

UNIVERZITET U SARAJEVU – FILOZOFSKI FAKULTET
ODSJEK ZA ANGLISTIKU

ZAVRŠNI RAD

Analiza konverzacijskih implikatura u političkoj satiri: Primjeri iz
emisije „Last Week Tonight“ Johna Olivera

Mentor: Prof. dr. Selma Đuliman

Student: Manal Elmasry Bratić

Sarajevo, 2024

UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO – FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

FINAL PAPER

Analyzing Conversational Implicatures In Political Satire: A Case Study
of John Oliver's 'Last Week Tonight'

Mentor: prof. dr. Selma Đuliman

Student: Manal Elmasry Bratić

Sarajevo, 2024

Sažetak

Ovaj završni magistarski rad ima za cilj istražiti pojam implikature Paula Gricea, naglašavajući njenu relevantnost u političkoj satiri. Ispituje kako John Oliver koristi konverzacijske implikature u kasnijim epizodama 10. sezone emisije 'Last Week Tonight' kako bi poboljšao satirične komentare. Teorijski okvir uključuje Griceove maksime i njihovu ulogu u generiranju implikatura, istraživanje humora i društveno-političkih uticaja. Ovaj rad također predlaže pedagoške strategije za integraciju implikatura, satire i humora u nastavi engleskog kao stranog jezika, promoviše medijsku pismenost i razumijevanje savremenog političkog diskursa.

Kroz detaljnu analizu, prikazat će se kako Oliverovo kršenje Griceovih maksima, posebno kroz kršenje kooperativnog principa, doprinosi humoru i retoričkom utjecaju. Dalje istražuje kako Oliverov pristup potiče kritičko praćenje medija među gledaocima. Ispitivanjem novijih podataka, prikazat će se savremena perspektiva o primjeni implikature u političkoj satiri, ističući njenu učinkovitost u angažiranju publike i promicanju kritičkog diskursa.

Ova završna magistarska teza ima za cilj da doprinese razumijevanju političke satire i humora, dok nudi praktične primjene za nastavnike koji žele integrirati humor i medijsku pismenost u svoje nastavne prakse.

Ključne riječi: implikatura, konverzacijska implikatura, politička satira, John Oliver, Griceove maksime, pragmatika, humor, retorika, medijska pismenost, nastava engleskog jezika kao stranog jezika (ESL).

Abstract

This final diploma paper aims to explore the notion of Paul Grice's implicature, emphasizing its relevance in political satire. It examines how John Oliver utilizes conversational implicatures in the later episodes of Season 10 of 'Last Week Tonight' to enhance satirical commentary. The theoretical framework includes Grice's maxims and their role in generating implicatures, investigating humor, and sociopolitical implications. The study also proposes pedagogical strategies for integrating implicatures, satire, and humor into ESL classrooms, promoting media literacy and understanding contemporary political discourse.

Through detailed analysis, this thesis demonstrates how Oliver's flouting of Grice's maxims, particularly through the violation of the Cooperative Principle, contributes to humor and rhetorical impact. It further explores how Oliver's approach fosters critical media engagement among viewers. By examining recent data, this study provides a contemporary perspective on the application of implicature in political satire, highlighting its effectiveness in engaging audiences and promoting critical discourse.

This research contributes to the understanding of political satire and humor while offering practical applications for educators aiming to integrate humor and media literacy into their teaching practices.

Keywords: implicature, conversational implicature, political satire, John Oliver, Grice's maxims, pragmatics, humor, rhetoric, media literacy, ESL pedagogy.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	6
2. Literature Review	8
2.1 Conversational Implicatures.....	8
2.2 Political Satire	13
2.3 Connection between Political Satire and Conversational Implicatures	14
3. Analyzing Conversational Implicatures in ‘Last Week Tonight’	17
4. Results and Findings.....	33
5. Case Study in Pedagogy: Integrating Satire Into Teaching.....	37
6. Conclusion	40
7. References.....	41

1. Introduction

Political satire is a form of humor that uses irony, exaggeration, and ridicule to criticize political figures and institutions. In contemporary media, John Oliver's *Last Week Tonight* is a good example of this kind of genre. This final diploma paper investigates the use of conversational implicatures in John Oliver's *Last Week Tonight*, focusing on the second half of Season 10. The main hypothesis suggests that Oliver's use of humor, particularly through implicatures enhances audience understanding and engagement with political and social issues.

The corpus for this study consists of episodes from the second half of Season 10 of *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*. This season was selected due to its recent and relevant content, providing a current perspective on political and social issues. The episodes analyzed cover a variety of topics, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the use of humor and implicatures as well as understanding of how humor and satire are constructed and their effectiveness in engaging and educating the audience.

The analysis involves a detailed examination of episodes, focusing on identifying the ways in which Grice's maxims are flouted to convey sarcasm and the implicatures that create humorous content.

The central hypothesis of this thesis is that John Oliver's use of conversational implicatures, satire, and humor in *Last Week Tonight* enhances audience understanding and engagement with political and social issues. By employing Grice's Theory of Implicature, this study will demonstrate how Oliver's flouting of conversational maxims creates humor and conveys deeper meanings, thereby fostering a more informed and critically thinking audience.

The primary research questions guiding this analysis are:

1. How is humorous content realized through implicatures?
2. How does the violation of the Cooperative Principle contribute to the use of sarcasm in the show?

These questions are critical to understanding the mechanics of satire and its impact on viewers.

The final diploma paper also proposes practical strategies for integrating conversational implicatures, satire, and humor into ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms. These strategies include using authentic materials, incorporating visual aids, leveraging technology, encouraging interaction, providing feedback, scaffolding learning, and making learning relevant. By employing these strategies, educators can enhance students' language skills, promote media literacy, and foster an understanding of contemporary political discourse.

To summarize, this final diploma aims to demonstrate that John Oliver's use of conversational implicatures and violation of the Cooperative Principle in *Last Week Tonight* not only entertains but also enhances audience understanding and engagement with critical political and social issues. By breaking down the elements of humor and satire, this study adds to the broader field of humor studies and political communication, highlighting the power of satire in today's media.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conversational Implicatures

‘The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn’t said’

Peter Drucker

Conversational implicatures, a concept introduced by H.P. Grice, play a crucial role in understanding how meaning is conveyed in conversation beyond the literal content of words. Grice first introduced this concept in his seminal William James Lectures at Harvard University in 1967, which was later published in the book "Studies in the Way of Words" in 1989. This work has been instrumental in the field of pragmatics and has provided a foundation for numerous subsequent studies on how context influences communication. (Levinson, 100)

According to Grice’s theory, implicatures arise not from the literal meaning of words but rather from the speaker’s intention when using those words in a specific context. This indirect exchange of information requires understanding the context, situation, and inferences. Through an examination of various types of implicatures, such as conventional and conversational implicatures, along with the underlying principles of quality, quantity, relation, and manner, researchers have been able to explore the complexities of language utilization and interpretation more deeply. (Grice 1975, 44)

Grice proposed that effective communication relies on a set of conversational maxims, which speakers generally follow to ensure their utterances are informative, truthful, relevant, and clear. These maxims are part of what Grice termed the Cooperative Principle, which asserts that participants in a conversation typically cooperate with one another to facilitate understanding.

The four maxims are:

1. **Maxim of Quantity:** Provide the right amount of information—neither too little nor too much.
2. **Maxim of Quality:** Do not provide information that is false or for which you lack evidence.
3. **Maxim of Relation:** Be relevant in your contributions to the conversation.
4. **Maxim of Manner:** Avoid ambiguity and obscurity; be orderly and clear.

Grice's Theory of Implicature explains how listeners can understand additional meaning, this is based on the idea that speakers mostly follow the maxims. When a speaker appears to violate a maxim, the listener interprets this as a deliberate act to convey a specific implicature. For example, if someone says, "Can you pass the salt?" they are not questioning the listener's ability to pass the salt but instead making a polite request for the salt to be passed. Conversational implicatures often arise when these maxims are flouted or deliberately violated in a way that the listener can recognize the intended meaning behind the utterance. (Levinson, 101-102)

Conversational implicatures are typically divided into two main categories: **generalized conversational implicatures** and **particularized conversational implicatures**.

Generalized Conversational Implicatures (GCI)

Generalized conversational implicatures arise without requiring specific contextual information to be understood. These implicatures are typically derived from what is said in most contexts, relying on common assumptions or general knowledge. They often occur when certain expressions or forms are used, leading the listener to infer additional meaning beyond the literal content. For instance:

1. **Scalar Implicatures:** These occur when a speaker chooses a term from a scale of values, implying that stronger terms do not apply. For example, saying "Some of the students passed the exam" typically implicates that not all students passed. (Levinson, 133)

2. **Quantity-based Implicatures:** Based on Grice's maxim of Quantity (providing the right amount of information), these implicatures suggest that the speaker has provided as much information as needed, and no more. For example, "John ate some of the cookies" implies that John did not eat all the cookies.
3. **Manner-based Implicatures:** These implicatures arise from the way something is said, often relying on Grice's maxim of Manner (be clear, avoid ambiguity). For example, if someone says, "John managed to solve the problem," it implies that solving the problem was not easy for John. The choice of "managed to" over a simpler "solved" carries additional meaning regarding the effort or difficulty involved. (Grice 1975, 47)

Particularized Conversational Implicatures (PCI)

Particularized conversational implicatures depend heavily on the specific context in which the conversation takes place. These implicatures require background knowledge and situational context to be understood. The meaning is derived from the interplay between the speaker's utterance and the context, making them unique to each conversational situation. Examples include:

1. **Context-specific Implicatures:** These arise from the particularities of the situation. For instance, if at a dinner party someone asks, "Can you pass the salt?" and the response is, "The salt is on the table," it implicates that the person being asked should get the salt themselves.
2. **Relevance-based Implicatures:** Stemming from Grice's maxim of Relevance (making contributions relevant to the conversation), these implicatures often rely on the current topic or situation. For example, in response to "Are you going to the meeting?" saying, "I have a lot of work to do" implicates that the person likely will not attend the meeting. (Levinson, 126-128)

Grice identified several key properties of conversational implicatures. They are context-dependent, non-conventional, defeasible, non-detachable, and calculable.

Context-Dependence

Conversational implicatures rely heavily on the context in which the conversation takes place. The meaning is often derived from the specific situation and background knowledge shared by the speaker and listener. For instance, the implicature in the phrase "Can you pass the salt?" depends on the context of a mealtime setting.

Non-Conventionality

Implicatures are not tied to the literal meaning of the words used. Instead, they arise from the way the words are used in a particular context. This makes them different from conventional implicatures, which are tied to specific words or phrases. For example, saying "It's cold in here" can imply a request to close a window, which is understood through context rather than the literal meaning of the words.

Cancellability

An implicature can be cancelled if additional information is provided. For instance, if someone says, "John ate some of the cookies," it can be followed by, "In fact, he ate all of them," which cancels the original implicature that John did not eat all the cookies. This attribute highlights the flexibility of conversational implicatures.

Non-Deterministic

Conversational implicatures are not always guaranteed. They depend on the listener's ability to recognize and interpret the implied meaning based on the context and shared knowledge. Different listeners might derive different implicatures from the same statement depending on their understanding of the context.

Reinforceability

Implicatures can often be reinforced by adding more explicit information. For example, saying, "John ate some of the cookies, but not all of them," reinforces the implicature that John did not eat all the cookies. This reinforcement can help clarify the speaker's intended meaning.

Calculated

Listeners calculate implicatures based on the assumption that speakers are following conversational maxims (such as providing the right amount of information, being truthful, relevant, and clear). When these maxims appear to be violated, listeners infer additional meaning. This calculation process is central to understanding how implicatures work in real-life communication. (Levinson, 114-120)

Dependence on Cooperative Principle

Conversational implicatures depend on the Cooperative Principle, which assumes that participants in a conversation are cooperating with each other to communicate effectively. This principle underlies the conversational maxims that guide the generation and interpretation of implicatures. Without this cooperative assumption, deriving implicatures would be significantly more challenging. (Grice 1989, 65-71)

Grice's idea of conversational implicatures is important for understanding how we communicate, as it shows the hidden meanings in our everyday conversations. By understanding these attributes, one can better analyze how conversational implicatures function in communication, including in contexts like political satire where implicatures are often used to convey deeper or hidden meanings. In political satire, such as John Oliver's *Last Week Tonight*, these implicatures are utilized to enhance humor and critique, often flouting Grice's maxims to not only entertain but also to engage the audience, encourage critical thinking and highlight the absurdities or contradictions in political and social issues. (Baym, 2006)

In the following analysis, the focus will be on examining conversational implicatures.

2.2 Political Satire

Political satire is a form of humor that uses irony, exaggeration, and ridicule to criticize political figures and institutions. Humor and sarcasm have always been important in political discourse. From ancient Greece to modern comedy shows, satire has adapted to the changing political environment.

The term "satire" originates from the Latin word "satura," which means "full" or "medley." Roman rhetorician Quintilian coined this term, referring to a form of literary work that combines various elements to mock or criticize its subjects. Early forms of satire were a mix of prose and poetry, often targeting public figures and social norms.

Satire has evolved significantly over centuries. In ancient Rome, satirists like Horace and Juvenal laid the foundation for this genre, employing wit and criticism to comment on social and political issues. The comedic tradition in ancient Greece laid the groundwork for satire as a means of societal reflection. The Renaissance period saw a resurgence of satirical works, with writers like Erasmus and Rabelais using satire to challenge religious and political norms. In modern times, satire has expanded beyond literature to include various media, such as television, film, and the internet, allowing for broader dissemination and impact (Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature).

Satire can be broadly categorized into two types: Horatian and Juvenalian. Horatian satire is light-hearted and humorous, aiming to entertain while gently poking fun at its subjects. In contrast, Juvenalian satire is harsher and more scathing, using sharp criticism and moral indignation to provoke thought and challenge the status quo. Both types are essential in addressing different aspects of societal and political issues.

Political satire specifically targets political figures, policies, and institutions, using humor as a weapon to critique and reveal underlying truths. According to Baym (2006), political satire serves as a counter-narrative to mainstream political discourse, offering alternative perspectives and questioning official narratives. Shows like "*The Daily Show*" and "*Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*" exemplify contemporary political satire, combining humor with incisive political commentary

Late-night television shows have become significant platforms for political satire. These shows combine comedy with news commentary, reaching wide audiences and influencing public opinion.

Political satire in late-night shows serves several functions:

1. **Critique and Accountability:** By highlighting the flaws and inconsistencies of political figures and policies, satirical shows hold those in power accountable.
2. **Public Engagement:** Satirical news shows often attract younger audiences who might not engage with traditional news media. This helps raise political awareness and encourages civic participation.
3. **Cultural Reflection:** Satirical shows reflect and shape cultural attitudes towards politics. They often provide a counter-narrative to mainstream news, offering alternative perspectives on current events. (Baym, 2006)

2.3 Connection between Political Satire and Conversational Implicatures

Conversational implicatures play a crucial role in satire, a genre that often relies on indirect and subtle communication to critique and entertain. Here's how these implicatures connect to and enhance satire:

Subtle Critique

According to Grice's theory, conversational implicatures allow speakers to imply meanings beyond what is explicitly stated, making the critique more sophisticated and layered (Grice, 1975). Satire thrives on subtlety, often critiquing its targets indirectly. For instance, John Oliver might make a seemingly innocuous statement that, through implicature, highlights the absurdity or hypocrisy of a political figure or policy.

Humor Through Implicature

Humor in satire often arises from the audience recognizing the gap between what is said and what is meant. Conversational implicatures exploit this gap, creating humor by leading the audience to infer hidden meanings (Horn, 2004). For example, when Oliver uses understatement or irony, the humor emerges from the audience's realization of the true, often exaggerated, meaning behind his words.

Engagement and Intellectual Challenge

Satirical humor engages the audience more deeply by requiring them to actively interpret and infer meaning. This intellectual challenge makes the content more engaging and memorable. By relying on conversational implicatures, satirists like Oliver encourage their audience to read between the lines, fostering a more interactive viewing experience (Baym, 2006).

Flouting Grice's Maxims

Satire often involves flouting Grice's maxims to generate implicatures that convey criticism or humor. For instance:

Maxim of Quantity: Providing less information than expected to suggest something deeper or more critical. Oliver might state a fact with minimal detail, prompting the audience to understand a more significant underlying issue.

Maxim of Quality: Using exaggeration or irony, which on the surface appears untruthful but is intended to highlight a larger truth or critique (Geurts & Pouscoulous, 2009).

Maxim of Relation (Relevance): Making statements that seem irrelevant but are actually highly relevant in a subversive or indirect way, drawing attention to hidden connections or ironies (Allan, 2001).

Maxim of Manner: Deliberately using ambiguity or obscurity to force the audience to interpret the underlying message (Levinson, 1983).

Amplifying the Message

Conversational implicatures can amplify the impact of satirical messages. By not stating the critique explicitly, satirists can make their message more powerful and memorable. The audience's active participation in deciphering the implicature can lead to a stronger emotional and cognitive response, reinforcing the satirical message (Horn, 2004).

Protecting the Satirist

Indirect criticism through implicature can also serve to protect the satirist. By implying rather than stating criticisms outright, satirists can avoid direct confrontation or legal repercussions while still conveying their message. This indirect approach allows them to tackle sensitive or controversial topics with a layer of plausible deniability (LaBoeuf, 2007)

Conversational implicatures are a vital tool in satire, enhancing its subtlety, humor, and engagement . The relationship between what is said and what is meant in satirical works like John Oliver's *Last Week Tonight* not only entertains but also encourages critical thinking and deeper reflection on the issues being addressed. This approach to communication ensures that satire remains a powerful vehicle for social and political commentary.

3. Analyzing Conversational Implicatures in 'Last Week Tonight'

Late night shows have become a significant part of the television landscape, especially in the United States, where they combine elements of comedy, news, and interviews to entertain and inform their audiences. These shows often feature a charismatic host who provides commentary on current events, interviews celebrities, and engages in humorous skits and monologues. The format of late night shows allows for a blend of satire and critique, often addressing political and social issues in a way that is both accessible and engaging for viewers. (Baym, 15-20)

According to Baym (2006), late night shows like 'The Daily Show with Jon Stewart' and 'The Colbert Report' have redefined political communication by merging news and entertainment. These shows employ satire and parody to critique mainstream media and political discourse, often highlighting the absurdities and contradictions in contemporary politics. Baym argues that late night shows serve as a "discursive integration," where the lines between news and entertainment blur, creating a unique space for political commentary and critique.

Hosts like John Oliver utilize satire to highlight the absurdities and hypocrisies of politicians and policies, employing sarcasm, irony, and mockery to effectively convey their messages. This type of satire not only entertains but also encourages viewers to critically engage with the issues being presented. According to Gray, Jones, and Thompson (2009), political satire acts as a form of social commentary that can inspire viewers to question the status quo and reconsider their beliefs. By merging humor with sharp analysis, these shows make complex political topics more accessible and engaging, thus serving as powerful instruments for both education and entertainment.

Major Characteristics of Late Night Shows

Late night shows, such as 'The Daily Show' and 'The Tonight Show,' share several key characteristics:

1. **Monologues and Opening Segments:** The host typically begins with a monologue that combines current events, jokes, and personal anecdotes. This segment sets the tone for the show and often includes sharp political satire.
2. **Interviews:** Interviews with celebrities, politicians, and other notable figures are a staple of late night shows. These interviews can range from light-hearted to serious, depending on the guest and the topic.
3. **Humorous Skits and Segments:** Many shows feature pre-recorded skits or recurring segments that parody current events or cultural phenomena. These segments often involve elaborate setups and comedic performances by the host and supporting cast.
4. **Audience Interaction:** The live studio audience plays a crucial role in late night shows, providing immediate feedback through laughter and applause. This interaction helps create a lively and engaging atmosphere.
5. **Satirical Commentary:** Perhaps the most defining feature of late night shows is their use of satire to comment on political and social issues. By exaggerating and mocking the actions of politicians and public figures, these shows encourage viewers to think critically about the news and question mainstream narratives.

These characteristics have made late night shows a powerful platform for political satire and social critique, reaching a wide audience and influencing public discourse. (Gray, Jones, and Thompson 2009)

Last Week Tonight with John Oliver stands out among late night shows for its in-depth analysis and investigative approach to political and social issues. Unlike traditional late night formats that rely heavily on interviews and skits, *Last Week Tonight* dedicates substantial time to exploring a single topic in each episode. This allows John Oliver to explore issues in greater depth, offering context, background information, and a critical perspective that is frequently absent from mainstream news coverage. Oliver's use of humor and satire is particularly effective in highlighting the absurdities and contradictions in political and social systems.

A key aspect of Oliver's approach is his use of conversational implicatures—implied meanings that are not explicitly stated but understood by the audience through context and shared

knowledge. By skillfully employing implicatures, Oliver enhances his satirical commentary, making it more engaging and thought-provoking. This technique allows him to communicate complex ideas and criticisms in a way that is both accessible and entertaining. For example, Oliver might discuss a policy by highlighting its official rationale while subtly suggesting, through tone and context, that the real motives are less noble. This use of implicature invites the audience to read between the lines and draw their own conclusions, fostering a deeper understanding and critical perspective (Davisson and Donovan 2019).

In addition to verbal techniques, Oliver frequently uses visual aids to reinforce his points. He often displays images or short video clips, which serve as visual commentary on the topics he discusses. These images and videos provide evidence for his arguments and add a layer of humor and sarcasm. For instance, during a segment on homeowners associations (HOAs), Oliver showcased absurd rules through humorous visuals, making his critique both entertaining and informative. Oliver also creates short mock videos that parody the real issues he addresses. These videos highlight the absurdity of certain practices or policies while providing a comedic twist. Notable examples include a parody commercial for dollar stores, a satirical video on the consulting firm McKinsey & Company, and a humorous take on HOA rules. These mock videos encapsulate the essence of his critique, using humor to underscore the real-life implications of the issues at hand.

This method is particularly effective in political satire, where the goal is not only to entertain but also to challenge viewers' perceptions and encourage critical thinking. By using conversational implicatures, visual aids, and mock videos, Oliver can address sensitive or controversial topics in a subtle manner, making his critiques more acceptable and impactful.

In the following sections, specific episodes of 'Last Week Tonight' from later in Season 10 will be analyzed, focusing on how John Oliver uses conversational implicatures to enhance his critique and engage his audience. This analysis will demonstrate the unique role that humor and satire play in political communication and the importance of understanding the underlying conversational implicatures in Oliver's rhetoric.

Episode	Conversational Implicature	Maxim Flouted	Humorous/Critical Effect
11	"Trump was indicted multiple times, one of which gave us this mugshot in which he looks like he's struggling to find Waldo in a crowded ski slope."	Quantity and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quantity by providing more information than necessary. Flouts the maxim of relevance because the image of "Waldo" is irrelevant in a serious legal context.	Uses humor to make Trump's legal problems seem less serious through a funny comparison.
11	"That is pretty incriminating. No one casually googles 'How much is one kilo of gold worth?' because they are bored."	Quality and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quality by implying a false claim (no one googles gold prices out of boredom) and the maxim of relation by introducing an irrelevant example to humorously highlight suspicious behavior.	Exaggerates the implication of guilt by highlighting the absurdity of the situation, adding humor to the critique.
11	"And I'll tell you why I'm so personally invested in this – some of us never get to see our exact body type on screen, and finally I get why representation matters."	Quantity and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quantity by providing more personal information than necessary, and flouts the maxim of relation by introducing the speaker's body type in a discussion where it may not be directly relevant, using humor to make a point about representation.	John Oliver makes jokes about himself to show why representation is important. This makes his message easier to understand and more interesting.
11	"I didn't think I'd ever say this sentence out loud and mean it. But listen to Billy Joel Fallout Boy, he's got a good point."	Manner and Relation – Flouts the maxim of manner due to its unclear and confusing phrasing. Flouts the maxim of relevance as the reference to Billy Joel Fallout Boy feels disconnected from the context.	The statement is funny because it is strange and unexpected.

Episode	Conversational Implicature	Maxim Flouted	Humorous/Critical Effect
11	"It'd be just as effective to hold a vote on the question: "Should it be summer now? Yes? Yes? Everyone vote, yes? Well bad news everyone, it still isn't."	Relevance and Manner – Flouts the maxim of relevance by introducing an irrelevant comparison. Flouts the maxim of manner due to the exaggerated and convoluted nature of the comparison.	Uses a funny comparison to show how some democratic processes don't work well, making the problems seem silly.
11	"It's worth pointing out that according to a recent study, 100% of prisoners are actually people – I mean like 'human beings,' like the kind you are."	Quantity and Quality – Flouts the maxim of quantity by providing unnecessary and overly obvious information. Flouts the maxim of quality by stating an absurdly self-evident fact in a serious tone.	Shows a clear and crazy fact in a funny way to criticize how people treat prisoners badly.
12	"It's a dilemma otherwise known as 'The Tom Cruise conundrum.' On one hand a billion dollars in the Box Office. On the other, a billion-year contract to an alien mafia. It's tricky right?"	Quality and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quality by exaggerating and distorting the comparison, and flouts the maxim of relation by introducing a humorous and irrelevant comparison to highlight the perceived dilemma.	Uses an exaggerated comparison to highlight the contradictions in decision-making, making the situation both relatable and amusing.
12	"The ceiling of how good homeschooling can be is admittedly very high. But the floor of how bad it can get is basically nonexistent."	Quality and Quantity – Flouts the maxim of quality through hyperbole, describing extremes that are not accurate. Flouts the maxim of quantity by giving more information than needed through the exaggerated contrast.	Uses contrast to jokingly highlight the quality of homeschooling

Episode	Conversational Implicature	Maxim Flouted	Humorous/Critical Effect
12	"And agreeing with a staunch Republican Georgia state rep wasn't something I had on my 2023 Bingo card. I've almost got a full Bingo by the way, I'm just waiting on, you know who, to you know what."	Quantity and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quantity by providing more personal and humorous information than necessary with the Bingo card metaphor, and flouts the maxim of relation by introducing an irrelevant and playful analogy to highlight the unexpected nature of the agreement.	Uses humor and a playful metaphor to highlight the surprising nature of the situation, making it engaging for the audience.
13	"For George Santos, an almost clinically chaotic man, to decide that you don't have fundamental leadership skills is truly damning."	Quality and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quality by using exaggeration, and flouts the maxim of relation because the focus shifts to Santos's absurdity rather than the leadership issue being discussed.	Uses irony to highlight the absurdity of the critique, making it funny by emphasizing Santos's own lack of credibility.
13	"The sad fact is many current Republicans, at every level, don't seem to want to serve the government at all; they just want to get famous for TV, regardless of how destructive it is."	Quality and Quantity – Flouts the maxim of quality by using hyperbole to describe Republicans as solely TV-driven. Flouts the maxim of quantity by overgeneralizing the motivations of a large group.	Uses hyperbole and imagery to critique the self-serving ambitions of some politicians, adding humor through exaggeration.
13	"And you should know, if you make a half cheese half pepperoni pizza and then put an egg on top, the whole government actually explodes."	Quality and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quality by using hyperbole to describe Republicans as solely TV-driven, and flouts the maxim of relation by introducing an irrelevant and exaggerated example.	Uses exaggeration to humorously show how complicated and confusing government oversight on food quality can be.

Episode	Conversational Implicature	Maxim Flouted	Humorous/Critical Effect
13	I'm just kidding, rich white celebrities don't go to prison. Felicity Huffman took one for the whole team, so now we're square."	Quality and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quality by suggesting the implausible idea that one person going to prison covers for everyone else. Flouts the maxim of relation by introducing a humorous and irrelevant reference to Felicity Huffman to critique the justice system's leniency.	Criticizing unequal consequences for rich white celebrities. He adds humor and a sarcastic comment about Felicity Huffman, suggesting that her going to prison covers for all the others.
14	"An IHOP in New Jersey is not where you expect a senator to meet his wife. It's where you expect a customer to meet their own personal rock bottom."	Quality and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quality by exaggerating the unlikelihood of a senator meeting their wife at IHOP, and flouts the maxim of relation by introducing an irrelevant and humorous comparison to emphasize the unexpected nature of the situation.	Uses a surprising and funny comparison to show the senator's strange behavior, adding a touch of satire.
14	"The mark of any good institution is matching outfits, evasion of responsibilities through institutional secrecy, and the misplaced belief that you are saving the world."	Quality and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quality by making an exaggerated, sarcastic claim about what defines a "good institution," and flouts the maxim of relation by humorously introducing irrelevant traits like matching outfits and secrecy to satirize institutional arrogance.	Uses irony and exaggeration to make fun of how some institutions act important but don't take responsibility, showing their wrong self-image.

Episode	Conversational Implicature	Maxim Flouted	Humorous/Critical Effect
14	"Essentially, McKinsey is a firm that projects a huge amount of confidence to sell a frequently unremarkable product at sky-high prices, making them truly the Salt Bae of companies. You've had salt before but have you had it from a douche?"	Quality and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quality by using exaggerated comparisons (McKinsey vs. Salt Bae) and an insult (douche), and flouts the maxim of relation by introducing a humorous, irrelevant comparison to critique the company's overpriced and overhyped services.	Uses a funny comparison and irony to criticize McKinsey's business practices, showing the gap between their confidence and the real value of their product.
15	"Although, let's face it, it's not like the new Republican speaker wasn't going to have a laundry list of horrifying opinions. It'd be more surprising if he threw a couple of good ones in there	Quality and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quality through the exaggeration of the speaker's opinions as entirely bad. Flouts the maxim of relation introducing a sarcastic and irrelevant remark about being surprised if there were good opinions, to humorously emphasize the speaker's negative expectations.	Uses irony and sarcasm to humorously critique the expected negative opinions of the new Republican speaker, highlighting the low expectations for any positive views.
15	"Well, well, to those who thought that I'm the most annoying version of a loud man on TV with a British accent, looks like you owe me an apology. Because that's pretty condescending right there."	Quality and Manner – Flouts the maxim of quality by implying that his own annoying behavior somehow warrants an apology, which is exaggerated. Flouts the maxim of manner through the unclear and indirect manner of presenting the insult.	Uses humor at his own expense and irony and flipping the situation to highlight the condescending behavior of others.

Episode	Conversational Implicature	Maxim Flouted	Humorous/Critical Effect
15	<p>"And at that point, why bother setting a date at all? If your friend agrees to meet you for dinner at 7, then pushes it to 7:30, then 8, and finally says ‘be there in 20 – years not minutes’, it kind of feels like they never had any intention of getting dinner in the first place."</p>	<p>Quantity and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quantity by providing more information than needed through the exaggerated timeline. Flouts the maxim of relevance by introducing a ridiculous analogy about setting dates that deviates from the actual point about delays.</p>	<p>Uses a funny and exaggerated comparison to criticize companies for not truly committing to ending child labor, pointing out the constant delays and lack of real intention and highlighting the absurdity of the situation.</p>
15	<p>"Auditors give advance notice of inspections. Which is ridiculous. Because that’s never going to be reliable. If you tell your teenager 'I’m going to check your backpack for cigarettes next Tuesday,' then great news, you’re not going to find any."</p>	<p>Relation and Quality – Flouts the maxim of relevance by comparing a real audit to the irrelevant scenario of checking a teenager’s backpack. Flouts the maxim of quality by using a sarcastic and exaggerated example that distorts the seriousness of the issue.</p>	<p>Uses a funny and relatable comparison to criticize how pre-announced audits are ineffective, showing the lack of real oversight.</p>
16	<p>"That’s not only devastating, it’s a truly horrible thing to have to add to the list of things that pregnant women are not safe to do: ride a roller-coaster, eat sushi, dye your roots and simply exist in the state of Texas."</p>	<p>Quantity and Quality – Flouts the maxim of quantity by providing an unnecessarily long list of activities. Flouts the maxim of quality through hyperbole, exaggerating the dangers pregnant women face by including “existing in Texas.”</p>	<p>Uses hyperbole and dark humor to emphasize the severe impact of abortion laws on women's health, pointing out the absurdity and danger of these restrictions.</p>

Episode	Conversational Implicature	Maxim Flouted	Humorous/Critical Effect
16	"Because after all, this is what democracy is all about: America interfering in foreign elections!"	Quality and Relation - Flouts the maxim of quality by making an exaggerated and sarcastic claim about America interfering in foreign elections, and flouts the maxim of relation by introducing an ironic and irrelevant remark to critique foreign policy under the guise of defining democracy.	Uses irony and sarcasm to critique and humorously highlight the hypocrisy and past actions of the United States in foreign affairs.
17	"I'm actually technically a comedy show. I just hide it better than most."	Quality and Relation - Flouts the maxim of quality by making a humorous and exaggerated claim about being a comedy show, and flouts the maxim of relation by introducing an ironic remark to downplay the comedic aspect while highlighting the show's subtle hum	Uses jokes about himself to show the serious topics of the show while reminding viewers it's a comedy, adding irony.
17	"We have to choose whether to share this land or to share the graveyard under it."	Quality and Relation - Flouts the maxim of quality by presenting an extreme and exaggerated choice between sharing the land or sharing a graveyard, and flouts the maxim of relation by introducing a dramatic and metaphorical statement to emphasize the seriousness of the situation	Uses vivid imagery and tough choices to show the seriousness of conflict resolution, adding weight and urgency to the situation.

Episode	Conversational Implicature	Maxim Flouted	Humorous/Critical Effect
18	‘Watch out he bites,’ isn’t something you say about a senator who everyone respects: it’s what you say about a 3-year-old named Dylan after he’s had two Capri Suns.	Quality and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quality by exaggerating the comparison between a senator and a misbehaving child, and flouts the maxim of relation by introducing an irrelevant, humorous analogy to emphasize the senator's lack of respectability.	Uses humor and a playful comparison to critique a senator's behavior, likening it to a hyperactive child to show the absurdity.
18	"Kevin McCarthy allegedly elbowed Tennessee representative Tim Burchett in the back, with Burchett later responding: 'I prayed for him this morning, because I know he’s hurting,' which we all know is the southern for: 'I hope that shitbag sits on a nail.'"	Manner and Relation – Flouts the maxim of manner by using indirect, sarcastic language instead of clearly stating hostility, and flouts the maxim of relation by shifting from a literal expression of prayer to a humorous, culturally specific interpretation, which adds an irrelevant but funny twist.	In the Southern United States, polite expressions can often mask true negative sentiments, Oliver uses humour to highlight the insincerity and critiquing the insincere nature of the statement.
18	"Despite the promise of value, you can end up getting less for more although I will say, in the case of Irish Spring, that’s not necessarily a bad thing."	Quantity and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quantity by providing more information than necessary about getting less for more, and flouts the maxim of relation by humorously introducing a specific, irrelevant example (Irish Spring) to soften the critique with a playful remark.	Uses humor and irony to criticize the false promise of value in products, joking that less might be better with Irish Spring soap.

Episode	Conversational Implicature	Maxim Flouted	Humorous/Critical Effect
18	"It is not good if your employees are making TikToks that look like hostage videos."	Quality and Quantity – Flouts the maxim of quality by exaggerating the comparison to hostage videos, implying something untruthful for comedic effect, and flouts the maxim of quantity by providing more dramatic detail than necessary to emphasize the extent of employee dissatisfaction.	Uses humor and exaggeration to criticize poor working conditions, comparing them to a hostage situation to show how serious absurd they are.
18	"Those look less like functioning stores and more like ‘American Ninja Warrior: Retail Edition.’"	Quality and Manner – Flouts the maxim of quality by exaggerating the comparison between stores and an obstacle course for comedic effect, and flouts the maxim of manner by using a playful and vivid description instead of directly stating that the stores are poorly organized or chaotic.	Uses a funny comparison to criticize how messy some stores are, saying it's like navigating an obstacle course
18	"But, at that point, it’s less an infestation and more a flourishing community of rats. Establishing an internal order. Building out their environment, probably exploring the arts."	Quality and Manner – Flouts the maxim of quality by exaggerating the idea of rats forming a community with internal order and artistic pursuits, and flouts the maxim of manner by using a whimsical, overly detailed description instead of plainly stating the severity of the infestation.	Uses humor and exaggeration to criticize a severe rat infestation, jokingly describing it as an organized and thriving community to highlight the absurdity of the situation.

Episode	Conversational Implicature	Maxim Flouted	Humorous/Critical Effect
19	"He gave a press conference that was upstaged by a garbage truck appearing in the background. Which is perfectly on-the-nose."	Quality and Quantity – Flouts the maxim of quality by exaggerating the significance of the garbage truck upstaging the press conference, and flouts the maxim of quantity by providing more detail than necessary about the background event.	Uses humor and wordplay to criticize the event, suggesting the press conference was fittingly overshadowed by a garbage truck, highlighting its absurdity.
19	"Because every minute matters when it comes to the viability of an organ for a transplant, and as anyone who's seen 'Killers of the Flower Moon' can tell you, three hours can be an incredibly long time."	Quantity and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quantity by providing more information than necessary with a reference to a film, and flouts the maxim of relation by introducing a humorous, irrelevant comparison to emphasize how long three hours can feel, drawing a contrast to the urgency of organ transplants.	Uses humor and a movie reference to show the urgency in medical situations, while also joking about the film's length
19	"Do you realize how shitty your organization has to be for me to say: 'Be more like Amazon?' Things have to be pretty dicey for me to look into a camera and say with my actual mouth: 'Please be more like the soulless megacorporation created by evil Mr. Clean here.'"	Quality and Manner – Flouts the maxim of quality by exaggerating the comparison to Amazon and implying that it's a model for improvement, despite the clear disdain, and flouts the maxim of manner by using colorful, indirect, and sarcastic language ("evil Mr. Clean") instead of directly stating the organization's poor quality.	Uses humor and exaggeration to criticize an organization's poor standards, ironically suggesting that even Amazon is a better example.

Episode	Conversational Implicature	Maxim Flouted	Humorous/Critical Effect
20	"Look, there are children's shows and then there are 'British' children's shows, and that's why I am, and this is true, like this."	Relation and Manner – Flouts the maxim of relevance by introducing an unrelated comment about British children's shows. Flouts the maxim of manner by presenting the statement in an unclear way.	Uses humor and a cultural reference implying the odd nature of British children's shows, adding humor at his own expense.
20	"None of that is good, but the phrase 'A red substance was spilled but officials have not confirmed what it is' is truly chilling. It sounds less like a legitimate news report and more like the first draft of a Stephen King novel."	Quality and Manner – Flouts the maxim of quality by exaggerating the ominous tone of the news report, implying it's more sinister than it likely is, and flouts the maxim of manner by using a dramatic, indirect comparison to a Stephen King novel instead of straightforwardly addressing the uncertainty of the situation.	Uses humor and a literary reference to critique the vague and ominous news report, highlighting its absurdity and adding dark humor.
20	"And, if history has taught us anything, that's not a good formula for positive outcomes. If anything, the formula is: industry + deregulation – government oversight = episode of 'Last Week Tonight.' And guess what guys? Here we are."	Quantity and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quantity by providing an overly detailed and humorous formula to describe a situation that could be stated more simply, and flouts the maxim of relation by introducing an irrelevant comparison to an episode of <i>Last Week Tonight</i> to emphasize the predictable negative outcome.	Uses humor and a math formula to critique the bad results of industry deregulation. The formulaic presentation highlights how predictable and recurring these problems are.

Episode	Conversational Implicature	Maxim Flouted	Humorous/Critical Effect
20	"Bomb train doesn't sound like something that should ever be allowed in a railway: it sounds like the title of a Jason Statham movie that's got 27% on Rotten Tomatoes."	<p>Quality and Relation – Flouts the maxim of quality by exaggerating the absurdity of the term "bomb train," and flouts the maxim of relation by introducing an irrelevant, humorous comparison to a low-rated Jason Statham movie to emphasize how unsuitable and dangerous the concept sounds.</p>	<p>Uses humor and a pop culture reference to criticize the danger of combustible cargo trains, comparing it to a bad action movie to show the absurdity and risk.</p>
20	"It's hard to tell, but if you look very closely, you'll notice that the 'town' part of that town is gone."	<p>Quantity and Manner – Flouts the maxim of quantity by providing less information than expected, being vague about the actual condition of the town, and flouts the maxim of manner by using an indirect, understated description ("the 'town' part of that town is gone") instead of directly stating that the town has been devastated or destroyed.</p>	<p>Uses humor and understatement to highlight the complete devastation of a town, emphasizing the severity of the situation through a subtle, ironic remark.</p>

Episode	Conversational Implicature	Maxim Flouted	Humorous/Critical Effect
20	"Wow. I got to say, after 10 seasons of showing you, executives denying their neglect, that's almost refreshing. It's the kind of honesty you only usually get from a guy like that after he's been visited by the ghosts of Christmas."	Relation and Quality – Flouts the maxim of relation by introducing a comparison to the Christmas ghosts. Flouts the maxim of quality by exaggerating the rarity of an executive's honesty.	Uses humor and a literary reference to highlight the surprising rarity of an executive's honesty, adding irony and satire.
21	"He (Elon Musk) even challenged Mark Zuckerberg to a cage fight, to which Zuckerberg replied 'send me location', and may I suggest to both of them: interior volcano."	Relation and Quality – Flouts the maxim of relation by introducing an irrelevant suggestion for the location of the fight (interior volcano). Flouts the maxim of quality by exaggerating the suggestion to an absurd degree.	Uses humor and exaggeration to suggest an extreme location for their fight implying that they should spare us the unnecessary drama by choosing a location where they would both perish, highlighting the absurdity of the situation.
21	"Okay, that really drives home just how different Musk is from the rest of us, because there's 'rich and detached,' and there's 'I've asked the cops not to arrest anyone else so we should be good' rich and detached."	Quality and Quantity – Flouts the maxim of quality through exaggeration, describing Musk's wealth as being so extreme that it affects his interactions with law enforcement. Flouts the maxim of quantity by providing more information than necessary to make the point.	Uses humor and exaggeration to highlight how out of touch and privileged Elon Musk is due to his wealth, contrasting it with the average person to show the absurdity.

Episode	Conversational Implicatures	Maxim Flouted	Humorous/Critical Effect
21	“I think we can all agree that it’d be really cool if the entirety of the ‘pandemic chapter’ in future history textbooks simply read ‘Weird time, had to be there, we did our best.’”	Quantity and Manner – Flouts the maxim of quantity by humorously suggesting an overly brief and insufficient summary of the pandemic for future textbooks, and flouts the maxim of manner by using an indirect, casual tone (“Weird time, had to be there”) instead of clearly describing the complexities of the situation	Uses humor and simplification to show the mental strain of the pandemic, suggesting a short and funny summary for future textbooks to capture the strange and tough times.

4. Results and Findings

The previous chapter demonstrated how conversational implicatures are used by John Oliver in *Last Week Tonight*. In this chapter, these findings will be interpreted and evaluated to determine how they support the idea that Oliver’s implicatures, along with flouting of Grice’s maxims – including Quality, Relation, Quantity and Manner - enhance audience understanding and engagement with political and social issues. Also, this chapter will contextualize these findings with existing literature on satire and political communication, and the violation of conversational maxims.

Use of Humor to Critique Political and Social Issues

John Oliver frequently uses humor to critique political and social issues, and much of this humor manifests through conversational implicatures that often flout Grice’s maxims, particularly those

of **Quality** and **Relation**. By using exaggerated comparisons, ironic statements, and hyperbolic scenarios, Oliver highlights the absurdities and contradictions within political and social contexts. For instance, in Season 10, Episode 13, Oliver states, "Right, the U.S. government can't waste billions of dollars just blowing things up in the vague hope that it'll somehow turn into a success, unless of course, those things are Iraq or Afghanistan." This statement flouts the maxim of **Quality** by exaggerating the idea that government interventions are wasteful, using irony to critique the inconsistency in military spending.

Baym (2006) points out that beneath the humor in satirical shows lies a serious demand for factual accuracy, accountability, and reasoned political discourse. He suggests that the blend of commercial success and political significance in shows like 'The Daily Show' stems from their hybrid form, merging entertainment with serious political critique. This concept is applicable to *Last Week Tonight*, where comedy initially attracts the audience, but the humor also serves as a vehicle for serious political criticism (Baym, 2006).

Highlighting Absurdities Through Hyperbolic Scenarios

Oliver frequently flouts the maxim of **Quality** by using hyperbolic scenarios that exaggerate the absurdities of certain situations. In doing so, he presents a humorous yet critical perspective on the issues being discussed. For example, in Season 10, Episode 18, Oliver says, "Those look less like functioning stores and more like 'American Ninja Warrior: Retail Edition.'" This comparison flouts both the maxims of **Quality** (due to exaggeration) and **Manner** (due to the confusing and unexpected nature of the analogy), which makes the critique both humorous and impactful.

Addressing Social Issues Through Relatable Analogies

Oliver also flouts the maxim of **Relation** by using relatable analogies to connect everyday experiences with broader social issues. This technique helps to simplify complex topics while making them more relatable to the audience. For instance, in his critique of pre-announced audits, Oliver states, "If you tell your teenager 'I'm going to check your backpack for cigarettes

next Tuesday,' then great news, you're not going to find any." By flouting the maxim of **Relation**, Oliver uses a humorous analogy to emphasize the inefficiency of pre-announced audits, simplifying the critique while making it more memorable for the audience.

Facilitating Understanding of Complex Issues

Through the use of humor and implicatures, Oliver simplifies complex political and social issues without oversimplifying them. The exaggerated scenarios and relatable analogies flout both the maxims of **Quality** and **Relation**, yet serve as quick insights that help viewers quickly grasp the underlying messages. This supports the hypothesis that humor enhances comprehension. As Horn suggests, these strategies make complex issues accessible while encouraging a more informed public. (Horn, 2004).

Promoting Critical Reflection

Oliver's humor not only entertains but also promotes critical reflection among viewers. By flouting the maxims of **Quality**, **Quantity**, and **Relation**, his jokes highlight absurdities and contradictions in political and social contexts, encouraging the audience to question and evaluate the information they receive, additionally frequent flouting of the maxim of **Manner**—through unclear, exaggerated, or indirect statements—encourages viewers to reflect more deeply on the messages behind the humor. By forcing the audience to interpret these deliberately unclear statements, Oliver promotes critical reflection on political and social issues. This reflective aspect contributes to the development of a more discerning and informed public, further supporting the hypothesis that humor fosters critical thinking.

The results of this study contribute to the broader understanding of political satire's role in media. The effective use of conversational implicatures in *Last Week Tonight* demonstrates how satire can serve both as entertainment and as a tool for education. By flouting Grice's maxims, particularly those of **Quality**, **Relation**, and **Quantity**, Oliver uses humor to engage audiences,

simplify complex issues, and promote critical thinking. This dual role of satire underscores its importance in fostering a more informed and engaged citizenry.

Baym's analysis (2006) suggests that the categorization of shows like *Last Week Tonight* as comedy rather than news allows them to make statements that traditional journalists might avoid. This dual identity protects the show from accusations of violating journalistic standards while enabling it to critique the political establishment and media (Baym, 2006).

While this study provides valuable insights into the use of conversational implicatures in political satire, it is not without limitations. The analysis is primarily qualitative and focuses on a single show, which may limit the extent to which the findings can be applied to other contexts. Future research could expand the scope to include multiple shows and incorporate quantitative methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of humor and implicatures in political satire.

The analysis of conversational implicatures in John Oliver's *Last Week Tonight* supports the hypothesis that humor, when used strategically, can enhance audience understanding and engagement with political and social issues. By employing irony, hyperbole, and relatable analogies, Oliver not only entertains but also educates and promotes critical reflection. These findings underscore the significance of humor in contemporary media and its potential to contribute to a more informed and engaged public.

5. Case Study in Pedagogy: Integrating Satire Into Teaching

As previously mentioned, satire, as a literary and rhetorical device, has long been used to critique social norms, politics, and human behavior through humor, irony, and exaggeration. Integrating satire into teaching can offer numerous educational benefits, from enhancing critical thinking to fostering creativity. This chapter examines the reasons why children should learn about satire, its benefits, and provides strategies for teaching satire in ESL classrooms to illustrate how it can be effectively integrated into the curriculum.

1. Why Should Students Learn About Satire?

1. **Enhancing Critical Thinking:** Satire encourages students to move beyond surface-level meanings, sharpening their analytical and interpretative skills.
2. **Developing Media Literacy:** In today's media-saturated world, satire helps students identify biases, question sources, and understand how media shapes public perception.
3. **Encouraging Creative Expression:** Writing or creating satirical content allows students to express their ideas creatively, fostering deeper engagement and helping them develop a personal voice.
4. **Promoting Social Awareness:** Satire often targets pressing social and political issues. Engaging with it helps students become more aware of current events and social critiques.
5. **Improving Understanding of Rhetorical Devices:** Satire commonly uses irony, sarcasm, and hyperbole, which deepens students' understanding of language and persuasive techniques. (Gray, Jones, and Thompson)

2. Benefits of Learning Satire

1. **Engagement:** Humor is inherently engaging. Lessons that incorporate satire tend to be more dynamic, encouraging active student participation.

2. **Empowerment:** Learning satire empowers students to question and critique societal norms and injustices, fostering a sense of advocacy.
3. **Skill Development:** Satirical writing improves overall writing skills, vocabulary, and comprehension, as students must think critically and articulate their thoughts clearly.
4. **Cultural Literacy:** Satire often draws on historical and cultural references, helping students gain a deeper understanding of societal contexts and enhancing their cultural knowledge.

3. Strategies for Teaching Satire in ESL Classrooms

1. **Using Authentic Materials:** Incorporating real-world examples of satire from television, news, and social media exposes students to authentic language and current cultural references, making learning more relevant.
2. **Incorporating Visual Aids:** Cartoons, videos, and images can help illustrate satirical concepts, particularly for students who may struggle with language barriers.
3. **Utilizing Technology:** Digital platforms, interactive websites, and social media provide students with access to satirical content, making the learning process more interactive and engaging.
4. **Fostering Interaction:** Class discussions and debates on satirical topics help students develop their critical thinking and language skills by sharing interpretations and viewpoints.
5. **Providing Constructive Feedback:** Offering feedback on students' satirical writing and interpretations helps improve both their language skills and their grasp of satirical techniques.
6. **Scaffolding Learning:** Break down satire into manageable parts, teaching rhetorical devices like irony and exaggeration first to build confidence before engaging with complex satirical content.

7. **Making Learning Relevant:** Relating satirical content to students' lives and current events increases engagement and helps students understand the relevance of satire in critiquing real-world issues. (Prayoto)

Integrating satire into teaching provides valuable educational benefits, from fostering critical thinking and social awareness to improving language skills. By engaging with satire, students are empowered to think critically, question societal norms, and express their views creatively. The strategies outlined, such as using real-world examples, visual aids, and interactive discussions, offer practical ways to integrate satire effectively into the classroom.

6. Conclusion

This final diploma has examined the use of conversational implicatures in John Oliver's *Last Week Tonight*, focusing on the second half of Season 10. The analysis has demonstrated how Oliver strategically employs humor, irony, and sarcasm to enhance audience understanding and engagement with political and social issues. By flouting Grice's maxim of Quality, Oliver creates humor that not only entertains but also critically engages viewers.

The research addressed the primary questions: identifying how the flouting of Grice's maxims facilitates sarcasm and how humorous content is realized through implicatures. The findings support the hypothesis that humor, when used effectively, can simplify complex issues and foster a more informed and critically thinking audience.

Additionally, the study proposed practical strategies for integrating satire into ESL classrooms. These strategies include using authentic materials, incorporating visual aids, leveraging technology, encouraging interaction, providing feedback, scaffolding learning, and making learning relevant. Implementing these strategies can enhance students' language skills, promote media literacy, and foster an understanding of contemporary political discourse.

Future research could expand to include multiple seasons and incorporate quantitative methods such as audience surveys or viewership data analysis, could provide additional insights into the impact of humor and implicatures on audience engagement. Comparative studies examining the use of implicatures in different cultural or linguistic contexts could also offer a broader perspective on the role of humor in political satire.

In conclusion, John Oliver's use of conversational implicatures in *Last Week Tonight* effectively combines entertainment with critical commentary, making complex topics accessible and engaging. This study contributes to the fields of humor studies, political communication, and pedagogy, highlighting the power of satire in contemporary media and its potential for educational application.

7. References

- Allan, Keith. *Natural Language Semantics*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2001.
- Allison, Melinda Mae. *The Power of Ridicule: An Analysis of Satire*. Senior Honors Projects, University of Rhode Island, 2012, digitalcommons.uri.edu/srhonorsprog/1065.
- Baym, Geoffrey. "The Daily Show: Discursive Integration and the Reinvention of Political Journalism." *Political Communication*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2006, pp. 259-276, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10584600591006492>.
- Carston, Robyn. *Thoughts and Utterances: The Pragmatics of Explicit Communication*. Blackwell, 2002.
- Davisson, Amber, and Mackenzie Donovan. "Trolling for Social Change? How John Oliver Uses Satire and Parody on *Last Week Tonight*." National Communication Association.
- Davisson, Amber, and Paul Booth. *Interpreting and Experiencing Satire in Popular Culture*. 2019.
- Dragne, Laura. "The Basics of Nonverbal Communication (Part One)." Great People Inside, 31 May 2017, greatpeopleinside.com/nonverbal-communication-part1/.
- Ellis, Donald G. *From Language to Communication*. Routledge, 1999.
- Geurts, Bart. *Quantity Implicatures*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Geurts, Bart, and Napoleon Pouscoulous. "Embedded Implicatures." *Semantics and Pragmatics*, vol. 2, no. 4, 2009, pp. 1-34.
- Gottlieb, Evan. "What Is Satire? || Definition & Examples." College of Liberal Arts, 12 Mar. 2024, liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/wlf/what-satire.
- Gray, Jonathan. *Watching with The Simpsons: Television, Parody, and Intertextuality*. Routledge, 2006.
- Gray, Jonathan, Jeffrey P. Jones, and Ethan Thompson, editors. *Satire TV: Politics and Comedy in the Post-Network Era*. NYU Press, 2009.
- Grice, H. P. *Studies in the Way of Words*. Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Grice, H. P. "Logic and Conversation." *Syntax and Semantics*, edited by Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan, vol. 3, Academic Press, 1975, pp. 41-58.
- Griffin, Dustin. *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction*. University Press of Kentucky, 1994.

- Griffiths, Patrick, and Chris Cummins. *An Introduction to English Semantics and Pragmatics*. Edinburgh University Press, 2023.
- Herrell, Adrienne L., and Michael Jordan. *Fifty Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners*. Allyn & Bacon, 2011.
- Horn, Laurence R. "Implicature." *Handbook of Pragmatics*, edited by Laurence R. Horn and Gregory Ward, Blackwell, 2004, pp. 3-28.
- LeBoeuf, Megan. "The Power of Ridicule: An Analysis of Satire." Senior Honors Projects, University of Rhode Island, 2007, digitalcommons.uri.edu/srhonorsprog/63.
- Levinson, Stephen C. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Levinson, Stephen C. *Pragmatika*. 1983.
- Nordquist, Richard. "Conversational Implicature Definition and Examples." ThoughtCo, 2020.
- Oliver, John, producer. "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver." HBO, 2023.
- Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature. "Satire." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*,
retrieved from
<https://oxfordre.com/literature/oso/viewentry/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.001.0001/acrefore-9780190201098-e-1091>.
- Pajarito, Andrew Justine P. "Laughing at Power: Satire's Crucial Role in Social Critique." *Medium*, 29 May 2023, medium.com/@andjustwork91/laughing-at-power-satires-crucial-role-in-social-critique-78b1e17e2eb7.
- Prayoto, Dwitio. "Strategies for Teaching English as a Second Language." LinkedIn, 21 June 2023, www.linkedin.com/pulse/strategies-teaching-english-second-language-dwitio-prayoto.
- Reiss, Jodi. *Strategies for Teaching Content*. Pearson Education, 2005.
- - Smith, J. M. *The Daily Show and Rhetoric: Arguments, Issues, and Strategies*. 2017.
- Sperber, Dan, and Deirdre Wilson. *Relevance: Communication and Cognition 2*. 1996.
- "What Is Satire?" Oregon State University, liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/wlf/what-satire.
- "What John Oliver Can Teach Us About Social Impact Storytelling." Constructive.co.
- Yule, George. *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press, 1996.