

Particularized Conversational Implicatures Through Off-Record Strategies in Surah Maryam Dialogues

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI) in the dialogues of Surah Maryam and its contribution to politeness in religious discourse. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how PCI is realized through off-record strategies and how it contributes to politeness in the dialogues of Surah Maryam. Grounded in the theories of Paul Grice and Brown and Levinson, this study employed qualitative content analysis, using the Sahih International translation of Surah Maryam as the source of the data. The data consisted of 32 utterances forming dialogic verses grouped into 12 dialogue sections. The findings reveal that 7 sections contain PCI which is realized through off-record strategies such as giving hints, rhetorical questions, understatement, presupposition, and association clues. These strategies enable indirect, context-dependent, and polite communication. The study contributes to pragmatic studies and Qur'anic discourse analysis by demonstrating how indirect communication constructs ethical interaction in religious texts.

Keywords: *Particularized Conversational Implicature, Off-Record Strategy, Pragmatics, Surah Maryam*

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INTRODUCTION

In human communication, meaning is not always conveyed explicitly through literal utterances, but is often constructed implicitly through context, shared assumptions and the listener's inferences. This phenomenon demonstrates that language serves not only as a tool for conveying information, but also as a means of building social relationships, maintaining politeness and avoiding potential conflict in interactions. In line with this, Yanti (2017) states in his research that speakers usually tend to be polite in implicating something, which is in order to be polite, speakers usually use implicature to say something different from what they mean, which aims to protect the other person's feelings during the conversation, reflecting an attempt to maintain their image or face. Language serves not only as a means of conveying information, but also as a complex medium for negotiating social responses and mitigating potential conflicts in social interactions.

Consequently, in much situations, speakers choose not to say something directly, but instead convey it through indirect cues that the listener must interpret in order to understand the meaning of what is being said. In line with this, Grice (1989) states that meaning in communication lies not only in what is said, but also in what the speaker intends through certain implications. Therefore, understanding implicit meaning is of paramount importance in linguistic studies, particularly in the field of pragmatics, which focuses on the relationship between language, context and the meaning produced in interaction (Yule, 1996). Thus, the study of implied meaning is not only theoretically relevant, but also essential for understanding how communication takes place effectively in various social contexts.

In the context of linguistic studies, religious texts such as the Qur'an can also be understood as a form of discourse rich in linguistic phenomena, including the use of implicit meaning in the conveyance of messages. The Qur'an functions not only as a holy book containing theological teachings, but also as a text containing complex linguistic structures

that can be analysed through various approaches, including implicature in pragmatics. This is evidenced by the existence of verses in the Qur'an that have frequently been used as research areas and subjects concerning implicature in the study of Islamic rhetoric (Thoriqussu'ud & Maghfiroh, 2018).

One of the fascinating aspects of the Qur'an is the presence of verses in the form of dialogue, which reflect interactions between specific figures, such as prophets, angels, and other individuals. Supratman (2015) defines that "Dialog is a conversation between two persons or groups". This definition highlights dialogue as a form of communicative interaction in which participants exchange ideas, intentions, and responses within a particular context. One of the surahs in the Qur'an that is rich in dialogue is Surah Maryam, which contains various dialogues between key figures such as Prophet Zakariya, Maryam, Prophet Ibrahim, and other parties involved. These dialogues often do not reveal their intent or purpose directly, but rather contain implied meanings that require contextual understanding to be interpreted correctly. It demonstrates that the dialogues and descriptions contained within the Qur'an can serve as a rich source for linguistic pragmatic analysis, since the meaning conveyed depends not only on the literal form but also on the context and accompanying inferences. Abdul Karim (2019) stated that "some meanings in the Holy Qur'an cannot be captured literally". Rather it requires an essential knowledge to get the right meaning", She also Argues that " Meaning is produced by various elements such as the purpose of the interaction, the correlation among the participants themselves, and the context of the utterance (including linguistic and physical context)" (P.649). This indicates that the Qur'an as a text not only conveys messages normatively but also employs complex and contextual communication strategies. Therefore, Surah Maryam serves as a relevant subject for examining how implied meaning is constructed within the context of religious texts.

In pragmatics, the implicit meanings that arise in communication are explained through the concept of implicature, introduced by Grice in his book entitled "*Studies in the Way of Words*". In his book, he explains that implicature refers to meanings that are not explicitly stated by the speaker, but which can be inferred by the listener based on context and the principle of cooperation in communication (Grice, 1989). Grice also argued that in the communication process, speakers and listeners implicitly follow the cooperative principle, which consists of four maxims: the maxims of quantity, quality, relevance and manner. He explains that when these maxims are avoided or deliberately flouted with the knowledge of the interlocutor, an implicature arises that allows the listener to interpret a deeper meaning from the utterance.

Furthermore, Grice distinguishes between generalized conversational implicature (GCI) and particularized conversational implicature (PCI); whilst generalized conversational implicature can generally be easily understood without relying on a specific context, the interpretation of particularized conversational implicature depends heavily on the specific context and the shared knowledge between the speaker and the listener (Grice, 1989). In the context of dialogue in the Qur'an, particularly the dialogic verses in Surah Maryam, the most relevant and frequently encountered type of implicature is the particularised conversational implicature, as the meaning produced depends heavily on the situation, the relationships between the characters, and the surrounding narrative context.

In addition to serving as a means of conveying implicit meaning, the use of indirect language or implicatures also has a social function, one of which is as a politeness strategy. In the theory of politeness put forward by (Brown & Levinson, 1978), there are various strategies used by speakers to preserve face or self-image, whether their own or that of their interlocutor. One of the most indirect strategies is the 'off-record politeness strategy', whereby the speaker conveys their meaning implicitly without stating it explicitly. This strategy allows the speaker to avoid direct responsibility for their utterances, whilst leaving room for the listener to interpret the meaning according to the context. In some cases, the conversational implicatures is realized through the use of off-record strategy, so these two concepts are closely interrelated. Consequently, an analysis of particularised conversational implicature not only reveals implied meaning but can also demonstrate how politeness strategies are realised in

communication (Brown & Levinson, 1978). This becomes particularly relevant when applied to texts such as the Qur'an, which contain ethical and politeness values in interaction.

The study of implicit meaning in religious texts is important because the language used is not always straightforward; rather, it often contains messages that can only be understood through context and the relationship between the speaker and the listener. In this regard, an analysis of Particularized Conversational Implicature become crucial because this type of implicature is highly dependent on situational context, and thus plays a vital role in revealing implicit meanings that are not apparent in the literal text. Furthermore, the link between PCI and off-record strategies indicates that implicit meaning serves not only to convey a message, but also as a means of maintaining politeness and communicative ethics in interactions.

Therefore, research specifically linking PCI with politeness strategies in religious texts is of high urgency, as it can provide a deeper understanding of how moral and relational messages are implicitly constructed through language. In this context, several previous studies in the field of Pragmatics have extensively examined conversational implicature and politeness strategies across various communicative domains, including entertainment, educational, social media, and religious discourse. Yanti (2017) analysed off-record strategies in The Oprah Winfrey Show and found that the use of indirect speech is closely linked to the emergence of politeness implicatures, which are influenced by the situational context and violations of conversational maxims. The study also showed that a single utterance can realise more than one off-record strategy simultaneously, thereby producing complex implicit meanings. Similarly, Sofyan et al. (2022) reveals that implicatures are used in teacher-student interactions to maintain politeness, respect hierarchical relationships, and foster social harmony. In religious discourse, Shabri et al., (2024) examined implicatures in Qur'anic dialogues between fathers and sons and found that both generalized and particularized implicatures are present in the conversations. The study also revealed that the dialogic verses contain various implicit meanings that can only be understood through contextual interpretation. Furthermore, a study by Sorour et al., (2023) examined politeness and impoliteness strategies in dialogues between several prophets and polytheists in the Qur'an using the theories of Leech, Brown and Levinson, and Culpeper. The study revealed that the prophets predominantly employed politeness strategies such as tact, modesty, sympathy, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record politeness to persuade their communities and maintain ethical interaction. In contrast, the polytheists frequently employed impoliteness strategies in responding to the prophets' messages. The study also demonstrated that off-record politeness strategies were used indirectly to encourage reflection and persuasion, particularly in Prophet Ibrahim's dialogues with his people.

Overall, these studies demonstrate that conversational implicature and politeness strategies play significant roles in constructing indirect meaning across different communicative contexts. However, existing studies have generally examined conversational implicature and politeness as separate phenomena. Although some studies have explored particularized conversational implicature in Qur'anic dialogues and others have investigated off-record politeness strategies in religious discourse, limited attention has been given to how PCI is realized through off-record strategies as a mechanism for constructing politeness. Moreover, previous studies have not specifically focused on the dialogic verses of Surah Maryam, despite the surah containing rich interpersonal interactions and context-dependent meanings. Therefore, a gap remains in understanding the relationship between PCI, off-record strategies, and politeness within the context of Qur'anic dialogue, particularly in Surah Maryam.

This study focuses specifically on Surah Maryam because it contains a significant number of dialogical verses involving various interpersonal relationships, including interactions between prophets, angels, family members and the community. Upon observation, these dialogues contain much implied meaning, indirect communication, and context-dependent interpretation, aimed at maintaining politeness or avoiding face-threatening acts, making this surah particularly suitable for a pragmatic study. Thus, Surah Maryam was chosen because it provides valuable data for researching how PCI is realised

through strategic off-record communication, and how this contributes to maintaining politeness in conversation or dialogue.

To bridge this gap, this study focuses on the dialogic verses in Surah Maryam using the Sahih International translation. The primary focus of this study is to analyse PCI and how PCI is realized through off-record strategies that produce politeness effects in communication. The choice of the Sahih International translation is based on the academic consideration that this translation is widely used in Qur'anic and linguistic studies because it tends to maintain semantic proximity to the original text, uses relatively literal language, and minimises interpretative additions, thereby enabling a more accurate and consistent pragmatic analysis.

Theoretically, this study contributes to pragmatic studies by extending the discussion of PCI and its relationship with Brown and Levinson's off-record politeness strategy in religious discourse. Practically, it contributes to Qur'anic discourse analysis by providing a deeper understanding of how implicit meaning and politeness are constructed in the dialogues of the Qur'an. The findings are expected to enrich studies on ethical communication and indirect language use in religious texts. Furthermore, this study contributes not only to Qur'anic discourse analysis but also to everyday communication by illustrating how indirect communication strategies can be employed to maintain politeness and interpersonal harmony. The findings demonstrate that PCI realized through off-record strategies enables speakers to convey criticism, disagreement, requests, or refusals in a less confrontational manner, thereby reducing potential face threats and minimizing the risk of offending interlocutors.

METHOD

This study employs the qualitative content analysis method. According to (Sugiyono, 2013) Qualitative research methods focus on the meaning of phenomena, processes and relationships between elements that emerge naturally from the data. Sugiyono also explains that qualitative research methods are often referred to as interpretative because the results of the research are more concerned with the interpretation of data collected in the field (Sugiyono, 2013). In line with this, (Taherdoost, 2022) The study also explains that qualitative research is research that focuses on understanding meaning through a naturalistic and interpretative approach to social phenomena. This enables researchers to explore how meaning is constructed within a specific context. Furthermore, qualitative content analysis allows for the systematic analysis of textual data to uncover the implicit meanings contained within a discourse. Then (Schreier, 2012), explain that qualitative content analysis aimed at reducing the volume of data whilst maintaining a focus on the context and meaning contained within it, this method is also used to analyse qualitative data collected through interviews, focus groups, or visual and textual material in order to identify patterns and themes. As such, this method is particularly well-suited to this study, which focuses on the analysis of implicit meaning in speech, specifically Conversational Implicature (PCI) in the Saheeh International translation of the dialogical verses of Surah Maryam, which relies heavily on the situational context.

According to (Creswell, 2007) that qualitative researchers act as key instruments. They collect data directly by examining documents, observing behaviour, and interviewing participants to understand meanings. In line with this, the researcher in this study acts as the primary instrument responsible for examining documents by identifying document sources, gaining access, recording the data, and subsequently analysing and interpreting the implicit meanings and the realisation of these implicit meanings in relation to the off-record strategies found in the dialogic verses of Surah Maryam.

In applying this approach, the researcher focuses on the linguistic strategies that emerge in the dialogic verses of Surah Maryam, particularly on the use of Particularized Conversational Implicature as the main phenomenon under investigation. Surah Maryam was selected purposively because it possesses a narrative structure dominated by dialogue between characters, such as the conversations between Prophet Zakaria, Maryam, Prophet Ibrahim, and other figures, which reflect communicative interactions rich in pragmatics. These

dialogues not only serve to convey the story but also contain implicit meanings constructed through situational context and interpersonal relationships, making them highly relevant for analysis within the framework of conversational implicature.

The data in this study were analysed using the theory of conversational implicature proposed by (Grice, 1989) and off record strategies by (Brown & Levinson, 1978). The process of identifying implicatures was conducted in strict accordance with Grice's conversational maxims to ensure that the resulting analysis had a consistent and systematic theoretical foundation. To ensure that the analysis was carried out in a structured manner, this study adapted the interactive analysis model proposed by (Miles & Huberman, 1994), which consists of the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

Data reduction: The researcher conducted a process of selecting, simplifying, and focusing the data by identifying dialogic verses in Surah Maryam that potentially contained implicatures. Surah Maryam, which consists of 98 verses, was read repeatedly to ensure the accuracy of data identification, resulting in 32 verses classified as utterances forming dialogue. Following (Supratman, 2015), definition of dialogue as a conversation between two persons or groups, dialogic verses were identified based on the presence of direct interaction between two or more participants indicated by questions, responses, requests, commands, statements, or other forms of conversational exchange. These verses were then analysed in the form of 12 dialogue sections in order to preserve the integrity of the conversational context. In this study, a dialogue section refers to a series of interconnected utterances occurring within the same conversational exchange. The researcher grouped the verses into dialogue sections based on the continuity of the interaction and the participants involved, so that the contextual relationship between utterances could be maintained throughout the analysis. Following the data selection process, a two-stage coding procedure was carried out. The first stage involved marking utterances that, on the surface level, did not directly explain their communicative intent. The second stage involved re-verifying these utterances based on Grice's conversational maxims to confirm the existence and type of implicature that emerged. After the coding process, the utterances were categorised into Generalized Conversational Implicature and Particularized Conversational Implicature. Utterances were classified as PCI when their interpretation required specific contextual information and shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer. Conversely, utterances whose interpretation could be understood without relying on a particular context were classified as GCI. Since the primary focus of this study was PCI, the analysis concentrated on the seven dialogue sections in which PCI occurred.

Data Display: The reduced data were systematically presented in tabular form to illustrate the distribution and patterns of conversational implicature occurrence within each dialogue section. The presentation of data in tables aimed to provide a clear and structured overview of the frequency, types, and off-record strategies identified in each data set. Through this presentation, the researcher was able to observe more easily the patterns of use of Particularized Conversational Implicature and Generalized Conversational Implicature within the dialogues of Surah Maryam.

Conclusion Drawing and Verification: The displayed data were analysed and interpreted further by relating the linguistic evidence to the context of the dialogue, the relationships between the characters, and the communicative purposes underlying the utterances. This process was conducted by identifying violations or deviations of the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner as proposed by Grice. Utterances indicating maxim violations were then categorised as conversational implicatures and classified into two main types, namely Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI) and Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI). The main focus of the interpretation was directed toward PCI and how PCI is realized through off-record strategies as proposed by (Brown & Levinson, 1978), particularly in the use of indirect language to maintain politeness and convey meaning implicitly. The identification of off-record strategies was based on Brown and Levinson's taxonomy, including strategies such as giving hints, rhetorical questions, understatement,

presupposition, and others. Each PCI was analysed to determine whether its implicit meaning was realised through one or more of these off-record strategies.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher conducted repeated readings of the data and continuously compared the interpretations with the theoretical criteria proposed by Grice and Brown & Levinson. This iterative verification process was intended to ensure consistency, credibility, and accuracy in the interpretation of conversational implicatures and off-record strategies.

Thus, through this systematic analytical process, the study aims to reveal how particularized conversational implicature functions not only as a pragmatic phenomenon, but also as a strategy of indirect communication that plays a role in constructing meaning and politeness within religious texts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

An analysis of the dialogic verses in Surah Maryam reveals that conversational implicatures are a phenomenon that occurs systematically in interactions between characters. Of the total 98 verses, 32 were identified as utterances forming a dialogue, which were then grouped into 12 dialogic sections based on the continuity of the conversational context. Of these 12 sections, 7 were found to contain particularized conversational implicatures, 1 section contained generalized conversational implicatures, whilst the remaining 4 sections consisted solely of ordinary informative conversation or dialogue without conversational implicatures.

To provide a more systematic overview, the distribution of these implicatures is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Distribution of Conversational Implicature in Surah Maryam

No	Section Dialog	Ayat (Verse Range)	Types of Conversational Implicature	Off-Record Strategy	Brief Description
1.	Section 1 (Prophet Zakaria & Allah)	4-7	PCI	Give hints, Presuppose	The request is conveyed indirectly through a description of the situation → context is required
2.	Section 2 (Zakaria & Allah)	8-9	PCI	Rhetorical question	Rhetorical question → an expression of surprise, not a literal question
3.	Section 3 (Zakaria & Allah)	10	Non-Implicature	X	Direct speech, no maxim violation
4.	Section 4 (Maryam & Jibril)	18-19	PCI	Give hints, Presuppose	Implicature: "Don't come near me" → highly contextual
5.	Section 5 (Maryam & Jibril)	20-21	PCI	Give association clues, Understate	Implicature: pregnancy is impossible → inference from context
6.	Section 6 (Maryam & Jibril)	23-26	PCI		Implicature: Maryam is feeling depressed and wants to take her own life because of the mental strain caused by people's prejudice.
7.	Section 7 (Maryam & The people)	27-29	PCI	Give hints, Association clues	Non-verbal implicature: Maryam points to the baby with the intention of proving God's miracle → highly contextual
8.	Section 8 (The people & Prophet Isa)	29-30	Non-Implicature		Direct declarative statement

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9.	Section 9 (Prophet Ibrahim & His Father)	42-48	PCI	Rhetorical question, Give hints, Understate	An indirect criticism of his father, who was an idol-worshipper
10.	Section 10 (The disbeliever & Allah)	66-67	GCI		The meaning of "not believing" generally appears without any specific context
11.	Section 11 (The disbeliever & Allah)	73-74	Non-Implicature	X	Explicit rhetoric does not produce strong implicatures
12.	Section 12 (The disbeliever & Allah)	88-90	Non-Implicature	X	A direct statement, not an implied one

Discussion

Based on Table 1, the most frequently occurring off-record strategies are giving hints, rhetorical questions, presupposition, understatement, and association clues. Among these, giving hints appears most frequently across the dialogue sections. This dominance may be attributed to the communicative nature of Qur'anic discourse, in which speakers often seek to convey guidance, warnings, requests, or criticism indirectly rather than through explicit confrontation. By providing contextual clues instead of direct statements, speakers allow interlocutors to infer the intended meaning while preserving politeness and maintaining social harmony. Such indirectness is particularly evident in the dialogues of Prophet Zakariya, Maryam, and Prophet Ibrahim, whose utterances consistently demonstrate sensitivity toward the interlocutor's face and social position.

Section 1

In Section 1, the dialogue of Prophet Zakaria and Allah in Q.S. Maryam verses 4-7, this can be observed in the following excerpt:

"He said (Zakaria), "My Lord, indeed my bones have weakened, and my head has filled¹ with white, and never have I been in my supplication to You, my Lord, unhappy [i.e., disappointed]" (Q.S. Maryam: 4)

Based on the explanation provided in Tafsir Ibnu Katsir volume 5, this verse essentially represents Prophet Zakaria's prayer to Allah for offspring who would continue his mission and preserve the religious message after his death (Bin Muhammad, 2003). However, Zakaria does not express this request explicitly. Instead, he first describes his physical condition, such as his weakened bones and grey hair caused by old age. Tafsir Ibnu Katsir explains that this expression reflects Zakaria's human weakness and limitations, while simultaneously serving as a subtle introduction before conveying his request to Allah.

When analysed using the theory of conversational implicature proposed by Paul Grice, the utterance demonstrates a flouting of the maxims of quantity and relevance. The flouting of the maxim of quantity occurs because Zakaria does not provide the information that directly communicates his primary communicative intention, namely requesting a child. Instead of explicitly saying, "Grant me offspring," he provides a description of his physical condition. Meanwhile, the flouting of the maxim of relevance appears because the utterance literally discusses physical weakness, whereas the actual communicative purpose is to convey a supplication to Allah. This mismatch between the literal form of the utterance and its communicative intention encourages the addressee to make a pragmatic inference, resulting in the implicature that Zakaria is in fact requesting a child as the successor to his mission.

This implicature is categorised as a Particularized Conversational Implicature because its implicit meaning can only be understood through the specific context surrounding the conversation. Without understanding that Zakaria was elderly, childless, and concerned about the continuation of his preaching, the utterance would merely be interpreted as a description of physical weakness. Thus, the implied request for offspring does not emerge from the literal meaning of the utterance itself, but rather from inference constructed through situational context and shared background knowledge between the speaker and the addressee.

Within the framework of politeness theory proposed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, the PCI in this section emerges through the use of off-record politeness strategies. The mechanism begins when Zakaria intentionally avoids expressing his request directly and instead chooses to provide clues through the description of his own condition. This form of communication belongs to the give hints strategy because the primary meaning is not explicitly stated, but rather left for the addressee to infer. A presupposition strategy is also evident, as Zakaria speaks with the assumption that Allah already understands his intentions and needs without requiring explicit explanation.

The contribution produced through the particularized conversational implicature realised via off-record strategies allows Zakaria to convey his request in a more polite, humble, and non-demanding manner. He does not directly ask or insist that Allah grant him offspring; rather, he first presents his condition as a form of reverence and submission from a servant to his Lord. Therefore, the PCI realised through off-record strategies functions not only to generate implicit meaning, but also to contribute to the construction of politeness, the maintenance of communicative ethics, and the representation of spirituality within Qur'anic dialogue.

Section 2

In Section 2, the utterance of Prophet Zakaria and Allah in Q.S. Maryam verses 8–9, this can be observed in the following excerpt:

He said (Zakaria), "My Lord, how will I have a boy when my wife has been barren and I have reached extreme old age?" (Q.S. Maryam: 8)

At the surface level, this utterance takes the form of a question. However, when analyzed using the theory of Paul Grice, the question is not intended as a genuine request for information. Prophet Zakaria is not seeking an answer regarding the biological possibility of having a child; rather, he is expressing astonishment and perceived impossibility based on his condition. In line with this, in Tafsir Ibnu Katsir by Bin Muhammad (2003) it is explained that from a human perspective both he and his wife were already beyond the normal biological condition for having children.

The flouting of the maxim of relevance can be observed because the utterance appears to be a question concerning the possibility of having a child, whereas its actual communicative purpose is not to obtain factual information from Allah. As the All-Knowing God, Allah certainly knows all things, and Zakaria himself fully understands that Allah's promise is true. Therefore, the question actually functions as an expression of astonishment toward the miracle that has just been conveyed to him. Meanwhile, the flouting of the maxim of quantity occurs when Zakaria provides additional information regarding his wife's barrenness and his own old age rather than directly expressing his amazement and sense of impossibility. This information exceeds what is required in an ordinary response and instead guides the addressee toward a particular implicit meaning. Through this maxim flouting, an implicature emerges that Zakaria is essentially conveying: "From the perspective of human logic, this appears impossible, yet I fully believe in Allah's power over all things."

This implicature is categorised as a Particularized Conversational Implicature because its interpretation depends heavily on the specific context of the conversation. Without understanding the preceding context that Zakaria had long prayed for offspring despite his old age and his wife's barrenness the utterance would merely be interpreted as an ordinary question about biological possibility. Therefore, the implied meaning can only be understood through contextual inference and shared background knowledge between the speaker and the addressee.

Within the framework of politeness theory proposed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, the PCI in this section emerges through the use of off-record politeness strategies. The mechanism begins when Zakaria intentionally avoids expressing impossibility or astonishment directly and instead conveys it in the form of a question. The utterance realises the rhetorical question strategy because the question is not intended to obtain a literal answer,

but rather to communicate an implicit meaning indirectly. Through this strategy, Zakaria avoids producing an utterance that could be interpreted as directly questioning Allah's power.

The contribution produced through the particularized conversational implicature realised via off-record strategies enables Prophet Zakaria to maintain politeness, humility, and reverence in his communication with Allah. He does not directly reject Allah's promise, but instead conveys his amazement and astonishment through a subtler and more implicit form of expression. Consequently, the utterance functions not only as an emotional response to a miracle, but also as a form of communication that preserves ethics, politeness, and the hierarchical relationship between a servant and God.

Section 3

In Section 3, the dialogue between Maryam and Jibril in Q.S. Maryam verses 18–19, this is evident in the following dialogue excerpt:

She (Maryam) said, "Indeed, I seek refuge in the Most Merciful from you, [so leave me], if you should be fearing of Allāh." He (Jibril) said, "I am only the messenger of your Lord to give you [news of] a pure boy [i.e., son]." (QS. Maryam: 18-19)

In the Tafsir Ibnu Katsir volume 5 as examined by (Bin Muhammad, 2003), it is explained that Maryam uttered this statement when Jibril appeared before her in the form of an unfamiliar man. Since she did not yet recognize him as an angel, Maryam became frightened and sought to protect her honour and chastity. However, when analysed using the theoretical framework of Paul Grice, this utterance cannot be understood solely at the surface level, as it involves a violation of the principles of relevance and manner. Maryam does not directly say "do not come near me" or "leave me," even though this represents her actual communicative intention in the situation. The mismatch between the form of the utterance (a statement seeking protection from Allah) and its communicative purpose (rejecting Jibril's presence) gives rise to the implicature that Maryam is requesting distance or expressing refusal indirectly.

This implicature is particularized because it is highly dependent on context: Maryam is alone and approached by a male figure she does not yet recognize as an angel, so her response reflects an effort to protect herself and preserve her honor. Without this context, the utterance would likely be understood as a simple prayer rather than an implicit refusal. Furthermore, the PCI realized through off-record politeness strategy as proposed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson. Maryam employs the strategy of giving hints, as she does not state a prohibition explicitly but instead conveys it through a religious expression. In addition, there is an element of presupposition, as she assumes that her addressee is a God-fearing individual ("if you should be fearing of Allah"), and therefore capable of understanding her intended meaning without it being stated directly.

The contribution of the PCI realised through these off-record strategies enables Maryam to convey refusal politely without creating direct confrontation. This strategy helps maintain honour, politeness, and social distance in a potentially threatening situation. Thus, Maryam's utterance functions not only as self-protection, but also as an example of indirect language used to preserve ethical communication in the Qur'anic dialogue.

Section 4

In Section 4, the dialogue between Maryam and Jibril in Q.S. Maryam verses 20–21, this can be observed in the following utterance by Maryam:

She said, "How can I have a boy while no man has touched me and I have not been unchaste?" (QS. Maryam: 20)

At the literal level, this utterance takes the form of a question about the possibility of having a child. However, when analyzed within the framework of Paul Grice, the question does not function merely as a request for information, but rather as an expression of impossibility based on the existing conditions. In Tafsir Ibn Kathir's Jilid 5 by Bin Muhammad (2003), explained that at that time Maryam had no husband and had no intention of committing adultery. "Thus, there is a flouting of the maxim of relevance, as the interrogative form is not genuinely intended to obtain a factual answer, but to convey the implicit meaning

that such a pregnancy is, from a human perspective, impossible. The resulting implicature is: "It is not possible for me to have a child under these circumstances."

This implicature is particularized because it is highly dependent on context: Maryam is a woman who preserves her chastity, has had no relations with any man, and is suddenly given news of bearing a child. Without this context, the utterance could be understood as an ordinary question. Therefore, the implied meaning is entirely determined by the specific situation that underlies the utterance.

In this section, the particularized conversational implicature is realized through off-record strategy. Maryam's utterance functions as a rhetorical question, used to convey rejection or disbelief indirectly without stating it explicitly. In addition, it contains an element of understatement, as Maryam does not directly declare the situation impossible or openly reject the information, but instead expresses it through a more subtle and reflective interrogative form.

The contributions from PCI through off record it self is to helping Maryam express her sense of astonishment and disbelief in a polite manner without directly rejecting or opposing, thereby maintaining politeness in her interaction with Jibril.

Section 5

In Section 5, in Q.S. Maryam verses 23–24, this can be observed in the following excerpt:

And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She (Maryam) said, "Oh, I wish I had died before this and was in oblivion, forgotten." But he¹ called her from below her, "Do not grieve; your Lord has provided beneath you a stream. (Q.S. Maryam: 23-24).

Maryam's utterance in this verse, at the literal level, expresses a wish not to live or not to have existed. However, when analyzed using Paul Grice's framework, the utterance is not intended as a factual statement indicating a genuine desire for death, but rather as an expression of intense emotional distress. In Tafsir Ibn Kathir's Jilid 5 by (Bin Muhammad, 2003), it is also explained that Maryam was experiencing profound hardship and distress; she realized that no one would believe the truth of her story, and as a result, people would view her negatively. In this case, there is a flouting of the maxims of quality and manner, because the utterance is not meant to be taken literally, but functions as an emotional expression. This flouting generates the implicature that Maryam is conveying: "I am under immense pressure and feel unable to cope with this situation."

This implicature is particularized because it can only be understood by considering the highly specific situational context, namely Maryam's condition as she undergoes childbirth alone, accompanied by anxiety over social stigma from her community. Without this context, the utterance could be misinterpreted as a literal wish for death. Therefore, the implied meaning is entirely dependent on the situational and psychological conditions underlying the utterance.

This PCI is realized through an off-record strategy, particularly understatement in the form of an indirect expression of emotional burden. Although the utterance appears extreme in form, its function actually avoids directly expressing fear, social pressure, or a request for help. In other words, Maryam does not explicitly say "I cannot handle this" or "I am afraid of people's judgment," but conveys these meanings through a more implicit and emotional expression.

The PCI realized through these off-record strategies contributes to the dialogue, in which Maryam does not explicitly blame anyone, does not directly reject the situation, and does not express her suffering in the form of accusation; rather, she conveys it implicitly through a reflective and personal utterance. Thus, communication remains within the framework of politeness, despite the presence of intense emotional pressure.

Section 6

the dialogue in Q.S. Maryam verses 20–21, this can be observed in the following excerpt:

Then she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, "O Mary, you have certainly done a thing unprecedented. O sister [i.e., descendant] of Aaron, your father was not a man of evil, nor was your mother unchaste." So she pointed to him. They said, "How can we speak to one who is in the cradle a child?" (QS. Maryam: 27-29).

When analyzed literally, Maryam's action is merely a gesture of pointing to the baby without any verbal explanation. However, from the perspective of Paul Grice, this act carries a strong PCI, as the intended meaning cannot be understood without considering the overall situational context. In this case, there is a flouting of the maxims of quantity and manner, since Maryam does not provide sufficient verbal information and instead opts for a form of communication that appears indirect and ambiguous without context. This flouting prompts the addressees to make inferences, resulting in the implicature that Maryam intends to convey: "The answer to your accusations lies with this baby, he will reveal the truth."

The particularized nature of this implicature is evident, as its meaning depends entirely on the narrative context: Maryam has just given birth without a husband, is facing accusations from her community, and chooses not to defend herself directly. Without this context, the act of pointing to the baby would not carry significant communicative meaning. Thus, interpretation is only possible through an understanding of the situational and social relations surrounding the interaction.

Within the framework of politeness theory proposed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, Maryam's action realizes an off-record politeness strategy, particularly through giving hints and association clues. So, it is give the contribution in creating politeness. She does not explicitly deny the accusations or defend herself; instead, she provides an indirect cue by directing attention to the baby as the source of truth. This strategy enables her to avoid direct confrontation while allowing the addressees to infer the meaning independently. From a politeness perspective, this use of non-verbal communication has a significant effect, as Maryam not only avoids verbal conflict but also preserves her honor by refraining from engaging in direct argument amid intense social pressure.

Section 6

In Section 6, the dialogue between Prophet Ibrahim and his father in Q.S. Maryam verses 42–48, this can be observed in the following excerpt: [Mention] when he said to his father, "O my father, why do you worship that which does not hear and does not see and will not benefit you at all?" (Q.S. Maryam: 42).

Literally, the utterance takes the form of a question. However, when examined through Paul Grice's framework, this question is not intended as a genuine request for information, but rather as a means of conveying a critical evaluation of idol worship. Moreover, in Tafsir Ibn Katsir Jilid 5 by (Bin Muhammad, 2003), it is also explained that Ibrahim forbade his father from worshipping idols. Thus, it is clear that the utterance is not merely a question, but a criticism directed toward his father. In this verse, there is a flouting of the maxim of relevance, as the form of the utterance (a question) does not align with its communicative purpose (criticism). From this flouting, an implicature arises in which Prophet Ibrahim intends to convey: "What you worship has absolutely no power and is therefore unworthy of worship."

The particularized nature of this implicature is evident in its dependence on the contextual relationship between a son and his father, as well as the father's background as an idol worshipper. Without this context, the utterance could be interpreted as an ordinary question. However, in this situation, the meaning that emerges is an implicit criticism that can only be understood through shared knowledge of the belief being questioned.

Although the utterance appears, at the literal level, to be an informative statement, pragmatically it carries the implicature that Ibrahim possesses a more authoritative or correct knowledge. In this case, there is a tendency to flout the maxim of quantity, as the information provided goes beyond what is strictly required and does not fully state the intended meaning explicitly, thereby requiring additional inference from the interlocutor.

From the perspective of politeness theory proposed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, the PCI in this section is realized through various off-record strategies, particularly rhetorical questions, giving hints, and understatement. Ibrahim does not directly state “you are wrong” or “idols are unworthy of worship”; instead, he employs rhetorical questions and implicitly framed statements to convey his message. This strategy enables him to express criticism without posing a direct threat to his father’s face.

In terms of politeness effects, the PCI realized through these off-record strategies contributes to producing a highly subtle and respectful form of communication. This is further reinforced by the repeated use of the address term “O my father,” which reflects an effort to maintain interpersonal harmony despite fundamental differences in belief. Thus, Prophet Ibrahim not only conveys a theological message but also demonstrates how criticism can be communicated politely through indirect strategies.

Overall, PCI and off-record remarks in the conversation in Surah Maryam indicate that these strategies play a central role in conveying meaning whilst maintaining politeness. Among the off-record strategies identified, the use of cues appears most frequently, indicating that speakers tend to convey guidance, requests, criticism, and personal concerns indirectly rather than through explicit confrontation. By relying on contextual cues, speakers allow their interlocutors to infer the intended meaning whilst minimising actions that could potentially undermine dignity and maintaining harmonious interaction.

This pattern is consistent with (Yanti, 2017), who found that off-record strategies generate politeness implicatures through indirect communication, and with (Sofyan et al., 2022), who showed that conversational implicatures contribute to respectful and harmonious interaction. It also extends the findings of (Shabri et al., 2024), who identified generalized and particularized implicatures in Qur’anic dialogues, by specifically demonstrating how PCI is realized through off-record strategies and contributes to politeness.

Unlike ordinary conversations, the dialogues in Surah Maryam are embedded within a religious, moral, and theological framework. Consequently, PCI serves not only to convey implicit meaning but also to communicate ethical values, spiritual guidance, humility, respect, and interpersonal sensitivity. This characteristic highlights the uniqueness of Qur’anic discourse, where pragmatic strategies function simultaneously as communicative and moral devices. Therefore, PCI can be understood not merely as a context-dependent pragmatic phenomenon, but also as a significant mechanism for constructing politeness and ethical interaction in religious discourse.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the dialogues in Surah Maryam predominantly communicate meaning through Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI), which relies heavily on contextual interpretation and the relationships between speakers and hearers. The findings reveal that implicit meanings emerge through the flouting of Grice’s conversational maxims and are realized through various off-record politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson, including hints, rhetorical questions, understatement, presupposition, and association clues. These strategies enable speakers to convey requests, criticism, disagreement, and emotional expressions indirectly while maintaining politeness and preserving interpersonal harmony. The analysis demonstrates that characters such as Prophet Zakaria, Maryam, and Prophet Abraham employ indirect communication to express sensitive intentions respectfully and avoid unnecessary confrontation. Although most dialogues contain PCI, some utterances convey meaning directly without maxim violations, and one instance of Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI) was identified. These findings indicate that PCI functions as the primary pragmatic mechanism through which implicit, contextual, and politeness-oriented meanings are constructed in the dialogues of Surah Maryam. The study contributes to pragmatic and Islamic discourse studies by showing how Qur’anic dialogues integrate indirect communication with ethical and relational values. Future research may examine other Qur’anic chapters, compare different translations, or

investigate additional politeness strategies to broaden understanding of pragmatic phenomena in Qur'anic discourse.

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