

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The majority of characters in literature have always been heterosexual, despite the fact that there are many other orientations and preferences that fall under the general heading of sexuality. Queer characters were largely absent from all genres of literature until quite recently. Characters were merely identified as heterosexual and limited to having romantic feelings for people of the other sex. However, this is not a realistic portrayal of our society today. The well-being of youths who are unsure of their orientation or identity is impacted by the scarcity of queer characters in literature. The impact of imagining a fictional (or nonfictional) character who shares the same preferences as the potentially self-conscious reader demands consideration and is crucial to be taken seriously.

Given that queer people's language does not deviate significantly from that of the general population, the representation of non-heterosexual relationships through language has not received much attention. It is very interesting to study the representation of non-heterosexual relationships in literature as they are often depicted through only subtleties such as description of physical closeness, and in lesser frequency, through the way of the communication between the characters. These unclear deliveries make it very important to dive deep in order to identify the means behind the general communication; one of the ways to identify is finding the implicature behind them.

One of these representations can be seen in the movie *Ocean's Eight*, directed by Gary Ross and which screenplay is written by Olivia Milch. *Ocean's Eight* follows Debbie Ocean's release from prison in meeting her former partner-in-crime, Louise Miller, to convince her to join a heist that she had planned during serving her sentence. This research aims to reveal a sapphic subtext in the movie between the characters of Louise Miller and Debbie Ocean and to accomplish the aim, this study will analyze the implications occurred between the two characters.

Pragmatics, a field within linguistics, focuses on the connection between linguistic expressions and human users. Yule (2003) defines pragmatics as the examination of speakers' intended meanings within a specific context, which often involves communicating more than what is explicitly stated. This study employs relevance theory to uncover the intended meanings of speakers' utterances. Specifically, the research delves into one branch of pragmatics known as Relevance Theory.

The theory of Relevance, proposed by Sperber and Wilson, is a significant aspect of pragmatics, addressing how hearers interpret a speaker's meaning by relating the utterance in relevant ways. Communication is driven by the speaker's intention to convey something to their audience, necessitating the hearer to reconstruct the meaning of the utterance. This research utilizes the Explicature and Implicature theory to analyze the data.

In relevance theory, Explicature and Implicature are two essential components. This research emphasizes the role of implicature, as people often

imply their intentions rather than stating them explicitly. Implicature serves various functions and allows individuals to convey their message more indirectly and effectively. The cognitive approach to pragmatics is highly applicable to movie language. The dialogues spoken by movie characters can be considered texts and can be analyzed using relevance theory to understand the director's communicative intentions. This study uses the movie "Ocean's Eight" as the data to help readers grasp the implicit meanings in the characters' utterances. The focus is on conversations that contain hidden messages and implicit meanings

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Ocean's Eight movie contains a set of dialogue that creates an ambiguous dynamic between the characters of Debbie Ocean and Louise Miller all while the relationship between them, past and/or present, has not been disclosed. Linguistic means, and that of more specific pragmatic apparatus of implicature, is needed to uncover the relationship between them for the aforementioned means. In light of these intriguing circumstances, several research questions naturally arise, as outlined below.

- a. What are the implicatures that occurred between and/or regarding the relationship of Debbie Ocean and Louise Miller?
- b. What can be inferred from those implicatures and will they be classified as sapphic subtext?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

This study aims to achieve two primary objectives: firstly, to identify and analyze all implicatures that manifest between the two characters; secondly, to reveal the underlying meaning within those implicatures and determine their potential classification as sapphic subtext. Furthermore, this research is hoped to shed light on one of the avenues through which non-heterosexual relationships are conveyed through language, contributing to a broader comprehension of diverse narratives within the realm of literature and film.

#### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

To ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of this research, it is essential to establish clear limitations. The focus of this study is narrowed down to three main theories: Relevance theory, Implicature, and Explicature. The specific theory utilized in this study is the one proposed by Sperber and Wilson. Notably, the implicature investigated in this research differs significantly from the implicature proposed by Grice. This research centers on analyzing the conversation between the characters Debbie Ocean and Louise Miller and/or conversation about their relationship in the movie *Ocean's Eight*. To ensure focus and efficiency, the study excludes unnecessary utterances and selects those that contain implicit meanings or implicatures regarding the relationship of Debbie Ocean and Louise Miller.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

a. Theoretical significance

This study seeks to provide concise information to readers regarding implicatures, relevance theory, and the presence of a sapphic subtext in the movie *Ocean's Eight*. By delving into these aspects, the study aims to enrich both the readers' and the writer's understanding, perception, and knowledge surrounding the subject matter. Furthermore, this research aspires to serve as a point of reference and potential comparison for future studies, offering a foundation for further exploration and analysis in this field.

#### b. Practical significance

This academic research holds the potential to enrich the existing body of knowledge and expand the references available within the field of pragmatics, particularly in relation to implicature. Furthermore, this study aims to make a significant contribution to future research endeavors, specifically in the areas of implicature and the movie *Ocean's Eight*. Additionally, this research seeks to critically examine the accuracy of the representation of non-heterosexual relationships in media, recognizing the crucial significance of representation itself. By exploring this aspect, our study acknowledges the vital role that representation plays in reflecting the diverse realities and societal dynamics of our world.

### **1.6 Previous Studies**

Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate implicature and employ the relevance theory framework. The current study builds upon this existing body of research, recognizing the value and relevance of prior studies that

have utilized the relevance theory approach. In the realm of humor analysis, H. U. Shuqin's (2013) study explores verbal humor in the popular sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*, demonstrating that humor arises from the contrast between maximal relevance and optimal relevance., Shengxi Jin et al. (2012) delve into the production of verbal humor in Joe Wong's talk show, uncovering the importance of mutual cognitive environments between the addresser and addressee as preconditions for successful humor realization. Lilis Ade Sartika and Budi Eko Pranoto (2021), also undertakes a comprehensive examination of the humor present in *The Big Bang Theory*, a renowned American sitcom, through the lens of cognition and communication, with the findings that of plethora of humor that relies on the principles of relevance communication, highlighting the indispensability of applying relevance theory to comprehend the contextual nuances of the humor.

In the field of audiovisual translation, Tang Minmin's (2016) study delves into the significance of relevance theory in subtitle translation, emphasizing the role of context, ostensive-inferential communication, and optimal relevance. Li Xinya's (2016) study focuses on movie-subtitle translation and identifies efficient strategies. Through an analysis of the translation process, the study addresses linguistic and cultural obstacles encountered while translating *The Shawshank Redemption*, a renowned 1994 American drama. By utilizing relevance theory, these two studies demonstrate the effectiveness of the theoretical framework of the application of relevance theory in overcoming translation challenges such as cultural disparities, wordplay, stylistic considerations, and omissions. Wang Jian

and Zhang Shiqian (2022) explores the concept of relevance in a slightly different take of translation. They investigate the significance of relevance reconstruction in achieving optimal relevance in the reconstruction in Xu Yuanchong's English renditions of ancient Chinese poetry.

Within the realm of stylistic analysis, a study conducted by Hazel Price and Jack Wilson (2019), undertakes an exploration of the inherent benefits of adopting a relevance theoretic approach in the examination of song lyrics. Specifically, the study delves into the analysis of Tom Waits' lyrics, highlighting how the effective use of figurative language is accentuated by the listener's schematic/encyclopedic knowledge of Waits' artistic trajectory, meteorological phenomena, and the broader context of American culture. This research contributes to the field of stylistic analysis by shedding light on the significance of a relevance theoretic lens in unraveling the intricate layers of meaning within song lyrics, offering a holistic understanding of the artistic endeavor.

In the realm of implicature theory, the current study builds upon prior research conducted by several scholars. Firstly, Selly Rafhela (2020) undertook a study focusing on the analysis of conversational implicature within the "Dr. Phil" talk show. The objectives of Rafhela's research encompassed the identification and analysis of various types of conversational implicature, as well as the functions arising from the speaker's utterances in Dr. Phil's talk-show setting. Secondly, Muhammad Vikry (2014) conducted a study with the aim of classifying the types of conversational implicature resulting from the characters' non-

observance of maxims in the movie "Iron Man 3." Additionally, Vikry aimed to explain the underlying meanings conveyed by these implicatures. Dheril Sofia Nanda (2015) embarked on a study focused on unraveling the foundational framework and deciphering the implied meanings embedded within conversational interactions by examining the arrangement of maxims. And lastly, a study conducted by Zahro Laila Nur (2016) delves into the intricate meaning embedded within the conversations among the cast of the Fast Furious movies, both employing implicatures and relevance theory. These studies not only contribute to the existing scholarly discourse but also shed light on the nuanced applications of implicature and relevance theory in different linguistic and cultural contexts.

In the realm of queer media and its representation through language, previous studies have contributed valuable insights. Jeremy Calder (2020) provided an essay titled "Language and Sexuality: Language and LGBTQ+ Communities," which illuminated the progression of language studies concerning queer speakers and individuals whose gender and/or sexual identities diverge from the traditional heterosexual binary. Initially focused on identifying linguistic disparities between queer and straight speakers, these studies have evolved to emphasize the multitude of queer voices across different contexts and their role in shaping diverse queer identities.

Another notable study conducted by Mats-Erik Augustsson (2011) titled "Queer as Folk, Representation of Gay Vocabulary in Popular Culture" explored



the portrayal of gay vocabulary and code-switching in the North American television series "Queer as Folk." Augustsson's research involved a comprehensive examination of the series, systematically searching for words and expressions previously documented in research.

Another significant contribution to the study of queer language and its impact on identity formation and subjectivity is Jad Jaber's (2018) research titled "ARAB QUEER LANGUAGE: What are the characteristics of the language used upon, and within queer Arab culture, and how does that affect the identity-formation and subjectivity of queer Arab individuals?" This study specifically explores Arab queer language, with a focus on Lebanon as a case study. Lebanon has long been recognized as a "Queer hub" within the region, owing to various socio-economic and historical factors that have positioned it as one of the relatively more "liberal" Arab countries.

Another noteworthy study exploring lesbian representation in popular culture is conducted by Grace Lemon (2020) titled "Subtext, But Make It Sapphic." This research delves into the realm of songwriting and storytelling, where an increasing number of artists have been intentionally blurring gender lines and challenging the distinction between the singer and the narrator. Lemon examines the works of four prominent female music artists: Taylor Swift, Mitski, Phoebe Bridgers, and Katie Gavin of MUNA. These artists have incorporated various techniques such as gender-swapping, avoiding the use of gendered pronouns, and exuding sapphic energy in their music. Lemon sheds light on the

nuanced ways in which they contribute to the portrayal and visibility of lesbian experiences and identities in contemporary pop culture.

In the realm of analyzing the movie *Ocean's Eight*, three notable studies have been encountered. The first study, conducted by Haswari Zahra Demanty (2019) and titled "Female Masculinity in Movies: An Analysis Study of Semiotics in *Ocean's Eight*," delves into the exploration of female masculinity portrayed by the eight main female characters in the movie. This analysis employs the semiotics framework proposed by Roland Barthes, along with the theories of female masculinity by Judith Halberstam and masculinity by Peter Lehman. The study aims to examine the significance of female masculinity exhibited by the characters. Through this semiotic analysis, the study unveils the presence and impact of masculinity in the portrayal of these female characters, providing valuable insights into the representation of gender roles and identities in *Ocean's Eight*.

The second study, conducted by Esmé Fransen (2020) and titled "Big Dyke Energy? Commodification and Queer Female Meaning-Making in the Reception of *Ocean's 8* (Gary Ross, 2018)," delves into the role of commodification in the process of queer meaning-making within popular film. Through a reception study of the film *Ocean's Eight*, this research investigates how commodification influences the formation of queer interpretations and meanings among audiences. By exploring the reception and interpretation of the

film, the study sheds light on the complex dynamics between commodification, queer representation, and audience engagement.

The third study, conducted by Elyssa Michelle Day (2020) and titled "Uncovering the Women in *Ocean's Eight*: Understanding the Trends of the Women's Movement with the Portrayals of Women in Film," aims to gain a deeper understanding of the correlations between significant milestones in the women's movement and their reflection in cinematic portrayals.

This research expands upon previous studies to further our understanding of implicature theory in diverse communicative contexts. This research also seeks to further explore the representation of queer identities in media and the intricate interplay between language and LGBTQ+ communities. Previous studies have not explored the intersection of relevance theory, implicature theory, and queer themes in the movie *Ocean's Eight*. This study aims to fill this gap by combining these three aspects. Using implicature theory as a linguistic framework, the research aims to reveal the hidden sapphic subtext within *Ocean's Eight*.

One of the notable aspects of this research lies in its unique perspective on the representation of the queer community. While previous studies in the field of queer linguistics have predominantly focused on sociolinguistic aspects, this research takes a novel approach by examining the representation from a pragmatics perspective. By adopting a pragmatic lens, the study aims to delve deeper into the subtleties and nuances of queer representation, particularly in relation to language use and communication.

## **1.7 Writing Organization**

The present study will be structured into four chapters, organized as follows:

a. **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter will provide an overview of the study, including its background, scope, research questions, objectives, review of previous studies, significance, and the organization of the paper.

b. **Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Research Method**

This chapter will provide a comprehensive examination and explanation of the theoretical foundations that underpin this study, including the broader field of pragmatics, the theory of implicature, and the relevance theory. This chapter will also outline the specific research methodology employed, including the type of research, data sources, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques.

c. **Chapter 3: Discussion**

This chapter is divided into two main sections: implicature analysis and subtextual emotional analysis. The implicature analysis focuses on exploring the implicatures present in the dialogues between Debbie Ocean and Louise Miller, delving into the multiple layers of meaning conveyed. The subtextual emotional analysis, on the other hand, investigates the subtle emotions conveyed through non-verbal cues and contextual

elements within specific scenes. By examining both aspects, this chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced communication dynamics and emotional subtext within the interactions of the characters.

d. Chapter 4: Conclusion

This chapter serves as the culmination of the analyses conducted in this study, presenting the comprehensive conclusions drawn from the findings. By synthesizing the results obtained from the implicature analysis and subtextual emotional analysis, this chapter offers a nuanced and insightful understanding of the communicative dynamics and underlying emotions depicted in the interactions between Debbie Ocean and Louise Miller.

e. References

This chapter serves as an essential component of this thesis, presenting the compilation of the references utilized throughout the research process. The references included in this chapter encompass a diverse range of scholarly works, academic articles, books, and other relevant sources that have significantly contributed to the development and support of the arguments and findings presented in this research.