



Language Style of Taylor Swift on Talk Show (*Gaya Bahasa Taylor Swift dalam Acara Talk Show*)

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Article Info	Abstract
Article history: Received: 1 September 2025 Revised: 18 September 2025 Accepted: 19 September 2025 Keywords: Language Style Language Function Sociolinguistics Talk Show Kata Kunci: Gaya Bahasa Fungsi Bahasa Sosiolinguistik Talk Show	This study aims to analyze Taylor Swift's speech styles in talk show appearances, particularly on the YouTube platform. Talk shows typically discuss current issues involving well-known figures such as celebrities, politicians, and athletes. Using Joos' (1967) theory of speech styles, this research examines the types of speech styles found in three American talk shows: <i>The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon</i>, <i>The Ellen DeGeneres Show</i>, and <i>Late Night with Seth Meyers</i>. The study also explores the language functions influencing the choice of speech styles based on Janet Holmes and Nick Wilson (2022). This research employs a qualitative method with a sociolinguistic approach. All data were collected from Taylor Swift's utterances during her conversations with the hosts. The findings reveal that thirty utterances containing speech styles were identified in the selected videos. Furthermore, the results indicate that Taylor Swift employed four out of the five speech styles: casual, consultative, formal, and intimate styles. Abstrak Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis gaya bahasa Taylor Swift dalam acara talk show, khususnya di platform YouTube. Acara talk show biasanya membahas isu-isu terkini dari tokoh-tokoh terkenal, seperti selebritas, politisi, dan atlet. Menggunakan teori gaya bahasa dari Joos (1967), penelitian ini mengkaji jenis-jenis gaya bahasa yang ditemukan dalam tiga program talk show asal Amerika Serikat yaitu <i>The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon</i>, <i>The Ellen DeGeneres Show</i>, dan <i>Late Night with Seth Meyers</i>. Penelitian ini juga menelaah fungsi bahasa yang mempengaruhi pemilihan gaya bahasa berdasarkan dari Janet Holmes dan Nick Wilson (2022). Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan metode kualitatif dan pendekatan sosiolinguistik. Seluruh data dikumpulkan dari ujaran Taylor Swift saat berdialog dengan pembawa acara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat tiga puluh ujaran yang mengandung gaya bahasa dalam video yang dipilih. Selain itu, ditemukan bahwa Taylor Swift menggunakan empat dari lima gaya bahasa. Empat gaya bahasa yang digunakan adalah gaya kasual, konsulatatif, formal, dan intim.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As socialized individuals, we spend much of our time interacting with others through language in the process of communication. Bonvillain (2019) described language as a powerful medium for speakers to carry their thoughts, emotions, desires, and intentions to interlocutors. Agha (2006) further argues that language is viewed not simply as a tool for conveying ideas and feelings, but rather it plays an integral role in building a good bond among people in social life. Therefore, it is important to consider appropriate word choices by paying attention to the social factors of language, including participants, the setting, the topic, and the function of interactions (Holmes & Wilson, 2022).

In its various forms, language comprises various kinds that reflect specific purposes and contexts. Style is a part of language variation. A style is understood as somebody's way of using language (Crystal, 2010). This concept is crucial for understanding how language varies among speakers and how it applies in different circumstances. One of the fields of research that discusses this in more depth is sociolinguistics. According to sociolinguist Coulmas (1997), sociolinguistics is part of a social phenomenon that examines how people use language in different social situations. In an educational context, sociolinguistics is essential to help learners better understand how to use language appropriately in varied contexts (Shu, 2019). Most importantly, a sociolinguistics course could raise all learners' awareness and sensitivity to cultural understanding and linguistic diversity in real-life interactions (Alshraah et al., 2024). Within this framework, Meyerhoff, as cited in Niswa (2021), points out that language style can reflect an individual's personality, attitude, or state, emphasizing its importance in human interactions.

Martin Joos (1967), an American linguist, has classified language styles based on the level of their formality. He identified five styles, which he terms as frozen style, formal style, casual style, consultative style, and intimate style. When people use certain styles, they also reveal the function of their language. Holmes and Wilson (2022) point out six types of language function. They are expressive function, directive function, poetic function, referential function, metalinguistic function, and phatic function. Knowing about language function, people will understand what the speakers mean by the language they use at the moment.

In today's modern era, there are many ways to observe the phenomenon of language style. One method is observing interview conversations on digital platforms like YouTube. Through YouTube, users are able to access and rewatch television programs (Bentley & Murray, 2016). One of the interesting television programs where one or more guests are invited by a host to discuss various topics, especially current issues, is called a talk show. The talk show encompasses a diverse range of talk framing styles, from strictly informative and news-based formats to entertaining, therapeutic, or simply ritualistic (Ilie, 2001). Similar to other genres of television programming, talk show programs are also known for being highly structured with a pre-planned format to determine the topics, the show format, and interview questions (Xinyu, 2024). However, an important feature that differentiates talk shows from other shows is open discussion, which allows the host and the talk show guest to improvise during the broadcast (Maryina, 2016). The necessity for improvisation in these interactions can significantly influence the choice of language style for both the host and the guest of the talk show, thereby contributing to the program's distinctive effect.

Studying language style in talk shows is particularly interesting for several reasons. First, talk shows have emerged as cultural phenomena in the last decade. It is a type of television show that relates to people's lives and is viewed as a platform representing society. Second, understanding how the interplay of spontaneous talk influences the language style of talk show participants can reveal some interesting findings. Lastly, we can assess a person's personality based on the different backgrounds of the talk show participants. Concerning this issue, various language styles can be observed in the context of the talk show. Therefore, this study aims to analyze Taylor Swift's language style in three different talk shows.

Some studies have been conducted to analyze language style with various subjects and objects. The researcher used this as a guideline and basis for this study. First, Noviyanti (2022) examined language style in an educational context. Second, Novitasari (2021) discussed the use of casual language in the context of the talk show. Last, Zumaria (2022) analyzes language style in the movie context. Although the previous studies have discussed similar theories and issues in identifying types of language styles, this study presents different objectives focused on examining the language style of the famous singer Taylor Swift, as

demonstrated in three selected videos from talk shows where she mainly discussed her career and personal life. The researcher will also explore the use of language functions based on the occurrences of language style. This research is considered necessary and relevant because it examines a new phenomenon linked to the rapid development of digital platform use, mainly talk shows on YouTube.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applied the qualitative method for data analysis. This type of methodology is considered the most suitable method for this study because the researcher wants to analyze the social phenomenon that happens on the talk show. This is in line with the explanation of Stewart-Withers et al. (2014), who said that qualitative research attempts to describe, explore, or explain social phenomena. However, Heigham & Croker (2009, p.5) stated, "Qualitative research involves collecting primarily textual data and examining it using interpretive analysis." Qualitative methods require a vivid and in-depth explanation of how the data is collected and analyzed, and how the researcher takes a role in the research as the primary research instrument.

2.1 Data Source

The data sources for this research were collected from well-known American talk shows available on YouTube: The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, The Ellen DeGeneres Show, and Late Night with Seth Meyers. These shows were selected due to their popularity as host of talk shows and got high viewership on every episode that was broadcast on their YouTube channel. From these shows, the researcher gathered three episodes for analysis. The first episode is taken from The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, titled "Taylor Swift Reacts to Embarrassing Footage of Herself After Laser Eye Surgery," released on October 4, 2019. The second episode is from The Ellen DeGeneres Show, titled "Taylor Swift's Deepest Fear," released on October 23, 2014. The last episode is from Late Night Show with Seth Meyers, titled "Taylor Swift Explains Why She's Re-Recording Her Albums," released on November 12, 2021. Meanwhile, the primary data for this research will be collected from the utterances of Taylor Swift, focusing on her language style as analyzed through Martin Joos' theory.

2.2 Technique of Collecting the Data

The data collection was carried out in four steps. First, the researcher obtained the links for three videos from their YouTube channels. Second, the researcher downloaded the transcripts from <https://downsub>. Then transcribed them in detail. Third, edited the transcripts by watching each video carefully to check the accuracy of each spoken dialogue attributed to the correct speakers. Last was identifying the utterances of Taylor Swift, focusing on language style. In this step, the researcher only marked or underlined those parts of the text that contain language style based on the theory of language style by Martin Joos (1967).

2.3 Technique of Data Analysis

After gathering the data, the researcher analyzed it through the following steps. First, the transcript was read several times to understand the data findings. Second, the researcher classified Taylor Swift's utterances into all types of language styles according to Martin Joos' (1967) theory of language styles, whether it belongs to frozen style, formal style, consultative style, casual style, or intimate style. Additionally, after classifying data, the researcher identified the language function that influences the occurrence of the language style used by Taylor Swift in each datum based on the six types of language functions by Holmes and Wilson's theory (2022), including referential, directive, phatic, metalinguistic, poetic, and expressive functions. Fourth, interpreting the data. The data containing language style and language function were interpreted based on Joos's theory of language style (1967) and the theory of language function of Holmes and Wilson (2022). Besides, the researcher considered several factors, such as the dialogue situation, the topic of discussion, and the talk show participants. Last, the researcher draws conclusions and recommendations. The researcher made it by looking at the results of the findings and the discussion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the study's results to answer the research problem. The researcher found that the main object, which is Taylor Swift, applied different language styles in three talk shows. After collecting the data, the researcher found four types of language styles used by Taylor Swift. They are formal style, casual style, consultative style, and intimate style. It was classified by adopting Joos' theory of language style. The researcher also found the language functions used by Taylor Swift based on Holmes and Wilson's theory. These functions include referential, expressive, poetic, phatic, and directive.

Table 1. Frequency of Data Findings

No	Type of Language Style	Frequency
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1	Formal style	1
2	Consultative Style	2
3	Casual Style	26
4	Intimate Style	1
Total		30

According to Table 1 above, there were 30 instances of language style applied by Taylor Swift in her utterances as a guest on three talk shows. The highest utterance of language style was the casual style, with a total of 26 utterances. Additionally, the type of language style is followed by a consultative style with 2 utterances. The third was the formal and intimate styles, which had the same number of 1 utterances for each style. Lastly, the researcher did not find any utterances that contain frozen style.

3.1 Formal Style

Formal style is less formal than the frozen style. It is generally used in formal situations, for example, in the classroom. This is in line with Joos (1992), who, in his journal article *Homeostasis in English Language Usage*, explains that formal style is used for lecturing. The language used in this style is highly concerned with explicit pronunciation, elaborate grammar without ellipsis, and complex sentences. Moreover, this style occurred in the conversation to show respect towards individuals who are significantly older or have a higher social status. Based on the research, the researcher found that Taylor Swift used a formal style only in her appearance on *The Late Night Show with Seth Meyers*. This style occurs when Taylor receives compliments from the show's host. The analysis is presented in the following explanation.

Datum 1

Meyers: “We love having you in the building, especially when it means we get to see you on 'SNL' this coming Saturday. Your fifth time as a musical guest.”

Taylor: “Yes. What a dream.”

Meyers: “And -- and a one-time host. An incredible host back in the day.”

Taylor: “**Thank you.**”

The conversation above is included in a formal style. This is because one characteristic of formal style occurs in Taylor's utterances. In this case, the formal style that appears in the dialogue is influenced by Meyers, the host of the show. This datum was uttered at the beginning of the conversation when Meyers mentions Taylor's previous experiences as a host on *Saturday Night Live* and compliments her for doing an incredible job. In response to Meyers' compliment, Taylor politely said “thank you,” which is the formal form of “thanks.” In Joos' (1967) theory, formal style is a language style that occurs in formal situations when the speaker is highly concerned about pronunciation, word choice, and sentence structure.

Moreover, this conversation uses a formal style because the function of the language influenced it. Taylor's utterances of “thank you” in the conversation had a function as an expression because Taylor expressed her appreciation and gratitude for the opportunity and compliments she had received from Meyers as the host of the show. Based on Holmes and Wilson's (2022) theory of language function, expressive function means expressing everything, whether it is about feelings, thoughts, ideas, or opinions.

3.2 Consultative Style

Consultative style is generally used in semi-formal situations. It is commonly found in daily situations where the participants continuously give feedback in conversation. For example, in conversations between sellers and buyers, doctors and patients, and small group discussions. Joos (1967) noted that there are two essential features of consultative style. First, the speaker provided background information. So, the explanation must be clear, as this style often applies when communicating with strangers or people who may not share the same experience. Second, the speaker can employ short responses to show engagement and understanding. Based on the research, the researcher found two data in two talk shows. In this sample data, the researcher provides one datum. This style occurs when the speakers receive a clear and explicit question from Jimmy Fallon. The data related to this style is presented in the following explanation.

Datum 2

Jimmy: “Can you see me, by the way?”

Taylor: “**Uh, yeah.**”

Jimmy: “Okay, good. ‘Cause I just was wondering, ‘Cause I under—Didn't you get Lasik surgery?”

Taylor's utterances, which have been bolded in the conversation, are included in the consultative style. It can be seen from Taylor's response, “Uh, yeah”. She took a slight pause after saying the word “Uh,” as she was startled by Jimmy's question before providing an affirmative response with “Yeah.” Therefore, as she gave short responses when answering Jimmy's question, it was reflective of a consultative style. According to Joo's (1967) theory of language style, one of the features of the consultative style is when a speaker gives a short answer like Umm, Yeah, I know, Uh-Uh, That's right, Oh, I think so, and several short answers.

Moreover, Taylor used the consultative style because it was influenced by the participant and the topic of the conversation. Jimmy asks a direct and specific question that requires a simple yes or no response: "Can you see me, by the way?" Taylor's response is, "Uh, yeah." This type of response provides a brief and clear answer that aligns with the consultative style. This aligns with Joos' (1967) theory, where he pointed out that a consultative style can be applied in small group conversations when the speaker's pronunciation must be explicit and clear.

Dealing with the function, Taylor's utterance can be classified as a referential function. According to Holmes and Wilson (2022), the referential function is to provide information. It was found that Taylor is conveying information about her eyesight. Taylor gives a simple answer by saying, "Uh, yeah," which indicates agreement or confirmation that her vision is functioning well and that there is nothing wrong with her eyesight.

3.3 Casual Style

Casual style is usually used in our relaxed or daily situations. People tend to use this style when conversing with family and friends. Slang and ellipses are freely used in this style. Also, the speaker can use incomplete sentences as long as both the speaker and the interlocutor understand the discussion. The researcher provides the example of casual style when it occurs in *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, as shown in the following data.

Datum 7

Jimmy: "What--What songs are you doing on "SNL"? Can you say? Have you said?"

Taylor: "Yeah, I'm fine with saying"

Jimmy: "You can?"

Taylor: **I mean, I'll tell -- Well, you know, we gotta be a little cryptic, just 'cause it's fun. But I'll probably do "Lover."**

The conversation above is included in a casual style. In this scene, Taylor talks about her upcoming appearance as the musical guest for the weekend's SNL. Taylor also shared that she will perform "Lover" in addition to promoting Lover, her new album. In the conversation, two ellipses occurred; when she said, "I mean, I'll tell---" Taylor did not continue her word and switched the word with "Well, you know," which the utterance included in the ellipsis. Besides, slang words also occur in Taylor's utterances. It showed when she said, "We gotta be a little cryptic." "gotta" is slang because it is an omission from "going to." This is in line with the theory of Joos (1967), who stated that ellipsis is one of the characteristics of casual style.

Based on Holmes and Wilson's (2022) theory of language functions, Taylor's utterance "We gotta be a little cryptic" can be classified into directive functions. Here, she provides guidance or directions to Jimmy about how they should approach discussing the songs. Taylor explained that although she is willing to share the information about the song she will perform on SNL, she wants to make the communication more intriguing or playful by adding an element of mystery.

3.4 Intimate Style

The lowest level of language style is the intimate style. Intimate style is most often utilized by speakers who know each other well or have a good relationship with their interlocutors, such as between close family or friends. The user of this style can use private vocabulary such as "dear," "darling," and "honey" to address one another. Those words show the intimacy between two people who have a strong bond. Regarding the findings, the researcher found that Taylor Swift used an intimate style only in her appearance on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. This is explained further below.

Datum 14

Taylor: "I don't even know how you did that. **Nobody has my mom's number.** Like, how did?"

Jimmy: "Yeah, I asked for your mom's number. But, yeah, we've been friends for years."

This conversation shows that datum seven is classified into the intimate style. This is because there is a signal of intimacy in Taylor's utterances when she asks Jimmy how he got the footage, when no one knows her mother's number. Taylor asked, "Nobody has my mom's number. Like, how did?" How she addressed her mother with the word "Mom" indicates that her relationship with her mother is intimate and friendly. Therefore, it is categorized as intimate because it contains addressee characteristics. According to Joos' (1967) theory, intimate style applies private vocabulary like dear, darling, honey, mom, dad, etc.

Based on Holmes and Wilson's (2022) theory of language functions, Taylor's utterances can be classified into expressive functions. In this case, Taylor expresses her surprise and disbelief when Jimmy reveals that he has her mom's number. Her statements, "I don't even know how you did that. Nobody has my mom's number. Like, how did?" reflect her astonishment and confusion. She expresses her genuine surprise at the revelation and seeks clarification on how Jimmy obtained her mom's number.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the results of the findings and discussion, the researcher formulated several conclusions. First, the results of this research have demonstrated that Taylor Swift employed four types of language styles based on Joos' (1967) theory to present herself in talk shows. They are consultative style, casual style, formal style, and intimate style. Notably, there is only one type that Taylor did not employ in this context, which is the frozen style. This study has no frozen style because no situation requires Taylor to use this style. Furthermore, casual styles rank first among all the language styles used by Taylor Swift. This type of language style occurs most frequently among the other types in all the videos the researcher has chosen. This is due to how Taylor positions herself based on the specific situation and audience. Additionally, the primary reason for using this type of language is that it aligns well with the talk show format and enables Taylor to establish a friendly connection between herself as a guest, the host, and the audience at a deeper level. Moreover, the researcher finds that the topic discussion can influence the formality of the language style used. For example, when discussing serious or sensitive topics, Taylor uses a consultative style with few pauses. She applies proper grammar and standard sentences. On the other hand, for less serious or casual topics, she uses colloquial language, ellipses, short responses, jokes, and slang to engage in a more casual and familiar conversation. Moreover, when receiving compliments from the host, Taylor tends to use a formal style.

Second, this research has discovered the language function used by Taylor in talk shows. By taking Janet Holmes and Nick Wilson's (2022) theory, the researcher only found four functions from the six functions appearing in Taylor's utterances when she communicates with the three hosts. These functions include expressive, directive, referential, and phatic functions. The dominant language function used by Taylor in each video is the referential function, followed by the expressive function. As an entertainer, Taylor tends to be very expressive when communicating with the talk show host, whether expressing her happiness, fear, confusion, excitement, curiosity, surprise, etc. She was so expressive that she created a more fun atmosphere, so viewers would not feel bored watching the show. Her expression, particularly when she expressed confusion or surprise, often elicits laughter from both the hosts and the studio audience. It can be concluded that both the host and the studio audience feel entertained. This function becomes most apparent because it aligns with the talk show format to share information and engage the audience.

4.2 Suggestions or Recommendations

After conducting this research, the researcher hopes it can be helpful as a reference material for further researchers interested in the same topic: language style and function. It is good to be interested in this topic since it happens daily. While this research provides valuable insight into the language style in the talk show platform, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations in this study.

First, this research only relies on a single theoretical framework to analyze the data. This study employed Martin Joos' theory of the five styles, which is an old theory. Joos' theory lacks a rigorous definition of the different styles, particularly in explaining casual style. For instance, it primarily describes casual style as occurring with friends or colleagues, but does not delve into specific characteristics such as informal vocabulary or the use of pronouns. Meanwhile, it only briefly mentions slang and ellipsis. Therefore, the researcher suggests that future research is also needed to address the issue of language style from varied theories, more updated theories, or combining two theories to enlarge the discussion of language style, for instance, combining two theories like the theory of Dumaine and other theories. These ways enable the researchers to enrich the discussion and the area of research.

Second, the data source for collecting the data. The sample only featured Taylor Swift's appearances on three talk shows with different durations. Future research could seek out several episodes of talk shows with at least a similar duration to better reveal similarities and differences between the findings. Additionally, the researcher highly recommends further research to analyze language style with other objects, such as podcasts, vlogs, and movies, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how language is used within diverse communicative contexts. Studies could also analyze the language style of participants when they are in the same place with their closest person. This intends to reveal how the participants shift their style with different people in the same situation.

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