

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Guy Ritchie's 2019 film titled *The Gentlemen* is an action-comedy film that focus on the main character Michael "Mickey" Pearson, an American drug lord who owns a highly profitable marijuana empire in England. Mickey comes from a lower-class family in America and later receives a scholarship to study at University of Oxford, where he began selling drugs to his upper-class British pals. Through years of establishing his positions, Mickey rose to the top of the business chain through ruthless and cunning moves, until he finally decided to retire and sell his marijuana empire, coinciding with the British government's plan to legalize drug commodities. Matthew Berger, an American billionaire who is also involved in marijuana business, is selected as a prospective buyer with zero criminal record, a significant advantage once the British government legalized drugs. However, the negotiation process became complicated as several business rivals attempted to take over and bring down Mickey's business. Consequently, Mickey, with the help of his right-hand man, Raymond, and other subordinates, strives to protect both his marijuana business and his reputation.

*The Gentlemen* (2019) film portrays hierarchical environment within illegal world and business matters, with central themes of power, status, and authority. Throughout the story, Mickey interacts with characters across different social backgrounds, including aristocrats, business partners, rivals, and subordinates.

These interactions signify Mickey's use of various language styles within different social contexts surrounding the interaction he is involved in. Language style is one form of language variation closely related to the degree of formality (Joos, 1967). Those variations are influenced by social factors, including participants, setting, topic, and function of interactions (Holmes, 2013). In social interactions, language style serves as a means for speakers to position themselves in relation to others. Through specific linguistic choices, speakers can project authority, solidarity, professionalism, or membership in a particular social group.

In the context of social groups and interactions, the term Community of Practice (CofP) is widely known, as it refers to a group of people united in common endeavor, characterized by three criteria, namely shared practices, shared goals, and specific linguistic resources (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999). Furthermore, Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) argue that members of a CofP construct and negotiate their identities through participation in shared activities and linguistic practices. Therefore, variations and shifts in Mickey's language style can be analyzed as a response to different social contexts which function as a resource for constructing social identity through self-positioning in social interactions related to his community as Mickey operates within the drug trade community.

Although several studies have explored *The Gentlemen* (2019) focusing on semiotics, semantics, and morphology (Wulandari, 2020; Basid & Maghfiroh, 2021; Wibisana & Simatupang, 2022), limited attention has been given to language style used in the film. Furthermore, a study focusing on identity construction

through the most frequent language style has been conducted using a different film (Ghaniyah & Sugiharti, 2025). However, limited attention has been given to how language style variations and shifts function as resources for social positioning and identity construction within a Community of Practice (CofP). Therefore, this study extends the discussion through a CofP perspective, by investigating Mickey's language style variations, the social factors influencing those variations, and their role in constructing social identity through positioning within a CofP.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

Two research problems will be discussed in this analysis, as follows.

1. What language styles does Mickey Pearson use in *The Gentlemen* (2019), and what social factors influence his choices of style within different interactions?
2. How do Mickey Pearson's language style variations and shifts contribute to the construction of his social identity in the film?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

From the previously stated questions, this study has two main objectives by focusing on analyzing the character Mickey Pearson to identify the types of language style he uses within different interactions and examine what social factors influence his choice of style, and to analyze how these variations contribute in shaping his social identity, specifically through positioning in a Community of

Practice (CofP), related to power and authority within hierarchical environment in the film.

#### **1.4 Previous Study**

Three studies on *The Gentlemen* (2019) have been conducted by Wibisana & Simatupang (2022), Basid & Maghfiroh (2021), and Wulandari (2020) from literary and linguistic perspectives. The study conducted by Wibisana and Simatupang focused on morphological processes, particularly analyzing derivational affixes using Lieber theory (2009), Haspelmath and Sims theory (2010), resulting in suffixes and prefixes types with four forms of derivational affix. As for Basid and Maghfiroh, they analyzed propositions using Charles J. Fillmore's case grammar theory, resulting in nine types of propositions. Furthermore, Wulandari in her thesis focused on analyzing semiotics signs using Roland Barthes' semiotics theory, resulting in both verbal and non-verbal signs with coarse language as the most frequent verbal signs, while the non-verbal signs were found in the colors of clothing, expressions, gestures, and weapons, which reflect power and threat related to culture, ideology, and social hierarchy in the criminal world.

Furthermore, the next category focused on language and identity. Studies on language and identity have shown that linguistic choices contribute to identity construction. Chaudhary and Al Zahrani (2024) analyzed the relationship between language, identity, and sociocultural context in *The Bluest Eye* (1970) using Hymes' SPEAKING model. The findings showed that characters' linguistic choices reflected social relationships, cultural values, and identity negotiation within their

community. Although this study used different theory from language style, it provides insight on how language choices reflect identity negotiations of a character. As for Ghaniyah and Sugiharti (2025), they focused on identifying language style and identity in the TV series *The Bear* using Martin Joos (1967) language style theory and Bucholtz and Hall (2005) identity theory. They found three types of language style: consultative, casual, and intimate, with casual style as the most dominant. This style shows the main character's identity as the head chef whose egalitarianism tends to minimize hierarchical structure within professional kitchen settings by choosing to have collaborative and equal relationships with his subordinates.

The next two studies explore how language style variations relate to character's social class within hierarchical settings in films. In her thesis, Rini (2022) analyzed *Joker* using Chambers (1995) social class theory and Martin Joos' (1967) language style theory, resulting in four types of language style with formal style as the most frequent style due to middle class characters, while Joker as the main character dominantly use casual style as he comes from a lower social class. As for Maharani (2025), she studied social class differences between the main characters in *Kingsman: The Secret Service* through their language style. She found that Eggsy, who came from lower class, used casual style the most and several non-standard grammar forms within his utterances, while Harry, as the upper class used consultative style the most and standard grammar within all his utterances.

The last three studies focused on the relation of language style and social interactions. Hartika and Ardianto (2024) studied language style in *Enola Holmes* (2020) using Joos' language style theory (1967) and Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. They found four styles: formal, consultative, casual, and intimate, with casual style appears as the most dominant style. These variations is influenced by sociocultural factors that are closely tied to the use of positive and negative politeness strategies in maintaining social relationships and face needs. As for Nabilah (2023), she focused on analyzing Queen Charlotte's language style and social factors in the series *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* using Joos' (1967) language style and Holmes' (2013) social factors and dimensions theories. She found casual style as the most frequent style affected by informal settings and closed relationship participants with all four social factors equally influencing Queen Charlotte's language style variations. Likewise, Meidiana and Astuti (2024) studied language style and its relation with social factors in the movie *Guillermo Del Toro's Pinocchio* using the same language style and social factors theories, in which they found all types of language style with casual style as the most dominant style. These style variations are influenced by all four social factors with participants as the most influential factor.

Based on previous studies on *The Gentlemen* (2019), there are still limited to the morphological, semantic, and semiotics perspectives, with no study focused on examining language style through sociolinguistics perspective. Meanwhile, existing studies on language style across different literary works have varied, focusing on how language style variations reflect social class differences between

characters, and how language style variations related to identity construction and influenced by social interactions. However, these studies remain relatively focused on comparing language style across multiple characters rather than examining a single character's style variations as a resource to negotiate and construct a character's social identity across different social interactions within a Community of Practice (CofP).

This indicates a gap in how language style variations of a character function as a resource for social positioning and identity construction within hierarchical settings, where status, power, and authority serve as central themes. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing Mickey Pearson's language style variations and shifts in constructing his social identity through positioning within a CofP. Using Guy Ritchie's *The Gentlemen* (2019) film as the research object, this study offers a deeper understanding of how a character's social identity is constructed through language choices, especially language style shifts and variations, in relation to power and hierarchy.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on the spoken utterances of the character Mickey Pearson in Guy Ritchie's *The Gentlemen* (2019) film. The analysis is limited to his variations of language style within different interactions affected by social factors, which contribute to the construction of his social identity related to interpersonal positioning within a CofP in the movie. This analysis focuses only on one character, Mickey Pearson, as the main character in this film. This analysis uses three theories,

namely Martin Joos' (1967) language style theory, Holmes' (2013) social factors theory, Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) Community of Practice (CofP) theory.

## **1.6 Writing Organization**

This proposal consists of four chapters with different components. The following organizations are explained as follows.

### **CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, previous studies, scope of the study, and writing organization.

### **CHAPTER II : THEORY AND METHOD**

This chapter covers the theoretical frameworks, including language style theory by Martin Joos (1967), social factors theory by Holmes (2013), and Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) community of practice theory. Moreover, this chapter also contains the type of research, research approach, data source, population and sample, method of data collection, and method of data analysis.

### **CHAPTER III : RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents the results of the data and discusses the analysis in relation to theoretical frameworks.

## CHAPTER IV : CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a summary of the results and analysis and presents the conclusions of the study.

