STUDY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL WRITING

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to help students to determine the fundamental differences between formal and informal writing. Understanding these distinctions is essential for them to achieve effective written communication considering that these two styles have non-identical characteristics, serve specific purposes in dissimilar contexts which require different approaches. The aim of formal writing is to demonstrate a high level of professionalism in communicating ideas, whereas the informal writing aims to be accessible, creating a friendly tone.

Keywords: formal, informal, writing skills

1. Introduction

Language learning is an elaborated process that requires accuracy, perseverance and practice to master. Formal and informal languages are engaged in different purposes. Regarding this aspect, writing plays an essential role in learning language. Developing both formal and informal writing skills is vital considering that they convey different communication contexts, which interpret finding, evaluate a theory, develop an argument, and critique the work of others, Formal writing, known as professional writing, serves academic purposes like university assignments. Formal language is precise, cohesive, ensures clarity and accuracy whereas informal language is conversational and personal. The present study relies on multiple research articles that are mentioned in bibliography.

2. Formal writing

Formal writing engages an organized approach that involves a formal language, a proper grammar, and a systematic organization of ideas. It is characterized by a certain style of writing that respects a standard procedures used in academic and professional context. It uses a professional tone, when conveying complex information or presenting arguments. It avoids evaluative words that are based on non-technical judgments' and feelings.

Academic writing is generally impersonal and technical, avoids conversational language, direct reference to people or feelings, focusing on emphasizing facts, ideas and objects. It is technical by using specific terminology for certain field.

In formal language there are some situations in which the writer is asked to express his point of view and still write in an objective style. In this perspective, the writer focuses more to emphasise things and ideas, instead of his own feelings or of others In formal language, it is important to write clearly and concisely, to accurately summarize data, to identify arguments, to use certain vocabulary to persuade and inform.

3. Informal writing

Informal writing is a type of communication that involves an informal language and expressions, a familiar conversational tone. It is used also in digital communications like emails and text messages and social media platforms helping people to get closer and build relationships. It creates a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, encouraging openness and

communication. This type of writing conveys a conversational tone without the need for specialized knowledge. Informal writing is narrative dependent on the context.

List of informal features:

1. First person pronouns to refer to the author(s) (*I* and we)
   e.g., "*I* will talk about this problem later.
2. unattended pronouns (*this*, *these*, *that*, *those*, *it*) that refers to antecedents
   e.g., " *This* is his answer to your question.
3. split infinitives -- an infinitive that has an adverb between *to* and the verbs
   e.g., "The reporter proceeded *to* sharply *admonish* the people."
4. Sentence initial conjunctions
   e.g., "*And* I will repeat him if he doesn't understand."
5. Sentence final preposition
   e.g., "what do you think *about?."*
6. listing expressions ('and so on', 'etc', when ending a list)
   e.g., "These are the adverbs used in this context , *etc*."
7. Second person pronouns/determiners to refer to the reader (you and your)
   e.g. "Suppose *you* are acting in a play, which assigns *you* role "
8. contractions
   e.g., "Your behaviour *doesn't* help you to progress."
9. direct questions
   e.g., "What *can* be done in this situation*?*"
10. exclamations
    e.g., This is not the case!

4. Difference between formal and informal writing skills

Formal language is precise, focuses on objectivity, and follows established conventions, maintains a professional tone, utilizes specialized vocabulary, while informal language is more relaxed and subjective, maintains a more conversational attitude which involves expressing emotions in order to establish a connection with the reader. Formal writing skills are of highest importance in academic, professional, and official settings. They are necessary for research papers, legal documents, business reports, and any situation where accuracy and professionalism are valued.

Here are some examples of formal and informal sentences with the same meaning:

In conclusion, in this essay I have argued that multiculturalism is good for economic development. [informal]

In conclusion, in this essay it is argued that multiculturalism is beneficial for economic development.[formal]

"*I believe the result is valid, based on these findings"* [informal]

"These findings indicate that the result is valid" [formal]

"As our house is quite cut off, perhaps we could arrange for you to be put up in the hotel in the town for few days" [informal]

"As our house is quite isolated, we could arrange hotel accommodation in the town for a few days". [formal]

"We will make up for the inconvenience of having to wait for so long" [informal]

"We will compensate you for the inconvenience of having to wait for so long". [formal]

4.1. Vocabulary:

Formal writing uses specialized vocabulary, technical terms, and specific terminology relevant to the certain topics. Informal writing relies on daily language that is not complicated for a wide range of readers, making it more understandable.

In formal writing, the choice of words is of highest importance for the accuracy of information. It engages precise vocabulary which contains technical terms specific to certain fields. Informal writing employs more relaxed words which relates to everyday language, daily expressions that resonate with common audience. Here are some examples of formal and informal words with the same meaning:

Require [formal] *vs need* [informal]
Purchase [formal] *vs buy* [informal]
Provide [formal] *vs give* [informal]
Request [formal] *vs ask for* [informal]
Reside [formal] *vs live* [informal]
Require [formal] *vs need* [informal]
Acceptable [formal] *vs okay* [informal]
Assistance [formal] *vs help* [informal]
Require [formal] *vs want* [informal]
*Infantile [*formal] *vs childish* [informal]
*Further [*formal] *vs more* [informal]
*Hence, therefore [*formal] *vs so* [informal]
*Sufficient [*formal] *vs enough* [informal]
*In spite of the fact [*formal] *vs even though* [informal]
*At your earliest convenience [*formal] *vs as soon as possible* [informal]

4.2. Sentence Structure:

Formal writing often uses more complex sentences, various structures in order to present complex ideas and maintain a formal tone, to convey information in an accurate way,

Informal writing use simpler sentences that are easily understandable to a wide range of audience, maintains a conversational tone. Formal writing uses longer sentences to provide a complex analyse and structured ideas. Complex sentence structures establish rational relationships between ideas and allow the insertion of supporting reasons and examples. In contrast, informal writing employs shorter sentences for a better understanding, ensures that the content is easily accessible to a wide range of readers.

4.3. Grammar:

Formal writing follows strict formal grammar structures, verb agreements, and sentence constructions, maintains clarity, precision, and grammatical accuracy in order to ensure clear communication and credibility. In formal language, grammar is more complex and sentences are generally longer. Formal writing uses third-person pronouns to maintain an objective tone, relying on evidence and facts rather than personal experiences and to create a sense of credibility. By avoiding the use of first-person pronouns (e.g., "**I**" or **"we"),** formal writing underlines the topic or the research rather than the author's personal outlook.

In contrast, informal writing uses flexibility in grammar, partial sentences, and often occasional grammatical errors intentionally in order to obtain a stylistic effect.

Informal writing uses first-person pronouns like **"I"** or **"we"** in order to create connection with the reader and make the writing personal.

The plane is late [informal]

We regret to inform you that the upcoming plane will be delayed [formal]
Have you seen my phone? [formal]
Seen my phone? [informal]
I am sorry to have kept you waiting [formal]
Sorry to keep you waiting [informal]

Formal language uses modal verbs. For example:

Would you be so kind to..?
Could you kindly inform us about..?

Informal language omits modal verbs:

Seen my glasses? Instead of
Could you tell me if you have seen my glasses?

Engaging pronouns can be considered informal language, but an academic paper would use a more neutral tone. Personal pronouns such as *I* establish a more personal informal tone because the reader feels the writer's presence in the text. Formal language uses the 'we' as a pronoun rather than 'I':

For example:
I can help you to finish your work. Call me! [informal]
We regret to inform you that……[formal]
I'm sorry, but…. [informal]
We have pleasure in announcing….[formal]

4.4. Use of Abbreviations:

Formal writing does not use the abbreviations, except for standard ones that are widely accepted and recognized, such as "**Mr.," "Dr.,"** or **"etc."** By spelling out words completely, formal writing ensures that the reader fully understands the intended meaning and avoids any confusion or ambiguity that may arise from the use of abbreviations. This is especially important in professional or academic situations where accuracy is vital. Certain abbreviations are never spelled out: a.m., p.m., B.C. (or B.C.E.), A.D. (or C.E.). Unless your style guide says otherwise, use lower case or small capitals for a.m. and p.m. Use capital letter or small caps for B.C. and A.D. (the periods are optional). Traditionally, B.C.E.(Before Common Era) comes after the year and A.D. (Anno Domini) comes before it, but nowadays the abbreviation commonly follows the year in both instances. If the month is preceded or followed by a numeral (14 Aug. or Aug. 14), abbreviate months as follows: Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., Aug., Sep. (or Sept.), Oct., Nov., Dec. Do not abbreviate May, June, or July. As a general rule, do not abbreviate the month if it appears alone or with just the year—and do not abbreviate the days of the week unless they appear in charts, tables, or slides. In formal writing it can be used the abbreviations when the space is limited- for example, in tables, charts, diagrams, and graphs. It can be abbreviated a term in formal writing in case the term is written three times in the same document. In formal writing, the abbreviation must be written in full form and enclose the abbreviation in parentheses.

Informal writing frequently uses abbreviations in order to transmit information more adequately regular abbreviations like ***lol*** (laugh out loud), *lmk* (let me know), ***btw*** (by the way), *nvm* (never mind), *omw* (on my way), *thx* (thanks), or ***OMG*** (oh my God) are ordinary used in informal writing to make easier a familiar and fast communication.

4.5. Punctuation

In formal writing, the use of formal punctuation is essential for the accuracy of sentence structure. Each punctuation mark has its own specific use, which determines to write a specific meaning within a sentence.

The main use of a full stop is to show where the sentence ends while the comma is a deceptively piece of punctuation to use because it is often misused or overused, but the comma splice occurs when writer employs a comma to link two independent clauses. Another prominent punctuation mark is the colon which reveals and develops themes and ideas within a sentence. The semicolon separates two independent clauses that are closely related. Hyphens are most used within adjectives that are made up of two (or more) words and other compound words. The dash, often confused with the hyphen, is completely different punctuation mark which serves a different purpose within a sentence. In formal writing, the use of the dash could be a stylistic choice to represent a change of direction within a sentence, or to provide juxtaposition between two clauses in a sentence.

4.5. Contractions:

Formal writing maintains a more formal and professional tone by avoiding using contraction in order to appear a more serious style.

In informal writing, usage of contractions made the reader feel more relaxed and approachable. The possibility of using contractions depends on the level of formality and the intended audience.

4.6. Use of Citations and References:

Formal writing use citations and references to support reasons, provide examples, and acknowledge the work of others. It follows specific citation styles and includes a bibliography or reference list at the end of the document.

Informal writing generally does not require the use of citations and references. It often relies on personal experiences or common information without mentioning any citations. Informal writing relies on personal opinions or knowledge.

5. Similarities between Academic and Informal writing

Despite the essential differences such as tone, style, and reaching a certain purpose, there are also some similarities between formal and informal writing. Both types of writing serve as a tool of communication. Clarity in expression is crucial to ensure that the message is correctly understood by the reader.

Both informal and formal writing engage paragraphs to organize and structure ideas. Each paragraph develops a specific topic or theme, delivering clear information using supporting arguments with relevant reasons, examples, or expert opinions in order to inform, persuade, or entertain the reader.

6. **Conclusions**

Proper writing skills are an extremely valuable ability to have. An essential part of accomplishing this proficiency is to master the distinctions between formal and informal writing.

Consequently, students should be able to understand formal texts and to structure in oral and written communication in formal context, to distinguish formal from informal writing, learning by example; academic essays and books. In order to accomplish this, they need to possess some level of understanding formal language features, formal registers and formal styles and differ from informal style of texts and linguistic features. The key element in

choosing a writing style remains the intended audience and competent communicators have to adapt their words to their audience and the communication context.

This study has some limitations, which could be addressed in future studies.

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