



The Language Style Used by YouTuber Bailey Sarian in Chris Watts – 2000 Page Discovery Murder, Mystery & Makeup

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Abstract

This research analyzed the language style used by YouTuber Bailey Sarian in the video “Chris Watts – 2000 Page Discovery Murder, Mystery & Makeup” using Martin Joos's (1967) language style theory, which classified language styles into five types: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate. The purpose of this research is to determine what language style Bailey used in that video and which language style is dominant. Using descriptive qualitative methods, the document data collection technique, Miles and Huberman's model analysis technique, and analytical template, the researcher identified and analyzed the video transcript, resulting in a total of 253 data, consisting of 5 formal styles, 113 consultative styles, 133 casual styles, and 2 intimate styles. The results show that Bailey Sarian uses informal and flexible language, making the storytelling more engaging, easy to understand, and emotionally resonant, while still maintaining its informative purpose. No frozen language styles were found in the analyzed data. It can be seen that the dominant language style used was casual. This research concluded that the appropriate language style served an important role in the effectiveness of storytelling content on social media such as YouTube.

Keywords: *Bailey Sarian; Language Style; Martin Joos*

Introduction

Language style is part of stylistic studies, a branch of linguistics. Stylistics is the scientific study of a literary work's language style (Asmarandhana et al., 2023). Language is an organized way to express ideas or feelings through the use of accepted sounds, signs, gestures, or symbols with clear meanings (Zadeh, 1975; Tseng, 2018 in Oviogun & Veerdee, 2020). Language is always expressed in textual

form. A text is a linguistic unit that conveys meaning contextually. "Text" is used concurrently with "discourse" in this context, and a lingual unit can be a single word, a group of words, a clause, or a set of paragraphs (Wiratno & Santosa, 2014). Besides expressing ideas or feelings, language also becomes a distinctive way for someone to convey their personality through their style of expression. Style is a form of self-expression, whether through language, behavior, clothing, or so on (Keraf, 1991). The appeal of a literary work depends on the style used by the author (Sari et al., 2021).

In rhetoric, language style is known as style. The word style comes from the Latin "stilus," a tool for writing on wax tablets. The skill in using this tool will affect how clear the writing on the wax tablet is. Over time, the meaning of style has changed towards the ability to write beautifully, so style is defined as the skill and expertise in writing or using words effectively to create beauty (Keraf, 1991). In short, style is a distinctive way of conveying thoughts through language that reflects the writer's or language user's soul and personality. An effective writing style ideally contains three main elements: honesty, politeness, and appeal (Oktavia, 2017). Several elements, such as diversity, humor, good understanding, and expressive power, determine an engaging language style (Larasati, 2022). This style of language is found in daily conversations, novels, movies, and social media such as YouTube (Dewi & Aulina, 2022).

YouTube provides various information in the form of videos uploaded by its users. The popularity of videos on YouTube has been continuously increasing lately, making it a commonly used platform for information and entertainment for all ages (Diego et al., 2024). Based on a digital report by (We Are Social, n.d.) looked at the last five years, YouTube occupied the second position as the world's most used social platform, with active users increasing from 2,000 million to 2.491 billion. Indonesian users generally believe that YouTube makes it easier for them to find interesting content on various topics (Dewi & Aulina, 2022). One type of interesting content is storytelling. Digital storytelling is a way to convey narratives by combining images, videos, text, music, and graphics in a digital format (Susilo, 2020). Digital storytelling is characterized by several features, including short duration, small scale in a simple manner, and generally highlighting personal experience stories conveyed through voice narration (Fatmawati, 2015).

Those were the reasons why many people enjoyed storytelling content. Influencers in the entertainment industry, such as YouTubers, certainly want to have a large-followers on social media to become more famous and gain many benefits. To become a successful YouTuber or Vlogger with many followers, content creators need to be productive and creative in making engaging, unique, and high-quality content, as well as having good verbal communication skills so that the content can entertain and be easily understood, thereby increasing the number of viewers or subscribers (Dewi & Aulina, 2022). Seeing the popularity of YouTube as a social media platform with a variety of information and entertainment, as well as the importance of engaging content and storytelling skills for a YouTuber to gain

many followers, Bailey Sarian was aware of what defined this success.

Bailey Sarian is a California woman born in Menifee on November 26, 1988, with the full name Bailey Brooke Sarian. Bailey started her career as a makeup artist at Sephora and Urban Decay, and also as an in-house creator at IPSY. Therefore, when she started her career as a YouTuber in 2013, her content was themed around makeup tutorials and reviews, with her first content, “My foundation, contour, highlight,” uploaded on September 13, 2013. In addition to remaining active as a makeup artist and YouTuber, she also hosted three episodes of the series “Case Closed with Bailey Sarian” on the YouTube channel “Still Watching Netflix.” Currently, Bailey has 7.71 billion subscribers with thousands of content videos.

Although she had been a YouTuber since 2013, Bailey started gaining widespread recognition in 2019 with her “Murder, Mystery & Makeup” series content, titled “Chris Watts – 2000 Page Discovery Murder, Mystery & Makeup | Bailey Sarian,” uploaded six years ago and has garnered 11 million views. Additionally, Bailey is also well-known through her podcast, “Dark History,” which discusses topics about psychopaths, major scandals, and lesser-known history. Winning Podcast of the Year at the Streamy Awards and a 2025 Webby Award for Best History Podcast, the podcast was met with critical acclaim (Sarian, n.d.).

Bailey's popularity has been increasing because she is considered to have an exciting storytelling style; she narrates true crime stories that contain complex criminal cases, but she can tell them clearly and expressively, wrapped in humor, while applying makeup, so the audience is emotionally affected by the storyline and does not feel bored. One concrete proof of Bailey Sarian's popularity and storytelling skills is the high enthusiasm of the audience for the “Murder, Mystery & Makeup” content, one of the popular episodes being “Chris Watts – 2000 Page Discovery Murder, Mystery & Makeup | Bailey Sarian.”

“Chris Watts – 2000 Page Discovery Murder, Mystery & Makeup | Bailey Sarian,” which aired on January 15, 2019, chosen by researchers because it was the first video that made Bailey a famous YouTuber until now, able to attract a large number of viewers in the popular content series, “Murder, Mystery & Makeup” that recounted a man named Chris Watts who appeared as a perfect husband and father, but turned out to commit infidelity and criminal acts against his own family and this video got 11 million viewers, 258 thousand likes, and 10 thousand comments with a video duration of 27:36. In this episode, Bailey discussed the detailed chronology of the case and the investigation process that ultimately exposed Chris' lies as he tried to cover up his crime. In addition to discussing the case in detail by presenting the facts based on data, she also shared her perspective by narrating while doing makeup, allowing the audience to experience the emotional side of the case.

Although many studies have discussed language styles in a work, this research presents novelty with a specific focus on the analysis of language styles used by storytelling content creators on YouTube. Most previous studies focused more on examining language styles in literary works such as films, novels, or other traditional literary works. While there are some studies on language styles on YouTube, they generally still focus on films and podcasts, making the study of storytelling content creators, especially those combining the true crime genre with makeup, still rare. Moreover, most similar studies only present analysis results in numerical form without providing concrete examples from the analyzed data. Giving examples allows readers to understand the meaning of the discussed language style more clearly. This research also explicitly discusses the use of an analytical template to facilitate the identification and analysis of data according to the applied language style theory.

The main objective of this research is to determine the language style used by Bailey Sarian during storytelling, which has made her content widely recognized. Therefore, this research focuses on the question of what language style is used and what dominant language style Bailey employs in the video titled “Chris Watts Watts – 2000 Page Discovery Murder, Mystery & Makeup | Bailey Sarian.” This demonstrates how language style contributes to the effectiveness of storytelling on digital platforms as YouTube.

Method

This research used a descriptive qualitative method. The qualitative method is used to obtain detailed and meaningful data (Sugiyono, 2010). The document data collection technique was used in this research. A document is media for saving information from past events. It can be in the form of writing, images, or significant works created by individuals (Sugiyono, 2010). The data that was studied is a transcript document from “Chris Watts – 2000 Page Discovery Murder, Mystery & Makeup | Bailey Sarian” on Bailey Sarian's YouTube channel, which contained a story of the criminal acts committed by Chris Watts against his family recounted by Bailey, and this data was identified based on Martin Joos’ (1967) theory of language style in his book “The Five Clocks.” After collecting data, the researcher analyzed the data using Miles and Huberman’s model.

The researcher used the Miles and Huberman model for data analysis technique because it provided a systematic and structured framework for qualitative data that included data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is the process of summarizing and sorting key information, focusing on essential points, and identifying important themes and patterns while eliminating irrelevant details (Sugiyono, 2010). Thus, researchers could focus more on relevant data and avoid information overload that could have complicated the identification of key findings. The display data made it easier for the researcher to identify essential patterns to determine the appropriate actions. Actions based on that data could involve further data analysis or simply validating existing

understanding, as emphasized by Miles & Huberman (1984) in (Sugiyono, 2010), who stated that the display of data is very helpful in understanding the situation and taking action. This action can be further analyzed or used simply to validate the existing understanding. The purpose of the conclusion in qualitative research is to present new findings that have never been described before. It can be in the form of an in-depth description or a clear illustration of an object that was previously unclear or not fully understood (Sugiyono, 2010). So, the conclusion not only summarized the findings but also served as a moment to present new knowledge that came from the data that was studied.

To identify and analyze data more clearly, the researcher used an analytical template. Template analysis is a flexible approach to data analysis that can be used in various methodologies and epistemological perspectives. This approach offers a structured way to analyze data, which can be adapted to the specific needs of each study (King, N., 2012 in Brown et al., 2022). Although it is usually used to analyze interview data, this technique can be applied to all types of textual data, including essay-type questionnaire responses (Brooks, J., & King, N., 2014 in Brown et al., 2022). Compared to other qualitative methods, such as thematic analysis, which usually has only one or two levels of coding, template analysis often uses four or more levels of coding to capture the most detailed aspects of the data (Brooks, J., McCluskey, S., Turley, E., & King, N., 2015 in Brown et al., 2022). Thus, the use of this analytical template as a tool for systematically processing data that could be adapted to research needs helped researchers in identifying and analyzing data more clearly and allowed them to delve deeper into meanings. In addition, it had a flexible nature that could be used in various methodologies, textual as this research, and the use of an unlimited number of data codes.

The coding in the analytical template for this research used a deductive method. The deductive method begins with a proven general theory or principle, then applies it to understand specific cases or situations. This is a way of thinking from the general to the detailed (Wanji et al., 2025). The integration of the analytical template with this deductive method enables researchers to classify data findings based on the established theoretical framework systematically. Based on Martin Joos' (1967) theory of language style, there were five codes: frozen style, formal style, consultative style, casual style, and intimate style.

Referring to the methodology previously explained, the research process began with concrete steps in its implementation. This research began by searching for data based on popular videos, which were chosen because they recounted an incident that became the first video that made Bailey a famous YouTuber in the popular content series, "Murder, Mystery & Makeup." After finding the relevant video, the researcher watched the video, downloaded the transcript, then identified and analyzed the data that fit into the form of language style based on

Martin Joos' (1967) theory in an analytical template, where the researcher categorized data based on code or the types of language style. Finally, the researcher concluded the data by showing which language styles were used and which language style was dominantly used by Bailey Sarian in that video.

Result

This research analyzed the diversity of language styles presented in the video content "Chris Watts – 2000 Page Discovery Murder, Mystery & Makeup | Bailey Sarian" based on Martin Joos' (1967) theory, which explains that in interaction or communication, language has five styles ranging from highly formal and polite tones to those commonly used in daily conversations, including the use of idioms, slang, and others. Frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate were the five language styles described in his book. In simple terms, the value of the book "THE FIVE CLOCKS" is its ability to categorize and accurately explain various communication situations one may encounter, as well as to link each situation with the specific language features commonly used in each conversational style (Joos, 1967).

According to the analysis conducted by the researcher, the storytelling in the video tends to employ informal and flexible language styles. This was evidenced by the findings of one hundred and thirty-three casual styles. Meanwhile, highly formal language styles with complete grammar, such as frozen style, were not found in this research. Thus, it can be seen that the dominant language style used was casual.

The table below summarizes the frequency of language styles found in the transcript:

Table 1. Language Style Analysis in Bailey Sarian's Storytelling

No	Language Style	Frequency	Percentage
1	Frozen Style	0	0%
2	Formal Style	5	0%
3	Consultative Style	113	0%
4	Casual Style	133	0%
5	Intimate Style	2	0%
Total		253	100%

Discussion

1. Frozen Style

Frozen style is a very formal and rigid language variety, generally used for written works or speeches because no tone of voice can influence the meaning of the text, and the reader or listener does not have the opportunity to ask questions or discuss with the writer (Joos, 1967). Based on the analysis done in this research, no relevant results were found with the frozen style.

2. Formal Style

Formal speakers must carefully plan what they will discuss with the audience. This means having a clear sentence structure before speaking, a paragraph outline before presenting it, and overall topic boundaries before starting their speech. The formal style aims to convey information. Its main characteristic is being informative, with secondary aspects of consultation, incidental in casual conversations, or absent in fully intimate interactions (Joos, 1967). Here are some analysis results on formal styles, shown below:

Formal Style Data 1:

"They were sent off to the Coroner's office where they determined that the two daughters were smothered."

This statement is informative and structured, presenting autopsy results from a government agency. The use of technical terms such as "smothered" and "Coroner's office" indicates a formal rhetorical style used to officially convey factual documents. Here, Bailey stated the coroner's office report results that both Chris and Shanann's daughters had been smothered.

Formal Style Data 2:

"He was found guilty and was sentenced to five life sentences."

This sentence uses legal terminology, such as "found guilty" and "sentenced," which are commonly used in legal documents, official reports, or formal news. This statement clearly conveys the legal decision that Chris has been found guilty and sentenced to life in prison.

Formal Style Data 3:

"There was one interview with an FBI agent, Brad Garrett and he reported that people responsible for killing their families are always white males in their thirties."

This sentence contains information from an official source, which adds to the impression of being factual and trustworthy, that is an FBI agent. Bailey stated that in an interview with an FBI agent, he reported that in family murder cases, the

responsible perpetrator is usually a white male around thirty years old.

3. Consultative Style

The consultative style is the easiest type of English to explain. However, a detailed explanation of grammar is not necessary here. Both everyday communication styles, namely consultative and casual, deal with public information, though with different approaches. The casual style tends to assume that the information is already known or merely mentions it, whereas the consultative style states it as soon as necessary. When there is no public information to talk about, casual conversations tend to fall silent or turn into jokes, whereas consultative conversations will stop entirely or be postponed until there is new information to talk about. Listeners fully participate in the latest information provided (Joos, 1967). Here are some analysis results on consultative styles, among others:

Consultative Style Data 1:

“They released a two-thousand-page discovery and that is put out there. Every single person they interviewed, a whole timeline. That’s where I’m getting my information that I’m going to talk about today. The whole timeline that I have is straight from the discovery.”

In this sentence, Bailey, as the speaker, clearly conveys to the audience that all the information she is presenting is sourced from valid data, namely “two-thousand-page discovery,” which forms the basis of her true crime story content. This is also evident in the phrases “That’s where I’m getting my information” and “straight from the discovery.” The sentence structure reflects a typical semi-formal situation in the consultative style, where Bailey wants to ensure the audience understands and trusts the information being shared, using language that is not overly rigid.

Consultative Style Data 2:

“Part of the job of the multilevel marketing companies is to get on like Instagram live or Facebook live and really promote the products. Talk about the products and get people engaged with you personally. Build a relationship with your clients like LuLaRoe.”

In this section, Bailey sequentially explains the tasks in a multi-level marketing business, which include promoting products via social media such as Instagram Live or Facebook Live, as well as interacting directly and building relationships with clients. This explanation also relates to Shanann's work, who was possibly involved in similar activities. To help the audience understand more easily, Bailey also mentioned LuLaRoe as a real-world example. This sentence is informative and communicative because the information is presented in easy-to-understand language, yet it remains structured to provide understanding.

Consultative Style Data 3:

“On July fourteenth there is phone records of Chris and Nicole talking to one another. He also had four missed calls from Shanann and Shanann kept continuing to call throughout the day and those went unanswered. There was one-minute phone call between Chris and Shanann later in the day but the rest had gone unanswered.”

This sentence is informative and structured, where Bailey provides details based on phone records, including when the calls occurred, who was involved, and the number of calls. Bailey explains that on July fourteenth, Chris made calls to Nicole (his mistress), while several calls from Shanann (his wife) went unanswered, except for one brief one-minute call. This information demonstrates a consultative style with the delivery using concrete facts, but with language that remains easy to understand, not overly formal.

Consultative Style Data 4:

“Police show up and they cannot get into the house without Chris's approval. The police officer speaks to Chris on the phone and ask for the garage passcode because he could get through the garage with the passcode and then also ask Chris for permission to go inside the house and look around. Chris says passcode doesn't work.”

In this presentation, Bailey factually and structurally explained the communication between the police and Chris. Bailey stated that the police could not enter Chris's home without his permission, although a report had been received and needed to be investigated. Therefore, they contacted him to request the garage code and ask for permission to enter, but Chris said the code was not working. This sentence indicates the delivery of factual information in a slightly formal manner, with the inclusion of police procedures to help the audience understand the actual chronological situation. The language used for delivery is not rigid, which is typical of the consultative style.

Consultative Style Data 5:

“Of course, when the FBI interview Chris he denies having an affair and says, quote, “Nah I wouldn't do that.” and he also says it is possible that Shanann may have been having an affair. Chris also explains that they fell out of love with one another and that the relationship was not going well.”

In this sentence, Bailey describes the communication in the interview between the FBI and Chris informatively, complete with a direct quote: “Nah I wouldn't do that.” Bailey stated that Chris denied the allegations of infidelity, even accusing Shanann of possibly having an affair, and saying their relationship was already not good. This presentation shows a consultative characteristic, which is

sequentially providing factual information with language that is not overly formal, so that the audience can easily understand the content of the interrogation.

4. Casual Style

The casual style is used when communicating with friends, acquaintances, or people who are already well-known. If this style is applied to strangers, the goal is to create a familiar impression as if they are part of the group. Two main elements support this casual style: ellipsis (omission of words) and slang (Joos, 1967). Here are some analysis results on casual styles, among others:

Casual Style Data 1:

“My name is Bailey Sarian and today I just want to sit down and get ready and then also talk about crime, murder mysteries, stuff like that.”

This sentence is a typical opening for story content videos that is effective in breaking the ice before getting into the main discussion. Here, Bailey introduces herself and the theme in a language that is not stiff, even though the topic seems serious. The simple sentence structure and expressions such as “just want to sit down and get ready” and “stuff like that” make the expressions feel light and familiar, making the audience feel comfortable and close, as if they were chatting with her directly. Additionally, the phrase “stuff like that” is slang meaning things like that, typical of a casual style spoken informally.

Casual Style Data 2:

“I don't know it's... I feel like it's very...”

This sentence describes how Bailey spontaneously expresses her opinion while telling a story, marked by the phrases “I don't know” and “I feel like,” which indicate hesitation when expressing herself. The disorganized sentence structure and pauses “...” emphasize informal spoken language, a form of the speaker's natural reaction. This sentence gives the impression of being natural and familiar, as if Bailey is thinking while speaking to the audience.

Casual Style Data 3:

“A lot of the comments I saw from people in regards to this case, a lot of people were like she puts her whole life on the internet. Why does she have to do that? Like, why can't she just be in the moment with her family?”

This sentence is Bailey's restatement of netizens' comments or opinions about Shanann and her work. Phrases such as “she puts her whole life on the internet” reflect Bailey's conclusion about the comment, which is slightly hyperbolic and spontaneous. Additionally, the use of rhetorical questions quoted from netizen comments makes the way of speaking feel natural, light, and interactive, as if they are chatting with a friend. One of them, the phrase “be in the moment,” is an idiom that means to fully enjoy the present.

Casual Style Data 4:

"I feel like she had... she had that gut feeling that something was going on and she was just trying to get to the bottom of it."

This sentence is subjective and expressive because Bailey uses the phrase "I feel like" to convey her personal opinion about what Shannan is feeling, suggesting that Shannan might have a premonition that something is wrong and is trying to find the truth. This is reinforced by the idioms "gut feeling," which means a strong intuition, and "get to the bottom of it," which means to investigate thoroughly. Another characteristic of the casual style is the presence of pauses and repetitions as "she had... she had," which reflects the characteristics of casual, spontaneous, and personal spoken expression.

Casual Style Data 5:

"Yeah, you just like can't wrap your head around it. It's just weird to watch and uncomfortable."

In this sentence, Bailey expresses her spontaneous reactions and comments on Chris's behavior in the true crime story she's presenting, using simple, casual, and emotional language. It can be seen in the use of the words "weird" and "uncomfortable" to emphasize the feeling of unease she wants to convey to the audience. Expressions such as "yeah" and "just like" also indicate a casual conversation, as if speaking with a friend. Additionally, the idiom "can't wrap your head around it," which means difficult to understand, also adds to the impression of a casual spoken conversation.

5. Intimate Style

Intimate speech doesn't share personal information with anyone outside the speaker. As in other styles, the intimate style is characterized by two systematic features: extraction and jargon (Joos, 1967). This language style uses non-standard words and forms, implying a very close relationship. What stands out most in this intimate style is how the speaker expresses their deepest feelings through the words they use (Joos, 1967 in Meidiana & Astuti, 2024). Here are some analysis results on intimate styles, shown below:

Intimate Style Data 1:

"I love you. I miss you."

This sentence expresses affection, evident in the word's "love" and "miss," which are very personal and emotional, typical of close relationships such as those between partners or family members. Bailey presented to the audience as a form of parable, what is commonly said in special relationships. Although Bailey and the audience did not have a close direct relationship, the expression was delivered

directly by Bailey and contained an intimate element involving feelings.

Intimate Style Data 2:

“I can’t wait to see you, sending you pictures, calling you.”

This sentence conveys common personal emotions expressed in close relationships through phrases such as “missing you” and “wanting to see you soon,” as well as activities such as sharing photos or making phone calls. The use of the pronouns “I” and “You” adds to the sense of connection between the speaker and the listener. Although Bailey and the audience do not have a direct personal relationship, this sentence is expressed directly by Bailey and evokes emotion.

Conclusion

This research analyzed the language style used by YouTuber Bailey Sarian in her popular video, “Chris Watts – 2000 Page Discovery Murder, Mystery & Makeup,” which was one of the main factors in increasing Bailey's popularity as a storytelling content creator on YouTube. This analysis is based on the theory of five language styles defined by (Joos, 1967) in his book “The Five Clocks” includes frozen style, formal style, consultative style, casual style, and intimate style. Based on the analysis of the video transcript, it was found that Bailey used five formal styles, one hundred and thirteen consultative styles, one hundred and thirty-three casual styles, and two intimate styles in telling her story.

From these results, it can be seen that the most frequently used language style is informal language, with casual style being dominant, accounting for one hundred and thirty-three data. This describes a flexible and familiar form of communication, making it easier for the audience to understand the story being told without losing the informative context that presents a summary of the criminal case. Conversely, there are no overly formal and rigid language styles, such as frozen language. The use of familiar and light language allows Bailey to present complex criminal case stories as a communicative narrative, making them engaging, easy to understand, and maintaining the audience's attention.

This language style also reflected Bailey's expressive, authentic, and unique personality as a YouTuber, which was also an important element in building an emotional connection with the audience and enhancing the appeal of her story content. Thus, this research emphasized that the use of appropriate language style in storytelling, especially on YouTube, greatly influenced the effectiveness of communication and audience engagement in enjoying content.

The researcher wants to provide ideas for future researchers related to this study. In analyzing language style, future researchers can use theories other than Martin Joos or combine several theoretical perspectives to gain a more comprehensive understanding of language style in a communication context or literary work. Some alternative theories that can be used include theories from Gorys Keraf, Dell Hymes, or other figures who have their own perspectives and theoretical approaches with specific focuses and research objectives. Next,

regarding Bailey Sarian's content, it is recommended that future research be expanded by analyzing more than one video in the Murder, Mystery & Makeup series to observe the diversity and consistency of communication techniques and narrative conveying in various contexts and situations, as well as to strengthen the understanding of the communication strategies used.

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