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EXPLORING THE FUNCTIONS OF IMPLICATURES IN NORTHERN KURMANJI

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ABSTRACT:

The current paper explores the functions of implicatures in Northern Kurmanji (NK). It lays concentration on the non-literal meanings (interpretation) that speakers convey beyond the literal one of either their speech or writing. Data were collected through purposive sampling from senior university students in experimental and control groups. The participants were chosen for their availability and willingness to participate. They self-recorded informal conversations to explore various functions of implicature, including explanation, criticism, empathy, contemplation, and humor. There was identification of the reasons behind implicatures, which included explanation, criticism, empathy, philosophical contemplation, and humor. The results dictate that, in one hand a strategic use of implicatures was utilized by the control group. The participants of the control group often employed implicatures to help with expressing deeper emotional and philosophical engagement. On the other hand, the experimental group used implicatures mainly for functions related to immediate and practical social exchanges. It is also found that the functions of implicatures in NK represents the cultural and contextual dynamics which denotes communicative strategies of the NK. Further studies can be explored to identify the role of implicatures in modern digital communication and to compare data across different Kurdish dialects and sociocultural contexts.

KEYWORDS: Northern Kurmanji, Implicatures, Pragmatics, Conversational Analysis, Cultural Dynamics, Social Interactions, Communicative Strategies.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Human interactions are essentially based on communication. When people communicate, they exchange information, express their feelings, and achieve goals socially and personally. Communication is defined by Davis and Newstrom (1981) as the process of sharing information and developing mutual understanding. Nevertheless, mutual understanding is not always achieved among speakers as the communication can sometimes be misleading; especially when the literal meaning does not match the interpretation of the words. When the speaker's intended meaning is not successfully conveyed to the listener, misunderstandings often arise. This emphasizes the difficulties of establishing meaning in interpersonal communications.

The study of meaning is one of the important subfields of linguistics. Moreover, pragmatics, the study of how context affects the interpretations of words, is an essential subdiscipline. Grice (1975) introduced the concept of implicature within the subfield of pragmatics. The term "implicature" refers to hidden meaning rather than explicitly expressed. It requires listeners to deduce the speaker's intended message from the context and shared knowledge. The Cooperative Principle was proposed by Grice (1975) which supports successful communication and it has four conversational maxims:

1- **Maxim of Quality** – Say what you believe to be true.

Example:

A: "Is John a good cook?"

B: "Well, he hasn't burned anything this week."

This sarcastic remark implies John is usually a poor cook, flouting the Maxim of Quality.

2- **Maxim of Quantity** – Provide as much information as needed, but not more than necessary.

Example:

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A: “Where are you from?”

B: “The Middle East.”

If B is from Zakho and the context calls for specificity, this under-informative reply flouts the Maxim of Quantity, possibly to avoid disclosing personal details.

3- **Maxim of Relation** – Be relevant.

Example:

A: “How did the meeting go?”

B: “I saw Rana outside smoking.”

The response may seem unrelated unless it is implied that Rana skipped the meeting. This flouts the Maxim of Relation to convey criticism indirectly.

4- **Maxim of Manner** – Be clear, orderly, and avoid ambiguity.

Example:

A: “Do you like my painting?”

B: “It’s… interesting.”

The vague and hesitant tone flouts the Maxim of Manner which suggests a negative opinion while avoiding direct offense.

Speakers frequently flout these maxims deliberately to produce implicatures—meanings that the listener must infer from context. Such use of implicature serves various communicative functions, including sarcasm, politeness, humor, and indirectness, which are deeply shaped by cultural and social norms.

According to Grice (1975), in order for a communication to be successful and effective, it must go through the four maxims. However, speakers do not usually follow the maxims; they often violate or flout them to create implicatures. Speakers, for example, might intentionally flout the maxims of conversations to convey different functions of implicatures such as sarcasm or irony, which leaves the listeners to infer the intended meanings.

Although there is extensive literature on implicatures in English and Arabic, Kurdish dialects, especially the NK, remain poorly studied. Based on a study conducted by Hasan (2022), it is noted that the research on implicature in Kurdish dialects is still limited which leaves substantial academic gaps towards understanding how implicatures are utilized and created, how meaning is interpreted and implied in Kurdish dialects. The NK, a subdialect of Kurmanji Kurdish mainly spoken in Zakho, Duhok, Amedi, and Akre provinces in Iraqi Kurdistan, has distinct syntactic, semantic, and cultural features that affect how its speakers produce and interpret implicatures. It has been clarified by Moheddin & Hamadamin (2022) how Kurdish speakers’ utilization and understanding of implicatures are shaped by the idiomatic expressions, politeness strategies, and cultural norms, which observes that these functions of implicatures are to be studied in this dialect.

1.2. Research Gap

While implicature has been widely studied in English, Arabic, and other major languages, Kurdish dialects—particularly Northern Kurmanji (NK)—have received limited scholarly attention. This lack of research leaves significant gaps in our understanding of how implicatures are formed and interpreted in NK, especially considering the role of idiomatic expressions, politeness strategies, and sociocultural norms.

NK, the Northern Kurmanji subdialect spoken primarily in Zakho, Duhok, Amedi, and Akre in Iraqi Kurdistan, has distinct syntactic and pragmatic features. Exploring implicature in this dialect offers not only linguistic insight but also a window into its rich cultural fabric.

1.3. Research Problem

The central problem this study addresses is the lack of empirical and theoretical understanding of implicature use in Northern Kurmanji, despite its unique pragmatic and cultural characteristics.

1.4. Questions

By examining the types and functions of implicatures from a pragmatic stance in the NK, the following research questions will be addressed in the present study:

1. What types of implicatures are commonly used in NK conversations?
2. What functions do these implicatures serve in the NK?

1.5. Research Objectives

The main objectives of the current paper are to:

1- identify and categorize the types of implicatures used by native speakers of NK.
2- analyze the communicative functions these implicatures perform.
3- explore the cultural and pragmatic norms that shape implicature use in NK.

1.6 Research Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that the experimental group (with awareness of pragmatic principles) will utilize implicatures more effectively than the control group (without such training or exposure).

1.7. Analytical Framework

This study adopts Grice’s (1975) theory of Conversational Implicature and Conversational Analysis as the primary frameworks for analyzing naturally occurring NK conversations.

1.8. Scope and Limitations

The study is limited to native speakers of NK. It solely focuses on recorded conversational data collected from speakers in Iraqi-Kurdistan. It does not cover written texts or other Kurdish dialects.

1.9. Value of the Study

This study is considered a contribution to the field of pragmatics by investigating implicatures in the NK, revealing the relationship between language techniques and cultural norms in a less studied dialect. This leads to enriching the greater knowledge of cross-cultural communication.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Implicature

The term 'implicature' was first coined by Grice (1975) and he defines it as a pragmatic process of implying meaning indirectly beyond the interpretation of speech. The implicit meaning relies on the listeners to infer it based on conversational maxims and the cooperative principle. A similar definition is given by Levinson (1983) which he refers to implicatures as "a type of inferred meaning that emerges when linguistic expressions interact with contextual factors, creating meanings not explicitly stated." From a Kurdish perspective, Sengul (2018) in *Customized Forms of Kurdishness in Turkey: State Rhetoric, Locality, and Language Use* elaborates that the connection between language use and contextual factors creates implicatures in communication; therefore, implicatures are products of the intertwine between the different aspects of culture and the use of language. It can be said that these definitions share common thoughts that implicature hinges on language, context, and inference. The emphasis of Grice's definition is on the structured principles guiding implicature, while Levinson highlights contextual dynamics, and Sengul underlines its cultural foundations in Kurdish discourse. To illustrate implicature, consider this example in English:

A. "Have you done your task?"
B. "Well, I watched three episodes of my favorite show."

Here, B does not explicitly state whether they did the task, but the implicature is that they likely did not, as their time was spent on leisure activities rather than studying. This implicature arises from the listener's inference based on the relevance and cooperative principle.

If one looks at the exchange above from a discoursal perspective, they can be analyzed from cohesion and coherence perspectives:

Exchange 1

A: Have you done your task?

B: No, I haven't done it.

Exchange 2

A: Have tou done your task?

B: Well, I watched three episodes of my favorite show.

While the first exchange is cohesive in which the answer is grammatically and literally related to the question, it is also coherent as they two utterances are relvant.

As for the second exchange, it is not cohesive because the answer seems to be far from the question literally, it is coherent as the anser is still relevant to the question.

One can come to the point that coherence is a crucial criterion for successful communication more than cohesion, the former being majorly related to the domain of pragmatics.

2.2. Types of Implicature

Implicatures can be broadly categorized into conversational implicatures and conventional implicatures, with further subdivisions within conversational implicatures. These distinctions provide a structured framework for analyzing how implicit meanings are conveyed in communication.

2.2.1. Conversational Implicatures: Conversational implicatures, introduced by Grice (1975), emerge from the interplay between a speaker's utterance and the cooperative principle, governed by the maxims of quality, quantity, relation, and manner. Levinson (1983) further divides these into generalized conversational implicatures, which occur in most contexts without the need for extensive background knowledge, and particularized conversational implicatures, which rely heavily on specific contextual information. To illustrate the generalized conversational implicature, in the following example, B's response implicates that not all students attended, as the term "some" generally implies "not all" in most contexts. This inference arises naturally without requiring additional information.

A: "Did all the students attend the lecture?"

B: "Some of them did."

In contrast, the implying meaning is different when it comes to the particularized conversational implicature:

A: "Can you help me with this report?"

B: "I have a meeting in five minutes."

In the above conversation, B's response does not directly answer the question but implicates that they cannot help due to their upcoming meeting. This meaning depends on the listener's ability to infer the relevance of B's statement in the given context.

One can state that in conversational implicature, there is at least one word in the sentence that can show the intended meaning while in conversational implicature, there is no word that shows the intended meaning; rather, it is only the context of situation that shows the meaning beyond the sentence.

2.2.2. Conventional Implicatures: Horn (2004) and Potts (2005) state that this type of implicatures is tied to specific linguistic expressions and is not context-dependent. These implicatures are often created by the use of certain words such as "but," "even," or "therefore." The following example contains a conventional implicature:

- "He is a good person but annoying."

In this example, the conjunction "but" conventionally implicates that there is a contrast between the traits of being good and annoying which is independent of the surrounding context.

2.3. Functions of Implicature

When people communicate, they use a diverse variety of functions of implicatures which are highly context-dependent. These functions of implicatures help speakers to convey indirect meaning as well as avoiding explicitness when addressing sensitive topics. Social dynamics are maintained by the use of indirect functions of implicatures. Furthermore, according to Grice (1975), social dynamics and speech acts such as politeness, commands, requests, or criticisms are often softened by using implicatures. Besides, creative linguistic purposes such as expressing humor, irony, or sarcasm can also be served by using implicatures which helps speakers in more nuanced and layered interactions. Moreover, complicated social dynamics can further be navigated by implicatures; as Leech (1983) states, implicatures help speakers in signaling shared knowledge, cultural norms, or social hierarchy without overt expressions. Thus, a deeper and a more implicit communication can be formed. In a study by Ahmed and Majeed (2019), it was observed that implicatures are often employed in political discourse to hide intentions, for example, when a politician says, “We will do what’s necessary to protect our national interests,” the intended meaning might imply potential military action or economic sanctions without explicitly stating so. On the other hand, FaqAbdulla (2023) highlighted their use in Kurdish comedy to create humor and irony like when someone is busy working in the kitchen and their sister sitting doing nothing, they may ask her "Would your highness like some coffee?". Likewise, Musa et al. (2022) recognized that implicatures are frequently used in daily communications to soften face-threatening acts and enhance social harmony. These studies underline the importance of implicature as a tool for managing meaning and social relationships in various communicative contexts. The researchers have created this figure to illustrate the most common functions of implicatures:

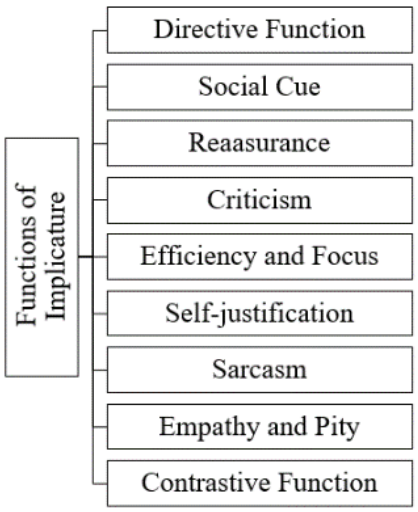

Figure 1: Functions of Implicatures

The following examples are provided to further clarify and illustrate the various functions of implicatures identified in Figure 1. The directive function can be seen when someone says, “It’s cold in here,” implying a request to close the window. As a social cue, a statement like “You’re quite the early bird today,” can imply surprise or approval, helping maintain social bonds. In terms of reassurance, a remark such as “You did your best” might imply that failure is acceptable, offering comfort without stating it outright. Criticism is often implied, as in “That’s an interesting choice,” which might suggest disapproval depending on tone and context. The function of efficiency and focus appears in phrases like “He’s not the sharpest tool in the shed,” which concisely conveys a complex judgment. Self-justification can be implied in a statement like “I was only trying to help,” signaling defense without directly responding to an accusation. For sarcasm, saying “Great job!” after a clear mistake conveys the opposite of the literal meaning. Empathy and pity are reflected in utterances like “Some people have no one to go home to,” suggesting concern or sympathy without direct consolation. Finally, a contrastive function can be observed in a statement like “She’s smart, but not wise,” subtly highlighting a nuanced difference without explicitly defining it. These examples show how implicatures enrich communication by conveying layered meanings beyond the literal.

Beyond their commonly discussed roles in indirectness, politeness, and criticism (Grice, 1975; Levinson, 1983), implicatures (what one implies rather than directly states) serve a broader range of functions in real conversations. For instance, they facilitate acknowledgement, where speakers subtly recognize a listener's contribution without overt statements; consider how "That's one way to see it" can imply agreement without full commitment, as Tannen (1994) explains. Implicatures also contribute to efficiency, enabling speakers to say less and mean more by relying on shared knowledge, thereby reducing redundancy and promote communicative economy, particularly in rapid exchanges (Levinson, 2000). Furthermore, they can fulfill a philosophical or reflective function when it allows speakers to raise abstract or critical points without direct confrontation, often challenge assumptions or highlight contradictions subtly in philosophical discourse (Horn, 2004). Understanding these diverse functional dimensions is highly relevant to the present study, as it offers a more nuanced perspective on how implicatures operate in Northern Kurmanji conversation that aims to account for their varied roles which shape meaning beyond the literal level.

Grice’s groundbreaking study of Cooperative Principles in (1975) has contributed to effective communication when the conversation between the speakers and listeners adhere to the conversational maxims (i.e., quantity, quality, relevance, and manner). The emergence of implicatures rely on flouting these maxims which allows speakers to provide implicit meaning. To emphasize this, the Neo-Gricean theory refines this view stating that there is a complex interaction between the intention of the speakers and the inferences of the listeners. The Grice’s framework was expanded by Levinson (2000) and Sperber & Wilson

(1986) as they introduced the idea that implicatures are context-dependent and driven by the relevance of information to the listeners. These theories are linked to the communications in the NK because the implicatures are mainly related to social and cultural context.

In this research, implicature is defined as the indirect meaning a speaker wants to convey without saying it directly, which the listener understands through the context of the conversation and the cultural norms of Northern Kurmanji.

2.4. Previous Studies

Research on implicatures in English has been instrumental in shaping one's understanding of the phenomenon and its various functions across diverse contexts, ranging from casual conversations to formal discourse. For instance, Thomas (1995) explored how implicatures in English facilitated politeness, especially in face-threatening situations. Her work highlights that indirectness, achieved through implicatures, helps speakers navigate sensitive topics without causing offense. Taguchi (2011) investigated how non-native speakers of English interpreted implicatures, demonstrating that pragmatic competence in implicature comprehension often lags behind grammatical proficiency. This finding underscores the complexity of implicatures and their reliance on cultural and contextual knowledge. Similarly, Li (2024) examined the role of implicatures in humor, showing how English speakers used implicatures to convey jokes that depended on shared cultural knowledge and subtle deviations from conversational norms. The functional aspects of implicatures in English have also been studied. For example, Drew and Heritage (1992) analyzed conversational implicatures in institutional talk, such as courtroom exchanges and medical consultations, where speakers strategically used implicatures to manage power dynamics and achieve specific objectives.

Studies on the Northern Kurmanji dialect have begun to explore how cultural norms shape the pragmatic functions of implicatures. For instance, Ahmed and Majeed's (2019) analysis of hedging in Kurdish parliamentary debates revealed that implicatures in formal contexts serve strategic purposes, such as politeness and political maneuvering. Hedging was observed as a prominent strategy. Their study underscored the multifunctionality of implicatures in both formal and informal settings. Hasan (2022) discussed how indirectness in the NK aligns with cultural values of politeness and social harmony, reflecting broader social norms that discourage direct confrontation. This cultural specificity highlights the need for localized studies that consider the unique aspects of the NK conversational implicatures. Idris and Mohammed (2022) presented how implicatures in everyday conversations facilitate social harmony, with speakers often choosing indirect language to avoid direct confrontations and preserve relationships. FaqAbdulla (2023) conducted a qualitative analysis of conversational implicatures in a Kurdish comedy drama, highlighting how humor and critical engagement with societal issues are conveyed through indirect speech acts.

In sum, despite the progress made in understanding implicatures in the NK, several gaps remain. Existing research often lacks methodological diversity, with a heavy reliance on qualitative methods that may not capture the full range of implicature functions. Additionally, many studies focus on specific contexts such as comedy or political discourse, leaving other domains underexplored.

This research stands out from other Kurdish research on implicatures by narrowing its scope to *only* how the functions of implicatures are utilized in the NK. It steers clear of other domains such as English as a Foreign Language (EFL), political discourse, religious sermons, and other fields. By concentrating on how implicatures function in everyday conversations among the NK speakers, this study aims to offer a clear and meaningful understanding of their role in real-life communication.

3. Method

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to examine the data in this study. In order to investigate the many kinds of implicatures and to comprehend their usage, context, and purposes in the conversational data, the researchers employed conversational analysis. The study's participants and data gathering methods are elaborated below in the ensuing subsections.

3.1 Ethical Considerations

The researchers maintain the confidentiality of the identities of all participants throughout the investigation. Participants' identities are never revealed, and their personal information is kept strictly confidential. The recordings for data collection are solely for the purpose of this study and will not be shared or used in any other context. In addition, all participants provide informed permission, ensuring that they fully understood the nature of the study and their role in it.

3.2. Participants

Forty senior university students (20 males and 20 females) from various departments at the University of Zakho participated in the study during the academic year 2023–2024. These individuals were chosen on the basis of their NK language skills, availability, willingness to participate, ensuring that they could converse in their mother tongue with ease. The participants' ages ranged from 22 to 28, which is typical of university-level senior students. To make the study easier, two groups were created, each with unique circumstances to inspect implicatures in various settings.

3.2.1. The Experimental Group: Twenty students (ten males and ten females) made up this group, and before making any recordings, they were made aware of the purpose of the study. They received a concise explanation of implicatures and their applications in communication. This strategy was intended to guarantee that they understood the objectives of the study and could intentionally employ implicatures in the discourse. This group's recorded conversations lasted from around two to seven minutes.

3.2.2 The Control Group

The control group also included 20 participants (ten males and ten females) who were not given any detail on the nature of the paper, nor the concept of implicatures before recording their conversation. We merely advised the group to pick a random topic and have a casual conversation in the NK. The goal of this was to collect actual conversational data without being aware of the research objectives; that allows for examining implicatures utilized in spontaneous communication. The recorded conversations in this group lasted between 2 and 7 minutes, similar to those in the experimental group.

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

For this study, the data were collected using a self-recording method (smartphones or digital voice recorders) from 40 senior university students at the University of Zakho; they then were divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group.

3.3.1. Instructions: Both groups were given extensive instructions on how to use the recording devices and they were assured of their privacy and the purpose of the recordings. The experimental group received additional training and information regarding implicatures and how they are used in everyday discourse.

3.2.2. Recording: Participants were requested to document talks with peers or acquaintances from their social network platforms. The topics were open-ended, and the discussions could vary from academic life to social issues, future aspirations, or personal experiences. Participants were able to engage in natural dialog without being limited by subject matter due to the freedom of topic selection. This method opens the ground for a comparative examination of the experimental and the control groups; this reveals how prior knowledge of implicatures affects their use in NK conversations.

3.3.3. Conversation Coding System: A coding system was established, similar to methods utilized in earlier studies such as Kasper and Wagner (2014), to simplify the structure and referencing of the acquired conversational data. In this study, a unique code was assigned to each recorded discussion depending on its group and sequence. Conversations from the experimental group were classified as EGCn (e.g., EGC7 for Experimental Group Conversation 7) and CGCn for the control group. This method made data organization easier and ensured clear separation between groups throughout analysis.

3.4 Model Adopted

This study adopts a combined analytical framework, drawing primarily on Grice's (1975) theory of Conversational Implicature and the principles of Conversational Analysis. These models provide the theoretical and methodological basis for examining how meaning is constructed, inferred, and negotiated in naturally occurring conversations in Northern Kurmanji. The analysis also considers the role of context, speaker intention, and cultural norms in shaping implicature use.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion of the Results

The process of the data analysis stated after the conversation samples were collected from the participants. The recordings were analyzed interpreted and analyzed qualitatively. The analysis and the discussion of the experimental group and the control group are presented in the following subsections respectively.

4.1. Data Analysis of the Control Group

After the analysis process of the conversations of the control group for conversational implicatures, the results showed that the conversational implicatures were used to utilize a wide range of communication functions. In the control group conversations, it was shown that implicatures, beside serving as tools for conveying indirect meaning, helped managing the social dynamics in communication.

Looking at *CGC1*, the implicature is used by the speaker to utilize both philosophical reflection and empathy. The utterance *"ئەز دزانم مالا تە یا ل ئاکرێ"* ("I know your house is in Akre") and *"هەمی شولێ وە ب هێڤیا وە ڤەیە"* ("You take care of everything") convey familiarity and acknowledgment of the listener's circumstances. The function of this implicature is empathy as the speaker recognizes the listener's independence or self-reliance. In the same conversation, another philosophical function is indirectly expressed by the use of the phrase *" ژیان دێ بووریت، هەما هوسایە"* ("As it goes, life goes on"); it implies that human beings should accepts the fact that life has a passing nature. It is evident that using implicatures in indirect communication supports both emotional connection and existential reflection. Therefore, based on the analysis, *acknowledgment*, *empathy*, and *philosophical reflection* functions are expressed by the use of the conversational implicature which not only conveys personal knowledge but philosophical contemplation of the speaker.

The functions of the implicatures in *CGC2* and *CGC4* are mainly to increase efficiency and focus while speaking. The utterance *"ب شێوەیەکێ کورت"* ("Briefly") in *CGC2* signals that the communication must shift towards a concise mode. The case is similar to *CGC4* as the phrase *"کورتی ئەزێ شێم بێژم"* ("I will make it brief") indicates brevity. The speaker is probably motivated by the listener's efficiency or a limited attention span. In these two conversations, the *efficiency function* of implicature is reflected minimizing pointless explanation and focusing on the core elements of the speech. The implicature function of *clarification* is also underscored when the shift to more concise form of expression is demonstrated.

One of the implicature functions is the directive function which the speaker uses implicature to direct the attention of the listener as in *CGC3* and *CGC5*. In both conversations, the implicatures are utilized to direct attention and convey sarcasm. The phrase*"دڤێت تو بزانی"* ("You must know!") in *CGC3* directs the attention of the listener to focus on an important point of the conversation. On the contrary, the *sarcastic function* of implicature is illustrated in *CGC5*. The utterance *" هەما هندە و خلاس، تە دنیا خراب کر"* ("Is that it? You really outdid yourself!") sarcastically criticizes the efforts of parents for being inconsequential or exaggerated. This function is used to

mock as well as express frustration caused by the irresponsible actions of the parents. Hence, it can be said that these functions of the implicature in both conversations are used to manage the direction of the conversation and to sarcastically express disapproval.

The implicatures *criticism and self-justification* are conveyed in *CGC7*. The speaker's conversation that contains *"بەس ئێک تە دیت؟"* ("You only found one!") indirectly expresses the function of disappointment, signaling insufficient efforts by the listener. The speaker implies and critiques that they were expecting more results. The sentence *"من ئێکێ جاب نەدا، من ئێکێ جاب دا، من تولا وێ قەکر"* ("I didn't answer the first, but I did answer the second one, I took revenge, meaning I compensated the loss") in the same conversation expresses a *self-justification* function, which contains an indirect attempt for self-justification asserting that they have taken more steps and have achieved success. These functions of implicature show how indirect communication can be used by speakers to critique others and to justify their own activities. The functions here suggest that the conversational dynamic conveys a negotiation of social roles in which the speaker justifies their actions to defend themselves, while challenging the listener's wherein the speaker defends their competence and simultaneously challenges the listener's insufficient efforts.

CGC9 and *CGC10* contain implicatures that are used to provide information and, again, to offer self-justifications. In *CGC9*, the statement *"و غیابات ژی چێکرن"* ("And they took the roll call") conveys indirect information to the listener about the significance of the roll call. This implicature signals that the listener's absence was registered and that they will face consequences. In *CGC10*, *"دەرەجێت من باشن هەتا رادەیەکی، بەس ئەدەبی نوی تێ نەبت، ئەڤروکە، دەرەجە خراب بی، ئەز نزانم ژ منە یان ژ پسیارایە، ئەز دبێژم نە ژ منە، ژ بەر هەمیا جواب نەدایە"* ("My grades are fairly good overall, except for Modern Literature. That one was bad. I don't know whether it was my fault or the questions. I'd say it wasn't just me—no one was really able to answer them."), the implicature is used to function as *self-justification* as they attempt to find justifications for their poor performance in the exam. In this implicature, the speaker implies that the reason behind their underperformance was due to the unfair questions but not his lack of preparation, justifying that everyone did not answer not only he. The function of self-justification in this implicature is utilized by the speaker to cover his failure and keep his self-esteem high. The functions of implicatures in these examples show how the audience views one's behavior and negatively affect personal responsibility.

Overall, different communicative functions like *clarification*, *criticism*, *self-justification*, *sarcasm*, and *philosophical reflection* were detected in the conversations of the control group. Beside guiding the flow of the conversations, these functions mirror deeper cultural and social dynamics, including the negotiation of identity, the assertion of values, and the management of relationships within the context of the conversation. The use of the implicature's functions in the control group's conversations illustrates how meaning can be strategically implied to manage social roles and guide social interactions.

4.2. Data Analysis of the Experimental Group

The data analysis of the experimental group's recordings reveals a variety of implicature functions expressed in everyday Kurdish conversations. All the recordings are provided with pragmatic interpretation and English translation. In *EGC1*, the phrase "وەکو ئاڤ قەخارنێ بوو" ("It was like a piece of cake") implies the function of *simplification* where the speaker uses implicature to indicate that the task does not require much efforts and that it can be handled by them. The speaker is probably reassuring that the task does not deserve any concerns, it is called the *reassurance* function. The other sentence "کەسەکێ ئەزمان رەش بوو" ("He had a big mouth") is used to convey a criticism function to criticize an outrageously talkative person and their disrespectful communication style. In the same conversation, there is the use of euphemism through the use of implicature function in the utterance, "یێ برسی بوو" ("He was hungry!"); it is used to indirectly comment on someone's inappropriate sexual behaviour. It is commonly known that NK speakers use indirect language to refer to sensitive topics. Finally, the utterance "هندی هند یا سەر رەقە" ("She is stubborn as a mule") can equally have two interpretations; either positive or negative. Based on the conversation between the speaker and listener, this function of the implicature is utilized to criticize the unnecessary determination of someone who is unwell but not checking on their health.

Concerning *EGC2*, the conversation does not contain any implicature as it complies with all the maxims of conversation. There are several phrases in *EGC3* that imply different implicature functions. The first utterance in this conversation is "نا بینی ما تو دکم، داوەتێ!" ("Can't you see!? I am juggling the flaming swords!") conveys the function of *frustration*. The speaker uses this function to express their frustration of being too busy. Another line, "هەی مالا تە، توژی نە یا تێکەلیێ!" ("Come on, no one can get along with you!"), serves to criticize the person's behavior, suggesting that they are difficult to deal with due to being overly sensitive or temperamental. In "گووت ئەز نساخم" ("She said that she is sick"), the speaker validates the claim by reinforcing that her actions (not attending an event) align with her statement of being unwell, thus performing a validation function. The phrase "وو فەقیری ئەو ژی خوە نابینت" ("Poor guy, he can't never catch a break") conveys empathy, showing concern for someone who seems perpetually unfortunate. Another expression, "یێ چووی دهوکێ" ("He has gone to Duhok"), functions as a clarification, explaining why someone is unavailable. Meanwhile, "هەما بهێلە وەک هەر جار" ("Leave it, it is the same as always") implies a sense of routine, suggesting that no changes have occurred. The utterance "ئەو ل بنێ دنیایێ بی" ("It's really far") justifies the speaker's refusal to participate in a particular activity by focusing on the external factor of distance. Lastly, "هورێنا ترومبێلێ" ("Car beeping, he is here!") functions as a social cue, prompting the listener to take action without direct instruction.

In *EGC4,* the first utterance "وللە هەما ل مالێ، حەیاتا رۆژانە" ("Honestly, it's just the usual daily routine at home") is a

simplification of daily life, downplaying the significance of the speaker's routine to create a sense of calm. The second line, "قێجا هەکە سەر وەرەقێ بت، تشتەک دییە" ("But when it is a written exam, it's a whole different story") serves as a contrastive function, emphasizing the difficulty of written exams in comparison to oral ones.

Moving to *EGC5*, multiple expressions show a variety of implicature functions. For instance, "ئەم ل هێڤیا تە پیربووین" ("I'm so tired of waiting too long") reveals frustration with delays. "باوەربکە، ئەم بچینە مال گەلە خوشتری ژ وێرێ" ("Staying at home is much better than going to that place") reflects preference, with the speaker showing a clear preference for comfort over inconvenience. The utterance " برا ل وێرێ ساونایە" ("Man, this place feels like a sauna") uses exaggeration to express discomfort and indirectly rejects the idea of staying or going somewhere similar. The speaker implies they want to go somewhere without saying it directly. Similarly, " پچەکێ ژ دهوکێ دەرکەڤین، مروڤ دبێژت قێری سەحرایە" ("Let's at least get out of Duhok; it feels like a desert here") uses metaphor to critique the environment, expressing dissatisfaction with the location. In " گلۆپا سەرسەرێ برایێ من شول کر" ("It's like a lightbulb just went off above your head!"), the speaker indirectly praises the listener for having a clever idea. Another utterance, " تە خەم پێ نەبت، دەلیل سیاحی مە ئەز" ("No worries, I'm like a professional tour guide"), reassures the listener, suggesting confidence in navigating a trip. In " ما چ خەتەری سەر مە نینە ژ بەر دەنگێ کۆنسێرتا تورکا و پەکەکێ" ("Are we in danger because of the Turkish-PKK concert?"), the speaker raises awareness about potential risks. The utterance " ما هەما برایێ من ئامێدی" ("Yeah, I know you're from Amedi!") affirms the listener implicitly highlights the cultural traits associated with Amedi—such as appreciation for etiquette, refinement, and attention to delicate or tasteful matters. Other expressions in this recording show the speaker praising the listener indirectly or expressing personal values, such as "خوارنەکێ دەمە تە دێ تلێت خوە گەل خوی" ("The food is so delicious; you'll be licking your fingers!") and "عەسل ئەوە بخودێ" ("I swear, this is what really matters!").

Recording *EGC6* lacks sufficient data for analysis as the entire conversation is clear and does not break any maxims of conversation. In *EGC7*, the phrases "گورگەک کیڤە مریيە" ("Did the hell freeze over?") and " من سیڤیێ خو یێ ب هەلیکوپتەرێ یێ بەلاڤ کری" ("I distributed my CV using a helicopter") indicate surprise or disbelief, and exaggeration, respectively. The speaker uses humor to express frustration with their job search, suggesting that their efforts were extreme, yet indirectly amusing. The other lines, such as "چینیە، دێ چێبیت خودێ حەسکەت" ("It's OK, everything is going to be all right") or " من مەوعدێ هەی د گەل هەڤالێ خو ئەوێ ژ ترکیا هاتی" ("I have an appointment with my friend who came from Turkey"), employ reassurance and politeness, maintaining a social balance in conversation.

In *EGC8*, the speaker sarcastically refers to someone not being fired yet, expressing criticism indirectly. The phrase "ئەز دێ چم دهوکێ" ("I am going to Duhok") as a response to the dinner invitation to the dinner is a polite refusal to participate in an activity and this is conversational type of implicature, while "ما کێ دگەل د قەناند" ("Who would put up with her?") critiques someone's behavior, implying they are intolerable. "بارودوخێت کوردستانێ گەلە زەحمەتن" ("The situation in Kurdistan is very difficult") highlights the hardships faced in Kurdistan without directly specifying the cause. The speaker also uses politeness when declining invitations, as seen in "تە چ شول نەبین، من هندە کار بێت هەین" ("I have something to do; if that's OK with you").

The data in *EGC9* reveals that the speaker expresses their discomfort with the hot weather by saying " بەس حەچکو سپلێت نە هل" ("It was as if the AC was not on").

Last of all, the expressions in *EGC10* serve many implicature functions. Expressions like " وللە ئەز بەحسێ خوە بکم دێ بۆ من کیە گری" ("You will cry if you hear my story") uses *exaggeration* to express emotional sorrow, while "قوتابیێت من ئەڤرو گەلە دلێش بین" ("My students were very annoying today") serves as *criticism* or *catharsis* to express a relief after a hardworking long day. The phrase "حەچەکو نە ل قێ دنیایێ" ("They were absent-minded") illustrates that the speaker wants to complain about a classroom issue, which their students are not paying attention. On the contrary, the same speaker uses " وەک گولەکێ ب رێڤەچوو" ("It went perfect") to offer to indicate to positive outcome about the same class. Finally, the expression "من یێ خوارى بەس ئەزێ گەل تە ئێم" ("I had something, but I will join you") shows *politeness* function, as the speaker does not want to refuse the invite and does not want him to be alone.

4.3. Comparative Analysis of Conversational Implicatures in Control and Experimental Groups

According to the analysis of conversational data, the implicatures that have been discovered in both groups are predominantly conversational rather than conventional, since they are heavily influenced by the situational context of the encounters. These implicatures have a dynamic meaning that emerges from the interaction of the speaker's intention and the conversational situation, i.e. they are not fixed to specific linguistic words or interpretations.

The CG employs a diverse set of implicatures for empathy, philosophical thought, sarcasm, criticism, self-justification and so on. These conversational implicatures do not only convey meaning indirectly, but they also aid in other aspects such social interaction management and emotion regulation. For example, taken a statement like "life is a passing shadow", it illustrates the group's philosophical leanings. Such introspective uses of implicatures are consistent with the findings of Hasan (2022) and Mustafa and Shahab (2024), emphasizing the philosophical and pragmatic aspects of implicatures in NK talks. The EG also employs implicatures, but with a greater emphasis on criticism, irritation, and social balancing. There are other utterances that indicate indirect criticism or irritation such as "He had a big mouth" and "I am juggling flaming swords".

The conversations belonging to CG indicate a deep, complicated attitude to relationships. Participants employ implicatures to define social positions and regulate personal dynamics. For instance, comments like "You only found one!" criticize the listener's efforts, whereas "I didn't answer the first one, but I did answer the second one" embodies a self-justification. The CG strikes a careful balance between empathy and criticism, respecting the

listener's independence while providing helpful feedback. Based on Leech (1983) and Levinson (1983), this is in parallel with larger trends in the use of implicatures to balance politeness with criticism. Despite that, the EG uses implicature more directly and frequently to alleviate distress or seek reassurance. "She is stubborn as a mule" or "Everything is going to be all right" are such examples that demonstrate emotional reactions and a focus on everyday issues. The EG focuses on simpler, more immediate social interactions while the CG makes more strategic and reflective use of implicature.

In line with strategy, the CG's implicature usage is frequently intentional, with the goal of directing or preserving the conversation's flow. For instance, "Briefly" or "In a concise manner" implies a desire to avoid superfluous complexity and concentrate on vital issues. The CG also employs sarcasm and philosophical contemplation to traverse complex social relationships, following certain scholars' guidelines for the strategic use of implicatures (Horn, 2004). Although using implicature to facilitate discussions, the EG focuses more on emotional expressiveness, particularly while dealing with frustration or empathy. Both groups employ implicature to speed up discourse, but the CG does so more deliberately, for the purpose of striving deeper connection and philosophical or emotional depth. This intentional discourse participation is in line with Taguchi's (2011) findings on the advanced pragmatic competence of some speaker groups.

Considering diverse and purposeful CG's emotional tone, it ranges from critical statements ("You only found one!") to expressions of empathy ("Poor guy, he can't catch a break") and philosophical insights. Speakers use these emotional fluctuations deliberately to create a multilayered landscape that balances empathy, frustration, and introspection. In comparison, the EG's emotional tones are more obvious, with a lingering sense of frustration. For instance, "She had a big mouth" and "I'm so tired of waiting" express dissatisfaction or irritation without the complexities inherent in the EG's method. Humor and sarcasm are regularly utilized in EG to deal with dissatisfaction and lighten uncomfortable situations. These are consistent with Eggins and Slade's (1997) results of casual conversation tactics.

The implicature's usage of CG is more complicated that combines emotional, social, and philosophical functions. Speakers belonging to this group use indirect communication to negotiate interpersonal relationships as well as larger existential problems. In contrast, the EG's usage of implicature relies on common emotional circumstances. Conversations in the EG tend to be about immediate grievances, comedy, or personal preferences rather than profound existential themes or philosophical musings. The complexity of implicature use is demonstrated by CG, with talks indicating a multidimensional approach to communication, being in line with Ahmed and Majeed's (2019) results.

Sarcasm and humor are used by both groups, but the CG does it more strategically, frequently and employing lines such as "Is that it? They really outdid themselves!" is used to ridicule someone's conduct while simultaneously delivering societal commentary. Sarcasm in the CG can play different roles simultaneously that functions as both a criticism and a tool for deeper participation in the discussion. While depending on sarcasm and comedy, the EG uses these methods in a more overt and exaggerated manner, with statements such "Did the hell freeze over?" and "I distributed my CV using a helicopter", expressing irritation or exaggeration in a lighter manner. These findings are in line with Drew and Heritage's (1992) insights about humor as a communication tool.

In essence, it is a known fact that both groups employ implicature to express meaning indirectly and regulate social relationships. The CG uses so in a more strategic and sophisticated manner by using implicature to facilitate philosophical reflection, self-justification, and complex social navigation. However, the EG uses implicature more for emotional expression and everyday circumstances, with a greater emphasis on dissatisfaction, criticism, and reassurance. These findings are congruent with prior studies on the pragmatic and cultural dimensions of implicatures in Kurdish and other linguistic contexts, based on Hasan (2022).

5. Conclusions

The following key conclusions are reached in the current work:

1. Implicatures are vital in Northern Kurmanji discourse because they help people negotiate interpersonal connections, maintain social peace, and deal with complex social dynamics. Their various purposes include conveying empathy, clarifying, offering criticism, encouraging philosophical reflection, and using humor.
2. In the data analysis, the majority of participants (both control and experimental groups) used implicatures. The CG demonstrated a sophisticated use of implicatures, using them for layered communication, emotional involvement, and philosophical depth, indicating a more purposeful and reflective conversational style. In contrast, the EG emphasized quick emotional responses and practical social exchanges, using implicatures to handle frustration, offer reassurance, and manage everyday circumstances.
3. The study provides valuable understanding for the NK speakers, emphasizing the importance of understanding and applying implicatures in indirect and context-dependent communication. This underscores the importance of including pragmatic skills into language teaching.

6. Recommendations for Further Research

Future studies should explore the use of implicatures in digital communication and educational settings within the Northern Kurmanji context, as these areas remain underexplored. Expanding research to include comparative analyses across Kurdish dialects and among different generations and genders would provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how implicatures function in diverse social and cultural contexts. Additionally, incorporating innovative methodologies—such as corpus linguistics and conversation analysis software—could improve the reliability and broader

applicability of findings, addressing current limitations in generalizability often associated with qualitative approaches.

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فەرمانێن ڤەشارتنا رامانێ د کوردییا کرمانجییا ژووری دا

کورتی:

ئەڤ ڤەکولینە ل دور فەرمانێن جودا یێن ڤەشارتنا رامانێ د کوردییا کرمانجییا ژووری دا هاتیە ئەنجامدان کو تەکەز ل سەر هندێ هاتیە کرن کا چەوا ئاخفتنکەرێن کوردییا کرمانجییا سەری دشێن رامانێ ڤەشێرن دا کو خوە دوویر بکەن ژ ئاخفتن و رامانێن راستەراست. ئەڤ ڤەکولینە پشت بەستنێ ب شیکاریا دان و ستاندنێ دکت ژبۆ شیکارکرنا دان و ستاندنێن ڕۆژانە یێن قوتابیێن زانکویێ د ناڤ هەردوو گروپێن ئاراستەکری و تەجریبی. ئەنجام وەسا دیار دکن کو فەرمانێن ڤەشارتنا رامانێ جوراوجورن وەکی رەخنەگرتن، دلسوزی، هزرکرنا فەلسەفی، و ترانەپێکرن. پشتی شیکارکرنا داتایان، وەسا دیار بوو کو گروپێ ئاراستەکری ئەڤ فەرمانە ب شێوازەکێ هویرتر ب کارئینان ژ ئاسانکرنا رامانا ڤەشارتی د بارێن لێکگەهورینا هەست و سوزا و فەلسەفا کویر. ژ لایەک دیڤە، گروپێ تەجریبی فەرمانێن ڤەشارتنا رامانێ پتر ژبۆ پێکگەهشتنا جڤاکی و ب شێوازەکێ کارەکی بکارئینان. ئەنجامێن ڤێ ڤەکولینێ دیار دکن کو فەرمانێن ڤەشارتنا رامانێ کوردییا کرمانجییا ژووری دا ل سەر لڤینێن کەلتووری و دەقێ ئاخفتنێ دهێنە ب کار ئینان و ئەڤ چەندە ژی وێ دیار دکت کو کوردییا کرمانجییا ژووری ستراتیجیێن تایبەت هەنە د دان و ستاندنێ دا. ئەڤ ڤەکولینە بابەتێن گرێدایی ب ڤەشارتنا رامانێ د دەقێن ئەلکترونی دا د شێوەزارێن کوردی یێن جودا پێشنیار دکت ژبۆ ڤەکولینێن داهاتی.

پەیڤێن سەرەکی: کرمانجییا ژووری ، ڤەشارتنا رامانێ، پراگماتیک، شیکارکرنا دان و ستاندنێ، لڤینێن کەلتووری، پیکگەهشتنێن جڤاکی، ستراتیجیێن دان و ستاندنێ.

وظائف التضمينات في الكرمانجية الشمالية

الملخص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة استخدام الوظائف التضمينات في الكرمانجية الشمالية، مع التركيز على كيفية إيصال المتحدثين للمعاني التي تتجاوز التفسير الحرفي لكلماتهم. ومن خلال تحليل بيانات المحادثات التي أجراها طلاب جامعيون كبار في مجموعتين الضابطة والتجريبية، تسلط الدراسة الضوء على الوظائف المتنوعة للتضمينات، بما في ذلك التوضيح، والنقد، والتعاطف، والتأمل الفلسفي، والفكاهة. وقد أظهرت المجموعة الضابطة استخدامًا دقيقًا واستراتيجيًا للتضمينات، غالبًا لتسهيل التفاعل العاطفي والفلسفي العميق. في المقابل، اعتمدت المجموعة التجريبية على التضمينات أساسًا للتواصل الاجتماعي الفوري والعملي .توضح هذه النتائج الديناميكيات الثقافية والسياقية التي تقوم عليها استخدامات التضمينات في الكرمانجية الشمالية، مما يُثري فهمنا لاستراتيجيات الاتصال الفريدة في هذه اللهجة. كما تحدد الدراسة فرصًا لمزيد من الاستكشاف، بما في ذلك دور التضمينات في التواصل الرقمي وإجراء تحليلات مقارنة عبر اللهجات الكردية والسياقات الاجتماعية والثقافية.

الكلمات الدالة: الكرمانجية الشمالية، التضمينات، التداولية، تحليل المحادثات، الديناميكيات الثقافية، التفاعلات الاجتماعية، استراتيجيات التواصل.