

ANALYSIS OF STUDENT'S LANGUAGE STYLE USING MARTIN JOOS THEORY AT ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

¹Maharani Illiyyin Zahra, ¹Aridah Aridah, ¹Ventje Jany Kalukar, ¹Maria Teodora Ping,
¹Iwan Setiawan

¹English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Mulawarman University

***Corresponding Author**

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Abstract

This research seeks to examine the language styles engaged by students of the English Education Department at Mulawarman University, using Martin Joos' (1976) theory and Holmes (2013) as sociolinguistic theory. The study investigates the categories of language styles used in students' speech and the factors influencing their choice of style. A qualitative method was applied, utilizing data from a recorded video interview and follow-up semi-structured interviews with two selected participants. Data analysis was undertaken using thematic analysis guided by Braun and Clarke (2006) framework. The findings reveal that three out of five language styles formulated by Joos—consultative, casual, and intimate—were used by the participants, with consultative style being the most dominant. Language style occurred primarily in academic contexts, especially when interacting with instructors or unfamiliar individuals. Factors influencing language style include the speaker, setting, topic, and function, in alignment with Holmes' (2013) sociolinguistic theory. Furthermore, although participants often identified their style as "formal," triangulation with Joos' and Braun and Clarke theory revealed that their usage aligned as consultative features. These findings provide valuable insights into how language styles function in educational settings and highlight the importance of context in language use.

Keywords: Language Style, Student's Language Style, Sociolinguistics

INTRODUCTION

In human society, people demand tools for connecting with each other, which resulted the emergence of language. Language is used not only for communication but also used to express their feelings and thoughts (Hutabarat et al, 2020; Ukhtin et al, 2021; Purba et al, 2021b; Silta et al, 2023) based on context and situation (Dewi et al, 2020). Language is

essentially connected to cognition and present as a portal that providing us to interpret the workings of the human mind (Herman, 2017; Butarbutar et al, 2020; Li, Y., & Xie, 2020; Purba et al, 2021b). Crystal (2013) defines dialogue as the conveyance of meaning from a source and a recipient via a communication system, specifically referring to human discourse. In human conversation, language is used for two different categories, for speaking and written communication forms. Furthermore, spoken language is usually used in conversation, speech, storytelling, and other verbal interactions (Athira Putri, Halim, & Abdullah, 2022).

In sociolinguistics, "language use will vary according to the social environment he lives in, who speaks, and to whom speaks" (Holmes, 2013), which is called language variation. Language variation occurs in speech communities, with distinctions in speaker-interlocutor connections resulting in language style (Purba et al, 2021a). Moore (2004) argues that individual manner of speech impacts their ability to manage and clarify their perspectives and objectives across a framework of social distinctions and rhetorical opportunities. It is also determined whether speech is formal or informal likewise depends on the situation (Wardaugh, 2010). Moreover, an individual's trait, psychological state, and cognitive can be revealed through their speech style (Velavan & Meyer, 2020).

A foundational framework for analyzing register is provided by Martin Joss (1976) to fulfil the research questions. Joos (1976), who categorizes language into five types: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate style. All of these manners have their own functions based on social situations and participant relationship. First, frozen style is used for formal occasions such as ceremonies, speeches. A sophisticated variety is displayed for great important or symbolic moments, such as in royal events, religious services, state ceremonies ceremony, and others frozen context. The key feature of this style is the omission of the reader, but it is used in respectful condition or formal ceremonies. Second, formal is used for important situations, which is typically applied in delivering message to a medium or large group "in important situations" (Richard, 1985). The slow tempo, complex grammatical structure, technical vocabulary, and avoidance of repetition words are the characteristics of formal style. Third, consultative is used in semiformal situations which is used in routine conversation at educational institutions, companies, and related situations. It is used in everyday speaking at class, companies, negotiating with strangers, distant relatives, etc. Fourth, Casual is used in casual conversations among friends, who possess a particular origin, such as maturity level, gender, education, socioeconomic status, heritage, and others. The casual style also can appear in slang words, taboo words, etc., because of that, people tend to use this style to shorten the language. Moreover, the characteristics of this type are using first names when addressing someone, and less emphasis on grammar. While, intimate is used with beloved family or known as "*lovey-dovey fashion*" (Silta et al., 2023). The speaker tends to use personal vocabulary, having a special nicknames and special tone. The characteristic of this style is the absence of social existence, expressing the feeling in a more intimate way where it fills the gap and is comfortable in communication.

After identifying the various type of language style as classified by Joos (1976), this study also adopts Holmes' (2013) theory as a sociolinguistic framework to examine the factors that influence the linguistic variation. Holmes (2013) emphasizes that register is influenced by

several key factors, including the participants (who is speaking and to whom), the setting or social context in which the interaction takes place, the topic being discussed, and the function or purpose of the interaction. First, the participant, refer to the people used the language style appropriately. For example, in classroom activity, students tend to use a consultative style, while teachers may use the consultative or formal style due to higher status. Second, the setting or social context plays a crucial role. For the same example, the social context naturally stimulating the use of a consultative style due to teacher and students are expected to communicate respectfully and professional. Third, the topic being discussed is influenced the use of language style. People need to know the topic is being discussed to adjust to the surroundings to make sure that the topic is comfortable and known by all the participants, or the choice of the words needs to be pay attention. Lastly, the function or purpose of the interaction shapes the style used. Language not only to deliver information verbally but also emotionally where it is the aim of the interaction. These factors play a crucial role in determining the appropriate communication style used in any given communicative event. For instance, people tend to use more formal styles when talking to authority figures or in professional settings, and more casual or intimate styles when talking to close friends or family members. This framework is particularly relevant to the current study, as it provides a solid foundation for analyzing how students adjust their language styles depending on social dynamics and communicative intent.

In the previous studies, it was found that the study used Joos' Theory to conduct the research. Dewi et al. (2020), Purba et al. (2021a), Yunita Turnip et al. (2021), Athira Putri et al. (2022), Silta et al. (2023), Sinulingga (2024), Dewi, et al. (2025), explore manner variation in document (film script), exposing that dominant registers consistently have relationship with participant role (who are involved in communication), setting, function, and topic where the dialogue is happening. Concurrently, Faruji (2012), Rachmat (2022), Susiani, (2022) explored the variation theory of manner of speaking based on expert theoretical framework, involve Grasha's taxonomy (1996), Keraf (2010), Joos' theory (1967) within education levels. The finding from these study shows that formal style emerges as the fundamental linguistic style employed by teachers in learning activities, due to the pedagogical principles that align with the function of using formal style, is to deliver the information in clearly and structurally, to help the understanding of students in learning comprehensively, and to balance the social situation in the learning process. The influence of context or individual also had a big effect on how language style is used. In addition, other studies, Ukhtin et al. (2021) and Purba et al. (2021b), analyzed on a digital website. Utilizing the Joos' theory to uncover the study, where casual is the dominant language style in online platform. The finding highlights the influence of participant roles, where users can easily text without following any strict linguistic rules with informal and relax topic. Additionally, these studies illustrate on how Holmes (2013) language and society related contributes to comprehension the factors that effects the use of casual register in multimedia platform.

Given the extensive data gathered in earlier studies, this study strives to deeper into the patterns of register among students majoring in English Education Department, Mulawarman University, who have diverse backgrounds that given sociolinguistic complexity.

In addition, looking at the background of Indonesia, which is known as a multilingual country (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2024), it will certainly show differences in the choices of speech style (Holmes, 2013) in diverse conversation settings. Therefore, this study aims to explore how the students' linguistic style used with following research questions: (1) What types of language styles occurs? (2) What are the factors influencing the characteristics of language style use? The researcher conducted a study on analyzing students' speaking styles integrated with Joo's theory (1976) since it is vital for acquiring oral conversation abilities and the appropriate selection of linguistic (Nugroho, Rohman & Geroda, 2020). It also provides insight to uncover the use of linguistic style in the English Education Department and the functions as an indicator of how English Education students express themselves as they reach graduation. This study is limited to spoken language used by students within academic contexts and does not explore non-verbal communication or language use outside of the classroom or interview setting.

METHOD

The study adopted a qualitative research design to investigate the types of language styles used by students and fundamental factors that influenced their speech style choices in speaking contexts. A qualitative method was the appropriate for this study for deeper understanding the participants' experiences and perceptions within a natural academic context.

Participants

The population for this research consisted all students in English Education Department, class of 2022, at Mulawarman University. The sample was purposefully selected and consists of two students who were actively involved in classroom discussions and presentations. The selection based on the richness of the data where they have ability to demonstrate a variety of communication style in both formal and informal academic settings. and provided through recorded classroom activities and follow-up interviews, rather than representing a larger group or a single class. Although the sample size is relatively small, it aligns with the selected research method, which emphasizes in-depth data analysis and has provided sufficient evidence, as patterns have already been determined based on exploration and discussion findings.

Following the data collection, ethical approval was granted from the informants. To guarantee confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used and all participants data will be stored securely for duration of the study.

Instruments

To collect the data, two main instruments used in this study. First a structured observation sheet was designed to document the types of language styles utilized by undergraduate students during classroom presentations and discussions, particularly from the video Fathinah (2024) "Interview about Intracultural and Intercultural

Learning – Multicultural Understanding”. This sheet was aligned with Joos’ (1976) paradigm. Second, a semi – structured interview was conducted with the selected students. A semi-structured interview format was established in accordance with Joos’ (1976) and Holmes (2013) approach to examine their perceptions, experiences, and the influencing factors behind their language style choices in oral activities. The interviews were conducted face to face, with participants’ permission for audio recording and each had duration around 20 minutes

Procedures

The data collection was conducted through two main techniques. First, conduct used video – based observation. The researcher analysed a recorded interview activity titled “Interview about Intracultural and Intercultural Learning – Multicultural Understanding.” Utilizing observation sheet, verbal interactions of the selected students are observed and categorized according to Joos’ (1976) language style theory. Second, follow-up interviews are conducted with the two informants to gain deeper insights into their reasons for using particular language styles, their comfort levels in different settings, and the contextual or personal factors that influenced their speech during interaction. Interviews were transcribed for analysis to support the evidence.

Data Analysis

The analytical approach used in this study is based on Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis framework for critical discourse analysis and commonly used in qualitative method. Thematic analysis is a theory that facilitates scholar in identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data. By applying this integrated approach, this research seeks to uncover the patterns of register by Joos (1976) in students of English Department, Mulawarman University. This design consists of six levels of analysis:

1. Familiarising with the data

The author immersed themselves in the data to gain a comprehensive understanding of its depth and range of the data. The observation and interview recordings were transcribed to maintain necessary information.

2. Generating initial codes

Early codes were generated by noting or highlighting segments of the data and organizing them into meaningful groups. Coding can be conducted extensively, allowing as many themes as necessary to emerge in order to contextualize the data.

3. Searching for themes

The various codes are sorted into main themes, sub-themes, or discarded if deemed irrelevant. Visual aids, such as tables, can be helpful in organizing and presenting these categories.

4. Reviewing themes

Refining the candidate themes involves evaluating their relevance and coherence. Some themes might be insufficient data, while others need to be broken down into more specific sub-themes or merged due to overlap. This phase consists of two levels: Level 1 involves re-reading the collected themes to ensure the coherent pattern; Level 2 focuses on validating the themes against the entire data set to ensure they accurately reflect the overall meaning.

5. Defining and naming themes

In this phase, the themes were defined and analysed in relation to the data to identify their essence and determine they can clearly convey the intended meaning.

6. Producing the report

The data were conveyed using language that is concise, coherent, and logically structured. Furthermore, data segments must be integrated into an analytical narrative that highlights the overall findings and presents arguments aligned with the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In findings from the transcribing data and semi- structure interview, it was classified that the participants used consultative, casual and intimate speech style in their daily conversation based on the Joos' theory (1976). With the most dominant mode was consultative, especially in their academic point of view. Furthermore, in terms of factors that influenced the language style, it was found that speakers, situation/context, topics and function that played roles in language style based on the Holmes (2013) theory.

It was uncovered from the data that there were 18 consultative registers, 11 casual registers, and 2 intimate registers. From the 31 occurrences register data, consultative style was the major of speech style used during communication, especially in academic setting (Holmes, 2013). The researcher also found that frozen and formal style were not used in the daily lives of the participants due to their function, which reflects less intimacy between the speaker and interlocutor and include the use of standard language. To examine the findings in depth-analysis, the following discussion is presented in stages.

First, based on the investigation of consultative style that used by participants in academic settings, this finding aligns with the theory by Martin Joos, which when we are talked to stranger, we casually used consultative language to convey respect

and politeness. Furthermore, there are several utterances that demonstrate on how the consultative is influenced by Holmes (2013) framework, they were:

1. R1: *"Hello, sir. Okay, the first question, while studying abroad was there a place to meet friends from the same country? ..."*
2. R2: *"The next question is when you returned from Australia to Indonesia were there any changes in your cultural values? If so, what was the biggest thing that influenced that change?"*

R1 and R2 used careful utterances to show on their respect when asking question to the interviewee. It also shown on how the respondents were able to produce well-organized question for gaining deeper information with the logical structure, using formal address "sir" in semiformal situation where the interlocutor provides explanation. Additionally, the participants tend to avoid using slang language to make it easier the interviewee about the topic being discussed and to maintain the professionalism which consistent with their consultative language.

3. R1: *"Formal language (Consultative) is usually used in lectures or when talking to lecturers"* (Line 37)
"We also tend to carefully choose our words- it has to be more proper, not just casual" (Line 53)
4. R2 added: *"A simple example is when we say 'thank you, thanks' – to lecturers, we definitely choose to say it formally 'thank you"* (Line 52).
"With sellers, it's a mix – not totally formal or casual" (Line37).
"It can also happen with distant relatives – It's usually not too casual" (Line 46).
"If the topic includes specific terms—like politics—then it becomes formal" (Line 70).

In interview, the researcher asks the participants to mention what the language style that they used and with whom is the style used. The participant said that they will used the formal style when they speak with lecturer or to the older people where they need to choose the words in carefully so they did not make the problem. Yet, their statement about register being contradictive with the Joos (1967) theory. By applying triangulation with the Braun and Clarke (2006) framework, it was found that the appropriate style was "consultative". This limitation shown that the researcher needs to pay attention, recheck, highlight, and clarify the participants understanding of the theory during data collection. However, the participants' claims can still be analyzed through Holmes' (2013) perspectives. In terms of participants features, both claimed that they spoke in consultative style when they speak as cue for style selection, such as to the lecturer, distant relatives, stranger, etc. And this characteristic shaped on how their communication style being choices. Furthermore, setting and the topic features will be influenced in their speech style because as the connection between the speaker

and hearer, especially in academic viewpoint, where the language choices are necessary to consider. In R2's statement regarding the politics theme, the language used became formal and requiring greater linguistic specificity. It means that there is numerous of phrases typically connected with law discourse which need to become formality of language use beyond casual. However, as undergraduate student, their understanding of "formal" often refers to the use of word groups which is always in formal way, yet the setting tends to be more semi-formal. Last, in the function of their using consultative, as interpreted by the researcher, was to addressee information between the participant with their professor, collateral relative or stranger while maintaining respect.

Second, casual Style is often marked by the use of slang words, taboo words, etc., because of that, people tend to use this style to shorten or deletion of subject the language that tend to quick pronunciation. Moreover, the characteristics of this type are using first names when addressing someone, and less emphasis on grammar. Furthermore, there are several utterances that demonstrate on how the casual is influenced by Holmes (2013) framework, they were:

1. R1: "*Uh, okay, thank you sir for answering all of my question. I will hand over for my next friends.*"
2. R2: "*Okay, thank you sir.*"

These two sentences show even the participants still using formal address, the situation between the participants and interviewee is become relax, as well as the tone shows how casual language style naturally occurs. The phrase "uh, okay" is the informal transition. The sentence, "*I will hand over for my next friends*" it can indicate the shift from formal into casual language choices with lowering the social gap between the interviewer and interviewee. Furthermore, the utterances of R1 and R2 revealed the relationship between interviewees as individuals in the same tier. While the function of their statement addresses on how their provided information about the closing of interview.

3. R2: "*I often use casual style with friends from the dorm or classmates.*" (Line 23).
"*In my opinion, casual is more suitable than intimate if you're trying to get close to someone.*" (Line 39).
4. R1: "*If I'm talking with friends and we're discussing holidays. It's definitely casual style.*" (Line 70).
"*Because we're trying to approach someone, it makes more sense to be casual.*" (Line 40)

The statements demonstrate how easily to develop relationship with others people through the use of casual. Not only does the mood become more relaxed, but on how the language choices, the standard form of language became vague. The intended of using slang and taboo word reflects on how individual in the same group

creates a sense to become attached each other. Additionally, the setting where they talked, commonly in public area or in the space in ease social tension. Furthermore, they topics of conversation often talked on their daily life, such as personal activities, hobbies, their study, or their family which develop bond between speaker within the dialogue.

Third, intimate style, participants generally utilized in their family to convey the speaker's emotions with their tone become childish, cheerful, show the attention in the family. Furthermore, there are several utterances that demonstrate on how the casual is influenced by Holmes (2013) framework, they were:

1. R1: "*I usually use intimate style with parents*" (line 33).
2. R2: "*So, the language style I use becomes more cheerful and I try to avoid negative words*" (line 76).

During the interview, the researcher asked the participants to mention the language style they used and with whom is the style applied. R1 expressed on how her feelings were more come out when communication within her parents which reflects a sense of closeness and familiarity. This register commonly used at home, where the function of using such a communication style was to get affection from her family, especially her parents. In addition, R2 asserted the same linguistic style with her family. While, she added on how she becomes more cheerful but at the same time need to consider on how she speaks to them. Both participants, illustrates how they express their honest feelings, demonstrate their childish behaviour as their roles as children in their family.

The absence of Frozen and Formal style in data associating with the theory. Frozen style used without any interlocutor and using in ceremonial. While, Formal style using in teaching – learning session as instructor, meetings and applied in textbook. It illustrates how the speech style did not used in participants interactions in their daily life as undergraduate student. In addition, the small sample size and inconsistent understanding of theory during data collection reflecting of researcher interpretation during analysing which is becoming limitation of the study.

CONCLUSION

As demonstrated by the research analysis, conclusion can be gathered to answer the study questions. The research of this study was carried out using Martin Joos' (1976) theory which revealed the existence of 5 linguistic styles: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate. The data from documentation and interview are found in accordance with the theory above, where three out of five style was found, Consultative (18 occurrences), Casual (11 occurrences) and Intimate (2 occurrences). The consultative was found to be dominant compared the other styles. This is due to interactions with professor or unknown individuals. On the other hand, neither type of

frozen nor formal occurred in the data because limited in daily communication contexts.

The researcher also used Holmes (2013) theory to analyse the factors influenced the language style, there are Participants, Situation/context, Topics, and Function. The participants adapted their speech based on their interlocutors (e.g., lecturer, friends, parents), the setting (e.g., classroom, dorms, home, public space), the topic (e.g., daily life, subject material) and the function of communication (e.g., to show respect, closeness, affectionate or develop bond). For instance, casual style occurred in relaxation, shorten language to express the closeness with partner in the dialogue. In contrast, intimate style was used within family contexts, reflecting emotional and affectionate tones. Overall, this study helps explain how participants adjust language shift according to social context, demonstrating Joos' and Holmes' theory in real-world settings. However, the limitation in this research suggests the future research to have clearer guidance before data collection, expanding participants into diverse age groups, educational levels to provide broader insights.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Curation, Writing; **Author 2.:** Supervision, Validation, Reviewing; **Author 3, 4, 5:** Validation;

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