

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Literature can be defined as a type of creative expression that refers to written works that are valued for their artistic or intellectual merit. Henry Van Dyke (1999) said that literature consists of writings that interpret the meanings of nature and life, in words of charm and power, touched with the author's personality, in artistic forms of permanent interest. Accompanying this declaration, Ima (2013) outlined literature as a medium through which a person transmits their thoughts or ideas about the world. These works deal with problems of mankind and life experiences. An author can communicate with readers through the writings that are put into his creative works. Thus, literature can be defined as written works that provide a glimpse into human life and present different and exciting ideas that engage readers.

These written works are given with a variety of inventive concepts and themes that appeal to readers' intellect and emotions, allowing them to dig deeply into the authors' worlds and characters. Some literary works that are often encountered in everyday life are poetry, prose, theater, nonfiction, essays, and folk literature. Given that written literature often depicts human feelings and experiences, literary works are often used as inspiration for visual media adaptations such as films.

Film is a series of moving images exhibited on a screen, frequently accompanied by sound that tells a tale taken from written literature. As stated by Linda Hutcheon (2006) film is an art form in which stories are adapted from one medium to another, transforming the original into a new form. In general, films are generally adapted from works of written literature that feature intriguing and engaging tales that usually express emotions and thoughts on human existence.

One such film that portrays the emotional turmoil of human life is *Marriage Story*, which is adapted from a script with the same title written by the director Noah Baumbach. This film is one of the life drama films that focuses on the home life of Nicole (Scarlett Johansson) and Charlie (Adam Driver) who undergo relationship twists and turns that cause them to finally separate and fight for custody of their son.

After its release in 2019 *Marriage Story* received many nominations and awards in the world of cinema because the film can portray real emotions and complex character relationships in the process of divorce through realistic acting and dialog. The film was nominated for 6 awards at the 92nd Academy Awards which is the highest honor for American filmmakers. Not only that, the movie was also nominated in other awards such as the Golden Globe Awards, British Academy Film Awards, Screen Actors Guild Awards, and Critics' Choice Awards. *Marriage Story* was also labeled as one of the best films of the top 10 films in 2019 by the American Film Institute and the National Board of Review.

In addition to receiving praise for the acting of the cast, *Marriage Story* also received a lot of praise from film critics and audiences through the authenticity of the script that depicts how a couple's arguments leads to divorce. The film is dominated by the dialog of the two leads arguing about things from the past and what could have happened if they had done things differently in the past so that the arguments are caused by unresolved issues from their past.

Johnson and Roloff (1998) stated that these types of arguments occur when one partner is upset because their expectations were not met or when couples have different viewpoints, values, or beliefs. However, these arguments can be damaging and reduce the likelihood of resolving the issue, potentially leading to additional disagreements in the future. The initial rage might lead to destructive discussions that limit the possibility of issue resolution, potentially leading to further conflicts.

Serial arguments show how both parties threaten, insult, and express their anger towards one another. These arguments consist of repeated, ongoing argumentative episodes about the same issue between individuals in an interpersonal relationship. Relational partners are often unable to resolve their conflicts in a single encounter and therefore extend issues over a period of time. Serial argument episodes may be spread out over hours, days, weeks, months, or even years.

The use of language by the characters, particularly the register employed in the serial arguments between Charlie and Nicole, has a considerable

influence on the portrayal of emotions in the film. Halliday (1985) defined register as a sort of language used in a variety of settings and he identified three variables that contribute to it namely field, tenor, and mode. Field refers to the ideational function or the topic matter under discussion. Tenor refers to the interpersonal function or the interactions that exist between the speakers and the context in which the communication is taking place. Mode refers to the textual function or the form and coherence of the language being utilized.

Register is a crucial instrument for conveying meaning and emotion in communication, particularly in film, where it can serve to build character relationships, disclose underlying tensions, and ultimately shape the tone and atmosphere of a scene. Halliday and Hasan (1989) emphasized the importance of choosing the appropriate register for effective communication stating that register enables speakers to convey not only the content of their message but also the social relationships and attitudes that they have towards their listeners and the topic.

The following example shows an example of data that can be extracted.

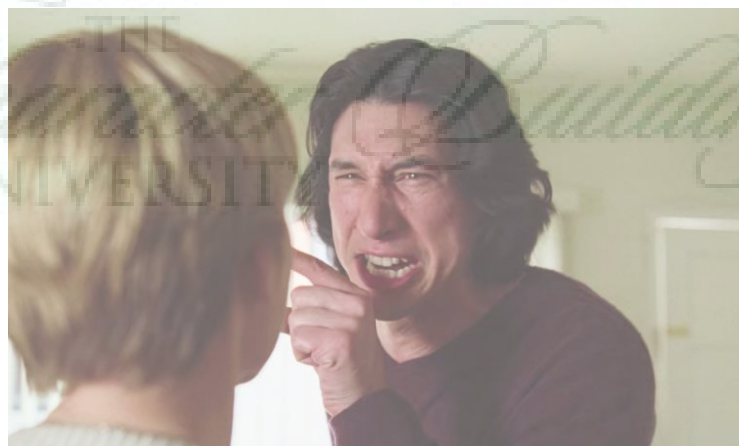


Figure 1. 1 Picture or Screenshot of Serial Argument Scene in Marriage Story

Charlie: *"You used me so you could get out of LA."*

Nicole: *"I didn't use you."*

Charlie: *"You did and then you blamed me for it. You always made me aware of what I was doing wrong, how I was falling short."*

Charlie: *"Life with you was joyless."*

Nicole: *"So you had to fuck someone else? How could you?"*

Charlie: *"You shouldn't be upset that I fucked her, you should be upset that I had a laugh with her."*

The scene that is located at the timestamp 01:04:50 is one of a series of arguments that occur between the two main characters in *Marriage Story*. Nicole and Charlie give statements that are refuted by each other and they blame and manipulate each other so that the argument finds no resolution. Through this serial argument in the dialog, there are field, tenor, and mode that compose each sentence uttered by the characters. These three components of register that make up the dialog contribute to the depiction of the emotions and relationships of the two characters in the film's story from an SFL perspective by using Halliday's theory.

Previous study has used Halliday's register theory to identify linguistic choices in the text and why it was chosen for the speaker's purpose through discourse analysis. These studies examined how register variables such as field, tenor, and mode contribute to communication in diverse situations by analyzing a variety of texts such as political speeches, news reports, and presidential victory speeches. By examining these things, researchers

discovered the importance of register used in language as a means of communication.

This study will help to understand how register as an important part of linguistics influences the dialog between the characters in the film in displaying their emotions and relationships. By analyzing the registers used and their contributions this study will provide insight into why the Noah Baumbach chose the specific registers in this film.

B. Problems of the Study

1. What is the register utilized in the serial arguments in Noah Baumbach's "Marriage Story"?
2. How does the register contribute to the characters' emotions and relationships in the serial arguments in Noah Baumbach's "Marriage Story"?
3. Why did Noah Baumbach select this specific register for the serial arguments in "Marriage Story"?

C. Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the register utilized in the serial arguments in Noah Baumbach's "Marriage Story".
2. To analyze how the register contributes to the characters emotions and relationships in the serial arguments in Noah Baumbach's "Marriage Story"

3. To comprehend Noah Baumbach's reasons for using the specific register for the serial arguments in "Marriage Story."

D. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the registers used by the characters in the serial arguments in Marriage Story. This research looks at how the use of certain registers affects the emotions and relationships of the characters in the serial arguments. In addition, this study also seeks to understand Noah Baumbach's motivation as the director and scriptwriter of Marriage Story in choosing certain registers in the serial arguments.

E. Significance of the Study

1. Theoretical Significance

This study attempts to increase knowledge about language registers centered on Systemic Functional Linguistics especially those used by the characters in the series arguments in Marriage Story and how language contributes importantly to the portrayal of characters' emotions and relationships in the film. Furthermore, this study aims to provide the filmmaker's intentions for choosing certain linguistic features in filmmaking with specific contexts.

2. Practical Significance

This study is expected to be a useful resource for future researchers interested in register within the scope of Systemic Functional Linguistics and

its role in movie language. This study is intended to guide and provide important insights for future research in this area.

