

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives the whole explanation of background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society, particularly how language varies according to social context and interaction. According to Hudson (1996) Sociolinguistics examines how social factors such as status, setting, and group membership influence language use. Similarly, Coulmas (1998) explains that language reflects social identity and power relations within a community. This means that language choice is shaped not only by grammar but also by social purposes and communicative goals.

In sociolinguistics, language is not only seen as a system of rules but also as a social practice. Speakers actively use language to position themselves within social structures, express group membership, and negotiate relationships. Language choice can indicate authority, solidarity, resistance, or competition depending on the interactional context. Therefore, sociolinguistic analysis pays attention to how meaning is shaped by social interaction rather than by linguistic structure alone. One important concept within sociolinguistics that specifically discusses language variation according to situation is register.

From the sociolinguistics discussed above, language variation in professional sports contexts can be further analyzed through the concept of register. Register refers to language variation according to situation and use. M. A. K. Halliday (1989) states that register is determined by the context of the situation, including what is happening, who is involved, and how language is used. In other words, register depends on activity and communicative purpose rather than the speaker's regional or social background.

According to Wardhaugh & Fuller (2021), register is a set of language items associated with particular occupational or social groups. Whereas Biber & Conrad (2009) define register as a language variety associated with particular situational

contexts, characterized by recurring linguistic features. They argue that register is determined by communicative purpose, topic, participants, and medium. In professional domains, specialized vocabulary and expressions often develop and become typical of that community.

The same definition is supported by Holmes (2013), who states that register appears when a group of people share the same activities, environment, or goals that influence the way they use language. In the context of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), register emerges from the shared professional activity of competitive fighting and sports promotion. Fighters, commentators, and promoters use specific expressions and terminology that are understood within the MMA community. The development of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) as a global sport has transformed fighting into what Spencer (2012) describes it as not only physical combat but also a mediated spectacle shaped by cultural meaning and public performance. These include technical fighting terms as well as promotional language used to build rivalry and attract audiences.

In Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) interactions, language is used not only to provide information about fights but also to assert dominance, challenge opponents, and construct public identity. During press conferences, fighters often use directive, assertive, or provocative expressions to position themselves competitively. At the same time, post-fight interviews may reflect respect, sportsmanship, or strategic self-presentation. This communication pattern demonstrates how register in MMA reflects competition, hierarchy, media performance, and professional identity within the sport.

This indicates that the language used in UFC events plays an important role in shaping audience engagement and fighter identity. The rivalry between Khabib Nurmagomedov and Conor McGregor at UFC 229 reflects this phenomenon clearly. Their pre-fight press conferences were widely recognized as intense verbal confrontations that extended beyond technical fighting discussion into cultural, national, and personal domains. As Snowden (1975) notes in his discussion of modern UFC promotion, fighters such as McGregor strategically use provocative language to generate hype and commercial impact. This promotional demonstrates

how register operates not only as technical sports terminology but also as a performative and competitive linguistic strategy.

The match between Khabib Nurmagomedov and Conor McGregor was chosen because their interactions clearly demonstrate the use of distinctive registers in the context of professional MMA during the fight. Furthermore, their contrasting speaking styles highlight situational variations in register. McGregor often uses provocative and dominance-oriented expressions to entertain and intimidate, while Khabib tends to use more controlled, value-oriented, and disciplined language.

This contrast makes their rivalry ideal for analyzing the types and functions of registers that reflect the field (professional combat), tenor (rivalry between opponents), and mode (public interaction). Therefore, the Khabib vs. McGregor match provides a clear and diverse example of registers, making it highly relevant for sociolinguistic register analysis.

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the background of the study presented above, the research questions are stated as follows:

1. What type of register is found in UFC YouTube channel used by commentators
2. What is the function of registers that commonly appear in the UFC YouTube channel used by commentators

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In accordance with the research problems, the objectives of the study are stated below:

1. To identify the types of registers used by commentators in the UFC YouTube channel.
2. To explain the function of registers that commonly appear in the UFC YouTube channel used by commentators

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to sociolinguistic studies, particularly in the field of register analysis. Theoretically, this study enriches our understanding

of how registers operate in professional sports discourse, especially in the context of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA). This study provides insight into how language variation reflects communicative goals, competition, identity formation, and media performance in the context of global sports.

Practically, this research can be a reference for students and researchers interested in analyzing language variation in sports. This research also helps readers understand how language is used strategically in UFC events, not only as technical communication but also as a tool for promotion and identity formation. In addition, this research can broaden perspectives on how registers function in modern digital media platforms such as YouTube.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is sociolinguistics, specifically focusing on register types and functions in the professional sports field. Data was collected from verbal comments from commentators during the match 229 between Khabib Nurmagomedov and Conor McGregor, which were available on the UFC YouTube channel. To achieve a structured register analysis, this study applies the framework proposed by Biber & Conrad (2009) to classify and analyze the specific types of registers found in the match. Meanwhile, linguistic variations are categorized and examined based on the register functions framework by Biber & Finegan (1994).

The limitations of this study are that the analysis only focus on spoken utterances containing register features in the match 229 between Khabib Nurmagomedov and Conor McGregor, which were available on the UFC YouTube channel. This study does not examine nonverbal communication, audience reactions, or other UFC matches. In addition, the analysis is limited to identifying the types and functions of registers based on sociolinguistic theory, without discussing psychological or marketing aspects in depth.