**Comparison of Academic and Informal Writing**

**Roger Zhang**

As the covid-19 pandemic goes on, there are lots of covid related writing being published, both academic and informal, but the appropriate choice depends on the audience and context. In order to impress the audience and fit most of the context, these two types of writing differ in target audience, tone and vocabulary. This passage will take a brief look into these two types of writing. The academic part is exemplified by “A Prospective Study of Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Childhood Trauma–Exposed Individuals: Social Support Matters”, a report about mental health during Covid-19 done by Seitz, Bertsch, & Herpertz. And the informal part is illustrated by “COVID Choices & Case Rate Cutoffs”, a blog writing about family decision making during covid pandemic done by Emily Oster.

As for the target audience. Academic writing is targeting people such as professor, investor or co-workers. Who already shares common background as the author and wishes to gain academic knowledge through the author’s work. As it is seen in the academic writing example, the author gives facts about his study by presenting the procedure of the study, the method he used, and the result data charts which consist real experiment data. Rather than go into detail on the background knowledge or use his experience to exemplify. The underlying assumption of the audience is that they care about the fact and shares the background as the author does. However, Informal writing is for common people, or friends and relatives. They do not share common background as the author does. And this situation requires the author to introduce the background to his reader, or the readers won’t be able to follow the author’s lead. This can be seen in the informal writing example. The author used a lot of her experience and many paragraphs to describe the background. And this writing tactic shows that the author assumed her audience has little background and need her help to understand.

In order to impress these two types of audience, academic and informal writing also differs in tones. When writing in the form of informal writing, the author can use a lot of personal view and emotional description. Which may help their audience to understand better. This can be seen in the informal writing example, the author used her own story and experience to introduce the problem to the audience, in a very subjective way. In addition, the author asked questions to the audience to make them think. This kind of tone is rarely seen in academic writing. For academic writing, on the other hand, the typical audience wishes to see the fact and result rather than the author’s emotion activity or feelings. So, these tone of personal view or feeling, which would hinder the authority of the author, is rarely seen in academic writing. Instead, as it is seen in the academic writing example, only the fact and real data is presented, in an objective way.

When talking about the choice of vocabulary, informal writing is targeting the normal people. Who would like to read casual text and not to think too hard about it. To cope with this, daily words are more likely to be chosen by the author. As we can see in the informal writing example. It’s like the author is just doing some daily talk to the audience. But for academic writing, the author needs to impress their audience. Who will not take the work seriously if it only contains casual words and informal writing, So they are no good choice in academic writing. As it is seen in the academic writing example, the author used much shorthand for academic words. Like FCV-19S as Fear of COVID-19 Scale, BSI GSI as Brief Symptom Inventory Global Severity Index. And many formal vocabularies are seen. Like the author used individuals instead of people.

Although academic and informal writing differs in these criteria, they all best fit their target audience and context. A capable graduate student should put effort to develop the skill for each of them. Only in this way, they can proceed further in their writing and be able to impress all kind of audiences.