

Article

**“I Wouldn’t Lie to You. Well... That’s a Lie”: An Analysis of Lies Expressed by Rick C-137
in *Rick and Morty* Season 1**

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Abstract: Language assumes a significant role in communication and expression, especially in cinematic and television productions. Despite the widespread popularity of the American animated series, *Rick and Morty* has not been extensively explored within the field of language and linguistics. This paper addresses this gap by examining the linguistic dimension of *Rick and Morty*, featuring the deceptive discourse of the character Rick C-137 in Season 1. With McCornack’s Information Manipulation Theory (IMT) as the theoretical foundation, this study aims to achieve 2 objectives: (i) investigate the dimensions in which information are manipulated by Rick C-137 in his deceptive messages and (ii) analyse the methods employed by Rick C-137 in his deceptive discourse. To achieve these objectives, qualitative content analysis is utilised on the transcripts of all 11 episodes of *Rick and Morty* Season 1. The findings of the study discover that Rick C-137 manipulates information along all four dimensions throughout the season: quantity, quality, relation and manner. Furthermore, the analysis unveils two distinct methods of information manipulation employed by Rick C-137: (i) manipulation along a single dimension and (ii) manipulation along two dimensions. While contributing to the knowledge pertaining to linguistic manipulation in *Rick and Morty* Season 1, these observations also offer valuable insights to the intricate world of deceptive communication within the context of animated series.

Keywords: Lies, deceptive messages; information manipulation; Gricean Maxims; pragmatic analysis; discourse analysis; animated series; *Rick and Morty*; telecinematic discourse

Introduction

Language acts as a dynamic tool of communication and expression, functioning as a crucial factor in the realm of films and television series by crafting narratives and engaging audiences (Ryan et al., 2004). It expands beyond simple dialogues; it encompasses a diverse array of linguistic choices, verbal styles, and rhetorical techniques that bring characters to life and convey the essence of the narratives. Films and television series often incorporate intricate dialogues and character-driven language to unveil the characters’ personalities and motivations, while employing clever wordplay to add depth to comedic moments (Castagno, 2013). As audiences immerse themselves in the linguistic aspect of films and television series, they form strong emotional bonds with the characters and themes, making language an essential factor in the connection between the films or television series and the audiences.

In the film and television industry, the genre of animated series has gained immense popularity in recent years due to its offering of unique storytelling platforms that explore themes and topics often deemed challenging in live-action productions (Wells, 2002). One such animated series that has made a mark in the

genre is *Rick and Morty*, a popular American adult science-fiction animated series produced by Adult Swim (Walulik, 2021). Since its debut in 2013, it has garnered a devoted following, largely due to its integration of dark humour, science fiction, and social commentary (Adalian, 2017). The animated series revolves around the adventures of the dysfunctional Smith family which consists of the not-so-happily-married parents Jerry and Beth, the rebellious teenage daughter Summer, the young son Morty and the depressed alcoholic grandpa Rick Sanchez, also referred to as Rick C-137. Central to the show is the character Rick, a brilliant yet anarchic, misanthropic and sociopathic scientist known for his cunning and manipulative nature, including his propensity for lying (Adult Swim, 2013).

Despite the series's popularity, it remains relatively unexplored in the field of language and linguistics. In spite of the extensive research on its philosophical themes such as nihilism (Bosmas, 2022), existentialism (Du, 2022), and absurdism (Koltun, 2018), there is a dearth of studies examining the linguistic aspects of the series. As a result, this paper delves into the linguistic dimension of *Rick and Morty* with a focus on Rick C-137's deceptive messages in Season 1, employing Information Manipulation Theory (IMT) as the theoretical framework.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to language and linguistics, media studies, and cultural analysis. It unravels the complexity of language manipulation in popular culture and offers insights into the linguistic tactics of characters in animated series. Furthermore, in accordance with the cultivation hypothesis (Potter, 1993), it sheds light on the potential impact of language manipulation in media on audiences' perceptions and beliefs. Ultimately, this paper seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the language used in the series based on the two research objectives:

- i. To investigate the dimensions in which information are manipulated by Rick C-137 in his deceptive messages.
- ii. To analyse the methods employed by Rick C-137 in his deceptive discourse.

Literature Review

Playing a vital role in conveying narratives, character development and thematic elements, telecinematic discourse studies the language used in films and TV series, including verbal communication and fictional dialogues (Piazza et al., 2011). Delving into the discourse within animated TV series reveals a rich tapestry of language use.

In animated series, expletives, i.e. swear words, serve the functions of characterisation, expressing emotions and creating humour (Bednarek, 2019; Grobelna, 2023). Muthalib, Fata and Nuzula's (2022) study on *The Simpsons* identified seven types of expletives, namely (i) anatomical insult, (ii) excrement, (iii) sexual intercourse, (iv) personal background, (v) mental illness, (vi) animal term and (vii) religious oath. The findings indicated that the most commonly used expletive was religious oath. Additionally, the research identified four functions of swear words: (i) abusive, (ii) auxiliary, (iii) expletive and (iv) humorous, with abusive being the most frequently observed function of swear words. Notably, the study discovered that expletives were present in all seven episodes examined.

Wordplay is another literary device prevalent in animated series (Darmawan, 2016). Tarasevich's (2022) examination of the use of wordplay in *South Park* established that the series utilises wordplay as a comedic device, with phonetic wordplay emerging as the most commonly observed type. Some examples of phonetic wordplay are puns and wordplays based on homophony. In *Spongebob Squarepants*, Primanda (2021) discovered the presence of four out of five types of puns, specifically (i) homonymy, (ii) homophony, (iii) paronymy and (iv) polysemy. Although homograph was found to be non-existent in the series, the authors proposed that this absence is not uncommon in animated TV series or films. However, no specific explanation was provided regarding its absence.

Dysphemisms are proven to exist in the discourse within animated series, but their number and nature differ from one series to another (Gorčević et al., 2021). Gorčević, Dazdarević and Zoranić (2021) discovered that while all the selected series contained dysphemistic expressions, *South Park* stood out by having the highest number of dysphemistic expressions. Further investigation uncovered that some dysphemistic

expressions were exclusive to animated series, not commonly found in natural discourse. The study suggested the significance of exploring dysphemisms in diverse language genres for further understanding.

In contradistinction to dysphemisms, politeness principles also play a significant role in telecinematic discourse (Culpeper, 2005). Yusof, Idris and Shaari (2018) demonstrated the adaptations of all six types of Maxims of Leech's Politeness Principles in *Upin and Ipin*. The study also identified instances of maxim contradictions within all six maxims. Distinctively, the tact maxim emerged as the most frequently applied principle; however, contradictions to the tact maxim were also prevalent. It is important to note that the existence of utterances contradicting the maxims does not imply a lack of concern for politeness within the series, as some of these utterances convey implied meanings (Yusof et al., 2018). The authors concluded that Leech's Politeness Principles played a significant role in elevating the level of politeness in the discourse within the series.

While the existing body of literature regarding the language used in *Rick and Morty* is limited, the studies conducted offer valuable contributions. Kinnunen (2019) uncovered that the series relies primarily on deviating phonology in formation of its fictional language. Serving the purposes of creating a science fictional setting and parodying the science fiction genre and other pop culture works, the series' fictional language acts as a crucial humoristic tool (Ray, 2022). Demina's (2021) study also found that *Rick and Morty* employs a combination of irony, sarcasm, hyperbole, understatement, grotesque and other devices in its satire construction in order to produce a desired sarcastic effect. Nonetheless, irony and sarcasm are most commonly used. Additionally, satire in the series often addresses social-political issues, philosophical topics and psychological issues. Demina suggested that this form of satire in modern animated cartoons serves as an influential tool for conveying these issues, particularly for younger generation who can easily absorb these messages and transmit them in mass circulation. Despite the extensive studies on various linguistic aspects of the series, there is a gap in research in terms of the portrayal of deception in the series.

Despite its negative reputation, deception is abundantly prevalent in both reality and in films (Dynel, 2021). In fact, individuals lie on a daily basis (Serota et al., 2021). According to Dynel (2021), deception in films can materialise through two levels: the characters' level of communication and the audiences' level. The characters' level refers to deception that occurs among the fictional characters within the film. It involves characters deceiving each other within the narrative, and this deception is observable to the audiences. The audiences' level pertains to deception that involves the audiences. In this case, the audiences are deceived by the camera narrator, a narrative voice or presence outside the story. The audiences remain unaware of the camera narrator's influence when indulging in the fictional world presented on screen. These two forms of deception can happen simultaneously (Kozloff, 1988). Furthermore, the types of deception in films align with those investigated by philosophers in real-life contexts, such as falsification, withholding information, covert ambiguity or covert irrelevance (Ekman, 1985; McCornack, 1992; Metts, 1989). This connection suggests that the complexity of deception in films mirrors the intricacies of deceptive communication in the real world, which aligns with Cavell's (1979) notion that film and literature serve as reflections of the real world. This alignment strengthens the premise of the present paper, which aims to investigate the deceptive messages of a major character in a popular animated series. Commonly known as lies, deceptive messages are considered deceptive owing to two primary characteristics: (i) their covert violations of the Gricean Maxims and (ii) their intention to mislead listeners (McCornack, 1992).

In coherence with this exploration, Information Manipulation Theory (IMT) emerges as one of the prominent communication theories that explain the production of deceptive messages. IMT posits that individuals manipulate information strategically to produce deceptive messages (McCornack, 1992). IMT focuses on the covert violation of one or more of Grice's Conversational Maxims, which results in deceptive messages. McCornack (1992) proposed that by covertly and purposefully violating one or more of the Maxims in production of deceptive messages, the speaker deviates from Grice's Cooperative Principle and exploits the listeners' belief that the speaker is complying to the Cooperative Principle and its Maxims. IMT suggests that there are at least four dimensions along which information can be manipulated in the crafting of deceptive messages: manipulations of quantity, quality, relation and manner, which is in accordance with the four Gricean Maxims (McCornack, 1992). However, only relatively distinctive forms of manipulation were

addressed. Thus, future research was recommended to address the possible combinations of manipulations that can potentially occur in other contexts.

Multiple studies have shown that violations of the Maxims are perceived as significantly more deceptive than adherence to the Maxims (Howard et al., 2021; Jacobs et al., 1996; Lapinsky & Levine, 2000). Nevertheless, Yeung et al. (1999) found that violations of the Maxims of Manner and Quality did not differ significantly from an honest message in Hong Kong due to cultural differences in terms of individualism-collectivism distinction. Noteworthy, despite the cultural differences, violations of the Maxim of Quality remain the most deceptive in academic situations (Lapinsky & Levine, 2000), professional settings (Howard et al., 2021) and romantic relationships (Jacobs et al., 1996) of diverse geographical regions. However, the literature on the application of IMT in telecinematic discourse remains limited in scope.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach, applying content analysis guided by Information Manipulation Theory (IMT) to investigate the deceptive behavior of Rick C-137 in Season 1 of *Rick and Morty*. Sourced from transcripts on a fandom website (*Season 1 Transcripts*, n.d.), the data of the study are messages uttered by Rick C-137 that fulfill two criteria: (i) they covertly violate one or more Gricean Maxims and (ii) they are overtly intended to mislead listeners. Messages that lack a clear or explicit deceptive intention made known to the audience are excluded due to the possibility of subjective interpretations by the audience.

1. Data Coding and Analysis Procedure

- i. Extract transcripts from the fandom website containing all 11 episodes of *Rick and Morty Season 1*.
- ii. Verify the accuracy of the transcripts by reviewing all utterances made by Rick C-137 through watching all eleven episodes of the season.
- iii. Code the messages spoken by Rick C-137 that covertly violate one or more Gricean Maxims and have a clear intention to mislead listeners, using them as the research data while disregarding irrelevant utterances.
- iv. Engage second coders to apply the same coding process as in steps 1 to 3 to the dataset.
- v. Validate the data by cross-checking it with the results obtained by the second coders.
- vi. Examine the specific Gricean Maxim(s) violated in each data point to address RQ1.
- vii. Investigate how information manipulation occurs in each data point to address RQ2.

The Findings

This section should provide a concise and precise description of the results of the research, including the data and their interpretation. For quantitative research, data are best presented using Table and Figure. Nonetheless, Graph can be also presented depending on the types of data. This section may be divided by subheadings. The first and second subheading should look like this:

1. Dimensions in Which Information are Manipulated

In the context of Rick C-137's deceptive messages across all 11 episodes of *Rick and Morty Season 1*, 47 instances of Maxim violations were observed. It was shown that all four Maxims have been violated individually throughout the season. Table 1 showcases examples of each Maxim violation:

Table 1. Examples of Individual Maxim Violation

Individual Maxim Violation	Quotes	Interpretation
Quantity	<p>Context: Rick stumbled into Morty's bedroom drunkenly while Morty was sleeping.</p> <p>Rick: <i>"Morty! You gotta come on. You got you gotta come with me."</i></p> <p>Morty: <i>"What, Rick? What's going on?"</i></p> <p>Rick: <i>"I got a surprise for you, Morty."</i></p>	<p>In the conversation, drunk Rick violates the Maxim of Quantity in attempt to suppress Morty's inquiries. When Morty asks for explanation regarding the situation, Rick's response lacks sufficient information. It does not offer any details about the surprise or what is happening, leaving Morty with an inadequate amount of information to comprehend the situation. This lack of information violates the Maxim of Quantity as Rick's response does not fulfil the amount of information required by the situation.</p>
Quality	<p>Context: In school, Rick froze Frank and convinced Morty to go on an adventure with him.</p> <p>Morty: <i>"Aw, geez. Okay. I guess I can skip history. What about Frank? I mean, shouldn't you unfreeze him?"</i></p> <p>Rick: <i>"I'll do it later, Morty. He'll be fine. Let's go."</i></p> <p>(Rick left with Morty, and Summer comes by. Frank's frozen body then breaks into pieces)</p>	<p>In the conversation, Rick's response violates the Maxim of Quality in an attempt to downplay the seriousness of the situation in order to convince Morty to go on an adventure with him. Rick tells Morty that he will unfreeze Frank later and assures him that Frank will be fine. Nonetheless, as the subsequent events reveal, Rick does not care enough to return to unfreeze Frank, and Frank's frozen body breaks into pieces. Rick's statement turns out to be false as he does not intend to follow through on his assurance to Morty, hence violating the Maxim of Quality.</p>
Relation	<p>Context: Morty seemed tired, and Beth advised him not to practice kiss the living room pillow.</p> <p>Morty: <i>"I wasn't kissing a pillow, mom. I just didn't get a lot of sleep last night. Maybe my dreams were just too loud or something."</i></p> <p>Summer: <i>"Or maybe you were out all night again with Grandpa Rick."</i></p> <p>Jerry: <i>"What?"</i></p> <p>Beth: <i>"Dad?"</i></p> <p>Rick: <i>"What, so everyone's supposed to sleep every single night now? You realize that nighttime makes up half of all time?"</i></p>	<p>In the conversation, Rick's response violates the Maxim of Relation in attempt to evade culpability. Summer suggests that Morty might have been out all night with Rick, raising concerns. Jerry and Beth both react in surprise with Beth querying Rick with a simple "Dad?" However, Rick's response about the nature of sleep and nighttime does not directly address or provide any relevant information regarding the concerns raised about Morty's activities. Instead, he diverts the conversation to a philosophical tangent, which is not relevant to the topic at hand. This diversion from the immediate topic serves as a violation of the Maxim of Relation.</p>
Manner	<p>Context: Rick explained to Morty about why almost all Ricks have a Morty.</p> <p>Rick: <i>"Ricks have a very distinct and traceable brainwave due to our genius. The best way to hide from an enemy's radar is to stand near someone with complementary brainwaves that make ours invisible. See, w-w-w-when a Rick is with a Morty, the genius waves get cancelled out by the uh, (clears throat) Morty waves."</i></p> <p>Morty: <i>"Um...because...our personalities are so different?"</i></p>	<p>In the conversation, Rick violates the Maxim of Manner by using the term "<i>Morty waves</i>" instead of directly calling Morty stupid to avoid insulting Morty. To avoid direct confrontation with Morty, Rick chooses a less direct or offensive way to convey the idea that Morty's brainwaves are opposite from his own. Although with positive intention, Rick still violates the Maxim of Manner as his use of "<i>Morty waves</i>" is not the most concise response</p>

2. Methods Employed in Deceptive Discourse

Two methods were employed by Rick C-137 in his deceptive discourse: individual Maxim violation and combined Maxim violation which encompasses two dimensions. The analysis reveals the presence of five out of six combinations of combined Maxim violations, including Quantity combined with Quality, Quantity combined with Relation, Quality combined with Relation, Quality combined with Manner and Relation combined with Manner. The combination of Quantity and Manner has not been detected. Table 1 demonstrates examples of individual Maxim violation while Table 2 displays examples of combined Maxim violations:

Table 2. Examples of Combined Maxim Violation

Combined Maxim Violation	Quotes	Interpretation
Quantity + Quality	<p>Context: During Christmas day, Rick entered the house with Ruben, whom Rick built an anatomy park inside the body.</p> <p>Rick: <i>“Ho ho ho, everybody.”</i></p> <p>Jerry: <i>“More like whoa whoa whoa. What is this? My parents are coming!”</i></p> <p>Rick: <i>“Calm down, Jerry. This is Ruben, an old friend.”</i></p> <p>Ruben: <i>“Pearl Harbor.”</i></p> <p>Rick: <i>“I check in on him once a year and give him a little (burps) medical (burps) evaluation.”</i></p>	<p>In the conversation, Rick’s response violates the Maxims of Quantity and Quality, serving to alleviate Jerry’s apprehensions regarding Rick’s friend. Rick provides an explanation for bringing Ruben into the house that implies that it is a straightforward medical evaluation. However, the true purpose of his action, which involves checking on the anatomy park Rick built inside Ruben’s body, is not disclosed, rendering his response insufficient and inaccurate, hence serving as a violation of the Maxim of Quantity and Quality.</p>
Quantity + Relation	<p>Context: On the dining table during breakfast, Jerry confronted Rick about Rick making Morty skipped classes.</p> <p>Jerry: <i>“Okay, with all due respect, Rick—What am I talking about? What respect is due? How is my son supposed to pass his classes if you keep dragging him off for high-concept Sci-Fi rigamarole?”</i></p> <p>Rick: <i>“Listen, Jerry. I-I-I don’t want to overstep my bounds or anything. It’s your house. It’s your world. You’re a real Julius Caesar but I’ll tell you something—tell you how I feel about school, Jerry. It’s a waste of time. A bunch of people running around, bumping into each other. G-Guy up front says, ‘two plus two.’ The people in the back say, ‘four.’ The-The-Then the bell rings, and they give you a carton of milk and a piece of paper that says you can go take a dump or something. I mean, it’s not a place for smart people, Jerry. And I know that’s not a popular opinion, but it’s my two cents on the issue.”</i></p>	<p>In the conversation, Rick violates the Maxims of Quantity and Relation in attempt to divert Jerry and Beth’s attention to his personal opinion on schooling. When Jerry confronts Rick about Morty skipping classes and the negative impact it is having on Morty’s education, Rick goes off on a tangent about his personal opinions about school being a waste of time. Instead of addressing Jerry’s concern concisely, Rick offers a lengthy tangent that exceeds the required amount of information in that situation. Thus, his response violates the Maxim of Quantity. His response is also irrelevant to Jerry’s concern about Morty’s schooling, thus violating the Maxim of Relation .</p>
Quality + Relation	<p>Context: Rick brought Morty into the garage. Morty saw Ruben in fits on a ping-pong table.</p> <p>Morty: <i>“Aw geez, Rick! What did you do?”</i></p> <p>Rick: <i>“Gee, thanks, Morty. W-W-What kind of monster do you think I am? I-I-I’m sitting here trying to save the guy’s life! I need your help/ I want you to find Dr.</i></p>	<p>In the conversation, Rick violates the Maxims of Quality and Relation in attempt to escape responsibility. Rick responds to Morty’s concern for Ruben by defending himself and implying that he is trying to save Ruben’s life. Nonetheless, this response is misleading, as Rick is not upfront about the fact that he has created</p>

Xenon Bloom. He'll know what's going on."

an anatomy park inside Ruben. His statement, "I'm sitting here trying to save the guy's life," is not entirely accurate, as his actions involve experimental medical procedures within Ruben's body. Thus, his response violates the Maxim of Quality. Additionally, Rick violates the Maxim of Relation by diverting the conversation to an unrelated topic: finding Dr. Xenon Bloom, when Morty's concern is with Ruben's physical condition. Rick's response does not directly address the immediate concerns at hand, hence violating the Maxim of Relation.

Quality + Manner

Context: Drunk Rick brought Morty on his spaceship saying that he wants to make a bomb to end the world. Morty panicked and asked Rick to pull over his spaceship. Rick pulled over and fell out of his spaceship, still drunk.

Rick: *"You know what? That was al-l-l a test, Morty. Just an elaborate test to make you more assertive."*

Morty: *"It was?"*

Rick: ***"Sure. Why not? I don't-I don't know. Y-You know what, Mo-"***

(Rick falls asleep and begins snoring)

In the conversation, Rick's responses violate the Maxims of Quality and Manner in attempt to alleviate Morty's persistent questioning. Morty asks for confirmation regarding the reliability of Rick's previous statement that the incident was merely a test. Rick proceeds to reassure Morty that he is telling the truth although he himself has no idea if what he said is the truth, thus violating the Maxim of Quality. Rick's follow-up response, *"I don't know,"* is vague and lacks clarity. Instead of providing a straightforward explanation, he offers a confusing and evasive response, hence violating the Maxim of Manner.

Relation + Manner

Context: In the garage, Rick shrunk Morty into microscopic size and sent Morty into Ruben's body. Just then, Beth entered the garage.

Beth: *"Hey, Dad. Where's Morty?"*

Rick: ***"He's busy."***

In the conversation, Rick's response violates the Maxims of Relation and Manner, serving as Rick's effort to deceive Beth regarding Morty's whereabouts. While Beth expresses concern about Morty's location, Rick's response is vague and dismissive. It does not provide any relevant information about Morty's current situation. Instead, it deflects the inquiry and fails to provide the necessary information in a clear manner, violating the Maxims of Relation and Manner.

Discussion

The findings have unveiled the presence of information manipulation along all four dimensions: quantity, quality, relation and manner. Manipulation of information quantity sees strategic decisions regarding the amount of information conveyed, while information quality involves intentional presentation of false or misleading information. Manipulation of information relation include manipulating connections between elements to divert focus or lead to false interpretations. Lastly, manipulation of manner of communication sees alterations in the presentation manner, introducing ambiguity. Such manipulation of dimensions reflects Rick C-137's intention to obscure the truth, mislead the recipients and the audience, divert the recipients' focus and make his message more susceptible to misinterpretation in order control narratives, shape other characters' perceptions and maintain secrecy and independence in pursuing his goals.

The findings have also demonstrated two distinct methods used by Rick C-137 in his production of deceptive messages. The first method involves manipulation of information along a single dimension. Rick C-137 appears to strategically select and convey information with a pronounced focus on either the information's quantity, quality, relation or the manner of communication. Conversely, the second method involves a more multifaceted approach. Rick C-137 manipulate information along a combination of two dimensions. Five out of six combinations have been identified, including quantity combined with quality, quantity combined with relation, quality combined with relation, quality combined with manner, and relation combined with manner. It is noteworthy that the manipulation of the combination of quantity and manner has

not been detected in the findings. This absence may indicate that, in the context of Rick C-137's deceptive messages, the manipulation of both information quantity and manner as a combination concurrently does not appear to be an effective method in avoiding detection by recipients.

These diverse methods for deception provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of deceptive communication. It is also worth noting that the founder of Information Manipulation Theory, Steven McCornack, posited that there are a multitude of possible combinations of manipulation that can potentially occur within deceptive messages (McCornack, 1992). However, he did not undertake a comprehensive analysis of these combinations. The findings presented in this study serve to address this gap by empirically substantiating the existence of distinct manipulation methods employed by Rick C-137. In doing so, they not only contribute to the understanding of deceptive communication but also provide validation for Cornack's suspicion that various manipulation methods exist within this domain.

The pervasive nature of these information manipulations underscores the strategic, multi-dimensional approach Rick C-137 employs in his deceptive discourse in order to maximise their misleading impact. It reflects not only a mastery of linguistic manipulation but also a deep understanding of how information manipulation can be strategically employed to achieve specific outcomes.

This exploration offers insights with potential implications for the field of language studies and communication studies. Through this investigation, an attempt is made to shed light on the intricate methods employed in deceptive discourse. The findings also suggest a nuanced perspective that invites scholars to consider alternative approaches to understanding deceptive communication, specifically an approach that perceives deceptive messages as results of information manipulation of the four dimensions: quantity, quality, relation, and manner (McCornack, 1992), as opposed to traditional deceptive message design which views deceptive messages as distinct types (Metts, 1989; Tolhuizen, 1990; Pandey et al., 2015). While the study may offer a modest contribution, it is hoped that its findings stimulate further discussion and refinement within the discourse of language and communication studies. Extending beyond academic realms, these findings emphasise the importance of tailoring deception analyses to the unique demands of different contexts and may have practical applications in educational and professional domains. Recognising and navigating deceptive communication can be a valuable skill in educational settings. Additionally, professionals in fields such as psychology, communication, and law enforcement may benefit from a deeper understanding of deceptive strategies and their diverse application under different contexts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper investigated Rick C-137's deceptive messages in *Rick and Morty Season 1*, and discovered that all four information dimensions, i.e. quantity, quality, relation and manner, are manipulated in his deceptive messages. Rick was found employing two distinct methods in his deceptive discourse: manipulation along a single dimension and a more intricate combination of two dimensions. The latter involves strategic combinations of quantity with quality, quantity with relation, quality with relation, quality with manner, and relation with manner. Rick's manipulation of information allows him to control narratives, shape perceptions, divert focus and maintain secrecy and independence in pursuing his goals, showcasing a sophisticated and multi-dimensional approach to deception. Nonetheless, the combination of quantity and manner is notably absent in the data possibly due to its lack of effectiveness in avoiding detection by recipients.

It is anticipated that the findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the fields of linguistics, language and communication. Although this paper specifically examines Rick C-137's deceptive behaviours in *Rick and Morty Season 1*, its discoveries could establish a groundwork for future research on deception in film to build upon. Finally, a promising direction for future research involves extending the analysis to subsequent seasons to provide a more holistic understanding of how Rick's deceptive behaviours evolve over time and offer insights into potential patterns or shifts in his manipulative techniques. Future research could also examine the correlations between different dimensions of information manipulation employed by Rick and other characters and the effectiveness of their deceptive messages. By examining how variations in information manipulation dimensions impact the reception and interpretation of deceptive messages, researchers can unravel the complexities inherent in deceptive communication.

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