

## Research Article

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# Unraveling Conversational Implicatures: A Study on Arabic EFL Learners

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**Abstract:** The present research aimed to evaluate the comprehension level of conversational implicature among a group of 30 senior Native Arabic-speaking students enrolled in the BA program of English Language and Literature at a UAE university. The participants' comprehension of implicatures was assessed by providing them with 20 excerpts from the American sitcom Seinfeld (<https://www.seinfeldscripts.com/seinfeld-scripts.html>). The participants were asked to select the implied meaning of one underlined utterance as it occurred in context. The findings of the study indicate that Arab English as a Foreign Language learners have a slightly below-average proficiency in comprehending implicatures produced by native English speakers, which can be attributed to their lower level of proficiency, lack of pragmatic competence, and their lack of information about the American culture. The most challenging types of implicatures to grasp were those flouting the maxim of manner (35.34%), while the easiest types to interpret were those flouting the maxim of quantity.

**Keywords:** pragmatics, conversational implicature, Gricean maxims, comprehension of implicature, cooperative principle

## 1 Introduction

Conversational implicature has long been a cornerstone in the realm of linguistic pragmatics, initially conceptualized by Paul Grice in his seminal work. The Cooperative Principle he proposed and the four maxims – quality, quantity, relevance, and manner – are foundational for understanding how speech often operates in zones of implication rather than explicit declaration. This framework effectively shapes how language users navigate complex communicative landscapes despite not strictly adhering to these maxims. When speakers intentionally sidestep or flout these maxims, they create what Grice termed conversational implicatures. These implicatures offer a rich layer of meaning that often encompasses irony, sarcasm, or other forms of indirect messaging based on the context in which they are deployed (Camp, 2012; Çiftlikli & Demirel, 2022).

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 100) present an illustration to elucidate this implicature:

A: Where is Bill?

B: 'There's a yellow VW outside 'Sue's house.

In their given instance, speaker B deliberately disregards the quantity and relevance maxims by failing to answer speaker A's question directly. However, this lack of cooperation prompts us to establish a connection between B's statement and A's inquiry. As a result, we infer that if Bill possesses a yellow VW, he might be

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present at Sue's house. This inference represents a conversational implicature. The subtlety of conversational implicature reveals itself when an indirect reply gives birth to an entirely new layer of understanding.

Research by Bouton (1988) demonstrated that non-native speakers of English tend to struggle with interpreting implicatures, suggesting that there is a developmental aspect in the ability to understand and produce implicatures in a second language. Moreover, a study by Roever (2005) also highlighted that tests aiming to assess second language learners' pragmatic competence, which includes implicature understanding, can have strong predictive validity for more generalized language skills. In a related vein, Taguchi (2002) found that second-language learners' comprehension of implicatures significantly improves with increased exposure and targeted instruction. This finding underscores the pedagogical importance of understanding conversational implicatures for second-language acquisition.

In light of these empirical findings, identifying conversational implicatures enriches our understanding of text, be it oral or written, and holds considerable weight in second language learning and translation. Baker and Saldanha (2009) amplify this point, emphasizing the role of implicature identification in facilitating the translation process. Their study showed that a Tunisian Minister was asked "what were the contents of the letter you handed to King Fahad?" His reply implied "this is a matter solely for the Saudis to consider." Having failed to understand the implicature, the interpreter translated the sentence literally as "This matter concerns the Saudis." The interpreter failed to convey the utterance's pragmatic meaning, which clearly suggested that the minister did not want to discuss the contents of the letter. The English journalist who asked the initial question felt encouraged to keep the same line of questioning and was rebuked a second time, but more explicitly. Pragmatic competence is crucial to avoid miscommunications in real-life situations. In line with Baker's earlier works (1992), Baker and Saldanha (2009) assert that a firm grounding in linguistics, pragmatics, and cultural understanding is indispensable for both language users and translators.

The influence of conversational implicatures also permeates the world of entertainment, particularly in sitcoms where humor is often derived from the strategic use of implicatures. This correlates with Leech's (1983) argument that humor frequently capitalizes on the manipulation of social norms, linguistic conventions, and shared cultural understandings. In light of this complex and nuanced landscape, our current study aspires to make a unique contribution by focusing on Arab students majoring in English Language and Literature at a public university in the UAE. This demographic has not been significantly covered in the existing literature, thereby opening an avenue for new insights. The principal research question we seek to answer is: To what extent do Arab students majoring in English at a governmental institution in the UAE comprehend conversational implicatures, particularly when Grice's (1975) conversational maxims are intentionally flouted?

We believe that this research is particularly timely and relevant for several reasons. First, it fills an important gap in the literature by focusing on a specific heterogeneous linguistic and cultural cohort – Arab English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Second, it aims to provide educators with empirical data that could inform pedagogical strategies for teaching implicature comprehension and pragmatics in EFL settings. Third, it looks at implicature comprehension from a cross-cultural perspective, offering valuable insights into how cultural factors might influence the understanding and use of implicatures. Furthermore, this research study employs natural dialogues as a methodological approach, thereby offering a targeted investigation into humor comprehension and everyday conversational understanding. By addressing these facets, the study hopes to offer a multidimensional view that can enrich academic discourse and practical applications in language education, cross-cultural communication, and translation studies, thereby enhancing the pedagogical approaches for teaching pragmatics and implicature comprehension in an EFL environment.

## 2 Literature Review

Understanding the comprehension of implicature among non-native speakers of English is a nuanced undertaking that has gathered considerable attention in applied linguistics and pragmatics. Researchers have delved into various dimensions, employing diverse methodologies and various contexts, such as cultural context, proficiency levels, and types of implicature (See Bouton, 1988; Mohammadzadeh *et al.*, 2019; Sağdıç, 2021;

Taguchi, 2002, 2005). This review aims to dissect these studies to identify common threads, divergences, and gaps that inform the current investigation.

Evaluating how well nonnative English speakers understand implicatures is a key to studying pragmatics. A variety of studies have employed diverse methods and approaches to gauge the comprehension of implicatures in this population. For example, Bouton (1988) serves as a critical starting point by introducing the cultural background as a significant factor in decoding implicatures and suggesting the multiple-choice test as an assessment tool. This raises questions about the universal applicability of implicature comprehension and points toward the need for culturally sensitive pedagogical tools. Taguchi's work (2002, 2003, 2005, 2008) builds on and complicates Bouton's findings. Taguchi does not only acknowledge the role of cultural background and proficiency but also adds an extra layer of complexity by introducing implicature types: formulaic and idiosyncratic. She extends the discussion by employing computerized tests and zeroing in on how different types of implicatures – indirect opinions and indirect refusals, in particular – are decoded differently by learners. While proficiency significantly influences accuracy, its effect on comprehension speed is mixed, offering a multidimensional view of how proficiency can impact implicature comprehension.

Rizaoglu and Yavuz (2017) also contribute a unique perspective by using multiple-choice and written discourse completion tasks, thus combining Bouton's methodological approach and adding another layer. Their focus on L2 Turkish students and the implication that familiarity with the cultural values of the target language influences implicature comprehension echoes Bouton's original point about the role of culture. Their findings also resonate with Taguchi's in that the type of implicature impacts comprehension, although they introduce the idea that formulaic implicature can be decoded more easily when learners are familiar with the cultural context. Formulaic implicatures are the inferences or meanings that come from commonly used expressions frequently manifesting in the form of idiomatic phrases. These implicatures rely on our shared understanding of language and cultural norms rather than solely deriving from the literal meanings of the words themselves. For example, 'Do you have a watch?' implies that the speaker is asking about the time. Similarly, Pratama et al. (2017) underscore the role of proficiency and introduce language exposure as an influencing factor. The study's findings align with Taguchi's work on the impact of proficiency but add a different dimension by examining the setting of an Indonesian university, implicitly expanding the cultural contexts in which these findings hold true.

In a recent study on Saudi EFL learners, Alharbi (2022) sets his study apart by emphasizing the cultural gap between English and Arabic. While previously mentioned studies are more generalized or focus on other variables, Alharbi points directly to the lack of focus on the pragmatic aspects of language in English curricula, employing a mixed-method approach that includes a discourse completion test, interviews, and questionnaires for deeper insights. The findings showed that EFL learners faced difficulties understanding implicatures. Certain types, such as quantity and quality, were more problematic than manner or relation. The study suggests including pragmatic aspects in language teaching and curriculum design.

In line with the previous research findings, Mohammadzadeh et al. (2019) and Sağdıç (2021) explore the factors affecting implicature comprehension. However, they focus on different variables. Sağdıç's study is broad in scope, investigating how proficiency, length of residence, and interaction contribute to the comprehension of L2 implicatures among 68 participants. The research indicated that proficiency is the most significant predictor, trailed by interaction intensity and length of residence, with less proficient learners facing greater challenges. On the other hand, Mohammadzadeh et al. (2019) look at the influence of gender, proficiency, and age among prospective English teachers. Unlike Sağdıç's (2021) findings, where proficiency stood out, Mohammadzadeh et al. (2019) find that while proficiency is important, age also has an impact, whereas gender does not significantly affect implicature comprehension. Both Koçlü (2018) and Kentmen et al. (2023) delve into the relationship between proficiency and implicature comprehension but differ in their methodologies; Kentmen et al. employ a multiple-choice discourse test and a discourse completion test, while Koçlü relies on an oral production task. Koçlü (2018) demonstrates that higher proficiency levels correlate with a better understanding of conversational implicatures. The analysis of the incorrect answers provides valuable insights into the difficulties students face in decoding implicature meanings. Koçlü's findings align with those of Kentmen et al. (2023), emphasizing the significance of pragmatic instruction in EFL classrooms to address cultural appropriateness challenges. Both studies converge on the need for targeted instruction but for slightly

different reasons – Kentmen et al. focus on conversational implicatures, while Koçlı emphasizes cultural appropriateness.

In a related vein, Derakhshan and Eslami (2020) investigate the effects of pragmatic awareness and training on the comprehension of implicatures among upper-intermediate Iranian EFL students, using video extracts containing implicatures from an American TV series, an angle less pronounced in Kentmen et al. (2023) and Koçlı's (2018) works. Their study revealed that students who receive pragmatic training, participate in interactive translation activities, and engage in discussions outperform the control group. In summary, these studies collectively underscore the multifaceted nature of implicature comprehension among non-native English speakers and highlight the importance of considering various contextual factors in pedagogical approaches to improve pragmatic competence. Other studies have directed their focus toward the intersection between implicatures and humor.

Since our present research examined Arab EFL learners' comprehension of implicature employing an American comedy sitcom, it is essential to survey the research conducted on the relationship between humor and implicature. Scholarly research on humor and implicature sheds light on their interconnectedness and illustrates how implicatures are employed to generate humor across various contexts. For example, Abdalhakeem and Mubarak (2019) and Huang (2020) probe into American sitcoms – *Two Broke Girls* and *Still Standing*, respectively – to investigate how implicatures contribute to humor. Abdalhakeem and Mubarak explore the role of conversational implicatures in generating humor within the American sitcom *Still Standing*. Their investigation demonstrates that implicatures play a pivotal role in humor creation, as speakers deliberately imply meanings that extend beyond the literal interpretations of their words. The study effectively conveys that utilizing implicatures constitutes an efficacious means of engendering humor within everyday conversations.

Along the same lines of research, Huang (2020) conducted a study centered on the creation of verbal humor in the popular American sitcom *Two Broke Girls*. By scrutinizing instances where the Cooperative Principle is flouted, the research elucidates how such flouting can engender humorous effects, effectively showcasing the intimate relationship between humor and implicature. Both studies, therefore, coalesce around the idea that conversational implicatures are essential tools in generating humor, albeit through different analytical lenses. In a divergent approach, Yulianti et al. dissect the types of conversational implicatures used in the *Saturday Night* live talk show, categorizing them as particularized or generalized. Their analysis amplifies the role of context and speaker intent in the choice of implicature types for comedic effect, a dimension not explicitly touched upon by either Abdalhakeem and Mubarak (2019) or Huang (2020).

The studies reviewed above collectively contribute to the nuanced understanding of implicature comprehension among nonnative English speakers. They employ various methodologies and contexts, including cultural background, proficiency levels, and implicature types. Bouton's work (1988) introduces cultural factors and multiple-choice tests, while Taguchi (2002, 2005) adds complexity by considering different implicature types. Rizaoglu and Yavuz (2017) emphasize cultural familiarity's role. Pratama et al. (2017) expand the cultural context to Indonesian universities by surveying students with different levels of exposure to the English language. Alharbi (2022) stands out for its mixed-methods design, which enables the collection of student feedback through a questionnaire. Mohammadzadeh et al. (2019) and Sağdıç (2021) explore factors like proficiency, interaction, and age. Kentmen et al. (2023) and Koçlı (2018) delve into proficiency and pragmatic instruction. Derakhshan and Eslami (2020) highlight the impact of pragmatic training. The intersection of humor and implicature, as presented in the study by Abdalhakeem and Mubarak (2019) and Huang (2020), reveals implicatures' role in generating humor. Yulianti et al. (2022) add context and speaker intent dimensions. Despite this wealth of research, there is still a gap in understanding implicature comprehension among Arabic-speaking EFL learners in non-English-speaking environments. This research study addresses this gap by directing attention toward everyday conversational implicatures prevalent in American media, thus contributing to an enriched scholarly discourse within the field.

To conclude, the existing body of literature presents a plethora of methods for evaluating implicature comprehension among nonnative English speakers, ranging from multiple-choice tests and Discourse Completion Tasks to more specialized approaches like implicature comprehension tests. These studies also illuminate the roles of varying factors, such as cultural background, language proficiency, and exposure in shaping this comprehension.

While evidence suggests that pragmatic awareness and training can improve implicature understanding, a notable gap remains in the research, particularly concerning Arabic-speaking English learners who have not lived in an English-speaking environment, thus adding a layer of cultural and linguistic complexity. Our study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by introducing a test specifically designed to evaluate implicature comprehension in this demographic, using a corpus drawn from the American TV sitcom *Seinfeld*. Unlike much of the existing research, which mainly focuses on implicatures in the context of humor, our study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of how Arabic-speaking students comprehend implicatures in everyday conversations depicted in American media. Therefore, our research not only expands upon pragmatic research but also diversifies it by addressing the unique challenges faced by Arabic-speaking students in the UAE in comprehending conversational implicatures.

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Participants

This study used a convenience sampling method to select participants, who were all Arab senior undergraduate students specializing in English and Literature at a university in the United Arab Emirates. The designation “Arab students” encompasses students from the UAE as well as those from other Arabic-speaking nations like Jordan, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. Consequently, this study features a heterogeneous student population, distinguishing it from prior research. As such, the outcomes of this study are anticipated to hold significance for both Emirati students and their counterparts from other Arab countries. These participants, aged between 21 and 28, had been enrolled in the BA program for 3 years and boasted over 12 years of English study prior to entering university. All were native speakers of Arabic. The sample was notably skewed in terms of gender, with 29 females and only 1 male participating; as a result, gender was not factored as a variable in the study. Crucially, all participants had undergone extensive training in both theoretical and practical aspects of language. Their academic curriculum included many courses covering language skills, translation, literature, and other pertinent subjects. The students have received instruction from both native and nonnative English teachers.

### 3.2 Data

The data for this study were sourced from the American TV series *Seinfeld*, originally broadcast on NBC between 1989 and 1998. This show was chosen for its naturalistic dialogue and its comedic use of conversational implicatures based on flouting Grice’s maxims. A sample of five episodes was selected; the third episode of the first five seasons was selected to obtain a random sample. Each episode ran for approximately 22–23 min, except for the final two episodes, which had durations of 43 and 56 min, respectively.

One of the researchers watched the selected episodes on Netflix. Then, these episodes were transcribed using Otter.ai website. The researchers scoured the text for examples of conversational implicatures, employing Grice’s maxims as a guiding framework for identification. Given the context-sensitive nature of conversational implicatures, an effort was made to select instances within sustained dialogues, thereby providing a richer contextual backdrop for the study participants.

An initial pool of 30 dialogue excerpts containing implication was identified. These excerpts were submitted for validation to a panel of three university professors of literature. The panel affirmed that all 30 selected excerpts contained valid instances of conversational implicatures. The initial 30 scenarios were narrowed down to a final set of 20 to achieve a balanced representation of the flouted maxims. Each of these selected scenarios represented a test item for one of the four flouted maxims of conversation. These 20 dialogue extracts, preserved in their original contextual form, were subsequently utilized to develop the implicature comprehension test, which will be elaborated upon later. Supplementary paralinguistic

information was provided to ensure that participants could grasp the context. Moreover, whenever necessary, the attitudes or body language portrayed by the actors were described to furnish additional contextual cues for the participants.

### 3.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis

To evaluate the comprehension levels of Arab EFL learners concerning conversational implicatures, the research team designed a 20-item online MCQ Implicature Comprehension Test. A pilot study was conducted on five EFL learners from the English Department. These learners were asked to elucidate the implicatures found in specific utterances within the test items. Three options for each question were given: two distractors and one accurate implicature.

The test was revised based on the answers obtained from the pilot study. The draft version of the test was then subjected to a further validation process by asking three native English speakers with more than 20 years of teaching experience in teaching literature at the university level to assess the test's efficacy in gauging implicature comprehension. Specifically, they were tasked with confirming whether the designated correct answers genuinely reflected the intended implicatures within the underlined portions of text. Modifications were made to the test based on the insights from these seasoned educators, resulting in its finalized version. A sample item from this final test is depicted in Figure 1.

The actual testing phase involved administering this final version of the test to the student participants via Google Forms, where the utterances, which included implicature were underlined. The 45-min test was administered during a classroom session under the supervision of one of the researchers. The students were directed to use the supplied information and dialogue excerpts to identify the most suitable answer choice representing the implicature. Upon completion, their responses were gathered and subjected to analysis to assess their test performance.

The researchers relied on the following percentage-based grading scale to assess the level of understanding of students:

- 0–24%: Poor
- 25–49%: Fair

By saying the utterance in red below, the speaker means: \*

**Jerry:** What did you do?

**Kramer:** Mousse. I moussed up.

**Elaine:** I guess it was just a matter of time.

**Kramer:** You know, I should've done this years ago. I mean, I feel like I had two lives. My pre-mousse and now, I begin my post-mousse. Hey, tell me the truth, have you ever seen a better-looking guy?

**Jerry:** **Oh, look, it's so subjective.**

- ☐ You look great
- ☐ Everyone has their own taste
- ☐ You look awful

**Figure 1:** Sample implicature comprehension test item.

- 50–74%: Satisfactory
- 75–89%: Very good
- 90–100%: Excellent

### 3.4 Limitations of the Current Research

It is worth noting that our current research does have a few limitations. First, our study was conducted exclusively with female participants. This was due to the limited number of students in the Department of Foreign Languages, where only one student from that class was available to take the implicature comprehension test. In addition, our research focused solely on American media, specifically the sitcom *Seinfeld*. Future research could expand its horizons to encompass a more diverse range of cultural and linguistic contexts as we move forward.

## 4 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Arab EFL Learners' Comprehension of Implicature

Table 1 presents the percentage of correct answers obtained from the implicature comprehension test. The term “correct” is used here for convenience to refer to the participants' selection of the most appropriate

**Table 1:** Success rate in the implicature comprehension test

|    | Utterance                                                                                                                 | Flouted maxim | Success rate (correct answer) (%) |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1  | I guess it was just a matter of time                                                                                      | Relation      | 53.3                              |
| 2  | Oh, look, ‘it’s so subjective                                                                                             | Quality       | 43.3                              |
| 3  | Ray, I had a statue in my house. You were in my house – and then I saw it in your house                                   | Quantity      | 83.3                              |
| 4  | Maybe ‘I’ll try that pesto                                                                                                | Relation      | 36.7                              |
| 5  | Suave! And it’s non-fat!                                                                                                  | Manner        | 13                                |
| 6  | It’s kinda private                                                                                                        | Manner        | 10                                |
| 7  | How old are you?                                                                                                          | Relation      | 80                                |
| 8  | You know, it doesn’t look as if your friend is coming                                                                     | Relation      | 30                                |
| 9  | Maybe you should take a look at a train schedule                                                                          | Quantity      | 60                                |
| 10 | Boy this comedy’s really frying your brain                                                                                | Relation      | 30                                |
| 11 | See, this is the kind of lasting impression I make on people                                                              | Quality       | 36.7                              |
| 12 | I don’t know, I guess it was on. I don’t know my alarm sound; I’m not tuned in to it like it’s my son                     | Quantity      | 53.3                              |
| 13 | You mean *a* career                                                                                                       | Manner        | 50                                |
| 14 | Did you see the size of that document? It’s like the Declaration of Independence, who’s gonna read that?                  | Quantity      | 76.7                              |
| 15 | Yeah, it looked as if you were in a real conversation over there                                                          | Quality       | 63.3                              |
| 16 | Yeah, a cup of coffee should cover it                                                                                     | Quality       | 76.7                              |
| 17 | I think that’s what the back of closets are for                                                                           | Manner        | 66.7                              |
| 18 | Or you                                                                                                                    | Manner        | 36.7                              |
| 19 | Anything you couldn’t have gotten tearing open a bag of Doritos and watching Viva Zapata?                                 | Quantity      | 3.3                               |
| 20 | Well, you should choose the poem since you knew Susan best at the time of her unfortunate <clears his throat>... accident | Quality       | 30                                |

implicature for each highlighted utterance within the provided excerpts. The instructions given to the participants emphasized the importance of considering the contextual cues when choosing the implicature that best aligns with the intended meaning of the utterance.

The comprehension of implicatures within the chosen utterances displayed substantial variations, as evident from the data presented in Table 1. It is worth mentioning that we adopted the following criterion to decide on the success rate. If the students' attainment was 50% or more, it was considered a success, while if their attainment was less than 50%, it was counted as a failure rate. As shown earlier, the success rates exhibited significant disparities contingent upon the specific utterance and deliberate transgression of conversational maxims. Remarkably, among the participants, there was a notably high success rate in discerning the implications within utterances 1, 3, 7, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, 12, and 13. Success rates in these instances ranged from 50 to 83%. In contrast, the findings unveiled that the participants encountered difficulties in comprehending the implications embedded within the remaining utterances, specifically 2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 18, 19, 8, 10, and 20. Another important finding is that utterances 5, 6, 19, and 20 exhibited the most pronounced failure rates, spanning from 3.3 to 43.3%.

These results suggest that the inability to comprehend an implicature in an utterance did not necessarily connote a deficiency in grasping its literal meaning. We noticed that the students very often selected the literal meaning rather than the implication. Another noteworthy finding is that 50% of the implications stem from the Arab EFL students' lack of pragmatic knowledge and implicature. Tables 2–5 provide an exhaustive breakdown of the success and/or failure rates for each item and maxim.

The results of the implicature comprehension test, as depicted in Table 2, reveal that the participants' grasp of implicatures stemming from the flouting of the maxim of quantity is quite satisfactory (55.32%). This marks the highest average success rate documented within the study, implying that the implicatures arising from flouting the maxim of quantity are the most readily interpretable for the students. In accordance with Grice's (1975) theoretical framework, communicators are expected to furnish an appropriate quantity of information. However, in the context of Table 2, the provided utterances flout the maxim of quantity by inundating the listener with an excess of information. The presence of contextual cues and the abundance of information within the excerpts offer substantial guidance for students to fully comprehend the intended meanings conveyed in each utterance.

Table 2 also shows that most participants exhibited a good comprehension level of the presented implicatures, with a solitary exception. Specifically, out of the total cohort of 30 participants, only one individual (constituting 3.4% of the group) succeeded in accurately discerning the implied meaning conveyed in the utterance, "Anything you couldn't have gotten tearing open a bag of Doritos and watching Viva Zapata?" It is intriguing to observe that a substantial portion of the students, constituting 53% of the participants, incorrectly opted for the choice "you do not usually come up with great ideas," thereby misconstruing Jerry's intended message. The failure to understand Jerry's implied message lies in the participants' inability to recognize his critique of the catalog's quality, which predominantly emphasized clichés over authentic content. By posing the question, Jerry subtly expressed his dissatisfaction with the catalog's lack of originality and distinctiveness.

One pivotal factor contributing to the participants' challenges in uncovering Jerry's implied message can be attributed to the inclusion of cultural references unfamiliar to the students, such as the film "Viva Zapata."

**Table 2:** The success rate of implicature comprehension for the maxim of quantity

| Maxims of quantity                                                                                          | Correct answers | Success rate (%) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Ray, I had a statue in my house. You were in my house - and then I saw it in your house                  | 25              | 83.3             |
| 2. I don't know, I guess it was on. I don't know my alarm sound; I'm not tuned in to it like it's my son    | 16              | 53.3             |
| 3. Did you see the size of that document? It's like the Declaration of Independence, who's gonna read that? | 23              | 76.7             |
| 4. Anything you couldn't have gotten tearing open a bag of Doritos and watching Viva Zapata?                | 1               | 3.3              |
| 5. Maybe you should take a look at a train schedule                                                         | 18              | 60               |
| <b>Average</b>                                                                                              | <b>16.6</b>     | <b>55.32</b>     |

**Table 3:** The success rate of implicature comprehension for the maxim of quality

| Maxims of quality                                                                                                               | Correct answers | Success rate (%) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Yeah, a cup of coffee should cover it                                                                                        | 23              | 76.7             |
| 2. Yeah, it looked as if you were in a real conversation over there                                                             | 19              | 63.3             |
| 3. Oh, look, 'it's so subjective                                                                                                | 13              | 43.3             |
| 4. See, this is the kind of lasting impression I make on people                                                                 | 11              | 36.7             |
| 5. Well, you should choose the poem since you knew Susan best at the time of her unfortunate<br><clears his throat>... accident | 9               | 30               |
| <b>Average</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>15</b>       | <b>50</b>        |

Given that a majority of participants were not acquainted with this specific cultural reference, it impeded their capacity to accurately decipher the intended meaning of the utterance. The additional cognitive burden stemming from unfamiliarity with cultural allusions may explain the selection of the distractor option that did not align with Jerry's genuine critique of the catalog. Culture here refers to "linguaculture" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 30), defined in the context of language teaching and learning as "the culture associated with a language being learnt" by Byram and Grundy (2003, p. 1). The cultural specificity of discourse complicates the comprehension of the intended meaning in a given context. This indicates that deficiencies in cultural understanding can pose challenges even when students have a good linguistic proficiency as shown by Murray (2011).

Table 3 furnishes valuable insights into the participants' ability to comprehend implicatures arising from utterances that flout the maxim of quality. Notably, 50% of the participants successfully understood the implicatures presented within these specific utterances. However, it is essential to underscore that the presence of irony in the majority of these utterances presented a formidable challenge for 50% of the Arab EFL students in accurately grasping the intended meaning.

Upon a closer examination of the participants' comprehension of implicature concerning these specific utterances, discernible disparities in their understanding become apparent. Significantly, two utterances, namely, "Yeah, a cup of coffee should cover it" (76.7%) and "Yeah, it looked as if you were in a real conversation over there" (63.3%), manifest a high level of comprehension in contrast to the last three utterances, which registered percentages of 43.3, 36.7, and 30%, respectively.

Irony, conventionally defined as "expressing a literal statement while conveying the opposite in a figurative manner" (Hatim, 1997, p. 192) emerged as a pivotal factor in the utterances that presented challenges for the participants. In the initial two utterances, the employment of the discourse marker "yeah," followed by statements directly contradicting the contextual elements, potentially supplied participants with adequate cues to discern the implied meaning.

As per the findings presented in Table 4, it becomes evident that a mere 46% of the participants were proficient in inferring the pragmatic meaning engendered by the five utterances that flout the maxim of relation. The degree of comprehension exhibited by the participants showed variations across different utterances within this category. Specifically, two utterances, "How old are you?" (80%) and "I guess it was just a matter of time" (53.3%), manifested relatively elevated levels of comprehension in contrast to the remaining three utterances.

**Table 4:** The success rate of implicature comprehension for the maxims of relation

| Maxims of relation                                       | Correct answers | Success rate (%) |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. I guess it was just a matter of time                  | 16              | 53.3             |
| 2. Maybe I'll try that pesto...                          | 11              | 36.7             |
| 3. How old are you?                                      | 24              | 80               |
| 4. You know, it doesn't look as if your friend is coming | 9               | 30               |
| 5. Boy this comedy's really frying your brain            | 9               | 30               |
| <b>Average</b>                                           | <b>13.8</b>     | <b>46</b>        |

**Table 5:** The success rate of implicature comprehension for the maxim of manner

| Maxims of manner                                   | Correct answers | Success rate (%) |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Suave! And it's non-fat!                        | 4               | 13.3             |
| 2. It's kinda private                              | 3               | 10               |
| 3. I think that's what the back of closets are for | 20              | 66.7             |
| 4. Or you                                          | 11              | 36.7             |
| 5. You mean *a* career                             | 15              | 50               |
| <b>Average</b>                                     | <b>10.6</b>     | <b>35.34</b>     |

Exploring the participants' comprehension of these utterances underscores the pivotal role contextual factors play in facilitating their understanding. For instance, when Elaine posed the question to Jerry, "How old are you?", she deliberately flouted the maxim of relation, employing it as an opportunity to deride Jerry's juvenile conduct. The results show that students effectively understood the subtextual layer of mockery within the utterance, indicating their ability to discern the implied meaning. In this instance, the context offered substantial contextual clues, empowering the participants to accurately infer the implicature.

However, participants encountered greater perplexity when the linkage between the utterance and the context became less conspicuous, as observed in the case of utterance 4. In this particular scenario, both George and Elaine harbored guilt over a busboy losing his job at a restaurant due to a comment they had made about him. Seeking reassurance from Jerry regarding their culpability, they inquired whether it was their fault. Instead of addressing their concerns directly, Jerry shifted the topic and remarked, "Maybe I'll try that pesto." Although Jerry's response lacked a direct connection to the query, he succeeded in unsettling his friends by leaving certain matters unspoken. Intriguingly, the majority of participants opted for meanings, such as "I didn't say you did it" and "there is no need to justify yourself." This suggests that they construed Jerry's response as an act of politeness, with him avoiding causing embarrassment to his friends.

Table 5 furnishes the outcomes pertaining to the participants' comprehension of implicatures related to the maxim of manner. The utterances presented in Table 5 deliberately flouted the maxim of manner, resulting in implicatures that posed substantial challenges for the students in deciphering the speaker's intention. The results indicate that a mere 35.34% of participants could understand the implied messages accurately. This constitutes the lowest recorded performance in the study, underscoring the difficulties participants encountered in comprehending implicatures associated with this particular flouted maxim of manner.

Notably, flouting the maxim of manner emerged as the most formidable challenge for the participants in the present research. A majority of the utterances within this category exhibited ambiguity and engendered complexities in interpretation. Nevertheless, there existed variations in the levels of comprehension concerning specific utterances among participants. For instance, participants demonstrated a heightened level of comprehension for the utterances "I think that is what the back of closets are for" (66.7%) and "You mean a career" (50%) in comparison to the other three utterances: "Or you" (36.7%), "Suave! And it's non-fat!" (13.3%), and "It's kinda private" (10%).

The maxim of manner admonishes against the utilization of ambiguity, vagueness, and cryptic language. Implicatures arising from flouting this maxim frequently hinge upon subtle linguistic cues demanding meticulous analysis and interpretation. The participants' difficulties in comprehending these implicatures can be attributed to diverse factors. For instance, the introduction of foreign words like "suave" or exceedingly concise responses such as "or you" can readily lead to the misinterpretation of the speakers' underlying sarcastic intent.

## 5 Discussion and Conclusion

This research delved into the realm of implicature comprehension among Arab EFL learners enrolled in a UAE university. The outcomes of this investigation shed light on a slightly below-average level of implicature comprehension among the participants, unveiling a notable pragmatic challenge. This has been documented

in many studies conducted on implicature. This deficiency in pragmatic competence can primarily be attributed to the participants' relatively low proficiency in the English language and their limited exposure to certain facets of the American culture.

The previous research has underscored the importance of integrating pragmatic aspects into language instruction and curriculum design due to EFL learners' challenges in understanding implicatures, with variations in difficulty observed across different types (Alharbi, 2022). In a similar vein, there is a strong relationship between EFL learners' proficiency level and implicature comprehension (Kentmen et al., 2023; Kojl , 2018). Importantly, the findings underscore that while the participants demonstrated competence in apprehending the literal meanings of utterances, they grappled with the more intricate and nuanced implications arising from the flouting of Grice's conversational maxims. Students' cultural background may offer insights into their challenges when selecting the preferred implicature in the test. As conceptualized by Kramsch, culture is "difference, variability, and always a potential source of conflict when one culture enters into contact with another" (1993, p. 1). Culture influences our perception of others and their actions. For instance, consider utterance 8: *You know, it doesn't look as if your friend is coming*. Sixty percent of surveyed students interpreted this as Kramer forgetting to pick up his friends, failing to perceive the hosts' frustration at having Jerry and Elaine at their place at 2 am, knowing the party was already over. Arab societies, when contrasted with North American and European cultures, were characterized by collectivism as prioritizing the "private self" (Darwish & Huber, 2003; Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Given the emphasis on solidarity in Arab culture, it may feel uncomfortable for an Arab individual to ask guests to leave or to convey unwelcome sentiments. As Sobh et al. noted, "Protecting guests, entertaining them, and properly feeding them was and is still considered essential in many Arab societies" (2013, p. 447). In this specific instance, it appears that students projected their shared cultural background onto the protagonists' actions.

Among the flouted conversational maxims, it became evident that the maxim of manner posed the most substantial challenge for the learners, with a mere 35.34% of the sample successfully inferring implicatures accurately. Flouting the maxim of manner can result in statements that appear ambiguous, misleading, vague or incomplete (ellipsis) (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 214). Therefore, EFL learners may find it challenging to discern the intended meaning when faced with such expressions, as they may need to consider alternative interpretations. However, the implicatures stemming from flouting the maxim of relation proved to be relatively more accessible, with 46% of learners successfully extracting the implicatures. The maxim of relation can present comprehension challenges for EFL learners. This is because how people express themselves might sometimes come across as unclear or unrelated to the topic. Consequently, learners may need to dig a bit deeper to grasp the intended meaning. This challenge can be attributed to their limited pragmatic competence in navigating such subtleties. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the maxims of quality and quantity exhibited varying degrees of success in elucidating the intended implicatures within the chosen scenarios. Specifically, the maxim of quantity yielded a commendable success rate of 55.32%, marking the highest level of proficiency in comprehending implicatures. Conversely, the maxim of quality achieved a success rate of 50%, signifying a moderately successful performance in understanding the implications conveyed in the five scenarios. This outcome could be attributed to the presence of irony, which perplexed certain students as it presents the contrary of what is stated. EFL learners may have scored high levels of comprehension of the maxim of quantity as the intended meaning was obvious by the surplus of information within the utterances. This observation appears to conflict with the findings of Alharbi (2022), who identified the maxim of quantity as particularly challenging for Saudi students. However, differences in methodology and data collection methods between studies may contribute to this disparity in results. Alharbi (2022) employed a questionnaire adapted from the work of Bouton (1988), whereas the present research utilizes a sitcom that portrays everyday dialogues. This observation is intriguing and warrants further exploration to understand the underlying factors contributing to this discrepancy in implicature comprehension.

The implications of these findings hold substantial pedagogical significance for EFL learners, educators, translators, and curriculum designers alike. It is discernible that Arab EFL learners, particularly those enrolled in English and Literature programs at UAE universities, would greatly benefit from enhanced training in pragmatic competence. In this endeavor, integrating materials from television shows like *Seinfeld*, which encapsulate authentic everyday language usage, can serve as a valuable resource for studying irony and humor through conversational implicatures. Kojl 's (2018) and Kentmen et al.'s (2023) research highlights

the importance of pragmatic instruction in addressing cultural appropriateness issues in EFL classrooms, while Derakhshan and Eslami's (2020) study underscores the advantages of pragmatic training and interactive translation activities in improving student performance. Previous research has also shown that implicature plays a pivotal role in enacting humor (Abdalhakeem & Mubarak, 2019; Huang, 2020; Yulianti et al., 2022) and that flouting can generate humor, highlighting the strong connection between humor and implicature (Al-Sawaeer et al., 2022; Huang, 2020). The inclusion of such materials into the curriculum has the potential to nurture and cultivate the pragmatic competence of EFL learners. The consequences of failing to accurately interpret implicatures were evidenced by the misinterpretation of a reply from a Tunisian Minister during an interview, as highlighted by Baker and Saldanha (2009). This underscores the real-world repercussions of inadequate pragmatic competence.

Furthermore, it is imperative to recognize that the development of pragmatic competence is pivotal to preclude miscommunications in real-life scenarios. Therefore, a comprehensive approach that addresses EFL learners' pragmatic competence alongside their linguistic and sociolinguistic proficiencies is essential in mitigating the risk of pragmatic failures. Equally crucial is the need to augment linguistic competence, enabling students to accurately convey the intended meaning of an utterance when translating or interpreting it into another language.

Considering the foregoing, this study underscores the critical importance of pragmatic competence in averting miscommunications, and it advocates for a holistic approach encompassing linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competencies in the EFL learning journey (Al-Tamimi & Rabab'ah, 2007; Rabab'ah, 2015; Rabab'ah & Abuseileek, 2012; Abu Rumman & Rabab'ah, 2022; AbuSalim et al., 2022; Rabab'ah et al., 2022; Rabab'ah & Fowler Al-Hawamdeh, 2020). It is paramount to acknowledge that the significance of pragmatic competence extends beyond avoiding miscommunications; it encompasses the broader goal of effective and contextually appropriate communication in diverse real-world settings. This necessitates integrating pragmatics into EFL classrooms.

Finally, this study points toward several promising avenues for future research. While our study was limited to comprehension of implicature in American sitcoms, exploring diverse cultural and linguistic contexts could greatly enrich the field of pragmatics. A second potential area of inquiry could be how Arab EFL learners translate or interpret implicatures, elucidating their strategies and challenges when rendering implicatures into another language. Such an investigation can provide valuable insights into the intricacies of translation processes, especially concerning pragmatic elements. In addition, future research could explore the correlation between implicature comprehension and the quality of translated texts, assessing how accurately implicatures are conveyed in the translated materials. This line of inquiry has the potential to enhance our understanding of the interplay between pragmatic competence and translation quality, contributing to the refinement of translation practices and pedagogy.

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## Appendix

### A Impicature Comprehension Test

*Please select the answer that best captures the meaning of the underlined sentences*

#### A.1 Segment 1

Season 2 Episode 5 – *The Apartment*

[Setting: Jerry's apartment]

[Jerry and Elaine are looking at Kramer with their arms folded. His hair looks different, it is slicked down.]

**Jerry:** What did you do?

**Kramer:** Mousse. I moussed up.

**Elaine:** I guess it was just a matter of time.

**Kramer:** You know, I should've done this years ago. I mean, I feel like I had two lives. My pre-mousse and now, I begin my post-mousse. Hey, tell me the truth, have you ever seen a better-looking guy?

**Jerry:** Oh, look, it's so subjective.

The speaker in segment 1 means:

1. ☐ He finally did it
2. ☐ He lost his mind
3. ☐ This would have happened sooner or later

#### A.2 Segment 2

**Jerry:** What did you do?

**Kramer:** Mousse. I moussed up.

**Elaine:** I guess it was just a matter of time.

**Kramer:** You know, I should've done this years ago. I mean, I feel like I had two lives. My pre-mousse and now, I begin my post-mousse. Hey, tell me the truth, have you ever seen a better-looking guy?

**Jerry:** Oh, look, it's so subjective.

The speaker in segment 2 means:

1. ☐ You are not looking better
2. ☐ Everyone has their own taste
3. ☐ You look awful

#### A.3 Segment 3

Season 2 Episode 6 – *The Statue*

[Setting: Coffee shop]

[Jerry hired a man called Ray to clean his apartment. A statue that belonged to Jerry disappeared after Ray cleaned the apartment.]

**Jerry:** Ray, I had a statue in my house. You were in my house - and then I saw it in your house.

**Ray:** What are you saying?

**Jerry:** What am I saying?

**Ray:** Are you saying I stole your statue?

The speaker in segment 3 means:

1. ☐ You stole my statue
2. ☐ Isn't that a funny coincidence?
3. ☐ We own the same statue

#### A.4 Segment 4

Season 2 Episode 12 – *The Busboy*

[Setting: Restaurant]

[George and Elaine think they were the reason why a busboy was fired from a Restaurant]

**Elaine:** I said I would never eat here again. But I, I, he had to know I was kidding.

**Jerry:** (Casually buttering a roll) I didn't say anything. [...]

**George:** Was it my fault?

**Elaine:** Was it my fault?

**Jerry:** **Maybe I'll try that pesto...**

The speaker in segment 4 means:

1. ☐ Yes, it's totally your fault
2. ☐ I didn't say you did it
3. ☐ There is no need to justify yourself

#### A.5 Segment 5

Season 5 Episode 7 – *The Non-Fat Yogurt*

[Elaine, Jerry and George are raving about a non-fat frozen yogurt]

**Elaine:** Hmm! Rico!

**Jerry:** **Suave! And it's non-fat!**

**George:** See, how could this not have any fat? It's too good.

The speaker in segment 5 means:

1. ☐ Delicious and healthy!
2. ☐ Non-fat food always tastes good
3. ☐ Non-fat food tastes bad

#### A.6 Segment 6

Season 3 Episode 8 – *The Tape*

[Setting: Jerry's apartment]

**Jerry:** Kramer. I would like to talk to George for a minute, please.

**Kramer:** 'bout what?

**Jerry:** **It's kinda private.**

The speaker in segment 6 means:

1. ☐ It's none of your business
2. ☐ I need you to leave
3. ☐ I might tell you later

## A.7 Segment 7

Season 3 Episode 10 – *The Stranded*

[Setting: Friend's house in Long Island]

[Elaine regrets having accompanied Jerry to a party]

**Jerry:** Now listen, let's keep an eye on each other tonight. In case one of us gets in a bad conversation, we should have a signal that you're in trouble so the other one can get us out of it.

**Elaine:** How old are you?

**Jerry:** Thirty-six. What's the signal? How about this? Chicken wing? No, no, no, I got a better one. Head patting.

**Elaine:** Whatever you want...

The speaker in segment 7 means:

1. ☐ This is so immature
2. ☐ This looks like a plan
3. ☐ Do you mind if I asked you your age?

## A.8 Segment 8

Season 3 Episode 10 – *The Stranded*

[It's 2 am. The party has ended. The hosts, Steve and Jenny are cleaning up, Elaine and Jerry are still there waiting for their friend Kramer to pick them up.]

**Jerry:** You know a friend of my father's used to live right around here. Mike Wichter. He sold plastic straws. You know the ones? You could bend them.

**Elaine:** Have you noticed, people don't use straws as much as they used to for some reason?

**Jenny:** You know, it doesn't look as if your friend is coming.

**Jerry:** Oh, he's coming.

**Jenny:** Maybe you should take a look at a train schedule.

The speaker in segment 8 means:

1. ☐ I want you to go now
2. ☐ Your friend has forgotten you
3. ☐ Your friend is not trustworthy

## A.9 Segment 9

**Jerry:** You know a friend of my father's used to live right around here. Mike Wichter. He sold plastic straws. You know the ones? You could bend them.

**Elaine:** Have you noticed, people don't use straws as much as they used to for some reason?

**Jenny:** You know, it doesn't look as if your friend is coming.

**Jerry:** Oh, he's coming.

**Jenny:** Maybe you should take a look at a train schedule.

The speaker in segment 9 means:

1. ☐ Don't wait for the car
2. ☐ Please just go
3. ☐ Maybe you should take the train

## A.10 Segment 10

Season 3 Episode 10 – *The Stranded*

[Setting: Jerry's apartment]

[Jerry's host in Long Island, Steve, took Jerry up on his offer and decided to stop by Jerry's apartment unannounced. Jerry was getting ready to leave when he heard a knock at his door. Jerry opens the door. Steve steps in.]

**Steve:** Jerry, baby!

**Jerry:** Do I know you?

**Steve:** Boy this comedy's really frying your brain.

**Jerry:** I'm sorry, uh-

**Steve:** See, this is the kind of lasting impression I make on people.

**Jerry:** Oh, okay.

**Steve:** You said if I was ever in the city, I'm in the city.

**Jerry:** You certainly are. What's going on?

The speaker in segment 10 means:

1. ☐ Of course, you know me
2. ☐ Your work as a comedian is making you lose your mind
3. ☐ Comedy would do that

## A.11 Segment 11

**Steve:** Jerry, baby!

**Jerry:** Do I know you?

**Steve:** Boy this comedy's really frying your brain.

**Jerry:** I'm sorry, uh-

**Steve:** See, this is the kind of lasting impression I make on people.

**Jerry:** Oh, okay.

**Steve:** You said if I was ever in the city, I'm in the city. **Jerry:** You certainly are. What's going on?

The speaker in segment 11 means:

1. ☐ No one ever forgets me
2. ☐ I make people forget things
3. ☐ People never remember me

## A.12 Segment 12

Season 3 Episode 11 – *The Alternate Side*

[Setting: Jerry and George are entering Jerry's apartment.]

[Jerry tells George that his car has been stolen]

**Jerry:** Do you believe this? The car was parked right out front.

**George:** Was the alarm on?

**Jerry:** I don't know, I guess it was on. I don't know my alarm sound; I'm not tuned in to it like it's my son.

The speaker in segment 12 means:

1. ☐ It's not his fault if the car was stolen
2. ☐ The alarm is useless since I cannot recognize its sound
3. ☐ I don't listen to my alarm everyday

### A.13 Segment 13

**Kramer:** I got a line in the movie!

**Elaine:** Get out!

**Jerry:** That's great!

**George:** You got a line in the Woody Allen movie?

**Kramer:** Pretty good, huh?

**George:** You're in the movie? Is he in the scene?

**Kramer:** Oh yeah, yeah, it's me and him. I might have a whole new career on my hands, huh?

**Jerry:** You mean **\*a\* career**.

The speaker in segment 13 means:

1. ☐ I don't think this is going to be a real career
2. ☐ You didn't have a career to begin with
3. ☐ This would be the first and last time that you get a career

### A.14 Segment 14

Season 3 Episode 11 – *The Alternate Side*

[Setting: rental agency. Jerry was not aware that his insurance did not cover other drivers]

**Agent:** Sir, if you had read the rental agreement–

**Jerry:** **Did you see the size of that document? It's like the Declaration of Independence, who's gonna read that?**

**Agent:** Mr. Seinfeld, as it stands right now, you are not covered for that damage and there is absolutely nothing that can be done about that.

The speaker in segment 14 means:

1. ☐ The document looks complicated
2. ☐ Only smart people can read that
3. ☐ No one reads long documents

### A.15 Segment 15

Season 3 Episode 11 – *The Alternate Side*

[Elaine and Jerry are waiting for the rental car agent to return. She went to speak with her supervisor.]

**Agent:** I'm sorry, my supervisor says there's nothing we can do.

**Jerry:** **Yeah, it looked as if you were in a real conversation over there.**

**Agent:** But we do have a compact if you would like that.

The speaker in segment 15 means:

1. ☐ You are lying
2. ☐ You took too long
3. ☐ Thank you for trying your best

## A.16 Segment 16

Season 3 Episode 11 – *The Alternate Side*

[Setting: Coffee shop. Elaine, Jerry and George are at their usual booth. The waitress brings the check. Jerry and George fight to pay the check.]

**Jerry:** Let me get that.

**George:** No no no, I got it.

**Jerry:** Please.

**George:** No come on, let me, let me. I smashed your car, it cost you over two thousand dollars...

**Jerry:** Yeah, a cup of coffee should cover it.

The speaker in segment 16 means:

1. ☐ You are being very generous
2. ☐ You owe me much more than that
3. ☐ I appreciate your gesture

## A.17 Segment 17

Season 5 Episode 4 – *The Sniffing Accountant*

[Jerry, George and Elaine at Monk's Café]

**George:** Jerry, where did you get that sweater?

**Jerry:** What do you think? I found it at the back of my closet.

**George:** I think that's what the back of closets are for.

The speaker in segment 17 means:

1. ☐ Your sweater is ugly
2. ☐ You should have never taken such a cool item out of your closet
3. ☐ I love your sweater

## A.18 Segment 18

**Jerry:** The stationery store guy called to say he ORDERED your pencil.

**Elaine:** I told ya'. He has ideas.

**Jerry:** He doesn't even care if a man answers.

**Elaine:** Or you.

The speaker in segment 18 means:

1. ☐ You don't care as well
2. ☐ You are not a man
3. ☐ You are not smart

## A.19 Segment 19

Season 8 Episode 1 – *The Foundation*

[Setting: Coffee shop-Elaine talks about her recent work trip to Mexico with her boss Peterman.]

**Elaine:** It was unbelievable. Six weeks of traveling through Mexico all on Peterman's peso.

**Jerry:** Wow. So, did you get any good ideas for the catalog?

**Elaine:** Oh, tons!

**Jerry:** **Anything you couldn't have gotten tearing open a bag of Doritos and watching Viva Zapata?**

**Elaine:** (laughs sarcastically) You don't respect my work at all, do you?

**Jerry:** No, I don't.

The speaker in segment 19 means:

1. ☐ The catalogue is too superficial
2. ☐ You do not need to travel to get great ideas
3. ☐ You do not normally come up with great ideas

## A.20 Segment 20

Season 8 Episode 2 – *The Soulmate*

[Setting: Opening scene - George at a meeting at the Susan Ross Foundation.]

[George's fiancé, Susan, passed away].

George: You want me to find a poem about Susan? May she rest in peace?! [...]

Wyck: **Well, you should choose the poem since you knew Susan best at the time of her unfortunate** < clears his throat >... **accident.**

The speaker in segment 20 means:

1. ☐ You know so much about Susan; you could have killed her easily
2. ☐ You killed Susan
3. ☐ You should choose the poem since you know Susan best