

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a fundamental role in human communication because it enables individuals to express ideas, emotions, intentions, and social identities. In everyday interaction, people use language not only to exchange information but also to establish relationships, negotiate meanings, and represent themselves within particular social and cultural contexts. The study of language use in communication has attracted considerable attention in linguistics, particularly in the field of pragmatics, which examines how meaning is conveyed and interpreted in relation to context. Through pragmatic analysis, researchers can explore how speakers perform various social actions and express their attitudes, emotions, and intentions through language.

In contemporary society, language is increasingly represented through various forms of media, including films, television series, and digital platforms. Film dialogues often reflect complex social interactions and emotional experiences that resemble real-life communication. As a result, films provide valuable data for investigating how language functions in expressing emotions, constructing interpersonal relationships, and representing social identities. The analysis of expressive speech acts in film discourse is particularly significant because emotional expressions frequently reveal deeper aspects of a character's identity, cultural background, and social position. Therefore, examining the relationship between expressive speech acts and identity representation in film can contribute to a broader understanding of language, communication, and identity in modern society.

1.1 Background

Language is one of the most important aspects of human life as it functions not only as a means of communication but also as a representation of identity, emotions, culture, and social relationships. Through language, individuals can express their thoughts, feelings, desires, and social positions in everyday

interactions. In social communication, speakers often use language to express emotions such as happiness, anger, disappointment, gratitude, admiration, and sympathy. Therefore, language is not only understood as a linguistic system but also as a social and cultural practice that reflects human identity and interpersonal relationships (Wardhaugh, 2006).

In linguistic studies, particularly pragmatics and sociolinguistics, language is understood as a dynamic social phenomenon closely related to context, interaction, and meaning. According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is the study of meaning conveyed by speakers and interpreted by listeners based on specific contexts. This indicates that the meaning of an utterance cannot be separated from the social situation, emotional conditions, and cultural background of the speaker. In line with this, Holmes (2013) states that language reflects social identity and social relationships because individuals tend to use different forms of language depending on whom they are speaking to and in what situation the interaction takes place.

One important aspect of pragmatics is speech acts. Speech acts refer to actions performed through utterances. According to Searle (1979), when someone speaks, they are not only producing sentences but also performing actions such as apologizing, thanking, praising, criticizing, complaining, or expressing certain emotions. Among the various categories of speech acts, expressive speech acts are particularly interesting to study because they directly represent the psychological and emotional states of the speaker towards a situation. Expressive speech acts include expressions of anger, disappointment, gratitude, sympathy, admiration, praise, apologies, and complaints.

In everyday life, we often perform expressive speech acts. These expressive speech acts are not only present in daily conversations but also in the films and television shows we watch. Films can be seen as a reflection of real life because they depict how people interact, speak, and form identities through language. According to Hall (1997), films and other media have a significant influence in

shaping our understanding of ourselves and culture. By watching films, we can see various ways people interact, express emotions, and showcase their culture, all of which reflect real life.

In recent years, animated films have increasingly developed into an important cultural text as they often present complex social issues, multicultural identities, and contemporary communication styles. One animated film that has garnered significant attention is *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*, produced by Sony Pictures Animation. This film is not only known for its visual innovation and superhero story but also for its strong representation of multicultural identity, youth culture, emotional communication, and bilingual interaction.

The main character in the film is Miles Morales, an Afro-Latino teenager who experiences various social and emotional conflicts in his life. As a teenager and a superhero, Miles strives to balance family demands, friendships, self-identity, and his responsibilities as Spider-Man. In the film, Miles and other characters often express emotions through informal language, emotional speech, slang, and multilingual communication. These interactions make the film relevant for analysis through pragmatic and sociolinguistic perspectives.

The use of expressive speech acts in *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* is significant because emotional expression in the film is closely related to identity representation. The characters in the film often use emotional language to express fear, frustration, disappointment, solidarity, affection, and resistance. For example, the interactions between Miles Morales and his parents often contain emotional speech that represents family closeness, cultural values, and generational conflict. Additionally, conversations among teenage characters in the film also reflect youth identity, friendship relationships, and the communication styles of the modern generation.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, language functions as a marker of social identity. According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005), identity is not something fixed, but rather constructed through social interaction and discourse practices. This

means that individuals build and negotiate their identities through the language used in communication. By using language, we can show who we are and how we want to be perceived by others. Emotional expressions, language choices, and interaction styles can indicate one's social background, ethnicity, cultural affiliation, and interpersonal relationships. For example, the way we speak and interact with others can provide clues about where we come from and how we view ourselves. Therefore, language plays a crucial role in shaping our social identities.

Moreover, the representation of Miles Morales as an Afro-Latino character holds significant social meaning as it presents an alternative to traditional superhero representations in mainstream media. Unlike previous superhero characters that were dominated by white, monolingual figures, Miles Morales represents multiculturalism, bilingual identity, and hybrid cultural experiences. The use of emotional expressions and informal communication in the film reflects the realities of modern urban teenage life as well as the experiences of immigrant families. Therefore, an analysis of expressive speech acts in this film can provide insights into how language represents identity, culture, and social relationships in contemporary media.

Several previous studies have discussed speech acts and language use in films. For example, the research conducted by Putri and Pranata (2025) analyzes expressive illocutionary acts in *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*. They found that emotional expressions such as disappointment, anger, and admiration often appear in the film's dialogue. However, the study focused more on identifying categories of speech acts without delving deeply into the representation of identity.

Another study conducted by Deni and Ilhami (2024) discusses the use of slang in the *Spider-Verse* franchise and explains that informal language reflects youth culture and social identity. However, this research emphasizes the use of slang and has not specifically examined emotional communication or expressive speech acts.

In addition, several researchers have also discussed the representation of identity and multiculturalism in superhero films using sociolinguistic approaches and cultural studies. However, these studies generally still discuss expressive speech acts and identity representation separately. Most research only focuses on identifying categories of speech acts without linking them to identity construction and socio-cultural representation. Thus, there remains a research gap that needs to be further explored.

Based on the description, this research aims to analyze expressive speech acts and identity representation in *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* from the perspectives of pragmatics and sociolinguistics. This study not only identifies the types of expressive speech acts found in the film but also interprets how these emotional expressions represent cultural identity, social relationships, and emotional meanings among characters.

This research is important because language in contemporary media increasingly reflects multiculturalism, emotional complexity, and identity negotiation in modern society. Through the analysis of expressive speech acts, this study is expected to contribute to the fields of pragmatics, sociolinguistics, media discourse analysis, and identity representation in popular culture.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study titled: “Expressive Speech Acts and Identity Representation in *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* (2023).”

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background above, the problem formulation in this research is as follows:

1. What types of expressive speech acts are used in *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*?

2. How do expressive speech acts represent the identities of the characters in the film?

1.3 Research Objectives

This research aims to:

1. To identify the types of expressive speech acts used in *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*.
2. To analyze how expressive speech acts represent the identities of the characters in the film.

1.4 Research Significances

1.4.1 Theoretical Aspects

Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of pragmatic and sociolinguistic studies, particularly in discussions regarding expressive speech acts and identity representation in popular culture. This research also expands the application of Searle's (1979) speech act theory and Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) identity theory in analyzing film discourse and emotional communication.

1.4.2 Practical Aspects

Practically, this research is expected to help students and researchers understand how emotional expressions in films represent identity, culture, and social relationships. This research is also expected to encourage readers to view films not only as entertainment but also as cultural texts that contain social and linguistic meanings.