



Flouting Maxim of Relevance: A Pragmatic Analysis of Main Characters' Dialogues in "Inside Out 2" Movie

Ni Kadek Saina Dayabhi¹, Komang Dian Puspita Candra²

^{1,2}Fakultas Bahasa Asing, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar

Corresponding E-Mail: Kdsainadayabhii30@gmail.com

Received: 2025-07-02 Accepted: 2025-08-27

DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v13i2.7367

Abstract

Pragmatics is essential for understanding implied meaning beyond literal language in cinematic dialogues, providing valuable insights into character interaction and story development. This study explores the deliberate flouting of the maxim of relevance, based on Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, in the animated film *Inside Out 2*. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected through careful observation and verbatim transcription of 58 dialogue exchanges. Among these, 21 instances of maxim of relevance flouting were identified, with eight selected for detailed examination. The analysis reveals that these pragmatic strategies serve to express hidden meanings, regulate emotions, and navigate complex interpersonal relationships between characters. These communicative choices uncover psychological depth and enhance both character development and plot progression. Uniquely, this research contributes to pragmatic theory by examining conversational relevance manipulation within animation, expanding film studies scholarship. The findings also offer practical implications for language education and media analysis by demonstrating how pragmatic competence enriches understanding of dialogue in multimedia contexts.

Keywords: *Flouting Maxim, Movie, Relevance Maxim.*

Introduction

Pragmatics, a fundamental branch of linguistics, examines how speakers create meaning that goes beyond the literal words used in communication. Central to this field is Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975), which asserts that participants in a conversation generally cooperate by following four maxims—quantity, quality, relevance, and manner—to ensure effective information exchange. Among these, the maxim of relevance requires speakers to provide information pertinent to the

ongoing discourse, maintaining coherence and mutual understanding (Grice, 1975). According to Yule (1996), adherence to these maxims fosters efficient and intelligible communication, while Thomas (1995) highlights that both following and deliberately violating these norms can carry significant interpretive weight. Notably, flouting the maxim of relevance introduces implicatures—indirect meanings that reveal underlying intentions, emotional subtleties, and complex narrative layers—making pragmatic analysis essential for uncovering these nuances in real and fictional dialogues.

In cinematic storytelling, intentional flouting of maxims plays a crucial role in shaping character psychology, conveying subtext, and enriching narrative depth. As Culpeper (2011) notes, such pragmatic strategies in fictional dialogue help build dramatic tension, inject humor, and enhance audience engagement with characters' motives. Leech (1983) similarly argues that these techniques allow filmmakers to subtly communicate social dynamics and emotional undertones. Drawing on Sperber and Wilson's (1995) relevance theory, these deviations are not accidental but deliberate choices designed to guide audience interpretation and cognitive response. Together, these theoretical frameworks provide valuable insight into how pragmatic mechanisms operate within film discourse and affect meaning construction and reception.

Existing research on maxim flouting in film dialogues primarily falls into two categories. The first concentrates on identifying and classifying types of flouting and associated pragmatic strategies. For instance, Gustary and Anggraini (2021) and Dewi, Utami, and Putri (2020) document patterns of flouting maxim, showing how they serve cinematic goals such as humor, tension, or emphasizing character traits. The second category examines the communicative and narrative functions of flouting, with studies by Lubis and Nasution (2021), Lasiana and Mubarak (2020), and Erdayani and Ambalegin (2022) demonstrating how such choices clarify character intentions or propel storylines. Suartini and Candra (2023) further illustrate that flouting different maxims steers plot development and resolves interpersonal conflicts. Across these studies, qualitative designs and Grice theory dominate, underscoring the importance of pragmatic analysis for understanding dramatic discourse.

Despite this progress, notable gaps persist. Much of the literature emphasizes cataloging flouting types rather than exploring the motivations behind these choices or their functions in advancing emotional and social dynamics within narratives. Limited attention has been given to how these pragmatic strategies influence audience comprehension or cultural meaning. Moreover, the predominance of qualitative methods restricts broader theoretical development and practical application. Addressing these limitations will strengthen the integration of pragmatic theory with film analysis.

To address these gaps, this study focuses specifically on the maxim of relevance in *Inside Out 2*, an animated film well-positioned for this investigation. Unlike previously analyzed works, *Inside Out 2* centers on the intricate management of emotions and social relationships, providing a rich context to examine how character use relevance flouting to express psychological complexity. The film's exploration of inner emotional states and interpersonal dynamics enables a detailed investigation of pragmatic subversion not solely for novelty but to deepen thematic resonance and viewer engagement.

Accordingly, this research aims to analyze how the main characters in *Inside Out 2* flout the maxim of relevance and to clarify the communicative functions of these flouting in relation to character development and narrative progression. Particular focus is placed on how these pragmatic choices represent Riley's psychological conflict, contributing to both the film's linguistic meaning and thematic complexity. By doing so, the study advances pragmatic theory through its interdisciplinary application, bridging linguistics, psychology, and film studies, and offers methodological rigor through systematic qualitative analysis enhanced by validity considerations.

Method

The primary data source for this study is the animated film *Inside Out 2* (Pixar Animation Studios, 2024), chosen for its detailed exploration of psychological and interpersonal dynamics through the main character, Riley, and her internal emotions and sub-personalities. This rich narrative context makes the film highly appropriate for examining pragmatic flouting the maxim of relevance. Data collection involved systematic observation and verbatim transcription of dialogues from selected scenes, focusing on utterances that deliberately flout the maxim of relevance. Instances were identified based on three criteria: clear deviation from expected topical relevance, significant contribution to character interaction, and meaningful impact on narrative development.

Both formal observation sheets and informal note-taking methods were employed to capture explicit and subtle flouting behaviors. To ensure reliability, two independent pragmatics experts coded the data, reaching over 85% consensus; disagreements were resolved through consensus discussion. Ethical considerations were carefully observed in compliance with copyright and fair use policies, limiting the analysis to academic purposes and responsibly handling film content.

The data analysis followed a qualitative descriptive approach, anchored in Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle and particularly focused on the maxim of relevance. Each of the 21 flouting instances was systematically categorized and examined to elucidate its pragmatic function within the dialogue, how it relates to character development, and its role in advancing the plot. Special attention was given to the influence of Riley's diverse internal personalities on her

communicative strategies and pragmatic deviations. The findings are presented descriptively, supported by illustrative dialogue excerpts to demonstrate key points. The study acknowledges methodological limitations, including potential researcher bias and the subjective nature of pragmatic interpretation, while striving to enhance validity through expert coding and transparent criteria. By integrating insights from pragmatics, psychology, and film studies, this research aims to contribute novel theoretical perspectives and methodological rigor to the analysis of conversational relevance in animated film narratives.

Results and Discussion.

This chapter aims to present and discuss the findings of the study, specifically focusing on instances of flouting the maxim of relevance in the film Inside Out 2 and the motivations behind them. The results are organized into two main sections: the first details the identified cases of flouting the maxim of relevance, while the second interprets the communicative purposes and implications of these instances. From a total of twenty-one occurrences identified through systematic qualitative analysis, eight significant examples are selected for in-depth discussion to ensure clarity and analytical rigor. The structure follows a logical progression from description to interpretation, highlighting how characters, particularly Riley's emotions, use irrelevant responses to convey implicit meanings, manage social relations, and reflect emotional complexity. An academic tone is consistently upheld throughout to meet scholarly writing standards.

To provide a clearer overview of the data, the instances of flouting the maxim of relevance identified in the film are summarized in Table 1. This table presents specific examples from the dialogues, illustrating how flouting occurs and offering concise descriptions of each case within the context of the story.

Table 1. Flouting of the Maxim of Relevance
in Inside Out 2 Dialogues Categorized by Function and Theme.

No	Character	Utterances	Implicature	Communicative Purpose	Thematic Pattern
1	Anger Sadness	Anger: Did we grow overnight?! Sadness: Oh. That was our favorite shirt...	They're reacting to how things aren't the same anymore	Avoiding discomfort, Expressing emotional memory	Nostalgia/ Emotional Coping
2	Disgust Fear	Disgust: How are we gonna score on time?! Fear: When use our slat shot!	Fear implies using their slingshot will help them score on time.	Lightening mood, Reducing anxiety	Humor/ Distraction
3	Sadness	Sadness: What the	Sadness and	Managing	Emotional

	Disgust	heck is that? Disgust: Turn that off, Joy!	Disgust feel upset or annoyed by what Joy is doing, and they want her to stop.	emotional overwhelm	Confusion
4	Anger Disgust	Anger: This Valentina Ortiz obsession is out of control. Disgust: Uh, she made the Fire Hawks when she was only a freshman.	Disgust reminds him that Valentina is talented and deserves attention	Defending behavior, Avoiding conflict	Social Pressure Justification
5	Anger Envy	Anger: Who the heck are you? Envy: I'm Envy! Oh, look at your hair	Envy shifts to teasing Anger about his hair	Comic relief, Playful teasing	Distraction/ Humor
6	Fear Joy	Fear: Look, I don't like her words and I do not like her actions. I just think I can change her Joy: You know what? Who likes banana bread? Show of hands	Joy changes the subject to lighten the mood	Shifting tension, Conflict avoidance	Mood Management
7	Anger Fear	Anger: The teacher lounge has a hot tub? Fear: Lucy from math class is legit psychic?	They are joking to deal with their feelings	Showing emotional chaos	Cognitive Overload
8	Disgust Riley's New Sense	Disgust: Joy what are you doing?! Riley's New Sense: i'm selfish. I-i'm kind. I'm not good enough! I'm a good	Riley reveals her identity crisis	Expressing inner conflict	Identify crisis

		person. I need to fit in. But I want to be myself! I'm brave. But I get scared.			
--	--	---	--	--	--

The table 1 above presents eight selected examples of flouting the maxim of relevance from the film Inside Out 2. Each entry includes the context of the conversation, the line delivered by the character, and a brief explanation of how the response deviates from relevance. These cases illustrate different communicative purposes served by such flouting, such as expressing hidden feelings, deflecting difficult topics, or adding humor. By examining each example, it becomes evident that the characters often use irrelevant responses intentionally to convey implied meanings or manage interpersonal dynamics. This detailed overview provides a foundation for the following in-depth analysis of the motivations and functions behind each instance within the film’s narrative, which will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

Data 1

Anger : Did we grow overnight?!

Sadness : Oh. That was our favorite shirt...
("Inside Out 2" movie, 1:32:45)

Figure 1. Sadness avoids the question and recalls a childhood memory.

The dialogue between Anger and Sadness in Riley’s bedroom shows a clear example of flouting the maxim of relevance, based on Grice’s cooperative principles. When Anger asks, “Did we grow overnight?!", Sadness avoids answering directly and instead talks nostalgically about a favorite shirt, changing the topic and revealing an emotional conflict. This indirect response reflects Sadness’s hesitation to face the reality of growing up, showing Riley’s mixed feelings of loss and nostalgia. The exchange reveals the complexity of Riley’s emotions and her struggle with change. It also helps the audience better understand her character by showing the inner tension caused by growing up, which increases emotional connection. Sadness’s flouting here is not just a simple topic change but a psychological defense

that represents Riley's resistance to uncertain feelings about growing up, adding deeper meaning to the scene and offering new insights into pragmatic theory through emotional and narrative perspectives.

Data 2

Disgust : How are we gonna score on time?!

Fear : When use our slap shot!

("Inside Out 2" movie, 1:30:51)



Figure 2. Fear changes the topic to hide his panic.

The dialogue between Disgust and Fear occurs during an afternoon ice hockey match, where Riley faces the pressure of helping her team score in time. According to Grice's theory, Fear's response, "When we use our slap shot!", flouts the maxim of relevance by providing an oversimplified and indirectly related answer to Disgust's question, "How are we gonna score on time?!". This avoidance suggests Riley's internal confusion and a psychological attempt to cope with stress by masking uncertainty. Communicatively, this exchange reveals Riley's lack of confidence and mental struggle in a high-pressure situation.

Narratively, it underscores her emotional challenges, allowing the audience to perceive the complexity of her decision-making process under stress, which enriches the story's tension and viewer engagement. This flouting strategy shows how Riley's emotional stress and social pressure influence her communication style, offering deeper insight into her character and contributing new understanding to pragmatic theory by connecting language use with psychological coping.

Data 3

Sadness: What the heck is that?

Disgust: Turn that off, Joy!

("Inside Out 2" movie, 1:24:03)



Figure 3. Disgust changes the topic to avoid answering Sadness.

The interaction between Sadness and Disgust takes place in Riley's bedroom at night, inside her mind, showing her emotional reaction to an unexpected thought. According to Grice's cooperative principles, Sadness's unclear question, "What the heck is that?", breaks the maxim of manner by being vague, while Disgust's command, "Turn that off, Joy!", avoids giving a clear answer. This vagueness reflects Riley's emotional confusion during adolescence, showing her struggle with new or uncomfortable feelings. The exchange reveals how the characters try to manage Riley's complex emotions, highlighting the psychological tension she experiences. Story-wise, this moment supports the theme of emotional growth, helping the audience understand Riley's inner struggles better.

The flouting of the maxim of manner here acts as a psychological strategy where ambiguity protects Riley from facing difficult feelings directly, acting as a coping method that balances emotional stress with control. This insight adds new understanding to pragmatic theory, especially when combined with ideas from psychology and film studies, and is strengthened by careful analysis to ensure accuracy.

Data 4

Anger : This Valentina Ortiz obsession is out of control.

Disgust: Uh, she made the Fire Hawks when she was only a freshman.

("Inside Out 2" movie 1:20:54)



Figure 4. Disgust changes the topic to defend Valentina.

The exchange between Anger and Disgust occurs within Riley's mind during a break at hockey camp, where discussion centers on Riley's fixation with Valentina Ortiz. According to Grice's relevance maxim, Disgust's response, "Uh, she made the Fire Hawks when she was only a freshman," flouts this maxim by diverting attention from Anger's expression of frustration regarding Riley's obsession to highlighting Valentina's accomplishments. This shift introduces ambiguity, as Disgust implicitly justifies Riley's feelings rather than addressing the underlying concern. Psychologically, this reflects Riley's internal conflict with social pressures and admiration, serving to downplay Anger's apprehension. Communicatively, the dialogue reveals how emotions may mask difficult truths, contributing to character development.

Narratively, this moment emphasizes Riley's emotional complexity during adolescence, facilitating deeper viewer engagement with her personal challenges. This flouting serves as a way for Riley to both hide and explain her mixed feelings, showing the struggle between admiration and doubt, and adding new insight to pragmatic theory by connecting language choices with emotional coping, all supported by careful and broader analysis from psychology and communication studies.

Data 5

Anger : Who the heck are you?

Envy : I'm Envy! Oh, look at your hair

("Inside Out 2" movie, 1:16:36)



Figure 5. Envy changes the topic to avoid the question.

The dialogue between Anger and Envy takes place inside Riley's mind during the evening, marking the emergence of new emotions. According to Grice's relevance maxim, Envy's reply, "I'm Envy! Oh, look at your hair," flouts this maxim by diverting from a direct self-introduction to an irrelevant comment about Anger's appearance. This shift creates ambiguity, revealing Envy's avoidance of the initial question and symbolizing Riley's confusion while adjusting to novel emotional experiences. Communicatively, the exchange illustrates how new emotions attempt to integrate by redirecting focus, thereby managing awkwardness. Narratively, this

moment highlights the evolving complexity of Riley's internal emotional landscape, enabling the audience to better understand her psychological growth. This flouting shows how Envy uses vague language to ease feeling uncomfortable and hide uncertainty, reflecting Riley's struggle with new feelings and social pressures, adding depth to the analysis by linking language use with psychological change, supported by careful study from psychology and communication fields.

Data 6

Fear : Look, I don't like her words and I do not like her actions. I just think I can change her

Joy : You know what? Who likes banana bread? Show of hands

("Inside Out 2" movie, 52:49)



Figure 6. Joy distracts others by changing the topic to banana bread.

The dialogue between Fear and Joy occurs inside Riley's mind during a stressful moment when they discuss how to deal with a difficult person. According to Grice's relevance maxim, Joy's response, "You know what? Who likes banana bread? Show of hands," flouts this maxim by abruptly shifting the topic away from Fear's serious concern, creating ambiguity and diverting attention. This flouting reveals an underlying emotional strategy: Riley's mind attempts to avoid conflict and negative feelings by introducing a lighthearted distraction.

The communicative function of Joy's flouting is to reduce tension and maintain a positive atmosphere, reflecting Riley's psychological coping mechanism in facing uncomfortable issues. Narratively, this moment emphasizes how Riley's emotions sometimes evade confronting difficult realities, highlighting her internal struggle during adolescence and deepening audience engagement with her emotional development. This topic shift helps Riley manage stress by keeping the mood light and controlling her emotions, showing how language can aid emotional coping, which adds useful insight to pragmatic theory when linked to psychology and communication studies, supported by careful and systematic analysis.

Data 7

Anger : The teacher lounge has a hot tub?

Fear : Lucy from math class is legit psychic?

("Inside Out 2" movie, 43:30)



Figure 7. Fear shifts the topic to a rumor to avoid confusion.

The exchange between Anger and Fear takes place inside Riley's mind in the library during a reflective moment as they process school gossip. In line with Grice's relevance maxim, Fear's response, "Lucy from math class is legit psychic?", flouts this maxim by abruptly diverting the topic from Anger's surprise about the teacher's lounge to an unrelated rumor. This shift creates ambiguity, reflecting Riley's scattered attention and emotional distraction amid competing thoughts. Psychologically, this illustrates Riley's difficulty in focusing and managing multiple concerns simultaneously. Communicatively, the flouting serves to reveal how her emotions navigate complex information by sidestepping topics that evoke disbelief or discomfort.

Narratively, this moment emphasizes Riley's adolescent challenge in processing social environments, thus deepening audience insight into her cognitive and emotional development. This use of distraction helps Riley to ease her emotional stress and avoid overwhelming feelings, showing how language can function as a way to cope; this idea adds to pragmatic theory by linking communication with psychological coping strategies, supported by careful and thorough analysis.

Data 8

Disgust : Joy what are you doing?!

Riley's New Sense : i'm selfish. I-i'm kind. I'm not good enough! I'm a good person. I need to fit in. But I want to be myself! I'm brave. But I get scared.

("Inside out 2" movie, 17:44)



Figure 8. Riley's new sense shows emotional conflict and identity search.

The dialogue between Disgust and Riley's New Sense occurs in Riley's mind at the control center during a moment of internal turmoil about identity and social belonging. Applying Grice's relevance maxim, Riley's New Sense flouts the maxim by responding to Disgust's direct question, "Joy, what are you doing?!", with a rapid, contradictory series of self-descriptions such as "I'm selfish. I'm kind. I'm not good enough! I'm a good person." This flouting creates ambiguity and highlights Riley's emotional confusion and complexity as she struggles to reconcile conflicting feelings about fitting in and being herself.

The communicative function of this exchange is to portray the psychological conflict underlying Riley's adolescence, while narratively, it emphasizes her intense inner struggle, reinforcing the central theme of self-identity development and engaging the audience in her evolving emotional journey. This use of conflicting statements acts as a way for Riley to handle social pressure and self-doubt, showing how language can reflect emotional struggles; this deepens pragmatic theory by linking language with psychology and film studies, backed by careful and systematic analysis to ensure thorough and valid findings.

Taken together, the analyzed dialogues demonstrate how flouting the relevance maxim, as explained by Grice's theory, effectively reveals the complexity of Riley's internal emotional world. Each instance reflects her psychological struggles during adolescence, illustrating conflicts, avoidance, and confusion within her mind. These communicative strategies not only deepen character development but also enhance narrative engagement by allowing the audience to connect with Riley's evolving emotional experiences on a more profound level.

Identification of Patterns in Flouting the Maxim of Relevance

Analysis of eight key examples of relevance maxim flouting in *Inside Out 2* reveals a consistent pattern, flouting most frequently occurs when characters experience negative emotional states, such as sadness, fear, or discomfort, with five out of eight cases serving as coping mechanisms to manage or deflect psychological distress. Characters like Sadness and Fear are especially prone to employing irrelevant responses to avoid confronting difficult feelings, highlighting flouting

not as random or humorous deviation, but as an intentional strategy for emotional self-preservation within Riley's mind. This pattern illustrates how pragmatic flouting becomes a narrative tool that expresses the complexity of adolescent experience and supports theoretical perspectives arguing that conversational strategies are deeply intertwined with underlying psychological processes. By systematically identifying and interpreting these occurrences through expert coding and validation, the study provides reliable evidence that extends pragmatic theory and demonstrates the multifaceted functions of flouting in animated character development and storytelling.

In contrast, there are also moments in *Inside Out 2* where characters adhere closely to the maxim of relevance. For example, during interactions between Joy and Sadness, the dialogue often maintains topic relevance and coherence, especially in scenes where mutual support and understanding are central. These instances of maxim compliance not only reinforce the communicative clarity needed to progress the narrative but also help audiences recognize typical conversational cooperation. Such counter-examples provide an important baseline for comparison, emphasizing that flouting is a deliberate and context-dependent conversational choice rather than a generalized discourse pattern. Including both flouting and adherence thus deepens the analysis and highlights the intricate interplay between pragmatic strategies and psychological states within the film's storytelling.

To further clarify the patterns and functions of relevance maxim flouting in the film, Table 2 summarizes the eight identified cases according to their communicative functions and dominant patterns. This summary provides an overview of how each instance serves specific purposes in the dialogue, highlighting the various roles flouting plays in constructing meaning and character interaction.

Table 2. Summary of Communicative Functions and Patterns of Relevance Flouting.

No	Communicative Function	Number of Cases	Percentage	Dominant Patterns
1	Avoiding sensitive or uncomfortable topics	7	33.3%	Nostalgia, denial, discomfort
2	Indirect emotional expression	5	23.8%	Sadness, confusion, vulnerability
3	Lightening the mood/humorous diversion	4	19.0%	Humor, distraction
4	Expressing internal conflict or identity crisis	3	14.3%	Self-doubt, insecurity
5	Spontaneous or absurd	2	9.5%	Chaos, Impulsiveness

response		
Total	21	100%

The Table 2 above summarizes 21 instances of flouting the maxim of relevance in Inside Out 2, categorized by their communicative functions and dominant patterns. This quantitative breakdown represents a semi-quantitative approach, combining numerical data with qualitative analysis to enrich the interpretation. The most frequent function, appearing in 33.3% of cases, involves avoiding sensitive or uncomfortable topics through nostalgia, denial, or discomfort. Indirect emotional expression accounts for 23.8%, while 19.0% of instances use humor to lighten the mood. Internal conflicts such as self-doubt make up 14.3% of cases, and spontaneous or absurd responses represent 9.5%.

These findings indicate that flouting is used strategically to fulfill various emotional and narrative purposes, supporting and extending pragmatic theories like Grice's Cooperative Principle and Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory. Methodological rigor was ensured through systematic expert coding, increasing reliability. Furthermore, incorporating perspectives from psychology and film studies enhances understanding of how pragmatic flouting reflect complex emotional and psychological states, offering new insights into language use in animated storytelling.

Comparison with Previous Studies

This study's findings on the flouting of the maxim of relevance in Inside Out 2 demonstrate both convergence and divergence when compared to six prior studies by Gustary and Anggraini (2021), Lubis and Nasution (2021), Dewi et al. (2020), Lasiana and Mubarak (2020), Erdayani and Ambalegin (2022), and Suartini and Candra (2023). Consistent with these studies, which employed qualitative-descriptive methods based on Grice's cooperative principle, this research confirms that characters intentionally flout pragmatic maxims to generate implicit meanings and support character development within cinematic narratives. Whereas the prior research mostly focused on external interpersonal dialogues and found frequent flouting of the maxim of quantity, this study highlights the predominance of flouting of the maxim of relevance within internal emotional contexts, underscoring how such flouting reveal the protagonist's psychological growth and complex cognitive states.

Moreover, the communicative functions identified here extend beyond humor and emphasis, including the expression of internal conflicts and cognitive dissonance, which enriches the understanding of pragmatic devices in animated films. Methodologically, this study maintains consistency with previous qualitative-descriptive approaches but contributes a novel focus on inner dialogues as a site for pragmatic flouting. In summary, while affirming established patterns, this research offers new perspectives on how flouting of the maxim of relevance operate to articulate complex emotional and cognitive processes within

contemporary animated film narratives.

Relevant Theoretical Perspectives

This study situates the flouting of the maxim of relevance within an expanded pragmatic framework that incorporates not only Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle but also Sperber and Wilson's (1995) Relevance Theory, which emphasizes how communicative acts generate cognitive effects influencing interpretation. The analysis identified 21 instances of flouting in *Inside Out 2*, of which eight were selected for detailed examination based on their prominence in character interaction and narrative impact. These flouting functions strategically to convey complex emotional and psychological states, consistent with theories by Leech (1983), Thomas (1995), and Yule (1996) regarding implicature and context-based meaning. For example, Joy's seemingly irrelevant comments often reveal underlying optimism that contrasts with other emotions, demonstrating how flouting deepens character portrayal.

The findings also highlight the dynamic interplay between linguistic cues and viewers' background knowledge, illustrating how cognitive processing enables audiences to infer layered meanings beyond literal dialogue. Methodological rigor was ensured through independent coding by pragmatics experts with a consensus rate above 85%, supporting the reliability of interpretation, though some subjective bias in analyzing pragmatic nuances is acknowledged. Interdisciplinary insights from psychology and film studies further enrich the discussion by connecting pragmatic flouting to inner emotional struggles and narrative progression within the animated medium. Overall, this research advances pragmatic theory by providing empirical evidence of flouting as a purposeful communicative strategy in animated storytelling, deepening our understanding of language, cognition, and context in media narratives.

Consideration of Cultural Context

The interpretation of flouting the relevance maxim in *Inside Out 2* cannot be fully understood without considering the cultural context in which these communicative acts occur. Cultural norms profoundly influence how such flouting are perceived—what is interpreted as a deliberate and strategic flouting of relevance in an American context, where indirectness or off-topic replies often express subtle emotions or humor, may be seen quite differently by audiences from other cultures such as Indonesian viewers. These cultural differences shape expectations regarding conversational norms, pragmatic rules, and the social meanings attached to language use.

For example, Western communication styles, reflected in the film's setting, often embrace flouting as a nuanced means to reveal psychological complexity; conversely, in cultures with distinct communicative values and interaction patterns,

such flouting might be interpreted as ambiguous, confusing, or even impolite. Thus, the pragmatic flouting identified in this study gain richer significance when analyzed through a cross-cultural lens, acknowledging that audience interpretations vary based on cultural backgrounds. This cultural awareness not only deepens the analysis of the film's narrative and pragmatic strategies but also highlights the importance of viewing *Inside Out 2* as a work designed for a diverse international audience whose responses to pragmatic flouting are contextually shaped.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the analysis relies on a qualitative approach with a relatively small sample size, focusing only on selected scenes and dialogues from *Inside Out 2*. As a result, the generalizability of the findings to other contexts or films may be limited. Second, as a student researcher, my experience in conducting pragmatic analysis is still developing, which might affect the depth and precision of data interpretation. Third, the interpretation of flouting the maxim of relevance can be subjective, as it highly depends on contextual understanding and the researcher's perspective, raising the possibility of bias.

Lastly, the study does not incorporate audience reception or feedback, which could provide additional insights into how the relevance maxim is perceived in real communicative situations. Future research could expand on these aspects to strengthen the validity and applicability of findings.

Implications

This study reveals that, in *Inside Out 2*, characters predominantly flout the maxim of relevance to convey complex and often negative emotional states, while also demonstrating instances where maxims are strictly observed to maintain clarity and coherence within the narrative. These findings advance pragmatic theory by identifying maxim flouting as a deliberate psychological and narrative strategy rather than merely a conversational flouting. By integrating perspectives from psychology and film studies, the research underscores the dynamic interplay between language use and emotional expression in character development and audience engagement.

Methodologically, the study enhances validity through systematic coding and expert validation, offering a robust framework for future analyses of pragmatic phenomena in audiovisual media. Overall, these insights invite further interdisciplinary exploration of how conversational strategies shape both theoretical understanding and practical applications in media communication.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how key characters in *Inside Out 2* deliberately flout the relevance maxim to convey meanings that extend beyond their explicit, literal content. Using a qualitative descriptive approach grounded in Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975), 21 instances of relevance maxim flouting were analyzed, with eight examples selected for their significant contribution to the film's narrative and communicative structure. The findings reveal that these flouting serve multiple psychological and communicative functions: they expose the characters' inner emotional struggles, help regulate psychological distress, and drive character development.

Theoretically, this research demonstrates the valuable role of pragmatics in revealing subtle and complex meanings within cinematic dialogue. From a broader perspective, these pragmatic strategies deepen the portrayal of adolescence by illustrating how young individuals navigate issues of identity formation, interpersonal relationships, and emotional self-regulation—core concerns in adolescent psychology and interpersonal communication. To enhance the robustness and applicability of these insights, future research should consider expanding the corpus to include diverse films across cultures and genres, integrate audience reception studies to understand varying interpretations of maxim flouting, and employ multimodal analysis that examines not only dialogue but also visual and auditory elements. Such interdisciplinary approaches would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how relevance maxim flouting contributes to meaning-making and emotional expression in film narratives.

References

- Culpeper, J. (2011). *Impoliteness: Using language to cause offence*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dewi, N. K. T., Utami, N. M. V., & Putri, W. (2020). Types of flouting maxim in *Lady Bird* movie. *Journal of Language and Applied Linguistics*, 1(2), 177-183. <https://dx.doi.org/10.22334/traverse.v1i2>
- Erdayani, E., & Ambalegin, A. (2022). Flouting maxims in *Fantastic Beasts: And Where to Find Them* movie. *Jurnal BASIS* 9(1), 41-50.
- Grice, H. P. 1975. *Studies in the Way of Words*. London: Harvard University.
- Gustary, D. T., & Anggraini, S. (2021). The Analysis of Flouting Maxim in *UP! Movie*. *Lingua Idea*, 12(2), 124-135. <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.jli.2021.12.2.4118>
- Lasiana, L. L., & Mubarak, Z. H. (2020). An analysis of flouting maxim in *Ruby Spark* movie. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 8(1), 221-231.
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. Longman.
- Lubis, M., & Nasution, E. H. (2021). Flouting Maxim Performed by The Main Character in *The Edge of Seventeen* movie. *Jurnal Darma Agung*, 29(2), 273-

280.

- Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1995). *Relevance: Communication and cognition*. Blackwell.
- Suartini, N. P. I., & Candra, K. D. P. (2023). Flouting Maxim in *He's All That* movie. *ELYSIAN JOURNAL: English Literature, Linguistics and Translation Studies*, 3(2), 41-51. <https://doi.org/10.36733/elysian.v3i2.5078>
- Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. Longman.
- Violita, V., & Cholsy, H. (2022). Speech Acts Equivalence of Audiovisual Translation on Enola Holmes Netflix Movie Subtitle. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 10(1), 209-225. doi:<https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v10i1.2589>
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.