

Pragmatic Analysis of Implicature in Bantenese Song Lyrics “Jereh Bu Guru”

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze implicature in the lyrics of the Banten regional song “Jereh Bu Guru” using a pragmatic approach. It focuses on identifying types of implicature, analyzing how they are conveyed, and examining how they construct moral, social, and emotional messages. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method, with the song lyrics as the primary data source. Data were collected through documentation by analyzing each line of the lyrics and identifying utterances containing implicature based on Grice’s theory. The findings show that the lyrics contain conversational implicatures, including general, particularized, and scalar types, with particularized implicature being the most dominant. The implicatures are conveyed through simple expressions that require contextual interpretation. The study also reveals that implicature plays an important role in delivering moral, educational, and religious values indirectly, showing that song lyrics function as both entertainment and a medium for conveying implicit cultural messages.

Keywords: *implicature, pragmatics, song lyrics.*

Introduction

Language plays a fundamental role in human life as a tool for communication to convey ideas, feelings, and information. In linguistics, language is not merely a collection of words but a complex system that includes sounds, meanings, and rules that enable humans to produce and understand unlimited utterances (Fromkin et al., 2017). This highlights the importance of language in shaping social interaction and representing human experiences. Moreover, language also functions as a medium for expressing identity, culture, and social values, making it an essential component in understanding how individuals interact within a community.

The development of linguistic studies has shifted attention from structural analysis to the use of language in context, which is studied in pragmatics. Pragmatics examines how meaning is constructed based on context, speaker intention, and the relationship between participants (Nagy, n.d.). This perspective shows that meaning cannot always be interpreted literally, but must consider situational and social factors. In addition, pragmatics emphasizes the dynamic nature of communication, where meaning is continuously negotiated between speakers and listeners depending on the context in which the interaction occurs.

One important concept in pragmatics is implicature, which refers to implied meaning that is not directly expressed but can be inferred by the listener (Cruse, 2000). In communication, speakers often convey messages indirectly, requiring listeners to interpret meaning through context and shared knowledge. Therefore, implicature becomes essential in understanding how meaning is actually communicated (Wardoyo &

Cipto, 2016a). This concept also reflects the complexity of human communication, where understanding does not only depend on what is said explicitly, but also on what is intended implicitly by the speaker.

Implicature is not only found in daily communication but also in literary works such as song lyrics. Song lyrics often contain symbolic and implicit meanings influenced by cultural and social values (Wahyudi & Al., 2025). As a form of cultural expression, songs function not only as entertainment but also as a medium for delivering moral and social messages indirectly. Furthermore, the use of figurative language, metaphors, and indirect expressions in song lyrics allows listeners to interpret meanings in diverse ways, depending on their cultural background and personal experiences.

Previous studies have examined implicature in song lyrics from various perspectives. Research by (Wahyudi & Al., 2025) analyzed conventional implicature in traditional song lyrics and found that implicit meanings convey moral and cultural values. Meanwhile, (Farid & Rohbiah, 2025) explored conversational implicature in popular songs and showed that emotional meanings are often conveyed indirectly. In addition, (Ma'rifat & Al., 2024) investigated implicature and flouted maxims in rock music lyrics, revealing that violations of conversational principles can enrich interpretation. However, most of these studies focus on global or non-local contexts, leaving a gap in research on regional songs, particularly from Banten. Therefore, this study aims to analyze implicature in the song "Jereh Bu Guru" to contribute to pragmatic studies in local cultural contexts, as well as to provide a deeper understanding of how implicit meanings are constructed within regional cultural expressions.

Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to analyze implicature in the lyrics of the song "Jereh Bu Guru." A qualitative approach was selected because this research focuses on interpreting implicit meanings, exploring language use, and understanding how meaning is constructed within its social and cultural context. This method is considered appropriate as it allows the researchers to examine the depth of meaning behind linguistic expressions rather than relying on numerical data, thereby providing a richer and more comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2014; Tracy, 2020).

In addition, this study adopted a pragmatic approach to investigate how meaning is conveyed implicitly through language use. Pragmatics emphasizes the role of context, speaker intention, and shared knowledge in interpreting meaning (Yule, 1996). More recent studies also highlight that meaning construction involves inferential and cognitive processes, where listeners actively interpret implied meanings rather than passively receiving information (Indarti, 2024b; Khorsheed & Gotzner, 2023b). Therefore, this approach is highly relevant for analyzing song lyrics, which often contain indirect and context-dependent meanings.

The primary data of this study consisted of the lyrics of the song "Jereh Bu Guru," which served as the main object of analysis due to its cultural and linguistic relevance. The song was selected purposively because it represents a regional Bantenese song that contains moral and educational messages conveyed implicitly. Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to select data that are most relevant to the research objectives (Etikan et al., 2016). In addition, secondary data were collected from various sources, including books, journal articles, and previous research studies related to pragmatics and implicature, particularly those discussing Grice's theory (Grice, 1975; Wardoyo & Cipto,

2016b). Recent journal articles were also used to support contemporary perspectives on implicature and pragmatic analysis (Bonalumi, 2024; Zhuo, 2024).

The data were collected using a documentation technique, in which the researchers carefully read, observed, and examined the song lyrics in detail. Documentation is considered an appropriate technique for analyzing written or recorded texts, as it allows systematic examination of linguistic data (Bowen, 2009). Each line of the lyrics was treated as a unit of analysis to ensure a thorough and systematic investigation. Furthermore, the researchers transcribed and translated the lyrics into Indonesian to facilitate deeper understanding and analysis. This step is important in qualitative research to avoid misinterpretation, especially when dealing with regional languages.

The researchers then identified utterances that potentially contained implicature by paying close attention to linguistic cues, contextual meaning, and implied messages embedded within the lyrics. In this process, the analysis was guided by Grice's Cooperative Principle, which includes four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner (Grice, 1975). Utterances that appeared to imply meanings beyond their literal expression were marked and categorized for further analysis. This step ensured that the identification of implicature was conducted systematically and consistently.

The data analysis was conducted through several systematic steps. First, the identified data were classified into types of implicature, namely general conversational implicature, particularized conversational implicature, and scalar implicature based on Grice's theory (Yule, 1996). Second, the researchers interpreted the implied meanings by considering both linguistic structures and contextual factors, including cultural background and social values reflected in the song. In addition, the analysis also considered recent pragmatic perspectives that emphasize inferential interpretation and contextual variability in meaning construction (Mazzarella, 2023).

Third, the findings were presented descriptively in order to provide clear explanations of how implicatures function within the lyrics. Descriptive analysis allows the researcher to explain phenomena in a detailed and systematic manner without reducing them into numerical data (Tracy, 2020). To enhance the depth of analysis, each identified implicature was explained in relation to its function, meaning, and cultural significance.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, triangulation was applied by comparing the results with relevant theories and previous studies. Triangulation is a common strategy in qualitative research used to increase credibility and reduce bias (Creswell, 2014). In this study, theoretical triangulation was used by employing multiple references from both classical and recent pragmatic studies. In addition, peer discussion and repeated data checking were conducted to ensure consistency in interpretation. These steps strengthened the accuracy and trustworthiness of the analysis.

Results

Based on the analysis of the song lyrics "Jereh Bu Guru" by A. Syahes Alima, several utterances were found to contain implicatures. The lyrics generally convey moral messages about children's responsibilities, such as studying, respecting parents, and understanding religion. However, these messages are not always delivered directly, but rather through implied meanings that listeners must interpret. This finding indicates that the song employs indirect language as a strategy to communicate values in a more subtle and culturally appropriate way, which is consistent with pragmatic theory emphasizing implicit meaning in communication (Yule, 1996).

In addition, the use of implicature in the lyrics reflects how language can function as a medium for value transmission. The indirect expressions found in the song allow listeners to engage in interpretative processes, making the meaning more meaningful and memorable. Recent studies also suggest that implicature plays an important role in shaping understanding in cultural and educational discourse (Romadhon, 2024; Wahyudi et al., 2025).

Below is the translated version:

Table 1. *Distribution of Implicature Types*

No.	Types of Implicature	Total
1.	General Conversational	2
2.	Particular Conversational	4
3.	Scalar Conversational	1
Total		7

The table above shows that particularized conversational implicature is the most dominant type found in the data. This indicates that the meaning conveyed in the lyrics is highly dependent on context and requires deeper interpretation. Such dominance suggests that the songwriter intentionally uses indirect expressions that rely on shared cultural knowledge between the speaker and the listener (Grice, 1975; Wardoyo & Cipto, 2016a).

Table 2. *Tabulation of Implicature Data*

No	Lyrics Excerpt	Types of Implicature	Category	Implied Meanings
1.	<i>Dadi bocah kudu nurut ning wong tue</i>	Conversational	Particular	Anak harus berbakti kepada orang tua
2.	<i>Dadi bocah kudu gelem akeh belajar</i>	Conversational	General	Kewajiban anak untuk belajar
3.	<i>Supaye engko dadi wong soleh</i>	Conversational	Particular	Tujuan belajar adalah menjadi pribadi yang baik
4.	<i>Sing akeh ilmune</i>	Conversational	Skalar	Harus memiliki banyak ilmu
5.	<i>Supaye engko dadi manuse sing akeh gunane</i>	Conversational	Particular	Ilmu harus bermanfaat
6.	<i>Dadi bocah kudu ngebantu wong tue</i>	Conversational	General	Anak harus membantu orang tua
7.	<i>Dadi bocah kudu belajar agame</i>	Conversational	Particuylar	Pentingnya pendidikan agama

Based on Table 3.2, each lyric contains implied meanings that go beyond their literal interpretation. The data show that the songwriter consistently uses simple sentence structures to convey complex moral and educational values. This supports the idea that implicature allows speakers to communicate meanings efficiently without explicitly stating them (Cruse, 2000)

Furthermore, the findings reveal that the implicatures are closely related to cultural norms and social expectations. The repeated use of expressions such as “kudu” (must/should) indicates obligation, but the meaning is softened through indirect expression, making it function as advice rather than command. This aligns with the concept of politeness in communication, where indirectness is used to maintain social harmony (Leech, 1983).

Overall, the results demonstrate that implicature in the song functions as a linguistic strategy to deliver moral, social, and religious messages in a subtle and culturally meaningful way. This confirms that song lyrics can serve not only as artistic expression but also as a medium for implicit education and value formation.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that all identified data in the lyrics of the song “Jereh Bu Guru” contain conversational implicatures. These implicatures are classified into three types: general conversational implicature, particularized conversational implicature, and scalar implicature. Among these types, particularized implicature appears most frequently, indicating that the meanings conveyed in the song are highly dependent on context and require deeper interpretation from the listener. This result is consistent with previous studies which show that cultural texts tend to rely on context-bound meanings rather than explicit expressions (Romadhon, 2024; Wahyudi et al., 2025).

The dominance of particularized implicature suggests that the songwriter intentionally delivers messages indirectly, allowing listeners to infer meaning based on their cultural and social understanding. This finding is in line with the theory proposed by (Wardoyo & Cipto, 2016a), which states that particularized implicature requires specific contextual knowledge to be properly interpreted. In the context of this song, listeners must understand social norms and cultural values to grasp the intended meaning behind the lyrics. Furthermore, recent pragmatic studies emphasize that implicature is shaped by inferential processes in which listeners actively construct meaning using background knowledge (Khorsheed & Gotzner, 2023b).

For instance, the lyric “Dadi bocah kudu nurut ning wong tue” implies that children must obey their parents. While the literal meaning appears simple, the implied meaning extends beyond obedience, encompassing respect, responsibility, and moral obligation. This indicates that the implicature carries strong social and ethical values that are not explicitly stated but are culturally understood. Such indirect expression reflects the politeness strategy described by (Leech, 1983), where advice is conveyed in a less imposing manner to maintain social harmony.

Another example can be seen in the lyric “Supaye engko dadi wong soleh,” which implies that the purpose of learning is to become a good and morally upright person. The relationship between effort (learning) and outcome (becoming a good person) is not directly explained, but it is inferred through contextual understanding. This reflects how implicature functions to connect ideas across different parts of the lyrics. In line with this, (Mazzarella, 2023) argue that implicature allows speakers to communicate complex ideas efficiently without explicitly stating all information.

Furthermore, the lyric “Supaye dadi manuse sing akeh gunane” implies that knowledge should be beneficial to others. This implicature emphasizes the importance of social contribution and highlights that personal success is not only measured by knowledge but also by its usefulness. Such meaning reflects strong cultural values related to community and social responsibility. Recent studies also suggest that implicature in cultural discourse often carries ideological meanings that shape social behavior and values (Bonalumi, 2024).

In addition to particularized implicature, general implicature is also found in lyrics such as “Dadi bocah kudu gelem akeh belajar” and “Dadi bocah kudu ngebantu wong tue.” These utterances convey meanings that are relatively easy to understand, as they reflect common societal expectations. However, they still function as indirect advice rather than direct commands, making the message more acceptable and less imposing. This supports the idea that indirectness in communication is often used to maintain politeness and avoid face-threatening acts (Leech, 1983; Yule, 1996).

Lastly, scalar implicature is identified in the lyric “Sing akeh ilmune,” where the word “akeh” (many) implies a scale of knowledge. This suggests that having limited knowledge is insufficient, encouraging continuous learning. According to (Khorsheed & Gotzner,

2023b), scalar implicature involves interpreting meaning based on a scale, where choosing a weaker term implies the exclusion of stronger alternatives.

Overall, the use of implicature in this song allows the delivery of moral, educational, and religious values in a subtle and culturally meaningful way, making the song not only entertaining but also educational and reflective. Moreover, this finding supports contemporary pragmatic theory which views meaning as a result of interaction between linguistic expression, context, and cognitive interpretation (Indarti, 2024b; Zhuo, 2024).

Additionally, the findings of this study indicate that conversational implicature in song lyrics functions as an effective strategy for delivering educational messages in a more engaging and emotionally acceptable manner. Indirect expressions in the lyrics encourage listeners to think critically and interpret meanings independently rather than merely receiving explicit instructions. This process strengthens the listener's cognitive involvement in understanding the message conveyed by the songwriter. Recent studies in pragmatics explain that implicature requires active inferential reasoning because listeners must connect linguistic expressions with contextual and cultural knowledge in order to understand the speaker's intended meaning (Khorsheed & Gotzner, 2023a; Puri & Baskara, 2023). Therefore, the use of implicature in *Jereh Bu Guru* does not only beautify the language aesthetically but also enhances listeners' interpretive engagement and reflective thinking.

Furthermore, the dominance of particularized conversational implicature in the song demonstrates that context plays a crucial role in meaning interpretation. Listeners who share similar cultural backgrounds and social experiences are more likely to understand the implied meanings successfully. In this case, implicature becomes closely connected with cultural identity and shared societal values. The songwriter assumes that listeners possess sufficient contextual knowledge to interpret the indirect advice and moral teachings embedded in the lyrics. This finding is relevant to recent pragmatic research which argues that conversational implicature is strongly influenced by socio-cultural context and inferential competence in communication (Indarti, 2024a). Consequently, understanding implicature cannot be separated from understanding the cultural environment in which communication occurs.

In addition, the use of implicature in *Jereh Bu Guru* reflects how language can function simultaneously as a communicative and pedagogical instrument. Through indirect language, the songwriter is able to teach moral and religious values without sounding overly authoritative or didactic. Such communication strategies are important because messages delivered subtly are often more acceptable and memorable for audiences, especially children. This finding supports contemporary pragmatic perspectives stating that speakers frequently employ implicature to maintain politeness, reduce imposition, and create harmonious interaction in communication (Bonalumi & al., 2024). As a result, implicature becomes an effective linguistic strategy for maintaining interpersonal relationships while still conveying important educational values.

Moreover, the findings reveal that scalar implicature in the song contributes to emphasizing the importance of continuous self-improvement and intellectual development. Expressions such as "Sing akeh ilmune" imply that knowledge should not be limited or static, but continuously developed throughout life. This reflects the broader educational principle that learning is a lifelong process. Recent studies on scalar implicature also explain that listeners naturally interpret graded expressions by comparing them with alternative meanings on a semantic scale (Kissine & De Brabanter, 2023). Thus, the use of scalar implicature in the lyrics strengthens the persuasive effect

of the educational message by encouraging listeners to pursue greater knowledge and personal growth continuously.

Finally, this study confirms that conversational implicature plays a significant role in enriching the communicative quality and aesthetic value of song lyrics. Meanings that are conveyed indirectly tend to create deeper emotional resonance because listeners participate actively in interpreting the implied messages. This interactive interpretive process makes songs more meaningful and memorable for audiences. In addition, the findings strengthen contemporary pragmatic theory which views meaning as the result of interaction between linguistic forms, contextual understanding, and cognitive inference (Indarti, 2024a; Yunus & al., 2024). Therefore, the lyrics of *Jereh Bu Guru* can be understood not only as entertainment but also as a medium of cultural transmission, moral education, and social reflection that shapes listeners' attitudes and values through implicit communication.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the lyrics of the song "*Jereh Bu Guru*" contain various forms of conversational implicature, which can be categorized into general conversational implicature, particularized conversational implicature, and scalar implicature. Among these types, particularized implicature appears most dominantly, indicating that the meanings conveyed in the song are highly dependent on context and require deeper interpretation from listeners. This finding demonstrates that the songwriter intentionally employs indirect expressions to communicate messages in a more subtle, persuasive, and culturally meaningful way. The dominance of particularized implicature also shows that listeners are expected to actively infer meaning based on their social experiences, cultural understanding, and contextual knowledge.

Furthermore, the implicatures found in the song are conveyed through simple and familiar linguistic expressions, yet they contain deeper meanings that cannot be understood merely through literal interpretation. Listeners are required to use their contextual understanding, cultural background, and inferential abilities to fully interpret the intended messages. This confirms that meaning in communication is not solely determined by linguistic structure, but also by the interaction between language, context, and shared knowledge. Therefore, the song lyrics function not only as verbal expressions but also as communicative tools that encourage reflection, interpretation, and emotional engagement among listeners.

In addition, the study reveals that the implicatures embedded in the lyrics construct important moral, educational, social, and religious values. These values are reflected through messages about respecting parents, studying diligently, helping others, understanding religious teachings, and becoming a morally upright and useful individual in society. Through indirect communication, the songwriter successfully delivers advice and moral teachings without sounding forceful, patronizing, or authoritarian. As a result, the messages become more acceptable, persuasive, and meaningful for listeners. Consequently, the song functions not only as entertainment but also as an educational medium that transmits cultural and ethical values in a subtle and socially acceptable manner.

Moreover, this study highlights the important role of implicature in enriching the aesthetic and communicative quality of song lyrics. The use of indirect meaning creates deeper emotional engagement because listeners actively participate in interpreting the implied messages. This interpretive process makes the lyrics more meaningful, memorable, and reflective for audiences. The findings also support contemporary

pragmatic theories which emphasize that communication involves cognitive and inferential processes where meaning is collaboratively constructed between speakers and listeners through contextual interpretation. Therefore, implicature does not merely function as a linguistic phenomenon, but also as a communicative strategy that strengthens the emotional, cultural, and educational impact of the song.

Additionally, this study demonstrates that the analysis of implicature in regional song lyrics can provide broader insights into the relationship between language, culture, and society. The lyrics of *Jereh Bu Guru* reflect how local wisdom and cultural values are preserved through indirect communication strategies that remain understandable and relevant across generations. By using implicature, the songwriter is able to convey educational and moral teachings in a form that is aesthetically appealing and culturally meaningful. This finding indicates that regional songs should not only be viewed as artistic products, but also as important cultural texts containing valuable linguistic, social, and educational messages. Therefore, the study of implicature in local songs contributes not only to pragmatic studies but also to the preservation and appreciation of regional cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that implicature analysis can be applied as an alternative approach in language and literature learning, particularly in teaching pragmatics and meaning interpretation. Through song lyrics, students can learn how implied meanings are constructed, interpreted, and connected with cultural contexts. This process may help learners develop critical thinking, interpretative skills, and pragmatic competence in understanding indirect communication. In addition, the use of regional songs in educational contexts can increase students' awareness of local culture while simultaneously improving their linguistic understanding. Consequently, this study opens opportunities for future research to explore the implementation of pragmatic analysis in educational practices, especially in integrating local cultural materials into language learning.

Finally, this study contributes to pragmatic research by expanding the analysis of implicature within regional cultural contexts, particularly Bantenese song lyrics, which have received limited scholarly attention. The findings demonstrate that regional songs can serve as valuable linguistic and cultural resources for understanding how implicit meanings are constructed and communicated in society. Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to explore implicature in other local songs, literary works, films, or cultural discourses in order to enrich pragmatic studies and preserve local cultural expressions through linguistic research. Overall, this study confirms that implicature plays a significant role in shaping meaning, transmitting values, and strengthening the communicative power of song lyrics within both linguistic and cultural perspectives.

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