

## **An Analysis of Language Styles Used in Business Activities in *The Founder* Movie**

### ***[Analisis Gaya Bahasa yang Digunakan dalam Aktivitas Bisnis di Film ‘The Founder’]***

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#### **ABSTRACT**

In preparing vocational students for successful entry into the professional business environment, the development of pragmatic competence, particularly in the use of appropriate language styles across varied business contexts, is essential. This study examines the film *The Founder* as a medium for analyzing language style usage within diverse business interactions. The objectives of the study are twofold: (1) to classify business situations based on the language styles employed, and (2) to identify and analyze the factors influencing language style selection in specific business contexts. The findings are presented through a series of infographics, systematically illustrating the application of language styles across both formal and informal business activities. These infographics are designed as pedagogical resources for students of the D4 English for Business and Professional Communication program, offering authentic representations of language use in real-world business scenarios. By engaging with these materials, students are expected to enhance their communicative competence and develop the ability to select appropriate language styles in professional settings.

*Keywords: language style, language variation, business activity, movie, narrative works, sociolinguistic.*

#### **ABSTRAK**

Dalam mempersiapkan mahasiswa vokasi untuk masuk ke lingkungan bisnis profesional, pengembangan kompetensi pragmatis, terutama dalam penggunaan gaya bahasa yang sesuai di berbagai konteks bisnis, sangat penting. Penelitian ini meneliti film *The Founder* sebagai media untuk menganalisis penggunaan gaya bahasa dalam beragam interaksi bisnis. Tujuan penelitian ini ada dua: (1) untuk mengklasifikasikan situasi bisnis berdasarkan gaya bahasa yang digunakan, dan (2) untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pemilihan gaya bahasa dalam konteks bisnis tertentu. Temuan ini disajikan melalui serangkaian infografi, secara sistematis menggambarkan penerapan gaya bahasa di seluruh kegiatan bisnis formal dan informal. Infografi ini dirancang sebagai sumber daya pedagogis untuk siswa program D4 Bahasa Inggris untuk Komunikasi Bisnis dan Profesional, menawarkan contoh otentik penggunaan bahasa dalam skenario bisnis dunia nyata. Dengan menekuni materi ini, mahasiswa diharapkan dapat meningkatkan kompetensi komunikatif mereka dan mengembangkan kemampuan untuk memilih gaya bahasa yang sesuai dalam latar profesional.

*Kata kunci: gaya bahasa, variasi bahasa, kegiatan bisnis, film, karya naratif, sosiolinguistik.*

## INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a fundamental tool enabling humans to cooperate, plan, argue, reach agreements, and express emotions (Newson, 1996; Casey, 1971). Language style, as defined by Keraf (2005), refers to the skillful and aesthetically pleasing arrangement of words, which must be adapted to different social contexts and environments. While previous studies have examined language styles in films such as *Green Book* and *Titanic* (Sanimawati et al., 2022; Mas'udah, 2008), there remains a gap in analyzing language styles within business-themed movies.

This study addresses that gap by examining *The Founder*, a film portraying the evolution of McDonald's into a multinational franchise. *The Founder* offers rich examples of both formal and informal business communications, making it a suitable medium for analyzing language styles in professional contexts. According to Goctu (2017) and Ismaili (2013), films provide a valuable visual and contextual aid for language learning, enhancing both comprehension and practical application.

Unlike prior analyses that focused on the movie's plot and thematic elements (Stutters, 2019), this research uniquely explores the use of language styles in various business interactions depicted in the film. By analyzing these interactions, the study aims to offer insights into the authentic communication practices within the business world, thereby contributing valuable resources for language learning, particularly for students preparing for professional environments.

Based on the background of the study above, this research proposes the main problem as follows.

- a. What are the language styles used in every business activity found in *The Founder* movie?
- b. What are the factors that influence the language styles used in every business activity found in *The Founder* movie?

This study examines the dialogues in *The Founder* movie, focusing exclusively on business-related communications and

excluding personal conversations. The analysis centers on identifying language styles at the conversational level rather than isolating individual words, phrases, or sentences. Recognizing that language style is context-dependent, the study emphasizes situational analysis, as lexical elements alone may overlap across multiple styles. Thus, contextual understanding is essential to accurately determine the appropriate language style employed in the business interactions depicted in the film.

The output of this study is a language style classification model for various business activities, supported by an analysis of factors influencing style selection. As an applied research project, the findings are presented in the form of an infographic that links specific business activities to appropriate language styles, providing a practical reference for effective business communication.

## RELATED THEORIES AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

Several theories will be referenced throughout the course of this research. These include:

### Business Communication Activities

Business communication, the exchange of information within or outside an organization (Hashim & Rashid, 2022), is crucial for company performance and sustainability (Murphy, 1990). It is categorized into internal communication, which supports management and operational efficiency (Roslyakova, 2013; Kalogiannidis & Papaevangelou, 2020), and external communication, which shapes the company's reputation through interactions with customers, suppliers, and the public (Murphy, 2020).

Core business activities—meetings, presentations, and negotiations—rely heavily on effective communication. Meetings facilitate organizational coordination (Handford, 2010), presentations are vital for conveying ideas clearly (Cober, 2001), and negotiations require strategic adaptability because of complex, dynamic variables (Watkins, 2002). Mastery of communication across these activities is essential for sustaining competitive business operations.

## Language Style

Language style refers to how individuals use language to express their thoughts and feelings, which can reveal their personality (Keraf, 2005). Joos (1967) suggests that people can switch between different language styles depending on the social context and relationships. The theory by Martin Joos is used in this research due to its relevance to analyze language styles in *The Founder* movie, which involves limited settings and characters.

Joos (1967) identifies five language styles that cover varying degrees of formality and informality:

- c. Frozen Style: Used in highly formal settings like ceremonies, political speeches, and religious rituals. It is a one-way communication that doesn't allow feedback, using long, well-structured sentences and specific vocabulary to make a lasting impression on the audience.
- d. Formal Style: Common in professional settings, this style uses formal vocabulary and avoids participant interaction. It is characterized by technical terms, clear pronunciation, and precise grammar, often in written form.
- e. Consultative Style: Typically occurs in semi-formal situations, with one speaker providing background information and the other offering short responses. It is common in situations like doctor-patient or teacher-student interactions.
- f. Casual Style: Used among friends or coworkers, this style features informal language, slang, and ellipses (omission of words). It requires minimal background information and is more relaxed in tone.
- g. Intimate Style: Used in very close relationships, such as between family members or couples. This style includes jargon or private code understood only by the participants, and minimal words can be used to convey meaning.

These language styles can be analyzed based on factors such as participants, relationship, setting, context, sentence structure, and vocabulary. Each style has

specific characteristics that help determine its appropriate use in different situations.

## Review of Previous Research Project

In this study, the researcher reviewed seven previous studies on language styles in narrative works, most of which used Martin Joos' language style theory. This theory was also applied in the current study, leading to similarities in the methodology.

- a. Jamil and Nasrum (2018) analyzed *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, identifying all five language styles. While their study focused on a novel, the current study focuses on a movie, with different situations, such as business activities, in contrast to student-teacher interactions.
- b. Febriani et al. (2019) studied the styles in *To All The Boys I've Loved Before*, a romance-comedy where intimate style was dominant. Their study was set in a high school, while the current study focuses on business settings.
- c. Mas'udah (2008) analyzed *Titanic*, finding that 74% of the dialogues used informal or colloquial styles. While this study used a different theory, it still analyzed language style in a movie, contrasting with the current study's use of Joos' (1967) theory.
- d. Hamdany and Damanhuri (2017) studied the styles in *500 Days of Summer*, finding a mix of consultative and casual styles in workplace settings. Both studies used Joos' theory, but the relationships in the two studies differ, as the current study involves business acquaintances.
- e. Salsabila and Permanasari (2022) studied the styles used in *The Princess Switch*, where formal style was most dominant due to the royal setting. The current study also uses Joos' theory, but it focuses on a business theme, unlike the romance theme in *The Princess Switch*.

- f. Sanimawati, Rahayuni, and Netra (2022) analyzed the styles in *Green Book*, where casual style dominated due to the friendship between the two main characters. In contrast, the current study focuses on business relationships.
- g. Oktaviani and Purwarno (2021) focused solely on intimate style in *The Notebook*, a romance-drama. While their study focused on one language style, the current study aims to explore all five language styles in the movie.
- d. Dialogue from the scenes was transcribed manually by listening to the characters and referencing the movie script.
- e. The researcher analyzed and classified the scenes into language styles based on Martin Joos' theory.
- f. The researcher explained the factors influencing language style classification.
- g. The data samples were sent to expert validators for review and validation.

In conclusion, while these studies share a common theoretical framework (Joos' language styles), the objects, themes, settings, and relationships studied differ significantly.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

This research employed a descriptive qualitative method, as the data is not quantifiable and is presented in the form of words. The goal is to provide a detailed, in-depth understanding of the language styles in *The Founder* movie through its dialogues. According to Wahyuni (2019), qualitative research is ideal for understanding specific events or organizations in detail. This method offers flexibility and allows the researcher to thoroughly explain the factors influencing the classification of language styles in the movie, aligning with the research objectives.

### Research Procedures

To collect data, the researcher accessed *The Founder* movie through Apple TV, the only streaming service offering it. The data collection process was as follows.

- a. The researcher observed the movie and studied related articles and video essays to deepen their understanding.
- b. Unrelated scenes were eliminated, focusing on those that depicted business activities and communication.
- c. The researcher organized the data according to the order of scenes in the movie.

### Research Object

The research uses *The Founder* movie, accessed via Apple TV, as the primary object of study. The researcher also utilizes the movie's script, found on [www.dailyscript.com](http://www.dailyscript.com), which serves as a reliable transcript and aids in understanding the context of each scene.

### Research Instruments

The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, following Merriam's (2009) approach. While biases are inevitable, the researcher's subjectivity is acknowledged and contributes to interpreting the data. Martin Joos' theory on language style (1967) is used to analyze language styles in business activities in *The Founder* movie, considering factors like participants, relationships, setting, context, sentence, and vocabulary.

To ensure validity, triangulation was applied by involving four expert validators. The data were validated via a questionnaire, confirming the reliability of the research findings.

### Data and Sources of the Data

The data for this research was derived from the dialogues in *The Founder* movie, accessed via Apple TV. The study focused on scenes involving business activities, analyzing and classifying each scene according to a specific language style. The researcher also comprehensively explained the factors influencing the classification of each language style.

### Data Analysis

The researcher used a table to present the findings, showcasing the factors that influence language style classification. The table includes sections such as pictures, which display screen captures from the movie to help readers understand the context, even though they were not needed for the research process itself. The language style section identifies the specific language style used in each scene, such as frozen, formal, consultative, casual, or intimate style. The dialogue section provides the characters' spoken words, serving as the primary reference for classifying and analyzing the language style. The timestamp section lists the time markers of the business-related scenes, aiding both the researcher in efficient analysis and the reader in locating the scenes. The general context section describes the scene's situation to help readers better understand the dialogue's context. In the analysis section, the researcher explains the reasoning behind the language style classification, including the formality of the situation, the relationship between characters, and the emotions or thoughts conveyed in the dialogue. Keywords and expressions that influence the language style classification are highlighted in bold to make it easier for readers to spot and comprehend the analysis. This also helps the researcher in the categorization process.

### FINDING

After observing *The Founder* movie, the researcher identified 34 business-related communication situations. These situations were then classified into their respective language styles.

### Language Style Classification

The analysis identifies five distinct language styles: Frozen, Formal, Consultative, Casual, and Intimate. The Casual Style was the most frequently used, appearing 14 times and accounting for 41.2% of the total occurrences. Formal and Consultative Styles were each used 9 times (26.5% each), showing a balanced use of structured yet interactive language. The Intimate Style appeared 2 times (5.9%), while the Frozen Style was not used at all (0%).

The language style use varies by business activity in *The Founder* movie. Consultative style dominates in sales and customer service, while pitch presentations and negotiations use both formal and casual styles.

### Language Style Analysis

The analysis of five conversations from *The Founder* movie, based on Martin Joos' theory of language style, demonstrates that most interactions fall under the consultative style. This style is marked by semi-formal settings, a balance between formal and informal elements, and structured dialogue in which the speaker often provides background information to ensure mutual understanding. In several conversations, Ray Kroc dominates the dialogue or continuously seeks information, while the other party responds accordingly—characteristics typical of consultative interactions. Although informal terms such as "fella" or "nah" appear, the absence of a close personal relationship between speakers prevents these conversations from being categorized as casual.

The relationships involved—such as buyer and seller, or customer and employee—support the classification, as Joos (1967) notes that consultative style is common in such contexts. Only one conversation was identified as casual style, which occurred between coworkers who used colloquial language, ellipses, and informal greetings, showing familiarity despite the business setting. This use of casual style reflects how language can shift based on interpersonal relationships, even within a professional environment. Overall, the findings reinforce the predominance of the consultative style in business-related dialogue, echoing results from previous studies that analyzed similar interactions in films.

The analysis of conversations in *The Founder* illustrates a dynamic range of language styles based on the relationship between characters, context, and purpose. Formal style is characterized by complete sentences, absence of ellipsis, and structured participation, typically used between strangers or in formal settings such as business pitches.

Consultative style, the most observed, appears in semi-formal interactions where background information is provided, and listener participation is minimal but continuous. It is suitable for professional but not highly intimate exchanges.

Casual style is employed when the characters have a developing or friendly relationship, marked by ellipsis, informal expressions, and jokes, such as in Ray and Dick's second meeting. Intimate style is found in conversations between the McDonald brothers, where minimal words and private code-labels convey complex shared meanings, intelligible only to the participants. Each style is exemplified regarding prior studies and Joos' (1967) stylistic features, affirming how speech formality reflects character familiarity, setting, and communicative intent.

Casual style is typically used among friends, acquaintances, or insiders. It is characterized using first names, ellipsis (such as omitting weak words like "you should"), slang expressions like "yeah," "fellas," or "damn," and a general absence of detailed background information. This style commonly appears in conversations where a close or informal relationship exists, such as among coworkers who have become friendly or when a superior addresses subordinates in a relaxed manner.

In contrast, formal style is marked by complete grammatical structures, the use of technical vocabulary (such as "source of revenue"), and structured, carefully presented background information. This style often appears in formal settings like business letters, corporate pitches, or public presentations, where only authorized speakers contribute. It avoids slang and ellipsis and tends toward fussy semantics and indirect phrasing, particularly when expressing disagreement or rejection in a polite and professional manner.

Consultative style occupies a middle ground between casual and formal styles. It is typically used when the speakers do not have a close relationship—such as between a salesperson and a potential customer—and allows for short, responsive listener feedback and interruptions without the need for permission. It is practical and informative in

tone, supporting a conversational yet respectful exchange of information.

The conversations represented exhibit both casual and formal language styles, depending on the context, relationships between participants, and the seriousness of the topics discussed. Conversations are classified as casual style, primarily because of the close relationships between the speakers—often long-time coworkers or business partners who address each other by first names.

This familiarity allows them to use features typical of casual language, such as ellipsis, slang, and a lack of background information. For instance, phrases like "Yeah," "guys," "bang-up," and "fucking" illustrate the informal nature of their exchanges. These choices reflect Martin Joos' theory that casual style is used among friends, acquaintances, and insiders. Supporting studies, such as those by Sanimawati et al. (2022) and Salsabila & Permanasari (2022), also highlight similar findings in film dialogue, where closeness between characters leads to casual language use.

In contrast, reflect formal style due to the setting, participants' roles, and the nature of the discussions. These conversations occur in professional environments like offices or involve serious topics such as loans or contract violations. The language used is marked by complete sentences, technical terminology (e.g., "equity," "revenue stream," "conditions of sale"), and the absence of slang or ellipsis. Even when the speakers are familiar with one another, the formal tone is maintained to reflect the gravity of the situation, where former casual communicators adopt a formal style due to the seriousness of a contract dispute. This shift is consistent with Joos' observation that formal style is used in official, structured settings and when speakers are not personally close or are acting in professional capacities.

### Data Validation

The analysis of four selected scenes from *The Founder* highlights varying uses of language style in business-related conversations, shaped by context, participant relationships, and

communicative goals. In the first scene, Ray Kroc formally presents a franchising proposal to Mac and Dick McDonald in a structured, interruption-free exchange. The professional vocabulary and complete sentence structure show a formal business communication style, earning a score of 3.5. The second scene, set in a restaurant, features a more relaxed yet informative discussion, where the McDonald brothers dominate the conversation and provide context about their business model. Despite complete sentence construction, the use of colloquial vocabulary lowers the formality, resulting in a score of 3.5.

The third scene involves Leonard Rosenblatt supervising employees at a Waukegan franchise. Though he assumes a dominant communicative role, the language used includes colloquial expressions and ellipses, indicating an informal tone. Nevertheless, the clarity and directive nature of the message earned a strong score of 3.75. Lastly, the fourth scene features a private discussion between the McDonald brothers about franchising. The conversation is marked by incomplete sentences, private jargon, and strong interpersonal familiarity. While the exchange reflects deep mutual understanding, its exclusive language and informal features led to an average score of 3.5.

Collectively, these samples illustrate the fluidity between formal and informal language styles in business discourse, influenced by speaker roles, relationship dynamics, and communicative intent.

### Discussion

This study identified and analyzed 34 business situations in *The Founder* movie, classifying each according to Martin Joos' (1967) language style framework. The findings reveal formal, consultative, casual, and intimate language styles, with no instances of the frozen style. The analysis explores the contextual and relational factors influencing style use, concluding that most characters adopt casual or consultative styles as their relationships develop.

Comparative insights are drawn from previous studies. Hamdany and Damanhuri

(2017) found the consultative style dominant in *500 Days of Summer*, attributed to interactions among workplace acquaintances. In contrast, *The Founder* characters, as rapidly formed business partners, often adopted a casual tone. Similarly, Sanimawati et al. (2022) noted a shift from formal to casual style in *Green Book* as relationships deepened, aligning with this study's findings.

Oktaviani and Purwarno's (2021) research on *The Notebook* emphasized intimate style because of its romantic genre, unlike *The Founder*, which featured only two intimate interactions—between business-partner siblings. Last, Salsabila and Permanasari (2022) highlighted the dominance of formal style in *The Princess Switch*, largely because of its royal setting, whereas in *The Founder*, formal style appeared mainly at the beginning of business relationships before transitioning to more casual communication.

These comparisons reinforce that language style in film dialogues is shaped significantly by character relationships, setting, and narrative context.

## CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTION

### Conclusion

The research aimed to find language styles used in every business activity in *The Founder* movie. The result stated that the most dominant language style that is found is a casual style with 14 findings. In percentage, it reaches 41.2% of all business activities. Then, it is followed by consultative style and casual style, which have the same data findings. They both have 9 findings which in percentage, they reach 26.5% each. Lastly, there is an intimate style with only 2 findings across all business activities. In percentage, the data translates into 5.9%.

The research also aimed to analyze the factors of the language style classification in every business activity in *The Founder* movie. The analysis was done using the language style theory by Martin Joos in his book *The Five Clocks* (1967). The research discovered all the language styles used in *The Founder* movie as well as providing the analysis.

### Contribution

For students, this research provides insights into language style in business activities. It can be a solid foundation for students to learn the way to speak to people in different situations and scenarios. It can also help students to get exposed to new vocabularies and expressions. Especially for the students of D4 English for Business and Professional Communication. They can find many business terms and phrases in this research which will enhance their communication skills.

For future researchers, this research can help them understand the language style theory that was proposed by Martin Joos. More than just showing language style classification, this research provides clear and comprehensive explanations in the analysis. This research can give a good understanding of language style analysis and research methods. So, this research can be a good reference for doing similar research in the future.

For D4 English for Business and Professional Communication study program, this research can help to provide new language knowledge. This knowledge can help students to improve their language skills, both academically and practically. This research has identified various language styles that are used in various business activities. It will help the students obtain a better understanding of properly dealing with business situations.

For business practitioners, this research provides the most appropriate language styles to be used in various business activities. Therefore, when business practitioners is dealing with a business situation, this research can help them select the most suitable language style. By doing so, unwanted things which can happen because of inappropriate language style usage can be avoided. Hopefully, choosing the appropriate language style in certain situations can help them achieve the desired business goal.

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