



INTRODUCTION

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Abstract

English plays a significant role in higher education, requiring university students to understand and use the language in both academic and daily contexts. During their studies, students are exposed to formal English through academic texts, presentations, and written assignments, while informal English is commonly used in everyday communication, social media, and digital content. This study aims to examine the level of university students' understanding of formal and informal English and to identify factors influencing their comprehension. This research employed a descriptive quantitative approach involving 15 university students from various academic backgrounds. Data were collected through a questionnaire and an English comprehension test to measure students' understanding, frequency of use, and difficulties related to both language varieties. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, including percentages and average scores. The results show that students generally have a better understanding of informal English than formal English. Informal English is perceived as easier due to frequent exposure and simpler structures, while formal English is considered more difficult because of complex grammar and academic vocabulary. Nevertheless, students recognize the importance of formal English for academic and professional purposes. The study concludes that balanced instruction in both formal and informal English is essential in higher education.

Abstrak

Bahasa Inggris memainkan peran penting dalam pendidikan tinggi, mengharuskan mahasiswa universitas untuk memahami dan menggunakan bahasa tersebut dalam konteks akademik maupun sehari-hari. Selama studi mereka, mahasiswa terpapar pada bahasa Inggris formal melalui teks akademik, presentasi, dan tugas tertulis, sementara bahasa Inggris informal sering digunakan dalam komunikasi sehari-hari, media sosial, dan konten digital. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tingkat pemahaman mahasiswa universitas terhadap bahasa Inggris formal dan informal serta mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi pemahaman mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif deskriptif yang melibatkan 15 mahasiswa dari berbagai latar belakang akademik. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner dan tes pemahaman Bahasa Inggris untuk mengukur pemahaman, frekuensi penggunaan, dan kesulitan yang terkait dengan kedua variasi bahasa tersebut. Data dianalisis menggunakan metode statistik deskriptif, termasuk persentase dan skor rata-rata. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa umumnya memiliki pemahaman yang lebih baik terhadap bahasa Inggris informal dibandingkan bahasa Inggris formal. Bahasa Inggris informal dianggap lebih mudah karena paparan yang sering dan struktur yang lebih sederhana, sementara bahasa Inggris formal dianggap lebih sulit karena tata bahasa yang kompleks dan kosakata akademik. Namun, mahasiswa menyadari pentingnya bahasa Inggris formal untuk tujuan akademik dan profesional. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa pengajaran yang seimbang antara bahasa Inggris formal dan informal sangat penting dalam pendidikan tinggi.

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

English plays an essential role in higher education, especially for university students who are required to engage with academic materials written in English. During their studies, students encounter English in many forms, such as textbooks, journal articles, presentations, assignments, and online learning resources. In addition to academic purposes, English is also widely used in daily communication through social media, entertainment, and informal interactions with peers. As a result, university students are expected not only to understand English in general but also to be able to use it appropriately in different situations.

In everyday use, English can be divided into two main types: formal English and non-formal (informal) English. Formal English is commonly used in academic and professional contexts. It is characterized by structured sentences, standard grammar, precise vocabulary, and an objective tone. This type of English is usually found in academic writing, research papers, official emails, and classroom discussions. In contrast, non-formal English is used in more relaxed situations, such as casual conversations, social media posts, movies, songs, and online chats. This variety often includes slang, abbreviations, contractions, and expressions that may not follow strict grammatical rules.

During their time at university, students are exposed to both types of English almost every day. In the classroom, they are required to read and write academic texts using formal English. Outside the classroom, however, they are more frequently exposed to non-formal English through digital platforms and popular culture. This situation requires students to understand the differences between formal and non-formal English and to use each appropriately depending on the context.

In reality, many students still experience difficulties in this area. Some students are more

familiar with non-formal English because of frequent exposure through social media and entertainment, yet they struggle to understand academic texts or produce formal writing. Others may have learned grammatical rules in class but find it difficult to understand informal expressions, idioms, or slang used in everyday communication. These challenges can lead to confusion, inappropriate language use, and difficulties in both academic and social settings.

A limited understanding of formal English can affect students' ability to comprehend lecture materials, read academic texts, and complete written assignments effectively. At the same time, a lack of understanding of non-formal English may limit students' ability to communicate naturally and confidently in daily interactions. Therefore, it is important to examine how well university students understand both formal and non-formal English and to identify the factors that influence their comprehension.

Based on these considerations, this study focuses on the level of understanding of formal and non-formal English among university students. By examining students' comprehension of both language forms, this research aims to provide a clearer picture of their strengths and challenges in using English during their academic life.

B. Research Questions

Questions are intended to Ask for opinions

- The use of non-formal English helps to improve the understanding of English. How well do university students understand formal English in academic contexts?
- What difficulties do you most often experience when understanding formal English?
- Is it enough if only use informal English? What is the reason
- why non-formal English tends to be easier for students to understand than formal English?

- Formal English is more difficult to apply than non-formal English?
- How often do you use English both in real life and on social media?

C. Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

- Identify the level of university students' understanding of formal English in academic settings.
- Examine the level of university students' understanding of non-formal English in daily communication.
- Explore the factors that influence students' comprehension of formal and non-formal English.

D. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide several important contributions:

Theoretical Significance

The findings of this study may contribute to discussions in the field of English language education, particularly in understanding how students comprehend and use different varieties of English in academic and non-academic contexts.

Practical Significance

For students, this study may help increase awareness of the importance of understanding and using formal and non-formal English appropriately.

For lecturers and educators, the results can be used as a reference to improve teaching approaches and learning materials related to English language instruction.

For educational institutions, this study may provide useful input for developing English curricula that better meet students' academic and communicative needs.

Methods of Research

This study examines how well college students comprehend formal and informal English over the course of their academic careers using a descriptive quantitative method. Instead than testing a specific teaching strategy or methodology, this approach aims to describe students' true level of knowledge. This study aims to provide an accurate picture of how students understand and utilize English in various academic and everyday contexts by concentrating on description and measurement.

The study's participants are current university students with a range of academic backgrounds, including majors in both English-related and unrelated subjects. University students were selected because they frequently use informal English in everyday conversation, social media, and online interactions while also encountering formal English in contexts like completing academic assignments, giving presentations, and reading academic materials. Purposive sampling was used to choose the participants, thus only students who had completed English courses or had prior experience using the language in both formal and informal contexts were included in the study.

A questionnaire and an English comprehension exam were the two primary tools utilized to gather the data. The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out how well students understood formal and informal English, how frequently they used either, and what challenges they faced when switching between the two. Questions on vocabulary selection, sentence construction, and acceptable language use in various circumstances were included in the comprehension test, which was centered on practical comprehension. Both tools were thoroughly examined before to distribution to make sure they were understandable, pertinent, and appropriate for the study's goals.

Depending on the participants' availability, the questionnaire and test were given out in person or

online. In order to ensure that their answers accurately reflected their level of comprehension, students were given enough time to complete both instruments. Following the collection of all responses, the information was arranged and categorized based on formal and informal English comprehension factors.

Descriptive statistical techniques, such as calculating percentages and average scores, were used to evaluate the data. This study allowed for the comparison of students' proficiency in both forms and the identification of broad trends in their comprehension of formal and informal English. Additionally, the analysis helped identify variables that could affect students' comprehension, such as their educational background, how frequently they use English, and the learning environment they are in.

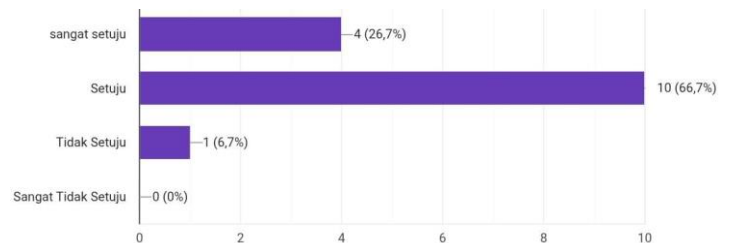
The overall goal of this research approach is to offer a practical and significant understanding of how college students interpret and utilize formal and informal English throughout their academic careers. In order to better serve students' academic and everyday communication needs, the findings are anticipated to provide instructors and educational institutions with valuable insights for enhancing English instruction.

Discussion and Result

Based on data obtained from 15 respondents, it can be concluded that informal English is more prevalent in everyday life, particularly through social media, informal conversations, and digital content. The majority of respondents reported being exposed to informal English more frequently than formal English.

To measure comprehension levels, researchers also asked questions about their understanding of both formal and informal English. The results showed that most respondents had a better understanding of informal English than formal English. Informal English was perceived as more flexible, simpler, and more frequently used in

everyday language. Conversely, formal English was perceived as having a more rigid structure, strict grammatical rules, and vocabulary that was less familiar to respondents.



Based on research the majority of respondents stated that formal English is more difficult to use than informal English. The main difficulties that often arise are limited grammar mastery, formal vocabulary selection, vocabulary, and formal academic word order. This shows that limited understanding of formal linguistic structures is a major obstacle in the use of formal English.

Although informal English is considered easier and more practical, the majority of respondents disagreed that only informal English is important. They acknowledged that formal English remains important, particularly for academic purposes, scientific writing, and official and professional communication. This shows that there is linguistic awareness that the two language varieties have different and complementary functions.

According to the claims made by respondents, informal English is simpler to grasp because: It's frequently utilized in daily life. It frequently appears in music, movies, and social media. Sentences that are simpler Strict grammatical rules do not apply as much to it. This study shows that language exposure through popular media

significantly influences students' linguistic comprehension from the perspectives of musicolinguistics and sociolinguistics. Overall, the study's conclusions show that formal and casual English are not well understood. While formal English continues to be a crucial standard that needs organized development, informal English acts as a first bridge in language learning.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that university students are generally more familiar with and have a higher level of understanding of informal English than formal English. This condition is strongly influenced by the frequency of exposure, as informal English is widely encountered in daily life through social media, online communication, music, movies, and casual conversations. As a result, students perceive informal English as easier, more flexible, and more practical to use.

In contrast, formal English is considered more challenging by most respondents. The main difficulties faced by students include limited mastery of grammar, unfamiliar academic vocabulary, and difficulty applying appropriate sentence structures in formal contexts. These challenges affect students' ability to fully understand academic texts and produce formal written or spoken English effectively. This indicates that students still require structured support and consistent practice to improve their competence in formal English, particularly in academic settings.

Despite the dominance of informal English in daily communication, the majority of students recognize that formal English remains essential, especially for academic purposes, scientific writing, and professional communication. This awareness shows that students understand the distinct roles of formal and informal English and acknowledge that both varieties serve complementary functions rather than replacing one another.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of balancing exposure to both forms of English in higher education. Informal English can serve as an entry point that builds confidence and communicative ability, while formal English must be developed systematically to support academic success. Therefore, English instruction at the university level should emphasize not only grammatical accuracy but also contextual language use, enabling students to switch appropriately between formal and informal English according to their communicative needs.

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