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**Language Style and Emotional Expression Used by Christy Beam
in *Miracles from Heaven* Movie: A Sociolinguistic Study**

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ABSTRACT

Language style and emotional expression play significant roles in human communication because they reflect social relationships, communicative purposes, and psychological conditions. In sociolinguistics, language variation is influenced by social contexts and interactions among speakers. This study aims to analyze the types of language styles used by Christy Beam in *Miracles from Heaven* (2016) and to identify the emotional expressions reflected in her dialogues. The study focuses on the relationship between language style and emotional expression as represented through the main character's interactions with family members, doctors, and other individuals. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. The data source was the movie *Miracles from Heaven*, directed by Patricia Riggen, while the data consisted of Christy Beam's dialogues. Data were collected through repeated observation, transcription, classification, and interpretation based on Martin Joos' theory of language styles and theories of emotional expression. The findings reveal that all five language styles proposed by Joos were present in the movie, namely frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate styles. Consultative, casual, and intimate styles were the most dominant, each accounting for 26.67% of the total data. Furthermore, six types of emotional expressions were identified: anxiety, love/affection, anger, fear, happiness, and sadness. Anxiety emerged as the most dominant emotional expression, representing 33.97% of the data. The findings indicate that Christy Beam's language choices are strongly influenced by social relationships, communication settings, and interaction purposes, while her emotional expressions reflect her psychological experiences as a mother struggling to support her daughter through a serious illness.

Sociolinguistics, Language Style, Emotional Expression, Christy Beam, Miracles from Heaven, Movie Dialogue.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential part of human communication because it allows individuals to express ideas, emotions, and social relationships. In communication, people do not always use the same form of language because

their language choices are influenced by social situations, relationships between speakers, and the purposes of interaction. This phenomenon becomes an important concern in sociolinguistics, which studies the relationship between language and society. According to Holmes (2013), sociolinguistics examines how social factors influence language variation and how speakers adjust their language based on participants, setting, topic, and function of communication. Language style reflects not only the way people communicate but also their social identity, relationships, and communicative intentions.

One important aspect of sociolinguistic analysis is language style. Joos (1967) proposed that language style can be classified into five categories: frozen style, formal style, consultative style, casual style, and intimate style. These styles represent different levels of formality and are influenced by the social relationship between speakers and the context of communication. Frozen style is commonly used in fixed and ceremonial situations, formal style appears in official communication, consultative style occurs in semi-formal interactions, casual style is used among close acquaintances, and intimate style reflects communication between people with very close relationships. Therefore, language style analysis provides an understanding of how speakers modify their language according to different social environments.

Besides language style, emotional expression is also an important element in communication. Human interaction is not only focused on transferring information but also on expressing feelings, attitudes, and psychological conditions. Emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, fear, love, and anxiety are often communicated through verbal expressions, tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language. Scherer (2022) explains that emotional expression functions as a way for individuals to communicate internal emotional states and maintain social relationships. In this context, language and emotion are closely connected because speakers often choose certain words and expressions to represent their emotional conditions.

Movies provide an interesting source for sociolinguistic studies because they represent language use in social interactions. Movie dialogues portray relationships, social backgrounds, conflicts, and emotional experiences of characters. Through dialogue, audiences can observe how characters use different language styles depending on their social situations and emotional conditions. Previous studies have shown that movie dialogues contain various language styles influenced by social relationships and communication purposes. For example, studies by Zenanda and Rahayu (2025), Daulay et al. (2025), Astuti and Pamulang (2024), and Nabilah and Candria (2023) demonstrate that Martin Joos' theory is applicable for analyzing language styles

in movie characters. However, most previous studies mainly focus on identifying language styles, while the connection between language style and emotional expression of a single main character has received less attention.

The movie *Miracles from Heaven* (2016), directed by Patricia Riggen, provides a relevant context for examining the relationship between language style and emotional expression. The movie presents the story of Christy Beam, a mother who struggles to help her daughter, Anna Beam, who suffers from a serious medical condition. Throughout the movie, Christy interacts with different people, including doctors, family members, and members of the community. These different social interactions create variations in her language choices. Her conversations with doctors show professional and information-focused communication, while her conversations with her family demonstrate emotional closeness, affection, and support.

Although previous research has investigated language styles in various movies, limited studies have examined how language style reflects emotional experiences through the perspective of a single character, especially in a movie involving family struggle and emotional conflict. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the types of language styles used by Christy Beam in *Miracles from Heaven* based on Martin Joos' theory and to identify the emotional expressions represented through her dialogues. This research is expected to contribute to sociolinguistic studies by showing how language choices reflect social relationships, emotional conditions, and communicative purposes in movie interactions.

RESEARCH METHODE

This research employed a descriptive qualitative research design. A qualitative approach was selected because this study focuses on analyzing language use, social interaction, and emotional expressions through textual data in the form of movie dialogues. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research aims to explore and interpret social phenomena by examining meanings and patterns found in textual or spoken data. Therefore, this method is appropriate for analyzing the relationship between language style and emotional expression in a movie context.

The data source of this research was the movie *Miracles from Heaven* (2016), directed by Patricia Riggen. The main data consisted of dialogues spoken by Christy Beam, the main character analyzed in this study. The dialogues were selected because they represent different communication situations involving Christy Beam's interactions with doctors, family members,

and other characters in the movie. These interactions provide linguistic data related to language style variation and emotional expression.

The data collection was conducted through several steps. First, the researcher watched the movie repeatedly to understand the storyline, characters, social contexts, and emotional situations presented in the film. Second, the researcher transcribed the dialogues spoken by Christy Beam. Third, relevant dialogues were selected based on the research focus, namely dialogues containing different types of language styles and emotional expressions. The selected data were then classified based on Martin Joos' (1967) language style categories, including frozen style, formal style, consultative style, casual style, and intimate style. In addition, emotional expressions were categorized into happiness, sadness, anger, fear, love/affection, and anxiety.

The data analysis process was conducted through several stages. First, the researcher classified Christy Beam's dialogues according to Joos' (1967) theory of language styles and the categories of emotional expression. Second, the researcher analyzed the communication context by considering social factors such as participants, setting, topic, and function of interaction based on Holmes' (2013) sociolinguistic perspective. Third, the researcher identified the dominant language styles and emotional expressions found in the movie. Finally, the researcher interpreted how language choices represent social relationships, emotional conditions, and communicative purposes of Christy Beam throughout the movie.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Types of Language Styles Used by Christy Beam in Miracles from Heaven Movie

The analysis of language styles and emotional expressions in *Miracles from Heaven* reveals various linguistic and emotional interactions expressed by Christy Beam throughout the movie. This research identifies the types of language styles based on Martin Joos' theory and emotional expressions reflected in the characters' interactions. The findings show that all five language styles are found, namely frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate styles, with consultative, casual, and intimate styles appearing as the most dominant. In addition, emotional expressions such as happiness, sadness, anger, fear, love/affection, and anxiety are identified, mainly representing Christy Beam's emotional experiences as a mother facing her daughter's illness. The results indicate that language style variation is influenced by social relationships, communication settings, and interaction purposes, while emotional expressions reflect the psychological experiences portrayed in the movie.

Table 1.
Frequency of Language Styles Used by Christy Beam

Language Style	Frequency	Percentage
Frozen Style	5	6.67%
Formal Style	10	13.33%
Consultative Style	20	26.67%
Casual Style	20	26.67%
Intimate Style	20	26.67%
Total	75	100%

Based on Table 1, five types of language styles proposed by Joos (1967) were found in Christy Beam's utterances throughout the movie Miracles from Heaven. Consultative Style, Casual Style, and Intimate Style are the dominant styles, each accounting for 26.67% of the total data. Meanwhile, Formal Style accounts for 13.33%, and Frozen Style represents 6.67%.

1. Frozen Style

Frozen Style appears in religious expressions and prayers uttered by Christy Beam. According to Joos (1967), Frozen Style is characterized by fixed, ritualistic, and highly formal language. This type of style usually occurs in religious ceremonies and expressions that remain unchanged over time.

The analysis of frozen style can be shown below:

Data 1

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

Data 2

"Dear God, we give thanks for this meal. We give thanks for each other. We give thanks for you and all that you are. Amen."

Data 3

"Oh, God. Oh, my God. My baby. Oh, my God. My child."

Data 4

"Thank you, God."

Data 5

"We give thanks for you and all that you are. Amen."

This finding indicates that Christy's language choice is influenced by the setting and communicative function. According to Holmes (2013), language variation is closely related to social factors. Since these utterances occur in

religious situations and function as prayers directed to God, Christy employs Frozen Style. Similar findings have also been reported in previous studies, which show that Frozen Style generally appears in ceremonial and spiritual contexts.

2. Formal Style

Formal Style is found when Christy communicates with doctors and healthcare professionals. According to Joos (1967), Formal Style is used in serious situations that require politeness, accuracy, and professional communication.

The analysis of formal style can be shown below:

Data 1

"Dr. Dorsi, she's in constant pain. I mean, this little girl has been throwing up for weeks. She hasn't kept anything down."

Data 2

"Her little tummy's all bloated and she's been on Xifaxan, she's been on Augmentin, four different antibiotics."

Data 3

"Hi, there. This is Christy Beam calling from Burleson, Texas, again. I just wanted to make sure that Dr. Nurko had received my letter."

Data 4

"Hi, Dr. Burgi, this is Christy Beam calling. I just wanted to make sure. Have you spoken to Dr. Nurko?"

Data 5

"Dr. Nurko, we came all the way here because everyone told me you were the one person who could help. That you were the person who could help my daughter."

According to Holmes (2013), participant and setting influence language variation. Since the conversations take place in hospitals and involve professional relationships, Christy uses Formal Style to ensure effective communication. These findings support previous studies that found Formal Style is commonly used in institutional and professional interactions.

3. Consultative Style

Consultative Style is one of the dominant language styles used by Christy Beam. According to Joos (1967), Consultative Style occurs when speakers exchange information, seek explanations, and work together to solve problems.

The analysis of consultative style can be shown below:

Data 1

"But she'll be all right now, right? I mean, she's sick, but she'll get better, right?"

Data 2

"Can you tell me how? Can you explain it?"

Data 3

"Wait. Anti-nausea medicine, but for what?"

Data 4

"Doctor, this is our fourth time here."

Data 5

"Excuse me, this is not acid reflux. She's not lactose intolerant. There's something wrong with our little girl."

These utterances indicate that Christy actively participates in discussions with doctors to obtain information regarding Annabel's condition. According to Holmes (2013), communicative purpose influences language choice. Therefore, Consultative Style becomes dominant because Christy's primary purpose is to seek explanations and medical solutions.

4. Casual Style

Casual Style is one of the dominant language styles found in Christy Beam's utterances in *Miracles from Heaven*. According to Joos (1967), Casual Style is commonly used in informal situations among people who have close relationships. This style is characterized by relaxed expressions, simple vocabulary, and the use of everyday language.

The analysis of casual style can be shown below:

Data 1

"You guys ready?"

Data 2

"Come on, girls. Let's go."

Data 3

"Hey, you okay?"

Data 4

"I'm just trying to help my daughter."

Data 5

"We're going home."

These findings indicate that Casual Style appears when Christy interacts with people who have close social relationships, especially her family. According to Holmes (2013), social distance between speakers influences language choice. Therefore, Christy uses Casual Style because the conversations occur in familiar and informal contexts.

5. Intimate Style

Intimate Style is also frequently found in Christy Beam's utterances, especially when she communicates with her husband and children. According to Joos (1967), Intimate Style is used among people who have a very close

relationship and emotional connection. This style often contains personal expressions, affection, and emotional meanings.

The analysis of intimate style can be shown below:

Data 1

"My baby, I'm here. Mommy's here."

Data 2

"I love you, sweetie."

Data 3

"You're my little girl."

Data 4

"Everything is going to be okay, honey."

Data 5

"I'll always be here for you."

These examples show that Intimate Style appears in situations involving family relationships and emotional moments. Based on Holmes (2013), language reflects the relationship between speakers. The closer the relationship, the more personal and emotional the language becomes. Therefore, Christy uses Intimate Style to express love, care, and emotional support toward her family.

Based on the findings, the dominant language styles used by Christy Beam in *Miracles from Heaven* are Consultative Style, Casual Style, and Intimate Style, with each style appearing 20 times (26.67%) of the total data. Consultative Style becomes dominant because Christy frequently communicates with doctors and medical staff to seek information and treatment for her daughter. Meanwhile, Casual Style appears in her daily interactions with family and friends, reflecting informal and comfortable communication. Intimate Style is also frequently used, especially in her conversations with her children, where she expresses love, care, and emotional support through affectionate words.

These findings indicate that Christy Beam's language choices are influenced by her social relationships, communication settings, and purposes. Consultative Style reflects her role as a mother dealing with medical situations, while Casual and Intimate Styles represent her close relationships and emotional connection with her family.

Language Style	Example Situation	Social Factor (Holmes, 2013)
Frozen Style	Praying to God	Religious setting and sacred function
Formal Style	Explaining Anna's condition to doctors	Professional relationship and status difference
Consultative Style	Asking doctors for diagnosis and treatment	Information exchange and problem solving

Casual Style	Talking with friends and familiar people	Low social distance and friendly interaction
Intimate Style	Comforting Anna and interacting with family	Strong emotional closeness and family relationship

Types of Emotional Expressions Used by Christy Beam in miracles from heaven movie

Based on the data analysis, six types of emotional expressions were identified in Christy Beam's utterances throughout Miracles from Heaven, with a total of 53 data. The frequency and percentage of each emotional expression are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
Frequency of Emotional Expressions Used by Christy Beam

No	Emotional Expression	Frequency	Percentage
1	Anxiety	18	33.97%
2	Love/Affection	10	18.87%
3	Anger	8	15.09%
4	Fear	7	13.21%
5	Happiness	5	9.43%
6	Sadness	5	9.43%
	Total	53	100%

Based on Table 2, Anxiety is the most dominant emotional expression found in Christy Beam's utterances, with 18 occurrences (33.97%). It is followed by Love/Affection with 10 occurrences (18.87%), Anger with 8 occurrences (15.09%), Fear with 7 occurrences (13.21%), while Happiness and Sadness appear 5 times each (9.43%). The dominance of Anxiety reflects Christy's emotional condition as a mother who continuously worries about her daughter's illness and recovery.

1. Anxiety

Anxiety is the most dominant emotional expression found in Christy Beam's utterances. This emotion appears because Christy experiences continuous worry, uncertainty, and fear regarding Annabel's health condition. As a mother, Christy often expresses concern by asking for reassurance and making efforts to find medical solutions for her daughter.

The analysis of anxiety can be shown below:

Data 1

"But she'll be all right now, right? I mean, she's sick, but she'll get better, right?"

Data 2

"Hi, there. This is Christy Beam calling from Burleson, Texas, again. I just wanted to make sure that Dr. Nurko had received my letter."

Data 3

"I hope this gastroenterologist can get to the bottom of this."

Data 4

"I don't know how we're gonna afford this."

Data 5

"It just makes me crazy!"

These utterances indicate anxiety because Christy repeatedly seeks confirmation and ensures that her daughter receives proper medical attention. The repeated questions and actions show her uncertainty and emotional pressure caused by Annabel's illness. According to Ekman (1992), anxiety is related to feelings of worry and uncertainty toward possible negative situations.

2. Love/Affection

Love/Affection appears through Christy's emotional attachment to her children, especially Annabel. This expression is shown through affectionate words, caring statements, and emotional support as a mother.

The analysis of love/affection can be shown below:

Data 1

"I love you, Anna."

Data 2

"Okay, honey. It's okay. Oh, sweetie. Oh, my baby."

Data 3

"Sleep tight, ladybug."

Data 4

"Okay, honey. It's okay. Oh, sweetie. Oh, my baby."

Data 5

"You will be, honey."

These expressions show love and affection because Christy uses personal and affectionate terms to comfort and support her daughter. Words such as "honey," "sweetie," and "my baby" indicate a close emotional relationship between mother and child. According to Holmes (2013), language choices are influenced by social relationships, where close relationships often create more personal expressions.

3. Anger

Anger appears when Christy faces difficulties during the medical treatment process. This emotion is expressed when she feels frustrated because her daughter's condition is not fully understood by others.

The analysis of anger can be shown below:

Data 1

"Excuse me, this is not acid reflux. She's not lactose intolerant. There's something wrong with our little girl."

Data 2

"Hold on a minute. Everything is not fine, Doctor."

Data 3

"No, you calm down!"

Data 4

"You find me another doctor, you run some more tests!"

Data 5

"I'm not leaving this hospital until I know what's wrong with my daughter!"

These utterances show anger because Christy disagrees with previous medical explanations and tries to defend her daughter's condition. Her anger is not only frustration but also represents her determination to find proper treatment for Annabel. According to Ekman (1992), anger can occur when individuals face obstacles that prevent them from achieving their goals.

4. Fear

Fear appears when Christy faces situations that threaten Annabel's health. This emotion reflects her fear of losing her daughter and her concern about the seriousness of the illness.

The analysis of fear can be shown below:

Data 1

"Oh, God. Oh, my God. My baby. Oh, my God. My child."

Data 2

"Dr. Dorsi, she's in constant pain. I mean, this little girl has been throwing up for weeks..."

Data 3

"She's dying, Kevin. I can see it."

Data 4

"But she'll be all right now, right?"

Data 5

"She's sick, but she'll get better, right?"

These expressions indicate fear because Christy reacts emotionally when she sees her daughter suffering. Her words reflect panic, worry, and concern about Annabel's condition. According to Ekman (1992), fear occurs when individuals face threatening or uncertain situations.

5. Happiness

Happiness appears when Christy experiences moments of relief, gratitude, and hope during her difficult journey. This emotion reflects positive feelings after receiving good news or support.

The analysis of happiness can be shown below:

Data 1

"Thank you, God."

Data 2

"Well, no one here is going to hell."

Data 3

"Look at that. Let's hear it for you, ladybug."

Data 4

"That's more like it."

Data 5

"Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you for my little girl."

These expressions show happiness because Christy expresses gratitude and uses a lighter tone in positive situations. Happiness appears when emotional pressure decreases and she experiences moments of comfort with her family.

6. Sadness

Sadness appears when Christy experiences emotional pain because of Annabel's suffering. This emotion reflects her helplessness and exhaustion as a mother trying to save her child.

The analysis of happiness can be shown below:

Data 1

"Baby, it's gonna be okay. Don't be scared, okay?"

Data 2

"Dr. Nurko, we came all the way here because everyone told me you were the one person who could help..."

Data 3

"I felt hopeless. I felt alone."

Data 4

"I lost my faith."

Data 5

"I'm sorry, honey. I know it does."

These utterances represent sadness because Christy expresses emotional pain and desperation during her search for treatment. Although she tries to comfort her daughter, her words also reveal her sadness and exhaustion. This shows the emotional struggle of a mother facing a difficult situation.

Based on Table 4.5, Anxiety is the most dominant emotional expression used by Christy Beam, with 18 occurrences (33.97%) out of 53 total data. This finding shows that anxiety becomes the main emotion expressed by Christy throughout *Miracles from Heaven*. Her anxiety is reflected through expressions of worry, uncertainty, and fear regarding Anna's illness, such as her need for medical answers and concerns about her daughter's recovery.

Christy's anxiety is mainly influenced by the difficult situation she faces as a mother dealing with her child's serious illness. The repeated medical treatments, uncertain diagnosis, financial problems, and fear of losing Anna increase her emotional pressure. This condition affects her communication with doctors, family members, and other people around her.

According to Ekman's theory of emotional expression, anxiety can be identified through verbal expressions that show worry, fear, and uncertainty. Therefore, the dominance of Anxiety indicates Christy's emotional struggle throughout the movie, representing her continuous effort and concern in fighting for her daughter's recovery.

CONCLUSION

The sociolinguistic investigation into the dialogue of Christy Beam in *Miracles from Heaven* reveals that language style and emotional expression are not isolated linguistic phenomena, but rather deeply interconnected elements driven by social context, familial roles, and psychological states. By synthesizing Martin Joos' language style taxonomy with theories of emotional expression, this study demonstrates how a speaker dynamically modulates formality and emotional output to navigate a prolonged life crisis. Christy Beam's communicative behavior alternates between professional, information-focused interactions and deeply personal, affect-driven dialogues. This duality highlights how a mother shifts roles from an assertive, anxious advocate in clinical settings to a source of intimate comfort and maternal solidarity at home. Ultimately, negative emotions like anxiety and fear naturally prompt structured, consultative linguistic patterns to seek external solutions, whereas positive emotions and shared hardships reinforce informal, intimate communication to preserve family cohesion.

This study is significant to the scientific community as it expands conventional sociolinguistic research, moving beyond the mere identification of speech styles to map out how specific emotional trajectories directly shape linguistic choices under extreme psychological pressure. By demonstrating that verbal emotional expressions are fundamentally bound by the social distance between participants and the rules of institutional settings, these findings

provide a realistic framework for understanding human communication in real-world medical crises. For the broader audience, this research underscores that language functions as much more than a tool for data transmission; it serves as a dynamic psychological mechanism used to manage vulnerability, assert agency, and maintain interpersonal security during times of profound adversity.

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