

AN ANALYSIS OF SLANG WORDS IN THE FILM *INSIDE OUT 2*

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Abstract

This study investigates slang words in the animated film *Inside Out 2* using Allan and Burridge's (2006) sociolinguistic framework. It aims to identify the types and functions of slang and examine how these functions are realized in character dialogues. A qualitative descriptive method was employed, using the film script and dialogues as the primary data. The data were identified, classified, and analyzed based on Allan and Burridge's classification and contextual functions. The findings reveal 34 slang expressions representing four types: flippant, clipping, imitative, and fresh and creative. Clipping and fresh and creative slang were the most frequent types. Slang served four functions: social identity formation, strengthening solidarity, contextual adaptation, and cultural and emotional expression, with cultural and emotional expression being the dominant function. The findings indicate that slang contributes to authentic teenage communication and supports characters' social interactions and emotional expression.

Keywords: *Inside Out 2*, language variation, slang, sociolinguistics, teenage communication.

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Introduction

Language plays a vital role in human life, not only as a means of communication but also as a marker of identity, solidarity, and cultural belonging. Sociolinguistics, as a branch of linguistics, emphasizes the relationship between language and society, showing how language use is shaped by social factors such as age, gender, social class, and cultural background (Wardhaugh, 2010; Holmes, 2013). One important aspect of sociolinguistics is the study of language variation, which includes differences in dialect, register, style, and informal varieties such as slang.

Slang is a dynamic form of informal language that is particularly associated with youth communication, where it can function as a resource for expressing identity, establishing social relationships, and reflecting contemporary cultural practices. Recent studies have shown that youth slang is closely connected to social identity and group membership, particularly in

digitally mediated communication (Bahar et al., 2025; Maciołek & Smereczniak, 2024). In this study, slang is classified based on Allan and Burridge's (2006) framework, which remains relevant to contemporary analyses of slang in media and youth-oriented discourse. Slang is not a new phenomenon. It has long existed as a distinctive variety of language used by particular groups to signal identity and solidarity. In the modern era, however, slang has become increasingly visible through mass media, social networks, films, and music. Teenagers, in particular, often use slang to strengthen group membership, express emotions, and resist formality or authority (Eble, 2012). For instance, words such as *lit*, *noob*, *chill*, or *extra* have gained popularity in English-speaking communities as ways of expressing excitement, identity, or emotional states. The use of slang is not limited to spoken interaction; it also shapes written communication, especially in digital

contexts such as texting and online chats (Ryanda, 2024).

Media, particularly films and other audiovisual productions, provide valuable contexts for examining contemporary language practices because they represent language use within socially meaningful interactions. Recent research has demonstrated that youth-oriented media can reproduce and construct linguistic identities through informal language, including slang and other colloquial expressions. For example, Telep (2025) demonstrates how youth slang in a mediated audiovisual context contributes to the construction of social identities and social meanings. Similarly, recent research on animated films has shown that slang can contribute to the representation of young people's experiences, social relationships, and cultural practices (Susanto et al., 2023). Therefore, film dialogue provides a relevant source for examining how slang is represented and functionally employed in interactions among young characters.

An animated film that provides an especially relevant context for examining slang is *Inside Out 2* (2024). Produced by Pixar Animation Studios and directed by Kelsey Mann, the film continues the story of Riley Andersen, a teenager who faces emotional and social challenges as she enters adolescence. The film introduces new characters and portrays Riley's experiences at a hockey camp, where she interacts with her friends Val, Bree, and Grace. These interactions include numerous instances of slang that reflect the authentic speech of contemporary American teenagers. Expressions such as *freak out*, *gross*, *awesome*, or *going to* illustrate how slang is embedded in everyday conversation, portraying teenage spontaneity, humor, and emotional intensity.

The presence of slang in *Inside Out 2* is not merely a stylistic device for entertainment. Rather, it reflects broader sociolinguistic patterns of youth communication. Films such as this one are valuable objects of study because they provide insights into contemporary teenage language use and the ways slang operates in real contexts. However, despite the ubiquity of slang in media, studies focusing specifically on the functions of slang in animated films remain limited. Most previous studies have concentrated on identifying types of slang or analyzing translation strategies (Azzahra, 2023; Bondarenko, 2023; Musofa, 2023). While such studies are valuable, they often overlook how slang functions are realized within actual dialogues and how these functions shape character interactions. This study seeks to address that gap by examining both the types and functions of slang words in *Inside Out 2*.

By applying Allan and Burridge's (2006) framework, the study aims to identify slang types—flippant, clipping, imitative, and fresh and creative—and to analyze their communicative functions, namely social identity formation, solidarity building, contextual adaptation, and cultural and emotional expression. Furthermore, it investigates how these functions are realized in the film's dialogues, thereby highlighting the role of slang in portraying authentic teenage communication.

Recent studies have begun to examine slang in contemporary animated films, including *Turning Red*, *Encanto*, and *Inside Out 2*. Susanto et al. (2023), for example, examined slang in *Turning Red* by identifying its types and sociolinguistic functions, while recent studies of *Inside Out 2* have primarily focused on identifying and classifying slang expressions or examining their translation into Indonesian. Lestari and Isna examined the types of slang used in

Inside Out 2 and considered its potential as authentic material for English language learning, whereas Rahmah et al. (2024) investigated the types of slang and the translation strategies used in its subtitles.

Although these studies provide important descriptions of the linguistic forms and translation of slang in *Inside Out 2*, a more detailed examination of how slang functions within the characters' interactions remains underdeveloped. In particular, previous research has not sufficiently explained how individual slang expressions operate in their immediate conversational contexts to construct social identity, establish solidarity, adapt to particular interactional situations, and convey cultural or emotional meanings. This distinction is important because identifying the type of a slang expression does not necessarily explain why the expression is used, what interpersonal purpose it serves, or how its function is realized through the surrounding dialogue. Recent research on youth slang confirms that slang functions as a resource for identity construction, group affiliation, social closeness, humor, and emotional expression (Bahar et al., 2025; Zia et al., 2024).

Therefore, the research gap addressed by the present study lies in the functional and contextual analysis of slang in *Inside Out 2*. Rather than focusing only on the classification or translation of slang expressions, this study investigates how slang functions in interaction and how those functions are realized through the characters' conversational contexts. This approach allows the study to connect the linguistic form of slang with its sociolinguistic and communicative purposes, particularly in the representation of teenage interaction.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design, as the objective was to describe and interpret the types and functions of slang words used in the animated film *Inside Out 2*. Qualitative descriptive research is suitable when the researcher aims to portray linguistic phenomena as they occur naturally and to interpret them within their social and cultural contexts (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Instead of focusing on statistical measurement, this approach emphasizes categorization, interpretation, and contextual analysis.

The research was conducted from June to August 2024 at Universitas Bina Darma, Palembang. The object of the study was the animated film *Inside Out 2*, produced by Pixar Animation Studios and released in 2024. This film was selected because it presents the life of a teenager, Riley Andersen, and her friends in various social and emotional situations. Such a context is highly relevant for examining teenage communication, particularly the use of slang.

The data of this study were all utterances containing slang expressions used by the main characters, especially Riley, Val, Bree, and Grace. The primary data source was the official transcript of the film, which was cross-checked against the spoken dialogues by repeatedly watching the movie. Supporting references were drawn from scholarly works on slang and sociolinguistics to strengthen the classification and functional analysis.

The data were collected through several procedures. First, the film was watched multiple times to ensure familiarity with the characters and contexts. Second, the transcript was obtained and verified for accuracy by comparing it with the actual dialogues. Third, slang words and phrases were identified based on Allan and Burridge's (2006) classification. Each identified

slang item was then recorded in a data sheet, which included information on the speaker, scene, and context of use.

The instrument of the study was the researcher herself, who served as the primary tool for data collection and analysis. A data sheet was also employed as a supporting instrument to systematically document slang expressions, their categories, and their functions.

The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model (2014). The first stage was data reduction, in which irrelevant dialogues were excluded and only slang-related utterances were retained. The second stage was data display, where the categorized slang words were arranged into tables to show types and functions. The final stage was conclusion drawing and verification, in which the results were interpreted in light of the theoretical framework and previous studies.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were applied. Triangulation was conducted by comparing the transcript with the film's audiovisual content. Peer debriefing was carried out by discussing the analysis with colleagues to confirm consistency and reliability. Referential adequacy was achieved by consulting relevant theories and previous studies on slang and sociolinguistics.

The researcher played a central role throughout the process, from identifying and classifying slang expressions to analyzing their contextual functions. By actively engaging with both the primary data and supporting literature, the researcher ensured that the findings were valid, reliable, and meaningful within the scope of sociolinguistic study.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis of *Inside Out 2* revealed a total of 34 slang expressions, categorized into four types: flippant, clipping, imitative, and fresh and creative. Acronym slang was absent. The quantitative distribution is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of Slang Words in Inside Out

Type of Slang	Occurrences	Examples
Flippant	8	<i>screw it up, lay off, gross, freak out</i>
Clipping	11	<i>gonna, wanna, rockin'</i>
Imitative	4	<i>hang out, wait up, what's up, all good</i>
Fresh and Creative	11	<i>awesome, cool, awooga, ice time</i>
Acronym	0	–
Total	34	

The table shows that clipping and fresh & creative slang are the most frequent, each appearing 11 times. These results suggest that the language of teenagers is characterized both by linguistic efficiency (clipping) and by innovation and exaggeration (fresh & creative).

a). Flippant Slang

Flippant slang expresses humor, sarcasm, or dramatized feelings. For instance, Riley says “*What if I screw it up?*” when she worries about failing in hockey camp. The slang term *gross* conveys disgust when she feels embarrassed, while *lay off* signals irritation when a peer is too persistent. Repeated use of *freak out* shows the dramatization of anxiety, a typical

feature of adolescent speech. This finding is consistent with Allan and Burridge (2006), who argue that flippant slang thrives on exaggeration and emotional intensity.

b). Clipping Slang

Clipping is the most common type of slang, with examples such as *gonna* and *wanna*. These contracted forms occur frequently in casual planning or invitations, e.g., “*I’m gonna try*”, “*You wanna join?*”. Such usage reflects the informal nature of teenage communication, where shortened forms indicate speed and spontaneity. The word *rockin’* further shows playful linguistic reduction in praising music or activities. Tagliamonte and Roberts (2005) emphasize that such clipped forms are essential to capturing the rhythm of authentic youth speech.

c). Imitative Slang

Imitative slang reproduces colloquial phrases from everyday English, such as *hang out*, *wait up*, and *what’s up*. These expressions mark friendship and familiarity. For example, “*Let’s hang out after practice*” illustrates peer bonding, while “*Wait up!*” is a casual appeal to slow down. Although less innovative, imitative slang helps to establish solidarity and a sense of belonging, consistent with Eble’s (2012) claim that slang reinforces group cohesion.

d). Fresh and Creative Slang

Fresh and creative slang includes words like *awesome*, *cool*, and exaggerated forms like *awooga* or *I loooove*. These expressions represent linguistic creativity and playfulness. Riley’s utterance “*I loooove Get Up and Glow*” dramatizes excitement, while *ice time* reflects hockey subculture. Such creativity illustrates teenagers’ desire to intensify emotion and signal identity through language. According to Holmes (2013), this innovative use of language is

central to how adolescents shape their identities and relationships.

e). Acronmy Slang

The complete absence of acronym slang such as *LOL* or *OMG* is a crucial finding. While these forms dominate digital communication, their absence in the spoken dialogues underlines the difference between written and oral teenage slang. This supports Eble (2012), who notes that slang adapts to communication modes. In this case, the film script prioritizes authenticity of spoken teenage interaction.

Table 2. Functions of Slang Words in Inside Out 2

Function of Slang	Occurrence s	Example s
Social Identity Formation	3	<i>ice time, in your zone</i>
Strengthening Solidarity	2	<i>No worries, all good</i>
Contextual Adaptation	5	<i>gonna, wanna, wait up</i>
Cultural & Emotional Expression	13	<i>screw it up, gross, awesome</i>
Total	23	

The analysis shows that cultural and emotional expression was the most dominant function (13 instances). Teenagers in the film use slang to dramatize emotions and enhance humor. For example, *gross* conveys strong disgust, while *awesome* amplifies excitement. This finding aligns with Holmes (2013), who argues that slang provides affective nuance in interaction.

The analysis of *Inside Out 2* revealed that slang words were not used randomly but carried distinct communicative purposes that supported character development and narrative authenticity. Four primary functions were identified: cultural and emotional

expression, contextual adaptation, social identity formation, and strengthening solidarity. Each of these functions reflects the ways in which adolescents negotiate emotions, relationships, and identities through language.

The most prominent function was cultural and emotional expression, with thirteen occurrences, accounting for more than half of the total functions identified. Slang served as a linguistic resource for characters, particularly Riley, to dramatize their emotional states in moments of joy, frustration, anxiety, or embarrassment. For example, Riley's exclamation "*That's awesome!*" after successfully scoring a goal in hockey practice does not merely describe a good performance but elevates the moment into one of shared celebration. Likewise, her utterance of "*Gross!*" in socially awkward situations underscores her heightened sensitivity and adolescent tendency to exaggerate feelings. Even stronger is her phrase "*I'm freaking out!*", which vividly portrays panic and anticipatory anxiety before a competition. These expressions exemplify what Holmes (2013) identifies as the affective richness of slang, which allows speakers to move beyond denotative meaning and convey emotions in ways that resonate with their peer group. They also reflect Musofa's (2023) observation that creative slang in youth-oriented films often functions as an emotional amplifier, intensifying the audience's connection to the characters' experiences.

The second most frequent function was contextual adaptation, which appeared five times. This function highlights how slang allows teenagers to adjust their speech to the informal, peer-centered contexts that dominate their daily interactions. Clipped forms such as *gonna* and *wanna* were repeatedly used instead of their formal equivalents (going to, want to). For instance, when

Riley casually says "*I'm gonna tell her later*", the utterance demonstrates not only phonological economy but also adaptation to a relaxed, conversational setting. Similarly, when Grace says "*I wanna try it too*", the use of *wanna* reflects the informality and closeness of teenage friendship. Another example is Riley's "*Wait up, guys!*", which is an informal imperative that softens the command into a friendly request. Allan and Burridge (2006) argue that slang is most at home in contexts of intimacy, functioning as a register of solidarity rather than deference. The frequent use of contextual adaptation in the film reflects this principle, as characters constantly choose forms that reduce social distance and highlight informality.

The third function identified was social identity formation, with three occurrences. Although relatively limited in frequency, its significance lies in how slang reflects adolescents' sense of belonging to particular cultural groups. Riley's use of hockey-related slang, such as *ice time* and *in your zone*, illustrates her identity as both a teenager and an athlete. These expressions are not only referential but symbolic: they situate Riley within the discourse of her team and affirm her role in the sporting subculture. Eckert (2012) emphasizes that slang is one of the primary resources through which young people construct social categories and group identities. In Riley's case, the adoption of sports slang signals her membership in the hockey team, distinguishing her from non-athlete peers. Azzahra (2023) similarly found that slang in youth films often emphasizes affiliation with particular cultural domains, whether related to school activities, sports, or leisure. The presence of this function in *Inside Out 2* demonstrates the film's attempt to authentically represent the multidimensional identities of adolescents.

Finally, the function of strengthening solidarity appeared only twice, yet its pragmatic importance should not be underestimated. Phrases such as *no worries* and *all good* were used in moments where reassurance was necessary, often following mistakes or minor conflicts among friends. For example, when Riley feels anxious about her performance, Val responds with “*No worries, it’s fine*,” thereby diffusing tension and reaffirming their bond. Similarly, Grace’s casual reassurance “*All good!*” after a small error during practice helps maintain group cohesion and prevents the escalation of negative emotions. Holmes (2013) stresses that such expressions, although brief and infrequent, play a central role in sustaining interpersonal relationships. The use of solidarity slang in the film reflects teenagers’ reliance on informal reassurance to maintain friendship harmony, highlighting that the value of slang lies not only in its frequency but in its pragmatic contribution to group dynamics.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that slang in *Inside Out 2* is functionally rich and socially meaningful. The dominance of cultural and emotional expression underscores the centrality of slang as a tool for dramatizing adolescent feelings, while contextual adaptation highlights its role in making conversations sound natural and fitting for informal peer settings. Social identity formation reveals slang’s power to symbolize membership in specific groups, and solidarity-building slang, though less frequent, shows its importance in managing relationships. These results confirm the arguments of Allan and Burridge (2006) that slang reflects intimacy and informality, Holmes’s (2013) view of slang as an affective resource, and Eckert’s (2012) claim that slang constructs youth identity. Compared to previous studies

such as Azzahra (2023) and Musofa (2023), which focused mainly on the dominance of creative slang, this study contributes a nuanced understanding of how slang functions not only structurally but pragmatically within narrative interaction.

The results of this study demonstrate that slang in *Inside Out 2* fulfills both linguistic and sociocultural functions. From a linguistic perspective, the predominance of clipping and fresh & creative slang indicates the dual tendencies of teenage communication: simplification and innovation. Clipping forms such as *gonna* and *wanna* reveal the desire for efficiency in spoken discourse, supporting Wardhaugh’s (2010) argument that linguistic variation reflects speakers’ needs for ease and economy. At the same time, fresh & creative slang like *awooga* and *I loooove* highlights the playful creativity of adolescents, in line with Holmes’s (2013) assertion that young speakers often experiment with language to mark identity and expressiveness.

From a sociocultural perspective, the functions of slang—particularly cultural and emotional expression—demonstrate that slang is not simply ornamental but deeply embedded in teenage interaction. The high frequency of emotionally expressive slang confirms Tagliamonte and Roberts’s (2005) observation that adolescent language is marked by dramatization and exaggeration. In the film, Riley’s frequent use of emotionally charged expressions (*freak out*, *screw it up*, *gross*) reflects the turbulence of adolescence, where slang provides a medium to externalize feelings.

These findings are consistent with previous research. Azzahra (2023) identified creative slang as dominant in youth conversations, while Musofa (2023) emphasized the role of slang in building solidarity. This study, however,

advances the discussion by showing that slang in animated films is not randomly inserted but carefully situated within character dialogue to represent authentic teenage communication. Unlike Bondarenko (2023), who focused on translation strategies of slang, this study highlights its communicative functions and contextual realizations.

Another significant contribution is the identification of subcultural slang derived from sports, such as ice time and in your zone. These terms reflect Riley's identity as a hockey player and show how slang adapts to specialized domains. This finding enriches sociolinguistic research by illustrating how subcultural practices contribute to language variation. While earlier studies tended to generalize slang as youth language, this research demonstrates that slang can also reflect more specific identities, such as athletic culture.

The findings also contribute theoretically by confirming that slang functions as a sociolinguistic marker of group membership, solidarity, and identity. Slang reinforces peer group boundaries and creates a sense of belonging, echoing Eble's (2012) claim that slang works as a badge of in-group membership. At the same time, its expressive and exaggerated forms confirm Allan and Burridge's (2006) categorization of slang as inherently playful and emotionally loaded.

Practically, the results of this study highlight the importance of recognizing slang in educational and parental contexts. For educators, understanding slang can help bridge communication gaps between teachers and students, as slang often reflects teenagers' authentic voices. For parents, awareness of slang can provide insights into their children's social interactions and emotional worlds. For linguists, the study contributes fresh evidence that slang in media reflects real-life usage patterns and can serve as

valuable data for analyzing contemporary language variation.

Finally, the novelty of this research lies in its emphasis on functional realization. While previous studies often stopped at identifying types of slang, this study illustrates how those types operate in actual dialogues, shaping character interaction and emotional dynamics. By examining *Inside Out 2*, the research not only enriches the academic understanding of slang but also underscores the role of animated films in reflecting and reinforcing teenage communication pattern

Conclusion

This study investigated slang words in *Inside Out 2*, focusing on their types and functions. The analysis revealed a total of 34 slang words, classified into four types: flippant (8), clipping (11), imitative (4), and fresh and creative (11). Interestingly, acronym slang, which is commonly found in digital communication, did not appear at all. Functionally, slang served four purposes: cultural and emotional expression (13), contextual adaptation (5), social identity formation (3), and strengthening solidarity (2). Among these, cultural and emotional expression was the most dominant.

From a linguistic perspective, the findings confirm that slang is not a random collection of words but a systematic part of teenage communication. The prevalence of clipping demonstrates linguistic economy and efficiency, while the high frequency of fresh and creative slang shows the innovative and playful nature of youth language. The use of flippant slang illustrates how adolescents intensify emotions, whereas imitative slang reveals how everyday peer interactions are mirrored in media. The absence of acronym slang highlights the difference between spoken and digital

slang, proving that communication mode strongly influences slang usage.

From a sociocultural perspective, slang in the film reflects how adolescents negotiate identity, solidarity, and emotional expression. Riley's frequent use of creative slang like *awesome* and *ice time* demonstrates how slang can be rooted in both general youth culture and specific subcultural practices (*such as hockey*). This aligns with Eckert's (2012) argument that slang is a resource for group identity. Moreover, solidarity-building slang, though limited in number, shows its crucial role in maintaining friendship and group cohesion.

The findings also carry important pedagogical implications. Teachers and language educators can use films such as *Inside Out 2* as authentic materials to introduce students to spoken English beyond textbook formalities. By analyzing slang, students can better understand how language functions in real-life contexts, especially in youth interactions. Furthermore, this awareness can improve learners' communicative competence, allowing them to use appropriate registers depending on the social setting.

For media and cultural studies, the results suggest that scriptwriters deliberately integrate slang to create authentic teenage characters. The absence of acronyms reinforces the idea that film dialogue prioritizes natural spoken interaction over internet jargon. This choice enhances relatability for both young audiences, who recognize the slang, and adults, who view it as realistic teenage speech.

In terms of theoretical contribution, this research supports and extends existing scholarship. It confirms Allan and Burridge's (2006) view that slang is central to informal registers, supports Holmes's (2013) claim that slang amplifies emotions, and resonates

with Eble's (2012) argument that slang sustains peer culture. However, the findings also extend previous work by highlighting the difference between digital and spoken slang—a dimension that has not been sufficiently addressed in studies of film dialogue.

Finally, this study opens avenues for future research. Comparative studies across film genres could determine whether the same distribution of slang types and functions holds true in comedies, dramas, or action films. Cross-cultural research could explore whether slang in Indonesian or other non-English films performs similar roles. Additionally, the relationship between spoken slang in films and digital slang in social media could be further investigated, to better understand how slang circulates across modes of communication.

In conclusion, slang in *Inside Out 2* is not merely ornamental but plays a crucial role in constructing teenage authenticity, dramatizing emotions, and shaping identity. Its linguistic, social, and cultural significance underscores the importance of studying slang not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a reflection of broader youth practices and values.

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