

**UNDERSTANDING INFORMAL EXPRESSIONS THROUGH *SPIDER-MAN: ACROSS THE SPIDER-VERSE***

**THESIS**

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**FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY  
BANDA ACEH  
2026 M/1448 H**

**UNDERSTANDING INFORMAL EXPRESSIONS THROUGH *SPIDER-MAN: ACROSS THE SPIDER-VERSE***

**THESIS**

Has Been Approved and Submitted to the Thesis *Munaqasyah* Defense as One the Requirements to Obtain a Bachelor's Degree in the field of English Language Education

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On:

Tuesday,

June, 23<sup>th</sup> 2026 M  
Muharram, 8<sup>th</sup> 1448 H

In Darussalam, Banda Aceh

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adalah benar-benar saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan didalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggung jawab saya. Demikianlah surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is to Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. The writer begins by offering his deepest gratitude to Allah SWT for the divine blessings of life, opportunity, perseverance, and the guidance and fortitude to complete this thesis. The writer also invokes blessings and peace upon the Prophet Muhammad SAW, whose noble teachings continue to enlighten our intellect and spirit, steering us toward knowledge and wisdom, and upon his family and companions who devotedly guided their community along the path of righteousness.

The writer would like to express his deepest gratitude and sincere appreciation to his supervisor and academic advisor, Miss Rahmi Fhonna, M.A., for her invaluable guidance, patience, encouragement, and continuous support throughout the process of completing this thesis. Her insightful suggestions, constructive feedback, and dedication have greatly contributed to the completion of this research.

The writer also extends his sincere gratitude to Miss Syarifah Dahliana, Ph.D., as the Head of the Department of English Language Education, and Miss Azizah, M.Pd., as the Secretary of the Department, for their guidance and support throughout the writer's academic journey. The writer also thanks all lecturers and staff members of the Department of English Language Education at UIN Ar-Raniry for their knowledge and support.

The writer's deepest and most heartfelt gratitude is dedicated to his beloved parents, whose endless prayers, unconditional love, sacrifices, encouragement, and unwavering support have become the greatest source of strength throughout every stage of life and education. Without their sincere support and prayers, this thesis would never have been completed.

The writer would also like to express sincere appreciation to his university companions, "Santai Tak Lalai," for the memorable experiences, laughter,

motivation, and solidarity shared throughout the years of study. Special thanks are addressed to Aridha, Afi, Aulia, Aris, Asrar, Atha, Aufa, Arda, Argia, Feri, Ifan, Muzzammil, Nashih, Reza, Saif, and Zayyan for their companionship, support, and encouragement during the academic journey. The writer also extends his gratitude to his vocational high school friends, Aigal, Alfi, Alfito, Athaya, Zamzami, and Zidan for their friendship, positivity, and unforgettable memories that continuously provided motivation and support throughout the completion of this thesis.

Lastly, the writer is grateful to *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* for becoming not only the object of this study but also a source of inspiration throughout the research journey. Through its meaningful story, memorable dialogue, and emotional depth, the film accompanied the writer during both the most difficult and most rewarding moments of completing this thesis. As reflected in one of its memorable lines, “*There’s a first time for everything, right?*”, this thesis marks an important first step in the writer’s academic journey.

Banda Aceh, 12 May 2026

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## ABSTRACT

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Thesis working title : Understanding Informal Expressions Through *Spider-Man: Across The Spider-Verse*  
Supervisor : Rahmi Fhonna, M.A.  
Keywords : Informal expressions, slang, film dialogue, sociolinguistics, *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*

This study investigates the types of informal expressions present in the film *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* from a sociolinguistic perspective. The research aims to identify and classify informal linguistic features, including slang, contractions, discourse markers, fillers, and formulaic expressions, as they appear in the film's dialogue. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through systematic observation and transcription of 90 selected informal utterances. The expressions were classified based on the theoretical frameworks proposed by Biber et al., Widawski, Wray, and Gavela. The findings reveal that all five categories of informal expressions are present in the film. Contractions are the most dominant type, appearing frequently across various characters and situations, reflecting the natural rhythm and fluency of spoken interaction. Slang expressions serve as markers of social identity and group solidarity, while discourse markers organize conversation and manage speaker interaction. Fillers add spontaneity and realism to the dialogue, and formulaic expressions contribute to the emotional and interpersonal depth of communication. The study concludes that informal expressions are systematic linguistic resources that enhance the authenticity of film dialogue and reflect real-life patterns of language variation. The findings offer implications for sociolinguistic research on media language and for the use of films as pedagogical tools in English language teaching.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

Slang and informal expressions have grown essential to modern English, especially in contexts where individuals often participate in casual dialogue and navigate their identities. These languages are defined by their adaptability, inventiveness, and social relevance, setting them apart from standard or formal English. Eble (1996) defines slang as an ever-evolving assemblage of words and phrases utilized by certain groups to strengthen identity and foster a sense of community. Allan and Burridge (2006) contend that slang can denote unity, enabling individuals to exhibit their intimacy and common cultural values. Slang is popular in youth culture, peer-group interactions, and current media due to the influence of social environment and interpersonal dynamics (Tagliamonte, 2023). Slang is an essential area of inquiry in linguistics, especially in sociolinguistics, as different forms of expression illuminate interpersonal dynamics and cultural identities.

Informal expressions hold similar significance to slang in colloquial spoken English. These expressions consist of prevalent vocabulary, contractions, discourse markers, fillers, and abbreviated forms employed in interpersonal communication. Biber et al. (2021) explain that informal spoken language is characterized by spontaneity, reduce

grammatical complexity, and lexical choices that prioritize interpersonal interaction over formal accuracy. Gavela (2015) similarly underscores that conversational informal English is distinguished by its interpersonal and cultural dimensions, frequently conveying familiarity, emotional subtlety, and shared context among speakers.

Films serve as one of the most accessible and impactful tools for engaging with actual spoken English. They exhibit the unprompted utilization of language in social settings. Film dialogue mirrors genuine conversation more closely than textual textbook interactions because of its diverse tones, tempos, registers, cultural references, and seeming spontaneity of emotions. Sherman (2003) states that films depict genuine dialogues, allowing for the observation of language operating in real-world circumstances. Webb and Rodgers (2009) add that films constitute a valuable linguistic resource for research because they incorporate terminology and idioms used in everyday discourse. Films provide an exceptional platform for analyzing modern English slang and informal language usage.

The selection of Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse as the object of this study is based on several considerations. First, as a contemporary animated film targeting adolescent and young adult audiences, the movie presents dialogue that commonly used in youth-oriented interactions. Second, the characters in the film represent diverse social identities and

backgrounds, which are reflected through their varied language choices, including slang, contractions, and other informal forms. Third, the fast-paced and conversational nature of the dialogue provides rich data for examining informal language use in naturalistic contexts. Fourth, the film features characters from different cultural and regional backgrounds, such as Hobie Brown's London English and Miles Morales's New York urban speech, allowing for a more diverse sociolinguistic analysis. Fifth, despite the film's popularity and cultural impact, linguistic studies focusing on the types of informal expressions used in this film remain limited. Therefore, this film offers a valuable and relevant source of data for sociolinguistic analysis, particularly in exploring how informal language functions within contemporary popular media.

The film *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* offers a significant dataset for analyzing slang and informal expressions, owing to its characters' diverse social and cultural backgrounds. The film utilizes modern spoken English that reflects contemporary youth culture and urban language trends, featuring innovative slang, humorous idioms, and culturally specific references. Pranata and Nasrullah (2023) note in their sociolinguistic study of the Spider-Man series that adolescent-focused superhero films often include diverse slang expressions that denote identification, friendship, humor, and group connection. Considering these features, *Across the Spider-Verse* is an appropriate resource for analyzing the manifestation of contemporary English slang and informal expressions in a popular, youth-

oriented film. Examining the language used in this film might clarify the types, patterns, and sociolinguistic functions of slang and informal expressions adopted by different characters.

The selection of *Spider-man: Across the Spider-Verse* as the object of this study is based on its sociolinguistic relevance. As a contemporary animated film targeting adolescent and young adults, the movie presents dialogue that commonly used in youth-oriented interactions. The characters in the film represent diverse social identities and backgrounds, which are reflected through their varied language choices, including slang, contractions, and other informal forms. Moreover, the fast-paced and conversational nature of the dialogue provides rich data for examining informal language use in naturalistic contexts. Despite the film's popularity and cultural impact, linguistic studies focusing on the types of informal expressions used in *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* remain limited. Therefore, this film offers a valuable and relevant source of data for sociolinguistic analysis, particularly in exploring how informal language functions within contemporary popular media.

Given these considerations, there is a compelling need to conduct a descriptive qualitative study to identify and classify slang and informal expressions in *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*. Previous research has examined slang in many films and television programs (Delvary & Rosita, 2023; Timur, 2016), although studies concentrating on slang and informal expressions in this particular film are few. Moreover, several existing

studies focus on translation or subtitling processes, rather than analyzing the linguistic forms and categories themselves. This research aims to advance sociolinguistic studies by providing a comprehensive taxonomy of the slang and informal expressions employed in this film. This study enhances the sociolinguistic analysis of informal expressions variations in modern popular media by identifying and classifying these phrases within established frameworks. This study is positioned within sociolinguistics, concentrating on the role of slang and informal expressions as socially significant linguistic variants in cinema dialogue.

### **B. Research Questions**

To guide this study in examining the sociolinguistic aspects of language use as represented in film dialogue, the following research question is proposed: What types of informal expressions are found in the film *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*?

### **C. Aims of the Study**

This study aims to systematically identify and categorize the types of informal expressions found in the film *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* from a sociolinguistic perspective. The study focuses on various forms of informal language, including slang, contractions, discourse markers, and other conversational features used in the film's dialogue. By employing a descriptive qualitative approach, this research seeks to explain

how informal expressions reflect patterns of social interaction and language variation in contemporary popular media.

#### **D. Significance of the Research**

This study seeks to further the subject of sociolinguistics theoretically and practically, particularly in the analysis of slang and informal terminology in media speech. This study examines the use of informal language in a contemporary animated film, potentially enriching sociolinguistic discussions on how linguistic diversity reflects social identity, interpersonal relationships, and cultural environment. The findings are anticipated to provide empirical insights on the types and characteristics of slang and informal language widespread in modern popular media. This study seeks to further the subject of sociolinguistics both theoretically and practically, particularly in the analysis of slang and informal terminology within media conversation. This study examines the use of informal language in a contemporary animated film, potentially enriching sociolinguistic discussions about how linguistic diversity reflects social identity, interpersonal relationships, and cultural context. The findings are anticipated to provide empirical insights on the types and characteristics of slang and informal language widespread in modern popular media. The findings may benefit researchers seeking to conduct more sociolinguistic investigations on informal language across various media or genres. Furthermore, the results may aid educators in utilizing films as

supplementary instructional resources to present colloquial English in a contextualized and engaging manner.

## **E. Research Terminologies**

### **1. Slang**

Slang is an informal, non-standard language utilized by specific social groups to express identity and foster interpersonal connections. Eble (1996) defines slang as an ever-evolving lexicon of terms and expressions that signify group affiliation and collective cultural experiences. Allan and Burridge (2006) contend that slang often emerges within adolescent societies as a marker of affiliation and unity. This study defines slang as innovative and socially relevant expressions seen in contemporary spoken English, particularly in media targeting younger audiences. The expressions are analyzed to identify their categories and linguistic features as employed in the film.

### **2. Informal Expressions**

Informal expressions encompass linguistic forms prevalent in everyday, casual discourse, such as contractions, fillers, discourse markers, formulaic expressions, and simplified grammatical structures. Biber et al. (2021) contend that informal spoken language is marked by spontaneity, reduced structures, and a preference for

ease of communication. Gavela (2015) notes that such expressions strongly signify familiarity, social closeness, and a shared context among interlocutors. In this study, informal terminology refers to naturally occurring conversational features employed by characters in the film. This analysis examines how multimedia storytelling illustrates informal discourse.

### 3. Film

Film denotes an audiovisual media that amalgamates visual imagery, spoken language, and narrative components to illustrate social interactions and cultural situations. Films, as cultural artifacts, mirror quotidian communication practices, beliefs, and social dynamics through the dialogue of characters. Sociolinguistic research has progressively employed films as genuine sources of linguistic data, as movies depict actual language usage in diverse social contexts and illustrate interpersonal speaker relationships (Pranata & Nasrullah, 2023). Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021) also note that language variation is shaped by social factors, including identity, relationships, and social context, often depicted through characters in films. This study analyzes *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* as a data source reflecting contemporary spoken English, specifically slang and informal expressions utilized by characters in diverse social contexts.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### A. Informal Expressions

##### 1. Definition of Informal Expressions

Informal expressions denote linguistic forms frequently employed in casual and quotidian communication. These statements generally manifest in oral communication rather than formal written contexts and are distinguished by their spontaneity and adaptability. Biber et al. (2021) state that informal spoken language represents real-time communication, wherein speakers emphasize clarity and interaction rather than grammatical accuracy. Consequently, informal expressions are essential in creating natural and authentic spoken English. Gavela (2015) elucidates that informal expressions are closely linked to interpersonal communication, as they frequently indicate familiarity, shared knowledge, and closeness between interlocutors. Her analysis of spoken language data shows that these features are systematic components of everyday spoken discourse.

Informal expressions are not random or careless language choices; rather, they are systematic and functional components of spoken discourse that assist speakers in managing contact and conveying social significance. Furthermore, Gavela (2015) emphasizes that the acquisition of conversational informal English

depends substantially on learners' exposure to authentic materials that reflect the lexico-syntactic and sociolinguistic features of everyday discourse. Her analysis of conversational data demonstrates that informal spoken language is a multidimensional entity encompassing both linguistic and sociolinguistic elements that operate simultaneously in real-time communication.

## **2. Features of Informal Expressions**

Informal expressions are marked by several distinctive features that differentiate them from formal language. One prominent feature is reduced grammatical complexity, including the frequent use of contractions and ellipsis. Informal language also relies heavily on shared context, allowing speakers to omit information that is assumed to be mutually understood. According to Gavela (2015), informal spoken discourse emphasizes interpersonal meaning, such as attitudes and emotions, rather than strict adherence to formal linguistic norms. She argues that the vocabulary and grammar choices in conversational English reflect a speaker's desire to maintain social relationships. Another significant characteristic of informal expressions is their interactional function. Biber et al. (2021) observe that informal language often includes discourse markers and fillers that facilitate conversational flow and regulate turn-taking. These attributes enhance

the authenticity of verbal communication and illustrate the application of language in routine social situations.

There are several reasons why people commonly use informal expressions in everyday communication. First, informal expressions allow speakers to communicate more efficiently and quickly. By using contractions, ellipsis, and shortened forms, speakers can convey their messages with less effort and in less time. This is particularly important in fast-paced conversations where speakers need to respond quickly. Second, informal expressions help speakers build and maintain social relationships. According to Holmes and Wilson (2017), language choices reflect social distance and closeness. When speakers use informal expressions, they signal that they consider their interlocutors as familiar, close, or part of the same social group. This helps create a sense of solidarity and mutual understanding. Third, informal expressions enable speakers to express emotions and attitudes more effectively. Slang, fillers, and discourse markers allow speakers to convey feelings such as excitement, frustration, humor, or hesitation in ways that formal language cannot. For example, using slang like *hangry* communicates both *hunger* and *anger* in a single creative word. Fourth, informal expressions reflect social identity and group membership. According to Eble (1996) and Widawski (2015), slang and other informal expressions help speakers mark their affiliation with particular social groups, such as age groups, subcultures, or regional communities.

Fifth, informal expressions make communication more engaging and relatable. In casual conversations, using informal language creates a relaxed atmosphere and makes interactions feel more natural and human. This is why films and other media often use informal expressions to create authentic and relatable dialogue.

### 3. Types of Informal Expressions

Informal expressions can be classified into several types based on their linguistic forms and communicative functions. Drawing on Biber et al. (2021), who identify contractions, discourse markers, and fillers as defining features of conversational grammar, and on recent work on slang (Widawski, 2015) and formulaic language (Wray, 2021), this study categorizes informal expressions into five types: slang, contractions, discourse markers, fillers, and formulaic expressions. These features are frequently used to maintain fluency and manage real-time interaction. Gavela (2015) further explains that informal expressions perform important pragmatic functions, such as expressing attitudes, signaling speaker stance, and facilitating turn-taking. Rather than being optional or peripheral, these expressions are central to how speakers construct meaning and maintain social relationships. This classification shows that informal expressions are systematic and functional elements of spoken discourse rather than random or careless language choices.

## 1. Slang

Slang is a highly dynamic form of informal language characterized by non-standard vocabulary that often emerges within particular social groups. It is frequently associated with youth communities, peer networks, and subcultures, where language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a marker of identity and belonging. According to Eble (1996), slang reflects creativity, shared values, and social solidarity among its users. Unlike formal vocabulary, slang expressions tend to evolve rapidly in response to cultural shifts and technological developments. This flexibility makes slang an important linguistic phenomenon for understanding contemporary spoken interaction. As a result, slang is widely studied in sociolinguistics as a reflection of social change and group identity.

It is important to distinguish between slang and colloquial language, as these two terms are often confused. According to Allan and Burridge (2006), while both slang and colloquial expressions are informal, they differ in several important ways. First, colloquial language refers to the informal words and phrases that are commonly used in everyday conversation by most speakers of a language. Colloquial expressions are widely understood and accepted as part of normal spoken language. Examples include

gonna, wanna, I'm, and don't. These forms are used by speakers across different social groups and are not limited to any particular community. In contrast, slang is more restricted in its use. Slang expressions are often created and used by specific social groups, such as teenagers, musicians, gamers, or regional communities. Slang is less widely understood and may be unfamiliar to speakers outside the group. For example, the word *bruv* is a slang term used primarily in London and among speakers of Multicultural London English. It may not be understood or used by speakers from other regions. Second, colloquial language tends to be more stable over time. While new colloquial forms may emerge, they generally change slowly. Slang, on the other hand, is highly dynamic and evolves rapidly. New slang expressions emerge frequently, and old ones may fall out of use quickly. According to Eble (1996), slang is an ever-evolving lexicon that reflects cultural shifts and technological developments. Third, colloquial language serves the primary function of facilitating everyday communication, while slang serves additional social functions such as marking identity, expressing group solidarity, and distinguishing insiders from outsiders. Widawski (2015) emphasizes that slang is a rule-governed linguistic system that serves crucial social functions including identity marking and group solidarity reinforcement. In summary, all slang is informal, but not all informal language is slang.

Colloquial expressions are informal words and phrases used broadly in everyday speech, while slang is a more specialized form of informal language used by specific social groups to express identity and solidarity.

Regarding the social position of slang users, it is important to note that slang is not limited to any single social class or level of society. According to Widawski (2015), slang is used across different social strata, though its forms and functions may vary depending on the social context. In some contexts, slang is associated with lower social classes or marginalized communities. Historically, slang has often emerged from urban communities, youth subcultures, and ethnic minority groups. For example, African American Vernacular English (AAVE) has contributed many slang expressions to mainstream English. In this sense, slang can be seen as a marker of social identity that distinguishes certain groups from others. However, slang is not exclusively used by lower social classes. According to Eble (1996), slang is also used by college students, professionals, and members of higher social classes. In these contexts, slang serves as a marker of group membership and solidarity among peers, regardless of social class. For example, professionals in fields such as technology, medicine, or finance may use jargon that functions similarly to slang in marking in-group identity.

The use of slang can also reflect social mobility and cultural exchange. As Tagliamonte (2023) notes, slang often spreads from marginalized communities to mainstream society through media, music, and popular culture. Once slang expressions become widely adopted, they may lose their association with a particular social group and become more neutral or colloquial. Thus, the social position of slang users is not fixed or hierarchical. Slang is used by speakers across different social strata, and its meanings and functions depend on the social context and the relationships between speakers. What distinguishes slang users is not necessarily their social class but their membership in particular social networks and their desire to express identity, solidarity, and cultural values.

In spoken communication, slang serves both interpersonal and expressive purposes. It allows speakers to convey attitudes, emotions, and humor in ways that standard language often cannot achieve. Recent sociolinguistic research highlights that slang is particularly significant in youth-oriented discourse because it enables speakers to negotiate identity and adapt to emerging cultural trends. Tagliamonte (2023) notes that slang functions as a linguistic resource that strengthens group membership while also distinguishing insiders from outsiders. Expressions such as *yo*, *nah*, and *ain't* are commonly recognized as markers of casualness and social familiarity in spoken English. These expressions often carry

meanings that extend beyond their literal definitions, contributing to the richness of informal interaction.

More recently, Widawski (2015) provided a comprehensive linguistic description of slang, emphasizing that slang operates as a rule-governed linguistic system rather than a random collection of non-standard words. Widawski argues that slang serves crucial social functions including identity marking, group solidarity reinforcement, and the expression of shared cultural values, particularly within urban communities. Furthermore, Tagliamonte (2023) notes that slang functions as a linguistic resource that strengthens group membership while also distinguishing insiders from outsiders.

Within media discourse, slang is frequently employed to create authenticity and realism in dialogue. Film characters often use slang to reflect their social backgrounds, relationships, and emotional states. This usage allows audiences to perceive conversations as more natural and relatable. In linguistic studies, analyzing slang in films provides insight into how informal language is represented in popular culture. Within this study, slang is examined as a type of informal expression that reflects social identity and conversational style in film dialogue. Its presence

demonstrates how language variation contributes to the portrayal of realistic spoken interaction.

## 2. Contractions

Contractions are shortened linguistic forms created by combining words and omitting certain letters or sounds, such as *don't*, *I'm*, and *you're*. They are a defining feature of spoken English because they promote efficiency, fluency, and ease of articulation in everyday communication. According to Biber et al. (2021), contractions are central characteristics of natural spoken discourse, reflecting the spontaneous and interactive nature of conversation. Their frequent use allows speakers to maintain the rhythm of speech without sacrificing meaning. Furthermore, contractions contribute to a relaxed and informal tone, which distinguishes spoken interaction from more formal written communication. As a result, they are widely recognized as essential elements of colloquial English.

In everyday speech, contractions serve practical and social functions. From a practical perspective, they reduce articulatory effort and enable faster communication. Socially, they signal familiarity, closeness, and informality between speakers. Contractions function as markers of interpersonal relationships in several ways. According to Biber et al. (2021), the use of contractions signals that speakers are in an informal, close

relationship. When speakers use full forms like *I am*, *do not*, or *going to*, they create a sense of distance and formality. In contrast, when speakers use contractions like *I'm*, *don't*, or *gonna*, they create a sense of closeness and familiarity.

This is because contractions are associated with spoken, unplanned discourse. According to Holmes and Wilson (2017), speakers adjust their language based on social distance. When speakers are close to each other, they are more likely to use informal, reduced forms. When they are distant or in formal situations, they are more likely to use full forms. Furthermore, contractions can signal emotional engagement and spontaneity. In emotionally charged conversations, speakers often use contractions to express feelings quickly and naturally. For example, in the utterance "*Everything's gonna be okay*," the use of *gonna* instead of *going to* makes the statement sound more immediate, personal, and comforting. This creates a stronger emotional connection between speakers.

Contractions can also indicate the relative power or status between speakers. In some contexts, using contractions with someone of higher status (such as a teacher, boss, or elder) may be considered disrespectful or too informal. Conversely, not using

contractions with someone of equal or lower status may create unnecessary distance and formality.

In media discourse, contractions are frequently used to establish character relationships. According to Danesi (2020), contemporary media increasingly use contractions to portray authentic social interactions. When characters use contractions with each other, audiences perceive them as having close, informal relationships. When characters use full forms, audiences perceive distance, formality, or tension. Thus, contractions are not merely phonological reductions but meaningful linguistic choices that signal the nature of interpersonal relationships between speakers. Contemporary discourse studies emphasize that contractions are not merely phonological reductions but also markers of interpersonal relationships. Forms such as *gonna*, *wanna*, and *gotta* are especially common in casual interaction and are often used to represent authentic spoken language. These forms illustrate how language adapts to the needs of efficient and socially meaningful communication.

Within media discourse, contractions are frequently used to create dialogue that resembles real-life conversation. Their presence in films, television series, and digital content contributes to the naturalness and relatability of character interactions. Linguistic

analysis of contractions in scripted dialogue provides insight into how spoken language is stylized for audiences. In this study, contractions are examined as indicators of casual speech patterns in film conversations. Their occurrence demonstrates how informal language prioritizes immediacy and fluency over formal grammatical completeness. Thus, contractions play an important role in shaping authentic spoken discourse.

### 3. Discourse Markers

Discourse markers are words or phrases that organize spoken interaction and guide the flow of conversation, including expressions such as *well*, *you know*, *come on*, and *hold on*. Unlike lexical items that contribute propositional meaning, discourse markers primarily serve pragmatic and interactional functions. They help speakers structure ideas, manage turn-taking, and signal relationships between utterances. Paltridge (2021) explains that discourse markers are essential features of spoken discourse because they facilitate coherence and listener comprehension. Their use reflects the collaborative and dynamic nature of conversation. Consequently, discourse markers are central to the study of spoken interaction.

Discourse markers serve several key functions in spoken communication. According to Biber et al. (2021), they help speakers

organize ideas and manage interaction. For example, *well* introduces new topics, *actually* signals corrections, and *I mean* clarifies previous statements. According to Crible (2018), markers like *you know* check shared knowledge and engage listeners, while *come on* urges action or expresses impatience. *Hold on* requests a pause or signals that the speaker is not finished. Discourse markers also express speaker attitudes: *kind of* softens statements to maintain politeness, and *look* signals a shift to a serious tone. According to Heine et al. (2023), these markers function as indicators of sociocultural behavior that help listeners understand relationships between ideas. In the film, *come on* functioned as encouragement in "Come on, man!" while *hold on* served as a turn-taking device in "Wait, hold on." Thus, discourse markers are essential pragmatic tools that structure interaction, express attitudes, and maintain coherence in spoken communication.

In informal communication, discourse markers often express attitudes, emotions, and conversational strategies. They may soften statements, introduce reactions, request attention, or indicate transitions between topics. Because of these functions, discourse markers contribute significantly to interpersonal meaning in dialogue. Their frequent occurrence demonstrates that conversation is not simply a sequence of sentences but a process of continuous negotiation between speakers. Recent discourse studies highlight

that these expressions are particularly valuable in analyzing authentic spoken exchanges. This makes discourse markers an important category in understanding pragmatic competence.

Within media dialogue, discourse markers are widely used to create realistic and engaging conversations. Their inclusion helps portray characters as natural speakers rather than scripted voices. By examining discourse markers in films, researchers can better understand how spoken interaction is represented in popular culture. In this study, discourse markers are analyzed as pragmatic tools that shape communication in film conversations. Their presence reveals how speakers manage interaction in real time while maintaining coherence and social connection. Therefore, discourse markers contribute substantially to the authenticity of dialogue.

Furthermore, Crible (2018) provides a systematic corpus-based analysis of discourse markers and their relationship to fluency in spoken English and French. Her study distinguishes between strategic and symptomatic uses of discourse markers, demonstrating that speakers employ these forms not merely as hesitation devices but as sophisticated interactional resources that contribute to the coherence and naturalness of spoken discourse. Heine et al. (2023) further argue that discourse markers constitute an essential part of

linguistic communication, functioning as indicators of sociocultural behavior across a wide range of typologically diverse languages.

#### 4. Fillers

Fillers are vocalized pauses or hesitation devices commonly found in spontaneous speech, including forms such as *uh*, *um*, and *er*. These expressions are often produced when speakers need additional time to think, organize ideas, or maintain control of the conversational floor. According to Biber et al. (2021), fillers are important components of spoken discourse because they preserve conversational flow and prevent silence. Although they may appear insignificant, fillers serve crucial communicative purposes in real-time interaction. Their presence reflects the cognitive demands of speech production. For this reason, fillers are widely recognized as markers of authentic spoken language.

From a pragmatic perspective, fillers contribute more than hesitation alone. They can signal uncertainty, soften responses, or indicate that a speaker has not yet completed a turn. In this way, fillers function as interactional devices that support smooth communication. Contemporary linguistic studies suggest that fillers reveal the imperfect and adaptive nature of human conversation. Rather than being meaningless sounds, they provide insight into cognitive processing during speech. Their study therefore offers

valuable understanding of how language operates in spontaneous settings.

In media discourse, fillers are frequently included to enhance realism and naturalness in dialogue. Scriptwriters often incorporate these expressions to make conversations resemble everyday interaction. Their use allows audiences to perceive characters as more relatable and authentic. In this study, fillers are examined as indicators of spontaneity and natural speech production in film conversations. Their occurrence demonstrates how spoken discourse is shaped by both cognitive and social demands. Thus, fillers play a meaningful role in representing genuine communication.

Scriptwriters intentionally incorporate fillers into film dialogue to create authenticity and realism. According to Danesi (2020), contemporary media increasingly employ features of everyday speech to connect with audiences, and fillers make characters sound like real people rather than scripted voices. Fillers also reveal character traits and emotional states; for example, Rio Morales's "*Um... Hi*" immediately conveys nervousness, while Miles's "*Uh... I don't know*" reveals youthful uncertainty (Holmes & Wilson, 2017). Furthermore, fillers can indicate power dynamics, with speakers using more fillers often perceived as less confident or lower in status. According to Gavela (2015), including fillers

provides audiences and language learners with a more accurate model of spoken English. In emotionally charged scenes, fillers enhance emotional impact by making characters appear vulnerable and relatable. Thus, scriptwriters incorporate fillers to create authentic dialogue, reveal character depth, indicate social relationships, and enhance emotional engagement.

### 5. Formulaic Expressions

Formulaic expressions refer to fixed or semi-fixed sequences of words that are stored and retrieved as whole units rather than being generated word by word during communication. According to Wray (2021), formulaic language includes expressions such as greetings, conversational routines, collocations, and common phrases that speakers use automatically in everyday interaction. These expressions play an essential role in language fluency because they reduce processing time and enable smoother communication. Furthermore, formulaic expressions are considered a fundamental aspect of spoken discourse, particularly in informal settings where rapid interaction is required. Their presence in natural conversation reflects speakers' ability to use language efficiently and appropriately in context.

In contemporary linguistic studies, formulaic expressions are recognized not only as linguistic structures but also as pragmatic

tools that support social interaction. Wood (2015) explains that formulaic language contributes significantly to communicative competence by allowing speakers to access pre-constructed chunks of language. These chunks often serve interpersonal purposes, such as expressing reassurance, encouragement, politeness, or emotional support. Similarly, Cutting (2021) emphasizes that conversational routines and fixed expressions help maintain rapport and facilitate mutual understanding between speakers. Expressions such as *I got this*, *don't worry about it*, and *you know what I mean* are examples of formulaic units commonly found in spoken interaction. Their use demonstrates how speakers rely on familiar linguistic patterns to achieve communicative goals effectively.

Extending this perspective, Wray (2021) argues that formulaic language is not merely a peripheral feature of spoken discourse but constitutes a fundamental component of linguistic competence. Her recent work emphasizes that formulaic expressions operate at the interface of lexicon and grammar, enabling speakers to achieve fluency while simultaneously managing the cognitive demands of real-time communication.

In media discourse, formulaic expressions are frequently used to create realistic and relatable dialogue. Film characters often employ such expressions to reflect spontaneity, emotional

engagement, and social familiarity. The analysis of formulaic expressions in movies provides insight into how natural spoken language is represented in scripted interactions. Within this study, formulaic expressions are examined as part of informal spoken features that contribute to authentic conversational style in film dialogue. Their identification in *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* supports the understanding that cinematic language often mirrors real-life communicative practices. Therefore, formulaic expressions are a relevant category in analyzing informal language use within audiovisual media.

#### **4. Informal Expressions from a Sociolinguistic Perspective**

Sociolinguistically, informal expressions are closely linked to social relationships and interactional settings. Holmes and Wilson (2017) note that speakers adjust their language choices based on social distance, familiarity, and context. The use of informal expressions often signals closeness, solidarity, or shared understanding between interlocutors. As a result, informal expressions play a key role in expressing social meaning in communication. Similarly, Walker (2024) highlights that language variation, including the use of informal expressions is systematically shaped by social factors such as age, gender, social class, and group membership. Danesi (2020) extends the sociolinguistic analysis of informal language to new media contexts,

demonstrating that digital communication platforms have accelerated the spread and diversification of informal expressions across different speech communities.

## **B. Film as a Source of Sociolinguistic Data**

### **1. Definition of Film**

Film is a form of audiovisual media that combines moving images, sound, dialogue, and visual elements to convey narratives, ideas, and emotions to an audience. Bordwell and Thompson (2019) define film as a visual storytelling medium that presents human experiences through structured narratives, characters, and cinematic techniques. As a cultural product, film reflects social realities, values, and everyday practices embedded within the society where it is produced. Therefore, film functions not only as entertainment but also as a representation of social life and communication.

### **2. Language Use in Film**

Although film dialogue is scripted, it is generally designed to resemble natural spoken interaction. Characters' speech frequently incorporates slang and informal expressions that reflect their identities, relationships, and social backgrounds. Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021) explain that language variation is shaped by social factors such as age, role, and group membership, all of which are commonly represented through characters in films. As a result, language use in film provides

insight into how social meaning is constructed through linguistic choices. This statement can be elaborated in several ways. First, film language portrays social identity. According to Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021), language variation is shaped by factors such as age, role, and group membership. Characters who use slang and informal expressions are portrayed as young, urban, or part of specific subcultures, while those using formal language appear educated or authoritative. Second, film language represents interpersonal relationships. According to Holmes and Wilson (2017), speakers adjust language based on social distance. Characters using informal expressions, contractions, and slang with each other are portrayed as close and familiar, while formal language signals distance or unequal status. Third, film language conveys social norms and values. According to Ball et al. (2024), media discourse provides insights into language ideologies and cultural norms. In *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*, Hobie's use of *bruv* reflects Multicultural London English, indexing contemporary urban youth culture. Fourth, film language indexes social context. According to Walker (2024), language varies based on context; characters adjust their speech depending on the situation, reflecting real-world language practices. Fifth, film language constructs social reality. According to Danesi (2020), language is not just a reflection of social reality but a means of constructing it. The way characters speak creates and reinforces social meanings, identities, and ideologies. Thus, film

language provides insight into how social meaning is constructed through linguistic choices by portraying identity, representing relationships, conveying norms, indexing context, and constructing social reality.

### 3. Film Dialogue from a Sociolinguistic Perspective

From a sociolinguistic perspective, film dialogue exemplifies social interaction and the creation of identity through language. Holmes and Wilson (2017) contend that linguistic selections in media discourse possess social significance and mirror interpersonal relationships. The incorporation of informal terms, such as slang, in film conversation enables scholars to analyze the construction and interpretation of linguistic variety in popular media. Consequently, cinema conversation serves as a pertinent and dependable source of data for examining informal phrases in this research. Supporting this view, Ball et al. (2024) in the second edition of *The Routledge Handbook of Sociolinguistics Around the World* emphasize that media discourse, including film dialogue, constitutes a legitimate and increasingly important source of data for sociolinguistic inquiry. They argue that the representation of language variation in films provides valuable insights into language ideologies, social identities, and cultural norms across different societies.

### 4. Critiques of Using Film as a Source of Sociolinguistic Data

While films serve as valuable sources of linguistic data, sociolinguists have raised several important critiques regarding the use of film language in research. These critiques address issues of realism, bias, and the potential reinforcement of social stereotypes.

a. Lack of Authenticity and Realism

One of the primary criticisms is that film dialogue is not fully authentic or realistic. According to Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021), film dialogue is scripted, rehearsed, and edited, which means it is a constructed representation of language rather than naturally occurring speech. Unlike real conversations, which are spontaneous and unplanned, film dialogue is carefully crafted to serve narrative purposes. Characters' speech is often stylized to be more dramatic, witty, or clear than real speech. As a result, film language may not accurately reflect how people actually speak in real-life situations.

Furthermore, film dialogue often lacks the hesitations, overlaps, interruptions, and other features of natural conversation. Although some films, including *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*, deliberately include fillers and discourse markers to create authenticity, these features are still intentionally selected and may not fully capture the complexity of real speech.

### b. Representational Bias

Another critique is that film language is often biased in its representation of different social groups. According to Ball et al. (2024), media discourse can reflect and reinforce language ideologies and social stereotypes. Characters from certain social backgrounds may be portrayed using specific linguistic features that may be exaggerated, outdated, or inaccurate. For example, urban characters may be portrayed as using excessive slang, while rural characters may be portrayed as using more traditional language. These representations may not reflect the full linguistic diversity of these groups.

Furthermore, films may not accurately represent the linguistic variation within a particular community. According to Walker (2024), language variation is complex and influenced by many factors, including age, gender, social class, and context. Films often simplify this complexity, presenting characters as having a single, consistent way of speaking rather than showing how language varies depending on the situation.

### c. Stereotyping and Social Reinforcement

A third critique is that films can reinforce social stereotypes through language use. According to Holmes and Wilson (2017), linguistic choices can carry social meaning and reinforce societal

attitudes. For example, if villains or uneducated characters are consistently portrayed as using non-standard English, this can reinforce negative stereotypes about certain speech communities. Similarly, if characters from minority groups are portrayed using heavy accents or slang, this may reinforce stereotypes and stigmatize linguistic diversity.

This is a significant concern in sociolinguistics, as films can shape public perceptions of language and identity. According to Danesi (2020), media representations can influence how people perceive different social groups and their language use. When films use language to reinforce stereotypes, they can contribute to social inequality and linguistic prejudice.

#### d. Idealization and Simplification

A fourth critique is that films often idealize or simplify language use. According to Meyerhoff (2018), language is inherently variable and influenced by many factors. Films, however, often present language as more uniform and predictable than it actually is. Characters may use language consistently regardless of context, which does not reflect real-world language practices. This idealization can create unrealistic expectations about how people speak and may lead to misunderstandings about linguistic diversity.

#### e. Commercial and Narrative Constraints

A fifth critique relates to the commercial and narrative constraints of filmmaking. According to Sherman (2003), films are produced for entertainment and commercial purposes, which means that language choices are often driven by audience appeal rather than linguistic accuracy. Dialogue must be clear, engaging, and accessible to a wide audience, which may lead to oversimplification or standardization of language. This can limit the range of linguistic features represented in films.

#### f. Acknowledgment and Implications

Despite these critiques, films remain valuable sources of sociolinguistic data when used with appropriate caution. According to Ball et al. (2024), film dialogue provides valuable insights into language ideologies, social identities, and cultural norms. However, researchers must be aware of the limitations of film data and should not assume that film language is fully representative of real-world speech patterns.

In this study, the critiques raised by sociolinguists are acknowledged. The findings of this research reflect the use of informal expressions in a specific film and should not be generalized to all spoken English. This study does not claim that the film's dialogue is fully authentic or representative of how people speak. Rather, it uses the film

as a rich source of data for analyzing how informal expressions are represented in contemporary popular media. The findings provide insights into patterns of language use within this specific context, while the limitations of film data are recognized and discussed.



## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Design

This study used a descriptive qualitative research approach to examine the use of informal language in the film *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* from a sociolinguistic viewpoint. Qualitative research is suitable for this topic as it emphasizes the description, interpretation, and comprehension of linguistic occurrences within their social and cultural settings. Creswell et al. (2023) elucidate that qualitative research enables researchers to investigate the meanings, patterns, and properties of language in its natural context. The descriptive qualitative technique is particularly appropriate as the aim of this study is to identify and classify types of informal utterances rather than to test hypotheses or statistically measure variables. The analysis centers on categorizing linguistic forms according to existing sociolinguistic theories and elucidating their presence in cinema dialogue. This approach seeks to deliver a comprehensive analysis of casual language usage as depicted in modern popular media.

#### B. Data Collection

This study's data include spoken dialogues with informal language from the film *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*. Data were gathered by systematic observation by watching the video repeatedly to achieve precision and thorough data collection. Throughout the viewing procedure,

dialogues that potentially included informal language were meticulously discovered and transcribed. To verify the precision of the transcriptions, the gathered data were compared with the official movie subtitles. This procedure was undertaken to reduce transcribing errors and to verify the accuracy of the utterances. The data selection was informed by theoretical criteria established by Biber et al. (2021) and Gavela (2015), encompassing informal terms such as slang, contractions, discourse markers, fillers, and formulaic expressions. Additional criteria for slang and formulaic language were derived from Widawski (2015) and Wray (2021), respectively. Only dialogues pertinent to these categories were selected, while irrelevant utterances were omitted to ensure consistency with the research aims.

### C. Instrument

The primary research instrument in this study is the film *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* itself. In qualitative research, documents and audiovisual media can function as valid research instruments because they provide authentic and naturally occurring data (Creswell et al., 2023). In this study, the film serves as the main source from which linguistic data are obtained. Specifically, the dialogues spoken by the characters in the film constitute the data to be analyzed. The researcher acts as the key instrument by identifying, selecting, and interpreting slang and informal expressions based on established sociolinguistic theories. This approach is consistent with qualitative research practices, where the researcher plays an active role in data interpretation.

#### **D. Data Analysis**

The data analysis in this study adheres to a descriptive qualitative approach. Subsequent to data collection, each utterance was scrutinized to detect occurrences of informal language. The discovered expressions were subsequently categorized into forms of informal expressions, such as slang, contractions, discourse markers, fillers, and formulaic expressions, according to the theoretical classifications formulated by Biber et al. (2021). The analysis examines the sociolinguistic context of the utterances, including the speaker, the interlocutor, and the situational setting within the film. This contextual study is crucial for comprehending how informal expressions serve as indicators of social engagement and identity. The analysis results are provided descriptively to demonstrate patterns of informal language usage throughout the film.

#### **E. Data Analysis Procedure**

The data analysis procedure in this study comprises multiple systematic processes. The researcher viewed the film multiple times to become acquainted with the narrative and overarching dialogue environment. Secondly, dialogues with informal terms were transcribed and assembled as raw data. Third, each expression was recognized and classified according to its category of informal expression based on sociolinguistic theories. The categorized data were analyzed by exploring their application within the film's narrative framework, emphasizing how informal expressions illustrate social interaction and linguistic diversity. The findings

were ultimately summarized and analyzed in connection with the study issue. This systematic method guarantees that the analysis is performed in an organized and transparent manner.



## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Findings

This section presents the findings of the study based on the analysis of informal expressions found in the film *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*. A total of 90 informal expressions were identified and classified into five types: 21 slang expressions, 20 contractions, 21 discourse markers, 10 fillers, and 18 formulaic expressions. The following subsections highlight the most representative examples from each category, selected for their frequency, distinctiveness, and relevance to sociolinguistic analysis. In total, approximately 38 key examples are discussed in detail, while the complete list of 90 expressions is documented in the study's instrument.

##### 1. Slang

The analysis identified 21 slang expressions, making this the largest category of informal language in the film. Among these, eight items stood out as the most representative: *yo*, *nah*, *bruv*, *dawg*, *hangry*, *psych*, *can't even*, and *man*. These examples were selected because they appeared frequently, served clear social functions, and reflected the diverse ways in which slang operates in youth-oriented peer communication. They encompass greetings, disagreements, identity markers, emotional expressions, and playful language use.

The informal greeting *yo* appeared in exchanges such as "*Yo, Def Leppard!*" and "*Yo, what's up, man?*" In both cases, it immediately established a casual, friendly tone between speakers without the need for formal salutations. The negative particle *nah* occurred in utterances like "*Nah, he seems more Dominican*" and "*Nah, you gotta say it first,*" where it consistently replaced a direct "no" with a softer, more relaxed form of disagreement that maintained conversational ease. Together, *yo* and *nah* demonstrate how simple slang items can efficiently manage routine interactional tasks such as opening conversations and expressing refusal.

Hobie Brown's dialogue provided two culturally distinctive slang terms that marked his London identity within the Spider-Society. The term *bruv* appeared in "*Listen to me, bruv,*" drawing from British multicultural English to signal camaraderie and in-group affiliation. The term *dawg* occurred in "*See you, dawg. Don't come back,*" functioning as a casual term of address that reinforced Hobie's individualistic and anti-establishment persona. These two items were not merely decorative; they actively constructed Hobie's social identity as an outsider among mostly American characters and aligned his speech with his countercultural philosophy.

Several other slang expressions illustrated the creative and emotionally expressive capacity of informal vocabulary. Gwen's coinage *hangry*, a blend of "*hungry*" and "*angry*," efficiently captured

Miguel's irritable mood with humor and concision, showing how slang can compress complex emotional states into single, stylistically marked words. Miles's use of *psych* to jokingly retract a feigned departure during combat demonstrated the playful, interactional function of slang in peer contexts. Miguel's exasperated "*I can't even*" expressed overwhelming frustration through a truncated contemporary idiom that relies on shared cultural understanding. The exclamatory *man* appeared in emotionally charged utterances such as "*Man, this is crazy!*" and "*Good luck out there, man,*" intensifying the speaker's feelings and strengthening interpersonal bonds. These eight items, drawn from the broader set of 21, capture the essential sociolinguistic functions of slang in the film: identity marking, emotional expression, and the maintenance of informal peer relationships.

## 2. Contractions

Twenty contractions were identified in the film, representing one of the most pervasive features of informal spoken English in the dialogue. The seven most representative forms were *gonna*, *wanna*, *gotta*, *I'm*, *don't*, *let's*, and *can't*. These were selected for their high frequency, their occurrence across a wide range of characters and emotional contexts, and their consistent contribution to the natural rhythm and casual tone of conversation.

The reduced modal *gonna* was among the most common contractions in the film, appearing in emotionally significant utterances such as "*Everything's gonna be okay,*" "*You're gonna snap,*" and "*I'm not*

*gonna lie.*" In each instance, *gonna* replaced the more formal *"going to,"* making predictions and admissions sound more immediate, personal, and conversationally appropriate for intimate interactions. The form *wanna* was equally prominent, particularly in the casual invitation *"Wanna get out of here?"* where the omission of *"Do you"* combined ellipsis with contraction to create an utterance that presupposed closeness and shared understanding. The form *gotta* conveyed personal urgency and persuasion in *"I gotta be somewhere"* and *"You gotta trust me,"* shifting the tone from formal obligation to interpersonal appeal.

Among standard contractions, *I'm* and *don't* stood out for their frequency and representative quality. *I'm* occurred in defensive one-liners such as *"I'm fine,"* where contraction maintained the quick rhythm of casual argument. *Don't* appeared in the urgent command *"Don't let him out!"* where the contracted negative delivered maximum directness in a crisis. The inclusive *let's* in *"Let's do things differently this time"* opened the film with a collaborative, informal narrative frame that immediately established a conversational rapport with the audience. Jeff Morales's *"I can't even start"* showed how a standard contraction preserves the emotional flow of heartfelt speech without the stiffness of formal grammar. These seven examples, selected from the 20 contractions identified, illustrate how reduced forms function as deliberate stylistic choices that shape the informality, immediacy, and authenticity of the film's dialogue.

### 3. Discourse Markers

Twenty-one discourse markers were identified across the film's conversational contexts. The eight most representative markers were *come on*, *hold on*, *you know*, *kind of*, *well*, *actually*, *look*, and *I mean*. These examples were selected because they clearly illustrate the range of pragmatic functions that discourse markers serve, including turn-taking, hedging, topic management, and the expression of speaker attitude across varied social situations.

The multifunctional marker *come on* appeared in various contexts, from encouragement and protest to impatience. In "*Come on, man!*" it combined with the slang term *man* to urge a friend to action with an emotionally charged tone. *Hold on* served as a clear turn-taking device in "*Wait, hold on*" and "*Hold on. Slippery guy,*" where it signaled the speaker's immediate need to pause or redirect the conversational flow. Both markers demonstrate how the film's dialogue incorporates interactional management tools that are typical of unscripted, real-time speech, contributing to the natural rhythm of character exchanges.

Several other markers performed distinct pragmatic roles. *You know* operated in two ways throughout the film: as a shared knowledge check in "*You know what?*" that engaged the listener before a forthcoming statement, and as a filler-like device in "*You know, like...*" that maintained the conversational floor during pauses. The hedge *kind of* in "*I'm kind of in*

*the middle of something*" softened a potentially dismissive response, using linguistic understatement to preserve social harmony. *Well* in "*Well, this is new*" and *actually* in "*Actually, forget it*" introduced reactions and corrections, respectively, while *look* in "*Look, life is a journey*" signaled a deliberate shift to a more serious, advisory tone. *I mean* appeared in "*I mean, it's more of a meta commentary*" to clarify and refine a previous statement. These eight markers, drawn from the broader set of 21, encapsulate the essential role of discourse markers in structuring authentic, interactive, and socially nuanced conversation throughout the film.

#### 4. Fillers

Ten filler instances were identified in the data, and seven of the most representative were selected for detailed description: *uh*, *um*, *ehh*, and filler *like*. These were chosen because they occurred in moments of clear hesitation, emotional vulnerability, and social delicacy, making their contribution to the conversational realism of the film particularly evident. Fillers appeared in the speech of both major and supporting characters, indicating that they were a consistent feature of the film's dialogue design rather than isolated character quirks.

The filler *uh* was the most common, occurring in several emotionally varied contexts. In "*Uh... I don't know*," Miles used it before confessing uncertainty, a moment that revealed his youthful vulnerability. Captain Stacy's "*We, uh— We caught a break*" showed how *uh* can function

as a bridge when a speaker shifts between casual and serious topics mid-utterance. Gwen's "*Uh, where you from, bud?*" accompanied her cognitive processing of a surprising interdimensional encounter, the filler buying a brief moment to formulate a coherent question. In all these cases, *uh* served as a strategic pause marker that signaled ongoing thought and maintained conversational flow.

The filler *um* appeared in more reflective or socially delicate contexts. Rio Morales began her impromptu party speech with "*Um... Hi,*" a single hesitation that immediately conveyed her nervousness to the audience. Miles's "*Um... maybe later*" used the filler to soften a refusal, transforming what could have been a blunt rejection into a more polite and considerate response. The casual *ehh* in "*Ehh, I don't know*" added a layer of dismissive doubt, while filler *like* in "*I'm, like, so...*" indicated an unfinished thought process typical of spontaneous adolescent speech. These seven examples demonstrate how fillers contribute significantly to the perception of dialogue as genuine, unscripted, and authentically human.

## 5. Formulaic Expressions

Eighteen formulaic expressions were identified in the film, and eight of the most representative were selected for analysis: *oh my gosh, don't worry, I got this, my bad, what's up, see you around, good luck, and what the heck*. These examples were chosen because they span the key social functions of formulaic language: expressing emotion, offering reassurance,

projecting confidence, managing routine conversation, and navigating social routines such as apologies and well-wishing.

The exclamatory *oh my gosh* was the primary expression of surprise in the film, appearing in multiple scenes where characters reacted to unexpected or shocking events. Unlike stronger expletives, it conveyed strong emotion while remaining appropriate for the film's youth-oriented tone and broad audience. Two reassurance routines stood out for their frequency and emotional impact. *Don't worry* appeared in "*Don't worry. Everything's gonna be okay*," where a fixed phrase was used to calm a panicked interlocutor in a moment of crisis. The confidence marker *I got this* in "*I got this, guys*" functioned similarly, projecting self-assurance through a pre-packaged linguistic formula that required no additional elaboration to be fully understood.

Routine conversational management relied heavily on formulaic sequences. The greeting *what's up* in "*Yo, what's up, man?*" and the parting *see you around* in "*See you around?*" opened and closed interactions with socially established scripts that facilitated smooth, effortless communication. The casual apology *my bad* in "*My bad, everybody*" represented the use of formulaic language for social repair, acknowledging a mistake while maintaining the speaker's relaxed demeanor. The well-wishing expression *good luck* in "*Good luck out there, man*" and the mild reproach *what the heck* in "*What the heck are you doing*"

*here?"* further demonstrated how fixed expressions enable speakers to navigate diverse social situations with fluency and appropriateness. These eight expressions, drawn from the broader set of 18, illustrate the essential role of formulaic language in supporting efficient, emotionally appropriate, and socially smooth communication throughout the film.

## B. Discussion

This section discusses the findings of the study by interpreting the use of informal expressions in the film *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* from a sociolinguistic perspective. The discussion focuses on how different types of informal expressions function in communication and what they reveal about social interaction, identity, and language variation. The findings are not only described but also analyzed in relation to the theoretical framework presented in Chapter II. This finding also aligns with more recent sociolinguistic research. Danesi (2020) observed that contemporary popular media increasingly employ informal language features to construct relatable characters and authentic social interactions, particularly in content targeting younger audiences. By connecting the data with existing theories, this section aims to provide a deeper understanding of how informal language operates in real-life communication. The discussion highlights the relevance of informal expressions in representing authentic spoken English. Overall, this section explains the significance of the findings beyond mere classification.

## 1. The Dominance of Contractions in Spoken Interaction

One of the most striking findings of this study is the pervasive presence of contractions throughout the film's dialogue. With 20 distinct instances identified, contractions emerged as a defining grammatical feature of the characters' speech. These forms ranged from standard contractions such as *I'm*, *don't*, and *can't*, to the more phonologically reduced modals *gonna*, *wanna*, and *gotta*. Their frequent occurrence across various characters and conversational contexts confirms that contraction is a fundamental characteristic of informal spoken English as represented in the film. Biber et al. (2021) identify contractions as central to natural spoken discourse, noting that they reflect the spontaneous and interactive nature of real-time communication. The density of contractions in *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* demonstrates that the scriptwriters deliberately prioritized conversational authenticity over formal grammatical completeness.

The reduced forms *gonna*, *wanna*, and *gotta* are particularly significant from a sociolinguistic standpoint. These phonological reductions do not merely save articulatory effort; they also index informal social contexts and close interpersonal relationships. Carter and McCarthy (2006) argue that such forms are systematically used in casual speech to signal familiarity and shared context between speakers. In the film, *gonna* appeared in emotionally charged utterances such

as *"Everything's gonna be okay"* and *"I'm not gonna lie,"* where the reduced form made predictions and admissions sound more immediate and personally engaged. Similarly, *wanna* appeared in the casual invitation *"Wanna get out of here?"* with subject ellipsis that implied a high degree of shared understanding. *Gotta* conveyed personal urgency in *"I gotta be somewhere,"* transforming formal obligation into interpersonal appeal. These examples illustrate that contractions in the film are not random simplifications but strategic linguistic choices that shape the emotional tone and social meaning of interactions.

The standard contractions, though less distinctive than the reduced modals, played an equally important role in establishing the informal register of the dialogue. Forms such as *I'm*, *don't*, and *let's* appeared in rapid, emotionally authentic exchanges where full forms would have disrupted the conversational rhythm. For instance, *"I'm fine"* maintained the staccato pace of Gwen's defensive banter with her bandmate, and *"Don't let him out!"* delivered an urgent command with immediacy. The inclusive *let's* in the film's opening line *"Let's do things differently this time"* immediately established a conversational frame. The overall prevalence of contractions aligns with Danesi's (2020) observation that contemporary media increasingly mirror the structural features of everyday speech to connect with younger audiences.

## 2. Slang as a Marker of Social Identity and Solidarity

The identification of 21 slang expressions in the film highlights the crucial role of informal vocabulary in expressing social identity, group membership, and peer solidarity. Slang items such as *yo*, *nah*, *bruv*, *dawg*, *hangry*, *psych*, and *man* were concentrated in dialogues among teenage and young adult characters. Their presence reflects the film's effort to authentically portray youth communication and to differentiate characters based on their social and regional backgrounds. Eble (1996) defines slang as an ever-evolving lexicon that signifies group affiliation and shared cultural experiences. The findings strongly support this view, demonstrating that slang in the film is not decorative but functional, serving to construct and negotiate social identities.

The terms *yo* and *nah* illustrate how simple slang items manage routine interactional tasks in peer settings. *Yo* functioned as an informal greeting in "*Yo, Def Leppard!*" and "*Yo, what's up, man?*" immediately signaling familiarity and closeness. Tagliamonte (2023) notes that such address forms are particularly significant in youth discourse, where they strengthen group membership while distinguishing insiders from outsiders. *Nah* appeared as a relaxed disagreement marker in "*Nah, he seems more Dominican*" replacing direct negation with a softer, non-confrontational alternative. Allan and Burridge (2006) argue that slang can function as a solidarity marker, and the use of *nah* exemplifies this

function by allowing speakers to disagree while preserving social harmony.

Hobie Brown's distinctive use of *bruv* and *dawg* provides a clear example of how slang can index regional and social identity. These terms, drawn from London multicultural English, distinguished Hobie from his American counterparts and aligned his speech with his anti-establishment persona. Widawski (2015) emphasizes that slang serves crucial social functions including identity marking and the expression of shared cultural values within urban communities. Hobie's slang choices construct his character as an outsider within the institutional Spider-Society, reinforcing his countercultural philosophy through linguistic means. Meanwhile, Gwen's coinage *hangry* illustrates the creative capacity of slang to compress complex emotional states into a single word. Miles's use of *psych* demonstrates the playful interactional function of slang, and the exclamatory *man* in utterances like "*Man, this is crazy!*" shows how slang intensifies emotional expression. These diverse functions confirm that slang is a systematic, rule-governed resource for managing social meaning in informal contexts.

### 3. The Role of Discourse Markers in Managing Interaction

The identification of 21 discourse markers in the film's dialogue demonstrates the importance of these pragmatic devices in structuring authentic spoken interaction. Markers such as *come on*, *hold on*, *you know*,

*kind of*, *well*, and *look* were distributed across various conversational contexts, where they guided the flow of talk and expressed speaker attitudes. Carter and McCarthy (2006) explain that discourse markers are essential features of spoken English because they facilitate coherence and signal relationships between ideas. The findings from this study confirm that the film's scriptwriters incorporated discourse markers systematically to mirror the organizational structure of real conversation.

*Come on* emerged as a particularly versatile marker, functioning as encouragement, protest, or impatience depending on context. Its combination with the slang term *man* in "*Come on, man!*" produced an emotionally charged utterance that simultaneously managed interaction and expressed interpersonal closeness. Crible (2018) distinguishes between strategic and symptomatic uses of discourse markers, and the dual role of *come on* exemplifies this complexity. *Hold on* operated as a clear turn-taking device in "*Wait, hold on,*" signaling the speaker's need to pause or redirect the conversational flow. These markers reflect the collaborative nature of spoken interaction, where speakers continuously negotiate and manage the ongoing talk.

The hedge *kind of* in "*I'm kind of in the middle of something*" illustrated how discourse markers can soften face-threatening acts and maintain social harmony. By inserting *kind of* before the main proposition, Miles mitigated the dismissiveness of telling his mother he was busy. *You*

*know* served dual purposes as both a shared knowledge check and a floor-holding device, reflecting the cognitive demands of planning speech in real time. *Well* and *actually* introduced reactions and corrections, while *look* signaled a shift to a more serious tone. Heine et al. (2023) argue that discourse markers are universal pragmatic tools reflecting sociocultural interaction patterns. The consistent presence of these markers across different characters and scenarios in the film supports this view, indicating that their use is a deliberate stylistic strategy to create believable, engaging dialogue.

#### 4. Fillers as Indicators of Spontaneous Communication

The presence of 10 filler instances in the data, including *uh*, *um*, *ehh*, and filler *like*, demonstrates the film's commitment to representing authentic, unscripted speech. Fillers are widely recognized as markers of spontaneous communication, occurring when speakers need additional time to think or hesitate before continuing their utterances. Biber et al. (2021) explain that fillers preserve conversational flow by preventing silence and signaling that the speaker has not completed their turn. In the context of scripted film dialogue, the deliberate inclusion of fillers represents a conscious effort to imitate the cognitive rhythms of real speech.

The filler *uh* was the most common, appearing in moments of vulnerability and cognitive processing. Miles's "*Uh... I don't know*"

revealed youthful uncertainty, making the superhero protagonist more relatable. Captain Stacy's "*We, uh— We caught a break*" showed how fillers can bridge topic shifts in real time, and Gwen's "*Uh, where you from, bud?*" accompanied her processing of an unexpected interdimensional encounter. In each case, *uh* functioned as a strategic pause that signaled ongoing thought. The filler *um* appeared in more socially delicate contexts, such as Rio Morales's nervous "*Um... Hi*" at the party, and Miles's polite refusal "*Um... maybe later.*" These instances highlight the politeness function of fillers, where hesitation softens face-threatening acts.

The casual *ehh* in "*Ehh, I don't know*" added dismissive doubt, and filler *like* in "*I'm, like, so...*" indicated unfinished thought processes typical of adolescent speech. From a sociolinguistic perspective, fillers do more than fill silence; they reveal the adaptive and imperfect nature of human conversation. The film's use of fillers contributes to the authenticity of character interaction, distinguishing scripted performance from the more polished delivery typical of formal or written English. Holmes and Wilson (2017) note that linguistic choices signal social meaning, and in the case of fillers, their presence signals spontaneity and genuine emotion.

## 5. Formulaic Expressions and Expressive Meaning

The identification of 18 formulaic expressions in the film confirms that fixed and semi-fixed sequences are essential components of informal spoken discourse. These expressions, including *oh my gosh*, *don't worry*, *I*

*got this, my bad, what's up, and see you around*, were used across a range of social situations to express emotion, manage politeness, and navigate conversational routines. Wray (2021) argues that formulaic language is fundamental to linguistic competence because it reduces cognitive load and supports fluent interaction. The findings from this study demonstrate that formulaic expressions are integral to the conversational realism of the film.

Emotional expression was primarily handled by *oh my gosh*, which appeared in multiple scenes as an exclamation of surprise. Unlike stronger alternatives, it conveyed strong emotion while remaining appropriate for the film's youth-oriented tone. Reassurance routines such as *don't worry* in "*Don't worry. Everything's gonna be okay*" and *I got this* in "*I got this, guys*" projected calm and confidence in moments of crisis. Wood (2015) explains that such chunks serve interpersonal purposes including emotional support, and their repeated use in the film illustrates their pragmatic efficiency.

Conversational management relied heavily on formulaic sequences for openings and closings. The greeting *what's up* and the parting *see you around* facilitated smooth transitions into and out of interactions using socially established scripts. The casual apology *my bad* in "*My bad, everybody*" performed social repair while maintaining a relaxed demeanor, a function that a formal apology would not achieve in informal peer

contexts. Expressions like *good luck* and *what the heck* further demonstrated how formulaic language enables speakers to navigate well-wishing and mild reproach with fluency and appropriateness. Cutting (2021) emphasizes that conversational routines help maintain rapport, and the film's use of these expressions reflects real-life communicative practices where speakers rely on familiar patterns to achieve social goals.

## 6. Informal Expressions as Representation of Social Interaction in Film

The overall findings of this study indicate that informal expressions are not peripheral embellishments but central mechanisms through which social interaction is represented in film dialogue. The combined presence of slang, contractions, discourse markers, fillers, and formulaic expressions across 90 identified instances demonstrates that these linguistic features are systematically woven into the narrative fabric of *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*. Their distribution reflects the film's deliberate strategy to construct believable, relatable characters whose speech patterns mirror those of real social groups. Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021) state that language variation is closely related to social identity, group membership, and situational factors, and the findings strongly support this view.

Each category of informal expression contributed to a specific dimension of social meaning. Contractions provided the rhythmic and grammatical foundation for casual speech. Slang constructed peer

identities and signaled group belonging. Discourse markers structured the interactive flow of conversation. Fillers introduced the imperfections of spontaneous thought. Formulaic expressions managed emotional expression and social routine. Together, these elements created a linguistic ecosystem that replicated the natural complexity of spoken English. Danesi (2020) observed that contemporary media increasingly employ informal language to construct authentic social interactions, particularly for younger audiences. The findings from this study align with this observation, demonstrating that *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* uses informal expressions not only to entertain but to represent social reality.

The use of regionally and socially marked terms such as Hobie's *bruv* and *dawg* further illustrates how informal language can encode identity and difference within a single narrative. These findings suggest that the film's language is not merely a backdrop to the visual spectacle but an active participant in the construction of meaning. By analyzing the linguistic choices of characters, researchers can gain insight into the nuanced ways that popular media engage with real-world sociolinguistic variation. The study thus reinforces the value of film as a legitimate and rich source of data for sociolinguistic inquiry, supporting the view of Ball et al. (2024) that media discourse provides valuable insights into language ideologies and social identities.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

#### A. Conclusions

This study aimed to identify and classify the types of informal expressions used in the film *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* from a sociolinguistic perspective. Based on the analysis of 90 informal expressions selected from the film dialogue, five types of informal expressions were identified: slang, contractions, discourse markers, fillers, and formulaic expressions. Each type was found to serve distinct communicative functions that contribute to the naturalness, expressiveness, and authenticity of the spoken interaction portrayed in the film.

Contractions emerged as the most dominant type of informal expression in the data. Forms such as *don't*, *gonna*, *wanna*, and *gotta* appeared consistently across various characters and conversational contexts, supporting the theoretical view that reduced grammatical forms are a defining feature of informal spoken discourse (Biber et al., 2021). This finding confirms that the film dialogue was designed to mirror the efficiency and fluency characteristic of real-life casual conversation.

Slang expressions, including *yo*, *nah*, and *ain't*, were frequently employed to reinforce social identity and group solidarity among

characters. Their use reflected the linguistic creativity and in-group affiliation described by Eble (1996) and Widawski (2015). Discourse markers such as *you know*, *come on*, and *hold on* functioned as pragmatic devices that structured interaction and maintained conversational coherence, aligning with Crible (2018) and Heine et al. (2023). Fillers like *uh* and *um* added spontaneity and realism to the dialogue, indicating hesitation and cognitive processing typical of unplanned speech. Finally, formulaic expressions such as *I got this* and *don't worry about it* contributed to the emotional expressiveness of the conversation, supporting Wray's (2021) theory that formulaic language is fundamental to fluent and socially meaningful communication.

From a broader sociolinguistic perspective, the presence of these five categories demonstrates that informal expressions are not arbitrary deviations from standard language but systematic linguistic resources that speakers use to negotiate relationships, convey attitudes, and construct social reality. In the context of film, these expressions are deliberately employed to create relatable and dynamic characters, making dialogue more accessible and engaging for the audience. The findings thus reinforce the value of films as authentic sources of sociolinguistic data and highlight how contemporary popular media reflect real-life patterns of language variation and social interaction.

This study makes several theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it provides a comprehensive taxonomy of informal expressions in film dialogue that can serve as a reference for future research. It also enriches sociolinguistic discussions on how language variation reflects social identity and interpersonal relationships, particularly through the analysis of slang as a marker of identity. Practically, the findings can be used by English language educators as teaching materials to expose learners to authentic informal language in context, helping students develop awareness of register, pragmatic function, and cultural aspects of spoken English.

However, several limitations should be acknowledged. This study only focused on one film, so the findings cannot be generalized to all films or all genres. Future research could expand the sample by examining multiple films from various genres. Furthermore, this study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, which prioritizes depth of analysis over statistical measurement. Future studies could use quantitative methods to measure the frequency and distribution of informal expressions. The study also did not examine how expressions are translated or subtitled in other languages, nor did it investigate how viewers from different cultural backgrounds interpret them. Furthermore, film dialogue is scripted and constructed, which means it may not fully reflect how informal expressions are used in spontaneous real-life conversations. Future research could

compare informal language in scripted media with informal language in natural spoken corpora.

Despite these limitations, this study offers valuable insights into the use of informal expressions in contemporary popular media and provides a foundation for further research in this area.

## **B. Suggestions**

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several suggestions are offered for future research and pedagogical practice.

### **1. For Future Research**

Future studies could expand the scope of analysis by examining a larger corpus of films from different genres or cultural contexts to compare how informal expressions are represented across varied media. Furthermore, quantitative approaches may be employed to measure the frequency and distribution of informal expressions statistically, thus complementing the qualitative insights provided by this study. Cross-linguistic comparisons of how informal language is subtitled or dubbed in different languages could also offer valuable perspectives on the translatability of sociolinguistic nuances.

## 2. For Pedagogical Practice

English language educators are encouraged to incorporate film excerpts into their teaching materials to expose learners to authentic informal language use in context. By analyzing dialogue similar to that found in *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*, learners can develop greater awareness of register, pragmatic function, and cultural aspects of spoken English. Carefully designed tasks that focus on identifying and interpreting informal expressions may help bridge the gap between formal classroom instruction and real-world communicative competence.



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جامعة الرانري

A R - R A N I R Y

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Appointment Letter of Supervisor



KEPUTUSAN DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH  
NOMOR: 034 TAHUN 2026

TENTANG:  
PENGANGKATAN PEMBIMBING SKRIPSI MAHASISWA  
DENGAN RAHMAT TUHAN YANG MAHA ESA

DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH

- Menimbang :
- bahwa untuk kelancaran bimbingan skripsi mahasiswa pada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh maka dipandang perlu menunjuk pembimbing skripsi;
  - bahwa yang namanya tersebut dalam Surat Keputusan ini dianggap cakap dan mampu untuk diangkat dalam jabatan sebagai pembimbing skripsi mahasiswa;
  - bahwa berdasarkan pertimbangan sebagaimana dimaksud dalam huruf a dan huruf b, perlu menetapkan Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.
- Mengingat :
- Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional;
  - Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005, tentang Guru dan Dosen;
  - Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012, tentang Pendidikan Tinggi;
  - Peraturan Presiden Nomor 74 Tahun 2012, tentang perubahan atas peraturan pemerintah RI Nomor 23 Tahun 2005 tentang pengelolaan keuangan Badan Layanan Umum;
  - Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 4 Tahun 2014, tentang penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Tinggi dan Pengelolaan Perguruan Tinggi;
  - Peraturan Presiden Nomor 64 Tahun 2013, tentang perubahan Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Menjadi Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
  - Peraturan Menteri Agama RI Nomor 44 Tahun 2022, tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kerja UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
  - Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 14 Tahun 2022, tentang Statuta UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
  - Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 492 Tahun 2003, tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang Pengangkatan, Pemindahan dan Pemberhentian PNS di Lingkungan Depag RI;
  - Keputusan Menteri Keuangan Nomor 293/Kmk.05/2011, tentang penetapan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh pada Kementerian Agama sebagai Instansi Pemerintah yang menerapkan Pengelolaan Badan Layanan Umum;
  - Surat Keputusan Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor 01 Tahun 2015, Tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang kepada Dekan dan Direktur Pascasarjana di Lingkungan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

#### MEMUTUSKAN

- Menetapkan :
- Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh tentang Pembimbing Skripsi Mahasiswa.
- KESATU :
- Menunjuk Saudari:  
**Rahmi Fhonna, M.A.**
- Untuk membimbing Skripsi
- Nama : M. Atha Daffa Caesario  
NIM : 220203128  
Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris  
Judul Skripsi : Understanding Informal Expressions through Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse
- KEDUA :
- Kepada pembimbing yang tercantum namanya diatas diberikan honorarium sesuai dengan peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku;
- KETIGA :
- Pembiayaan akibat keputusan ini dibebankan pada DIPA UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor SP DIPA-025.04.2.423925/2025 Tanggal 02 Desember 2024 Tahun Anggaran 2025;
- KEEMPAT :
- Keputusan ini berlaku selama enam bulan sejak tanggal ditetapkan;
- KELIMA :
- Keputusan ini berlaku sejak tanggal ditetapkan dengan ketentuan bahwa segala sesuatu akan dirubah dan diperbaiki kembali sebagaimana mestinya, apabila kemudian hari ternyata terdapat kekeliruan dalam Surat Keputusan ini.

Ditetapkan di : Banda Aceh  
Pada tanggal : 6 Januari 2026  
Dekan

  
Safu Muluk

#### Tembusan

- Seljen Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
- Direjen Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
- Direktur Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
- Kantor Pelayanan Perbendaharaan Negara (KPPN), di Banda Aceh;
- Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
- Kepala Bagian Keuangan dan Akuntansi UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
- Yang bersangkutan;
- Arsip.



## Appendix B: Instrument

### INSTRUMENT PROTOCOL

| No | Dialogue | Speaker | Informal Expression | Type of Informal Expression | Context of Utterance |
|----|----------|---------|---------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1  |          |         |                     |                             |                      |
| 2  |          |         |                     |                             |                      |
| 3  |          |         |                     |                             |                      |
| 4  |          |         |                     |                             |                      |
| 5  |          |         |                     |                             |                      |
| 6  |          |         |                     |                             |                      |
| 7  |          |         |                     |                             |                      |
| 8  |          |         |                     |                             |                      |
| 9  |          |         |                     |                             |                      |
| 10 |          |         |                     |                             |                      |

(The table can be extended based on the amount of data found in the film.)

#### Explanation of the Instrument

The instrument presented above was designed to systematically organize and classify informal expressions identified in the film *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*. As this study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, the instrument functions as a structured data sheet to facilitate the identification, categorization, and contextual interpretation of linguistic features found in the film dialogue.

Each column in the instrument serves a specific analytical purpose. The Dialogue column records the original utterance spoken by the character, while the

Speaker column identifies the source of the expression. The Informal Expression column highlights the particular word, phrase, or chunk considered representative of informal spoken English. The Type of Informal Expression column classifies each expression according to the theoretical framework established in Chapter II, including slang, contractions, discourse markers, fillers, and formulaic expressions.

Furthermore, the Context of Utterance column provides a concise description of the communicative situation in which the expression occurs. This contextual information is essential for sociolinguistic interpretation, as it allows the researcher to examine how language choice reflects interpersonal relationships, speaker intention, and social meaning within the dialogue.

By using this instrument, the researcher ensures that the data collection and classification process remains systematic, transparent, and aligned with the objectives of the study.



**AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

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**Educational Background**

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