

Language Style Analysis of Female Characters in Horror Movie “Presence

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Submission date: 16-Jul-2025 02:08PM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 2715793511

File name: FIB_1612100102_WINARSIH.docx (1.39M)

Word count: 3334

Character count: 18092



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Abstract. Language style is how people have choices and alternatives in the way they use the language. Language is part of verbal communication. This research explores the concept of language style focusing specifically on how it is utilized by female characters in the horror film “Presence.” The primary aim of this study is to describe the types of language styles employed by the female characters and to determine which style is most dominantly used throughout the movie. The study adopts a descriptive qualitative research method, where data are obtained through a close analysis of selected utterances from the movie script. These utterances are then categorized according to the five language styles proposed by Martin Joos: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate. From the analysis, a total of 23 utterances spoken by female characters were identified as relevant data. These were distributed among three language style categories: one utterance was classified as consultative, fourteen as casual, and eight as intimate. The findings show that casual language style is the most frequently used. This dominance is attributed to the contextual and thematic elements of the film. “Presence” centers around themes of power, rumor, and empathy, and is set within a suburban household—an environment that naturally invites informal, emotionally expressive, and conversational interactions. The use of casual and intimate styles reflects the close relationships and tense dynamics among the characters, which align with the movie’s psychological and mysterious atmosphere. Thus, the study demonstrates how language style in cinematic dialogue is influenced by both narrative content and setting.

Keywords/Kata Kunci: female characters, horror movie, language style, sociolinguistics, utterances

INTRODUCTION/PENDAHULUAN

The interplay between society and language is a dynamic, two-way relationship, not a one-sided influence. Sociolinguistics examines this complex connection, noting how social norms shape word choice, tone, and speaking styles appropriate to specific contexts. Holmes (2013), cited in Juliana Dewi, defines sociolinguistics as the study of language in relation to its social context, exploring why people speak differently across settings and how language conveys social meaning.

Missikova (2003), as cited in Indahsari et al., describes language style as a deliberate and consistent manner of speaking or writing, shaped by linguistic and non-linguistic choices tailored to the topic, context, purpose, and speaker's intent. From a sociolinguistic perspective, language style encompasses word choice, dialect, register, and communication patterns influenced by social factors like class, gender, ethnicity, and culture. Joss (1967), cited in Wirawan, explains that style varies by social context, ranging from rigid, ritualistic "frozen" styles to highly personal "intimate" ones. Martin Joos categorizes language styles into five levels of formality: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate.

Language style extends beyond everyday interactions, appearing in media like news, films, songs, and speeches. Effendy (1986), cited in Jong li fa, views films as cultural and artistic expressions in audio-visual form. Danesi & Admiranto (2010), cited in Vitariani, describe movies as entertainment reflecting societal stories through sequences of images and sound that create an illusion of movement. Horror films, in particular, use language styles to enhance narratives, develop characters, and connect with audiences by tapping into collective fears. Analyzing language style in horror movies reveals how linguistic choices support the genre's narrative and aesthetic goals, such as using ambiguous language to evoke uncertainty or emotionally charged dialogue to deepen character development and audience engagement. Based on the statement above, the research question can be articulated as follows:

1. What are the types of language style of female characters in horror movie "presence" according to Martin Joos theory?
2. What is the most dominant language style of female characters in horror movie "presence" according to Martin Joos theory?

LITERATURE REVIEW/ TINJAUAN PUSTAKA

Research on language styles has been extensively conducted, covering language styles used in movies, songs, and even poetry. However, research on language style in horror movie is still limited.

The first research was conducted by Dewi et al. (2020) in a journal titled "Language Style in Romantic Movies." This study used two different movies as data sources to identify differences in language styles present in these movies. The first movie is "the last song" and the second is "midnight sun". The method employed was a qualitative-audiovisual approach, using Martin Joos' theory of language style and Hymes' theory of situational context. The study analyzed two different data sets. The first data set, from the movie The Last Song (2010), identified frozen style, formal style, consultative style, intimate style, and casual style. The second data set, from the movie Midnight Sun (2018), found no instances of frozen style.

Secondly, Ilenia and Yustisiana (2021) in their journal article "Speech Style Used in Jimmy Kimmel Live Talk Show." The purpose of this study was to analyze the use of speech styles and the factors influencing their use in the Jimmy Kimmel talk show. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, the study utilized Martin Joos' theory of language styles and Holmes' theory of influencing factors. The results showed that the casual style was more dominant, and no frozen style was found.

The third research is by Purba et al. (2021), titled “Sociolinguistics Analysis on Language Style Form at the Movie Script of Papillon.” The objective of this research was to classify the types of language styles used in the speakers’ utterances. It using Martin Joos’ theory of language styles and Roman Jakobson’s theory of language functions. The method applied was a qualitative approach. The results based on data from the movie script Papillon sourced from YouTube, identified 30 language styles, including frozen style, casual style, intimate style, and consultative style. Five language functions were also identified: expressive, guiding, referential, metalinguistic, and phasic.

METHOD/METODE

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method to explore and understand the meaning of social issues as perceived by individuals or groups, as described by Creswell (2014) in Indahsari. Whitney (1960:160), cited in Elisabeth, defines the descriptive method as research that seeks facts through accurate interpretation. Here, qualitative research involves analyzing text or dialogue from the horror movie “*presence*”, with the goal of describing and presenting the findings in a detailed, descriptive format.

The data for this study come from the horror movie “*presence*”, directed by Steven Soderbergh and released in January 2025, which is available to watch online at hurawatch.com and lasts 84 minutes. The data consist of female characters’ dialogue reflecting their language style in the movie.

Data for this study were gathered through documentation, using observation and documentation to identify the language styles of female characters in the movie “*presence*”. The data collection steps were:

1. Watching the movie “*presence*” three times on www.hurawatch.com to understand the story.
2. Downloading the movie script from www.opensubtitle.com and copying it into Microsoft Word from (.srt file format).

The data analysis in this study uses a qualitative approach, focusing on linguistic conversation analysis. The steps include:

1. Selecting and marking utterances from the “*presence*” movie script that contain language styles.
2. Categorizing the female characters’ utterances based on Martin Joos’ language style theory. To present the finding, the researcher used a table.
3. Interpreting the result of the data.
4. Making conclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION (HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN)

A. Result and Discussion A

1. Consultative Style

This style is suitable for situations such as group discussions or consultations with clients. Joos (1967) in Wirawan, The consultative style is used in semi-formal interactions, such as discussion groups, school settings, or conversations between buyers and sellers. Types of consultative style in horror movie “*presence*” such as:

1. Data 1

CST1:

00:04:08,291 --> 00:04:11,033

Cece: I’m always early. Here, you can have a look at that.

00:04:11,207 --> 00:04:14,558
 Rebekka: Thanks. **Um**, I just want..

In this scene, there are two participants, Rebekka and Cece, who take place in living room. Rebekka and her family are visiting the house they are going to buy. Cece gave a picture of the location plan around the house while saying "here, you can have a look at that." Rebekka responded with "thanks. Um..."

Cece's utterance above is categorized as consultative style because the dialogue between seller and buyer and the topic they talk about is about buying and selling a house. In addition, Rebekka's response by using the discourse marker '**um**' is one of the characteristics of consultative style. So, it can be concluded that the Cece's utterance above is categorized as consultative style.

2. Casual Style

This style allows the use of colloquialisms, slang, or idiomatic expressions. Casual style is spontaneous and pays little attention to formal grammar rules. It reflects familiarity and comfort in social interactions, often with a relaxed and humorous tone. Type of casual style in horror movie "presence" such as:

1. Data 1

CS1:
 00:05:15,967 --> 00:05:17,578

Rebekka: He can swim **four-event**.

In this scene there is a conversation between Crist and Rebekka with the topic of Crist's concern for Tyler. Tyler is their son. Crist is worried about Tyler will be able to participate in a swimming competition in such close quarters. However, Rebekka assured Crist that Tyler could make it through four swim competitions because Tyler had already made it. In the dialogue, Crist said "I am aware" and was responded by Rebekka "he can swim four events."

Rebekka's utterance above is categorized as casual due to the use of ellipsis 'four-event'. The plural noun 'events' becomes singular 'event'. The phrase 'four-event' can be understood by Crist as four swimming competitions that Tyler will do. In addition, the conversation took place in an informal situation. So, Rebekka's utterance is categorized as casual style.

2. Data 2

CS2:
 00:05:29,851 --> 00:05:32,132

Rebekka: We'll **get boned** on the rate, but we'll **re-fi** in 12 months.

In this scene, there are two participants, Rebeka and Crist, who are in the kitchen of the house they are going to buy. In this context, they are calculating the costs they will pay when buying the house. The situation in the conversation is informal. Rebekka's utterance above is categorized as casual style because it is in an informal situation with family members. In addition, the use of slang "get boned" which means "you're fucked" and "re-fi" short for refinance are spoken incompletely but understood by Crist. So, Rebekka's utterance is categorized as casual style.

3. Data 3

CS3:

00:15:46,684 --> 00:15:48,295

Rebekka: You're going down a **rabbit hole**.

In this scene there are two participants, Crist and Rebekka. The dialogue that happens in the kitchen with an informal situation. Crist is confused to think of other ways to cure Chloe. Crist sees Chloe's strange behavior (Budiasa, 2015) (Alya Nurul Firdaus, 2015) (Elisabeth Prita Ningtyas Utami, 2020) (Furidha, 2023) and wants to take Chloe's hair to the psychic. However, Rebekka stopped him by responding "You're going down a rabbit hole."

Rebekka's utterance is categorized as casual style because it is in an informal situation and also the topic they are talking about. In addition, "You're going down a rabbit hole" is categorized as casual style because the use of idioms which is "high risk". Which means the restriction for Crist to do to Chloe. So, Rebekka's utterance is a casual style.

4. Data 4

CS4:

00:22:10,677 --> 00:22:12,809

Chloe: **Moderate to below average**

This scene takes place in Chloe's room in an informal situation between Crist and Chloe. Crist came to Chloe who was in her room and asked "how was your day" and was responded by Chloe with "moderate below average". The conversation took place in an informal situation.

Chloe's utterance above is categorized as casual style because it happens in an informal situation and between family members. In addition, the sarcastic use of "moderate below average" for Crist's question has a negative meaning such as "not great or bad". So, in conclusion, Chloe's utterance is casual style.

5. Data 5

CS5:

00:22:16,726 --> 00:22:18,119

Chloe: **Love one**.

In this scene there are two participants, Crist and Chloe. The conversation happens between Crist and Chloe is about dinner in an informal situation. Crist offers a burrito "you want a burrito?" Then Chloe responds "love one." Which means she wants a burrito for her dinner. After that, Crist left Chloe's room and made an offer to Tyler.

Chloe's utterance above is categorized as casual style because it is a conversation between families and happens in an informal situation. In addition, the use of ellipsis "I would love one" becomes "love one" which means that Chloe accepts the burrito offered by Crist. So, in conclusion, Chloe's utterance is casual style.

3. Intimate Style

Jo (2019) defines intimate language style as the style used in private communication between individuals who have a very close relationship, such as couple or family members. This style is very informal and relies on shared understanding. Intimate style often uses grammatically incomplete language, private codes, or expressions that only the parties involved understand. This style reflects the highest level of familiarity. Type of intimate style in horror movie "presence" such as:

1. Data 1

INT1:

00:05:42,907 --> 00:05:45,214

Rebekka: **Honey**, she'll be fine.

The conversation happens between two participants, Crist and Rebekka. The conversation took place in the kitchen with an intimate situation. "Actually, its death" was responded by Rebekka "honey, she'll be fine" was Rebekka's words reassuring Crist that Chloe would be fine in the new house. However, Crist feels worried about Chloe's condition who can feel and see the existence of ghost. Rebekka's utterance above is intimate because it has the characteristics of an intimate style, which is spoken to a partner and uses intimate language "honey". So, it can be concluded that Rebekka's utterance above is an intimate style.

2. Data 2

INT2:

00:10:28,366 --> 00:10:35,243

Rebekka: **I just want you to know that everything I've done, every single thing has been for you.**

This scene takes place in the kitchen between Tyler and Rebekka in the evening while they are drinking tea. Rebekka tells Tyler about Crist and Rebekka's divorce plan. But Tyler doesn't accept and says "why are you even telling me?" and is responded to by Rebekka "I just want you to know that everything I've done, every single thing has been for you" which means that Rebekka expresses affection for Tyler between son and mother.

Rebekka's utterance above has the characteristics of intimate style which is an expression of mother's affection to the son by saying "I just want you to know that everything I've done, every single thing has been for you". In addition, the situation is informal and happens between two people who have a close relationship as mother and son. So, the conclusion is Rebekka's utterance is categorized as intimate style.

3. Data 3

INT3:

00:16:31,903 --> 00:16:33,905

Rebekka: **Sweetie**, there is no fixing it.

In this scene there is a dialogue between Crist and Rebekka which takes place in the kitchen. Crist is worried about Chloe's condition which is considered to have anxiety. However, Rebekka already knows that Chloe can feel and see ghosts in her house. Rebekka tries to offer Crist another therapy for Chloe "What about a different therapist?" but Crist still tries to solve it himself with the answer "I just want to fix this". However, Rebekka responded with "**Sweetie**, there is no fixing it".

Rebekka's utterance above has intimate characteristics because it is spoken by two people who have a close relationship, a married couple. In addition, the use of intimate language such as "sweetie" is a characteristic of intimate style. So, it is concluded that Rebekka's utterance is intimate style.

4. Data 4

INT4:

00:16:36,734 --> 00:16:39,346

Rebekka: **Look at you. You're a mess.**

In this scene there is a dialogue between Crist and Rebekka that takes place in the kitchen. Crist is worried about Chloe's condition who is considered to have anxiety. However, Rebekka already knows that Chloe can feel and see ghosts in her house. Seeing Crist's confused and worried condition that looks bad, Rebekka gives attention to Crist not to worry about Chloe.

Rebekka's utterance above is characteristic of the intimate style, which is carried out by two people who have a close relationship. In this case, Crist and Rebekka are spouse. In addition, "Look at you. You're a mess" is an expression of Rebekka's affection for Crist by paying attention to him. So, it can be concluded that Rebekka's utterance above is intimate style.

5. Data 5

INT5:

00:43:21,686 --> 00:43:24,732

Chloe: **You'll be okay, Tyler. I promise.**

In this scene there is a dialogue between Chloe and Tyler on their balcony. This scene tells the story of their family seeing a ghost presence that makes a mess of Chloe's room. As Crist and his family are relaxing in the living room, they hear the sound of loud objects falling. They ran to see what was happening. Arriving at Chloe's room, Chloe enters and sees everything that happened. All the trophies and books on the table were in a mess. Then everyone told Chloe to get out of her room, but Chloe still stayed there. Shortly after that, Crist and his family go to the balcony to save themselves and find a solution on how to leave the house. Tyler thinks that the incident has something to do with Nadia, Chloe's best friend. Tyler does not want to be trapped in the situation and wants to leave the house as soon as possible. However, Chloe tells Tyler that he will not be in danger.

Chloe's utterance above is characteristic of intimate style. The phrase "You'll be okay, Tyler. I promise" is an expression spoken to a person who has a close relationship as a sibling. "You'll be okay, Tyler. I promise" is Chloe's promise to keep Tyler from bad things and will find a solution to leave the house immediately. So, it can be concluded that Chloe's utterance is categorized as intimate style.

Images and Tables (Gambar dan Tabel)

Table 1. Table of Frequency

No.	Language Style Type	Frequency
1.	Frozen	0
2.	Formal	0
3.	Consultative	1
4	Casual	14
5	Intimate	8
	Total Data	23



Figure 1 Anaphora Logo

CONCLUSION/KESIMPULAN

This research found three language styles contained in the horror movie "presence". The first language style is casual language style (14 utterances) used in daily conversation with an informal style. Second, intimate language style (8 utterances) is used between husband and wife or parents and children to show affection. Finally, the consultative language style (1 utterance) used between seller and buyer when Rebekka's response by using the discourse marker 'um' is one of the characteristics of consultative style. In the horror movie "presence", the most dominant language style is casual style. The use of casual language happens in everyday conversations with the closest people. The use of casual language can also be seen from the place setting used, the setting of the movie "presence" is at home from beginning to the ending.

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