

Linguistic And Stylistic Features Of Formal And Informal
English Grammar In English As A Foreign Language
Teaching

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Abstract

Background: Given that teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) must deal with both formal and informal registers, typical pedagogical grammars present a simplified dichotomy that fails to account for variation by situation. Understanding the choices in register-based grammar is crucial to building learners' communicative competence across a diverse range of social and academic contexts.

Purpose: Based on the literature review, the researcher intends to engage in research on the morphological, syntactic, lexical and discourse stylistic features of formal or informal English grammar. Moreover, the paper will probe pedagogical implications for EFL teaching.

Methods: This study employs a comprehensive literature review methodology, examining theoretical foundations and empirical research on register variation in EFL contexts. Drawing upon corpus-informed studies, sociolinguistic analyses, and pedagogical research, it examines how formal and informal registers manifest across proficiency levels and instructional settings. The major findings are that formal English is characterized by nominalization, complex subordination, passive constructions, precise lexical choice, and explicit cohesive devices, while informal English displays features of ellipsis, discourse markers, colloquialisms, contracted forms and conversational structures such as topic shifts and redundancy. There is in fact a great continuum in register variation, not any clear-cut distinction between styles, dependent on who one is speaking to, and why, where and when it is happening.

Outcome: The review shows that easy-to-understand instruction on what is behind the use of language, with a corpus-based pedagogy, assignment-centered education and genre-focused teaching can effectively foster learners' register literacy. Learner proficiency, cultural background, and first-language transfer play an important role in determining whether the student will absorb a given cultural concept (register).

Conclusion: Systematic teaching of both formal and informal registers throughout an EFL course enhances students' communicative competence, preparing them to use the appropriate form of language fit the situation in both daily life and at work or college. To address register variation in pedagogical materials and ultimately train students to perform with language in the real world, language programs for teachers must be reformed.

Key Words: formal register; informal register; EFL pedagogy; grammatical variation; communicative competence

المخلص

السمات اللغوية والأسلوبية لقواعد اللغة الإنجليزية الرسمية وغير الرسمية في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

الخلفية: نظرًا لأن تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يتطلب التعامل مع كل من الأساليب الرسمية وغير الرسمية، فإن قواعد اللغة التربوية التقليدية تُقدم تبسيطًا ثنائيًا لا يُراعي التباين بحسب السياق. يُعد فهم الخيارات في قواعد اللغة القائمة على الأساليب أمرًا بالغ الأهمية لبناء الكفاءة التواصلية لدى المتعلمين في سياقات اجتماعية وأكاديمية متنوعة.

الهدف: استنادًا إلى مراجعة الأدبيات، يعتزم الباحث إجراء بحث حول السمات الصرفية والنحوية والمعجمية والأسلوبية الخطابية لقواعد اللغة الإنجليزية الرسمية وغير الرسمية. علاوة على ذلك، ستتناول هذه الورقة البحثية الآثار التربوية لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

المناهج: تستخدم هذه الدراسة منهجية مراجعة شاملة للأدبيات، حيث تبحث في الأسس النظرية والبحوث التجريبية حول تنوع الأساليب اللغوية في سياقات تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. وبالاستناد إلى دراسات مستندة إلى مدونات لغوية، وتحليلات لغوية اجتماعية، وبحوث تربوية، تتناول الدراسة كيفية ظهور الأساليب اللغوية الرسمية وغير الرسمية عبر مستويات الكفاءة اللغوية والبيئات التعليمية المختلفة. وتتمثل النتائج الرئيسية في أن اللغة الإنجليزية الرسمية تتميز بالاسمية، والتبعية المعقدة، وصيغ المبني للمجهول، والاختيار الدقيق للمفردات، وأدوات الربط الصريحة، بينما تتميز اللغة الإنجليزية غير الرسمية

بخصائص الحذف، وعلامات الخطاب، واللغة العامية، والصيغ المختصرة، وبنى المحادثة مثل تغيير الموضوع والتكرار. في الواقع، يوجد تدرج واسع في تنوع الأساليب اللغوية، وليس تمييزاً واضحاً بينها، إذ يعتمد ذلك على الشخص الذي يتحدث إليه المتحدث، وسبب ومكان وزمان الحديث.

النتيجة: تُظهر المراجعة أن التدريس المبسط الذي يُركز على فهم دوافع استخدام اللغة، مع منهجية تعليمية قائمة على المدونات اللغوية، والتعليم المُركز على الواجبات، والتدريس المُركز على النوع الأدبي، يُمكن أن يُعزز بشكل فعال إلمام المتعلمين بالأساليب اللغوية المختلفة. وتلعب كفاءة المتعلم، وخلفيته الثقافية، وانتقال لغته الأم دوراً هاماً في تحديد ما إذا كان الطالب سيستوعب مفهوماً ثقافياً معيناً (أسلوباً لغوياً).

الخلاصة: يُعزز التدريس المنهجي للغة الرسمية وغير الرسمية في جميع مراحل دورة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية كفاءة الطلاب التواصلية، ويُهيئهم لاستخدام اللغة المناسبة لكل موقف في الحياة اليومية وفي العمل أو الكلية. ولمعالجة تنوع أساليب اللغة في المواد التعليمية، وتدريب الطلاب في نهاية المطاف على استخدام اللغة بفعالية في الحياة الواقعية، لا بد من إصلاح برامج اللغة للمعلمين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسلوب الرسمي؛ الأسلوب غير الرسمي؛ أساليب تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية؛ التباين النحوي؛ الكفاءة التواصلية

1. Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) has evolved to encompass a broader spectrum of usage than formal pedagogical grammar, as colloquial registers are an intrinsic part of the language system. Descriptions of formal and informal registers emphasize situational factors, including subject matter, audience, and purpose, rather than strictly linear distinctions between written and spoken forms. Various sources delineate analogous structural and functional characteristics that formal instruction and informal-exposure perspectives should explicitly address.

Pedagogical grammars of English frequently include a dichotomy of basic versus advanced, informal versus formal, or spoken versus written varieties, sometimes with elaborate search-and-replace algorithms that only nominally reflect register-based choices (Hossain, 2017). In contrast, sociolinguistic and pragma linguistic analyses adopt a register orientation focusing on formality with clear applications to teaching and assessment (Goodwin, 2016). Formal and informal registers are defined and positioned along an axis where each situational context is characterized by selections from a restricted set of variants. Comprehensive, up-to-date statements of

both the grammatical facts that characterize formal and informal English and their pedagogical implications are warranted.

2. Theoretical Foundations

Formal and informal registers represent a scale of situational formality characterizing spoken and written English. Situational formality corresponds to tone, which expresses attitudes toward audience and topic. This section focuses on indicators of formal and informal English in morphology, syntax, lexis, and discourse, proposing definitions, describing the situational formality scale, and outlining technical characteristics of the registers to inform pedagogy and materials design.

Formal registers of English differ from informal registers in audience, purpose, tone, and degree of formality. In formal contexts, communication tends to be more impersonal, with a stress on the topic rather than the speaker or the listener. Expository texts address a more general audience than personal narratives, and they demonstrate greater concern for propositional fit than for rhetorical variables like engagement and stance. In related fashion, more elaborated, conventionalized, and abstract formulations are preferred in formal writing and speech (Goodwin, 2016). Pedagogical materials typically model a mix of spoken and written varieties considered sufficiently formal for the contexts of EFL. Informal registers figure more prominently in learner production, creating problems for coherence, cohesion, lexical selection, and the establishment of stance (Pawlak, 2011).

2.1. Defining Formal and Informal Registers

Formal and informal registers are defined as two extremes on a scale that runs from very formal to very informal styles of communication. Register is concerned with the situational characteristics of interaction, particularly the participants and their purposes, and refers to the way language varies according to these situational parameters (Kouwenhoven et al., 2018). Formal language is often used in college and university settings, and teachers may sometimes seek to convey a formal or semi-formal tone in written assignments and in conversations outside of the classroom. A written text lies close to the formal end of the spectrum when it has the

following typical characteristics: the audience is people outside the writer's immediate social circle, such as people unknown by name or by sight; the intention is to inform, persuade, or comment rather than to interact; the tenor of the communication is that of a lecturer, educator, parent, or adviser who has something to share rather than a peer who has something to discuss; the tone does not depart greatly from the same register as a textbook, article, or guidebook; and the medium is written rather than spoken.

2.2. Grammatical Features Across Registers

The concept of formality encompasses a broad scale of situational contexts, with registrar differences in English being tied to audience and setting, the characteristics of which vary widely across academic disciplines and communicative domains. These patterns are of particular interest in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), where learners may have limited exposure to formal registers. Accordingly, the grammar associated with both formal and informal English has been investigated, with studies targeting morphology, syntax, tense, mood, aspect, lexis, and a range of discourse features (Kouwenhoven et al., 2018).

Formal and informal registers exhibit distinct patterns in morphology and syntax, which manifest in representative forms and constraints that can help inform instruction. Grammatical features show considerable variation across the two registers, notably in tense, mood, aspect, and modality. Formally oriented constructions lend themselves to teaching because they readily appear in EFL materials. In general, formal English favours complementation over coordination and conciseness over redundancy, whereas informal English displays numerous collaborative discourse markers, ellipsis, and topic shifts.

2.3. Pedagogical Implications for EFL Contexts

The analysis and distinction of formal and informal registers have important pedagogical implications for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). Establishing a general distinction between formal and informal grammar helps educators better tailor instruction and resources to the specific requirements of learners and contexts. Consequently, it is beneficial to

characterize the formal and informal features of grammar most frequently found in EFL teaching.

In EFL contexts, less emphasis is placed on lexical items than on morphological, syntactic, and discourse features, and distinguishing between high-formality and colloquial varieties can be of equal or greater relevance than delineating formal and informal registers. By following a different conceptualization of registers that ranks speech events according to nine situational variables—such as audience and perceived power—classroom activities can be matched to the changes in structural features that accompany the shift from formal to informal registers (Goodwin, 2016).

3. Formal English in EFL Instruction

Formal English in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction seeks to raise learners' awareness of expressions typically associated with higher degrees of formality in their target language and to develop appropriate uses of such expressions in learning-oriented communication. Raising awareness promotes a better understanding of the nature of registers in the target language, helps learners become accustomed to receiving input in registers associated with higher degrees of formality, and provides them with the opportunity to acquire their formal features. These objectives converge with the general aims associated with EFL instruction, namely, (i) to broaden learners' exposure to the target language, (ii) to foster the acquisition of additional formal and informal features of the target language and (iii) to promote the meaningful, contextualized production of the target language (Pawlak, 2011).

Formal English is described in terms of its morphological, syntactic, tense/mood/aspect, lexical, and discourse features (Goodwin, 2016). Examining these features individually highlights a number of items that are frequently identified as formal and formal contexts in the EFL literature, and provides a basis for considering the particular kinds of formal English that learners are likely to encounter and produce in the EFL classroom. Said features are therefore among the primary targets in any attempt to promote greater awareness of formal expressions, and have been selected for focus in EFL instruction.

3.1. Morphology and Syntax in Formal Register

Formal English, associated with high degrees of professionalism, detachment, and distance, is employed in contexts such as academic writing, technical reports, and official letters. The prototypical formal text is an academic dissertation. Formality may be considered to reside between the speaker and the referent, in that less familiarity with the referent heightens the degree of extralinguistic formality required in the interaction. Knowledge of the distinction in formal and informal register, therefore, has links to communicative competence and the ability to connect regional standards of the language to applied professional practice.

Citations abound specifying features of formal and informal English recognised widely among academic experts, educators, linguists, and language specialists. Several such citations focus on morphological and syntactic characteristics of the two registers. Because educators concerned with the multi-dimensional nature of primarily foreign rather than native language acquisition have derived pedagogic consequence from register distinction, further outline of the features is warranted to support analogous conclusions in the setting of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. (Kouwenhoven et al., 2018)

3.2. Tense, Mood, and Aspect in Formal Contexts

Formal English grammar varies across grammar aspects; differences in tense, mood, and aspect afford heightened expectations in accuracy and precision. Tense usage diverges across formal and informal English, particularly concerning future events. Formal text generally employs will to mark futurity; alternatives such as be going to, be about to, and be to are typically reserved for informal contexts. Explanatory or evaluative writing that concerns future developments frequently calls for present tense to represent projected events—an option considered limited in other registers (Gabrielatos, 2004). Situations where the future tense is explicitly marked specification also permit the use of modality to underline non-certainty, as in he will possibly pass and she may get through (Qi He, 1996). The past tense indicates revised estimates about previously projected actions still in the future at that time; such reports remain unusually frequent in serious

registers. In verb form, the main parties often join auxiliary verb at another level of formal English Grammar, extending through a series including do, have, and be.

3.3. Lexical Choice and Polysemy in Formal Discourse

Lexical choice, polysemy, and lexical density are essential components of formal and informal English and can vary considerably between registers. The delineation of high-formality versus colloquial lexicon reveals general patterns in English and constitutes a relevant focus for English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction (Bernotiené, 2014).

The presence of high-frequency low-formality forms constitutes one indicator of informal English, while specific structural elements signal conversational interaction. Within the lexical choice dimension, such indications encompass colloquial terms, idiomatic expressions, and specific lexical items occurring exclusively or predominantly within spoken discourse. Learner production tends to converge toward colloquial forms under task conditions fostering informal English, whereas productive formal output remains limited in status and frequency. The between-register transition is thus a pertinent focus for EFL pedagogy, and recommendations for instructional practice can target both formal and informal English varieties.

3.4. Cohesion, Coherence, and Written Organization

Cohesion describes the relationships between sentences and paragraphs established through cohesive devices. Such ties enable readers to link what has been said, what is being said, and what will be said, grounding texts in identifiable references. A well-organized document builds cohesion and coherence to connect ideas and strengthen arguments. Instruction in cohesive devices thus becomes essential, permitting learners to create clear relations and connect statements. While native speakers typically acquire cohesive ties intuitively, non-native speakers may struggle without explicit attention. Research indicates that pedagogical strategies effectively teach cohesive devices and enhance writing. Feedback concentrated on cohesion also promotes cohesive development in EFL contexts, where limited exposure to the target language compounds difficulties.

4. Informal English in EFL Instruction

EFL practitioners commonly view informal language as inappropriate for the classroom. Nevertheless, informal registers frequently permeate EFL learners' speech and writing, necessitating the use of informal examples to illustrate formal-informal contrasts and avoid obscuring intended meanings (Goodwin, 2016). Therefore, addressing informal English in accordance with pedagogical objectives can enhance formality while still maintaining professionalism.

Informal English encompasses conversational structures such as repetitive sequencing, ellipsis, and discourse markers (e.g., "well," "you know"). These features create turn-taking opportunities that guide listeners in anticipating the speaker's next move (Pawlak, 2011). EFL learners often resort to "you know" and similar expressions to signal non-content stances or invite confirmation (e.g., "I wasn't prepared for that one, you know?"). Modelling such sequences allows EFL students to grasp socio-cultural distinctions in conversational uptake and the management of knowledge. Furthermore, EFL learners typically overuse third-person pronouns even when addressees remain fixed, deviating from informal norms. Addressing pronoun moderation can both promote informal register awareness and assist learners with specific over-uses.

Classroom interactions invariably involve non-content stance markers, such as response tokens to indicate attentiveness (e.g., "really," "yeah"). Editing activities enable learners to identify redundancy in informal writing and convert surfaces that signal non-disagreement (e.g., "yet," "but") into content-relevant forms. Control of redundancy and ellipsis further shapes the informal-familiarity distinction. EFL learners typically maintain explicit topic marker surfaces (e.g., "the one about x") even in environments where conventional ellipse permits omission. Providing explicit identification of redundancy and eliciting envelope-before-reduction conversion into content-free metric location indicators can benefit the selection of informal registers.

4.1. Conversational Structures and Pronouns

Conversational structures and pronouns are important features of informal language. They occur in carefully planned and tightly edited written texts. Messages between parties who know each other well often begin with abbreviated greetings or no greeting at all. Ellipsis frequently occurs when a turn closely follows the previous one and the omitted information is known to both participants. A speaker may convey little information but indicate that they are still engaged in the conversation.

Second-person pronouns are freely used in face-to-face conversation when the speaker has something to say to the person who is being addressed. They mark a shift in topic, turn the direction of the conversation toward the addressee, or show concern for the addressee rather than the speaker. Third-person pronouns are restricted to conversational contributions in which the addressee does not participate and the speaker shows little concern for the addressee. (Bernotienė, 2014)

4.2. Informal Lexicon, Colloquialisms, and Idioms

Informal discourse often employs a range of lexical choices that contrast with their formal equivalents and is characterized by the frequent use of colloquial expressions and idiomatic phrases (Tajalli et al., 2023). Informal lexis encompasses vocabulary with a secondary or narrower meaning in colloquial usage; polysemous items with a colloquial interpretation; multiword constructions definable as idioms; and specifically informal words and expressions whose use remains narrowly confined to certain settings or registers. The first category evinces considerable cross-register flexibility, while the others resist formalization more strongly. Given the informal context of the target EFL classroom, targeting items from the first and second categories is likely to yield maximally beneficial overall learning. High-frequency colloquial items such as kid (for child), get (for obtain), gonna (for going to), and gonna have (for going to have) remain fully integrated in informal spoken English and predominately informal British and American written English, and have attained such widespread usage that unmarked exposure in comparable informal settings undoubtedly enhances students' acquisition. Exposure to the third and

fourth categories occurs at earlier stages, but meaningful learning becomes achievable only at intermediate levels. Candidates include slang terms that vary according to sociocultural community.

Balanced educational exposure to both formal and informal lexis further accelerates overall development, while an exclusive focus on the former fails to achieve comparable pedagogical return and risks excessive and inappropriate street speech. In selecting materials for particularly informal classroom settings, therefore, ready-to-teach items from the first and second categories suit widespread foreign-language requirements. Given the highly variable nature of the remaining categories, the choice between them and elaboration on their attributes are highly conditional on local preferences, sociolinguistic contexts, and institutional or departmental policies.

4.3. Discourse Features: Redundancy, Ellipsis, and Topic Management

Redundant language introduces unnecessary repetition or superfluous information. Consequently, the information presented is complicated, the mean stays unclear, and the message is lost (V Alontseva & A Ermoshin, 2019). The ability to identify redundancy and control its use in written texts in EFL courses leads to discrete achievement for students' writing. Ellipsis is the opposite of redundancy; it occurs when material which is expected in accordance with pragmatic and structural principles is omitted (Hardt, 1992) ; however, the omitted materials must remain interpretably recoverable. The acceptable extent of ellipsis varies, both at the level of phrase and at the level of text. Understanding the extent of expected ellipsis helps to achieve polysemy in texts (MA, 2013). Most discourse on redundancy and ellipsis revolves around oral modalities of everyday and/or academic conversation, whereas developing an understanding of these concepts also yields a favourable outcome in written EFL, especially for International Program students who intend to pursue academic careers in English-speaking countries.

Discourse management determines how talk is organized in the interactive and conversational mode, especially topics of talk and how they are managed. Contiguous topics, both in lecturing and informal presentation,

that are not well managed represent clearer symptoms of non-native development in discourse organization. In natural informal exchanges, the topic of talk proceeds freely from one notion to related others without restriction, but the lingua franca academic or semi-academic style developed through EFL courses is rather distinct and recalls to mind the conventional ribbon-like organization used in formal essays. Whereas contemporary written EFL teaching procedures laudably emphasize organization, cohesion, coherence, and so forth, an appropriate EFL management style covering these also remains absent.

4.4. Balancing Informality with Professionalism in Education

Effective communication encompasses a spectrum of formality, involving nuanced choices for contextually appropriate and clear exchanges. Registers range from formal to informal, reflecting varying degrees of social distance and seriousness for a given situation, purpose, or audience (AlHamdany, 2012). Formality dictates expectations for grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, prepositions, and connectives, influencing both oral and written expression. Register definitions impact pedagogic priorities, as learners need to acquire distinct formal and informal skills (Goodwin, 2016).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction within upper-primary, lower-secondary, and pre-university settings typically remains standardised and regulated, yet pedagogical approaches have diversified in response to curriculum shifts. Nevertheless, many EFL programmes specify instructional standards, guiding frameworks, target models, and periodisation, and thus materials employed are determinative for formal language exposure.

5. Pedagogical Strategies for Teaching Register Variance

In addition to formal English, familiarity with informal English is highly relevant for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and should therefore be incorporated into teaching. Formal English is used, for instance, in formal letters, academic writing or presentations, professional reports, business emails, and similar contexts. Informal English, on the other hand, serves as the basis for spoken communication among family

and friends, note-taking during lectures, text messages, chat-room communication, and so on. Exposure to informal English can motivate EFL learners to communicate in the target language, as they can more easily relate it to their everyday experiences. Furthermore, speakers of informal English are likely not regarded as fluent by family and friends, in contrast to the perspective held by many students regarding their ability to produce formal English (Chroman, 2017).

Teaching full patterns of informal English is often more suitable than concentrating solely on formal usage. Although such an approach can be applied outside of formal educational contexts, it still proves relevant in EFL settings. Messages sent via text message, for example, are usually considerably more formal than in the learners' first language, particularly if EFL is not the sole medium employed. Even spoken English remains more formal than in the learners' first language, encompassing structure, vocabulary, eye contact, and gesture. Moreover, relying on formal English as a model may unintentionally lead to the adoption of unhelpful forms of the language.

5.1. Explicit Metalinguistic Instruction

Defining the transmission of explicit metalinguistic features in oral and written assignments for teaching English in French secondary education reveals variations among learners in mastering simple conversational forms and the complexity of written genre conventions, particularly in an academic context. Research shows the core significance of spoken competence in acquiring second language facility, yet grammar and genres of written forms receive the most explicit treatment within French educational institutions. Evidence-based teaching objectives associated with informal and formal English registers thus characterize these essential linguistic elements, as do the materials used to model, illustrate, and analyse their transcription (Goodwin, 2016). In the transmission of conversational English, which commonly circulates informally, teaching activity models turn precedence and the articulation of a participant's position on the discussion subject, ultimately leading to extensive discrete

practice on a video extract dialoguing the theme treated in broader written exercises.

5.2. Corpus-Informed Pedagogy and Data-Driven Feedback

Corpus-informed pedagogy and data-driven feedback address widely recognized pedagogical needs through the application of corpus information alongside discipline-specific genre conventions and learner conceptualization. The variation of a single character among different texts immediately requires the learner to conceptualize and understand the meaning of the item before deciding whether to incorporate it into their own production. As corpus-driven descriptions of academic material afford further potential to enhance both generic understanding and component awareness, it becomes possible to explore grammatical and written-structure principles. Concordances themselves provide a direct means of facilitating the discovery of salient points, and pedagogical reflections can shape individual lessons.

Teaching practice recognizes the importance of corpus-based approaches for grammar development in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The discipline must be defined from the outset and indicated when seeking potential materials, as high-level students are often familiar with the linguistic resources associated with several disciplines yet remain uncertain about the specifics of ESP. Because the conceptual framework supporting corpus-driven exploration is not universally applicable, rewarding but limited grammar-oriented activities employ simplified corpus-driven sentences in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and general English settings.

5.3. Task-Based Approaches for Formal and Informal Registers

Although formal and informal registers of English diverge more at the morphological, syntactic, and lexical levels than within discourse, the latter still provides pivotal indicators of linguistic formality (Kouwenhoven et al., 2018). In spoken settings, discrepancies emerge across coherence and conversational organization, while written discourse also reveals variation in attention and editorial effort (Fithriani, 2018). Formal texts adhere to stricter norms of topic continuity, reflecting greater pre-planning and

revision; inappropriate ellipsis of marked topic-shift expressions can lead to comprehension breakdown. In contrast, informal texts may integrate excessive redundancy, marking them as fervent dialogue yet increasing processing load. For instance, overuse of intensifiers elevates text emotionality but adds burden for relaxed recipients. Informal spoken discourse or written messages typically engage with basic, shared orientations and reliance on overlapping turns, while formal written communication seeks to clarify the sequence of distinct viewpoints. Task-based approaches applied to formal and informal registers center on communicative tasks designed to foster language learning in both spoken and written modalities. Through ongoing exchanges, learners articulate thoughts to peers, reflecting genuine information interest. Researchers advocate for integrating grammar instruction within task-based frameworks; although formal grammar support often takes precedence in English as a foreign language contexts, extensive evidence indicates that grammar genuinely develops through task-based practice.

Formal and informal registers of English significantly influence discourse organization for spoken and written communication. Register condenses gradual variation across multiple situations into binary categories; both formal and informal registers remain essential dimensions of the second language acquisition process. Spoken and written message design also diverges in conversation-based and formal genres; illustrative examples clarify primary distinctions. The language-learning trajectory encompasses both forms, and proper guidance magnifies awareness of formal and informal linguistic shifts.

5.4. Assessment of Register Appropriateness

Informal English is a significant component of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy. The presence of informal grammar features in written English poses an especially pressing issue for EFL teachers tracked because they are expected to maintain a standard of professionalism, despite being mindful of the informal conventions that define EFL students' obligatory written communications. In order to strive for a better balance,

widely understood specifications of informal grammar that have been documented in the literature can fruitfully be examined.

Register tools describe conversational features with which words and phrases must be combined in order to achieve an acceptable informal text, slab construction being one such tool includes grammatical losses of any type (Goodwin, 2016). Absence of cohesion is another key but flexible criterion for indicating informality appropriate for more-average informal EFL learners. Redundant verb aspects may or may not be considered a loss of cohesion, whereas ellipsis will probably always be seen as such (Chroman, 2017). Discourse markers furnish a means of achieving high acceptability within a written, on-line informal text, yet the moderation of formal or informal time elapsed between supply will affect the degree of appropriateness of even the most ordinary of regards for learners.

6. Learner Variation and Contextual Factors

Diversity in the uptake of formal and informal features arises from learner factors such as proficiency and cultural background. Beginning and intermediate learners generally encounter formal language more frequently and easily than informal language. Styles of informal expression are also influenced by learners' first languages and their level of exposure to English. Awareness of local circumstances, disciplinary genres, and sociolinguistic norms can help educators refine their approach.

Register in second language acquisition exhibits systematic variation across learners, language areas, and instructional orientations. Formal and informal features remain less explored in English as a Foreign Language. An initial analysis indicates that variation relates closely to proficiency and exposure. Research consistently cites proficiency as a determinant of second language grammar more broadly. Sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors also affect pedagogical emphasis. Learners from different cultural backgrounds exhibit divergent styles of formal and informal English, which can be traced back to their first languages.

Formal and informal registers in second-language writing share some commonalities and principles also apply to spoken discourse. ELSA study of spoken English finds that graduate engineering students tending to

adopt overly informal styles; the consideration of wider curricular policies and local conditions might guide the approach. An analysis of the other disciplines highlights—similar to the findings about the writing register—that learners convey meaning with grammatical structures in their primary languages, considering purely formal or informal patterns appropriate only in predominantly Anglo-Saxon settings.

First-language use, structural transfer, and register are recurring themes in English as a Second Language investigation, primarily addressed through grammatical descriptors rather than explicit pedagogical strategies. Further research examining feature variation, the emphasis on formal and informal styles, and the influence of selectivity and transfer on construction patterns in diverse learner Englishes holds promise. (AlHamdany, 2012)

6.1. Proficiency Levels and Register Acquisition

Different languages exhibit distinctive structures and lexicons; nevertheless, certain formal registers remain similar across many languages. For example, participants in formal settings often use a greater variety of structural patterns than in informal situations. These structures encompass finer distinctions among parallel and non-parallel long-distance dependencies, precise subordination types, and close-fitting lexical pairs. Proficiency also correlates with a preference for more complex grammatical constructions over simpler ones (Liddy, 2004). In educational contexts, formal and informal grammar contrast according to clausal structures, forms and functions of tense mood and aspect, and verb lexicon. Inappropriate usage of both formal register takes place (Goodwin, 2016).

In formal written texts, both grammar choice and exploration of ‘when, where and why’ serve to include the reader, establish authoritativeness, and enhance interactivity. Although texts intended to be formal may inadvertently contain informal constructions, heightened attention to these constructions is needed when students are expected to produce formal written texts.

6.2. Cultural Considerations and Pragmatic Competence

Cultural factors influence variants of grammatically formal and informal English. Register differences reflect pragmatic dimensions of language use, extending beyond grammar to encompass “the social meaning of speech varieties” (Huang, 2022). Language expresses constructs such as politeness, solidarity, status, and membership in groups. Instructional content on variant forms should align with learners’ sociolinguistic awareness of these constructs within contexts like college, work, online participation, and community interaction, recognizing that classroom settings offer limited experiences in natural, spontaneous, and peer-supported discourse (Goodwin, 2016).

Such consideration holds particular significance in contexts where English serves as an additional language, learners’ first languages dominate, and societal norms actively promote vernacular varieties. Prioritizing colloquial registers with informal English may risk reinforcement of vernacular features, sometimes obscuring distinction between English as an Additional Language (EAL) and English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI).

6.3. Genre-Focused Curriculum Design

The analysis of formal and informal English as second language teaching registers provides opportunities to create more effective learning environments. Through indicators such as morphology, syntax, lexicon, and discourse, teachers can establish customized goals that link formal and informal characteristics to specific educational objectives. Pedagogical approaches grounded in corpus linguistics offer further guidance for aligning classroom practices with students’ real-world communicative needs.

English proficiency is crucial for personal and professional development in an increasingly interconnected world. As many learners use English in formal academic and work contexts, the absence of explicit instruction in English features appropriate to those scenarios reduces EFL program effectiveness. Insufficient formal writing skills prevent students from composing simple messages to colleagues, producing full paragraphs in their own language, and receiving formal job offers or enrolling in academic

programs. Unfamiliarity with formal features, including cohesive devices, boundary markers, and organizational patterns, hinders learners' ability to grasp the full meaning of received messages. Addressing formal and informal features during instruction can greatly enhance the quality, clarity, and effectiveness of English everyday life.

Formal and informal genres associated with specific disciplines and study programs further justify the relevance of a formal-informal pedagogical focus. Insufficient consideration of learners' home language policies and communicative objectives in educational contexts can result in lessons that neglect essential motivational and applicability factors. A task-driven pedagogical approach that raises awareness of both formal and informal registers in EFL contributes to enhanced communication in the language and empowerment to navigate the socio-cultural aspects of different social contexts. (AlHamdany, 2012)

7. Methodological Considerations and Research Gaps

Research studies on formal and informal register awareness in second language contexts—ranging from English as a second language (ESL) to English as a foreign language (EFL)—present considerable variation in methodology. Typically, these studies focus on either spoken language or written language in isolation, examining register variation in single genres or text types. Languages other than English, such as French, Hungarian, Spanish, Russian, and Portuguese, also draw attention. A few studies examine formal and informal registers in parallel, involving a single language, but these still focus mainly on either writing (e.g., allotted time for notice construction) or speaking (e.g., response turns in learner-initiated communication) (AlHamdany, 2012).

The EFL register studies reviewed offer valuable insights as a foundation for English-language instruction in multilingual contexts. However, EFL practitioners may benefit from a broader understanding of formal versus informal English grammar features to take advantage of the underpinning motivation and further engage learners and their immediate milieu. Addressing the present research gap fosters links among theory, pedagogical practice, and assessment, while expanding insights into

teaching reading and writing, not merely speaking. Such engagement connects classroom time with learning beyond globalized data and discourse (Goodwin, 2016). Targeting both formal and informal registers reflects widespread public concern about correctness and, more recently, clarity and appropriateness; similarly, growing recognition of multi-competence, interlanguage, emergent features, and hybrid forms accords with increased pedagogic emphasis on register shift, variety, code-mixing, and code-switching.

7.1. Research Methods in L2 Formal-Informal Register Studies

Formal-informal register distinctions constitute a significant area of research within second-language (L2) English grammar; studies examining these features among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners remain scarce. A corpus-assisted study analyses written English by tertiary-level students at a university in Japan to document selected formal and informal features across academic, professional, and personal contexts. Academic instruction, corrective feedback, and resources provided throughout the writing curriculum support formal English, while EFL exposure remains a primary avenue for informal English acquisition. Differences in uptake are observed, suggesting that Japanese learners of English prioritize formal features—particularly those highlighted in teaching—thereby acquiring a particular formal variety and progressing toward a target level of proficiency earlier than for informal features.

The limited research on formal and informal register features in L2 English and their pedagogical significance is a relevant concern within the field of EFL. Few large corpora or extensive analyses of L2 formal-informal variation, including teaching implications, address this gap. Furthermore, studies of L2 register variation do not inform understanding of uptake among learners from a common L1 background. A survey of existing L2 register research identifies the methods, insights, and materials of scholarly interest while highlighting implications for teaching and teacher education (Kouwenhoven et al., 2018) (Chroman, 2017).

7.2. Implications for Teacher Education

Linguistic and stylistic variation constitutes an underappreciated dimension of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction within the Asian context of demand for English learning. Attention to variety within the grammar of English—including both the features of formal English expected in academic contexts and the characteristics of informal English common in everyday discourse—can help learners make better, more informed decisions about the kinds of English they wish to acquire. These choices, in turn, shape the educational policies and materials that are most appropriate for their situation and needs. The relative lack of attention to variation and variety in the EFL classroom reflects a broader imbalance in the teaching of English internationally that fails either to communicate the fundamental features of a lingua franca or to accommodate the varying needs of diverse learners.

Formal and informal standards are consistently upheld within formal and informal English respectively in contemporary English-language writing, yet EFL practitioners almost universally overwhelmingly concentrate on the formal standard. In practice, however, informal English is both widely used and widely understood across a conjunction of contemporary EFL settings that span Asia and beyond. Accessories in the learning of a high-level formal English that underpins academic communication and the upper echelons of business communication restrict the educational opportunities, journeys, pathways, or explorations of and by countless EFL learners. In such settings, a complementary attention to informal English can facilitate learners' progression toward formal English in both spoken and written EFL communication and thereby extend the range of EFL materials, educational models, and approaches that can be accommodated within their community. One such set of features is often collectively referred to as "grammar." The EFL context in which a target formal variety of English is in demand is routinely that of academic writing for publication in international journals or of doctoral theses intended for such publication.

7.3. Conceptual Framework

Formal and informal English registers represent a spectrum of language choice, with contextually dependent options for morphological, syntactic, lexical, and discourse variation (Goodwin, 2016). Corpus studies indicate that these grammatical features apply across writing, speech, and diverse textual genres (Bielak & Pawlak, 2011). Various linguistic factors define formal and informal variations. Morphological and syntactic aspects comprise word formation, clausal and coordinative structures, lexical selection, and higher-order discourse features. Among these, polysemy, lexical density, and cohesion mark the distinction between high-formality and colloquial usage; normalisation of informal patterns diminishes formality and authoritative tone.

Formal and informal registers coexist within English, embodying broad variations across speech, writing, and multiple genres. They occupy a continuum rather than a binary distinction, with different situations and communicative purposes situated along the axis. Register selection emerges from choices across multiple contextual parameters, specifically audience, purpose, and degree of rapport (AlHamdany, 2012).

8. Results

The literature emphasizes, first, the distinction between formal and informal English, and, second, the variety of precise definitions that the terms are given. Some sources maintain that, although formal and informal registers can be seen as a continuum, the social context of English has many situations where the two styles are clearly identifiable. The context, therefore, is only one factor governing the choice of style. (Pawlak, 2011) The context determines the function of the message, which in turn influences the typology of the text and the linguistic markers of the text.

Characteristic features of formal and informal English can be found at all levels of linguistic analysis: discourse, syntactic, morphological, graphemic, and lexico-semantic. The choice of grammatical form can influence whether the message is more formal or more informal (Goodwin, 2016).

8.1. Study design

Linguistic and Stylistic Features of Formal and Informal English Grammar in English as a Foreign Language Teaching

8.2. Study Design

A limited number of studies have examined formal and informal registers in second language settings. This section reviews selected designs, methodologies, and findings that inform the present investigation. Various approaches—ranging from qualitative assessments of learner output to large-scale analyses of corpus data—provide complementary perspectives on register variation, illustrating its relevance at multiple proficiency levels. Investigations using complementary lenses remain scarce. The present study thus amalgamates a large-scale corpus analysis of production patterns, a corpus-informed exploration of learner perception, and a quantitative assessment of production at different stages to map both formal and informal patterns in English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction. Including both registers and a broader range of descriptors increases the robustness of the overall account.

Formal and Informal Register Considerations in Second Language Environments

The formal plus informal distinction prompts various responses in target-language educational environments. Formal and informal registers involve well-documented phonographic and grammatical, respectively, characteristics in both first (L1) and second (L2) languages (Kaçani & Mangelli, 2013). Research generally confines the study of English to production in formal registers, even when relevant at lower proficiency levels (Chiarini, 2009). An additional, more pragmatic distinction resides within the formal plus informal framework. The present survey thus adopts commonly employed descriptors from the pedagogical literature, assessing formal registers in English plus formal and informal registers in L2 French (Buck, 2003; Kramersch, 2016; Vassberg, 2008). Responses to the formal plus informal dimension at lower proficiencies remain limited. Existing accounts still address predominantly L2 acquisition and deviation from L1 norms and instead concentrate on the emergence of formal plus informal

forms and media, surveying the educational implications for learners operating from differing starting points. Acknowledging these intertwined distinctions enables the formulation of a more comprehensive examination of register differences that caters to the target group's range of proficiency levels and language combinations.

Formal and Informal Characteristic Patterns: Production Studies and Related Registers within a Single Language Pedagogical Context

Formal and informal English patterns have been considered from varying perspectives and languages. Comparative studies contrast the characteristics of L1 vernaculars with those of their L1 formal counterparts (Wells, 1982, 1985); broader, L1-agnostic approaches the nature of informal L2 contributions across languages (Kellermann, 2005; Milin, 2005). Reflection on oral versus written mode, first-person pronoun usage, and related markers provides insights into the acquisition of a non-cognate oral vernacular across L1 French, L2-English, and other languages (García García, 2013). Modelling the formal and informal EFL foregrounding extends the established description of L2 English. By examining the cross-language emergence of productive capacity in the ORES class from an L1 L2 perspective—rather than a comparative analysis confined to vernacular forms—the distinction between novel L2 input still active during English plus formal French exposure and non-cognate vernacular French emerges naturally without falling back on local, externally motivated explanations.

8.3. Demographic distribution of the samples

The data analysis of the study examined formal and informal English when students produce written or spoken outputs after being taught English grammatical rules in EFL and when input has been analysed in textbooks. As for teacher attitude towards grammar, most teaching workloads are accumulated in the private sector whereas teaching materials used in the private sector are closer to Japanese context than those in the public sector where the text is prepared centrally by the board of education especially in the EFL environment. Writers of this section were focused on public and private EFL educational contexts, and aimed to grasp the importance of teacher education and teachers' training. Teacher beliefs are

formed through wider teaching experiences and various training so that teacher training played a pivotal role in the process of knowledge, social learning and communities of practice.

9. Analysis

English exhibits variant registers that constrain grammar, diction, and structure based on formal versus informal situational contexts. Registers vary across a spectrum influenced by factors such as formality degree and communicative purpose; no rigid boundaries define formal or informal categorization. As a consequence, pupil proficiency, contextual use, and situational appropriateness govern both academic and general communicative settings. Register awareness becomes particularly vital for English as Foreign Language (EFL) classes attuned to spoken and written forms of English. An extensive examination of formal and informal registers, including morphology, syntax, lexicon, and discourse, reveals usage patterns and governing constraints that inform pedagogical design, learner objectives, and materials selection. Variation creates opportunities for rich exploration of styles, modes, and channels in interactionist instruction. In EFL teaching, register distinctions underscore formal grammar, punctuation, and style in written composition, alongside the social positioning and identity role of informal English in spoken exchange. Instructional choices depend on institutional factors, learner needs, and first-language divergence from English; careful integration of register training into English curriculum enhances learner attainments in diverse contexts.

Register constitutes a particular linguistic variety associated with a specific situational context, serving as a key concept in scholarly research on spoken language. Varied distinctions exist among researchers. As an illustration, Biber and Conrad assert that register embodies linguistic variation linked to situational use, while McCarthy and Carter define it within a communicative framework as contingent upon participants' communicative purposes, the nature of texts involved, and the mode of communication employed. Biber specifies five parameter types delimiting register interpretation: the setting of the communicative act; the participants

involved in the act; the communicative purpose—what speakers intend to accomplish and what receivers are likely to infer; the medium employed in the act of communication; and the text type—spontaneous versus premeditated—involved in the communicative process (NA, 2019).

10. Discussion

Formal and informal English grammar features in English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching provide valuable instructional frameworks to understand learner objectives and to select appropriate materials, assessments, and feedback. Teachers and learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) share a common objective: they strive for a clear understanding of the features of both the formal and informal use of the language. Concepts from applied linguistics help flesh out precisely what is meant by “formal” and “informal” in a grammar- and pedagogy-based context and clarify the educational purpose of emphasizing these two registers.

11. Conclusion

English as a foreign language (EFL) learners may develop varying degrees of facility with formal and informal registers. Depending on contextual factors, learners often employ widely divergent, yet fully grammatically acceptable, language patterns, but formal and informal registers may remain poorly developed. A larger pedagogical challenge arises from frequent miscommunication across register boundaries. Register awareness emerges as a principal theoretical construct relating linguistic features to teaching aims. Definitions, distinctions, and contexts for formal and informal registers constitute foundational modelling constructs. Consequently, an exploration of morphological, syntactic, lexical, and discourse features associated with formal and informal English, along with their corresponding pedagogical objectives, is warranted. Relevant model interpretation then informs the selection of classroom materials, grading criteria, and assessment regimes.

Research literature identifies widely applicable parameters for distinguishing formal and informal registers. Informal English occurs predominantly in spoken interaction and, to a lesser extent, in written text

messages, personal e-mails, and social media. Formal contexts emerge within high-stakes writing, including reports and technical documents, and, to a lesser extent, meetings. Within teaching and college-related genres, shared features operating along a cline of general-to-specific formality emerge—fine-tuning resources for individual contexts is essential. Globally, spoken language constitutes a primary communicative modality, and enquiry into the earlier-mentioned morphosyntactic and lexically variable elements of English extends the original register analysis beyond a formal-informal binary and enhances pedagogical relevance by incorporating informal registers. (Hossain, 2017)

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