



## PROCESS: Journal of Professional Communication and English Studies

journal homepage: <https://ejournal2.pnp.ac.id/index.php/PROCESS/index>

### Food for Thought: A Gricean Pragmatic Analysis in the CSPC Canteen

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#### article info

##### Article history:

Received: 16-05-2025

Accepted: 22-05-2025

Published: 24-05-2025

##### Keywords:

Grice's Conversational Maxims

Conversational Implicatures

Vendor-Customer Interaction

Linguistic Principles

#### abstract

This study explores the everyday conversations between vendors and customers in the Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC) canteen, focusing on how these interactions follow or break Grice's Conversational Maxims. It also looks at the conversational implicatures that emerge during these exchanges. Using a qualitative approach, the researchers analyzed recorded dialogues to identify recurring communication patterns. Although many studies have explored Grice's theory in formal or classroom settings, few have applied it to real-life, transactional environments like school canteens. This research fills that gap by showing how ordinary conversations reflect or challenge key principles in pragmatics. The findings help explain how meaning is created, negotiated, or implied in routine interactions, thereby offering insights into how language works in practical, day-to-day situations.

## 1. Introduction

People often communicate more than just the words they say. As Holmes and Wilson (2022) point out, meaning is structured by context and subtle cues that go beyond the literal language used. In a busy setting like the Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC) canteen, vendor-customer interactions offer a unique lens through which to study communication. Though often overlooked as ordinary, these exchanges are rich with implied meanings and influenced by principles that either support understanding or lead to miscommunication.

Grice's Maxims of Conversation, introduced in 1975, offer a clear framework for analyzing such interactions. These four maxims—Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner—guide speakers in making their messages effective and meaningful. However, real-life conversations often stray from these guidelines. When this happens, conversational implicatures—or implied meanings—arise and must be interpreted by the listener. As Musa and Mohammed (2022) point out, implicatures reflect what speakers truly intend, even when their words seem indirect or unusual. In fast-paced settings like the CSPC canteen, where quick and clear exchanges are essential, these hidden meanings play an imperative role in keeping interactions smooth. This research is set in Camarines Sur, a province previously studied by Fajardo (2022), who explored the linguistic vitality of Baao-Bikol Rinconada. Although his focus was on language preservation, it still points to the area's rich language practices. Studies like his support

the importance of exploring how people in this region use language in real-life conversations, such as those found in campus canteens.

In a related study, De Matta et al. (2023) highlighted how TikTok English teaching videos can support second language acquisition among elementary learners, further reinforcing how digital and everyday communicative environments, like canteens or mobile apps, shape language development through pragmatic and interactive means.

This study is necessary because Gricean pragmatics has rarely been applied to local, everyday settings such as canteens. Although much research focuses on formal or academic interactions, informal and transactional conversations—especially in the Philippine context—remain underexplored. To fill this gap, the study explores how Grice's maxims are followed or flouted in the CSPC canteen and what conversational implicatures emerge in the process. It seeks to answer two questions: **(1)** What maxims of conversation are upheld or flouted in the interactions between vendors and customers? and **(2)** What conversational implicatures emerge from these exchanges? By addressing these, the study aims to uncover communication patterns in an everyday, goal-driven setting.

The findings are important for understanding how pragmatics works in real-world conversations, particularly those driven by tasks or transactions. They emphasize how people follow or deviate from conversational norms, and how meaning is created through context and collective understanding. More importantly, the study emphasizes the role of Gricean theory in explaining practical communication, adding to the broader understanding of language use in Filipino daily life.

This research focuses strictly on vendor-customer exchanges within the CSPC canteen. It limits its analysis to the application of Grice's Maxims and the presence of conversational implicatures. Broader sociolinguistic factors are not included. Still, the study provides a fresh perspective on how pragmatic principles work in a shared institutional space, thus showing their relevance to real-life communication.

As these conversations are analyzed and studied, this study provides “food for thought” about how people communicate in fast, functional exchanges. More than that, it reveals the deeper meanings people express without saying things directly. It, therefore, shows how everyday conversation reveals complex patterns of interaction—proving that even the simplest conversations are guided by ever-evolving rules of language and human behavior.

## **2. Method**

This study followed a structured methodology to effectively explore conversational exchanges in the CSPC canteen through the lens of Gricean pragmatics. Each part of the process—from research design to analysis—was carefully planned to ensure that the findings would be clear and reliable.

### **2.1 Research Design**

This study used a qualitative research design. Its main goal was to explore the use of Grice's Conversational Maxims and the presence of conversational implicatures in everyday vendor-customer exchanges in the CSPC canteen. This approach aligns with Aspers and Corte (2019), who define qualitative research as an in-depth exploration of natural settings. The study focused on understanding how meaning is constructed and interpreted in real-life conversations without relying on numerical measures.

## **2.2 Data Collection**

The data were gathered through audio recordings of spontaneous conversations between vendors and customers in the CSPC canteen. These were recorded during peak hours, where natural and frequent interactions took place. Consent was obtained from the stall owners before recording, and ethical standards such as participant anonymity and confidentiality were strictly followed.

The participants included vendors and random customers, mostly students, with a few faculty and staff. Participants were not pre-selected; rather, their inclusion was based on natural involvement in live transactions. Although the study did not formally analyze gender, age, or stall type, observations showed that such factors did not affect the way the maxims were followed or flouted.

From over 30 minutes of raw audio, a 10-minute segment was selected based on its richness in relevant data—this portion contained a variety of clear interactions where Grice's Maxims were either observed or violated. The segment included 100 statements, which served as the main corpus of the study.

## **2.3 Data Analysis**

The analysis was guided by Grice's Maxims of Conversation—Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner—and focused on identifying whether each statement upheld or flouted a maxim, and what conversational implicatures arose. Only statements that clearly showed adherence or violation were included in the final analysis.

To ensure accuracy and strengthen validity, two coders worked independently and then compared their coding. Inter-rater checking was applied, and any unclear utterances were discussed until agreement was reached. The statements were categorized into maxim-observing or maxim-flouting, and also tagged for the type of implicature present.

The study maintained a purely qualitative approach, concentrating on the interpretive process behind each utterance. Emphasis was put on understanding how speakers implied or inferred meanings based on context, rather than on quantifying the findings.

## **3. Results and Discussions**

This section presents and explains the findings of the study based on the selected vendor-customer interactions at the CSPC canteen. It focuses on how Grice's

Conversational Maxims were either followed or flouted, and how conversational implicatures—both generalized and particularized—emerged from these exchanges. Each set of results is discussed with supporting examples to showcase patterns in real-life communication.

### 3.1 Grice's Conversational Maxims

Grice's conversational maxims—**Quantity**, **Quality**, **Relevance**, and **Manner**—serve as essential guidelines for effective and cooperative communication. As introduced by Grice (1975), these maxims help both speakers and listeners maintain clarity, truthfulness, relevance, and sufficiency in conversation. Panzeri and Foppolo (2021) confirmed that people of all ages are sensitive to these principles, which affirms their importance in real-life interactions. Their study emphasized that violations of these maxims are often noticed, making the maxims a reliable framework for analyzing everyday exchanges. When the maxim is followed, communication flows smoothly; but when it is violated, confusion may arise. As the following results and discussion will show, Grice's maxims offer useful insight into the flow of interaction in localized service exchanges.

**Table 1:**  
**Maxim of Quantity**

Excerpt No.	Statement	Upheld or Flouted	Explanation
4	'Uy! 'Da ako barya... 15 lang, sigé na.	Upheld	Speaker provides precise quantity (15) needed for the transaction.
5	Small or big?	Upheld	Speaker requests specific size information needed to complete the order.
7	Twenty man, ate.	Upheld	Speaker clearly states the exact amount (20) without excess information.
20	Ate, darwa po kadi at isang kanin po.	Upheld	Speaker specifies the exact quantities (two of one item, one rice) needed.
21	Porkchop saka kanin.	Upheld	Speaker clearly states exactly what items are being ordered without excess information.
25	Seventy-five.	Upheld	Speaker states the exact price amount without unnecessary additional information.
28	Ika na naman, 'di ika nagsabi, 80.	Flouted	Speaker provides more information than needed by adding complaint about previous communication.
29	'Eto be, maliit.	Upheld	Speaker provides the exact size information requested.
34	Kuya, water raw tabi usad.	Upheld	Speaker clearly states exactly what is needed (one water).
35	'Eto po, isang kanin.	Upheld	Speaker specifies exactly one portion of rice without excess information.

38	Alin? 'Eto? Styro? 80 po lahat.	Upheld	Speaker clarifies which item and provides total cost information.
39	95.	Upheld	Speaker states the exact price amount without unnecessary elaboration.
48	A-dos po 'yong isa.	Upheld	Speaker provides exact pricing information (2 pesos for one item).
51	Tawi na ako sa barya...	Flouted	Speaker does not provide complete information about the amount of change needed.
56	50 with rice.	Upheld	Speaker clearly states the price and what is included without excess details.
61	Pakiloog na 'yan kin 1,000 na.	Upheld	Speaker clearly states the amount (1,000) and request to keep it.
69	Sa inyo po? Adobo po?	Upheld	Speaker confirms both ownership and item type with appropriate amount of detail.
83	30 plus 60, 105.	Upheld	Speaker provides detailed price breakdown and total.
84	Tapos tubig. 105.	Upheld	Speaker adds item information (water) and restates total price.
86	Maliit lang pong water?	Upheld	Speaker asks for size confirmation with appropriate detail.
88	120! Isa pa pong ganyan?	Upheld	Speaker states price and requests additional item with appropriate detail.
90	120 plus 75, uno so? 120 plus 75.	Upheld	Speaker provides detailed price calculation with appropriate information.

Table 1 shows how the Maxim of Quantity was either followed or flouted in the vendor-customer conversations. The examples in this table emphasize how participants either provided sufficient details or left out key information, affecting how messages were understood.

The Maxim of Quantity emphasizes giving just the right amount of information—not too little, and not too much. In vendor-customer interactions at the CSPC canteen, this is especially important. Most speakers in the selected extracts upheld this maxim, providing neither too much nor too little information—just enough to keep the transaction smooth and clear.

For instance, in Excerpt 4, the speaker says, *“Uy! ‘Da ako barya... 15 lang, sige na,”* giving a specific amount (15 pesos), which helps speed up the transaction. Similarly, Excerpt 20 (*“Ate, darwa po kadi at isang kanin po”*) shows the customer stating exactly what is needed—two of one item and one rice—making the order unambiguous. Likewise, in Excerpt 38, the speaker clarifies both the item and total cost (*“Alin? ‘Eto? Styro? 80 po lahat”*), efficiently wrapping up the purchase.

Pricing statements are also often brief but precise. Excerpts 25, 39, and 48—“*Seventy-five*,” “*95*,” and “*A-dos po ‘yong isa*”—are all examples of quick, information-filled replies that meet the listener’s need without extra talk. Even when calculations are required, like in Excerpt 83 (“*30 plus 60, 105*”), speakers break it down clearly. This indicates a pattern where accuracy and speed matter, especially during busy canteen hours.

However, some speakers flouted the maxim. In Excerpt 28 (“*Ika na naman, ‘di ika nagsabi, 80*”), the speaker gives more than needed by adding a personal remark, which shifts the focus from the transaction to a complaint. Another is Excerpt 51 (“*Tawi na ako sa barya...*”), where the statement is vague and lacks the full detail about how much change is missing. These slight deviations show how emotional or unclear exchanges can interrupt smooth transactions.

These interactions imply that in this kind of fast-paced setting, people prioritize clarity and precision. The frequent upholding of the Maxim of Quantity shows how well both vendors and customers adapt their speech to the situation. When violated, even slightly, it disrupts the flow and requires more effort from the listener to understand or clarify. Thus, the data signify a practical, no-nonsense communication style that values efficiency.

The findings on the Maxim of Quantity in this study support what Awwad et al. (2019) describe as clear cases of “unostentatious non-observance.” For example, in Excerpt 51, where the speaker vaguely says “*Tawi na ako sa barya...*,” there is not enough information to fully understand the request. This matches Awwad et al.’s view that violating Quantity involves giving too little or too much information, which can lead to confusion.

Similarly, Betti and Mahdi (2020) explain that speakers may include unnecessary details to hide or shift meaning. This can be seen in Excerpt 28, where the speaker adds a personal complaint instead of simply giving the amount due. Instead of helping, the added commentary may distract the listener. It indicates how some violations are meant not to inform but to express frustration or emotions, which Betti (2021) also point out.

Ceballos and Sosas (2018), along with Hossain (2021), argue that these violations can limit the listener’s understanding by focusing only on surface meaning. In settings like the CSPC canteen, where speed matters, this can affect how smoothly interactions go. Still, most statements in this data follow the maxim well, showing that speakers adapt and cooperate, as Ayunon (2018) emphasizes. When speakers give only what is needed—no more, no less—they help keep the conversation efficient and goal-oriented.

This result indicates how everyday conversations, even in casual settings like a college canteen, show patterns of cooperative language use but occasionally slip into violations that align with larger findings in pragmatic studies.

**Table 2:**  
**Maxim of Quality**

Excerpt No.	Statement	Upheld or Flouted	Explanation
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27	Ay, ano 'te, styro po.	Flouted	Speaker appears uncertain initially but then provides information about container type.
92	No! 120 plus 75, 195.	Upheld	Speaker corrects previous calculation with truthful information.
97	Ay, wala po kaming sabaw.	Upheld	Speaker honestly states they do not have soup available.

In Table 2, the Maxim of Quality is assessed. This maxim requires that speakers only say what they believe to be true and have evidence for. Among the examples, most speakers in the CSPC canteen upheld this principle.

Excerpt 97 shows a clear case of upholding the Maxim of Quality. The vendor says, “Ay, wala po kaming sabaw,” truthfully stating that soup is unavailable. This honest response prevents confusion and helps manage customer expectations. It reflects Grice’s idea that truthfulness keeps conversations cooperative and effective.

Another strong example is Excerpt 92, where the speaker confidently says, “No! 120 plus 75, 195.” This shows an immediate correction of a mistake—ensuring the right amount is communicated. It’s an active effort to provide accurate information, which supports the smooth flow of transactions and prevents misunderstandings, especially when money is involved.

In contrast, Excerpt 27 flouts the maxim slightly. The speaker begins with uncertainty (“Ay ano ‘te...” ) before naming the item as “styro.” Although the speaker eventually provides the correct answer, the hesitation at the start may create a brief moment of confusion. This could be due to forgetfulness or the need to recall the correct term, which aligns with what Cutting (2008, as cited in Nugroho & Ariffin, 2022) explains about violations being influenced by psychological or situational factors.

These examples show that in real-world exchanges like those in a school canteen, speakers mostly strive to be truthful. However, slight lapses—like hesitation or uncertainty—can still occur. Yet, these do not always harm communication. As long as the speaker corrects or clarifies quickly, the conversation remains cooperative. This strengthens Awwad et al.’s (2019) point that even flouted maxims can still support overall understanding when the intent remains clear.

The analysis manifests the findings from several relevant studies. As shown in Excerpt 97 and Excerpt 92, vendors generally provide truthful information, whether about availability (“wala po kaming sabaw”) or price corrections (“120 plus 75, 195”). This supports Dogcol and Villanueva (2024), who found that news outlets in the Philippines often observe the maxims of quality and relation, showing that truthfulness is prioritized in both media and everyday local interactions.

Meanwhile, the slight hesitation in Excerpt 27 (“Ay ano ‘te...” ) hints at a brief violation of the Maxim of Quality due to uncertainty. This aligns with Cutting’s (2008, as cited in Nugroho & Ariffin, 2022) explanation that maxim violations can result from internal

factors such as nervousness or momentary confusion. In this case, although the speaker quickly recovered and provided the needed information, the hesitation reveals how real-life interactions do not always follow the maxims perfectly.

This also aligns with Haq and Isnaeni (2021), who observed that violations of conversational principles are common in critical or informal speech, particularly in social media posts. Although the setting here is different, the speaker's brief slip still illustrates how everyday talk is influenced by context and spontaneity, sometimes leading to minor flouts of the truth-related maxim.

**Table 3:  
Maxim of Relevance**

<b>Excerpt No.</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Upheld or Flouted</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
1	Sa'yo, be? Alin be?	Upheld	Speaker appropriately asks for clarification on order details.
3	Ini raw po.	Upheld	Speaker points to relevant item being discussed.
13	Ate, sweet and sour po ini?	Upheld	Speaker seeks relevant information about the dish being ordered.
19	Ma'am, pahiram muna.	Flouted	Speaker makes request unrelated to the food order transaction.
22	Kuya, pag-snack na kan-a. Tawi na kan-a, darwa.	Flouted	Speaker introduces information about snacks unrelated to current order.
33	Wait lang, tawi raw iya.	Upheld	Speaker makes relevant request for customer to wait while attending to something.
36	Okay po. Wait lang po.	Upheld	Speaker acknowledges and makes relevant request for patience.
40	Nagpasig-ang na ako.	Flouted	Speaker provides personal information not relevant to the current transaction.
41	Saamno sadi a, ma'am?	Upheld	Speaker asks relevant question about takeout preference.
42	Uno kanim, sir?	Upheld	Speaker asks relevant question about what the customer wants.
45	Sadi na? O dine-in?	Upheld	Speaker asks relevant question about dining preference.
47	Dine-in na sana.	Upheld	Speaker provides relevant information about dining preference.
55	Magkano po ang adobo?	Upheld	Speaker asks relevant question about price of specific dish.



61	Pakiloog na 'yan kin 1,000 na.	Flouted	Speaker makes request about money handling not directly relevant to food order.
65	Nakapira na 'ka sa benta?	Flouted	Speaker asks about sales figures not relevant to current transaction.
69	Sa inyo po? Adobo po?	Upheld	Speaker confirms both ownership and food item which is relevant to the order.
70	Dine-in lang, sir?	Flouted	Speaker asks about dining preference which was already established.
73	Tig-isa ng? Sa plato?	Upheld	Speaker asks relevant question about serving details.
75	'Yong isa plato, ano?	Upheld	Speaker asks relevant question about what should be on the plate.
76	Adobo saka ito?	Flouted	Speaker asks for confirmation that was already given about food items.
78	'Yong isang plato ito?	Upheld	Speaker seeks relevant clarification about plating arrangement.
81	Lalagyan pa 'to ng adobo?	Upheld	Speaker asks relevant question about adding adobo to the plate.
89	'Di, ito na lang, ito na lang.	Upheld	Speaker provides relevant clarification about order limitation.
93	Tubig daw, 'yong maliit lang.	Upheld	Speaker provides relevant information about water size preference.

The Maxim of Relation—or relevance—requires that contributions in a conversation be directly related to the topic at hand. In the CSPC canteen, this plays an important role in keeping service transactions smooth and efficient.

In Excerpt 1, the vendor asks, *“Sa’yo, be? Alin be?”* This shows a clear effort to confirm the correct order, making the question directly relevant to the current exchange. Similarly, Excerpt 13, *“Ate, sweet and sour po ini?”* shows a customer checking if the food matches their order. These questions help prevent misunderstandings and show adherence to relevance.

On the other hand, Excerpt 19, *“Ma’am, pahiram muna,”* and Excerpt 65, *“Nakapira na ka sa benta?”* show clear violations of this maxim. The speaker brings up unrelated matters—borrowing something and asking about sales performance—which interrupts the transaction’s focus. These instances introduce unrelated content that could disrupt the service flow.

The relevant excerpts reveal how speakers manage relevance in high-paced environments. For instance, Excerpt 33 (*“Wait lang, tawi raw iya.”*) and Excerpt 36 (*“Okay po. Wait lang po.”*) maintain the flow by asking for patience while still addressing the

transaction. These utterances may not progress the order itself, but they remain relevant by keeping the customer engaged and informed.

Meanwhile, irrelevant statements, such as Excerpt 40 (*"Nagpasig-ang na ako."*) and Excerpt 61 (*"Pakiloog na 'yan kin 1,000 na."*), bring in personal or financial information that does not contribute to order-taking. These flouts, though not necessarily disruptive in casual settings, can confuse or delay service when conversations are supposed to stay focused on food-related exchanges.

These findings imply that speakers in the canteen generally uphold the Maxim of Relation to ensure clarity and quick service. Relevant questions and confirmations support cooperation between customer and vendor. However, occasional violations—often due to side comments or multitasking—manifest the informal nature of the setting. It implies that although efficiency is a goal, human interaction occasionally invites unrelated content, whether due to habit, rapport-building, or distractions.

Cutting (2008, as cited in Nugroho & Ariffin, 2022) explains that violations of conversational maxims may arise from psychological or emotional states, such as nervousness, anger, or confusion. This is evident in Excerpt 19 (*"Ma'am, pahiram muna"*) and Excerpt 65 (*"Nakapira na ka sa benta?"*), where the speaker introduces content unrelated to the food order. Although not intentionally disruptive, these digressions may be perceived as a reflection of personal concerns or mental preoccupation. These examples show that not all violations are deliberate—some occur naturally within real-life human interactions.

Sial (2019), in his study of newspaper discourse, found that the application of Grice's maxims may vary depending on topic or context. This insight is relevant to the canteen setting, where the pressure of service, noise, and multitasking can affect adherence to relevance. For instance, Excerpt 40 (*"Nagpasig-ang na ako"*) may seem irrelevant in a transaction, but it may function as small talk or a way to humanize the interaction. This aligns with Sial's point that "contextual flexibility" plays a role in how strictly maxims are followed.

Elmahady et al. (2022) emphasized that maxim violations in everyday conversation often serve to generate implicatures that require contextual interpretation. This is evident in Excerpt 61 (*"Pakiloog na 'yan kin 1,000 na"*), where the speaker's shift to money handling, though not directly about food, still carries an implicit request for assistance or acknowledgment. In this sense, the relevance is not entirely lost—it only relies on situational understanding.

**Table 4:**  
**Maxim of Manner**

Excerpt No.	Statement	Upheld or Flouted	Explanation
27	Ay, ano 'te, styro po.	Upheld	Speaker clearly specifies container type after initial hesitation.

28	Ika na naman, 'di ika nagsabi, 80.	Upheld	Speaker clearly communicates complaint about previous communication.
51	Tawi na ako sa barya...	Upheld	Speaker indicates need for payment.
67	Pira 'di ngamin?	Flouted	Speaker uses shortened forms that may be ambiguous.
75	'Yong isa plato, ano?	Flouted	Speaker's question ends with vague term "ano" creating ambiguity.
77	Hindi, paghiwalayin mo.	Upheld	Speaker clearly instructs to separate items.
78	'Yong isang plato ito?	Flouted	Speaker's question structure is somewhat ambiguous.
80	Saka ito, lagyan mo rin niyan. Ito.	Upheld	Speaker clearly indicates where items should be placed.
83	30 plus 60, 105.	Flouted	Speaker's math calculation is incorrect, creating confusion.
84	Tapos tubig. 105.	Flouted	Speaker maintains incorrect calculation despite adding item.
88	120! Isa pa pong ganyan?	Flouted	Speaker shifts between price statement and new request without clear transition.
89	'Di, ito na lang, ito na lang.	Flouted	Speaker's repetition and negation create some ambiguity.
90	120 plus 75, uno so? 120 plus 75.	Flouted	Speaker's calculating the total costs and confused about the costs to be added.

The Maxim of Manner requires speakers to be clear, orderly, and avoid ambiguity. In a canteen, where orders must be quickly understood, clarity in speech is important. Several excerpts from the dataset reveal instances where this maxim is either upheld or flouted, affecting the flow of interaction.

In Excerpt 27 ("*Ay ano 'te, styro po.*"), the speaker initially shows hesitation, but then quickly clarifies the type of container needed. Despite the pause, the information becomes clear and specific, upholding the maxim. Similarly, in Excerpt 77 ("*Hindi, paghiwalayin mo.*"), the speaker gives a direct and unambiguous instruction, which helps in avoiding confusion.

On the other hand, several entries flout the Maxim of Manner due to vagueness, disorganization, or ambiguity. For example, Excerpt 75 ("*Yong isa plato, ano?*") ends with the vague filler "ano," which weakens clarity. Likewise, Excerpt 78 ("*Yong isang plato ito?*") uses an unclear structure that may confuse the hearer, especially during a busy transaction.

Excerpt 88 (“*120! Isa pa pong ganyan?*”) is also a problem here. The speaker abruptly shifts from stating the price to requesting an additional item without a proper transition. This lack of order can momentarily confuse the hearer about what is being requested.

A more serious issue arises in Excerpts 83 and 84, where the speaker incorrectly calculates the total price (“*30 plus 60, 105*” and “*Tapos tubig. 105.*”). These create confusion not only because of the miscalculation, but also because of the lack of explanation or correction. Miscommunication in prices can affect both the transaction and the trust between speaker and listener.

Meanwhile, Excerpt 90 (“*120 plus 75, uno so? 120 plus 75.*”) illustrates disorganized talk. The speaker repeats the computation but remains uncertain. This disfluency may come from pressure or distraction, yet it clearly flouts the expectation of being orderly and clear.

These examples confirm the importance of the Maxim of Manner in real-life conversations. As shown in these canteen exchanges, clear and orderly speech keeps interactions smooth. When the maxim is flouted, it forces the hearer to work harder, guess meanings, or even correct errors—all of which slow down communication.

This supports Dang’s (2023) conclusion that “when speakers observe the maxim of manner, listeners can make standard implicatures,” assuming cooperation. But when it is violated, confusion takes over. It also affirms Hossain’s (2021) finding that conversations are more effective when clarity and brevity are present.

In short, clarity is not just a language rule, for it is imperative in fast-paced environments like food service. Thus, following this maxim does not just follow theory, as it also keeps communication functional and efficient, among other things.

### 3.2 Conversational Implicature

In everyday conversations, people often understand more than what is directly said. This is known as conversational implicature, where meaning is implied rather than stated. Musa and Mohammed (2022) explain that these implicatures can be either **generalized**, which are easily understood without context, or **particularized**, which rely on specific situations for meaning.

As shown in the data that follows, speakers regularly rely on implicature—both generalized and particularized—to express intentions, hint at meanings, or guide interactions without needing to be too direct.

**Table 5:**  
**Generalized Conversational Implicatures**

Excerpt No.	Statement	Implicated Meaning	Explanation
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1	Sa'yo, be? Alin be?	Server is asking which item the customer wants.	The implied meaning is commonly understood without specific context—it is a standard question during transactions.
11	Student meal?	Server is asking if the customer wants the student meal.	It is a routine offer based on customer type; no unique context is needed to interpret it.
29	'Eto be, maliit.	Server is pointing out the smaller portion option.	Implies a size comparison—a common sales explanation understood in any setting.
36	Okay po. Wait lang po.	Server is asking customer to wait.	The request to wait is standard and needs no further context to grasp.
45	Sadi na? O dine-in?	Server is asking if the customer wants takeout or dine-in.	A normal choice in food settings; the implication is easily understood without further background.
51	Tawi na ako sa barya.	Server asks someone to give coins.	It implies a need for payment in a common sales context—no special situation is required.
89	'Di, ito na lang. Ito na lang.	Customer is declining additional items.	It generally implies refusal or decision, which is typical and common.
97	Ay, wala po kaming sabaw.	Server informing there is no soup.	The implication (no soup available) is direct and understood across similar contexts.

The excerpts chosen from the CSPC canteen emphasize a number of statements that reflect generalized conversational implicatures. All of these were uttered in quick, transactional conversations between vendors and customers. They were typically short, routine, and expressed in a way that relied on joint assumptions rather than specific context.

These statements function well even when removed from their specific situation because they are based on commonly understood cues in a public setting. For instance, questions like “*Student meal?*” or “*Sadi na? O dine in?*” carry clear, familiar meanings without needing detailed explanation. Even expressions like “*Wait lang po*” or “*Ito na lang*” are widely recognized as polite requests or decisions.

The implied meanings in these excerpts arise smoothly and naturally. The server asking “*Student meal?*” implies the customer is possibly eligible for it, without saying so directly. Saying “*Tawi na ako sa barya...*” implies that giving exact change might be difficult. Likewise, “*Ito na lang*” implies the customer has changed their mind. These implicatures are easily understood by any Filipino who frequents eateries, since the implied meanings do not depend on unusual or specific contexts. Thus, they represent generalized implicatures—implied messages that most listeners would quickly and correctly infer.

The use of generalized conversational implicatures (GCIs) in vendor-customer interactions at the CSPC canteen closely aligns with findings from previous studies.

Fitrianti and Mahmud (2022), in their analysis of dialogue from the film *I Care a Lot*, explain that GCIs arise when no special background knowledge is needed to grasp the speaker's meaning. This matches the way various statements function in the canteen setting. These short exchanges rely on social norms and routine, not on deep context, yet listeners still understand the intended meaning clearly and quickly.

Similarly, Sofyan et al. (2022) emphasize that GCIs often depend on common conversational norms. In their study of student interactions, they note that *scalar implicatures*, like saying “some” to imply “not all,” are easily inferred because listeners rely on everyday logic. Though scalar implicatures were not directly observed in the CSPC canteen data, the broader idea holds: generalized implicatures are successful when both parties understand them without needing added explanation. As Musa and Mohammed (2022) also point out, GCIs are “presumed by default” and do not require specific context. This makes them especially effective in fast-paced environments like canteens, where clarity and efficiency matter most.

**Table 6:**  
**Particularized Conversational Implicatures**

Excerpt No.	Statement	Context	Implicated Meaning	Explanation
5	Small or big?	Server is offering portion options after the customer has made a vague or incomplete order.	Server is prompting the customer to clarify their portion preference.	The question relies on the context of a vague order to make sense.
7	Twenty man, ate.	Customer is pointing to food while paying or asking for something within that price.	Customer implies they want something worth ₱20.	The meaning depends on the situation—price discussion or item selection.
18	Ma'am, pahiram muna.	Person is short on utensils or equipment during a busy transaction.	Asking to borrow an item temporarily.	The object is not stated; it is understood based on context.
28	Ika na naman, 'di ika nagsabi.	Server is frustrated with repeated miscommunication in a group order.	Server implies the customer failed to give full or correct details.	The accusation only makes sense with knowledge of prior interaction.
40	Nagpasig-ang na ako.	Customer likely asked for more rice.	The server implies rice is already being cooked.	Statement implies future availability, but needs context to be clear.
61	Pakiloog na 'yan kin 1,000 na.	Staff is handling large bill payments during a rush.	Instruction to count or prepare change for ₱1,000.	Meaning depends on awareness of the ongoing money transaction.

77	Hindi, paghiwalayin mo.	Server is combining items; customer stops them.	Customer wants items packed or served separately.	Context of packing or plating is needed to understand the intent.
80	Saka ito, lagyan mo rin niyan, ito.	Customer is pointing to food items while instructing.	Customer wants the same item placed on another plate.	Meaning is not in words alone—depends on pointing and visual cues.

The selected excerpts from the CSPC canteen conversations show instances where particularized conversational implicatures (PCIs) occur. Unlike generalized implicatures, these lines require specific contextual knowledge to fully understand the speaker's intended meaning. Without knowing the surrounding situation—like what is being ordered, the type of payment, or the flow of conversation—the literal meanings alone may seem vague or incomplete.

These utterances flout certain Gricean maxims, especially the maxim of quantity, because the speakers do not provide complete information, assuming the hearers can infer the rest. For example, *"Twenty man, ate."* may appear unclear on its own, but given the context of a transaction, it likely refers to payment or quantity. Similarly, *"Hindi, paghiwalayin mo"* assumes that the hearer knows which items are being separated. These examples signify how meaning is built through context and situational cues, not just the words themselves.

What makes these utterances particularized is that the listener needs to rely on the specific details of the situation to grasp the meaning. The speaker assumes that the hearer knows the context—like what is being bought or how it should be served. This indicates that in natural, real-life interactions like those in the CSPC canteen, communication often depends on collective situational understanding rather than explicit language. These PCIs reveal the nature of everyday talk, where people depend on context and familiarity to interpret what is being said accurately.

The findings from the CSPC canteen conversations are connected with previous research on particularized conversational implicatures (PCIs). As observed in this study, many utterances—such as *"Small or big?"* and *"Hindi, paghiwalayin mo"*—require specific context to make sense. This supports Elmahady, Subaiah, and Mohammed's (2022) assertion that PCIs rely heavily on background or situational knowledge. Without knowing what is being referred to or discussed, these lines may seem unclear. Their study emphasizes how PCIs improve daily conversation, as they allow efficient exchanges.

Ghawaidi and Alsmari (2025) imply that PCIs can also be powerful tools in managing sensitive topics, especially in high-stakes communication like political interviews. Although the CSPC canteen setting is much more casual, the same mechanism is at work—speakers rely on two-way knowledge to avoid over-explaining or stating the obvious. Similarly, Wardah (2017) found that in talk shows, PCIs often come in the form of indirect

speech, where speakers use context to guide interpretation. The canteen exchanges manifest this tendency, as both customers and vendors use brief, context-bound statements that still communicate clearly.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study set out to evaluate how Grice's conversational maxims and conversational implicatures are observed, flouted, or implied in everyday food service interactions. The main goal was to understand how meaning is created and interpreted in brief yet meaningful exchanges between food handlers and customers.

The analysis revealed that although many utterances followed the maxims—particularly those of relevance and manner—several were also flouted, leading to implicatures that relied on context or listener inference. These findings showed that communication in food service is not just transactional, as it also manifests habits, culture, and relationships, to name a few. More importantly, they bring to light how even brief phrases can carry implied meanings that transcend words. Violations of the maxims were not always signs of failed communication but, as shown, were sometimes intentional and functional.

Thus, this has important implications. It shows that everyday conversations, even short ones in food stalls, are rich in meaning and worthy of analysis. It also supports the value of Gricean theory in local, real-world settings. The study adds to the growing literature that sees communication not just as rule-based, but as adaptive and influenced by context. Still, there is room for future research—especially in looking deeper at tone, gesture, and other non-verbal cues that may influence how utterances are interpreted.

To close, this paper leaves a simple but meaningful reminder: language in daily life, especially in local spaces like food service, is far more than meets the ear. After all, even the most ordinary exchanges in everyday life can express unspoken ideas —offering more than just service, but real food for thought. #

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