

METAPRAGMATIC ANALYSIS IN FILM REVIEW TEXTS

ON LETTERBOXD PLATFORM

THESIS

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM MALANG

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METAPRAGMATIC ANALYSIS IN FILM REVIEW TEXTS ON LETTERBOXD PLATFORM

THESIS

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2026

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled “**Metapragmatic analysis in Film Review Text on Letterboxd Platform**” is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, 30 June 2026

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This to certify that Rijal Arif Ariyadi's thesis entitled **“Metapragmatic analysis in Film Review Text on Letterboxd Platform”** has been approved for thesis examination at Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as one of the requirements for the degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S.).

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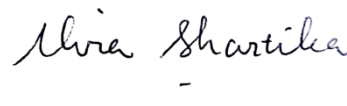
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MOTTO

“No matter how many hits I take, I always find a way to come back.”

Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse

DEDICATION

In this opportunity, I would like to dedicate my research to my family, who always support me in every moment. Their never-ending support always gives me strength in facing a bad day. Thank you for always being here with me. Secondly, this research belongs to all my dearest friends who are always beside me in every situation.

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13. Lastly, as an ordinary human, I am truly aware of some imperfections in this thesis. Therefore, criticism and suggestion for improving this work are welcomed. Hopefully, this thesis will be beneficial both the researcher and the readers in general.

The Researcher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rijal', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Rijal Arif Ariyadi

ABSTRACT

Ariyadi, Rijal Arif. (2026). *“Metapragmatics Anlaysis in Film Review Text on Letterboxd Platform”* Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Drs. Djoko Susanto,M.Ed., Ph.D

Keywords: Metapragmatic, Digital Discourse, Letterboxd, Film Reviews,

This research aims to study the Metapragmatic utterances in the film review text on Letterboxd platform. With the focus on how the reviewer creates meaning, negotiate social identity, and mitigate to weaken their evaluative claims in the digital discourse. Based on the three senses of Metapragmatics frameworks provide by Caffi (2006) with the indicators such as: Metatheoretical Reflection, Transcendental Conditions, and Revlective Competence, this research use qualitative approach toward the 37 data that have been found which published by the year of 2025. The research findings shows that Reflective Competence is the most dominance sense that indicates if the reviewer actively monitor and manage their communicative acts through explicetely linguistic markers. Transcendental conditions appear through alignment marker such as “hot take” and “unpopular opinion” which have a function to creates common ground also anticipates the respons of the readers. Besides that, this research found that mitigation strategies is the manifestation of Reflective competence that realized by the use of hedges, bushes, and shields markers. These strategies made the possibilities of the reviewer to weaken their claims and to anticipates the conflict potential. This findings not only shows that Metapragmatic utterances is not only function as linguistic features but also as a strategy in the maintaining of interpersonal connection and identity construction on digital community

ABSTRAK

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Keywords: Metapragmatik,, Diskursus Digital, Letterboxd, Ulasan Film,

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa tiga sense metapragmatik dalam teks ulasan film di platform Letterboxd, dengan fokusnya pada bagaimana pengulas menciptakan makna, menegosiasikan identitas sosial, dan melakukan mitigasi untuk melemahkan klaim evaluatif mereka dalam wacana digital. Berdasarkan kerangka tiga sense metapragmatik yang dikemukakan oleh Caffi (2006) dengan indikator seperti: Refleksi Metateoretis, Kondisi Transendental, dan Kompetensi Reflektif penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif terhadap 37 data yang ditemukan dan dipublikasikan pada tahun 2025. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Kompetensi Reflektif merupakan sense yang paling dominan, yang mengindikasikan bahwa periset secara aktif memantau dan mengelola tindak komunikatif mereka melalui penanda linguistik yang eksplisit. Kondisi Transendental muncul melalui penanda penyelarasan seperti "hot take" dan "unpopular opinion" yang berfungsi untuk menciptakan landasan bersama serta mengantisipasi respons pembaca. Selain itu, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa strategi mitigasi merupakan manifestasi dari Kompetensi Reflektif yang diwujudkan melalui penggunaan penanda hedges, bushes, dan shields. Strategi-strategi ini memungkinkan periset untuk melemahkan klaim mereka dan mengantisipasi potensi konflik. Temuan ini tidak hanya menunjukkan bahwa ekspresi metapragmatik berfungsi sebagai fitur linguistik, tetapi juga sebagai strategi dalam mempertahankan hubungan interpersonal dan konstruksi identitas dalam komunitas digital.

مستخلص

رسالة "Letterboxd أريادي، رجال عارف) 2026". (تحليل ما وراء التداولية في نصوص مراجعات الأفلام على منصة بكالوريوس. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية في مالانج. المشرف: د. هـ. جوكو سوسانتو، ماجستير التربية، دكتوراه

مراجعات الأفلام، Letterboxd، الكلمات المفتاحية: ما وراء التداولية، التخفيف، الخطاب الرقمي

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل ثلاث معاني ميتابراغماتية في نصوص مراجعات الأفلام على منصة Letterboxd، مع التركيز على كيفية خلق المراجعين للمعنى، والتفاوض حول الهوية الاجتماعية، والتخفيف من تقويض مطالباتهم التقييمية في الخطاب الرقمي. استنادا إلى الإطار الثلاثي الميتابراغماتي الذي قدمه كافي (2006) مع مؤشرات مثل: التأمل الميتانظري، الحالات المتسامية، والكفاءة التأملية، تستخدم هذه الدراسة نهجا نوعيا لمعالجة 37 بيانات تم العثور عليها ونشرها في عام 2025. تظهر نتائج البحث أن الكفاءة التأملية هي المعنى الأكثر هيمنة، مما يشير إلى أن الباحثين يراقبون ويديرون أفعالهم التواصلية بنشاط من خلال علامات لغوية صريحة. تظهر الحالة المتعالية من خلال علامات التوافق مثل "الرأي الساخن" و"الرأي غير الشعبي" التي تهدف إلى خلق أرضية مشتركة وتوقع رد فعل القارئ. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، وجدت هذه الدراسة أن استراتيجيات التخفيف هي تجسيد للكفاءة التأملية التي تتحقق من خلال استخدام الأسوار، والشجيرات، وعلامات الدروع. تسمح هذه الاستراتيجيات للباحثين بإضعاف ادعاءاتهم وتوقع النزاعات المحتملة. تشير هذه النتائج ليس فقط إلى أن التعبير الميتابراغماتي يخدم كميزة لغوية، بل أيضا كاستراتيجية للحفاظ على العلاقات الشخصية وبناء الهوية في المجتمعات الرقمية.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this section, the researcher discusses the introduction of the study. This section includes the background of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study, and definitions of key terms. In this chapter, the researcher also mentions several previous studies.

A. Background of the Study

Digital platforms including Letterboxd have experienced a major transformation through film review activities which evolved from professional cinematic analysis to individualized content that combines comedic elements with personal thoughts and ironic statements. The changing nature of reviews in linguistic pragmatics creates an essential research challenge because scientists need to understand the meaning behind statements like "it's not a review, it's just a vent" and "this is just my opinion" which contain only film evaluations. The fast-paced digital communication system faces challenges because conventional linguistic analysis methods struggle to understand its meaning. Research has studied politeness and speech acts in social media extensively but it lacks sufficient analysis of how writers use Metapragmatic awareness to create their language in this specific film review environment. The lack of research about these linguistic strategies in this specific digital cinephile communities makes this phenomenon an urgent

academic matter because it remains unexplained how these strategies affect identity construction and reader perception and interpretation practices.

Letterboxd is a social media platform that specially made for *film lovers community*, often referred as cinephiles. The founders, Matt Buchanan and Karl von Randownm are film enthusiast who made Letterboxd as their part-time way to appreciate their love through film (Purwadhika, 2025). Letterboxd's growth and unique position within the digital film review ecosystem provide a strong contextual foundation for this linguistic research. The Letterboxd platform experienced exponential user growth, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, which shifted film-viewing habits to home. From approximately 1.8 million users in January 2020, the number jumped to 3 million in January 2021 (M. Heath, 2021) and continued to grow consistently, reaching 10 million users in September 2023 (Carlos, 2023) and 17 million by the end of 2024 (Heath, 2024). This sustained growth not only reflects the platform's widespread adoption but also indicates the formation of an active and productive digital community producing written discourse about films, providing a rich and dynamic corpus of linguistic data for analysis.

The reason for choosing Letterboxd, rather than larger platforms like IMDb or Rotten Tomatoes, lies in its unique social and linguistic nature. Fundamentally, Letterboxd is designed as a social network for film lovers that prioritizes community interaction, while IMDb functions more as a comprehensive film database and Rotten Tomatoes as an aggregator of professional critic ratings (K.

Philip, 2023). This fundamental difference shapes the language practices within it. Unlike Rotten Tomatoes, where the film reviews can only be written by professional film critics, Letterboxd users can write reviews of any film regardless of their backgrounds, making it seem like a social media platform. Letterboxd's film reviews encourage subjective expression, a highly personal writing style, and the construction of digital identities through language from in-depth analysis to humorous one-liners (Lawson, 2023). In an academic perspective, particularly in linguistics scope, film reviews on Letterboxd are important because they show a high Metapragmatics awareness. The reviewers are not simply expressing their opinion, but consciously manage their own language to mitigate social risk. This phenomenon is proven from the domination of reflective competence that is found in dozens of reviews, where reviewers use markers such as *"I think"*, *"Maybe"*, or *"Just my Opinion"* to weaken their claim or criticism.

Based on Caffi's (2006) three-sense framework of Metapragmatics, analysis of reviews on the Letterboxd platform reveals three main manifestations of Metapragmatic awareness. 1.) Metatheoretical Reflection emerges when the reviewer consciously questions and negotiates the nature and boundaries of the "film review" genre itself. 2.) Transcendental condition realized in reviewers' efforts to build and maintain the social foundation that makes a possible communication, such as community norms and solidarity; this phenomenon is clearly visible in the use of alignment markers. 3.) Reflective competence is the most linguistically visible sense, where the reviewers show the ability to monitor and direct an interaction. These three senses often overlap in an utterance, for

example a disclaimer *"This is just a shitpost disguised as a review, don't take it seriously"* simultaneously challenges philosophical conventions, establishes a relaxed common ground, and demonstrates the writer's reflective competence in managing self-impression.. The wide range of utterances proves that Metapragmatic awareness exists at multiple levels which conventional pragmatic studies have not studied insufficiently while showing the requirement for detailed research about these utterances and how reviewers on Letterboxd use certain phrases to diminish the strength of their claims or criticisms.

Research studies have investigated Metapragmatic awareness through different digital environments. Multiple researchers have studied Metapragmatic awareness as a linguistic concept through extensive analytical work. Research on Metapragmatics in educational settings has been conducted by Derakhshan & Eslami (2020) who tested visual input methods to improve language learners' understanding of implicatures. Goddard & Levisen (2023) studied the semantic evolution of "sarcasm" between English and Danish to demonstrate how Metapragmatics requires cultural understanding. Chen (2024) studied Metapragmatic language use in responses to unfavorable reviews which appeared on TripAdvisor and other similar platforms. The research shows business agents employ Metapragmatic utterances to create mutual understanding and modify the importance of their messages. The research study has restrictions because it studies business communication only while omitting the ways reviewers use Metapragmatics to build their social identity with community reviews.

The research by Usó & Martínez (2021) demonstrated that film analysis help students develop their Metapragmatic abilities. The researchers in language education discovered that film dialogues enable students to learn about pragmatic elements and develop their Metapragmatic skills. The research focuses on educational settings and did not analyze user development of review genre awareness and Metapragmatic awareness in digital communities. Researchers have conducted new studies to analyze digital environment that not only use Metapragmatics theory, but also use stance-taking practices. Grosser (2023) studies Metapragmatic discourse and stance-taking among Japanese speakers to show how Metapragmatic awareness affects social position development. The researcher only focus on how the implementations of Metapragmatics are used by non-native English, Although focused on Japanese speakers, this research still falls within the realm of digital/contemporary discourse analysis. Its presence in this research indicates that discussions of Metapragmatics have spread across various digital linguistic communities, and my research on Letterboxd is both a continuation and a specialization of this trend into a unique English-language platform niche. This helps researcher within the broader academic map of Metapragmatics in the digital world.

The existing research contains multiple important restrictions. The research by Liu (2021) and Andries et al. (2024) focuses on particular communication environments yet fails to study the distinctive characteristics of niche cultural platforms. The existing research shows broad coverage across different fields yet scientists have not studied how Metapragmatic awareness interact in Letterboxd's

unique blend of film criticism and personal and humorous content (Chen, 2024; García, 2023). Evidence from recent studies shows that niche community platforms such as Letterboxd have become an important space for the construction of digital identity through specific linguistic practices (García, 2023). Previous research has demonstrated that digital communication within specific communities creates distinctive linguistic patterns that have not been fully mapped in conventional pragmatic studies (Liu, 2021). The existing research gap demands a thorough analysis of how these linguistic elements unite in amateur film reviews that appear on digital platforms.

Research about Metapragmatic utterances which people use to analyze their own language in digital environments continues to grow. The research by Derakhshan & Eslami (2020) demonstrates how visual input enhances Metapragmatic awareness to help language learners identify implicatures. The research by Goddard & Levisen (2023) examines how the semantic meaning of "sarcasm" changes between English and Danish to show that Metapragmatics requires cultural understanding.

The research by Chen (2024) examines how people use Metapragmatic utterances when they respond to negative reviews on TripAdvisor and other similar platforms. The research by Usó & Martínez (2021) examines how film analysis helps students develop their Metapragmatic skills. The research investigates language education methods for teaching pragmatics and Metapragmatics through film dialogue analysis. The researchers discovered that film dialogue enables

students to learn about actual pragmatic elements which appear in authentic communication situations while developing their Metapragmatic skills through better understanding of implicature utterances and politeness rules and implied meanings. The research study has limitations because it restricts its analysis to educational film usage without exploring other review platforms. The research fails to investigate how users learn about review categories and their methods of taking community positions during film reviews and how digital platforms merge Metapragmatic elements with user social characteristics.

The research by Elfrida (2025) examines film discourse through a systematic review of pragmatic analyses about presuppositions in cinematic dialogue and storytelling. The research investigates film discourse through pragmatic studies of presuppositions which appear in film dialogue and narrative content. The research demonstrates that existential and factive and lexical presuppositions function to create narrative structure and cultural background while Yule's theory remains the primary method for analysis. The research study focuses on narrative elements and implicatures in user-generated film content instead of analyzing user reviews and their Metapragmatic utterances which include review comments and reviewer identity construction in film review communities. The research by Chen (2024) investigates how Metapragmatic utterances help users handle intercultural business relationships through their responses to negative reviews on TripAdvisor. The researcher discovered that business agents employ Metapragmatic utterances (MPEs) to create interpersonal effects by using them for building common ground and adjusting salience to achieve better customer

relationship maintenance. The research fails to investigate how reviewers use Metapragmatics to establish their social identity and authority and it lacks a detailed analysis of reviewer positioning relative to their audience and review community standards and film review categories. The existing body of research about Metapragmatic utterances has expanded across multiple digital communication platforms. Based on the literature review, research on Metapragmatic utterances has developed across various digital communication domains, but still leaves a gap in specific platform contexts such as Letterboxd.

The study by Khazdouzian (2025) in his dissertation entitled "Senior EFL Learners' (Meta)Pragmatic Awareness of Suggestions: A Multiple Case Study on the Role of Audiovisual Materials and Individual Differences" investigated Metapragmatic awareness in senior learners with a focus on suggestions. The research highlights the importance of learner agency in L2 pragmatics as well as the need for teaching approaches tailored to the characteristics of older learners.

Liu and Liu (2021) studied metapragmatic utterances in customer complaint responses to show how these utterances function as tools for adjusting mutual understanding and handling relationships between people. Derakhshan & Shaki (2020) demonstrates the need for pragmatic competence and Metapragmatic awareness in international communication but focuses on educational aspects. Grosser (2023) studied Metapragmatic discourse and stance-taking among Japanese speakers to show how Metapragmatic awareness enables people to create social positions. The Letterboxd platform serves as a social environment which unites film

evaluation with comedic elements and personal identity display thus establishing a substantial research opportunity.. The synthesis of these previous studies reveals that although various aspects of Metapragmatics have been investigated, the integration of these two linguistic phenomena in a niche community like Letterboxd has not received sufficient attention. Therefore, this research have a purpose to fill this gap investigate how metapragmattics utterances integrate in construct reviewers' subjective positions and social identities in Letterboxd.

The findings from these studies are consistent in demonstrating that Metapragmatic utterances serve as strategies for managing interpersonal relationships, moderating speech, and negotiating meaning in online interactions. However, a weakness of existing studies lies in their focus, which has not yet reached niche community platforms like Letterboxd. Previous studies have focused more on general social media (Facebook), business review platforms (TripAdvisor), or educational contexts. As a result, the unique characteristics of the Letterboxd community, where the boundaries between film criticism, personal journaling, humor, and identity expression are blurred, have not received adequate attention. This gap makes this research on Metapragmatic utterances in film reviews on Letterboxd becomes essential because it addresses an unexplored area in existing academic literature.

Based on a comprehensive review of previous studies, a significant research gap has been identified, which is the focus of this research. Although the study on Metapragmatic utterances already growing rapidly in various context of digital

communication. Previous studies like the analysis about Metapragmatic Expressions in Business Reviews have not specifically discussed the unique linguistic dynamics in niche film review platforms like Letterboxd. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by systematically examine how Metapragmatic Utterances integrate in constructing reviewers' position and subjective identity in the Letterboxd community. In doing this research, the research aims in the main education gap that appear from a complete assessment of previous studies. Studies about Metapragmatic already spread to various digital communication platforms, However, many researcher have not yet study this elements specifically in Letterboxd, or any film reviews context. This research examine how metapragmatics cooperate to create reviewers position and subjective identity in Letterboxd community

The Metapragmatics theory developed by Caffi (2006) studied the language consciousness in face to face communication. The application of this theoretical framework of digital content writing in social media platform produce new different knowledge from previous studies' findings. Written digital communication operates differently than face-to-face communication according to Herring (2004). Face-to-face communication tends to emphasize uniformity and providing codified utterances through a well-established language system, whether in the form of characters, syllables, or composite forms. Although these theories were originally developed for spoken contexts, their application to digital written discourse has been widely explored in contemporary digital linguistics studies (Barton & Lee, 2013; Tagg, 2015)

On the other hand, Herring (2004) assumes that digital communication is fundamentally different from face-to-face communication. Digital communication has specific characteristics that combine elements of writing with the spontaneity of oral conversation. The level of digital communication is more spontaneous compared to formal face-to-face communication. In other words, digital communication occupies a position between planned writing and spontaneous conversation. Therefore, Herring (2004) argues that digital communication is a form of writing that contains conversational elements. This study provides additional data in the form of written texts that have conversational characteristics. Review authors produce texts that are not entirely spontaneous but also not entirely planned. Before writing a review, platform users are aware of community norms and reader expectations. In other words, In other words Caffi's Metapragmatic theory can be considered appropriate tools for this research because they are able to analyze both aspects of Metapragmatic awareness and social positioning in digital communication data.

B. Research Question

This research consist of two research questions:

1. What senses of metapragmatic utterances are used in Letterboxd film reviews?
2. How these reviews that contain metapragmatic use certain utterances to weaken the strength of their claims or criticisms?

C. Significance of the Study

The research investigates how Metapragmatic utterances appear in film reviews which users post on Letterboxd. The research investigates the linguistic features which operate in digital platforms through their usage in casual review-based communities. Metapragmatic awareness serve as essential tools for creating interpersonal meaning across different communication environments. The research investigates the essential role which these linguistic elements play when people interact through digital communities.

The research delivers essential findings which help scholars who investigate digital Metapragmatic patterns in discourse aspect. The research findings will help students and readers and lecturers understand how language reflection functions in modern digital environments through film review platforms. The research study delivers important knowledge to digital platform users and developers who work on Letterboxd. The research findings about linguistic mechanisms help community members understand how language selection affects social identity and community standards. The research results will help platform developers create better features and community engagement strategies which match user communication patterns. The research study contributes theoretical value to digital pragmatics as a field of study.

By examining the intersection between Metapragmatic utterances and attitude-taking in specific digital communities, this research expands the scope of pragmatic theory application to include informal online discourse. These findings

are expected to contribute to the existing literature on digital communication patterns and community-specific language practices.

D. Scope and Limitation

This study is categorized as digital discourse analysis research that focuses on the function of Metapragmatic utterances mechanisms that appear in film reviews on the Letterboxd platform based on Caffi's (2006) Metapragmatic theory. The object of this study only includes English-language film reviews written by users on the Letterboxd platform, with a specific focus on reviews that contain Metapragmatic utterances such as “just my thoughts,” “not a real review,” or similar statements that reflect language awareness. Therefore, data that does not contain Metapragmatic utterances will be excluded from the analysis to ensure that the research findings remain focused on the issue under study.

This study is limited to two main aspects: (1) identification of senses of Metapragmatic utterances, and (2) their contribution to the construction of social identity in the Letterboxd community. Thus, this study is limited to answering the research questions that have been formulated, without entering into broader sociological or anthropological aspects related to the practice of watching films as a whole.

This study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, methodologically, the research is limited to linguistic text analysis without considering users' demographic data or their interaction history on the platform, which might influence their communication strategies or other topic outside this

research analysis. Second, contextually, the research does not enter sociological aspects such as the cultural background and social class of reviewers, as well as anthropological aspects related to film watching practices as a broader cultural phenomenon. Third, this research focuses on Metapragmatic utterances without analyzing multimodal elements or the evolution of community norms over time and not determine the concrete rating of the film. Fourth, the analysis only focus on the review text not the comment of the review and how much likes does the review have. Finally, as a generalization, the unique characteristics of Letterboxd users restrict how these results can be applied to different social media platforms across different cultural settings. Research can create meaningful contributions to digital pragmatics through these recognized boundaries which will enable future studies to address these constraints.

E. Definition of Key terms

This section contains key terms and their definitions as follows:

1. Metapragmatic: a linguistic device that used to reflect and comment on the use of language itself in communication, such as the phrases “this is just my personal opinion” or “this is not an official review,” which indicate the writer's awareness of how they are conveying their message.
2. Film Review: a text or a piece of writing that contains an analysis, interpretation, and assessments of a film. The main purpose is to provide an overview, information,

and help readers or viewers assess the quality of a film before they decide to watch it.

3. Letterboxd: social media and social networking platform specifically for film lovers that allows users to share film reviews, rate films, create film lists, and interact with other film lovers in the community.

4. Digital Film Review: a genre of digital text written by film platform users to convey evaluations, personal responses, critiques, or comments on a film in the form of writing published online.

5. Digital Media Discourse: a form of communication and language exchange that occurs through digital media, particularly in the context of online platforms that facilitate interaction through written text.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this section, the researcher presents a discussion related to the previous study, such as the literature theory and the object that correlated with this research topic. Furthermore, the researcher explains the types of Metapragmatic utterances for the framework. In addition, this chapter also includes the theory of Metapragmatics proposed by Caffi(2006), which has become the main framework of this study. Besides, the researcher also writes down the understanding of the Letterboxd platform.

A. Metapragmatics

Metapragmatics is a study of “language within language” or speakers’ conscious reflection on their own language use in communication (Caffi, 2006). It involves the capacity to reflect and regulate communicative behavior, including the ability to comment, frame, or modify utterances in response to contextual demands (Caffi, 2006). Essentially, Metapragmatics operate at a level of abstraction while pragmatics examines how meaning is produced in context, Metapragmatics examines how speakers demonstrate awareness towards that meaning production process.

Meanwhile, pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies the meaning in context, such as how speakers use language to convey specific meaning, achieve communication goals, and interpret utterance based on the situation of the speakers.

(Yule, 1996). Pragmatics focus on what speakers do with language, such as speech acts of praising, criticize, or recommending, and how the context influence the interpretation of meaning. Meanwhile, Metapragmatics is a higher level of analysis, it is a study about speakers awareness of their own language use (Caffi, 2006). Metapragmatics examine how speakers consciously reflects, comment on, and manage their communicative acts. In other words , the language they use to discuss language itself. If pragmatics ask “*What does the speakers mean by this sutterance?*”, the Metapragmatics asks “*why does the speakers feel the need to add comments like ‘in my personal opinian’ or ‘this is not an official review’ before express their opinion?*”. Thus, in the context of film reviews on Letterboxd, pragmatics analysis will focus on how reviewer they praise or criticize film, while Metapragmatics will focus on how reviewer frame these critics with disclaimers, hedges or several alignment as a form of their conscioun on social norms and interpersonal risk in digital communication.

Therefore, this study is specifically designed to fill this gap. By focusing on Letterboxd as a digital discourse, the study will investigate how Metapragmatic utterances such as disclaimers like “*not a formal review*” or markers like “*unpopular opinion*” not only function as tools for interaction management, but more broadly, are strategically used by amateur users to construct social identity, negotiate community norms, and moderate their evaluative claims within a homogeneous interest-sharing space. Accordingly, the findings of this study are expected to contribute both empirically and theoretically to the understanding of

Metapragmatic practices in niche digital communities that have been largely unexplored.

After mapping the development of Metapragmatic research in various context, it is important to delve into the main theoretical foundation that will have a function as analytical tool in this research. To analyse Metapragmatic utterances in Letterboxd review deeply, conceptual framework is required, it is not only able to identify the linguistic form, but also explain the level of awareness and social function. Metapragmatic theory as stated by Claudia Caffi (2006) offer comprehensive framework through its division into three senses.

B. Senses of Metapragmatics

To analyze the 1st research question, Claudia Caffi's Three Senses of Metapragmatics provides the theoretical foundation that distinguishes her framework (Caffi in Chaemsaitong, 2022). Generally, the word "*sense*" (in English) refers to the ability to understand, assess, or become aware of something through perception or thought. It can also refer to a particular way or perspective of viewing or interpreting a phenomenon. It is in this context that Caffi borrows this term. The term "*senses*" (aspects or dimensions) here is not interpreted as "*types*," but rather indicates three distinct but interconnected analytical perspectives or ways of understanding the same phenomenon: Metapragmatic awareness. In other words, for Caffi, "*senses*" are conceptual lenses that allow us to see the different dimensions or "*feelings*" of a communication act, rather than compartmentalizing them. This use of "*senses*" differs from the concept of "*types*," which typically

refers to separate and distinct categories or classifications. Caffi's "*senses*" are not classifications of utterance types, but rather overlapping layers of consciousness within a single speech act. This concept offers three analytical perspectives: (1) metatheoretical reflection on the philosophical assumptions of pragmatic analysis (Caffi, 2006); (2) transcendental conditions as social prerequisites for communication (Caffi, 2006); and (3) reflective competence, namely the speaker's practical ability to monitor and manage interactions (Caffi, 2006).

The concept of "Three Senses of Metapragmatics" proposed by Claudia Caffi (2006) is used in this study as an analytical basis to answer the first research question regarding "*senses of Metapragmatic utterances.*" Caffi herself distinguishes the terms "*senses*" instead "*types*" where "*senses*" refers to overlapping analytical perspectives in Metapragmatic awareness, while "*types*" tends to refer to discrete categories, this framework is operationalized into functional categories that allow for the systematic identification of variations in Metapragmatic utterances in Letterboxd reviews.

Although Claudia Caffi's (2006) three 'senses' framework provides a foundational philosophical perspective for understanding Metapragmatic awareness, empirical analysis requires the operationalization of these senses into identifiable linguistic categories. Following the methodology of researchers like Liu (2017), who categorize Metapragmatics into functional types such as commentary and evidential to analyze discourse management, this study will develop a tailored typology to systematically code data from Letterboxd reviews. This integrated approach allows for the systematic identification of utterances

(addressing the 1st research question) while interpreting them through the reflective dimension of Caffi's framework to explain their strategic use in mitigation and identity construction (Marco & Arguedas, 2021).

These three senses, metatheoretical reflection, transcendental conditions, and reflective competence, serve as the basis for grouping utterances based on their social function and the dominant level of linguistic awareness in an utterance. For example, an utterance like "just my opinion" can be categorized as a form of reflective competence, while "unpopular opinion" reflects an attempt to construct transcendental conditions. This approach allows researchers not only to register linguistic forms but also to explain the mechanisms of awareness, interactional strategies, and social purposes behind the use of these utterances. Thus, Caffi's sense framework serves as a dynamic and contextual analytical tool to answer questions about Metapragmatic types of utterance, while maintaining the integrity of the analysis by acknowledging the layeredness and complexity of meaning in the practices of digital communities such as Letterboxd.

These three "senses" are not separate categories, but rather three overlapping layers of consciousness within a single speech act (Chaemsaitong, 2022). Therefore, "senses" serve as analytical tools to explain the mechanisms behind meaning production, while "meaning" is the outcome or product of the communication process, which is also framed by these mechanisms. For example, in the context of a Letterboxd review, a disclaimer can be analyzed through all three lenses simultaneously: as a challenge to genre conventions (metatheoretical reflection), an attempt to establish common ground (transcendental condition), and

a strategy for managing self-image (reflective competence). Thus, the strength of Caffi's (2006) framework lies in its ability to integrate philosophical, social, and linguistic-practical analyses into a single, coherent model.

2.1. Metatheoretical Reflection

The first sense in Caffi's framework (2006) is philosophical and fundamental, referring to the speaker's ability to reflect on the metatheoretical assumptions underlying their communicative actions. In practice, metatheoretical reflection manifests itself when reviewers explicitly question, negotiate, or even reject conventional boundaries of what counts as a 'film review'. For example, when a Letterboxd user opens their post with “This isn't a proper review, just my incoherent thoughts,” they aren't simply evaluating a film they're actively reflecting on and redefining the genre itself. Such statements demonstrate an awareness of established norms for reviewing (e.g., structured analysis, critical distance) and a conscious choice to deviate from them, thus placing their writing within a more personal, informal, or diary-like genre.

On the practical level, Metatheoretical Reflection is manifested when a speaker consciously questions, comments on, or negotiates the boundaries of the genre and communication norms they are using. On the Letterboxd platform, this becomes very prominent due to its community culture that encourages personal expression beyond the conventions of formal film criticism. A reviewer not only evaluates the film but also actively reflects on and redefines what they are doing. Statements such as 'This is not a review,

just venting' or 'Just consider this a diary entry for this film' are not merely an introduction, but a powerful Metapragmatic act. With that sentence, the writer consciously rejects the authority and conventional structure of a 'review' and instead frames their writing in a more personal and fluid genre. This act demonstrates a high awareness that there is a norm (an 'expected review') and they intentionally choose to deviate from it. Such reflection becomes key to understanding how the identity of an 'amateur reviewer' or 'ordinary film enthusiast' is constructed, namely, by consciously distinguishing oneself from professional critique discourse.

2.2. Transcendental Conditions

The second sense shifts from philosophical reflection to social prerequisites. Transcendental Conditions refer to the speaker's active efforts to build and maintain a common ground that serves as the foundation for an interaction to proceed cooperatively (Caffi, 2006). This foundation includes basic trust, shared knowledge, agreed-upon communication goals, and community norms. In online communities such as Letterboxd, where interactions take place between strangers united by similar interests, establishing these transcendental conditions becomes a crucial and ongoing task. Metapragmatic utterances function as explicit social navigation tools for this purpose (Caffi, 2006). Before expressing opinions that may be controversial, a reviewer will use alignment markers to map their position on the community's value map. Phrases like 'I know this is an unpopular opinion...', 'Brace yourselves, hot take incoming:', or 'Am I the only one who

thought...?" serves a dual function. First, this utterance acknowledges the existence of a community consensus (for example, that a particular film is generally liked). Second, it simultaneously asserts the subjective position of the writer, which deviates from that consensus. Thus, the writer not only conveys criticism but first negotiates 'permission' to disagree by recognizing the prevailing norm. This is a strategy to minimize the risk of conflict (face-threatening act) and maintain solidarity among fellow members of the film-loving community, even if they have different tastes (Letterboxd, 2023). An analysis of this strategy will reveal how virtual community bonds are maintained through language, even in statements that appear subjective and personal.

2.3. Reflective Competence

The third sense that becomes the operational focus of empirical research. Here, Caffi shifts from the realm of possibilities to actual language practice. Reflective competence is the speaker's ability to "step outside" the flow of communication, monitor the process, and comment on it using language. This ability manifests in explicit linguistic signs that serve as your research data. Caffi (2006) emphasizes that Metapragmatic utterances (such as "I'm not an expert, but..." or "This might sound harsh") function as interaction management strategies. They manage expectations, moderate claims, build or maintain face, and negotiate social relationships among participants. In discourse analysis, these signs are visible traces of the speaker's awareness and strategies. Research in this domain, including studies on oral traditions and

social texts, showing how Metapragmatic utterances reveal ideology and regulate behavior within a cultural community. In the context of Letterboxd, the analysis of utterances such as "just my two cents" is not merely about categorizing their types, but about uncovering how reviewers strategically construct their identities (as humble individuals, as ordinary fans versus critics), manage the risks of their subjective judgments, and align with or diverge from community norms.

C. Reflective Competence Framework to Weaken the Claims of Criticism

To analyze the way of how reviewers on Letterboxd weaken their claims or criticisms according to the 2nd research question, this study adopts the specific framework from Caffi's three senses of Metapragmatics, which is the manifestation of Reflective Competence through her work on Mitigation. Caffi distinguishes three types of mitigation strategies based on the scope of mitigation, which component of the utterance is reduced in force (Caffi, 2007, pp. 85-90). Mitigation is not about being 'polite' or 'impolite' in an ethical sense, but about managing the interpersonal risks inherent in communication. It is a set of linguistic strategies for modulating the force of utterances to achieve social goals. (Caffi, 2007) These three categories are bushes, hedges, and shields, each operating at a different linguistic level.

First, bushes operate at the propositional or content level. These strategies reduce the precision or certainty of propositions by making statements less specific, vague, or imprecise (Caffi, 2007, p. 92). In practice, bushes are manifested through utterances such as "kinda," "sort of," "roughly," or "a little" (Albelda & Estellés, 2021). When a reviewer writes, *"The pacing was a bit slow"* or *"It's kind of*

overrated," they are using hedges to soften the criticism without changing the essence of the evaluation. By making the proposition less harsh, hedges allow the reviewer to convey dissatisfaction without sounding too absolute or dogmatic, thus reducing the potential for conflict with readers who may have differing opinions.

Second, hedges operate at the illocutionary level, or the force of the speech act. This strategy reduces the illocutionary force and the speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition being conveyed (Caffi, 2007, p. 98). Hedges are manifested through phrases such as "I think," "maybe," "I feel," or "I suppose" (Flores, 2020). In the context of Letterboxd, phrases like "I think the cinematography is stunning" or "Maybe I missed something, but..." indicate that the writer is aware of the subjectivity of their opinion and is open to alternative interpretations. By weakening the force of the assertive speech act, hedges communicate epistemic humility and invite dialogue, not debate.

Third, shields operate at the level of the source (deictic origin). This strategy reduces the speaker's responsibility by obscuring or shifting the source of the utterance, thereby "protecting" the speaker from potential attacks if their statement is incorrect or unpopular (Caffi, 2007, p. 105). Shields are manifested through phrases such as "in my personal opinion," "people say," "I heard," or "I read somewhere" (Villalba, 2020). In Letterboxd reviews, common examples are "This is just my personal opinion, but..." or "People are saying the ending is confusing." By using a shield, the reviewer either avoids taking full ownership of the controversial statement or shifts some responsibility to an external source, thus protecting their face from social risk.

These three categories are not mutually exclusive and often occur together in a single utterance (Caffi, 2007, p. 115). For example, the phrase "I think this is just my personal opinion, but the film was a bit overrated" contains all three elements: hedge ("I think"), shield ("just my personal opinion"), and bush ("a bit"). Using Caffi's (2007) framework, this study not only identify whether reviewers use Reflective Competence marker, but also to explain which aspects of the utterance they mitigate (message content, illocutionary force, or utterance source) and why they choose that strategy in the social context of Letterboxd. This analysis answer the 2nd research question while strengthening theoretical coherence with the main foundation of the study rooted in Caffi's Metapragmatic framework.

D. Letterboxd as Digital Discourse

Letterboxd operates as a social media which allows film lovers to write reviews and rate films and build film lists while connecting with fellow cinema enthusiasts. The platform shows how digital technology has revolutionized film criticism by transforming personal content that unites humor with personal thoughts and sarcastic remarks into professional film analysis (Chen, 2024).

Based on the researcher opinion it show that Letterboxd along with other specialized community platforms serve as essential digital spaces where users build their online identities through particular language usage (Garcia, 2023). Previous research has shown that digital communication within particular communities generates distinctive linguistic patterns that have not been fully mapped in conventional pragmatic studies (Liu, 2021). The impact of this communication phenomenon not only shapes how digital communities evaluate cultural products

but also profoundly influences the construction of individual social identity and the norms of the digital community itself (Dahaam, 2023).

Theoretically, the value of a platform like Letterboxd is also built on user generated content, which represents a high level of Metapragmatic awareness (Usó & Martínez, 2021). Socially, this content contributes to the formation of a digital cinephile community, where members are connected through specific linguistic utterances and genre reflexivity (Grosser, 2023). Therefore, it is an academic responsibility to fill the research gap on this phenomenon, given that integrative analysis of Metapragmatic within digital film review communities remains an underexplored area (Derakhshan & Eslami, 2020), particularly in the context of specific platforms like Letterboxd, which exhibit unique linguistic characteristics.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter provides a scientific method with a specific purpose to assist the writer in collecting, designing, analyzing, and getting the data source. Therefore this chapter includes research design, research instrument, data and data source, data collection, and data analysis.

A. Research Design

This research used qualitative research as an approach because the data is obtained in the form of words (Creswell, 2017). The main purpose of qualitative methods is to develop a subjective approach used to describe a phenomenon and give meaning (Creswell, 2017). Qualitative methods are also described as research that collects data in the form of words or images rather than numbers (Creswell, 2017). According to Rahardjo (2020), qualitative research is used to develop knowledge using constructivist concepts by extracting meaning from events through the actions of research subjects. Qualitative research, especially research on language, is always related to humans as agents (Podesva & Sharma, 2014). Humans as agents are represented in qualitative research methodology as speakers, writers, readers, or listeners related to the language in question (Creswell, 2017).

This study aims to understand the function of language, especially Metapragmatic utterances in the context of film review texts on the Letterboxd platform. Furthermore, this study also uses a descriptive inquiry design to explore

significant descriptions of research data. The descriptive approach is an inquiry design in which researchers develop in-depth descriptive analysis through data. The purpose of the qualitative method is to discover the nature of specific phenomena in the study (Lambert & Lambert, 2012).

This research describes the current phenomenon of Metapragmatic utterances and mitigation strategies in film reviews. Therefore, the text analysis method provides a descriptive summary of the study containing data collection, including document data, examination data, observation data, and note data. Unlike other qualitative approaches, the qualitative method focuses on data collection and analysis. In addition, the author elaborates on the text analysis approach with the Metapragmatic theory proposed by Caffi (2006) in analyzing research data.

B. Research Instrument

According to Rahardjo (2020) the researcher acts as the key instrument, actively engaging with the data to find patterns and meanings embedded in the participants' language use. Furthermore, qualitative research is characterized by its naturalistic and descriptive orientation. The research instrument in this study was the researcher himself, who acted as an instrument to collect all data through observation of film reviews on the Letterboxd platform. Therefore, the researcher played a crucial role in collecting, analyzing, and classifying the data.

In addition. The research employed two main instruments which were data recording devices and Microsoft Words software to create a table. The researcher started by look at the film review texts on Letterboxd before collecting the data to

document the observations. The data is from user generated content from Letterboxd platform reviews when users write their film reviews. The researcher uses Microsoft Words software to help gathering and organize the Metapragmatic utterances which users indicate through their utterances.

C. Data and Data Source

The research of the data consists of user written content from Letterboxd platform users who create film reviews. The data sources uses all publicly available review content from Letterboxd to analyze Metapragmatic utterances according to Caffi (2006). The researcher used deep observation to collect written statements from each review author who fulfilled research requirements.

The data for this study consist of film reviews that used English language, which publicly available on the Letterboxd platform. To ensure relevance to the research questions, several inclusion criteria are applied. First, reviews must contain explicit Metapragmatic utterances, such as disclaimers ("this is not a review"), epistemic markers ("I think," "maybe"), alignment markers ("unpopular opinion," "hot take"), or other phrases that reflect the writer's awareness of their communicative act (Caffi, 2006). Second, only reviews published during 2025 and not based on the year of the film released are selected, but based on the published film review in the Data Collection section, as this period represents the most recent and stabilized Metapragmatic practices within the community. Third, reviews must be at least one sentence in length; one-liners and emoji-only reviews are excluded as they typically lack sufficient linguistic material for in-depth Metapragmatic

analysis. Reviews that do not contain any Metapragmatic utterances, or are written in languages other than English, are excluded from the corpus. This purposive sampling strategy ensures that the collected data directly addresses both research questions while maintaining focus on the phenomena under investigation.

The research participants consisted of unidentified users who created English reviews on Letterboxd (<https://letterboxd.com/>). The research used Letterboxd as its data source because this platform demonstrates how digital technology has transformed film review work from professional analysis to individual content creation that combines comedy with personal thoughts and ironic statements (Chen, 2024).

The selection of digital film reviews as a data source is based on the unique characteristics of digital communication, which presents written forms with the spontaneity of spoken conversation (Herring, 2004). The impact of this communication phenomenon not only shapes how digital communities evaluate cultural products, but also has a profound influence on the construction of individual social identities and the norms of the digital community itself (Dahaam, 2023). Theoretically, the value of a platform such as Letterboxd is also built by user-generated content that represents a high level of Metapragmatic awareness (Usó & Martínez, 2021). Socially, this content contributes to the formation of a digital cinephile community, where members connect through specific linguistic utterances and genre reflexivity (Grosser, 2023). Therefore, it is an academic responsibility to fill the research gap on this phenomenon, considering that integrative analysis Metapragmatics in digital film review sharing communities is

still an under-explored area (Derakhshan & Eslami, 2020), especially in the context of specific platforms such as Letterboxd, which present unique linguistic characteristics.

D. Data Collection

The researcher collected the data by accessing the Letterboxd platform on the websites and used web scraping techniques to collect data. This method of data collection approach was applied to strengthen the validity and reliability of the analysis (Creswell, 2017). According Rahardjo (2020), the quality and credibility of a study are largely determined by a systematic data collection process. The author used several stages to collect data.

First, the researcher select the data from the film reviews that published on January-December 2025. This selection based on the evolution of review styles observed since 2020 (Heath, 2021, 2024; Carlos, 2023). By 2025, review style is expected to reach a point where Metapragmatic awareness and have become established norms, making data from this year ideal for assessing the latest phase of this dynamic. Thus, the use of 2025 data ensures depth of analysis, temporal validity, and the research's ability to capture the most representative and evolving language practices within the Letterboxd community (Silverman, 2020; Grosser, 2023).

Second, the researcher accessed the Letterboxd platform by make an account and conducted purposive sampling with a focus on film reviews that explicitly contained indications of Metapragmatic utterances, as identified by Caffi

(2006). The search criteria included keywords such as *“hot take,” “unpopular opinion,” “just my opinion,” and “this is not a review.”* to find the categorized keyword, the researcher used the searching tool that provided by Letterboxd, the searching tool will automatically finds a specific keywords in the film reviews that the researcher wrote.

Third, the researchers observed and analyzed each review text that met the criteria. At the same time, the researcher used copy+paste features to collect the data of all review texts and their contexts (such as ratings, and username) in a complete and organized manner.

Finally, all collected data was classified and organized into tables to facilitate in depth analysis based on Caffi's Metapragmatics theory (2006)

E. Data Analysis

Data analysis conducted in several stages, the first step is to observe the entire review text that contain Metapragmatic utterances. Then, the researcher use copy+paste features and make a table to obtain data. After that, the researcher copied the entire review text and converted it into a structured text document. In this section, the researcher skimmed, scanned, and classified data that contain Metapragmatic utterances based on the categories proposed by Caffi (2006), Next, the researcher select data related to Metapragmatic utterances to answer the research questions. In other words, data that did not contain Metapragmatic utterances were excluded from the analysis, but the data that have ambiguous

Metapragmatics indicator still be considered as a form of data but not analyzed in depth compared to the data that is clearly have the indicators of Metapragmatics .

Next, the data consist of Metapragmatics utterances classified and categorized in a table that refers to Caffi's (2006) theory of Metapragmatic functions. However, it is possible to perform a different analysis if the data had a specific context (Dahaam, 2023). This also allows the data to reveal different results, given the primary data comes from a combination of written discourse and the characteristics of spoken conversation that are typical in digital communication (Herring, 2004). The review text has been prepared with an awareness of community norms and reader expectations, reflecting the characteristics of planned spontaneity that are typical on digital platforms.

The researcher then describes the analysis of the findings. In the next section, the researcher links this investigation to a discussion combined with several previous studies on the use of Metapragmatic utterances. Finally and most importantly, the researcher concludes the research findings by referring back to the research questions and theoretical framework that used.

The findings provide the analysis of 37 original film review on Letterboxd which published by the year of 2025. The analysis was carried out based on two problems. (1) identification of three senses of Metapragmatic utterances (metatheoretical reflection, transcendental condition, and reflective competence); and (2) analysis of Reflective Competence (bushes, hedges, shields) marker that the reviewers use to weaken the strength of their claims or criticisms. Each findings

accompanied by a direct quote of the data and interpreted in the context of the theory. From 37 film reviews that have been found. The researcher divided it into Table which consist of the Senses of Metapragmatics consisting of a total of 37 reviews categorized as Senses of Metapragmatic. Then divided into several subcategories; Metatheoretical Reflection was found 1, Transcendental Conditions (hot take markers) was found 4. Transcendental Conditions (unpopular opinion marker.) was found 7. Transcendental Conditions (other alignment marker) was found 19. Reflective Competence was found 19.

In this research findings, the goal is to uncover and illustrate patterns, meanings, and functions by achieving data saturation (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 185). The measure of sample adequacy is not numerical size, but rather the richness, relevance, and depth of information revealed by the selected data units (Patton, 2015, p. 264; Sandelowski, 1995, pp. 179-180). This study employed a purposive sampling strategy to ensure that the selected reviews were rich in Metapragmatic utterances, containing specific linguistic markers such as “hot take,” “unpopular opinion,” “just my opinion,” “this is not a review,” and various hedges, bushes, and shields. These markers are explicit indicators of Metapragmatic awareness and the mitigation strategies that are the focus of the study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the data on the film review texts on Letterboxd platform. The researcher used Claudia Caffi's (2006) theory as an analytical tool. Therefore, the findings and discussion are as follows:

A. Findings

This Chapter provides findings and analysis from 37 original film review on Letterboxd which published by the year of 2025. The analysis was carried out based on two problems. (1) identification of three senses of Metapragmatic utterance (metatheoretical reflection, transcendental condition, and reflective competence); and (2) analysis of Reflective Competence (bushes, hedges, shields) that researchers use to weaken the strength of their claims or criticisms. Each findings accompanied by a direct quote of the data and interpreted in the context of the theory. From 37 film reviews that have been found

1. Identify the Three Senses of Metapragmatic

To answer the 1st Research question, the researcher found 37 reviews that have been identify, redacted, and analyze, Caffi's (2006) three Senses of Metapragmatics appeared with different indicators. Reflective competence is the most dominant, while Metatheoretical Reflection appears least frequently.

Table 4.1 Senses of Metapragmatics

Senses of Metapragmatics	Total
Metatheoretical Reflection	1
Transcendental Conditions (hot take markers)	4
Transcendental Conditions (unpopular opinion marker)	7
Transcendental Conditions (other alignment marker)	6
Reflective Competence	19
TOTAL	37

A. Metatheoretical Reflection

The first sense of Caffi's (2006) framework, Metatheoretical Reflection refers to the ability to reflect on the metatheoretical assumptions which underlying their communicative acts, including questioning genre boundaries, communication norms, and the definition of the speech act (Caffi, 2006). Unlike Transcendental Conditions that focus on social prerequisites, Metatheoretical Reflection is in higher level of abstract, the speakers not only use languages in the context, but consciously comment on, challenging, or redefine the context and the genre that they use (Caffi, 2006).

In the practice, Metatheoretical Reflection happens when the researcher explicitly question, negotiate, or reject conventional limit from what considered as 'film review'. In the Letteboxd platform, this phenomenon become visible due to its' community culture that encourages personal expression outside the formal film criticism. Researcher not onlyu evaluate film, but actively conscious reflect and redefine what they do (Caffi, 2006). This act shows a high awareness that there is a norm (an expected review') and they choose to deviate from it.

From the 37 reviews analyzed, Metatheoretical Reflection appear less frequently than the other two senses. However, the presence is significant because it shows that Metapragmatic awareness in Letterboxd can reach the level of philosophical reflection about genre and the conventions of review itself.

Datum A.1 – @review_aspirer (Rating: N/A):

"I will never be able to live up to this review. It sets a very high standard."

This review does not evaluate film itself. There is no mention about plot, acting, cinematography, or other intrinsic elements. Instead, the reviewer explicitly comments the quality standards in Letterboxd community. The phrase “live up to this review” acknowledges about what makes a review considered good, and insightful in the community (Caffi, 2006). By declaring their inability to “match” others’ reviews, the reviewer consciously reflects the conventions of the review genre itself.

This statement suggests that in Letterboxd community, there are unwritten norms about review quality: a good review might be expected to have analytical depth, a clear argumentation, or an engaging writing style. By acknowledging that these standards are very high, the reviewer makes themselves as an “amateur” or “average writer” who can not reach the level of professional or highly skilled reviewer. This is an intentional identity construction which consciously distincts the professional criticism discourse (Caffi, 2006).

Besides the datum no. 28, although not explicitly included in the selected data, Metatheoretical Reflection can also appear in the form of statements such as:

- *"This isn't a proper review, just my incoherent thoughts."* (Hypotetically example from Caffi's Framework)
- *"Just consider this a diary entry for this film, not a critique."*
- *"I'm not a critic, so take this with a grain of salt."*

Even though these statements not appear in 50 selected data that have been analyse. Theoretically, these could be in Metatheoretical Reflection because the reviewer consciously reject the authority and conventional of a film review, instead frame their writing in personal.

B. Transcendental Conditions (Hot take marker)

Caffi's (2006) second senses of Metapragmatic Utterances refer to the condition that enable speakers to use language effectively, including basic trust, shared knowledge, agreed communication goals and community norms (Caffi, 2006). In the online community such as Letterboxd, build these Transcendental conditions is a important, because the interactions between the people which basically a strangers to each other only can be united by a same interest in film (Caffi, 2006). Metapragmatic Utterances, especially alignment markers, have a function as social navigation tool for this purpose. Before expressing opinion that potentially controversial, the researcher use these markers to map their position on the community. Thus negotiating 'permission' to have different opinion while maintaining solidarity.

The data from table shows that the phrase "hot take" is frequently used to mark a difference from the consensus.

Datum B.1 - @film_jonas (Rating 3/5):

"Hot-take, they are all in the same universe. (It just about works)"

By call his opinion as “hot take” the researcher consciously give signal that the claim probably does not match with common interpretations. This alignment marker prepare the reader for the possibility of an unconventional view, thereby reducing conflict risk by lowering expectation. The data shows that the phrase “hot take” usually use to marked a difference.

Datum B.2 - @superhero_nerd (Rating:4/5):

"Possibly one of my biggest superhero movie hot takes, but, I think that this was the best of the trilogy, even if the CGI is a bit dated."

Combine several marker ‘hot takes’ is followed by the hedge “I think,” creating a layered Metapragmatic strategy. The reviewer first marks a differences from the consensus, and then weaken the claim by stating “*even if the CGI is a bit dated.*” This strategy allows the reviewer to expressed their strong preference while still appearing humble and open to different opinion.

Datum B.3 - @arthouse_lover (Rating 4,5/5):

"I guess it would be a pretty hot take to claim this out-breathlesses Godard's original, but the energy here is unmatched."

Used “Hot Take” with a bit reflection “*to claim this out-breathlesses Godard's original, but the energy here is unmatched.*” The reviewer acknowledges that comparing this film to Godard is unusual in art film discourse. By framing this as a “Hot take”, the reviewer maps its position on the community of art film, demonstrating awareness about statement that might be bold or provocative.

Datum B.4 - @quiet_observer (rating 4/5):

"I know this is a hot take, but the slow pacing actually added to the tension for me. Most people seem to hate it, though."

Make this pattern more powerful. The reviewer explicitly compare the positive interpretation of the slow pace with the negative opinion “*Most people seem to hate it*” the Phrase “I know” adds an additional layer of awareness. The reviewer is fully aware that the opinion is not popular. This acknowledgement have a function to build a similar perspective by demonstrating respect for the dominant perspective before deviating from it.

C. Transcendental Conditions (Unpopular Opinion Markers)

The most common alignment marker in the data is “Unpopular opinion”. Data number 4 until 10. As well as several data demonstrate its use systematically.

Datum C.1 - @borderlands_fan (Rating 3/5)

"I believe this is referred to as an unpopular opinion. I had low expectations for Borderlands, but after watching it, I think it is a fine film, not great, but watchable."

The reviewer explicitly mentions holding a minority view. By labelling their evaluation as an “unpopular opinion” the reviewer signals an awareness that the film widely criticized. Therefore it is create a space for advocacy. This strategy minimize the risk of being labelled as an opponent in letterboxd community.

Datum C.2 - @hanni., (rating 4/5)

"It is probably a very unpopular opinion that I think this is a better film than the original. The pacing worked better for me."

The used of ambiguous “I think” in the alignment marker indicates that the reviewer not only aware of the deviation but also reduce the clarity of the comparison. The use of this layer shows highly developed Metapragmatics competence.

Datum C.3 - @doodfat._(Rating 1,5/5):

"My single most unpopular movie opinion is that I do not like Goodfellas. I absolutely hated it and it still does not click after rewatching."

The adjective “most unpopular” highlights the rarity of the opinion. By framing the opinion as rare opinion, the reviewer anticipates the potential for strong disagreement and implicitly asks for tolerance.

Datum C.4 - @desmorados (Rating 5/5):

"This is an extremely unpopular opinion but this is my favorite DCEU film. The character."

Used “*This is an extremely unpopular opinion*” to start the positive review about DCEU film that many people dislike it. The intensification word “very” magnifies claim that face-threatening, therefore it is strengthened the needs for mitigation.

Datum C.5 - @rat_ville (rating 3/5):

"I have never been impressed by Ratatouille, which seems apparently an unpopular opinion. It is good, but not a masterpiece."

Offers a meaningful statement but still moderate. The addition of words “seems” highlights if the reviewer studying that consensus through community interactions, which further demonstrates an awareness of shared values.

Datum C.6 - @first_movie_lover, (Rating 4/5):

"This is an unpopular opinion but I prefer the first film because it felt more terrifying. The sequel is too polished."

Datum C.7 - @second_movie_defender (Rating 4,5/5):

"I said unpopular opinion because many people prefer the second one, but this film resonated with me more emotionally."

Both use “unpopular opinion” to justify preference towards one of the franchise. In datum 10, the reviewer explicitly explains why that opinion is not popular. The justification demonstrates awareness of community preference patterns, which is a form of transcendental construction.

D. Transcendental Conditions (Other Alignment Markers: “In the Minority,” “Divisive Take,”)

In additions to “*Hot take*” and “*Unpopular Opinion*”, the datum also consist another utterances that have the same function.

Datum D.1 - @bearlo_w (Rating 4,5/5):

“I may be in the minority, but I found the ending very emotional.”

“*I may be in the minority*” Directly signals a difference opinion without using the phrase “Unpopular opinion.”.

Datum D.2 - @genre_bender (Rating 3,5/5);

“This may be a divisive take, but I thought the ending was effective.”

Word “*divisive*” highlights that the opinion will divide audience, preparing the reader for potential disagreement.

Datum D.3 - @action_fan, (Rating 2,5/5):

“I might receive criticism for this, but the action scenes are overrated.”

several data combine alignment markers with anticipatory face saving strategies.

The reviewer explicitly predict that people will criticize the stance, inviting reader to prove otherwise.

Datum D.4 - @director_fan (Rating 3/5):

“Do not criticize me, but I prefer the director’s earlier work.”

A direct request to tolerate as an act of Metapragmatic that explicitly negotiate the terms of interaction.

Datum D.5 - @completionist (Rating 4/5):

“I might be the only one who thinks the sequel is better.”

It claims the uniqueness by positioning the reviewer itself as the one and only of the holder of this statement, the reviewer maximize perceived deviance, thereby increasing the need of the tolerance of the community.

Datum D.6 – @first_michael (Rating 2,5/5)

"Maybe I misunderstood, but it did not feel as meaningful as others say."

Combines the conformity “others say” with a cautious statement “*Maybe I misunderstood*” the reference to “others say” explicitly accept the consensus, meanwhile the cautious statement “maybe” soften disagreement. This combination illustrate how the transcendental states and reflective competence often overlaps.

E. Reflective Competence

In this sub category, the research turns to answer the 2nd research question. The 2nd research question aim to analyse the way of how this sense of awareness is manifested in the practice of film review. The analysis focus on Reflective Competence which in Caffi’s (2006) is one of the most concrete and observable. Reflective competence framework is not about being polite or impolite in a definition, but it is about managing interpersonal risk that hold in communication. This is a linguistics strategy to modulate the power of speech in order to achieve social goals (Caffi, 2006).

In this context, Reflective Competence realized through three main markers (Caffi, 2006, pp. 85-105) Bushes (weakening the message content at the proportional level), Hedges (weakening the power of illocution at the speech act level), and shields (weakening the speaker’s responsibility at the source level). The

analysis in this section specifically examined these three strategies is used by Letterboxd reviewer to weaken their claim or their criticism,

The use of Hedges is a mitigation strategy that reduces the speakers commitment towards the proportional truth being conveyed (caffi, 2006, p. 98). In the data, the most commonly used is “I think”, “I suppose”, “Could be”, and “Not sure”. By using hedges, the reviewers used signal that their evaluation subjective and open to alternative interpretation, therefore invite the dialog instead confrontation.

Datum E.1 – @horror_fanatic (Rating 1/5):

*"I think this **might** be the worst horror movie I have seen. It is just my opinion, but I do not understand the appeal."*

The use of phrases “*I think*” and “*might*” simultaneously aims to reduce negative claim that very strong (“Worst horror film”) Without these phrase, the statement would sound like objective fact, that potentially trigger conflict with film fans. By adding “*I think*” and “*might*”, the reviewer change that claim to become personal judgement that is harder to refute.

Datum E.2 - @roast_listener (rating 4/5):

"I think the most entertaining part was the commentary track and the humor between the speakers."

In here, the phrase “I Think” frames subjective opinion, allowing the possibility of the reviewer to express enthusiasm without forcing it as universal truth. This phrase reduce the risk if the reader who disagree will feel that their opinion are being disrespect.

Datum E.3 - @cigaretts_23 (Rating 2,5/5)

"Perhaps I am misinterpreting, but the character arc felt incomplete."

The phrase "Perhaps" acknowledges the possibility of misinterpreted from the reviewer itself. By positioning uncertainty on themselves, the reviewer significantly weaken the strength without looks dogmatic.

Datum E.4 - @ambivalent_reviewer (Rating 3/5):

"I guess I need another viewing to fully understand this film."

The phrase "I guess" shows uncertainty about the judgement of the reviewer themselves. Instead of certain their evaluation, the reviewer defers definitive judgement by stating that they need to rewatch the film. This is an expression form that emphasizes epistemic humility.

Datum E.5 - @social_commentator (Rating 2/5):

*"I am **not sure** if it was intentional, but the themes felt uncomfortable."*

The phrase "not sure" emphasize uncertainty about the intentions of the filmmaker. By admit that they uncertain whether the themes that uncomfortable were intentional, the reviewer reduce the severity of criticism and open up the space for alternative interpretation.

Datum E.6 - @rewatch-junkie (Rating 3/5):

*"This **might** be an overinterpretation, but I see deeper themes here."*

The phrase "might" used to protect the reviewer from accusation to over interpreting the film. By admit the interpretation might be too much, the reviewer pre-emptively weaken their claim.

Datum E.7 - @soundtrack_lover (Rating 4/5)

"Correct me if I am wrong, but the soundtrack enhances the film."

The phrase "*correct me if I'm wrong*" explicitly invite correction from the reader. This is a mitigation strategy that not only reduces their commitment but also giving authority to the reader to criticize the truth of the claim.

Bushes marker operate in the proportional level (message content). This strategy reduce the accuracy or proportion certainty by making a less specific statement, vague, or imprecise (Caffi, 2006, p.92). for examples of bushes marker in the data include "a little", "a bit", "sort of", "somewhat", "not really" and "quite." By using bushes marker, the reviewer reduce the critic intensity or praise without changing the essence of the evaluation.

Datum E.8 - @indie_ra (rating 2,5/5):

*"It is **a bit** too experimental for my liking, although some viewers may appreciate it."*

The bush marker, "*a bit*" weakens the criticism that the film is too experimental. Without that phrase, the statement "too experimental" would sound like a rejection. By "*a bit*", the critic would be easy to take and less judgement.

Datum E.9 - @charm_seeker (Rating 3/5):

*"It is charming but I **could not really engage** with the story. It felt **a bit** too long."*

The reviewer us two phrases "*could not really engage*", "*a bit*". "*could not really engage*" soften the statement about inability to involved emotionally, while "*a bit*" soften critic about the duration of the film. These combination express both critic without make it sounds like over negative.

Datum E.10 – @pace_royal (rating 3/5):

"The film is a bit inconsistent, but I somewhat enjoyed it."

The phrase “a bit” weaken critic toward inconsistencies, while “somewhat” weaken the praise intensity. These combination allows the reviewer to express mixed evaluation (critic and praise) without sounds extreme in either direction. This is a strategy that commonly happen in non-extreme reviews.

Datum E.11 – @summer_blockbuster (Rating 3/5):

*"Just my two cents, the action is good but the story is **a little weak**. Maybe I expected too much."*

Although “weak” is not directly tempered by the word ‘a little’, the phrase “maybe I expected too much” have function to distract the critic to the reviewer personal expectation. This demonstrates how word “little” and “weak” often works together.

Shields strategy operate at the level of the utterance source. This strategy reduce the responsibilities of the speakers by obscuring or shifting the source of utterance, therefore protecting the speaker from potential attack if their statement is wrong or unpopular. (Caffi, 2006, p. 105). Shields strategy that commonly in data is “just my opinion”, “in my honest opinion”, “maybe I am bias”, “based on my experience” and “I am not an expert”.

Datum E.12 – @orlok_yn (Rating 4/5):

***"Just my opinion**, this adaptation is better than the book and much stronger than the previous instalment."*

The shield marker “Just my opinion” explicitly frame the evaluation of comparing as a personal opinion. This is protecting the reviewer from accusations that their comparative claims are objective or authoritative. In other words, the reviewer said:

“just my opinion” you are free to agree or disagree”

Datum E.13 - @documentary_fan (rating 4,5/5):

"In my honest opinion, a great documentary cannot be simplified without losing meaning, and this film proves that."

The phrase "in my honest opinion" emphasizes sincerity while also marks subjectivity. The theoretical statement about the documentary film sounds more like personal reflection instead of universal truths. This is a strategy to make a strong claim while remaining interpersonally safe.

Datum E.14 - @ape_lover (rating 4/5):

"Maybe I am biased because I love animals, but I do not think it is a bad film at all."

The shield mark "Maybe I am biased" pre-emptively acknowledges the bias potential. By connect the positive evaluation to a love of animals, the reviewer protects themselves from accusation that their evaluation is not objective. If someone disagree, the reviewer can say that they ar bias in explaining the differences.

Datum E.15 – @gerry_not (Rating 4/5):

"Maybe I am biased because I watched a dubbed version, but the story still works."

In here, the reviewer linked the condition while watching the dubbed version. This is a form of shields mark that acknowledges that less ideal of viewing experience can affect their judgement, with the result to protect their credibility.

Datum E.16 - @house_dweller (Rating 4/5):

"Maybe I am biased because the setting reminds me of my home, which influenced my experience."

The reviewer identify their personal connection (*the setting reminds me of my home*) as bias potential source. By admitting this, the reviewer shows a high reflective competence also protecting the reviewer itself from a critic that sentimentally evaluate them.

Datum E.17- @brugesmark (rating 4,5/5):

"The cinematography is excellent, but maybe I am biased because I like the location."

The reviewer connects the positive evaluation towards the cinematography with personal approach for the location. This shield marker reduce objective claim.

Datum E.18 - plot_analyst (Rating 3.5/5):

"In my experience, films like this usually fail, but this one works."

The phrase "in my experience" used personal experience as a generalize basic claim. By make the generalization basic with personal experience, the reviewer reduce the needs to prove it scientifically or statistically.

Datum E.19 - @art_enthusiast (Rating 2.5/5):

"I am not an expert, so take this cautiously, but the symbolism feels excessive."

The reviewer used two shields marker at the same time: "I am not an expert" (reject expert authority) and "take this cautiously" (asking the reader to be cautious). This is a strong mitigation strategy because the reviewer responsible for their criticism

B. Discussion

These findings confirm that all three senses of Caffi's (2006) Metatheoretical Reflection, Transcendental Conditions, and Reflective Competence. These are present in the Letterboxd's film review, although the frequencies are very different. Reflective Competence is the most dominant, it appears in 19 out of 37 reviews. Transcendental condition appear 17 times, while Metatheoretical Reflection only appear once (Datum A.1) These distribution reflect the nature of the platform and communicative purpose of its user in linguistic perspective.

The dominance of Reflective Competence is not surprising, Letterboxd is one of the social network that specifically in a film review scope. It encourages subjective, humourous, and highly personal writing (Garcia,2023; Lawson, 2023). In such an environment, the main challenge for the user as a reviewer is not only about evaluating film, but also representing themselves and interpersonal connection by the reviewers and the reader which possibly have different taste. Reflective Competence, have an ability to “step outside” from the stream of the communication and monitor speakers own languages, therefore it is a highly needed skill (Caffi, 2006).

These findings is consistent with the previous studies about Metapragmatic Utterances within the digital community. For example, Dahaam (2023) found the user of Facebook in Iraq page actively used Metapragmatics to positioning themselves as relative toward the norm of community of Facebook. However, Dahaam study more focus on the stance taking (Du Bois, 2007) instead of three senses of Metapragmatics. This research expand Dahaam studies by showing that in Letterboxd, Reflective Competence is operationalized by the linguistic devices that very specific, such as the utterances “hedges”, “bushes”, and “shields” that empowered the senses of Metapragmatics.

The relatedness of Usó & Martínez (2021) study and this research place text materials as the data source and metapragmatic awareness as the focus of their study. Usó & Martínez (2021) developed a research-based instructional proposal for teaching the speech act of refusals using excerpts from television series. Meanwhile, this study descriptively analyzes how users of the Letterboxd platform

spontaneously express metapragmatic awareness in their film reviews. Both studies share similar pedagogical and theoretical goals: Usó & Martínez (2021) study aims to provide teachers with resources for incorporating pragmatics into language courses, while this study aims to fill an academic gap in how niche communities use language to construct social identities.

Similarly, (Grosser, 2023) examined Metapragmatic discourse between the speakers in Japan and found that Reflective Competence is important to negotiate the social position in the intercultural social interaction. The study confirmed that reflective competence is important as same as in the digital community that have interest-based as its function and monolingual, it shows that this ability possibly have universal communication in online interpersonal discourse.

In other hand, the previous study which focus on the academic context or educational context (Derakhsan & Eslami, 2020; Uso & Martinez, 2021) found that Metapragmatic awareness often taught explicitly in film clip or visual insight. These studies studied the ability of students to recognize implicature. This research is different because the data analysis that naturally happen from the platform expert which is Letterboxd, and not students. The high Reflective competence within the data shows that Letterboxd reviewer that have been experienced already internalized the Metapragmatic utterances without formal instruction.

The presence of Transcendental conditions especially through the alignment markers such as “controversial opinion” and “unpopular opinion” shows that the reviewers of Letterboxd are very conscious about the value and consensus within

the community. Caffi (2006) stated that transcendental condition include the basic trust, and shared knowledge, and community norms. In the context of Letterboxd, These norms explicitly stated in the platform's community policy, which encourages the members to be "kind to each other" and distinguishes between criticize film and attack an individual personal opinion (Letterboxd, n.d.; Letterboxd, 2016).

The use of "unpopular opinion" before evaluating the difference have a double function, first it admit the majority perspective and ask tolerance from audience. This is what is meant by Caffi (2006) of Transcendental Conditions, the readers actively build a social foundation that possibly enables communication. This finding align with the study by Chen (2004) about Metapragmatic utterances in response to negative review in TripAdvisor. Chen found that the representatives of businesses used utterances like "we understand your concern" to build a common ground and maintaining customer relation. However, in Letterboxd, the purpose is not for commercial but social, the reviewer use alignment marker to maintain solidarity and avoid conflict, not to maintain the reader responses. This differences highlights the important of the context in Metapragmatic analysis.

Furthermore, The intensity of the alignment markers (for examples: "unpopular opinion", "my opinion about unpopular opinion") correlate with the power of deviation. This suggests that the Letterboxd reviewer have awareness that very detail about their opinion position towards the value of community, and that is the finding that have not been studied in the Metapragmatic studies on other platforms.

Metatheoretical reflection only appear once in 37 reviews (Datum A.1: *"I will never be able to live up to this review. It sets a very high standard."*) This can be understandable because the metatheoretical reflection requires philosophical distance from the act of the review itself. Most user focus on the film, not on the conventional review of the film. However, it appearance still important theoretically. This highlight that some of the Ltterboxd users reflect "a good review" standard in the community, Thus engaging in discourse about discourse or language within language (Caffi, 2006).

This finding echoes Chaemsaithong's (2022) about the argumentation of metapragmatics utterances in the historical courtroom discourse, where the lawyers explicitly comment the proof of the rule and argumentation. In both cases, metatheoretical reflection appears in the context where the participants are very competent and have a high communication stakes. In Letterboxd, the reputation and social identity are not a lethal consequences, but the Metapragmatic mechanism that underlied are similar.

No previous study about Metapragmatic within online review platform. For example Chen, 2024 and Liu, 2021 found the metatheoretical reflection perhaps happened because of those studies are focused on the businesses context or complaint where that reflection is irrelevant. Therefore, this research contributes to the literature by showing that even in a amateur review platform that looks casual, the user can shows a high Metapragmatic awareness.

The utterances of hedge markers such as “I think”, “Maybe”, “Perhaps” are mitigation devices that often occur. The function is to reduce the speaker commitment towards the proportional truth (Caffi, 2006, p. 98). In the context of film review, where the evaluation is basically subjective, these utterance allow reviewer to provide personal interpretation rather than objective facts. These findings is consistent with Albelda & Estellés (2021), who argue that these utterance that evasive are the universal strategy to modulate the illocutionary force in evaluative discourse. This also align with Flores (2020) who shows that these evasive utterance in English and Spanish languages have a function to protect the face of the speakers. In Letterboxd, these phrase are important because the reader might be a film fan that criticized. By saying “I think it is a slow pace” instead “that is slow pace”, the reviewer reduce the risk to offending the reader.

Interestingly the utterance frequencies of assertion in the Letterboxd was higher than that reported in some spoken discourse studies (Farahani, 2020, on academic presentations) suggesting that written digital discourse that mor explicitly because the absence of the Paralinguistic cue (Herring, 2004).

Derakhshan and Shakki's (2020) study examined the effectiveness of implicit versus explicit metapragmatic instruction on the comprehension of apology and refusal speech acts in Iranian EFL learners, finding that explicit instruction was generally superior. While their study contexts were quantitative in a formal setting, this study was qualitative in digital discourse both acknowledged the centrality of metapragmatic awareness in communication. This findings showed that Letterboxd users spontaneously manifested this awareness through mitigation strategies such

as hedges, bushes, and shields. These strategies are functionally equivalent to formally taught politeness strategies for reducing threats to face. While Derakhshan and Shakki focused on specific speech acts in academic contexts,

Bushes marker such as “a bit”, “sort of”, “a little” were the least frequent but still looks visible. These phrase operates at the proportional level, make the evaluation less precise or less intense (Caffi, 2007, p. 92). Albelda & Estellés (2021) noted that the words that used to reduce criticism without changing the negative judgement exactly what we see in **Datum E.8 “*a bit too experimental*”** or in **Datum E.9 “*It felt a bit too long.*”**. The use of these phrase are to reduce criticism in the Letterboxd review are comparable to the use of words that mitigate the negative impact in complaint response as studied by Liu (2021). Liu found that when responding complaints, business agents use the utterances that reduce negative impact such as “a bit” to reduce the threatening of self-esteem. However in Liu’s study (2021), the use of negative impact is a part from professional strategy to maintain customers. In Letterboxd, Bushes function is purely social: this function os to maintain the relation between film fans in the community.

Shields marker such as “maybe I am biased”, “ Just my opinion”, “I am not an expert” frequently used, especially in the reviews that express strong opinion or unpopular potential. These statements reduce the speaker responsibility by linked the evaluation of the film to personal perspective or external conditions (Caffi, 2007, p. 105). Villalba (2020) proposed a methodological tool to identify evasive statements, by note that those statements often appears as “deictic shifts” that shifting the utterance of the speakers. In **Datum E.14, E.15, E.16 “*Maybe I’m*”**

biased” is a classic example, by admitting the bias, reviewer cancelled the potential of counterarguments while still expressing their true opinion. This strategy is very common in Letterboxd but still not many studied in other online review platform. Chen (2024) Reported that these utterance such as “in our opinion” used by business agents to reduce negative impact. However, in the research, the utterance is a part of customer service script. In Letterboxd, this utterance is spontaneous and various, reflects on the individual style of review and their judgement towards the social risk that involved. “maybe I am biased” shows that this utterance is already become Metapragmatic utterances on the Letterboxd community.

One of the most important findings is that the reviewer often combine two mitigation strategy in one utterance. For example, **Datum E.19** used Hedges and shield. This layered mitigation strategy emphasize a high Metapragmatic competence because the reviewer manages various aspect of utterance, the commitment of the truth, proportional intensity, and the speakers responsibility. Caffi (2007, p. 115). Explicitly stated that the three strategies are not exclusively connected. Empirical proof from Letterboxd data supports this claim and also shows that this combination of affirmative + defensive when they anticipate a strong disagreement. **Datum E.1** used shield and hedges that also shows defensive + affirmative when they only one to mitigate a small critic. These patterns shows that mitigation is strategic and sensitive to the context, not automatic.

This research shows a close relationship Pragmatics and Metapragmatics in the digital era. Khazdouzian's (2025) research deepens the understanding of how cognitive and social factors influence learners' Metapragmatic awareness, while this

research extends Caffi's (2006) theory to the context of digital discourse on film review platforms. Therefore, these two studies fill an academic gap in how niche communities use language to construct meaning, manage interpersonal risk, and construct their social identities, emphasizing the importance of understanding pragmatics as a dynamic and contextual process, rather than simply a set of rigid rules.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In this chapter, the researcher concludes every explanation and description which has been discussed toward the finding data and the analysis of the three senses of metapragmatics that appeared in the film review of Letterboxd platform. In addition, this chapter also reveals a suggestion for the next scholar related with an analysis of the metapragmatics.

A. Conclusion

This research collects the data that consist of Senses of Metapragmatic in 37 english film review that posted on Letterboxd by the year of 2025. By using Claudia Caffi's Three senses of Metapragmatics (2006) that empowered one of the indicator theory in Metapragmatic's senses. This research intend to answer two research questions: (1) What senses of Metapragmatic utterances are used in Letterboxd film reviews? (2) How do reviewers on Letterboxd use certain phrases to mitigate the strength of their claims or criticisms?

The findings indicates that Three Senses of Metapragmatics appear in the data, although with the different frequencies. Reflective Competence is the most dominant, found in 19 of 37 reviews. This can be manifested through Hedges ("*I think*," "*maybe*," "*perhaps*"), and shields ("*just my opinion*," "*maybe I am biased*," "*I am not an expert*"). This domination reflects the subjective nature of

Letterboxd as a film review platform, where the reviewer constantly monitor and manage their own language to avoid conflict as a part of community member.

Transcendental conditions appear 17 times, especially through alignment marker such as “hot take,” “unpopular opinion,” “in the minority,” and “divisive take.” These markers shows that the reviewer of Letterboxd are very conscious with the norm and the shared value of community. By using these, the reviewer admit their existence in the consensus and negotiate permission to express another perspective, with the result of maintaining solidarity even when the opinion is different. Metatheoretical Reflection only appear once. Even it is rare to appear, its presence confirm that some user reflect “a good review” standard.

For the 2nd research questions, the analysis revealed that the way reviewer used Reflective Competence marker to weaken the claim of their criticism. **Hedges marker** reduce the illocution force and epistemic commitment: the use of **bushes marker** reduce over propositional precision; **shields marker** decrease speaker responsibility. For example, **Datum E.19** (hedge + shield) and **Datum E.1** (shield + hedge) illustrate that combinations are not random: hedge+shield is used when strong disagreement is anticipated, while hedge+bush appears for mild criticisms. These patterns demonstrate that mitigation is strategic, context-sensitive, and a concrete manifestation of reflective competence.

In conclusion, this research give empirical proof about how Three senses of Metapragmatic operate in a specific digital community such as Letterboxd. This research also shows that Mitigation is a practical tools through which reflective

competence is realized. The findings confirm that even in a casual, amateur review platform, users display Metapragmatic awareness to manage interpersonal risk, construct social identity, and adhere to the community's ethos of "be excellent to each other"

B. Suggestion

Several directions of study can be recommend for further research. First, because of this research only analyse 37 film reviews, A larger corpus could reveal a more diverse range of Metapragmatic utterances that more various and perhaps a higher frequencies of Metatheoretical Reflection. Secondly, this research only focus on the reviews that us English languages. Cross language comparison for example, between the Letterboxd users from English and Indonesia or other country that used different languages could reveal culture variety in the use of the utterance from hedges, bushes, and shields. Thirdly, the analysis was based text only, future studies could combine reader response (like, comment) to check the social impact from Metapragmatic utterances. Fourth a longitudinal studies would be valuable to track how Metapragmatic practice in Letterboxd grows overtime. Lastly, researchers could apply theoretical framework (Caffi's three senses of Metapragmatic Uterances) to other interest based digital platforms, such as Goodreads for book or RateYourMusic or music, to determine which specific for the platform and which have universal use in online discourse. The comparative studies as explain above could be strengthen the theoretical understanding about Metapragmatic in digital era.

CURRICULUM VITAE



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the university life as an English Literature students, he joined several voluntary committee such as Meet And Greet of Student Orientation, and Maliki English Festival Committee (2023). He also joined the internship program of Jakarta Historical Museum as a Tour Guide. He also become a lead actor in annual Theatrical Drama in English Department, entitled “Wonka” as Wonka himself in 2024. He also become a Community Division in the Student Work Lecture in 2024 which focused on the relationships with the community and organize social activities. He also joined the internship program of Jakarta Historical Museum as a Tour Guide in 2025. Besides on-campus activities, he also joined several part-time and full-time job, specifically in Food and Beverages industry as a Kitchen Crew such as; Nomaden Coffe and Eatery (2023-2024), Jank-Jank Wings (2024), Laluna Space(2025-2026), and Nowhere Coffe and Eatery (2026)

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APPENDIX

No.	Username	Rating	Review Text	Metapragmatic Marker	Metapragmatic Senses	Signal of the senses
A.1	@review_aspirer	N/A	<i>"I will never be able to live up to this review. It sets a very high standard."</i>	<i>live up to this review</i>	Metatheoretical Reflection	Focus is on reviewing practices rather than the film itself.
B.1	@film_jonas	3/5	<i>"Hot-take, they are all in the same universe. (It just about works)"</i>	<i>"Hot-take"</i>	Transcendental Conditions	The reviewer signals that their opinion deviates from the general consensus within the community.
B.2	@superhero_nerd	4/5	<i>"Possibly one of my biggest superhero movie hot takes, but I think that this was the best of the trilogy, even if the CGI is a bit dated."</i>	<i>"hot takes" and "I think"</i>	Transcendental Conditions and Reflective Competence	The alignment marker indicates awareness of deviation, while the hedge reduces the strength of the claim.
B.3	@arthouse_lover	4.5/5	<i>"I guess it would be a pretty hot take to claim this out-breathless Godard's original, but the energy here is unmatched."</i>	<i>"hot take"</i>	Transcendental Conditions	The reviewer acknowledges that their comparison is unconventional within the community's evaluative norms.
B.4	@quiet_observer	4/5	<i>"I know this is a hot take, but the slow pacing actually added to the tension for me. Most people seem to hate it, though."</i>	<i>"hot take"</i>	Transcendental Conditions	Reviewer acknowledges divergence from majority opinion.
C.1	@borderlands_fan	3/5	<i>"I believe this is referred to as an unpopular opinion. I had low expectations for Borderlands, but after watching it, I think it is a fine film, not great, but watchable."</i>	<i>"unpopular opinion"</i>	Transcendental Conditions	The reviewer recognizes that their evaluation contradicts the dominant negative perception.
C.2	@hanni.	4/5	<i>"It is probably a very unpopular opinion that I think this is a better film than the"</i>	<i>"unpopular opinion" and "I think"</i>	Transcendental Conditions and Reflective Competence	The alignment marker and hedge together show layered

			<i>original. The pacing worked better for me."</i>			awareness and mitigation.
C.3	@doodfat. —	1.5/5	<i>"My single most unpopular movie opinion is that I do not like Goodfellas. I absolutely hated it and it still does not click after rewatching."</i>	<i>"unpopular movie opinion"</i>	Transcendental Conditions	The reviewer positions themselves against a widely accepted canonical film.
C.4	@desmora dos	5/5	<i>"This is an extremely unpopular opinion but this is my favorite DCEU film. The character development is unmatched."</i>	<i>"extremely unpopular opinion"</i>	Transcendental Conditions	The intensifier highlights strong awareness of deviation from consensus.
C.5	@rat_ville	3/5	<i>"I have never been impressed by Ratatouille, which is apparently an unpopular opinion. It is good, but not a masterpiece."</i>	<i>"unpopular opinion"</i>	Transcendental Conditions	The reviewer acknowledges divergence from dominant appreciation.
C.6	@first_mo vie_lover	4/5	<i>"This is an unpopular opinion but I prefer the first film because it felt more terrifying. The sequel is too polished."</i>	<i>"unpopular opinion"</i>	Transcendental Conditions	The reviewer prefaces disagreement with community preference.
C.7	@second_ movie_def ender	4.5/5	<i>"I said unpopular opinion because many people prefer the second one, but this film resonated with me more emotionally."</i>	<i>"unpopular opinion"</i>	Transcendental Conditions	The reviewer justifies why their stance is considered unpopular.
D.1	@bearlo_ w	4.5/5	<i>"I might be in the minority, but I found the ending very emotional."</i>	<i>"in the minority"</i>	Transcendental Conditions	Signals divergence from consensus.
D.2	@genre_be nder	3.5/5	<i>"This might be a divisive take, but I think the ending is effective."</i>	<i>"divisive take" and "I think"</i>	Transcendental Conditions and Reflective Competence	Alignment marker and hedge combined.
D.3	@action_f an	2.5/5	<i>"I might receive criticism for this, but the action scenes are overrated."</i>	<i>"might receive criticism"</i>	Transcendental Conditions and Reflective Competence	Anticipates disagreement.
D.4	@director_ fan	3/5	<i>"Do not criticize me, but I prefer the director's earlier work."</i>	<i>"do not criticize me"</i>	Transcendental Conditions and Reflective Competence	Requests tolerance.

D.5	@completi onist	4/5	<i>"I might be the only one who thinks the sequel is better."</i>	<i>"might only one"</i>	Transcendental Conditions	Claims rare position.
D.6	@first_mic hael	2.5/5	<i>"Maybe I misunderstood, but it did not feel as meaningful as others say."</i>	<i>"maybe" and "others say"</i>	Reflective Competence and Transcendental Conditions	Hedge + acknowledgment of consensus.
E.1	@horror_f anatic	1/5	<i>"I think this might be the worst horror movie I have seen."</i>	<i>I think, might</i>	Reflective Competence	Reduces commitment to a strong negative claim; transforms into opinion
E.2	@roast_list ener	4/5	<i>"I think the most entertaining part was the commentary track."</i>	<i>I think</i>	Reflective Competence	Frames enthusiasm as subjective.
E.2	@roast_list ener	4/5	<i>"I think the most entertaining part was the commentary track."</i>	<i>I think</i>	Reflective Competence	Frames enthusiasm as subjective.
E.3	@cigaretts _23	2.5/5	<i>"Perhaps I am misinterpreting, but the character arc felt incomplete."</i>	<i>Perhaps</i>	Reflective Competence	Acknowledges possible misinterpretation.
E.4	@ambivale nt_reviewe r	3/5	<i>"I guess I need another viewing to fully understand this film."</i>	<i>I guess</i>	Reflective Competence	Indicates uncertainty; defers judgment.
E.5	@social_c ommentato r	2/5	<i>"I am not sure if it was intentional, but the themes felt uncomfortable."</i>	<i>not sure</i>	Reflective Competence	Expresses uncertainty about intention.
E.6	@rewatch_ junkie	3/5	<i>"This might be an overinterpretation, but I see deeper themes here."</i>	<i>might be</i>	Reflective Competence	Weakens claim by admitting possible overinterpretation.
E.7	@soundtra ck_lover	4/5	<i>"Correct me if I am wrong, but the soundtrack enhances the film."</i>	<i>correct me if I am wrong</i>	Reflective Competence	Invites correction; gives authority to reader.
E.8	@indie_ra	2.5/5	<i>"It is a bit too experimental for my liking."</i>	<i>a bit</i>	Reflective Competence	Softens criticism; less absolute.
E.9	@charm_s eeker	3/5	<i>"It felt a bit too long."</i>	<i>a bit</i>	Reflective Competence	Reduces intensity of criticism.
E.10	@pace_roy al	3/5	<i>"The film is a bit inconsistent, but I somewhat enjoyed it."</i>	<i>a bit, somewhat</i>	Reflective Competence	Weakens both criticism and praise.

E.11	@summer_blockbuster	3/5	<i>"Just my two cents, the action is good but the story is weak. Maybe I expected too much."</i>	<i>(implicit bush)</i>	Reflective Competence	Contextualizes criticism via personal expectation.
E.12	@orlok_yn	4/5	<i>"Just my opinion, this adaptation is better than the book."</i>	<i>Just my opinion</i>	Reflective Competence	Frames evaluation as subjective.
E.13	@documentary_fan	4.5/5	<i>"In my honest opinion, a great documentary cannot be simplified..."</i>	<i>in my honest opinion</i>	Reflective Competence	Emphasises sincerity and subjectivity.
E.14	@ape_lover	4/5	<i>"Maybe I am biased because I love animals..."</i>	<i>Maybe I am biased</i>	Reflective Competence	Acknowledges bias; defuses counter-arguments.
E.15	@gerry_not	4/5	<i>"Maybe I am biased because I watched a dubbed version..."</i>	<i>Maybe I am biased</i>	Reflective Competence	Attributes judgement to viewing condition.
E.16	@house_dweller	4/5	<i>"Maybe I am biased because the setting reminds me of my home..."</i>	<i>Maybe I am biased</i>	Reflective Competence	Links evaluation to personal connection.
E.17	@bruges_mark	4.5/5	<i>"The cinematography is excellent, but maybe I am biased..."</i>	<i>maybe I am biased</i>	Reflective Competence	Reduces objectivity of positive claim.
E.18	@plot_analyst	3.5/5	<i>"In my experience, films like this usually fail..."</i>	<i>in my experience</i>	Reflective Competence	Generalises from personal experience.
E.19	@art_enthusiast	2.5/5	<i>"I am not an expert, so take this cautiously..."</i>	<i>I am not an expert, take this cautiously</i>	Reflective Competence	Rejects authority; maximum mitigation.