

The Pragmatic Implicature in The Political Discourse of Surakarta's Special Region Proposal

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: May 26, 2025 Revised: June 11, 2025 Published: June 15, 2025	<i>Using a qualitative-descriptive method, data were collected from speeches, news articles, and public statements between January and May 2025. These texts were analyzed through the lens of Gricean pragmatics and humanism to uncover the implicit messages and values embedded in the discourse. The findings show that implicatures function to indirectly express claims of justice, cultural identity, and perceived inequality, while also serving as rhetorical strategies to avoid overt conflict. Using a qualitative-descriptive method, data were collected from speeches, news articles, and public statements between January and May 2025. These texts were analyzed through the lens of Gricean pragmatics and humanism to uncover the implicit messages and values embedded in the discourse. The findings show that implicatures function to indirectly express claims of justice, cultural identity, and perceived inequality, while also serving as rhetorical strategies to avoid overt conflict. From a humanistic perspective, the use of such language reflects deeper aspirations for dignity, recognition, and ethical communication. This paper concludes that understanding implicature is essential for interpreting political discourse and fostering mutual understanding in culturally diverse societies.</i>
Keywords Implicature; Pragmatics; Surakarta; Political Discourse; Special Region Proposal	

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INTRODUCTION

The idea to designate Surakarta as a Special Region (Daerah Istimewa Surakarta) has been a topic of discussion in Indonesian politics in recent months. This campaign, which is mostly supported by cultural organizations and some political leaders, contends that because of Surakarta's historical contributions to the Republic of Indonesia, it should be given the same status as Yogyakarta. Politicians and scholars have taken notice of the discussion, which has also sparked public opinions both in support of and against the proposal. Fundamentally, the problem draws attention to the conflict between administrative modernity and cultural heritage recognition.

The proposal is not merely a bureaucratic or legal process; it is a deeply ideological and cultural statement. The status of "Daerah Istimewa" confers symbolic legitimacy that acknowledges the historical relevance of local monarchies, such as the Keraton Surakarta, in the shaping of Indonesian national identity. Hence, the language used in arguing for or against

this status is often layered with symbolic, emotional, and political implications. Pragmatically, these layers of meaning reveal themselves through implicatures; messages not directly stated but inferred by the audience. These layers of meaning are practically revealed through implicatures, which are statements that are implied by the audience rather than explicitly expressed.

Pragmatics as a field of linguistics, provides a good lens to investigate how meanings are delivered implicitly. Grice's theory of implicature, in particular, clarifies why speakers frequently use indirectness to accomplish their communication objectives. In the context of political speech, especially when discussing delicate themes like regional privilege and historical justice, such indirectness becomes not only strategic but crucial. Phrases that contain strong connotations of marginalization and governmental culpability, such as "kita hanya menuntut keadilan sejarah" ("we are merely seeking historical justice"), are used by politicians and supporters.

This paper likewise adopts a humanistic perspective in understanding the discourse. The ideals of fair acknowledgment and cultural affirmation are in line with humanism, which stresses the worth, dignity, and agency of every individual. In this way, speakers' practical decisions are not made in a vacuum; rather, they are a part of a larger human endeavor to claim cultural survival, identity, and autonomy. In the Surakarta instance, implicature reflects not only language tactics but also the hopes and disappointments of a group that wants to be respected inside the national framework.

Using presumptions and common knowledge between the speaker and the hearer, Grice's (1975) theory of conversational implicature holds that meaning is expressed not only via the words themselves but also through what is implied in context. In political settings, implicature becomes an essential instrument for bridging ideological gaps, forming coalitions, and evoking strong feelings without devolving into divisive discourse. Without specifically accusing the government of wrongdoing, statements like "We are not seeking privilege, only justice" obliquely allude to prior neglect or unfair treatment. Such language aims to convince while upholding civility and moral rectitude; it is both emotive and strategic. Additionally, this study adds a humanistic viewpoint to the examination of political implicature. Humanism places a strong emphasis on qualities like empathy, cultural identity, dignity, and respect for one another. According to this perspective, language serves as a medium for expressing existential and communal truths in addition to being a means of conveying knowledge. The Surakarta case's use of implicature shows more than just practical skill; it also highlights the moral and emotional toil of a community trying to be acknowledged in the national narrative. Implicit calls for justice and cultural pride turn into actions of identity assertion based on a strong desire to be recognized as a people with a rich history and inherent worth, not only as a political entity.

In applying humanism to the analysis of implicature, we recognize that meaning in language is both a reflection of and a tool for human relationships. The choice to imply rather than assert can be seen as an act of rhetorical care; an effort to persuade without provoking, to appeal without offending. At the same time, failure to understand these implicatures can lead to misrepresentation, polarization, or even conflict. Therefore, understanding the pragmatics of such political discourse is essential not only for linguistic insight but also for democratic integrity and social cohesion. In light of humanistic principles, this study aims to examine the role implicature plays in the discussion surrounding Surakarta's request for Special Region Status. We seek to reveal the hidden meanings that influence public opinion and political legitimacy by analyzing statements from political speeches, media narratives, and public responses. Our goal is to advance a more sophisticated comprehension of the ways in which language mediates identity, power, and justice in modern Indonesian society.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive research method, aimed at understanding the implied meanings in political discourse through the lens of implicature and humanism. Qualitative methods are appropriate when the objective is to interpret, describe, and analyze language usage in context, especially when dealing with non-literal meanings such as implicatures. The use of this method allows the researchers to explore how political actors express layered meanings and indirectly convey ideological, cultural, or emotional stances. The researchers can investigate how political actors subtly communicate ideological, cultural, or emotional positions and express multi-layered meanings by employing this technique.

Speeches, interviews, news stories, press releases, and public declarations made between January and May 2025 served as the study's data sources. These statements and materials were specifically chosen because they were pertinent to the idea for the Surakarta Special Region. To gather the opinions of lawmakers, Keraton Surakarta members, cultural leaders, and government representatives, major national and regional news portals such as Kompas, Republika, Detik, and TV One were examined. Grice (1975) defined conversational implicatures, comprising both generic and particularized implicatures, and this was the specific focus of the analysis. Statements such as "Kita bukan minta keistimewaan, hanya minta keadilan sejarah" (which means "We are not asking for privilege, only historical justice") were analyzed for their implications beyond their literal meaning.

The researchers employed a discourse analysis methodology that looked at the utterances' context, co-text, and social functions in order to bolster the pragmatic analysis. Humanistic content analysis, which is a fundamental component of the humanist tradition, was also incorporated into the framework with the goal of determining how the language used reflects values like equality, dignity, recognition, and cultural identity.

The data reduction, data display, and conclusion drafting steps of Miles and Huberman's (1994) model were followed in the data analysis. Expressions and utterances that might have contained implicature were retrieved and categorized throughout the data reduction stage. Thematic groupings such as "justice and identity," "cultural recognition," "comparison to Yogyakarta," and "claims of fairness or marginalization" were then used to display these. The last phase was to apply Gricean ideas to the interpretation of these clusters and assess them from a humanist perspective.

Triangulation was used to improve reliability by comparing sources from various media (e.g., published articles versus spoken interviews), verifying researcher interpretations through peer review, and discussing initial findings with linguistics and cultural studies specialists. Understanding how language use in political discourse affects public perception, activates collective memory, and upholds cultural values was the ultimate goal, not only identifying linguistic traits.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

In the political discourse surrounding Surakarta's bid for Special Region (Daerah Istimewa) designation, the study's findings demonstrate the deliberate and complex use of conversational implicature. The information gleaned from public comments, media articles, and political speeches shows a recurring pattern of implied meanings that are used for both ethical and rhetorical reasons. By using these implicatures, speakers can make strong points without resorting to direct conflict, maintaining peace while claiming cultural and political legitimacy. According to a humanistic viewpoint, these subliminal impulses also represent virtues like respect, acknowledgment, and moral equity.

1. Implied Justice “Kami Hanya Menuntut Keadilan”

The line suggests that Surakarta has been unfairly excluded and compares its historical standing to Yogyakarta's, even though it explicitly states a call for justice. This implies that expression is a key illustration of conversational implicature and is frequently used by DIS (Daerah Istimewa Surakarta) proponents.

Although the sentence expressly calls for justice, it subtly implies that Surakarta has been excluded. This implies that Surakarta should be recognized by the government and that the existing policy is a reflection of past incompetence using the word "justice" instead of "privilege" reframes the discussion in terms of universal human ideals rather than political benefit, according to a humanistic viewpoint. This tactic, which suggests that Surakarta's desire is moral and principled rather than political or opportunistic, is effective.

2. Cultural Identity and National Integration

Phrases like "Surakarta adalah pusat budaya Jawa" (Surakarta is the center of Javanese culture) contain implicatures (that such cultural centrality justifies political recognition) as well as presuppositions (that this status is recognized and agreed upon). These statements are purposefully employed to support the DIS plan by tying it to identity and cultural heritage. Such comments, which link cultural truths to political rights without explicitly articulating them, satisfy the relevance maxim from the perspective of implicature theory. In this way, language turns become a tool for creating claims based on identity. From a humanist perspective, this language use emphasizes the inherent importance of culture in citizenship and statehood.

3. The Implicature of Comparison

Another strong pattern in the discourse is the implied comparison between Yogyakarta and Surakarta. Statements like “Kalau Yogyakarta bisa mendapatkan keistimewaan, kenapa Surakarta tidak?” (“If Yogyakarta can be special, why not Surakarta?”) are indirect challenges to official policy. These remarks do not accuse the government outright of being unfair but imply it through scalar implicature, suggesting inequity along a spectrum of treatment. This strategy avoids direct confrontation while still inviting the audience to infer that something is unjust. Such implicatures, while subtle, can evoke collective frustration and mobilize support without the risks of open defiance. Viewed through a humanist framework, they reflect a community's desire for dignity and equitable treatment.

4. Ambiguity as Strategy. “Kami mengikuti mekanisme yang berlaku”

In political responses to criticism, this assertion is commonly made. It literally states a procedural fact. However, it does suggest legality and legitimacy—that the group is neither radical nor dissident. Practically speaking, this is in line with the rule of manners, which calls for clarity while simultaneously using defensive implicature to preserve the reputation. This phrase, which reflects a humanistic appeal to justice and rational method, suggests that the movement is reasonable and shouldn't be dismissed as political agitation.

5. The Risk of Misinterpretation

Although they are strong, implications can be dangerous. The same remark may imply different things to different audiences. "Surakarta hanya ingin diakui" (Surakarta simply wants to be acknowledged), for instance, could be read as a subtly political demand or as a humble cultural appeal. This demonstrates how implicature is fundamentally relational and reliant on trust and shared prior knowledge. Insufficient mutual comprehension could result in misunderstandings or even interpersonal conflict. The humanist focus on empathy and respect for one another becomes essential in this situation. In addition to persuading, political discourse needs to foster mutual understanding.

Finally, because implicature mostly relies on shared context and prior information, the results also highlight the possibility of misunderstanding. Some may view a statement like "Surakarta hanya ingin diakui"—"Surakarta only wants to be acknowledged"—as modest, but others may interpret it as a hint of political ambition. A fundamental component of humanism, this dualism emphasizes the relational character of meaning and the significance of sympathetic interpretation.

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that pragmatic implicature is not just a language occurrence but rather a potent communication technique employed in political discourse, particularly when issues of justice, identity, and recognition are involved. The examined utterances demonstrate how speakers purposefully encode meanings indirectly to negotiate challenging sociopolitical terrains, drawing on Grice's Cooperative Principle and maxims. This grammatical nuance should not be confused with ambiguity or a lack of commitment, though. Instead, it represents a more profound ethics of communication that is influenced by humanistic principles. Advocates of Surakarta's designation as a Special Region use rhetoric that, from a humanistic perspective, echoes an appeal to our common humanity. The frequent use of "justice," for instance, alludes to a universal moral code that goes beyond political expediency. By presenting past grievances as respectable attempts to restore cultural equity rather than as self-serving demands, it humanizes the conversation. By doing this, the speakers change the tone from one of authority to one of empathy and from confrontation to reconciliation.

This is consistent with humanism's core principles, which include the conviction that people and communities are inherently valuable and deserving of respect. This study's analysis of political speech takes place in an ethical communication environment where implicature acts as a link between the speaker and the listener. The interpreter must participate not only intellectually but also morally and emotionally. Therefore, the process of deducing meaning turns into an act of understanding, empathy, and recognition. Additionally, the humanistic interpretation of implicature aids in dissecting the Surakarta proposal's emotional labor. These are manifestations of cultural memory and longing more than just strategic moves. The comparative implicature with Yogyakarta, for instance, implies an implied desire for equal acknowledgment, not superiority. A societal desire for institutional legitimacy is revealed by statements that place an emphasis on procedure and legality ("Kami mengikuti mekanisme yang berlaku") without compromising national cohesion. Within the parameters of moral citizenship, these are nuanced yet meaningful expressions of identity. To summarize, the use of implicature in this context represents a very human drive to transmit principles of justice, dignity, and acknowledgment in ways that respect others' emotional and cultural realities, and it does more than shield speakers from political backlash. Political implicature thus turns into a vehicle for ethical solidarity rather than merely a rhetorical device.

CONCLUSION

The strategic use of pragmatic implicature in the political discourse surrounding the proposal to grant Surakarta Special Region status (Daerah Istimewa Surakarta) has been explored in this paper. Using a humanistic analytical framework and Grice's theory of implicature, the results show that the discourse is full of indirect yet effective communicative acts. Speakers, from political leaders to cultural representatives, frequently use implied meanings to convey nuanced ideas about fairness, recognition, and historical continuity rather than using overtly aggressive language.

In politically delicate situations, implications are crucial in determining how statements are understood and received. Phrases like "Kami hanya menuntut keadilan sejarah" or "Kalau Yogyakarta bisa, kenapa Surakarta tidak?" serve to evoke cultural feelings and common social knowledge in addition to avoiding political offense. While keeping a tone that encourages discussion rather than conflict, these statements subtly criticize historical negligence and call for symbolic recognition. Such strategic ambiguity provides a kind of moral persuasion based on cultural diplomacy, reflecting the speakers' knowledge of the political difficulties associated with making direct accusations.

The incorporation of humanistic ideals into the pragmatic analysis is what sets this study apart. By emphasizing human dignity, identity, and acknowledgment, this study shows that language is a reflection of collective awareness as well as a means of influencing opinion. In addition to pursuing legal benefits, those who support Surakarta's recognition are also participating in a moral dialogue aimed at reaffirming their value, cultural legacy, and historical significance to the Indonesian nation-state. According to this viewpoint, implicature is a means of existential assertion and cultural expression rather than just a linguistic tactic. The capacity to communicate across social, cultural, and ideological divides is crucial in a diverse, democratic society. Implicature can serve as a bridge between communities and mediate complicated political issues in ways that foster understanding rather than conflict if it is applied morally and with empathy. But there is also a chance that implicature will be misunderstood, especially if the audience does not have the background information needed to understand the intended meaning. This emphasizes how audiences and public speakers alike must become more pragmatically literate in order to interpret indirect messages within the ethical and cultural frameworks for which they were intended.

To sum up, the conversation around the Surakarta Special Region offers an engaging example of how language functions at the nexus of politics, culture, and human values. It demonstrates how the things that are not expressed in political debate frequently reveal a great deal about the speaker's intentions, the goals of the community, and the moral principles that guide public conversation. We may better understand how political language functions and reinforce the significance of empathy, dignity, and recognition in creating inclusive public narratives by examining such implicatures via a humanistic lens. As a result, implicature should be understood and taught in civic education, media literacy, and political training in addition to language theory. By doing this, we may promote a public conversation that is more thoughtful, courteous, and compassionate—one that genuinely values the intricacy of language and the humanity of its speakers.

RECOMMENDATION

The study's conclusions highlight the importance of pragmatic implicature as a sociocultural and linguistic tool in political communication. A humanistic interpretation of implicature reveals it as a reflection of a community's identity, beliefs, and goals as well as a sophisticated rhetorical device. Several important suggestions for those involved in political communication, education, and future study can be made in light of this realization.

First, ethical and compassionate speaking techniques should be taught to political communicators. Indirect language can be an effective persuasion technique, particularly in delicate situations, as the Surakarta Special Region proposal's use of implicature shows. If not used appropriately, it also involves the risk of being misunderstood or manipulated. Political players need to understand that communication is about building mutual understanding and trust as much as it is about winning fights. Modules on pragmatics, discourse ethics, and culturally sensitive communication should be part of training programs for public officials, legislators, and spokespeople. By highlighting the humanistic principles of justice, empathy, and dignity, these initiatives can foster more polite and inclusive public dialogue.

Second, pragmatic literacy ought to be incorporated into language and civic education programs. Understanding implicatures is crucial for informed citizenry in a time when political messages frequently contain emotional appeals or hidden meanings. The detection, analysis, and response to implicature in political speeches, media narratives, and ordinary conversations should be explicitly taught in high school and university curricula, especially in language, civics, and media studies. Students may be better equipped to understand both the overt and covert aspects of communication and to participate critically in public discourse as a result. Additionally, incorporating humanism into these courses helps students view language as a tool for ethical communication as well as a technical ability.

Third, future studies should look into how implicatures in political discourse are interpreted by various audiences. Although the production of implicature by political speakers is the main emphasis of this study, more research is required to comprehend how different social groups—from different educational, cultural, and geographic backgrounds—receive and interpret these signals. Such studies could show if some implicatures are understood by everyone or if they run the danger of offending particular groups of people. To increase the efficacy and inclusivity of political communication tactics, audience reception studies are crucial.

Fourth, research comparing Surakarta to other special regions like Aceh, Papua, and Yogyakarta may provide important information on the parallels and discrepancies in the usage of implicature in regional autonomy movements. These areas' distinct political, cultural, and historical backgrounds shape their discourse methods. Scholars can gain a better understanding of how identity, power, and recognition are linguistically negotiated throughout Indonesia by comparing their rhetorical patterns.

Finally, the media is essential in mediating implicatures between the audience and speakers. The ability to identify and appropriately interpret implicatures in political speech should be taught to journalists and editors. Media sources should work to contextualize and make clear the intended meanings of ambiguous comments rather than sensationalizing them, especially when discussing delicate subjects like justice, regionalism, and identity. Initiatives to promote media literacy should also assist the general people in understanding the nuances of political pronouncements and news narratives.

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