

**THE COMPARISON OF PETER PARKER'S LANGUAGE STYLE AND  
STYLE-SHIFTING OCCURRENCES IN JON WATTS'  
*SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING* (2017) AND *SPIDER-MAN: NO WAY HOME*  
(2021) MOVIES**

**THESIS**

*Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of Requirements to Obtain  
Strata One (S1) Degree in English Department*



**By:**

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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS  
UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG**

**2024**

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Judul : The Comparison of Peter Parker's Language Styles and Style-Shifting Occurrences in Jon Watts' *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) Movies

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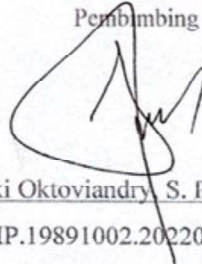
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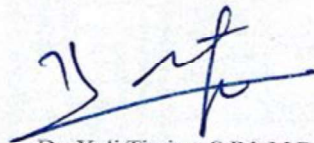


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**The Comparison of Peter Parker's Language Styles and Style-Shifting Occurrences in  
Jon Watts' *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021)  
Movies**

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## ABSTRACT

Zulhelmi, Mutiara Luthfiyanti. 2024. **The Comparison of Peter Parker's Language Styles and Style-Shifting Occurrences in Jon Watts' *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) Movies.** Thesis. English Language and Literature Department, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang.

This study analyzes the language style and style-shifting in Peter Parker's conversations in two movies directed by Jon Watts: *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021). A descriptive-qualitative method was used to analyze the data. This study found that the casual language style is the most dominant in both movies. This is related to Joos' (1967) "*Five Clocks of Language*" with the casual type which is a relaxed, natural, and unrestricted manner language style used in everyday life. *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) shows that the most prominent style-shifting is maintenance, indicating Peter Parker's tendency to maintain the language style. Meanwhile, in *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) although casual style remains dominant, Peter tended to shift his style with upward convergence, indicating that Peter Parker often adapts his interaction to be more formal. This style-shifting is related to Giles' (1973) "*Communication Accommodation Theory*" with the upward convergence strategy used to adjust one's communication style to be aligned with the interlocutor by being more formal and using a more prestigious language. While maintenance strategy occurs when a speaker chooses not to alter their communication style and use their own style consistently throughout the interaction. This difference reflects the development of Peter Parker's character between the two movies, with a more consistent style in *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017), compared to a more dynamic style adaptation in *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021).

**Keywords:** peter parker, language style, style-shifting, *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, *Spider-Man: Homecoming*.

## ABSTRAK

Zulhelmi, Mutiara Luthfiyanti. 2024. **Perbandingan Gaya Bahasa Peter Parker dan Kejadian Pergeseran Gaya dalam Film *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) dan *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) Karya Jon Watts.** Skripsi. Departmen Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni, Universitas Negeri Padang.

Penelitian ini menganalisis gaya bahasa dan perubahan gaya bahasa dalam percakapan Peter Parker dalam dua film yang disutradarai oleh Jon Watts: *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) dan *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif-kualitatif dalam menganalisa data. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa gaya bahasa kasual adalah yang paling dominan di kedua film tersebut. Hal ini terkait dengan teori "*Five Clocks of Language*" oleh Joos (1967) dengan tipe kasual yang merupakan gaya bahasa yang santai, alami, dan tidak terbatas yang digunakan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) menunjukkan bahwa perubahan gaya yang paling menonjol adalah pemeliharaan, yang menunjukkan kecenderungan Peter Parker untuk mempertahankan gaya bahasanya. Sementara itu, dalam *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) meskipun gaya kasual tetap dominan, Peter cenderung mengubah gayanya dengan konvergensi ke atas, yang menunjukkan bahwa Peter Parker sering menyesuaikan interaksinya menjadi lebih formal. Perubahan gaya ini terkait dengan "*Teori Akomodasi Komunikasi*" milik Giles (1973) dengan strategi konvergensi ke atas yang digunakan untuk menyesuaikan gaya komunikasi seseorang agar selaras dengan lawan bicara dengan bersikap lebih formal dan menggunakan bahasa yang lebih bergengsi. Sementara strategi pemeliharaan terjadi ketika seorang pembicara memilih untuk tidak mengubah gaya komunikasinya dan menggunakan gayanya sendiri secara konsisten selama interaksi. Perbedaan ini mencerminkan perkembangan karakter Peter Parker di antara kedua film tersebut, dengan gaya yang lebih konsisten dalam *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017), dibandingkan dengan adaptasi gaya yang lebih dinamis dalam *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021).

**Kata Kunci:** peter parker, gaya bahasa, pergeseran gaya, *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, *Spider-Man: Homecoming*.

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This thesis is impossible to be accomplished without helps and support from many persons. Therefore, the researcher would like to express sincere gratitude and appreciation to her respected supervisor, Sir Rifki Oktoviandry, S. Pd., M. Hum, who has patiently given his time, energy and thoughts in helping during accomplishing this thesis. The researcher would also like says thank you to the examiners, Ms. Nur Rosita, S.Pd., M.A. and Ms. Delvi Wahyuni, S.S., M.A., who have given valuable suggestions and supportive feedback to this thesis.

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Finally, the researcher fully realises that this thesis is still far from perfect. Therefore, the researcher is open to all suggestions and criticism to improve this thesis.

Padang, August 9th 2024

The Researcher

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Problem

Human communications is a dynamic and constantly evolve. Even though people may communicate with the same interlocutor, the way they communicate continues to evolve over time. Language style plays a pivotal role in this evolution, as it reflects how individuals express their ideas. Each individual has a unique language style that adjusts depending on the context and the people they are associating with. Those adjustments also lead into the shifting of their language style (Style-shifting). The concept of style-shifting is usually related to the changes/shift in language variation which involves varieties of language markers/factors. Meyerhoff (2006) states that style-shifting is an individual's speech variation which is correlated with kinds of addressee, social context, personal goals.

Style-shifting refers to a single speaker alter their style in response to context. This shift in language variations affects only code-markers, or variable elements related with social and cultural factors such as age, gender, social class, and speaker relationships. Saville-Troike (1989, as cited in Lochman and Kappel, 2008) distinguishes downward and upward style-shifting, which show shifts to a lower or higher level, respectively. Furthermore, Saville-Troike (1989) introduced the concept of intra-sentential style-shifting, which occurs when the variety of language used changes within a sentence, such as when an informal greeting is followed by a formal address, or even more extreme when there is a shift in formality involving grammar and lexicon. She notes that this type of style-shifting should only be employed purposely for humorous purposes in English.

Accommodation theory, also known as *communication accommodation theory* (CAT) or *speech accommodation theory* (SAT), was introduced by sociolinguist Howard Giles in 1973. It aims to explain how and why people adapt their communication style when speaking with others. In linguistics, the term "*accommodation*" refers to how people "adjust" their speech and communication style



during face-to-face and other forms of communication. The theory investigates the motivations and implications of accommodation in communication. People often adapt to the effect of "social factors" such as gender, culture, ethnicity, native language, age social and occupational standing. There are two main types of accommodation: convergence and divergence. Convergence occurs when people adjust their speech to sound more like the interlocutor, while divergence occurs when they emphasize differences. People can upward converge/diverge by portraying themselves as more upper class/formal, or they can downward converge/diverge by making themselves appear more working-class/casual (less-formal). Communication between people is influenced by the individual and their immediate contextual factors, as well as the larger socio-historical context.

Ducrot and Todorov (1993) characterize language style as the choices made among different alternatives when utilizing language. It includes ways of conveying the same information through diverse expressions, reflecting the different varieties of language utilized in different circumstances and settings. The way individuals speak is intricately linked to factors such as their social status, educational background, profession, age, gender, and various other social patterns. These elements affect the language style of the speaker (Hornberger & McKay, 2010; Yule, 1985).

Meyerhoff (2006) goes further by stating that language style can give insights into an individual's identity, mindset, and conditional state. One's condition and circumstances can significantly impact their language style. As an example, formal language is regularly utilized when a lecturer delivers his lectures in front of the class due to the formal serious situation in the classroom and the particular purposes of conveying information, such as utilizing terms like "*Excuse me*", "*Attention please*". A formal language is typically employed when a president delivers a speech to the public due to the formal context and the specific purposes of conveying information, such as using terms like "*ladies and gentlemen...*" For comparison, when a couple communicates, they frequently utilizes an insinuate language style, utilizing endearing terms like "*honey*" or "*dear*" that are only utilized in their personal space.

Sari (2019) conducted a study at a military dormitory, specifically Kompi Bantuan Yonif Mekanis 643/wns, located in the Anjongan District of Pontianak. The findings revealed that the women of the army, known as "Persit," mainly employed formal, consultative/semiformal, and casual styles of communication while interacting with others. Rahayu and Parmawati (2020) conducted a study on the language styles used in the dialogues in the teen-lit novel *The Perfect Husband*. They identified five distinct language styles, with casual and intimate styles being the most dominant. In addition, a study titled *Language Style Used by President Joko Widodo in Interviews with Hosts of Three YouTube Channels* was conducted by Ansari and Padmadewi in 2022. The finding revealed that a casual manner was preferred by President Joko Widodo to communicate with audiences. Based on this study, we can conclude that the president is not restricted to only using a formal style when speaking in public. Depending on the circumstances, a casual style may also be employed. These studies demonstrate that language styles can be examined in individuals of various social statuses, educational backgrounds, occupations, ages, genders, and other social patterns, including media and other platforms. Those three cases were using data from different subject; field study, novel, and interview video from YouTube, thus other intriguing media that can be used to analyzed language style is movie.

Movies offer two different ways for analyzing language style: by watching the movie video and studying its script. Movie works as a powerful communication media that often tell stories reflecting social realities and human experiences. The world of movie has always amazed the audiences around the world for over hundreds of years, across cultural and linguistic boundaries. Movies have the unique power to transport viewers into different realities, draw out profound emotions, and convey intricate point of view. A very important component contributing to the overall cinematic experience is the language style used in a movie.

Several studies have been done previously on this topic. An earlier study on language style was conducted by Tamsar (2019) on Disney movie scripts, there were

four language styles, with the casual style being the most dominant. Aprilia (2021) centered on the language style types utilized by the main character within a drama movie, *The Ron Clark Story*, showed that a casual manner was the most preferred by the main character, followed by consultative/semiformal, formal, and intimate style while interacting within the movie. A study by Larasati and Simatupang (2022) on Language Styles in the *Luca (2021)* movie. It used Martin Joos' (1976) theory for language styles and Roman Jakobson's (1980) theory for language functions. A descriptive qualitative method was used, revealing that the most frequent language style was consultative style, followed by the casual style, and formal style. These three studies used Martin Joos' Five Language Style framework, one out of three found frozen style in the characters' conversations within the movies. A different study approach was conducted by Silpitri (2022), this approach used Halliday's systemic functional linguistics theory to analyze the language style in the *Conjuring 1* and *Conjuring 3* horror movie series with a comparative method. This study aimed to find out how the two movie series were similar and different. A comprehensive study conducted by Lauterboom and Nuraeni (2024) titled *Exploring Language Style in The Menu Movie* using Martin Joos' and Roman Jakobson's theories. They found that the main characters used all five of Joos' styles: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate, with casual being the most dominant. They also employed all six of Jakobson's language functions. The study recommended further research with various sources and theories to deepen the understanding of language styles.

Previous study related to this study's topic on style-shifting was conducted by Sari, Widita, and Zunaidah (2019) on State University International Students' in Surabaya aimed to analyse their accommodation and politeness strategies to deals with communication conflicts. The data were collected through interviews and observation with the informants that were selected by using the purposive technique. The results revealed that most students applied the negative politeness strategy, which went in line with the divergence strategy in accommodation theory to maintain their identity in a foreign place. Another study was by Suputra, Ramendra, and Swandana

(2020) on English Language Education students' from Ganesha Univeristy of Education. It aimed to describe the use of communication accommodation strategy including the students' reasoning of using the strategy. The data was collected through observation and interview, revealing that the students were able to use multiple strategy in each variable based on the circumstance, such as; the place, interlocutor, intimacy, and speech community. All students used convergence strategy in all variable and some of them used divergence strategy lexically.

There are several style-shifting study on Asian Language; Such as, A study by Mulyadi, Suhandono, and Munandar (2021) entitled "*Style-shifting in Usage Instructions of Food, Beverage, and Pharmaceutical Products in Japanese.*" The study was analyzing the shift from formal to informal language styles on instructions for various kinds of products that written in Japanese. Data from the product packages revealed that style-shifting occurred in both spoken and written forms. It was influenced more by the content of the information than by only on the audience's status. Style-shifting was noted within individual discourses and specific elements of discourse. Another style-shifting analysis conducted by Yoon (2023) entitled "*Questioning Practices and Speech Style Shifting in Korean Entertainment Talk Shows.*" The study analyzed questioning practices and speech-style shifting in Korean entertainment talk shows. It focused on semi-institutional discourse particularly on entertainment talk shows context. The study found that the use of linguistic resources in questioning and style shifting was closely related to managing entertainment and institutional dynamics among participants. Furthermore, Adipura and Arianingsih (2023) analysis entitled "*Yakuwarigo and Style Shifting in the Anime Genjitsushugi Yuusha no Oukoku Saikenki.*" The study analyzed style shifting with the second person pronoun *kiden* in the anime *Genjitsushugi Yuusha no Oukoku Saikenki*. The data were collected through listening and note-taking, while focusing on how characters used *kiden* based on their conversational context and the status of their interlocutors. The study found that *kiden* style shifting occurred when both speaker and listener had equal status.

For this study, the researcher is digging into the comparison of language styles and style-shift between two movies using two theories. First, Martin Joos' (1976) *Five Clocks of Language* outlines five different language styles that reflect a person's ability to adapt their speech according to the level of formality and the nature of their relationship with the listener. These styles include frozen/oratorical, formal/deliberative, semiformal/consultative, casual, and intimate. Second, Howard Giles' (1973) *Communication Accommodation Theory* (CAT) examines style-shifting. This theory offers a framework for understanding how people adjust their communication styles to either reduce, maintain, or increase social distance. The theory identifies two primary types of accommodation: convergence and divergence, each with two approaches: upward and downward, along with a third type, maintenance, which involves not shifting styles.

*Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) is used as the objects. These films are part of the *Marvel Cinematic Universe* (MCU) and form a trilogy in the Spider-Man series. These are American superhero films produced by Columbia Pictures and Marvel Studios. They are based on the Marvel Comics character Spider-Man and are distributed by Sony Pictures. These movies show how Peter Parker's speech changes depending on his situation and relationship with other character.

*Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) is about a young Peter Parker who tries to handle his life in high school while also being a superhero. The conversation in this movie shows how teenagers speak, sometimes clumsily or awkwardly. This movie filled with funny, clever punch lines, which make it seems lighter than other superhero movies. The humor in the movie is predicted to make it easier for younger audiences to relate to the characters. In comparison, *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) explores more emotional subjects like sadness, figuring out their identity, and being accountable for their actions. This movie shows the characters deep feelings, with more thoughtful and touching conversations.

These movies were chosen to be analyzed for several reasons. First, the language style and style-shifting in these two movies is different from other genres and superhero films, making them interesting for analysis. Second, the influence of the big changes in the story conflicts of these two movies affects the language style of the characters, especially the main character, making it interesting to analyze. Third, it's important to consider how the dynamics of the main character's relationships with familiar characters from *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and new characters in *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) evolve over time, leading to noticeable style shifts in their conversations. Finally, there hasn't been any previous study on comparing language style in superhero movies, particularly focusing on style-shifting using CAT theory with the main character's background is a native speaker.

This study differs from previous studies on language style that typically focus on other genres such as romance-comedy, horror, and animation. Instead, this study focuses on superhero movies, which are fictional full of action, and have different contexts. In addition, most past research only focused on one movie, also there has yet a study that includes analyzing style shifting using CAT theory while analyzing language style in a movie. In this study, the researcher compares the language style and style-shifting of a native speaker main character's conversation, Peter Parker, in the first and the third movies of the MCU's Spider-Man trilogy.

## **1.2 Identification of the Problem**

As mentioned in the background, several studies have analyzed the language style on one movie as the object. There are also several studies on style-shifting in university students' utterances, and some were analyzing on Japanese language advertisement, Korean talk show and even anime. However, there has yet to be a writer who covers both and compares a main character's language style and style-shifting on levels of formality and intimacy in two continuous superhero movies, specifically using Joos' language style theory and Giles' CAT theory. Therefore, this research analyses the main character's conversations language style, and style-shifting occurrences in two sequenced superhero movies.



### 1.3 Limitation of the Problem

*Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) is 2 hours and 13 minutes long, while *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) is 2 hours and 28 minutes long. To avoid an analysis that is too broad or distorted, the researcher will limit the scope of this study. In this study, the researcher will only focus on the main character, Peter Parker's, conversations with other specific limited characters that gives an impact to the story plot from both films as the subject samples. Those characters that appear in both *Homecoming* (2017) and *No Way Home* (2021) films such as Happy Hogan, Michelle/MJ, Ned, Flash, and May Parker, and new characters that appear in *No Way Home* (2021) such as Max Dillon/Electro, Norman Osborn/Green Goblin, Otto Octavius/Doctor Octopus, Flint marko/Sandman, Curt Connors/Lizard, Dr. Strange, Wong, Raimi's Spider-Man/Peter-Two, and Webb's Spider-Man/Peter-Three.

The researcher examines Peter Parker's language styles using Martin Joos'(1967) theory by focusing on five key aspects: the scene's setting (situation), the vocabulary used, sentence structure (syntax), tone of voice, and communication approach with different individuals (address). Additionally, the researcher analyses the style-shifting using the two main types from *Communication Accommodation Theory* (CAT)—convergence and divergence, with its two approach strategies—upward and downward, and maintenance (non-shifting), as introduced by Howard Giles (1973). The findings from these analyses are compared.

### 1.4 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation above, the formulation of the problem of this research is “What is the comparison of Peter Parker's conversation language styles and style-shifting occurrences in *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) movies?”

### 1.5 Research Questions

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the researcher formulated the research question as follows:

1. What language styles are implemented in Peter Parker's conversations as the main character in *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) movies?
2. What style-shifting occurred in Peter Parker's utterances in *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) movies?
3. What are the comparisons of Peter Parker's language style and its style-shifting occurrences in *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) movies?

### **1.6 Purpose of the Research**

Based on the research problem above, the purposes of this research are:

1. To find out the language styles implemented in Peter Parker's conversations as the main character in *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) movies.
2. To find out the style-shifting that occurs in Peter Parker's utterances in *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) movies.
3. To find out the comparisons of Peter Parker's language style and its style-shifting occurrences in *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) movies.

### **1.7 Significance of the Research**

1. Theoretical

This study could be a reference study related to language style and style-shifting. It is expected to enrich the theoretical perspective on language specifically focusing on how people adapt their language styles to various conditions and situations, and also understanding the occurrences of style-shifting in every day communication.

2. Practical

This research is expected to be an input for linguists to analyze the variation of language style and style-shifting in movie. The researcher hoped that this

research will be further developed by those who are interested in analyzing language communication style and style-shift. Furthermore, this research could assist future researchers in conducting the same analysis on different variables.

## 1.8 Definition of Key Terms

Some terms used in this study are defined as follows:

### 1. Language Style

Language style is the way that people or particular group chooses their words in communicating according to their relevance, place, condition, and to whom they are speaking. Language style also defines people's identity, mindset, and personality.

### 2. Style-Shifting

Style-shifting refers to a single speaker changing style in response to context. It is usually related to the changes/shift in language variation which involves varieties of language markers/factors or variable elements related with social and cultural factors such as age, gender, social class, and speaker relationships.

### 3. Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)

Accommodation theory, also known as *communication accommodation theory* (CAT) was introduced by sociolinguist Howard Giles in 1973. It seeks to understand how and why people adapt their communication style when speaking with others. Its two main types are convergence and divergence, with two accommodation approach; upward or downward, also maintenance (non-shifting type).

### 4. *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017)

*Spider-Man: Homecoming* is a superhero movie that came out in 2017. It is about the character Spider-Man from Marvel Comics. The movie was made by Columbia Pictures and Marvel Studios, and released by Sony Pictures. This is the second remake of the Spider-Man movie and it's the 16th movie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Jon Watts directed the film. It was written by different

groups of writers: Jonathan Goldstein with John Francis Daley, Watts with Christopher Ford, and Chris McKenna with Erik Sommers. This is the first of the three Spider-Man trilogies. In the movie, Peter Parker attempts to balance his life as a high school student with being Spider-Man. He also has to deal with a villain called the Vulture.

### **5. *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021)**

*Spider-Man: No Way Home* is a superhero movie which came out in 2021 and is based on a character from Marvel Comics called Spider-Man. It was made by Columbia Pictures and Marvel Studios and is released by Sony Pictures. This is the next movie after *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and *Spider-Man: Far From Home* (2019). Jon Watts directed the movie and it was written by Chris McKenna and Erik Sommers. In the movie, Parker asks Dr. Strange to use magic to hide his identity again. This happened after everyone found out he was Spider-Man in the previous movie, *Spider-Man: Far From Home* (2019). When Parker messed the magic spell up, portal to different versions of reality mix together and allows people from other universes to come into Parker's world.

### **6. Peter Parker**

Peter Parker is the Spider-Man, the main character of the two movies. He is a young high school student and a part of superhero group called the Avengers. He has a spider-like ability because he got bitten by a spider that had some special radiation in it. Peter Parker's utterances from the two films will be the subject of this study.

### **7. Peter Parker's Interlocutors**

Characters who had conversations with Peter Parker in the two movies. They are Happy Hogan, Michelle/MJ, Ned, Flash, May Parker, Tony Stark, Suit lady /Karen, Adrian Toomes /The Vulture, Max Dillon /Electro, Norman Osborn /Green Goblin, Otto Octavius/ Doctor Octopus, Flint Marko/ Sandman, Curt Connors/Lizard, Dr. Strange, Wong, MIT Admin, Mr. Delmar, Raimi's Spider-Man /Peter-Two, and Webb's Spider-Man /Peter-Three.