

Dynamic Listening Comprehension Unit 3 Chapter 2 (Video #6)
Formal and Informal Language
Transcript

Today I want to talk about levels of language usage. You have probably noticed that people express similar ideas in different ways, depending on the situation they are in. This is very natural. All languages have two broad, general categories, or levels of usage: a formal level and an informal level. English is no exception. I'm not talking about correct and incorrect English. What I'm talking about are two levels of correct English. The difference in these two levels is the situation in which you use a particular level. Formal language is the kind of language you find in textbooks, reference books such as encyclopedias, and in business letters.

For example, a letter to a university would be in a formal style. You would also use formal English in compositions and essays that you write in school. People usually use formal English when they give classroom lectures or speeches and at ceremonies such as graduations. We also tend to use formal language in conversations with persons we don't know well or with people we have a formal relationship with, such as professors, bosses, doctors, friends of our parents, strangers, etc. Informal language is used in conversation with colleagues, family, and friends, and when we write personal notes or letters to close friends, as well as in diaries, etc.

Formal language is different from informal language in several ways. However, today I'm going to talk only about a couple of ways. First of all, formal language tends to be more polite. Interestingly, it usually takes more words to be polite. For example, I might say to a friend or family member, "Close the door, please," but to a stranger or someone in authority I probably would say, "Would you mind closing the door?" or "Excuse me, could you please close the door?" Using words like "could" and "would" makes my request sound more polite, but also more formal. I want to be polite but not too formal with my family and friends.

Another difference between formal and informal language is some of the vocabulary. There are some words and phrases that belong in formal language and others that are informal. Let me give you a couple of examples of what I mean. Let's say that I really like soccer. If I'm talking to my friend or colleague, I might say, "I'm just crazy about soccer!" But if I were talking to my supervisor or a friend of my parents, I would probably say, "I really enjoy soccer," or "I like soccer very much." Let's say I'm telling someone some news I heard about the police arresting a criminal. To my friend I might say, "The cops bagged the crook." To my parents' friends I might say, "The police arrested the thief." Although the line between formal and informal language is not always clear, and although people are probably less formal today than in the past, it is useful to be aware that these two levels, or categories, do exist. The best way for a non-native speaker of English to learn the difference is to observe the different ways English speakers speak or write in different situations. Television newscasters, your college professors in your class, your doctors in their offices, etc. will usually speak rather formally. However, your classmates, teammates, family members, and friends will generally speak in an informal fashion. The difference can be learned over time by observing and interacting with native speakers.

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Formal and Informal Language

ERROR CORRECTION. There is one error in each sentence.

1. Today I want to talk about level of language usage.
2. You have probably notice that people express similar ideas in different ways, depending on the situation they are in.
3. This is very naturally.
4. All languages have two broad, general category, or levels of usage: a formal level and an informal level.
5. English is not exception.
6. I not talking about correct and incorrect English.
7. What I'm talking about are two level of correct English.
8. The difference in these two levels is situation in which you use a particular level.
9. Formal language is kind of language you find in textbooks, reference books such as encyclopedias, and in business letters.
10. For example, letter to a university would be in a formal style.
11. You would also use formal English in compositions and essays that you write school.
12. People usually use formal English when they give classroom lectures or speeches and at ceremonies such graduations.
13. We also tend to use formal language in conversations with persons we doesn't know well or with people we have a formal relationship with, such as professors, bosses, doctors, friends of our parents, strangers, etc.
14. Informal language is use in conversation with colleagues, family, and friends, and when we write personal notes or letters to close friends, as well as in diaries, etc.
15. Formal language is different from informal language in several way.
16. However, today I'm going to talk only about couple of ways.
17. First of all, formal language tend to be more polite.
18. Interesting, it usually takes more words to be polite.
19. For example, I might say to a friend or family member, "Close the door, please," but to a stranger or someone in authority I probably would say, "Would you mind to close the door?" or "Excuse me, could you please close the door?"
20. Using words like "could" and "would" makes my request sound more polite, but also more formalize.
21. I want to be polite but not too formal with my family and friend.
22. Another difference between formal and informal language is some of the vocabularies.
23. There are some words and phrases that belong in formal language and other that are informal.
24. Let me give you a couple of examples of what I meant.
25. Let's says that I really like soccer.
26. If I'm talking to my friend or colleague, I might said, "I'm just crazy about soccer!"
27. But if I were talking to my supervisor or a friend my parents, I would probably say, "I really enjoy soccer," or "I like soccer very much."
28. Let's say I'm telling someone some news I heard about the police arrest a criminal.
29. To my friend I might say, "The cops bagged crook."
30. To my parents' friend I might say, "The police arrested the thief."
31. Although the line between formal and informal language is not always cleared, and although people are probably less formal today than in the past, it is useful to be aware that these two levels, or categories, do exist.
32. The best way for a non-native speaker of English to learn the difference is to observe different ways English speakers speak or write in different situations.
33. Television newscasters, your college professors in your class, your doctors in their offices, etc., will usually speak rather formal.
34. However, your classmates, teammates, family members, and friends will generally speak in informal fashion.
35. The difference can be learned over time by observe and interacting with native speakers.

END OF ERROR CORRECTION EXERCISE

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5. English is no exception.
6. I'm not talking about correct and incorrect English.
7. What I'm talking about are two levels of correct English.
8. The difference in these two levels is the situation in which you use a particular level.
9. Formal language is the kind of language you find in textbooks, reference books such as encyclopedias, and in business letters.
10. For example, a letter to a university would be in a formal style.
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15. Formal language is different from informal language in several ways.
16. However, today I'm going to talk only about a couple of ways.
17. First of all, formal language tends to be more polite.
18. Interestingly, it usually takes more words to be polite.
19. For example, I might say to a friend or family member, "Close the door, please," but to a stranger or someone in authority I probably would say, "Would you mind closing the door?" or "Excuse me, could you please close the door?"
20. Using words like "could" and "would" makes my request sound more polite, but also more formal.
21. I want to be polite but not too formal with my family and friends.
22. Another difference between formal and informal language is some of the vocabulary.
23. There are some words and phrases that belong in formal language and others that are informal.
24. Let me give you a couple of examples of what I mean.
25. Let's say that I really like soccer.
26. If I'm talking to my friend or colleague, I might say, "I'm just crazy about soccer!"
27. But if I were talking to my supervisor or a friend of my parents, I would probably say, "I really enjoy soccer," or "I like soccer very much."
28. Let's say I'm telling someone some news I heard about the police arresting a criminal.
29. To my friend I might say, "The cops bagged the crook."
30. To my parents' friends I might say, "The police arrested the thief."
31. Although the line between formal and informal language is not always clear, and although people are probably less formal today than in the past, it is useful to be aware that these two levels, or categories, do exist.
32. The best way for a non-native speaker of English to learn the difference is to observe the different ways English speakers speak or write in different situations.
33. Television newscasters, your college professors in your class, your doctors in their offices, etc., will usually speak rather formally.
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END OF ERROR CORRECTION EXERCISE

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Indicate the stressed syllable in the words that have two or more syllables, and indicate the one-syllable words that are stressed.

Every syllable has a vowel sound. Notice also how the speaker does consonant to vowel linking. If a word ends with a consonant and the next word begins with a vowel, the speaker pronounces both words as if they were one word.

Example: *He spoke-in-an-interesting way.* The hyphens show consonant to vowel linking.

For example, a letter to a university would be in a formal style. You would also use formal English in compositions and essays that you write in school. People usually use formal English when they give classroom lectures or speeches and at ceremonies such as graduations. We also tend to use formal language in conversations with persons we don't know well or with people we have a formal relationship with, such as professors, bosses, doctors, friends of our parents, strangers, etc. Informal language is used in conversation with colleagues, family, and friends, and when we write personal notes or letters to close friends, as well as in diaries, etc.

Listening Practice

Student A: Read aloud up to each slash mark, then stop.

Student B: Repeat what student A says.

Today I want to talk about / levels of language usage. / You have probably noticed / that people express similar ideas / in different ways, / depending on the situation they are in. / This is very natural. / All languages have two broad, / general categories, / or levels of usage: / a formal level / and an informal level. / English is no exception. / I'm not talking about correct / and incorrect English. / What I'm talking about / are two levels of correct English. / The difference in these two levels / is the situation / in which you use a particular level. / Formal language is the kind of language / you find in textbooks, / reference books / such as encyclopedias, / and in business letters.

ANSWERS

Indicate the stressed syllable in the words that have two or more syllables. The underlined words are one-syllable words that the speaker says with stress. Consonant to vowel linking is shown with a hyphen (-).

For-ex/**am**/ple, a **let**/ter to a u/ni/**ver**/si/ty would be in-a **for**/mal style. You would-**al**/so use **for**/mal-**Eng**/lish in com/po/**si**/tions-and **es**/says that you write-in school. **Peo**/ple **u**/su/al/ly use **for**/mal-**Eng**/lish when they give **class**/room **lec**/tures-or **spee**/ches-and-at **ce**/re/mo/nies such-as gra/du/a/tions. We **al**/so tend to use **for**/mal **lang**/uage-in con/ver/**sa**/tions with **per**/sons we don't know well-or with **peo**/ple we have-a **for**/mal re/**la**/tion/ship with, such-as pro/**fes**/sors, **bos**/ses, **doc**/tors, friends-of our **pa**/rents, **stran**/gers, etc. **In**/for/mal **lang**/uage-is used-in con/ver/**sa**/tion with **col**/leagues, **fa**/mi/ly, and friends, and when we write **per**/so/nal notes-or **let**/ters to close friends, as well-as-in **di**/a/ries, etc.

Statistical analysis of word stress patterns in English

1. Look at all the two-syllable words. How many have the stress on the second syllable? (Answer: None)

letter, formal, also, English, essays, people, classroom, lectures, speeches, language, persons, bosses, doctors, parents, strangers

2. Look at the words that have more than two syllables. How many have stress on the first syllable? (Answer: 6/13)

example, university, compositions, **usually**, **ceremonies**, graduations, conversations, relationship, professors, **informal**, **family**, **personal**, **diaries**

3. Is there stress on one-syllable words? Yes, this is a common feature of spoken English.

The developing human brain of a baby uses statistical analysis to learn the native language. This is part of the instinctive growth of the brain. The baby of course does not do it consciously. It just happens, but unfortunately, it doesn't happen so easily for older humans when they try to learn a language.

Our simple analysis done here shows that two-syllable words almost always have stress on the first syllable. In this sample, 46% of words that have more than two syllables have the stress on the first syllable. It is possible to learn these patterns unconsciously, but you have to make a conscious effort to speak with variation in stressed and unstressed syllables. Try to not speak in a flat monotone voice.

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Make notes on the main ideas of this lecture. Choose a few key words from each paragraph.

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For example, a letter to a university would be in a formal style. You would also use formal English in compositions and essays that you write in school. People usually use formal English when they give classroom lectures or speeches and at ceremonies such as graduations. We also tend to use formal language in conversations with persons we don't know well or with people we have a formal relationship with, such as professors, bosses, doctors, friends of our parents, strangers, etc. Informal language is used in conversation with colleagues, family, and friends, and when we write personal notes or letters to close friends, as well as in diaries, etc.

3.

Formal language is different from informal language in several ways. However, today I'm going to talk only about a couple of ways. First of all, formal language tends to be more polite. Interestingly, it usually takes more words to be polite. For example, I might say to a friend or family member, "Close the door, please," but to a stranger or someone in authority I probably would say, "Would you mind closing the door?" or "Excuse me, could you please close the door?" Using words like "could" and "would" makes my request sound more polite, but also more formal. I want to be polite but not too formal with my family and friends.

4.

Another difference between formal and informal language is some of the vocabulary. There are some words and phrases that belong in formal language and others that are informal. Let me give you a couple of examples of what I mean. Let's say that I really like soccer. If I'm talking to my friend or colleague, I might say, "I'm just crazy about soccer!" But if I were talking to my supervisor or a friend of my parents, I would probably say, "I really enjoy soccer," or "I like soccer very much." Let's say I'm telling someone some news I heard about the police arresting a criminal. To my friend I might say, "The cops bagged the crook." To my parents' friends I might say, "The police arrested the thief." Although the line between formal and informal language is not always clear, and although people are probably less formal today than in the past, it is useful to be aware that these two levels, or categories, do exist. The best way for a non-native speaker of English to learn the difference is to observe the different ways English speakers speak or write in different situations. Television newscasters, your college professors in your class, your doctors in their offices, etc. will usually speak rather formally. However, your classmates, teammates, family members, and friends will generally speak in an informal fashion. The difference can be learned over time by observing and interacting with native speakers.

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NOTES	SUMMARY
<p><u>1st paragraph:</u> topic: levels of language use choice of level depends on situation all languages have these levels two levels: formal and informal not about correct and incorrect level—both correct formal language: textbooks, reference books, business letters</p>	<p>Today I would like to speak about levels of language use. The level we choose depends on the situation. All languages have these levels, and both levels are correct. Usually, there are two levels—a formal and informal level. Formal language is used in textbooks, reference books and business letters.</p>
<p><u>2nd paragraph</u> formal language for formal situations—ceremonies, letters to universities, lectures, speeches formal relationships—professors, bosses, doctors, friends of our parents, strangers informal language—informal relationships—friends, family</p>	
<p><u>3rd paragraph</u> formal language more polite, more words needed—for example, “could...” “would...” “please”</p>	
<p><u>4th paragraph</u> formal vocabulary, informal vocabulary informal—slang more common English less formal recently best way to learn difference: observe English speakers</p>	

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NOTES	SUMMARY
<p><u>1st paragraph:</u> topic: levels of language use level depends on situation all languages have these levels two levels: formal and informal not about correct and incorrect formal language: textbooks, reference books, business letters</p>	<p>Today I would like to speak about levels of language use. The level we choose depends on the situation. All languages have these levels, and both levels are correct. Usually, there are two levels—a formal and an informal level. Formal language is used in textbooks, reference books and business letters.</p>
<p><u>2nd paragraph</u> formal language for formal situations--ceremonies, letters to universities, lectures, speeches formal relationships--professors, bosses, doctors, friends of our parents, strangers informal relationships--friends, family</p>	<p>Formal language is used in ceremonies, lectures, speeches, and in letters to universities, for example. We use formal language in formal relationships with people such as professors, bosses, doctors, friends of our parents and strangers. We use informal language with our family and close friends.</p>
<p><u>3rd paragraph</u> formal language more polite, more words, “could...” “would...”</p>	<p>Formal language is more polite, and we need more words to speak politely. Formal language uses words like “could” and “would” to make requests sound more polite. For example, we say, “Could you open the window, please?”</p>
<p><u>4th paragraph</u> formal and informal vocabulary informal--slang English is becoming less formal best way to learn: observe English speakers</p>	<p>There is also a difference in vocabulary between formal and informal language. Informal language has more slang. English is becoming less formal, but the two levels still exist. The best way to learn how to use the two levels is to observe English speakers.</p>

Listening quiz (to be done after Listening Practice)

1. Today I want to talk about / _____.
2. You have probably noticed / _____ /
3. in different ways, _____.
4. This is very natural. / _____,
5. general categories, / _____:
6. a formal level / _____.
7. English is no exception. / _____ /
8. and incorrect English. _____ /
9. are two levels of correct English. / _____ /
10. is the situation / _____.
11. Formal language is the kind of language / _____,
12. reference books / _____, / and in business letters.

Listening quiz (to be done after Listening Practice)

1. Today I want to talk about / _____.
2. You have probably noticed / _____ /
3. in different ways, _____.
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7. English is no exception. / _____ /
8. and incorrect English. _____ /
9. are two levels of correct English. / _____ /
10. is the situation / _____.
11. Formal language is the kind of language / _____,
12. reference books / _____, / and in business letters.

1

00:00:14,130 --> 00:00:17,850

Today I want to talk about levels of language usage.

2

00:00:17,850 --> 00:00:19,080

You have probably noticed

3

00:00:19,080 --> 00:00:22,630

that people express similar ideas in different ways,

4

00:00:22,630 --> 00:00:24,810

depending on the situation they are in.

5

00:00:24,810 --> 00:00:26,650

This is very natural.

6

00:00:26,650 --> 00:00:29,430

All languages have two broad, general categories,

7

00:00:29,430 --> 00:00:32,040

or levels of usage:

8

00:00:32,040 --> 00:00:35,040

a formal level and an informal level.

9

00:00:35,040 --> 00:00:37,060

English is no exception.

10

00:00:37,060 --> 00:00:40,630

I'm not talking about correct and incorrect English.

11

00:00:40,630 --> 00:00:42,050

What I'm talking about

12

00:00:42,050 --> 00:00:44,540

are two levels of correct English.

13

00:00:44,540 --> 00:00:46,490

The difference in these two levels

14

00:00:46,490 --> 00:00:50,500

is the situation in which you use a particular level.

15

00:00:50,500 --> 00:00:53,470

Formal language is the kind of language

16

00:00:53,470 --> 00:00:55,390

you find in textbooks,

17

00:00:55,390 --> 00:00:57,150

reference books such as encyclopedias,

18

00:00:57,150 --> 00:00:59,000

and in business letters.

19

00:00:59,000 --> 00:01:04,250

For example, a letter to a university would be in a formal style.

20

00:01:04,250 --> 00:01:06,040

You would also use formal English

21

00:01:06,040 --> 00:01:08,300

in compositions and essays

22

00:01:08,300 --> 00:01:10,220

that you write in school.

23

00:01:10,220 --> 00:01:11,820

People usually use formal English

24

00:01:11,820 --> 00:01:14,540

when they give classroom lectures or speeches

25

00:01:14,540 --> 00:01:17,440

and at ceremonies such as graduations.

26

00:01:17,440 --> 00:01:19,649

We also tend to use formal language

27

00:01:19,649 --> 00:01:22,829

in conversations with persons we don't know well

28

00:01:22,829 --> 00:01:25,890

or with people we have a formal relationship with,

29

00:01:25,890 --> 00:01:29,939

such as professors, bosses, doctors,

30

00:01:29,939 --> 00:01:33,500

friends of our parents, strangers, etc.

31

00:01:33,500 --> 00:01:37,340

Informal language is used in conversation with colleagues,

32

00:01:37,340 --> 00:01:38,860

family, and friends,

33

00:01:38,860 --> 00:01:40,409

and when we write personal notes

34

00:01:40,409 --> 00:01:41,909

or letters to close friends,

35

00:01:41,909 --> 00:01:45,000

as well as in diaries, etc.

36

00:01:45,000 --> 00:01:46,799

Formal language is different

37

00:01:46,799 --> 00:01:49,869

from informal language in several ways.

38

00:01:49,869 --> 00:01:51,539

However, today I'm going to talk

39

00:01:51,539 --> 00:01:54,539

only about a couple of ways.

40

00:01:54,539 --> 00:01:58,420

First of all, formal language tends to be more polite.

41

00:01:58,420 --> 00:02:02,969

Interestingly, it usually takes more words to be polite.

42

00:02:02,969 --> 00:02:06,689

For example, I might say to a friend or family member,

43

00:02:06,689 --> 00:02:08,220

“Close the door, please,”

44

00:02:08,220 --> 00:02:11,039

but to a stranger or someone in authority

45

00:02:11,039 --> 00:02:12,440

I probably would say,

46

00:02:12,440 --> 00:02:13,950

“Would you mind closing the door?”

47

00:02:13,950 --> 00:02:18,010

or “Excuse me, could you please close the door?”

48

00:02:18,010 --> 00:02:20,310

Using words like “could” and “would”

49

00:02:20,310 --> 00:02:22,720

makes my request sound more polite,

50

00:02:22,720 --> 00:02:24,690

but also more formal.

51

00:02:24,690 --> 00:02:26,920

I want to be polite but not too formal

52

00:02:26,920 --> 00:02:29,530

with my family and friends.

53

00:02:29,530 --> 00:02:32,920

Another difference between formal and informal language

54

00:02:32,920 --> 00:02:36,000

is some of the vocabulary.

55

00:02:36,000 --> 00:02:37,600

There are some words and phrases

56

00:02:37,600 --> 00:02:39,390

that belong in formal language

57

00:02:39,390 --> 00:02:41,260

and others that are informal.

58

00:02:41,260 --> 00:02:44,860

Let me give you a couple of examples of what I mean.

59

00:02:44,860 --> 00:02:47,250

Let's say that I really like soccer.

60

00:02:47,250 --> 00:02:49,380

If I'm talking to my friend or colleague,

61

00:02:49,380 --> 00:02:52,540

I might say, "I'm just crazy about soccer!"

62

00:02:52,540 --> 00:02:56,670

But if I were talking to my supervisor or a friend of my parents,

63

00:02:56,670 --> 00:02:58,120

I would probably say,

64

00:02:58,120 --> 00:03:00,030

"I really enjoy soccer,"

65

00:03:00,030 --> 00:03:02,250

or "I like soccer very much."

66

00:03:02,250 --> 00:03:04,930

Let's say I'm telling someone

67

00:03:04,930 --> 00:03:08,290

some news I heard about the police arresting
a criminal.

68

00:03:08,290 --> 00:03:09,720

To my friend I might say,

69

00:03:09,720 --> 00:03:11,900

"The cops bagged the crook."

70

00:03:11,900 --> 00:03:14,170

To my parents' friends I might say,

71

00:03:14,170 --> 00:03:17,720

"The police arrested the thief."

72

00:03:17,720 --> 00:03:20,670

Although the line between formal and informal
language

73

00:03:20,670 --> 00:03:22,400

is not always clear,

74

00:03:22,400 --> 00:03:24,510

and although people are probably less formal

75

00:03:24,510 --> 00:03:26,340

today than in the past,

76

00:03:26,340 --> 00:03:29,640

it is useful to be aware that these two levels,

77

00:03:29,640 --> 00:03:32,230

or categories, do exist.

78

00:03:32,230 --> 00:03:35,140

The best way for a non-native speaker of English

79

00:03:35,140 --> 00:03:36,860

to learn the difference

80

00:03:36,860 --> 00:03:38,760

is to observe the different ways

81

00:03:38,760 --> 00:03:43,040

English speakers speak or write in different situations.

82

00:03:43,040 --> 00:03:44,260

Television newscasters,

83

00:03:44,260 --> 00:03:46,610

your college professors in your class,

84

00:03:46,610 --> 00:03:49,090

your doctors in their offices, etc.

85

00:03:49,090 --> 00:03:51,420

will usually speak rather formally.

86

00:03:51,420 --> 00:03:54,700

However, your classmates, teammates,

87

00:03:54,700 --> 00:03:56,480

family members, and friends

88

00:03:56,480 --> 00:03:59,870

will generally speak in an informal fashion.

89

00:03:59,870 --> 00:04:02,060

The difference can be learned over time

90

00:04:02,060 --> 00:04:04,980

by observing and interacting with native speakers.