

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter I, several sub-sections will be discussed, including the following: background of the study, Identification of the Problems, research questions, research objectives, research limitations, and significance of the studies.

A. Background of the Study

Language is more than just a tool for communication—it is a reflection of who we are. Through language, people express their thoughts, emotions, social roles, and even their sense of self. In sociolinguistics, this connection between language and identity is a central area of study. Identity is not fixed or given from birth, but rather something that people actively construct through their daily interactions with others (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). When we speak, we make choices—about words, tone, formality, and style—that shape how others see us and how we see ourselves.

One of the key elements of identity construction is language style. According to Joos (1967), language style refers to the level of formality or informality used by a speaker depending on the context, relationship, and purpose of the communication. Speakers may switch between formal and informal styles to show authority, create intimacy, or establish equality. Holmes (2013) further emphasizes that language style reflects social distance, power relations, and group membership. This means that the way people speak can

reveal whether they are close or distant, equal or hierarchical, dominant or submissive.

Another important concept is power in language. Fairclough (1989) defines power in discourse as the ability to control or influence the behavior and beliefs of others through language. Power is often shown through commands, interruptions, topic control, or the use of formal or informal speech. In conversations, people constantly negotiate power depending on their roles and status. For example, a leader may speak differently to a subordinate than to a peer. These subtle signs of power can be observed in everyday speech and are especially clear in scripted dialogues, such as those in films.

In film studies and media linguistics, language is often used to reveal character identity and relationships. The concept of characterization through language refers to how writers use dialogue to shape and present characters to the audience (Toolan, 2012). Each character may have a unique way of speaking that matches their background, values, or social role. This makes films a rich source for analyzing how language style and power dynamics contribute to identity.

Despite this, many studies on identity and language focus only on real-life interactions or written texts, such as interviews, speeches, or literature. There is still limited exploration of identity construction in film dialogue, especially in the superhero genre. This is unfortunate because films like *Avengers: Endgame* contain a wide range of characters with distinct personalities, roles, and speaking styles. These characters often use language

to lead, persuade, resist, or connect with others—making their dialogue a valuable resource for sociolinguistic analysis.

This study focuses on six main characters from *Avengers: Endgame*: Iron Man, Captain America, Black Widow, Thor, Hulk, and Hawkeye. Each character represents different identities, social roles, and relationships. By examining their language style and power relations, we can uncover how their speech helps to shape who they are and how they interact with others. This is in line with Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) idea that identity is constructed interactionally and dynamically through language.

The analysis will be based on spoken language as represented in the film's subtitle script, using a qualitative approach to explore the deeper meanings behind the characters' dialogue. This focus allows the researcher to capture real-life patterns of speech, including informal expressions, politeness strategies, and role-based language use.

This research is also important for language learners. Many students can understand grammar and vocabulary but struggle to grasp how language changes depending on the situation or speaker. By studying language use in film, learners can observe how English is used in context to express emotion, power, respect, sarcasm, disagreement, or friendship. This can help them become more effective and confident speakers in real communication.

B. Identification of the Problem.

In today's global society, language plays an important role in shaping how individuals present themselves and interact with others. Language is not

only used to send messages, but also to build relationships, express emotions, and show identity. Sociolinguistics studies these functions of language, especially how language reflects the identity of its speakers. One important aspect of sociolinguistics is how language is used to show personal traits, social roles, and power relations in different contexts.

However, in real-life settings, it is often difficult to study identity and power in spoken language because conversations are spontaneous, complex, and not always recorded. As a result, many researchers turn to films, where dialogues are scripted and can be analyzed more easily. Film characters, especially in well-written movies, are often designed to reflect real people and their ways of speaking. Through their language, we can see how identity is constructed and how power is negotiated in conversation.

Avengers: Endgame, as a globally popular film, features strong, well-developed characters who represent different roles, personalities, and values. These characters use language not just to fight or give commands, but also to express their leadership, emotions, loyalty, and decisions. This makes the movie an ideal subject for analyzing how language style and power relations reflect and construct character identity.

Despite its potential, there is still limited research focusing specifically on language and identity in the context of superhero movies, especially using qualitative methods and focusing on spoken language. Many existing studies tend to focus on written texts, such as novels, news articles, or social media

posts. Others only study one or two linguistic features, without exploring how different elements work together to build identity and show power dynamics.

Moreover, many studies do not explore the combination of language style and power relations at the same time, even though these two aspects are deeply connected. Language style helps shape how others see us, while power influences how we speak and how others speak to us. In a group of characters like the Avengers—where there are leaders, followers, rivals, and friends—power and identity are constantly negotiated through speech. Studying this can reveal a lot about how people use language to position themselves in a social hierarchy.

Another problem is the lack of research that focuses on spoken language in film dialogue. Film subtitles provide a written version of spoken language, which includes tone, informality, interruptions, emotional expressions, and conversational structures. By using film subtitles as data, researchers can analyze spoken language in a controlled, repeatable way. However, many linguistic studies still rely too much on written forms and ignore the richness of speech in popular media.

Finally, there is a need to create studies that are not only academically valuable but also useful for language learners. Students often struggle to understand how to use English in different social situations. They may know grammar and vocabulary, but they may not understand how language reflects identity or how to speak differently depending on who they are talking to. This

study helps solve that problem by providing real examples of how language is used in different power dynamics and by different personalities.

These problems show the importance of conducting this research. By focusing on the language used by the six main characters in *Avengers: Endgame*, this study aims to fill the gaps in previous research and provide useful insights for both scholars and language learners.

C. Scope and Limitation.

To ensure that this research remains focused, manageable, and meaningful, it is necessary to clearly define its scope and limitations. This study is centered on exploring how identity is constructed through language, specifically by examining language style and power relations as expressed in spoken dialogue. The analysis is conducted within a qualitative framework, emphasizing depth over breadth in the interpretation of linguistic features.

The primary data source for this research is the subtitle transcript of the film *Avengers: Endgame*. Subtitles serve as an accessible and reliable representation of spoken language in the film. They offer a written record of verbal exchanges that can be systematically examined for linguistic patterns related to identity and social power. While the subtitles do not capture every non-verbal cue, tone, or intonation, they provide sufficient material for a focused sociolinguistic analysis.

This study focuses exclusively on six main characters from the movie, who play central roles in the narrative and exhibit distinct identities and power

dynamics. The selected characters are: Tony Stark (Iron Man), Steve Rogers (Captain America), Natasha Romanoff (Black Widow), Thor, Bruce Banner (Hulk), Clint Barton (Hawkeye)

These characters are chosen due to their prominent involvement in the storyline, their well-established personalities, and the rich variety of interactions they engage in throughout the film. Each character represents different forms of leadership, emotional expression, and interpersonal relationships, making them suitable subjects for investigating language-based identity construction.

The study is limited to analyzing spoken language only—that is, what characters say during the film as presented in the subtitle script. Non-verbal communication such as gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice will not be examined in detail, as they fall outside the primary linguistic focus of this study. Additionally, no attempt will be made to study the characters' development across other films in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The analysis is strictly confined to *Avengers: Endgame*.

Furthermore, the research will not address audience perception, reception, or interpretation of the characters' language use. It also does not cover broader thematic elements such as plot structure, cinematography, or moral messages in the film. Instead, it concentrates solely on how language is used by the characters to perform identity and negotiate power in their spoken interactions.

By narrowing the scope in this way, the study seeks to deliver a detailed and nuanced analysis that contributes meaningfully to the fields of sociolinguistics and language education. This focus also allows the research to offer practical insights for English language learners, particularly in understanding how language varies depending on the speaker's role, status, and personal identity within a specific context.

D. Research Questions.

Based on the background, identified problems, and the defined scope of the study, this research is guided by the following questions:

1. How is language style used by the six main characters in *Avengers: Endgame* to construct their identity?
2. How do power relations appear through the spoken language of the six main characters in *Avengers: Endgame*?

These questions aim to explore how language functions as a tool for expressing individuality and negotiating power within the context of the film. The answers to these questions will be based on the analysis of the characters' spoken dialogue as found in the movie's subtitle transcript.

E. Objective of the Study.

The main objective of this research is to analyze how language is used to construct identity and express power among the six main characters in *Avengers: Endgame*. This study aims to contribute to the understanding of how spoken language reflects personality, role, and authority within a specific social and narrative context.

More specifically, this research seeks to:

1. Describe the language styles used by Iron Man, Captain America, Black Widow, Thor, Hulk, and Hawkeye in the film, and explain how these styles help to construct their individual identities.
2. Identify and analyze the expressions of power relations in the spoken interactions among these six characters, based on their choice of words, sentence structures, levels of politeness, and other linguistic features.

Through these objectives, the study hopes to provide valuable insights into the role of language in building identity and managing social power, particularly in the context of popular media.

F. Significance of the Study.

This research is expected to offer several significant contributions both theoretically and practically, particularly in the fields of sociolinguistics, language education, and media-based language analysis.

1. Theoretical Significance

This study contributes to the development of sociolinguistic theory by providing a detailed analysis of how language style and power relations shape character identity in film dialogue. It supports the idea that identity is not fixed but is constructed through interaction, especially through spoken language. The findings are expected to enrich academic discussions on how language reflects social roles, personality traits, and interpersonal dynamics in fictional yet socially meaningful contexts like films.

Furthermore, by combining two important sociolinguistic elements—language style and power relations—this study offers a more integrated understanding of identity construction. It highlights how both elements interact to form a complete picture of how characters position themselves and relate to others through language.

2. Practical Significance

This research has practical benefits for several groups:

- A. For language learners, especially learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), this study provides real-life examples of how spoken English varies depending on social context, role, and personality. It helps learners understand that effective communication is not only about grammar and vocabulary but also about how language is used to show respect, assert authority, or build

solidarity. By analyzing the subtitles of a popular film, students can learn authentic expressions, tone, and conversational strategies that are rarely covered in textbooks.

- B. For language teachers, this study offers insights and potential materials for classroom activities. Teachers can use clips or subtitle excerpts from *Avengers: Endgame* to teach students about speech acts, levels of formality, and interpersonal communication in English. The analysis provided in this research can help guide teachers in selecting meaningful examples and creating engaging, context-based lessons.
- C. For future researchers, this study serves as a reference or model for conducting similar research in sociolinguistics, especially using film or media data. It opens up possibilities for further exploration of identity and language in other film genres, TV series, or even video games. Researchers can also expand the study by including non-verbal elements, audience responses, or cross-cultural comparisons.
- D. For general audiences and media analysts, this research helps raise awareness of how language in movies is used not only for entertainment but also as a reflection of real-world communication. It encourages viewers to think critically about the way characters are portrayed through their speech and what this says about societal norms and values.

3. Personal and Academic Development

Finally, this research offers personal development for the researcher by improving skills in linguistic analysis, critical thinking, and academic writing. It also contributes to the academic community by adding a fresh perspective on the study of identity, especially through the lens of globally popular media like *Avengers: Endgame*.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

This study explored how language is used to express identity and power in *Avengers: Endgame*, focusing on six main characters: Iron Man, Captain America, Thor, Black Widow, Hulk, and Hawkeye. Using sociolinguistic and discourse analysis theories from Fairclough (1989), Foucault (1972), Holmes (2013), and van Dijk (1996), the research examined how these characters speak and what their speech reveals about who they are and how they relate to others.

The findings showed that each character's language style changes depending on the situation. For example, when they are planning a mission or giving orders, they speak in a more serious and formal way. But in emotional or personal moments, they use more casual, friendly language. This supports Holmes' idea that people use different speech styles based on their relationship with others and the context of the conversation. Language style helps reflect and shape a character's identity.

The study also found that power is shown through language in many ways. Characters use commands, questions, interruptions, or emotional appeals to show leadership or challenge others. Fairclough (1989) explains that language doesn't just reflect power but it helps create it. Foucault (1972) adds that power is something that happens in relationships, not something one

person simply holds. In the movie, power shifts between characters depending on the situation, showing that speech is an important tool for influencing others.

Sometimes power is expressed directly through instructions, while at other times, it is shown through sarcasm, politeness, or teamwork. This shows how language can be used not just to control, but also to cooperate and support others.

In conclusion, the characters' speech in *Avengers: Endgame* reveals how language reflects identity and power. These findings show how everyday communication, both in fiction and real life is shaped by who we are, who we're talking to, and what we want to achieve through our words.

B. Suggestions

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several suggestions can be made for future researchers, educators, and students who are interested in sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, or the study of language in popular media such as films.

For future researchers, this study opens up many possible directions. While the analysis in this thesis focused on six main characters in *Avengers: Endgame*—Iron Man, Captain America, Black Widow, Thor, Hulk, and Hawkeye—there are many other characters in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) who also present rich language data. Future studies can focus on different characters, or compare characters across different movies to trace

the development of their identities through language. For example, researchers could explore how a character's speech style changes from one film to another and what that says about their growth, relationships, or changing roles. Additionally, researchers might examine the same themes language style and power relations in different film genres, such as drama, comedy, or animation, to see how language use varies across contexts.

Another suggestion is to expand the theoretical approach. This study used theories from Fairclough, Foucault, and van Dijk to explore how identity and power are performed in language. Future researchers might add or focus on different theories, such as gender and language theory, narrative discourse theory, or cultural linguistics. This would allow a broader or more detailed understanding of how language works in shaping identity, depending on the goals of the research.

For language learners and educators, this study shows that movies can be a useful and engaging learning tool. Subtitles and scripts offer real-life-like examples of spoken language, including informal expressions, speech acts, politeness strategies, and power dynamics. Teachers can use movie clips in the classroom to demonstrate how language is used in context—not just grammatically, but also socially and emotionally. For example, showing students how a character shifts their tone, vocabulary, or politeness level depending on the situation can help learners understand the role of language in real communication.

Students of English and linguistics may also benefit from analyzing films as part of their academic activities. Watching how characters interact in films can teach students about turn-taking, directness, sarcasm, interruption, and other features of spoken discourse. Through this, they can improve both their language skills and their critical thinking.

In terms of academic writing, this study may serve as a reference for those conducting discourse analysis using film subtitles. It shows how film dialogue can be organized and analyzed based on theories of sociolinguistics. Students writing theses or papers can follow the structure and method used here while adapting it to their own topics.

For writers, screenwriters, or content creators, this research suggests that dialogue is more than just a way to tell the story, it also helps shape how characters are perceived. By paying attention to how characters speak, writers can build more realistic, unique, and believable personalities. They can also create power dynamics intentionally, using language features like commands, interruptions, or rhetorical questions to reflect relationships between characters.

Lastly, this study encourages a more critical way of watching movies. Viewers can become more aware of how language is used to build relationships, show status, and express identity. Popular media can reflect real-world communication patterns and power structures, making film a useful mirror for analyzing society.

In summary, there are many ways that the findings of this study can be developed or applied. Whether through deeper research, classroom activities, or creative writing, the connection between language, identity, and power in films like *Avengers: Endgame* offers a valuable field for further exploration.

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