
Cultural Representation through Conversational Implicature in Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*: A Pragmatic Study

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Abstract

Popular music exists not only as entertainment but also as a cultural discourse through which identities, beliefs, and social values which are communicated. Although conversational implicature examined in literary and media discourse, its role in constructing cultural representation in popular music remains widely unexplored. This study examined how conversational implicatures were realized in Queen's song and how they construct cultural representation within the lyrical discourse. A qualitative textual analysis was employed using (Grice, 1991) and (Hall et al., 2003). Data were collected from the official lyrics through document analysis using reflexive thematic coding, along with pragmatic and cultural interpretation. The analysis identified 17 conversational implicatures, categorized into religious representation (29.41%), identity and existential representation (35.29%), and historical-cultural symbolism (35.29%). The findings demonstrated that conversational implicatures function beyond indirect communication by constructing implicit cultural meanings through symbolic language, contextual inference, and shared cultural knowledge. Religious, existential, and historical references collectively represent moral values, identity negotiation, and European cultural heritage. In conclusion, this study performed as pragmatics and cultural studies by demonstrating that conversational implicature functions not only as an inferential mechanism but also as a representational mechanism through which cultural meanings are constructed in popular music discourse.

Keywords: *pragmatics; conversational implicature; cultural representation*

A. INTRODUCTION

Popular music has evolved far beyond its conventional role as a form of entertainment to become a dynamic cultural discourse through which societies negotiate meanings, identities, ideologies, and collective memories (Bennett, 2009). As one of the most influential forms of symbolic communication, music reflects not only artistic creativity but also the sociocultural realities from which it emerges. Through melodies, performances, and particularly lyrics, popular music continuously reconstructs historical experiences, political ideologies, religious beliefs, and social values into communicative forms that are accessible to diverse audiences. Consequently, music should not be understood merely as an aesthetic product but as a cultural text whose meanings are produced through complex interactions between language, context, and shared cultural knowledge. Such a perspective has positioned popular music at the center

of interdisciplinary inquiries involving linguistics, cultural studies, sociology, media studies, and communication because musical texts frequently function as sites where cultural identities are negotiated and social meanings are reproduced (Bennett & Janssen, 2016). The transformation of music into a cultural artifact further demonstrates that popular songs preserve collective memories, reinforce ideological positions, and construct symbolic representations that extend well beyond their immediate entertainment value (Cifti & Belli, 2016). Heritage discourses surrounding rock music, for instance, reveal how songs become repositories of cultural memory, historical consciousness, and identity formation, allowing audiences to reconnect with broader cultural narratives rather than merely consume musical performances (Bennett, 2009).

Within this broader cultural framework, song lyrics constitute one of the most linguistically sophisticated components of popular music because they communicate meanings through carefully selected lexical choices, figurative language, inter-textual references, and contextual associations (Sbisà, 2021). Unlike ordinary conversational exchanges, lyrical discourse frequently relies on ambiguity, symbolism, metaphor, irony, and narrative fragmentation to encourage audiences to participate actively in constructing meaning (Tajeddin & Bagherkazemi, 2021). The communicative power of song lyrics therefore lies not only in what is explicitly expressed but also in what remains intentionally unsaid. Such implicit communication enables songwriters to embed philosophical reflections, religious allusions, political criticism, emotional struggles, and cultural identities within seemingly ordinary linguistic expressions. Consequently, interpreting song lyrics requires more than semantic decoding; it demands pragmatic interpretation in which listeners infer speakers' intended meanings through contextual reasoning and shared sociocultural assumptions. Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that language and culture are inseparable because linguistic expressions derive their communicative force from the cultural contexts in which they are produced and interpreted (Elmahady et al., 2022).

Cultural values shape lexical choices, discourse structures, and communicative conventions, while language simultaneously serves as a symbolic system through which cultures preserve, negotiate, and transform meanings across generations (Asemota, 2015). This reciprocal relationship suggests that song lyrics should be examined as cultural discourse rather than isolated literary texts because their meanings emerge from the interaction between linguistic forms and sociocultural contexts. The complexity of meaning construction in lyrical discourse inevitably directs attention to pragmatics, a branch of linguistics concerned with how language users communicate meanings that extend beyond literal expressions. Among various pragmatic phenomena, conversational implicature remains one of the most influential theoretical frameworks for explaining how speakers intentionally communicate meanings that are neither explicitly encoded nor directly recoverable from linguistic forms alone. According to (Grice, 1991) cooperative principle, conversational participants assume that communication proceeds cooperatively through shared expectations concerning truthfulness, relevance, and clarity. These expectations enable listeners to infer additional meanings whenever speakers deliberately observe, exploit, or apparently violate conversational maxims. Rather than constituting peripheral aspects of communication, conversational implicatures represent the very mechanism through which everyday language achieves efficiency, subtlety, and communicative richness. Contemporary developments in pragmatics further explore that implicature involves sophisticated inferential processes integrating contextual knowledge, cognitive reasoning, and shared cultural assumptions (Baydak et al., 2015). Conversational implicatures therefore cannot be reduced to isolated linguistic phenomena because they emerge from dynamic interactions among speakers, listeners, discourse contexts, and sociocultural conventions. Subsequent developments by neo-Gricean pragmatics, relevance theory, and lexical pragmatics have further expanded

Grice's original proposal by explaining how generalized conversational implicatures, particularized conversational implicatures (Su & Zhang, 2025), pragmatic enrichment, and lexical interpretation contribute collectively to meaning construction in authentic communication (Sbisà, 2021). Rather than being static interpretative outcomes, conversational implicatures continuously evolve alongside language use and repeated cultural practices, gradually becoming conventionalized meanings embedded within particular linguistic communities (Blutner et al., 1996).

Conversational Implicature as Pragmatic Meaning

The interpretation of meaning has long constituted one of the central concerns in linguistic inquiry. While semantic theories primarily explain meanings encoded within lexical and grammatical structures, they frequently fail to account for the communicative intentions speakers successfully convey beyond literal expressions (Tajeddin & Bagherkazemi, 2021). Everyday communication demonstrates that speakers rarely articulate every intended meaning explicitly. Instead, interlocutors routinely depend on contextual information, shared knowledge, cultural conventions, interpersonal relationships, and inferential reasoning to recover meanings that remain linguistically underdetermined. This observation gradually shifted the focus of linguistic inquiry from sentence meaning toward meaning in context, ultimately establishing pragmatics as one of the most influential perspectives for explaining human communication (Sbisà, 2021). Pragmatics therefore extends linguistic analysis beyond structural description by examining how communicative intentions emerge through the interaction between speakers, hearers, discourse contexts, and sociocultural environments rather than through linguistic forms alone (Izu, 2022).

Within this perspective, conversational implicature occupies a central position because it explains one of the most fundamental characteristics of natural language: the ability of speakers to communicate substantially more than what is explicitly stated (Su & Zhang, 2025). Grice's Cooperative Principle proposes that communication succeeds because interlocutors assume mutual cooperation governed by the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner (Nhung, 2023). Rather than functioning as prescriptive conversational rules, these maxims represent shared expectations that enable hearers to infer intended meanings whenever speakers deliberately observe, exploit, suspend, or apparently violate them. Consequently, conversational implicatures emerge not from linguistic expressions themselves but from the interaction between utterances, contextual assumptions, and rational inferential processes. The significance of Grice's proposal lies in its explanation that communication is fundamentally inferential rather than merely code-based, making conversational implicature one of the most influential concepts in modern pragmatics (Grice, 1991; Levinson, 2008).

Subsequent developments have substantially refined Grice's original proposal. Levinson's theory of generalized conversational implicature argues that many pragmatic inferences become default interpretations that listeners derive even in the absence of highly specific contextual information (Lalić, 2020). Rather than requiring elaborate inferential reasoning for every utterance, generalized conversational implicatures operate through recurring pragmatic heuristics that facilitate efficient communication. These heuristics explain why expressions such as quantifiers, indefinite noun phrases, and scalar alternatives systematically evoke additional meanings beyond their literal semantic content. Meanwhile, particularized conversational implicatures remain highly dependent upon contextual knowledge and cannot be interpreted independently from specific communicative situations. This distinction demonstrates that pragmatic interpretation exists along a continuum ranging from highly context-dependent inferences to relatively stable pragmatic conventions, thereby illustrating the dynamic relationship between semantics and pragmatics (Levinson, 2008).

Contemporary scholarship has further expanded conversational implicature beyond Gricean pragmatics by integrating cognitive perspectives into the interpretation of implicit meaning. Cognitive pragmatics argues that inferential communication involves complex mental processes including conceptual activation, contextual modelling, encyclopaedic knowledge, relevance evaluation, and expectation management (House & Kadar, 2021). From this perspective, listeners do not simply decode utterances; instead, they continuously construct mental representations by integrating linguistic input with previous experience, social knowledge, and cognitive expectations. Consequently, conversational implicatures should be understood as dynamic cognitive achievements rather than fixed linguistic products. (Schmidt & Schmidt, 2021) emphasized that pragmatic interpretation emerges through interactions among cognitive representations, contextual constraints, and discourse processing, illustrating that meaning construction is simultaneously linguistic, psychological, and social.

Another significant development concerns the relationship between pragmatics and culture. Cross-cultural pragmatics demonstrates that pragmatic interpretation is inseparable from culturally shared norms because communicative conventions differ substantially across linguistic communities. Expressions that successfully generate conversational implicatures within one culture may produce different interpretations or even communicative failure in another because pragmatic inference depends on culturally embedded assumptions regarding politeness, indirectness, interpersonal relations, and contextual expectations. (House & Kadar, 2021) therefore argued that pragmatic competence involves understanding not only linguistic structures but also the sociocultural conventions governing language use. This perspective is particularly relevant for literary and musical discourse because song lyrics frequently encode meanings rooted in culturally specific symbols, historical experiences, and collective identities that require culturally informed pragmatic interpretation.

Recent empirical investigations further demonstrate that conversational implicatures evolve historically rather than remaining static communicative phenomena. Through a diachronic corpus analysis, (Su & Zhang, 2025) revealed that repeated contextual use enables particularized conversational implicatures gradually to become generalized conversational implicatures before eventually developing into conventional lexical meanings. Their findings challenge the traditional assumption that implicatures exist only as temporary contextual inferences by demonstrating that pragmatic meanings may become entrenched through repeated cultural practices and collective language use. This diachronic perspective establishes an important conceptual bridge between pragmatics and cultural studies because it suggests that repeated pragmatic interpretations eventually become components of shared cultural knowledge. In other words, conversational implicatures do not merely reflect cultural contexts but may actively participate in constructing and reproducing cultural meanings across time (Islamli & Aliyeva, 2025).

Cultural Representation in Popular Music

While conversational implicature explains how speakers communicate meanings beyond literal linguistic expressions, it does not sufficiently explain why particular meanings become socially significant or culturally recognizable (Stadler, 2018). Interpreting implicit meanings requires more than pragmatic inference because language operates within broader cultural systems that assign values, identities, ideologies, and historical significance to communicative acts. Consequently, understanding the implicit meanings embedded in literary and musical discourse requires integrating pragmatic interpretation with theories of cultural representation. Such integration enables researchers to move beyond identifying what speakers imply toward explaining how those implications participate in constructing cultural meanings. This perspective is particularly relevant for popular music because songs function simultaneously

as linguistic discourse and cultural artefacts, allowing implicit meanings to circulate through symbolic representations shared by particular communities (Hall et al., 2003)

Representation is not the passive reflection of reality but an active process through which meanings are produced, negotiated, and circulated within society (Kadar & House, 2021). Cultural meanings do not exist naturally within objects, events, or linguistic expressions themselves; rather, they emerge through representational systems that connect concepts, language, and shared cultural codes. Language therefore functions not merely as an instrument for describing reality but as the primary medium through which societies construct and communicate meanings. From this perspective, every discourse, including popular music, participates in shaping rather than merely reflecting cultural reality. Song lyrics, consequently, should be regarded as representational practices in which linguistic choices contribute to producing cultural identities, collective memories, emotional experiences, and ideological positions (Kádár et al., 2023).

Hall's representation theory further emphasizes that meaning is socially constructed through shared interpretative frameworks rather than individually determined. Audiences interpret texts by drawing upon collectively established cultural codes that define how symbols, metaphors, historical references, and ideological expressions should be understood (Hall et al., 2003). As a result, linguistic expressions frequently carry cultural meanings extending far beyond their dictionary definitions. Religious references, mythological characters, historical figures, geographical names, and symbolic metaphors often evoke broader cultural narratives because they activate shared knowledge accumulated within particular societies. Such observations are particularly important for analysing song lyrics, whose communicative effectiveness frequently depends on audiences' familiarity with culturally embedded symbols rather than explicit linguistic explanation. Thus, representation constitutes an interpretative bridge connecting language with culture through socially shared systems of signification (Wang, 2024).

The relationship between language and culture has likewise received considerable attention within linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics. Language not only facilitates communication but also functions as a symbolic system through which societies preserve traditions, negotiate identities, and transmit cultural knowledge across generations. (Jourdan & Tuite, 2006) argued that language, culture, and social interaction are inseparable because linguistic practices emerge from culturally organized patterns of human experience. Rather than existing independently from social life, language continually reflects cultural beliefs while simultaneously contributing to their reproduction through everyday communication. Consequently, understanding discourse requires examining not only linguistic structures but also the cultural environments that shape communicative practices (Gotor, 2011).

It is similar with (Asemota, 2015), stated that language functions as a symbolic guide to social reality because meanings become intelligible only when interpreted within their cultural contexts. Expressions that appear linguistically straightforward frequently encode culturally specific assumptions, values, and interpersonal relationships that remain inaccessible without contextual knowledge. The study therefore emphasizes that language; individual experience, society, and culture constitute an integrated system in which linguistic meaning develops through social interaction and cultural practice rather than grammatical structure (Carbaugh, 2007). More recently, (Islamli & Aliyeva, 2025) reaffirmed this perspective by demonstrating that cultural values continuously shape vocabulary, communicative conventions, semantic development, and language change. Their findings indicate that language simultaneously functions as a communicative instrument and as a marker of cultural identity, illustrating that linguistic evolution is inseparable from broader processes of cultural transformation.

These theoretical perspectives become particularly significant when applied to popular music. Contemporary music scholarship increasingly recognizes songs as cultural texts that document historical experiences, ideological struggles, collective emotions, and identity formation. Rather than existing outside society, music participates actively in producing cultural memory by preserving narratives, commemorating historical events, and reinforcing shared identities. (Bennett, 2009), for instance, introduced the concept of heritage rock to explain how rock music has evolved into a form of cultural heritage through which societies reinterpret and preserve their historical experiences. According to Bennett, songs are not merely musical performances but representational practices that enable audiences to reconnect with collective histories and cultural identities through symbolic forms.

Expanding this perspective, (Bennett & Janssen, 2016) argued that popular music functions as an important site of cultural memory because musical works establish emotional connections between individuals and the historical past. Songs become repositories of collective remembrance by preserving experiences, values, and identities that transcend individual listeners. Music therefore contributes to constructing historical consciousness while simultaneously shaping contemporary cultural identities. This argument positions popular music as an essential representational medium through which cultural meanings are continuously negotiated across generations rather than remaining fixed historical artefacts. On the other hand, popular music as a cultural practice shaped by relationships among media industries, audiences, technology, identity formation, and discursive production. Popular songs should therefore be understood as products of broader sociocultural processes in which language, performance, commercial production, and audience interpretation collectively construct meaning (Hoeven, 2018). Rather than analysing lyrics as isolated literary texts, Wall encourages scholars to examine them within wider networks of cultural production, consumption, and representation. This perspective is particularly relevant to *Bohemian Rhapsody*, whose enduring global significance cannot be explained solely through its musical composition but must also be understood through its cultural symbolism, historical reception, and discursive circulation across different generations (Hoeven, 2018).

Overall, these perspectives establish an important conceptual foundation for the present study. Grice's theory explains how implicit meanings are pragmatically inferred, whereas Hall's representation theory explains how those inferred meanings acquire cultural significance through systems of representation. Meanwhile, scholarship on language, culture, and popular music demonstrates that song lyrics are not isolated linguistic artefacts but culturally situated discourses through which identities, ideologies, memories, and symbolic values are continuously produced and negotiated. Moreover, this study conceptualizes conversational implicature not merely as a pragmatic phenomenon but as a representational mechanism that enables *Bohemian Rhapsody* to construct and communicate cultural meanings through indirect linguistic expression.

Though the growing body of scholarship on conversational implicature, cultural representation, and popular music, these areas of inquiry have often been examined separately. Pragmatic studies tend to focus on how implied meanings are inferred from linguistic expressions and contextual assumptions, whereas cultural studies emphasize how meanings, identities, and ideologies are constructed through systems of representation. The intersection between these perspectives, particularly in the analysis of popular music lyrics, therefore warrants further investigation. More specifically, limited attention has been devoted to explaining how the inferential mechanisms of conversational implicature contribute to the construction of cultural representation within a single lyrical discourse. To address this gap, the present study integrates Grice's Conversational Implicature Theory with Hall's Representation Theory to examine Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*. The study moves beyond identifying implicit meanings by investigating how such meanings participate in constructing

religious representation, identity and existential experience, and historical-cultural symbolism. Its principal contribution lies in developing an integrated pragmatic and cultural perspective that connects the interpretation of implied meaning with the social production of cultural significance in popular music.

B. METHOD

Research Design and Data Collection

This study employed a qualitative research design to investigate how conversational implicatures construct cultural representation in Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody. Qualitative inquiry is particularly appropriate for examining linguistic phenomena that involve interpretation, contextual understanding, and socially constructed meanings because it emphasizes the exploration of complex human experiences within their natural settings rather than statistical measurement (Creswell, 2022). Within this paradigm, meanings are understood as socially and culturally constructed through language, making qualitative inquiry suitable for examining implicit meanings embedded in song lyrics (Silverman, 2019). More specifically, the present study adopted qualitative textual analysis because the research object consists of written discourse in the form of song lyrics. Unlike quantitative linguistic studies that focus on frequency or distributional patterns, qualitative textual analysis seeks to interpret linguistic expressions by considering their contextual, pragmatic, and cultural dimensions. Since song lyrics represent symbolic discourse rather than ordinary conversational exchanges, their interpretation requires close attention to contextual meanings, inferential processes, and sociocultural references (Griffin, 1999).

The primary data consisted of the official lyrics of Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody. The song was purposively selected because it is widely recognized as one of the most linguistically and culturally complex compositions in popular music (Nazaruddin & Handaru, 2023). Its lyrics combine conversational expressions with religious symbolism, philosophical reflections, operatic narratives, historical references, and figurative language, providing a rich source of conversational implicatures and cultural representations. The unit of analysis comprised words, phrases, clauses, and lyric segments containing potential conversational implicatures. Data were collected through document analysis by repeatedly reading the lyrics to gain familiarity with their linguistic structures and contextual meanings. Subsequently, lyric segments potentially containing conversational implicatures were identified, highlighted, and organized into analytical units. Supporting contextual information concerning historical background, cultural symbolism, and religious references was also compiled to facilitate comprehensive interpretation. This iterative reading process enabled the researcher to develop a deep understanding of both the linguistic and cultural dimensions of the text prior to the analytical stage (Creswell, 2014).

To ensure analytical consistency, a lyric segment was considered a potential instance of conversational implicature only when its interpretation involved a distinguishable implied meaning beyond its literal content. The identification process considered the linguistic expression, its surrounding lyrical context, the relevant conversational maxim, and the inferential steps through which the implied meaning could be recovered. Cultural references were not automatically classified as conversational implicatures merely because they evoked historical, religious, or artistic associations. Instead, each candidate segment was examined to determine whether its interpretation could be justified through pragmatic inference. This distinction was important for separating conversational implicature from metaphorical expression, symbolic reference, and other forms of figurative language.

Data Analysis

The analysis followed an iterative qualitative procedure integrating reflexive thematic coding with pragmatic and cultural interpretation. Rather than employing thematic analysis as the principal methodological framework, this study used reflexive thematic analysis as a systematic coding strategy to organize textual data prior to pragmatic interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach was considered appropriate because it provides analytical flexibility while maintaining methodological rigor in qualitative textual analysis. The analytical process consisted of six interconnected stages. First, the researcher familiarized himself with the data by repeatedly reading the song lyrics to understand their linguistic structures, contextual meanings, and symbolic expressions. Continuous engagement with the text enabled the identification of recurring linguistic patterns and potential conversational implicatures (Blutner et al., 1996). Second, initial coding was conducted following (Saldana, 2021) coding procedures. Each lyric segment was coded according to its linguistic expression, contextual background, potential maxim observance or violation, implied meaning, and relevant cultural references. Coding remained inductive and recursive, allowing new interpretative categories to emerge throughout the analytical process rather than being predetermined. Third, the initial codes were grouped into broader analytical categories based on similarities in pragmatic functions, contextual characteristics, and cultural symbolism. This categorization process facilitated systematic organization of the data while preserving the contextual uniqueness of each lyric segment (Miles et al., 2014). Fourth, each coded lyric segment was interpreted using Grice's Conversational Implicature Theory (Grice, 1991). The analysis examined how conversational maxims generated implicit meanings and how listeners were expected to infer those meanings through contextual reasoning rather than literal interpretation. Particular attention was given to the inferential mechanisms underlying generalized and particularized conversational implicatures. Fifth, the pragmatically interpreted meanings were further analyzed through Hall's Representation Theory to explain how conversational implicatures construct broader cultural representations (Hall et al., 2003). This stage focused on identifying cultural identities, ideological positions, historical memories, religious symbolism, and philosophical values communicated through implicit linguistic expressions. Integrating Grice's pragmatics with Hall's representation theory enabled the analysis to move beyond identifying conversational implicatures toward explaining their representational functions within popular music discourse (Bennett & Janssen, 2016).

Figure 1 (below) illustrates the overall research procedure adopted in this study. The research begins with the formulation of the research focus, which aims to investigate how conversational implicatures are constructed in the lyrics of Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody and how these implicatures represent cultural meanings. To address these research questions, the study integrates Grice's Conversational Implicature Theory as the pragmatic framework for identifying implicit meanings and Hall's Representation Theory as the interpretative framework for explaining the construction of cultural representation. Subsequently, the study employs a qualitative textual analysis using the official lyrics of Bohemian Rhapsody as the primary data source. The unit of analysis consists of lyric segments containing potential conversational implicatures. Data were collected through document analysis and analyzed using an iterative procedure comprising data familiarization, contextual interpretation, coding, categorization, thematic grouping, and interpretative analysis. This analytical process enabled the researcher to systematically identify conversational implicatures before interpreting their broader cultural meanings. The findings were then organized into three major categories of cultural representation: religious representation, identity and existential representation, and historical and cultural symbolism. Finally, these findings were discussed by integrating pragmatic and cultural perspectives to explain the dual function of conversational implicatures as mechanisms of implicit communication and cultural representation. The

research concludes by answering the research questions, highlighting the theoretical contribution of integrating pragmatics and cultural studies, acknowledging the study's limitations, and proposing directions for future research. The data analysis proceeded through five interconnected stages. First, the lyrics were read repeatedly to establish familiarity with their linguistic patterns, narrative progression, and contextual relationships. Second, candidate lyric segments were identified and provisionally coded according to their literal meanings, contextual cues, potential conversational implicatures, and relevant cultural references. Third, each candidate was examined pragmatically by considering the conversational context represented in the lyrics, the relevant conversational maxim, and the reasoning required deriving the implied meaning. Segments for which a defensible inferential relationship could not be established were distinguished from those supported by contextual and pragmatic evidence.

Fourth, the validated data were organized into broader categories according to their cultural representational functions. These categories were developed through iterative comparison of the coded segments, with attention to recurring patterns concerning religious representation, identity and existential experience, and historical-cultural symbolism. Fifth, the resulting categories were interpreted through the integration of Grice's Conversational Implicature Theory and Hall's Representation Theory. Grice's framework was used to explain how implied meanings could be inferred from linguistic expressions and contextual assumptions, whereas Hall's framework was used to examine how those meanings participated in constructing cultural representations. The interpretations were subsequently reviewed against the original lyric segments to maintain consistency between the textual evidence, pragmatic reasoning, and cultural claims.

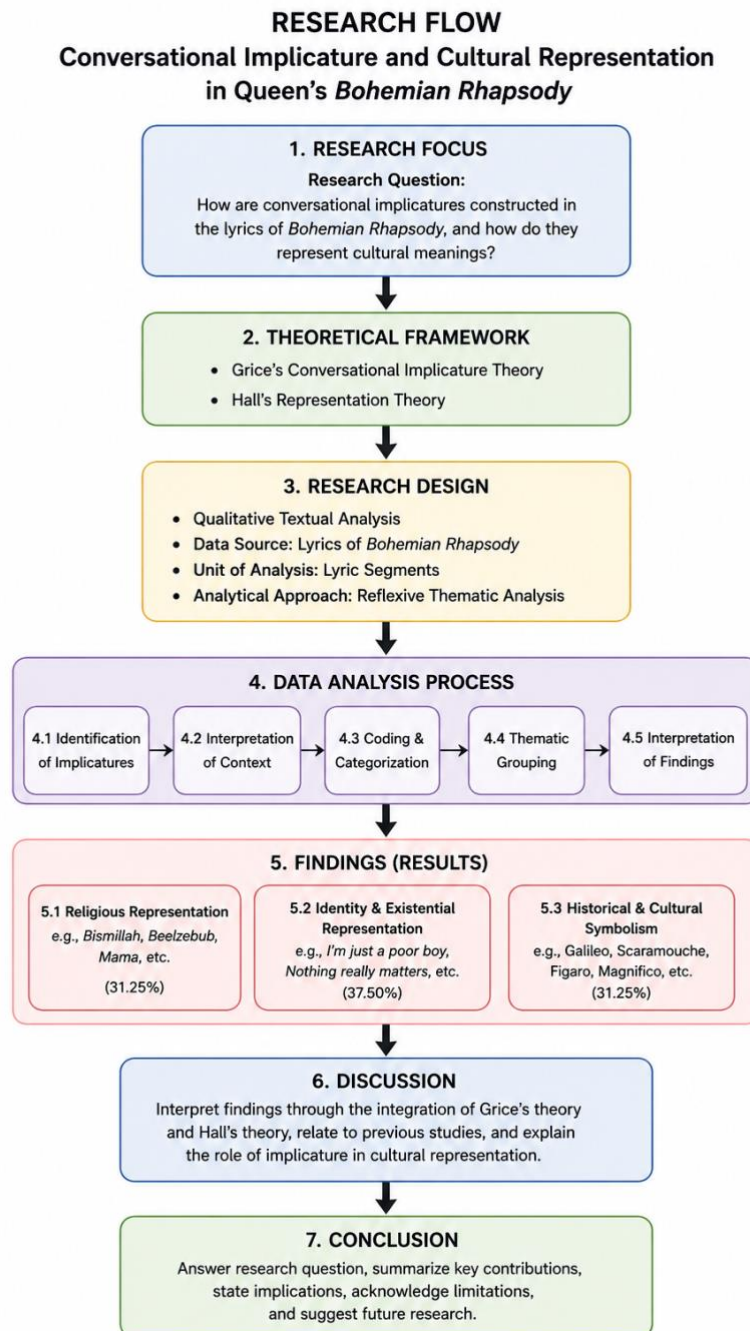


Figure 1. Research flowchart

The findings were synthesized by continuously comparing the coded data with the theoretical framework and emerging interpretations. The analytical process remained iterative throughout the study, allowing interpretations to be refined as new insights emerged (Silverman, 2020; Charmaz, 2021). To ensure analytical rigor, the study adopted the trustworthiness criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was achieved through repeated engagement with the data and careful contextual interpretation. Dependability was maintained by documenting each stage of the coding and analytical procedures to establish a transparent audit trail. Confirmability was ensured by grounding all interpretations in textual evidence and established theoretical frameworks rather than personal assumptions. Finally,

transferability was enhanced through detailed descriptions of the linguistic, pragmatic, and cultural contexts of the analyzed lyrics, enabling readers to assess the applicability of the findings to similar studies involving song lyrics and cultural discourse.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The analysis revealed that religious representation constitutes the most dominant category of conversational implicature identified in *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Rather than explicitly expressing theological doctrines or religious beliefs, the lyrics construct spiritual meanings through indirect linguistic expressions that require contextual interpretation. The religious representations emerge from symbolic lexical choices, emotional appeals, and references to sacred and supernatural entities. These expressions function as conversational implicatures because their intended meanings cannot be fully understood through literal interpretation alone but instead depend upon listeners' inferential reasoning and cultural knowledge. Five lyric segments were identified as representing religious discourse through conversational implicature. These segments portray themes of confession, guilt, redemption, divine authority, temptation, and metaphysical conflict. The findings indicate that conversational implicature provides an important perspective for understanding how the lyrics of Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* communicate meanings beyond their explicit linguistic content. The lyric segments examined in this study invite interpretations that depend on the relationship between linguistic expressions, their surrounding context, and the assumptions used to infer additional meaning. This finding is consistent with Grice's (1975) account of conversational implicature, which explains how hearers derive implied meanings by considering an utterance in relation to conversational expectations and contextual information. In the present study, however, pragmatic interpretation serves a further purpose: it provides the basis for examining how implied meanings become associated with broader cultural representations.

Table 1. Religious Representation through Conversational Implicature

No.	Lyric Segment	Literal Meaning	Implied Meaning	Cultural Representation
1.	<i>Mama, just killed a man</i>	The speaker killed someone	Confession and moral guilt	Moral responsibility
2.	<i>Mama, life had just begun</i>	Life has only started	Regret and loss of innocence	Human mortality
3.	<i>Bismillah!</i>	Islamic invocation	Appeal for divine intervention	Religious devotion
4.	<i>Beelzebub has a devil put aside for me</i>	Devil awaits the speaker	Spiritual judgment	Good versus evil
5.	<i>Mama mia, let me go</i>	Request to be released	Plea for salvation	Hope for redemption

The lyric "*Mama, just killed a man*" constitutes one of the strongest examples of implicit religious representation. On the surface, the utterance functions as a confession describing a violent act. However, the surrounding discourse suggests a deeper layer of meaning in which the speaker acknowledges not merely the physical act of killing but also its moral and spiritual consequences. The absence of any explicit request for forgiveness or justification encourages listeners to infer that the confession represents an internal struggle between guilt

and conscience rather than a simple narrative event. The utterance therefore introduces the broader theme of moral accountability that continues throughout the song. The following lyric, "*Mama, life had just begun*", strengthens this interpretation by shifting attention from the act itself to its existential consequences. Instead of merely expressing sadness, the utterance implies irreversible loss, interrupted destiny, and profound regret. The contrast between the beginning of life and its sudden destruction symbolizes the fragility of human existence. This implicit meaning emerges through the relationship between adjacent lyric segments rather than from the literal sentence itself.

A more explicit religious dimension appears through the isolated expression "*Bismillah!*" Unlike the surrounding English lyrics, this Arabic expression immediately introduces a sacred atmosphere into the discourse. Its sudden appearance without contextual explanation requires listeners to activate prior religious and cultural knowledge. Rather than functioning simply as a lexical borrowing, the expression implicitly invokes divine authority during the speaker's existential crisis. The absence of explanatory context transforms the utterance into a symbolic marker of spiritual dependence rather than an ordinary linguistic expression. The lyric "*Beelzebub has a devil put aside for me*" represents the climax of religious symbolism within the song. Although the statement literally refers to demonic imagery, its communicative function extends beyond supernatural description. The lyric constructs an implied conflict between condemnation and redemption by juxtaposing sacred expressions such as *Bismillah* with references to evil. Rather than explicitly narrating a theological battle, the discourse encourages listeners to infer a symbolic confrontation between opposing moral forces operating within the speaker's psychological experience.

Finally, the repeated plea "*Mama mia, let me go*" shifts the discourse from confession toward liberation. The request for release is never explicitly directed to a particular authority, leaving its intended recipient deliberately ambiguous. This ambiguity allows multiple interpretations, including emotional dependence, divine mercy, or spiritual redemption. The repeated imperative intensifies the emotional force of the utterance while simultaneously reinforcing the broader representation of human vulnerability before transcendent authority. It can be inferred, these findings indicate that religious representation in Bohemian Rhapsody is constructed primarily through indirect communication rather than explicit theological exposition. The lyrics employ symbolic expressions that encourage listeners to infer meanings concerning guilt, redemption, divine authority, temptation, and salvation. Consequently, religious meaning functions as an interpretative layer emerging from conversational implicatures instead of literal linguistic statements.

The second category identified in the analysis concerns the representation of personal identity and existential experience. Unlike the previous category, which emphasizes religious symbolism, these lyric segments portray the speaker's psychological condition through indirect expressions of self-identification, emotional uncertainty, resignation, and philosophical reflection. Rather than explicitly describing the speaker's identity or emotional state, the lyrics invite listeners to infer these meanings through conversational implicatures embedded in seemingly simple utterances. Consequently, identity is represented as a fluid and continuously negotiated construct rather than a fixed personal characteristic. The analysis identified six lyric segments representing identity and existential concerns.

Table 2. Identity and Existential Representation through Conversational Implicature

No.	Lyric Segment	Literal Meaning	Implied Meaning	Cultural Representation
1.	<i>I'm just a poor boy, nobody loves me</i>	The speaker is poor and unloved	Social marginalization and inferiority	Marginal identity

No.	Lyric Segment	Literal Meaning	Implied Meaning	Cultural Representation
2.	<i>He's just a poor boy from a poor family</i>	Description of family background	Collective social identity	Class consciousness
3.	<i>Easy come, easy go</i>	Things come and go easily	Acceptance of life's uncertainty	Fatalistic worldview
4.	<i>Any way the wind blows</i>	Wind changes direction	Indifference toward fate	Existential uncertainty
5.	<i>Nothing really matters</i>	Nothing has importance	Meaninglessness of existence	Existential philosophy
6.	<i>Anyone can see</i>	Everyone knows	Acceptance of reality	Human vulnerability

The opening declaration, *"I'm just a poor boy, nobody loves me,"* functions as an indirect expression of identity rather than a literal description of socioeconomic status. The lexical choice *poor* does not merely denote financial limitation but implicitly conveys emotional isolation, social exclusion, and diminished self-worth. Likewise, the statement *nobody loves me* should not be interpreted as an objective claim about interpersonal relationships. Instead, it reflects the speaker's internal perception of abandonment and psychological alienation. The conversational implicature emerges from the contrast between the simplicity of the lexical expressions and the broader emotional condition they evoke, allowing listeners to infer a deeply fragmented sense of identity. This representation is reinforced through the subsequent lyric, *"He's just a poor boy from a poor family."* The shift from the first-person pronoun (I) to the third-person reference (He) creates a subtle distancing effect in which the speaker appears to observe himself from an external perspective. Such a shift suggests that personal identity is no longer experienced as stable or unified but becomes fragmented between subjective experience and social categorization. Furthermore, the repetition of the adjective *poor* extends the notion of poverty beyond economic conditions to encompass inherited social circumstances and collective identity. The lyric therefore implies that the speaker's personal struggle is inseparable from broader social structures and familial background.

A different existential dimension emerges through the repeated expression, *"Easy come, easy go."* On its literal level, the statement simply describes the temporary nature of events. However, within the broader lyrical context, it implicitly expresses an attitude of resignation toward the unpredictability of human life. Rather than actively resisting changing circumstances, the speaker appears to accept uncertainty as an unavoidable condition of existence. This indirect expression communicates emotional detachment while simultaneously revealing psychological exhaustion following the earlier confession of guilt. Similarly, the lyric *"Any way the wind blows"* extends this existential perspective through metaphorical language. The image of the wind symbolizes forces beyond human control, suggesting that the speaker has relinquished the desire to determine the direction of his own life. The utterance does not explicitly state surrender or hopelessness; nevertheless, listeners naturally infer these meanings from the contextual relationship between the metaphor and the surrounding discourse. The conversational implicature therefore represents a worldview characterized by uncertainty, impermanence, and limited personal agency.

The expression *"Nothing really matters"* constitutes one of the most philosophically significant lyric segments in the song. Literally, it appears to deny the importance of everything. Pragmatically, however, the utterance functions as an indirect expression of existential crisis rather than a universal philosophical proposition. The lyric implies emotional emptiness and psychological resignation after an intense internal struggle. Its meaning

depends not on the lexical content alone but on its placement following successive episodes of guilt, fear, and confrontation. Consequently, the conversational implicature portrays a condition in which the speaker questions the significance of life itself without explicitly articulating existential despair. The final expression, "*Anyone can see*," appears deceptively straightforward. Instead of merely stating that something is obvious, the lyric implicitly acknowledges the inevitability of the speaker's situation. The utterance invites listeners to infer that the emotional collapse experienced by the speaker has become impossible to conceal. Through this indirect acknowledgement, the speaker accepts personal vulnerability while simultaneously recognizing the universality of human suffering. The expression therefore broadens the discourse from an individual experience toward a shared human condition.

Collectively, these lyric segments demonstrate that identity within Bohemian Rhapsody is represented through indirect communication rather than explicit self-description. The conversational implicatures reveal individual negotiating feelings of guilt, isolation, resignation, uncertainty, and existential reflection. Rather than portraying identity as a fixed personal attribute, the lyrics construct it as a dynamic psychological and cultural process shaped by emotional conflict and changing life circumstances. Consequently, existential representation emerges as one of the dominant cultural dimensions embedded throughout the song, complementing the religious representations identified in the previous section.

The third category identified in the analysis concerns the representation of historical and cultural symbolism. Unlike the previous categories, which primarily focus on personal experience and religious discourse, these lyric segments incorporate references to historical figures, theatrical traditions, scientific heritage, and European cultural expressions. Rather than functioning merely as proper nouns or decorative lexical choices, these references contribute to the construction of implicit meanings that extend beyond their literal interpretations. Their communicative significance emerges through listeners' ability to recognize culturally shared knowledge associated with each symbolic expression. The analysis identified six lyric segments representing historical and cultural symbolism.

Table 3. Historical and Cultural Symbolism through Conversational Implicature

No.	Lyric Segment	Literal Meaning	Implied Meaning	Cultural Representation
1.	<i>Scaramouche, Scaramouche</i>	Name of a theatrical character	Dramatic uncertainty and comic irony	Italian theatrical tradition
2.	<i>Will you do the Fandango?</i>	Invitation to dance	Performance and social spectacle	Spanish cultural expression
3.	<i>Galileo</i>	Name of Galileo Galilei	Rationality and intellectual authority	Scientific heritage
4.	<i>Figaro</i>	Name of an operatic character	Artistic identity	European operatic tradition
5.	<i>Magnifico</i>	Italian adjective meaning magnificent	Grandeur and nobility	Italian cultural expression
6.	<i>Thunderbolt and lightning</i>	Natural phenomena	Fear, judgment, and overwhelming power	Universal symbolic imagery

The expression "*Scaramouche, Scaramouche, will you do the Fandango?*" constitutes one of the most culturally distinctive passages in the song. At the literal level, the lyric

combines the name of a traditional theatrical character with an invitation to perform a dance. However, the juxtaposition of these two expressions produces meanings that extend beyond theatrical performance. The lyric constructs an atmosphere of uncertainty, absurdity, and dramatic tension through symbolic references that require cultural familiarity for their interpretation. Rather than describing an actual theatrical performance, the passage implicitly portrays emotional instability and psychological conflict through performativity imagery.

The subsequent reference to "Fandango" reinforces this representational pattern. Although literally referring to a traditional Spanish dance the expression functions as a symbolic marker of spectacle and exaggerated performance within the lyrical narrative. Its appearance contributes to the theatrical character of the discourse while simultaneously introducing elements of European cultural heritage into the song. The cultural meaning therefore depends not on the lexical item itself but on the broader symbolic associations activated during interpretation.

A different form of historical symbolism emerges through the repeated invocation of "Galileo." Literally, the expression identifies the renowned Italian astronomer and scientist. Within the lyrical discourse, however, the repeated naming functions as more than a historical reference. It evokes associations with scientific inquiry, intellectual courage, and challenges to established authority. The repetition intensifies the symbolic weight of the name, allowing listeners to infer broader cultural meanings related to knowledge, reason, and the pursuit of truth without explicitly explaining these concepts.

Similarly, the appearance of "Figaro" introduces another layer of European artistic tradition. Rather than functioning solely as the name of a fictional character, the expression evokes operatic heritage and classical performance culture. Within the song, *Figaro* contributes to the operatic atmosphere established throughout the central section while simultaneously broadening the cultural horizon of the discourse. The lyric therefore integrates theatrical symbolism into the speaker's emotional narrative through indirect cultural references.

The expression "*Magnifico*" further strengthens the multicultural character of the lyrical discourse. Although grammatically functioning as an adjective meaning "magnificent," its use within an otherwise English-language text creates a stylistic shift that draws attention to European cultural aesthetics. The insertion of Italian vocabulary contributes to the operatic style of the composition while simultaneously reinforcing the multilingual and multicultural character of the discourse.

The final symbolic expression, "*Thunderbolt and lightning, very, very frightening me,*" differs from the previous examples because it does not refer to a historical figure or cultural artifact. Instead, it utilizes universally recognizable natural imagery to communicate overwhelming emotional intensity. The lyric implicitly represents fear, uncertainty, and psychological pressure through environmental symbolism rather than direct emotional description. The combination of thunder and lightning intensifies the dramatic progression of the narrative while maintaining the song's reliance on indirect communication.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that historical and cultural symbolism is systematically embedded throughout the lyrical discourse of *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Rather than functioning as isolated references, names such as *Scaramouche*, *Galileo*, *Figaro*, and *Magnifico* collectively establish a multicultural symbolic landscape that integrates scientific history, theatrical traditions, artistic heritage, and European cultural identity into the narrative structure of the song. These symbolic expressions invite audiences to interpret broader cultural meanings through contextual inference, thereby enriching the complexity of the lyrical discourse.

The qualitative analysis identified three dominant categories of cultural representation constructed through conversational implicatures in *Bohemian Rhapsody*. These categories

emerged inductively from repeated patterns observed throughout the lyrical discourse rather than from predetermined analytical classifications.

Table 4. Summary of the Findings

Category	Number of Data	Percentage	Dominant Cultural Meaning
Religious Representation	5	29.41%	Guilt, redemption, divine authority, salvation
Identity and Existential Representation	6	35.29%	Self-identity, alienation, uncertainty, existential reflection
Historical and Cultural Symbolism	6	35.29%	Scientific heritage, theatrical tradition, European cultural identity
Total	17	100%	Three major representational domains

The findings indicate that identity and existential representation constitutes the most prominent category, accounting for 37.50% of the identified conversational implicatures. This predominance suggests that the song primarily constructs an internal narrative concerning personal identity, emotional conflict, and existential uncertainty. Religious representation and historical-cultural symbolism each account for 31.25%, demonstrating that spiritual discourse and multicultural symbolic references are equally significant components of the lyrical structure. Across all categories, conversational implicatures consistently function as mechanisms for communicating meanings indirectly rather than explicitly. The lyrics rarely state their intended cultural messages directly; instead, they rely on symbolic expressions, contextual associations, and inferential interpretation. Consequently, the cultural meanings identified in the analysis emerge through the interaction between linguistic expressions and listeners' interpretative processes rather than through literal semantic content alone.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that conversational implicatures in *Bohemian Rhapsody* function as more than indirect communicative strategies. Rather than merely conveying unstated meanings, the identified implicatures systematically construct multiple layers of interpretation that cannot be recovered through literal semantic analysis alone. This finding reinforces Grice's (1975) proposition that successful communication depends not solely on the linguistic content of an utterance but also on hearers' ability to infer speakers' intended meanings through contextual reasoning. Throughout the song, utterances such as *Mama, just killed a man*, *Nothing really matters*, and *Any way the wind blows* communicate psychological and philosophical meanings that substantially exceed their explicit lexical content.

The findings further support (Levinson, 2008) distinction between generalized and particularized conversational implicatures. Several lyric segments, particularly *Easy come, easy go* and *Nothing really matters*, require listeners to activate contextual and experiential knowledge before their intended meanings become interpretable. These expressions therefore operate as particularized conversational implicatures whose interpretations depend upon broader narrative contexts rather than isolated lexical meanings. Conversely, expressions such as *Mama* and *poor boy* activate relatively stable pragmatic inferences because they evoke culturally familiar emotional relationships that audiences immediately recognize. This coexistence of generalized and particularized implicatures illustrates the pragmatic complexity of lyrical discourse and confirms that song lyrics exploit inferential communication more extensively than ordinary conversational exchanges.

The present findings are also consistent with contemporary developments in cognitive pragmatics. Pragmatic interpretation should be understood as an inferential cognitive activity through which listeners integrate linguistic information with contextual assumptions and encyclopedic knowledge. Construction emerges from interactions among cognition, discourse, and contextual experience rather than from linguistic forms alone. The findings of this study support these perspectives by demonstrating that listeners interpret *Bohemian Rhapsody* through multiple inferential processes involving religious symbolism, historical references, emotional experiences, and cultural memory rather than literal lexical meanings alone.

Furthermore, the findings extend the argument that conversational implicatures may gradually become culturally conventionalized through repeated social use. Although the present study analyzes a single musical text rather than diachronic language change, the repeated appearance of symbolic expressions such as *Bismillah*, *Galileo*, and *Scaramouche* illustrates how culturally embedded references generate stable inferential meanings among audiences sharing similar cultural knowledge. Consequently, conversational implicatures function not only as temporary contextual inferences but also as mechanisms through which culturally recognizable meanings are reproduced and maintained within popular discourse.

Conversational Implicature as Cultural Representation

Representation is an active process through which meanings are socially produced rather than passively reflected by language. The conversational implicatures identified in *Bohemian Rhapsody* therefore function as representational practices that construct cultural realities instead of merely describing them. The religious representations identified in the song illustrate this process particularly clearly. Expressions such as *Bismillah* and *Beelzebub* are not interpreted solely as isolated lexical items but as symbolic representations of sacred authority, temptation, moral conflict, and redemption. Their meanings emerge because audiences connect these expressions with broader cultural narratives already established within religious traditions. Consequently, the lyrics demonstrate that conversational implicatures depend upon culturally shared systems of knowledge to become meaningful.

On the other hand, the representations of identity and existential uncertainty reveal that personal identity is constructed through discourse rather than explicitly declared. The repeated descriptions of being *a poor boy* or the assertion that *nothing really matters* communicate experiences of alienation, emotional vulnerability, and existential reflection without directly naming those conditions. These findings reinforce Hall's argument that identity is continuously produced through representational practices rather than existing as a fixed personal attribute. Language therefore functions simultaneously as a communicative medium and as a mechanism through which identities are socially negotiated. The second major finding concerns the relationship between implied meaning and cultural representation. While pragmatic analysis explains how additional meanings may be inferred from linguistic expressions, Hall's (1997) representation theory offers a framework for examining how meanings become culturally intelligible through shared systems of signification. Bringing these perspectives together makes it possible to investigate not only how an utterance is interpreted but also how its interpretation connects with broader cultural ideas, identities, and symbolic traditions.

The religious expressions "Bismillah" and "Beelzebub" illustrate this relationship. Both expressions carry recognizable associations with religious traditions, but their cultural significance within the song depends on more than their dictionary meanings. Their juxtaposition creates an interpretive space in which listeners may perceive tensions involving sacred authority, evil, moral conflict, and possible redemption. From a representational

perspective, these meanings emerge through the interaction between the textual arrangement and cultural knowledge associated with the expressions. However, the presence of religious vocabulary alone does not establish a conversational implicature. The pragmatic claim must be supported by an identifiable inferential process, whereas the wider religious associations can be discussed separately as elements of cultural representation.

***Bohemian Rhapsody* as a Cultural Text**

Another important contribution of this study concerns the cultural complexity of *Bohemian Rhapsody* itself. The analysis demonstrates that the song integrates multiple cultural traditions within a single lyrical discourse. Scientific history is represented through *Galileo*, European theatrical heritage through *Scaramouche* and *Figaro*, Italian linguistic expressions through *Magnifico*, and Abrahamic religious traditions through *Bismillah* and *Beelzebub*. These diverse references collectively construct a multicultural symbolic landscape that extends beyond conventional rock music. This finding is heritage rock, which argues that rock music functions as an important medium for preserving cultural memory. Likewise, popular music contributes to constructing collective memory by connecting contemporary audiences with broader historical experiences. The present findings extend these perspectives by demonstrating that cultural memory is not communicated solely through explicit historical narratives but also through conversational implicatures embedded within lyrical discourse.

Furthermore, popular music should be understood as cultural discourse rather than merely commercial entertainment. The findings strongly support this position because the symbolic references identified throughout *Bohemian Rhapsody* continuously invite audiences to negotiate meanings rather than passively consume musical performance. The song therefore operates simultaneously as artistic expression, cultural archive, historical narrative, and linguistic discourse. This perspective is compatible with scholarship on popular music as a site of cultural memory and identity formation. Bennett (2009) discusses the significance of rock music in heritage discourse, while Bennett and Janssen (2016) examine the relationship between popular music and cultural memory. The present analysis extends this perspective by directing attention to the linguistic resources through which cultural references become available for interpretation. Rather than relying exclusively on explicit historical narratives, lyrics can incorporate cultural associations through names, expressions, and symbolic contrasts.

Nevertheless, the presence of cultural references should not be taken as proof that all listeners interpret the song in the same way. Familiarity with religious traditions, European theatrical history, or operatic conventions may vary across audiences. Consequently, the cultural meanings identified here represent interpretations supported by the textual evidence and relevant contextual knowledge, rather than universal audience responses. This qualification is particularly important because the present study analyzes the lyrics themselves and does not include interviews, surveys, or reception data from listeners.

Theoretical Contribution and Implications

Previous studies have predominantly examined conversational implicatures as pragmatic mechanisms for indirect communication or analyzed song lyrics from literary, stylistic, or discourse-analytical perspectives. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to explaining how conversational implicatures simultaneously function as representational mechanisms through which cultural meanings are constructed. The present study demonstrates that conversational implicatures perform two interconnected functions. At the pragmatic level, they enable listeners to infer meanings beyond literal linguistic expressions. At the cultural level, they facilitate the construction and circulation of religious values, existential identities, historical memories, and symbolic traditions. Accordingly,

conversational implicatures should not be viewed merely as linguistic phenomena but also as cultural resources through which societies communicate, preserve, and negotiate shared meanings.

This integrated perspective contributes to both pragmatics and cultural studies by illustrating that implicit communication is inseparable from cultural representation. Rather than treating language and culture as separate domains, the findings suggest that pragmatic inference constitutes one of the principal mechanisms through which cultural meanings become communicatively meaningful. Future studies may extend this framework by investigating conversational implicatures in other musical genres, multilingual songs, cinematic discourse, or digital media communication to further explore the relationship between pragmatic inference and cultural representation across different sociocultural contexts. For pragmatics, the study highlights the importance of examining implied meanings in artistic discourse while maintaining a clear distinction between conversational implicature and other forms of figurative or symbolic meaning. For cultural studies, it demonstrates how close linguistic analysis can contribute to explaining the ways cultural associations are activated and negotiated within a musical text. The resulting framework is therefore interdisciplinary, connecting the inferential concerns of pragmatics with the representational concerns of cultural studies.

The study also has methodological implications. Analyses of song lyrics should identify the textual evidence supporting each proposed implicature, explain the inferential relationship between the explicit expression and its implied meaning, and distinguish this process from the interpretation of cultural references. Such procedures make the analysis more transparent and enable readers to evaluate the plausibility of the interpretations.

D. CONCLUSION

This study examined how conversational implicatures in Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody contribute to the construction of cultural representation by integrating Grice's Conversational Implicature Theory and Stuart Hall's Representation Theory. The findings indicate that the interpretation of the lyrics extends beyond their literal meanings, as contextual inference and culturally shared knowledge enable the construction of additional meanings. In this respect, conversational implicature provides a pragmatic basis for examining how linguistic expressions communicate meanings that are not explicitly stated. The analysis identified three major domains of cultural representation: religious representation, identity and existential representation, and historical-cultural symbolism. Religious representation encompasses meanings associated with guilt, redemption, divine authority, and moral responsibility. Identity and existential representation reflects personal uncertainty, alienation, emotional conflict, and the negotiation of self-identity. Meanwhile, historical-cultural symbolism incorporates references associated with scientific heritage, theatrical traditions, and European cultural memory. These domains demonstrate that the cultural meanings of the lyrics emerge through the interaction of linguistic expressions, contextual interpretation, and cultural associations.

The study's main contribution lies in connecting pragmatic inference with cultural representation. Grice's framework explains how implied meanings can be derived from linguistic expressions and contextual assumptions, while Hall's framework helps explain how these meanings participate in the construction of cultural significance. Nevertheless, cultural references and figurative expressions should not automatically be classified as conversational implicatures; their inclusion requires a defensible pragmatic interpretation beyond their literal or symbolic meanings. This distinction strengthens the analytical relationship between pragmatic evidence and cultural interpretation. The findings further reveal that existential and identity-related representations constitute the most dominant cultural dimension within

Bohemian Rhapsody. Expressions such as *I'm just a poor boy*, *Nothing really matters*, and *Any way the wind blows* collectively portray identity as a dynamic and negotiated process shaped by emotional conflict, uncertainty, and self-reflection. Meanwhile, religious references including *Bismillah*, *Beelzebub*, and *Mama* construct symbolic narratives of guilt, redemption, and moral responsibility through contextual inference rather than direct theological exposition. Historical and artistic references such as *Galileo*, *Scaramouche*, and *Figaro* likewise enrich the lyrical discourse by embedding scientific heritage, theatrical traditions, and European cultural memory into the song's symbolic structure. These findings indicate that the cultural meanings embedded within the lyrics emerge from the interaction between linguistic expressions, contextual interpretation, and audiences' shared cultural knowledge. Theoretically, this study contributes to pragmatics and cultural studies by demonstrating that conversational implicature should not be understood solely as an inferential mechanism explaining how listeners recover speakers' intended meanings. Rather, conversational implicatures also function as representational resources through which cultural meanings are produced, negotiated, and circulated within popular music discourse. The study also contributes to the growing body of research on popular music by positioning song lyrics as culturally situated discourse rather than merely artistic or literary texts. The findings suggest that popular songs preserve and communicate cultural values through symbolic language that requires pragmatic interpretation. Consequently, qualitative pragmatic analysis may provide valuable insights into how music functions as a medium of cultural representation, identity formation, and collective memory. This interdisciplinary perspective may also be applicable to the analysis of other forms of artistic discourse, including films, literary works, digital narratives, and multimedia communication. Despite these contributions, the present study has several limitations. The analysis focuses exclusively on a single song, which restricts the generalizability of the findings across broader musical genres and cultural contexts. In addition, the study relies on textual analysis without incorporating audience reception or interpretative responses from listeners, which may provide additional perspectives on how conversational implicatures are understood in different sociocultural settings. Future research is therefore encouraged to examine larger corpora of song lyrics across multiple genres, artists, and cultural traditions while integrating corpus-assisted discourse analysis, audience reception studies, or multimodal approaches to explore the relationship between pragmatic inference and cultural representation more comprehensively.

It can be inferred that this study demonstrates that *Bohemian Rhapsody* should be understood not only as a landmark composition in popular music but also as a sophisticated cultural text in which conversational implicatures construct complex representations of religion, identity, history, and human existence. The integration of pragmatic analysis and cultural representation provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how indirect linguistic expressions transform popular music into a meaningful site of cultural communication and symbolic interpretation.

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