

THE LEVELS OF FORMALITY IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION DISCOURSE

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Annotation. This article aims to investigate the levels of formality in different types of speech acts in business communication discourse. The levels of formality in this type of discourse vary according to the intention and aim of the participants of the communication. The analysis of the formality is important, as this influences on the success of the communication.

Key words: business, business communication, level of formality, high level, low level, speech act.

Introduction. Being an indisputable part of any culture, language itself in some cases is considered to be a whole culture. The question if the identity of the language learner and his local culture has an impact on second language acquisition has always been an intriguing topic to discuss. If English is the second or a foreign language to be learned, so is in our case, then there is a high enough likelihood to confuse language learners with the differences of the target and native language. According to Meyer, cultural identity is the network between several aspects of culture such as race, religion, ethnicity, and others, and language is the tool to convey these innermost thoughts. Due to the factors related to the globalization, communication types are varying day by day. This process impacts the speech acts utilized in this discourse. One of the most significant issues to study is the formality levels in communication, specifically in business discourses.

Literature review. The connection between language acquisition and the cultural identity notes that due to the increased opportunities in the communication

channels, media, and Internet, the connection between culture and language acquisition is stronger ever. Before researchers used to believe that our cultural identity is formed by the time, we reach adulthood and then it is set in stone, but nowadays, it is proved that identity is a dynamic process and it adapts to the environment that we are surrounded with. Therefore, the speech acts we are using are also adaptable according to our intention in communication. There have been disputable arguments about the issue. Richards and Schmidt (1983) claim that “If learners just study the language material without analysis of its cultural meaning, they may not notice the underlying material that can shape the behaviors, roles and ethics of participants in the culture” (p. 15). It demonstrates that drawing students’ attention to the various meanings of the phrase based on context will hasten their integration to target language pragmatic competence. Ishihara (2006) claims that “if they gain an understanding of the social and cultural norms, they could still resist accommodating to L2 norms in their own pragmatic performance” (p.13). Thus, establishing cultural values in students’ brains will help them resolve cultural misinformation.

Investigation and results. One of the most significant part of business correspondence is the degrees of formality. These levels of formality is connected with the intention of the message and the relationship the speaker or writer has with receiver of the message. Main features of formal language in business communication are politeness, respect and distance. By contrast, informal language conveys friendliness and familiarity. There are some ways to express the degree of formality including, the right choice of the words, expressions or phrases, the utilization of special grammatical structures. The formality used in business communication are usually in high level, as it is important for communicators to achieve the aim, and also the social status of the participants in business discourse are usually different. Therefore, among four categories of formality, formal and semi-formal styles are preferable in business discourses.

Conclusion. The degree of formality in business discourse is relatively linked with the purpose of the message or speech. The main characteristics conveying formality in business communication are politeness, respect and familiarity. It is vital

for the participants of communication be aware of the essential tools conveying formality in business communication.

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