

# Formal and Informal Language Expressions Used by English Students of Indonesia in Classroom Presentation-Interaction

Nurfitri Sri Muslimawati\*

Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

\*nurfitrisrim@gmail.com

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## ABSTRACT

Analyzing communication strategies remains crucial to overcome communication problems in classroom interaction since it directs the students to receive successful English learning results. One strategy to communicate is applying an appropriate language level of formality in the classroom. However, there have been very limited researches that explore formal and informal languages in the classroom context. This research aims to discuss the characteristics and factors influencing students in using formal and informal expressions in the classroom presentation-interaction. This research applied a qualitative method taking twenty-two students of Universitas Negeri Makassar as participants. The data from classroom observation, voice-recording, and interview were analysed using the discourse analysis approach. The result of the research shows that characteristics of formal and informal language are absolutely opposite, namely complete versus uncompleted sentence, politeness versus familiarity words, and precise versus colloquialism words. The result of the research also shows factors influencing the use of formal and informal language are formal situations, communication purposes, status and age differences, and familiarity. This research also found the relation of using formal language as students' strategies to be polite to the lecturer in classroom interaction. Results of this research are significant for students in shaping good strategies in using formal or informal language expressions to achieve effective communication in classroom interaction.



## 1. Introduction

The study that investigates the relationship between social context and language remains popular in the current era. The need to attain effective social communication demands studies to solve communication issues (Floreddu & Cabiddu, 2016). Mashudi et al. (2017) emphasised the importance of complying with language rules and the relation in achieving effective communication. Soekarno (2018) also suggested using appropriate strategies to run communication harmoniously. In shaping a good strategy, it is crucial to learn social features of communication to understand language rules and apply them to pursue communication purposes.

In sociolinguistics domains, the studies are varied to analyse language and the social features of language for example situation, speakers' identity, cultural background, etc. Shah & Sinayah (2020); Banikadef et al. (2015); Dwijatmoko (2018) conducted research on analyzing certain social aspects of language and its correlation to language use. Banikadef et al. (2015) for example, he found that apology strategies are affected by social status. He posited that the ability to select language strategies will contribute for raising language awareness. It means that understanding the social aspect of language helps speakers

to use appropriate language in the appropriate context to achieve effective communication. Consequently, studies in this area are still necessary.

In education areas, effective communication is essential to establishing and maintaining a good quality of the learning process. Students need to apply good communication strategies to successfully learn English in the classroom. There are various studies held to reveal phenomena that influence successful students' interaction in the classroom such as politeness, intercultural competence, etc. but still rarely on analyzing language formality.

Levels of formality of language are varied depending on the situation where and when the interaction happened. Varieties of language that are highly related values emphasise status differences, rituals, formality related to religion, education, and government. Based on Straker's (1980) statement, educational environment is one of the situations for people to highly concern about their language. The positions when people are generally conscious about choosing the right words, structuring a good sentence, and pronouncing well are defined as formal speech or language (Richard et al., 1997). The situation that calls for formal English includes business letters or e-mails, letters or e-mails to government officials, office memos or e-mails,

reports, homework, communications to teachers, important conversations, speeches, presentations, and oral reports (Woods, 2017). Conversely, Kraut et al. (1990) argued that informal language has no restriction from rules or social orders. The rules and code attributed to formal language are removed. Woods (2017) divide English into three levels; friends-talk, conversational English, and formal English. Friends-talk and conversational English include in informal English. "In friend-speak, the speakers are on the same level. They have nothing to prove to each other and they are comfortable with each other mistakes" (Woods, 2017, p.11). On the other hand, conversational English does not stray too far from English rules, but it does break the rules. Friend-speak deals with the friendship domain where the use of slang language is frequently. Conversational English deals with situations such as chatting with family members, friendly conversation with supervisors, e-mail and text to friends, and informal conversation with the teachers (Woods, 2017).

Based on the theory above, students are expected to use formal language in classroom interaction specifically during the presentation process. Interestingly, the fact is students still use informal language. When someone speaks formal expressions in a formal situation, it could be a signal for building space in family and friendship domains. Whereas, when someone speaks informal expressions in a formal situation, the person could be considered as an ignorant (Straker, 1980). The researcher questioned if there was any incongruity made by students in using formal and informal language expressions in classroom interaction. Hence, the researcher was eager to analyse formal and informal language expressions used by English students in classroom presentation-interaction.

There were several studies have been done on similar issues. Pardianti (2013) analysed the use of slang language by junior high school students. She used questioners and interviews to categorise types and identify factors influencing the use of slang. Susanto (2014) investigated the use of address terms *sampeyan* and *anda* by Javanese students to address lecturers. He also looked at the factors influencing the students used these address terms. Purwati (2019) also studied formal and informal talks of lecturers in English Foreign Language classroom interaction.

However, there were still limited studies about the phenomena of formal and informal language expressions in the area of classroom interaction. This research aims to fill the gap. This research is focused to analyse both formal and informal language expressions and will restrict the research on students' viewpoints to focus on students' language formality issues. This research will identify characteristics and factors influencing the use of formal and informal language expressions used by students in classroom presentation-interaction. The results of the research are expected to bring general knowledge of formal and

informal language expression to the readers. Specifically for English students, it is expected to raise awareness of using formal and informal language expressions appropriately. It is also expected to give a contribution to students understanding formal and informal language expressions and apply it to achieve effective communication in classroom interaction.

## 2. Literature Review

The levels of formality are highly correlated to power relations among speakers (Brown & Gilman 1960). Power is an immense influence of someone to enforce their demand on others (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Power is caused by age and status differences. As Mizutami & Mizutami (1987) said that age differences affect the level of formality as well as politeness. It means that there is a tendency to be more formal and polite when someone is talking to older people. In contrast, there is a casualty or informality when someone talks to the younger people. Another aspect of power is status differences. The social status of communicators influences the way they communicate (Zahid & Johari, 2018).

The formality of language also depends on the situation. Brown & Freaser (1979) affirmed that a situation can be recognised by speech marker on speech event. Formal and informal situations are commonly compatible with formal and informal languages. When a situation is formal, the language would be formal as well. In contrast, when the situation is informal, the language would be informal. Moreover, social distance and familiarity also influence formality. Foyewa et al (2016) said that the relationship of speakers indirectly gives an impact on the degree of formality among them. The closeness of relationships among participants will change they behave in using formal and informal speech. The more intimate the relationship among speakers, the more casual the language they use.

The formal language appeared long after informal language was used as a natural language of people in everyday communication. In the beginning, formal language theory was used to form and study the syntax of natural language for programming language needs (Moll et al, 2012; Dassow & Paun, 1989). Govindaraj (2012) defined formal language as combined symbols that were categorised by rules of construction. The rules were developed to structure the grammatical language to construct formal language. Therefore, researches related to formal language are massive in the field of computational language. Bakinova et al, (2020); Toro (2019); Maldogaliyev (2019) were conducted the researches analyzing formal languages in connection with programming languages.

The study of formal language is not restricted only to the field of computational language. Nowadays, researches about formal and informal language happen in varied

languages. Winter & Grawunder (2012) analysed about properties of formal and informal speech registers in Korean. They found out that certain vocal expressions can be a sign of formality in Korean. Mashudi et al (2017) analysed the rule of interaction in Malay languages and found out the role of understanding the participants' cultural background in formal setting conversation can contribute to effective communication in social relationships. Kouwenhoven et al (2018) also conducted similar research in Spanish. These researches talked about formal and informal languages in a different context but neither of them took classroom interaction or even academic context as a background to be analysed.

Classroom interaction is supposed to be an important situation for research to be conducted because it is a place where most learning processes happen. The effectiveness of communication in classroom interaction will bring easiness for knowledge transfer. Hence, students will get successful learning results. Classroom interaction is a part of the education field where people are required to behave academically. In other words, classroom interaction is a formal situation that requires the speakers to apply certain rules and restrictions in interaction.

There has been plenty of researches that discussed communication strategies in classroom interaction. Mahmud (2019), Yusuf & Anwar (2019), and Sembiring et al (2021) discussed politeness strategies in classroom interaction. They conducted all of the research in an English classroom. These studies not only analysed the language in classroom interaction but also the feature of languages – the discourse of languages; situation, speaker status, etc. Discourse is simply defined as an illustration of communicative actions with the language as a medium (Johnstone, 2008; Risdavena, 2014). To analyse certain strategies in classroom interaction, the analysis of both language and discourse of the language is needed. Hence, the discourse analysis method will suit the research related to situation, familiarity, speaker's social status, and age differences.

### 3. Method

The researcher used the qualitative method which was used to comprehend people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behavior, and interactions which generate non-numerical data (Phatak et al, 2013). In this research, the qualitative method was used to get descriptive data of participants' perspectives to gain more understanding of characteristics and factors that influence students to speak either formally or informally in classroom presentation-interaction. It was focused on students' viewpoints. Participants were chosen by convenience sampling (Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012). Participants were one of an English Master's class in Universitas Negeri Makassar which includes twenty-two students. They were selected due to the

frequency of the class in conducting presentation and discussion sessions.

The language context in this research was specified to the classroom interaction context when the majority of interaction existed as presentation and discussion session. The data were in the form of participants' utterances. The data were collected in the post-graduate program of Universitas Negeri Makassar from 5th September to 22nd November 2018 using three instruments; observation, voice-recording, and interview.

There were several steps to collect data. First, the researcher observed and recorded four meetings of the presentation-interaction session. An observation and voice-recording were used to identify formal and informal words or expressions that occurred in a classroom presentation. Second, an interview was held. The researcher used a semi-structured interview which integrates constructed and open-ended questions (Galletta, 2013). The researcher formulated a guided question and then developed them to receive requirement data. There were ten numbers of formulated questions.

**Table 3.** Questions of Semi-Structured Interview

| No | Questions of Semi-Structured Interview   |
|----|--|
| 1  | Which expressions do you prefer to use in classroom presentations? (e.g. could or can, probably or maybe, etc.)                                  |
| 2  | Can you differentiate when and where to use these expressions? (e.g. could or can, probably or maybe, etc.)                                      |
| 3  | Do you think it is important to differentiate these expressions? (e.g. could or can, probably or maybe, etc.) Why?                               |
| 4  | What do you think about using a complete sentence in classroom interaction?  |
| 5  | What do you think about using a grammatically correct sentence in classroom interaction?   |
| 6  | What do you think about using slang words in classroom interaction?  |
| 7  | Have you ever used or heard expressions such as; guys, wanna, dunno, gonna, etc. in classroom presentations?                                     |
| 8  | How do you feel about using these expressions (guys, wanna, dunno, gonna, etc.) in classroom presentations?                                      |
| 9  | What do you think when someone use these expressions (guys, wanna, dunno, gonna, etc.) in a classroom presentation?                              |
| 10 | In your opinion, in what condition or situation these expressions (guys, wanna, dunno, gonna, etc.) are allowed to use in classroom interaction? |

These questions aimed to know participants' reasons for uttering formal or informal words/expressions discovered from data of observation and recording. However, the researcher simultaneously developed the questions to dig deeper about participants' opinions and attitudes toward

certain comparable formal and informal words or expressions. Third, the interview was transcribed and discourse analysis was conducted.

The purpose of this research was focused on language features-the discourse of language use. Hence, the proper method was conducting discourse analysis which studied the relationships between language and its context (Kamalu & Osisanwo, 2015). In discourse analysis, the utterance cannot be analysed separated from its context. In this research, the context means setting and the situation refers to classroom presentation-interaction. Simpuru et al (2020) used the same method to analyse low and high code in the form of code-crossing and what influences students to use them in EFL Classroom Interaction. They identified that discourse of language use; social status and age differences generated lecturer use low code according to their position in classroom and students used high code to respect lecturer's position. Others research method was irrelevant. The analysis that is "restricted to the study of formal properties of language" (Kamalu & Osisanwo, 2015) would not be enough to cover the research's purpose. This research was designed as an approach to gain more understanding of what influences students to use formal and informal expressions in classroom interaction. Therefore, the reader would get knowledge on certain social orders and cultural phenomenon in the educational field.

#### 4. Results

The researcher found that magister students as participants in this research were expressing formal and informal expressions during classroom interaction. The following section consists of some extracts of the data obtained from interaction among students in the classroom. Interaction between the student as moderator (M), another student (S), and several students (SS) in the discussion process was obtained by using observation and voice recording. These extracts describe the characteristics of formal and informal expression used by students in classroom presentation-interaction.

- S : "[...] I think that's all for me, next question and answer session. *Feel free to ask.* Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatu."  
 SS : "Walaikumsalam warahmatullahi wabarakatu."  
 M : "Please."  
 S : "*Okay thank you very much for the opportunity given to me.* I am Nurismi. Well, I want to ask Ms. Lia."

##### Excerpt 1: Asking a Question

**Excerpt 1** shows the beginning session of the question-and-answer session. One student as an audience was allowed to ask a question to the presenter. To show her/his gratitude to the presenter for the opportunity in asking a question, the students said: "*Okay thank you very much for the opportunity given to me.*" This sentence is a complete sentence. This complete sentence indicated formal

expression because it is grammatically correct and well structured. However, students also expressed informal language. It was used by the presenter. **Excerpt 1** shows the presenter ended the presentation and opened the question-and-answer session. After that, the presenter said, "*feel free to ask.*" This sentence means that the presenter encourages other students for asking questions freely. This sentence is an uncompleted sentence. It is used incomplete structure without subject and object. This expression is grammatical ellipses. Cambridge dictionary referred ellipses happens when people leave out items which normally expected to use to follow grammatical rules. This sentence indicated informal expressions. The students use informal expressions while interacting with their peers which have similar ages and positions in the classroom. Complete sentence characterised as formal expression while uncompleted sentence characterised as informal expression. A similar case can be perceived as follows:

- M : "[...] we are move to the second presenter it's *kak* Rosnaini Rasyid *please present your material.*"  
 S : "Oke thank you for the chance. I will discuss the principle in constructing the multiple-choice test. First, see the definition of multiple-choice test..."

##### Excerpt 2: Inviting the Presenter to Present the Material

**Excerpt 2** shows the presentation process when the first presenter had presented the material and the moderator told the second presenter to present the material. The moderator said, "*please present your material,*" which indicates formal language expressions because it used the polite marker "*please.*" It is also a complete exclamation sentence. The moderator addressed the second presenter by saying "*kak*" which is generally used to call the older people. In Indonesian culture, it is impolite to call others only by people's names. Hence, the younger people are necessary to address older ones by particular address terms such as, "*kak,*" "*pak,*" "*bu,*" etc. When the moderator said "*kak Rosnaini Rasyid,*" he/she tried to be polite to another speaker who has different age than him/her. In short, the sentence that contains polite markers is also categorised into formal language expression.

On the contrary, incomplete sentences for example ellipses classified into informal expressions. It can be shown in the following extract.

- M : "Thank you so much for the question. *Nice question.* So we move to the third questioner. The third questioner is Fariah or you have done the last meeting? No? o ya I'm so sorry I forgot it."

##### Excerpt 3: Inviting Question from the Audience

**Excerpt 3** shows the question-and-answer session when the moderator responded to the second questioner. The moderator responded by saying, "*thank you for the question.*" After that, the moderator said, "*nice question*" to

show appreciation for a good question. In good grammatical order, the sentence was supposed to be “it is a nice question,” but instead, the participants decreased the subject and predicate of a sentence structure. Furthermore, when the moderator addressed the third questioner, he/she directly called her name without address term conversely when he/she called the second presenter on **Excerpt 2**. It shows that participants only try to be polite by using polite marks to older people. When both participants have the same age, there is no need to be rigorously formal. The same case happened in the following extract:

- S : “[...] and... the last is about the conclusion... We can see that the conclusion in essay test is the test that requires the students to compose responses, usually lengthy up to several sentences or paragraphs. Essay tests let students display their overall understanding of a topic and *demonstrate* their ability to think critically... organize their thoughts... and be creative and original... well I think that’s all about my explanation in constructing and scoring essay test... thank you... assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatu.”
- SS : “Waalaiikumsalam warahmatullahi wabarakatu.”

#### Excerpt 4: Conclusion

**Excerpt 4** shows the end part of the presentation when one student as a presenter finished explaining the material. Before closing the presentation, the student explained the conclusion of his/her material. The student used the word “*demonstrate*” instead of another word that has a similar meaning for example “*show*”. According to Hayawaka (1994) in his parallel list between formal and informal words or phrases, the word “*demonstrate*” include in the formal words. In this case, it indicated that the presenter used formal language expression during the presentation. The participant used formal expression based on the academic presentation material. The topic of the presentation is around language evaluation specifically discussing essay tests. The discussion happened for academic purposes. Hence, the language used by the participants should be suitable for communication in the academic domain.

On the contrary, vague expressions and colloquialism include in the informal style of English (Sheikha & Inkpen, 2011). The following extract shows the student use colloquialism in classroom interaction.

- M : “Oke.. next.. yes please.”
- S : “Oke bismillahirrahmanirrahim thank you so much for the chance I am Sani... I *wanna* ask.”

#### Excerpt 5: Asking a Question

Based on **Excerpt 5**, one of the students as an audience gave a question to the presenter. After the moderator pleased the student, the student asked by saying “I *wanna*

*ask*” after that the student said his/her question. The student said “I *wanna* ask” instead of “I want to ask”. The word “*wanna*” is a colloquialism-informal word that is typically used in casual conversation. The participant expressed this word when the lecturer was not present in the classroom. It happened when all the students in the class were doing discussion independently without lecturer attendance. It shows that there is a tendency for the conversation in the class to become less formal and more casual without a lecturer in the classroom. Due to the lecturer status and age differences between students and lecturer, the language choices and approach are affected. A similar case happens in the following extracts.

Another characteristic of informal language found in this research is the word that expresses familiarity.

- S : “Okey well assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatu.”
- SS : “Waalaiikumsalam warahmatullahi wabarakatu.”
- S : “How’s your life today *guys*?”
- SS : “Alhamdulillah. Very well Alhamdulillah.”

#### Excerpt 6: Greeting

**Excerpt 6** shows the beginning part when one of the students as a presenter started to explain the material. This is an interaction among one student as a presenter in a classroom presentation and the audience. Therefore, as a presenter, the presenter greeted the audience to open the presentation and got the audience’s attention. After saying *salam*, the presenter greeted with the sentence “How’s your life today *guys*?”. The use of the word “*guys*” indicates rapport and familiarity and familiarity indicate informal speech. The students used this word when the audience of the discussion were only their classmates without the lecturer’s presence. Hence, it means that the student uses informal expression in classroom interaction considering the status of the audience. When students are communicating with their peers who has the same age, status, and power in the situation, there is an intimacy – a closeness emotional relationship among them. It can influence them to speak more casually to others.

This study further contributed by not only analysing the characteristics but also the factors influencing the use of formal and informal languages by interviewing the students. Besides observation and voice-recording, interviews between researcher as interviewer (I) and student as a participant (P) were held in Indonesian to obtain the students’ most authentic responses. It can be shown in the following extracts.

- I : “*Kalau bertanya di kelas presentasi biasanya pake can atau could, misalnya, can you explain bla bla bla or could you?*”
- “When you asking in a classroom presentation, do you use can or could? For example, can you explain blab la bla or could you?”

- P : “Kalau saya sih pake *could* dianya, kalau diri saya sendiri tapi biasa rata-rata teman pake *can*, *can you mind to blab la bla*. Kalau saya pakenya *could you mind to blab la bla*.”  
 “I choose to use *could* but commonly my friends use *can*, *can you mind blab la bla*. Whereas I use *could* you mind to blab la bla.”
- I : “Kenapa pake *could* ki daripada *can*?”  
 “Why you use *could* rather than *can*?”
- P : “Untuk lebih sopannya karena ndak sebaya, sebaya sihtapi kan kita dalam keadaan formal jadi kita harus pake *could*. Beda kalau sudah diluar kelas.”  
 “To be more polite because though we are in the same age but in the formal situation we should use *could*. It is different when we are outside the class.”

#### Excerpt 7: Adjusting Language with the Formal Situation

According to **Excerpt 7**, one of the reasons why students use formal language in classroom interaction is because of the formal situation. Through the interview, the student responded with, “though we are in the same age but in the formal situation we should use *could*.” It means that although the student is in the same age as their peers or classmates, he/she still needs to use formal language due to the situation. The situation is formal so that the student considered using formal language as well. The student chooses to use the term “*could*” instead of “*can*” when they ask the presenter in a classroom presentation. It means that they choose more formal language over less formal language. The use of formal language in a formal situation is the way students adjust the language with the context of the situation where they speak.

- I : “Tapi menurut ta penting ndak membedakan kalimat itu dalam diskusi? Adakah perbedaan signifikan kedua kalimat ini dalam presentasi atau diskusi?”  
 “Do you think it is important to differentiate these sentence in the class? Is there any significant different between these two sentence used in presentation or discussion?”
- P : “Kayaknya penting sih, bukan kayanya memang penting. Cuman kalau misalnya saya sampai sekarang belum terlalu paham apa perbedaan kalau misalnya dari kata *thanks for the chance* *thank you for the opportunity* ndak tau sih titik perbedaannya kedua kata ini dimana. Tapi kalau misalnya penting untuk mengetahuinya ya penting.”  
 “It is important but I do not really know the difference between these two sentences *thanks for the chance* and *thank you for the opportunity*. But surely it is important to know it.”
- I : “Kenapa kira-kira penting?”  
 “Why it is important?”
- P : “Kalau kalau saya alasanku karena pertama kan dibidang akademis meki. Pasti haruski bisa bedakan kata-kata yang kayak begitu tadi atau mauki dilihat bagaimana tapi kata-kata ta bisa sesuai dengan

konteks dimana kita.”

“My reason is firstly because we are in the academic field, we have to differentiate those words. Our utterance should be suitable in context where we speak.”

#### Excerpt 8: Speaking in an Academic Setting

**Excerpt 8** the student admitted that it is important to know the difference between formal and informal words. The student said, “because we are in the academic area,” which means that the teaching and learning process in the classroom includes to the educational environment, so that language should be adjusted with the educational environment. It can be seen by the sentence, “our words should be suitable with the context.” From this sentence, it can be determined that the reason why the participant uses formal language expression in the classroom interaction is because of the academic area. Communication in the academic area is for academic purposes. Hence, the student feels necessary to speak formally for academic purposes. A similar reason can be seen in the following extract.

- I : “[...] Kalau kata *may be* sama *probably*?”  
 “[...]What about the word *maybe* and *probably*?”
- P : “Saya lebih suka *probably* daripada *may be* itu terlalu, terlalu apa di. Kurang *scientific* begitu kalau itu mau dipake dikelas percakapan dikelas kan, kalau percakapan dalam kelas harusnya percakapannya kan agak ini sedikit, kalau *may be* mungkin kita pake pas diluar ndak dikelas yang tidak formal kalau *probably* agak bagus kayaknya kalau di kelas.”  
 “I prefer *probably* than *may be*. Maybe is less scientific to use in classroom interaction while the interaction in the classroom should be more scientific. Maybe is better used outside the classroom in informal while probably better use in the classroom.”
- I : “Jadi lebih ilmiah?”  
 “So it is more scientific?”
- P : “Iya lebih ilmiah, lebih *scientific*.”  
 “Yes, more *scientific*.”

#### Excerpt 9: Scientific

**Excerpt 9** shows that the different use of the word “*maybe*” and “*probably*” in the classroom interaction. The student preferred to use the word “*probably*” instead of “*maybe*” in the classroom context. The participant argued that the word “*probably*” is more scientific which is more appropriate to use in classroom interaction. The students admitted language choices are affected by the environment where people speak. In consequence, the language that the participant use is adjusting the classroom interaction environment which is a formal environment.

- I : “Haruskah kita menghindari kata-kata begitu kak misalnya I dunno and guys. Pentingkah menghindari kata-kata itu dalam kelas diskusi atau kelas presentasi.”

“So, do you think we should avoid the word I dunno and guys? Is it important to avoid these words in classroom discussion and presentation?”

P : “*Kalau formal iya penting karena kan paling tidak kan situasinya itu kan formal jadi kita menghargai dosen yang ada disitu. Kalau disebut guys otomatis dosennya kan ada disitu, masa kita selevel sama dosen. Dia kan lebih tinggi daripada kita.*”

“Yes it is important when the situation is formal because we respect to the lecturer. When we say guys means that we are in the same level with lecturer while he/she is in a higher level.”

#### Excerpt 10: Respecting the Lecturer

Based on **Excerpt 10**, a student argued to avoid the use of words that express rapport or familiarity such as the word “*guys*.” The reason to avoid it is because of the lecturer's status. The participant thinks that it is not appropriate to use the word “*guys*” because it expresses the casual conversation among people who have the same status or position whereas the lecturer has a higher level than the students. The lecturer has higher social status and position over students. He/she has more power in the classroom. Status differences between lecturer and student influence the student to choose formal over informal expressions. The participant thought it is a strategy to show respect to the lecturer.

I : “[...] *Kalau misalnya presentasi atau diskusi kelas, ketika bertanya biasanya kamu pake can atau could?*”  
“[...] In classroom presentation or discussion, do you use can or could in asking a question?”

P : “Could.”

I : “*Kenapa itu?*”  
“Why?”

P : “*Dalam memberikan sebuah pertanyaan “could” itu menandakan bahwa itu bersifat e bersifat sopan.*”  
“In giving a question, using “could” is indicate politeness.”

#### Excerpt 11: Showing Politeness

In **Excerpt 11**, the student preferred to use the word “*could*” instead of the word “*can*” to ask a question in the classroom interaction. The consideration to prefer the word “*could*” is that the word “*could*” indicates the more formal language. The student responded in the interview, “In giving a question, using “could” is polite.” In this sentence, the students preferred the formal language because it shows politeness. The participants argued that there is a correlation between being polite and using formal language. One of the strategies of showing politeness in classroom interaction is by choosing formal expressions to use.

On the contrary, there are few factors that influence students to use an informal expression. It can be explained in the following extracts:

I : “*Ta kak misalnya begini haruskah kita menghindari*

*kata-kata begitu kak misalnya I dunno and guys. Pentingkah menghindari kata-kata itu dalam kelas diskusi atau kelas presentasi.*”

“So, do you think we should avoid the word I dunno and guys? Is it important to avoid these words in classroom discussion and presentation?”

P : “*Kalau formal iya penting karena kan paling tidak kan situasinya itu kan formal jadi kita menghargai dosen yang ada disitu. Kalau disebut guys otomatis dosennya kan ada disitu, masa kita selevel sama dosen. Dia kan lebih tinggi daripada kita.*”

“Yes it is important when the situation is formal because we respect to the lecturer. When we say guys means that we are in the same level with lecturer while he/she is in a higher level.”

I : “*Kalau nda ada dosennya misalnya kak?*”  
“If there is no lecturer?”

P : “*Ndak masalah. Itu kita lebih intimate sama. Kalau ndak ada dosen sih ndak masalah tapi selama itu masih teman sekelas.*”

“It is okay because we are more intimate each other. If there is no lecturer, it is okay as long as with classmate.”

#### Excerpt 12: Intimacy

As can be seen in **Excerpt 12**, the researcher asks the student’s opinion about the use of the word “*guys*” to greet the audience in a classroom presentation. The participants have classified the word “*guys*” into informal expressions. Participant 1 admitted that the use of the word “*guys*” is acceptable despite the context of classroom interaction. The students thought it was appropriate only when the lecturer does not present in the room. The participant said “*If there is no lecturer, it is okay as long as with classmates*”. The absence of the lecturer brings intimate feelings within classroom members. When there is no lecturer in the room, the situation becomes less formal and more casual. Hence, the communication will be influenced to be more informal as well. It shows that one of the reasons why the student uses informal language in classroom interaction is because of the closeness emotional relationship among students and their classmates. The student said “It is okay because we are more intimate with each other.” Intimacy is one of the factors that influence the student to speak informal expression.

I : “*Kalau misalnya penggunaan slang kayak I dunno I wanna begitu e pake guys begitu e how are you guys, pernahki kah pake dalam kelas? Dalam diskusi dalam presentasi.*”

“The use of slang such as I dunno, I wanna, guys, like how are you guys, do you ever use it in classroom discussion or presentation?”

P : “*Kalau kayak I want to I wanna I am gonna, biasa tergantung dari situasi kan ada juga itu dosen yang tidak memperoleh begitu toh. Kalau I am gonna harus bilang I am going to.*”

“It depend on the situation because there is a lecturer that forbid to say I am gonna. It should be I am going

- to.”
- I : “*Kalau ndak ada dosen bagaimana?*”  
 “What if there is not lecturer?”
- P : “*Ya e biasa pake nonformal.*”  
 “Sometimes use informal.”
- I : “*Nonformal? Karena?*”  
 “Nonformal? Why?”
- P : “*Karena sama lawan bicara se- eee...*”  
 “Because the other person is eee...”
- I : “*Sebbaya? Temanta ji?*”  
 “Peers? Your friends?”
- P : “*Iya.*”  
 “Yes.”
- I : “*Jadi santai karena sama teman sebaya ta ji?*”  
 “So just relax because you talking with your friends of the same age?”
- P : “*Iya iya begitu.*”  
 “Yes, exactly.”

#### Excerpt 13: Same Age

When the researcher asked the student about his/her opinion of using the informal expression, **Excerpt 13** shows that they uttered “*wanna*” and “*gonna*” in the classroom interaction. It revealed that the student used informal language expression when the lecturer was not in the classroom. The student justified the use of formal language expression in the classroom context when there was no lecturer inside the classroom. The student argued that when the lecturer is present in the classroom, the language should be formal. Whereas when the lecturer is absent, informal language expression might be used in the classroom interaction although it is in the presentation process because the students are in the same age. Age differences and the social status of the speaker are the reasons why students use formal expressions.

- I : “*Kalau misalnya presentasi ki yang mana yang lebih kita prefer kata thanks for the chance atau thank you very much for the opportunity given to me.*”  
 “In presentation, do you prefer to use thanks for the chance or thank you very much for the opportunity?”
- P : “*Saya cuma bilang thank you so much for the time, just like that.*”  
 “I only say thank you so much for the time.”
- I : “*Lebih ini ya, lebih singkat?*”  
 “More like, more shorter?”
- P : “*Iya lebih singkat.*”  
 “Yes, shorter.”
- I : “*Kenapa kak? Kenapa maksudnya pake itu? Memilih untuk lebih singkat itu kenapa?*”  
 “Why? Why you prefer to make it shorter?”
- P : “*Because it appears on my mind. ya Cuma muncul aja gitu.*”
- I : “*Reflex?*”
- P : “*Ya reflex gitu aja.*”  
 “Yes, just reflex.”

#### Excerpt 14: Spontaneity

**Excerpt 14** shows that the student sometimes uses informal language in the classroom interaction because it is just an automatic reaction to the situation. The phrase naturally occurred and it did not plan in advance are indications of spontaneity. The spontaneity generally occurs within the casual conversation in an informal situation. It means that the students feel comfortable and casual with the other students due to the close relationship among them. Hence, it influenced the student to speak less formally in presentation and discussion sessions in the classroom.

## 5. Discussion

The results of the research showed that students used formal language expressions which has characteristic as a completed sentence – well-structured sentence, politeness words e.g. “*please*” and precise words e.g. “*simultaneously*.” Therefore, the characteristics of informal language expressions are uncompleted sentences e.g. ellipses, the words or phrases that express familiarity e.g. “*guys*” and colloquialism e.g. “*wanna*.” This is in line with the idea of Irvin (1979) and Labov (1972), who claimed that there are certain rules and considerations which classified formal language. Richards et al. (1997); Jaafar & Awal (2020) also believed that the more formal the situation aligns with the more conscious speakers in choosing the right words, structuring a good sentence, and pronouncing well. In the classroom context, students are concerned about using well-structured sentences, questions, or exclamations. They also pay enough attention to the language selection and adjust it to the audience's status, situation, and purpose of communication. Meanwhile, the situation in the classroom changed to become less formal without lecturer attendance. At this moment, language use transforms as well. Age differences and social status define social distance and closeness which affected the use of language (Brown & Gilman, 1960).

Classification or distinction of formal and informal language has been previously explored by one study. Sheika & Inkpen (2012) classified documents based on formal and informal style. They found several characteristics to classify the formal and informal style of language. There are some characteristics which similar to the current research namely polite markers, and precise words for formal language characteristics. However, some items do not include in the current research for example using personal pronouns and passive voice. This type of formal expression is not relevant to this research because of the difference of research objects. Sheika & Inkpen (2012) analysed documents that are written language while this current research analysed spoken language. In spoken language, impersonal pronouns and active voice remain formal language.



This study found several factors influencing the use of formal and informal language expressions used by students in classroom interaction namely, formal situation, purpose of communication, status, and age differences which relates to intimate and distance level of relationship among speakers. Students understand that language should be used appropriately. Appropriateness covered linguistics choice (Meristiani, 2011) as the suitability of language used and its context (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). The formal situation in the classroom influences students rigorously in using their language as Woods (2017) said that situations affect people in choosing the language. Foyewa et al. (2016) also mentioned purpose of communication affected the way speakers communicate. In this case, educational purposes when students presented and discussed their material influence them to use the formal expression. The result of this research also aligns with the idea of Hymes (1972), (Saviele-Troike, 2008), and Oyetede (1995) that said social status and age significantly affect the flow of interaction. Lecturers and students have different levels of status and age in the classroom. It makes the lecturer has more influence and control in the classroom. In consequence, the students use formal expression as a language strategy to address lecturer's position in classroom interaction. The status and age differences also determine interpersonal relationships of speakers (Brown & Gilman, 1960). Tanasy et al (2020) also stated that social stratification and distance could be factors in choosing languages. The more distant the relationship, the more correct the language pattern (Woods, 2017). Conversely, when the distant relationship turns into an intimate relationship, the communication strategy and pattern will eventually change as well (Brown & Freaser, 1979).

A number of previous researches have similar ideas with the current research. Pasaribu et al. (2021) found that power and social status are the factors to choose strategy in communication. Haryono (2011) discovered that social position and age have a major impact in establishing the communication pattern of Nahdatul Ulama community in Indonesia. Wajdi & Subianto (2018) also found that the speech level in language use can illustrate the social relationship of speakers. Moreover, Mahmud (2013) established that "being stranger or being familiar to someone will determine the way of speaking," (p. 69). The novelty of this study is its findings on how formal and informal language are not only influenced by power but also by others features of the language. The situation or educational environment of classroom context also influences students to use formal languages. Communication purposes for education also influence people to choose formal language. On the other hand, spontaneity in speaking is a factor influencing the students to speak informally in classroom interaction.

The results of the research also revealed that there is a relationship between politeness and the use of formal language. The research found that one of the characteristics of formal language expressions is polite marks such as "please" and "sir" to address older people. One of the reasons that influence student to use formal expression in the classroom is respecting the lecturer who has more power over students. According to Scupin (1988); Agha (1994) and Holmes (1995), politeness is significantly related to the term "honorific" or an act to give honor or respect. Lecturer and students share different positions in classroom interaction. The student believes that using a familiarity expression such as 'guys' is not appropriate due to the lecturers' power in the classroom. Therefore, using formal language is appropriate to show respect to the lecturer and maintain effectiveness in communication. That influences students to use formal language expressions in classroom presentation-interaction. This result has similar findings with the research conducted by Mahmud (2013), and Soekarno (2015) which shows that formal situation leads to polite interaction in a formal way compared to informal situation. Zahid & Johari (2018) also found that role, power, and differences of speakers' social status influence politeness in the conversational context of Malay people.

However, the researcher found that the students use informal language without any intention to be less polite. The use of informal expressions is meant to express an intimacy among students and their classmates who have similar ages and positions in classroom presentation-interaction. The researcher confirmed that there is no incongruity in using informal expression in classroom interaction. Using informal expressions is normal. The students spontaneously used informal language expressions due to the level of familiarity and closeness among them.

Nevertheless, the use of informal language is constantly not appropriate when the lecturer joins the class presentation. The students claimed that most informal language expression occurs when the lecturer does not attend the classroom presentation. Informal expressions are only allowed when the lecturer was not involved in communication event. The close relationship and the same age and status among students makes them speak spontaneously. It influences the way they interact in the classroom. The spontaneity affects interaction become more casual, therefore, students express informal language.

The results of this research could become a consideration for English students, especially at the university level when classroom presentation is often held with the communication strategy. To behave appropriately in classroom presentation-interaction, they are supposed to acknowledge the context of classroom presentation. When the lecturer involves in interaction, the situation will be more formal and it is forbidden to express informal

language. In contrast, when the lecturer does not involve in interaction, the situation becomes more casual. The informal expression that occurs in classroom presentations would be normal to use. It would not be addressed as an impolite attitude.

This research has described the phenomenon of formal and informal language expressions of students in classroom presentation-interaction. However, this research only analysed one side perspective from students. Hence, this research's contributions are mostly for students' benefit. Future studies are recommended to analyse lecturers' perspectives as well to understand both students' and lecturers' perspectives and compare their perspectives to gain a complete understanding of all the interactants in the classroom presentation-interaction process.

## 6. Conclusion

This research had discussed characteristics and factors influencing the use of formal and informal language expressions used by students in classroom presentation-interaction. There are three characteristics of formal language expressions; (1) completed sentence, (2) politeness words or phrases, and (3) precise words. There are also three characteristics of informal language expressions; (1) uncompleted sentence, (2) words or phrases that express familiarity, and (3) colloquialism. Mostly, the students use formal expression, informal expression was used due to lecturers' absence in the classroom. This was influenced by the formal situation, communication purposes, status and age differences, and familiarity. The students use formal language as strategies to show politeness to the lecturer. They use informal language as strategies to show their intimacy among their classmates. However, there is no indication for students to be less polite or inappropriate by using informal expressions. It is normal for students to use informal expressions to address their familiarity with others students.

Multiple studies have analysed issues about communication strategy in classroom interaction but none of them specifically investigated the use of formal and informal language expressions. This research is meant to fill the gap. The results of this research can be a contribution for students to understand when formal language use is required and in what condition the informal language is normal to use in classroom interaction. This research is significant for students to have good strategies in choosing the formal and informal language to gain effective communication in the learning process within classroom interaction.

Yet, there are still limited researches conducted in this area. Therefore, it is significant for students to read this research to achieve effective communication strategies in classroom presentation-interaction. This research is not only important for students, but also for all of the English

language learning practitioners to gain an understanding of formal and informal languages in the classroom. Based on this conclusion, practitioners should consider conducting more research on a similar issue specifically analyzing formal and informal language expressions by lecturer and students in classroom interaction to gain both lecturer and students' viewpoints.

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