

# The Analysis of Language Styles Used by the Main Characters in the Dialogues in Webtoon Get Schooled

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the language styles used by Na Hwajin and Im Hanrim, the main characters in the webtoon *Get Schooled* by Chae Yong Taek. The analysis is based on Martin Joos' language style theory from his book *The Five Clocks*, which categorizes language into five styles: Frozen, Formal, Consultative, Casual, and Intimate. The study aims to identify and categorize the language styles of these characters, providing insights into their use of dialects and the implications within the narrative context. The research questions focus on identifying the language styles used by Na Hwajin and Im Hanrim and determining the most dominant styles. The goal is to show the different language styles and identify the most prevalent ones among the main characters. The scope of this study includes analyzing the language styles in episodes 1 to 111 of the webtoon, concentrating on the dialogues of Na Hwajin and Im Hanrim. Using Joos' theory and supporting references from books, journal articles, and online sources, the study analyzes the dialogues, revealing that Na Hwajin utilizes 64 language styles and Im Hanrim 45. For Na Hwajin, the breakdown is: 0% Frozen, 0% Formal, 32.8% Consultative, 67.2% Casual, and 0% Intimate. For Im Hanrim, it is: 0% Frozen, 2.2% Formal, 37.8% Consultative, 60% Casual, and 0% Intimate. The most dominant language style for both characters is the Casual Style, reflecting their informal and everyday conversational interactions. The Consultative Style is the second most dominant, highlighting their roles as teachers.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a fundamental tool in human interaction, facilitating communication and enabling individuals to express themselves in various contexts. Communication takes on diverse forms, ranging from making requests and providing information to entertaining and expressing emotions. Conversations serve as the primary avenue for conveying messages, fostering interaction, and nurturing interpersonal relationships. The field that explores the intricate relationship between language and society is known as sociolinguistics (Maharani, 2019).

The term "sociolinguistics" derives from two components: "socio," pertaining to social or societal aspects, and "linguistics" (Maharani, 2019), the scientific study of language. Sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies how language is used in social contexts, including variations in language based on factors such as region, social class, gender, ethnicity, and communication situations. Coulmas further delineated this by stating that sociolinguistics examines how social structure influences language use and patterns (Wardhaugh, 2010).

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One of the subfields of sociolinguistics is language styles. Language styles are defined as methods of conveying the same information through multiple expressions, utilizing diverse versions of language suited to various situations and demands (Simamora & Sherinab, 2022). Language, as a component of verbal communication, follows rules influenced by social and situational contexts. Martin Joos (1967) in his book “The Five Clocks” highlighted the importance of stylistics in selecting from grammatically comparable forms, proposing five distinct language styles namely frozen style, formal style, consultative style, casual style, and intimate style. This is a strictly technical and descriptive perspective, highlighting the value of the five styles in their effective classification and precise description of various communication contexts.

In recent years, the development of digital media has transformed how people consume content, including Webtoons—digital comics from South Korea that have become increasingly popular worldwide. Designed for mobile devices with a convenient vertical format, Webtoons offer a visually engaging storytelling experience for a wide audience.

The webtoon *Get Schooled* offers a rich and multifaceted opportunity to explore language style variations, making it an ideal subject for research grounded in Martin Joos' language style theory. The narrative features a diverse cast of characters, including authoritarian educators, rebellious students, government officials, and concerned parents, each with distinct social roles and relationships that influence their unique linguistic patterns and dialect usage. By studying *Get Schooled*, researchers can examine how language functions as a tool for both maintaining and challenging social order, making it a valuable case study for understanding the practical applications of Joos' language style theory.

Delving into the study of language styles within the webtoon “*Get Schooled*” using Martin Joos' theoretical framework can inform and enrich the reader about language style in the context of fictional narratives. Using Martin Joos theoretical framework on how to identify language styles in certain dialogues within the webtoon, readers can benefit from better interpretation on character’s intentions, relations, and social aspect within the Webtoon through language styles.

## II. METHODS

Qualitative research is an approach that aims to understand the detailed views, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors of individuals or groups comprehensively and deeply. This approach forms a holistic and complex picture, often expressed through detailed descriptions and words. Qualitative research employs methods such as open interviews, observation, and documentation to collect data, enabling researchers to develop a rich and detailed understanding of the subject being studied. Unlike quantitative research, which relies on statistical analysis, qualitative research focuses on interpreting and understanding the meaning of the data obtained, making it suitable for exploring complex phenomena like language use.

Qualitative approach was chosen for this study because it allows the researcher to obtain descriptive results from the data used. Given the characteristics mentioned above, qualitative research utilizes analytical approaches for the data obtained. These analytical approaches are suitable for the data in this research, which consists of dialogues. The dialogues will be analyzed using descriptive methods through Martin Joos's theoretical framework of language styles. Therefore, a qualitative approach was chosen.

In this study, the writer chose the webtoon titled *Get Schooled* as the research source. *Get Schooled* is a webtoon by Chae Yong Taek published in 2021. For this study, the researcher limits the data source to only Season 1 of the webtoon, consisting of episodes 1 to 111 as of 2023. In webtoons, an episode refers to an individual unit or segment of the story that is released

sequentially. Each episode typically contains a specific segment of the narrative and often ends with a cliffhanger or conclusion that entices readers to continue to the next episode. Episodes are usually presented in a digital format and updated regularly on webtoon platforms. To read webtoons, you can visit websites such as <https://webtoons.com>, which is an official platform offering various genres and series. Alternatively, you can download the app from the App Store or Google Play Store on your phone.

### III. RESULTS

The language styles used by Na Hwajin and Im Hanrim is classified into categories defined by Martin Joos as follows:

#### **Language Styles Used in Na Hwajin's Dialogues**

The researcher found 64 language styles used by Na Hwajin across 111 episodes of Webtoon Get Schooled. From 64 language styles, there are 2 types of language styles identified. Those are Casual Style and by Consultative Style. In this thesis, a detailed analysis of each language styles used by Na Hwajin throughout the Webtoon will be presented, with 1 dialogues for each style.

##### A. Casual Style

There are 43 dialogues that shows the use of Casual Style from Na Hwajin. These dialogues vary from talking to student, Im Hanrim, Choi kang-seok, and other characters that are close with Na Hwajin.

##### **EPISODE 7 - At the cemetery**

Na Hwajin : Woah~ this crazy geezer is just... He told me he'll take care of it, but he's just starting a war! How did he get to be the number six senator?

Choi Kang-Seok: What did you say?

Na Hwajin : Ahaha.. You're here, already here? Dad.

Choi Kang-Seok: The hell do you mean, 'Dad'?! You bastard!

Na Hwajin engages Choi Kang-seok in a personal and familiar manner, addressing him directly by using the word "woah~ this crazy geezer. The word "geezer" in Oxford Languages is defined as old man in informal language (Oxford University Press, 2024). Other than that, Na Hwajin also laughed with the word "ahaha..." indicating the casual context of the dialogue. Therefore, Na Hwajin's language style in this dialogue aligns with the casual style.

##### B. Consultative Style

There are 21 dialogues that shows the use of Consultative Style from Na Hwajin. The consultative style usually more used when Na Hwajin is talking to student's parents, headmaster, or other teachers.

##### **EPISODE 2 - In the Head Principal's Room**

Headmaster : What are you doing? Take it right now.

Vice Principal : Oh, yes! Yes! It's not much, but it can pay for a new car

Na Hwajin : Principal, I'm afraid you're mistaken. I'm a member of the ministry of education, but I'm not a scholarly and I don't have a teacher's license. I don't have ability nor authority to judge the school, so this doesn't add up to anything. So please stop acting up, it's very embarrassing to see someone your age to do that.

This dialogue between Na Hwajin, Vice Principal, and Headmaster classified as Consultative Style because of its business-like nature and semi-formal situation. From the conversation we can see that Na Hwajin is a teacher talking to the Headmaster and Vice Principal. The sentences such as "I'm afraid you're mistaken" shows Na Hwajin is showing professionalism and "So please stop acting up, it's very embarrassing to see someone your age to do that" inquiry Vice Principal to participate and give feedback to Na Hwajin speech.

## Language Styles Used in Im Hanrim's Dialogues

For Im Hanrim, the researcher found 45 language styles used throughout 111 episodes of Webtoon Get Schooled. From 45 language styles, there are 3 types of language styles identified. Those are Casual Style, Consultative Style, and Formal Style. Using same presentation as Na Hwajin, for this thesis each language styles used by Im Hanrim throughout the Webtoon will be presented with 10 dialogues for each style.

### A. Casual Style

There are 27 dialogues that shows the use of Casual Style from Im Hanrim.

EPISODE 17 - At Soyeon's High School Class

Random girls : Surprise! Welcome to our school, Ms. Im! We got off on the wrong foot, don't you think? We were just fooling around before! That's all! We'll be good students from now on! Go on! Blow out the candle!

Im Hanrim : \*kicked the cake towards Han Yeri\*

Im Hanrim : Whoopsie, my bad! Must've been a reflex. Too bad it ended up all the way over there. Oh God! What's wrong? You're bleeding! You alright? Where does it hurt?

Han Yeri : You think you can get away with this? Can't you see I'm bleeding? You asshole! I'm going to report you for injuring a student, you bitch!...Ackk! W-what the hell?!

Im Hanrim : You're asking me how I'm going to get away with this? I think I should be the one asking you that. Now why on earth would you be bleeding after getting hit with a cake, huh? Were you guys...planning on cutting up my face with that?

Han Yeri : How should I know?! It's them who--

Im Hanrim : Let me introduce myself again. I'm school warden I'm Hanrim, from the teachers' rights protection agency. Since you're so addicted to your phone...I bet you've seen my coworker Na Hwajin's teaching methods on newtube. But unluckily for you...I'm not as nice as him.

This dialogue used by Im Hanrim is casual style because the language and tone are informal like "Whoopsie, my bad! Must've been a reflex," "Oh God! What's wrong? You're bleeding! You alright? Where does it hurt?," And "Now why on earth would you be bleeding after getting hit with a cake, huh?" The phrase "Oh God" from Oxford Languages is an idioms exclamation that expresses surprise, distress, sympathy, or other emotions (Oxford University Press, 2024). The phrase "Whoopsie" and "My bad" it is recognized as slang and is informal way used to show recognition of a mistake. And "Why on earth" " is an idiomatic expression used to emphasize one's shock or anger. Another example using Casual style is "I bet," which is an informal idiom expressing certainty or agreement.

### B. Consultative Style

There are 17 dialogues that shows the use of Casual Style from Im Hanrim.

EPISODE 16 - At the Teacher's Room

Random Teacher : This is our new student teacher. Im hanrim . Please make her feel welcome here, and offer her guidance.

Im Hanrim : It's a pleasure to meet you. I'm Im hanrim . I look forward to working with you.

Random Teacher : Now let's see, you'll be with.. Ms. Jung sunyoung, the homeroom teacher for second years, class four. I can't wait to learn from you.

Jung Sunyoung : Ah, of course...!

Im Hanrim : I look forward to working with you... Wow! I think it's been seven years since I walked down the halls of a high school. You know, I went to an all-girls' school myself. What are kids like these days? Back in my day we would prank our teachers, and...

This dialogue is Consultative Style because it occurs in a professional setting where participants are exchanging information and guidance. The language used is polite and semi-

formal, fitting the context of Im Hanrim as a new teacher being introduced to colleagues and given advice. Using terms such as “It’s a pleasure to meet you” in “It’s a pleasure to meet you. I’m Im Hanrim. I look forward to working with you.”. There is a clear interaction between the speakers, who maintain a respectful tone appropriate for a workplace environment. While maintaining the level of formality and politeness, Im Hanrim express an informal exclamation such as “Wow” in “I look forward to working with you... Wow! I think it’s been seven years since I walked down the halls of a high school”. Based on Oxford Learners, “Wow” is informal - expressing astonishment or admiration (Oxford University Press, 2024). Therefore, the dialogue here is categorized as Consultative Style.

### C. Formal Style

There is only 1 dialogue that shows the use of Formal Style from Im Hanrim when she was presenting at the conference.

EPISODE 41 - At pers conference

Im Hanrim : As a result of the investigation, the school violence at Seungyeon high school women's basketball team it was concluded that the captain Kang sooyeon was behind it. The Korea basketball association has received the investigation results and disqualified Kang Sooyeon and Kang jayeon from the national team. The two are currently on trial in juvenile court on charges of assault. Before I end this briefing...lastly I would like to ask athletes who dream of becoming professionals. It's not the players duty to play the best. With your best performance to entertain and impress the audience. Who can enjoy the play of a broken player?

This passage is formal style due to its structured and official tone, as well as the use of formal language appropriate for delivering serious and authoritative information. Im Hanrim's statement begins with a clear announcement of investigation results regarding school violence, “As a result of the investigation” followed by official actions taken by the Korea Basketball Association and legal proceedings in juvenile court. Using the formal tone by using words like “has received”, “disqualified” in “The Korea basketball association has received the investigation results and disqualified Kang Sooyeon and Kang jayeon from the national team” indicates the conference is a formal meeting. Im Hanrim also used the phrase “Before I end this briefing” which is usually used to end a formal speech. As seen from the dialogue, Im Hanrim is talking to the pers but invites no feedback. This is a characteristic for a Formal Style.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

Through the process of collecting, grouping, and analyzing each dialogue from Na Hwajin and Im Hanrim in the webtoon *Get Schooled*, published in 2021, this study focused only on Season 1 of the webtoon, consisting of episodes 1–111 as of 2023. It was found that Na Hwajin utilizes 64 language styles, while Im Hanrim utilizes 45 language styles. For Na Hwajin, it was found that he used 0 Frozen Style (0%), 0 Formal Style (0%), 21 Consultative Style (32.8%), 43 Casual Style (67.2%), and 0 Intimate Style (0%). For Im Hanrim, it was found that she used 0 Frozen Style (0%), 1 Formal Style (2.2%), 17 Consultative Style (37.8%), 27 Casual Style (60%), and 0 Intimate Style (0%).

The analysis reveals that the most dominant language styles used by both characters is the Casual Style, with Na Hwajin using it 41 times and Im Hanrim 27 times. This predominance suggests that both characters frequently engage in informal and everyday conversational styles, reflecting their interaction contexts and relationships with other characters in the Webtoon. The second most dominant language styles for both characters is the Consultative Style, highlighting their roles as teacher in providing information, guidance, or advice within the narrative.

In summary, while both characters predominantly use Casual and Consultative Styles, Na Hwajin shows a slightly higher tendency towards informal communication compared to Im Hanrim shown by percentage of Casual Style used by Na Hwajin is 4.1% higher than Im Hanrim. The tendency of using informal communication from Na Hwajin also shown by no use of language styles more formal than consultative style, while Im Hanrim still used 1 Formal Style. This difference in language style usage can be attributed to their individual character traits, roles, and relationships within the story.

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