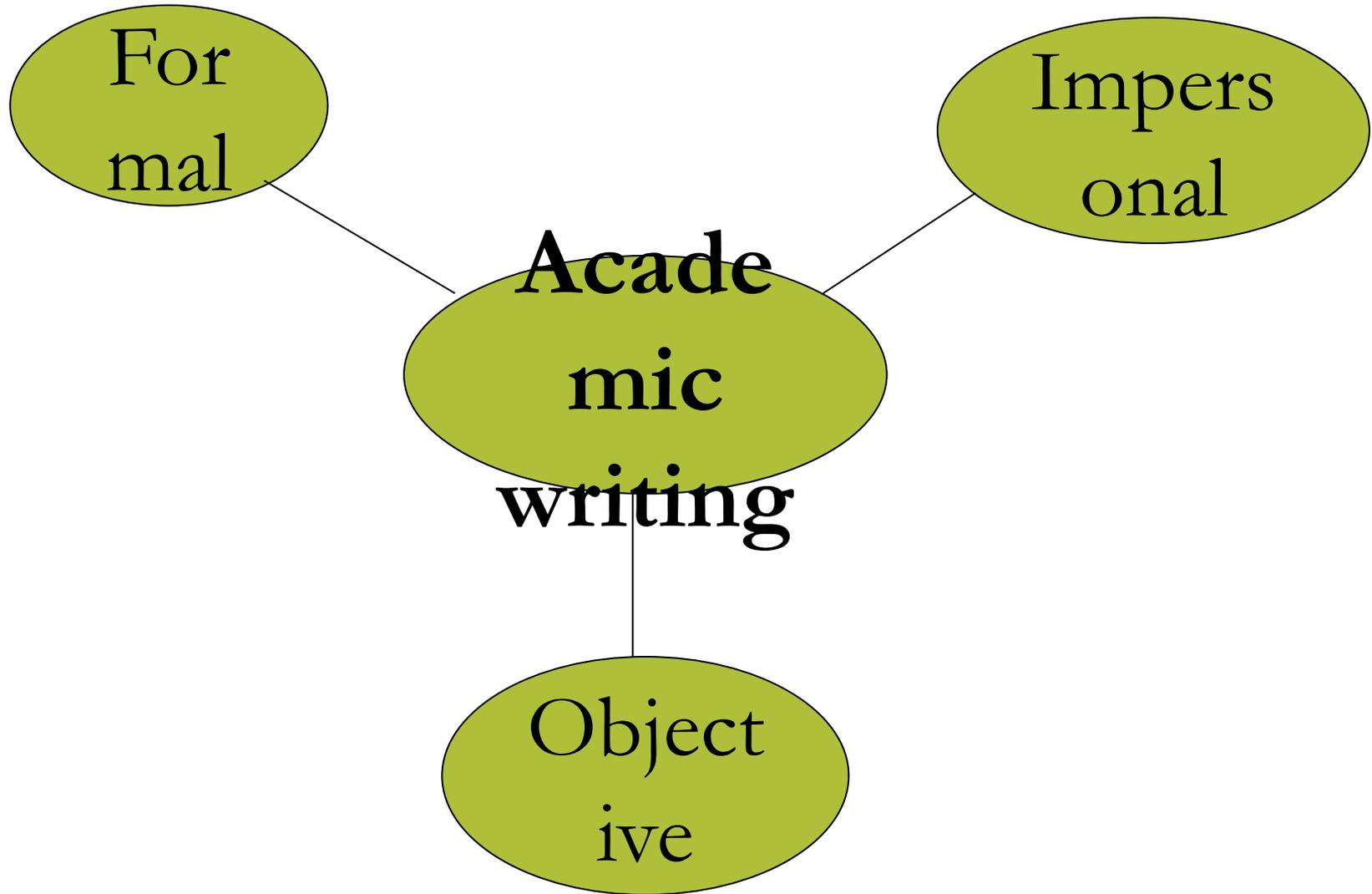

Features of academic writing



1. Formal

Use:

- **academic vocabulary (Academic word list)**
 - **characteristic phrases** of academic texts
*e.g. with respect to ..., in terms of ...,
regarding..., in addition ...*
 - **terminology**, i.e. vocabulary characteristic of a specific field
-

1. Formal (cont.)

Avoid:

- idioms, colloquial words, phrasal verbs

e.g. this piece of writing □ *the present study*

- contracted forms

e.g. it's □ *it is*

don't □ *do not*

shouldn't □ *should not*

2. Impersonal

- Avoid using **personal and possessive pronouns**: *I/ our/ you etc.*

Many of my friends and colleagues say that... □ It is commonly said that...

In my essay I'll make it clear □ the present paper will clarify

Our study proves that □ This study shows that

I'm sure this is so. □ There is reason to believe that this is so.

We really couldn't make anything of the results. □ There were difficulties in analyzing the results.

2. Impersonal (cont.)

- **Emphasize things and ideas**, instead of people and feelings.

Instead of writing:

I believe the model is valid, based on these findings.

Write:

These findings indicate that the model is valid
or *The following section will show how the model is validated by the findings.*

2. Impersonal (cont.)

- Avoid **evaluative words**, such as "badly", "disappointment", "amazing", etc.

I think this idea is awful. □ This idea may not be accurate.

In my opinion this is a wonderful topic. □ This topic is worth investigating because....

2. Impersonal (cont.)

- **Avoid rhetorical questions**

How could this trend affect the company operation?

- *It is worthy examining the effects the trend under consideration may have on the company operation.*
-

2. Impersonal (cont.)

- Avoid **exclamation marks**

All students should have lessons in plagiarism avoidance from day one!!!

- *Students may require instruction on plagiarism avoidance at the start of their first year.*
-

3. Objective

- Precision

pets like cats, dogs, etc. □ *pets, such as cats
and dogs,*

around half of the group □ *approximately
53% of the group*

3. Objective (cont.)

- **Caution** to avoid intense or emotional evaluative language

Parents who smoke are obviously abusing their children.

- *Second hand smoke has some harmful effects on children's health.*
-

3. Objective (cont.)

- ‘Vague’, tentative language (**HEDGING**)
I think second-hand smoke causes cancer.
 - *Second-hand smoke may cause cancer*
or There is evidence to support the possibility that second-hand smoke increases the risk of cancer.
-

3. Objective (cont.)

- Reference to sources

instead of writing:

Language is, in my view, clearly something social.

write

As Halliday (1973) shows, language is intrinsically social.

4. Text organisation

- **easy to follow** (introduction, main body, conclusion)
 - **sensible components** (paragraphs, subsections, main sections)
 - **paragraph structure**
-

4. Text organisation

- **Cohesion and coherence** at different levels

Cohesion: the language indicates the **links** between the various issues;

Coherence: interrelated issues are presented **logically**.
