EFL LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF (IN)FORMALITY: ADDRESS FORMS IN INTERACTION WITH OTHER (IN)FORMAL REGISTER MARKERS

by

Ivan Lasan

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Graduate Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Ivan Lasan (2016)
EFL LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF (IN)FORMALITY: ADDRESS FORMS IN INTERACTION WITH OTHER (IN)FORMAL REGISTER MARKERS

Master of Arts
Ivan Lasan
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
University of Toronto
2016

Abstract

Perception and production of stylistic variation is an important aspect of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence. Whereas most research has focused on the production of (in)formal variants by native speakers, this study compares perceptions of formality by English-dominant (ED) speakers and advanced English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) learners measured on a 5-point Likert scale for 20 examples of e-mail workplace communications in which (in)formal greetings, address forms, and vocabulary are variously combined as three register markers. Participants also reported how certain they felt about their formality ratings on a 4-point Likert scale, and identified features that they considered significant in their perceptions of formality. Statistically significant differences between the two participant groups emerged in 11 of the formality and 12 of the certainty ratings. A trend which needs to be substantiated by further research was observed suggesting that the EFL learners found address forms more and vocabulary less salient than the ED speakers.
Acknowledgments

There are a number of people without whose help I could not have completed this thesis. I would like to thank my thesis committee, Dr. Julie Kerekes and Dr. Katherine Rehner, for the many different ways in which they guided and supported me throughout my MA studies and the writing of my thesis. There were numerous times when their professional advice and personal encouragement were invaluable to me.

I would like to thank my fellow students in the Language and Literacies Education program at OISE for providing inspiring professional feedback about various aspects of my research, and my partner, Stefan, and his mother, Michele, for being a sounding board for my research ideas, and offering their unique perspective as native speakers of English and former fellow EFL teachers in Slovakia.

I would like to thank all the professors in Canada and Slovakia who helped me recruit participants and collect data, and all the students in Canada and Slovakia who were willing to participate in my research.

I must thank my parents, Anna and Ľubomír, and my partner, Stefan, and his mother, Michele, for making it possible for me to study at the University of Toronto, and my late maternal grandmother, Antónia, for teaching me how to keep faith in my ability to persevere.
Dedication

To my parents, Anna and Lubomír.
Table of Contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... ii
Acknowledgments ......................................................................................................... iii
Dedication ...................................................................................................................... iv

1. Introduction ............................................................................................................. 1
   1.1 Motivation ........................................................................................................... 1
   1.2 Rationale ............................................................................................................ 3
      1.2.1 Context and Significance ........................................................................... 3
      1.2.2 The Native-Speaker Goal .......................................................................... 5
      1.2.3 The Gap ...................................................................................................... 6
   1.3 Research Questions ............................................................................................. 8

2. Conceptual Framework ........................................................................................... 10
   2.1 Literature Review .............................................................................................. 10
      2.1.1 Register ...................................................................................................... 10
      2.1.2 Diglossia versus Continuum ....................................................................... 11
         2.1.2.1 (In)formal Registers within the Framework of Diglossia ..................... 11
         2.1.2.2 (In)formal Registers within the Framework of a Continuum ............... 14
      2.1.3 (In)formal Register Markers ....................................................................... 18
         2.1.3.1 Greetings ............................................................................................ 19
         2.1.3.2 Address Forms ................................................................................... 25
         2.1.3.3 Morphosyntactic and Lexical Variants ................................................. 32
      2.1.4 E-mail .......................................................................................................... 35
      2.1.5 EFL and ESL Contexts of Learning .............................................................. 37
      2.1.6 Sociolinguistic and Pragmatic Competence of Learners ............................. 39
   2.2 Definitions .......................................................................................................... 40

3. Method .................................................................................................................... 43
   3.1 Pilot Study .......................................................................................................... 43
      3.1.1 Participants ................................................................................................. 43
      3.1.2 Instruments ................................................................................................. 44
         3.1.2.1 Formality Judgment Questionnaire ....................................................... 44
         3.1.2.2 Sociolinguistic Background Questionnaire ......................................... 51
         3.1.2.3 Follow-up E-mail Interview .................................................................. 53
      3.1.3 Data Collection Procedures ......................................................................... 53
      3.1.4 Collected Data ............................................................................................. 54
      3.1.5 Analysis of Collected Data .......................................................................... 54
      3.1.6 Findings and Implications for the Main Study ............................................. 54
         3.1.6.1 Data from Peer Professionals ............................................................... 55
         3.1.6.2 Data from EFL Learners ...................................................................... 56
   3.2 Main Study .......................................................................................................... 56
      3.2.1 Participants ................................................................................................. 57
      3.2.2 Instruments ................................................................................................. 58
3.2.2.1 Main Study Version of the Formality Judgment Questionnaire ............ 58
3.2.3 Data Collection Procedures ........................................................................... 63
3.2.4 Collected Data .............................................................................................. 64
3.2.5 Analysis of Collected Data .............................................................................. 66

4. Results .................................................................................................................. 69
4.1 EFL Learners’ Group Profile .............................................................................. 69
4.2 Formality Ratings .............................................................................................. 72
4.3 Certainty Ratings .............................................................................................. 80
4.4 Salient (In)formal Register Markers ................................................................. 86

5. Discussion .............................................................................................................. 93
5.1 Interpretation of Results and Implications for EFL Instruction ......................... 93
  5.1.1 Formality Ratings ......................................................................................... 93
  5.1.2 Certainty Ratings ....................................................................................... 100
  5.1.3 Salient (In)formal Register Markers ........................................................... 102
  5.1.4 Individual Variation .................................................................................... 104
5.2 Limitations of the Study ................................................................................... 106
  5.2.1 Participants .................................................................................................. 106
  5.2.2 Instruments .................................................................................................. 107
  5.2.2.1 Formality Judgment Questionnaire ......................................................... 107
  5.2.2.2 Sociolinguistic Background Questionnaire ............................................. 109
  5.2.3 Collected Data ............................................................................................ 110
  5.2.4 Analysis ..................................................................................................... 110
5.3 Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 111
  5.3.1 Implications For Future Research ............................................................... 111
  5.3.2 Implications For English Users ................................................................. 112

References ............................................................................................................... 114
List of Tables

Table 1 (In)formal Register Markers as Variables ............................................. 47
Table 2 Combinations of (In)formal Register Markers in Sentence Types ............... 48
Table 3 Names Used as Formal and Informal Address Forms ................................. 50
Table 4 Verbs, Adjectives, and Nouns Used as In/Formal Vocabulary (Pilot Study) .... 50
Table 5 Vocabulary in the Pilot Study versus the Main Study ................................. 60
Table 6 Verbs, Adjectives, and Nouns Used as In/Formal Vocabulary (Main Study) .... 61
Table 7 Participant Groups .............................................................................. 65
Table 8 Distribution of Questionnaire Versions in the Data ................................. 66
Table 9 Frequency of Engaging in Specific Activities in English ............................. 71
Table 10 Results of the Mann-Whitney U Test for Formality Ratings .................... 74
Table 11 Group Mean Formality Ratings .............................................................. 75
Table 12 Stylistic Consistency of the Sentences Rated Differently (Formality) ........... 78
Table 13 Sentence Types Rated Similarly and Not Similarly ................................. 79
Table 14 Result of the Mann-Whitney U Test for Certainty Ratings ....................... 82
Table 15 Group Mean Certainty Ratings ............................................................. 83
Table 16 Stylistic Consistency of the Sentences Rated Differently (Certainty) ......... 85
Table 17 Examples of “Content” and “General Impression” Responses ................... 88
Table 18 Reports of Salient (In)formal Register Markers by Group ....................... 90
List of Figures

Figure 1 Sentence Structure ................................................................. 49
Figure 2 Sample Formality Judgment Item ............................................ 51
List of Appendices

Appendix A Initial Set of Sentences for the Formality Judgment Task ...................... 138
Appendix B Pilot Study Set of Sentences in the Formality Judgment Task .................. 140
Appendix C Sociolinguistic Questionnaires .................................................................. 142
Appendix D Main Study Versions of the Formality Judgment Questionnaire ............... 147
Appendix E Information Letters and Consent Forms (Main Study) .............................. 161
Introduction

1.1 Motivation

During my eight years of teaching English as a foreign language in Slovakia, I was always curious to find out what my native-speaker colleagues believed were the greatest hurdles their students struggled to overcome. The stories that caught my interest were about students using language that was inappropriately (in)formal. One colleague, who taught English to adult employees in the workplace, shared a story about inappropriate use of formal language in one group of her students. Over time, as she and her students came to know each better and became friendly, she continued to feel that her students kept a distance from her. She realized that whether in or out of the classroom, her students used language that was inappropriately formal, composed of mostly textbook, standard vocabulary. As it turned out later, despite their wish to become friends with my colleague, their language made it difficult for her to think of them for a long time as anything other than friendly students.

Another colleague, who taught English to undergraduate students at university, shared a story about inappropriate use of informality in one of her first courses. To appear friendly, she invited her students to use her first name to address her. However, the students seemed to have interpreted it as an invitation to be informal in all respects. Both in and out of the classroom, they used language that was inappropriately informal, including the use of slang words, and, occasionally, even swear words. Against her wish, instead of a friendly teacher, my colleague became a friend to her students, and struggled to assert her authority as a consequence.
My colleagues and I noticed that many of our students belonged to one of two groups. One group was mostly older students who had learned English almost exclusively in the classroom, and their English was invariably formal. In contrast, the other group was mostly younger students who had spent time in English-speaking countries or were spending a considerable amount of their free time exposed to English through various media, and their English tended to be informal. Although based on a limited sample of EFL students, these observations are consistent with Ferguson's (1959) and Voegelin's (1960) ideas about the acquisition of formal and informal registers. They argued that the stricter formal registers are acquired through formal instruction and training, whereas the looser informal registers are acquired more intuitively and naturally by imitation of other speakers.

As Nayar (1997) made clear, in foreign language contexts of learning where the target language enjoys no official, cultural, or social status, and language learning is limited to the classroom environment, it seems obvious that there are far fewer opportunities to acquire the full range of formal and informal registers. Most of the Slovak EFL students in my experience lacked the ability to shift between formal and informal registers in English. When confronted with explicit questions about the differences between formal and informal English, most students revealed that they lacked awareness of such difference. Most likely influenced by the means of expressing (in)formality in Slovak as their first language, many also mistakenly believed that English does not distinguish between formal and informal registers because it does not distinguish between the second-person singular and the second-person plural personal pronoun, and the identical "you" is used in both cases. In contrast, in Slovak choosing the
second-person plural "vy" instead of the second-person singular pronoun "ty" for a single addressee functions as a salient register marker of formality (Mistik, 1983). Similar systems of pronouns of address that function as (in)formal register markers exist in many other languages. I wondered, to what extent are specific (in)formal register markers such as address forms, and specific combinations of (in)formal register markers such as address forms and vocabulary, perceived similarly by foreign language learners and other speakers of the target language?

1.2 Rationale

1.2.1 Context and Significance

It has been established that communicative competence includes sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence (e.g., Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972). Since then a number of researchers have investigated sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence of language learners. In the sociolinguistic research (e.g., Lyster, 1994; F. Mougeon & Rehner, 2009; Regan, 2010; Van Compernolle & Williams, 2012), sociolinguistic competence has been defined as the ability to use language that is appropriate to particular contexts by shifting between styles, registers, and varieties. In the pragmatic research (e.g., Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Dewaele, 2007; Ifantidou, 2013), pragmatic competence has been defined as the ability to use language that is appropriate to particular situations by understanding, in Crystal's (1997) popular definition, "the effects ... use of language has on other participants in the act of communication" (p. 301), and has been investigated primarily in the performance of speech acts such as requests.
Research of (in)formal register markers has made clear that (in)formality is both a sociolinguistic and a pragmatic issue in that sociolinguistic factors play a role in the communication of pragmatic meaning. For example, discussing the use of colloquial vocabulary in French, Lodge (1999) argued that sociolinguistic factors such as the speaker's age, gender, and social class are just as important as pragmatic factors such as social distance and politeness. Similarly, discussing the differences in the use of "tu" and "vous" as (in)formal address forms in European and Quebec French, Van Compernolle (2010) argued that the use of the address forms depends on the social identity of the interlocutors as well as their social relationship.

To understand the significance of appropriate use of (in)formal variants, whether by native speakers or language learners, consider the following examples. In a study that focused on the perception of the variable pronunciation of "ing," Campbell-Kibler (2011) found that speakers who pronounced the "n" as velar, which is called for in standard English, were perceived as intelligent, educated, and less likely to be students in contrast to speakers who pronounced the "n" as alveolar, which is typical of informal speech and certain dialects. In a study that focused on the production of a business letter in which participants were asked to apologize for having unavoidably missed a scheduled job interview and to request another one, Maier (1992) found that English learners produced letters that were inappropriate in that they were "too casual, too personal, too desperate, or too detached" (p. 194).
1.2.2 The Native-Speaker Goal

Discussions of native-speaker competence as an appropriate goal for language learners have identified a number of problems. First, a universally accepted definition of the term native speaker remains elusive (e.g., Alptekin, 2002; Cook, 1999; Lee, 2005). Second, as a goal for language learners, native-speaker competence presupposes a monolithic view of language and culture, and restricts the authenticity of the target language to an exclusive group of speakers (e.g., Alptekin, 2002). Third, it assumes that all language learners share the same motivation for learning and the same reasons for using the target language (e.g., McKay, 2003). Fourth, it fails to take into account that a language such as English has attained the status of an international language and lingua franca (e.g., Alptekin, 2002; McKay, 2003). And fifth, with implications for the acquisition of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence, it remains unclear the language use of which particular community or communities of target-language speakers should be included in the curriculum (e.g., McKay, 2003).

In this study, to avoid the unclear term "native speaker," participants recruited in Canada have been identified as English-dominant (ED) speakers, which better reflects the fact that English is their first or dominant language. The rationale for using this group of speakers as the source of the baseline data for this study is to identify any differences in the perceptions of sentence-level (in)formality by advanced learners of English in Slovakia. Importantly, the purpose of identifying these differences is not to suggest that the perceptions of the ED speakers are correct and those of the EFL learners are not. The comparison should result in an increased understanding of the significance and role of greetings, address forms, and lexical variants as register markers, which may be variously
combined to create various (in)formal registers and that language learners need to be aware of to be able to make decisions about their use.

Such awareness makes it possible for those learners who wish to attain native-speaker competence to achieve that goal; importantly, without restricting them to the acquisition of a set of rules that reflect the practice of only one particular community of target-language speakers. Although obviously not the goal of every language learner, Timmis's (2002) small-scale but still informative survey of student and teacher attitudes toward acquiring native-speaker competence in English suggests that such competence is the goal of some language learners, even those who acquire English as a foreign language and who currently use it and anticipate using it in the future mostly to communicate with other English learners.

1.2.3 The Gap

There is a wealth of research on stylistic variation in various languages, with focus on (in)formal (i.e., standard, non-standard, honorific, regional) variants (e.g., in French: Lodge, 1999; Taylor & Clement, 1974; in Greek: Ioannidou, 2009; in German: Hogg, Joyce, & Abrams, 1984; in Dutch: De Houwer, 2003; in Persian: Shahraki & Rasekh, 2011; in Czech: Dickins, 1994; in Japanese: Caltabiano, 2008; Okamoto, 1999; Tokunaga, 1992; in Arabic: Abdel-Jawad & Radwan, 2013), and a similar wealth of research with focus on (in)formal address forms (e.g., in French: Ford, 1974; Morford, 1997; Van Compernolle, 2010; Warren, 2006; in Italian: Bates & Benigni, 1975; in Spanish: Foster, 1964; Michnowicz & Place, 2010; in German: Kempf, 1985; Kretzenbacher, Clyne, & Schüpbach, 2006; in Dutch: Vandekerckhove, 2005; in
Swedish: Paulston, 1976; in Norwegian: Dittrich, Johansen, & Kulinskaya, 2011; in Estonian: Keevallik, 1999; in Persian: Keshavarz, 2001; in Korean: Hwang, 1991; in Chinese: Alleton, 1981; Chao, 1956; Hao, Zhang, & Zhu, 2008; in Arabic: Alrabaa, 1985). Such research may be divided into studies that focus on (1) the production and description of use, and (2) the perception and understanding of stylistic variation by native speakers or language learners. Based on a survey of the reviewed studies listed above, it appears that the majority of such research has focused on the production and description of use of stylistic variation by native speakers. In contrast, research that has focused on the perception and understanding of stylistic variation by language learners appears to be limited.

With regard to English specifically, the trend appears to be identical. Although some research has focused on (in)formal variants (e.g., Campbell-Kibler, 2011; Evans, McBride, Queen, Thayer, & Spyridakis, 2005; Hyland & Anan, 2006; Maier, 1992; Moreno, 2011; Tannen, 2011; Waugh, 2013) and (in)formal address forms (e.g., Fiske, 1978; Lambert, 1967), the majority of such research has focused on the production and description of use of stylistic variation by native speakers. In contrast, there appears to be a paucity of research that has focused on the perception and understanding of stylistic variation by language learners. Out of the surveyed studies of English listed above, only Hyland and Anan's (2006) study of (in)formal variants and no study of (in)formal address forms fit such a description.

Taking into account both the sociolinguistic and the pragmatic significance of the appropriate use of stylistic variation and the paucity of research focused on language learners, there appears to be a need for research that focuses on language learners’
perception or understanding of stylistic variation. Specifically, by focusing on perception, as a prerequisite to the production, of greetings, address forms, and vocabulary as (in)formal register markers that may be combined to create various levels of (in)formal registers, this study aims to make a contribution on two levels, theoretical and pedagogical. On a theoretical level, it seeks to contribute to the understanding of the interaction between greetings, address forms, and lexical variants as (in)formal register markers in various combinations and their role in the overall perceptions of sentence-level (in)formality in English. On a pedagogical level, it seeks to contribute to research that informs language instruction that leads to appropriate perception and production of stylistic variation in English by raising awareness of its significance in terms of sociolinguistics and pragmatics.

1.3 Research Questions

The guiding question of this study is whether and in what manner learners of English as a foreign language differ from North American English-dominant speakers in their perceptions of (in)formality in examples of e-mail communications of sentence length, expressed by combinations of (in)formal greetings, address forms, and lexical variants as (in)formal register markers. To answer this overarching question, three specific research questions are posed in this study:

(1) Do English-dominant (ED) speakers educated in Canada and advanced English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) learners educated in Slovakia rate the same examples of e-mail communications in English as similarly formal?
(2) Do ED speakers and advanced EFL learners report similar levels of certainty regarding their formality ratings of the same examples of e-mail communications in English?

(3) Which (in)formal register markers do ED speakers and advanced EFL learners report as significant in their perceptions of examples of e-mail communications in English?
Conceptual Framework

This chapter is divided into a literature review and definitions. In the literature review, an overview is provided of research that is relevant to principal components of the research inquiry guiding this study, namely (in)formal registers, (in)formal register markers (including greetings, address forms, grammatical and lexical variants), and e-mail communication. A short discussion is also provided of the differences between the EFL and ESL contexts of learning, and the sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence of language learners. In the definitions that follow, a summary is provided of all key terms and concepts that inform the research design of this study.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Register

Researchers have used the term register to refer to a variety of concepts. With (in)formality as a shared defining feature, in a summary of the various concepts, Moreno (2011) identified aspects of language variation, which include modes (e.g., the register of written language), genres (e.g., the register of a personal letter), styles (e.g., the academic register), and idiolects (e.g., the register of a politician). She further identified functions (e.g., the register of persuasion), topics (e.g., the register of art), and disciplines (e.g., the register of law). Arguing that style, genre, and register are the three most frequently confused concepts, Moreno (1997) proposed a distinction between these concepts by suggesting that styles vary according to individual preferences, genres are defined by
functions they serve, and registers vary according to the social roles of the interlocutors and the social context of the communicative situation. Such understanding of the term register is adopted in this study.

### 2.1.2 Diglossia versus Continuum

#### 2.1.2.1 (In)formal Registers within the Framework of Diglossia

Literature focused on registers (e.g., Biber, 1995; Ghadessy, 1988; Gregory & Carroll, 1978; Halliday, 1978) may be divided into two groups. One is research with a dichotomous view of (in)formal registers within the framework of intralingual diglossia (e.g., Bernstein, 1964; Ferguson, 1959; Givon, 1979; Gumperz, 1964; Kay, 1977; Irvine, 1979; Voegelin, 1960). The other is research that defines (in)formal registers in terms of degrees, within the framework of a continuum (e.g., Agha, 1998; Chan, 1976; Heylighen & Dewaele, 1999; Joos, 1967; Lahiri, Mitra, & Lu, 2011; Leckie-Tarry & Birch, 1995; Moreno, 1997, 2006, 2011).

In a review of literature that explores (in)formal registers within the framework of intralingual diglossia, Hudson (1994) distinguished between the sociocultural (e.g., Ferguson, 1959; Gumperz, 1964; Irvine, 1979, Voegelin, 1960) and psychopragmatic (e.g., Bernstein, 1964; Givon, 1979; Kay, 1977) views of (in)formality. In the sociocultural view, (in)formality is primarily a function of "communicative decorum," or the extent to which interlocutors in specific communicative situations are required to suppress their personal identity and expression of personal intent to "perform a social role" as "agents of the culture" (Hudson, 1994, p. 303).
For example, Irvine (1979) identified four universal aspects of (in)formality that encompass the use of non-linguistic codes such as body language, clothes, or proximity, and the linguistic code or language. First, formal contexts call for the observance of additional rules and conventions. In terms of language, this translates into the use of specific variants in phonology, morphology, syntax, and vocabulary, although not necessarily the use of all of these variants at the same time or to the same degree. Second, formal contexts require a stricter co-occurrence of consistent choices than do informal contexts, in which diverse choices may be combined more freely to produce specific effects. Third, formal contexts call for positional instead of personal identities. Whereas positional identities “are part of a structured set likely to be labeled and widely recognized in a society,” personal identities are “individualized and depend more on the particular history of an individual’s interactions” (p. 778). And fourth, formal contexts are more likely to call for central focus, which requires all participants to be engaged as a group and follow rules that regulate who and when has the right to speak or act, as at a university lecture, for example.

Corresponding to Irvine's (1979) idea that behavior in formal social contexts is subject to additional rules and conventions and stricter variant co-occurrence restrictions, Ferguson (1959) argued that the formal variety of a language allows less variation and favors more complex grammar. In addition, Voegelin (1960) argued that the use of the formal variety is restricted to specific situations, whereas the use of the informal variety is possible across a large spectrum of social contexts. Both Ferguson (1959) and Voegelin (1960) warned against unintended effects caused by inappropriate use of the formal and
the informal variety, and argued that to master the formal variety requires formal instruction, unlike the informal variety, which is acquired more intuitively by imitation.

Corresponding to Irvine's (1979) idea that formal social contexts invoke social and positional identities, Gumperz (1964) distinguished between transactional interaction, which roughly correlates with formal contexts, and personal interaction, which roughly correlates with informal contexts. In transactional interaction, such as a job interview, participants are required to perform a specific social role and therefore suspend the expression of their personal identity, whereas in personal interaction, such as a casual conversation among friends, participants are free to act as individuals and express their personality.

In contrast to the sociocultural view, (in)formality in the psychopragmatic view is primarily a function of "communicative efficacy," or the extent to which interlocutors in specific communicative situations share presuppositional background, and the extent to which these communicative situations constrain interlocutors in their ability to establish such common background (Hudson, 1994, p. 303).

For example, Bernstein (1964) distinguished between elaborated and restricted speech. As an example of the formal variety, elaborated speech is composed of longer, grammatically complex sentences with diverse and precise vocabulary. As logically explicit and precise, to be processed elaborated speech requires minimal use of non-linguistic channels of communication and little prior understanding or shared background. Kay (1977) made a similar distinction between autonomous speech, such as the speech of “an educated speaker in a formal academic context” (p. 21), and non-autonomous speech, such as the speech of the same educated speaker in an informal
context of playing baseball. Kay (1977) further argued that autonomous speech is especially suitable for communicating new, exact, and emotionally neutral information. In contrast, non-autonomous speech is composed of shorter, less grammatically complex sentences, with limited and context-specific vocabulary. Because interlocutors that engage in the production of such speech share common assumptions, interests, and histories, explicit and precise expression of intent is redundant and unnecessary.

Corresponding to Kay's (1977) autonomous and non-autonomous speech and Bernstein's (1964) elaborated and restricted speech, Givon (1979) described tight-formal-syntactic and loose-informal-pragmatic discourse. Tight-formal-syntactic discourse is characterized by careful use of grammatical morphology, tight subordination of clauses, and a word order determined by the grammatical subject. This type of discourse requires planning, such as writing by adults. In contrast, loose-informal-pragmatic discourse is characterized by limited and basic grammatical morphology, loose coordination of clauses, and a word order that follows a topic-comment structure. This type of discourse is unplanned, such as the early speech of children. Givon (1979) argued that proficient adult speakers of a language have at their disposal a repertoire of such discourse varieties, which they select from according to their needs in specific communicative situations.

2.1.2.2 (In)formal Registers within the Framework of a Continuum

Whereas within the diglossic framework of (in)formal registers the formal variety is defined as the opposite of the informal variety, within the framework of a continuum (in)formality is defined in terms of degrees that defy precise definitions. Moreno (2006) identified Joos (1967) as a pioneer that broadened the view of (in)formal registers from
two opposites to a number of degrees in a continuum, by describing five styles: intimate, casual, consultative, formal, and frozen. To the extent that these styles are informed by the social distance between interlocutors, the communicative situation, and the amount of background shared by interlocutors, they may be understood as informed by principles similar to those of the communicative decorum and communicative efficacy, as defined within the sociocultural and psychopragmatic views of interlingual diglossia discussed earlier.

For example, Joos (1967) imagined that the consultative style is used most commonly with strangers. Its defining features include the supply of necessary background information without which interlocutors would fail to be understood, and a sustained use of backchannels, or continuous participation (p. 23). Moving toward the informal end of the continuum, the casual style is reserved for insiders, such as friends and acquaintances, and anyone who the speaker wishes to treat as such. Its defining features include the use of ellipsis and slang, which simultaneously presupposes and acknowledges that the involved interlocutors share the same background information and are therefore able to understand such language easily. Similarly, the intimate style is most commonly used with close family members, and, in comparison to the casual style, the amount of shared background information is even higher. Therefore, one of its defining features is the use of “extraction,” in which “the speaker extracts a minimum pattern from some conceivable casual sentence” (pp. 30-31), and another feature is the use of jargon, which, unlike ever-changing and public slang, is permanent as a code invented and used by a closed group of people (p. 32).
Moving toward the formal end of the continuum, the formal style is primarily designed to inform and one of its defining features is detachment, which means that communication in the formal style is impersonal and the interaction of interlocutors is organized around the rules of turn-taking and allows for no use of insertions or participation (p. 36). Another defining feature of the formal style is cohesion, which requires advance planning to produce language that is logical and explicit and therefore quite complex and elaborate. Finally, the frozen style is intended for print and declamation, and its defining features include the lack of participation, or the ability of “the reader or the hearer to cross-examine the author” (p. 39). Although it allows for the rereading of the written text, the style presupposes that the participants in the communication will remain social strangers.

Other researchers have contributed to the understanding of (in)formal registers within the framework of a continuum by focusing on various features of (in)formal registers. Many of these features are similar to those identified within the diglossic view of (in)formal varieties, but are discussed in terms of degrees. One such feature is cohesion, an echo of Irvine's (1979) idea that formal social contexts call for a stricter variant co-occurrence. For example, Agha (1998) argued that cohesion achieved by co-occurrence of honorific variants was essential for creating the effect of honorific language. Demonstrating that various degrees of (in)formality may be created by various combinations of (in)formal variants, Agha (1998) further argued that language that uses more honorific variants, to the exclusion of non-honorific variants, is perceived as more honorific. Importantly, Chan (1976) added support to the argument that cohesion is a prerequisite for creating the effect of formality by drawing attention to the fact that
perception of a register as formal is easily destroyed by the intrusion of even a small number of informal variants, whereas the same is not true of the converse.

Another such feature is context-dependence, an echo of Kay's (1977) and Bernstein's (1964) idea that as explicit and precise, formal speech requires little background to be shared by interlocutors to be understood. For example, Heylighen and Dewaele (1999) distinguished between surface and deep formality. In their definition, whereas surface formality is achieved by increased attention to form in the service of convention, deep formality is achieved by increased attention to form in the service of "unequivocal understanding of the precise meaning of the expression" (p. 3). They demonstrated that (in)formality is best understood within the framework of a continuum by arguing that an expression is more formal when its meaning is less dependent on context.

Another feature similar to those identified in research with the diglossic view of (in)formality is linguistic complexity, an echo of Kay's (1977), Bernstein's (1964), and Givon's (1979) idea that the formal variety is more grammatically complex. For example, in a study of syntactical branching, which describes the position of phrasal or clausal modifiers in relation to the main verb in a sentence, Levin and Garret (1990) found that left-branching significantly differed from center- and left-branching in being perceived as a feature of formal registers. Assuming that left-branching requires greater memory load and longer processing time than either center- or right-branching, Levin and Garret argued that there is a correlation between such increased syntactical complexity, longer processing time of such structures, and the perception of a higher degree of formality. Levin and Novak (1991) made a similar argument in their study of vocabulary.
Discovering that participants perceived less frequently used Germanic words and words of Latinate instead of Germanic etymology as more formal, they argued that longer processing time was one of the key factors in their perceptions of (in)formality.

Apart from exploring features of (in)formality similar to those identified within the diglossic view, researchers have made other observations that lend support to the idea that (in)formal registers are better viewed within the framework of a continuum. For example, in a study of register variation, Ravid and Berman (2009) used low, neutral, and high as three degrees of (in)formality in their analysis of spoken and written discourse, and found that neutral items made up the majority of their data. This suggested that the formal and informal degrees as the extreme ends of the (in)formal register continuum were marked, in contrast to the unmarked neutral degree.

In the light of the number of interacting factors that affect the production and perception of (in)formality through combinations of various (in)formal variants and features discussed above, in this study, (in)formality is viewed within the framework of a continuum, with a number of (in)formal varieties between the formal and informal varieties as two extreme ends of the (in)formal continuum.

### 2.1.3 (In)formal Register Markers

Understanding (in)formal registers as various degrees of (in)formality that may be created by combining specific (in)formal variants and features, the following is a survey of literature pertaining to such variants and features as (in)formal register markers, namely greetings, address forms, grammatical, and lexical variants.
2.1.3.1 Greetings

According to the Canadian Oxford Dictionary (2005), a greeting refers to "words and gestures" that are "used to greet a person." Such a definition suggests that greetings may be divided into verbal, such as "Hi, how are you?," and non-verbal such as a handshake. Concerning verbal greetings which are the focus of this study, some researchers (e.g., Biesenbach-Lucas, 2009; Bjorge; 2007; Duranti, 1997; Scarcella & Brunak 1981; Schleicher, 1997; Waldvogel, 2007; Wei, 2010) have used the term greeting as an all-encompassing term to refer to any words, phrases, or expressions that may be used in the act of greeting, including the use of address forms, such as titles and names. Some researchers have used the term salutation as a synonym of the term greeting (e.g., Gains, 1999; Hatipoglu, 2006; Sabater, Turney, & Fleta, 2008), whereas others (e.g., Faiz & Suhaila, 2013) distinguished between greetings as referring to expressions such as "Hi" or "Hello," and salutations as referring to titles such as "Miss." Duranti (1997) used the term salutation to refer to a subgroup of greetings made up of "activity-specific" lexical items, such as "Hi" in English or "Ciao" in Italian (p. 67), for which Felix-Brasdefer (2012) used the term greetings. In this study, the term greeting is used to refer to such "activity-specific" lexical items only, excluding any address forms such as titles and names.

Recognizing the lack of a common definition of greetings among researchers with diverse theoretical and methodological approaches to their study, Duranti (1997) identified six universal features of greetings. First, greetings signal the beginning of a social interaction, and often serve as a means of attracting the attention of the desired interlocutor. Second, greetings signal that interlocutors share a perceptual field, whether
visual or auditory, and function as a means of recognition and acknowledgment of the interlocutor. Third, greetings naturally form adjacency pairs, which are two-part sequences, in which one interlocutor "invites, constraints, and creates expectations for a particular type of reply" (Duranti, 1997, p. 69) from another interlocutor. Fourth, greetings have a form and content that is easily predictable, as they are often formulaic and constitute a social routine. Fifth, greetings define "a unit of interaction," which may parallel "natural units," such as the cycle of day and night, or "cultural units," such as a meeting (Duranti, 1997, p. 70). These units of interaction may be as short as an exchange of greetings and as long as a day at work, but they may also constitute much longer periods of time, as in communication via e-mail that stretches over several months. And, finally, greetings serve as a means of recognizing that an interlocutor deserves attention, and of identifying an interlocutor as a member of a specific group of people through the choice of the greeting they receive, such as "Hello" in contrast to "Hi" or "What's up."

Research focused on greetings in the context of e-mail communication (e.g., Bjorge, 2007; Chen, 2006; Duthler, 2006; Felix-Brasdefer, 2012; Frey, Schegg, & Murphy, 2003; Gains, 1999; Sabater et al., 2008; Waldvogel, 2007) has shown that greetings are often inseparable from address forms, with which they form the opening of such computer-mediated communication. Various combinations of greetings and address forms can create various degrees of (in)formality. There appears to be general agreement in the research of e-mail communication that greetings such as "Hi" or "Hey" represent the informal degree, the standard greeting of traditional letters, "Dear," or greetings such as "Good morning" represent the formal degree, and a number of other greetings, such as "Hello," fall somewhere between the two ends of the (in)formal continuum.
Research focused on the use of greetings has identified a number of pragmatic and sociolinguistic factors that affect the use and choice of specific (in)formal greetings. Concerning pragmatic factors, many researchers have considered the use of greetings within the framework of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory (e.g., Bou-Franch, 2011; Duthler, 2006; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011; Faiz & Suhaila, 2013; Felix-Brasdeder, 2012; Scarcella & Brunak, 1981; Waldvogel, 2007; Wei, 2010), specifically with regard to the concepts of positive face (i.e., the desire to be liked) and negative face (i.e., the desire to act as one pleases) and the corresponding positive and negative politeness strategies as means of counteracting the effects of face-threatening acts (e.g., requests, apologies, compliments).

Within this framework (e.g., Felix-Brasdefer, 2012), the use of informal greetings is understood as part of an effort to establish solidarity between involved interlocutors, which is a positive politeness strategy. In contrast, the use of formal greetings is viewed as an element in the communication of deference to the interlocutor whose face is perceived to be threatened, which is a negative politeness strategy. The choice between positive versus negative politeness strategies depends on the social distance and the power difference between interlocutors and the amount of imposition inherent in the face-threatening act (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

For example, in a study comparing e-mails exchanged between university lecturers as power-equal interlocutors and between undergraduate students and university lecturers as power-unequal interlocutors at the same school, Bou-Franch (2011) reported that although greetings were included in the majority of e-mails, they were used slightly less in e-mails sent down the institutional hierarchy. The findings of the study also
revealed that e-mails exchanged between power equals included as many informal greetings to signal solidarity as they did formal greetings to communicate deference. In contrast, e-mails sent up and especially e-mails sent down the institutional hierarchy included many more informal greetings to signal solidarity. Waldvogel (2007) also reported findings with regard to power and social distance affecting the use of greetings at an educational institution. Analysis of the power variable revealed that half of the e-mails sent to power equals included no greeting, whereas there were a number of different openings (i.e., different combinations including greetings and names) found in the other half of the e-mails. Of the e-mails sent down the institutional hierarchy, only 30% included an opening, in comparison to e-mails sent up the institutional hierarchy, of which 55% included an opening. Analysis of the social distance variable revealed that e-mails sent to distant as opposed to close colleagues were most likely to include a greeting and the name of the recipient in the opening.

As an example of the effect of pragmatic factors on the use of greetings, it must be acknowledged that apart from the choice of a specific greeting, interlocutors also have a choice, and in fact often choose, not to use any greeting at all. For example, Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) and Formentelli (2009) reported that in their data a large number of students avoided the use of greetings in e-mails to their university lecturers. Similarly, as discussed earlier, Waldvogel (2007) reported that the majority of the e-mails that were collected at an educational institution included no greeting. Whereas Waldvogel (2007) suggested that the lack of greetings in the e-mails may be a practice specific to the institution, Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) argued that choosing not to include a greeting is an avoidance strategy that indicates that both first and second-language speakers may
be uncertain about what is and is not appropriate in specific communicative situations, such as student-to-professor e-mail communication.

Apart from pragmatic factors, there are a number of sociolinguistic factors that affect the use and choice of greetings. One example of such a sociolinguistic factor is national culture. For example, Hatipoglu (2006) compared e-mails written in English by British and Turkish organizers of international academic conferences in which they called for a submission of papers. Among other differences between the e-mails and the two cultures defined by scores in five dimensions of Hofstede's (2001) model of national cultures, Hatipoglu (2006) found that the Turkish organizers, as members of a culture with a high power distance score, which measures the extent to which less powerful people in society accept power inequality, tended toward the use of the formal greeting "Dear," whereas the majority of the British organizers, as members of a culture with a low power distance score, did not use any greeting. In a similar study, Bjorge (2007) compared e-mails written in English by international students from countries with a high power distance score and countries with a low power distance score enrolled at a business school in Norway. Students from countries with a high power distance score were found to be more likely to use the formal equivalents of greetings.

Another example of a sociolinguistic factor that influences the use of greetings is national or regional identity. For example, in a study of address forms and greetings in various national and regional varieties of German, Kretzenbacher (2011) found that there were a number of greetings that were used across all varieties of German, such as "Guten Tag," "Hallo," and "Hi," among others. However, some greetings were found to be used exclusively in certain regions, such as "Grüss Gott" in the southern parts of the German-
speaking area, "Servus" in Austria, and "Grüzi" in Switzerland. In addition, there were similar national and regional differences in the perception of certain greetings as (in)formal, based on whether the participants in the study felt that they could be combined with the formal address form "Sie" or the informal address form "du." For example, Kretzenbacher (2011) reported that the greeting "Hallo" may be combined with both the formal pronoun "Sie," an honorific, or a last name all over Germany, but is much more frequently combined with the informal pronoun "du" in Austria. Similarly, the greeting "Tschüss" can be combined with both the formal pronoun "Sie" and the informal "du" in northern and central Germany, whereas it is unusual in southern Germany, and is only combined with the informal pronoun "du" in Austria.

One other example of a sociolinguistic factor that affects the use of greetings is the standard adopted by a specific community of practice. For example, Gains (1999) compared e-mails written in English in a commercial setting of an insurance company and academic settings of four different universities in the United Kingdom. The findings revealed that the majority of e-mails written in the commercial setting did not include a greeting. In contrast, the majority of e-mails in the academic setting did include a greeting, with "Hi" and "Dear" among the most popular choices. In a similar study, Waldvogel (2007) compared e-mails written at an educational organization and a manufacturing plant in New Zealand. The majority of the e-mails written at the educational organization were found to include no greeting, whereas the majority of the e-mails written at the manufacturing plant did. In both groups of e-mails the informal greeting "Hi" was reported to have been used most often.
Another example of a sociolinguistic factor that influences the use of greetings is the gender of the sender and the recipient. Waldvogel (2007) reported that in the e-mails that were collected at the educational organization in New Zealand discussed earlier women used greetings more frequently. Although greetings such as "Hi," "Hello," and "Dear" were used infrequently by either gender, they were used slightly more by women and were usually followed by the addressee’s name. In addition, a pattern emerged when the e-mails were divided into categories by the gender of the addressee, in which both men and women were reported as more likely to have used a greeting in e-mails addressed to men. Focusing on the gender of the sender, in a study comparing openings in e-mails written by undergraduate students in L1 English and L2 Spanish to their Spanish instructors, Felix-Brasdefer (2012) reported that most of the female students writing in L2 Spanish used a greeting word only, whereas most of the male students writing in L2 Spanish used a greeting word and a title as an opening.

2.1.3.2 Address Forms

Address forms in most languages may be divided into pronominal and nominal. Pronominal address forms, typical of many modern European languages, consist of two or more forms of personal pronouns, usually distinguishing between an informal and a formal address form, such as "tu" and "vous" in French. Nominal address forms, typical of English, may be divided into a number of categories, such as names (e.g., first name, last name), titles (e.g., Sir, Ma'am), professional titles (e.g., Doctor, Professor), kinship titles (e.g., Aunt, Uncle), and terms of endearment (e.g., Honey, Baby). Although in most languages either the pronominal or the nominal address forms are more typical, systems
of address forms in most languages include both types of address forms and may be used in various combinations along an (in)formal continuum.

As Koven (2009) explained, address forms fulfill two primary functions. They identify interlocutors participating in specific interactions and communicate their relationship. Concerning lexical items that may be used as nominal address forms, Dickey (1997) distinguished between two meanings of the same lexical items according to their function. One meaning is that of reference, which is in use when the lexical items refer to particular interlocutors indirectly, in contrast to that of address, which is in use when the lexical items refer to interlocutors directly, and which is the focus of this study.

Research focused on the use of address forms has identified a number of pragmatic and sociolinguistic factors that affect the use and choice of specific (in)formal address forms. With regard to pragmatic factors, a number of researchers (e.g., Dittrich, Johansen, & Kulinskaya, 2011; Brown & Gilman, 1960; Wood & Kroger, 1991) have focused on trying to identify universal, cross-linguistic rules that govern the use of address forms. This required creating categories of (in)formality that fit both pronominal and nominal address forms. For example, to compare the use of address forms in a number of modern European languages, of which only English was identified as a language that primarily uses nominal address forms, Brown and Gilman (1960) classified nicknames, informal versions of the first name, and first names as informal address forms, and titles and last names as formal address forms. Wood and Kroger (1991) and Dittrich et al. (2011) added kinship titles to the list of formal address forms.

Based on their observations, Brown and Gilman (1960) described two principles that govern the use of address forms: the power and solidarity semantic. The power
semantic presupposes asymmetrical relationships in which one interlocutor holds power over the other as a result of their differences in age, gender, familial or social status, among others. Such asymmetry is expressed by non-reciprocity in the use of address forms in that the interlocutor with power sends an informal address form but receives a formal address form. In contrast, the solidarity semantic presupposes symmetrical relationships in which interlocutors share a commonality that indicates “like-mindedness” such as the same age, gender, birthplace, or profession (p. 258). The symmetry is expressed by reciprocity in the use of address forms, with the mutual informal address forms used by interlocutors whose relationship is solidary and the mutual formal address forms used by interlocutors whose relationship is distant.

Brown and Gilman (1960) further argued that strict adherence to the rule of the power semantic among power unequals and the rule of the solidarity semantic among power equals was indicative of societies that were static and allowed little social mobility. However, as a result of the rise of egalitarianism in many modern European societies, both the power and solidarity semantic now govern the rules of using address forms, as it has become possible to be superior in power and solidary (e.g., parent-child), superior in power and non-solidary (e.g., employer-employee), inferior in power and solidary (e.g., assistant-supervisor), and inferior in power and non-solidary (e.g., waiter-patron).

Power and solidarity as pragmatic factors that influence the use of address forms are not without problems. One of the choices that interlocutors have in the use of address forms is not to use any. For example, Martiny (1996) and Keevallik (1999) argued that avoiding the use of address forms is a strategy often used in communicative situations in
which determining an appropriate address form is difficult. In addition, although power and solidarity at first appeared to inform the universal principles governing the use of address forms, researchers (e.g., Dittrich et al., 2011; Wood & Kroger, 1991) have concluded that there are other factors that affect the use of address forms, including a variety of cultural, social, and personal factors, forming a sociolinguistic perspective on the use of address forms.

Social factors that influence the use of address forms include categories such as age, gender, and class of the recipient of the address form. For example, in a study of the effect of social context, social distance, and social characteristics such as age, gender, and social class on the use of address forms in Persian, Keshavarz (2001) asked male and female adult participants, whom he divided into three age groups and three social class groups, to indicate in a questionnaire which of the two (formal or informal) address forms they were likely to use with various family members in formal and informal situations. The results revealed that in informal communicative situations age was a more significant factor in the use of address forms than either gender or social class. Participants reported using the formal address form with family members older than themselves and the informal address form with family members younger than themselves. However, in formal communicative situations the most significant factor in the use of address forms was gender. Participants reported increased use of the formal address form with interlocutors of the opposite sex as the formality of the communicative situation increased. In another study of address forms in Persian that did not distinguish between the formality of the communicative situations and focused only on age and gender, Mardiha (2012) obtained similar results, with age as the most significant factor in the
choice of address forms. Both in addressing interlocutors of their own and the opposite sex, male and female university students reported using the formal address form with interlocutors older than themselves and the informal address form with interlocutors younger than themselves. Age was similarly a significant factor in the use of address forms reported by Schupbach et al. (2007), who observed that in modern Swedish the formal pronominal address form is reserved to address noticeably old and frail interlocutors, in contrast to the general informal pronominal address form that was reported to have become nearly universal.

Examples of sociolinguistic factors that affect the use of address forms is the cultural, national or regional, generational, and individual identity of the sender of the address form. For example, concerning cultural identity, as expressed in ideology shared by a linguistic community, Clyne, Kretzenbacher, Norrby, and Warren (2004) and Schupbach et al. (2007) observed that as a result of the student revolution in the 1960s and 1970s which called for more egalitarian social relations, there was a temporary increase in the use of the informal pronominal address form in the western part of Germany. They observed a similar phenomenon in Sweden, where the social change and the political agenda in the 1960s and 1970s led to a near universal use of the informal pronominal address form. In addition, Clyne et al. (2004) and Schupbach et al. (2007) reported that the ideology of egalitarianism eventually spread from the public to the private sector. The Swedish furniture store IKEA adopted an official language policy which required that all the company employees use the informal pronominal address form with one another.
Concerning national and regional identity, Clyne et al. (2004) and Schupbach et al. (2007) observed differences in the use of the informal and the formal pronominal address forms in German spoken in the western and the eastern part of Germany, and Austria; each with a unique history, politics, and national character. Because the student revolution in 1960s and 1970s only occurred in western Germany, the preference for a universal informal pronominal address form was reported to hold less true for eastern Germany, where such use might also have been felt to have been imposed on the people by the communist regime and therefore avoided. In Austria, a unique combination of the informal pronominal address form with the use of formal titles dates back to official policy in state bureaucracy and military effected during the days of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Similarly, Schupbach et al. (2007) observed different use of pronominal address forms in northern Italy, where a distinction exists between one informal and one formal pronominal address form, in contrast to southern Italy, in parts of which the formal pronominal address form exists in two variants, whereas in other parts a universal informal pronominal address form is preferred. As an example of variation that exists on a more local level, in a study of address forms in Estonian, Keevallik (1999) observed a difference between the use of address forms in urban and rural areas. The urban speakers reported a higher use of the formal pronominal address form, whereas the rural speakers reported a higher use of the informal pronominal address form.

An example of a sociolinguistic factor in the use of address forms that reflects the fact that languages evolve and change is generational identity. For example, Kroger and Wood (1992) reported that German speakers between 16 and 22 years of age preferred to
address various family members with the informal pronominal address form in contrast to German speakers between 49 and 102 years of age, who preferred to use the formal pronominal address form. Similarly, in a replication of Brown and Ford's (1961) study of the use of first name versus title and last name as nominal address forms in American English, Murray (2002) reported that change in the use of these address forms had occurred. In comparison to the findings of Brown and Ford, the use of first name was reported to have become more common than title and last name in dyads composed of two newly-introduced adults, in dyads composed of adults with a difference in professional status and an age difference of fifteen years and more, and in dyads including a child as the sender and an adult as the receiver of the address form.

One other example of a sociolinguistic factor that affects the use of address forms is personal identity. For example, in a study of bilingual speakers of French and Portuguese, Koven (2009) reported that some of the participants reported using forms to address their parents that were inconsistent with standard usage patterns in either French or Portuguese, but were a reflection of the participants’ personal identity. Koven (2009) argued that a consistent and uniform use of address forms is unlikely even in monolithic societies as a result of such individual variation. Similarly, in a study of the address forms in French within and outside the workplace, Warren (2006) reported that individual preferences affect the choice of address form in both domains, but that individual variation is more common outside the workplace. In this regard, informants in the study discussed as a very broad factor in their use of address forms feelings of affinity, which translate into the use of the informal address form when there is a perceived shared
experience between the interlocutors, or "like-mindedness," as Brown and Gilman (1960, p. 258) termed it.

### 2.1.3.3 Morphosyntactic and Lexical Variants

A number of researchers (e.g., Heylighen & Dewaele, 1999; Levin & Garret, 1990; Levin & Novak, 1991; Levin, Long, & Schaffer, 1981) have focused on studying stylistic variation by trying to identify variants that are more likely to occur and contribute to creating formal versus informal registers. Excluding phonological variants, which are beyond the focus of this study, these variants may be put into two broad categories: morphosyntactic and lexical. One example of (in)formal morphosyntactic variation is syntactical branching, which refers to the position of phrasal or clausal modifiers in relation to the main verb in a sentence. In a study which asked participants to order sentences according to their (in)formality, Levin and Garret (1990) reported that left-branching (e.g., “Because they had had such a long journey, the passengers were tired” p. 520) and center-branching sentences were perceived as more formal than right-branching sentences (e.g., “The passengers were tired because they had had such a long journey” p. 520).

Another example of (in)formal morphosyntactic variation is voice, which indicates the relationship between the subject and the action. A number of researchers (e.g., Garcia, 2015; Kawale, 2009; Laanemets, 2013) have reported that the use of the passive versus the active voice is affected by stylistic factors and the (in)formality of the register. Specifically, the passive voice is more common in formal genres, whereas the
active voice is more common in informal genres, regardless of whether the medium of communication is spoken or written.

One other example of (in)formal morphosyntactic variation is the use of full forms versus contractions. For example, in a corpus study of newspaper language in British English, Axelsson (1996) observed that contractions may be used consistently in keeping with a particular register, or occasionally to create a shift in the overall register, mostly to make the text “more intimate, friendly, and informal” (p. 16). Similarly, in a corpus study of contractions in British English, Kjellmer (1997) reported that the degree of (in)formality of the text was a significant factor in the number of used contractions, with the frequency of contractions much higher in the texts of the informal genres (e.g., popular lore) or the “fiction” category of texts, in contrast to the formal genres (e.g., government documents or scientific writing) or the “non-fiction” category.

An example of stylistic variation that may be considered morphosyntactic as well as lexical, is nominalization, which refers to the use of nouns in preference to verbs. For example, in a list of the different types of nominalizations frequently used in legal English, Zaharia (2010) included combinations of nouns with the verbs “have” and “make,” such as “to have an objection” and “to make an amendment” instead of “to object” and “to amend,” and combinations of nouns with the verbs “give,” “reach,” and “do,” such as “to give an answer,” “to reach an agreement,” and “to do a draft,” among many others. Zaharia (2010) noted that one of the stylistic functions of nominalizations is formality, in which case, to use one of the examples of nominalizations listed above, in certain contexts the nominal structure “to have an objection” would be considered more formal than the verb “to object.” Similarly, in a study of nominalization in English and
Italian legal writing, Mattiello (2008) observed that the use of nominalizations is “connected with the formal register” (p. 136).

Concerning (in)formal lexical variation, one example of such variation is the use of words according to the amount of their dependence on context required for their comprehension. For example, Heylighen and Dewaele (1999) argued that to interpret the meaning of language in formal registers requires less contextual information in contrast to informal registers. In their study, they showed that nouns, adjectives, articles, and prepositions, which they categorized as context-independent word classes were more frequently found in formal texts, as opposed to pronouns, adverbs, verbs, and interjections, which, as examples of context-dependent word classes, were more frequently found in informal texts.

Another example of (in)formal lexical variation is the use of words according to their origin and frequency of use. For example, Levin et al. (1981) and Levin and Novak (1991) reported that English speakers perceive less frequently used words of Germanic origin, defined as words derived from German, Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, or Scandinavian languages, and words of Latinate origin, defined as words derived from Latin, Greek through Latin, or a Romance language as more formal. Leckie-Tarry and Birch (1995) made a similar argument about words of Greek origin.

As a guide in their studies of stylistic variation, Moreno (2011), in a study of business e-mail communication, and Sheikha and Inkpen (2011), in a study of computer-generation of sentences, identified the following morphosyntactic and lexical features of informal and formal registers: features of informal registers included the use of active voice, contractions, abbreviations, phrasal verbs and idiomatic expressions, general terms
and expressions, personal pronouns, and words that communicate familiarity. In contrast, features of formal registers included the use of passive voice, full forms, Latin terms and standard expressions, precise terms and expressions, nominalization, impersonal pronouns, and words that communicate politeness.

2.1.4 E-mail

E-mail is an example of computer-mediated communication (CMC), which refers to any “communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers” (Herring, 1996, p. 1). What sets e-mail apart from other types of CMC is that its mode is written, not spoken, and asynchronous, which means that it is not necessary for participants to be online at the same time, unlike with synchronous CMC, which takes place in real time (Murray, 2000). Since its introduction, e-mail communication has become a popular medium of communication in both the private and the public world, such as business and academia, where it has become an alternative to face-to-face interactions and telephone calls (Baron, 1998).

However, because e-mail is still a relatively new genre, there is a great amount of uncertainty about the conventions that govern its composition, particularly with regard to (in)formality (e.g., Baron, 1998, 2002; Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007; Felix-Brasdefe, 2012; Crystal, 2011). This uncertainty appears to arise out of the fact that there is a lack of agreement in whether to approach e-mail as more akin to speech or writing. In response to this issue, Baron (1998) argued that speech and writing as two language modes should be viewed as two ends of a continuum rather than two absolute opposites, which makes it possible to understand e-mail and its various aspects as positioned within this continuum.
Suggesting that e-mail is a new and unique language mode, Crystal (2011) argued that internet language in general “is identical neither to speech nor writing, but selectively and adaptively displays properties of both” (p. 21). In the absence of clear and universally accepted conventions for the composition of e-mail (e.g., Bjorge, 2007), researchers (e.g., Baron, 1998, 2002; Crystal, 2011) appear to agree that e-mail users may be divided into those that consider e-mail to be informal, more like speech, and therefore less carefully constructed, and those that view it as formal, more like writing, and as a result, edited.

However, factors other than such individual preference affect the use of different levels of formality in e-mail. An important factor that determines the level of (in)formality in e-mails is the relationship between the interlocutors (e.g., Baron, 1998; Bjorge, 2007), perhaps best understood in terms of the categories of power and distance proposed by Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory. For example, in a study of (in)formality in workplace e-mail, Peterson, Hohensee, and Xia (2011) examined the effect of power and distance. They reported that e-mails in their corpus were more likely to be formal if they were sent to a distant recipient of a higher institutional rank. Similarly, in a study of e-mails sent by an English L2 university student to peers versus professors, Chen (2006) reported that the participant’s e-mails to peers as status equals were informal and conversational, whereas the participant’s e-mails to professors as status non-equals followed the formal conventions of letters. However, once the participant became more familiar with a few professors and noticed that their e-mails contained informal and conversational elements, the participant learned to mirror such use of informal and conversational language in e-mails to these professors over time.
Other factors that affect the formality of e-mails include the private (i.e., intended for one recipient) versus the public (i.e., intended for multiple recipients) nature of e-mails, the personal versus the business nature of e-mails, and standards adopted by specific communities of practice. Concerning the private versus public nature of e-mail, in a study of e-mails exchanged between members of academic institutions, Sabater, Turney, and Fleta (2008) reported that in terms of greetings and farewells, the private one-to-one e-mails were more informal and conversational than the public one-to-many e-mails. Regarding the business versus personal nature of e-mail, apart from findings on the effect of power and distance discussed earlier, Peterson et al. (2011) also reported that e-mails of personal nature were more likely to be labeled informal than e-mails of business nature. Finally, with respect to the standards adopted by specific communities of practice, in a study of workplace e-mail focused on the use of openings and closings, Waldvogel (2007) reported that in the e-mails collected at an educational institutions openings and closings were rarely used, which Waldvogel concluded indicated a distant style. In contrast, e-mails collected at a manufacturing plant included an extensive use of openings and closings, which to Waldvogel implied a friendly style.

2.1.5 EFL and ESL Contexts of Learning

Although as terms and concepts, English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) are not without problems (e.g., Nayar, 1997), a distinction should be made between learners of English as a foreign and learners of English as a second language because there are significant differences between the two target-language acquisition environments. For example, Batstone (2002) defined two primary
contexts of language acquisition: communicative and learning. Whereas the communicative context requires learners to use the target language as a means for interactions with other speakers of the target language, the learning context provides learners with input and opportunities for output in the target language designed primarily to improve their linguistic knowledge.

With this distinction in mind, a crucial difference between EFL and ESL learners is that EFL learners have far fewer opportunities to engage in acquiring the target language in the communicative context. As Nayar (1997) explained, in foreign-language contexts, the target language is usually little more than a school subject because it lacks any official, cultural, or social status. This often means that the exposure to the target language is limited to the amount of time spent in the classroom, unless learners engage in extracurricular activities in the target language. In contrast, Nayar (1997) identified three principles that define second-language contexts in North America. First, the target language is acquired in an authentic target-language environment, ideally with instructors for whom it is their first or dominant language. Second, the purpose of the target-language instruction is for learners to become competent communicators so that they can successfully integrate into the target-language community. And third, acquiring the target language is an important tool that allows learners to participate in the target-language society economically.

With this understanding of the differences between EFL and ESL contexts of learning, it appears reasonable to expect that differences exist between EFL and ESL learners in their acquisition of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence in the target language. As Nayar (1997) observed, even if the model target-language speaker in
foreign-language contexts is that of an English first-language or English-dominant speaker, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence are not necessarily given a high priority. This is because the primary purpose of language instruction in foreign-language contexts is for learners to develop the ability to communicate with other speakers of the target language for whom it is not necessarily their first or dominant language.

2.1.6 Sociolinguistic and Pragmatic Competence of Learners

A number of researchers have studied extralinguistic factors that affect the acquisition of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence of language learners (e.g., in French, Dewaele, 2004a, 2004b; Howard, Lemée, & Regan, 2006; R. Mougeon, Rehner, & Nadasdi, 2004; Nadasdi, R. Mougeon, & Rehner, 2008; Rehner & R. Mougeon, 1999; Thomas, 2004; in Spanish: Geeslin, Fafulas, & Kanwit, 2013; Knouse, 2012; Ringer-Hilfinger, 2012; Salgado-Robles, 2011; in Japanese: Iwasaki, 2008; Marriott, 1995; in Chinese: Li, 2010). This research has made clear that one of the key factors in the acquisition of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence is the amount of extracurricular exposure to the target language, particularly extracurricular contact with speakers of the target language for whom it is their first or dominant language.

There is a wealth of research focused on the acquisition of stylistic variation in French in Europe, as an example of the foreign-language context (e.g., Howard et al., 2006; Regan, 1996, 2004), and in Canada, where a comparison may be made between learners of French in predominantly English-speaking environments similar to the foreign-language context (e.g., R. Mouegon & Rehner, 2001; F. Mougeon & Rehner, 2009; Nadasdi & McKinnie, 2003; Nadasdi, R. Mougeon, & Rehner, 2008; Rehner & R.
Mougeon, 1999; Rehner, 2010; Rehner, R. Mougeon, & Nadasdi, 2003; Uritescu et al., 2004), and learners of French in French-speaking environments, such as the French/English bilingual city of Montreal, similar to the second-language context (e.g., Nagy, Blondeau, & Auger, 2003; Nagy, Moisset, & Sankoff, 1996; Sankoff et al., 1997).

This research has made clear that more exposure to the target language has a positive effect on the acquisition of stylistic variation. However, this research has also shown that despite extracurricular exposure to the target language, the rates and patterns of stylistic variation in the language of learners significantly differ from those of speakers for whom French is their first or dominant language. An interesting exception to these findings is research focused on learners of French in the bilingual French/English city of Montreal (e.g., Blondeau, 2010; Nagy et al., 1996; Sankoff et al., 1997), whose rates and patterns of stylistic variation approximate those of the speakers of French as a first or dominant language.

2.2 Definitions

The following concepts and terms inform the research design of this study.

(1) (In)formality of a register is defined as the level of (in)formality used in a particular communicative situation, determined by the social roles of the participating interlocutors and the social context of their interaction (Moreno, 2011).

(2) (In)formality of a register is understood as a specific level of (in)formality within an (in)formal continuum. Varying levels of (in)formality of (in)formal registers
are understood as achieved by combinations of (in)formal register markers. The formality of a register increases as the number of formal register markers increases, whereas the formality of a register decreases as the number of informal register markers increases, reflecting the fact that (in)formality of a register is determined by combination and proportion of (in)formal register markers (Moreno, 2011).

(3) (In)formal register markers include (in)formal greetings, (in)formal address forms, and (in)formal lexical and morphosyntactic variants.

(4) (In)formal greetings are understood as lexical items, such as “Hi” or “Hello” (Faiz & Suhaila, 2013), to the exclusion of any use of names, titles, and other nominal address forms.

(5) (In)formal address forms are understood as nominal address forms that include the use of nicknames, informal versions of first names, last names, and titles in direct reference to the interlocutor, to the exclusion of their use in indirect reference as terms of reference (Dickey, 1997).

(6) E-mail as a form of computer-mediated communication and an example of Internet language that combines features of spoken and written language (Crystal, 2011) is understood to be a medium of communication that allows for stylistic variation in the use of (in)formal registers.
(7) The term English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) is understood to reflect the fact that the target language holds no official, cultural, and social status in the country where the target language is acquired, and that as a result foreign-language learners have limited opportunities for exposure to the target language and target-language speakers outside the classroom (Nayar, 1997).
Method

This chapter provides an overview of the research methods used in the pilot and the main study. For each study, the overview includes discussion of the participant groups, research instruments, data collection procedures, description of the collected data, and data analysis.

3.1 Pilot Study

To ensure the quality of the research instruments and to test the feasibility of the data collection procedures, a pilot study was conducted before the main study. The research design of the pilot study was reviewed and approved by the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education Research Ethics Board at the University of Toronto.

3.1.1 Participants

Two groups of participants were selected for the pilot study. The first group consisted of the researcher’s peer professionals, recruited from among the researcher’s fellow graduate students. This group of participants was selected primarily to ensure the validity of the research instruments. The second group consisted of advanced learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), recruited from among undergraduate students enrolled in courses offered in an English teacher-trainee program at a Slovak university. This group of participants was selected primarily to ensure the feasibility of data collection in Slovakia.
3.1.2 Instruments

To answer the three research questions posed in this study, three research instruments were designed for the pilot study: (1) a formality judgment questionnaire, (2) a sociolinguistic background questionnaire, and (3) a follow-up e-mail interview. Each will be now described in detail.

3.1.2.1 Formality Judgment Questionnaire

To answer each of the three research questions, a formality judgment questionnaire was designed to record participants’ ratings of formality levels, ratings of the certainty levels with which they reported their formality ratings, and features that they believed significantly influenced their formality ratings, as adapted from an instrument used in Rehner’s (2010-2015) project.

Similar to instruments used in studies of perceptions of (in)formal variants (e.g., Lahiri et al., 2011; Levin & Garret, 1990; Levin et al., 1981; Levin & Novak, 1991), the formality judgment questionnaire was designed to ask participants to rate the formality of examples that were each the length of a sentence. As in similar studies of perceptions of (in)formal variants (e.g., Chan, 1976; Lahiri et al., 2011), the formality judgment questionnaire asked participants to rate the formality of the sentences on a Likert scale. The five-point Likert scale used in the questionnaire was accompanied with the following verbal descriptors: (1) very informal, (2) informal, (3) neutral, (4) formal, and (5) very formal, as used in the formality judgment questionnaire in Rehner’s (2010-2015) project.

To record the levels of certainty with which the formality ratings for each sentence were reported, a four-point Likert scale was used, with the following verbal descriptors: (1) a
guess, (2) not very sure, (3) somewhat sure, and (4) very sure, adapted from the formality judgment questionnaire used in Rehner’s (2010-2015) project. Finally, to record the features that the participants believed significantly influenced their formality ratings, an open-ended question was posed for each sentence: “What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality?,” with space the length of one line left for the answer.

In Chan’s (1976) study of (in)formality in English, which included a judgment task with 8 target and 8 masked labels, “formal” and “informal” were found to be the most reliable labels in that participants never contradicted their choice. The following definitions of “formal” and “informal” language were included in the instructions, to guide participants in their ratings of formality:

“Consider as ‘formal’ the kind of language you would use with a professor or employer in a professional setting; consider as ‘informal’ the kind of language you would use with a friend, close classmate or colleague.”

E-mail was chosen as the most appropriate written medium because as a form of computer-mediated communication it allows for a great degree of variation in (in)formality (e.g., Crystal, 2011), particularly in the use of various combinations of greetings, address forms, and lexical variants as (in)formal register markers. Therefore, sentences in the questionnaire were all designed to represent excerpts from e-mail communication between two female colleagues of the same age, who work together in
the same position at the same department of a bank, which was clearly communicated to
the participants in the initial instructions for completing the questionnaire:

“Each sentence is an example of a portion of e-mail communication between two
female colleagues of the same age working in the same position in the same department
department of a bank.”

Such design ensured consistency in the social context of the interactions and the
social roles of the two interlocutors throughout the questionnaire, and controlled for these
variables. Whereas identifying the two fictional interlocutors as female, of the same age,
and with the same professional position minimized their differences in power, identifying
the interlocutors as colleagues left room for possible differences in solidarity (i.e., close
or distant relationship) and therefore various degrees of formality in their interactions.

Based on informal feedback from peer professionals about the initial set of
sentences for the questionnaire, three (in)formal register markers were selected for the
questionnaire as variables: (1) greetings, (2) address forms, and (3) lexical items (verbs,
adjuncts, and nouns considered together). As Table 1 shows, each of these three
variables had one formal and one informal variant.
Table 1. (In)formal Register Markers as Variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Register Marker</th>
<th>Greeting</th>
<th>Address Form</th>
<th>Lexical Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Variant</td>
<td>Dear</td>
<td>Ms. Last Name (e.g., Ms. Black)</td>
<td>words of non-Germanic origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Variant</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>informal version of first name (e.g., Becky)</td>
<td>phrasal verbs (e.g., look up, turn down), words of Germanic origin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 2, the following sentence types emerged from combinations of these three variables. Sentence types 1 and 8 represent the ends of the (in)formal continuum in that type 1 is composed of all formal and type 8 of all informal register markers. Sentences types 2-7 represent various degrees of the (in)formal continuum, composed of sentences in which one or two of the register markers are formal. To record perceptions of formality in the absence of greetings and address forms, the last two sentence types, 9 and 10, were added.
Table 2. Combinations of (In)formal Register Markers in Sentence Types.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence Type</th>
<th>Greeting</th>
<th>Address Form</th>
<th>Lexical Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>formal</td>
<td>formal</td>
<td>formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>formal</td>
<td>informal</td>
<td>formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>formal</td>
<td>formal</td>
<td>informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>formal</td>
<td>informal</td>
<td>informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>informal</td>
<td>formal</td>
<td>formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>informal</td>
<td>informal</td>
<td>formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>informal</td>
<td>formal</td>
<td>informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>informal</td>
<td>informal</td>
<td>informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>informal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, based on feedback from peer professionals, the initial set of sentences for the questionnaire, included in Appendix A, were found to include the following differences between sentences, which were subsequently removed to prevent them from confounding the results obtained in the main study:

(1) differences in the length of the sentences,
(2) differences in the syntax of the sentences,
(3) differences in the use of the personal pronouns, “I” and “our,”
(4) differences in the references to a third party, including versus excluding the interlocutors
(5) differences in the subject-matter, personal versus professional
As a result, the structure shown in Figure 1 was used throughout the questionnaire to ensure consistency and to eliminate confounding variables. To remove the confounding variables 1 and 2, all sentences were composed to follow the standard subject-verb-object word order, and used simple past tense and active voice. The sentences were composed to include approximately the same number of words, differing only when two-part phrasal verbs and prepositions required by syntax were included.

![Figure 1. Sentence Structure.](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greeting</th>
<th>Address Form</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Active Verb Past Tense</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dear</td>
<td>Ms. Black,</td>
<td>the customer</td>
<td>located</td>
<td>the misplaced data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear</td>
<td>Ms. White,</td>
<td>the client</td>
<td>amended</td>
<td>the corporate protocol.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To remove the confounding variables 3 and 4, all pronouns were replaced with the definite article, and references to the two female colleagues as interlocutors were removed and replaced with references to a third party as the subject of each sentence. As shown in Figure 1, to avoid monotony, the subject of the sentence had two variants: “customer” and “client.” Finally, to remove the confounding variable 5, the subject-matter of all sentences was made professional.

As shown in Table 3, to ensure consistency, only words that denote colors were used as last names, and only shortened versions of English first names ending in “y” were used as informal versions of first names.
Table 3. Names used as Formal and Informal Address Forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal Versions of First Names</th>
<th>Last Names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cathy, Peggy, Ginny, Shelly,</td>
<td>Black, Grey, Blue,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicky, Becky, Franny, Nicky</td>
<td>Silver, Gold, Brown, White, Green</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4, the following lexical items were used as formal and informal verbs, adjectives, and nouns in the questionnaire. Verbs, adjectives, and nouns were considered together as one register marker, so its formal equivalent consisted of a formal verb, adjective, and noun, and its informal equivalent consisted of an informal verb, adjective, and noun.

Table 4. Verbs, Adjective, and Nouns Used as In/Formal Vocabulary (Pilot Study).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexical Item</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal</strong></td>
<td>amend,</td>
<td>annual,</td>
<td>assessment,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>clarify,</td>
<td>complex,</td>
<td>circumstances,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>comply,</td>
<td>corporate,</td>
<td>certificate,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>endorse,</td>
<td>expedited,</td>
<td>application,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>install,</td>
<td>misplaced,</td>
<td>conference,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>locate,</td>
<td>purchase,</td>
<td>credit,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>obtain,</td>
<td>required,</td>
<td>data,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>participate,</td>
<td>security,</td>
<td>protocol,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>request,</td>
<td>substantial,</td>
<td>transaction,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>supply</td>
<td>upgraded</td>
<td>procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informal</strong></td>
<td>bring up,</td>
<td>changed,</td>
<td>call,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>check out,</td>
<td>early,</td>
<td>changes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fill out,</td>
<td>easy,</td>
<td>chat,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>go through,</td>
<td>free,</td>
<td>form,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hand in,</td>
<td>later,</td>
<td>money,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>look up,</td>
<td>new,</td>
<td>numbers,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pick up,</td>
<td>old,</td>
<td>offer,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>put together,</td>
<td>short,</td>
<td>papers,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>turn down,</td>
<td>usual,</td>
<td>rules,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>work out</td>
<td>yearly</td>
<td>wages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To increase the validity of the recorded perceptions of formality, each of the 10 sentence types was included in the questionnaire in two examples, making 20 the total number of items. To minimize the ordering effects, the questionnaire was created in three versions (A, B, and C), each with a different computer-generated random order of the same 20 sentences, as a form of counterbalanced design (e.g., Mackey & Gass, 2011).

Figure 2 shows the format in which all the questions posed for each sentence were presented in the questionnaire. The sentences used in the pilot version of the questionnaire are included in Appendix B.

**Figure 2. Sample Formality Judgment Item.**

1. **Dear Ms. Black, the customer located the misplaced data.**

   *a.* Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

   *b.* How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in *a*?
   
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

   *c.* What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in *a*?

---

**3.1.2.2 Sociolinguistic Background Questionnaire**

To collect sociolinguistic background information about the participants, two versions of a sociolinguistic background questionnaire were designed, one for the baseline group of English-dominant (ED) speakers and one for the comparison group of English-as-a-foreign language (EFL) learners. Both questionnaires asked participants to identify their age and gender.

The sociolinguistic questionnaire for the ED speakers was designed for participants to confirm that English is their first or dominant language, that they were...
primarily educated in Canada, and to record their knowledge and use of languages other
than English, specifically to identify their proficiency in each additional language, their
frequency of use of that language, and its primary domain of use, distinguishing between
free time and school/work.

The sociolinguistic questionnaire for the EFL learners was similarly designed for
participants to confirm that Slovak is their first or dominant language, to indicate their
self-rating of their proficiency in English, their frequency of use of English, and its
primary domain of use, distinguishing between free time and school/work. The next set
of questions asked the EFL learners to indicate the frequency with which they currently
engage in a number of activities in English, including watching TV, listening to the radio,
reading books for school or study purposes, reading books for fun, reading newspapers
and magazines, listening to music, playing computer games, and browsing the Internet.
Another set of questions asked the EFL learners to indicate how much time on average
they had spent in English-speaking countries and how much of that time they had spent
interacting with the local native speakers of English. Rather than the descriptive label
“speaker of English as a first or dominant language,” the term “native speaker” was used
as a term and concept that EFL learners are familiar with and understand. The final
question asked participants to indicate how often and in what domain, distinguishing
between free time and school/work, they intended to use English in the future. All of the
questions concerning the learners’ proficiency in English, exposure to the target-
language, and the present and intended future use of English were adapted from the
sociolinguistic questionnaire used in Rehner’s (2010-2015) project. Both full-length
questionnaires are included in Appendix C.
3.1.2.3 Follow-up E-mail Interview

To ensure the completeness of data collected in the formality judgment questionnaire, the sociolinguistic background questionnaire, a follow-up interview via e-mail was designed to provide additional access to the participants. The following open-ended questions were designed for the follow-up e-mail interview, to be chosen from depending on the nature of the participants’ initial answer and the degree of clarification their answers required:

(1) Could you indicate your formality rating of sentence x?
(2) Could you indicate your certainty rating of sentence x?
(3) Could you describe your thinking when deciding on your answers in question x?
(4) Could you explain why and how the examples of the features you gave in sentence x helped you decide on the formality rating of the sentence?
(5) Could you provide this missing information about yourself?

3.1.3 Data Collection Procedures

To collect data for the pilot study, two sets of procedures were followed: one for the participant group of peer professionals; the other for the participant group of EFL learners. To recruit peer professionals, the researcher approached his fellow graduate students by e-mail with an information letter about the study. Once they agreed to participate in the study and gave informed consent, they were asked to complete the formality judgment questionnaire and the sociolinguistic background questionnaire.
To recruit EFL learners, the researcher first approached a professor by e-mail with an information letter about the study. Once the professor agreed to participate in the study, he approached his students with information about the study. Once the students agreed to participate in the study and gave informed consent, they were asked to complete the formality judgment questionnaire and the sociolinguistic background questionnaire.

3.1.4 Collected Data

In the pilot study, data were obtained from 3 peer professionals and 3 EFL learners in Slovakia. All participants completed the formality judgment questionnaire and the sociolinguistic background questionnaire. All 3 peer professionals and 1 EFL learner agreed to participate in the follow-up e-mail interview.

3.1.5 Analysis of Collected Data

Data collected from the peer professionals were analyzed differently from data collected from the EFL learners. The data collected from the peer professionals were analyzed in terms of the quality of the questionnaire, whereas the data collected from the EFL learners were analyzed in terms of the comprehensibility of the questionnaires.

3.1.6 Findings and Implications for the Main Study

Findings of the pilot study and the implications of these findings for the main study are presented in the following two subsections, divided by participant group and type of analysis, as explained earlier.
3.1.6.1 Data from Peer Professionals

Formality ratings reported by the peer professionals were analyzed with two aims in mind. One was to check that each of the sentences received a formality rating that was plausible based on the combination and proportion of the (in)formal register markers in the sentence, primarily that the sentences composed of all formal and all informal register markers received corresponding ratings of formal and informal. The other was to check whether the peer professionals gave each of the sentences a similar formality rating. In addition, certainty ratings were checked to see whether the peer professionals reported similar levels of certainty with which they rated the formality of the sentences. Responses to the open-ended questions that asked participants to identify salient (in)formal features of each sentence were scanned for answers that might identify any features that were included in the sentences inconsistently and/or unintentionally.

This analysis revealed that overall the sentences received formality ratings that were consistent with the combination and proportion of (in)formal register markers and that the peer professionals agreed in both their formality and certainty ratings of the sentences. However, the analysis also revealed an inconsistency in the use of the definite article “the” in one of the sentences, where it was missing as a determiner in the noun phrase which functions as the object of the sentence. In addition, analysis of the answers collected from the peer professionals in the follow-up e-mail interviews suggested that the choice of words (i.e., verbs, adjective, nouns) that make up the formal and the informal variable of vocabulary should be supported not only by the etymology of the words, but also by their frequency of use, thus forming a more objective measure of their
(in)formality. All of these findings were addressed in the design of the formality judgment questionnaire intended for the main study.

### 3.1.6.2 Data from EFL Learners

Formality ratings, certainty ratings, and answers to the open-ended question about salient (in)formal features of each sentence reported by the EFL learners were also analyzed with two specific goals. One was to check for any signs that the instructions in the formality judgment questionnaire and the sociolinguistic background questionnaire were not understood or were understood incorrectly. The other was to check for any signs that the language used in the sentences that the EFL learners were asked to rate was not too difficult or unfamiliar. This analysis revealed that the language of the instructions and the language of the sentences in the questionnaire did not present any difficulties to the EFL learners. Therefore, no changes were made to the formality judgment questionnaire and the sociolinguistic background questionnaire based on these findings.

### 3.2 Main Study

Following data collection and analysis of the information obtained in the pilot study, the main study was conducted. Following is a description of the participant groups, the final versions of the instruments, data collection procedures, collected data, and data analysis. As with the pilot study, the research design of the main study was reviewed and approved by the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education Research Ethics Board at the University of Toronto.
3.2.1 Participants

Two groups of participants were selected for the main study. The baseline group of ED speakers educated in Canada and the comparison group of EFL learners educated in Slovakia. The ED speakers were recruited from among undergraduate students enrolled in English literature courses offered by the Department of English at a Canadian university. The EFL learners were recruited from among undergraduate students enrolled in English literature and English linguistics courses offered in an English teacher-trainee program at a Slovak university.

Recruiting participants from these two groups of undergraduate students ensured a similarity in the age of the participants and likely also a similarity in the level of their awareness of the differences between formal and informal language. The ED speakers were assumed to possess an intuitive understanding of the differences between formal and informal English, perhaps enhanced by their study of English literature. The EFL learners were naturally assumed to have an intuitive understanding of the differences between formal and informal language in Slovak as the first language, but they were also assumed to have received a sufficient amount of instruction on the differences between formal and informal language in English during their undergraduate study as well as prior to their admission to the English teacher-trainee program.

To be admitted into the program, the students must have passed a state secondary-school exam in English at the minimum proficiency level of B1 of the Common European Framework for Languages. The Slovak National Institute for Education, which prepares the state secondary-school exam, explicitly includes the ability to recognize differences between (in)formal registers as integral to sociolinguistic competence
acquired at this proficiency level (Štátny pedagogický ústav, 2012). However, although the official description of the level lists five specific (in)formal registers, with the following verbal descriptors: “intimate,” “familial,” “informal,” “formal,” and “very formal,” it provides no further description for any of them.

3.2.2 Instruments

Based on the analysis of the data collected in the pilot study, a few changes were made to the formality judgment questionnaire, but no changes were made to the sociolinguistic background questionnaire and the follow-up e-mail interview. Following is a description of the main-study version of the formality judgment questionnaire.

3.2.2.1 Main Study Version of the Formality Judgment Questionnaire

Based on feedback obtained from the peer professionals in the pilot study and review of the pilot-study version of the formality judgment questionnaire, a number of changes were made to improve the quality of the instrument. First, all the subjects and all the objects in the sentences included in the questionnaire were changed to contain the definite article “the,” to ensure consistency in presenting the information referenced in the sentence-length e-mail excerpts by the fictional interlocutors as “known.” For example, one of the sentences composed of an informal greeting, informal address form, and formal lexical items, read in the pilot study as “Hi Nicky, the customer obtained substantial credit,” but was changed to read “Hi Nicky, the customer obtained the substantial credit.”
Second, based on the findings reported in Levin et al. (1981) and Levin and Novak (1991), both etymology, as available in the Canadian Oxford Dictionary (2005) and the New Oxford American Dictionary (2005), and word frequency, as available in Davies’s (2008–) Word Frequency Data from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), were considered in the selection of formal and informal lexical items. Rather than data from the Strathy Corpus of Canadian English (SCCE), data from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) were used because it is a much larger corpus, containing 450 million words compared to 50 million words in the SCCE corpus. It is also a more contemporary corpus, including texts from 1990 to 2012, compared to the SCCE which includes texts from 1920 to 2010.

Taking into account both etymology and frequency meant that a number of words included in the pilot-study version of the questionnaire were replaced with other words, as shown in Table 5, and the meanings of certain sentences were slightly changed.
Table 5. Vocabulary in the Pilot Study versus the Main Study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pilot Study</th>
<th>Main Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Lexical Items</td>
<td>Formal Lexical Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>install,</td>
<td>commercial,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misplaced,</td>
<td>regulations,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>procedures,</td>
<td>require,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purchase,</td>
<td>requisite,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>request,</td>
<td>scrutinize,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>required,</td>
<td>stringent,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>security,</td>
<td>supplementary,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upgraded</td>
<td>validated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal Lexical Items</th>
<th>Informal Lexical Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>changed,</td>
<td>fees,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>later,</td>
<td>last,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rules,</td>
<td>low,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usual,</td>
<td>main,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yearly</td>
<td>missing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows the verbs, adjectives, and nouns used in the main-study version of the questionnaire.
Table 6. Verbs, Adjective, and Nouns Used as In/Informal Vocabulary (Main Study).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexical Item</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal</strong></td>
<td>amend, clarify, comply, endorse, locate, obtain, participate, require, scrutinize, supply</td>
<td>annual, commercial, complex, corporate, expedited, requisite, substantial, supplementary, stringent, validated</td>
<td>application, assessment, certificate, circumstances, conference, credit, data, protocol, regulations, transaction,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informal</strong></td>
<td>bring up, check out, fill out, go through, hand in, look up, pick up, put together, turn down, work out</td>
<td>early, easy, free, last, low, main, missing, new, old, short</td>
<td>call, changes, chat, fees, form, money, offer, papers, wages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerning formal lexical items, all verbs, adjectives, and nouns in this category were identified as words of non-Germanic origin. Their etymology includes Old French and/or Latin, and as in the case of the word “protocol,” Greek as well. Concerning informal lexical items, all verbs included in this category were listed in the Canadian Oxford Dictionary (2005) and the New Oxford American Dictionary (2005) as phrasal verbs, with the exception of the phrasal verb “hand in,” which was listed under “transitive verbs” in the Canadian Oxford Dictionary (2005). However, the meaning of the phrasal verb in the New Oxford American dictionary (2005), which defines it as “give something to a person” is similar to the meaning given in the Canadian Oxford Dictionary (2005), which defines it as “deliver, transfer by hand.”
All adjectives and nouns included in this category were identified as words of Germanic origin, with the exception of the adjective “easy” and the nouns “money,” “rule,” “number,” “form,” “paper,” “offer,” and “change,” whose etymology included French and/or Latin. However, according to the New Oxford American Dictionary (2005) all of these words were recorded to have been in use since Middle English, and according to the list of 5,000 most frequently used words in Contemporary American English in Davies’s (2008-) Word Frequency Data, all of these words have a very high frequency of use. Frequency ranks of these words, which reflect both how often the word appears in the corpus and how evenly it is distributed throughout, ranged from 204 for the noun “number” to 550 for the adjective “easy.” Normalized frequency, which is a measure of the occurrence of a particular word per one million words in a corpus, was reported for all of these words in the Corpus of Contemporary American (COCA) as similar to those in the Strathy Corpus of Canadian English (SCCE). The ratio reflecting the normalized frequency of occurrence in the two corpora for all the words ranged between 0.68 and 1.00.

The two words “customer” and “client,” chosen as the two nouns included in the questionnaire as the subjects of the sentences, were similarly reconsidered in terms of etymology and frequency. Neither of the two words is of Germanic origin, and according to Davies’s (2008-) Word Frequency Data, the two words have a similar frequency of use, with the frequency rank of 1102 for the word “customer” and 1161 for the word “client,” as recorded in the list of 5,000 most frequently used words in Contemporary American English. Therefore, they were retained in the main-study version of the
formality judgment questionnaire. All three versions (A, B, and C) of the formality questionnaire used in the main study are included in Appendix D.

3.2.3 Data Collection Procedures

To collect data for the main study, the following sets of procedures were followed in Canada and Slovakia. In Canada, to recruit participants for the baseline group of ED speakers, the researcher approached professors at the Department of English at a Canadian university by e-mail with information about the study. After the professors read the information letter and consented to participate in the study, they allowed the researcher to approach students enrolled in their courses. The students were presented with an information letter about the study and, if they consented to participate in the study, they completed the formality judgment questionnaire and the sociolinguistic background questionnaire, and indicated if they agreed to be contacted by e-mail for a potential follow-up interview. Students were instructed to complete the questionnaires during their free time outside of class and to bring the completed questionnaires to subsequent classes scheduled with the professors, where the researcher collected them.

A similar set of procedures was followed during data collection in Slovakia. To recruit participants for the comparison group of EFL learners, the researcher approached professors at the Department of English and American Studies at a Slovak university by e-mail. After reading the information letter and consenting to participate in the study, the professors approached the students enrolled in the courses with information about the study. The students were presented with an information letter about the study and, if they consented to participate in the study, they completed the formality judgment
questionnaire, the sociolinguistic background questionnaire, and indicated if they agreed to be contacted by e-mail for a potential follow-up interview. They were instructed by the professors to complete the questionnaires in their free time outside of class and to bring the completed questionnaires to subsequent classes scheduled with the professors, who collected them for the researcher. The professors stored the questionnaires and transferred the information in the questionnaires to the researcher electronically via a secure network in an encrypted and password-protected electronic folder. The information letter and the consent forms used in the recruitment of the professors, ED speakers and EFL students are included in Appendix E.

### 3.2.4 Collected Data

Formality judgment questionnaires and sociolinguistic questionnaires were collected from 28 ED speakers and 31 EFL learners. However, it was not possible to include all of the collected data in the analysis. Data from three ED speakers were excluded from analysis because these ED speakers failed to qualify as eligible participants. One ED speaker was considerably older than the majority of the other participants in the group, and two ED speakers identified a country other than Canada as the country in which most of their education had taken place. Similarly, data from four EFL learners were excluded from analysis because these participants failed to provide answers to all of the questions in the questionnaire. Two of the EFL learners did not consent to be contacted by e-mail and the other two EFL learners failed to respond to e-mail inquiries about the missing information in the questionnaires.
Therefore, as Table 7 shows, for the baseline group of ED speakers, the data included in the analysis were collected from 25 participants, of whom 11 (44%) were male and 14 (56%) were female. The average age of the participants in this group was 20 (SD 0.91), ranging from 19 to 22. All participants in this group indicated that they considered English as their dominant language and that they had been primarily educated in Canada. For the comparison group of EFL learners, the data included in the analysis were collected from 27 participants, of whom 11 (41%) were male and 16 (59%) were female. The average age of the participants in this group was 21 (SD 0.73), ranging from 20 to 23. All participants in this group indicated that they considered Slovak their dominant language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7. Participant Groups.</th>
<th>ED Speakers</th>
<th>EFL Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (N / %)</strong></td>
<td>25 / 100 %</td>
<td>27 / 100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male (N / %)</strong></td>
<td>11 / 44 %</td>
<td>11 / 41 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female (N / %)</strong></td>
<td>14 / 56 %</td>
<td>16 / 59 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Age (M / SD)</strong></td>
<td>20 / 0.91</td>
<td>21 / 0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age Range</strong></td>
<td>19-22</td>
<td>20-23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To complete the sociolinguistic profile of the two participant groups, the following information was obtained from the collected data. Regarding the baseline group, twenty (80%) of the 25 ED speakers reported the ability to speak a language other than English. Of these 20, 14 (70%) reported the ability to speak one other language and 6 (30%) more than one other language. All 20 reported the ability to speak French. Of the
6 participants who reported more than one language, 2 participants reported the ability to speak German, and the remaining four reported the ability to speak Mandarin, Spanish, Italian, and Tamil, respectively. Regarding the comparison group, 22 (82%) of the 27 EFL learners reported their proficiency in English as advanced, 3 (11%) reported their proficiency as master/fluent, and 2 (7%) reported their proficiency as intermediate.

Finally, with regard to the counterbalanced design employed to counteract the ordering effects of the sentence-length examples of (in)formal communications included in the formality judgment questionnaire, Table 8 shows the proportions of the three different computer-generated random order versions of the questionnaire in the collected data by participant group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8. Distribution of the Questionnaire Versions in the Data.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version A (N / %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version B (N / %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version C (N / %)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2.5 Analysis of Collected Data

Data collected in the main study were analyzed as follows. Concerning the data obtained in the formality judgment questionnaires, answers provided by participants were divided into three categories of data: (1) formality ratings, (2) certainty ratings, and (3) reports of salient (in)formal features. With regard to the first and second category of data, to compare the formality and certainty ratings of the baseline group of ED speakers and
the comparison group of EFL learners, mean and standard deviation were calculated for
the two groups of participants for each of the 20 sentence-length examples of (in)formal
e-mail communications. To find out if there were statistically significant differences in
the formality and certainty ratings between the two groups, the Mann-Whitney U
statistical test was used. For the purposes of statistical analysis, the formality and
certainty rating represented the dependent variable, whereas the status of English, either
as a dominant or a foreign language of the participants represented the independent
variable. The Mann-Whitney U was chosen as a nonparametric test because both
formality and certainty ratings were reported on a Likert scale, which makes the
dependent variable ordinal, not interval. As such, the collected data fails one of the
assumptions required for the use of a parametric test (e.g., Mackey & Gass, 2011).

With regard to the third category of data, answers about salient (in)formal features
that participants identified as significant with regard to their formality ratings were
converted into three main categories that corresponded with the three (in)formal register
markers included in the sentence-length examples of (in)formal communications; namely,
greetings, address forms, and vocabulary. To compare answers from the ED speakers and
the EFL learners, simple frequencies of the reports (i.e., the number of times they were
reported as significant with regard to the participants’ formality ratings) of each of these
three register markers were calculated for each group for each of the 20 sentence-length
examples of (in)formal e-mail communications.

Concerning the data obtained in the sociolinguistic questionnaires, answers
provided by the participants were divided into two categories: (1) answers that confirmed
that participants met the inclusion criteria of their participant group of ED speakers or
EFL learners, such as age and first or dominant language, and (2) answers in which participants provided additional information about themselves. This information was used to create a group profile of the EFL learners in terms of their use of English and engagement with it.

Finally, data obtained in the follow-up e-mails served to provide information originally missing in the data obtained from participants in the formality judgment questionnaire and the sociolinguistic background questionnaire, and was therefore included and analyzed with the rest of the data, as described above.
Results

This chapter reports findings obtained from the analysis of the data collected in the main study. First, the EFL learners in the study are described as a group in terms of their use of English and engagement with it. Then, the results in answer to each of the three research questions are presented in the order they were posed for the study.

4.1 EFL Learners’ Group Profile

The information that the EFL learners provided in the sociolinguistic questionnaire reflected aspects of their past learning experiences, such as the time they had spent in an English-speaking country, how often they used English in the English-speaking country overall, and how often they used English in interactions with local native speakers. Reflecting their current learning experience, participants indicated how often they currently engage in specific activities in English, and reflecting their future plans, they indicated how often they plan to use English in their free time and school or work environments.

With regard to the EFL learners’ past learning experience, 17 participants (63%) reported having spent time in an English-speaking country. Of these 17, 15 participants (88%) reported having spent from 1 to 3 weeks in the United Kingdom. The other English-speaking countries participants reported included the United States, Ireland, and Malta. Throughout the questionnaire, to indicate how frequently participants engaged in any activity, they selected one of the following verbal descriptors in a 5-point Likert scale: (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) often, and (5) very often.
Regarding the frequency of their use of English in the English-speaking countries overall, of the 17 participants, 10 (59%) reported having used it “very often,” 5 (29%) reported having used it “often,” and 2 (12%) “sometimes.” Regarding the frequency of their use of English in interactions with local native speakers of English, of the 17 participants, 7 (41%) reported having used it “very often,” 6 (35%) reported having used it “often,” and 4 (24%) “sometimes.”

With regard to the EFL learners’ current learning experience, for the current primary area of their use of English, 17 participants (63%) reported that they use English primarily at school or work, 9 participants (33%) reported that they use English at school or work and in their free time equally, and 1 participant (4%) reported using English primarily in her free time. Further, Table 16 provides a summary of the participants’ current frequency of engaging in eight specific activities in English. As before, participants indicated how frequently they currently engage in each of the activities by selecting one of the verbal descriptors on the 5-point Likert scale described earlier. For the purpose of analysis, these descriptors were assigned numerical values from 0 to 4, with 0 for “never,” 1 for “rarely,” 2 for “sometimes,” 3 for “often,” and 4 for “very often.” Both group mean and standard deviation are reported for each activity.

Verbal descriptors for means presented in Table 9 are reported as follows. Means of x.4 or less are rounded down to the x numerical level and means of x.5 or greater are rounded up to the next numerical level of the 5-point Likert scale used in the questionnaire and its corresponding verbal descriptor. For example, the group mean of 2.52 reported for “watching TV” is reported with the verbal descriptor “often,” which
corresponds with the numerical value of 3. The same method for reporting verbal
descriptors was used throughout all the analyses.

Table 9. Frequency of Engaging in Specific Activities in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Frequency of Engagement</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Browsing the Internet</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to Music</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Books for Study Purposes</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Newspapers, Magazines</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Books for Fun</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to the Radio</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing Computer Games</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As may be observed in Table 9, the two activities that the EFL learners reported
engaging in the most frequently were browsing the Internet and listening to music,
whereas the two activities that they reported engaging in the least frequently were
listening to the radio and playing computer games. However, as the mean frequencies of
engagement decrease, the standard deviations increase, which means that in terms of
engagement, in activities with the lower mean frequencies, the group is less
homogeneous (i.e., the participants reported a wider range of engagement frequencies).

Finally, with regard to the EFL learners’ future plans for using English, the mean
frequency reported by the participants for the future use of English in their free time was
3.19 (SD .67), which corresponds to the verbal descriptor “often.” In contrast, for the
future use of English at school or work the mean frequency was 3.85 (SD .36), which corresponds to the verbal descriptor “very often.” As the low standard deviations reported for both means suggest, there is a great similarity among participants in the frequency with which they intend to use English in the future.

With the exception of their past learning experience, measured by the amount of time participants reported having spent in English-speaking countries, the EFL learners in the study are quite homogeneous as a group. Among other reasons, this is likely because all of the EFL learners in the study were recruited exclusively from among students enrolled in an EFL teacher-trainee program. On the one hand, enrollment in the program presupposes a similar (advanced) level of proficiency in English. On the other hand, it presupposes a similar career goal of becoming an EFL teacher, which likely translates into a similar amount of investment in mastering English.

4.2 Formality Ratings

The first research question posed in this study asks: Do ED speakers educated in Canada and EFL learners educated in Slovakia rate the same examples of e-mail communications in English as similarly formal? Tables 10 and 11 summarize the results obtained by analyzing ratings reported by the participants in answer to question A in the formality judgment questionnaire, which asked them to rate the formality of each sentence on a 5-point Likert scale.

Table 10 presents the results of the Mann-Whitney U test, which was run for each of the 20 examples of (in)formal e-mail communications to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the distribution of formality ratings between the ED
speakers and the EFL learners. To that end, the Mann-Whitney U test first calculated a mean rank for each group. To obtain a mean rank, the formality ratings of the ED speakers and the EFL learners were combined, then ordered from lowest to highest. Each individual rating was assigned a rank from 1 to 52, with 52 being the total number of participants in the two groups combined. The assigned ranks were then split back into the two groups of ED speakers and EFL learners and a mean rank was calculated for each group. The Mann-Whitney U test then determined whether the difference between the mean ranks of the two groups was statistically significant. The significance level used throughout the analyses was set to .05, so for a result to be statistically significant the value of $p$ had to be less than .05.

In Table 10, bold font was used to mark the sentence type, the mean ranks, and the $p$ value for all sentences in which the formality ratings were statistically significantly different (i.e., higher in one group than in the other). In order to provide a clearer idea of the differences in the formality ratings of the ED speakers and the EFL learners, Table 11 presents mean and standard deviation for each group for each of the 20 sentences. For sentences in which the formality ratings were statistically significantly different as determined by the Mann-Whitney U test, the sentence type, mean, and standard deviation of both groups are bolded. The < and > signs indicate which of the two groups rated the sentences as statistically significantly more formal, in which case the sign appears closer to the higher number.
Table 10. Results of the Mann-Whitney U Test for Formality Ratings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence Type</th>
<th>Mean Ranks</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDSs</td>
<td>EFLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Formal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>26.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Formal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>26.80</td>
<td>26.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Informal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>31.64</td>
<td>21.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Informal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>22.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>30.88</td>
<td>22.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>27.94</td>
<td>25.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>27.74</td>
<td>25.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>26.74</td>
<td>26.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>32.16</td>
<td>21.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>32.56</td>
<td>20.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, AF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>22.08</td>
<td>&lt; 30.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, AF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>25.28</td>
<td>27.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>33.28</td>
<td>20.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>34.30</td>
<td>&gt; 19.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF, V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>32.48</td>
<td>20.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF, V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>30.50</td>
<td>22.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>22.50</td>
<td>30.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>27.82</td>
<td>25.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>19.50</td>
<td>&lt; 32.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>18.26</td>
<td>&lt; 34.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G = greeting, AF = address form, V = vocabulary
Table 11. Group Mean Formality Ratings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence Type</th>
<th>ED Speakers</th>
<th>EFL Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Formal “customer”</td>
<td>4.44 (.51)</td>
<td>4.44 (.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Formal “client”</td>
<td>4.6 (.5)</td>
<td>4.48 (.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Informal “customer”</td>
<td>2.04 (.54 &gt; 1.59)</td>
<td>.57 informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Informal “client”</td>
<td>2.24 (.72 &gt; 1.77)</td>
<td>.64 informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G “customer”</td>
<td>2.88 (.78 &gt; 2.40)</td>
<td>.69 informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G “client”</td>
<td>2.60 (.91 &gt; 2.48)</td>
<td>.80 informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF “customer”</td>
<td>2.76 (.66 &gt; 2.63)</td>
<td>.88 neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF “client”</td>
<td>2.68 (.75 &gt; 2.59)</td>
<td>.84 neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V “customer”</td>
<td>3.08 (1.03 &gt; 2.33)</td>
<td>.68 informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V “client”</td>
<td>2.96 (.89 &gt; 2.18)</td>
<td>.78 informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, AF “customer”</td>
<td>3.44 (.71 &lt; 3.92)</td>
<td>.62 formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, AF “client”</td>
<td>3.44 (.92 &gt; 3.55)</td>
<td>.93 formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, V “customer”</td>
<td>3.76 (.72 &gt; 3.0)</td>
<td>.92 formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, V “client”</td>
<td>3.76 (.72 &gt; 2.81)</td>
<td>.79 neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF, V “customer”</td>
<td>3.72 (.73 &gt; 3.0)</td>
<td>.96 neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF, V “client”</td>
<td>3.68 (.85 &gt; 3.14)</td>
<td>.95 neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V only “customer”</td>
<td>3.48 (1.12 &gt; 4.03)</td>
<td>.94 formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V only “client”</td>
<td>3.8 (1.11 &gt; 3.77)</td>
<td>.85 formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V only “customer”</td>
<td>1.96 (.73 &lt; 2.77)</td>
<td>.8 neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V only “client”</td>
<td>2.12 (.78 &lt; 3.11)</td>
<td>.75 neutral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G = greeting, AF = address form, V = vocabulary
The results of the Mann-Whitney U test presented in Table 10 show that there was a statistically significant difference in the formality ratings between the ED speakers and the EFL learners in 11 (55%) out of the total of 20 examples of e-mail communications. As may be further seen in Table 10 and 11, these included either both the “customer” and the “client” version or only the “customer” version of a sentence type. Sentence types for which statistically significant differences in the formality ratings between the two groups were found in both the “client” and the “customer” version included the sentence type in which all the register markers (i.e., greeting, address form, and vocabulary) were informal, the sentence type in which only the vocabulary is formal, the sentence type in which the greeting and the vocabulary are formal but the address form is informal, and finally, the sentence type in which both the greeting and the address form are omitted and the vocabulary is informal. Sentence types for which statistically significant differences in the formality ratings between the two groups were found in only the “customer” version included the sentence type in which only the greeting is formal, the sentence type in which the greeting and the address form are formal but the vocabulary is informal, and the sentence type in which the address form and the vocabulary are formal but the greeting is informal. Based on these findings, the answer to the first research question is that the ED speakers and the EFL learners rated less than half of the 20 sentences as similarly formal.

In terms of stylistic consistency (i.e., combinations of formal and informal register markers), the sentences in the questionnaire may be divided into five categories. First, there are sentences that are exclusively formal (e.g., “all formal,” “formal vocabulary only” ) or informal (e.g., “all informal,” “informal vocabulary only”), in which case all
the register markers included in the sentences are either formal or informal. Then, there are sentences that are predominantly formal (e.g., “formal G and V,” “formal AF and V”) or predominantly informal (e.g., “formal G,” “formal AF”), in which case the vocabulary and at the same time either the greeting or the address form are formal or informal. And finally, there are sentences that may be considered mixed (e.g., “formal G and AF,” “formal V”), in which case the formality of the vocabulary contrasts with the formality of both the greeting and the address form. For the purpose of creating these five stylistic categories, the formality of the vocabulary was given more weight than either the formality of the greeting or the address form because the vocabulary is composed of more words than either the greeting or the address form in each of the 20 sentences in the questionnaire. It is important to bear in mind that these categories do not take into account the possible difference in the salience of the greeting, the address form, and the vocabulary as (in)formal register markers.

As may be observed in Table 12, out of the 11 sentences for which the Mann-Whitney U test confirmed a statistically significant difference in the formality ratings between the two groups, the formality ratings of the ED speakers were closer to the level of formality suggested by the stylistic consistency of the register markers in 8 sentences, whereas those of the EFL learners were closer in only 3. These three sentences included both the “customer” and the “client” version of the “all informal” sentence type, in which the statistically significantly lower formality ratings of the EFL learners indicated that they found the sentences more informal than the ED speakers, and the “customer” version of the predominantly informal “formal G” sentence type, which the EFL learners rated as “informal,” in contrast to the ED speakers who rated it as “neutral.”
Table 12. Stylistic Consistency of the Sentences Rated Differently (Formality).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ED Speakers</th>
<th></th>
<th>EFL Learners</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusively Informal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Informal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V only</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>&lt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V only</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>&lt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly Informal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, AF</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>&lt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly Formal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, V</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF, V</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G = greeting, AF = address form, V = vocabulary

In summary, Table 13 lists the 10 sentence types included in the formality questionnaire divided into two categories: those that the two groups rated as similarly (in)formal and those where there was a statistically significant difference in the formality ratings between the two groups in the “customer” or both the “customer” and the “client”
version of the sentence type. The formality level in the table shows whether the ED speakers or the EFL learners rated the sentences as more formal.

The sentence type in which all the register markers are informal is listed among the sentence types that were rated differently by the two groups. Although in terms of mean ratings both groups rated the sentences as “informal,” which is a verbal descriptor that corresponds with the numerical value of 2 on the 5-point Likert formality scale, the formality ratings of both the “customer” and the “client” version of this sentence type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rated Similarly Formal by EDSs and EFLLs</th>
<th>Not Rated Similarly Formal by EDSs and EFLLs</th>
<th>Formality Level*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Type</td>
<td>Sentence Type</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all formal register markers</td>
<td>all informal register markers</td>
<td>EDSs &gt; EFLLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no greeting</td>
<td>informal address form</td>
<td>EDSs &gt; EFLLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal vocabulary</td>
<td>formal greeting</td>
<td>EDSs &gt; EFLLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informal greeting</td>
<td>informal greeting</td>
<td>EDSs &gt; EFLLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal address form</td>
<td>formal address form</td>
<td>EDSs &gt; EFLLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informal vocabulary</td>
<td>formal vocabulary</td>
<td>EDSs &gt; EFLLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal greeting</td>
<td>informal address form</td>
<td>EDSs &gt; EFLLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informal greeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal address form</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no greeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no address form</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informal vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal greeting</td>
<td>informal address form</td>
<td>EDSs &lt; EFLLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal vocabulary</td>
<td>formal address form</td>
<td>EDSs &lt; EFLLs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Formality level: < and > show which group rated the sentences as less and more formal.
were found to be statistically significantly lower for the EFL learners (i.e., they rated the sentences as slightly more informal than the ED speakers).

As may be observed, the sentence types which produced similar formality ratings by the two groups included all the sentence types in which all the register markers are formal. In contrast, the formality ratings of the two groups differ for all the sentences in which all the register markers are informal and, with one exception, all of the sentence types in which formal and informal register markers are combined to create various formality levels of the sentences. Therefore, it appears that consistency in the use of formal register markers was an important factor in producing perceptions of similar levels of formality by the ED speakers and the EFL learners.

4.3 Certainty Ratings

The second research question posed in this study asks: Do ED speakers and EFL learners report similar levels of certainty regarding their formality ratings of the same examples of e-mail communications in English? Tables 14 and 15 summarize the results obtained by analyzing certainty ratings reported in answer to question B in the formality judgment questionnaire, which asked participants to rate the certainty with which they had rated the formality of each sentence on a 4-point Likert scale.

As with the formality ratings, Table 14 presents the mean ranks, which were used by the Mann-Whitney U test to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the two groups, and for a better assessment of these differences Table 15 presents mean and standard deviation for each group for each of the 20 sentences. Sentences in which the certainty ratings were statistically significantly different as
determined by the Mann-Whitney U test, the sentence type, the mean ranks, and the \( p \)
value are bolded in Table 14, and similarly the sentence type, mean, and standard
deviation of both groups are bolded in Table 15. The < and > signs indicate which of the
two groups reported statistically significantly higher certainty, in which case the sign
appears closer to the higher number.
Table 14. Results of the Mann-Whitney U Test for Certainty Ratings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence Type</th>
<th>Mean Ranks</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDSs</td>
<td>EFLls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Formal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;customer&quot;</td>
<td>29.82</td>
<td>23.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Formal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;client&quot;</td>
<td>31.34 &gt; 22.02</td>
<td>216.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Informal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;customer&quot;</td>
<td>29.26</td>
<td>23.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Informal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;client&quot;</td>
<td>29.86</td>
<td>23.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;customer&quot;</td>
<td>30.10</td>
<td>23.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;client&quot;</td>
<td>31.42 &gt; 21.94</td>
<td>214.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;customer&quot;</td>
<td>33.6  &gt; 19.93</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;client&quot;</td>
<td>32.24 &gt; 21.19</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;customer&quot;</td>
<td>30.42 &gt; 22.87</td>
<td>239.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;client&quot;</td>
<td>31.4  &gt; 21.96</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, AF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;customer&quot;</td>
<td>27.94</td>
<td>25.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, AF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;client&quot;</td>
<td>30.64 &gt; 22.67</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, V*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;customer&quot;</td>
<td>31.78 &gt; 21.61</td>
<td>205.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, V*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;client&quot;</td>
<td>29.94</td>
<td>23.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF, V*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;customer&quot;</td>
<td>33.9  &gt; 19.65</td>
<td>152.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF, V*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;client&quot;</td>
<td>31.3  &gt; 22.06</td>
<td>217.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;customer&quot;</td>
<td>29.54</td>
<td>23.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;client&quot;</td>
<td>30.48 &gt; 22.81</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V only*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;customer&quot;</td>
<td>32.2  &gt; 21.22</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V only*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;client&quot;</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G = greeting, AF = address form, V = vocabulary
Table 15. Group Mean Certainty Ratings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence Type</th>
<th>ED Speakers</th>
<th>EFL Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Formal</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>very sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Formal</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>very sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Informal</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>very sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Informal</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V*</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V*</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, AF</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, AF</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, V*</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, V</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF, V*</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF, V</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V only</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V only</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V only*</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V only</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G = greeting, AF = address form, V = vocabulary
The results presented in Table 14 and 15 show that the ED speakers were more certain about their formality ratings than were the EFL learners. This was true for each of the 12 sentences where the Mann-Whitney U test showed a statistically significant difference in the certainty ratings between the two groups. With the exception of both the “customer” and the “client” version of the sentence type in which all the register markers are formal, and the “customer” version of the sentence type in which all the register markers are informal, where the group mean certainty rating of the ED speakers translates into the verbal descriptor “very sure,” corresponding to the numerical value of 4 on the 4-point Likert scale, all of the other group mean certainty ratings for both the ED speakers and the EFL learners translate into the verbal descriptor “somewhat sure,” corresponding to the numerical value of 3 on the 4-point Likert scale. Based on these findings, the answer to the second research question is that the ED speakers and the EFL learners were similarly certain about their formality ratings in less than half of the 20 sentences.

As may be observed in Table 16, the statistically significant differences in the certainty ratings were reported for sentences that are examples of all five categories of stylistic consistency, as described in the previous section.
Table 16. Stylistic Consistency of the Sentences Rated Differently (Certainty).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exclusively Informal</th>
<th>ED Speakers</th>
<th></th>
<th>EFL Learners</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V only*</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>&gt; 2.63</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly Informal</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>&gt; 2.78</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>&gt; 2.74</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>&gt; 2.81</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V*</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>&gt; 2.78</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V*</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>&gt; 2.93</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, AF</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>&gt; 2.96</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly Formal</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, V*</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>&gt; 3.0</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF, V*</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>&gt; 2.63</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“customer”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF, V</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>&gt; 2.78</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusively Formal</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Formal</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>&gt; 3.29</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>very sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V only*</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>&gt; 3.03</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“client”</td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>somewhat sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G = greeting, AF = address form, V = vocabulary

Five out of the 12 sentences in which the differences in the certainty ratings between the ED speakers and the EFL learners were found to be statistically significant were the same as the sentences in which statistically significant differences were found between the two groups in the formality ratings, reported in the previous section. Marked
by an asterisk next to the sentence type descriptor in Table 14, 15, and 16, they include both the “customer” and the “client” version of the sentence type in which the vocabulary is formal but the greeting and the address form are informal, the “customer” version of the sentence type in which the greeting and the vocabulary are formal but the address form is informal, the “customer” version of the sentence type in which the address form and the vocabulary are formal but the greeting is informal, and finally the “customer” version of the sentence type in which both the greeting and the address form are omitted and the vocabulary is informal.

In summary, the EFL learners were significantly less certain than the ED speakers in all of the 12 sentences in the questionnaire in which the difference in the certainty ratings between the two groups was found to be statistically significant. Certainty ratings of the EFL learners never rose above the level of “somewhat sure,” whereas the certainty ratings of the ED speakers rose above that level in three sentences. These three sentences included both the “customer” and the “client” version of the sentence type in which all the register markers are exclusively formal and the “customer” version of the sentence type in which all the register markers are exclusively informal. Therefore, it appears that stylistic consistency may have been a factor in raising the certainty levels of the ED speakers, but not of the EFL learners.

4.4 Salient (In)formal Register Markers

The third research question posed in this study asks: Which (in)formal register markers do ED speakers and EFL learners report as significant in their perceptions of examples of e-mail communications in English? The responses provided to the open-
ended question C in the formality judgment questionnaire, which asked participants to identify features that they considered significant with regard to their formality rating of each sentence, were divided into four categories: (1) greeting, (2) address form, (3) vocabulary, and (4) other. The first category of “greeting” includes responses that mention either the formal “Dear” or the informal “Hi.” The second category of “address form” includes responses that mention either the informal version of the first name or the title and/or the last name. The third category of “vocabulary” includes responses that mention any one of the words that constituted the subject (i.e., “customer” or “client”), either the formal or the informal verb, and either the formal or the informal object (i.e., adjective and noun) of the sentence. The fourth category of “other” includes responses that fit none of the first three categories.

For sentence types that include all three (in)formal register markers, a very small number of responses in the “other” category may be divided into two subcategories of “content” and “general impression.” Examples of “content” include the following responses from the ED speakers: “sounds like a formal summary,” “addresses a serious concern,” even explicitly “contents.” The EFL learners provided similar responses: “description, instructions,” and “declarative sentence.” Examples of “general impression” included the following responses from the ED speakers: “business vocabulary,” “balanced,” “the language is neither formal or informal,” and similar responses from the EFL learners: “professional language,” “official language,” and “neutral.” Interestingly, neither the ED speakers nor the EFL learners provided comments for any of the “all formal” or the “all informal” sentences that explicitly mention their stylistic consistency. For sentence types in which the greeting and the address forms are omitted, Table 17
shows examples of the “other” category of responses divided by participant group and sentence type. As may be observed, the responses are very similar.

Table 17. Examples of “Content” and “General Impression” Responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence Type</th>
<th>ED Speakers Content</th>
<th>EFL Learners Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal V only</td>
<td>no examples</td>
<td>“neutral information”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V only</td>
<td>“just a description”</td>
<td>“just information”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General Impression</th>
<th>General Impression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal V only</td>
<td>“simple, straight-forward, easy to understand”; “seems unnatural, not casual”; “impersonal, brisk”; “elevated language, not personal”; “language of business”; “balanced”</td>
<td>“no specific style of sentence”; “impersonal, neutral”; “straight enough”; “no markers of formality”; “nothing special”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V only</td>
<td>“general style”; “sounds like friends”; “two friends”; “simple and straightforward”; “nothing suggests formality”; “balanced”</td>
<td>“neutral”; “neutral language”; “no markers of formality”; “no expression on either end of the scale”; “nothing special”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A number of participants in both groups commented explicitly on the lack of greeting and/or address form in the sentences. For both the “customer” and the “client” version of the sentence type with formal vocabulary and the sentence type with informal vocabulary, the lack of greeting and the lack of address form correlated roughly equally with ratings of “neutral” and “informal” in both groups of participants. The two exceptions to this pattern were the ratings of “formal” by the ED speakers of the “customer” version and by the EFL learners of the “client” version of the sentence type with formal vocabulary.
Table 18 summarizes the responses that fit the first three categories. Simple frequency counts of the number of times participants identified features that fit one of the three categories of “greeting,” “address form,” and “vocabulary,” are reported for each of the 20 sentences. If participants reported features that fit more than one category, each feature was included in the frequency counts of its corresponding category. To compare the two groups, the percentage reported indicates how many of the ED speakers and the EFL learners reported features that fit one of the three categories in their answers. Where the EFL learners differ from the ED speakers by at least 10 percentage points the results are bolded. The < and > signs indicate the higher percentage and appear closer to it. For easier reference to the participants’ formality ratings reported earlier, verbal descriptors of the sentences for which a statistically significant difference was found between the two groups in the formality ratings are bolded in the table.

These frequency counts were obtained from analysis of the participants’ answers to an open-ended question which did not explicitly ask them to identify all of the features that they found was significant with regard to their formality ratings of the sentences, nor did it explicitly ask them to identify all the features which they did not take into consideration. Whereas, on the one hand, the open-ended nature of the question allowed the participants more freedom in their answers; on the other hand, it allowed for a certain level of arbitrariness. As such, the open-ended question was designed more as a source of qualitative rather than quantitative data, and therefore no statistical analysis was performed to establish the statistical significance of the results, which are intended to be merely a summary of the answers.
Table 18. Reports of Salient (In)formal Register Markers by Group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence Type</th>
<th>Greeting</th>
<th>Address Form</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EDSs</td>
<td>EFLls</td>
<td>EDSs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Formal “customer”</td>
<td>76 %</td>
<td>70 %</td>
<td>56 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Formal “client”</td>
<td>76 %</td>
<td>74 %</td>
<td>48 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Informal “customer”</td>
<td>80 %</td>
<td>89 %</td>
<td>60 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Informal “client”</td>
<td>80 %</td>
<td>81 %</td>
<td>44 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G “customer”</td>
<td>52 %</td>
<td>52 %</td>
<td>56 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G “client”</td>
<td>52 %</td>
<td>52 %</td>
<td>56 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF “customer”</td>
<td>72 %</td>
<td>74 %</td>
<td>48 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF “client”</td>
<td>67 %</td>
<td>&lt; 81 %</td>
<td>76 % &gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V “customer”</td>
<td>68 %</td>
<td>70 %</td>
<td>52 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V “client”</td>
<td>64 %</td>
<td>&lt; 78 %</td>
<td>56 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, AF “customer”</td>
<td>80 %</td>
<td>81 %</td>
<td>64 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, AF “client”</td>
<td>76 %</td>
<td>67 %</td>
<td>64 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, V “customer”</td>
<td>64 %</td>
<td>63 %</td>
<td>40 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal G, V “client”</td>
<td>52 % &gt;</td>
<td>41 %</td>
<td>48 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF, V “customer”</td>
<td>48 %</td>
<td>&lt; 70 %</td>
<td>44 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal AF, V “client”</td>
<td>76 %</td>
<td>74 %</td>
<td>40 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V only “customer”</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal V only “client”</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V only “customer”</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal V only “client”</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G = greeting, AF = address form, V = vocabulary
Regarding the sentence types which include all three (in)formal register markers, the following trends concerning the two participant groups emerge. It is important to bear in mind that, as discussed earlier, these were not tested for statistical significance. Regarding the greeting, a higher percentage of the EFL learners in 8 sentences and a higher percentage of the ED speakers in 6 sentences reported the greeting as a salient register marker. In two sentences the percentage of the EFL learners and the ED speakers who reported the greeting was the same. Regarding the address form and the vocabulary, a higher percentage of the EFL learners in all of the sentences except the “client” version of the “Formal AF” sentence type and the “client” version of the “Formal G and AF” sentence type reported the address form as a salient register marker. In contrast, a higher percentage of the ED speakers in all of the sentences except both the “customer” and the “client” version of the “all informal” sentence type and the “customer” version of the “formal G and AF” sentence type reported the vocabulary as a salient register marker.

As may be observed in Table 16, in 11 sentences the trend of a higher percentage of the EFL learners reporting the address form and the trend of a higher percentage of the ED speakers reporting the vocabulary as salient register markers occur simultaneously, and may also be observed in 6 of the 11 sentences for which statistically significant differences were reported between the ED speakers and the EFL learners in the formality ratings. Interestingly, a higher percentage of the EFL learners reported “vocabulary” as a salient register marker for all four sentences in which the greeting and the address form are omitted and the vocabulary is either formal or informal.

Based on these findings, which need to be substantiated by further research, the answer to the third research question is that, despite some similarities, the ED speakers
and the EFL learners did not find the same (in)formal register markers similarly salient in their perceptions of formality. Regarding the sentences types composed of all three register markers, the observed trends suggest that, in determining the formality level of these sentences, the ED speakers and the EFL learners found the greeting roughly similarly salient. However, in contrast to the ED speakers, it appears that the EFL learners found the address forms more salient as a register marker than the vocabulary.
Discussion

This chapter provides a discussion of the results obtained in the main study in three sections. In the first section the results are interpreted and considered in terms of their implications for EFL instruction, in the second section the limitations of the study are summarized, and in the concluding section, first the implications of this study for future research are presented, followed by the implications for English learners and speakers as two groups of English users.

5.1 Interpretation of Results and Implications for EFL Instruction

The results of the main study are interpreted and their implications are discussed in this section in the order of the three research questions they addressed: (1) formality ratings, (2) certainty ratings, (3) salient (in)formal register markers. A brief discussion of the possible effects of the participants’ individual differences on their perceptions of formality, which were not examined in the study, concludes this section.

5.1.1 Formality Ratings

Same Ratings. The EFL learners gave 9 out of the 20 sentences formality ratings similar to those of the ED speakers. Regarding the sentence type in which all three register markers are formal, it is possible that the EFL learners and the ED speakers rated both versions of this sentence type as “formal” because the sentences are composed of exclusively formal register markers. This is consistent with the idea that perception of a register as formal increases with more consistent use of formal variants (e.g., Agha, 1998;
Irvine, 1979; Moreno, 2011), and at the same time makes the level of formality of these sentences easier to assess. However, it is also possible that the EFL learners rated these sentences as “formal” because in assessing the level of their formality they paid attention mostly to the greeting and the address form (both of which are formal), which is a trend in the EFL learners’ distribution of attention among the three register markers that may be observed throughout the questionnaire.

Regarding the sentence type in which the greeting and the address form are omitted and the vocabulary is formal, the EFL learners and the ED speakers might have equally perceived these sentences as “formal” because of their stylistic consistency achieved by a strict co-occurrence of formal lexical variants. The ED speakers’ perception of these low-frequency words of non-Germanic origin as “formal” would be consistent with previous research (e.g., Levin et al., 1981; Levin & Novak, 1991), in which it was found that native speakers of English perceive such vocabulary as more formal than high-frequency words of Germanic origin. Concerning the EFL learners, it is possible that they perceived the vocabulary of these sentences as “formal” because words of Latin and Greek origin similar to those included in the questionnaire, are perceived in their first language, Slovak, as non-domestic. They are referred to as “foreign words” (e.g., Mistrík, 1993), listed in special dictionaries, and used mostly in formal, technical, and academic contexts.

However, it is also possible that the EFL learners were able to recognize the vocabulary of these sentences as formal because they were likely familiar with it through exposure in EFL textbooks. As studies of vocabulary (e.g., O’Loughlin, 2012; Reda, 2003) included in EFL textbooks across all proficiency levels have made clear, the
dominant principles of selection are those of utility and frequency, which means that standard and formal vocabulary is prioritized. For example, in a study of the New Headway Upper-Intermediate, a popular EFL textbook, Matsuoka and Hirsh (2010) concluded that the textbook offered a limited number of opportunities for learners to develop their vocabulary beyond the first 2000 most frequently used words and academic vocabulary.

Finally, regarding the sentence type in which the address form is formal but both the greeting and the vocabulary are informal, it is possible that the ED speakers, who appear to have paid attention to all three register markers, rated both versions of the sentence type as “neutral” because the formal address form was a register marker sufficiently salient to raise their overall formality level. In contrast, the EFL learners likely rated both versions of the sentence as “neutral” because they paid attention mostly to the greeting and the address form, the first of which was informal and the second of which was formal, and as such, in terms of formality, these two register markers “canceled each other out.”

With one exception, the formality ratings of the EFL learners were similar to those of the ED speakers only when the sentences were stylistically consistent in being exclusively formal. The EFL learners’ ability to recognize the register of these sentences as formal is consistent with previous research (e.g., Dewaele, 2004b; Tarone & Swain, 1995), which has suggested that language learners tend to acquire predominantly neutral or formal registers and that, to acquire a wider range of styles, including informal registers, language learners need to continue their target-language study, particularly through interactions with target-language speakers in authentic target-language contexts.
**Different Ratings.** The EFL learners gave 11 of the 20 sentences formality ratings that were found to be statistically significantly different from those of the ED speakers. Regarding the sentence types in which all three register markers are included, there are a number of possible explanations for the differences in the ratings. First, it is possible that the EFL learners gave the sentences formality ratings different from those of the ED speakers because they appear to have paid attention mostly to the greetings and the address forms, whereas the ED speakers appear to have paid attention to all three register markers more evenly. For example, the EFL learners rated both the “customer” and the “client” version of the sentence type in which both the greeting and the address form are informal as “informal.” In contrast, the ED speakers who appeared to have also considered the formal vocabulary in this sentence type rated both versions as “neutral.”

Second, it is possible that the EFL learners were less able than the ED speakers to assess the formality levels of the vocabulary because of their limited exposure to varieties of (in)formal vocabulary in EFL textbooks discussed earlier. In contrast, the ED speakers might have been more aware that the high-frequency words of Germanic origin, selected to represent the informal level of vocabulary in the questionnaire, do not necessarily constitute the most informal degree of vocabulary in English. For example, the vocabulary included the questionnaire to represent the informal level could be more informal if it included colloquial or slang expressions, among other options. This could explain why the ED speakers rated both the “customer” and the “client” version of the sentence type in which all the register markers are informal as slightly more formal than the EFL learners; this difference was confirmed by the Mann-Whitney U test as
statistically significant, even though the group means for both versions translate into the same verbal rating of “informal.”

Third, it is possible that there was a difference between the EFL learners and the ED speakers in the level of formality they perceived in the greeting “Dear,” selected to represent the formal level in the questionnaire. The EFL learners, who had likely encountered the greeting mostly in EFL textbooks, where it is presented as a standard opening of a letter, may have perceived it as neutral. In contrast, the ED speakers might have perceived it as more formal, which would be consistent with previous research (e.g., Bjorge, 2007; Chen, 2006; Duthler, 2006; Felix-Brasdefer, 2012; Frey, Schegg, & Murphy, 2003; Gains, 1999; Sabater et al., 2008; Waldvogel, 2007), in which in the context of e-mail communication the greeting “Dear” is considered formal. This might explain why the EFL learners rated the “customer” version of the sentence type in which only the greeting is formal (i.e., “Dear”) as “informal,” whereas the ED speakers rated it as “neutral.” Whereas the greeting does not appear to have raised the overall level of formality of the sentence for the EFL learners, it appears to have done so for the ED speakers.

Regarding the sentence type in which the greeting and the address form are omitted and the vocabulary is informal, a possible explanation for the difference in the formality ratings is that in the absence of the greeting and the address form, which appear to have been the EFL learners’ preferred salient markers of formality, they were having difficulty assessing the level of formality of these sentences. Their group mean formality ratings of both versions of the sentence as “neutral” correspond with their comments about the lack of salient (in)formal features in these sentences, which included explicit
statements such as “no markers of formality” and “no expression on either end of the scale.” Unlike with the sentences composed of only formal vocabulary, which the EFL learners rated as formal despite the lack of the greeting and the address form, the EFL learners’ inability to assess the formality level of the vocabulary in these “informal vocabulary only” sentences might have been caused by their limited familiarity with this level of informal language, as a result of their limited exposure to it in the textbooks, as discussed earlier.

**Customer versus Client Sentences.** For 3 sentence types, the differences in the formality ratings between the ED speakers and the EFL learners were found to be statistically significant only for the “customer” versions, never for the “client” versions. A possible explanation for this might be that there were differences in how formal the word “client” appeared to participants, some of whom might have perceived it as more formal than the word “customer.”

As was mentioned earlier, consistent use of formal variants increases the perception of a register as formal (e.g., Agha, 1998; Irvine, 1979; Moreno, 2011), whereas perception of a register as informal increases with increased use of informal variants or a looser combination of formal and informal variants, which may be used to create a particular tone (Irvine, 1979). Importantly, as Chan (1976) warned, even a few informal variants may significantly decrease the overall level of formality. Therefore, depending on the composition of the sentences, which either included more of the formal or more of the informal variants, and depending on how formal the word “client” appeared to each participant, the word might have at times increased or decreased the overall formality level of the sentences.
As a result, unlike the “customer” versions, the “client” versions received a wide range of formality ratings in both groups of participants. Because of this wide range, the distributions of ratings (i.e., the number of high, mid, and low ratings in each group) in the two groups were too similar for the Mann-Whitney U test to reject the null hypothesis and find the differences in the ratings between the two groups statistically significant. Therefore, even though in terms of the group means the formality ratings of the “client” versions by both groups matched the formality ratings of the corresponding “customer” versions, only the differences between the two groups in the ratings of the “customer” versions were found to be statistically significantly different.

**Implications.** It appears that in order to increase EFL learners’ understanding of stylistic variation, EFL instruction needs to be improved in at least three ways. First, EFL learners would benefit from increased exposure to a greater number of authentic (in)formal registers in several varieties of English, beyond the mostly standard English included in EFL textbooks. Second, EFL learners would benefit from increased awareness of the various levels of formality inherent in certain lexical variants, such as low- versus high-frequency words and words of Germanic versus non-Germanic origin. And third, EFL learners would benefit from instruction that includes explicit discussion of the various types of (in)formal register markers that exist in English and of how these register markers may be combined to create various levels of formality, particularly with a focus on the significance of vocabulary.
5.1.2 Certainty Ratings

With the exception of the ED speakers’ certainty ratings for three sentences, the ED speakers and the EFL learners reported that they felt “somewhat sure” about all of the remaining formality ratings. As one level down from the most certain level of “very sure” available to the participants on the 4-point Likert scale in the questionnaire, it indicates that both groups of participants felt some reservations about their formality ratings.

One possible explanation is that the participants were confused by the incongruous combinations of (in)formal register markers, which was the case in a large number of the sentence types included in the questionnaire. The disparity of the combined register markers alone likely made assessments of formality challenging. However, many of the combinations may not occur very often in natural e-mail communication. As such, they may have been an additional source of difficulty because the participants may not have encountered such combinations of (in)formal register markers before, or not frequently enough, in order to have developed an intuitive understanding of their formality level. What lends support to this argument is the finding that the ED speakers reported feeling “very sure” about their formality ratings of both versions of the sentence type in which all the register markers are formal and the “customer” version of the sentence type in which all the register markers are informal. For the “client” version of the sentence type in which all the register markers are informal, their certainty rating approaches the level of “very sure.”

Regarding the EFL learners, there is another possible explanation. The EFL learners’ certainty ratings were found to be statistically significantly lower than those of the ED speakers in 12 of the 20 sentences, even though with one exception in terms of the
verbal descriptors they translate into the same ratings of “somewhat sure.” Unlike the ED
speakers, the EFL learners might have felt the need to indicate a certain lack of certainty
about their formality ratings to avoid the risk of appearing unintelligent, if they worried
their answers were “incorrect,” or unintentionally different, if they worried their answers
significantly differed from those of the other participants.

Although participants were reminded that there were no “correct” or “incorrect”
answers to any of the questions, the EFL learners might have inadvertently felt some
pressure because of the public educational setting in which they were approached and the
fact that at the time of data collection they were all enrolled in an EFL teacher-trainee
program. There has been some understanding that using a foreign language in public is an
ego-threatening (e.g., MacIntyre, Noels, & Clement, 1997) or face-threatening act (e.g.,
Morita, 2004). In their study, McIntyre et al. (1997) focused on the role of anxiety in L2
learners’ self-perceptions of competence, and their research showed that anxious learners
tend to underestimate their ability. Morita (2004) explored a common aspect of L2
learners’ identity, which is that they perceive themselves as less competent than others
based on their experience of difficulties in using the target language as well as their sense
of how others perceive them when they interact in the target language. Her research
exposed anxiety and insecurity over using the target language imperfectly as the root of
the problem, particularly in the case of learners who have an increased need “to prove
themselves,” such as instructors of the target-language. Therefore, whereas some EFL
learners might have genuinely felt reservations about their formality ratings, other EFL
learners might have been responding to their increased awareness of themselves as
language learners with limited linguistic expertise and intuitive feeling for the target language.

**Implications.** With the majority of the EFL learners’ certainty ratings statistically significantly lower than those of the ED speakers, it appears that EFL learners would benefit from EFL instruction that leads them to gradually develop the identity of legitimate target-language users, so that as their proficiency in the target-language increases they might move away from seeing themselves as target-language learners and start considering themselves target-language speakers.

One way this might be achieved is to present the native speaker as one possible model of a target-language speaker that learners may choose to emulate, rather than as the only model they must strive to achieve. As has been suggested in the literature about the “native-speaker goal” (e.g., Alptekin, 2002; McKay, 2003), language learners, particularly in foreign-language contexts, have a variety of reasons for learning and using the target language. Many aspects of the native-speaker model may not align with the actual needs of many language learners, in which case the model unnecessarily creates a standard that is impossible for many language learners to achieve.

### 5.1.3 Salient (In)formal Register Markers

In the trends that emerged in the reports of salient (in)formal register markers, the EFL learners reported the address form more often and the vocabulary less often than the ED speakers, suggesting that they found the address form a more salient register marker than the vocabulary. Although these findings need to be substantiated by further research, a number of possible reasons for these two observed trends will now be discussed.
Regarding the EFL learners’ increased attention to address forms, a possible explanation for this trend is the existence of address pronouns in their first language, Slovak. As other Slavic languages, Slovak distinguishes between an informal and a formal address form, specifically the informal “ty” and the formal “vy.” As Sussex and Cubberley (2006) explained, “a well-established system of polite and familiar address in pronouns” (p. 565) is a feature that Slavic languages have in common with Romance and Germanic languages. In fact, they argue that address systems in Slavic languages underwent a change following a period of French influence in the eighteenth century, when imitation of the French pronouns “tu” and “vous” was on the rise.

In contemporary Slovak, the plural form “vy” with the corresponding verb endings may be used for a single addressee to signal formality and politeness. Mistrík (1983) illustrates the difference between the two pronouns by arguing that the informal “ty” is used with children, peers, and close friends, whereas the formal “vy” is used with older professional superiors and officials, and establishes a formal and respectful relationship of the addressor to the addressee. As in French (e.g., Dewaele, 2004b), these address pronouns are some of the most salient (in)formal register markers in Slovak. Therefore, the EFL learners in the study likely paid attention mostly to address forms because that is what they are used to doing with address pronouns in Slovak when they are trying to assess the level of formality in communication.

Regarding the EFL learners’ limited attention to vocabulary, a possible explanation for this trend is that the EFL learners had trouble assessing the formality of the vocabulary in the questionnaire because they have not yet attained the requisite intuitive feeling about the formality level of vocabulary in English. This is likely because
of their limited exposure to (in)formal registers of English. As discussed earlier, most of the vocabulary included in EFL textbooks is limited to frequently used standard vocabulary (e.g., O’Loughlin, 2012; Matsuoka & Hirsh, 2010; Reda, 2003). However, it is also possible that the EFL learners found the vocabulary in the sentences difficult to assess because, unlike the greetings and the address forms, each of which was represented in the questionnaire in only two forms (one formal and one informal), the formal and informal vocabulary was composed of several different lexical items in each sentence of the questionnaire.

**Implications.** It appears that in order to increase EFL learners’ understanding of stylistic variation, EFL instruction needs to develop EFL learners’ awareness of the similarities and differences in the salience and significance of (in)formal register markers in their first language in contrast to English as the target language. When communicating with ED speakers, EFL learners need to be aware that to appropriately understand the level of formality of the communication in English, they may need to consider (in)formal register markers other than those they would typically use in their first language.

**5.1.4 Individual Variation**

The results obtained in this study only pertain to comparisons of the ED speakers and the EFL learners as groups because the small number of participants did not allow for statistical analysis of factors affecting individual variation. Therefore, only speculations may be offered about possible individual differences among participants in their perceptions of formality.
Previous research suggests that one factor of individual variation might have been gender. Female language learners have been found to have a tendency to use non-standard sociolinguistic variants less often than male learners (e.g., Adamson & Regan, 1991; R. Mougeon et al., 2004). This is a tendency that Trudgill (1974) discovered in a seminal study of native speakers of English, focused on the standard velar versus the non-standard alveolar pronunciation of “-ing,” and argued that women may prefer to use standard variants to counterbalance their less secure and lower-status position in society. If women do indeed prefer to use standard variants, it is possible that they might be more sensitive to the differences between standard and non-standard language than men.

Previous research further suggests that the participants’ engagement with the target language might have been another factor. For example, in a number of studies of FSL learners, increased extracurricular exposure to authentic target-language media and target-language speakers in authentic communicative contexts has been found to result in language learners’ increased use of non-standard sociolinguistic variants (e.g., R. Mougeon & Rehner, 2001; F. Mougeon & Rehner, 2009; Nagy et al., 1996; Rehner & R. Mougeon, 1999; Thomas, 2004; Uritescu et al., 2004). Such increased use of non-standard sociolinguistic variants might be an indicator that the learners with increased extracurricular exposure to the target language are more aware of the differences between standard and non-standard language.

Therefore, assuming that such increased sensitivity to the differences between standard and non-standard language would translate into the formality ratings of both the ED speakers and the EFL learners, the female EFL learners and the EFL learners with a high level of extracurricular engagement with English in this study might have been
better at assessing the formality of the 20 sentences in the formality questionnaire.

“Better” in this case would refer to greater similarity of their formality ratings to those of the ED speakers. As mentioned earlier, however, more research is necessary to establish whether this was indeed the case.

**5.2 Limitations of the Study**

There are a number of limitations of the main study that must be borne in mind in assessing the validity and the generalizability of the obtained results. These will be discussed in the following sections.

**5.2.1 Participants**

An important consideration in assessing the validity of results is the extent to which participants in the study best represent the general population. In case of the main study, the question is to what extent the participants recruited as ED speakers and EFL learners represent those categories of English users.

The best effort was made to make sure that the two groups of participants were similarly aware of and sensitive to the use of the various levels of (in)formal English in order to allow for a meaningful comparisons of their perceptions of formality. This is why the ED speakers in the study recruited from among undergraduate students enrolled in English literature courses were matched with EFL learners recruited from undergraduate students enrolled in English literature and English linguistics courses.

However, although it was assumed that these two groups were well matched, each of them in their own may not include the best representatives of ED speakers and EFL
learners in general. For example, ED speakers and EFL learners not focused on the study of literature and language might be less aware of and sensitive to levels of formality, whereas those of a different age category might have their perceptions of such stylistic variation shaped by ideas and expectations specific to their generation.

Although every effort was made to include an equal number of male and female participants in each of the two participant groups, in both groups there is a slightly higher number of female participants. Although the number of participants in each of the two groups overall allowed for a meaningful statistical analysis, it should be borne in mind that the number of participants is limited.

Finally, although the number of participants was sufficient to allow for statistical analysis of the similarities and differences between the ED speakers and the EFL learners as groups, it was not sufficient to allow for statistical analysis of the factors affecting individual variation. As such, it prevented the possibility of obtaining results pertaining to individual differences.

5.2.2 Instruments

Another important consideration in assessing the validity of results is the validity of the instruments. In the main study, two primary research instruments were used, an formality judgment questionnaire and a sociolinguistic background questionnaire.

5.2.2.1 Formality Judgment Questionnaire

An important limitation of the formality judgment questionnaire is that the 20 sentence-length examples of (in)formal e-mail communications are not examples of
naturally occurring data. Rather than extracted from authentic workplace e-mail communication, the sentences in the questionnaire were composed to include specific combinations of (in)formal greetings, address forms, and vocabulary and presented as examples of e-mail communication in a fictional setting between fictional interlocutors. Although plausible representations of workplace e-mail communication, the sentences are artificial in nature, and as such might be perceived differently from language produced naturally.

Another important limitation of the formality judgment questionnaire is that despite careful screening for possible inconsistencies in the sentences in an effort to eliminate all confounding variables, there are a number of features in the sentences that might have affected participants’ perceptions of formality beyond the scope of the intended manipulation of the (in)formal register markers included in the sentences as controlled variables. As was extensively discussed before, there was most likely a difference between how formal the word “customer” appeared to participants in contrast to the alternate word “client,” each of which was used in one of two versions of the same combination of (in)formal register markers. This partly invalidated the use of two examples of each combination of (in)formal register markers, which was to establish reliability of the obtained formality ratings for each of the 10 sentence types in the questionnaire.

Participants’ perceptions of formality were also likely influenced by the fictional informal versions of the first names and the last names. With regard to ED speakers, although all the last names were carefully selected as words that denote colors, it is possible that some of the names, such as “Brown” and “Gold” might be associated with
specific ethnicities and perceived by ED speakers differently in terms of formality. With regard to EFL learners, both the informal versions of the first names and the last names, as foreign-sounding names, might have been perceived as more formal than domestic-sounding Slovak names would have been.

One other limitation of the formality judgment questionnaire is that it asked participants to indicate their formality ratings on a 5-point Likert scale and certainty ratings on a 4-point scale. As such, only a limited number of possible degrees were available for the rating of formality and certainty, and it is possible that at times participants might have felt that none of the available options accurately reflected their perception. It is important to bear in mind that differences between degrees in a Likert scale, which is an example of an ordinal scale, are not exact (e.g., Mackey & Gass, 2011). For example, in a Likert scale designed to record perceptions of formality in this study, a rating of “2” or “informal” is not necessarily different from the rating of “1” or ”very informal” to the same degree that it is from the rating of “3” or “neutral.”

Finally, the formality judgment questionnaire asked participants to rate the formality of workplace e-mail communications at a financial institution. As undergraduate students, both the ED speakers and the EFL learners in the study have likely had only limited experience of such workplace e-mail communication, which may have affected their formality and certainty ratings.

5.2.2.2 Sociolinguistic Background Questionnaire

An important limitation of the sociolinguistic background questionnaire is that all of the information related to the EFL learners’ L2 engagement factors was self-reported.
These self-reports may not accurately reflect participants’ reality because the answers that the participants provided in the questionnaire might have been influenced by their perception, memory, or even self-image, among other factors.

### 5.2.3 Collected Data

There are a number of limitations of the data collected from both groups of participants. Because of the nature of language, which as a method of communication exists in a great number of varieties specific to various places, times, and groups of its speakers, it must be borne in mind that the data in the study were collected from participants of particular ages, at particular places and times. As such, the obtained results allow for only limited generalizability. The results obtained from the ED speakers best reflect how formality in English is perceived by speakers of Canadian and perhaps American English, whereas the results obtained from the EFL learners best reflect how formality in English is perceived by learners in foreign-language contexts whose first language distinguishes between formal and informal pronominal address forms. At the same time it is important to bear in mind that the results obtained from both groups best reflect how formality in English is perceived by undergraduate students in their early twenties, with possibly heightened sensitivity to language resulting from an active study of the English language and literature.

### 5.2.4 Analysis

An obvious limitation of the five stylistic categories of the sentences in the questionnaire (i.e., exclusively or predominantly formal or informal, and mixed) that
were created for the purpose of analyzing the formality and certainty ratings is that they are based on a single criterion of the proportion of formal versus informal variants in a sentence, regardless of whether the variants are part of the greeting, address form, or vocabulary. Although the trends observed in the reports of salient register markers need to be substantiated by further research, they nevertheless suggest it is possible that there is a difference in the salience of the greeting, address form, and vocabulary as register markers of formality. This means that it is possible that despite being composed of fewer words, the greeting and/or the address form might have affected the perception of the overall formality of the sentences more significantly than the vocabulary. If the criterion of the salience of the register markers was taken into consideration in addition to their proportion, the sentences in the questionnaire would likely be distributed among the five stylistic categories differently.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, there are two kinds of implications of this study. The first is for the future research focused on the perceptions of stylistic variation in English by ED speakers and EFL learners. The second is for ED speakers and EFL learners as two groups of English users.

5.3.1 Implications For Future Research

There are a number of implications for future research. First, this study could be replicated with changes in the research design that would address its current limitations. Such improved research design would lead to a study with increased internal validity. Second, because of the lack of studies with which the findings of this study could be
compared, more research of the two groups of English users similar to those in this study is necessary to establish this study’s external validity. And third, because (in)formal language exists in various local, temporal, and sociolinguistic variations, more research focused on the perceptions of stylistic variation in English is necessary to account for this variety. For example, to account for sociolinguistic variants, future research of the perceptions of stylistic variation should include various groups of English users, such as varieties of ED speakers and EFL or English-as-a-second language (ESL) learners, focusing on (in)formal language use in a number of different workplace and non-workplace settings. Similarly, future research should also focus on the different types of communication media, such as written, spoken, and computer-mediated versus non-computer mediated communication.

5.3.2 Implications For English Users

Based on the findings of this study, it appears that English users might benefit from the awareness that ED speakers and EFL learners may not perceive greetings, address forms, and vocabulary as similarly salient (in)formal register markers. In the perceptions of formality reported in this study, ED speakers appear to have paid attention to greetings, address forms, and vocabulary more evenly than EFL learners, who focused primarily on greetings and address forms. This difference in focus appears to have led to different perceptions of the overall formality of more than half of the sentences the participants rated. The first language of the EFL learners in the study is Slovak, in which a single addressee may be addressed with an informal or a formal address pronoun. This form of address is a salient (in)formal register marker, so it is possible that the EFL
learners expected that address forms in English enjoyed a similar salience in communicating (in)formality.

On the one hand, this means that ED speakers might benefit from the awareness that when they are communicating with non-ED speakers, these speakers might perceive and produce (in)formal register markers differently, which might lead to mismatched interpretations of the degree of the overall formality of a communicative situation. On the other hand, this means that EFL learners might benefit from the awareness that when they are communicating with ED speakers, they might need to pay attention not only to address forms and greetings but also to vocabulary in order to perceive and produce various degrees of (in)formality in the communication situation more accurately.
References


Baron, N. S. (2002). Who sets e-mail style? Prescriptivism, coping strategies, and democratizing communication access. *The Information Society, 18*(5), 403-413. doi: 10.1080/01972240290108203


Australian Linguistic Society. Retrieved from


https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10036/29915/DickeyFormsAddress.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y


Rehner, K., & Mougeon, R. (1999). Variation in the spoken French of immersion students: To ne or not to ne, that is the sociolinguistic question. *Canadian Modern Language Review/La Revue canadienne des langues vivantes, 56*(1), 124-154. doi: 10.3138/cmlr.56.1.124


http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.469.9063&rep=rep1&type=pdf#page=539
Appendices

Appendix A - Initial Set of Sentences for the Formality Judgment Task

12 Types, 2 examples of each

1. **formal address form AND formal lexical feature (Latin, Greek vocabulary)**
   
   Hi Mrs. Brown, the misplaced information was located.
   Hi Mrs. Green, corporate protocol was violated.

2. **formal address form AND informal lexical feature (Anglo-Saxon vocabulary)**
   
   Hi Mrs. White, your letter was brought back for another stamp.
   Hi Mrs. Black, I was told our manager was leaving the company.

3. **informal address form AND formal lexical feature (Latin, Greek vocabulary)**
   
   Hi Trish, explicit instructions were provided.
   Hi Trixie, our participation in the conference was required.

4. **informal address form AND informal lexical feature (Anglo-Saxon vocabulary)**
   
   Hi Ginny, our new copier was dropped off today.
   Hi Dottie, your phone calls were taken care of while you were out.

5. **formal address form AND formal grammatical feature (nominalization)**
   
   Hi Mrs. Grey, that customer had a tendency to be late with payments.
   Hi Mrs. Blue, the client made a decision.

6. **formal address form AND informal grammatical feature (verbalization)**
   
   Hi Mrs. Silver, the accountant investigated our taxes.
   Hi Mrs. Gold, the client complained about our customer service.

7. **informal address form AND formal grammatical feature (nominalization)**
   
   Hi Bobbie, I placed an order for a new stapler for you.
   Hi Becky, the legal department provided an answer to your question.

8. **informal address form AND informal grammatical feature (verbalization)**
   
   Hi Peggy, I called the client to explain.
   Hi Toni, I analyzed the material you sent.
9. **formal lexical feature (Latin, Greek vocabulary)**

   Our security procedures were amended.
   An upgraded operating system was installed.

10. **informal lexical feature (Anglo-Saxon vocabulary)**

    My calls were never picked up.
    The fliers you mailed out were sent back.

11. **formal grammatical feature (nominalization)**

    The head office expressed its disapproval of our methods.
    The manager and I reached an agreement.

12. **informal grammatical feature (verbalization)**

    Our department studied the results.
    The branch office met with the lawyer.
Appendix B – Pilot Study Set of Sentences in the Formality Judgment Task

10 Types, 2 examples of each

1. **formal greeting, formal address form, formal lexical variants**

   Dear Ms. Black, the customer located the misplaced data.
   Dear Ms. White, the client amended the corporate protocol.

2. **formal greeting, informal address form, formal lexical variants**

   Dear Vicky, the customer supplied the required certificate.
   Dear Becky, the client participated in the annual conference.

3. **formal greeting, formal address form, informal lexical variants**

   Dear Ms. Green, the customer handed in the usual papers.
   Dear Ms. Blue, the client put together the short chat.

4. **formal greeting, informal address form, informal lexical variants**

   Dear Shelly, the customer turned down the changed offer.
   Dear Peggy, the client worked out the old wages.

5. **informal greeting, formal address form, formal lexical variants**

   Hi Ms. Grey, the customer complied with the security procedures.
   Hi Ms. Brown, the client installed the upgraded application.

6. **informal greeting, informal address form, formal lexical variants**

   Hi Nicky, the customer obtained substantial credit.
   Hi Ginny, the client requested the expedited assessment.

7. **informal greeting, formal address form, informal lexical variants**

   Hi Ms. Silver, the customer picked up the later call.
   Hi Ms. Gold, the client checked out the early numbers.

8. **informal greeting, informal address form, informal lexical variants**

   Hi Cathy, the customer looked up the new rules.
   Hi Franny, the client brought up the yearly changes.

9. **formal lexical variants**
The customer clarified the complex circumstances.
The client endorsed the purchase transaction.

10. **informal lexical variants**

The customer went through the free money.
The client filled out the easy form.
Appendix C – Sociolinguistic Questionnaires

English-dominant Speakers

Please provide the following information about yourself.

Your Name __________________________
Age __________________
Gender __________________

1. Is English your first/dominant language? Please circle one of the options.
   yes - no

2. Were you born in Canada? Please circle one of the options.
   yes - no

3. In what country have you been educated primarily? (i.e. Out of all the years of education you have received, in what country have most of them been?)
   __________________

If more than one country, please explain briefly in the space below.

4. What languages other than English do you speak?

Language 1 __________________________
   Please circle one of the options:

   Proficiency elementary - beginner - intermediate - advanced - master/fluent
   You use it never - rarely - sometimes - fairly often - often
   Primarily in your free time - school/work - in your free time and at school/work equally

Language 2 __________________________
   Please circle one of the options:

   Proficiency elementary - beginner - intermediate - advanced - master/fluent
   You use it never - rarely - sometimes - fairly often - often
Primarily in your free time - school/work - in your free time and at school/work equally
Language 3 ____________________________

Please circle one of the options:

Proficiency elementary - beginner - intermediate - advanced - master/fluent
You use it never - rarely - sometimes - fairly often - often
Primarily in your free time - school/work - in your free time and at school/work equally
Language 4 ____________________________

Please circle one of the options:

Proficiency elementary - beginner - intermediate - advanced - master/fluent
You use it never - rarely - sometimes - fairly often - often
Primarily in your free time - school/work - in your free time and at school/work equally
Language 5 ____________________________

Please circle one of the options:

Proficiency elementary - beginner - intermediate - advanced - master/fluent
You use it never - rarely - sometimes - fairly often - often
Primarily in your free time - school/work - in your free time and at school/work equally

Foreign-language Learners

Please provide the following information about yourself.

Your Name ____________________________________________
Age ____________________________________________
Gender ____________________________________________

Please answer the following questions.

1. Is Slovak your first/dominant language? Please circle one of the options.

yes - no
2. How would you rate your proficiency in English? Please circle one of the options.

   elementary - beginner - intermediate - advanced - master/fluent

3. How often do you use English? Please circle one of the options.

   never - rarely - sometimes - fairly often - often

4. When and where do you primarily use English? Please circle one of the options.

   in your free time - at school/work - in your free time and at school/work equally

5. Please circle one of the options to indicate how often you do each of the following activities in the English language?

   watch TV
   listen to the radio
   read books for school/study purposes
   read books for fun
   read newspapers, magazines
   listen to music
   play computer games
   browse the Internet

   never - rarely - sometimes - fairly often - often

6. Please fill out the following chart about your trips to English-speaking countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Time Spent (all trips to the country combined)</th>
<th>On average, you used English during your trips to this country</th>
<th>On average, you spoke with local native speakers during your trips to this country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>(circle one) (weeks)</td>
<td>(circle one) never rarely sometimes fairly often often</td>
<td>never rarely sometimes fairly often often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Time Spent (all trips to the country combined)</td>
<td>On average, you used English during your trips to this country</td>
<td>On average, you spoke with local native speakers during your trips to this country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other 1 (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other 2 (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other 3 (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. In the future, how often do you plan to use English? Please circle one of the options for each of the two contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in your free time</td>
<td>never - rarely - sometimes - fairly often - often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at school/work</td>
<td>never - rarely - sometimes - fairly often - often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D – Main Study Versions of the Formality Judgment Questionnaire

Version A

Your Name ____________________________________________

For each of the 20 sentences, please indicate how formal you find the sentence overall. Consider as "formal" the kind of language you would use with a professor or employer in a professional setting; consider as "informal" the kind of language you would use with a friend, close classmate or colleague in a relaxed setting.

Each sentence is an example of a portion of e-mail communication between two female colleagues of the same age working in the same position in the same department of a bank.

1. Dear Ms. Black, the customer located the supplementary data.
   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal
   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure
   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

2. The customer went through the free money.
   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal
   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure
   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

3. Hi Cathy, the customer looked up the new fees.
   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal
   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure
   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

4. Hi Ms. Grey, the customer complied with the stringent regulations.
5. Dear Peggy, the client worked out the old wages.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

6. Dear Ms. Blue, the client put together the short chat.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

7. Hi Ginny, the client required the expedited assessment.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

8. Dear Shelly, the customer turned down the low offer.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
9. **The customer clarified the complex circumstances.**

   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      1 - very informal    2 - informal    3 - neutral    4 - formal    5 - very formal

   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      1 - a guess    2 - not very sure    3 - somewhat sure    4 - very sure

   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

10. **Dear Vicky, the customer supplied the requisite certificate.**

    a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
       1 - very informal    2 - informal    3 - neutral    4 - formal    5 - very formal

    b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
       1 - a guess    2 - not very sure    3 - somewhat sure    4 - very sure

    c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

11. **Hi Ms. Silver, the customer picked up the last call.**

    a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
       1 - very informal    2 - informal    3 - neutral    4 - formal    5 - very formal

    b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
       1 - a guess    2 - not very sure    3 - somewhat sure    4 - very sure

    c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

12. **Hi Ms. Gold, the client checked out the early numbers.**

    a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
       1 - very informal    2 - informal    3 - neutral    4 - formal    5 - very formal

    b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
       1 - a guess    2 - not very sure    3 - somewhat sure    4 - very sure

    c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

13. **Hi Ms. Brown, the client scrutinized the validated application.**

    a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
       1 - very informal    2 - informal    3 - neutral    4 - formal    5 - very formal
14. Dear Ms. White, the client amended the corporate protocol.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
__________________________________________________________________________

15. The client filled out the easy form.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
____________________________________________________________________________________

16. Dear Becky, the client participated in the annual conference.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
____________________________________________________________________________________

17. Dear Ms. Green, the customer handed in the missing papers.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
____________________________________________________________________________________
18. **Hi Franny, the client brought up the main changes.**

*a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.*

1 - very informal  
2 - informal  
3 - neutral  
4 - formal  
5 - very formal

*b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?*  
1 - a guess  
2 - not very sure  
3 - somewhat sure  
4 - very sure

*c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?*

______________________________________________________________________________________

19. **Hi Nicky, the customer obtained the substantial credit.**

*a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.*

1 - very informal  
2 - informal  
3 - neutral  
4 - formal  
5 - very formal

*b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?*  
1 - a guess  
2 - not very sure  
3 - somewhat sure  
4 - very sure

*c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?*

______________________________________________________________________________________

20. **The client endorsed the commercial transaction.**

*a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.*

1 - very informal  
2 - informal  
3 - neutral  
4 - formal  
5 - very formal

*b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?*  
1 - a guess  
2 - not very sure  
3 - somewhat sure  
4 - very sure

*c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?*

______________________________________________________________________________________

**Version B**

Your Name ________________________________

For each of the 20 sentences, **please indicate how formal you find the sentence overall.** Consider as "formal" the kind of language you would use with a professor or employer in a professional setting; consider as "informal" the kind of language you would use with a friend, close classmate or colleague in a relaxed setting.

Each sentence is an example of a portion of e-mail communication between two female colleagues of the same age working in the same position in the same department of a bank.

1. Hi Ginny, the client required the expedited assessment.
2. **Dear Ms. Black, the customer located the supplementary data.**

   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

3. **The client endorsed the commercial transaction.**

   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

4. **Hi Cathy, the customer looked up the new fees.**

   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

5. **Dear Ms. Green, the customer handed in the missing papers.**

   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
6. **Dear Vicky, the customer supplied the requisite certificate.**

   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal
   
   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure
   
   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

7. **The client filled out the easy form.**

   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal
   
   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure
   
   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

8. **Hi Ms. Gold, the client checked out the early numbers.**

   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal
   
   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure
   
   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

9. **Hi Franny, the client brought up the main changes.**

   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal
   
   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure
   
   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

10. **The customer clarified the complex circumstances.**

    a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
       1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal
b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess   2 - not very sure   3 - somewhat sure   4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

11. Hi Ms. Brown, the client scrutinized the validated application.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal   2 - informal   3 - neutral   4 - formal   5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess   2 - not very sure   3 - somewhat sure   4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

12. The customer went through the free money.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal   2 - informal   3 - neutral   4 - formal   5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess   2 - not very sure   3 - somewhat sure   4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

13. Dear Ms. White, the client amended the corporate protocol.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal   2 - informal   3 - neutral   4 - formal   5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess   2 - not very sure   3 - somewhat sure   4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

14. Dear Shelly, the customer turned down the low offer.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal   2 - informal   3 - neutral   4 - formal   5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess   2 - not very sure   3 - somewhat sure   4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
15. Dear Becky, the client participated in the annual conference.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

16. Dear Peggy, the client worked out the old wages.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

17. Hi Nicky, the customer obtained the substantial credit.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

18. Hi Ms. Silver, the customer picked up the last call.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

19. Hi Ms. Grey, the customer complied with the stringent regulations.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
20. **Dear Ms. Blue, the client put together the short chat.**

*a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.*

1 - very informal  
2 - informal  
3 - neutral  
4 - formal  
5 - very formal

*b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?*

1 - a guess  
2 - not very sure  
3 - somewhat sure  
4 - very sure

*c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?*

______________________________________________________________________________________

---

**Version C**

Your Name

For each of the 20 sentences, **please indicate how formal you find the sentence overall.** Consider as "formal" the kind of language you would use with a professor or employer in a professional setting; consider as "informal" the kind of language you would use with a friend, close classmate or colleague in a relaxed setting.

**Each sentence is an example of a portion of e-mail communication between two female colleagues of the same age working in the same position in the same department of a bank.**

1. **Dear Vicky, the customer supplied the requisite certificate.**

*a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.*

1 - very informal  
2 - informal  
3 - neutral  
4 - formal  
5 - very formal

*b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?*

1 - a guess  
2 - not very sure  
3 - somewhat sure  
4 - very sure

*c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?*

______________________________________________________________________________________

---

2. **The customer clarified the complex circumstances.**

*a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.*

1 - very informal  
2 - informal  
3 - neutral  
4 - formal  
5 - very formal

*b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?*

1 - a guess  
2 - not very sure  
3 - somewhat sure  
4 - very sure

*c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?*
3. **Dear Peggy, the client worked out the old wages.**

   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?


4. **Hi Ms. Silver, the customer picked up the last call.**

   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?


5. **The customer went through the free money.**

   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?


6. **Dear Becky, the client participated in the annual conference.**

   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
      
      1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

   c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?


7. **Hi Franny, the client brought up the main changes.**

   a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
      
      1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

   b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
8. Hi Ms. Brown, the client scrutinized the validated application.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
______________________________________________________________________________________

12. Dear Ms. White, the client amended the corporate protocol.
13. Hi Ms. Grey, the customer complied with the stringent regulations.

1a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

1b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in 1a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

1c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in 1a?
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________

14. Hi Ginny, the client required the expedited assessment.

1a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

1b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in 1a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

1c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in 1a?
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________

15. Hi Cathy, the customer looked up the new fees.

1a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

1b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in 1a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure

1c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in 1a?
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________

16. The client endorsed the commercial transaction.

1a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal  2 - informal  3 - neutral  4 - formal  5 - very formal

1b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in 1a?
   1 - a guess  2 - not very sure  3 - somewhat sure  4 - very sure
c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

17. Dear Shelly, the customer turned down the low offer.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal   2 - informal   3 - neutral   4 - formal   5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess   2 - not very sure   3 - somewhat sure   4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

18. Hi Ms. Gold, the client checked out the early numbers.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal   2 - informal   3 - neutral   4 - formal   5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess   2 - not very sure   3 - somewhat sure   4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

19. Dear Ms. Green, the customer handed in the missing papers.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal   2 - informal   3 - neutral   4 - formal   5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess   2 - not very sure   3 - somewhat sure   4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?

20. Hi Nicky, the customer obtained the substantial credit.

a. Circle the number that best fits your judgment of the formality of the sentence.
   1 - very informal   2 - informal   3 - neutral   4 - formal   5 - very formal

b. How sure are you about your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
   1 - a guess   2 - not very sure   3 - somewhat sure   4 - very sure

c. What in the sentence helped you in your judgment of the sentence formality in a?
Appendix E – Information Letters and Consent Forms

Professors in Canada

Dear Professor,

My name is Ivan Lasan and I am a Master of Arts student in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. I am writing to see if you would be interested in participating in a research study about the perception of (in)formality in the English language by English-dominant speakers versus advanced learners of English as a foreign language. Please read the information below and if you are interested in participating, complete the consent section of the document and return it to me. Thank you.

Research Project Title
English L2 Learners' Perceptions of (In)formality: Address Forms in Interaction with other (In)formal Register Markers

Principal Investigator
Ivan Lasan, M.A. Candidate, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Purpose of the Study
My study seeks to examine how students understand and respond to a variety of e-mail excerpts. Its purpose is to help teachers of English as a foreign or second language design appropriate activities and materials for English learners.

Participants
For my study I will recruit approximately 20 to 30 students enrolled in an English course offered by the Department of English at the St. George Campus of the University of Toronto, for whom English is their first or dominant language and were born and educated in Canada.

Benefits
There are no direct benefits associated with your participation in the study. However, there are at least two potential benefits to the scholarly community involved in foreign or second language education. First, the findings of the present study will contribute to the existing knowledge of (in)formal variation, specifically (in)formal lexical and grammatical variants and (in)formal address forms. And second, the findings of the present study will contribute to the existing knowledge that informs instruction designed for foreign or second language learners, specifically instruction that is focused on developing sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence of foreign or second language learners. This type of research might be of interest to you in case some of the students enrolled in your courses are not speakers of English as a first language. Therefore, as a token of appreciation for your participation in my research, I will provide you with a summary of my research findings.

Risks
There are no risks associated with your participation in the study.

Procedure
My study involves the completion of two questionnaires and a follow-up interview via e-mail. In the first questionnaire, student participants will be asked to rate the formality of 20 sentences, indicate the level of confidence with which they rated the sentences, and to point out any parts of the sentence that they found helpful in the rating process. In the second questionnaire, student participants will be asked to provide information about their use of English. In the follow-up e-mail interview, some students may be asked to provide more details about the answers they gave in the two questionnaires.
I am asking if you would allow me to distribute a handout with information about the study to students enrolled in your courses during one of your scheduled classes. In case of interest, I am asking if you would allow me to distribute the information letter and consent form and the two questionnaires during one of your scheduled classes, to instruct students to complete the documents in their free time, and to collect the documents during another of your scheduled classes.

Participants' Rights

- **To Confidentiality**
  Your identity will be kept confidential and private.

- **To Ask Questions about the Research**
  If you have any questions about the research you can contact me: Ivan Lasan, ivan.lasan@mail.utoronto.ca, 416-554-3679. You may also contact my supervisor: Julie Kerekes, julie.kerekes@utoronto.ca, 416-970-0303. For more information about the participants' rights or to authenticate this research, you may contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto: ethics.review@utoronto.ca, 416-946-3273.

- **To Withdraw**
  You have the right to withdraw from the study for any reason at any time and you can do so by contacting me (ivan.lasan@mail.utoronto.ca; 416-554-3679). In that case, I will cease from seeking to recruit participants from among students enrolled in your courses.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please read and sign the consent form attached.

Sincerely,

Ivan Lasan

Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.

I have read Ivan Lasan's letter about the purpose and design of his research, and I understand that my participation will involve the following activities and conditions:

Activities

- I will allow Ivan Lasan to distribute a handout with information about his research during one of my scheduled classes, and/or allow Ivan Lasan to send an e-mail with information about his research to students enrolled in my courses.

- In case of interest, I will allow Ivan Lasan to distribute and collect information letters and consent forms as well as two questionnaires during two of my scheduled classes.

Conditions

- My participation in the study as well as the participation of the students in the study will be confidential and private.

- I may withdraw from the study for any reason at any time. In that case, Ivan Lasan will cease approaching students enrolled in my courses, and/or collecting data from students enrolled in my courses during my scheduled classes.

- I will receive a summary of the research findings whether or not I withdraw from the study. Neither I nor other participants will be identifiable in the summary.

☐ YES, I agree to participate in the research  ☐ NO, I don't agree to participate in the research

Name ___________________________ Name ___________________________

Signature ______________________ Signature ______________________

Date ___________________________ Date ___________________________
Students in Canada

Dear Student,

My name is Ivan Lasan and I am a Master of Arts student in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. I am writing to ask for your participation in a research study about understanding (in)formality in the English language by English-dominant speakers versus advanced learners of English as a foreign language. Please read the information below and if you are interested in participating, complete the consent section of the document, and return it to me. Thank you.

**Research Project Title**
English L2 Learners' Perceptions of (In)formality: Address Forms in Interaction with other (In)formal Register Markers

**Principal Investigator**
Ivan Lasan, M.A. Candidate, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

**Purpose of the Study**
My study seeks to examine how students understand and respond to a variety of e-mail excerpts. Its purpose is to help teachers of English as a foreign or second language design appropriate activities and materials for English learners.

**Participants**
I am looking for approximately 20-30 students who are enrolled in an undergraduate English course and speak English as their first or dominant language. To participate in the study you need to be a student (1) enrolled in an undergraduate English course offered by the Department of English at the St. George Campus of the University of Toronto, and (2) speak English as your first or dominant language.

**Benefits**
There are no direct benefits associated with your participation in the study. If you agree, as a token of appreciation for your participation in my research, I will provide you with a summary of my research findings. In addition, if you agree, you will be entered into a competition in which one student participant out of the approximate total of 20-30 will be selected in a draw and receive a Subway Restaurant Gift Card with the cash value of 20 CAD.

**Risks**
You may feel self-conscious or uncomfortable filling out the two questionnaires. Please remember that there are no correct/incorrect answers and all answers that you provide in the two questionnaires will be confidential and private.

**What Will Happen**
You will complete two questionnaires. The first is a judgment task questionnaire, in which you will find 20 sentences in English. For each sentence you will be asked to indicate on a 5-point scale how formal you find the sentence, to indicate on a 4-point scale how sure you are of your rating of the formality of the sentence, and to indicate any features of the sentence you feel helped you make your decision. The second...
is a sociolinguistic questionnaire, in which you will answer a few questions about your knowledge and use of languages other than English. If you agree and provide an e-mail address in the consent form, I may contact you later for a few additional questions related to your answers in the questionnaires.

Your Rights as a Participant

- **To Confidentiality**
  Your identity will be kept confidential and private.

- **To Ask Questions about the Research**
  If you have any questions about the research you can contact me: Ivan Lasan, ivan.lasan@mail.utoronto.ca, 416-554-3679. You may also contact my supervisor: Julie Kerekes, julie.kerekes@utoronto.ca, 416-970-0303. For more information about your rights as a participant or to authenticate this research, you may contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto: ethics.review@utoronto.ca, 416-946-3273.

- **To Withdraw**
  You have the right to withdraw from the study for any reason at any time and you can do so by contacting me (ivan.lasan@mail.utoronto.ca; 416-554-3679). In that case, I will destroy all the information I have collected from you in hard copies and electronic form and exclude it from my data analysis and reports of the findings. However, you may not withdraw from the study once the findings of my study have been published.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please read and sign the consent form attached.

Sincerely,

Ivan Lasan

Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.

I have read Ivan Lasan's letter about his research study, and I understand that my participation will involve the following activities and conditions:

**Activities**

- I will complete a judgment questionnaire in which I will rate the formality of each sentence on a 5-point scale, indicate how sure I am of that rating on a 4-point scale, and indicate any features that helped me make my decision.
- I will complete a sociolinguistic questionnaire in which I will answer questions about my knowledge and use of languages other than English.
- If I want, I will provide an e-mail address at which Ivan Lasan may contact me at a future time to ask me some additional questions about the answers I gave in the two questionnaires.
- If I want, I will provide some form of contact information and be eligible to win a Subway Restaurant gift card in a draw.

**Conditions**

- My participation in the study will be confidential and private.
- I may withdraw from the study for any reason at any time. In that case, Ivan Lasan will destroy all information collected from me in hard copies and electronic files and will exclude it from his data analysis and reports of his findings. I may not withdraw from the study once the findings of Ivan Lasan's study have been published.
- If I provide an e-mail address, I will receive a summary of the research findings whether or not I withdraw from the study. Neither I nor other participants will be identifiable in the summary.
- If I provide some contact information, I will be eligible to win a prize in a draw whether or not I withdraw from the study.
Dear Professor,

My name is Ivan Lasan and I am a Master of Arts student in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. I am writing to see if you would be interested in participating in a research study about the perception of (in)formality in the English language by English-dominant speakers versus advanced learners of English as a foreign language. Please read the information below and if you are interested in participating, complete the consent section of the document and return it to me. Thank you.

**Research Project Title**
English L2 Learners' Perceptions of (In)formality: Address Forms in Interaction with other (In)formal Register Markers

**Principal Investigator**
Ivan Lasan, M.A. Candidate, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

**Purpose of the Study**
My study seeks to examine how students understand and respond to a variety of e-mail excerpts. Its purpose is to help teachers of English as a foreign or second language design appropriate activities and materials for English learners.

**Participants**
For my study I will recruit approximately 20-30 students enrolled in an English course offered by the Department of English and American Studies at the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University for whom English is a foreign language and were born and educated in Slovakia.

Benefits
There are no direct benefits associated with your participation in the study. However, there are at least two potential benefits to the scholarly community involved in foreign or second language education. First, the findings of the present study will contribute to the existing knowledge of (in)formal variation, specifically (in)formal lexical and grammatical variants and (in)formal address forms. And second, the findings of the present study will contribute to the existing knowledge that informs instruction designed for foreign or second language learners, specifically instruction that is focused on developing sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence of foreign or second language learners. This type of research might be of interest to you as the courses you teach are designed for students training to become teachers of English as a foreign language. Therefore, as a token of appreciation for your participation in my research, I will provide you with a summary of my research findings.

Risks
There are no risks associated with your participation in the study.

Procedure
My study involves the completion of two questionnaires and a follow-up interview via e-mail. In the first questionnaire, student participants will be asked to rate the formality of 20 sentences, indicate the level of confidence with which they rated the sentences, and to point out any parts of the sentence that they found helpful in the rating process. In the second questionnaire, student participants will be asked to provide information about their use of English. In the follow-up e-mail interview, some students who agreed and provided their e-mail address may be asked to provide more details about the answers they gave in the two questionnaires.

I am asking if you would be willing to distribute a handout with information about my study to students enrolled in your courses during one of your scheduled classes. In case of interest, I am asking if you would be willing to distribute an information letter and a consent form and the two questionnaires during one of your scheduled classes, to instruct students to complete them in their free time, and to collect the completed documents during the following scheduled class.

I am also asking if you would be willing to assist me with initial transfer of collected data. I would ask you to assign each student participant a unique numerical code and transfer the information from the hard copies of the two questionnaires into encrypted, password-protected electronic files and transfer the files to me via a secure internet connection. While working on transferring the information from the hard copies into electronic files and for a period of five years afterwards, I would ask you to store the hard copies in a secure, locked drawer in your office. After finishing transferring the information, I would ask you to delete the electronic files from your computer.

Participants' Rights
• To Confidentiality
  Your identity will be kept confidential and private.

• To Ask Questions about the Research
  If you have any questions about the research you can contact me: Ivan Lasan, ivan.lasan@mail.utoronto.ca, 416-554-3679. You may also contact my supervisor: Julie Kerekes, julie.kerekes@utoronto.ca, 416-970-0303. For more information about the participants' rights or to authenticate this research, you may contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto: ethics.review@utoronto.ca, 416-946-3273.

• To Withdraw
You have the right to withdraw from the study for any reason at any time and you can do so by contacting me (ivan.lasan@mail.utoronto.ca; 416-554-3679). In that case, I will cease from seeking to recruit participants from among students enrolled in your classes.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please read and sign the consent form attached.

Sincerely,
Ivan Lasan

Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.

I have read Ivan Lasan's letter about the purpose and design of his research, and I understand that my participation will involve the following activities and conditions:

**Activities**
- I will distribute a handout with information about Ivan Lasan's research during one of my scheduled classes.
- In case of interest, I will distribute an information letter and a consent form as well as two questionnaires to students willing to participate in Ivan Lasan's study during one of my scheduled classes. I will ask students to complete the documents in their free time. I will collect the completed documents during another of my scheduled classes.
- I will keep the hard copies of the documents locked in a secure, locked drawer in my office. I will transfer the information from the hard copies of the two questionnaires into encrypted and password-protected files and transfer the files to Ivan Lasan via a secure internet connection. I will keep the electronic files encrypted and password protected at all times. After I have transferred the electronic files to Ivan Lasan, I will erase the electronic files from my computer. I will store the hard copies of the documents in a secure locked drawer in my office for a period of five years afterwards.

**Conditions**
- My participation in the study as well as the participation of the students in the study will be confidential and private.
- I may withdraw from the study for any reason at any time. In that case, Ivan Lasan will cease approaching students enrolled in my class, and/or collecting data from students enrolled in my courses during my scheduled classes.
- I will receive a summary of the research findings, whether or not I withdraw from the study. Neither I nor other participants will be identifiable in the summary.

☐ YES, I agree to participate in the research ☐ NO, I don't agree to participate in the research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☐ YES, I would like to receive a summary of research findings, by e-mail:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☐ NO, I don't wish to receive a summary of research findings.
Students in Slovakia

Dear Student,

My name is Ivan Lasan and I am a Master of Arts student in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. I am writing to ask for your participation in a research study about understanding (in)formality in the English language by English-dominant speakers versus advanced learners of English as a foreign language. Please read the information below and if you are interested in participating, complete the consent section of the document, and return it to me. Thank you.

Research Project Title
English L2 Learners' Perceptions of (In)formality: Address Forms in Interaction with other (In)formal Register Markers

Principal Investigator
Ivan Lasan, M.A. Candidate, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Purpose of the Study
My study seeks to examine how students understand and respond to a variety of e-mail excerpts. Its purpose is to help teachers of English as a foreign or second language design appropriate activities and materials for English learners.

Participants
I am looking for approximately 20-30 students who are enrolled in an undergraduate English course and speak English as a foreign language. To participate in the study you need to be a student (1) enrolled in an undergraduate course offered by the Department of English and American Studies at the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University, and (2) speak English as a foreign language.

Benefits
There are no direct benefits associated with your participation in the study. If you agree, as a token of appreciation for your participation in my research, I will provide you with a summary of my research findings. In addition, if you agree, you will be entered into a competition in which one student participant out of the approximate total of 20-30 will be selected in a draw and receive a Subway Restaurant Gift Card with the cash value of 20 EUR.

Risks
You may feel self-conscious or uncomfortable filling out the two questionnaires. Please remember that there are no correct/incorrect answers and all answers that you provide in the two questionnaires will be confidential and private.

What Will Happen
You will complete two questionnaires. The first is a judgment task questionnaire, in which you will find 20 sentences in English. For each sentence you will be asked to indicate on a 5-point scale how formal you find the sentence, to indicate on a 4-point scale how sure you are of your rating of the formality of the sentence, and to indicate any features of the sentence you feel helped you make your decision. The second is a sociolinguistic questionnaire, in which you will answer a number of questions about your knowledge and use of English. If you agree and provide an e-mail address in the consent form, I may contact you later for a few additional questions related to your answers in the questionnaires.

Your Rights as a Participant
• To Confidentiality
  Your identity will be kept confidential and private.

• To Ask Questions about the Research
If you have any questions about the research you can contact me: Ivan Lasan, ivan.lasan@mail.utoronto.ca, 416-554-3679. You may also contact my supervisor: Julie Kerekes, julie.kerekes@utoronto.ca, 416-970-0303. For more information about your rights as a participant or to authenticate this research, you may contact the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto: ethics.review@utoronto.ca, 416-946-3273.

• To Withdraw
You have the right to withdraw from the study for any reason at any time and you can do so by contacting me (ivan.lasan@mail.utoronto.ca; 416-554-3679). In that case, I will destroy all the information I have collected from you in hard copies and electronic form and exclude it from my data analysis and reports of the findings. However, you may not withdraw from the study once the findings of my study have been published.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please read and sign the consent form attached.

Sincerely,
Ivan Lasan

Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.

I have read Ivan Lasan's letter about his research study, and I understand that my participation will involve the following activities and conditions:

Activities
• I will complete a judgment questionnaire in which I will rate the formality of each sentence on a 5-point scale, indicate how sure I am of that rating on a 4-point scale, and indicate any features that helped me make my decision.
• I will complete a sociolinguistic questionnaire in which I will answer questions about my knowledge and use of English.
• If I want, I will provide an e-mail address at which Ivan Lasan may contact me at a future time to ask me some additional questions about the answers I gave in the two questionnaires.
• If I want, I will provide some form of contact information and be eligible to win a Subway Restaurant gift card in a draw.

Conditions
• My participation in the study will be confidential and private.
• I may withdraw from the study for any reason at any time. In that case, Ivan Lasan will destroy all information collected from me in hard copies and electronic files and will exclude it from his data analysis and reports of his findings. I may not withdraw from the study once the findings of Ivan Lasan's study have been published.
• If I provide an e-mail address, I will receive a summary of the research findings whether or not I withdraw from the study. Neither I nor other participants will be identifiable in the summary.
• If I provide some contact information, I will be eligible to win a prize in the draw whether or not I withdraw from the study.

☐ YES, I agree to participate in the research ☐ NO, I don't agree to participate in the research

Name __________________________  Name __________________________
Signature __________________________  Signature __________________________
Date __________________________  Date __________________________

☐ YES, I agree that Ivan Lasan may contact me at a future time to ask me some additional questions about my answers in the questionnaires, by e-mail:

E-mail __________________________
☐ NO, I don't agree that Ivan Lasan may contact me at a future time to ask me some additional questions about my answers in the questionnaires.

☐ YES, I would like to be included in the draw for a gift card. In case I win I may be contacted by:

E-mail __________________________________________, AND/OR
Phone ____________________________

☐ NO, I don't wish to be included in the draw.

☐ YES, I would like to receive a summary of research findings, by e-mail:

E-mail ________________________________

☐ NO, I don't wish to receive a summary of research findings.