

Analysis Of The Differences Between Formal And Informal Styles In The Language, Their Linguistic Structures, And Communicative Purposes

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Abstract: This article analyzes, from a scientific perspective, the linguistic and pragmatic differences between formal and informal styles in the Chinese language. Through its formal and informal styles, Chinese demonstrates how language is used in accordance with the communicative context. The article examines differences in word choice, syntax, and verb usage in both styles, as well as grammatical and morphological structures. In Chinese, the formal style is typically used in professional, governmental, and academic settings and serves to express respect and social status. The informal style, on the other hand, is used in close interactions among friends and family members, where the language is simple and sincere. The article highlights the importance of understanding these differences for linguistics and intercultural communication. This study helps learners of Chinese and linguists gain a deeper understanding of the social and pragmatic aspects of the language.

Keywords: Formal style, informal style, syntax, intonation, pragmatic aspect, greeting, expressing gratitude.

Introduction: The Chinese language is distinguished by its unique system of grammatical expressions. Understanding the differences between the formal and informal styles of the language is not only important in the process of learning Chinese but also for individuals living in China or interacting with Chinese speakers. This article analyzes the main differences between formal and informal styles in Chinese, as well as when and how they are used.

1. General Definition of Formal and Informal Styles in Chinese

Formal style (正式语, zhèngshì yǔ): This style is typically used in workplaces, government offices, academic writing, or public speeches. Speaking in a formal style in Chinese requires precision, strictness, and politeness.

Informal style (非正式语, fēi zhèngshì yǔ): Informal style is often used in conversations with friends, family members, or acquaintances. In this style, speech tends to be simpler and more relaxed.

2. Word Choice in Formal and Informal Styles

Word choice plays a significant role in distinguishing formal and informal styles in Chinese. Words used in the formal style are usually more complex and precise, whereas in informal style, words tend to be simpler and shorter.

In formal style:

您 (nín) — “you” (polite form)

非常感谢 (fēicháng gǎnxiè) — “thank you very much”

请问 (qǐngwèn) — “may I ask...” / “excuse me...”

In informal style:

你 (nǐ) — “you”

谢谢 (xièxiè) — “thanks”

问一下 (wèn yíxià) — “just asking” / “may I ask quickly...”

In formal style, the word “您” (nín) is used to express “you” politely, conveying respect and courtesy. In informal style, “你” (nǐ) is used, which is appropriate only for addressing friends or close acquaintances.

3. Verbs and Auxiliary Words in Formal and Informal Styles

Verbs and auxiliary words also differ between formal and informal styles. In formal style, verbs are used in their complete and correct forms, whereas in informal style, shorter and simpler forms are preferred.

In formal style: 我会参加会议 (wǒ huì cānjiā huìyì) — “I will attend the meeting.”

请您稍等一下 (qǐng nín shāo děng yīxià) — “Please wait a moment.”

In informal style: 我去开会 (wǒ qù kāihuì) — “I’m going to the meeting.”

等一下 (děng yīxià) — “Wait a moment.”

In formal style, auxiliary words and expressions need to be complete and precise, which is essential for conveying important information clearly. In informal style, expressions are simplified and more abbreviations are used.

4. Greetings in Formal and Informal Styles in Chinese

There are notable differences between formal and informal greetings in Chinese.

Formal greetings: 您好 (nín hǎo) — “Hello (with respect).”

很高兴认识您 (hěn gāoxìng rènshí nín) — “I’m pleased to meet you.”

Informal greetings: 你好 (nǐ hǎo) — “Hi!”

很高兴认识你 (hěn gāoxìng rènshí nǐ) — “Nice to meet you.”

The main difference in greetings is the use of “您” (nín) in formal style, which shows respect. In informal style, “你” (nǐ) is used, which is appropriate only among close acquaintances.

5. Farewell Expressions in Formal and Informal Styles

Farewell expressions also differ between formal and informal styles. In formal style, official words and polite expressions are generally used.

Formal style:

祝您一切顺利 (zhù nín yīqiè shùnlì) — “I wish you success in all your endeavors.”

期待与您再次合作 (qīdài yǔ nín zài cì hézuò) — “I look forward to cooperating with you again.”

Informal Style Farewells:

祝好运 (zhù hǎo yùn) — “Good luck!” 再见 (zàijiàn) — “See you!”

In formal style, farewell expressions should be polite

and cautious. In informal style, expressions are short and simple.

6. Intonation in Formal and Informal Styles

Intonation also plays an important role in distinguishing formal and informal styles in Chinese. In formal style, intonation tends to be higher and more official, which reflects the seriousness of the conversation. In informal style, intonation is freer, more cheerful, or friendly.

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