

## LANGUAGE AND STYLE

### Level of formality

Here are some examples; in each case, the same idea is expressed using three different levels of formality: look at the different changes that occur, as we move from a formal style to an informal one.

1. The inclement climatic conditions obliged the President to return earlier than scheduled.  
The President was obliged to return earlier than planned due to poor weather conditions.  
The president had to go back sooner than he'd planned because the weather was so bad.
2. Please await instructions before dispatching items.  
Please wait for instructions before sending items off.  
Don't send anything off until you're told to do so.
3. Essential measures should be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.  
One should undertake any necessary measures at the earliest opportunity.  
You should do whatever you have to as soon as you can.
4. Prior to the discovery of America, potatoes were not consumed in Europe.  
Before America was discovered, potatoes were not eaten in Europe.  
Before they discovered America, Europeans didn't eat potatoes.

### TASKS

I. Read the following extracts quickly.

a) Try to identify the type of source. Select from:

- i) a magazine for the general public
- ii) an advertisement
- iii) a scientific paper
- iv) a novel
- v) a catalogue
- vi) a specialist magazine
- vii) a non-fiction book of witticisms

b) Give a brief description of the character of the text and illustrate it with examples.

c) Rate their degree of formality (least formal: 1 to most formal: 4).

#### 1. Body-Powered Devices

Everything we do generates power – about one watt per breath, 70 watts per step. This year, Michael McAlpine of Princeton University and colleagues figured out how to turn locomotion into power by embedding piezoelectric crystals into a flexible, biocompatible rubberlike material that, when bent, allows the crystals to produce energy. Put the crystals in shoes, say, or implant them directly into the body and they could produce enough power to charge personal electronics or internal medical devices. Elsewhere, telecommunications provider Orange introduced a prototype of Orange Power Wellies – rubber boots that convert heat into current. Campers at Britain's Glastonbury Festival were the first to demo the footwear. (With the current model, it takes 12 hours of walking to charge a cell phone for an hour). Of course, if you assemble enough people in a tight space, they don't even need to move to generate energy: in Paris, engineers have captured the warmth generated by bodies on the Métro subway to heat a public-housing project on Rue Beaubourg. By 2011, the Métro heating system will cut carbon dioxide emissions from the housing project's heating system by a third.

2.

This paper presents the recognition performance obtainable, for both monochromatic and chromatic images, from Single Layer Networks (SLNs) of trixel N-Tuple (NT) nodes and SLNs of trixel Min/Max (MM) nodes.

The general concepts of the trixel N-Tuple (TNT) and trixel Min/Max (TMM) techniques for the recognition of coloured images are briefly outlined. For comparative purposes, some results from implementation in 1991 are also included.

From the presented results, it is concluded that, for the recognition of images with different coloured backgrounds, both the TNT and TMM networks provide greatly improved confidence levels.

However, it should be noted that the documented results relate to nearidentical images on different coloured backgrounds and not to different images with variations in intensity, hue and saturation.

Therefore, further work is required to ascertain benchmarks where the use of colour-encoded images provides a definite improvement in recognition confidence levels compared with either monochrome or single-bit binary encoded images. Also, it is essential that future systems must incorporate appropriate automatic thresholding facilities where the video chain characteristics are accurately defined.

3.

One of the first steps in any new energy management program is to identify how much energy each facility within the company consumes. The old adage "you can't manage what you can't measure" is true. For larger plants, the specific energy should be determined for various process areas and major plant utilities. Smaller facilities should at least know the specific energy for the entire plant on a production unit basis. This information needs to be compiled into a central data repository and made available to plant and corporate personnel. CalPortland has developed a comprehensive SharePoint Intranet Web site that provides such a forum. Energy managers or plant administrative personnel can enter their fuel and electricity consumption and costs into a central database on the site. An energy dashboard displays a year-to-date energy consumption for each facility as well as the total company consumption number.

4.

Murphy's law of research

Enough research will tend to support your theory.

Maier's law

If the facts do not conform to the theory, they must be disposed of.

Corollaries:

1. The bigger the theory, the better.

2. The experiment may be considered a success if no more than 50 percent of the observed measurements must be discarded to obtain a correspondence with the theory.

Williams and Holland's law

If enough data are collected, anything may be proven by statistical methods.

Rule of accuracy

When working toward the solution of a problem, it always helps if you know the answer.

Young's law

All great discoveries are made by mistake.

Felson's law

To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism; to steal from many is research.

Finagle's rule

Teamwork is essential. It allows you to blame someone else.

Lerman's law of technology

Any technical problem can be overcome given enough time and money.

Lerman's corollary:

You are never given enough time and money.

#### Law of unreliability

To err is human, but to really foul things up requires a computer.

#### Handy guide to modern science

1. If it's green or it wriggles, it's biology.

2. If it stinks, it's chemistry.

3. If it doesn't work, it's physics.

#### Cerf's extensions to the handy guide to modern science

4. If it's incomprehensible, it's mathematics.

5. If it doesn't make sense, it's either economics or psychology.

#### Bitton's postulate on state-of-the-art electronics

If you understand it, it's obsolete.

#### Meredith's law for grad school survival

Never let your professor know that you exist.

#### Vile's law for educators

No one is listening until you make a mistake.

5.

Engineers have four basic options when it comes to joining two materials together: spot welding, mechanical fasteners (rivets), double-sided tapes, and liquid adhesives. Welding and rivets are often the most popular fastening methods because they provide instant gratification: after the weld or rivet gun has done its job, the two objects are joined. Doublesided tapes also don't require curing time, but do require surface preparation. Liquid adhesives require additional time for curing, which often keeps engineers from using them. However, the other methods also have hidden costs and time requirements that can change your calculations, making adhesives a more possible solution.

6.

As research into semi-solid processing of steels has been focused on thixoforming, the vast potential of other new processes for creating unconventional microstructures has been neglected. Current semi-solid processing of steel typically leads to polyhedral austenite particles embedded in various forms of carbide networks. Oversaturation of the solid solution with carbon provides a relatively effective stabilization of austenite. Interventions in the evolution of such metastable microstructures may induce various transformations of this microstructure component. It can produce a very interesting final microstructure, mechanical properties and other properties.

7.

The machine was making a strange humming sound as the door slid open. As his eyes adjusted to the light, he could see that he was not alone. There, sitting huddled in a corner of the laboratory was a small creature. "It wasn't me! I didn't do it", it squeaked at him. The apparatus was all over the place; twisted tubes and broken glass everywhere. But the machine was still working. Lights were blinking on and off, but the monitors were showing that everything was functioning normally. Apart from the small creature, there was one other thing which was odd. There was a large round hole in the floor where his desk had once been.

8.

Remember the Knight Rider car? The one declaring "scanner indicating danger ahead", "your reflexes are slow" or "I shall activate a turbo-boost"? A similarly futuristic car might hit the road sooner than you think, according to Klaus Draeger, BMW's head of research and development. Many cars are already connected to computer systems, making drivers' and passengers' lives both more comfortable and safer. But until now they have mainly been receiving information, so as yet they are not really engaging in dialogues, Mr. Draeger says. BMW's Connected Drive concept, currently on show at the Geneva motor show, aims to change that.

II. In the following examples, the same message is expressed in five different styles, from an extremely formal written style, to the very informal spoken style. Match the correct text with the description of the style.

1. *Jargon, very formal. This is the style of language used in official reports, technical studies, etc. It is exclusively a style of written English, full of verbal nouns, technical words and passives.*

2. *Written, formal, clear. This is clear, written English, as found in the press or in documents aimed at ordinary educated readers.*

3. *Written style for the general public discourse, scripted radio or TV news style.*

4. *Formal spoken style – radio, seminar, talk.*

5. *Relaxed, informal spoken style: discussion. There is plenty of prepositional verbs. All actions are now expressed through verbs, not verbal nouns.*

6. *Relaxed, simplified, chat, very informal spoken style. Note the addition of repetition and fillers.)*

a) As the value of Sterling increased compared to other currencies, the government was forced to take tax measures to head off a rapid increase in consumer spending spurred on by cheaper imports.

b) As Sterling went up in value, the government had to put up taxes to stop consumers splashing out on too many cheap imports.

c) Consequent to the appreciation in the exchange value of Sterling against other currencies, necessary fiscal measures were introduced by the government in order to reduce the likelihood of an import-led consumer spending surge.

d) As Sterling's international value went up, the government had to take tax measures to head off a consumer spending boom spurred on by cheaper imports.

e) And you see, Sterling got more and more valuable, so as a result, the government had to go round putting up taxes, you see, to stop everyone going out and splashing out, spending all their money on cheap imports.

f) After the international value of Sterling rose, the government was obliged to take fiscal measures to reduce the likelihood of a surge in consumer spending led by cheaper imports.

III. Improve the style of the following text (according to the video).

Many students use poor academic style in their writing, like using I, we and you. A simple way to improve this is to study good examples of academic style and to follow them. Their writing score will go up as a result. And it will be useful at university. Style is always a problem for Chinese students, who make lots of mistakes when they start to write academic English, by using, for example, phrasal verbs instead of more formal verbs. This is something that such students need to learn to overcome if they wish to reach a higher grade. What other ways are there for students to improve their style? One way is to ask the teacher for advice. A considerable number of students don't listen to their teachers, and therefore do not improve. This is a terrible situation. It is important for students to remember that they are now adults, not kids. If they do not follow teachers' advice, their writing style will not improve.

#### IV. REVISION

##### **Principles of English written style:**

Choose the suitable completions of the sentence:

The more formal the language is,

1. the more it will use inanimate nouns as subjects of a sentence.
2. the more it will use verb structures (where choice is possible)
3. the less it will use passive structures
4. the more it is likely to use passive structures
5. the more words of Latin origin it will use
6. the more words of Germanic origin it will use (phrasal verbs)
7. the more it will use humans as subjects of sentences
8. the more verbal nouns it will use
9. the more it will use contracted verb forms
10. the more noun compounds (noun phrases) it will use
11. the more complex sentences it will use
12. the larger number of participial and infinitive constructions it will use

Sources used:

<http://www.uefap.com/writing/feature/featfram.htm>

<https://www.eapfoundation.com/writing/style/>

<http://en.fel.zcu.cz/AE%20III%20Guidelines%20for%20Academic%20Writing/Typical%20features%20of%20academic%20English.pdf>