

Conversational Implicature in the Animated Film *Inside Out 2* (2024): A Pragmatic Analysis

M. Tegar Yunus, Kartin Lihawa, Jefriyanto Saud

English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Letters and Cultures, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 10 April 2026

Revised 15 April 2026

Accepted 20 April 2026

Available online 22 April 2026

Keywords

Conversational Implicature, Gricean
Maxims, *Inside Out 2*, Particularized
Implicature, Adolescent Communication



This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)
license.
Copyright © 2026 by Author. Published by Yayasan
Daarul Huda

ABSTRACT

*This research addresses the research gap concerning how conversational implicatures shift toward context-dependency as characters transition into adolescence. The study aims to identify the types of conversational implicatures and describe the implied meanings conveyed by characters in the animated film *Inside Out 2* (2024). Employing a descriptive qualitative design and document analysis, the research applies Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle to analyze the film's dialogue. The findings reveal 84 utterances containing conversational implicatures, categorized into 75 Particularized Conversational Implicatures (PCI) and 9 Generalized Conversational Implicatures (GCI). Particularized implicatures were the most dominant, with the Maxim of Quality being the most frequently flouted (56 data). This indicates that adolescent communication in the film is highly sophisticated and context-bound, favoring sarcasm and irony over directness. The study concludes that implied meanings serve critical pragmatic functions, including hiding vulnerability, navigating social hierarchies, and strategic manipulation during the puberty transition.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas celah penelitian mengenai bagaimana implikatur percakapan bergeser menjadi lebih bergantung pada konteks saat karakter bertransisi menuju masa remaja. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis implikatur percakapan dan mendeskripsikan makna tersirat yang disampaikan oleh karakter dalam film animasi *Inside Out 2* (2024). Menggunakan desain kualitatif deskriptif dan analisis dokumen, penelitian ini menerapkan Prinsip Kerja Sama Grice (1975) untuk menganalisis dialog film. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan 84 tuturan yang mengandung implikatur percakapan, yang dikategorikan menjadi 75 Implikatur Percakapan Partikular (PCI) dan 9 Implikatur Percakapan Umum (GCI). Implikatur partikular merupakan jenis yang paling dominan, dengan Pelanggaran Maksim Kualitas sebagai yang paling sering muncul (56 data). Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi remaja dalam film ini sangat canggih dan terikat konteks, dengan lebih mengutamakan sarkasme dan ironi daripada keterusterangan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa makna tersirat menjalankan fungsi pragmatik kritis, termasuk menyembunyikan kerentanan, menavigasi hierarki sosial, dan manipulasi strategis selama transisi masa pubertas.

INTRODUCTION

Language serves not only as a tool for information exchange but also as a fundamental instrument for negotiating hidden meanings, emotions, and social strategies. In the field of linguistics, pragmatics plays a crucial role in uncovering these "unspoken" messages by studying the relationship between language expressions and the context of their use. A central phenomenon within this discipline is conversational implicature, a concept introduced by Grice (1975) to explain situations where a speaker implies a broader meaning than what is literally uttered. To bridge the gap between literal form and intended meaning, listeners must perform an inferential process based on the Cooperative Principle and its four maxims: quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. Movie dialogue, although script-based, provides a rich and authentic corpus for such pragmatic analysis because it simulates the dynamics of real-life conversation, including emotional nuances and complex social interactions.

Recent scholarship has extensively explored pragmatic phenomena in animated cinema, establishing a foundation for how film dialogue reflects communicative strategies. For instance, Purwanti (2017) analyzed the flouting of maxims in the first *Inside Out* (2015), finding that such

strategies were primarily used for humor and persuasion. Furthermore, Swandari (2021) investigated the same film and concluded that Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI) was the dominant type, as the language was crafted to reflect natural, generic communication. Regarding the sequel, *Inside Out 2* (2024), Sianipar et al. (2025) recently conducted a study on illocutionary acts; however, their research focused strictly on Searle's taxonomy without providing specific attention to the mechanisms of implicature arising from the new character interactions.

Despite this abundance of research, a significant research gap persists. Most existing studies remain focused on the first installment of the franchise or explore different pragmatic scopes like speech acts and politeness. There is a distinct lack of research dissecting the "pragmatic shift" that occurs as the main character, Riley, transitions from childhood into adolescence. Unlike the first film, which relied on generalized meanings, the sequel introduces a more sophisticated level of communication, characterized by sarcasm, emotional concealment, and social manipulation, that necessitates a shift toward Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI). This transition is driven by the arrival of new, complex emotions such as Anxiety and Ennui, whose interactions are heavily dependent on specific situational and psychological contexts.

Addressing this gap, the primary objective of this research is to identify the types of conversational implicatures and describe the implied meanings conveyed by characters in *Inside Out 2* (2024). The study is guided by two central research questions: (1) What types of conversational implicature (generalized and particularized) are found in the animated film *Inside Out 2* (2024)? and (2) How are implied meanings interpreted based on contextual cues (speaker intention, situation, and character relations) in the selected dialogues of the film?. By applying Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, this study aims to reveal how implied meanings function as strategic tools for social survival and identity management during puberty. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the context-bound nature of adolescent discourse, offering new empirical insights into how pragmatic strategies evolve alongside the protagonist's emotional maturity.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive research design to provide an in-depth interpretation of linguistic phenomena within their natural narrative setting. This approach was selected as it is particularly suitable for uncovering context-dependent meanings and understanding the "unspoken" messages in character interactions that cannot be quantified through statistical measures alone. The subject of this research was the animated film *Inside Out 2* (2024), with a specific focus on the conversational implicatures generated in both the internal realm (Headquarters) and the external social environment of the protagonist, Riley. By employing this design, the researcher aimed to provide a thick description of how adolescent communication shifts toward sophisticated indirectness.

The primary instrument for this study was the researcher, who functioned as the central tool for collecting, categorizing, and interpreting the data. Data were collected through a systematic observation and documentation procedure. The process began with repeated viewings of the film to achieve immersion and identify scenes rich in pragmatic conflict or emotional nuance. Using a purposive sampling technique, the researcher selected utterances that clearly demonstrated a deviation from standard conversational expectations (maxim flouting) and held significant narrative weight regarding Riley's transition into puberty. These dialogues were then transcribed based on the official English close-captioned subtitles to ensure textual accuracy.

The data analysis followed a qualitative content analysis technique, proceeding through several systematic stages. First, the collected data underwent data reduction to isolate the most salient segments containing potential implicatures. Second, each utterance was classified into a dominant category based on Grice's (1975) four conversational maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. Third, the resulting implicatures were identified as either Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI) or Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI) based on

their degree of context-dependency. Finally, the researcher applied a triadic model of context analyzing speaker intention, situational setting, and character relations to bridge the gap between literal form and implied meaning. This comprehensive analysis ensured that the conclusions were firmly grounded in both pragmatic theory and the multimodal cues (tone, gesture, and narrative stakes) provided by the film.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the classification and pragmatic analysis of conversational implicatures identified in *Inside Out 2* (2024). Based on the analysis of 84 distinct utterances, the study categorized the data into two types of conversational implicatures: Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI) and Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI), arising from the flouting of Grice's four maxims. The frequency of these occurrences is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Frequency of Conversational Implicature Types in *Inside Out 2*

Flouted Maxim	Generalized (GCI)	Particularized (PCI)	Total Frequency
Quality	7	49	56
Relation	1	11	12
Quantity	0	9	9
Manner	1	6	7
Total	9	75	84

As illustrated in Table 1, Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI) emerged as the most dominant type, constituting 89% of the total data. This prevalence indicates that the majority of implied meanings in the film rely heavily on specific situational contexts, character emotional states, and the unfolding narrative of puberty. Regarding the flouted maxims, the Maxim of Quality was the most frequently violated (56 instances), suggesting that characters frequently resort to sarcasm, irony, or deliberate untruthfulness to navigate their social environment.

The dominance of PCI in this sequel marks a significant pragmatic shift when compared to the first film. Swandari (2021) found that Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI) was dominant in the original *Inside Out*, as the communication was more generic and straightforward for a child protagonist. However, as Riley transitions into adolescence in *Inside Out 2*, her social interactions become more layered and "context-bound," requiring listeners to "read the room" to understand hidden meanings. For example, when Anxiety uses the vague phrase "plan for the future" to justify abandoning Riley's old friends, the implicature of "betrayal" can only be understood within the specific social hierarchy of the hockey camp.

Furthermore, the prevalence of Quality maxim flouting (sarcasm and irony) reflects the new emotional complexities introduced by characters like Ennui and Anxiety. While Purwanti (2017) noted that the Maxim of Relation was most frequently flouted in the first film to avoid sadness, the characters in the sequel actively distort the truth to manage Riley's social image. This is evident when Riley sarcastically claims to "love" a childish band she actually enjoys just to fit in with seniors, sacrificing her honesty for social survival.

The analysis concludes that these implied meanings serve three primary pragmatic functions: hiding vulnerability (e.g., Riley's "No big deal" response), navigating social hierarchies (e.g., Joy using indirectness to maintain a friendly leader persona), and strategic manipulation (e.g., Anxiety framing unethical actions as necessary plans). These findings reinforce the idea that in adolescent cinematic discourse, linguistic choices are dictated by the immediate psychological peril and social goals of the characters.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that conversational implicature in *Inside Out 2* (2024) functions as a sophisticated and essential strategic mechanism for adolescent communication rather than a mere linguistic byproduct. The analysis reveals that Particularized Conversational Implicature (PCI) is the overwhelmingly dominant type, appearing significantly more frequently than Generalized Conversational Implicature (GCI). This dominance underscores a fundamental shift in Riley's communicative development; as she enters adolescence, her interactions become deeply context-bound, requiring participants to rely on specific situational knowledge and emotional cues rather than general linguistic conventions. Furthermore, the prevalence of flouting the Maxim of Quality, predominantly through sarcasm and irony, demonstrates that adolescent discourse in high-pressure social environments favors emotional defense and social performativity over direct truthfulness.

Beyond mere verbal exchanges, the implied meanings in the film serve as critical pragmatic tools for social survival and identity management. Characters utilize these implicatures to navigate three primary functions: shielding internal vulnerability from authority figures, managing complex social hierarchies among peers, and exerting strategic control over evolving personal narratives. Theoretically, these findings reinforce the integration of Grice's Cooperative Principle with the triadic model of context, proving that cinematic dialogue in coming-of-age films offers an authentic corpus for analyzing how linguistic choices are dictated by psychological stakes. Based on these insights, it is suggested that English language educators integrate animated films like *Inside Out 2* as authentic pedagogical materials to sharpen students' pragmatic sensitivity to the "unsaid" in cross-cultural communication. Future researchers are encouraged to expand this scope into comparative studies across different developmental stages or apply multimodal analysis to examine the interaction between visual cues and verbal implicatures in modern animation.

REFERENCES

- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics: Vol. 3. Speech acts* (pp. 41–58). Academic Press.
- Purwanti, E. F. (2017). *Analysis on flouted maxims performed by the main characters of "Inside Out" movie* [Undergraduate thesis, Universitas Brawijaya]. Repository Universitas Brawijaya. <https://repository.ub.ac.id/id/eprint/102822/>
- Sianipar, W. L., Pangaribuan, R. E., & Sembiring, R. A. (2025). An analysis of illocutionary acts in the *Inside Out 2* animated movie. *JALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy)*, 9(1), 1–12. <https://jurnal.unigal.ac.id/jall/article/view/17132>
- Swandari, F. (2021). *The implicature of speech acts performed by the main characters in Inside Out (2015) and Over the Moon (2020) movies* [Undergraduate thesis, IAIN Surakarta]. IAIN Surakarta Repository. <https://eprints.iain-surakarta.ac.id/7544/>