

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Some words or utterances used in conversation are not always spoken directly; instead, they are often implied due to the situation. Unlike semantics, which studies the meaning of words and their relationships in sentences, pragmatics as a branch of linguistics focuses on the use of language in real contexts (Joyce, 2021). Pragmatics explains how elements such as manner, time, place, and situation contribute to meaning beyond the literal meaning, including presuppositions and turn-taking, so that speakers and listeners can overcome ambiguity (Levison, 1984; Yule, 1996).

British philosopher of language Paul Grice (1975) argued that in everyday conversation, individuals do not always convey meaning explicitly, but often imply it. In other words, the main issue in communication is not solely the utterances spoken, but how the speaker can convey meaning that goes beyond the literal words and how the listener is able to interpret that meaning accurately. In his essay entitled *Logic and Conversation*, Grice (1975) introduced the Cooperative Principle, which is the idea that communication is effective because the participants implicitly adhere to four maxims of conversation: the maxim of quantity (providing sufficient information), the maxim of quality (conveying what is true and supported by evidence), the maxim of relation (staying relevant to the topic of conversation), and the maxim of manner (expressing messages clearly, concisely, and orderly).

Thomas (1995) states that flouting the maxim of quality occurs when the speaker conveys statements that are untrue or unsupported. Meanwhile, flouting from the maxim of quantity occurs when the speaker provides information that is either too brief or unnecessarily extensive. Furthermore, flouting maxim of relation arise when an utterance is not aligned with the topic of conversation, while flouting maxim of manner are characterized by the use of ambiguous, obscure, or disordered expressions (Thomas, 1995; Levinson, 1984; Yule, 1996).

Building on these accounts of maxim flouting, in political discourse which is saturated with competing interests such maxims are often deliberately flouted not merely to mislead, but to generate strategic implicatures. Cutting (2002) details various linguistic strategies used in maxim flouting, including the use of tautology, providing too much or too little information, and employing figurative language such as metaphor, hyperbole, irony, jokes, and sarcasm. In addition, flouting may also occur through deliberate irrelevance to the topic or through making statements that are intentionally vague or unclear. In other words, maxim flouting may appear in a wide range of communicative events such as everyday conversations, interviews, and political speeches, and thus frequently function to generate additional layers of meaning or implied intentions for the listener.

Furthermore, in everyday interaction what speakers mean is often significantly richer than what they explicitly say, so that a substantial part of the message is carried through implied rather than literal content. Grice (1975) captures this phenomenon through the notion of conversational implicature, explaining how speakers can communicate an additional layer of meaning by producing an utterance whose intended interpretation is pragmatically inferred in context. Meanwhile, Horn (2004) emphasizes that linguistic form radically underdetermines the message that is ultimately conveyed and understood, so that implicature functions as a crucial inferential bridge between sentence meaning and the speaker's intended communicative effect.

In political discourse, Wilson (2012) emphasizes that implicature plays a significant role since politicians often employ ambiguous or oblique language to accomplish strategic objectives. Because political discourse discloses meanings that go beyond the literal utterances, it offers an informative viewpoint for analyzing the communication methods used by international leaders. In order to maintain diplomatic ties, sway audiences, and create a carefully controlled public image, consideration is paid not just to what is said but also to how communications are conveyed in high-stakes exchanges.

Therefore, this bridge of meaning is not merely a communication tool, but a strategic instrument for building power. This is consistent with the framework of Political Discourse Analysis developed by Paul Chilton (2004), which states that language serves to establish political positions. Chilton (2004) identifies three core strategic functions used by political actors to achieve this positioning: coercion, legitimization and delegitimization, and representation and misrepresentation. Of these three functions, the latter two hold primary analytical relevance for this study, as both can be traced directly and linguistically through the inferential mechanisms of conversational implicature unlike coercion, which typically operates through direct and explicit force or institutional power, rather than through implied meaning. The legitimization strategy aims to justify political actions, build compliance, and construct the speaker's authority as a legitimate and correct figure. On the other hand, representation works by mapping social actors into discursive spaces through the formation of a dichotomy between the “us” (in-group) and “them” (out-group) groups. Through these two strategies, political actors not only convey information, but also actively manipulate the psychological and social distance with their audience to secure their position of power.

The phenomenon of using language as a positioning tool is very evident in the rhetoric of Donald Trump, the 45th President of the United States. Trump is known for his unique communication style, in which the use of implicature through maxim floutings such as extreme hyperbole and disregard for relevance becomes a key tactic for executing his strategy of legitimization and delegitimization, and representation and misrepresentation. One of the most representative sites for observing this dynamic is his television interview with journalist Terry Moran on ABC News' special segment, *President Trump: The First 100 Days*.

The interview, which took place in the Oval Office, was crucial because it focused on various controversial issues, including economic policy, immigration, and American public concerns about the impact of tariffs (ABC News, 2025). Throughout the interaction, Trump often responded to questions with exaggerated statements, sudden topic shifts, and evaluative comments that seemed deliberately

used to avoid direct questions (Horton & Gilder, 2025). These characteristics show that Trump did not simply answer questions, but manipulated linguistic norms to assert authority, reinforce political narratives, and direct public perception. This strategy was systematically used to construct an ideologically advantageous position and build legitimacy amid media discourse pressure.

Although many studies have been conducted on conversational implicatures in political figures, most previous studies tend to focus solely on micro-pragmatic aspects, namely identifying the types of maxim floutings that occur. There is still little research that comprehensively links these implicature findings with macro-pragmatic dimensions, particularly in analyzing how implicatures function as instruments of political positioning in confrontational media interviews. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by integrating Grice's (1975) cooperative principles and conversation implicature and with Paul Chilton's (2004) framework on political discourse analysis. By focusing the analysis on Chilton's (2004) strategic functions of legitimization and delegitimization, and representation and misrepresentation in Donald Trump's interview on ABC News, this study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how language is strategically manipulated to construct political authority and influence public perception in the era of post-truth communication.

1.2 Statement of Problem

From the background in this research above, the main problem of this research is how conversational implicatures are realized into Chilton's (2004) strategic functions in constructing Trump's political positioning, this problem formulated into the following two questions:

1. What types of Gricean (1975) maxim floutings and conversational implicatures are found in Donald Trump's utterances during the interview with Terry?
2. How do these conversational implicatures function as realizations of Chilton's (2004) strategic functions of legitimization and delegitimization,

and representation and misrepresentation, in constructing Trump's political positioning?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the formulation of the research question above, the researcher is intended:

1. To identify the types of maxim floutings and analyse the conversational implicatures that arise from the maxim floutings found in Donald Trump's utterances during the interview with Terry.
2. To analyze how these conversational implicatures function as realizations of Chilton's (2004) strategic functions of legitimization and delegitimization, and representation and misrepresentation, and to examine how these functions collectively construct Trump's political positioning.

1.4 Research Significance

This research holds significance both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it contributes to the field of political pragmatics by integrating two complementary analytical perspectives: Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle as a micro-level framework and Chilton's (2004) Political Discourse Analysis as a macro-level approach. While previous studies on political communication often rely solely on speech act theory, rhetorical analysis, or isolated examinations of maxim floutings, this research advances the discussion by demonstrating how floutings of Gricean (1975) maxims not only generate conversational implicatures but also play a crucial role in constructing political identity, shaping representation and misrepresentation, and legitimising authority. By combining Grice (1975) and Chilton (2004), this study offers a more comprehensive understanding of how implicit meaning in political interviews operates simultaneously at the linguistic and ideological levels.

Practically, the research provides valuable insights into how political figures use language strategically to influence public perception, manage their public image, and navigate high-pressure media interactions. The integrated analysis of

maxim floutings and political discourse strategies equips linguists, media practitioners, and political observers with tools to critically evaluate how politicians embed persuasion, evasion, and power positioning within their speech. Furthermore, by examining Donald Trump's interview responses through both pragmatic and political-discursive lenses, the study enhances public media literacy, enabling audiences to recognize how subtle linguistic choices contribute to framing political reality and shaping collective opinion.



1.5 Conceptual Framework

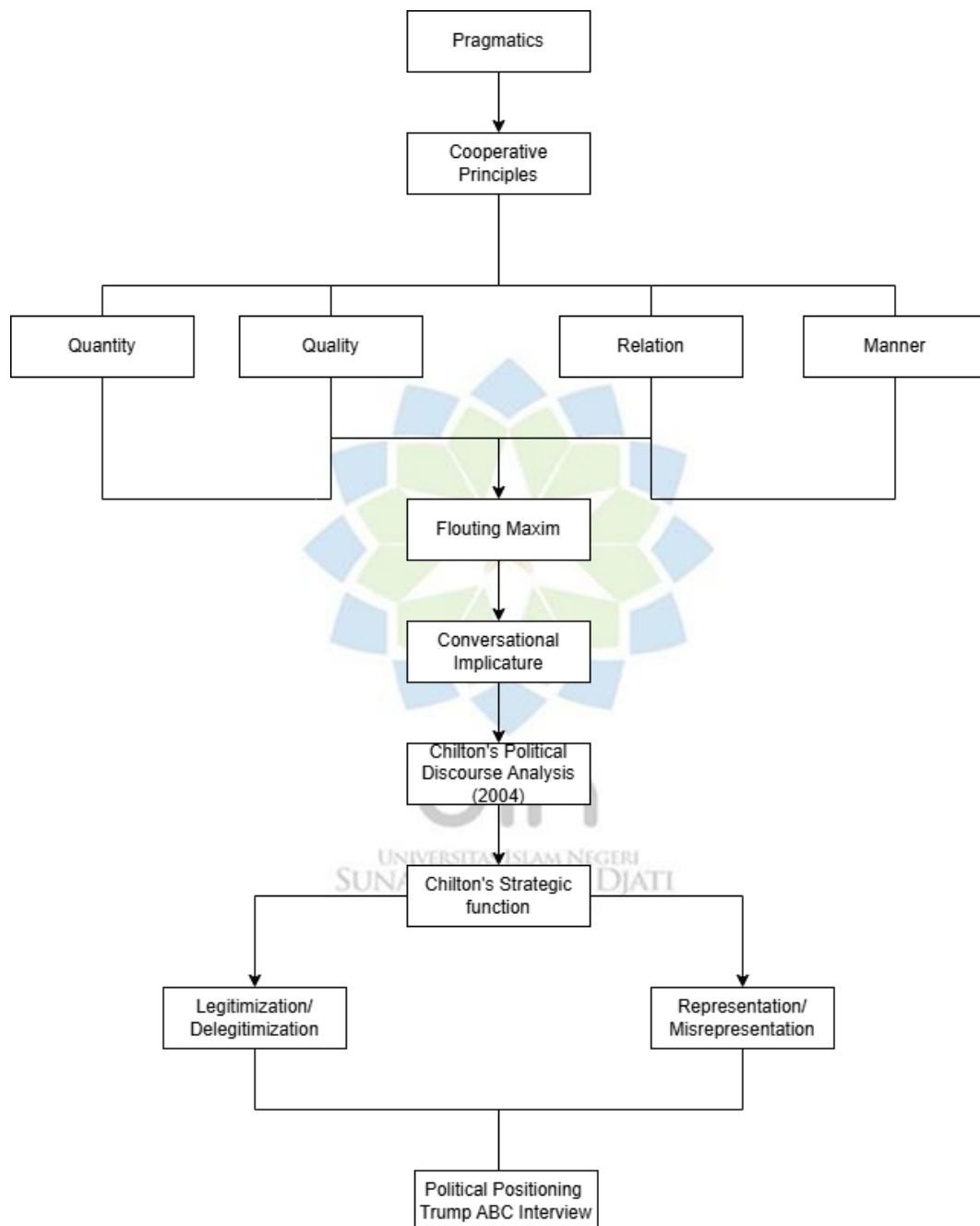


Figure 1. 1 Conceptual Framework of Conversational Implicature and Political Positioning in Trump's Interview

This research is grounded in the field of pragmatics, particularly Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, which explains how conversational meaning is formed through cooperative interaction. According to Grice (1975), speakers normally follow four conversational maxims; Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner to ensure clarity and relevance in communication. However, when these maxims are intentionally flouted, additional layers of meaning emerge in the form of conversational implicatures. These implicatures reveal what a speaker intends to communicate indirectly, allowing listeners to infer meanings that are not explicitly stated. In political communication, such strategic floutings often function not as communicative errors, but as purposeful rhetorical devices.

The object of this research, Donald Trump's interview with journalist Terry Moran in *ABC News: President Trump The First 100 Days*, provides naturally occurring political discourse where language is used strategically under high-stakes conditions. Trump's spontaneous, hyperbolic, and often evasive responses offer rich data for observing how maxim floutings generate implicatures that contribute to persuasive and defensive political messaging. The interview format with shifting topics, confrontational questioning, and real-time responses creates a communicative environment in which implicit meaning frequently plays a central role.

In this study, Paul Chilton's (2004) Political Discourse Analysis is used to explain how political meaning operates beyond the micro-level of conversational interaction. Chilton (2004) identifies three core strategic functions that political speakers consistently pursue through discourse: coercion, legitimation and delegitimization, and representation and misrepresentation. Of these three functions, the latter two hold primary analytical relevance for this study. Legitimation and delegitimization refer to the discursive strategies employed by political speakers to simultaneously justify their own authority and credibility while undermining the credibility, moral standing, or competence of opposing actors. On the other hand, representation and misrepresentation refer to the process by which political speakers selectively construct social reality highlighting the positive

attributes of in-groups and the negative attributes of out-groups in ways that support their ideological interests. These political functions are realized through the process of political positioning, in which a political actor situates themselves and others within the discursive world through the deictic mechanisms of spatial, temporal, and modal deixis.

Political positioning, in Chilton's (2004) model, is not treated as an independent theory but as a discursive process that is linguistically realised through spatial, temporal, and modal deixis. Spatial deixis is used to construct in-group and out-group boundaries through pronouns, group labels, and references to social or national distance. Temporal deixis organises political reality by contrasting past, present, and future events, often positioning the speaker as an agent of correction or change. Modal deixis expresses necessity, obligation, and moral judgement, allowing political actions or policies to be framed as inevitable, justified, or morally right.

In this research, these deictic mechanisms function as analytical tools for examining how legitimization/delegitimization and representation/misrepresentation are constructed in political discourse. Once conversational implicatures are identified through Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, Chilton's (2004) framework is applied to interpret how those implicatures contribute to political positioning by realizing the strategic functions of legitimisation and delegitimation constructing the speaker's authority while undermining opponents and representation and misrepresentation framing social reality through ideologically motivated in-group and out-group distinctions. By integrating Grice's (1975) micro-pragmatic analysis with Chilton's (2004) macro-political discourse approach, this conceptual framework explains how implicit meaning in political interviews operates simultaneously at pragmatic and ideological levels.

1.6 Previous Studies

Research on political language frequently applies Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle to reveal how politicians strategically flout conversational

maxims to shape public interpretation. One such study is conducted by Martisa (2024) revealed that floutings of the maxim of Quantity were the most dominant strategy in the 2020 U.S. vice-presidential debate. Politicians deliberately provided excessive or insufficient information to persuade audiences and maintain strategic ambiguity. The study also found that generalized implicatures were most frequently used, enabling candidates to communicate political intentions indirectly while avoiding direct commitments and accountability.

Similarly, Buddharat et al., (2017) found that floutings and flouting of conversational maxims occurred frequently in U.S. presidential debates, particularly in the 2016 Trump–Clinton debate. These non-cooperative strategies functioned as rhetorical tools that allowed candidates to evade questions, challenge opponents, and control the direction of the debate. The study suggests that such floutings are not always untruthful, but may serve as strategic and polite implicatures within political interaction.

Another relevant study by Dylgjeri (2016) found that politicians frequently use implicature as a persuasive strategy by implying shared assumptions and leaving crucial information unsaid. These implicatures allow political actors to dramatize situations, conceal information, and influence public perception without making explicit claims. The study highlights implicature as a powerful pragmatic tool that shapes political interpretation, particularly when audiences lack alternative sources of information.

In addition, research by Dewanata, (2018) found that Indonesian politicians flout and flout Grice's (1975) maxims to protect their political image and reinforce their political positions. The study shows that maxim floutings function as face-saving strategies and as tools to reaffirm political stance, indicating that pragmatic manipulation in political discourse is not limited to Western contexts.

Although previous studies have shown that maxim floutings and implicatures play an important role in political communication, their analyses remain limited to the micro-pragmatic level. These works do not explain how implicatures produced

through maxim flouting function as strategic political discourse mechanisms. To address this gap, the present study integrates Grice's (1975) conversational implicature analysis with Paul Chilton's (2004) strategic functions framework (2004), specifically focusing on two of the three strategic functions identified by Chilton (2004): legitimisation and delegitimisation, and representation and misrepresentation. Through these two core Chilton (2004) functions, this research examines how Trump's implicatures construct political positioning simultaneously legitimising his own authority while delegitimising political opponents, and constructing ideologically motivated representations of self, opponents, and social conditions within the ABC News interview context.

