



Understanding the Importance of Email Etiquette and Addressing Email Communication Challenges Among BTVI Students

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Abstract

Email serves as a communication channel for students in higher educational institutions to interact with teachers on course materials, assignments, and impending tests and seek guidance on personal or academic concerns. The present research examines student-instructor email communication, explicitly identifying the problematic elements in students' emails that hinder effective communication. The study examines a sample of 50 email communications composed and sent by first-year students to their instructors at Bright Technical and Vocational Institute (BTVI) in Kurdistan. Textual analysis is a valuable method for investigating research inquiries across several disciplines. The study findings demonstrated that informal aspects of student email exchanges include the usage of slang, overuse of capitalization, unconventional spelling, symbols, and emoticons. Lack of adherence to email etiquette norms and grammatical errors. These elements indicate a need for more understanding of formality, professionalism, and the decorum expected in a university atmosphere. Thus, it is advisable to implement pedagogical intervention to develop the necessary abilities for composing and comprehending emails. Providing education and assistance on the protocols and norms of email communication may enhance students' capacity to effectively and professionally interact via email in (BTVI), hence fostering good practices and increasing future employment prospects.

Keywords: Etiquette, email, proper ethics email, competence, higher education, BTVI

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Introduction

Two truths have gained global prominence in higher education during the last thirty years. Globalization has, on the one hand, contributed to the growth and prominence of the English language (Mensah, 2019). However, email has emerged as a primary means of communication in

Educational environments, particularly for out-of-class communications between teachers and students. These two realities are similar in that they both center on and involve discursive practices, communicative strategies, and interaction styles shaped by situational and cultural contexts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). The requirement for experts with knowledge of accounting principles and procedures has increased dramatically in the last few years due to the exponential growth of the accounting industry (Lennox & Wu, 2022). The need for people to communicate with faculty members via email politely has grown along with this expansion (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020); (Musheke & Phiri, 2021).

Email etiquette is especially vital in accounting programs, where precision and attention to detail are critical abilities. In addition to showing that a student respects the professors they are engaging with, proper email etiquette also indicates that the student can communicate in a kind and professional way. Maintaining a positive student-faculty relationship is crucial for academic performance, and using online communication to ask questions of their instructors seems to help them develop a personal rapport with them (Young et al., 2011). This research will examine various best practices accounting students should follow when writing emails to their lecturers. These best practices include using a formal tone, creating brief and relevant emails, and realizing how important it is to respond to emails on time. There could be studies conducted in other nations as part of the current study on pharmacy students' email behavior at Bright Technical and Vocational Institutes. It is conceivable that accounting pupils from various regions of the globe have diverse manners, as every nation has unique customs, traditions, and civilizations. Consequently, there is a need for further study on this topic. According to the researchers' present study, several factors, including the formality of the language used, may impact how students act while corresponding by email with their professors (Oliver et al., 2022). The main goal of this study is to investigate accounting students' behavior when they email their professors. The research will specifically examine whether learners know appropriate email communication etiquette and if there are any distinctions between accounting students and other students regarding email etiquette.

The impact of email etiquette on students' academic performance and the general interaction between learners and their teachers (Thornberg et al., 2022). However, students may be unclear about email etiquette owing to their lack of experience and the fact that it is usually not expressly taught. Writers sometimes feel conflicted and unsure how to express their intended meaning via email, which lacks nonverbal cues. This is particularly evident in partnerships with an apparent power dynamic, such as between learners and educators, and in instances where the writer is imposing something on the recipient. There is a lack of suitable examples for students to follow when writing emails to faculty members because students typically refrain from sharing their emails. Additionally, feedback on how the recipient perceives a student's email is usually not given directly. However, there are some instances in the workplace where feedback is provided, and as a result, students often base their email messages on those they receive from their peers (Dawson et al., 2019); (Winstone et al., 2017). This research will provide significant information on the present condition of email communication at BTVI by investigating the many components of proper email behavior among accountancy students and its consequences on their academic progress. The results of this research may also be expanded upon to encourage efficient email exchanges between instructors and students, which will show the behavior and level of students' understanding of email usage as a formal communication tool.

This study aims to complete an examination that inspects students' higher education email etiquette knowledge. It determines whether students understand how to utilize email in higher education and whether sections of student-teacher email discussions are problematic. On the other hand, the study is structured on the following research inquiries: Do students possess knowledge of the email writing norms often used in academic contexts? What are the prevalent language errors seen in student email communications?

Review of Literature

The official method of communication and information sharing between educators, students, and administration is email. For example, educators utilize email for various tasks, including form-filling, articles, proposals, job applications, and student CV exchanges. Similarly, email provides a convenient way for students to contact their teachers outside of scheduled class times; the training package improved the average email checklist scores in two introductory psychology sections. When participants sent emails in a new environment, their checklist scores also increased (Farnsworth & Thompson, 2024). It should come as no surprise that most students prefer to communicate with lecturers via email rather than personally, and cultural background greatly influences the inclination towards formality, punctuality, accuracy, task-orientedness, and relationship-orientedness in email correspondence. Many BTVI students seem to lack the necessary skills to write professionally appropriate emails, which leads to the creation of poorly thought-out and uninformative letters. This may result from pupils needing to be taught how to create proper email messages or being aware of email etiquette. Email communication etiquette and communicative purpose encoding often need to be noticed, particularly in hierarchical relationships (e.g., between students and teachers) and circumstances where the addressee is being imposed upon. More significantly, poorly written emails may cause a certain amount of discontent between professors and students, as teachers find it offensive and poorly written emails from students.

Email Address Format and the Content

The exchange of communication between users via computer systems is called email. Generally speaking, emails are shorter than letters. For example, an email responding immediately to a request or question could include one phrase. Professional emails are required to adhere to a defined format, nevertheless. An email should include the following components: a subject line, a greeting, the body of the message (which should contain an explanation of why the email was sent), and a close. Email is often described as an informal mode of communication. This could be the case because the writing style accepted for official writing, such as academic publications, differs from the type deemed proper for emails. Being informal does not imply being careless, hurried, cutesy, or jokey. Being casual does not entail speaking informally or disregarding politeness. For example, we instinctively consider the writer of an email message as careless when we read it and see misspellings and punctuation problems. Thus, Email correspondence must adhere to correct sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and punctuation guidelines. Individuals and businesses often choose to use email as a vital means of communication. The use and significance of e-mails persistently increase despite the existence of other methods, such as electronic communications, mobile apps, and social networks.

Characteristics of Email Exchange

Contending that email is a distinct language, disagree, claiming that communication via email procedures possesses its characteristics. Teaching methods that included email as a means of assistance. They endeavored to determine the effectiveness and feasibility of using E-mail to aid cultural instruction. The lecturer guided the students by suggesting lifestyle, food and clothes, love, marriage, and family life. The results indicated that students had a favorable disposition towards the exercise, which broadened their knowledge and understanding and enhanced their capacity to articulate their thoughts and ideas. In Taiwan, a study to assess the impact of using E-mail on enhancing writing performance in terms of syntactic complexity, grammatical accuracy, and lexical density. The study also explored the correlation between the number of E-mail exchanges and writing performance. The study used qualitative and quantitative research to reveal that pupils improved syntactic complexity and grammatical correctness. There was no apparent increase in lexical density. In recent years, information technology has seen rapid advancements, surpassing previous rates of progress. Consequently, students now find it much easier to get Internet

Connectivity than in earlier times. Students must attend the computer course to acquire the essential information for the E-mail exchange activity. These factors provide conducive settings for researchers to pursue more study.

They examined email requests made to professors by graduate students who spoke English as their first language and those who did not, emphasizing pragmatic clarity and politeness strategies. According to the research, native speakers could formulate more courteous and practically acceptable demands. Conversely, emails from non-native students demonstrated a lack of idiomatic phrases and linguistic flexibility, ignorance of email-transferable letter standards, and an inability to choose the proper lexical modification. Furthermore, the language characteristics of written memos and emails in an Australian university department. The research compared email correspondence and memorandum samples from the same academic department. That email communications differed from memos, including language innovation, expressive elements, and structural reductions. The research also showed that emails include characteristics often thought of as oral communication features and are typically less formal than other written workplace communication formats. Similarly, points out that while texts, emails, and instant chats are written communications, they yet have many characteristics with voice. Also, the distinction between spoken and written language is becoming hazier in email correspondence. Email communication is widely used in both professional and personal settings. Email has become the most popular, widespread, and effective way for students and teachers to communicate in academic contexts. Email messages may be sent without an opening or closing, but including them can assist in preserving (or strengthening) the social bonds between the sender and the recipient. Examples of these ties include salutations and titles.

The proficiency of medical students in crafting formal emails, examining 210 student emails to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the format. The study's findings demonstrated medical students' ignorance of the purposes of various email components, which unfavorably affected faculty members. Tackled email communication similarly, looking for general and linguistic trends. During the researcher's master's and doctoral studies at a Jordanian institution, 750 emails were sent both to and from her. The results demonstrated that although emails sent by students to other students were written in nonstandard language and did not adhere to norms, emails sent to and from professors adhered to the rules of conventional formal letters. Also looked at Arabic and English email greetings and goodbye phrases. One hundred academic emails written in Arabic and 100 in English were analyzed for their research. The study showed that students were more conscious of protocol while composing emails in English. For example, some Arabic-written emails included a single word, such as greeting and goodbye, whereas others had no such phrase.

The study examined how students and lecturers felt about proper email etiquette and style. According to the inquiry, there is a difference in how academic staff and students view email communication, particularly in style, vocabulary, and manners. Because they often see email as texting, students frequently employ casual texting characteristics that need to be appreciated by academic personnel. Faculty members get frustrated and irritated by inappropriate email formulation because they often evaluate students based on the tone and substance of their emails. Guidelines for email conventions are thus required to assist students in interacting more efficiently and professionally via email at BTVI. This will encourage both good practices and future employment chances.

Methodology

Participants and Subjects of Study

The study was conducted at BTVI in Kurdistan. The study samples were a collection of 50 authentic e-mails composed and sent by undergraduate students to their instructors. The participating students in this research are in the academic year (2023-2024) currently enrolled in various educational programs taught in English. It is essential to mention that their emails were utilized for this study. Sender and receiver codes were used to guarantee the anonymity of the participants, and all personal information was handled with utmost secrecy. The emails were subsequently compiled and arranged. The email threads and individual emails were assigned associated numerical identifiers. On the other hand, 50 student emails were reviewed and assessed based on the conventions and official email correspondence between students and their instructors. These included refraining from using emoticons in emails, using appropriate punctuation, avoiding ambiguous subject lines, and maintaining a formal and professional tone of expression.

Data gathering and evaluation

Email correspondence between instructors and students in (2023-2024) was gathered. Emails created outside the rules of email writing, including grammatical, lexical, punctuation, or stylistic mistakes, were chosen to determine the problematic elements of student-teacher email communication. Before starting this study, permission was acquired from the students to use their emails for research purposes. Due to ethical and privacy concerns, the participating students were advised that the study's sample emails would not include their identity or personal information. The email messages sent by first-year students in (pharmacy and IT students were chosen randomly since most of the study programs at BTVI and others use English as the teaching medium. These student groups were selected because, at these levels, pupils should be able to communicate using written language. Under titles derived from the characteristics of the email messages reviewed that depart from the conventional email writing rules, the primary text aspects of student emails are researched and analyzed.

Findings

The following screenshot emails present the various sorts of email messages that students have sent to their instructors, along with the frequencies of those messages. According to the total relative of each category, they are listed in order of decreasing importance of academic email. The emails students submitted to their teachers have been analyzed, and some conclusions have been drawn from the findings. The data indicate that most email exchanges do not adhere to the acceptable procedure, include grammatical errors, and exhibit characteristics often seen on message boards and texts. In this section, the results are presented in the form of themes that developed from the distinctive qualities of the emails sent by the participants.

Identifying One: Students' Knowledge of Proper Email Etiquette

According to data research, many student emails must follow the formal, professional email structure. For example, some emails need fundamental email elements like a salutation, a closure, or a subject line, which suggests a lack of understanding of the purposes of these elements. Since the whole content is included in the subject line, the email sent by the student to the instructor in Figure 1 needs to have appropriate email structure and formatting. Inadequate email etiquette among students may significantly impact the academic performance of such students and faculty members' perceptions of those students. This sort of impression may damage both the educational staff and the students themselves.



Figure 1. Illustrate the absence of a well-organized and visually appealing email format

Failure to Provide Necessary Information

Based on the results, it is evident that some electronic mail messages are deficient in important information that assists the receiver in comprehending the message or identifying the transmitter. A straightforward illustration of this is the situation of emails that do not include any self-identification of the sender or any information that is significant in either the subject line or the main content of the message that is sent. The bulk of the emails that were sent before the explosion at academic institutions were characterized by the fact that they did not give sufficient information. This was seen in the majority of the emails. The communications that were sent out in the days leading up to the event were written by writers rather than being read by consumers. This observation is revealed by the case that is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Demonstrates the nonappearance of the sender's self-identification.

Utilization of Emojis and Emoticons

A prominent characteristic of students' emails is the inclusion of elements often seen in instant messaging platforms, such as emoticons and emojis. However, these aspects could be more suitable for a university environment, particularly student-teacher correspondence. Utilizing emojis and emoticons in email correspondence between students and teachers may harm the sender's reputation since such communications are unprofessional and unsuitable for academic environments. Figure 3 is a visual representation of this concept. Emojis served as speech act indicators, reinforcers, teasers, and intensifiers. Additionally, it was discovered that the respondents' feelings and moods, the kind of discussion, and their desire to follow the trend all impacted how often respondents used emojis as linguistic tools.



Figure 3. Exemplifies the use of symbols and emotions

Scheduling Emails

According to the research, some students emailed their lecturers inconveniently, meaning they were sent outside school hours. Figure 4 displays an example of an email sent at night, early morning, or on a weekend. The most effective approach is to check and answer emails twice to four times daily rather than every 45 minutes or constantly, which is a prevalent practice among many knowledge workers.



Figure 4. An instance of emails being sent at inconvenient times

Errors in Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation

Emails from students often include grammatical, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary misuse, and a lack of coherence issues. These mistakes might impede comprehension of the intended message and interfere with conversation. Data study reveals that a dependence on machine translation techniques and lacking linguistic skills are the primary causes of language problems. Figure 6 shows an example of a language-problem email. Students' writing faults arise from their lack of capacity to produce ideas, arrange discourse, manage sentence structures, choose suitable terminology, and use effective styles. Teachers often see mistakes in a negative light, striving to rectify each mistake, typically interpreting these errors as an indication of their teaching's ineffectiveness. Nevertheless, EFL instructors may use mistake correction as a vital component in their instructional approach.

(no subject)

[redacted]@btvi.edu.iq>
to [redacted]
hi dear teacher

I am hoping you doing good

I would like to tell you I sick, so tomorrow I can not come to institute

I wait for your reply could you tell me it is ok or not !

Figure 5. A linguistically and problematic email

Changing and combining codes

Learners use communication methods to overcome their lack of language proficiency in specific contexts. One such tactic used by non-native English speakers is code-mixing. One of the study's conclusions is that some student emails contained instances of code-switching and code-mixing between Arabic and English. Figure 6 shows this, with English words like "terminology" and "sentence structure" transliterated and written in Arabic characters using English. Defines code-mixing as intra-sentential code-switching or alternation caused by using two or more languages below clause level in one social scenario. Claims that code-mixing happens because speakers innovate by injecting content terms into another language's grammar.



Figure 6. Displays and emails that have code-switching between the English and Arabic languages

Using the Kurdish language by writing the English pronunciation

Some students use Kurdish as a mother tongue to email their lecturers. While they use English pronunciation in their texts, the underlined two Kurdish words have been written in English pronunciation. Teaching English to Kurdish speakers has many obstacles. These issues may not be linked to the attributes of either language. Regarding phonetics instruction, several challenging problems emerge that need to be addressed.



Figure 7. Using the Kurdish language by writing in English pronunciation

The absence of a subject line and an empty email body

An investigation has shown a substantial problem with email interaction among BTVI students in higher education. This was established during the investigation. The absence of a subject line and a body in the email are the defining characteristics of this problem. In light of this, there is

A risk that ambiguity and problems may occur when seeking to determine the message's purpose. Using action instructions is quite beneficial when encouraging someone to change their behavior. On the other hand, there is a need for more research into the impacts of frames and action directives in the subject lines of emails. This research has to be carried out sooner rather than later. Figure 8 represents the significance of comprehending the relevance of subject lines and content in efficient communication. This significance is brought to light by the fact that it is essential to adhere to the protocols for email.



Figure 8. There is a missing subject line, and the email body contains no text

The absence of a subject line in these emails may make it more challenging to evaluate the content and purpose of the communication rapidly. Acquiring and organizing information may become less efficient, creating further problems. It has been brought to light, as a result of the results of this research, how essential it is to consider the use of appropriate subject lines in the context of communications. This purpose, discussed in further detail below, aims to increase clarity, expedite comprehension, and simplify communication. When considered, this characteristic could improve the efficiency of email exchanges found within the dataset and the structure of interactions for the dataset. What strategies may researchers use to enhance the rate at which individuals respond to email requests in the setting of email overload? An area that is a sensible target for attempts to reduce non-response is the email subject line. Recipients may be responsive to changes in subject lines for valid reasons. The subject line, like the introduction remark in telephone conversations and the first paragraph in a cover letter for postal surveys, conveys to the reader the potential substance of the communication. The subject line serves as a tool that informs consumers about the content of a message, allowing them to make prompt judgments on whether to read or delete it.

Some sample of email correspondence between learners and instructors was investigated during the study. The findings of the study indicate that several emails have an unsatisfactory structure and layout, which is consistent with the findings of previous research carried out by (D.-H. Kim et al., 2016), and other researchers. A subject line, a greeting, and a signature are the three fundamental elements that make up an effective email. The structure and layout of an email message are both critical aspects to consider. The study presents emails sent without an appropriate salutation or closure, negatively affecting the recipient's perception, interpretation, and emotional response. These instances, which align with the conclusions of (Lewin-Jones & Mason, 2014) demonstrate students' ignorance of proper email etiquette, especially with the message's tone and the recipients' emotional response. It is important to note that text on screens is interpreted and written differently. One might quickly appear unclear, deceptive, or disrespectful (Crystal, 2011). Since emails and other online communications lack the facial expressions, gestures, body posture, and distance conventions that are so important for expressing one's personal opinions and attitudes and for moderating social relationships, using appropriate, greetings and sign-offs is necessary to prevent misunderstandings and avoid coming across as unkind, unprofessional, or rude. This is just the case because, to accomplish communicative goals acceptably, language speakers also need to grasp sociopragmatic and social language norms.

On the other hand, (Arsovski et al., 2022) stated that developing automated email responder systems that generate human-quality answers is difficult owing to semantic ambiguity and the complexities of response modeling. Introducing the Personal Email Responder, an innovative

System for email classification and semi-automatic answer production (Haider & Zandi, 2022). Explored how faculty members view emails sent by students who do not speak English as their first language to be disrespectful. These perceptions vary based on social identity factors such as the student's position as a native speaker, gender, and seniority.



Figure 9. An email without a salutation and conclusion

One notable aspect of email correspondence between students and teachers is emojis and emoticons, widely used in instant messaging apps like Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Viber, etc. Emojis and emoticons are often regarded as non-verbal markers of emotion in computer-mediated textual communication (Dresner & Herring, 2010). Like emojis, most emoticons are facial expression mimics used in email conversations to convey various sentiments and emotions. For example, the emoticon :-)) is used to describe pleasure, while the emoticon :-(is used to represent grief. Emojis and emoticons "compensate for the inability to convey voice inflections, facial expressions, and bodily gestures in written communication," as emails are seen as an emotionless means of communication. Stated differently, their purpose is to express sentiment or attitude. The Email with emojis is shown in Figure 3 as an example.

The results also revealed that student emails included spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors, suggesting that students often forget to proofread their emails before forwarding them to their teachers. Behavior generates a poor picture of the sender. Given the (semi-)formal character of student-teacher email contact, it may adversely affect relaying the information adequately. In this regard, notes that failing to proofread emails indicates a disdain for receivers. Contends that composing emails demands "as much care and mental effort as writing letters." Furthermore, reading a document becomes more complicated when punctuation is absent or misused, which may also sometimes alter the intended meaning of the content (Marzuki et al., 2023). This issue email has been illustrated in Figure. Based on the discussion section, the researcher noted that these issues have been made among students worldwide. So, Kurdish learners of English inevitably faced the same problem.

In summary, while there is a vast amount of literature on response rates to online surveys, there need to be more studies investigating the use of email in soliciting and inviting participants for research, mainly focusing on the influence of email etiquette among students. Emails and other modern services have made it easier for faculty and students to communicate in the modern era. Examining Email Etiquettes of BTVI Students: Insights from faculty members in higher education. The majority of emails are official. It is expected to write emails to correspondents formally, including with a subject line, salutations, closing comments, etc. These are the standard components of most communications, particularly in professional settings. Email communication may also be casual, depending on the sender. However, this can make the student seem less credible academically. Corrupt emails from students to teachers may have negative consequences. This may challenge pupils who need help understanding the authority relations involved and the consequences of practical failure. Furthermore, when instructors receive emails from students learning a language, they typically see them as rude since they are unaware of any socio-pragmatic norms of language usage among their pupils (D. Kim, 2020). As a result, there is a rising need to raise students' knowledge of practical aspects.

The primary purpose of emails is to allow students to communicate with faculty members by informing them about their situations or requesting information about different queries. Email is an affordable and readily available form of communication on college and university campuses (Abbas et al., 2019). Additionally, it has evolved into a method for locating and using information sources. Lecturers have used emails for various purposes, including formal appointments, further questions, remote instruction, and more. Emails have been vital to information exchange in today's technologically sophisticated society. Because email is convenient and formal, it has become the preferred method of communication in professional contexts. Additionally, many educational institutions employ emails as a guiding tool, especially when students send faculty members enormous files or papers. As a result, while utilizing emails, formality and civility count.

Conclusion

The research found that some students struggle to effectively communicate over email because they are unfamiliar with email etiquette and lack competency in language, socio-pragmatic competence, and writing abilities. A noticeable lack of professionalism and grammar, spelling, and punctuation mistakes characterizes email correspondence between students and teachers. This implies a tendency to employ unconventional language and features—like emoticons and emojis often seen in instant messaging services. Implementing a pedagogical intervention that teaches students how to create formal email messages with appropriate etiquette is necessary. This intervention will help students develop communication skills in academic and professional environments. Incorporating these skills into the language-teaching process, with a specific emphasis on socio-pragmatic and sociolinguistic norms, will help students become acquainted with this mode of communication and the rules that regulate its usage, especially in situations that involve hierarchical relationships. The participants' emails indicate that their language usage and email etiquette influence the faculty members' reactions toward the quality of email students. A study revealed that most faculty members preferred communication in the English language due to formality, assessing student skills, or as a necessary format. Given the facts above, it is possible that communicating with faculty members using English and adhering to appropriate email etiquette may result in favorable outcomes.

Conflicts of Interest

The writers say they have no competing interests.

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