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The Intermingling Of Formal And Informal Text Elements In Internet Discourse

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Abstract: This article examines the convergence of formal and informal stylistic elements within a single text in internet discourse as a linguistic and communicative phenomenon, often described as a "hybrid" style. Owing to the open and democratic nature of the internet and the functional differentiation of platforms (official websites/portals versus social networks, blogs, and chats), formal announcements, statements, and legal–informational texts frequently coexist with informal devices such as slang, abbreviations, emojis, and memes. The study characterizes the formal style by its normativity, neutrality, and standardized syntax, while the informal style is defined by simplicity, expressiveness, dialogic orientation, and emotional coloring. Drawing on the works of Bobokhonova, Krongauz, Crystal, Zappavigna, and Herring, the paper explores the transformation of etiquette in online communication, the platform-specific creation of norms, and the formation of registers. Using examples from Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, and TikTok, it demonstrates how the degree of formality/informality varies according to audience, context, and communicative goals, with particular stylistic softening observed in advertising, education, news, and service correspondence. In addition, through examples such as "ovoz berish" (to vote), "qoʻl koʻtarmoq" (to raise one's hand), and "voz kechmoq" (to refuse), the article analyzes processes of semantic narrowing/expansion and stylistic shift in the internet environment, explaining these changes by the activation of polysemy in online contexts. The conclusion substantiates that the blending of formal and informal elements in internet texts is a natural process determined by platform characteristics, audience expectations, and the emergence of a new communicative culture.

Keywords: Internet text; formal style; informal style; stylistic hybridity; computer-mediated communication (CMC); platform register; network etiquette; multimodality; emojis and memes; stylistic shift; polysemy; audience and context.

Introduction: Internet texts possess distinctive communicative features. Due to the open and democratic nature of the internet and the equal opportunities it provides to users, both formal texts (such as announcements by government institutions and corporate statements) and informal forms of communication (friendly exchanges, humor, slang) coexist side by side. Moreover, the functional diversity of platforms plays a significant role: official websites, government portals, and news channels require the use of a formal style, whereas social networks, blogs, and chats encourage informal and free communication. As a result, a single user may simultaneously employ both styles.

Because internet texts are addressed to diverse audiences – some targeting the general public and others intended for close circles – formal texts tend to ensure credibility and authority, while informal texts create intimacy and sincerity. In genres such as blogs, webinars, online conferences, or posts on official pages, formal modes of address are often combined with informal elements (emojis, slang, memes). This combination serves to attract users' attention and enliven communication.

Internet language is dynamic and constantly evolving: established formal norms adapt to new conditions and intermingle with informal elements. This process produces a hybrid style characteristic of internet discourse. Accordingly, the integrated use of formal and informal communication in online styles is explained by platform-specific features, audience demands, and the formation of a new communicative culture. Consequently, many contemporary online texts simultaneously perform informational and interactive functions by incorporating elements of both styles.

Formal style is a mode of speech used in domains such as state documentation, laws, decrees, scientific and technical texts, and official correspondence. It is based on strict norms and relies on standardized, neutral lexical units. Typically, it is characterized by standardization, emotional neutrality, and a focus on precision.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researcher D. Bobokhonova was the first in Uzbek linguistics to present a detailed classification of documents belonging to the official style and to emphasize that each type of document within a single style has its own specific mode of formation. These include, for example, government resolutions, decrees, directives, appeals, laws, orders, regulations, instructions, diplomatic documents, international treaties, agreements, official statements, notes, ultimatums, embassy conventions, judicial and procedural documents, codes, summonses, pledges not to leave a place, indictments, prosecutorial speeches, alternative court decisions, verdicts, correspondence between state institutions, powers of attorney, reports, explanatory letters, certificates, curricula vitae (biographies), character references, applications, and others[1,7]. Thus, the formal style is used in scientific, technical, administrative, legal, and educational texts. It is characterized by clear, precise, and concise expression; the use of terminology and specialized vocabulary; restraint from emotionality and personal opinions; grammatically correct and well-structured sentences; and the use of formal greeting and closing formulas (in letters and speeches).

The formality inherent in documents produced in this style functions as a central, core force among all extralinguistic factors: it determines the selection of linguistic elements, organizes and integrates them, and, in turn, ensures their appropriate placement within the text according to communicative purpose and context[2,15].

Overcoming spatial and temporal constraints, the possibility of engaging in synchronous and asynchronous communication with large numbers of internet users, a high degree of anonymity, and the widespread use of information and communication technologies across all spheres of human activity have led to the emergence of network (online) etiquette.

The scholar M. A. Krongauz characterizes network etiquette as a "peculiar hybrid" consisting of elements of oral and written (epistolary) etiquette. The main transformations of traditional etiquette in the electronic environment manifest themselves in the following ways: the specific use of graphic means (color, font, text size, smileys/emojis, attached images and files, etc.); deliberate distortion of words and sounds; and the modification or omission of standard etiquette formulas[3,10].

Changes in the electronic environment also affect the tone of users' formal texts in official domains. As a result, formality and informality are often manifested in a mixed form. Accordingly, in synchronous and asynchronous communication with internet users, words and sentences are selected – or naturally produced – in ways that correspond to the communicative situation. This adaptation is driven by situational necessity.

The informal style is used in spheres such as everyday communication, chats, correspondence on social networks, memes and GIFs, and personal letters. It is characterized by strong emotional coloring and the frequent use of abbreviations, wordplay, slang, jargon, and metaphors. Informal texts are typical of daily interaction, conversations with friends, blogs, personal messages, and social media exchanges. They employ free, simple, and natural language, with emotions, expressive vocabulary, slang, and wordplay. In many cases, abbreviations, idiomatic expressions, speech rhythm, and intonation play an important role, and personal opinions and feelings are expressed openly.

It is well known that this style stands in opposition to bookish styles and is distinguished by simplicity,

accessibility, and informality in language use. It emerges primarily in the sphere of everyday life-more precisely, in personal communication. However, it would be incorrect to limit its scope solely to personal interactions or everyday contexts. Whether we delimit it or not, informal style penetrates family relations, the workplace, the educational process, and scientific and cultural life, where it inevitably comes into contact with literary (standard) speech. At times, its presence may exert a negative influence on literary norms; at other times, it draws nourishment from them. In such situations, the two styles converge.

Consequently, informal elements may appear in formal texts, for example:

in official letters, presentations, or lectures, where simple, informal expressions are used to provide examples or establish personal rapport with the audience;

in official documents, through simplified phrasing or the use of more accessible language;

in educational communication, where formal scientific style is used in written instructional materials, while informal and interactive communication prevails in the classroom;

in media and journalism, where news texts may be formal, but interviews, commentaries, or blog posts often employ a more informal style;

in advertising and marketing, where formal information about a product is presented alongside friendly, informal communication with customers. Thus, the intermingling of formal and informal stylistic elements is a natural process in language and communication. This blending depends on purpose, audience, and context, and ultimately enhances communicative effectiveness. In internet communication, the degree of formality and stylistic tone is determined not only by the author's individual speech habits, but also by the communicative norms of the platform on which interaction takes place. As D. Crystal notes, "the technological and social characteristics of a social network determine the boundaries of formality and informality in language use within it"[4,24]. From this perspective, Facebook has often become a platform for disseminating official information by government institutions, universities, and corporate pages, which strengthens the tendency toward complete sentences and a normative written style. Telegram, by contrast, is characterized by a moderate level of formality: news channels and blogs coexist on the platform, so elements of formal and informal style are frequently used in combination. Instagram, and especially TikTok, stand out for the strong predominance of an informal and intimate style. Analyzing captions and posts on Instagram, M. Zappavigna concludes that "the linguistic strategies used to bring platform users together typically rely on informality, abbreviations, and emotive elements" [5, 133].

S. Herring [6, 255], within the framework of CMC theory, emphasizes the norm-forming capacity of platforms and notes that each network develops its own distinctive linguistic register. As a result, the same content can be expressed differently across platforms. For example, on Facebook one might encounter a formal post such as: "Dear students! Today at 15:00 a seminar will be held," whereas on TikTok the same announcement could be presented in a more informal form: "Seminar at 15:00-don't miss it ☺."

This demonstrates the need for in-depth research into a new concept in internet linguistics: the blending of formal and informal stylistic elements within digital communication.

The following table illustrates the use of formal and informal texts on social media platforms.

Social Network	Formal	Informal	Mixed (with real examples)
Facebook	Official announcements by government institutions and universities; posts about decrees and resolutions.	Jokes among friends, memes, stories from personal life.	**National University of Uzbekistan:** "Dear applicants! The 2024/2025 admission process has begun ♦"
Instagram	Official pages of the	Personal life snippets in	**School page:**

		stories and posts; slang and abbreviations.	"Assalomu alaykum, dear friends! Come to the 'Reading Day' event tomorrow ☺ It'll be great!"
Telegram	Government channels, news channels, official statements.	Friend groups, informal chats, humorous stickers and GIFs.	**"New Uzbekistan News" channel:** "Dear subscribers ❀ today's promotion is super! Stickers are included as gifts!"
TikTok	Official videos related to state campaigns (e.g., road safety).	Trends, challenges, humorous videos, slang, improvisation.	**Road safety campaign:** An official warning combined with trending music—"Be careful! Don't forget safety even when doing challenges!"

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Based on the data presented in the table, we analyze the examples as follows: **"Ovoz bermoq" (to vote):**

to call out or respond by producing a sound;

to express one's preference regarding the resolution of an issue, a proposal put forward, or participation in an election or decision-making process; "ovozga qo'ymoq" (to put to a vote) [7,79].

The Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan (CEC) uses the expression "ovoz berish" (voting) extensively in the formal style as a legal and political term on its website, particularly in the section "Voting procedure on election day." For example:

"Elections in the Republic of Uzbekistan are held on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot. Each voter has one vote, and the equality and freedom of the right to vote and to express one's will are guaranteed by law."

(Election Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 16.06.2022, https://lex.uz/)In this example, the phrase "ovoz berish" is interpreted as a constitutional right. Its denotative meaning refers to the legally guaranteed right to vote for a candidate or decision in the electoral process, while its connotative meaning implies a democratic process sanctioned and protected by the state. As a legal term, it is precise, neutral, and characteristic of the formal style. The text reflects normative–legal rigor, standard-setting, and guarantees.

"Each voter has one vote. The equality and freedom of the right to vote and to express one's will are guaranteed by law."

("Voting has begun in Uzbekistan," 27.10.2024, Norgul Abduraimova, UzA)

Here, "ovoz berish" again denotes a constitutional legal process used in a formal political and informational context, with emphasis on the commencement of the process. The denotative meaning is the act of expressing one's will (the electoral act), while the connotative meaning points to political reality and civic duty. The text is presented in an informational style typical of news agencies: it employs official vocabulary, avoids emotional coloring, and reflects the state media style focused on reporting and covering official procedures.

By contrast, consider the following example from an Instagram interactive poll:

"Vote for our new logo- which option do you like? 👍/❤"

In this case, "ovoz bering" (vote) is not used in its formal electoral sense but rather to mean participation in an online interactive poll. The denotative meaning

involves choosing a logo option—often by liking or reacting with an emoji—while the connotative meaning is playful, friendly, and oriented toward building close interaction with consumers. This usage belongs to an informal, advertising, and social-media style. The emojis (👍/♥) function as multimodal elements that enliven communication, encourage participation, and establish interactive contact with the audience.

In summary, in examples 1-2 the phrase "ovoz berish" functions as a formal political and legal term denoting a constitutional process. In example 3, however, the expression undergoes semantic narrowing and stylistic shift, coming to mean simple participation in an online choice within an informal context. Thus, in internet discourse, "ovoz berish" demonstrates polysemy and stylistic adaptability, transitioning from a formal political context to an informal interactive one and acquiring new layers of meaning.

"Qo'l ko'tarmoq" (to raise one's hand). According to the dictionary, the expression has the following meanings:

I. To intend or attempt to strike.

II. (Of a person)

To express support or approval (during voting);

To indicate a wish to speak (at a meeting or in class).

In the cited example, the expression "qo'l ko'tarmoq" is used within a formal political discourse and denotes the traditional, institutional form of voting. In this context, its denotative meaning refers to a deputy expressing approval of a decision during a session or meeting by means of a physical action-raising one's hand. This meaning is characteristic of official voting procedures, which are regulated, formalized, and recorded.

However, a deeper contextual analysis reveals that the expression also carries a connotative load. The phrase "deputies who merely raise and lower their hands to approve the local budget" implies criticism of deputies whose activity is portrayed as mechanical, formal, and passive. Here, "qo'l ko'tarmoq" acquires a symbolic and metaphorical sense, meaning "to give automatic approval without meaningful discussion or analysis". As a result, the expression gains a critical and ironic tone.

From a stylistic perspective, although the text belongs to formal political discourse, it clearly incorporates publicistic elements. References to "listening to the voice of the people" and "solving problems" introduce evaluative and socially charged language, softening the strict official tone and strengthening the author's stance. This leads to the emergence of informal, critical semantics within an otherwise formal text.

Thus, the expression "qo'l ko'tarmoq" functions on two levels:

in a formal context, it denotes an institutional act of voting;

in a publicistic context, it symbolizes formalism, irresponsibility, or passivity.

This example clearly illustrates the processes of semantic expansion, stylistic shift, and evaluative reinterpretation of official terms and expressions in contemporary media and online discourse. Consequently, "qo'l ko'tarmoq" emerges as a polysemous and stylistically flexible unit, capable of moving beyond formal political discourse and functioning as a tool of social criticism.

"I can never forgive someone who raises a hand against her!" ☹ (Instagram, 18 June 2024).

In this example, the expression "qo'l ko'tarmoq" is used in its literal meaning, that is, "to raise a hand to hit someone, to commit or attempt physical violence." Its denotative meaning refers to an act of physical aggression (or an attempt at it), while its connotative meaning conveys strong negativity, anger, and protest. The phrase "I can never forgive" together with the ☹ emoji serves as an intensifying device that reinforces emotional tension and moral condemnation.

The utterance belongs to an informal, emotionally charged style typical of social media posts and reflects the expression of personal feelings and attitudes. The use of an emoji (☹) increases the expressive force of the statement and makes the communication multimodal.

In both contexts, the expression "qo'l ko'tarmoq" appears in the same lexical form but functions on different semantic levels. In the first example, it is used metaphorically in a formal political sense ("to vote at an official meeting"), carrying a critical and publicistic tone. In the second example, it is employed in its literal sense, denoting physical violence, within an informal,

emotionally saturated, emoji-supported online post.

These examples clearly demonstrate the processes of polysemy (multiple meanings) and stylistic shift: the same expression can function either as a marker of formal political criticism or as an emotionally charged expression of personal indignation, depending on the communicative context.

Berilgan savol (asked question). Q. Kimning kimga (who asks whom). Variant: savol bermoq (to ask a question) [8, 211].

"The submitted question is visible only to the specialist, and the answer is visible only to the applicant."

(Electronic legal clinic or the provision of free legal consultation via a digital platform… 28.12.2020. Otabek Narziyev, Head of the TSUL Legal Clinic; Muhriddin Shamsiddinov, graduate of the TSUL Legal Clinic).

In this example, the expression "berilgan savol" (submitted question) is used in an explanatory text related to a technical or service platform (for example, an online consultation). It carries a traditional, neutral meaning, referring to a request or inquiry sent by a user to a specialist in the form of a question. The denotative meaning indicates a question written and submitted by the user via the platform, while the connotative meaning describes the process from a technical or service-provision perspective. The style is characteristic of formal-service (administrative) discourse. The use of terms such as "specialist" and "applicant" provides precision and clarity. There is no emotional coloring; the primary purpose is to inform and regulate the procedure.

"Questions submitted by new users."

(From context: "new users have left questions related to rules") (https://uz.wikipedia.org/) Here, "berilgan savollar" (submitted questions) most likely functions as the title of a website or forum section (e.g., FAQ or discussion topic), referring to frequently asked questions or inquiries submitted by newly registered users. Its denotative meaning is a collection of questions written by new users who have contacted the platform. The connotative meaning is neutral but informational and classificatory in nature. This usage belongs to an informational–formal style, typical of section headings or documentation on websites. The lexical form is formal, yet not bureaucratic, and is characterized by a relatively neutral and user-friendly tone.

In both sentences, the expressions "berilgan savol" and "berilgan savollar" are used in their literal, neutral meanings, but their stylistic functions differ slightly. In the first example, the phrase denotes an individual inquiry within a service or technical process. In the second example, it functions as a general category or section title, serving a classificatory role. Both belong to the formal-service style, are emotionally unmarked, and primarily fulfill the function of expressing order, structure, and systematization.

Bir ovozdan In unanimity, in full agreement. Synonym: bir og'izdan (with one voice). Without opposition (during a vote). Synonym: bir og'izdan [8, 41].

"The senators unanimously supported the candidate." (Sodiq Safoyev was elected First Deputy Chairperson of the Senate. 19.11.2024, UzA).

This example is taken from an official political text related to state governance or parliamentary activity. The phrase "bir ovozdan" here indicates 100% unanimity, meaning that there were no opposing votes. Its denotative meaning refers to all senators jointly and unanimously supporting the candidate with a single decision. The connotative meaning reflects political unity, consensus, and a positive official atmosphere. The expression has acquired the character of a legal–political term used in parliamentary administrative language. Emotional coloring is minimal; however, the emphasis on unanimity conveys a sense of formal seriousness. "…the judges unanimously declared the Uzbek boxer the winner." (Instagram, 22.06.2024). This example comes from a sports news post reporting the result of a competition. Here, "bir ovozdan" again expresses unanimity, meaning that all judges reached the same decision. The denotative meaning indicates the absence of disagreement among judges, while the connotative meaning emphasizes objectivity, fairness of victory, and unquestionable evaluation in a sports context. This usage belongs to the informational (journalistic) style, typical for sports news. Although the expression has a formal connotation, it is used in a clear and accessible manner.

In both examples, "bir ovozdan" is not polysemous; its meaning remains the same-unanimity, complete agreement. In the first case, it carries a political–legal tone within a formal-publicistic style, highlighting

official consensus. In the second case, within a sports context and journalistic style, it underscores the unity of judgment. Thus, the phrase demonstrates stylistic adaptability, functioning as a neutral yet mature term across different domains.

Voz kechmoq To give up, to refuse completely; to abandon decisively. Variant: voz kechtirmoq (to make someone give up something). Synonym: bahridan o'tmoq (to forgo) [8, 63]. "Donald Trump refused to participate in a second televised debate with his rival Kamala Harris." (Donald Trump withdrew from the second televised debate. 13.09.2024, UzA).

This example is taken from international political news. The verb "voz kechmoq" is used to express a formal decision to decline participation. Its denotative meaning refers to Donald Trump's choice not to take part in the second debate. The connotative meaning reflects a formal, diplomatic, and neutral stance, sometimes implying a firm or strategic decision. The text belongs to the formal-publicistic style typical of news reporting. Emotional coloring is minimal; the focus is on announcing a decision objectively. "Personally, I gave up sugar-21 days without sweets, cakes, and chocolate, the things that used to give my life energy." (Instagram, 26.09.2024).

This example is taken from a blog or personal social media post. Here, "voz kechmoq" denotes voluntary renunciation of a habit or product, implying a lifestyle change. The denotative meaning is the conscious cessation of sugar consumption. The connotative meaning is emotional and personal: the author frames this decision as a life challenge and a test of willpower. The style is informal and personal-blog oriented, reinforced by expressions such as "personally" and "things that gave my life meaning". Emotional intensity is higher, with open expression of personal feelings and motivation. In both sentences, "voz kechmoq" retains the general meaning of giving something up, but its semantic layers and stylistic contexts differ.

In the first example, it refers to an official political decision (not participating in a debate), with a formal and neutral tone.

In the second example, it reflects a personal life decision (giving up sugar), expressed in an informal and emotionally charged manner.

Thus, "voz kechmoq" demonstrates polysemy and stylistic flexibility, functioning effectively in both formal political discourse and informal personal communication, with shifts in tone and expressive coloring depending on context.

Internet communication, especially on platforms such as Telegram, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, increasingly blurs the boundary between formal and informal styles, giving rise to hybrid forms of speech. This phenomenon can be illustrated through the following models:

Formal expressions + informal elements

"Assalomu alaykum, dear subscribers, a special promotion just for you❗"

(Instagram, 04.05.2023) In this example, "dear subscribers" is a formal form of address, while the phrase "special promotion ❗" carries an informal tone, combined with an emoji and a marketing-oriented advertising element. This greeting and form of address are widely used on social networks. Its denotative meaning is to inform subscribers about the availability of a special discount, promotion, or offer. The phrase "Assalomu alaykum", which has religious and cultural roots, creates an atmosphere of sincerity and respect. "Dear subscribers" is a formal address expressing attention and courtesy. The phrase "special promotion❗", as a marketing expression, arouses interest among the audience, while the ❗ symbol serves as a connotative element, adding emotional emphasis.

In this example, the formal elements are "dear" and "subscribers", whereas the informal elements include the ❗ emoji and the marketing use of the word "promotion". As a result, stylistic mixing emerges: formal address and informal, emotionally charged expressions typical of online advertising and announcements are combined within a single sentence. The overall tone is warm and friendly. The ❗ symbol adds a sense of urgency typical of advertising ("act quickly!"). Formal seriousness is noticeably reduced; the primary aim is to attract attention and create a positive attitude. These features form the emotional coloring of the message.

Informal words in a formal context "This year, thanks to the initiative of our President, the "Dolzarb 90 kun" program for students and youth turned out to be really great." (Telegram, 23.07.2025)

This example conveys a concrete fact: the "Dolzarb 90 kun" program was developed on the initiative of the President and is evaluated as a positive outcome for students and young people. The denotative meaning of the sentence is to report a government initiative aimed at benefiting youth.

The phrase "on the initiative of our President" reflects respect and political legitimacy, emphasizing the importance of the program and state-level attention. The name "Dolzarb 90 kun" itself is formal, indicating that the program is designed to address urgent tasks.

The phrase "really great" is an informal, conversational element that conveys strong positive evaluation and intensifies emotion; it reveals the connotative meaning of the sentence.

Stylistically, formal elements such as "on the initiative of our President" and "the program was developed" belong to the formal political register, while the informal expression "really great", widely used in everyday speech and online language, creates a hybrid style. As a result, an official political message is blended with informal social media language. The phrase "really great" enriches the sentence emotionally, creating a sincere, youth-oriented tone and making the message warmer and more approachable.

Thus, a formal political message is delivered in a friendly and engaging manner.

Official correspondence + chat elements

Today, even in official email correspondence, chat elements, such as emojis (☺, 👍, etc.), can be encountered. This phenomenon leads to a softening of style in business and service communication.

Subject: Meeting schedule 🗓

Dear department heads,

The meeting will take place on Friday at 10:00.

Please ensure that all necessary documents are prepared!

Office Secretariat.

In this example, the denotative meaning is expressed through the phrase "Meeting schedule 🗓", which indicates the main topic—the date and time of the meeting. The 🗓 emoji makes the message more visible and clear. The address "Dear department heads" specifies the audience, while "The meeting will take place on Friday at 10:00" conveys exact information.

The sentence "Please ensure that all necessary documents are prepared!" expresses a requirement in an imperative tone, and "Office Secretariat" identifies the sender as an official authority.

The connotative meaning is realized through the respectful address "Dear department heads", which expresses formality and positive attitude, while the 🗓 emoji modernizes the message, makes it more engaging, and softens the official tone. The phrase "Please ensure" conveys responsibility and obligation.

Stylistically, formal elements include the official address "Dear department heads" and the closing "Office Secretariat", typical of institutional communication. The sentences are clear, concise, and unembellished. The informal element-the 🗓 emoji-originating from chat communication, softens the message and provides visual emphasis. Thus, stylistic harmony emerges through the combination of official language with chat elements (emojis).

Although the overall tone remains formal and directive, the presence of emojis and polite forms of address reduces harshness, making the message appear neutral and friendly rather than rigid.

CONCLUSION

In internet texts, formal and informal elements appear side by side and, through their interaction, create a hybrid communicative space. While the formal style ensures clarity and normative content, the informal style fosters closer interaction with the audience through freedom, emotional expressiveness, and interactivity. As a result, internet texts emerge as a two-layered system that combines both credibility and appeal, forming a complex and dynamic mode of communication.

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