



Analyzing Anxiety's Speech Acts in Inside Out 2: A Pragmatic Study of Emotional Language and Its Implications for Educational Management

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze the types and pragmatic functions of speech acts performed by the character Anxiety in Pixar's animated film Inside Out 2 and to examine their implications for educational management, particularly in the context of social-emotional learning. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach grounded in Speech Act Theory, the data were obtained from Anxiety's utterances in the film and analyzed through classification and interpretative techniques. The utterances were categorized based on Searle's taxonomy of illocutionary acts. The findings reveal that directive and expressive speech acts dominate Anxiety's language, reflecting its role as a controlling and protective emotion that influences decision-making and emotional regulation during adolescence. Directive acts function to manage behavior and anticipate risk, while expressive acts convey emotional tension, concern, and fear. These results indicate that speech acts in animated films serve as linguistic representations of psychological states. The study implies that understanding emotional speech acts can support educational management practices, particularly in classroom management and social-emotional learning programs, by providing insights into how language shapes emotional regulation, student behavior, and supportive learning environments.

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INTRODUCTION

General Issue in Society Language is not merely a medium for conveying information but a form of social action through which speakers express intentions, emotions, and influence others. This perspective is central to pragmatics, particularly Speech Act Theory, which conceptualizes utterances as actions performed within specific social and psychological contexts (Alam & Mohanty, 2023; Dewi et al., 2025; Khoiroh, 2025; Kusnanto et al., 2023). In

contemporary society, understanding emotional language has become increasingly important due to rising concerns about mental health, adolescent anxiety, and emotional regulation in educational settings. Communication shapes how emotions are recognized, managed, and responded to by individuals and institutions (Abas & Kholidah, 2025; Nuriyah et al., 2024; Putri et al., 2024; Rusdiah, 2024). Empirical studies indicate that emotional discourse influences behavior, decision-making, and social interaction, especially among adolescents navigating academic pressure and social expectations. For educators and education managers, language functions as a strategic tool for fostering supportive learning environments and effective classroom management. Therefore, analyzing how emotions are linguistically represented is socially significant because it provides insights into emotional communication that can inform educational management practices, social-emotional learning programs, and policies aimed at supporting students' psychological well-being.

General Problem Despite growing awareness of emotional well-being, many educational institutions face challenges in managing students' anxiety and emotional responses effectively. Anxiety among adolescents often manifests through language expressed as urgency, excessive worry, or avoidance yet such linguistic signals are frequently misunderstood or overlooked by educators and school administrators. This misinterpretation can result in ineffective classroom management, limited emotional support, and reduced student engagement. From a broader societal perspective, there is a gap between psychological understanding of anxiety and practical strategies for managing emotional communication in learning environments. Language is often treated as a neutral channel rather than as an active force that shapes emotional regulation and behavior. Consequently, educational management practices may fail to address the communicative dimensions of anxiety. This problem underscores the need for interdisciplinary research that connects pragmatic language analysis with educational management, enabling institutions to better interpret emotional discourse and develop responsive strategies for supporting students' social and emotional development.

Empirical Phenomenon Empirically, popular media, particularly animated films, has become an influential source of emotional narratives for children and adolescents (Afifah, 2025; Fajariyah, 2025; Muharromah, 2025; Mukarromah, 2025; Setiawan et al., 2024). Pixar's *Inside Out 2* (2024) presents a vivid portrayal of adolescent emotional complexity through the introduction of Anxiety as a central character. Anxiety is depicted as constantly anticipating potential threats, social judgment, and failure, reflecting real emotional experiences commonly observed among students. The character's dialogue is marked by urgency, repetition, and directive expressions, mirroring how anxiety

manifests linguistically in real-life contexts. In educational settings, similar speech patterns are often found in students experiencing academic stress or social pressure. However, these patterns are rarely examined systematically as communicative acts. The widespread consumption of animated films means that such representations influence how young audiences understand and articulate their emotions. Therefore, examining Anxiety's speech acts provides an empirical basis for understanding emotional language and its relevance to educational management, particularly in designing emotionally responsive classroom and counseling practices.

Literature Synthesis (1) Previous studies in pragmatics and discourse analysis have emphasized that speech acts play a crucial role in expressing emotions and regulating social interaction. Emotional discourse frequently relies on directive and expressive speech acts to manage behavior, convey urgency, and construct meaning (Rusdi, 2020). Research grounded in Speech Act Theory has demonstrated that language functions not only linguistically but also affectively and ideologically, shaping audience perception and response (Hasanah, Munawwaroh, & Hasanah, 2024; Ma'isyah et al., 2024; Rahmatillah & Andayani, 2025; Setiawan & Rizal, 2024). In narrative and media discourse, speech acts are intentionally crafted to represent psychological states and moral values (Hasanah, Munawwaroh, & Qushwa, 2024; Kholifatunnisak, 2024; Yakin, 2025). Studies on film discourse further suggest that characters' dialogues serve as models of emotional communication that audiences may internalize. While these studies contribute to understanding emotional language, most focus on general emotional expression without explicitly linking pragmatic analysis to educational management or adolescent emotional regulation.

prior research has explored emotional language in media and narrative texts, several limitations remain. First, few studies have examined animated films as pedagogical resources for understanding emotional communication through a pragmatic lens. Second, existing research often treats emotions as thematic content rather than as linguistic actions realized through specific speech acts. Third, the connection between emotional speech acts and educational management such as classroom interaction, student behavior management, and social-emotional learning has received limited scholarly attention. Indonesian pragmatics scholarship highlights the ideological and affective dimensions of narrative discourse, yet empirical analyses integrating these insights with educational contexts remain scarce. This research gap is significant because emotional discourse in media shapes how students perceive and express emotions in real life. Addressing this gap allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how language mediates emotional regulation and institutional responses within educational environments.

State of the Art and Novelty The novelty of this study lies in its integrative approach that combines pragmatic speech act analysis with educational management perspectives using an animated film as the research object. By focusing on Anxiety's speech acts in *Inside Out 2*, this study advances current research by treating emotional language as performative action rather than mere representation. It positions animated film discourse as a valuable site for examining how emotions are linguistically constructed and managed. This approach represents a state-of-the-art contribution by bridging pragmatics, media studies, psychology, and educational management. The study is important because it offers insights into how directive and expressive speech acts reflect anxiety as a psychological construct, providing implications for social-emotional learning, classroom management, and counseling practices in schools. Such interdisciplinary analysis enriches both linguistic theory and practical educational strategies.

Research Problem and Argument Based on the preceding discussion, this study addresses the problem of how Anxiety's emotional language in *Inside Out 2* is realized through specific speech acts and what pragmatic functions these acts perform. The research argues that Anxiety's dominant use of directive and expressive speech acts functions to regulate behavior, anticipate risk, and construct anxiety as a controlling emotional force. This study assumes that understanding emotional speech acts can enhance educational management by improving educators' ability to interpret students' emotional language and respond appropriately. By identifying speech act types and explaining their functions, this research contributes to pragmatic studies and provides practical insights for educational management, particularly in fostering emotionally supportive learning environments and effective social-emotional learning practices.

RESEACH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design using a case study approach. The qualitative design is selected because it enables in-depth interpretation of meaning, intention, and contextualized language use, which are central to pragmatic analysis (Windiasari et al., 2025). A case study approach is appropriate as the research focuses on a single, bounded case, namely the character Anxiety in Pixar's animated film *Inside Out 2*. This character is chosen due to her distinctive communicative behavior and her central role in representing adolescent anxiety through language. By treating Anxiety's dialogue as a specific case of emotional discourse, this study allows for a detailed examination of how speech acts function to construct psychological states within a narrative context (Alfarisi & Faiz, 2024; Febriyanto & Manshur, 2025; Hadi &

Masuwd, 2025; Hidayati, 2024). Qualitative case studies are particularly suitable for discourse and media analysis because they provide rich contextual understanding rather than generalization.

The data source of this study is the animated film *Inside Out 2* (2024). Data collection was conducted through document-based analysis of the film dialogue. The researcher first watched the film repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the narrative structure, emotional context, and character interactions. Anxiety's utterances were then carefully transcribed to ensure accuracy. From the full transcription, utterances containing clear pragmatic force particularly those reflecting emotional regulation, anticipation, control, and urgency were selected as data. This procedure ensured that the data remained contextually grounded while allowing systematic identification of relevant speech acts.

Data analysis was carried out through qualitative pragmatic analysis. First, the collected utterances were categorized based on Searle's taxonomy of speech acts, including representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative acts. This stage corresponds to data reduction by focusing on utterances with explicit illocutionary force (Hasani, 2025; Hikmah et al., 2025; Khotimah et al., 2024). Second, the classified data were organized and displayed in analytical tables to facilitate comparison across speech act types. Finally, interpretative analysis was conducted to explain the pragmatic functions of each speech act within the narrative context, supported by consideration of perlocutionary effects, such as emotional influence on other characters. This analytical process emphasizes illocutionary acts as the primary unit of analysis while acknowledging perlocutionary effects as interpretative support.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section integrates the findings and discussion of the study, presenting an analysis of Anxiety's utterances in *Inside Out 2* and interpreting their pragmatic functions within the narrative and educational management contexts. The analysis focuses on the distribution of speech act types and explains how these illocutionary acts linguistically construct anxiety as an anticipatory and controlling emotion. The results demonstrate that directive and expressive speech acts dominate Anxiety's language use, followed by representative acts, indicating that language functions as a mechanism for emotional regulation rather than mere dialogue.

Distribution and Functions of Speech Acts

The analysis reveals that directive speech acts occur most frequently in Anxiety's dialogues. These directives are primarily used to warn, instruct, restrict, or control the actions of other emotions. Anxiety consistently positions

herself as a regulator of behaviour by urging constant anticipation of potential risks and discouraging immediate action. This linguistic pattern reflects the core psychological function of anxiety, which prioritizes prevention and safety over exploration and spontaneity. From an educational management perspective, such directive language mirrors how anxiety manifests in students through excessive caution, avoidance, or resistance to participation, which often challenges classroom management and learning engagement.

Expressive speech acts appear as the second most dominant category. Through expressive acts, Anxiety verbalizes internal emotional states such as fear, panic, worry, and urgency. These utterances function to externalize Anxiety's psychological condition, making her emotional intensity explicit and accessible to the audience. In educational contexts, recognizing such expressive language is essential for teachers and school managers, as it signals emotional distress that requires supportive intervention rather than disciplinary control. Representative speech acts, although less frequent, are used to describe Anxiety's perception of reality and future possibilities, often involving predictions of negative outcomes that reflect catastrophizing tendencies.

Directive Speech Acts and Behaviour Regulation

Directive speech acts constitute the most salient feature of Anxiety's language use. These utterances aim to influence behaviour by encouraging caution and discouraging risk-taking. For instance, the utterance, "We need to think about everything that could go wrong," functions as a directive that urges other emotions to engage in anticipatory thinking. Although grammatically declarative, its illocutionary force is directive, as it seeks to control decision-making processes. This finding supports Searle's (1979) assertion that directives do not always appear in imperative forms but can be realized indirectly. Another example, "Stop! We can't do this yet," illustrates a direct directive that explicitly restricts action. Within the narrative, such utterances position Anxiety as a dominant emotional force that prioritizes prevention over progress. In educational management, similar directive patterns may appear in anxious students who attempt to control learning situations to reduce uncertainty, highlighting the importance of responsive classroom management strategies.

Expressive Speech Acts and Emotional Externalization

Expressive speech acts are employed by Anxiety to convey emotional states such as fear, worry, and urgency. These utterances do not directly seek to change others' behaviour but instead reveal Anxiety's internal psychological condition. The utterance, "This is bad. This is really bad," functions as an expressive act that communicates panic and heightened emotional arousal. The repetition intensifies emotional impact and signals Anxiety's low tolerance for uncertainty. These findings align with Jihad's (2018) argument that expressive

speech acts in narrative discourse serve to externalize internal cognition, enabling audiences to recognize emotional states that might otherwise remain abstract. From an educational perspective, such expressive language is crucial for social-emotional learning, as it models how emotions are articulated and recognized, informing emotional literacy and counseling practices in schools.

Representative Speech Acts and Anxiety-Driven Reality Construction

Representative speech acts appear when Anxiety makes statements about perceived realities or anticipated future outcomes. For example, the utterance, “If this fails, Riley will lose everything,” functions as a representative act expressing Anxiety’s belief about a possible future scenario. Although speculative, it is presented as a logical consequence, reflecting Anxiety’s tendency to interpret uncertainty as certainty. This pattern supports Rusdi’s (2020) observation that emotional discourse often constructs predictive realities to legitimize fear-driven behaviour. In educational management contexts, such language parallels students’ catastrophic thinking about academic failure, emphasizing the need for guidance strategies that help learners reframe perceptions and manage academic anxiety constructively.

Summary of Integrated Findings

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Anxiety’s speech acts are strategically employed to fulfil her narrative role as an anticipatory and controlling emotion. Directive acts function to regulate behaviour, expressive acts reveal internal emotional states, and representative acts construct anxiety-driven perceptions of reality. The distribution and function of these speech acts confirm that language in *Inside Out 2* operates as a pragmatic mechanism for representing psychological processes rather than merely serving as scripted dialogue. Moreover, Anxiety’s speech acts shape audience interpretation of adolescent anxiety, aligning with studies that view film dialogue as a tool for emotional and social learning (Taguchi, 2015; Fowler, 2018). These insights offer important implications for educational management, particularly in fostering emotionally supportive classrooms, effective student behaviour management, and social-emotional learning programs.

Table : 1 Analysis of Anxiety's Speech Acts

No	Utterance (Excerpt)	Speech Act Type	Pragmatic Function
1	"We need to think about everything that could go wrong."	Directive	Urging anticipation and control
2	"This is bad. This is really bad."	Expressive	Expressing fear and panic
3	"If this fails, Riley will lose everything."	Representative	Predicting catastrophic outcomes
4	"Stop! We can't do this yet."	Directive	Preventing immediate action
5	"I'm just trying to protect her."	Expressive	Justifying emotional intervention

Following the classification presented in Table 1, it is evident that Anxiety's speech acts function as a linguistic model of emotional regulation that holds pedagogical relevance. From an educational management perspective, the dominance of directive and expressive acts reflects communication patterns often observed in students experiencing academic or social anxiety, such as excessive caution, avoidance of challenges, and heightened emotional expression. These findings suggest that educators and school leaders can use media texts like *Inside Out 2* as reflective tools to better understand students' emotional language and to design responsive classroom management and social-emotional learning strategies. By recognizing directive and expressive speech acts as indicators of emotional distress rather than mere disruptive behavior, educational management can shift toward more empathetic, supportive, and psychologically informed practices that foster emotional resilience and adaptive learning environments.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that Anxiety in *Inside Out 2* predominantly employs directive and expressive speech acts, which linguistically construct anxiety as an anticipatory, controlling, yet fundamentally protective emotion. The most important insight gained from this research is that language functions as a mechanism of emotional regulation and behavioral management rather than merely as dialogue. Anxiety's directives illustrate how fear-driven language seeks to organize actions, prevent risk, and maintain control, while expressive acts externalize internal emotional tension. From the perspective of educational management, this finding offers an important lesson that communication patterns—especially directive and expressive language—play a crucial role in guiding behavior, managing emotions, and supporting decision-making processes in learning environments, particularly in adolescent education and classroom management.

The academic strength of this study lies in its contribution to pragmatic studies by integrating speech act analysis with animated film discourse and educational management. It demonstrates that popular media can serve as a reflective model for understanding emotional leadership, communication strategies, and affective management in educational contexts. However, this study is limited to a single character and a qualitative textual analysis, which may constrain broader generalization. Future research may expand by comparing multiple emotional characters, incorporating empirical audience or classroom-based responses, or applying speech act analysis to educational settings to examine how teachers' directive and expressive language influences student behavior, emotional regulation, and learning outcomes.

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