

# THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL DIMENSIONS ON LANGUAGE STYLE: A SOCIOLINGUISTICS ANALYSIS OF THE *LOKI* SERIES IN DISNEY+

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study investigates how social dimensions influence language style in Loki season 1. The analysis employs Martin Joos' (1967) framework of language styles and Janet Holmes' (2013) concept of social dimensions, using a qualitative descriptive approach based on character dialogues. The findings reveal 5 instances of Formal Style, 37 of Consultative Style, 35 of Casual Style, and 3 of Intimate Style, while Frozen Style does not occur. The dominance of Consultative and Casual Styles indicates that most interactions take place in semi-formal or friendly contexts. Social dimensions, including status, social distance, and formality, strongly shape language choices: authority figures such as Ravonna and Mobius use formal or consultative styles, whereas Loki and Sylvie frequently employ casual or intimate styles to reflect closeness and emotional intensity. These results demonstrate that language style in the series is systematically influenced by social relationships and institutional contexts, highlighting the role of language in constructing character identity and interaction.*

*Keyword: language style, social dimensions, Martin Joos, Janet Holmes, Loki series.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Sociolinguistics examines how language reflects social meanings and identities, with variation shaped by factors such as age, gender, class, ethnicity, and context (Labov, 1972). Language style, as outlined by Joos (1967), provides insight into the way speakers shift across five levels of formality: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate. These choices are not random, but are influenced by social dynamics such as distance, status, and formality (Holmes, 2013). In other words, the way individuals speak reveals not only their communicative purpose but also the nature of their social relationships. The *Loki* series offers a particularly rich site for examining how language choices reflect identity, authority, and relationships between characters. As a narrative that combines institutional authority through the TVA (Time Variance Authority) with personal and emotional struggles between variants, *Loki* provides varied contexts where language style shifts according to social roles and situations. Studying these shifts helps to uncover how language constructs character identity and conveys power dynamics within the storyline.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the language styles used in *Loki* season 1 and to explain how social dimensions influence characters' linguistic choices. By employing Joos' theory of language style and Holmes' framework of social dimensions, this research aims to provide both theoretical and practical insights into the intersection of sociolinguistics and media studies, showing how fictional dialogues can reflect real patterns of social interaction.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 1. Social Dimensions

Holmes (2013) offers the concept of social dimensions to explain why language use varies according to social situations. This framework emphasizes that a person's choice of language is determined not only by linguistic structure, but also by social relationships, context, and communication goals. By understanding social dimensions, we can see how differences in interpersonal relationships, status, level of formality, and function of interaction shape language variation.

1. Social Distance refers to the closeness of the relationship between the speaker and the addressee. The closer the relationship, the more casual the language tends to be; conversely, distant relationships usually require more formal language.
2. Status highlights differences in power or hierarchy. Speakers with higher status generally use more formal language, while those with lower status adjust themselves to show respect.
3. Formality relates to the level of formality of the situation. In formal contexts, the language used is more structured, while in casual settings, the language is more free and familiar.
4. Function indicates the purpose of communication, whether it is informational (conveying facts) or affective (expressing feelings and maintaining social relationships).

### 2. Language Style

Joos (1967) classified language variation into five main styles known as language styles. This framework shows that language always adapts to the context of communication and social relationships. Each language style reflects the level of formality, closeness of the relationship, and the purpose of the conversation. By understanding these five language styles, we can analyze how speakers adjust their choice of words, sentence structure, and tone of voice according to the situation.

1. Frozen Style is rigid and fixed language, typically used in legal texts, oaths, or ceremonies, without any changes or improvisation. Its characteristic is that it is a conversation that does not require feedback.
2. Formal Style is used in formal situations that demand order and seriousness, such as academic speeches or presentations. Interaction is allowed when the speaker requests it, but it rarely occurs.
3. Consultative Style appears in professional or transactional conversations, where there is an exchange of information between parties who are not very close, such as teachers and students or doctors and patients.
4. Casual Style is used in everyday conversations between friends or family, with the use of slang, abbreviations, and simpler language structures.

5. The Intimate Style is used in very close relationships, such as between couples or immediate family members, with language that is full of personal meaning, often without even complete words.

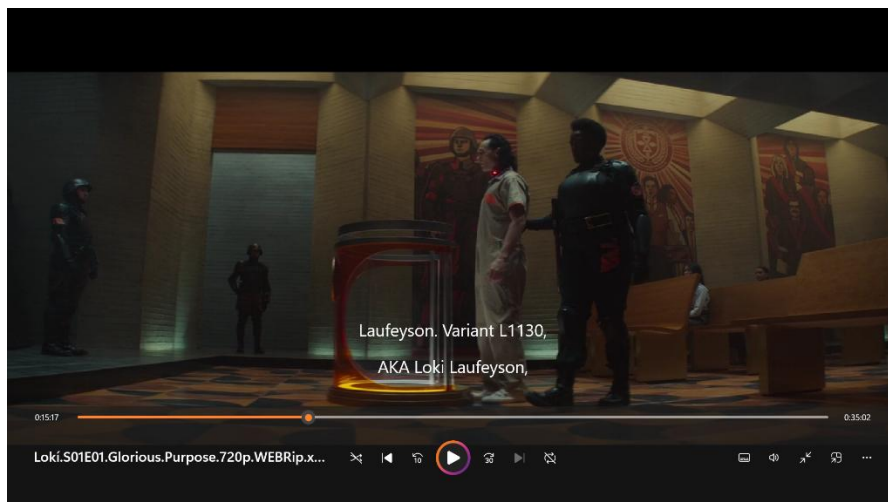
## METHODOLOGY

This research applies a qualitative descriptive method. The primary data source is the transcript of dialogues from Loki season 1. Data were collected by watching the series, transcribing dialogues, identifying language styles, and categorizing them according to Joos' framework. The analysis then examined how Holmes' social dimensions which exist of social distance, status, formality, and function influenced the use of different language styles. The data were analyzed through identification, classification, description, and interpretation.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of Loki season 1 identified 5 instances of Formal Style, 37 of Consultative Style, 35 of Casual Style, and 3 of Intimate Style. Frozen style was not found. The predominance of consultative and casual styles reflects that conversations in the series are situated in semi-formal or friendly contexts. For instance, dialogues between Ravonna and Mobius often use consultative style, as they involve professional discussions within the TVA. In contrast, Loki and Sylvie frequently use casual style when expressing sarcasm, teasing, or informal remarks. Intimate style is rare and only occurs when emotional closeness is strongly emphasized between characters. The absence of frozen style is explained by the lack of ceremonial or ritualistic language within the narrative. These findings support the argument that language styles in media are shaped by shifting social dynamics, such as authority, emotional ties, and the context of interaction.

## FORMAL STYLE



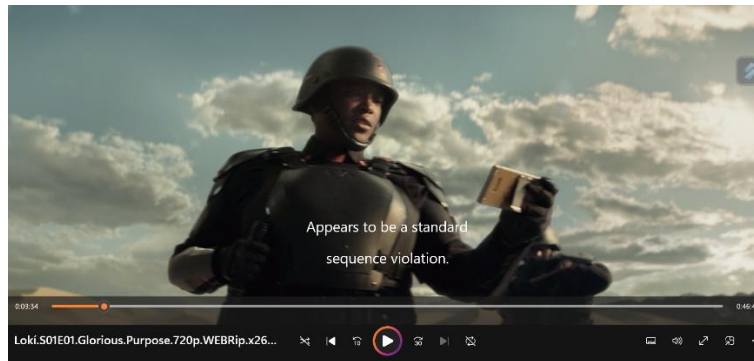
**Screen Capture 1. Loki was in the courtroom as the defendant and Ravonna as the judge.**  
(Loki Season 1 Eps. Glorious purpose)  
(00:15:11)

**Ravonna: Laufeyson. Variant L1130, AKA Loki Laufeyson, is charged with sequence violation 7-20-89, How do you plead?**

**Loki : Madam, God doesn't plead. This has been very enjoyable pantomime, but I'd like to go home now.**

Ravonna : Are you guilty or not guilty, sir?

The use of formal style in the courtroom scene between Ravonna and Loki is strongly shaped by social dimensions. Ravonna's status as judge places her in a higher position of authority, while the social distance between her and Loki is wide since they have no personal relationship. The formality of the courtroom setting also demands structured and cautious speech, and the function of the interaction is mainly informational, focusing on Loki's charges. These dimensions naturally influence both characters to adopt formal language. Ravonna employs legal diction and an authoritative tone, while Loki, despite his sarcasm, still uses polite and well-structured sentences such as addressing her with "Madam." These linguistic choices clearly reflect the characteristics of formal style.



**Screen Capture 2. Loki's Capture by TVA Agents**  
(Loki Season 1 Eps. Glorious Purpose)  
(00:03:34)

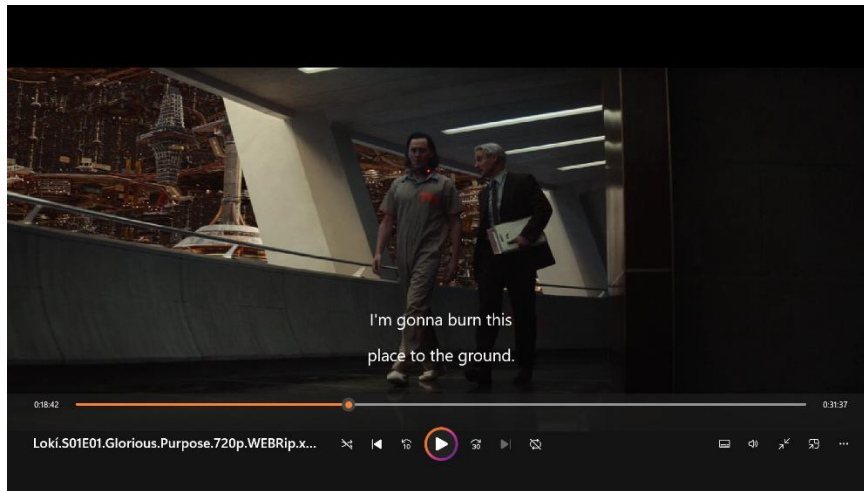
B-15 : Appears to be a standard sequence violation, Branch is growing at a stable rate and slope Variant identified.

Loki : I beg your pardon.

B-15 : **On behalf of the Time Variance Authority, I hereby arrest you crimes against the Sacred Timeline.** Hands up, You're coming with us!

In the conversation between Hunter B-15 and Loki, the situation occurs when B-15, as a TVA agent, arrests Loki for violating the Sacred Timeline. Their relationship is marked by unequal status and authority: B-15 represents the institution, while Loki is the subject of arrest. According to Janet Holmes' social dimensions theory, the asymmetrical status, lack of social closeness, and the official context influence the use of formal language. An utterance such as "On behalf of the Time Variance Authority, I hereby arrest you..." falls under the formal style in Martin Joos' classification because it employs complete sentence structures, official diction, and procedural tone. Even Loki's response, "I beg your pardon?", reflects seriousness and politeness, which are consistent with the formal style.

## CONSULTATIVE STYLE

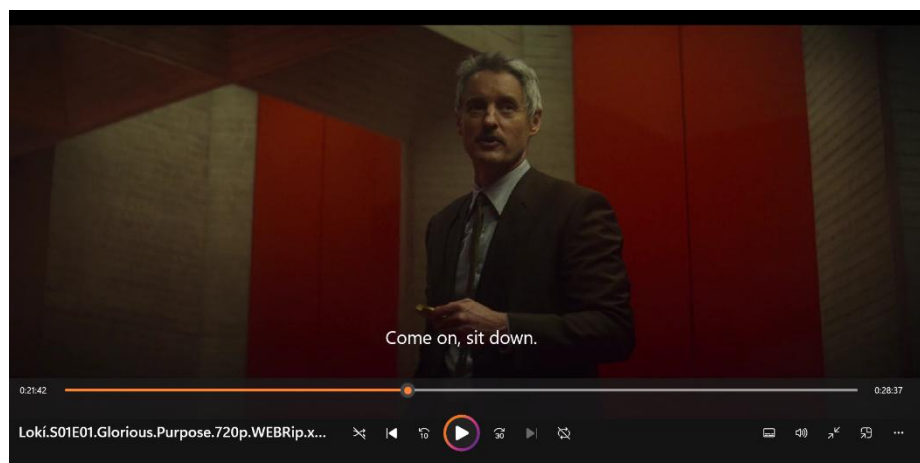


**Screen Capture 3. Loki and Mobius were outside the courtroom after Loki's release.**  
(Loki Season 1 Eps.Glorious Purpose)  
(00:18:39)

Loki : I'm gonna burn this place to the ground.

Mobious : **I'll show you where my desk is, you can start there.** Have a look.

The use of consultative style in Loki's initial interrogation with Mobius is shaped by several social dimensions. Mobius holds a higher status as a TVA agent, but he moderates his authority to encourage Loki's cooperation. The formality of the situation is semi-formal, occurring in an institutional context but not as rigid as a courtroom, while the social distance between them remains wide since they share no personal relationship. These factors lead both characters to adopt a consultative style. Loki delivers emotional statements in structured sentences, and Mobius responds politely and neutrally, maintaining complete sentences without rigid protocol. This balanced use of language reflects the characteristics of consultative style, which lies between formal and casual.



**Screen Capture 4. Interrogation room**  
(Loki Season 1 Eps. Glorious Purpose)  
(00:21:42)

Mobious : Come on, sit down. Let's get into this. Go on, have a seat.  
If looks could kill.

Loki : What do you want from me?

Mobious : **Well, let's start, with a little cooperation.**  
Loki : Not my forte.

The dialogue takes place in the TVA interrogation room where Mobius, as the authority, questions Loki as a detainee. Based on Holmes' social dimensions, status and function dominate the interaction, with low solidarity and moderate formality. Mobius' line "Well, let's start, with a little cooperation" reflects Joos' consultative style because it is structured and purposeful, yet less rigid than formal style, allowing a two-way exchange.

## CASUAL STYLE

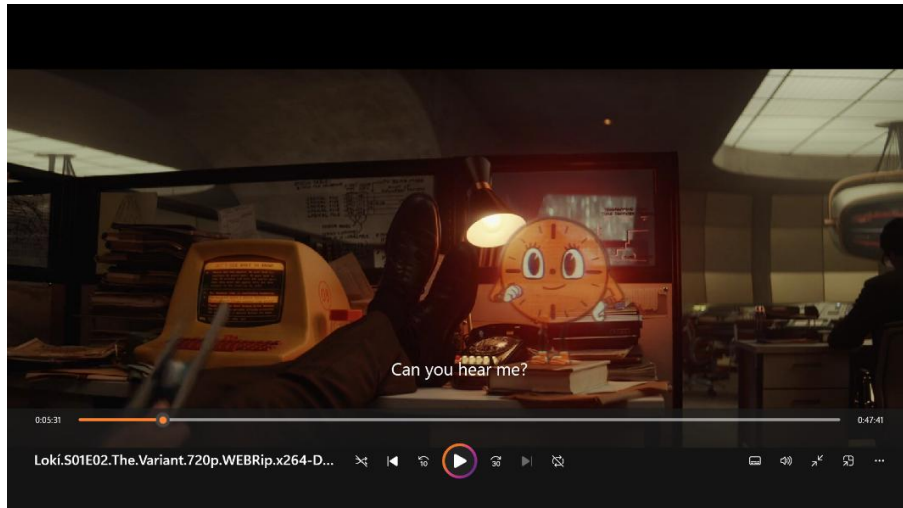


**Screen Capture 5. Dangerous Situation in the Destruction of Planet Lamentis.**  
(Loki Season 1 Eps.Lamentis)  
(00:08:36)

Loki : get down!  
Sylvie : Didn't need your help!  
Loki : **You're so weird.**

The conversation between Loki and Sylvie demonstrates the use of a casual style, which is apparent from the relaxed and spontaneous nature of their exchanges. When Loki shouts "Get down!", Sylvie responds with "Didn't need your help!" a retort that reflects her independence while maintaining an informal tone. Loki's reply, "You're so weird," adds a layer of light teasing, which is typical of casual and everyday interaction. The language here is simple, direct, and emotionally expressive rather than structured or formal, emphasizing a natural back-and-forth dynamic. According to Janet Holmes' social dimensions theory, several factors explain this choice of style. Status is equal, as both Loki and Sylvie are variants of the same character, so no hierarchical or institutional authority frames their interaction. Social distance is reduced because they share a unique identity and experience, which fosters familiarity and ease in communication. Formality is low, as the conversation does not occur in an official or professional setting, but rather in the heat of action. The function of their language is expressive and interpersonal, focusing on conveying emotion and personal reactions rather than procedural or transactional content. In terms of Martin Joos' classification, the exchange clearly falls under the casual style. This style is characterized by informal diction, playful remarks, and the use of everyday expressions that do not require elaboration. Loki's line "You're so weird" is particularly telling as it relies on colloquial language, carries a humorous tone, and functions as a form of teasing that signals comfort and familiarity between speakers. Together, these elements highlight how the casual style operates to build rapport and show personality, even in the midst of dangerous or tense situations.





**Screen Capture 7. In Office Room**  
(Loki Season 1. The Variant)  
(00:05:31)

Loki : Can you hear me? are you recording? or are you alive?

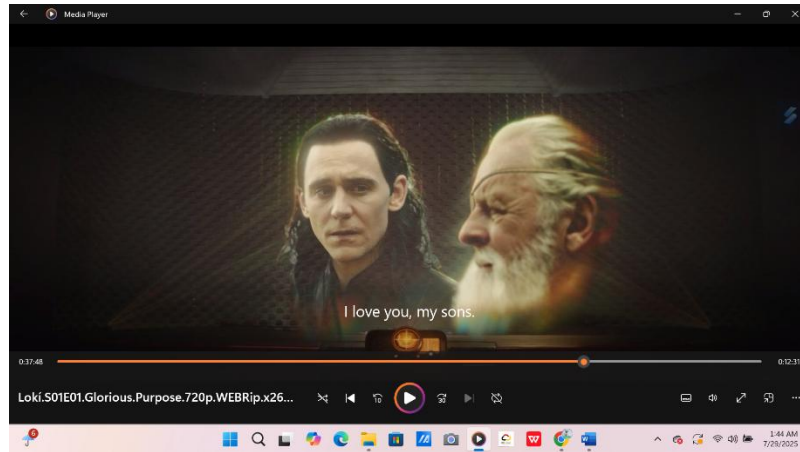
Miss minutes: ah, sorta both.

Loki: ah.

Miss minutes : **watch it! where's your manners? oh! hey! quit it! that is not nice. Jerk.**

The conversation between Loki and Miss Minutes reflects a casual style, which can be seen in the spontaneous expressions, use of slang such as “oh! hey! quit it!” and “jerk”, as well as the light teasing that gives their interaction a playful and relaxed tone. The language is natural and unstructured, highlighting personal expression rather than official communication. Even though the setting is within the TVA a formal institution their exchange does not follow professional or procedural norms, but instead shows a moment of humor and informality. According to Janet Holmes’ social dimensions, this choice of style is influenced by low social distance, as Loki and Miss Minutes interact in a way that ignores formality and hierarchy. Their status appears relatively equal in this context, since neither character asserts dominance over the other. The level of formality is low despite the workplace setting, and the function of the interaction is primarily expressive, focusing on emotions and reactions rather than transactional purposes. From the perspective of Martin Joos’ classification, the dialogue fits into the casual style because it employs informal diction, playful teasing, and linguistic choices that resemble everyday friendly exchanges. Instead of emphasizing clarity or authority, the language here underscores personality and spontaneity. This demonstrates that in some interactions, especially where humor or informality is present, social relationships can outweigh the institutional setting in shaping language style.

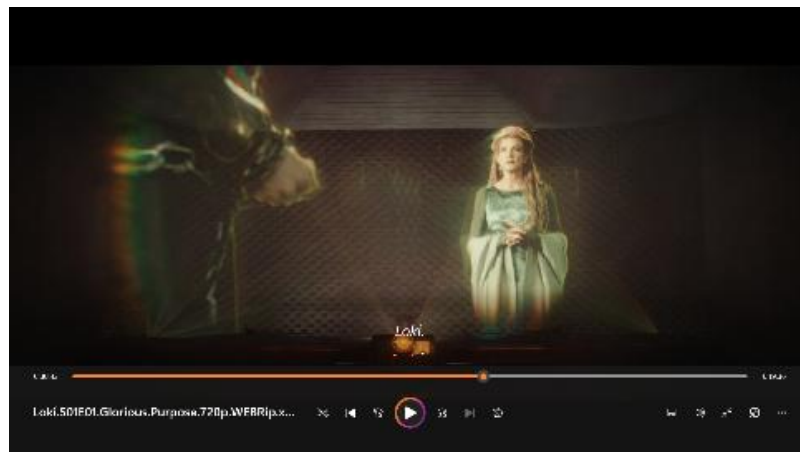
## INTIMATE STYLE



**Screen Capture 8. Loki interacts with Odin, his father, in Asgard.**  
(Loki Season 1 Eps. Glorious Purpose)  
(00:37:48)

Dad : **I love you my sons**, remember this place?  
Loki : Home.

The use of intimate style is illustrated in the conversation between Loki and his father, Odin, in Asgard. The social distance is minimal because of their close family relationship, and the status between them is balanced within the intimacy of father and son, rather than institutional hierarchy. The formality level is low, as the setting reflects personal interaction rather than an official context, and the function is strongly affective, emphasizing emotions and familial bonds. These dimensions lead to the use of intimate language. Odin's words, "I love you, my sons," express direct affection, while "remember this place?" conveys a personal message filled with emotional meaning. Loki's brief but meaningful response, "Home," is not simply informative but a recognition of belonging and emotional closeness. These linguistic features clearly demonstrate the characteristics of intimate style.



**Screen Capture 9. Loki interaction with his Mother.**  
(Loki Season 1 Eps. Glorious Purpose)  
(00: 30:43)

Mother : Loki  
Loki : **Hello, Mother. Have i made you proud?**  
Mother : Please, don't make this worse.

The dialogue between Loki and his mother clearly illustrates an intimate style of communication, as it highlights a personal bond and emotional depth that is different from



interactions Loki has with other characters. Loki's utterance "Hello, mother. Have I made you proud?" reflects his vulnerability and longing for approval, while his mother's response "Please, don't make this worse" shows her deep concern and emotional involvement. The choice of words is simple yet emotionally loaded, revealing closeness and familiarity that would not be expressed in formal or consultative contexts. According to Janet Holmes' social dimensions theory, this conversation is influenced primarily by solidarity, which is very high due to their family relationship. Social distance is minimal because mother and son share a personal and affectionate bond. Status is relatively equal in this private exchange, since authority is not the focus; instead, the emotional function of the conversation dominates. Formality is absent, as the interaction is not institutional or procedural but deeply personal. From the perspective of Martin Joos' language style classification, this dialogue fits the intimate style. Intimate style is characterized by language that expresses affection, personal concern, and emotional ties rather than transactional clarity. The private and tender nature of the exchange expressed through short, heartfelt utterances shows how intimacy shapes language choice, making the communication uniquely different from the more formal or consultative styles seen elsewhere in the TVA setting.

## **CONLUSSION**

This study concludes that language styles in Loki season 1 are dominated by consultative and casual styles, indicating that most conversations occur in semi-formal or friendly contexts. Formal and intimate styles appear less frequently, while frozen style is entirely absent due to the lack of ritual or ceremonial speech in the narrative. The study also reveals that social dimensions significantly shape language choice: authority figures such as Ravonna and Mobius use more consultative or formal styles, while characters like Loki and Sylvie adopt casual or intimate styles, reflecting emotional closeness and equality in status. These results demonstrate how sociolinguistic frameworks can be applied to media texts to better understand the relationship between language, identity, and social context. Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions can be offered for future research. First, further studies may analyze language styles in other film or television genres to provide broader comparisons and reveal how different contexts influence stylistic choices. Second, researchers could combine Joos' theory of language styles with other linguistic approaches, such as speech act theory or discourse analysis, to gain more detailed insights into character interactions. Third, future research might also examine audience reception, exploring how viewers interpret the use of certain language styles and how this shapes their understanding of character relationships and identities. By expanding the scope and methodology, subsequent studies can enrich the understanding of sociolinguistic perspectives in media texts.

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