

# Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Codes

## Вербальні та невербальні коди комунікації

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### The Role of Extralingual Factors in Shaping Interpersonal Conflict in Modern English Fictional Discourse

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У статті досліджується роль екстралінгвальних чинників у формуванні та розвитку міжособистісного конфлікту в сучасному англomовному художньому дискурсі. Особливу увагу приділено аналізу конфліктних мовленнєвих ситуацій як мультимодальних утворень, у яких вербальні, невербальні та паравербальні засоби взаємодіють на семіотичному, когнітивному та прагматичному рівнях.

*Мета* статті полягає у комплексному виявленні та теоретичній концептуалізації специфічного впливу екстралінгвальних чинників на динаміку розгортання й інтерпретаційного моделювання мультимодальних міжособистісних конфліктів у семіотичному просторі художнього тексту. Для досягнення поставленої мети дослідження передбачає вирішення таких завдань: 1) визначення специфіки ситуативного контексту та його взаємодії з екстралінгвальними чинниками у міжособистісному конфліктному мовленні в сучасному англomовному художньому дискурсі; 2) виявлення та класифікація основних екстралінгвальних чинників і ситуативних аспектів, що впливають на семіозис конфліктів у сучасному англomовному художньому дискурсі як в авторській нарації, так і в мовленні персонажів; 3) проведення кількісного контент-аналізу, включно з категоріальною класифікацією екстралінгвальних чинників у відібраних міжособистісних конфліктах; 4) виявлення моделей мовленнєвих ситуацій та здійснення їх аналізу на семіотичному, мультимодальному й когнітивному рівнях із урахуванням кожного виявленого екстралінгвального чинника.

Дослідження того, як екстралінгвальні чинники контекстуально реалізуються в художньому дискурсі, ґрунтується на інтегрованій міждисциплінарній *методологічній основі*. Ця основа охоплює контекстуальний аналіз, мультимодальний аналіз (MDA), семіотичний та когнітивний аналізи, а також кількісний контент-аналіз.

Матеріалом дослідження стали 482 фрагменти сучасної англomовної художньої прози, у яких репрезентовано міжособистісні конфліктні взаємодії персонажів. У результаті аналізу встановлено, що екстралінгвальні чинники є визначальними компонентами конфліктної комунікації, оскільки саме вони задають умови виникнення, розвитку, ескалації та завершення конфлікту. Доведено, що конфлікт у художньому дискурсі формується як полі-кодовий феномен, у межах якого невербальні сигнали, просторові параметри, просодичні характеристики, жести, мовчання та фізичні дії часто домінують над вербальним повідомленням і змінюють його інтерпретацію.



У статті запропоновано класифікацію екстралінгвальних чинників, що охоплює ситуативні, ресурсні, соціокультурні, комунікативні, амбівалентні та темпоральні аспекти. Кількісний аналіз засвідчив переважання соціокультурних (28,42%), комунікативних (21,99%) та ситуативних (21,16%) факторів, що підтверджує їхню центральну роль у моделюванні конфліктної взаємодії. Встановлено, що найчастіше конфлікти провокуються неефективною комунікацією, приховуванням інформації, культурними відмінностями, боротьбою за владу чи ресурси, а також ситуаціями невизначеності або часовим тиском.

Результати дослідження показали, що на семіотичному рівні невербальні елементи виконують функцію індексальних та іконічних знаків, які виявляють приховані емоції, наміри та суперечності між сказаним і внутрішнім станом персонажів. На мультимодальному рівні конфлікт постає як результат взаємодії мовлення, жестів, інтонації, мовчання та просторової організації комунікації. На когнітивному рівні екстралінгвальні сигнали відображають внутрішні ментальні моделі учасників конфлікту, активізують схеми підозри, страху, агресії або захисту та визначають способи інтерпретації конфліктної ситуації. У підсумку доведено, що екстралінгвальні та невербальні чинники визначають інтенсивність, напрям і результат конфлікту в сучасному англomовному художньому дискурсі.

*Ключові слова:* дискурсивна інтерпретація, мовленнєві моделі, мультимодальний конфлікт, екстралінгвальні чинники, ситуативний контекст, прагматичні стратегії, семіозис конфлікту.

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## Introduction

Along with such phenomena as prototypes, stereotypes, and standards, a conflict situation also occupies a distinct position within the structure of ideas about social reality, as it helps organize one's general worldview and serves as a system-forming element in the individual's interaction with society (*the interindividual level*). At the same time, it functions as a systemic representation characterized by an internal hierarchical structure (*the intra-individual level*). According to scholars, "a situation may be understood as a complex, multi-layered construct through which the individual configures a subjectively mediated and agentively shaped conceptualization of the objective relational dynamics between the self and the experiential environment" [Otych, 2008, p. 328].

Therefore, a conflict speech situation, implemented in fictional discourse, cannot be reduced merely to the external circumstances accompanying the conflict, nor to communicative acts that index resistance or the protection of one's interests. Rather, it constitutes a semiotically organized cognitive construct—an internally configured subjective framing of the situation. Once the participants have encoded the situation as conflictual, subsequent acts of interpretation and meaning-making unfold within this established semiotic frame, becoming progressively "aligned" with the initial categorization.

In other words, the conflict speech situation constitutes a complex phenomenon of *objective-subjective hybridity*, amenable to analysis along two interrelated axes: the *extrinsic*, objectively describable configuration of the situation, and its *intrinsic*, cognitively and semiotically constructed representation as construed by the speech personality. Consequently, the extralingual situational factor manifests across both internal and external planes of semiotic measurement, thereby establishing the epistemic parameters and methodological trajectories for its systematic investigation.

## Problem statement and degree of its elaboration

A considerable body of English-language and domestic linguistic research is devoted to the investigation of conflict communication and the influence of both external and internal factors on its course and development. Scientists have examined the features of conflict speech from cognitive and pragmatic perspectives [Voyzehivska, 2018; Frolova, 2013; Chilwa, 2021; Ukaegbu, 2018], analyzed the linguistic means of verbalizing interpersonal conflicts and their emotional representation in speech [Janicki, 2015; Rohach, Lipysh, 2024; Evans, O'Driscoll, 2019], investigated the multimodal nature of conflict realization in various types of discourse [Chernenko, 2024; Sherwan, Harchegani, 2022], among other aspects.

A range of scholars across pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and conflict studies have addressed the role of extralinguistic factors (social context, power, identity, emotions, cultural norms) in conflict. While they may not always use the exact term “extralinguistic factors,” their frameworks explicitly incorporate them. Teun A. van Dijk developed a socio-cognitive model of discourse, showing how power, ideology, and social context shape conflict interaction [van Dijk, 2008]. Within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), conflict is interpreted as a phenomenon shaped by social structures, power relations, and institutional conditions, as well as by broader historical, political, and cultural contexts that influence its discursive construction [Fairclough, 1995; Wodak, Meyer, 2009]. P. Brown and S. Levinson’s politeness theory shows how conflict depends on social distance, power, and face needs [Brown, Levinson, 1987].

The dynamics of conflict escalation are elucidated in the works of J. Culpeper, who developed the theory of impoliteness to account for context-dependent verbal aggression shaped by emotional and social factors, and G. Leech, whose politeness principle explains how violations of communicative norms contribute to the intensification of conflict [Culpeper, 2011; Leech, 2014]. The interactional emergence of conflict is examined in the works of H. Sacks, E. Schegloff, and G. Jefferson, who demonstrate how it arises through turn-taking, interruptions, and repair mechanisms shaped by contextual (extralinguistic) conditions, as well as in the research of D. Tannen, who highlights the role of gender, culture, and conversational style as key extralinguistic factors in conflict [Sacks et al., 1974; Tannen, 1990]. J. Bobin examines the role of contextual variables in the analysis of conflict in literary discourse, while M. Hoffman addresses problems of understanding in conflict situations, proposing a semiotic approach to their resolution [Bobin, 2012; Hoffman, 2005].

Despite substantial advances in both domestic and international linguistics in the investigation of conflictual speech interaction and the sustained scholarly attention to conflict-related discursive practices, a number of issues remain insufficiently explored. In particular, the role of extralinguistic factors—such as situational, sociocultural, and temporal conditions under which conflict interaction unfolds in literary discourse—has not received systematic and comprehensive treatment. *The scientific novelty* of the present study resides in the development of a discursive-analytical model that explicates the impact of extralinguistic situational factors on the semiosis of interpersonal conflictives, construed as multimodal discursive constructs. These constructs are examined through the lens of semiotic integration, understood as the dynamic interplay of verbal, nonverbal, and paraverbal resources, and are interpreted as manifestations of disharmonized intra- and interpersonal relational configurations within contemporary English-language fictional discourse.

Using the processes of categorization and interpretation, an individual defines a situation as conflictual in one way or another, which results in a response to the subject of the conflict in the form of selecting an appropriate strategy of conflict interaction and its subsequent development. Research into this factor from the perspectives of psychology [Coleman et al., 2014], the cognitive-phenomenological approach [Krueger, Diabes, Weingart, 2022], social perception [Martínez-López et al., 2022], and linguistic conflictology [Nasie, et al., 2025] makes it possible to address the question of why people perceive the same situations differently and why interlocutors, possessing an approximately equal set of strategies, choose different ways of resolving conflicts even under the influence of the same factors or circumstances.

Thus, in addition to the internal plane of research into conflict speech interaction—particularly simulated conflicts in literary work—there is a need to examine the influence of *external factors* on the processes of the generation, functioning, and termination of conflict. A more thorough study of the situational context, which constitutes the external plane of a conflict speech situation, is required. This context can be viewed as objectively existing and modeled in fictional discourse according to plot development, as well as shaped by real extralingual circumstances reflected in a literary work.

### **Aims, methodology and material**

Thus, the *aim* of the paper is to comprehensively identify and theoretically conceptualize the specific influence of extralingual factors on the dynamics of the unfolding and interpretative modelling of multimodal interpersonal conflictives within the semiotic space of the fictional text.

To achieve the goal, the study undertakes the following *tasks*: 1) identifying the specifics of situational context and its interaction with extralingual factors in interpersonal conflict speech in contemporary English-language fictional discourse; 2) identifying and classifying the main extralingual factors and situational aspects that influence the semiosis of conflictives in modern English fictional discourse, both in the author's narrative and in character speech; 3) to conduct a quantitative content analysis, including a categorical classification of extralingual factors in the selected interpersonal conflictives; 4) to identify models of speech situations and to conduct their analysis at the semiotic, multimodal, and cognitive levels, with due consideration of each identified extralinguistic factor.

The extralingual factor is widely recognized as constitutive in the genesis of conflict. As W. Thomas emphasizes: "We cannot disregard the content—the meanings that these objects hold for the conscious individual—since it is precisely these meanings that govern the individual's behavior" [Thomas, 1951, p. 156]. Through the processes of categorization and interpretation, an individual invariably construes a situation as conflictual, which in turn informs their response to the conflictual subject through the selection of an appropriate strategy for interaction and the subsequent evolution of the conflict. Let us examine in greater detail the external plane of the conflict speech situation in a literary text, understood as an objectively existing entity, modeled within fiction discourse in accordance with plot development and shaped by real, extralingual circumstances as reflected in the fictional narrative.

*Extralinguistic situational factors* constitute one of the principal determinants in the emergence and development of conflicts, including those represented in literary texts. Their influence is typically dynamic rather than constant, contingent upon the specific circumstances in which the participants in the interaction are situated.

The analysis of how extralinguistic factors are contextually realized in fictional discourse is grounded in an integrated, interdisciplinary *methodological framework*. This framework includes *contextual analysis*, which explores the impact of situational and extralinguistic contexts on the emergence and interpretation of interpersonal conflicts; *multimodal analysis (MDA)*, which examines the interplay of verbal, non-verbal, and symbolic modes within conflict scenes; *communicative-pragmatic analysis*, which focuses on the pragmatic functions of utterances, communicative strategies, and the effectiveness of character interaction in conflict situations; *semiotic analysis* is used to identify and interpret the verbal, nonverbal, and symbolic signs that participate in the construction of interpersonal conflict situations in contemporary English-language fictional discourse, as well as to determine their role in the semiosis of conflictives within the fictional text; *cognitive analysis* is employed to examine the mental models, interpretative patterns, emotional reactions, and conceptual mechanisms underlying the perception, development, and interpretation of interpersonal conflicts by fictional characters; and *quantitative content analysis*, which enables the identification and systematic classification of extralinguistic factors within the multimodal structure of conflict representations in fictional discourse.

Examining the multimodal, pragmatic, and communicative organization of conflicting fragments within literary texts, from the perspective of how context influences their development and interpretation helps us systematize the types of *extralinguistic situational factors*—social, cultural, circumstantial, communicative etc.—that shape the semiotic construction of conflict in the text:

✓ *The circumstantial factor* pertains primarily to abrupt changes in the nature of interpersonal interactions—such as stress, accidents, crises, attacks, natural disasters, or unexpected reorganizations—which can profoundly alter the dynamics of relationships between individuals or groups. Within stressful contexts, tolerance levels decline, and individuals may begin to act impulsively, thereby precipitating conflicts;

✓ *The resource factor* constitutes a critical dimension of the situational factor, emerging in contexts of scarcity—encompassing limitations in financial, temporal, informational, or authoritative resources, which act as semiotic and relational stressors. In such competitive conditions for constrained resources, individuals are more susceptible to aggression and may even instigate conflict among close allies;

✓ *The socio-cultural factor* primarily concerns the influence of the social environment, including the status and roles of the conflict participants, the nature of interpersonal relationships,

and the presence of observers or witnesses. These factors can, for instance, compel individuals to “stand their ground,” while group pressure may either provoke overt conflict or, conversely, inhibit the expression of emotions. *The socio-cultural factor* is additionally defined by the semiotic and regulatory influence of socially encoded norms, collective expectations, and prescriptive imperatives, which mediate individual behavior and modulate the dynamics of conflict within a given social context;

✓ *The communicative factor* pertains to situations characterized by communication barriers. Misunderstandings, ineffective communication, or distorted information frequently give rise to conflict—for instance, a poorly formulated message may be interpreted as an insult. Factors such as the presence or absence of witnesses or third parties, the mode of communication (oral, written, online), and the degree of situational formality can all influence the semiosis of conflictual elements;

✓ *The ambivalent factor* represents a semiotically and cognitively charged dimension of the situational factor, marked by uncertainty and indeterminacy. In contexts where the structural “rules of the game” are ambiguous or in flux, relational tension escalates, and individuals’ interpretive and behavioral schemas are destabilized, fostering suspicion, hyper-vigilance, or defensive overcompensation within the conflictual semiotic field;

✓ *The time factor*, or time-pressure factor, is manifested in temporal constraints imposed on conflict participants or in conditions that are unfavorable for dialogue. Such temporal structuring functions as a semiotic regulator of conflict dynamics, shaping both the pacing of communicative exchanges and the cognitive and affective responses of the participants. Accordingly, temporal constraints compel rapid decision-making, often precluding careful analysis, which may precipitate conflicts arising from errors, neglect of others’ needs, or hasty conclusions.

The proposed classification of extralingual factors is based on the multidimensional modeling of the communicative situation and reflects various parameters of the extralinguistic context (situational, resource, sociocultural, communicative, temporal, and ambivalent), which, in communication and discourse theory, are regarded as *extralingual variables* that modulate the development and escalation of conflict in fictional discourse. Extralingual variables are parameters of the extralinguistic context that, although not linguistic units, shape the production, interpretation, and pragmatic effect of a speech act. In classical communication theory, such variables are conceptualized as contextual variables or communicative parameters and are treated as an essential backdrop to any act of communication [Jakobson, 1960; Hymes, 1974; Bobin, 2012].

Thus, *extralinguistic situational factors (extralingual variables)*, considered from the perspective of the external, objective plane of conflict analysis, constitute extralingual conditions that can catalyze, intensify, or even provoke conflicts. Frequently, conflicts arise not from personal animosity but from the circumstances in which individuals are situated. An awareness of the situational context facilitates a deeper understanding of the nature of the conflict, allows for a more detailed analysis of its functionally integral components—*conflictives*—and informs the selection of effective resolution strategies [Chernenko, 2024, p. 155].

The study is based on a broad corpus of contemporary English literary prose, namely, selected fragments depicting interpersonal conflict interactions between characters in literary discourse (482 samples), available in print and online.

## Results and discussion

We now turn to a detailed analysis of the previously identified dimensions of the extralingual situational factor and their modulatory role in the semiotic processes that govern the genesis, evolution, and dynamic unfolding of multimodal conflictives within contemporary English-language literary discourse.

*The circumstantial aspect*, situated within contexts of sudden perturbations in interpersonal interaction, constitutes a semiotic and cognitive vector capable of initiating conflict, sustaining its escalation, or instigating secondary conflictual processes. This dimension is characterized by a range of cognitive, verbal, pragmatic, and emotional mechanisms that collectively structure the semiotic field of the conflict [Bobin, 2012; Janicki, 2015]. We analyze conflictives as successive stages in the development of conflict discourse, considering their multimodal nature as a product of the interplay among multiple semiotic systems [Chernenko, 2022, p. 136].

Let us recall that the circumstantial aspect of an external situation may be shaped by factors such as unexpected unpleasant news, a sudden death, an armed attack or accident, abrupt climate changes, or a natural disaster. Let us consider an example of the influence of a circumstantial factor on a person who has received unpleasant news about the breakdown of a profitable deal and, being unable to cope with the “expectation–reality” gap, provokes a conflict, thereby losing face and damaging the interlocutor’s face through speech acts that constitute face-threatening acts [Culpeper, 2011, p. 290]. Curtis O’Keefe, a prominent businessman and owner of a chain of hotels in various cities, had not experienced such a failure for many years and struggled to believe the reality of what was unfolding.

*“If either of us lives so long.” Having contained himself already, Warren Trent felt his own self-control increase as O’Keefe’s diminished. <...>*

*O’Keefe raged, “Get out!”*

*Warren Trent said, “This is my house still. While you are my guest you have certain privileges in your own rooms. I’d suggest, though, you don’t abuse them.”*

*With a slight, courteous bow to Dodo, he went out. <...>*

*His voice was high, hysterical. Dodo, frightened, had never known him in a mood so uncontrolled before.*

*“Please, Curtie!”*

*“I’m surrounded by fools! Fools, fools, fools! You’re a fool! It’s why I’m getting rid of you. Replacing you with someone else.”*

*He regretted the words the instant they were out. Their impact, even upon himself, was of shock, snuffing out his anger like a suddenly doused flame. There was a second of silence before he mumbled, “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have said that.”*

*Dodo’s eyes were misty. She touched her hair abstractedly in the gesture he had noticed earlier.*

*“I guess I knew, Curtie. You didn’t have to tell me.”*

*She went into the adjoining suite, closing the door behind her [Hailey, p. 371].*

The fragment represents a model of an asymmetrical conflict speech situation characterized by escalation and subsequent cognitive-emotional deconstruction, combining elements of both institutional and interpersonal communication. It illustrates a “Man vs Man” interpersonal conflict with a triangular structure (Warren Trent—O’Keefe—Dodo), embedded in an asymmetric communicative situation. The interaction combines status conflictive (host vs. guest), emotional conflictive (romantic/personal rupture), and intrapersonal conflictive (O’Keefe’s self-contradiction and regret).

At the level of speech situation typology, the fragment represents a conflict situation involving the threat of rupture, realized within a private spatial setting yet structured according to a quasi-institutional model. Communication between the participants is structured according to a system of social roles characterized by a clear hierarchy: owner/guest, controlling subject/affectively destabilized subject, and decision-maker/recipient of the decision. This asymmetry of social roles determines the range of permissible speech acts and their illocutionary force. From the perspective of speech act theory, the situation combines directives (“Get out!”), declaratives (“This is my house” —the verbalization of ownership or status), and expressives (affective outbursts and apologies). Importantly, declarative statements are event-based in nature: rather than merely describing reality, they actively transform it, in particular by reshaping interpersonal relationships and the cognitive expectations of the addressees.

The above circumstances force Curtis O’Keefe to resort to threats (*I swear I’ll break you, You’ll rue this day! Every vestige of my planning will be directed at smashing this place and you with it*), a raised tone (*O’Keefe raged, “Get out!”*), and nonverbal semiotic resources – an angry expression, his face reddening with fury, and swollen veins at his temples (*O’Keefe’s face flushed with rage, A vein pulsed visibly across his temples*). He also employs kinetic signals, such as clenching his hands into fists (*His hands were clenched*), etc.

Within the framework of the speech situation model, this fragment corresponds to a scenario of controlled escalation culminating in a point of no return. The conflict is initially governed by a rational communicative strategy; however, an affective utterance disrupts this balance and creates a “threshold moment,” beyond which a return to the prior communicative norm becomes impossible.

The subsequent apology does not perform a reparative function but rather a metacommunicative one: it signals awareness of the violation, yet it does not restore the disrupted interactional frame.

Dodo facilitates Curtis O'Keefe's "face-saving," understood as his socially and linguistically constructed self-presentation, while simultaneously attempting to mitigate and softly inhibit the escalation of the conflict (*You're excited, Curtie. You shouldn't ..., Please, Curtie!*).

However, despite Dodo's efforts, Curtis O'Keefe resorts to speech acts that threaten the interlocutor's face—both *positive* and *negative* [Ukaegbu, 2018, p. 130]. *Face-threatening acts (FTA)* to the interlocutor's *positive face* occur when the speaker shows no concern for the interlocutor's feelings or desires, allowing himself insults, accusations, denials, and other expressives such as negative evaluations or strong negative emotions (hatred, anger, e. g., *Shut up! I'm surrounded by fools! Fools, fools, fools! You're a fool! It's why I'm getting rid of you. Replacing you with someone else*). Face-threatening acts to the interlocutor's *negative face* arise when a communicant does not attempt to avoid restricting the interlocutor's freedom of action or dignity, resorting to threats, warnings, or reminders (*I swear I'll break you, You'll rue this day! Every vestige of my planning will be directed at smashing this place and you with it*).

It should also be noted that the conflict speech situation modeled in fictional discourse includes a *post-conflictive*, which contains speech acts indicating that the speaker acknowledges their wrongdoing or their inability to control themselves. According to the concept of positive and negative politeness developed by P. Brown and S. Levinson, such acts are also considered as those that contain a threat to the speaker's positive face, that is, the speaker, by admitting guilt, harms himself, that is, suffers certain reputational losses [Brown, Levinson, 1987].

Thus, in the aforementioned *post-conflictive*, which is located contractually—that is, directly in the final phase of the conflict or immediately after it—Curtis expresses regret for his words (*He regretted the words the instant they were out*). His anger is given a metaphorical expression and compared to a fire or flame that is suddenly extinguished (*snuffing out his anger like a suddenly doused flame*), signalling the speaker's realization of the harm he has caused to the interlocutor. This is evidenced by his uncertain tone (*he mumbled*) and his apology (*I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that*), which demonstrates the semiotic effect of the word as an irreversible sign: once uttered, it has already performed an action, even if the emotion has faded. However, the damage to face as a social and linguistic construct has already been done: Dodo has merely received confirmation of what had previously been only a suspicion she did not want to acknowledge (*I guess I knew, Curtie. You didn't have to tell me*).

#### *The semiotic level of realization of the speech situation model*

Conflict unfolds as a multilayered semiotic interaction in which verbal, paraverbal, and kinesic signs shape the dynamics of power, emotional regulation, and the breakdown of interpersonal bonds. The opening line, "*If either of us lives so long,*" functions as a symbolic sign of a latent threat: although formally a neutral conditional statement, it implicitly encodes the notions of mortality, fatality, and the ultimate culmination of the conflict. It carries not only semantic but also pragmatic weight, signaling the radicalization of the confrontation.

The laconic command "*Get out!*" functions as an indexical sign of the loss of rational regulation, whereas Trent's extended, formally polite response serves as a symbolic manifestation of social power grounded in linguistic conventions, legal markers of property (deictic and possessive markers: "*This is my house still*"), and role hierarchy ("*guest*"). The gesture of bowing is also semiotically significant: it functions as an iconic sign of social ritual, masking aggression under a veneer of politeness while simultaneously reinforcing status asymmetry.

Nonverbal details (*Dodo's clouded eyes and the gesture of touching her hair*) function as indexical signs of traumatic acceptance. Her final line marks the semiotic closure of the conflict: the previously implicit truth is verbalized, thereby irrevocably consolidating the loss. The fragment demonstrates that conflict is generated not only by the content of words but also by the entire system of signs, which collectively constitute a semiosis of emotional disintegration.

#### *The multimodal level of realization of the speech situation model*

The fragment demonstrates a pronounced multimodal organization of conflict, in which meaning is constructed not only through the verbal text but also through the interaction of

paralinguistic, kinesic, and proxemic modes. While the verbal mode establishes the framework of the conflict, its interpretation becomes possible only in conjunction with the other semiotic channels accompanying the characters' speech.

At the verbal level, the conflict unfolds through brief imperatives and declarative statements. The utterance "*Get out!*" is minimalist in form yet functionally intense, marking an attempt at the immediate redistribution of space and power. Its harshness is further reinforced by paralinguistic features of the voice, later explicitly described as high-pitched and hysterical. In contrast, Warren Trent's speech is more expansive, grammatically complex, and characterized by the use of modal constructions and conditional constraints. This speech strategy functions as a multimodal compensatory mechanism for aggression, whereby lexical and syntactic complexity replaces emotional pressure with rationalized control.

The paralinguistic mode plays a *key role* in the escalation of the conflict. The description of O'Keefe's hysterical and uncontrollable voice creates an auditory image of emotional breakdown, contrasting with the linguistic restraint of the preceding scene. At the same time, the silence following the offensive remark ("*There was a second of silence*") functions as a meaningful acoustic break: the absence of sound emerges as an independent semiotic mode, signaling a turning point in the conflict.

The kinesic mode is realized through the characters' gestures and bodily reactions. Trent's slight bow is a ritualized gesture of social propriety, visually juxtaposing the tension of the situation and reinforcing status asymmetry. Dodo's gesture of touching her hair is repetitive and functions as a bodily marker of anxiety and vulnerability, complementing her verbal silence and tacit acceptance of what has been said. Her misty eyes create a visual image of emotional vulnerability that requires no verbal articulation.

The proxemic mode also plays a significant role: the imperative "*Get out!*" and Trent's subsequent departure from the room function as spatial acts that reconfigure the interaction. Control over space is transformed from the physical to the psychological level, as O'Keefe, despite being physically expelled, relinquishes emotional dominance. Overall, a multimodal analysis of the fragment reveals that the conflict is constructed through the synchronous interaction of speech, voice, gesture, spatial organization, and silence. It is this interplay of semiotic modes, rather than isolated lines, that accounts for the scene's emotional depth and dramatic tension.

#### *The cognitive level of realization of the speech situation model*

A cognitive analysis of the presented fragment enables the reconstruction of how conflict is constructed in the characters' minds through the clash of mental models, frames, and emotional scripts activated during interaction. The text represents not only external dialogue but also the internal cognitive dynamics of control, threat perception, and loss. The opening line, "*If either of us lives so long,*" activates a frame of mortality and the ultimate limits of existence within the cognitive domain. This utterance functions as a cognitive trigger, abruptly shifting the interpretation of the situation from a mundane conflict to an existential dimension. In the recipient's mental model, it reinforces a danger scenario and the anticipation of irreversible consequences, thereby shaping the perception of subsequent utterances.

The cognitive opposition between Warren Trent and O'Keefe is framed as a clash of two control strategies. For Trent, the frame of rational self-regulation prevails. His speech activates the "owner/guest" script, which structures spatial relations, role distribution, and permissible actions, thereby reducing cognitive uncertainty and reasserting hierarchical order. In contrast, O'Keefe operates within an affect-driven scenario in which affective processes override cognitive regulation. The imperative "*Get out!*" manifests reduced cognitive processing, whereby complex mental operations are supplanted by a direct threat–expulsion response. The subsequent repetition of "*fools*" reveals a cognitive categorization scheme in which complex social reality is reduced to binary oppositions such as "*self vs. other*" and "*intelligent vs unintelligent.*" While this simplification reduces cognitive load, it simultaneously amplifies the destructive potential of the conflict.

A moment of remorse ("*I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that*") signals a sharp cognitive shift: the emotional script is replaced by a reflexive one. Awareness of the perlocutionary effect of one's own words prompts a reappraisal of the situation; however, the cognitive model has already been

transformed, and what has been said cannot be undone. Dodo's cognitive response is structured within a scenario of anticipated loss. Her final remark demonstrates the activation of a mental model in which the truth was already implicitly known and is confirmed through verbalization. Thus, the fragment demonstrates how conflict is constructed through the clash of cognitive frames, scripts, and categorization mechanisms that determine both the characters' verbal behavior and their internal experience of the event.

In conclusion, the fragment exemplifies a *multilayered conflict model* in which interpersonal confrontation is inseparable from social hierarchy and internal psychological processes. Its semiotic richness, multimodal complexity, and cognitive depth collectively contribute to the representation of a conflict that evolves from controlled tension to emotional breakdown and partial reconciliation.

According to our quantitative calculations, the influence of the *circumstantial aspect* of the situational factor accounts for 21.16 % of the total number of all analyzed conflictives, taking into consideration the extralingual situational factor. At the same time, stressful circumstances such as illness, unforeseen events (death, loss of inheritance, breakdown of an agreement or deal, persecution, pressure or blackmail, loss of position or job), the influence of alcohol or drug addiction, and the impact of the physical environment (noise, temperature, space, distance, etc.) account for varying percentages, depending on the fragments of fiction discourse containing conflictives that we analysed (see Table 1).

**The resource aspect** of the situational factor that we identified is associated with situations involving limited resources—such as shortages of money, time, power, or information, which can provoke disputes and conflicts. Under conditions of competition for scarce resources, individuals tend to be more prone to aggression; moreover, when a resource (money, power, attention, time, opportunities) is limited, a *struggle* arises among the participants in the interaction over its distribution.

A lack of resources also creates *psychological pressure*, making people more vulnerable to conflict [Krueger et al., 2022, p. 115]. Accordingly, stress reduces the capacity for compromise and self-control, and it can provoke the emergence of new conflictives. In conflicts over limited resources, the issue often becomes “personalized”: rather than focusing on how to distribute the resource, people begin blaming each other, and the conflict may escalate into a personal one.

Therefore, *limited resources* can not only provoke competition, emotional tension, egocentrism, and distrust, but also hinder compromise and act as a catalyst for interpersonal or group conflict. A situation of limited resources is one of the most common situational factors leading to the emergence or escalation of conflict. In contemporary English-language fictional discourse, such struggles most often arise over resources like *power* and *money*.

Linguistically, if the analysis of the *circumstantial factor* is grounded in the concept of context of situation [Halliday, 1978], “specified in terms of three variables: field of discourse, tenor of discourse, and mode of discourse” (i.e., participants, setting, time, and conditions of interaction), then the identification of *resource factors* is grounded in Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, where asymmetries in access to material, informational, and symbolic resources (power/access) function as extralinguistic determinants shaping discourse and generating conflict [Halliday, 1978; van Dijk, 2008].

Let us consider an example of the influence of the resource situational factor on the semiosis of conflictives, unfolding in the context of competition and the struggle for influence, money, and power between two directors of large New York cosmetics companies, “Hertz” and “Gardiner” — Josephine and Constance.

“Darling, I thought you had no idea who I was,” Josephine taunted her. <...>

In her fury, Constance, walked off the wooden platform and up to her. Josephine recoiled, not knowing if she was going to get physical.

“You're short and fat. And that fur is mine.” She ripped the mink shrug right off of Josephine's shoulders. Without so much as a thought of a reprisal, Constance marched off to her dressing room with her prize, seemingly the victor.

“Well,” Josephine shot back, glaring, “you take it. It's not mink, it's rat, like you.” She stood her ground as Constance turned.

*"You listen to me, you Polish bitch," she hissed <...> You wait. You will get yours." She raised her voice, clear, clipped, and modulated in anger.*

*"You think I am worried about you?" Josephine laughed out loud and stood firm, her hand on her hip. "Miss Palm Bitch, I have CeeCee and all your secrets. I would be very careful, though."*

*She wagged her finger, her accent emerging in anger. "Don't overstep your bounds, Mrs. Gardiner-Vyke. <...> She laughed out loud. Her assistant helped her off the box as the seamstress unhooked her green satin gown. She stepped into the dressing room and pulled the curtain in a flash of anger and energy [Kirshenbaum, p. 240].*

The fragment under analysis represents a *conflict speech situation of open, symmetrical interpersonal confrontation*, realized within a semi-institutional communicative setting (a backstage or dressing-room environment). Unlike asymmetrical conflict models characterized by a stable hierarchy of roles, this situation is marked by *dynamic and contested power relations*, where both participants (Constance and Josephine) actively engage in the production of conflict discourse. The interaction is inherently escalatory and is structured around direct verbal aggression, reinforced by physical action.

Within this conflict speech situation, several types of conflictives can be identified, forming a *multilayered conflict complex*. First, the fragment clearly realizes an *interpersonal conflictive*, as the confrontation unfolds directly between two individuals in a face-to-face communicative act. Second, it incorporates a *status conflictive*, rooted in competition for symbolic and possibly professional dominance within the shared institutional environment (struggle over the fur garment, which functions as a marker of status and entitlement). Third, the interaction manifests an *emotional conflictive*, driven by hostility, jealousy, and mutual antagonism, which intensify the escalation and reduce the possibility of rational regulation. Finally, elements of an *identity conflictive* are present, as both participants resort to personal insults targeting physical appearance and ethnic background. These conflictive types do not function in isolation but interact synergistically, amplifying the overall intensity of the communicative breakdown.

#### *The semiotic level of realization of the speech situation model*

The conflict unfolds as a complex system of interacting signs, encompassing symbolic, indexical, and iconic dimensions. Verbal insults such as "*short and fat*," "*rat*," and the ethnic slur function as *symbolic signs*, drawing on culturally encoded evaluative meanings to construct and degrade the interlocutor's identity. These utterances do not merely describe but actively reconfigure the social positioning of the participants within the interaction. The physical act of ripping the mink shrug operates as a highly salient *iconic and indexical sign*: iconically, it represents the forceful removal of status and possession; indexically, it directly signals aggression and dominance in the immediate communicative context. The garment itself emerges as a *semiotically loaded object*, symbolizing not only material ownership but also social prestige and self-presentation. Paralinguistic markers such as hissing, laughter, and raised voice function as *indexical signs of emotional states*, providing additional layers of meaning that intensify the perceived hostility. Overall, the semiotic organization of the fragment demonstrates that conflict is constructed through the interplay of verbal and nonverbal signs, each contributing to the escalation and symbolic restructuring of interpersonal relations.

#### *The multimodal level of realization of the speech situation model*

The fragment exhibits a pronounced integration of verbal, paralinguistic, kinesic, and proxemic modes, which collectively shape the dynamics of the conflict. The *verbal mode* is characterized by short, abrupt, and syntactically simple utterances that convey high emotional intensity and minimal cognitive mediation. This linguistic economy is compensated by the richness of other semiotic channels. The *paralinguistic mode*, manifested through descriptions such as "*hissed*," "*laughed*," and "*raised her voice*," creates an acoustic dimension of the conflict, transforming speech into an auditory representation of aggression and defiance. The *kinesic mode* plays a particularly central role: gestures such as ripping the garment, wagging a finger, and adopting a posture with a hand on the hip function as embodied expressions of dominance, resistance, and confrontation. These gestures are not merely illustrative but constitute integral components of the

communicative act, reinforcing or even substituting verbal meaning. The *proxemic mode* further contributes to the construction of conflict through spatial dynamics: the movement toward the interlocutor, the momentary recoil, and the occupation of physical space all signal shifts in power and threat perception. The multimodal configuration thus reveals that the conflict is not reducible to verbal exchange alone but is generated through the *synchronous interaction of multiple semiotic channels*, which together produce the scene's intensity and dramatic effect.

*The cognitive level of realization of the speech situation model*

The fragment reflects the activation and collision of competing cognitive frames, emotional scripts, and categorization mechanisms within the participants' mental processing. The interaction is dominated by an *affect-driven cognitive mode*, in which emotional arousal significantly reduces the complexity of cognitive operations. This is evident in the use of reductive categorizations, whereby the interlocutor is simplified into negatively charged labels ("rat"), reflecting a binary opposition between self and other. Such categorization serves to lower cognitive load while simultaneously legitimizing aggressive behavior. Constance's cognitive model appears to be structured around a *dominance and entitlement script*, in which control over objects and space is equated with personal superiority. In contrast, Josephine operates within a *defensive-strategic cognitive framework*, relying on verbal retaliation and implicit threats ("I have... your secrets") to reassert her position. Importantly, the fragment lacks any clear transition to a reflective or metacommunicative phase: there is no evidence of cognitive reappraisal or regret. Thus, the cognitive analysis demonstrates that the conflict is sustained by the interaction of simplified categorization, emotional dominance over rational control, and the absence of mechanisms for cognitive restructuring.

Therefore, the resource aspect of the extralinguistic factor, which influences the semiosis of the conflict—from its origin and onset to its functioning, escalation, culmination, and resolution—is embodied multimodally in fictional discourse and is characterized by situations of limited resources, such as money, influence, power, time, attention, and opportunities.

At the same time, the share of the limited resource "money" is 35%, and it is associated with a tendency for the number of participants in the conflict to increase, while "power/authorities" account for more than 46 % among other aspects.

The influence of *sociocultural factors* on the emergence, development, course, and resolution of conflicts in modern English fictional discourse is not limited to the impact of society or other individuals who may shape the manner or nature of the conflict. It is also characterized by a wide range of shared cultural perceptions—such as values, norms, traditions, language, religion, education level, and mentality—that shape a person's worldview and behavior, and therefore contribute to the formation of value orientations and behavioral patterns, including those manifested in conflict [Nasie, et al., 2025, pp. 57–63]. A *sociocultural factor* can serve as a source of conflict, complicate an existing one, or, conversely, become a resource for its resolution if properly taken into account. It also necessitates intercultural competence for effective dialogue and mutual understanding.

The identification of sociocultural factors is grounded in sociocultural pragmatics and the ethnography of communication, which posit that differences in cultural codes, norms, and values, such as gender roles, social status, ethnocultural scripts, and moral standards, implicitly shape communicative behavior and account for characters' disproportionate responses in discourse [Hymes, 1974].

Conflicts can arise from clashes between different cultural norms or values. Moreover, *sociocultural factors* determine the acceptable boundaries of conflict behaviour: in some cultures it is customary to express emotions openly, while in others it is considered more appropriate to avoid direct confrontation. Communicants expect others to behave in ways consistent with their own cultural norms and may interpret "different" behavior as hostile or offensive. For example, raising one's voice may be seen as a sign of passion in one culture but as a sign of aggression in another. Sociocultural attitudes also influence preferred methods of conflict resolution—such as mediation, compromise, competition, or avoidance—and may place particular importance on apology, reparation, public reconciliation, and similar practices.

Here is an example of such sociocultural attitudes “in action”: the conflict unfolds through a series of conflictives between the mother, Sanja, and her son, Noah, after he discovers that his father is not Japanese but Korean—and a yakuza.

*Noa stopped moving and took a deep breath, then exhaled, because he felt so dizzy.*

*“That’s why he’s always helping us—why he found that farm for us during the war. Why he brought us things.”*

*“He was trying to make sure that you were okay. He wanted to help you. It had nothing to do with me. I was someone he knew a long time ago.”*

*“You know that he’s a yakuza? Is that right?”*

*“No. No, I do not know that. I do not know what he does. He used to be a wholesale fish broker who lived in Osaka when I knew him. He bought fish in Korea for Japanese companies. He was a businessman. He owns a construction company and restaurants, I think. I don’t know what else he does. I hardly ever speak to him. You know that—”*

*“Yakuza are the filthiest people in Japan. They are thugs; they are common criminals. They frighten shopkeepers; they sell drugs; they control prostitution; and they hurt innocent people. All the worst Koreans are members of these gangs. I took money for my education from a yakuza, and you thought this was acceptable? I will never be able to wash this dirt from my name. You can’t be very bright,” he said.*

*“How can you make something clean from something dirty? And now, you have made me dirty,” Noa said quietly, as if he was learning this as he was saying it to her. “All my life, I have had Japanese telling me that my blood is Korean—that Koreans are angry, violent, cunning, and deceitful criminals. All my life, I had to endure this. I tried to be as honest and humble as Baek Isak was; I never raised my voice. But this blood, my blood is Korean, and now I learn that my blood is yakuza blood. I can never change this, no matter what I do. It would have been better if I were never born. How could you have ruined my life? How could you be so imprudent? A foolish mother and a criminal father. I am cursed” [Lee, pp. 395–396].*

The fragment under analysis represents a *conflict speech situation of asymmetrical interpersonal confrontation with a pronounced intrapersonal dimension*, realized in a private communicative setting. The interaction is characterized not by overt physical or aggressive escalation, but by a *cognitively and emotionally driven conflict*, in which one participant (Noa) occupies a dominant evaluative and accusatory position, while the interlocutor assumes a defensive and justificatory role. The *asymmetry* is not institutional in the strict sense but emerges from moral authority, emotional intensity, and epistemic positioning, as Noa increasingly monopolizes the interpretative framework of the situation. The communicative exchange evolves from an attempt at rational clarification toward a *deep psychological rupture*, culminating in a breakdown of both interpersonal relations and the speaker’s internal cognitive equilibrium.

Within this speech situation, several interrelated types of conflictives can be identified, forming a *complex, multilayered conflict structure*. First, the fragment clearly realizes an *interpersonal conflictive* between Noa and his mother, grounded in accusation, misunderstanding, and moral judgment. Second, it incorporates an *identity conflictive*, as the speaker’s sense of self becomes destabilized through the revelation of his connection to a stigmatized social group (yakuza), which he associates with criminality and moral impurity. Third, a *axiological conflictive* emerges, rooted in opposing ethical interpretations of past actions, particularly the acceptance of help from a morally questionable source. Finally, the interaction gives rise to a profound *intrapersonal conflictive* within Noa, as he internalizes societal stereotypes and experiences a collapse of his previously constructed self-image.

*The semiotic level of realization of the speech situation model*

The conflict unfolds through a system of symbolic and indexical signs that construct and intensify meanings of guilt, contamination, and identity crisis. Central to this level is the metaphorical opposition between “*clean*” and “*dirty*,” which functions as a symbolic framework encoding moral evaluation. Expressions such as “*wash this dirt from my name*,” “*make something clean from something dirty*,” and “*you have made me dirty*” are not merely figurative but operate as semiotic condensations of social stigma and internalized shame, transforming abstract ethical concerns into tangible, almost physical states. The lexical field associated with impurity and

contamination extends to the concept of “*blood*,” which becomes a *symbolic marker of immutable identity*, linking biological inheritance with moral judgment. The term “yakuza” itself functions as a *culturally loaded sign*, evoking a network of associations related to criminality, violence, and social marginalization. Paralinguistic cues, such as Noa’s quiet tone (“*he said quietly*”), act as *indexical signs of internal processing and emotional restraint*, contrasting with the severity of the content and thereby intensifying its impact. Overall, the semiotic structure of the fragment demonstrates how language constructs a reality in which moral evaluation, identity, and emotional experience become inseparably intertwined.

*The multimodal level of realization of the speech situation model*

The conflict is organized through the interaction of verbal and paralinguistic modes, with minimal but significant kinesic and physiological elements. The verbal mode is dominant and is characterized by a progression from interrogative and explanatory structures to extended accusatory and evaluative monologue. This shift reflects a transition from dialogic interaction to monologic domination, in which one participant’s voice subsumes the communicative space. The paralinguistic mode plays a crucial role in modulating meaning: the description of Noa speaking “*quietly*” introduces an *acoustic paradox*, where reduced vocal intensity coexists with heightened semantic aggression, thereby conveying controlled but profound emotional disturbance. The initial physiological reaction (dizziness, deep breathing) functions as a *somatic marker*, signaling the onset of cognitive overload and emotional shock. Although kinesic details are limited, their relative absence is itself meaningful, emphasizing the internalization of conflict and its shift from external action to internal processing. The multimodal configuration thus reveals a conflict that is less embodied in overt gesture and more concentrated in *speech, voice, and physiological response*, creating an atmosphere of restrained yet escalating psychological tension.

*The cognitive level of realization of the speech situation model*

The fragment provides a detailed representation of the processes through which conflict is constructed in the speaker’s mind via the interaction of cognitive frames, schemas, and emotional scripts. The revelation concerning the father’s association with the yakuza activates a pre-existing cognitive frame shaped by *societal stereotypes*, in which “yakuza” is equated with moral corruption and criminality. This frame triggers a process of categorical identification, whereby Noa reinterprets his own identity through the lens of inherited stigma (“*my blood is Korean... my blood is yakuza blood*”). The repeated emphasis on “*blood*” reflects a shift toward essentialist thinking, in which identity is perceived as fixed, biologically determined, and unchangeable. Cognitive processing becomes increasingly dominated by binary oppositions (*clean/dirty, innocent/criminal*), leading to a simplification of complex social reality and reinforcing the inevitability of the speaker’s conclusions. At the same time, the fragment reveals the internalization of external discourse: Noa explicitly references lifelong exposure to discriminatory narratives (“*All my life, I have had Japanese telling me...*”), demonstrating how *socially constructed stereotypes* become integrated into the individual’s *cognitive model*. The utterance “*as if he was learning this as he was saying it*” indicates a process of online cognitive construction, where meaning is not pre-formed but emerges in the act of speech itself. The culmination of this process is a *cognitive collapse*, characterized by fatalistic reasoning (“*I can never change this... It would have been better if I were never born*”) and the formation of a self-concept defined by curse and irreversibility. Unlike conflicts that allow for cognitive reappraisal, this fragment illustrates a trajectory toward *self-destructive cognition*, in which the conflict is internalized and perpetuated beyond the immediate interaction.

**The communication aspect**, or situations related to communication barriers—such as misunderstanding, ineffective communication, or distortion of information—often becomes a source of conflict. For example, an inaccurate or poorly formulated message may be perceived as offensive. Additionally, the presence or absence of witnesses or third parties can influence the process of generating and interpreting conflictives. The form of communication (whether oral, written, or online) and the level of formality of the situation also play an important role.

The identification of communicative factors is grounded in speech act theory and pragmatics, which view interaction as a rule-governed process involving speech acts, cooperative principles,

and speaker–addressee asymmetries, where strategic and tactical deviations reflect extralinguistic conditions shaping, rather than constituting, linguistic forms [Brown, Levinson, 1987].

Let us consider an example of a distorted interpretation of information that acted as the cause—a situational factor that triggered the conflict:

*He looks up at me and I don't recognize his expression. I'm confused by what's happening. I don't know if he just got bad news or . . . Oh, God. Allysa.*

*"Ryle, you're scaring me. What's wrong?"*

*He holds up my phone and just looks at me like I should know what's happening. When I shake my head in confusion, he holds up a piece of paper.*

*"Funny thing," he says, setting my phone on the coffee table in front of him. "I dropped your phone by accident. Cover pops off. I find this number hidden in the back of it."*

*Oh, God. No, no, no.*

*He crumbles the number in his fist.*

*"I thought, 'Huh. That's weird. Lily doesn't hide things from me.'"*

*He stands up and picks up my phone.*

*"So I called it." He tightens his fist around the phone.*

*"He's lucky I got his fucking voice mail."*

*He chunks my phone clear across the room and it crashes against the wall, shattering to the floor"*  
[Hoover, p. 180].

The fragment provides an example of a set of conflictives, which develop against the backdrop of misinterpreted information by a jealous, violence-prone man. It represents a *conflict speech situation of asymmetrical interpersonal confrontation characterized by latent threat and escalating aggression*, realized within a private domestic setting. The asymmetry of the interaction is grounded in emotional dominance and control, as one participant (*Ryle*) assumes an interrogative, accusatory position, while the other (*Lily*) occupies a defensive and increasingly vulnerable role. The communicative situation develops rapidly from ambiguity and confusion to overt aggression, with the escalation driven not by rational exchange but by emotional volatility and suspicion. The absence of *dialogic balance* and the *progressive restriction of the addressee's communicative agency* contribute to the formation of a high-intensity, coercive interaction, in which the dominant participant controls both the flow of information and the emotional framing of the situation.

Within this conflict speech situation, several interrelated types of conflict can be identified. First, the fragment clearly realizes an *interpersonal conflictive*, as it unfolds through direct confrontation between two individuals in a private relationship. Second, it incorporates an *emotional conflictive*, driven by jealousy, suspicion, and perceived betrayal, which serve as the primary catalysts for escalation. Third, the interaction reflects a *relational trust-based conflictive*, centered on the violation or presumed violation of expectations of transparency ("*Lily doesn't hide things from me*"). Fourth, elements of a *power and control conflictive* are evident, as Ryle asserts dominance through both verbal and physical actions, limiting Lily's ability to respond or reinterpret the situation. Finally, an *incipient intrapersonal conflict* can be observed in Lily's perspective, as her confusion and fear indicate the beginning of internal cognitive dissonance in response to the rapidly shifting communicative context. These conflictive types interact dynamically, producing a situation in which emotional escalation overrides rational clarification.

#### *The semiotic level of realization of the speech situation model*

The conflict is constructed through a system of symbolic and indexical signs that encode suspicion, control, and aggression. The hidden phone number functions as a *symbolic sign of secrecy*, acquiring meaning not inherently but through Ryle's interpretative framing, which transforms it into evidence of betrayal. His utterance "*Lily doesn't hide things from me*" operates as a normative symbolic statement, establishing an expectation that is immediately violated within his cognitive model. The physical manipulation of objects (*crumpling the paper, gripping the phone, and ultimately throwing it*) serves as a series of *indexical signs of escalating aggression*, each gesture marking an increase in emotional intensity. The act of throwing the phone against

the wall functions simultaneously as an *iconic representation of relational rupture*, materially enacting the breakdown of communication. Paralinguistic cues embedded in the narrative (e.g., *profanity, fragmented speech*) further contribute to the semiotic construction of anger and loss of control. Thus, the semiotic organization of the fragment demonstrates how meaning is generated through the reinterpretation of neutral objects and the progressive intensification of indexical signals of aggression.

*The multimodal level of realization of the speech situation model*

The conflict is structured through the interaction of verbal, paralinguistic, kinesic, and proxemic modes, which together produce a cohesive representation of escalating tension. *The verbal mode* is characterized by fragmented, controlled utterances, which paradoxically heighten the sense of threat by withholding explicit explanation and forcing the addressee into a position of uncertainty. Ryle's speech is not expansive but economical and deliberate, creating a communicative environment in which each utterance carries disproportionate weight. *The paralinguistic mode* is conveyed through tone, pauses, and profanity, which collectively signal emotional instability and suppressed aggression. *The kinesic mode* plays a central role: gestures such as holding up the phone, crumpling the paper, tightening his fist, and throwing the phone function as embodied expressions of control and defiance, progressively replacing verbal communication. *The proxemic mode* is implicitly structured through spatial relations, particularly the act of throwing the phone across the room, which reconfigures the physical environment and transforms space into a medium of aggression. Lily's relative stillness and verbal hesitation contrast sharply with Ryle's kinetic dominance, reinforcing the asymmetry of the interaction. Overall, the multimodal configuration reveals that the conflict is driven by the interplay of restrained speech and increasingly expressive physical action, culminating in a moment where gesture overtakes language.

*The cognitive level of realization of the speech situation model*

The fragment reflects the activation and interaction of competing cognitive frames related to trust, betrayal, and control. Ryle's behavior is structured by a suspicion-driven cognitive schema, in which ambiguous evidence (the hidden number) is immediately interpreted within a framework of deception. This reflects a process of *confirmation bias*, whereby neutral or insufficient information is reinterpreted to support a pre-existing assumption of wrongdoing. His statement "*I thought, 'Huh. That's weird'*" marks the initial cognitive trigger, which rapidly evolves into a fixed interpretative model resistant to alternative explanations. As the conflict progresses, cognitive processing becomes increasingly emotionally dominated, reducing the capacity for rational evaluation and leading to impulsive, aggressive action. Lily, by contrast, operates within a confusion-based cognitive state, characterized by a lack of access to the interpretative framework guiding Ryle's behavior. Her repeated expressions of uncertainty ("*I don't know what's happening*") indicate a disruption of shared cognitive context, which is essential for effective communication. The asymmetry in cognitive processing (certainty on one side, confusion on the other) further intensifies the conflict. The culmination of the interaction in physical aggression reflects a *collapse of communicative cognition*, where meaning is no longer negotiated through discourse but imposed through action. Thus, the cognitive analysis demonstrates that the conflict is sustained by biased interpretation, emotional escalation, and the breakdown of shared understanding.

In conclusion, the fragment exemplifies an *asymmetrical, escalation-driven conflict speech situation*, in which suspicion and emotional volatility transform a potentially resolvable misunderstanding into an aggressive confrontation. Its semiotic structure highlights the reinterpretation of objects as signs of betrayal, its multimodal organization emphasizes the transition from verbal control to physical expression, and its cognitive dimension reveals the role of bias and emotional dominance in shaping perception. Together, these elements contribute to the representation of a conflict that culminates in the *materialization of aggression and the disruption of communicative and relational stability*.

From a communication perspective, the main sources of conflict are usually distorted or misinterpreted information, silence, and the concealment of necessary information—that is, ineffective communication—which leads to misunderstanding, emotional tension, and, ultimately,

conflict. After all, understanding disagreements or conflicts requires much more than a single statement, or even a full exchange of remarks, since “their source may lie outside the current exchange” [Evans et al., 2019, pp. 152–164].

**The ambivalent aspect** of the extralingual situational factor influencing the formation of conflictives manifests in contexts of uncertainty or ambiguity, when the “rules of the game” are unclear or continually shifting. Such conditions generate tension and a sense of unpredictability, prompting individuals to become cautious, distrustful of others, or excessively defensive.

The identification of ambivalent factors is grounded in role conflict theory and models of internal communicative tension, which conceptualize interaction as shaped by contradictory roles, intentions, and statuses, where overlapping social, psychological, and communicative parameters produce simultaneous cooperation and opposition within discourse [Baxter, Montgomery, 1996; Kahn et al., 1964].

The above can be illustrated with the following example:

*Remembering her general wariness, I stopped just short of the table, not wanting to crowd her.*

*“I was hoping to speak with you about my grandfather,” I said. “I heard that you helped him harvest the honey last summer.”*

*“Who told you that?” “Does it matter?” “I didn’t do anything wrong,” she said. Her comment caught me off guard. <...>*

*“I don’t know anything,” she repeated.*

*“Did you help him harvest the honey?”*

*“He paid me,” she said, color rising like a stain in her pale cheeks. “I didn’t steal any, if that’s what you’re asking. I didn’t steal anything.” <...>*

*“Callie—” “I didn’t do anything wrong!” she cried again, cutting me off. <...>*

*“Did he ever mention that he was going to visit Helen?”*

*Her eyes suddenly widened and for the first time, I thought I saw a flash of actual fear. As quickly as it came, however, it vanished with an angry shake of her head.*

*“I’m sorry about your grandfather, okay? He was a nice old man. And I was happy to help him with the honey. But I don’t know anything about why he went to South Carolina, and I’d appreciate it if you just left me alone.”*

*I said nothing. She lifted her chin defiantly, before finally turning around and heading back toward the store. On her way, she tossed the remains of her lunch into a garbage can without breaking stride.*

*I watched her leave, wondering what it was that I’d said that had upset her so” [Sparks, pp. 157–158].*

The fragment illustrates several *latent, one-sided conflictives* and focuses on a girl who assumes the false name “Celly” to hide her real identity. Following a tragic event—the death of her younger brother resulting from her negligence—she fled home and relocated to a trailer in another state, convinced that her parents would hate her indefinitely. In the unfamiliar city, she befriends Trevor Benson’s grandfather and assists him at his apiary. After the grandfather dies in a car accident on his way to North Carolina, Trevor attempts to uncover the reason he undertook such a difficult journey alone.

The fragment under analysis represents a *conflict speech situation of asymmetrical interpersonal confrontation with latent tension and defensive escalation*, realized in a semi-public setting. The interaction is characterized by unequal cognitive and emotional positioning, where the narrator assumes an investigative, information-seeking role, while Callie occupies a defensive and increasingly guarded position. The asymmetry is not institutional but emerges from differences in knowledge, emotional involvement, and perceived threat. The communicative exchange develops from an apparently neutral inquiry into a *conflictive interaction marked by suspicion, denial, and emotional withdrawal*, without reaching overt aggression or resolution.

Within this speech situation, several types of conflict can be identified, forming a *complex but implicitly structured configuration*. First, the fragment realizes an *interpersonal conflictive*, as the interaction involves direct communicative tension between the narrator and Callie. Second, it incorporates an *epistemic conflictive*, grounded in unequal access to information and differing assumptions about what is known or concealed. Third, an *emotional conflictive* emerges, as Callie’s

reactions, marked by anxiety, fear, and defensiveness, contrast with the narrator's initially neutral stance. Fourth, the interaction suggests a *latent conflictive of suspicion and accusation*, even though no explicit accusation is made; Callie interprets the questions as implying wrongdoing ("I didn't do anything wrong," "I didn't steal anything"), thereby constructing a conflictive frame independently of the speaker's intention. Finally, elements of an *intrapersonal conflictive* are evident in Callie's behavior, as her fluctuating emotional responses indicate internal tension between concealment and disclosure. These conflict types interact subtly, producing a situation in which misunderstanding and defensive interpretation drive the escalation.

#### *The semiotic level of realization of the speech situation model*

The conflict is constructed through a system of symbolic and indexical signs that encode suspicion, defensiveness, and emotional instability. Callie's repeated statements ("I didn't do anything wrong," "I didn't steal anything") function as symbolic indicators of a perceived accusatory context, even in the absence of explicit accusation. These utterances reveal a semiotic shift, whereby neutral questions are reinterpreted as signs of threat. The metaphorical expression "*color rising like a stain*" operates as an iconic and indexical sign of emotional disturbance, visually representing guilt, embarrassment, or fear. Similarly, the widening of her eyes and the fleeting "*flash of actual fear*" function as indexical signs of internal emotional states, momentarily revealing information that her verbal responses attempt to suppress. The final gestures (*lifting her chin defiantly, discarding her lunch without breaking stride*) serve as indexical signs of emotional closure and rejection, reinforcing her withdrawal from the interaction. Thus, the semiotic organization demonstrates how meaning is constructed not only through explicit statements but also *through involuntary physical and emotional signs* that contradict or complicate verbal denial.

#### *The multimodal level of realization of the speech situation model*

The fragment is structured through the interaction of verbal, paralinguistic, and kinesic modes, with a strong emphasis on *subtle nonverbal cues*. *The verbal mode* is characterized by a pattern of question–denial sequences, in which the narrator's inquiries are met with defensive, repetitive responses that do not directly address the questions. This creates a communicative imbalance, as the expected cooperative exchange of information is replaced by evasion. *The paralinguistic mode* is reflected in Callie's tone and intensity, particularly in the shift from controlled responses to emotional outbursts ("*she cried again*"), indicating escalating internal tension. *The kinesic mode* plays a crucial role in conveying meaning: gestures such as widening eyes, shaking her head, lifting her chin, and abruptly leaving the scene function as embodied expressions of resistance, fear, and eventual disengagement. The narrator's controlled physical behavior ("*stopped just short of the table, not wanting to crowd her*") contrasts with Callie's reactions, highlighting the asymmetry in emotional involvement. *The proxemic dimension* is also significant, as the narrator's effort to maintain distance suggests an awareness of potential tension, while Callie's departure redefines the spatial configuration by terminating the interaction. Overall, the multimodal configuration reveals that the conflict is constructed through the *interaction of restrained inquiry and increasingly expressive nonverbal resistance*, culminating in withdrawal rather than confrontation.

#### *The cognitive level of realization of the speech situation model*

The fragment reflects the interaction of differing cognitive frames and interpretative strategies. The narrator operates within an information-seeking cognitive model, assuming that the interaction is cooperative and that the interlocutor will provide relevant information. In contrast, Callie's cognitive processing is structured by a defensive and threat-oriented schema, in which the narrator's questions are interpreted as implicit accusations. This leads to a process of *cognitive misalignment*, where the participants do not share a common understanding of the communicative situation. Callie's repeated denials and emotional reactions suggest the activation of a guilt or fear-related cognitive script, even if the exact source of this response remains ambiguous. The momentary "*flash of actual fear*" indicates a brief breakdown of emotional control, revealing underlying knowledge or concern that contradicts her verbal claims. At the same time, her rapid return to denial and defiance demonstrates a restorative cognitive mechanism, aimed at reestablishing control over the interaction by terminating it. The narrator's final reflection ("*wondering what it*

was that I'd said that had upset her so") underscores the persistence of cognitive asymmetry, as he remains unaware of the interpretative framework guiding Callie's responses. Thus, the cognitive analysis shows that the conflict is sustained by misaligned frames, defensive interpretation, and incomplete knowledge, preventing mutual understanding and resolution.

In conclusion, the fragment exemplifies an *asymmetrical, latent conflict speech situation*, in which interpersonal tension arises not from explicit aggression but from divergent cognitive and emotional interpretations. Its semiotic structure highlights the role of involuntary signs in revealing suppressed meanings, its multimodal organization emphasizes the importance of nonverbal behavior in shaping the interaction, and its cognitive dimension demonstrates how misunderstanding and defensive schemas can transform neutral inquiry into perceived confrontation. Together, these elements contribute to the representation of a conflict that remains *implicit, unresolved, and psychologically driven*, culminating in withdrawal rather than open escalation.

**The temporal aspect** of the situational factor, referring to limited resources or time pressure, manifests when conflict participants are forced to act under time constraints or at moments unfavorable for constructive dialogue. Time constraints compel individuals to make decisions rapidly, often without adequate analysis, which can result in conflicts arising from erroneous decisions, disregard for others' needs, or hasty judgments. Moreover, time in literary discourse often serves as a *catalyst* for conflict.

The identification of temporal factors is grounded in the concepts of the chronotope and narrative pragmatics, which view the temporal organization of communication—such as time pressure, delayed responses, accumulation of prior conflicts, and retrospective reinterpretation—as shaping interaction and often functioning as a catalyst for conflict in fictional discourse [Bakhtin, 1981].

The following excerpt provides an example of conflict communication in fictional discourse, which we will now examine:

*Leni saw the violence of his breathing, the way his fingers spasmed. He was on the balls of his feet, energy pouring out of him, anger transforming him.*

*"You're lying to me," he said.*

*Mama shook her head. "No. I'm not. I don't even know what you mean."*

*"It's always the Walkers," he muttered.*

*"Ernt, this is crazy—"*

*He hit her so hard she slammed into the wall. Before Mama could get to her feet, he was on her again, yanking her hair back, exposing the pale skin of her throat. Wrapping his hand in her hair, he smashed his fist down, cracked the side of her head on the floor.*

*Leni hurled herself at her father, landed on his back. She clawed at him, pulled his hair, screamed,*

*"Let her go!"*

*He wrenched free, cracked Mama's forehead into the floor.*

*Leni heard the door open behind her; seconds later she was yanked off her dad. She got a glimpse of Matthew, saw him pull Dad off Mama, spin him around, and punch him in the jaw so hard Dad staggered sideways and crumpled to his knees.*

*Leni ran to her mother, helped her to her feet.*

*"We need to go. Now."*

*"You go," Mama said, looking nervously toward Dad, who moaned in pain. "Go." Her face was bloodied, her lip torn [Hannah, p. 404].*

This passage illustrates instances of both escalating and culminating conflictives in a violent scenario, highlighting a man's inability to regulate his condition and behaviour, engaging extreme acts of violence against his wife.

The fragment under analysis represents a *conflict speech situation of extreme asymmetrical interpersonal confrontation escalating into physical violence*, realized within a private domestic setting. The interaction is structured by a rigid and coercive power asymmetry, in which one participant (*Ernt*) assumes total physical and emotional dominance, while the other (*Mama*) is positioned as a vulnerable, subordinated subject. A third participant (*Leni*) initially occupies the role of observer but rapidly becomes an active intervening agent, and a fourth participant

(Matthew) enters as an external force disrupting the conflict. The communicative situation is characterized by a rapid transition from verbal accusation to uncontrolled physical aggression, marking a breakdown of communicative norms and the replacement of discourse with violence as the primary mode of interaction.

Within this speech situation, several interrelated types of conflictives can be identified, forming a *high-intensity, multilayered conflict structure*. First, the fragment clearly realizes an *interpersonal conflictive*, as it unfolds through direct confrontation between Ernt and Mama. Second, it incorporates a *power and control conflictive*, in which dominance is asserted through physical force and intimidation. Third, the interaction reflects a *domestic (intrafamilial) conflictive*, rooted in dysfunctional relational dynamics and recurring patterns of aggression (“*It’s always the Walkers*”). Fourth, an *emotional conflictive* is central, driven by anger, suspicion, and loss of control. Fifth, there is a *protective conflictive*, as Leni intervenes physically to defend her mother, thereby transforming the dyadic confrontation into a *multi-participant conflict scenario*. Finally, elements of an *intrapersonal conflictive* are implied in Ernt’s behavior, as his uncontrolled aggression suggests internal instability and the collapse of self-regulation. These conflictive types interact cumulatively, producing a situation of escalating and sustained violence.

#### *The semiotic level of realization of the speech situation model*

The conflict is constructed through a dense system of indexical and iconic signs, with relatively limited reliance on symbolic verbal content. The initial utterance “*You’re lying to me*” functions as a symbolic act of accusation, establishing a framework of mistrust and triggering escalation. However, the subsequent development of the conflict is primarily driven by indexical signs of aggression, such as “*violent breathing*,” “*spasming fingers*,” and physical movements that signal imminent violence. These physiological and kinetic cues serve as pre-verbal indicators of emotional overload, foreshadowing the transition to physical action. The acts of hitting, yanking hair, and smashing the victim’s head against surfaces function as iconic signs of domination and destruction, directly embodying the breakdown of interpersonal relations. Leni’s actions (clawing, pulling, screaming) operate as indexical signs of desperation and protective intent, while Matthew’s intervention (*pulling Ernt away, striking him*) introduces counter-signs of resistance and restoration of balance. *Blood, torn skin, and bodily injury* emerge as material semiotic markers, transforming the conflict into a visibly inscribed event. Thus, the semiotic organization demonstrates a shift from symbolic accusation to *embodied, physical semiosis*, where meaning is enacted through violence.

#### *The multimodal level of realization of the speech situation model*

The fragment exhibits a pronounced dominance of kinesic and proxemic modes, with verbal communication playing a secondary role. *The verbal mode* is minimal and fragmented, consisting of short accusatory and defensive utterances that quickly give way to nonverbal action. *The paralinguistic mode* is implied through tone and intensity (“*he muttered*,” “*she screamed*”), but it is overshadowed by the immediacy of physical expression. *The kinesic mode* is central: gestures such as striking, pulling, smashing, and struggling constitute the primary means of communication, transforming the conflict into a fully embodied interaction. Leni’s leap onto her father’s back and Matthew’s physical intervention further emphasize the collective and dynamic nature of bodily engagement. *The proxemic mode* is equally significant, as the reduction of interpersonal distance enables and intensifies violence; bodies collide, space is compressed, and movement becomes a mechanism of both aggression and resistance. The sudden entrance of Matthew reconfigures the spatial dynamics, introducing a disruptive force that breaks the existing power structure. Overall, the multimodal configuration reveals that the conflict is realized through the interaction of limited speech and dominant physical action, where bodily movement and spatial relations replace verbal negotiation.

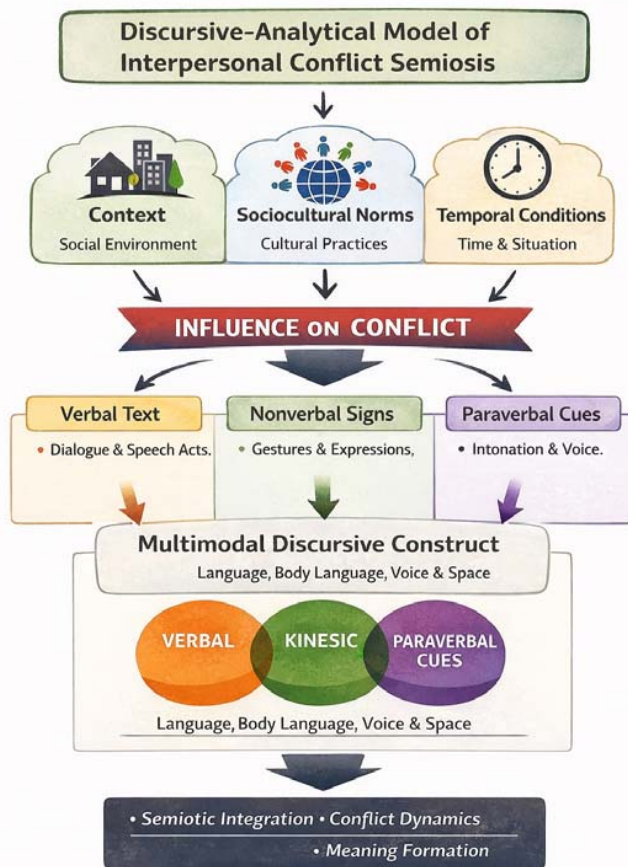
#### *The cognitive level of realization of the speech situation model*

The fragment reflects a profound disruption of rational cognitive processing, particularly in the aggressor’s behavior. Ernt’s actions are structured by a paranoid and emotionally driven cognitive schema, in which suspicion (“*You’re lying to me*”) is immediately accepted as fact without evidence, leading to impulsive and disproportionate response. His reference to “*the Walkers*” suggests the activation of a pre-existing cognitive frame, possibly associated with past grievances, which amplifies his perception of threat. Cognitive processing is dominated by affective overload, resulting

in the collapse of inhibitory control and the substitution of action for reasoning. Mama’s cognitive state is characterized by defensive confusion and survival-oriented responses, as she attempts to deny the accusation and physically protect herself. Leni’s cognition is governed by a protective and reactive script, where the imperative to defend her mother overrides considerations of personal safety. Her actions are immediate and instinctive, reflecting a shift from observer to participant. Matthew’s intervention introduces a restorative cognitive frame, aimed at stopping the violence and reestablishing control. The final exchange (“*We need to go. Now.*” “*You go*”) reflects a transition to a crisis-management cognitive mode, in which the focus shifts from confrontation to escape and protection. Thus, the cognitive analysis demonstrates that the conflict is driven by distorted perception, emotional dominance over rationality, and survival-oriented decision-making, resulting in the breakdown of communicative cognition and the emergence of action-based responses.

In conclusion, the fragment exemplifies an *extreme, asymmetrical conflict speech situation*, in which interpersonal confrontation escalates into physical violence and involves multiple participants with shifting roles. Its semiotic structure is dominated by indexical and iconic signs of aggression, its multimodal organization foregrounds bodily and spatial dynamics over verbal interaction, and its cognitive dimension reveals the collapse of rational processing in favor of emotionally driven and survival-oriented responses. Together, these elements contribute to the representation of a conflict that is immediate, embodied, and destructive, culminating in physical harm and necessitating external intervention for its interruption.

The integrated results of the analysis are reflected in the conceptual model below, which represents the proposed framework of interpersonal conflict semiosis.



**Fig. 1.** Conceptual model of conflict dynamics.

(The conceptual diagram was visually designed with the assistance of generative AI [OpenAI, 2026], based on an author-created theoretical framework. The authors verified and finalized the structure).

The analysis of the selected fragments demonstrates that extralinguistic and nonverbal means play a decisive role in the construction, development, and resolution of conflict speech situations, functioning across semiotic, multimodal, and cognitive levels of realization. *At the semiotic level*, nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions, gestures, spatial positioning, prosodic features, and physiological reactions, operate as indexical and iconic signs that reveal emotional states, intentions, and hidden meanings which are often absent or suppressed in verbal discourse. These signs frequently contradict, reinforce, or reinterpret verbal messages, thereby intensifying conflict or exposing underlying tensions.

*At the multimodal level*, conflict is shown to be a *polycode phenomenon*, in which verbal communication interacts with paralinguistic, kinesic, and proxemic modes. Nonverbal behavior often dominates or even replaces verbal interaction, especially in high-intensity or asymmetrical conflicts, where gestures, tone of voice, silence, interruption, and physical actions become primary vehicles of meaning. These extralinguistic elements regulate turn-taking, signal dominance or submission, and shape the dynamics of escalation or de-escalation, thereby determining the trajectory of the conflict.

*At the cognitive level*, extralinguistic and nonverbal means serve as external manifestations of internal mental processes, including perception, interpretation, emotional evaluation, and decision-making. They provide access to underlying cognitive schemas such as suspicion, fear, defensiveness, or aggression, and often trigger cognitive shifts in participants by introducing new information or disrupting existing interpretative frames. In many cases, nonverbal signals function as *catalysts of cognitive conflict*, exposing discrepancies between assumed and actual states of affairs and prompting reinterpretation or reaction.

Thus, extralinguistic and nonverbal means are not merely supplementary to verbal communication but constitute an integral and dynamic component of conflict speech situations, shaping their semiotic structure, organizing their multimodal realization, and influencing the cognitive processes of participants. Their interplay determines the intensity, direction, and outcome of conflict, highlighting their essential role in the analysis of modern conflict discourse.

*Extra linguistic* situational factors have a significant impact on the emergence and development of conflicts, as they shape the context in which a conflict arises, unfolds, and is ultimately resolved. Depending on the specific situation, the same conflict may either quickly subside or escalate and develop into a long-term or destructive process. Due to the peculiarities of physical conditions, unexpected circumstances, limited resources, the social status of the communicants, cultural and moral contexts, the presence of witnesses, and other situational factors, the course of a conflict may change. These factors can provoke or restrain the conflict, influence the choice of conflict behavior strategies, shape the interpretation of situations, and ultimately *model* the overall atmosphere of the conflict.

Through a systematic linguistic analysis of conflictives as integral units of modern English fictional discourse, we identified the *circumstantial*, *resource*, *sociocultural*, *communicative*, *ambivalent*, and *temporal* aspects of the situational factor, which is not secondary but a key element in shaping the course of conflict.

Table 1 presents a detailed classification of each aspect of the situational factor, based on a study of 482 functionally coherent conflictive units, along with the percentage influence of situational factors on the process of conflictive semiosis in modern English fictional discourse for each aspect. The table displays the frequency and percentage distribution of extralingual situational factors, providing an empirical basis for their further interpretation.

The findings of the analysis can be further substantiated through the distribution of extralinguistic variables presented in the table, which quantitatively confirms the central role of nonverbal and contextual factors in the structuring of conflict speech situations. The predominance of *sociocultural* (28.42%) and *communicative* (21.99%) factors, along with a high frequency of *circumstantial variables* (21.16%), demonstrates that conflict is largely shaped by external conditions that extend beyond purely linguistic interaction. In particular, the significant proportion of communicative variables (79.25% relating to ineffective communication, silence, concealment, and distortion of information) directly correlates with the semiotic and cognitive observations that nonverbal cues, silence, and indirect signaling often function as primary carriers of meaning in conflict discourse. Similarly, the high percentage of sociocultural factors—especially cultural differences (47.45%) and sociocultural norms (40.88%)—aligns with the cognitive-level findings, where shared or conflicting interpretative frames determine how communicative acts are perceived and evaluated.

Table 1.

**Relative Frequency (% Ratio) of Extralinguistic Factors in Conflict Interaction**

Extralinguistic factor	N	%	Situational aspects	N	%
<b><i>Circumstantial</i></b>	<b>102</b>	<b>21.16%</b>	• illness	19	18.63%
			• natural disasters/accident/attack	31	30.39%
			• death of loved ones	2	1.96%
			• loss of employment/ inheritance/ breakdown of agreements	22	21.57%
			• influence of alcohol/ mental state/ drug addiction	28	27.45%
<b><i>Resource</i></b>	<b>73</b>	<b>15.15%</b>	• power	34	46.58%
			• financial resources	26	35.62%
			• time scarcity	13	17.81%
<b><i>Sociocultural</i></b>	<b>137</b>	<b>28.42%</b>	• social/group pressure	16	11.68%
			• cultural differences:		
			• influence of sociocultural attitudes/norms/rules	65	47.45%
			• asymmetric/ symmetrical social status	56	40.88%
<b><i>Communicative</i></b>	<b>106</b>	<b>21.99%</b>	• communication barriers/noise/deviation ineffective communication/ silence/	22	20.75%
			• concealment/ distortion of information	84	79.25%
<b><i>Ambivalent</i></b>	<b>33</b>	<b>6.85%</b>	• alteration of established rules	12	36.36%
			• uncertainty/ unknown factors	21	63.64%
<b><i>Temporal</i></b>	<b>31</b>	<b>6.43%</b>	• temporal constraints/ pressure	21	67.74%
			• unfavourable timing/ conditions	10	32.26%

Moreover, the presence of resource-based (15.15%) and circumstantial variables related to power, financial constraints, and temporal pressure reinforces the multimodal nature of conflict, where extralinguistic conditions shape not only the content but also the intensity and trajectory of interaction. The relatively lower but still significant presence of ambivalent (6.85%) and temporal (6.43%) factors highlights the role of uncertainty, rule instability, and time pressure as catalysts that destabilize communicative equilibrium and amplify reliance on nonverbal and extralinguistic cues. Overall, the statistical distribution confirms that conflict speech situations are fundamentally *extralinguistic-driven and multimodal constructs*, in which nonverbal, contextual, and situational factors interact with linguistic means to shape semiotic meaning and cognitive interpretation. This empirical evidence reinforces the conclusion that nonverbal and extralinguistic variables are not peripheral, but rather constitutive elements that determine the emergence, escalation, and resolution of conflict in discourse.

**Conclusions**

The analysis of the identified models of conflict speech situations—ranging from asymmetrical interpersonal confrontation to conflicts escalating into physical violence—demonstrates that extralinguistic and nonverbal means function as fundamental mechanisms that structure and intensify conflict across all levels of realization. Within these models, different types of conflictives (emotional, interpersonal, status-based, epistemic, and power-related) are not only verbally articulated but are also materially embodied through nonverbal behavior, which often serves as the primary driver of escalation, especially in asymmetrical contexts. At the semiotic level, nonverbal signs index emotional states and implicit intentions, frequently revealing contradictions between overt verbal claims and underlying cognitive or affective realities. At the multimodal level, the interaction of verbal and nonverbal codes becomes particularly significant in high-intensity conflict situations, where gestures, prosody, silence, and physical actions regulate dominance, resistance, and the progression of conflict. At the cognitive level, extralinguistic cues reflect and shape participants’ mental models, activating schemas of suspicion, fear, authority, or aggression, and thereby influencing how conflict is perceived and cognitively processed.

Consequently, across all analyzed conflict types and models, extralinguistic and nonverbal means emerge as decisive factors that not only complement but often override verbal communication, determining the dynamics, escalation patterns, and eventual outcomes of conflict speech situations.

The quantitative distribution of extralinguistic variables further substantiates the central conclusions drawn from the qualitative analysis of conflict speech situations. The predominance of sociocultural (28.42%), communicative (21.99%), and circumstantial (21.16%) factors confirms that conflict is fundamentally embedded in broader contextual frameworks that extend beyond linguistic expression. These data particularly highlight the crucial role of communicative variables, most of which (79.25%) are associated with ineffective communication, silence, concealment, and information distortion, thereby empirically reinforcing the semiotic and cognitive findings regarding the importance of indirect, nonverbal, and implicit meaning-making in conflict discourse. Similarly, the high proportion of sociocultural factors, especially cultural differences and normative constraints, underscores the decisive influence of shared and conflicting interpretative schemas in shaping how conflict is perceived, evaluated, and enacted across different types of conflict speech situations, including status-based and interpersonal confrontations.

At the same time, the presence of resource-based variables (15.15%)—such as power asymmetries, financial constraints, and temporal pressure—demonstrates that extralinguistic conditions not only frame but actively intensify conflict dynamics, particularly in asymmetrical models where dominance and control are contested. The measurable contribution of ambivalent (6.85%) and temporal (6.43%) factors further points to the destabilizing effect of uncertainty, shifting norms, and time constraints, which increase reliance on nonverbal strategies and heighten the potential for escalation. Taken together, these findings provide strong empirical support for the view that conflict speech situations are inherently *extralinguistic-driven and multimodal constructs*, in which contextual, sociocultural, and communicative variables interact with linguistic means to shape both the structure and trajectory of conflict. Thus, the statistical evidence confirms that nonverbal and extralinguistic factors are not peripheral elements but rather *core determinants* in the emergence, development, and resolution of conflict across the identified models and conflict types.

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## The Role of Extralingual Factors in Shaping Interpersonal Conflict in Modern English Fictional Discourse

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The article investigates the role of extralingual factors in shaping and developing interpersonal conflict in contemporary English fictional discourse. Particular attention is devoted to the analysis of conflict speech situations as multimodal formations in which verbal, nonverbal, and paraverbal means interact at semiotic, cognitive, and pragmatic levels.

The aim of the paper is to comprehensively identify and theoretically conceptualize the specific influence of extralingual factors on the dynamics of the unfolding and interpretative modelling of multimodal interpersonal conflictives within the semiotic space of the fictional text. To achieve the goal, the study undertakes the following tasks: 1) identifying the specifics of situational context and its interaction with extralingual factors in interpersonal conflict speech in contemporary English-language fictional discourse; 2) identifying and classifying the main extralingual factors and situational aspects that influence the semiosis of conflictives in modern English fictional discourse, both in the author's narrative and in character speech; 3) to conduct a quantitative content analysis, including a categorical classification of extralingual factors in the selected interpersonal conflictives; 4) to identify models of speech situations and to conduct their analysis at the semiotic, multimodal, and cognitive levels, with due consideration of each identified extralinguistic factor.

The analysis of how extralinguistic factors are contextually realized in fictional discourse is grounded in an integrated, interdisciplinary *methodological framework*. This framework includes contextual analysis, multimodal analysis (MDA), communicative-pragmatic analysis, semiotic and cognitive analysis and quantitative content analysis.

The material of the research consists of 482 fragments of contemporary English-language fiction representing interpersonal conflict interactions between characters. The analysis demonstrates that extralinguistic factors function as constitutive components of conflict communication, since they determine the conditions of conflict emergence, development, escalation, and resolution. The study proves that conflict in fictional discourse is constructed as a polycode phenomenon in which nonverbal signals, spatial parameters, prosodic features, gestures, silence, and physical actions frequently dominate verbal communication and alter its interpretation. The paper proposes a classification of extralinguistic factors including circumstantial, resource-based, sociocultural, communicative, ambivalent, and temporal dimensions. Quantitative analysis reveals the predominance of sociocultural (28.42%), communicative (21.99%), and circumstantial (21.16%) factors, confirming their central role in structuring conflict interaction. The findings indicate that conflicts are most often triggered by ineffective communication, concealment or distortion of information, cultural differences, competition for power or resources, as well as uncertainty and time pressure.

The results further demonstrate that, at the semiotic level, nonverbal elements function as indexical and iconic signs revealing hidden emotions, intentions, and contradictions between verbal statements and the characters' internal states. At the multimodal level, conflict emerges through the interaction of speech, gesture, intonation, silence, and spatial organization. At the cognitive level, extralinguistic cues reflect the participants' mental models, activate schemas of suspicion, fear, aggression, or defensiveness, and shape the interpretation of conflict situations. Consequently, the study concludes that extralinguistic and nonverbal factors determine the intensity, direction, and outcome of conflict in contemporary English fictional discourse.

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