LEXICAL MEANS USED IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract. The present thesis examines the lexical features that differentiate formal and informal communication, focusing on vocabulary selection, stylistic variation, and contextual appropriateness. Special attention is given to how speakers choose lexical units depending on the communicative environment and social relationships. The study also analyzes the role of lexical variation in achieving effective communication and maintaining social interaction.

Key words: lexical means, formal communication, informal communication, vocabulary, stylistic variation, colloquial language, slang, professional terminology, communicative context, language interaction.

Language is a fundamental tool of human communication, and vocabulary plays a crucial role in expressing ideas, emotions, and intentions. One of the most important aspects of language use is the selection of lexical means depending on the communicative situation. In everyday interaction, people adapt their vocabulary according to the context, the relationship between speakers, and the purpose of communication. As a result, language can be broadly divided into formal and informal styles.

Formal and informal communication differ significantly in their lexical choices. Formal communication typically involves the use of standard vocabulary, precise terminology, and grammatically complete structures. It is commonly used in academic, professional, and institutional settings such as scientific writing, official documents, reports, and public speeches.

Informal communication, on the other hand, is characterized by relaxed language, colloquial expressions, slang, contractions, and emotionally expressive vocabulary. It is mostly used in everyday conversations among friends, family members, and colleagues in casual situations. The study of lexical means used in formal and informal communication is an important area of linguistics because it reveals how vocabulary reflects social relationships, cultural norms, and communicative intentions. Understanding these lexical differences helps speakers use language appropriately and effectively in various contexts.

In linguistics, lexical means refer to the vocabulary units that speakers use to convey meaning in communication. These units include words, phrases, idioms, technical terms, and expressions that form the lexical system of a language. Lexical choice is influenced by many factors such as social context, cultural background, professional environment, and the relationship between participants in communication. Lexical means serve several important functions in communication. First, they allow speakers to transmit information clearly and accurately. Second, they help express emotions, attitudes, and personal opinions. Third, they reflect the level of formality or informality in a communicative situation.

Finally, lexical choices help establish social relationships and signal the speaker's identity, education level, and cultural affiliation. The vocabulary used in communication is not fixed; rather, it changes depending on the situation. For example, the same idea can be expressed differently in formal and informal contexts. In formal communication, speakers tend to use neutral and standardized vocabulary, while in informal communication they may use simpler, more expressive, and sometimes nonstandard words.

Formal communication is typically associated with official, academic, and professional environments. The lexical features of formal communication reflect clarity, precision, and neutrality. In formal settings, speakers and writers aim to present information objectively and avoid ambiguity or emotional exaggeration.

One of the most distinctive features of formal communication is the use of standard vocabulary. Standard vocabulary refers to words that are widely accepted and recognized within the language community. These words are usually found in dictionaries and follow grammatical and stylistic norms.

Another characteristic of formal communication is the use of technical and professional terminology. In academic or scientific contexts, specialized vocabulary is used to describe specific concepts and processes. For example, fields such as medicine, law, engineering, and linguistics have their own terminological systems that allow experts to communicate precisely and efficiently.

Formal communication also tends to avoid slang, contractions, and overly emotional language. Instead, it uses complete forms of words and expressions. For example, writers prefer "do not" instead of "don't," and "cannot" instead of "can't." This creates a more serious and professional tone. Additionally, formal communication often includes abstract vocabulary and complex lexical constructions. Words such as "approximately," "significant," "analysis," and "implementation" are commonly used in academic and professional texts. These lexical choices help convey complex ideas in a structured and systematic way.

Examples of contexts where formal lexical means are used include:
- Academic articles and research papers
- Official reports and documents
- Business correspondence
- Government communication
- Public speeches and presentations

The main goal of formal communication is to ensure clarity, accuracy, and professionalism in the transmission of information.

Informal communication is used in everyday interactions and social conversations. It reflects a relaxed and personal style of language use. Unlike formal communication, informal communication allows speakers to express emotions, personal attitudes, and creativity through vocabulary. One of the main lexical features of informal communication is the use of colloquial language. Colloquial expressions are words and phrases commonly used in everyday speech but rarely found in formal writing. These expressions often simplify communication and make it more natural and friendly. Another important feature of informal communication is the use of slang.

Slang consists of highly informal words and phrases that are often used by specific social groups, such as young people or particular communities. Slang expressions change frequently over time and may not be understood by all speakers of the language.

Informal communication also includes contractions and shortened forms of words. For example, speakers often use "I'm," "you're," "it's," and "they're" instead of the full forms "I am," "you are," "it is," and "they are." These contractions make speech faster and more conversational.

Idiomatic expressions are also common in informal communication. Idioms are phrases whose meanings cannot be understood directly from the meanings of the individual words. For instance, expressions like "break the ice," "hit the books," or "piece of cake" are frequently used in casual conversation. Another feature of informal lexical usage is emotional vocabulary.

Speakers may use expressive words, interjections, and intensifiers to show feelings or attitudes. Words such as "awesome," "terrible," "amazing," and "really" help convey emotions more vividly.

Informal communication typically occurs in the following situations:

- Conversations between friends and family
- Social media interactions
- Casual discussions at work
- Personal messages and chats

The primary purpose of informal communication is to create a comfortable and friendly atmosphere and to strengthen social relationships.

The lexical differences between formal and informal communication reflect differences in social context, purpose, and audience. Formal vocabulary is usually more precise, neutral, and structured, while informal vocabulary is more flexible, expressive, and spontaneous. In formal communication, the speaker or writer focuses on delivering information in a clear and professional manner. The vocabulary used is carefully selected to avoid misunderstandings and maintain a serious tone. In contrast, informal communication allows greater freedom in language use.

Speakers may use humor, slang, and creative expressions to make communication more engaging and personal.

Another important difference is the level of standardization. Formal language follows established linguistic norms and is usually expected in professional and academic environments.

Informal language, however, often includes regional expressions, personal styles, and nonstandard forms that reflect everyday speech. These differences demonstrate that lexical choices are not random but are influenced by social and communicative factors. Successful communication requires the ability to adapt vocabulary according to the context and the expectations of the audience.

Lexical choice plays a crucial role in ensuring effective communication. Selecting appropriate vocabulary helps speakers express their ideas clearly and establish the desired tone of interaction. In professional or academic settings, using formal lexical means demonstrates competence, respect, and credibility. At the same time, informal lexical means are important for building social relationships and creating a sense of familiarity and trust. In friendly conversations, overly formal language may sound distant or unnatural.

Therefore, speakers must balance formal and informal vocabulary depending on the situation. The ability to switch between formal and informal lexical styles is an important aspect of communicative competence. Individuals who can adjust their vocabulary according to the context are more likely to communicate successfully in different social and professional environments.

Lexical means are a central element of communication and play a key role in distinguishing formal and informal language styles. Formal communication is characterized by standard vocabulary, technical terminology, and precise expressions that ensure clarity and professionalism.

Informal communication, in contrast, includes colloquial language, slang, contractions, idioms, and emotionally expressive words that reflect everyday interaction. The differences between these lexical styles highlight the importance of context in language use. Speakers and writers must consider the communicative situation, the audience, and the purpose of interaction when choosing vocabulary. Understanding the lexical features of formal and informal communication helps individuals develop effective communication skills and use language appropriately in various social contexts.

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