Because only a few people have most of the money and power in Australia, I conclude that it is not an equal society. Society has an Upper, Middle and Lower class and I think that most people when they are born into one class, end up staying in that class for their whole lives. When all three classes are looked at more closely, other things such as the differences between the sexes and people’s racial backgrounds also add to the unequal nature of Australian society.

The inequity in the distribution of wealth in Australia is yet another indicator of Australia’s lack of egalitarianism. In 1995, 20% of the Australian population owned 72.2% of Australia’s wealth with the top 50% owning 92.1% (Raskall, 1998: 287). Such a significant skew in the distribution of wealth indicates that, at least in terms of economics, there is an established class system in Australia. McGregor (1988) argues that Australian society can be categorised into three levels: the Upper, Middle and Working classes. In addition, it has been shown that most Australians continue to remain in the class into which they were born (McGregor, 1988) despite arguments about the ease of social mobility in Australian society (Fitzpatrick, 1994). The issue of class and its inherent inequity, however, is further compounded by factors such as race and gender within and across these class divisions.

Table 6: Sample student texts from humanities with features of informal and formal register highlighted