

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

Video link: <https://youtu.be/4nB47W4G-3U> (with English subtitles)

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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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.
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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.

From 00:58 in the video:

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Listening Practice

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

Student B: Repeat what student A says.

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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, the underlined words)

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 the 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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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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Read the transcript or listen to the lecture again while you write notes on the main ideas in the column on the left. After you finish your notes, write a summary of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 in the column on the right. You can find examples of answers on pages 8-9 but finish your own version of the notes and the summaries before you look at those examples.

Video link: <https://youtu.be/4nB47W4G-3U>

NOTES	SUMMARY
<p><u>1st paragraph:</u></p> <p>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></p>	
<p><u>3rd paragraph</u></p>	
<p><u>4th paragraph</u></p>	

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<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 / _____,
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