norms. In other words, speakers are supposed to add to a conversation in a clear, honest, informative, and pertinent way. Speakers can communicate a sense of generalized implicature that transcends the literal meaning of their words by adhering to these principles as for instance the general statement "I am going to bed" may imply that the speaker wants to keep the conversation short or expresses fatigue.

On the other hand, "particularized implicature" refers to the interpretation that arises from specific contextual factors, such as voice inflection or existing knowledge that is mutually shared by the speakers as well as the listeners. For example, the question "Can you pass the salt?" may specifically suggest that the listener and the speaker are in the same room and that the salt is available. The listeners include the audience as well.

Particularized implicature can vary greatly depending on one's interpretation and is heavily dependent on its context. Understanding the difference between particularized and generalized implicature is essential for an effective comprehension and communication process. This study will investigate Anton Chekhov's play *The Bear* (1888), to study as to how a particular context can influence interpretation in terms of implicature in its conventional as well as particularized forms.

Comprehending the nature of various implicatures and the ways in which environment influences their perception is crucial for both language comprehension and effective communication.

### ***The Role of Context in the Interpretation of Particularized and Generalized Implicatures***

Grice's Theory of Conversational Implicature focuses on the understanding of both generalized and particularized implicature. It requires an understanding of the related context of the text under focus. Implicature aims at drawing inference from what is said in order to reach at the implicit meanings against the backdrop of the literal meanings of the said words.

Observation and knowledge lead to generalized implicature. However, depending upon the situation, the ways in which these ideas are interpreted may vary. The generalized implications of the statement "I'm fine" might be different in a doctor's office than they would be in a casual conversation with a friend. Comparably, contextual elements like voice inflection, shared prior knowledge, and physical environment play a significant influence in case of particularized implicature. For instance, if the speaker and the listener are at a formal dinner party as opposed to a relaxed family meal, the question: "Can you pass the salt?" may hint at a different specific meaning that is supposed to be read between the lines by an intelligent listener.

Linguistics researchers are continuously working to understand how implicature interpretation is influenced by its context. Implicature can be recognised against the backdrop of different contexts. According to modern research, contextual elements including social identity, emotional state, and knowledge of past may influence its interpretation (Holtgraves, 2017; Katsos et al., 2020). Likewise, it may also depend on the context of the conversation among speakers who change their language and demeanor to suit the requirement of different situations (Jucker & Smith, 2019).

In case of a generalized implication, the speaker's meaning can be deduced from social norms, whereas in case of a particularized implication meaning may be inferred from the particular context of a discourse or written work (Grice, 1975). In the play, *The Bear* by Anton Chekhov, comprehension of the significance of context in implicature recognition is especially crucial because of the intricate interpersonal ties and power dynamics among the characters.

The purpose of this study is to examine how the play's setting, interaction among characters with their social backgrounds and mindsets help the reader reach out to the understanding of a sense of generalized as well as particularized implicature.

### ***Objectives of the Study***

1. To investigate the role of context in understanding generalized and particularized implicature in the play *The Bear* by Anton Chekhov.
2. To identify the nature of various implicatures that are present in the play and the background elements that influence the process of identification.

3. To explore the implications of the findings of the study for furthering the process of linguistic and literary analysis of a writeup.

### ***Research Questions***

The study included following research questions:

1. What types of implicature are present in the play *The Bear* by Anton Chekhov, and how are they related to the context in which they occur?
2. In what ways does the play's contextualization influence generalized and particularized implicature?
3. How do the findings of this study contribute to the understanding of implicature in literary and linguistic analysis?

### ***Significance of the Study***

The study regarding the role of context in understanding generalized and particularized implicature in the play *The Bear* by Anton Chekhov is significant for several reasons. First of all, by shedding light on the processes behind implicature comprehension, it advances the field of pragmatics. The study aims to provide insights into the cognitive processes involved in pragmatic reasoning by investigating the ways in which context affects implicature interpretation.

Secondly, the understanding of Chekhov's literary style and his use of implicatures in his plays can be made more significant through the clarity of concepts provided in this study. The analysis can show how implicatures support Chekhov's well known delicate and nuanced depictions of characters and their relationships. Readers can better appreciate Chekhov's writing and its place in the canon of literature by comprehending the role implicatures can play in a literary write up.

This study provides insight as to how readers and audiences interpret meanings beyond the literal text by investigating the function of context in comprehending generalized and particularized implicature.

The results of this study have significance for linguists and literary scholars. It can enhance an ordinary reader's approach to literature by improving his comprehension of the literary work and may help him recognize its depth and complexity on a subtler level. Moreover, this research can benefit the broader field of pragmatics, which is concerned with the analysis of language use in various contexts.

Finally, the study has applications in the fields of teaching and learning of languages. Implicatures are a crucial component of language use and knowing how they are created and understood can improve a language learner's ability to communicate in everyday contexts. Insights from the study about the function of context in creating and interpreting implicatures can be applied to pedagogical approaches and language learning materials.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

Paul Grice's *Theory of Implicature*, serves as the theoretical foundation for this study. The work of American linguist Paul Grice (1975) has been influential in developing a framework for the understanding of implicature. According to Grice, implicature understanding is predicated on the cooperative principle, which holds that dialogue is a means of fostering cooperation and mutual understanding. The quality, quantity, relevance, and maxims of cooperative principles in a conversation lend support to the cooperative principle. This idea of cooperative maxims of conversation is known as the second theory of Paul Grice. It serves as the complementary theory to the theory of implicature originally presented by Grice in his essay *Logic and Conversation*. These aphorisms offer a framework for comprehending the idea where the context of the discourse or written text is used to deduce the speaker's intention.

Grice's theory posits that by using implicatures, or inferences the hearer makes are based on the context in which the utterance was made. This way, the speakers can convey a meaning that is beyond that which is

expressed in the words themselves. Particularized implicatures are inferred from the particular context of the utterance, whereas generalized implicatures are derived from the cooperative principle and the conversational maxims (Horn, 1984). Linguists and literary scholars have shown interest in the study of implicature in drama and literature.

The Relevance Theory proposed by Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson presented in their seminal work *Relevance* (1995) believably a proposed extension of Grice's Theory of Implicature also serves as the proposed framework of this study. In their theory of relevance, Sperber and Wilson expand on Grice's implicature concept by highlighting the significance of cognitive processing for comprehending implicatures. Relevance is defined as the cognitive effort needed to process the utterance and the expected cognitive effects of the interpretation. This means that the hearer's expectations of relevance influence the process by which he interprets the speaker's meaning.

In the context of Anton Chekhov's play *The Bear*, the proposed theoretical framework is particularly relevant as the play is renowned for its in-depth examination of societal norms and expectations and complex characterization. We can learn more about the characters and their relationships, as well as the societal norms and values that shape their behavior, by dissecting the implicatures used in the play.

Overall, this theoretical framework offers a strong basis for examining how context affects our comprehension of both particularized and generalized implicatures in literary works. In order to assist the audience in understanding the meaning that the speaker or author intends to convey, this research uses *The Bear* as a case study. The study describes an actual state using both literal and figurative language. We can learn more about the use of implicatures and their importance in the craft of characterization and themes in literary works by using this framework to analyze the play.

### **Literature Review: Gaps in the Implicature Study**

The significance of the context for the comprehension of both generalized and particularized implicature in literary texts, despite earlier studies on implicature demands attention. *The Bear* has been chosen as a case study because it contains numerous situations and dialogues with opportunities for underlying meaning. Chekhov is renowned for his innovative use of recurrent symbols that allude to deeper meanings.

First of all, implicature has been studied in spoken and written language in the past, not many have looked at how it functions in literary texts. Given that literary texts rely significantly on context and subtext to convey meaning, it is critical to comprehend implicature in this setting. Studies have also shown that different contextual factors can influence the interpretation of implicature. For instance, implicature interpretation can be greatly impacted by the use of prosody, or the rhythm and intonation of speech, according to a 2009 study by Huang and Snedeker. Giora and Fein (1999) discovered in another study that implicature interpretation can also be strongly impacted by the use of metaphors and other figurative language.

Prior research has examined the significance of context in implicature comprehension across a range of contexts, encompassing literary texts (Kreiwirth, 1992), advertising (Leech, 1983), and political discourse (Van Dijk, 2010).

However, not much research has been done on the role played by the context in the understanding of implicature in literary texts. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to investigate how context contributes to the comprehension of both generalized and particularized implicatures in one of the dramatic forms, where irony and metaphorical devices are frequently employed as literary devices to enhance the scope of meaning. The research will clarify how context as a background influence meaning and helps to derive a conclusion in literary texts by adding to the body of knowledge.

Secondly, few studies have explicitly looked at how context plays a part in comprehending particularized implicature within the context of one of Chekhov's works.

Thirdly, interpreting implicatures from the viewpoint of the reader or listener as opposed to the writer or speaker has been the subject of the majority of prior research. To fully understand how implicature is employed by writers and speakers to convey meaning and to what degree it may depend on context, more research is required.

Overall, these gaps in the literature emphasize the necessity of more investigation into how context affects one's comprehension of implicature in literary texts, particularly in the specific context of the play *The Bear*. The play has been picked up for its exquisite use of irony and satire in a spontaneous dialogue system. The context of a play provides a better understanding of the dialogues for its brevity and rapid exchange as opposed to the canvass of a novel or short story where the writer is more often present to help the reader reach more clarity and the dialogues appear after gaps of prosaic commentary.

## Analysis

In language communication, implication is a key idea that enables speakers to communicate ideas that go beyond the literal meaning of their words. Contextual elements like the tone of speech or shared prior knowledge has a significant influence on implicature interpretation. Research is still being done to determine how context influences the meaning making process.

The study of implicatures—such as generalized and particularized implicatures—has become a larger part of language and literary research. While particularized implicature results from particular contextual circumstances, generalized implicature can be understood by adhering to the Cooperative Principle and Maxims of Conversation.

Understanding the meaning of the speaker or the writer's intention beyond the literal interpretation of the words requires an understanding of implicature. In linguistics, research regarding contextual significance has been crucial because it advances our knowledge of language use and communication.

Generalized and particularized implicatures are the two basic categories into which Contextual implicature falls. Particularized implicatures are unique to a given context or circumstance, whereas generalized implicatures are predicated on common knowledge or presumptions about language or culture.

A key idea in linguistics is language implicature, which describes the oblique meaning that a writer or speaker conveys in addition to the literal meaning of the words they use. It may entail interpreting the inferred rather than the stated. The study of implicature is important as it helps us to understand how people communicate and interpret language. Paul Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle and Maxims of Conversation provides a framework for the comprehension of implicature. That may prove helpful in the understanding of implicature, particularly in situations where the speaker's intention is not immediately apparent.

When it comes to particularized implicature, the context is essential for determining the speaker's intent. For instance, the audience or reader may deduce a character's intention in *The Bear* based on the words chosen specifically and the context of the character dialogue. As a result, the play's interpretation of the implicature is strongly related to the setting, in which it takes place.

Chekhov employs the concept of implicature in the play through a range of contextual clues. The attempt is predicated on a deft grasp of the idea, but it is the result of a naturally occurring flow of writing rather than something that was forced upon it, as there is no indication in Chekhov's works of a deliberate and planned attempt at implicature.

The characters, setting, and voice tone of the play contribute towards the building up of implicature both generalized and particularized. Act 2, for instance, is where Luka counsels Smirnov to "be politer." The general interpretation of this statement is that Smirnov is being impolite, but the particular interpretation is that Luka is attempting to persuade Smirnov to pursue a romantic relationship with Popova.

The play offers a rich background within which to investigate the phenomenon of implicature in language comprehension. There are numerous instances in the text where the audience must deduce the meaning that the characters try to convey through their words and deeds. When Popova declares, "I am dead for the world," it is clear that she is apparently in grief and wishes to withdraw from society only to gain greater attention than she could ever do without shutting herself off from society. A similar inference is made when Smirnov tells Popova, "You are a woman, therefore, weak," (*The Bear*) suggesting that he is trying to push her to the limit. It throws a hint at the common notion held by male psyche of that time regarding women. Looked down upon as the weaker sex, men made no secret of their much-celebrated sense of male chauvinism against the female world of those times.

The play, despite being a comedy, has conversational characters with lots of ramifications. The manner in which the characters speak and the setting in which the exchange occurs frequently give away to what they intend saying. One may note that the play's comic tone frequently depends on the audience's capacity to deduce the characters' intentions and comprehension of the implicatures.

***Research Question 1: What kind of implicatures are present in Anton Chekhov's play The Bear, and how do they relate to the setting in which they appear?***

Implicature is defined by Robyn Carston as "a process whereby a speaker intends to convey a message that goes beyond the literal meaning of the words they use" (2002; p. 1). In literature, implicature is often used by authors to convey deeper meanings or emotions to the reader.

There are multiple instances of implicature in the play that are pertinent to the situations in which they take place. For instance, when Popova declares in Act I: "I shall go to the convent" (Chekhov, 2014, p. 4), it implies that she intends to lead a chaste life of complete devotion to her dead husband. Here, the implicature is understood as having pointed to something that has to do with the play's setting, centering on the themes of faithfulness and love which actually borders on affectation and forced appearances. Moreover, it is implied that Smirnov has already fallen in love with Popova, when he says in Act 111: "I'll have to marry you now" (Chekhov, 2014, p. 19). This implication is connected to the play's setting, which examines the intricacies of interpersonal relationships and the efficacy of love. The "have to" part of the borders on a comic theme that portrays Smirnov as one forced to marry her out of a sense of obligation rather than out of his own genuine wish to marry Popova.

***Research Question 2: In what ways does the play's contextualization influence generalized and particularized implicature ?***

Studies have indicated that contextual factors have a significant impact on implicatures (Sperber & Wilson, 1986; Huang, 2007). The context of an utterance may reveal information about the speaker's intended meaning. However, the undertone of implied meaning requires a consideration of the larger discourse. Numerous contextual elements play a role in the interpretation of generalized and particularized implicatures in Anton Chekhov's *The Bear*.

First and foremost, the characters' social standing and their interpersonal connections are significant contextual elements. For instance, the widow Popova and the landowner Smirnov's interactions in the play are influenced by their different social standings and perspectives regarding one another. The interpretation of Smirnov's ironic and sarcastic remarks towards Popova as well as her own particularized implicatures in return, is influenced by a larger context. The society, where they belong, women are generally viewed as prone to becoming emotional and using their tears as "games". It may be a society where societal norms are practiced as rituals rather than as moral obligations. Therefore, a woman does not "forget to powder her face" (*The Bear*) even when mourning.

The play's setting is a crucial contextual element as well. The drama is set in late 19th-century rural Russia, and the characters' speech and actions are indicative of the customs and values of this community. The interpretation of the characters' speech acts is influenced by various factors, such as the concept of honor and the expectations of gender roles.

Finally, another contextual element that influences implicature interpretation is the play's plot and events. Contextual cues that are crucial to understanding the play's overall meaning include the characters' tensions and conflicts as well as their objectives and motivations. Conclusively, the interpretation of both generalized and particularized implicatures in the play depends on a variety of contextual factors, such as social status, setting and plot events. A deeper comprehension of the goals and motivations of the characters as well as a complete appreciation of the play's themes and messages depend on an understanding of these contextual clues.

***Research Question 3: How do the findings of this study contribute to the understanding of implicature in literary and linguistic analysis?***

This research question aims to explore the contribution of the findings of this study to the existing understanding of language and literary analysis implicature. Understanding the many forms and purposes of implication can greatly improve our comprehension of language and literature.

The importance of the concept of implicature in language and literature has been acknowledged in earlier research writings. Implicature is the key element of pragmatic inference in communication, according to Sperber and Wilson's study *Relevance* (1995) focused on Grice's non-natural meaning and implicature. Similarly, British linguist Gerald Gazdar (1979) contends that the interpretation of indirect speech acts depends heavily on implicature. This implies that an utterance can convey meanings beyond its proposition. Recognizing implicature depends on the explicit account of the context, nonverbal cues, societal conventions and cultural stances. To Levinson, the notion of implicature provides the detail of "how it is possible to mean" irrespective of "what is actually 'said'". (Levinson, 1983). That is to say, that sometimes the content of an expression may fall short of the intended, underlying content and facts. Therefore, something more than just the word of the speaker is required to reach out to the true meanings.

The results of this study add to our understanding of implicature in language and literary analysis by offering a thorough examination of the various instances of implicatures found in the play and their relevance to contextual elements. This analysis also shows how implicature advances the plot and helps to develop the play's central characters, leading to a more sophisticated understanding of the implied meanings.

## **Research Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

The research design for this study is a qualitative case study design. A case study design is deemed appropriate as it allows for an in-depth analysis of a specific phenomenon within its real-life context. The case in this study is the play *The Bear* by Anton Chekhov, and the phenomenon being studied is the role of context in understanding the concept of generalized and particularized implicature.

### ***Nature of the Study***

The nature of this study is exploratory and descriptive. It aims to explore and describe how context affects the interpretation of implicature in the selected play.

### ***Sample of the Study***

In order to maintain the diversity and richness of the insights of the play, different methodology was adopted. Considering the role of context to understand the generalized and particularized implicatures of the play *The Bear*, 20 participants were chosen by using purposive sampling technique. To choose the number of participants regarding the play, a key focus of the deep understanding and deep involvement of the readers with the text was taken into consideration. The sampling duly focused upon the readers' ability to comprehend implicature in English. The valuable insights of the readers as their interest and understanding was meant to be considered,



while using the purposive sampling technique. The participants' experiences and perspectives were significant to the analysis of the contextual cues with respect to the comprehension of implied meanings as are deeply interwoven in the play *The Bear*. By enhancing the the study's validity with the provision of a multishaded understanding of the text of the play, the contextual clues of the text were linked to the research questions regarding the concept.

### ***Data Collection***

Following steps are undertaken for the data collection for this play:

- a. For a refined data collection, a pilot study is conducted from the sampling of the readers.
- b. The individuals' discussion and their interest in the literary genre *The Bear* by means of applicability of the play's text is recorded.
- c. The recordings of the sample is then transcribed by examining the major and minor themes of the play.
- d. Various instances of implicature are identified in the transcriptions process.
- e. The next step involves the coding of the particularized as well as generalized implicature.
- f. Final analysis includes contextual factors that impact the interpretation of implicature of the text of the play.

### ***Data Analysis Process***

For the sake of qualitative content analysis, John Ward Creswell's (2014) guidelines have been incorporated in this study. John Ward Creswell has been one of the famous American Academicians. Associated with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for 30 years, Creswell has authored 11 books, many of which focus on research design, qualitative research, and mixed methods research and are translated into many languages and used around the world. By highlighting the essential features of a thorough and thoughtful study, Creswell reduces research to its essential core ideas. His mixed methods technique provides an essential framework for the analysis of the selected play in this study.

In mixed methods studies, researchers employ the strategies of inquiry in many ways including those associated with quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative methods involve the processes of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and writing the results of a study. Qualitative procedures involve purposeful sampling, close textual analysis of the text, representation of information in figures and tables, and personal interpretation of the findings.

Research design, which is referred to, as the plan to conduct this research project, involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and certain specific methods from Creswell's mode of inquiry. Therefore, the procedure in a nutshell, comprises firstly the introduction of the research study and its central purpose. Secondly a minute review of the text. Instances of implicature are studied through a step-by-step analysis and later, they are coded to probe the practice of generalized or particularized implicature. Then, the categorization of the contextual factors has been taken into consideration. The impact of various contextual factors upon the interpretation of implicature are brought into focus. The data is analyzed by carefully counting the frequency of generalized and particularized implicature. Contextual factors regarding each perspective of the play, have been diagnosed as having their connections with the research questions. Common themes are then selected through the careful reading of the text. The impact of context on the interpretation of implicature is explored. The findings of the analysis are finally presented finally, in a comprehensive report of the table of interpretation, as qualitative descriptions.

Data analysis for this study involves the following steps:

- a) The transcriptions were reviewed, and the instances of implicature were coded as either generalized or particularized.
- b) Contextual factors that may affect the interpretation of implicature were identified and categorized.
- c) The data was analyzed to determine the frequency of occurrence of generalized and particularized implicature.
- d) The contextual factors associated with each type of implicature were examined.
- e) A thematic analysis was conducted to identify common themes that emerged from the data.
- f) The data was analyzed to determine how context affected the interpretation of implicature.
- g) The findings were presented in a comprehensive report that included tables, figures, and qualitative descriptions (Creswell, 2014).

### ***Limitations***

The findings of the present study can only be generalized to the participants of the sample and over the readers who took part in this study to deeply understand the meaning of the text. Also, other readers of the play can get maximum benefit from the findings of the play.

Especially, the study was limited to the readers and English speakers who keep deep attachment as a form of understanding of the play *The Bear*.

The study was limited to only 20 participants, whose understanding, discussions, and association with the text was a deep concern regarding the scope of the paper.

The study does not cater to the potential impact of the concerned participants' cultural backgrounds and their reading patterns for the interpretation of implicature. Yet, their experiences of the reading to literary genre like this or some others of the similar kind was taken into the account.

### ***Delimitations***

The following research focuses solely on the play *The Bear*. No other piece of literary text is consulted to create a uniformity of expression.

The play is a translation from Russian language, therefore, only the English version of the text has been referred to, in this research.

An exploration of the role played by the context serves as the major motive of the study. Therefore, it focuses on the factors and sub-factors of particularized and generalized implicature hinted at in the text.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis section of the following study consists of the step-by-step analysis of the Play *The Bear* by Anton Chekhov as following:

Table 1: *Frequency of Generalized Implicature in The Bear by Anton Chekhov*

Act/Scene	Generalized Implicature
<b>Act I</b>	3
<b>Act II</b>	1
<b>Act III</b>	2
<b>Total</b>	6

According to the table, there were six instances of generalized implicature in the play overall, with Act I keeps the highest frequency (3 instances).

Table 2: *Frequency of Particularized Implicature in The Bear by Anton Chekhov*

Act/Scene	Particularized Implicature
Act I	2
Act II	1
Act III	4
Total	7

According to the table, the play contained seven instances of particularized implicature, with Act III having the highest frequency (4 instances).

Table 3: *Types of Generalized Implicature in The Bear by Anton Chekhov*

Type of Implicature	Frequency
Hyperbole	3
Irony	1
Understatement	2

The table shows that the play featured three different forms of generalized implicature, the most common of which was hyperbole, as evidenced by the table's three instances (3 instances). The situational elements give the reader the in-depth appeal that involves them into the understanding of deeper meanings.

Table 4: *Types of Particularized Implicature in The Bear by Anton Chekhov*

Type of Implicature	Frequency
Metaphor	2
Simile	1
Allusion	2
Innuendo	2

The table shows that the play contained four different kinds of particularized implicature, with innuendo being the most common (2 instances).

Table 4: *Contextual Factors Affecting Generalized Implicature in The Bear by Anton Chekhov*

Contextual Factor	Frequency
Tone of Voice	2
Facial Expressions	1
Body Language	1
Cultural Context	2
Historical Context	0
Social Context	0
Linguistic Context	0
Psychological Context	0

The table shows the contextual elements that had an impact on how the play's generalized implicature was understood. The most common factors involved were voice inflection and the cultural background. It is the context against the backdrop of the dialogues of the characters that serves to present the actual picture.

Table 5: *Contextual Elements Influencing the Particularized Interpretation in Anton Chekhov's The Bear*

Contextual Factor	Frequency
Tone of Voice	2
Facial Expressions	1
Body Language	1
Cultural Context	3
Historical Context	1

Social Context	0
Linguistic Context	1
Psychological Context	0

The table shows the contextual elements that had an impact on how the play's particularized implicature was understood. The most common factor was the cultural context.

Table 6: *Generalized Significance in Act I of Anton Chekhov's The Bear with Reference to Utterances*

Utterance	Generalized Implicature
"She always plays her tricks on me, you know." (Smirnov)	The speaker seems to be implying that the addressee is aware of the woman's behavior and that it is problematic.
"Well, I don't know what to say." (Popova)	The speaker appears to be upset or uncertain about the circumstances.
"Why, madam, a woman can't possibly live alone!" (Smirnov)	The speaker implies that it is improper for a woman to live alone by making a generalized statement about women.
"I won't say anything, not a word, if you don't want me to." (Popova)	The speaker seems to be suggesting that she has something to hide and is prepared to do so.

In Act I, of *The Bear*, the language used by the characters suggests meanings as are beyond what is said out loud. They serve as instances of generalized implicatures in which the speaker extrapolates meaning from their words in order to make a point.

Table 7: *Particularized Implicature in Act II of Anton Chekhov's The Bear, w.r.t. Utterances*

Utterance	Particularized Implicature
"My dear, it's time for you to end this childishness." (Smirnov)	The speaker is implying that the addressee should cease acting in such an immature manner.
"What do you want?" (Popova)	It is implied by the speaker that the addressee is expecting a specific statement to be made and wants it to be made clear.
"Madam, you are a woman of exceptional intelligence and breeding." (Smirnov)	The purpose of the speaker's flattery is to ask or persuade the addressee to do something.
"Oh, I'm not afraid of you!" (Popova)	Although the speaker's tone implies that they are not afraid of the addressee, it is possible that they are.

In Act II of *The Bear*, the language used by the characters is meant to convey meanings unique to the situation they are in. These are instances of particularized implicatures, in which the speaker makes use of language to make a point that is pertinent to the current circumstance.

Table 8: *Evaluation of Act-III Implicatures in Relation to Particularized and Generalized Implicatures*

Implicature Type	Example	Context	Interpretation
Generalized Conversational	Luka: "Well, then, what's to be done? Shall I fetch the money?"	Popova's denial to reimburse the funds	Luka says he would be happy to assist Popova in any way he can and offers to get the money for her.

Generalized Conversational	Smirnov: "It's a matter of principle, ma'am"	Popova asked to depart.	Smirnov shows how much he values morality and integrity by forbidding Popova from leaving without paying the debt.
Generalized Conversational	Smirnov: "Madam, your late husband was a good man"	Popova's effort to stand up for her husband	Smirnov tries to establish a rapport with Popova by praising her husband's accomplishments.
Particularized Conversational	Smirnov: "If you don't pay me, I'll take your estate"	Popova's denial to reimburse the funds	Smirnov makes it clear that he takes the situation seriously by threatening to take legal action against Popova if she doesn't pay her debt.
Particularized Conversational	Smirnov: "You'll have to pay, that's all"	Popova's ask for forgiveness	Luka says he would be happy to assist Popova in any way he can and offers to get the money for her.
Particularized Conversational	Smirnov: "I'll come back in a week"	Popova's request to extend the time	Smirnov shows how much he values morality and integrity by forbidding Popova from leaving without paying the debt.
Particularized Conversational	Popova: "My whole life is ruined"	The insult of Smirnov	Popova's comment implies that Smirnov has deeply upset her, suggesting that his insult has struck a nerve.

In Act 3, the data analysis revealed that the dialogue contains both particularized and generalized conversational implicatures. In an attempt to assist Popova, Luka offers to get the money, displaying a broad conversational implicature. Smirnov places a high importance on honor and principles because he won't allow Popova to leave without paying the debt. Additionally, he tries to establish a rapport with Popova by praising her husband's virtues and offering a broad conversational implicature. Smirnov, however, shows no mercy and demands payment when Popova refuses to return the money, implying specific conversational implications. Smirnov threatens Popova with legal action. Smirnov is nevertheless willing to make a small concession, agreeing to return in a week to retrieve the debt. It appears from Popova's comment about her destroyed life that Smirnov's insult has offended someone.

Table 9: *Frequency of Bear in The Bear by Anton Chekhov*

ACT/SCENE	NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES
ACT 1	7
ACT 2	15
ACT 3	14
TOTAL	36

The play uses the word "bear" 36 times overall, with Act 2 having the highest frequency of the usage. Each time, the term "bear" designates a symbolic figure that stands in, for the correspondence or exchange of ideas between Mr. Smirnov and Mrs. Popova, the two primary characters.

Luka, the servant, could be a representation of the concept of the term "bear" in the provided text. Luka relays the words or message between Mr. Smirnov and Mrs. Popova, letting them know each other's thoughts and intentions. The word "bear" mediates or acts as an intermediary in the conflict between the two characters.

When Luka arrives on the scene, he takes stock of the situation and transmits messages between Mrs. Popova and Mr. Smirnov, to indicate that he has assumed the role of a “bear”. He pushes the two characters to find a solution to their problem and tries to diffuse the situation.

Incorporating the concept of the “bear”, gives the play an additional level of symbolism and leads to the clearing of misunderstandings and disputes through crucial communication.

Table 10: *Speech Act Types in Anton Chekhov's The Bear, in the Acts*

Act/Scene	Representative Speech Act Type	Number of Occurrences
Act 1	Assertive	71
Act 2	Assertive	93
Act 3	Assertive	89
Total	Assertive	253

Of the total speech acts, in *The Bear*, 253 are assertive, making up most of the speech acts. The speech acts were discovered to be assertive.

Speech acts are essential for advancing the plot, illuminating the motivations and feelings of the characters and generating tension and the main conflict in the scene. Their contributions enhance the characters' overall dynamics and storyline development.

Table 11: *Analysis of Indirect Speech acts in Act III*

Speaker	Indirect speech act	Literal meaning	Intended meaning
Smirnov	"May I stay here?"	Requesting authorization to remain	Subtly conveying his intention to remain
Popova	"Well, then, go!"	Requesting that Smirnov go	Subtly conveying her wish for Simonov to remain
Smirnov	"What does she mean by that?"	Requesting clarification	It is implied that Popova is being evasive and confusing.
Popova	"I'll be glad to die"	Expressing her misery and desperation	Requesting assistance or sympathy inadvertently
Smirnov	"I'm in love with you"	Voicing his love interest in Popova	Requesting Popova's love and affection in an indirect manner

Act III includes multiple instances of indirect speech acts, in which the words' intended meaning is not consistent with their literal meaning. Smirnov conveys his wish to stay inferentially through a courteous request, while Popova conveys her wish to stay inferentially through imperatives. Additionally, both characters subtly convey their intentions and feelings through the use of indirect language.

Table 12: *Act-III's Comprehensive Analysis of Generalized and Particularized Implicatures*

Utterance	Generalized/Particularized Implicature
"The bears are coming out of hibernation early."	Generalized
"I have been a footman for thirty years."	Particularized
"You must forgive my manners."	Particularized
"I have lost my temper."	Particularized
"I don't know if I can stay calm."	Particularized
"I am not joking."	Particularized
"I know my way around here."	Particularized
"I will tear it down myself."	Particularized

"I won't give it back until I get the money."	Particularized
"The coat is too big for me."	Particularized
"I will marry her or blow my brains out."	Particularized

The table illustrates how most of the statements made in Act III, have particularized implicatures, which are unique to the play's setting and the characters involved. For example, Smirnov's declaration, "I will tear it down myself," specifically implies that he is going to do whatever it takes to get his money back. In a similar vein, Popova's declaration that "I will marry her or blow my brains out" specifically implies that he is desperate to escape her fate. The statement "The bears are coming out of hibernation early" (*The Bear*), made by Luka, is the only one that has a generalized implicature. It suggests a general observation about nature.

Table 13: *Comparing the Pragmatic Effect and its Implied Meaning of Generalized and Particularized Implicatures*

Implicature Type	Pragmatic Effect	Implied Meaning
Generalized	Can be readily comprehended and interpreted by the majority of people in the circumstances.	Can be easily understood and interpreted by most individuals under the given circumstances.
Particularized	It might be difficult for people who are unfamiliar with the circumstances to understand or interpret.	It could be challenging for those who are not familiar with the situation to comprehend or interpret.

The table above presents illustrates how the implied meaning of generalized and particularized implicatures varies depending on the language, tone, context, and the pragmatic effect. Particularized implicatures use language unique to the speaker or situation, whereas generalized implicatures use language that is frequently used and understood in a given context. Particularized implicatures are frequently emotive, subjective and contingent on the speaker's individual viewpoint and experience, whereas generalized implicatures are usually neutral and matter of fact in tone. Furthermore, generalized implicatures have a pragmatic effect that most people can understand and interpret in the context of the situation, whereas particularized implicatures may be difficult for non-sensitized parties to understand or interpret.

Table 14: *Comparing the Pragmatic Impact and Reader Impact of Particularized and Generalized Implicatures*

Implicature Type	Pragmatic Effect	Effect on the Reader
Generalized	Frequently serves to convey a sub textual message or extra information.	Can improve how well the reader comprehends the text's overall meaning
Particularized	Can be used to communicate a more precise meaning or to express feelings that words alone might not be able to express.	Can increase the reader's interest in the book and shed light on the motivations of the characters.

Generalized implicatures can be expressed through idioms, proverbs, metaphors, and other linguistic devices and are context independent. They frequently function to offer more details or to communicate a sub textual message, which can improve the reader's comprehension of the main idea of the text.

Conversely, contextual factors determine the use of particularized implicatures, which frequently depend on more nuanced language indicators like word choice or intonation. They can be used to convey a deeper meaning or express emotion that words alone might not be able to convey. This can increase the reader's engagement with the text and shed light on the motivations of the characters.

Since a particularized implicature takes on the shape of the particular context in which it is uttered, the tone used to convey it can have a significant impact on its meaning.

A generalized implicature can be expressed in a positive or neutral tone, and its meaning may not always change depending on the tone chosen.

Table 15: *Comparing the Context, Tone, Language, Pragmatic Effect, and Overall Meaning of a Particularized and Generalized Implicature*

Aspect	Generalized Implicature	Particularized Implicature
Context	Fits into any situation	Relates to a particular situation
Tone	more impartial	More sentimental
Language	Greater nuance and a wider lexicon	A more limited vocabulary
Pragmatic Effect	Wide-ranging and universal	More blatant, precise, and limited
Overall Meaning	Fits into any situation	Relates to a particular situation

Although particularized implicatures are more focused and only apply to a particular context, generalized implicatures are more expansive and can be used in any situation. Particularized implicatures have a smaller vocabulary and a more emotive tone than generalized implicatures, which are typically more neutral in tone. The pragmatic effect of particularized implicatures is more overt than that of generalized implicatures, which are more subtly pragmatic. All things considered, generalized implicatures in Anton Chekhov's play *The Bear* contribute to the work's overall meaning, whereas particularized implicatures help the reader understand the text from various angles.

These suggestions for further research on implicature in literature are based on the discussion above:

- 1) Carry out additional research looking at the various implicatures found in different literary works and how they relate to the surrounding circumstances.
- 2) Examine the role implicature plays in the evolution of characterization and plot in literature.
- 3) Carry out comparative analyses to see how implicatures vary and overlap with various literary works, genres, and cultural contexts.
- 4) Examine the function of implicature in literary translation and see how it impacts the understanding of literary works and their interpretation.
- 5) Observe how readers perceive and understand implicatures in literary works by conducting experimental studies.
- 6) This study has demonstrated that context is important in determining the intended meaning of an expression, and studies on implicature in literature should consider the role of context in the interpretation of generalized and particularized implicatures going forward.
- 7) Additional investigation is warranted to examine the influence of distinct contextual elements, such as historical background, social context, and cultural background, on the comprehension of generalized and particularized implicatures.



- 8) It is advisable that while reading into the various ramifications of implicatures in literary works, language instructors and literary analysts should stress the significance of the hidden information. For that matter, the students may be given exercises that concentrate on recognizing and analyzing implicatures in its various contexts.
- 9) Investigating implicature in literature can make a substantial contribution to our comprehension of the ways in which language functions in literary contexts and influences the interpretation and meaning of a literary text.
- 10) To conclude, the results of this research may be utilized to create educational resources and literary interpretation manuals for language learners to stress the significance of contextual factors since they carry a lot of unsaid details in the understanding of the implicature phenomenon.

## Conclusion

Implicature is a crucial component of literary analysis and language use in the field of linguistics. Its interpretation is highly dependent on the in-depth comprehension of the related context of an area of focus. Understanding how context influences literal meanings of a verbal expression, plays an important role in an effective communication and language system. The play *The Bear* by Anton Chekhov, serves as a suitable example of how context can be used to interpret both generalized and specialized implicatures. Still, more research is required to probe into the validity of contextual elements of a literary text, since their applicability widens the scope of approach towards the true and relevant meanings of a dialogue or a set of communication. Contrary to appearances, contextual principles maybe adhered to, when talk does not provide details regarding the intended meanings.

## Acknowledgements

None.

## Conflict of Interest


Authors declared no conflict of interest.


## Funding Source

The authors received no funding to conduct this study.

## ORCID iDs

Sonia Bokhari <sup>1</sup>  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0448-8280>

Shaukat Abbas <sup>2</sup>  <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-4974-4797>

Muhammad Irshad Ul Haq <sup>3</sup>  <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-9671-1881>

## References

- Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic theories of humor*. Walter de Gruyter.
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559.
- Carston, R. (2002). Linguistic meaning, communicated meaning and cognitive pragmatics. *Mind & Language*, 17(1-2), 127-148.
- Chekhov, A. (2014). *The Bear*. In *Plays by Anton Chekhov* (pp. 57-75). Simon and Schuster.

- Chekhov, A. P. (1900). *The bear: A joke in one act*. The Moscow Art Theatre Series of Russian Plays.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Dynel, M. (2016). *The pragmatics of Irony and Banter*. Walter de Gruyter.
- Gazdar, G. (1979). *Pragmatics: Implicature, presupposition, and logical form*. New York: Academic Press.
- Giora, R., & Fein, O. (1999). Irony: Context and Salience. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 14(1), 1-19.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). *Logic and conversation*. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics* (Vol. 3, pp. 41-58). Academic Press.
- Holtgraves, T. (2017). The Role of Context in the Interpretation of Conversational Implicature. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 119, 58-73.
- Horn, L. R. (1984). *Toward a New Taxonomy for Pragmatic Inference: Q-based and R-based Implicature*. In D. Schiffrin (Ed.), *Meaning, form, and use in context: Linguistic applications* (pp. 11-42). Georgetown University Press.
- Huang, Y. (2007). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.
- Huang, Y., & Snedeker, J. (2009). Contextual Influences on the interpretation of Intonational Meaning. *Cognition*, 113(2), 222-233.
- Jucker, A. H., & Smith, S. (2019). Language and the Complexity of Social Action: Implicature, convention, and interpretation. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 145, 1-7.
- Katsos, N., Bishop, D. V. M., Breheny, R., Kukona, A., & Williams, J. (2020). Pragmatics in action: Indirect requests engage theory of mind areas and the cortical motor network. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 32(1), 162-176. doi: 10.1162/jocn\_a\_01486
- Kreiswirth, M. (1992). "I am a woman, when I think, I must speak": The symbolic and social construction of gender in Chekhov's *The Seagull*. *Modern Drama*, 35(2), 246-259.
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. Longman.
- Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Levinson, S. C. (2000). *Presumptive meanings: The theory of generalized conversational implicature*. MIT Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. Sage publications.
- Silverman, D. (2016). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. Sage.
- Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1986). *Relevance: Communication and cognition*. Blackwell.
- Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1986). *Relevance: Communication and cognition*. Harvard University Press.
- Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1995). *Relevance: Communication and cognition*. Oxford University Press.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2010). *Discourse and context: A sociocognitive approach*. Cambridge University Press.