

Odysseus' characterizations through implicative meaning of *EPIC: The Musical*

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the characterizations of Odysseus through implicature theory by Yule in EPIC: The Musical album. EPIC: The Musical is a musical song that tells Odysseus' journey as a legendary hero in the literary works of Homer. The researchers construct a pragmatics study using discourse analysis. The researchers analyze the 31 songs in the album to discover the implicature that portrays Odysseus' characters. In the finding, there were found 18 the characterizations that was divided into positive and negative traits. Based on the analysis, the most characterizations found in the song was ruthlessness. It showed the writer succeed to characterized Odysseus as a ruthless human who dared to defy God.

Keywords

Pragmatics, Musical Song, Implicature, Odysseus' Characterizations, EPIC: The Musical

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Introduction

Pragmatic is a study of meaning that concerned with whom the speaker communicated with. According to Sapar et al. (2022), pragmatics focuses on supplying the speaker's intention with the hearer's knowledge. This linguistics branch implies the meaning of a conversation between two speakers. Yule (1996) stated that, in fact, pragmatics is a very human concept; it is incredibly complex to determine in a consistent and objective way. Pragmatic can be used to implicitly bridge the gap and count on the listener to have the same interpretation (Horn, 2006). In a pragmatic context, interpreting the speakers' intended meaning is called implicature.

Implicature implies something without saying its literal meaning. It was different from the true meaning of what the speakers wanted with what was said. Qadori (2016) mentions that the speaker's utterances are not part of what is said. Many studies have conducted research using implicative methods to identify the type of implicature that occurs in a song or film; besides those studies that usually focus on identifying the occurrences of conversational implicature. Study by Hadisusilo et al. (2023) finds that implicature can develop the plot through its movie soundtrack and also establish a status quo, which means that implicature cannot only be used to identify the conversational or conventional implicature but more deeply than the researcher can conceive of. For instance, an analysis of the theme of racism in Michael Jackson's song (Wahba, 2024). It shows that songs can imply and deliver the meaning of many topics to discuss in recent years.

The study of implicature was used in analyzing the song in Encanto Movie as a soundtrack means to develop the plot (Hadisusilo et al., 2023). The researchers used the concept from Grice Maxim's flouting theory. Through the research, it was found that the soundtrack plays an important role in conveying information in a short time. Also, the musical soundtracks acted as a means of exposition based on the knowledge the characters/singers had prior. The extent of implicature and Gricean maxims flouting in Encanto's movie soundtracks are used to develop its plot, provide information to further the plot, and also determine a status quo.

On the other hand, in a study conducted by Wahba (2024) revealed the function of the pragmatic features of the song. Through Grice's Maxim theory, the researcher found that Michael Jackson failed to provide the required information for the utterance, in which he gave too much or too little information. Also, there were two types of implicature, which were conventional and conversational implicature.

While those studies used Grice's theory, there is a study using George Yule's theory. The researchers Putri et al. (2023) analyze the types of conversational implicature found in the song lyrics. Implying the distinct meaning that the researchers have discovered in Brandi Carlile's song lyrics. The researchers explained that conversational implicature can easily capture the true meaning that the lyricist poured into the song. As conversational implicature has three types, the researchers have come to the result that the dominant type of conversational implicature is particularized conversational implicature. According to Yule (1996), particularized conversational implicature requires assumption from the utterances. In conclusion, Brandi Carlile's lyrics appear to write an assumption through the lyrics.

The Greek Myth Hero, Odysseus, is always intertwined with the concept of leadership and heroism. In 2023, Jorge Rivera-Herrans saw the opportunity to produce his musical theme song using the story of The Odyssey by Homer under his own company. The title of the album is *EPIC: The Musical* (ETM). He puts in much detail to make the masterpiece and gets recognition from worldwide. The way Jorge writes the lyrics makes many people love and analyze each song on the album. Also, it gives animators an idea of how to create their characters by using the song, which becomes a new musical theatre perspective in this era.

ETM is an adaptation of Odysseus as a Legendary Hero in the Homeric Age. It tells the story of Odysseus' journey back home from the Trojan War until he got home to Ithaca Island to meet his wife and his son, Penelope, and Telemachus. The author writes the lyrics with every single detail in the song. Every character was well-written, and the settings of the story were well-explained. Even though people do not read Homer's original story, it is precise and uses very efficient words to give important information. On his TikTok account, Jorge explained that EPIC: The Musical was meant to be an adaptation of the Iliad and Odyssey. However, it was significantly undertaking, and it might not work out, so he decided to focus on building Odysseus' story and the character only. That is why most of the songs are sung by Jorge dominantly, as he plays the role of Odysseus. It is very intriguing to analyze each song using implicative meaning.

Based on the background, this study will analyze the author's intention in writing the lyrics to characterize Odysseus using the implicative meaning of Yule's theory. It has an objective to show how implicature can define the character.

Method

This research used discourse analysis method in a pragmatic field to analyze the intended meaning by the writer to write the song in the album. The primary data source is EPIC: The Musical, written and produced by Jorge Rivera-Herran. EPIC: The Musical is divided into 2 acts, with 20 songs in each act for a total of 40 songs. The entire musical has a runtime of about 2 hours 15 minutes. Odysseus is the King of Ithaca, and he has to run an order for his kingdom to attack the Trojan. In the Homeric Age, Odysseus' character is more complicated, and he has a broader view (Yue, 2015). Odysseus experienced many hurdles and challenges that showed his cunning intelligence as a Hero.

The data collection process steps are as follows: The first step is searching for EPIC: The Musical lyrics on azlyrics.com. Then, this study also constructs a preliminary analysis of the album. Researchers decided to use preliminary as a way to eliminate the song that emphasizes Odysseus' character. The third step was putting the lyrics into a spreadsheet. The fourth step was reading the lyrics to find the utterances that contained an intended meaning. The last step was analyzing the lyrics and the implicative meaning showing the characterization of Odysseus in the song.

In analyzing the data, the researchers made a table in spreadsheet consist of the Saga, the title of the song, the utterances, speaker, listener, time, place, social context and the characterizations as the result of the analysis. The researchers are also searching for Odysseus' characterizations through internet to validate the analysis.

Results

After analyzing the data, the researchers found 18 Odysseus' characterizations through the lyrics in the song. The researchers found the characterizations in 31 songs using Yule's implicative theory. The finding showed there were several characterizations that occurred in one song.

Table 1. Characterizations in the Song

Saga Album	Title	Characterizations
The Troy Saga	The Horse and the Infant Just a Man	Leadership, Pride Dubiousness, Fatherly
	Full Speed Ahead	Leadership, Loyal, Optimism
	Warrior of the Mind	Cunning Intelligent, Pride
The Cyclops Saga	Polyphemus Survive Remember Them	Wariness Hubris, Leadership Guilt, Leadership, Reckless
	My Goodbye	Hubris, Pride
The Ocean Saga	Storm Luck Runs Out	Optimism Flawed Human, Hubris, Leadership, Optimism, Pride
	Keep Your Friend Close	Cunning Intelligence, Longing, Wariness
	Ruthlessness	Cunning Intelligence, Dubiousness, Flawed Human
The Circe Saga	Puppeteer Done For	Leadership Cunning Intelligence, Loyal Husband
	The Are Other Ways	Longing, Loyal Husband
The Underworld Saga	The Underworld No Longer You Monster	Guilt Ruthlessness Dubiousness, Guilt, Ruthlessness
The Thunder Saga	Suffering Different Beast	Cunning Intelligence Cunning Intelligence, Ruthlessness
	Scylla	Ruthlessness, Shameless
	Mutiny	Dubiousness, Leadership, Shameless, Suffering, Wariness
	Thunder Bringer	Dubiousness, Guilt, Pride
The Wisdom Saga	We'll Be Fine Love in Paradise	Flawed Human Desperation
The Vengeance Saga	Dangerous Charybdis	Dubiousness, Pride Cunning Intelligence, Longing
	Six Hundred Strike	Family Man, Hubris, Loyal Husband, Ruthlessness
The Ithaca Saga	Odysseus I Can't Help but Wonder Would You Fall in Love with Me Again	Ruthlessness Guilt Dubiousness, Guilt

Table 2. Characterizations Occurrences

Characterizations	Frequencies
Loyal Husband	4
Family Man	2
Fatherly	1
Longing	4
Cunning Intelligence	9
Leadership	8
Pride	6
Hubris	6
Wariness	4
Optimism	3
Flawed Human	4
Reckless	2
Dubiousness	9
Guilt	9
Suffering	1
Desperation	1
Shameless	2
Ruthlessness	18

The table above shows the frequency of characterizations utterances that appear in the song. The researchers categorize the characterizations from Loyal Husband to Ruthlessness, as it shows that Odysseus' character changes from positive to negative throughout his voyage. The author primarily focuses on Odysseus as the main character who sings the song. Therefore, the song's lyrics are mainly written from Odysseus' point of view to portray Odysseus' characterizations.

Discussion

Positive Traits

Odysseus is an outstanding character from Greek mythology, portrayed as a Hero in the Homeric age, despite being a human and in Homer, people, gods, or goddesses addressed him by name, attributing hero qualities to him (Liang, 2017). In EPIC: The Musical, the author strives to write the Odysseus' character as well as portrayed in *The Odyssey* by Homer. There are several positive traits utterances in the Album.

There are Other Ways

Back at home, my wife awaits for me.
She's my everything, my Penelope,
and she's all my power, all my power

The characterization found in the song is *that of a Loyal Husband*. The author clearly portrays Odysseus's desire to return home to Ithaca Island. Odysseus desperately tells Circe about his wife. Circe is a goddess and enchantress who fought with Odysseus. Odysseus bravely entered her palace to save his comrade, who turned into a pig. The lyrics reveal that Odysseus is not only a loyal husband but also a cunning and intelligent character, as his actions demonstrate his ability to avoid Circe's seductions. His cunning, intelligent characterizations were also portrayed in another song sequentially in *Warrior of the Mind*, *Keep Your Friends Close*, *Ruthlessness*, *Done*

for, Suffering, and Charybdis. Another instance of Odysseus' cunning intelligent characterization utterance:

Different Beast
 You pretended to be my wife
 So I just played along
 I read your lips and phrases
 Scanning for information
 Sirens know about every route and horizon
 Now I know how to get back to my island

The utterance of *Cunning Intelligence* is found in the Thunder Saga song titled "Different Beast" when they meet Sirens on their way. Sirens are sweetly singing enchantress. Odysseus acknowledged that the Sirens knew every route and horizon, so he used his wits to trick the Sirens and glean information. Therefore, Odysseus hindered the Sirens from killing them, saving his comrade, and also getting important information about the route to Ithaca Island.

The researchers also found that Odysseus is a *Family Man* and *Fatherly* in the song "Just a Man". The utterances below:

Table 3. Family and Fatherly Characterizations Utterances

No	Title	Utterance(s)	Characterizations
1		Odysseus: Deep down, I would trade the world to see my son and wife	Family Man
2	Just a Man	Odysseus: I look into your eyes. And I think back to the son of mine	Fatherly
Social Context: Odysseus was the King of Ithaca. He had a child of the same age with Trojan's infant. It had been 10 years since he left his family.			

Just a Man is the second song in the first saga, The Troy Saga. The song tells a story about Odysseus, who has to kill the infant of Trojan, but he also wants to keep the infant alive because he has a son of the same age. However, His desire to go home after ten years of war with Troy makes him ruthless and ends the infant's life.

Keep Your Friends Close
 And I'm getting closer to you
 I can't wait to make some new memories

The following characterization is *Longing*. The researchers found this characterization in the Ocean Saga, where they met Aeolus and asked the Wind God to help them reach their home island. In the utterances, the authors described the condition of Odysseus after he thought that he would reach his home island. He dreams of his wife and son when he keeps the bag closed for nine days so that they can return home safely without storms or tides. It illustrates Odysseus' longing to reunite with his family.

The researchers also discover several characterizations that portray him as a Hero in the Album, namely Leadership, Pride, Hubris, Wariness, and Optimism.

Mutiny

We need to get away from this island now!
 Grab an oar with all the strength your arms allow
 These cows were immortal, they were the Sun God's friends
 And now that we've pissed them off, who do you think he'll send?

In the Thunder Saga "Mutiny," Odysseus' crew betrayed, stabbed him, and tied him to the statue of the Sun God. Odysseus, who is wary of what his crew has done, still leads them to leave the Island, even though he has been betrayed, showing how worthy he is of the Leadership character and also his wariness of the repercussions.

As a leader, the author intentionally writes the lyrics that implicate Odysseus's characterizations of pride, hubris, and optimism.

Table 4. Pride, Hubris, and Optimism Characterizations Utterances

No	Title	Utterance(s)	Characterizations
1	Dangerous	Odysseus: Don't you know that danger is my friend? My whole life, I've trained for this	Pride
2	My Goodbye	Odysseus: This way, you won't plague my life	Hubris
3	Storm	Odysseus: We'll beat this storm	Optimism

In the Vengeance Saga, "Dangerous," Odysseus tells Hermes that danger is his friend, and he has been trained to bear danger all his life. Because of his pride character, Zeus once warned him about it in the Thunder Saga. Zeus utterances that "Pride is a damsel in distress," which "pride" refers to Odysseus. Regardless, he is a human form who also needs God's help; he presumptuously tells Athena to leave him alone and not plague his life. This utterance, which revealed his hubris, marked the beginning of his miserable journey. Without knowing the peril coming, Odysseus arrogantly tells Athena that he does not need her. Even after his hubris behavior toward Athena, the God of Gleamy Eyes, Odysseus is still very optimistic about reaching his homeland. Odysseus, full of spirit, shouts out in The Ocean Saga, "Storm."

Negative Traits

Notwithstanding, he is portrayed as a hero; in fact, he is still a human. A human who is *flawed* and *reckless*. When Odysseus said, "I am the Infamous Odysseus," he proudly introduced himself to Polyphemus in the Cyclops Saga "Remember Them." His action leads to the revenge of Poseidon because they have blinded his son, Polyphemus. At that moment, Athena tries to stop Odysseus and actually gets mad at him. Thus, Athena uttered, "He had his demons too (The Wisdom Saga: We'll Be Fine)," to show that Odysseus is a *flawed human*.

Odysseus's other human traits are *Dubiousness*, *Guilty*, *Suffering*, and *Desperation*. The final song of EPIC: The Musical, "Would You Fall in Love with Me Again," effectively conveys Odysseus' feelings. A lyric excerpt below that utters the characterizations of doubt, guilt, suffering, and desperation.

Would You Fall in Love with Me Again

[PENELOPE:]

What kinds of things did you do?

[ODYSSEUS:]

Left a trail of red on every island
As I traded friends like objects I could use
Hurt more lives than I can count on my hands
But all of that was to bring me back to you
So tell me
Would you fall in love with me again
If you knew all I've done?
The things I can't undo
I'm not the man you knew
I know that you've been waiting, waiting

In the utterances above, Odysseus had a mixed feeling when he met his wife, Penelope. The dubious feeling for Penelope is that he doubts Penelope will accept him because of his ruthless decision during the journey. In that song, Odysseus told everything about what he had done: his suffering, guilt for every comrade he had sacrificed, and his desperation to go home. Not only are those characterizations implicated in the song, but also Odysseus longs to meet his wife.

Other characteristics of Odysseus are *shamelessness* and *Ruthlessness*. In the Thunder Bringer Saga "Mutiny," Odysseus refuses to answer Eurylochus' questions about the sacrifice of six men in the Lair of Scylla. Odysseus shamelessly uttered "I can't" with Eurylochus's question because Odysseus did not even try to fight Scylla and save the men. Those characterizations were needed and aligned with the Odysseus in the book "The Odyssey" by Homer. The author also intentionally says, "EPIC explores the theme of Ruthlessness" in his TikTok account (Rivera-Herrans, 2025). That is the reason why the researchers find the implicature of *Ruthlessness* characterizations more than those of the other characterizations. There are 18 characterizations found in the Album. One of the utterances below:

Odysseus

You filled my heart with hate
All of you who've done me wrong
This will be your fate!"

"Odysseus" in the Ithaca Saga itself is the theme of the Ruthless side of Odysseus. Utterances above is the final word of Odysseus after he brutally killed the 108 suitors in his palace.

Thus, the researchers interpret Odysseus' characterizations through Yule's implicative theory. The song's author, Jorge Rivera Herran, successfully portrays the characters of Odysseus. This implicational analysis helps researchers identify how the chosen words affect the story, enabling the audience to understand the entire musical song. The characterizations analyzed by the researchers were also discussed in society, aligned with the original literary work by Homer and some websites that write about Odysseus.

His cunning intelligence is enough to make him a hero in Homer. In Greek Mythology (2024), Odysseus is portrayed as a human with key heroic traits, such as bravery, leadership, and unwavering loyalty towards his family and home. As evidenced in Book I, page 3 of The Odyssey by (Homer, 1980), Zeus had a conversation with Athena:

*'My child, what a word is this that has passed your lips! How could I ever forget Odysseus, that **hero** who more than any mortal has subtle wit and more than any has offered sacrifice to the deathless gods whose home is heaven?'*

Zeus, the Ruler of the gods on Olympus, admitted Odysseus as a human who possessed an incredible ability. Zeus' role in the book *The Odyssey* is minor, often appearing to help Odysseus or permitting Athena to assist Odysseus (Staff Writer, 2025). It concludes that Zeus only appeared three times in *EPIC: The Musical*. It depicted the author's ability to portray every character in the Album. Additionally, *Characters in EPIC: The Musical* (n.d.) deconstruct every characterization of Odysseus, such as his fatal flaws, guile, and being happily married, among many others. That website analyzes every single detail in *EPIC: The Musical*.

EPIC: The Musical features conversation-based songs, which require two or more characters to interact with each other in order to create a cohesive musical piece. Given the studies' interrelated nature, based on previous research, this paper aims to extend the findings from a new perspective. Encanto's soundtrack employs implicature, as per Grice's theory, to develop the plot; *EPIC: The Musical* utilizes implicature, as per Yule, to reveal Odysseus' traits throughout the Album. According to Gunawan Hadisusilo et al. (2023), in the Cooperative principle by H.P. Grice, Odysseus is flouting the maxim of quantity in the Thunder Bringer Saga "Mutiny." For instance, when Eurylochus forces Odysseus to say something about Odysseus' rare act in the Lair of Scylla, he answers, "I can't" instead of giving the honest answer. It suggests that Odysseus avoids providing a clear answer, allowing him to be misunderstood rather than explaining his decision. It implies that Odysseus is shameless because he knows the consequence of passing through Scylla's lair and intentionally sacrifices the six men.

On the other hand, a study by Putri et al. (2023) analyzed conversational implicature types using Yule's theory. One example is the generalized conversational implicature. In the Circe Saga, "There are Other Ways," Odysseus refers to his wife as "My wife," "My Penelope," and "My everything." It simply concludes that Penelope belongs to Odysseus. It is the same as Circe when she mentioned "My nymphs" in the "Done for" that her nymphs are her high priority. It points out that Odysseus is a *loyal husband*.

Conclusion

The characterizations found in the result clearly showed the attainment of the author to portray Odysseus in a very compact and precise way in the song despite the fact that its original story is very complicated. Yule's theory demonstrated that the use of implicature should find out what people are honestly implying rather than what is said (Yule, 2023). Through implicative meaning, *EPIC: The Musical* genuinely presents the story of how Odysseus characters change from positive to negative traits. Therefore, the researchers found positive characterizations like Loyal Husbands, Cunning Intelligent, and Pride, and negative characterizations like Guilty, Ruthlessness, and Dubiousness.

Implicature analysis has the potential to discover what is intriguing about a literary work rather than just finding out the type of implicature used in it. By analyzing the implicature, future research can construct a deeper study. Further research should expand the purpose of implicature analysis.

However, this study had limitations. The analysis is compared merely to Homer's story of the *Odyssey*. In fact, there might be another interpretation of Odysseus' characterization through *The Iliad* by Homer. Additionally, the research solely focused on explaining the author's intention of portraying Odysseus in the song.

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