

## A Linguistic Analysis of the Theme of Racism Represented in Michael Jackson's Protest Song "*They Don't Care About Us*"

Gehad Shaban Mohammed Wahba\*

[jihads914@gmail.com](mailto:jihads914@gmail.com)

### Abstract

This study explores Michael Jackson's protest song "*They Don't Care About Us*". It aims to reveal the function of the pragmatic features of the song. Also, it tries to demonstrate that the lyrics make use of implicative speech to advocate certain political and social issues. This is achieved through adopting an eclectic approach of the theory of Grice (1975), by describing the types of the implicatures and the flouted maxims. The study investigates one song based on its common theme, which is the theme of racism. The examination of the Jackson's protest song reveals that the song is a critique against racism and social discrimination within the American society. The results have shown that flouting of Grice's maxims plays a crucial role in the songs. They help to the frequency of the conversational implicature. The study has found that the two types of implicatures, conventional and conversational implicature, existed. The dominant type of implicature is the conversational implicature.

**Keywords:** *Pragmatics, Conversational Implicature Theory, Protest Songs.*

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\* Faculty of arts, Fayoum university, Department of English language and literature.

## Introduction

Protest songs can be viewed as songs whose lyrics convey a message opposed to a policy, behavior or action adopted by an authority, whether it is a person or an institution, or the society, as in the case of discrimination (Haynes, 2008, p. 248). Kizer (1983, p.4) summarizes the main features of protest songs as follows: (1) protest songs are expressions of discontent or dissent which imply or assert a need for a change; (2) may represent the attitudes of one individual or a collection of individuals, such as members of a special interest group; (3) may be adapted by and utilized as ideological statements of a social movement, whether originally written for that purpose or not, and then the original composer no longer dominates as the message source; (4) may inspire the creation of other rhetorical messages; and (5) may serve to stimulate thought, reinforce, or modify attitudes. Protest songs worldwide have been subject to the linguistic, pragmatic, and stylistic analysis. According to Igwedibia (2018, p. 121), pragmatics is a “field of study that shows how language is used to send messages that are not directly related to the additive value of the raw linguistic data of the utterance”.

Pragmatics is the linguistic study of human utterance to figure out the meaning that lies beyond what is said; it is the study of meaning lying between the lines. It is concerned with the meaning of the utterance, how what is said is meant by the speaker, and how the utterance is to be interpreted by the audience. The understanding of protest songs requires appreciation of historical and social conditions, and ideological factors surrounding the song. Accordingly, the author and the reader have to employ deep understanding of the cooperative principle to be able to communicate, i.e. the author should create common ground to meet readers for profound understanding and appreciation (Indede, 2009, p 122).

## Objectives of the Study

The current study aims at:

- Revealing the function of the pragmatic features of selected American protest songs.
- Providing possible interpretations of selected American protest songs.
- Examining how the lyrics make use of implicative speech to advocate certain political and social issues.

## Research Questions

The present study is intended to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do the writers of protest songs use Grice's Conversational Implicature in their lyrics?
2. To what extent do the writers of protest songs flout Grice's Conversational Implicature (4 Maxims) in their lyrics?

### **The Review of Literature**

Numerous studies had been conducted to explore pragmatic and stylistic aspects in written (lyrics) and spoken (songs) political and social discourse, especially in the American contexts. Among these studies is a study was conducted by Abdulhaleem (2019), in which the researcher provides a linguistic analysis of some selected American and Egyptian popular songs from 2006 to 2018. The study examines how the popular songs reflect the society to which they belong. It aims to detect the impact of social issues on the choice of the lyrics of the selected popular songs, emphasizing mainly the issues of life, money and love. This aim has been achieved through applying the speech act theory of Searle (1969, 1975), the systematic functional grammar of Halliday (2014), and the theory of the conceptual metaphor of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), on twenty selected American and Egyptian songs. The researcher has proved that both the American and Egyptian societies have some similarities. However, there are some differences due to the cultural differences. Thus, the lyrics of the Egyptian and American popular songs depict common social issues that are concerned with in both societies, and shed light on the ideologies of Egyptian and American songwriters as well.

Igwedibia (2018) interpreted Audre Lorde's poetry, using Grice's theory of Conversational Implicature "cooperative principle" (CP), which is comprised the four maxims: the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Manner and Relation. This study seeks to discover whether these maxims could be applied to the reading of the selected poems of Lorde or not. It also aims to confirm to what extent Lorde's selected poems violate or adhere to these maxims. The study finds out that Audre Lorde fluctuates between violating the maxims in some poems and adhering to them in others.

Eesuola (2012) conducted a study to investigate political protest songs as a manifestation of actual protest values. He tried to locate through Fela Anikulapo Kuti's Sorrow, Tears and Blood and Bob Marley's Stand up, Get up, using in-depth analysis of the songs' lyrics plus opinion survey of their listeners. Among the findings is that the actual protest values of the two songs are high in meditation upon protest problem and sustenance of ongoing protests, but very

low in igniting protests on their own. Most people who listen to the two musicians' songs are mere fans of their music, not adherents of their lyrics. The analysis is used to explain the inability of Fela and Marley to ignite mass uprising in Africa through their many protest songs. The conclusion is that a song is a weak trigger of protest, but it plays a very big role in sustaining resistance.

An additional study is Pranoto's (2013) entitled "Implicature Analysis in Maher Zain's Song Lyrics on "Forgive Me" Album". It provides a detailed examination of Implicature occurred in "Forgive Me" Album by Maher Zain. The researcher emphasizes the understanding of the song lyrics through the Implicature Theory. The researcher uses the descriptive qualitative research design. The researcher concludes that the two types of conversational Implicature, generalized and particularized, can be found in some lyrics of the song.

Despite the several above-mentioned scholarly works, no single study has implemented a pragmatic analysis on Michael Jackson's protest song "*They Don't Care About Us*" using Grice's Cooperative Principle (4 Maxims). As a result, the present study provides pragmatic analysis of this song in order to show the power of words in social and political protest.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Implicature**

The concept of implicature was formulated by Oxford philosopher H.P Grice. Grice presented it in the lectures declaimed at Harvard in 1967 and were partly gathered and published in Grice (1989). The word "implicature" came from the verb "to imply". According to Mey (2001, p.45) primarily, to imply means to flex something into something else, consequently, what is implied is tucked in, to be understood. Horn (2004, p.3) observes that implicature is a part of the speaker's expressions without being a piece of the speaker's meaning that establishes aspects of what is intended in a what is literally said. What the speaker expects to communicate is peculiarly far richer than what she exactly expresses; linguistic meaning fundamentally underdetermines the message transmitted and comprehended.

### **Types of Implicature**

Grice (1989, pp. 25-6) divides implicature into two different categories: conventional implicature and conversational implicature. In general, both categories convey an extra level of meaning, that's the meaning beyond the literal meaning of the spoken words. The first type of implicature is 'conventional implicature' in which the meaning is

identified with lexical terms, like “therefore, but, yet”. An example that Grice gives of this type of implicature is;

- The queen is English and therefore brave.

The word “therefore” entails the implicature that what goes after follows from what is said. This sense of the word “therefore” always entails this implicature, whatever of the context it is associated with. This comes in contrast with another type of implicature, which is identified as conversational (particularized) implicature, and emerges, only in a specific context of utterance.

As Jaszczolt (2002, p. 209), appeals, it is necessary, to take into account that Grice's concept of utterance is much wider than the linguists' definition of the expression. According to Grice, the whole acts of communicating meaning may be presented by means of the same theory. Recognition of the intended meaning can guide directly to its investigation. The speaker's intentions to report the recipient about something are performed by being recognized by receiver communication. By the time, the addressee realizes the linguistic meaning of the words; he or she understands the speaker's meaning from it. This is what is intended by the doctrine that communication is about intended meanings and inferences. The technique, by which interlocutors realize the intentions of the speaker, is announced in Grice's theory of meaning and encompasses the idea of cooperation.

### **Grice's Conversational Maxims (Cooperative Principle)**

In his theory of conversational implicature, Grice (1989, p. 26) proposes that there is a basic principle that controls the way in which language is utilized with extreme competence and effectively to realize rationalistic interaction in communication. He calls such connection "a co-operative principle," as well as subdivides it into four maxims: quality, quantity, relation and manner.

The co-operative principle and its constituent maxims assure that in an interchange of conversation, the full amount of knowledge is given and the cooperation is conveyed in a truthful, pertinent and perspicuous way. Based on the Grice's conversational implicature, Grice (1975, p.45- 48) introduced a general cooperative principle and four maxims specifying how to be cooperative.

He assumes that people follow these rules for efficient communication.

Grice suggests that speakers and hearers are governed by a co-operative principle within the conversation. He proposed four maxims that control the efficient co-operative use of language. His co-operative

principle states that it is to make a contribution as per the required levels in terms of the stage at which it occurs, the purpose of the talk, and the direction of talk exchange in which the speaker or hearer is engaged (Grice, 1975, p. 45).

According to Grice's theory of conversational implicature, the individual can make his/her conversational contribution as required, as the phase at which it happens, by the reasonable purpose or orientation of the talk interchange in which one is engaged in. The cooperative principle is the one of the most important notions of Grice.

Cruse (2000, p. 336) expounds that by cooperating in a conversation, a speaker completely points out to some indications, and both a speaker and a listener correspond to participate in the common activity to adhere to the rules. He forms his concept according to the conversation.

- **The maxim of quality:** this maxim is concerned with telling the truth and has two parts:

- (i) Do not tell what you believe to be false.
- (ii) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Which makes your contribution true; so do not convey what you believe false or unjustified.

- **The maxim of quantity:** this maxim is concerned with the quantity of knowledge an utterance conveys:

- (i) Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange in which you are engaged.
  - (ii) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
- This refers to the speaker's being as informative as required.

- **The maxim of relevance:**

- (i) Be relevant, refers to the speaker's being relevant.

- **The maxim of manner:** is related to the idea of clarity; it entails speakers to avoid vagueness and being obscure, that has four elements:

- (i) Avoid obscurity.
- (ii) Avoid ambiguity.
- (iii) Be clear.
- (iv) Be orderly.

The relation between the speaker and the maxims can be assured as he or she can uprightly abide by the maxims. The speaker also might adhere to the maxims, or he might violate the first sub maxim of quality by saying an intended lie. In addition, the speaker might select the maxims by using hedges in dialogue. Some words in quality can be used to view hedges, like "as far as", but, "I know, I am not sure if this

is true," "I may be wrong, but." Hedges in quality may be expounded, like "as you probably already know," "I probably do not need to say this, but." There are hedges in relation, such as "by the way," "I am not sure if this relevant, but," or manner, such as "I am not if this clear, but I do not know if this makes sense, but."

### **Flouting the Maxims**

According to Sharaf Eldin (2013, p. 68) the conditions that specially interested Grice were those ones in which the speaker blatantly flops to abide a maxim. It is not with any intention of misleading or deceiving, but because the speaker wants to motivate the listener to search for a meaning which is different from the expressed meaning. This supplementary meaning Grice calls 'conversational implicature' and he describes the process by which it is produced as 'flouting a maxim'. A flout happens when the speaker blatantly fails to abide by a maxim at the standard of what is said, with the premeditated intention of producing an implicature. The other manner in which implicatures may be featured is through intentional flouting of the maxims where it is obvious to the listener that the maxims are flouted, and is likewise obvious that the speaker wants the listener to know that the maxims are flouted.

For additional explanations, the following example demonstrates this notion:

- I married a cat.
- The mushroom asks omelets with coffee.

None of the abovementioned sentences is probably going to be truly obvious, but none of them also is likely to deceive the hearers. There are some metaphors that are being utilized in these sentences which have the illustrative processes according to its context. Flouting the maxim of quantity is potential in some conditions, like the following one:

- Girls will be girls.

This example does not have any sort of information on the superficial level, and there is not any informational sense, so such a sentence violates the quantity maxim. As Cutting (2002, p.40) mentions if a speaker violates the maxim of quantity, he/she does not present the listener sufficient information to cognize what is being talked because he/she does not want the listener to know the whole picture. The speaker is not implying anything; they are being economical with the fact.

Also, the maxim of relevance is violated in the next example:

- I say, did you hear about Rose's?

- Yes, well, it rained about the whole time we were there.

This is obviously irrelevant response that gives the sense that no relation between the first and the second sentence.

The maxim of manner is violated in the following example:

(i) Miss Singer produced a series of sounds corresponding closely to the score of an aria from Rigoletto.

Levinson (1983, p.112) depicts the above-mentioned instance as an obvious violation of the maxim of manner because of the prolix that is distinct in this sentence. In his categorization of the ways speakers may violate the maxims, Grice, as Cutting (2002, p.41) mentions, lists two other ways of violating a maxim. A speaker, violating a maxim or opting out of a maxim, does not include something various from the words which he employs or is not being deliberately misleading. A speaker, infringing a maxim, flops to observe a maxim because of an incomplete linguistic performance. This can occur if the speaker has a deficient command of the language like a child or a foreign learner or if their execution is impaired by nervousness, drunkenness, and excitement or if they are simply unable to speak clearly. According to Sharaf Eldin (2013, p.70) a speaker opting out of or flouting a maxim designates a preparation to cooperate, although he/she does not want to show uncooperative. It is difficult to say which one is operating, and at the same time, it would be more accurate to say that there are two or more maxims operating at once. In the following example:

A) What did you have to eat?

B) Oh, something masquerading as chicken chasseur?

Here in the above –mentioned example the speaker B is flouting the maxim of quality through saying that his food pretends to be something, and thus it is not 'chicken chasseur'. However, it could also be said that he is also flouting the maxim of manner, because he does not tell accurately what the 'something' is, or looked like. Then still, he could also be flouting the maxim of quantity because he does not provide enough information to distinguish what he eats. In fact, he is not flouting the maxim of relation, as his reply is relevant to the question.

Finally, to sum up, it is obvious that implicature has a great significance in language interpretation. For several linguists, the notion of implicature is one of the basic concepts in pragmatics. An



implicature is undoubtedly an elementary example of more than what is said.

### **Research Data and Methodology**

The study assigns a qualitative analysis approach. In this study, the selected song is analyzed according to the Cooperative Principle which includes the four Maxims and implicature by Grice (1975). The data of this study is Michael Jackson's protest song "They Don't Care About Us". The song is carefully selected, since the researcher focuses on the song that mainly tackles the theme of racism. The lyrics of the American protest song is taken from <https://www.azlyrics.com/t/thethe.html>. In collecting the data, the following steps were done; the first step is to listen to the American protest songs. The second step is to choose a protest song by the researcher to match the problems of the study. The third step is to search the lyrics of the selected song on the website, <https://www.azlyrics.com/t/thethe.html>, reading them carefully, and assuring the validity of the lyrics. To assure the validity of data, the researcher compares the lyrics with the song by listening to them carefully. The fifth is reading the lyrics carefully to understand the intended meanings within the lyrics. Finally, the last step is analyzing the lyrics of the American protest song according to the Cooperative Principle which includes the four Maxims by Grice (1975), and implicature.

### **Procedures of data analysis:**

#### **Grice's Cooperative Principle (Four Maxims) and Implicature**

1. Dividing the data into lines in a table; every line of the lyric will be numbered.
2. Classifying the data into the flouting of the 4 maxims (Quantity, Quality, Manner and Relation) and implicature into two types (conventional and conversational implicature).
3. Identifying and interpreting the flouting of the 4 maxims (Quantity, Quality, Manner and Relation) and the two types of implicature (conventional and conversational implicature).

### **Research Findings and Discussion**

#### **Flouted maxims**

The findings show that Michael Jackson flouted the maxims of Grice's Cooperative Principle. Here, the data used for an analysis of maxim flouting are provided in the form of tables. The findings comprise the data of the types, frequency, and percentage for maxim flouting. The analysis of the data has revealed the following findings.

As shown in the table below, the types of flouted maxims that occur in Michael Jackson's "*They Don't Care About Us*" indicate that Michael Jackson has used every chance to flout the maxims of the Cooperative Principle. The total number of the flouted maxims performed by Michael Jackson in the song is 45 times within the 37 utterances of the song. It is noteworthy that some utterances have more than one flouted maxim.

No.	Types of Flouted Maxims	Frequency	Percentage
1	Quantity Flouted Maxim	28	62.22 %
2	Quality Flouted Maxim	13	28.88 %
3	Manner Flouted Maxim	2	4.44 %
4	Relevance Flouted Maxim	2	4.44 %
	Total	45	100 %

**Table no. 1: Frequency of the types of flouted maxims in Michael Jackson's "*They Don't Care About Us*".**

The highest flouted maxim uttered by Jackson is quantity flouted maxim; its frequency is 28 (62.22%) which indicates that Michael Jackson usually failed to give the required information for the purpose of the utterance, whether he gives too much or too little information. Examples will be shown below:

**1- *Skin head*:** In this utterance, the speaker does not explicate that this term refers to a group of violent people. So, this term gives less information than what is required.

**2- *Situation, aggravation*:** The speaker gives less information about how his situation is aggravated according to his point of view. He does not explain how the allegations of his child abuse are increasing.

**3- *In the suite, on the news/ Everybody dog food*:** The speaker does not explain what the suite is and what the news which he refers to is. He gives too little information.

**4- *Don't you black or white me*:** The speaker makes his utterance less informative than is required. He uses the pronoun "you" and does not explain its reference, whether he refers to the racists who classify people according to their skin or the authorities.

**5- *Tell me what has become of my life*:** The speaker gives too little information than is needed. The speaker utters an

incomplete utterance. In this utterance, the speaker's intention is wondering about what will happen with his life in the future.

**6- I have a wife and two children who love me:** The speaker talks about his family. He is more informative than is needed, so he breaks the maxim of quantity.

**7- Oh, for God's sake/ I look to heaven to fulfill its prophecy:** The speaker does not give enough information about what is the prophecy that he wants to fulfill.

**8- Trepidation, speculation:** The speaker gives too little information in this utterance. He should explicate what he is afraid of.

**9- Tell me what has become of my rights:** The speaker gives too little information than is needed. In this utterance, the speaker's intention is flouting the maxim by asking about his rights of freedom and equality.

**10- I can't believe this is the land from which I came:** This utterance is less informative. Here, the speaker should state which land he means.

**11- You know I really do hate to say it:** The speaker gives less information than is needed. The speaker should explicate what he hates to say. Also, he does not explicate the reference of the pronoun "you".

**12- But if Roosevelt was livin' / He wouldn't let this be, no, no:** The speaker makes his utterance less informative than is required when he uses the demonstrative "this" and he does not explain its reference.

**13- Situation, speculation:** The speaker gives too little information in this utterance. He should explicate what are the situation and the speculation that he refers to.

**14- Beat me, bash me/ You can never trash me:** The speaker makes his utterance less informative than is required. He uses the pronoun "you" and does not explicate its reference that he refers to the racists who want to destroy his identity.

**15- Hit me, kick me/ You can never get me:** The speaker makes his utterance less informative than is required. He uses the pronoun "you" and does not explicate its reference that he refers to the racists who want to destroy his identity.

**16- But if Martin Luther was livin' / He wouldn't let this be, no, no:** The speaker makes his utterance less informative than is

required when he uses the demonstrative "this" and he does not explain its reference.

**17- Don't you wrong or right me:** The speaker makes his utterance less informative than is required. He uses the pronoun "you" and does not explain its reference that he refers to the racists who classify people according to their skin.

The second type of flouted maxim pertains to quality. Examples of flouted quality maxim occur 13 times (28.88%). This type of flouted maxim happens when Michael Jackson failed to fulfill the maxim which requires him to make a reliable contribution, and say things that are believed to be true and have adequate evidence. He also uses it to express his disagreement and anger about things. The meanings conveyed through the flouted maxim are varied as he uses overstatement, metaphor, and irony for this flouted maxim. Examples will be as shown below:

**1- Black man, blackmail/ Throw your brother in jail:** The speaker does not make a contribution that is true. The irony that leads to maxim flouting "Throw your brother in jail", indicates that they throw black people in prison.

**2- Am I invisible because you ignore me?** This utterance flouts the first pivot of quality maxim which says: "Don't say what you believe to be false". Here, the speaker asks a rhetorical question that implies a false truth. He describes himself as if he is invisible despite being a human.

The third rank in the occurrences of flouted maxim is manner flouted maxim. It is when Michael Jackson failed to fulfill maxim of manner in his utterances and its frequency is 2 (4.44%). Michael Jackson failed to be perspicuous, avoid obscurity, avoid ambiguity, be brief, and be orderly. Example will be as shown below:

**1- All I wanna say is that/ They don't really care about us:** The speaker does not explicate what the pronouns "they" and "us" refer to. Also, the speaker flouts the maxim of manner as the speaker seems to avoid giving more information or details about "they" and "us". As a result, the reader feels ambiguity, which leads to a misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

Then, the last flouted maxim which is equal to the previous one in the occurrence is relevance flouted maxim that occurs 2 times (4.44%). This breaks the maxim which requires Michael Jackson to be relevant in doing an utterance. Example will be as shown below:

**1- Kick me, kike me:** By this utterance, the speaker introduces outwardly irrelevant term "kike", and the question the reader asks is: what is the relevance of this word to the issue of the song. The indication to this term sounds no rational justification for that. In effect, the reference proposes an irrelevancy that affords no rational relationship with the state that the speaker is in. Thus, these words flout the maxim of relation.

### **Utterances with more than one flouted maxims:**

**1-dead head:** The speaker flouts the maxim of quantity as he makes his utterance less informative than is required. He does not give more information about this term which refers to a group of homeless, unemployed, and penniless people. It refers to the Ku Klux Klan, whose members are often viewed as being unintelligent and illiterate members of a monolithic secret organization. It is described as the most infamous-and oldest-of American hate groups and America's only enduring political terrorist movement. Also, he uses an ambiguous expression "deadhead"; so he flouts maxim of manner which provides for the avoidance of ambiguity.

**2- Everybody gone bad, Everybody allegation, In the suite, on the news Everybody dog food, Bang bang, shot dead Everybody's gone mad and Everybody, litigation :** The speaker flouts the maxim of quantity as he uses the compound word "everybody" and he does not explicate what this term refers to; namely, he makes his utterance less informative. Also, he flouts the maxim of quality as he uses hyperbole as the speaker describes his state by using the word "everybody" which means that everyone who is standing against him and the Blacks is behaving badly towards them, all the people tell gossips, but here he refers to the media, and everyone tells lies and makes a mountain out of a molehill.

**3- All I wanna say is that/ They don't really care about us:** The speaker flouts the maxim of quantity as he makes his utterance less informative than is required. He does not

explicate what the pronouns " they" and " us" refer to. Also, the speaker flouts the maxim of manner as the speaker seems to avoid giving more information or details. The speaker doesn't explain what the pronouns "they" and "us" refer to and then, this makes the reader feel ambiguity, which leads to misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

**4- Beat me, hate me/ You can never break me:** Here, the speaker uses the verbs "beat", and "hate" to express his state in an exaggerated way. The use of hyperboles in this utterance flouts the maxim of quality. Also, he makes his utterance less informative when he uses the pronoun "you" and does not explicate its reference, he flouts the maxim of quantity.

**5- Will me, thrill me/ You can never kill me:** The speaker flouts the maxim of quality since he says what lacks adequate evidence. The verbs "will", and "thrill" make his contribution false as he is unable to prove his utterance. He is exaggerating the fact of being an oppressed person. Also, he makes his utterance less informative when he uses the pronoun " you" and does not explicate its reference, he flouts the maxim of quantity.

**6- Jew me, sue me/ Everybody do me:** The speaker, here, flouts the maxim of relevance by saying a thing which is not relevant with the purpose of current utterance. His sudden talk about "Jew" is the thing which is not relevant. He uses overstatement as he says what is not needed. In this case, the factor that leads the maxim flouting to happen is asserting. The speaker tries to explain his situation. Also, the speaker flouts the maxim of quality as he uses the compound word "everybody" which refers to overstatement that not all people are against the Black.

**7- Kick me, kike me:** By this utterance, the speaker introduces outwardly irrelevant term "kike", and the question the reader asks is: what is the relevance of this word to the issue of the song. The indication to this term sounds no rational justification for that. In effect, the reference proposes an irrelevancy that affords no rational relationship with the state that the speaker is in. Thus, these words flout the maxim of relation. Again, the speaker uses the term "kike" that it is

an offensive term against Jews, and he uses it in an ironic way. So, he also, flouts the maxim of quality by using irony.

**8- They're throwing me in a class with a bad name:** The speaker flouts maxim of quality by overstatement. By using overstatement or specifically hyperbole. The speaker flouts maxim of quality. His statement lacks evidence. Also, he flouts the maxim of quantity as he uses the pronoun "they" and does not explicate its reference and its identity and failed to be specific when he used the indefinite article "a" before the "class" and "bad name" So, he failed to fulfill the maxim of quantity as he gives less information.

**9- The government don't wanna see:** Quality maxim flouting happens in this utterance. There is an accurate irony in this sentence as the speaker wants to say the government does not want to see how much discrimination and dictatorship it uses against Black people. Also, this utterance flouts the maxim of quantity as he gives less information than what is required.

**10- Some things in life they just don't wanna see:** The speaker flouts the maxim of quantity as he makes his utterance less informative than is required. He does not explain the things that he talks about. Also, he makes his utterance ambiguous as he does not explicate the reference of the pronoun "they" so, he flouts the maxim of manner.

### Implicature

As shown in the table below, there are two types of implicatures, namely, conventional implicature and conversational implicature, in the song. Conversational implicature is divided into two sub-divisions: generalized conversational implicature and particularized conversational implicature.

No.	Types of Implicature	Frequency	Percentage
1	Conventional Implicature	13	28.89 %
2	Conversational Implicature: it is divided into:		
	Generalized Conversational Implicature	2	4.44 %
	Particularized Conversational Implicature	30	66.67 %
	<b>Total</b>	45	100 %

**Table no. 2: Frequency of the types of implicature in Jackson's "They Don't Care About Us".**

The researcher found that there are 37 utterances in the song. These utterances contain 45 implicature. It is noted that sometimes the utterance has more than one implicature. The researcher found 13 (28.89%) conventional implicature. Examples will be as follows:

1- **Bang bang, shot dead/ Everybody's gone mad:** This utterance can be classified into conventional implicature as it has an additional meaning. In other words, the speaker wanted to say that there is a sound of shooting; therefore, there must be fatalities. Here, the speaker explains the difficulty of the black skinned people's situation and the amount of violence they face from the racists.

2- **Beat me, hate me/ You can never break me:** This utterance can be classified into conventional implicature. The speaker, here, addresses the aforementioned racists using the pronoun "you". Thus, the utterance implies beat me and hate me, but you can never break me. The contrast by the implicit word "but" carries a conventional implicature.

3- **Will me, thrill me/ You can never kill me:** This utterance can be classified into conventional implicature. The speaker, again, addresses the aforementioned racists using the pronoun "you". The two parts of the utterance "Will me, thrill me," and "You can never kill me" are linked by an implicit "but". The speaker uses the negation in the word "never", hence there is a contrast in this utterance and this contrast is conventional implicature which the speaker strengthens his position in front of the racists, showing his strength and their inability to destroy him.

4- **I'm tired of bein' the victim of hate:** This utterance can be classified as conventional implicature as the speaker wants to convey a message that he asserts by using verb "to be" [am] which expresses the fact that he became a target to hate by the racists. He gets tired of being hated for no reason. He tried hard to be a normal citizen with equal rights like the Whites.

5- **I'm tired of bein' the victim of shame:** This utterance can be classified as conventional implicature as the speaker wants to convey a message that he asserts by using verb "to be" [am] which expresses the fact that he became a victim of



shame because of his color. He is tired of the media because of spreading false image of him, depending on rumors and speculations. For years, the media labeled him as a "child abuser".

There are 2 (4.44%) generalized conversational implicature. Examples will be as shown below:

**1- I'm a victim of police brutality, now:** The speaker wants to convey a message that he asserts by using verb "to be" [am] which expresses the fact that he became a target to the violence and brutality of the policemen. He asserts his state that he is a victim of police brutality, and this fact has to be accepted by the listener to be the case and to be true. However, he is one of the victims, not the only one. He uses the indefinite article "a" to mean that he is just one of them.

**2- They're throwing me in a class with a bad name: This** utterance can be classified as generalized conversational implicature and the implicature is present as the speaker failed to be specific in a way in which he must have been expected to be specific. The use of indefinite article "a" implies that the class and the bad name are not adequately stated by the speaker.

Furthermore, the researcher found that there are 30 (66.67 %) particularized conversational implicature. It can be concluded that the particularized conversational implicature has the highest number of implicature in the song. Examples will be as follows:

1- **Everybody gone bad:** The utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature. That means that this utterance needs a particular context to understand that the speaker refers to everyone who is standing against Black people is behaving badly towards them.

2- **Situation, aggravation:** The utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature; namely, this utterance needs more knowledge about the situation of racists towards him and the Blacks.

3- **Everybody allegation:** The utterance can be classified as particularized conversational implicature. In short, this utterance needs a background to understand the implied meaning. He gives an example of the allegations ranged widely against him. Jackson thinks that the situation is worsening because people

began to believe in the child abuse allegations of which he was accused.

4- ***In the suite, on the news/ Everybody dog food:*** The utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature; it needs to be interpreted through a common background that Jackson was accustomed to stay in hotel suites when touring. In his tours, he experienced many wrong unjust allegations about his case and watched the accusations on the news. The utterance expresses how the speaker was torn between the threats of the unjust aggressive justice system and the scandalous nature of the paparazzi.

5- ***Bang bang, shot dead/ Everybody's gone mad:*** "Everybody's gone mad" can be classified into particularized conversational implicature as it needs a context or a background to be interpreted. It seems as if the speaker wants to describe all racists and authorities as bad people who intentionally and hatefully kill the Blacks.

6- ***All I wanna say is that/ They don't really care about us:*** This utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as this utterance needs to be interpreted by a background to make clear that the speaker refers to the authority which does not care about the black people and what happens to them of injustice, killing and brutality at the hands of the racists.

7- ***Jew me, sue me/ Everybody do me:*** It is clear that this utterance needs to be interpreted by a common background about why the speaker uses the term "Jew". While he is talking about racism, why did he come up with the term "Jew", meaning that he implicitly means comparing himself to the Jews in terms of how they are rejected and hated, which sparked the controversy that he is anti-Semitic. Also, the speaker means by "everybody do me" that the issue of racism has become so severe that everyone treats him in a brutal way. This utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature

8- ***Kick me, kike me:*** This utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as it is clearly needs to be interpreted by common sense why the speaker uses the term "kike" here while he is talking about racism; why did he come up with the term "kike", meaning that he implicitly refers to the Jews in an ironic way. The word "Kike" means an offensive,

religious insulting to the Jews. So, the utterance can be interpreted as "insult me physically or verbally like you did to the Jews".

9- ***Tell me what has become of my life:*** This utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as this utterance needs to be interpreted as the speaker here sends a message to the racists and asks an implicit question: if he is treated as black, what will happen to his life?

10- ***I have a wife and two children who love me:*** This utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as the utterance needs a background knowledge which is a reference to his first wife, Lisa Marie Presley, and his two stepchildren, Danielle and Benjamin.

11- ***You're rapin' me off my pride:*** This utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as the speaker sends a message to the racists and the authority, and he wants to say: You usurp my freedom and my pride when you treat people with their colors.

12- ***Oh, for God's sake/ I look to heaven to fulfill its prophecy:*** This utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as it needs a background to know what the prophecy that he refers to is; it is as if the speaker is calling his Lord to fulfill a prophecy that he wishes. What is meant here is that he wishes that man would live in lasting peace, whether he is white or black.

13- ***Trepidation, speculation:*** This utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as it needs to be interpreted to know what are the trepidation and speculation that the speaker refers to. The speaker here implies that he is afraid of the racists and anything that threatens his life because he is black.

14- ***Black man, blackmail/ Throw your brother in jail:*** This utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as it needs a particular context. The speaker depicts, affirms and announces in a bitter way the fate of black people in racist America. They became the dog food and the inhabitants of jails.

15- ***Tell me what has become of my rights:*** The utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature

as this utterance needs to be interpreted as the speaker expresses the racial prejudice against the Blacks. He wonders about their rights in freedom and equality.

16- **Am I invisible because you ignore me?:** This utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as the speaker expresses his feelings of humility and nothingness. He accuses the government that doesn't defend his rights of freedom and not stop the media from spreading false image of him, depending on rumors and speculations. For years, the media labeled him as a "child abuser".

17- **I can't believe this is the land from which I came:** This utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as this utterance needs particular context to know what the implied meaning the speaker conveys; he criticizes the American government of being hypocrite as it presents a false image of America as the land of freedom and equal opportunities for all people; however, it still treats the Blacks as a second race.

18- **You know I really do hate to say it:** This utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as this utterance needs particular context or background to know that the speaker wants to assert that he hates prejudice, oppression and racism from authority and racists.

19- **The government don't wanna see:** This utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as this utterance needs particular context to know what the implied meaning that the speaker wants to say, that the government does not see the injustice toward the Black people.

20- **Situation, speculation:** This utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as it needs to be interpreted to know what are the situation and speculation that the speaker refers to. The speaker here implies that the situation of the government or racists increase towards the Black people without pity or mercy.

21- **Everybody, litigation:** The utterance can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature. This utterance needs background to be interpreted. The speaker here conveys a message that everyone charges him and the situation that he faces is increasing.

22- **Some things in life they just don't wanna see:** This utterance can be classified as particularized conversational implicature as it needs background to know that the things that the speaker means are the prejudice, oppression and racism that faces the Black people. Also, the pronoun "they" refers to the authority and racists.

### **Utterances with more than one type of Implicature:**

- 1- **Skin head:** This utterance can be classified into conventional implicature as it has a semantic meaning. By using this term, the speaker implicitly means to draw the attention of the authorities and the public to the injustice, and racism that is happening towards black skinned people by the skin-head group. This is a clear, explicit accusation of racism by these people. Also, this term carries a particularized conversational implicature as well; it needs a background to know that this group committed crimes against Black people. They have committed some of the most barbarous hate crimes in the memory of the Americans, including arson, assault and murder.
- 2- **dead head:** This utterance can be classified into conventional implicature as it has a lexical meaning taken from the dictionary. By using this term, the speaker implicitly means to draw the attention of the authorities and the public to the injustice, and racism that is happening towards black skin. This is a clear and explicit accusation of racism committed by these people. Also, this utterance can be considered as a particularized conversational implicature because the lexical meaning was not enough to give the intended meaning by the speaker. As a result, this utterance needs a common background to know the identity of the Ku Klux Klan. It used to target the minorities, including the Jews, immigrants, homosexuals, an even Catholics. However, it finds their primary target in the Blacks. The Klansmen threaten, exile, kill, stab and hang the Negros, especially the officials and high-ranked blacks.
- 3- **Don't you black or white me:** There is a paradox in this sentence as the speaker uses the terms "black" and "white" and these two terms are opposite to one another. He seems to tell the listener not to classify him as a black or white. It also refers to two possible meanings: the first is "do not judge me according

to my color" and the second meaning is "do not put me in only two possible criteria good or bad, and black or white" but treat me as an ordinary human being who has a mixture of good and bad traits. So, this utterance is classified into conventional implicature as he uses contrast between the words black or white. The utterance " Don't you black or white me" also, can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as it needs background knowledge to know the reference of the pronoun "you" which refers to the racists or authority.

- 4- **But if Roosevelt was livin'/ He wouldn't let this be, no, no:** By linking this utterance with the previous utterance, "The government don't wanna see but if Roosevelt was livin', he wouldn't let this be, no, no", it is categorized as conventional implicature by using the conjunction "but" which carries the implicature that what follows will counter to expectations. Here, the speaker wants to say that the government do not want to see the prejudice towards the Black people but Roosevelt would have seen this injustice if he was alive now. He refers to U.S. President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, showing that the latter would not accept the deeds of the American government as his policies were made for the benefit of all Americans. Also; the utterance "He wouldn't let this be, no, no" carries particularized conversational implicature as it needs background to know the reference of the demonstrative "this" which refers to injustice, social discrimination, oppression and racism.
- 5- **Beat me, bash me/ You can never trash me Hit me, kick me/ You can never get me:** This utterance can be classified as conventional implicature as it has an additional meaning. In other words, the speaker here when he says to the aforementioned racists using the pronoun "you" beat me bash me, it implies beat me and bash me, but you can never trash me. The speaker describes his bitter state that he suffers from injustice, prejudice and social discrimination and asserts his state. The utterance "you can never trash me" also, can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as it needs knowledge to know the reference of the pronoun "you" which refers to the racists or authority.
- 6- **But if Martin Luther was livin'/ He wouldn't let this be, no, no:** By linking this utterance, with the previous utterance, "some things in life they just don't wanna see" but if Martin Luther

was livin', he wouldn't let this be, no, no", it can be categorized as conventional implicature by using the conjunction "but" which carries the implicature that what follows will counter to expectations. The speaker wants to say that the authority or government do not want to see the oppression, but Martin Luther would have seen this injustice if he was alive now. Again, the speaker talks about "they" that gives a blind eye to the rights of their partners on the land of America. The speaker refers to Martin Luther King, Jr. who was an influential member in the revolt against racism in America and the leader in the African-American Civil Rights Movement. Also, the utterance "He wouldn't let this be, no, no" ' carries particularized conversational implicature as it needs background to know the reference of the demonstrative "this" which refers to injustice, social discrimination, oppression and racism.

- 7- **Don't you wrong or right me:** This utterance is classified into conventional implicature as he uses contrast between the words wrong or right. The utterance "Don't you wrong or right me" also, can be categorized as particularized conversational implicature as it needs background knowledge to know the reference of the pronoun "you" which refers to the racists or authority.

### **Conclusion**

From the current study, it becomes evident that a song is a powerful form of communication. Through the exploration of different definitions of protest songs, it becomes clear that a protest song is a revolting cry against the status quo and a call for making a reform or a change. Throughout history, protest songs are used to challenge social and/ or political norms and values. The lyricists of protest songs are major spokesmen of their generations, groups and their societies. They used their lyrics to stir both emotional and intellectual responses to social and/or political issues among a relevant identified group. Protest songs have proved that they can still play a valuable role today as in the past. This view makes them the most deserved type of songs to be studied in this thesis.

Michael Jackson is one of the most important pop singers of all time. He is known as "The King of Pop" as he hit records and revolutionized the music industry. He used to challenge the racial discrimination in the US, and defended the Blacks to whom he

belonged. His preoccupation with the problems of his people was reflected in the lyrics of his songs. Being the lyricist of the two selected protest songs, Michael Jackson uses his lyrics as a fundamental device to convey his messages.

The examination of the Jackson's protest song reveals a number of parallels and connections. In the texts chosen for this study, the thought of the lyricist is clear. The song is a critique against racism and social discrimination in America. The main message of the song is "it is so difficult to be a black". Moreover, the song has many events taken from Michael Jackson's real life. However, *They Don't Care About Us* is against political and social conditions.

These results are found out through the pragmatic analysis of the song. The results obtained from the analysis, together with some relevant tropes, have revealed that the non-observance of the maxims, especially their flouting, plays a crucial role in the song. The occurrence of conversational implicature is caused by the results of flouted maxim. It is noteworthy that the dominant flouted maxim in the song was the quantity maxim, which indicates that Michael Jackson failed to provide the required information for the purpose of the utterance, whether he gives too much or too little information; then comes the quality flouted maxim which happens when Michael Jackson failed to fulfill the maxim which requires him to make a reliable contribution, and say things that are believed to be true and have adequate evidence. The meanings conveyed through the quality flouted maxim are varied as he uses overstatement, metaphor, and irony for this flouted maxim. It is followed by the flouted maxim of manner; it occurs when Michael Jackson failed to fulfill the maxim of manner in his utterances. He failed to be perspicuous, avoid obscurity, avoid ambiguity, be brief, and be orderly.

Second, the researcher found the two types of implicatures, conventional and conversational implicature, in the two songs. The dominant type of implicature was the conversational implicature, especially, particularized conversational implicature, which requires understanding the context through common background.



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## Appendix

### Michael Jackson's *They Don't Care About Us*

Skin head, dead head  
Everybody gone bad  
Situation, aggravation  
Everybody  
allegation  
In the suite, on the news  
Everybody dog food  
Bang bang, shot dead  
Everybody's gone mad  
All I wanna say is that  
They don't really care about us  
All I wanna say is that  
They don't really care about us  
Beat me, hate me  
You can never break me  
Will me, thrill me  
You can never kill me  
Jew me, sue me  
Everybody do me  
Kick me, kike me  
Don't you black or white me  
All I wanna say is that  
They don't really care about us  
All I wanna say is that  
They don't really care about us

Tell me what has become of my life  
I have a wife and two children who love me  
I am the victim of police brutality, now  
I'm tired of being the victim of hate  
You're ripping me off my pride  
Oh, for God's sake

I look to heaven to fulfill its prophecy...

Set me free

Skin head, dead head

Everybody gone bad

Trepidation, speculation

Everybody allegation

In the suite, on the news

Everybody dog food

Black man, blackmail

Throw the brother in jail

All I wanna say is that

They don't really care about us

All I wanna say is that

They don't really care about us

Tell me what has become of my rights

Am I invisible because you ignore me?

Your proclamation promised me free liberty, now

I'm tired of being the victim of shame

They're throwing me in a class with a bad name

I can't believe this is the land from which I came

You know I really do hate to say it

The government don't wanna see

But if Roosevelt was living

He wouldn't let this be, no, no

Skin head, dead head

Everybody gone bad

Situation, speculation

Everybody litigation

Beat me, bash me

You can never trash me

Hit me, kick me

You can never get me  
All I wanna say is that  
They don't really care about us  
All I wanna say is that  
They don't really care about us

Some things in life they just don't wanna see  
But if Martin Luther was living  
He wouldn't let this be, no, no

Skin head, dead head  
Everybody gone bad  
Situation, segregation  
Everybody allegation  
In the suite, on the news  
Everybody dog food  
Kick me, kike me  
Don't you wrong or right me

All I wanna say is that  
They don't really care about us  
All I wanna say is that  
They don't really care about us  
All I wanna say is that  
They don't really care about us  
All I wanna say is that  
They don't really care about  
All I wanna say is that  
They don't really care about  
All I wanna say is that  
They don't really care about

### ملخص

تستقصي هذه الدراسة أغنية احتجاجية أمريكية مختارة من منظور النظريات البراجماتية. وتهدف الدراسة إلى بيان وظيفة السمات البراجماتية في الأغنية. كما أنها تسعى أيضاً لإثبات أن كلمات الأغنية تستخدم الخطاب الضمني للدفاع عن بعض القضايا السياسية والاجتماعية. يتم تحقيق ذلك الهدف من خلال اعتماد منهج انتقائي مكون من نظرية غرايس (١٩٧٥)، من خلال وصف أنواع التضمينات الحوارية ومخالفة المبادئ الأربعة. تبحث الدراسة في أغنية اختيرت بناءً على موضوع هام، ألا وهو موضوع العنصرية. والأغنية هي: أغنية "إنهم لا يكثرثون لنا" لمايكل جاكسون. وتظهر الدراسة أن الأغاني الاحتجاجية تتحدى الأعراف والقيم الاجتماعية أو السياسية أو كليهما. كما يعكس تحليل أغنية جاكسون الاحتجاجية أنها عبارة عن انتقادات للعنصرية والتمييز الاجتماعي داخل المجتمع الأمريكي. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن مخالفة مبادئ غرايس الأربعة تلعب دوراً حاسماً في الأغنية؛ وهي تساعد في تكرار التضمين الحوارية. كما توصلت الدراسة إلى وجود نوعين من التضمين: التضمين العرقي والتضمين الحوارية، والنوع السائد من التضمين هو التضمين الحوارية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية: البراجماتية، مفهوم التضمين الحوارية، الأغاني الاحتجاجية**