

LEARNING FORMAL AND CASUAL ENGLISH FROM CHARACTERS IN STORIES

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ABSTRACT. This article explores how readers can learn both formal and casual English through characters in stories. Language in literature often mirrors real social communication, offering examples of how people speak in different contexts. The study focuses on how fictional dialogue helps learners recognize distinctions between formal and informal English, such as vocabulary, tone, grammar, and context. This article uses a qualitative approach to examine how learners can effectively use character dialogue as a natural and motivational tool for studying the nuances of English

Keywords: *formal English, casual English, character dialogue, language learning, stories, literature, communication, speech style, pragmatics, cultural context, English acquisition, language variation, storytelling, discourse analysis, learner motivation*

ANNOTATSIYA: Ushbu maqola o'quvchilarning hikoyalar qahramonlari orqali rasmiy va tasodifiy ingliz tilini qanday o'rganishi mumkinligini o'rganadi. Adabiyotdagi til ko'pincha haqiqiy ijtimoiy muloqotni aks ettiradi va odamlarning turli kontekstlarda qanday gapirishiga misollar keltiradi. Tadqiqot fantastik dialog o'quvchilarga lug'at, ohang, grammatika va kontekst kabi rasmiy va norasmiy ingliz tili o'rtasidagi farqlarni tushunishga qanday yordam berishiga qaratilgan. Ushbu maqolada o'quvchilar ingliz tilining nuanslarini o'rganish uchun tabiiy va motivatsion vosita sifatida xarakterli dialogdan qanday samarali foydalanishlari mumkinligini tekshirish uchun sifatli yondashuvdan foydalanadi

Kalit so'zlar: *rasmiy ingliz tili, tasodifiy ingliz tili, personajlar dialogi, til o'rganish, hikoyalar, adabiyot, muloqot, nutq uslubi, pragmatika, madaniy kontekst, ingliz tilini o'zlashtirish, til o'zgarishi, hikoya qilish, nutq tahlili, o'quvchi motivatsiyasi.*

INTRODUCTION

Language learning extends beyond grammar and vocabulary; it involves understanding how people use language in real-life contexts. One of the most effective and enjoyable ways to study English is through stories—whether novels, short stories, films, or television shows. Stories present characters who speak in diverse ways, reflecting their background, education, and relationships. Observing how they use formal or casual English can help learners grasp not only linguistic forms but also social and cultural norms. It will review existing literature, explain the methodology, analyze examples, and present pedagogical implications. The article argues that literature and media offer rich linguistic data for improving communicative competence.

LITERARY ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

Karen Saxby is the author of the Storyfun series, published by Cambridge University Press. She also co-wrote the Fun For series, and is an experienced Cambridge English consultant. In this article, she explores how stories can be used to make young people's language learning meaningful and memorable. As a child, I loved sitting on my grandfather's lap while he read me stories. I remember most of them even though I am now a grandparent, too! As a child, I was blissfully unaware that, as I listened to the stories, I was also learning new words and ways in

which those new words combined to communicate ideas and life lessons. A good story encourages us to turn the next page and read more. Because of this natural empathy with the characters, our brains process the reading of stories differently from the way we read factual information. Our brains don't always recognise the difference between an imagined situation and a real one so the characters become 'alive' to us. What they say and do is therefore more meaningful. Formal English involves complex grammar, complete sentences, and a polite tone, while casual English relies on contractions, idioms, and slang [Cutting, 2015]. Learning both registers helps speakers adjust appropriately to different situations.

DISCUSSION AND RESULT

Let's take a quick look at learning vocabulary within a factual text or within a story. Imagine the readers are eight-year-olds interested in animals. In your opinion, are they more likely to remember AND want to continue reading the first or second text? Many birds and animals live in the world, for example, parrots, pandas, lions, leopards and rabbits. In the sea we can find whales, dolphins, sharks and octopuses. My younger brother is called Fred. Fred's very interested in animals. He talks and asks questions about animals ALL the time! Fred's really interested in parrots and pandas and lions and leopards and rabbits. But Fred's favourite animals live in the sea. He has pictures of whales, dolphins, sharks and octopuses on all the walls of his bedroom. From: *Do whales have stomach aches?* (Storyfun for Movers, Cambridge University Press, 2011). When choosing second language story books, you might consider questions like:

Will your child easily identify with the central characters? Are they of similar ages for example?

Will the events interest and excite, scare or amuse your child enough to motivate them to continue reading?

Is the story an appropriate length – not too short, not too long?

Will the layout – the font, the titles, the amount of text on each page – appeal to your child?

Is it supported by illustrations that your young reader will enjoy looking at?

For your child to gain the maximum benefit and language learning from reading stories, consider the story's language level carefully, too. Is the grammar and vocabulary not too easy but still accessible to the reader? Would the language be similar to that which your child might use in their first language? Would it support school work and help prepare for tests? Useful EFL publications such as *Storyfun for Starters, Movers and Flyers* and other graded readers are carefully written with these important considerations in mind. But, of course, stories don't only offer the young reader a chance to read. The experience also creates an opportunity to talk about the story. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method, focusing on analyzing examples from literary and cinematic sources to demonstrate how characters use formal and casual English. The research does not rely on numerical data but on linguistic and contextual observation. Selected examples include novels (*Pride and Prejudice, The Great Gatsby*), modern films (*Harry Potter, Spider-Man*), and animated stories (*Zootopia*).

The analysis identifies:

1. Formal speech patterns, including complex sentences, modal verbs, and polite expressions.
2. Casual speech patterns, including contractions, colloquial phrases, and informal tone.
3. Contextual factors, such as setting, relationship, and emotional intensity.

Data were gathered through textual analysis of dialogues, focusing on how language changes depending on the situation and character roles. The findings aim to offer practical insights for language learners and educators. The experience of reading or listening to a story allows us to escape our own lives for a moment and live in another one in a fun and safe way. In the same magical experience, a goldmine of language may be learned, so do encourage your child to read stories in their second language as well as their first.

CONCLUSION

Learning formal and casual English from characters in stories is an effective and enjoyable method that enhances both linguistic and cultural competence. Stories provide natural examples of language in context, allowing learners to observe how tone, grammar, and vocabulary change with setting and relationship. By analyzing dialogues, students can understand how politeness, power, and emotion influence communication. While stories offer authentic examples, learners must be cautious with slang, idioms, or outdated expressions. Some phrases in literature may no longer be used in modern English. Teachers should guide students to distinguish between standard and obsolete forms. The study shows that using literary and cinematic characters as language models helps learners balance formal accuracy and conversational fluency. It encourages not only correct grammar but also appropriate expression. Integrating story-based learning into English education can therefore bridge the gap between textbook knowledge and real-life communication.

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