



Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Mouloud Mammeri of Tizi-Ouzou
Faculty of Letters and Languages
English Department



Domain : Foreign Languages

Field : English Language

Specialism : Didactics of Foreign Languages

***Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master in English***

Title :

**A Genre Analysis of Selected Emails Written in English by First-Year
Students in the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of
Tizi-Ouzou**

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Academic Year : 2023/2024

Dedications

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved parents, who have been my source of inspiration and who gave me strength when I thought of giving up, who continually provided their moral, spiritual, emotional and financial support.

To all those who stood by my side, and helped me during my entire journey. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To my binomial **Zahia Bourai**, whose incessant efforts, support, and encouragement have been instrumental in the accomplishment of this dissertation. Your belief in my abilities and support throughout this journey has been invaluable.

Thank you for your friendship, your patience, and your constant belief in me. Your presence in my life has made this endeavour not just possible, but enjoyable.

ZEDEK NORA

To my parents, my constant source of support: your sacrifices are the soil in which my dreams have grown.

To my siblings, who always believe in me: your encouragements are the sunshine that has nurtured my journey.

To my amazing family, thank you for your support and help.

To all my friends, who inspired me every day.

To my binomial **Nora Zedek**, my constant partner and companion: your ideas, collaboration, efforts, and intense support have been integral to the completion of this scholarly academic work. Together, we have achieved what has seemed impossible alone.

I am deeply thankful for your partnership in this humble work and all my life.

BOURAI ZAHIA

Acknowledgments

To Mr.Hammou,

We would like to express our sincere gratitude for your acceptance of being our supervisor, and your orientation as well. Indeed, we would like to thank you for your patience and your ability to transmit us all the value of the worth humans and life during the two years.

To Mr.Aouine,

We are grateful for everything you have given us during this year. Your teaching has had a deep impact on our academic and personal journey. We thank you immensely for your encouragement, guidance, patience and well-reasoned feedback.

To Dr.Ammour,

Your classes were true spaces for exchange and sharing, where everyone felt valued and respected. You fostered a positive and supportive learning environment that allowed us to flourish and gain confidence. Thank you for your help, ideas, kindness, and your easy-going character with us.

We are greatly indebted to the broad examiners who had accepted to read and evaluate our work.

To the Pakistani teacher Mr.Irbaz Khan,

We are incredibly grateful to you especially for your insightful feedback, your valuable time that you have accorded to us during our academic journey. We thank you for your guidance, help and support.

Finally, we present our sincere gratitude to the anonymous teachers and students who kindly donated their time and helped us to realise this study.

Abstract

Nowadays, E-mails play a vital role within higher education especially in building and maintaining effective relationships between teachers and students. In this context, e-mails are considered as a genre that students must be familiar with and able to use effectively. The current dissertation is a genre analysis that aims at analysing emails samples of first-year students in the Department of English at MMUTO. The study focuses on three (03) main objectives. The first is to analyse the genre conventions and structural characteristics of each identified genre within the corpus of first-year students' emails. The second is to determine teachers' attitudes towards first-year students' emails communication. Lastly, the third objective is to provide an appropriate structure of writing an academic email for enhancing first-year students' capabilities and awareness. To carry out our research study, we relied on John Swales' CARS Model (1990) with two integrated approaches namely TAM and TPACK Models. These combined approaches provide a comprehensive understanding of how first-year students adapt to email communication within a university setting by considering genre conventions, linguistic features, and communicative purposes of first-year students in an academic context. To reach the objectives of the research, a mixed-methods approach was used for both data collection and data analysis. Thus, we used the descriptive statistical method in order to quantify the closed-ended items of the students' questionnaire that consists of seventeenth (17) questions, and the frequency of email genre conventions included in thirty-three (33) emails, a quantitative method was adopted. Additionally, a qualitative content analysis was used for the interpretation of the open-ended question of the questionnaire (01), teachers' interview conducted with three (03) teachers, and the results of moves and steps included in first-year students' emails referring to John Swales' Model (1990). Moreover, the findings of the questionnaire show that first-year students were unfamiliar with the requirements of an academic email, and the results of the interview revealed the positive attitudes and reactions of teachers towards their students by appreciating their efforts as well. As regards the findings of the corpus affirmed that first year students lack knowledge and awareness about the appropriate structure of an academic email.

Key Words: Communicative Purposes, Email Communication, Email Conventions, Genre Analysis, First-Year Students.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

- AOL: American Online
- ARPANET: Advanced Research Projects Agency Network
- CK : Content Knowledge
- EFL: English of Foreign Languages
- ESP: English for Specific Purposes
- EU: European Union
- GDPR: General Data Protection Regulation
- L2: Second Year Licence
- L3: Third Year Licence
- MIME : Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions
- MIT: Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- MMUTO: Mouloud Maameri's University of Tizi-Ouzou
- PCK: Pedagogical Content Knowledge
- PEOU: Perceived Ease of Use
- PU: Perceived Usefulness
- QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis
- TAM: Technology Acceptance Model
- TCK: Technological Content Knowledge
- TK : Technology Knowledge
- TPACK: Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge

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List of Symbols

- \circ : Number
- ****: Name of the student or name of the teacher

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General Introduction

- **Statement of the problem**

In language teaching and learning, the concept genre refers to a type of writing that serves specific communicative functions, for instance, essays, letters, poems, and emails. Every genre or type of writing has a set of conventions that allow particular to be unique, these conventions are as the following: The format, tone, choice of words, spelling and grammar, purpose. According to Swales (1990): “a genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre... In addition, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content, and intended audience” (p.58).

Analysing a type of writing or genre is considered as a genre analysis project which is defined as examining a type or style of writing in order to better understand the conventions, expectations, purposes and target audience of that genre. For Swales, genre analysis involves examining and identifying the communicative purposes, audience expectations, and linguistic features of genres within specific communities (ibid). As mentioned above, emails are considered as a genre, they become a fundamental means of communication between teachers and students in academic environment particularly at universities where students need to address their teachers for specific purposes among them: Seeking more clarifications concerning lectures, requesting for marks, asking for help, etc.

After looking at genre analysis studies, we have found that only few investigations are conducted for example the study conducted by the binomials Ms.Lounasi and Meghari Sarah dealt with “Genre Analysis of Master Dissertation Introductions of Didactics Students at the English Department of MMUTO in 2021.” The results revealed that the generic structure of the introductions is different at the level of step 1-a of the first rhetorical move, namely “

Claiming Centrality”. An Other research study conducted by Language and Communication specialty entitled “Genre Analysis of Abstracts Introductions and Conclusions of Master Dissertation moves by Hanane Ait Hamouda and Sabrina Nabi. For this research work, it is concluded that students do not have a common way of writing abstracts, introductions, and conclusions. So, the articulated hypotheses are confirmed. That is to say, on the one hand there are some Master Students of English that respected the moves mentioned in the literature. On the other hand, some of them did not follow them. It has been found that some students prefer to follow different moves they proposed.

After many studies, we found another investigation about genre analysis study of master conclusions. The case study, didactics of foreign languages dissertations written between 2018 to 2020 of English department at MMUTO that was submitted by Samira Rahoui and Hanane Hamdouche, where the findings of this study have shown that the moves found in the introductions are the same. In terms of the steps found in didactics master dissertation introductions comprised in the corpus do not reflect the recognized generic structure if the dissertation part-genre as outlined in Samraj’s CARS Model (2008).

At the international level, we have found some related research studies about genre analysis of emails like A thesis at the American university in Cairu AVC entitled “Students use and teacher requirement of email conventions.” submitted by Lora Ibrahim Galabi in May, 2011. The gap in the present research is student-teacher e-mail communication in the Arab world, and more specifically in the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Another study conducted by Joy Baugh in September, 2011 at university of Essex entitled “what works in academic request emails.” The study undertakes a genre analysis of a corpus of student request email sent to teachers in one department at the university of Essex to determine the moves of the genre and create a pedagogically useful move structure.

From our observations, teachers' remarks and reactions email writing remains a challenging task for many students specifically those in their first-year of university, they face numerous difficulties on how to produce an effective and a well-organized academic email as well as they are unfamiliar with email genre conventions. In such a way, analysing emails written by first-year students is the main focus of this study; that is to say, it aims at depicting the most frequent errors made by first year students like grammatical and lexical errors, the excessive use of casual (informal) language and their lack of email-genre conventions and awareness including style, content and structure.

- **Aims and Significance of the Study**

The present research study aims to analyse emails written by first-year students in the department of English at MMUTO, the latest is divided into three major objectives. One of the study's objectives, is to analyse the genre conventions and structural characteristics of each identified genre within the corpus of first-year students' emails by making a reference to John Swales' Model (CARS, 1990). Additionally, the study attempts to determine teachers' attitudes towards their first year students' emails communication. The third objective is to provide an appropriate structure of writing an academic email for enhancing first-year students' capabilities and awareness.

Genre Analysis studies different email genres where individuals can learn to compose emails more effectively, ensuring that their messages are clear, concise and appropriate for the given context. This can lead to improved communication outcomes and better relationships with recipients. Moreover, this work is worth conducting due to the fact that it fosters effective communicative skills and promotes academic success between students and teachers' interaction. This research is worth doing and significant as it reveals the communicative purposes of first-year students in an academic context, and contributes to a

better understanding of the role and the importance of email communication within higher education.

- **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Based on the above highlighted objectives, the research questions that need to be answered are:

- 1) What are the genre conventions and linguistic features of each identified genre within first-year students' emails?
- 2) How do teachers react to first-year students' emails communication?
- 3) What might be the appropriate structure that would help students to write good academic emails?

To predict the findings of this study, we suggest the following hypotheses:

- **Hypothesis 01:** First-year students do not follow and respect the requirements of an academic email.
 - **Hypothesis 02:** Teachers appreciate the efforts of first year students.
 - **Hypothesis 03:** The appropriate structure of an academic email is not respected by first-year students.
- **Research Techniques and Methodology**

To conduct this study, a mixed methods approach is selected. A mixed methods approach is the combination of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In fact, qualitative research focuses on “why” and “how” of human experiences, attitudes, and behaviours rather than focusing on “how many” or “how much” like quantitative research. So this research method is adequate for understanding the why and how first year students check their academic emails and address their teachers through the analysis of linguistic features,

genre conventions and structural characteristics by taking into consideration of the numerical research method. This research study opted for three instrument tools including: a corpus of 33 emails written by first-year students, a questionnaire and an interview. Indeed, for a sake of gathering as much as possible information together with students' habits, behaviours, perceptions and opinions a questionnaire of 18 questions is designed for thirty (30) first-year students in the Department of English at MMUTO.

Moreover, an interview is considered as another type of data collection tool that focuses on revealing various participants' perceptions, opinions and attitudes. That is why the interview is addressed to teachers of the department of English in order to gain more details about their attitudes, reactions and perceptions of emails written by first-year students. Once the data are gathered, we tended to analyse them by adopting the qualitative content analysis and the descriptive statistical method.

- **Structure of the Dissertation**

The current dissertation follows the traditional simple model. It comprises a General Introduction, four major chapters and a General Conclusion. The first chapter entitled "Review of the Literature" which presents some definitions and highlights the theoretical framework. The second chapter called "Research Design and Methodology" shows the procedure of data collection and data analysis. The third chapter named "Presentation of the Findings" reveals the results obtained from the analysis of emails written by first-year students and the other data collection tools. The fourth and last chapter is "the Discussion of the Findings" which discusses and interprets the results of the study and answers the research questions posed in the General Introduction. As regards "the General Conclusion", it sums up the overall aim of the research work and the objectives. Finally, this research work provides recommendations for future and further investigations.

Chapter I: Review of the Literature

Introduction

The following chapter is concerned with reviewing the key concepts underlying our sections. The first section is about History of E-mail. The second section is entitled “Email as a Genre”. In the third section, students’ views using TAM Model is tackled. The fourth section is named “Teachers attitudes and views towards first year students emails”. In the fifth section, we stress on the role of academic emails within higher education. Finally, in the sixth and last section we shed light on the theoretical framework of this study that is John Swales’ Genre Analysis Model (1990), and two integrated frameworks that are TPACK, and TAM Models.

I.1. History of Email

I.1.1. Definition of email

Electronic Mail is one of the most prominent uses of networked communication technology. Better known as e-mail, this is one of the most widely used forms of communication today (eGyankosh, n.d.). In other words, email is a frequently used communication tool in academic settings (Ewald,2016). It is stated that electronic mail (email) is much older when compared to the internet (Vendantu, 2024), and it existed before networks did (Partridge, 2008). Email is defined as the transmission of messages from one computer to another, and it is a form of communication that can take place between two to many users. It is not only sending the message in text format, but also we can add images, documents in the form of PDFs, and videos or other attachments. The person who has to send a certain message is called the sender, and the one who receives it is called the receiver (Vendantu, 2024).

The origins of email can be traced back to the first email that was sent to computers in 1965, by using the MIT program called a mailbox. By using this program, the user can type a

message and send it. Whereas, the receiver can see the message only after logging it into the computer (Steinbrinck, 2023).

By 1969, the US department of defense implemented ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network), a network connecting numerous computers across the department for the purpose of communication within the organizations (cloudHQ, 2021). In 1971, Ray Tomlinson developed the ARPANET into ARPANET's network email system and invented Electronic Mail. His contribution was "@" symbol which indicated the destination address of the message to be sent. Tomlinson realized that by using the "@" symbol to his system, he could connect to a specific user on a specific computer (Virtually fluent, 2021). It is claimed that queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom was the first head of state to officially send an email in 1976 (Virtually fluent, 2021; Steinbrinck, 2023). In 1978, the first email marketing campaign was developed by Gary Twerk who sent an email to 400 emails addressed on ARPANET (Steinbrink, 2023). In 1980, email began to become more widely available as personal computers become more common (Mbox-Splitter, 2022). Additionally, the term "email" became popular in the same year, and it eventually became an official word in the OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY (Virtually fluent, 2021).

By 1990, email has become an essential tool for communication all over the world (Mbox-Splitter, 2022). In 1991, the first email was sent from space by astronauts Shannon Lucid and James. S. C Adamson. Apple's portable computer was used and sent this email (MeSign, 2017, 2024). In 1992, Steinbrinck (2024) stated that, the feature of attaching files to emails was developed with the development of an internet protocol called Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions (MIME). In 1993, internet use increased and electronic mail replaced by E-mail. Consequently, AOL was launched, it is considered as a major development in the history of email (cloudHQ, 2021). Then, in 1996 Hotmail was launched. Hotmail's webmail offer was free and available to anyone with an internet connection.

(cloudHQ,2021). In 1997, yahoo launched its free email service, adding another option for users to gain access outside of their internet provider (cloudHQ,2021).

In 2004, another significant development during this decade was the introduction of Gmail, which started as an internal email system (cloudHQ,2021). In 2007, email truly goes mobile on June 29, 2007 when Steve Jobs introduces the new iPhone (Steinbrink,2023). In 2018, GDPR was introduced in the EU. In fact, emails have become an essential part of society as every student, employee, and organization used email for different purposes (Steinbrink,2023). In 2019, there were 3.9 billion email users' that's over half the population of our planet! And this is expected to increase to almost 5 billion users by 2024 (Virtually fluent, 2021). Today, the history of email has seen a wide range of “email killers” that includes text messages, social media, Slack, Microsoft, Teams, Facebook, Discord, Wechat, and many others (cloudHQ, 2021).

I.1.2. Types of Emails

I.1.2.1. Student to instructor Emails

a. Inquiry Emails

In academic settings, inquiry emails are often used by students for different purposes including requesting information about a specific topic or research area, seeking clarification on academic concepts, and asking for guidance on academic projects on assignment (Tompson,2002).

b. Request Emails

Academic request email is a unique form of communication and as such makes for a distinct genre or group of communicative events, in this case electronic texts, which share a communicative purpose (Swales, p.58). Chen (2001) added that, making requests to professors through email has become a common institutional discourse practice for students;

for example, they often use email to request appointments, advice, course-related information, and recommendations.

c. Apology Emails

For Duran et al (2005), apology emails are presented in form of excuses for students' delayed assignments.

I.1.2.2. Instructor to student Emails

d. Announcement Emails

Within our context, Announcement emails are formal communications sent by teachers to students to inform them about upcoming events, new information, or important changes. According to Mowrer (1996), using email for announcements and answering students' questions would thus increase teaching time by reserving class time for course learning activities.

e. Feedback Emails

According to Maria Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) "email has therefore become an effective and popular alternative means of communication, providing students the convenience to obtain feedback, clarification and information as soon as they need it". (p.3193).

I.2. Email as a genre

I.2.1. Definition of the Concept Genre

Etymologically, the term "genre" is derived from the French language meaning "form" or "type". Then, originally, the word "genre" which is also used in biology science means "genus" referring to the classification of flora and fauna (Stokes, 2006; Himawan, 2007). This means that the early concept of genre is to classify the species into a certain class due to its typical similar characteristics (Disgeyasa, 2015). After that, the use of genre developed overtime, genre is applied in any various aspects of life such as films, music, literature...etc.

In music for example, genre is used to refer any music categories as pop, jazz, R n B...etc. Whereas, in movies, there are also many types of genre like drama, science fiction, action, and so forth. In literature, it is often heard the words like novel, drama, poetry...etc.

In short, it can be simply said that genre means a type or kind, or class of a particular thing or object. Recently, genre is also used in linguistics study where many scholars within genre studies have investigated several sources of variation within a genre. While, still based theoretically in understanding of the shared nature of genres. Whether shared social action (Miller, 1984), communicative purposes (Swales, 1990) or social purposes (Martin, 1997).

According to Swales (1990), “genre is a communicative event in which the members have a set of communicative goal”. (p.58). In line with the concept of genre, Dan Martin (2000) states that genre is the particular usage of the language in a certain social circumstance such as interview genre, media genre, or email genre and so forth. Traditionally, genre, as a literary construct, has been a popular framework for analyzing the form and function of non-literary discourse, such as research articles or letters, or a tool for developing educational practices in fields like rhetoric, composition studies, professional writing and ESP (Hyon, 1996).

I.2.2. Genre Analysis of Emails

Genre analysis was first introduced by Swales (1990); as he asserted, the shared communicative purpose is the principle criterion that characterizes a class of communicative acts as a genre. Its genre, according to Swales (1990) is composed of certain units called “move”: “A discorsal and rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse” (Swales, 2004, p.228). Genre analysis, as an important approach to text analysis especially in ESP, has been developed by the works of researchers like Swales (1986) and Bhatia (1993). Scollan, Bhatia, Li and Yung (1999), believe that genre

analysis, because of its focus on the rhetorical moves and strategies used by producers of texts in relation to its audience, and provides a more useful lead to the understanding of socially interactive discursive practices. Moreover, Schler and Osten (2001) claim that genre analysis is about teaching students to understand how and why texts are written in a particular way. Also to help students to develop strategies for producing texts that achieve their rhetorical purposes.

For Bhatia, genre analysis refers to the study of naturally occurring written discourse focusing, in particular, on analysis beyond the sentence level. According to Hyon (1997) genre serves “as a useful framework for describing functional nature of texts as well as textual variation across contexts” (p.66). Understanding email writing as a speech events. Galabi (2011) identifies writing genre as those situations characterized by recurring patterns in the usage of language. According to Hyland (1992), genre analysis is the study of how language is used within a particular context, genre differs in that each has a different goal and they are structured differently. The identification of the use of emails as a genre prompts a definition of the required textual characteristics such as grammar and spellings as well as a comparison between the observance of such requirement by ESL and EFL students (Hasan&Akhand, 2011).

I.2.3. Student-Teacher interaction and relationship via email

Since the new technology allows for the fast and frequent exchange messages, student-teacher communication has become more intense (cf. Bloch 2002; Chejnova 2014; Dürscheid-Frehner 2013). Emails are consistently used as a means of communication and interaction among students and faculties (Dawielwicz- Betz, 2013). Indeed, many scholars consider email writing as a genre because it has its own repetitive patterns (Cowan, 2009; Galabi, 2011).

Electronic communication between students and teachers in higher education may be considered a peculiar domain for two reasons. Firstly, because of the fact that in the past decades, email correspondence has become a dominant channel in this type of interaction. This contrasts with the earlier practice whereby teacher and office hours rather than through written communication (cf. Reder, 2007). Thus, the development of electronic communication has not simply created new technical opportunities for exchanging messages; it has also broadened the sphere of social actions performed via the written medium in student-teacher relationships. Secondly, the communication of university, students with their teachers is also a special area because students in higher education are in peculiar social status with respect to institutional hierarchy and their relationship with teachers (Halász, 2001 p.123).

For both teachers and students, these virtual interactions can present new challenges and opportunities not only for communicating inside and outside of their language communities but also for understanding the nature of social relationships in the university. Meanwhile, these relationships are important for success within higher education, and given the fact that email is widely used to establish and maintain those relationships, so it is essential for students to be able to use this genre. The use of email as a means of communication is a form of interaction between academics and students. For Gan (2013) the interaction between non-native students and their professors, who are scholars with higher knowledge of language use, presents a chance for the students to exercise their learning and the desired language. As a result, email interaction between L2 students and the faculty impacts the development of writing skills among such learners (Gan, 2013).

Stephens, Houser and Cowan (2009) present that the interaction between students and teachers are formal and has a pattern that is based on and follows specific conventions and appropriateness in language. According to Filippone & Servinski (2016) poor email creates a communication conflict between professors and students. Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993)

attempted to analyze different genre in order to provide the language learners with explicit models of particular communicative activities.

I.2.4. Academic email conventions and linguistic features

Galabi (2011) states that research on email is still limited, and studies on email conventions are few, but several do exist. Genre-based writing as a product or type of writing shows its distinctive features as shown by its organization, rhetoric structure, and or linguistic features, purpose, etc. (Hyland, 2003; Knapp & Watkins, 2005; Pardiyano, 2007; Disgeyasa, 2015). Additionally, they also state that the characteristics of genre-based writing consist of a) certain communicative purpose b) certain rhetorical structure or generic structure and c) certain linguistic features. Lucas (2007, p.61) “communication styles and conventions are typically shared in speech communities and learned by new apprentices over a course of years”. However, email as a relatively recent development, is not yet governed by clear conventions and expectations. Moreover, professional email conventions should observe politeness and correct grammar usage because these factors lead to a possible misunderstanding of the sender and the recipient (Ren, 2016).

I.3. Students’ Views on using TAM Model

I.3.1. Definition of the concept TAM Model

The technology acceptance model (TAM) introduced by Davis (1986), is one of the most widely used models to explain user acceptance behavior. This model is grounded in social psychology theory in general and the theory of reasoned action (TRA) in particular (Fishbein, & Azjen, 1975). The TAM was proposed by Davis (1989) to explain the factors that influence the acceptance and use of technology.

Davis (1989) conducted numerous experiments to validate TAM by using PEOU and PU as two independent variables and system usage as the dependent correlated with both self-

reported current usage and self-predicted future practitioners and academicians to identify the antecedents to user acceptance behavior. TAM was extensively tested using different sample sizes and user groups within or across organizations, analyzed with different statistical tools, and compared with competing models (Geffen, 2000). It was applied to many different end-user technologies such as email (Adams, Nelson & Todd, 1992. Davis, 1989). Word processors (Adams, Nelson & Todd, 1992. Davis, Bagozzi&Warshaw, 1989). Groupware (Taylor & Todd, 1995), spreadsheets (Agrawal, Sambamurthy& Stain, 2000; Mthieson, 1991), and World Wide Web (Lederer, Maupin, Sena&Zhuang, 2000). Some studies also extended TAM by including additional predictors such as gender, culture, experience, and self-efficacy. Overall, researchers tend to suggest that TAM is valid, parsimonious, and robust (Venkatesh& Davis, 2000).

Correspondingly, Davis (1986, 1989) introduced the constructs in the original TAM (see figure 01) as follows: perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), attitude, behavioral intention to use and actual use. Among the constructs, PU and PEOU form an end-user’s beliefs on a technology and therefore predict his or her attitude toward the technology, which in turn predicts its acceptance.

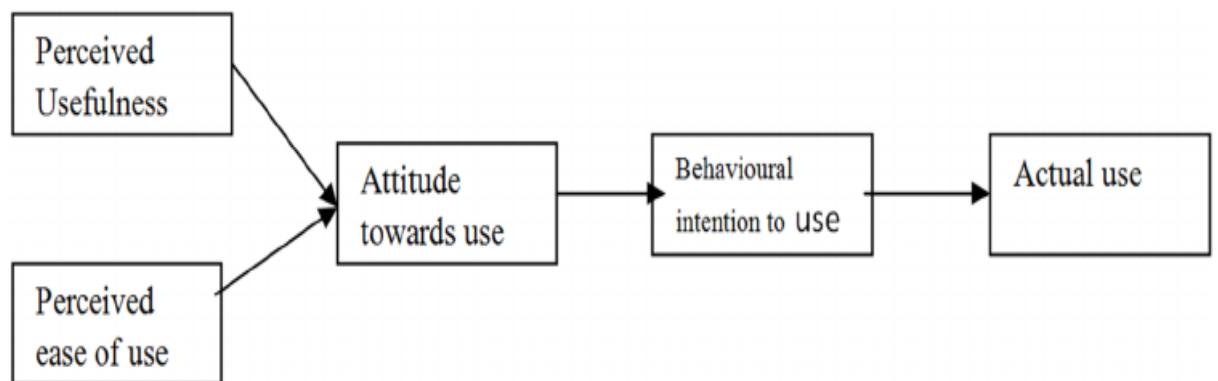


Figure 01: The Original Technology Acceptance Model. Davis (1986, 1989).

I.3.2. Components of TAM Model

Technology acceptance model consists of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude towards use, and behavioral intention to use.

- a. Perceived Usefulness (PU)** It is defined by Davis (1989) as “The degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology will enhance his or her job performance” (p.320). According de Bandura (1982) defined PU as the individual’s perception of the extent to which the use a given technology improves performance. Robey (1979) added that PU was operationalized based on evidence confirming the effect of system performance expectancy on system usage.
- b. Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)** It is described as “The degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology would be free from effort” (Davis, 1989, p.320). In other words, it is the user’s expectation that the target technology would be used effortlessly. That is to say; This construct derived from the self-efficacy concept, which refers to a situation-specific belief about how well someone can execute actions for the prospective task (Davis,1989; Bandura, 1982). It was suggested that self-efficacy had a predictive role in decision making about technology use (Hill, Smith & Mann, 1987).

I.4. Teachers’ Attitudes and Views towards First Year Students’ Emails

I.4.1. Teachers’ Views using TPACK Model

I.4.1.1. Definition of TPACK Model

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK) was introduced to the educational research field as a theoretical framework for understanding teacher knowledge required for effective technology integration (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). The TPCK framework acronym was renamed TPACK (pronounced “tee-pack”) for the purpose of

making it easier to remember and to form a more integrated whole for the three kinds of knowledge addressed: technology, pedagogy, and content (Thompson & Mishra, 2007-2008). The TPACK Model framework builds on Schulman's construct of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) to include technology as situated within content and pedagogical knowledge. TPACK is a framework that introduces the relationships and the complexities between all three basic components of knowledge (technology, pedagogy, and content) (Koehler & Mishra, 2008; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). At the intersection of these three knowledge types is an intuitive understanding of teaching content with appropriate pedagogical methods and technologies.

I.4.1.2. Components of TPACK Model

Seven components (see Figure 02) are included in the TPACK framework. They are defined as the following:

First, **Technology Knowledge (TK)**: Technology knowledge refers to the knowledge about various technologies, ranging from low-tech technologies such as pencil and paper to digital technologies such as the Internet, digital video, interactive whiteboards, and software programs. Second, **Content Knowledge (CK)** the "knowledge about actual subject matter that is to be learned or taught" (Mishra & Koehler, 2006, p.1026). Teachers must know about the content they are going to teach and how the nature of knowledge is different for various content areas. Third, **Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)** refers to the methods and processes of teaching and includes knowledge in classroom management, assessment, lesson plan development, and student learning.

Fourth, **Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)** refers to the content knowledge that deals with the teaching process (Schulman, 1986). Pedagogical content knowledge is different for various content areas, as it blends both content and pedagogy with the goal being to develop better teaching practices in the content areas. Fifth, **Technological Content**

Knowledge (TCK) refers to the knowledge of how technology can create new representations for specific content. It suggests that teachers understand that, by using a specific technology, they can change the way learners practice and understand concepts in a specific content area.

Sixth, **Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK)** refers to the knowledge of how various technologies can be used in teaching, and to understanding that using technology may change the way teachers teach.

Seventh and last, **Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)** refers to the knowledge required by teachers for integrating technology into their teaching in any content area. Teachers have intuitive understanding of the complex interplay between the three basic components of knowledge (CK, PK, TK) by teaching content using appropriate pedagogical methods and technologies.

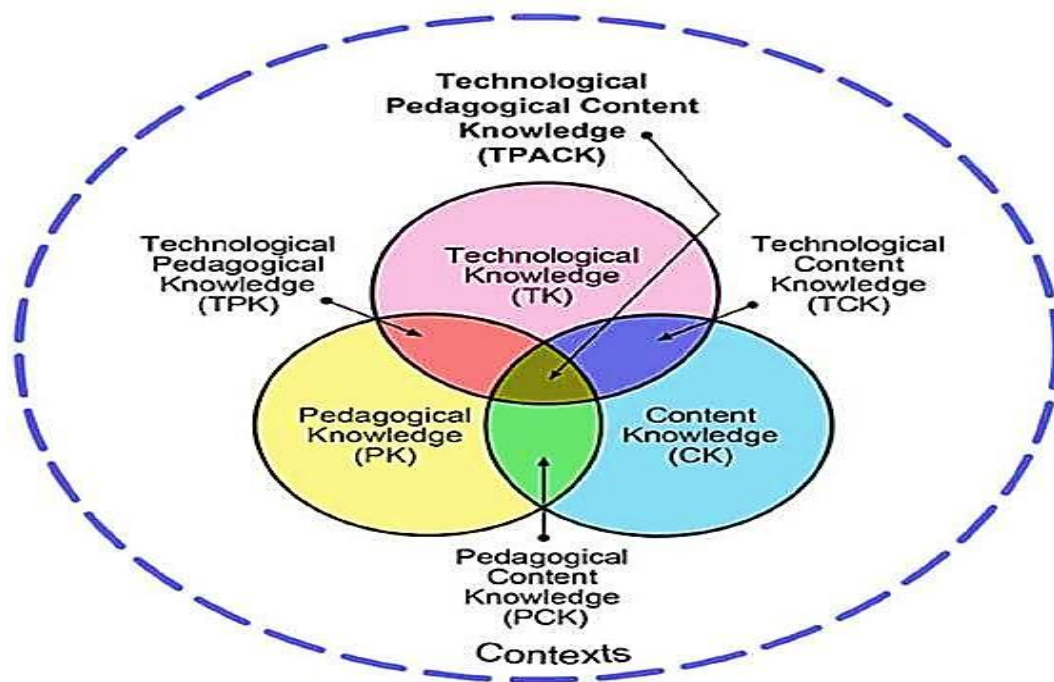


Figure 02: Components of the TPACK Framework (Graphic framework from <http://tpack.org>). Shulman's (1986, 1987)

I.5. The Role of Academic Emails in Higher Education

As a means of organizational communication, email has been noted for its many advantages such as it lessens usage of paper, removes time delays, allows the sender to convey messages to a list of specific individuals and overcome physical and situational factors associated with face-to-face communications, scheduled meetings and scattered work environments (Ratchukool, 2001; Davidavičienė, Pabedinskaite, & Davidavicius, 2017; Raudeliūviene, Davidavičienė, Tvaronaviciene, & Jonuska, 2018). Robbins and Judge (2017) also outlines some of the advantages of email such as they can be quickly and cheaply written, edited, sent and stored.

For two past decades, Judd (2010) claimed that e-mail has become the preferred online communication channel for both formal and informal discussions in professional contexts such as universities.

Chase and Clegg (2011) believed that adding email into learning environments allowed improving communication between the academic community to be simpler and faster, for example, the use of online and electronic methods for the admission, registration, and key-in process for courses. This could be a less scary communication tool for students who have problems interacting in groups. Possibly because, as time passed, there were fewer and fewer face-to-face exchanges between The School and The University staff in furthering ongoing planning and implementation: email communications were relied upon too heavily. The higher education professionals who took part in Chase and Clegg's (2011) study stressed that, for complex systems such as this, face-to-face exchanges were vitally important.

Early studies from the late 1980s focused on the utilization of email as a research tool, user perception and adoption of email in instructional settings, and the effects of email communication on users (Chase & Clegg, 2011). In 1997, it was estimated that 17.5 million

adults in the United States used the internet for medical information, and by the late 1990s, physicians were beginning to use email the private, corporate, health care, and higher education sectors incorporate email as a foundational mode of modern communication (Chase & Clegg, 2011). As such, email has become ubiquitous in higher education and has greatly improved the networking and collaborating capabilities of faculty, staff, and students.

Chase and Clegg (2011), although there are many positive benefits to email in an academic setting, this form of communication can present challenges related to workload and compromised relationships. Both professionals and academics in higher education are overwhelmed by the number of emails they receive and the pressure to respond to the emails immediately.

I.6. Theoretical Framework

I.6.1. John Swales' Genre Analysis Model (1990)

The created research space (CARS Model) was developed by John Swales based on the analysis of journal articles. His model attempts to explain and describe the organizational pattern of writing the introduction to scholarly research studies. In his model, swales' proposes three moves, accompanied by specific steps. These moves and steps can be used as template for writing the introduction to own social sciences papers.

- **Move 01: Establishing Territory**

This move aims at demonstrating that the general area of research is important, critical, problematic, and worthy of investigation. The steps are the following:

Step 01: Claiming Centrality: This step is about highlighting the importance of the research topic; providing evidence to support why the topic is important to study.

Step 02: Making topic generalizations: This provides background information about the current state of knowledge.

Step 03: Reviewing Items of Previous Research: Aims at surveying previous studies done in the topic or synthesizing prior research that further supports the need to study the research problem.

- **Move 02: Establishing a Niche**

The present move refers to making a clear argument that a particular piece of research is important and possesses value. The steps of the present move are:

Step 1-a: Counterclaiming: is about introducing an opposing view point.

Step 1-b: Indicating a Gap: this step aims at developing the research problem by identifying a gap or understudied area of the literature.

Step 1-c: Question Raising: This involves presenting key questions about consequences of gaps in prior research that will be addressed by the study.

Step 1-d: Continuing Tradition: Means extending prior research to expand or clarify a research problem.

- **Move 03: Occupying the Niche**

The final move to announce is a means by which the study will contribute new knowledge or new understanding in contrast to prior research on the topic. This is also where you describe the remaining organizational structure of the paper. The steps involved in this move are:

Step 1-a: Outlining Purposes: This refers to explaining clearly the objectives of your study.

Step 1-b: Announcing Present Research: Describing the purpose of your study in terms of what the research is going to do or accomplish.

Step 2: Announcing Principal Findings: This step involves presenting a brief, general summary of key findings written.

Step 3: Indicating Article Structure: This step states how the remainder of your paper is organized.

Move 1	Establishing a Territory
Step 1	Claiming centrality
Step 2	And/or Making topic generalization
Step 3	Reviewing items of previous research
Move 2	Establishing a Niche
Step 1 A	Counter-claiming
Step 1 B	Or indicating a gap
Step 1 C	Or question-raising
Step 1 D	Or continuing a tradition
Move 3	Occupying the Niche
Step 1 A	Outlining purposes
Step 1 B	Or announcing present research
Step 2	Announcing principal findings
Step 3	Indicating a RA (Research Article) structure

Table 01: The CARS Model (Adapted from Swales, 1990, p.141)

I.6.2. TAM and TPACK Models as an Integrated Approach to John Swales’ Genre Analysis Model

Swales' Genre Analysis model focuses on understanding written communication by examining its social purpose and the recurring elements that structure it. TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) and TPACK (Technological, Pedagogical and Content Knowledge) are frameworks from a different domain, technology integration in education. While directly applying TAM and TPACK to Swales' model would not be a perfect fit. In this way, Swales'

model provides the foundation for understanding the genre (and TPACK informs the teacher on how to best rank technology to facilitate students' engagement with that genre.

TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) might be less relevant in this structure because it focuses on individual factors influencing technology adoption, which is not the main concern of Swales. Yet, Swales' model can be applied to various genres beyond academic writing.

Overall, while TAM and TPACK aren't directly integrated into Swales' model, they can be complementary tools, particularly in educational contexts where technology is used to teach specific writing genres.

In the domain of written communication analysis, John Swales' genre analysis model stands out for its focus on resolving social purposes and persisting structural elements. While obviously separate domains.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Technological, Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) frameworks hold value in educational settings that support technology to teach genre-specific writing. The two mentioned frameworks might be connected as the following: Swales' model, when applied to a genre like research papers, reveals the structure (Introduction, Literature Review etc.) and the communicative purpose of each section. Then, a TPACK-skilled teacher can strategically integrate technology to strengthen this learning process. For instance, an online tool could be implemented to guide students through the literature review stage. Approximately, Swales' model provides the genre's blueprint, while TPACK informs teachers on how to best use technology to facilitate students' engagement with that genre. It's important to note that TAM, which explores individual factors influencing technology adoption, might not be directly applicable here. Furthermore, Swales' model's power extends beyond academic writing, encompassing a wide range of genres.

In conclusion, while not directly integrated into Swales' model, TAM and TPACK can serve as complementary tools, particularly in educational environments where technology empowers the teaching of specific writing genres.

Conclusion

The present chapter has reviewed the major previous theoretical concepts related to our topic which is a genre analysis of emails written by first-year students in the Department of English at MMUTO, that comprises the history of email and its types, email as a genre and academic email conventions and linguistic features. Then, incorporating both elements of TPACK and TAM Models. At last, it has provided the theoretical framework adopted in this dissertation which is John Swales' Model (1990). By integrating those models, we aim to develop a significant understanding of how technology influences email genre use among first-year university students.

Chapter II: Research Design

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology and research tools that we have opted for our investigation in order to answer the research questions asked in the general introduction. The research design consists of two main parts. The first part is entitled “procedures of data collection”, it discusses the research method we select for our study, the setting, the participants, and the instruments of data collection. The second part is called “procedures of data analysis”, it deals with describing the data analysis procedures used to analyse the data gathered from the collection instruments.

II.1. Procedures of Data Collection

II.1.1. Research Method

To carry out our study, a mixed-methods has been selected. Indeed, the study combines both qualitative and quantitative methods for both data collection and analysis. The selection of quantitative method is to gather a huge amount of numerical data by quantifying results of the closed-ended items of the questionnaire and the results of email genre conventions within students’ emails. While, the use of qualitative method permits us to gather data from the open-ended items of the teachers’ interview and, the qualitative results of the corpus of emails which are then analysed by the use of qualitative content analysis.

II.1.2. Setting and Research Participants

The investigation is carried out in the Department of English at MMUTO. The participants involved in this research study are first-year students. For the impossibility to work with all students of the department of English (L2, L3) a random sampling for first-year students is selected. Thus, we selected thirty (30) first-year students to answer our questionnaire. Since first-year students are new comers at the university; we observed that

first-year students lack the habit of composing an academic email. Some of the teachers of the Department of English also participants of our study. A convenience sampling is then selected, so to mean that, we have selected Three (03) teachers who teach first-year students and those who teach subjects including study skills, linguistics, and ESP that are related to our topic.

II.1.3. Instruments of Data Collection

In order to collect data related to our study, we have used two (03) main research tools. We administered a questionnaire to first-year students and an interview was conducted with teachers who teach ESP, Study Skills, and Linguistics for first-year students; we carried also with the analysis of the corpus of Thirty-Three (33) emails written by first-year students.

A. Students' Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument, consisting of a series of items, designed to gather information from respondents about their attitudes, experiences, or opinions on a specific topic. According to Brown (2001,p.6) a questionnaire is “any written instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from existing answers”. Put differently, a questionnaire is a data collection tool that researchers use to collect either quantitative or qualitative data or information, where the respondents are opted to answer the questions by selecting or choosing a limited set of suggested responses that is called “closed-ended items”, which may include: yes or no items, multiple choice questions, likert scales, and rank ordering. On the other hand, open-ended items allow respondents to express themselves freely without any bounds by using their own words and style. Many scholars defined questionnaire differently. For instance, according to Mathers, Fox, & Hunn (2007), a questionnaire is a very convenient way of collecting useful comparable data from a large number of individuals (p.19) .Besides,

Kafof, Dan and Dietz (2008) define the questionnaire “ as a series of survey questions that respondents read and answer by their own. It has to be designed so as to ensure that the respondents can accurately complete the survey without assistance or help” (pp.119-204).

The questionnaire we carry out for our research investigation is addressed precisely to thirty (30) first-year students. First and foremost, we introduce the questionnaire with a short introduction including the purpose of conducting that questionnaire, also ensuring complete confidentiality and anonymity to the participants. Then, three (03) sections are arranged as follows: the first section “Email Writing Habits, genre awareness and perception of genre conventions”. The section aims at getting a clear and comprehensive idea about the participants’ habits and their degree of awareness of email technology and email genre conventions. Then, the second section is entitled “Time and Purpose effectiveness in students’ emails”; it provides students’ opinions and choices about when and why they send emails to their teachers. The last section, “Students’ Challenges, training and support” aims at gathering data on the challenges students face when they compose their academic emails to their teacher, and exploring the participants’ agreement and views about teachers’ feedback and support in the improvement of their email skills.

In terms of the number of items, the questionnaire consisted of eighteen (18) questions. It is made up of various types of items including five (05) likert scales where the respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they ‘agree’ or ‘disagree’, very difficult or not, very important or not, and ‘very comfortable’ or ‘very uncomfortable’. Two (02) Yes/No items; we asked the respondents to choose one of the answer choices, according to their opinions. Besides, six multiple choice questions are listed, where our participants are intended to select one or more response options. Indeed, we included three (03) clarification questions. Thus, our questions obtained two parts; we gave a chance to first-year students to explain, justify, or specify about a particular idea. Moreover, we added one (01) rank ordering item, where we

provide the respondents the list of items, and required to order them according to their importance by assigning a number to each item. And one (01) specific open question, in this item the participants were free to answer the questions based on their own ideas and thoughts.

B. Piloting the Questionnaire

Prior to the final administration of the questionnaire to all the thirty (30) selected participants, a pilot study is conducted in order to pre-test and check the clarity, and validity of the items of our questionnaire. Five (05) copies of the questionnaire are distributed randomly to five students of first-year level at the Department of English. We asked them to freely answer the questions designed and say if there are any difficulties or something ambiguous items. More to the point, our objective is to ensure that all the items are understandable and easy to answer. As a result, the participants viewed the whole questionnaire as an organized one, and the items were transparent, and intelligible and free from ambiguity. We neither add any question, nor omit any other one. Nevertheless, we have adjusted the sections from four (04) to three (03) by combining the first (01) section entitled “Email Writing Habits” with the third one named “Genre Awareness and Perception of Genre Conventions” so that it becomes the first section labelled “Email Writing Habits, Genre Awareness and perception of Genre Conventions”. Obviously, the fourth section “students challenges, training and support” becomes the third one, and the second did not change. Yet, we retain the same order and number of questions.

C. Corpus of the Study

A corpus is defined as a large collection of written or spoken material stored electronically, which is used to study and analyse how language is used. A corpus has a great importance and serves a rich source of language data, and providing more detailed insights. In our investigation, “a genre analysis of emails”, the selection of corpus is required. So, our genre analysis of emails written by first-year students relies on a corpus of thirty-three (33)

emails. The chosen corpus size of thirty ones enables a comprehensive examination of the communication patterns within the student population's emails, and this allows us to explore the variety of ways that first year students express themselves via email exchanges at our university. To safe-guard the privacy of participants and adhere to ethical research practices, we obtain the email corpus through student consent which is a face to face one by obtaining permission from first-year students to use their emails for our genre analysis, this ensures that they are aware about our research and agree that we use their emails for an academic purpose. Moreover, the corpus consists of types of emails namely inquiry, request and apology ones that are the most used by first-year students in our department.

D. Teachers' Interview

Another research tool we have used for our investigation is the interview. The interview is a type of data collection instrument that the researcher uses to gather as much information as possible about individual's insights, experiences, opinions, and beliefs on a particular topic. Accordingly, an interview can take three main forms: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews. The structured interviews have predetermined questions and asked in predetermined order. Unlike the structured interviews, the unstructured ones are more flexible that they may lead the interviewer to unpredictable directions and more spontaneity. There are, in fact, the semi-structured interviews. They are a blend or a combination of the aforementioned types (the structured and the unstructured ones). While the interviewer has a general plan for what they want to ask, then the questions do not have to follow a particular order.

For this research, the structured interview is adopted. We have arranged in advance a set of nine (9) predetermined questions to three (03) teachers of first-year students in the department of English at MMUTO. Thus, we have respected time and length of the pre-prepared questions, and asked them in order to the interviewees. In this part, we have

distributed the instrument in two forms; two (2) teachers have contributed in the form of synchronous online interview (via email), and one (1) via in-person interview.

II.2. Procedures of Data Analysis

II.2.1. Descriptive Statistical Method

Quantitative data analysis is the procedure of analysing numerical data using statistical tools. For William (2006), descriptive statistics are generally used to display quantitative descriptions in an uncomplicated structure. In our investigation, we intend to use this method because it is the most appropriate for the analysis and interpretation of the closed-ended items of first year students' questionnaire, and to quantify the corpus of emails written by first-year students.

II.2.2. Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis is a data analysis method that aims at interpreting and analysing qualitative data that result from open-ended questions, and the method that is not based on quantifying data or numerical data. QCA is defined by Hsieh and Shannon (2005,p.1278) as “a research method for the subjective interpretation process of the content of text data through systematic classification process of coding and interpreting themes or patterns.” Thus, to analyse our open-ended questions of teachers' interview, qualitative content analysis method (QCA) is selected. The selection of this method allows us to have a deeper understanding and a deeper interpretation of teachers' opinions and experiences towards the use of emails by first year students. Moreover, we chose to employ qualitative content analysis in order to analyse the genre of emails written by first-year students. So, to delve deeper into the genre conventions used by first-year students, we employed a directed qualitative content analysis (QCA) approach informed by John Swales' Genre Analysis Model (1990). This allowed us to systematically identify genre-specific elements within the

email corpus by providing insights into how students structure and communicate through email at our university more precisely department of English.

Conclusion

The present chapter has highlighted the research design used in our study. First it has presented the method used for the study. Second, the description of the setting and the participants of the study are provided. Then, the instruments of data collection are presented including the questionnaire for first-year students and the interview for teachers, and the corpus of emails. Lastly, data analysis has been thoroughly presented and described to get a broad picture of our research work, and have clear answers to our research questions.

Chapter III: Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

The present chapter is about the findings of our research study. It presents the results gathered from the selected research tools of our investigation, including a questionnaire addressed to first-year students, and an interview to teachers of the Department of English, and a corpus of emails. The aim of this chapter is to present the results of emails, written by first-year students of the Department of English at Mouloud Maameri’s University of Tizi-Ouzou, teachers’ interview, and the results of the corpus. The findings of the questionnaire are presented by percentages and implemented in diagrams, pie charts, and one table, in addition to the results of the interview are presented qualitatively which is used to answer the open-ended items. Regarding the results of the corpus are presented both quantitatively and qualitatively. This part is composed of three (03) sections. The first section is devoted to the presentation of the results of the questionnaire. The second (02) one deals with the presentation of the findings of teachers’ interview, and the third (03) section is concerned with the presentation of the results of the corpus of emails.

III.1. Findings of First-year Students’ Questionnaire

Section One: *E-mail writing habits, genre awareness and perception of genre conventions*

Q1: How comfortable do you feel when writing e-mails for academic purposes?

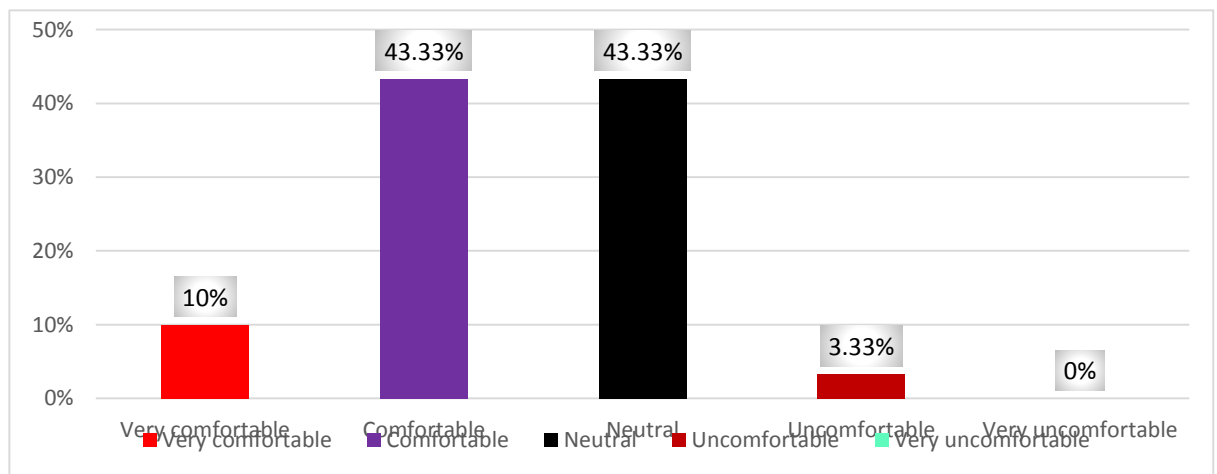


Diagram 01: Students’ comfortability when writing their academic emails

From the data gathered, the majority of students are both comfortable and neutral at the same time (43.33%), some of them (10%) are very comfortable, only a minority (3.33%) are uncomfortable when they write their academic emails. None of them has mentioned the last proposition, which is very uncomfortable.

Q2: Do you think that sending e-mails to your teachers is crucial during your learning process? If yes, please specify.

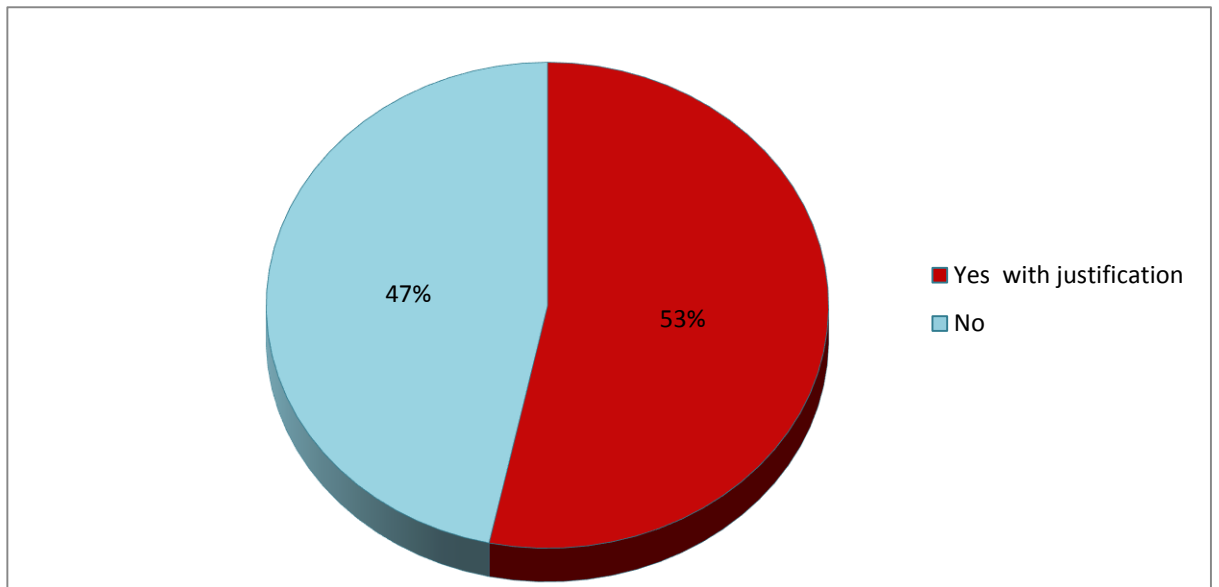


Diagram02: Students' views about emails sending cruciality during the learning process.

As shown in the diagram, the majority of students (53%) consider it as being “crucial”, and the larger part of first-year students have justified their answers by saying that it is crucial to email their teachers during the learning process so that it fosters their relationship with their teachers by asking for help, more clarifications about a particular lesson or home works, requesting guidance and feedback. The rest of students (47%) claim that it does not matter and it is unnecessary to address their teachers during the learning process

Q3: How often do you revise your e-mails before sending them?

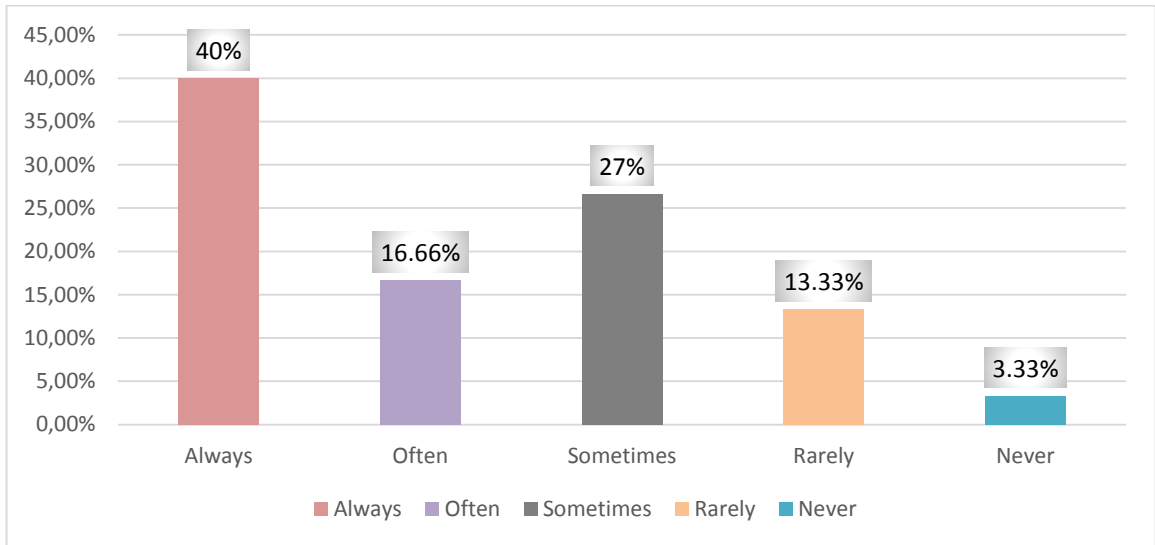


Diagram 03: Frequency of emails’ revision by first year students

As for the frequency of emails’ revision by first year students, the majority of the respondents (40%) “Always” revise their emails before sending them. Few of them (16.67%) claim that they do this “sometimes”. (26.66%) of first year students who say that they “often” review their emails before sending them. Just one of the students whose answer is the last proposition, which is “never”.

Q4: How familiar are you with these types of e-mails?

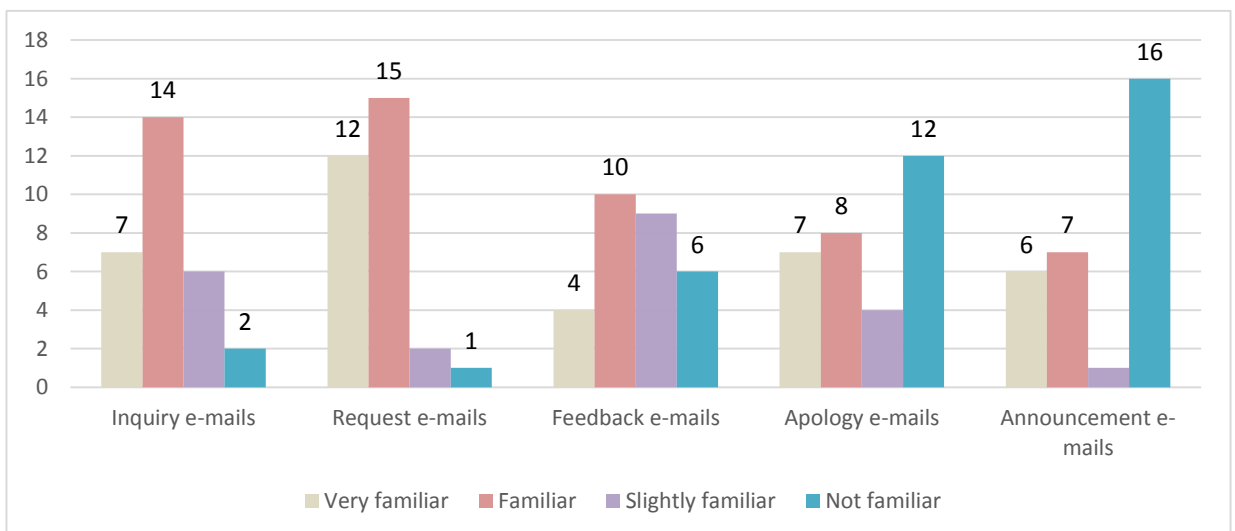


Diagram 04: Frequency of students’ familiarity with the types of emails

From diagram 04, the majority of first year students are familiar with both request and inquiry e-mails, and the minority of the participants are very familiar with request e-mails' type, others are slightly familiar with it, and few of them are not familiar at all. Some of the respondents are both very familiar with feedback, apology and announcement e-mails, others are familiar with the three listed types. Only few of them are not familiar with the two first types of e-mails and a large number of the students are not familiar with the rest of e-mails types.

Q5: When composing your academic e-mails, what are the typical components you include?

This question is a clarification one by which we gave first Year students the opportunity to rank the typical components to include when they compose their academic emails. The data gathered from this question reveal that the majority of students rank those elements in order of importance from greetings to polite closing. Regarding the rest of students, have just selected those components and did not ranked them.

Q6:-Do you think that using a formal language is a difficult task when addressing your teachers? If yes, explain why?

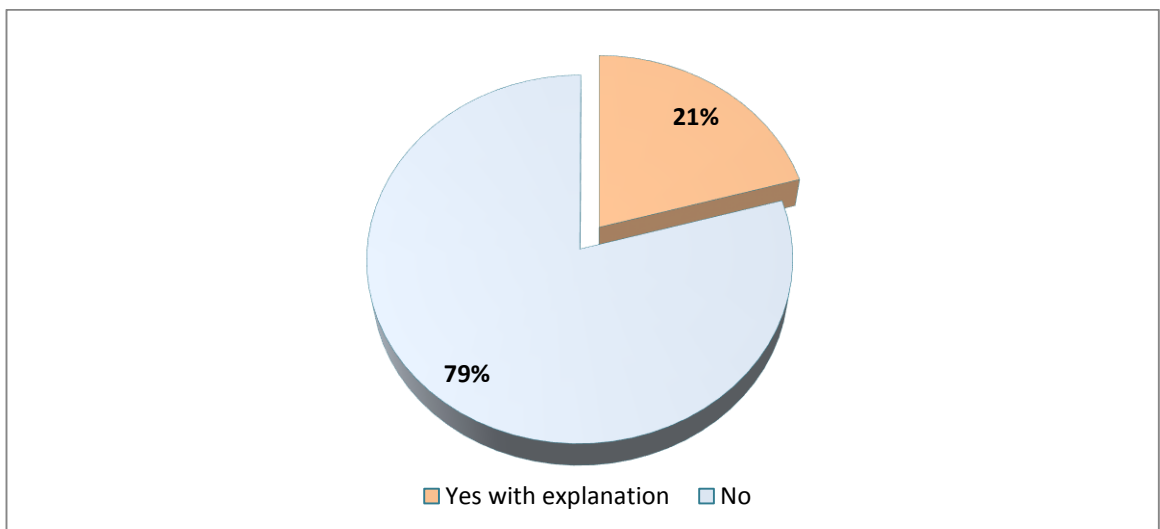


Diagram 05: Students' responses about the difficulty of formal language

As diagram 05 shows, the majority of students (79%) have answered by “yes”. They explain their answer by saying that they face difficulties to use a formal language in their emails due to their habit with the casual language employment in everyday life, also because of the lack of grammar, vocabulary and spelling usage skills. The minority (21%) of them answered by “no”, and affirm that it is an easy task for them.

Q7: Among all these elements, select those you think are a part of genre conventions of an academic email?

This question is a multiple choice one, the majority of first year students have selected the appropriate elements that are a part of genre conventions of an academic email. Only few of them have chosen the inadequate components among them: the casual language, neglecting punctuation, the use of abbreviations, and intentional misspellings.

Section two: Time and purpose effectiveness in students’ e-mails

Q8: What is the appropriate time to send an e-mail for your teachers?

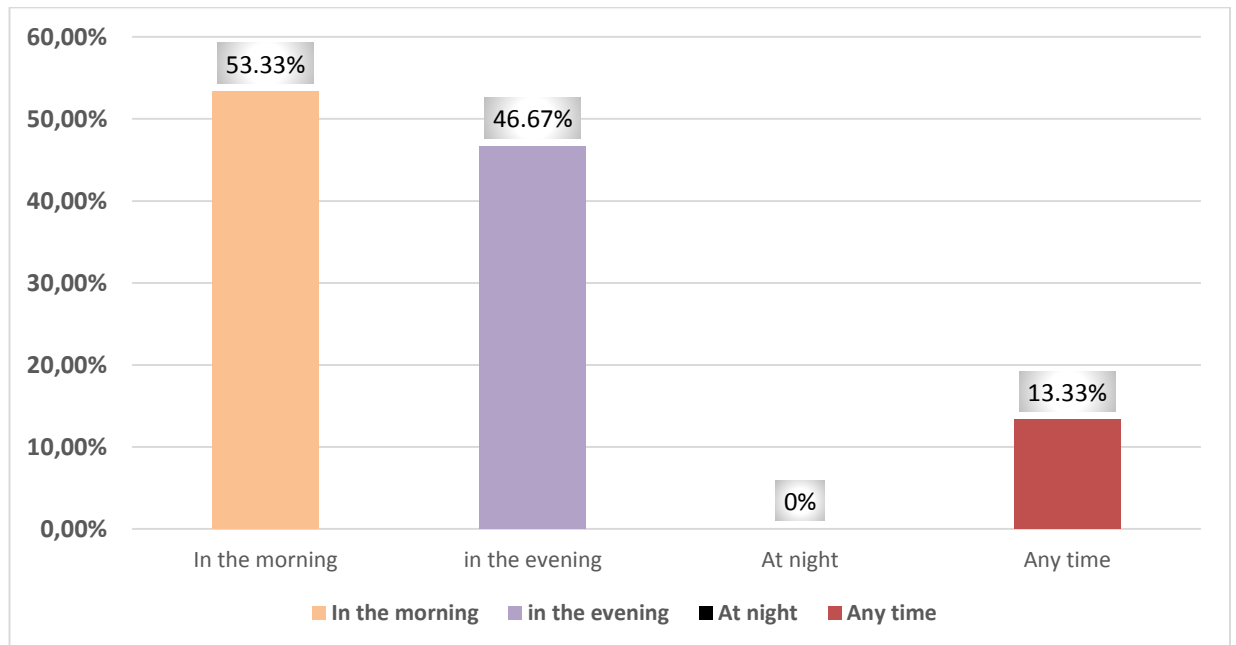


Diagram 06: Students’ choice about email sending time

On the basis of the data gathered, the majority of students (53.33%) prefer to email their teachers in the morning. On the other hand, (46.67%) of them send their emails in the evening. None of first year students send them at night, and only some of the participants send their emails any time.

Q9: How often do you send e-mails for your teachers?

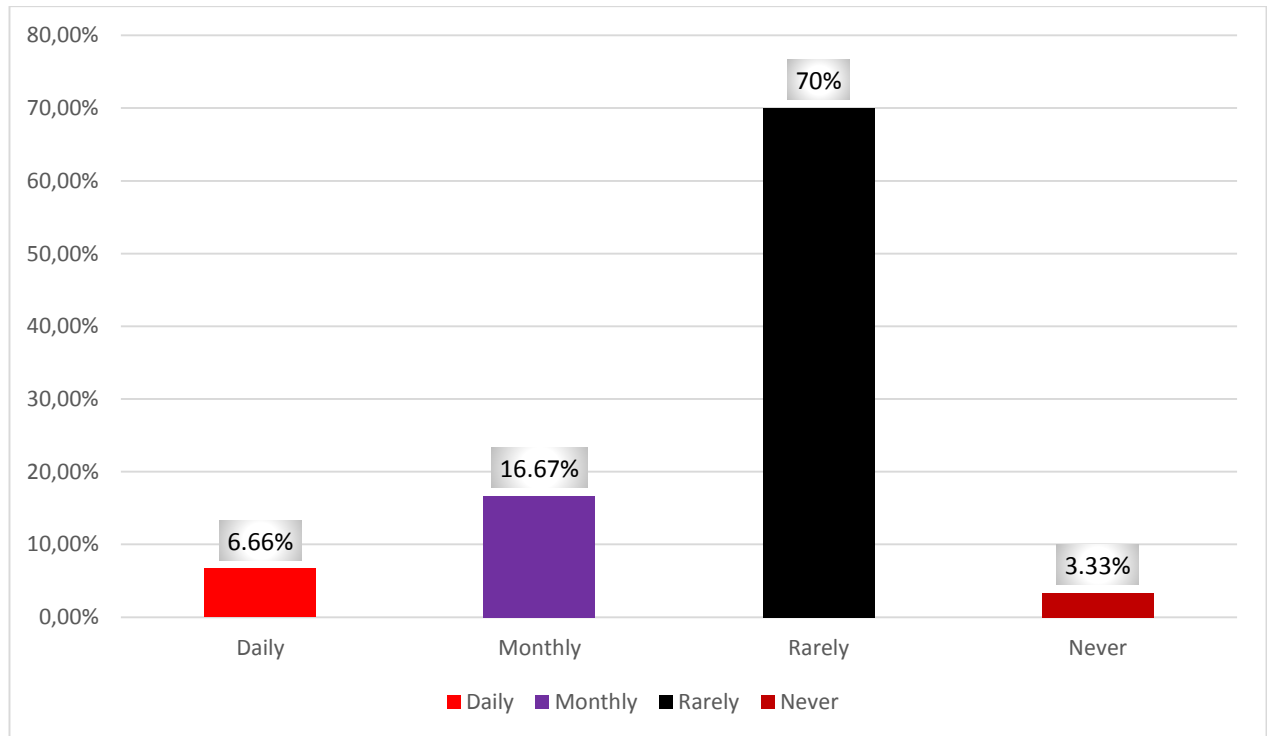


Diagram 07: Frequency of students' habits about email sending time

Diagram 07 illustrates how frequently students email their teachers. A large number (70%) of participants “rarely” send emails to their teachers. Five of them (16.67%) prefer to address their teachers “monthly”. Then, two (6.67%)of them select the proposition named “daily”. In the last place, only one participant say that he has never send an email to his teacher.

Q10: On average, how much time do you spend when composing an academic e-mail?

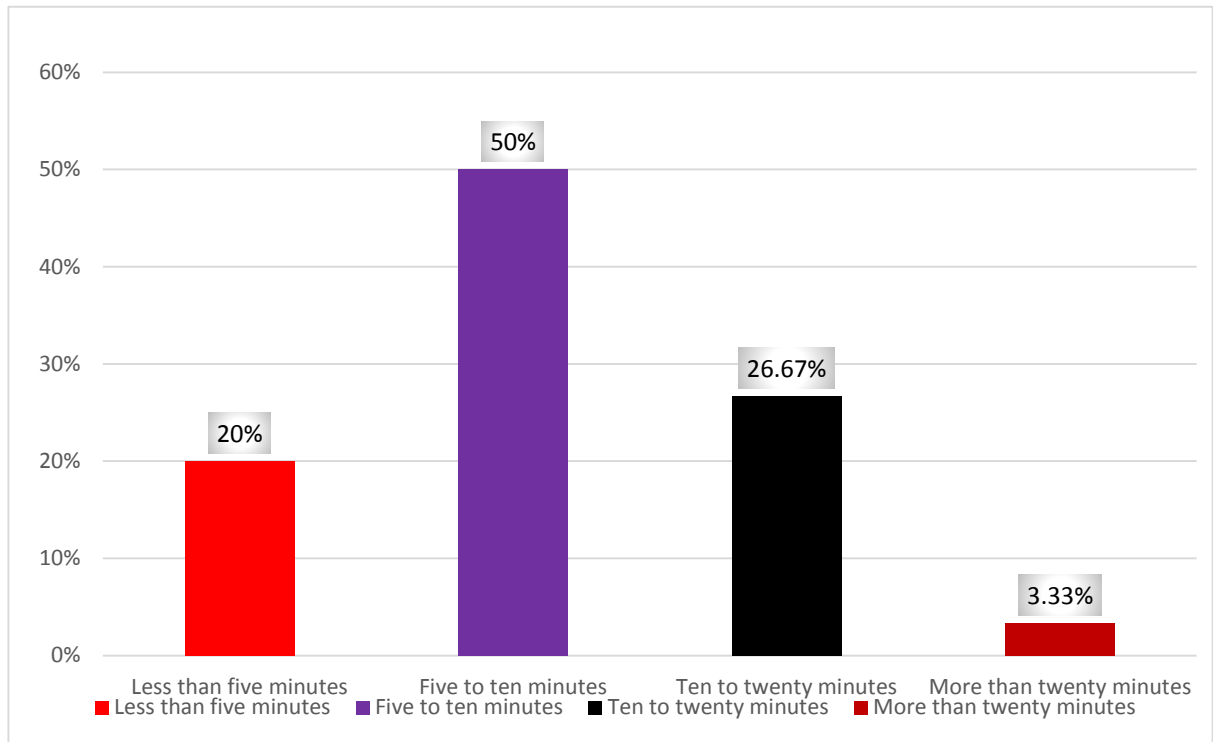


Diagram 08: Students’ length of time while writing their emails

Diagram 08 indicates that 6 (20%) of the participants spend less than five minutes to write an e-mail; However, half (50%) of them spend five to ten minutes. Then, eight (26.67%) of the respondents claim that they spent ten to twenty minutes. Lastly, there is only one participant who selects the last option which is “more than twenty minutes.”

Q11: When do you think it is necessary to send an e-mail to your teachers, and why?

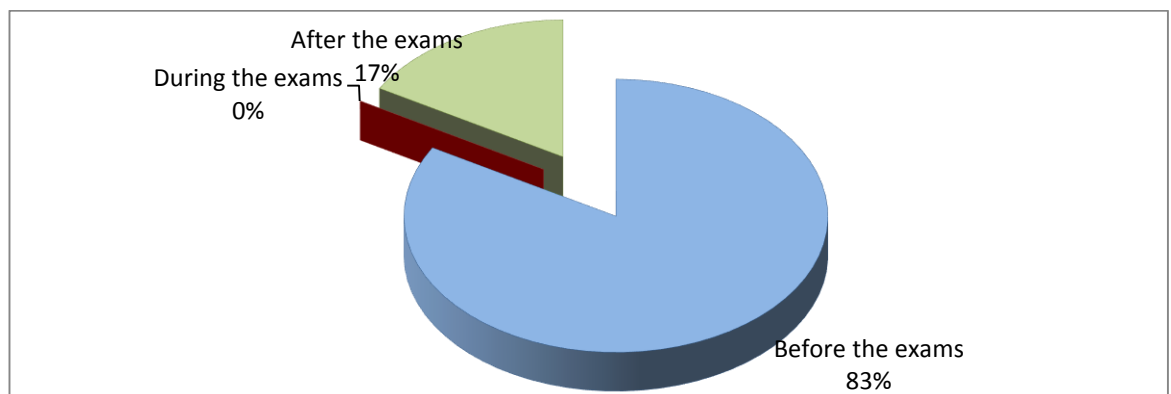


Diagram 09: Students’ period views when sending their emails

The results gathered from question 11 show that the majority (83%) of the respondents claim that they address their teachers before the exams. Their justifications are as the following: some students prefer to address their teachers before the exams to ask them about something like providing them more clarifications about a particular lesson, and helping them. Regarding the proposition named “after exams” is only selected by 5 (17%) of the participants. They justified their answers by asking their teachers about their marks, they also claim about calculation errors or mistakes made in their exam papers. Then, none of the participants prefer to send their emails during the exams.

Q12: What are your purposes when sending an academic e-mails to your teachers?

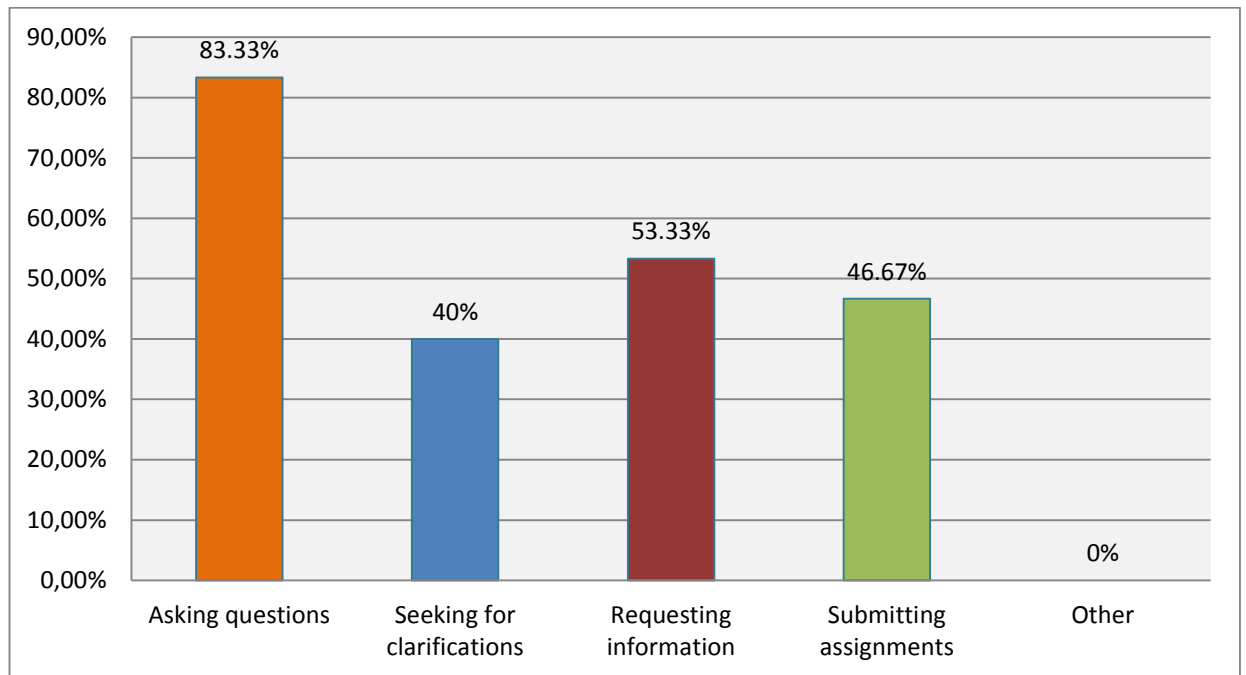


Diagram 10: Students’ purposes when sending their academic emails

Diagram 10, illustrates the purposes of students when sending their academic emails. A large number (83.33%) of first year students address their teachers for asking questions. (40%) of them to seek for clarifications. Indeed, there are 16 students who request for information (53.33%). Meanwhile, 14 (46.67%) who selected submitting assignments’ proposition. However, there are two participants who specified and added other propositions.

One participant proves that his purpose of sending an email to his teacher is to ask about his grades and marks. The second one, address his teacher when he misses a test and want to know if the teacher will reschedule it or not.

Remark:

There are students who select all the fourth proposed elements namely asking questions, seeking for clarification, requesting information and submitting assignments.

Section three: *Students' challenges, training and support*

Q13: What are the main challenges you face when composing your academic e-mails?

The aim of this open-ended question is to know exactly what challenges do first year students face when composing their academic emails. According to their answers, the majority of them find difficulties in terms of politeness, formality and academic writing as a whole. The participants claim that due to their lack of vocabulary, choice of appropriate and adequate terms or words is a demanding task. In addition, for them it is difficult to form a well-structured email with correct and complete sentences that are free from grammatical errors, and correct tenses where they are unfamiliar with, like the present, past, and future tense. Moreover, other participants confirm that they do not have a full mastery of punctuation, so that; they definitively neglect it. Few students say that they are afraid of making errors to bother the recipients or the teachers. Otherwise, there are participants who assert that they do not face any challenges when they write their academic emails.

Q14: How difficult is to include proper grammar, correct spelling and formality when you address your teachers?

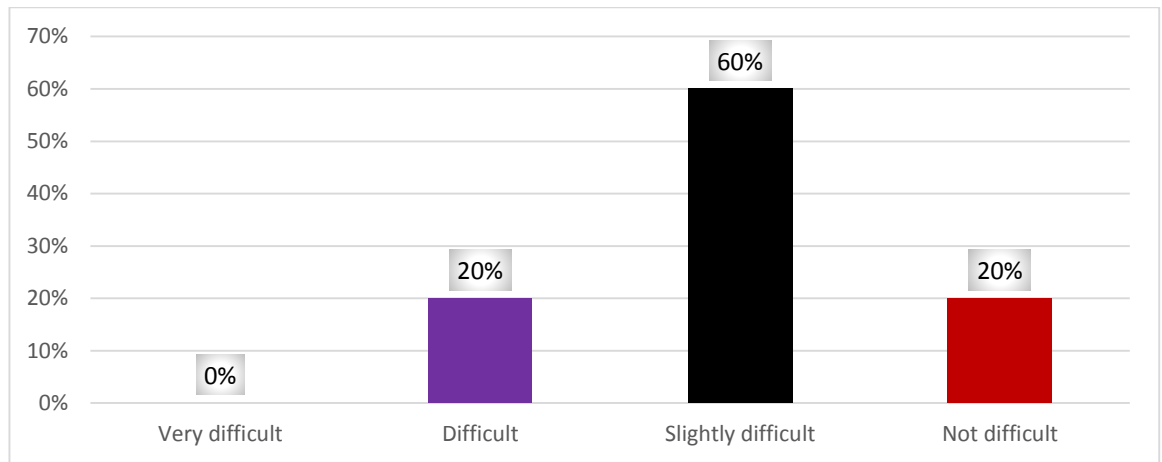


Diagram 11: The difficulty level of including genre conventions within academic emails

The findings of the eleventh diagram, indicates that none of the participants select the first proposition which is “very difficult”. Six (20%) of the participants assert that proper grammar, correct spelling, and formality are difficult. However, the majority (60%) of them agree about the fact that it is slightly difficult to include those email genre conventions when they address their teachers. Lastly, 6 (20%) of the participants claim that it is not difficult.

Q15: Have you ever cancelled your e-mail for fear of making errors?

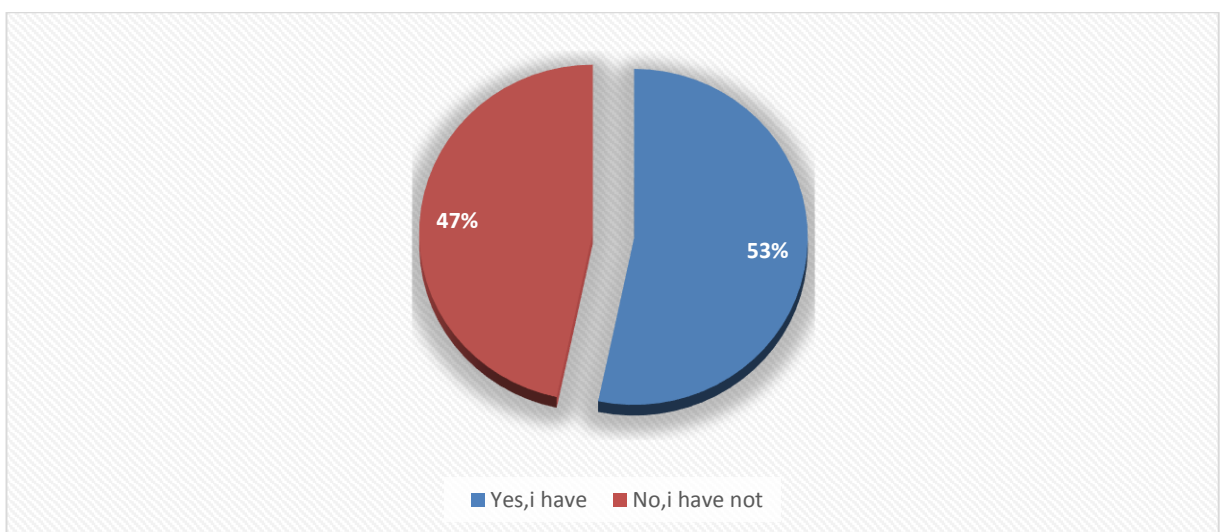


Diagram 12: Students’ attitudes about cancelling their emails

As indicated in diagram 12, (53%) of the participants assert that they have cancelled their emails because of having fear of making errors. The remaining (47%) have not cancelled their emails before.

Q16: Have you ever received any formal guidance on e-mail writing skills from your teachers during your courseworks?

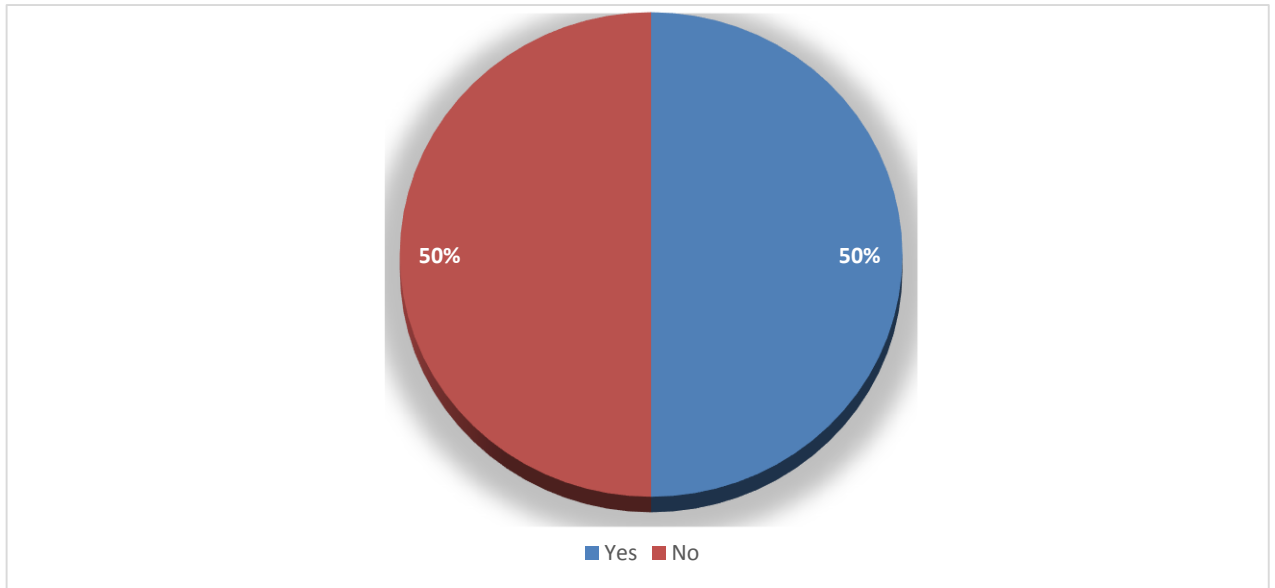


Diagram 13: Students’ opinions about teachers’ guidance on email writing skills

The outcomes of this thirteenth diagram show that half (50%) of the participants received the guidance from their teachers. While the other half (50%) claim the contrary; they have not received any guidance from their teachers.

Remark: The participants who answered with “Yes”, are those who have attended their lesson entitled “how to write an e-mail” within the e-learning course more precisely in the ICT’s module. Otherwise, the rest of the participants answered with “No” simply because they did not attend their lesson due to the access dilemma to the lecture.

Q17: How important are teachers’ feedback and guidelines in the improvement of your skills in writing formal and academic e-mail?

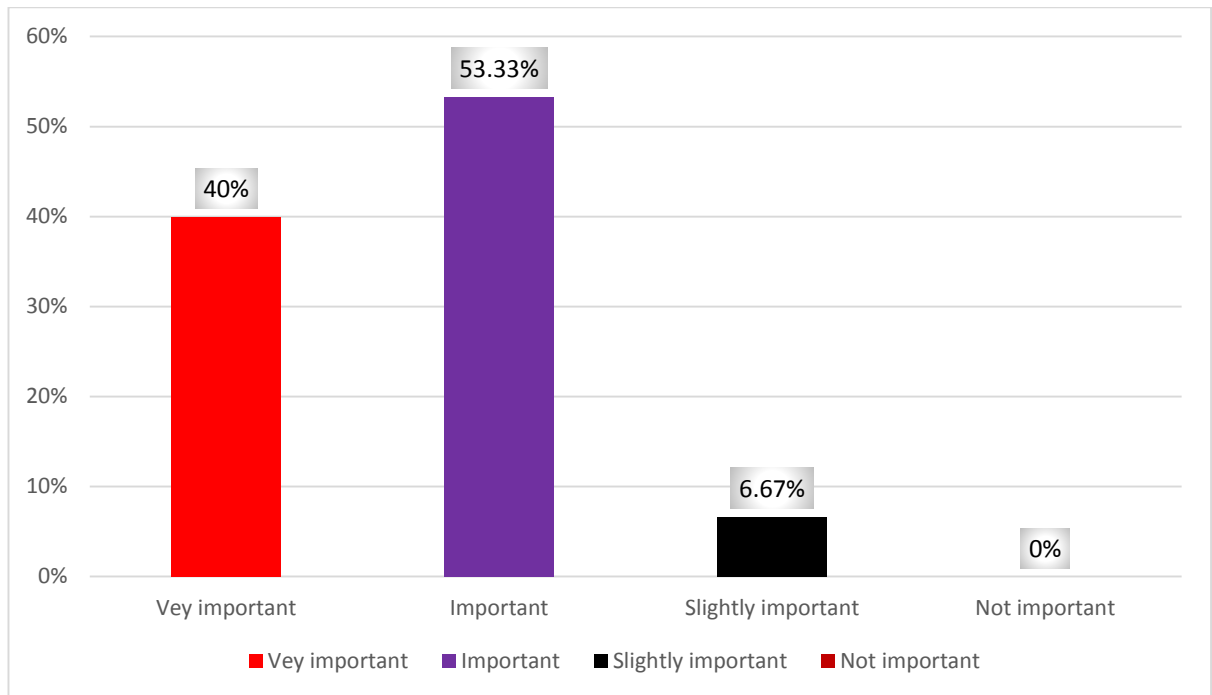


Diagram 14: The degree of importance about teachers’ feedback and guidelines

Diagram 14 aims at presenting the degree of importance of teachers’ feedback and guidelines. 12 (40%) of the participants agree that it is very important for teachers to provide them support and guidelines on how to write an email. Additionally, 16 (53.33%) of them they just see it important. whereas, a few number (6.66%)of the participants believe that it is slightly important. Then, there is no selection of the last proposition which is “not important”.

Q18: Do you agree with the idea of integrating e-mail conventions into your curriculum in order to better write your academic e-mails?

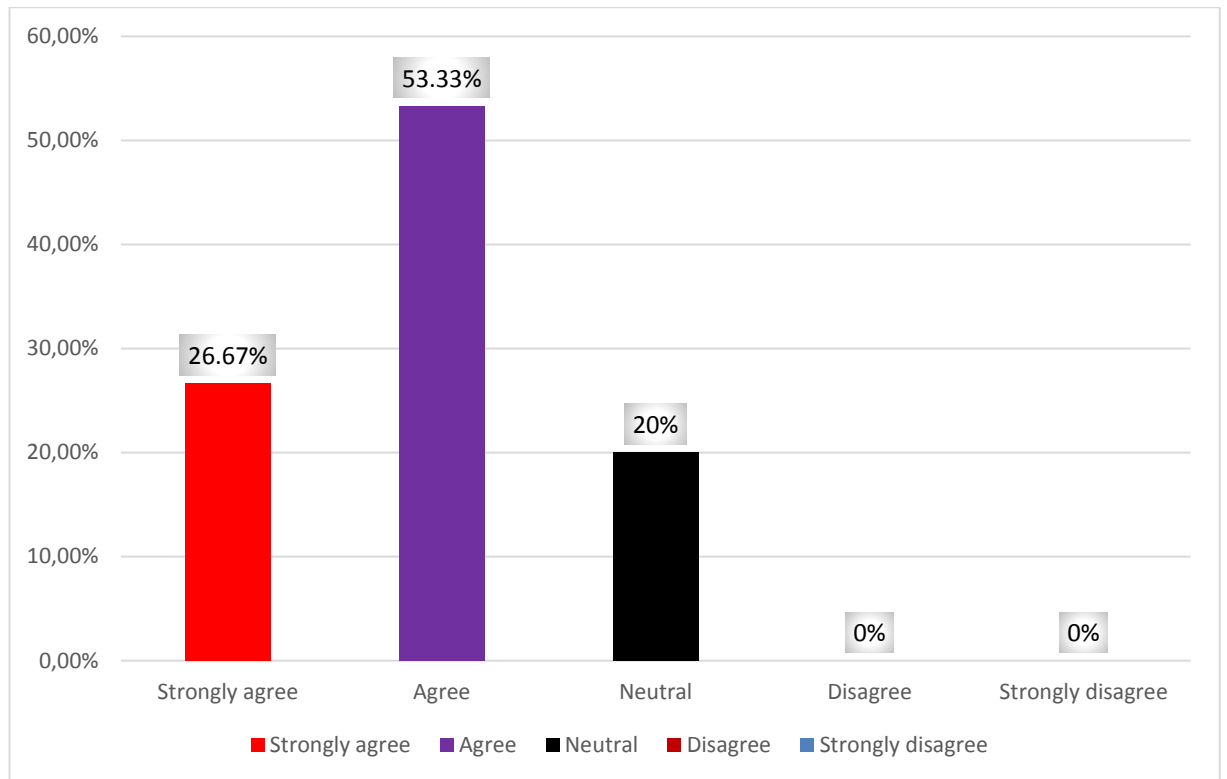


Diagram 15: Students’ agreement of email integration into the curriculum

Diagram 15 clearly depicts students’ agreement of email integration into the curriculum, and the results are described as follows: 8 (26.67%) participants “strongly agree” with the idea of integrating email genre conventions into their curriculum. In addition, 16 (53.33%) of them are “agree”. Whereas, there are 6 (20%) of the participants are neutral relating to this concept Finally, neither disagreement nor strongly disagreement has been selected by first year students.

III.2. Findings of teachers' Interview

Q.1. Could you please describe your experience while receiving and responding to first year students' email?

The three teachers have samely answered this question by claiming that most of first year students' emails are typical and arrive in bulk around exams' time, marks, and scheduling something related to their lectures, and throughout the rest of the year, their emails are scarce. They have also shared a positive attitude towards emails sent by their students even if they lack the appropriateness of writing a good academic email. So, they have declared that they appreciate their efforts, and are pleased to guide them on how to communicate effectively in an academic setting.

Q.2. According to you, what are the main reasons that first year students typically email you?

Answers are varied for this question, and the three teachers have mentioned different reasons. The first teacher, insist on clarifications on assignment, asking about marks, requests for extensions, inquiries about course materials, and seeking advice on academic or personal matters. The second teacher, highlights other reasons namely complaining about technical issues that first year students face in platforms, asking for the meeting timing, and reclaiming about extra sessions. The third one, declares particular reasons among them asking for more points because they whether deserve or need them, they report on an error they noticed in their grades, and for the reason which is the justification of their absence.

Q.3. In your opinion, what are the most important elements of a well written email in an academic context?

Two teachers, their answers are approximately the same where they have stressed on these elements including clear and specific subject line by being concise and including a clear body message by using the appropriate vocabulary and structure, they have added also that it is crucial to insert a polite closing and signature with students' full name, group and section.

Remark: *The third teacher has named only one element which is “salutations”, but has noticed an important thing in first year students’ emails when they address her which is the use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) and appreciate this effort from them. However, she prefers the students’ spontaneity when writing their academic emails.*

Q.4. What are some of the common issues (tone, formality...etc) you have noticed in the email writing skills of first year students?

For this question, two teachers have mentioned the same issues including the lack of a clear subject line, the use of informal language and tone, absence of greetings or closings, the use of incorrect grammar and spelling. Additionally, they have highlighted the excessive use of street language and the use of abbreviations like: “hey miss I didn’t find my mark on progress plz fix it.”

Remark: *The last teacher has also insisted on students’ spontaneity, and clearly talked about her bad experience happened last year, at the same time she was insured that even though there were some mistakes in their emails like the misuse of politeness, but they do not do them on a purpose.*

Q.5. How do you react when your first year students neglect or lack the appropriate structure and genre conventions of their academic emails?

All the three teachers react in an ethical way and by gently pointing out the importance of formal communication in academia. One of them do not answer at all but takes their request into consideration if their emails are valid. The last one has tackled a very important and interesting point which is the fact that of being a model to her students, so that they will imitate her in a good way, and know how to write an appropriate academic email with all the necessary elements in it.

Q.6. Do you believe that there is a need to provide additional support for helping students to improve their email writing skill? If so, what kind of support would be most beneficial?

The three teachers do believe that there is a need for additional support for helping student to improve their email writing skill. So the first teacher, mentioned workshops, detailed guidelines, and examples of well written emails as a beneficial support. The second teacher has informed us about her favourite ESP module and mentioned that a lesson entitled “How to write an email” is included in the program as a chapter not as a whole course so that can be beneficial for first year students to improve their email writing skill. The third and last one, from her point of view we have understood that this matter must be included as a topic and studied briefly in class and there are modules that feel can incorporate this into the syllabus.

Q.7. How important do you think it is for first year students to be aware of different email genres within academic communication?

The three interviewed teachers share the same point of view. They all think that it is very important for their first year students to be aware of different email genres within academic communication, so that, one of the teachers insisted on the learning process and then practice and clearly said that we cannot do something if we are not aware for it; because this awareness will help them tailor their messages appropriately depending on the context, whether when they communicate their professors, administrative staff, or press.

Q.8. From your perspective, what strategies or approaches have been most effective in helping first year students improve their email writing skills?

In this question, each teacher is unique in his answer. One of them, have directly provided the following strategies: a) Providing clear examples of good and bad emails. b) Offering templates and checklists for email writing. c) Incorporating email writing exercises into coursework. d) Giving prompt feedback on email communications. The second one, has stressed on modelling; that is to say, teachers should be a model, each genre has its characteristics that is why they should be aware and practice them because practice makes perfect according to this teacher. The last one, did not provide any strategy but insisted on her advice that she gave for her students about the rudeness of using chatGPT or any other online bots in order to write their emails.

Q.9. What if you provide the necessary guidelines or instructions to your first year students will help them to increase their academic writing?

All the interviewees agreed that providing the necessary guidelines or instructions to their first year students will largely help them to increase their academic writing. However,

each one of them has a specific opinion about this idea where two teachers stressed on student self-assessment and autonomy will also help them to increase their academic writing. Another teacher affirmed that accessible resources can be practical tips that can empower students to communicate more effectively and confidently.

III.3. Findings of the corpus

III.3.1. Qualitative results

The following section provides the various findings of the e-mail moves and steps analysis adopted by John Swales (1990) CARS model (create a research space).

A. Establishing a Territory

Step1: claiming centrality

The majority of the analysed e-mails start with centrality claims which is greeting the recipient. However, some e-mails lack formality and politeness. As in “Hi miss” or “salut!Mess”.

Step2: Making topic generalizations

Few e-mails included background information or general statements. Thus, there are some students who clearly provided general statements about the topic of their e-mails. For instance, “I’m here to inform you that ...”, “I would like to talk to you about...”, or “I want to discuss a concern regarding the...”

Step3: Reviewing items of previous Research

In the present step, the majority of the analysed e-mails did not mention relevant previous e-mails or discussions. We except depict one email, where a student provided context about a

lesson that they covered in class: “in our earlier lesson during the first semester, we covered...”.

B. Establishing a niche

Step1-a: Indicating a gap

Most e-mails included the gap or the issue where students need to address their teachers. For example, the need for clarifications, for confirmations, or for help.

Step1-b: Adding to what is known

The structure of the analysed e-mails was too concise and brief. Hence, “adding to what is known” step was not widely used. Notwithstanding, there was one e-mail where a student suggested improvements and additional information: “additionally, for students who may have misunderstood the question, it would be helpful to know...knowing this information in advance will allow us to approach the correction with a clearer understanding”.

C. Occupying the niche

Step1-a: outlining purposes

All e-mails included purposes; there are purposes that were clear and easy to understand. For instance “good afternoon miss, can you send us our marks of the test please, group15. Thank you”. In this e-mail is clearly aimed at asking for marks. On the other hand, there were e-mails which do not contain a clear and easy purpose to understand purpose. As in “Hello miss, I added one member to my group. Thank you”.

Step1-b: announcing present research

A large number of e-mails were directly presented briefly, without outlining the previous steps. To understand more we mention the present example:

Good evening miss, can you please send us the test grades

Warm regards

Group 13.

The email directly stated the need of sending the e-mail, but it lacks formality.

We have noticed another example where the student presented his main message more formally and politely: “could you kindly provide clarification on whether you intended us to focus on the civil war between the monarchy and Parliament or the conflict between Mathilda and Stephen?”

Step2: Announcing principal findings

The present step is about summarizing or highlighting the main points and conclusions. Our most analysed emails have not considered the above step. However, we found one expression in all the thirty e-mails, and we refer it “announcing principal findings step” which is “I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your guidance”.

Step3: Indicating Email Structure

When the step it comes applicable to academic e-mails, we discovered that a large number of emails did not contain or include the right and the appropriate structure of an academic e-mail. Simply put, students were unaware about the structure of an academic e-mail including: clear subject line, polite opening or formal salutation, clear message body with correct spelling, grammar and punctuation, clear and comprehensible purpose, then polite closing with signature. In the thirty analysed emails, for instance, we found that some emails do contain salutation, purpose, but without closing, with some spelling and grammar mistakes, with no punctuation.

In order to understand more about the above idea, we collected quantitative data related to email genre conventions. To explain clearly how frequently first year students

included those conventions within their emails, we presented the following table, and commenting it in the coming section.

III. 3.2. Quantitative Results

E-mail conventions	E-mail sample (N= 33)	
Information in the subject line	4	12.12%
Opening	3	9.09%
Salutation	24	72.72%
Self- introduction	3	9.09%
Purpose of the email	33	100%
Correct spelling	19	57.57%
Correct grammar	22	66.66%
Correct punctuation	13	39.39%
Closing thanks	14	42.42%
Sign off	3	9.09%
Signature	4	12.12%

Table 02: The Frequency of students’ inclusion of conventions in their e-mails

From the corpus of our study, the results revealed that few (12.12%) e-mails included information in the subject line and opening (9.09%). In contrast, most emails (72.72%) began with salutation as “good morning”, “good afternoon”, “good evening”, “hello” and “hi”. (9.09%) of emails include self-introduction like ‘**I am...**’or ‘**this is...**’. All of the coded e-mails have a purpose; even those purposes are not clearly outlined and indirectly addressed, but still slightly understandable.. Indeed, (57.57%) of emails did not have any spelling

mistakes. The remaining e-mails contained some spelling mistakes including the omission of a letter as in '**wil**' instead of 'will', '**afternon**' instead of '**afternoon**' and '**sory**' instead of 'sorry', misspellings as in '**mess**' instead of '**miss**', 'I'm her' instead of 'I'm here' and extra letters for example 'yeeesss', and some of capitalization errors for instance 'hello' instead of 'Hello', or 'I Don't' instead of 'I don't'. Besides, more than half of the e-mails (66.66%) are written clearly free from grammatical errors. Notwithstanding, there are e-mails that do contain grammatical mistakes like sub-verb agreement for instance 'we means' instead of 'we mean', word order as in '**esay**' instead of 'easy', tenses for example 'I hope that you find' Instead of '**I hope that you will find**', or 'I don't found' instead of '**I didn't find**', and preposition mistakes for example 'I cannot access online courses' instead of 'I cannot access to online courses', and also 'un' instead of 'in'. In addition, less than half of the e-mails (39.39%) are punctuated. There are e-mails do contain full stops, commas, exclamation marks, and interrogative marks in their right place. Yet, some e-mails have not punctuated at all, and others have only one comma or one full stop within the whole email. Moreover, fourteen e-mails (42.42%) end with closing thanks. Thus, students end their e-mails with a kind of gratitude. Lastly, only three (9.09%) of the e-mails include sign off instance 'best regards' or warm 'regards', and four (12.12%) of signature

Remarks

- Some of the purposes are e-mails themselves. For instance, 'thank you for the information' or 'thank your sir good night'.
- There are some emails that do not explicitly and clearly have a purpose, but we may understand that it is a response to a previous e-mail. For example, in 'we mean our grades of s2'.
- In terms of formality, the majority of the coded emails lack formal and respectful tone. Thus, Students address their teachers without paying attention to formal language; they tended to use

casual language as they email their friends.

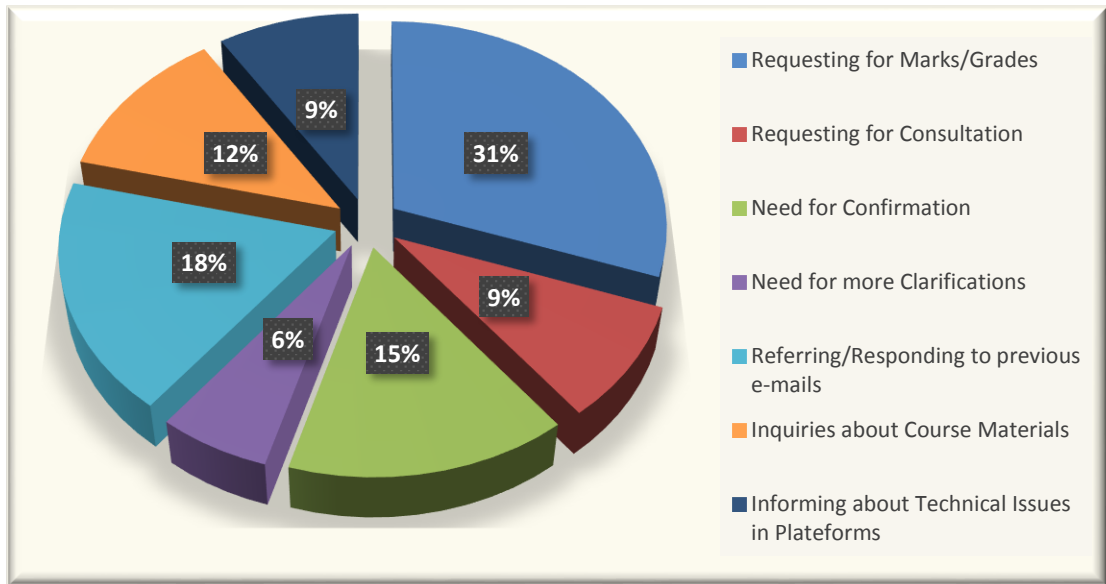


Diagram16: the communicative purposes of the e-mail messages

The diagram shows that most emails (31%) are sent by students in order to ask about their marks of tests or exams. Whereas, 9% of emails were about requesting for consultation of their exam papers, and same percentage (9%) was to inform teachers about technical issues that occur in platforms. Besides, (15%) of emails are addressed for the reason that students need confirmation about an exam or a lesson timing. indeed, (6%) of e-mails are sent to ask for more clarifications about something unclear and misunderstood. Moreover, the percentage of e-mails that refer or respond to previous e-mails is (18%); where students immediately response to their teachers e-mails for instance “Thank you for the information”, or “Thank you sir good night”. At last,(12%) of e- mails that students sent is to inquire or to inform about course materials.

Conclusion

The current chapter dealt with the presentation of the findings gathered from the questionnaire addressed for thirty (30) of first-year students. An interview held with (03) teachers at the department of English of Tizi-Ouzou, and an analysis of the corpus of (33) emails written by first-year students. They are presented in an organized way, and visually easy to read. The results are displayed in diagrams, pie charts, and one table. The findings exposed in this chapter are discussed in the coming one named **“The Discussion of the Findings”**.

Chapter IV: Discussion of the findings

Introduction

The present chapter is devoted to the discussion of the findings of our research study which have been obtained from the questionnaire we addressed to first year students, an interview to teachers those concern, and a corpus of first year students' emails we have conducted. The results are going to be analysed by using QCA to analyse both the results obtained from the open-ended questions, and corpus of emails, and descriptive statistical method for the closed-ended questions, and the corpus of the study as well. The following chapter is divided into three major parts; the first part is about the discussion of the results of students' questionnaire, the second one discusses the findings of teachers' interview. Then, the last part aims at analysing the corpus of emails written by first year students.

IV.1. Answer to Research Question # one: Email genre conventions and linguistic features

IV.1.1 unveiling student practices, genre awareness, and perceptions of formality

The results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire indicate that first year students' perceptions of email habits and genre conventions are noticed in the first seven (07) questions of the first section.

To start with, when asked whether they are comfortable when writing emails for academic purposes or not, most of the participants are both comfortable and neutral at the same time, as showed in diagram 01 with the percentage of (43.33%), the idea of comfortability is in line with the study of Atamian&DeMoville (1998) where they stated that the majority of students would rather write an email instead of making an appointment and waiting to visit the instructor's office. Referring to PU component in TAM Model, another result indicates that first-year students agreed with the cruciality of sending emails to their teachers during the learning process where the majority of them have justified their answers

by claiming that it is a significant medium to foster student-teacher relationships, according to crystal (2001) “email has already become an important component of language teaching to facilitate teacher-student interaction”. Another study of Mowrer (1996), found that email exchanges can help form a bond between the instructor and students. Relying on the component of TAM Model named PEOU the results of question 6, revealed that the majority of the respondents (79%) agreed on the fact that including a formal language is a difficult task when addressing their teachers. This study supports evidence of Wallwork (2016) who required students ‘you should write in a reasonably formal style’ (p.63). The participants explained their answers and affirmed about their habit of using casual language because of their lack of grammar, vocabulary, and spelling usage skills. Yet, the lecturer Stafford in Psychology and Cognitive Science at the University of Scheffield,England within Wallwork’s book (2016), affirmed that students ‘should make an effort to capitalize, punctuate and spell correctly in their emails and should practice the habit of taking care over these things when they write’ (p.57).

The results of the seventh question highlight the view that a large number of students have selected the right elements that are a part of genre conventions of an academic email. These results are in accordance with a recent study indicating that the sender should use the elements of email carefully to create a positive impression on the recipient (Firari,2007). Unfortunately, they are not in line with their application of those genre conventions that they have listed in the questionnaire. The other listed elements including the use of emojis, neglecting the punctuation, casual language, and the use of abbreviations are selected by a small number of the respondents. To be taken seriously and considered reliable, according to Dumbrava and Koronka (2006) the following should be avoided in email correspondence: Use of emoji, informal language, misspellings, and grammatical errors.

IV.1.2. Exploring Time Management and Purpose Clarity in Student Email Effectiveness

The second section composed of five (05) questions, aimed at exploring the time when students address their teachers and their purposes. Foremost, it is resulted from diagram 6 that more than a half (53.33%) of first-year students email their teachers in the morning; that is to say, they respect the right timing of emailing their instructors. Moving to the findings presented in diagram 9, the majority of participants address their teachers before the exams with a high percentage of (83%) because of the need for help or seeking for more clarifications about a particular lesson. Some students prefer to email their teachers after the exams with a percentage of (17%) in order to ask about their marks or claiming about the errors occurred in their exam papers. This result seems to be consistent with polling's (1994) statement where he claimed that "After a low exam mark, a student may feel quite depressed to talk face-to face with his instructor and would find email a suitable alternative for communicating.

In addition, students feel a sense of security that they can get in touch with the instructor whenever there is a need. None of them email their teachers during the exams. Moreover, in terms of purposes most (83.33%) emails are sent by first-year students in order to ask questions, (40%) to seek for clarifications, (53.33%) in order to request information. As indicated in the remark of diagram 9, there are students who email their teachers by including all the mentioned purposes in the question. These views are significantly in accordance with the statement of Maria Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) "email has therefore become an effective and popular alternative means of communication, providing students the convenience to obtain feedback, clarification and information as soon as they need it".(p.3193).

Another study, by Al-Qadasi (2018) provided the following purposes for writing an email including saying thank you, responding to questions, giving advice, giving information, asking for help or a favor, and apologies (pp. 6-7).

IV1.3 Addressing Student Challenges in Email Communication through Training and Support

The last six (06) questions of the last section combined both challenges that first-year students encounter when composing their emails, and potential solutions to help them overcome those challenges. Thus, in order to mention the main challenges that our respondents face, we make a reference to the thirteenth (13) question where we discover the most frequent difficulties which are turning around politeness, formality, academic writing, and vocabulary, the choice of words, punctuation, spelling and grammar. This finding is contrary to Ren's (2016) study who claimed that professional email conversations should observe politeness and correct grammar usage because the absence of these factors leads to a possible misunderstanding of the sender by the recipient.

More to the challenges that first-year students face, we narrowed the difficulty level of including proper grammar, correct spelling and grammar within their academic emails, where we found that the majority (60%) of the participants claimed that it is slightly difficult. Carrying out with the idea of fear, (53%) of the students have cancelled their emails before sending them due to it, and the (47%) remaining participants have not cancelled them before. Referring to pedagogical content knowledge of TPACK Model, we found that (50%) of the participants received guidance from their teachers, and the other half (50%) claimed the contrary. Based on students' opinions, teachers' feedback and guidelines are very important (40%) in the improvement of first year students' skills in writing formal and academic email. (53.33%) of the students thought that it is important. As regards the last question in the questionnaire, a large number (53.33%) of the participants were agree with the idea of

integrating email conventions into their curriculum in order to better write their academic emails.

IV.2. Answer to Research Question # Two: Attitudes

IV.2.1. Teachers experiences, opinions, and attitudes towards first year students' emails

From the starting point, the first question determined teachers' experiences while receiving and responding to first-year students' emails where they equally claimed that most of emails are typical, and arrive in abundance around exams' time, marks, and around scheduling something related to their lectures. But at the same time they asserted that throughout the rest of the year their emails are rare. Notwithstanding, those teachers shared a positive attitude towards emails sent by their students, and they appreciated their efforts even if they lack the appropriate structure of writing a good academic email. The finding reflects those of Kussmaul, Dunn, Bagley, Watnik (1996) that much effort is spent on how the technology could be used rather than on when and why it should be used.

In the second question, teachers have presented the reasons that first-year students email them, and the answers vary from one teacher to another, where the first one insisted on clarifications on assignment, asking about marks, request for extensions, inquiries about course materials, and seeking advice on academic or personal matters. While the second teacher has included these following reasons: complaining about technical issues that first year students face in platforms, asking for the meeting time, and reclaiming about extra sessions.. From the third question of the interview, we have deduced that the opinions of the three interviewees were diverse. Thus, two teachers shared approximately the same opinion where they have listed elements including clear and specific subject line, clear message body.

In terms of clear message body, the results are in line with Hassini (2006) the email writer should, therefore, be careful and clear in his/her message to avoid ambiguity and

unwanted consequences. Regarding email issues, two teachers have mentioned the same issues which are: blank subject line, the use of informal language and tone, absence of greetings or closings, the use of incorrect grammar and spelling, the excessive use of street language, and the use of abbreviations. This finding fits with Glater (2006) & Biesenbach-Lucas (2007) Complaints from faculty regarding students' e-mails which range from unreasonable requests, and impolite tone to inappropriate informality, inappropriate salutations, abbreviations, spelling and grammar. Another finding explored teachers' reactions regarding the lack of the appropriate structure and genre conventions of first year students' emails. This outcome differs from Al-Qadasi (2018) lesson that it is important to respect common grammar and spelling conventions.

IV.2.2. Teachers' Support and Guidance in improving first year students' emails writing skills

This study found that all the three interviewees believed that there is a need to provide additional support for helping students to improve their email writing skill, and all of them have shared a positive attitude about this idea. This result fits with Mowrer (1996) finding that by sending email messages to the instructor, students can also develop effective writing skills. Additionally, the second teacher of linguistics clearly talked about her favorite module which is the ESP one, and mentioned the name of the lesson "how to write an email?" included in the program as a chapter not as whole course so that it could be beneficial for first-year students to improve their email writing skill.

The finding of the seventh question of the interview revealed that it is prominent for first-year students to be aware of different email genres in academic communication. One of the teachers insisted on the learning process and on the importance of being aware of it, because this awareness will help first-year students to adapt their messages appropriately depending to the context, when they communicate with their professors, administrative staff.

The same idea is studied by Konuk (2021) the use of email between staff and students at universities constitutes academic correspondence. Another finding is that two of the interviewed teachers provided the coming strategies in helping first-year students improve their writing email skills by Providing clear examples of good and bad emails, offering templates and checklists for email writing, incorporating email writing exercises into coursework, and giving prompt feedback on email communications. A different point of view is asserted by another teacher where she stressed on modelling. For her, a teacher should be a model for his students. She also confirmed that each genre has its unique characteristics. Thus, students should be aware and then apply them. The same teacher acknowledged us that practice always makes perfect.

The last finding of the interview revealed that two teachers stressed on self-assessment and autonomy in helping first-year students to increase their academic writing. The last interviewed teacher, affirmed that accessible resources can be practical tips that can empower students to communicate more effectively and confidently. This finding is contrary to previous studies which have suggested that most academic syllabi lack explicit instruction in email writing .As a result, both native and non-native speakers are often faced with uncertainties regarding style and politeness strategies in email interaction.(Crystal, 2001; Baron, 2000,2002, 2003; Biesenbach Lucas, 2006).

IV.3. Answer to Research Question # Three: Structure

IV.3.1. Identifying moves-steps in emails referring to John Swales' Model (1990)

The following section provided various findings of the emails' moves and steps referring to John Swales' Model focusing on genre analysis of research articles introductions. We tended to depict the most frequent steps and moves that first year students neglected in their emails.

Move 1: Establishing a Territory

Step 1: Claiming Centrality

This step involves emphasizing the importance of the email, or the reason of writing a particular email. As a result, in our investigation it refers to greetings. Formal salutations, such as **“Dear Ms...”**, **“Good evening misses”**, or **“Good morning miss”** convey professionalism and respect. These types of greetings signal that the sender values the recipient and the subject matter of the email. They help establish a formal context that is especially important in professional or academic settings, where maintaining a respectful tone is crucial for effective communication. In accordance with Gains’ (1998) study of academic e-mails sent by faculty, staff, and students, found the two most common salutations to be **“Dear”** and **“Hi.”**

On the other hand, less formal greetings like **“Hi miss”** or **“Salut mess”** can come across as overly casual or even disrespectful, particularly in situations that call for formality. Such informal openings may undermine the seriousness of the message and can lead to misunderstandings about the intent or importance of the email. In a professional environment, using a proper greeting not only enhances the credibility of the sender but also encourages the recipient to engage with the content more seriously.

Step 2: Making Topic Generalizations

The following step let the recipients understand the context of the email and helps them quickly understand the email's purpose. When students start with phrases like **“I’m here to inform you that...”** or **“I want to discuss a concern regarding the...”**, they set a clear context. This is particularly important for busy recipients who may have numerous emails to manage. Unfortunately, not all first year students did provide some backgrounds to their emails, rather, they directly penetrate to their needs.

Step 3: Reviewing Items of Previous Research

By referencing prior lessons or discussions, the sender situates their request within a broader narrative. This helps the recipient understand the background and relevance of the current topic. For instance, a statement like “In our earlier lesson during the first semester, we covered...” immediately signals what the email will address, making it easier for the recipient to connect the dots.

Move 2: Establishing a Territory

Step 01-a: Indicating a Gap

The present step involved identifying any issues or gaps that the sender needs to address the recipient. The findings of the corpus revealed that most emails included the gap. For example, the need to clarify more information or something unclear, to confirm about an exam or session timing. The following is a sample:

Hi miss, I hope you are doing well.

I was wondering if you could give us more information on what the homework is, as it is very unclear.

Thank you.

The gap of the presented email is the need to address the teacher to more clarification about the homework.

Step 01-b: Adding to what is known

The present step is about suggesting improvements or additional information. As the analyzed emails are brief and concise, so this step was not widely used. But, there is one email that contained the previous mentioned step which is as the following: “additionally, for students who may have misunderstood the question, it would be helpful to know how the correction process will be handled. Knowing this information in advance will allow us

approach the correction with a clearer understanding and alleviate any concerns about potential misunderstandings affecting our grades”.

Occupying the Niche

Step 01-a: Outlining Purposes

For the present step, the sender must clearly and concisely state the purpose for improving teachers’ impression. In our context, the analyzed emails are all stated, and there are purposes which were clear and concise. For instance, the previous mentioned example in the findings:

Good afternoon miss,
Can you send us our marks of the test please,
Group 15
Thank you.

The purpose of the example is clearly outlined, the student asked for his mark. Specially, there are purposes were not evidently stated. For instance:

Hello miss,
I added one member to my group.
Thank you

Step 01-b: Announcing Present Research

The step involves a summary of the main points and provides specifics about the request. Most emails that we have analyzed, briefly mentioned their needs without outlining the previous steps. That is, they directly announcing their message. An example is:

Good evening miss,
Can you please send us the test grades
Warm regards
Group 13

Another example where a student more politely and formally used the step and at the same time outlining some of the previous steps which are:“could you kindly provide

clarification on whether you intended us to focus on the civil war between the monarchy and Parliament or the conflict between Mathilda and Stephen?.”

Step 02: Announcing Principal Findings

In most emails, simple closures are like “thanks” or “best regards”. The example of the sender who concludes with “I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your guidance” serves multiple purposes. It not only summarizes the email's intent but also expresses gratitude and anticipation for a response. This polite acknowledgment can strengthen the relationship between the sender and the recipient. This is in line with Baron’s claim (1998), “email is an ideal tool for building and maintaining social relationships” (p.155). making future interactions more positive, and ensuring professionalism. Indeed, ending with a summary gives the email a clear structure and can make the communication more polite and formal, which is particularly important in academic or professional settings.

Step 03: Indicating Research Article Structure

When we applied the step named “indicating research article structure” provided by John Swales’ Model to emails, we found a large number of emails lacking the appropriate structure of an academic email; students are unaware of academic email conventions that formulate a well-written and well-structured email. Hence, they introduced their email with a greeting, then directly to their needs, without taking into account the clear message body followed by correct spelling and grammar, and they ended their emails just with thanking expressions.

IV.3.2. Students’ Email Conventions

From the results presented in table 01 entitled “The frequency of students’ inclusion of conventions in their emails”. 12.12% of emails contained the subject line for example: “exam paper consultation”, “clarification request regarding S1 civilization exam questions”, “1st

semester test”, and “second semester test”. From the occupancy rate, we noticed that most students left the subject line blank. As confirmed in the book entitled “English for Interacting on Campus” by Adrian Wallwork (2016), ‘to include the subject line is to say exactly what your email is about’ (p.54). Another result showed that first-year students lack the awareness of including the opening convention within their emails as “dear Ms...”, “dear Mr...”. From this rate (9.09%) it can be understood that they have tendency to send their emails directly. This finding corresponds to Hallajian and David’s (2014) findings which indicated that most students start with an opening, which can be considered as a “greeting” or “self-explanatory.

Indeed, most of (72.72%) of emails started with salutations. Such a finding embodied that first-year students saluted their recipients with the coming expressions: “good morning”, “goodafternoon”, “good evening”, “hello” and “hi”. As equally noted, all students were well-informed on recognition and use of salutations which was observed throughout their emails (Shahid,2020). This result is also confirmed by Tom Stafford’s direction to his students to begin with a proper salutation when they address him (2016:61).

An additional finding showed that only three (03) emails with a percentage of (9.09%) have encompassed self-introduction. Meaning that, few students introduced themselves before they request for their needs. For instance, “I am...” and or “This is...”. Such a finding proved Al-Qadasi’s (2018) lesson who asserted that “in the first sentence you should introduce yourself if the recipient does not know you or might not remember you” (p.3). Moreover, all the coded emails have a purpose. However, there are purposes that were not clearly outlined as in this example:

Good evening miss I’m***** from section A
Groupe2
Number of group:

The novel: little women by Louisa may Alcott

From the presented email, we understood that the purpose is to inform the teacher about course material. But, it was not straight outlined. In contrast, there were emails that were clear and easy to understand. For example:

Good evening miss.

please, when will we be able to see our exam papers?

thank you very much

In the presented email, the sender directly and clearly provided his purpose which is a request for consultation.

One more finding demonstrated that (57.57%) of emails did not contain spelling mistakes, but still there are emails that did contain spelling mistakes. Namely the unconsciousness omission of letters as in “**wil**” instead of “**will**”, “**afternon**” instead of “**afternoon**” and “**sory**” instead of “**sorry**”. Additionally, misspellings as in “**mess**” instead of “**miss**”, “**I’m her**” instead of “**I’m here**”, “**number**” instead of “**member**” and intentional misspellings for example “**yeeesss**”. In terms of punctuation, the majority of students did not punctuate their emails correctly. Thus, they did not include the punctuation marks in their right place. As noted by Dumbravă & Koronka (2006), spelling and punctuation errors, causing the sender’s frivolous and careless to make an impression. In the formal mail, the sender avoids misspellings, before sending to eliminate the possibility of any misinterpretation.

Our research demonstrated that more than a half (66.66%) of emails were free from grammatical errors, that is to say; students wrote their emails grammatically correct. Even so, there were students who made some grammatical mistakes like sub-verb agreement as “**we means**” instead of “**we mean**”. Word order as in “**esay**” instead of “**easy**”. Tenses like “**Ihope that you find**” instead of “**I hope that you will find**”, or “**I don’t found**” instead of “

Ididn't find", and preposition mistakes for example "**I cannot access online courses**" instead of "**I cannot have access to online courses**". "**Un**" instead of "**In**" as well.

Another interesting finding, displayed (39.39%) of emails are punctuated which means that students did not respect the punctuation rules at one hundred percent (100%). Yet, there are emails that were not punctuated at all; they neither contained commas, question marks, nor periods. For example

Good morning miss

Is the exam paper consultation for tomorrow

As there are also emails that do contained only one punctuation, either one single comma or one single period. For instance:

- 1) Sir can you send the final grades, thank you in advance
- 2) Good morning sir I hope you are doing well so I Don,t found m'y Mark in exam in speaking and listening module

More to previous point, there are some emails that did contain approximately all the necessary punctuation. Though, those punctuations were not placed in their right disposition. The following example will confirm this result:

Good evening miss.

please, when will we be able to see our exam papers?

thank you very much.

Instead of

Good morning miss,

When will we be able to see our exam papers, please?

Thank you very much.

The results of the corpus showed that, 14 (42.42%) of emails ended with a closing thanks. Meaning that, students concluded their emails by thanking the recipient or their teachers.

Examples: “thank you in advance”, “thank you very much” and “thank you!”. The presented finding corroborate with Al-Qadasi’s lecture (2018) “the last paragraph should conclude the message. At the end of your last paragraph you should provide a “thank you” or “call to action” depending on subject of your email, and provided some examples such as: “Thank you for your assistance with...” or “I hope to receive an answer back from you” (p.4). In addition to the previous results, the current investigation found that (9.09%) of emails have a sign off. For example “best regards” or “warm regards”. It is possible that, first-year students did not take into consideration the inclusion of this convention due to their lack of genre conventions awareness. This implies the view of Kin et al (2016) “salutation, closing, and sign-off demonstrate the politeness and social distance of an email”.

The last part of the findings presented in table 01 clearly showed that the signature convention was only included in four emails with a percentage of (12.12%).The result highlights the view that the majority of Students did not conclude their emails with their full names followed by their section and group number. This outcome is contrary to that of the lecturer Tom Stafford (2016) within the book named “English for Interacting on a Campus” written by Adrian Wallwork, as the following: “If you email me, please say your full name, level, and, if relevant, which course(s) you are referring to (p.57).

At last, from the remarks presented in the “Presentation of the Findings” formality in academic emails plays a prominent role in enhancing and facilitating student-teacher interaction and communication. This result suggests that, writing emails to authority figures requires high pragmatic competence and awareness of the politeness conventions and e-mail etiquette that need to be followed (Biesenbach-Lucas,2007). Unfortunately, the majority of the coded emails lack formal and respectful tone. As a consequence, students address their teachers without taking into account the formal language maybe because they did not have the habit to use email as a technology for building relationships between them and their teachers

academically. This result differs from shahid's 2020 finding where, he found that most non-native students used formal language using when formulating emails to the faculties.

IV.3.3. Identifying Communicative Purposes of Emails

In order to have a deeper understanding on why students addressed their teachers or what purposes that led them to send emails to the latest to fulfil their needs. From diagram 16 presented in the last section of the findings, most emails (31%) are sent by students in order to ask about their marks of tests or exams, and or for their grades. More to the previous mentioned purposes, 15% of emails were addressed for the reason that students needed for confirmation about an exam or lesson timing. Additionally, there were some students who needed more clarifications about something unclear or misunderstood from their teachers, and the rate of this purpose was (6%). Moreover, the percentage of emails that referred or responded to previous emails was 18%. For instance, when the teacher sent them any email, students immediately emailing back by thanking the recipient as in "Thank you sir, good night». Lastly, the purpose of inquiring or informing about course materials was included in (12%) of emails. Similar studies revealed that the communicative purposes for which students use email with their professors have found similar facilitative and academic functions: building a relationship, getting information/ advice about course materials and quizzes, addressing late work and missed classes, challenging grades, showing interest in and understanding of course material and getting the instructor's good side (Martin, Myers,&Mottet, 1999,p.160;Collins,1998; Marbach-Ad &Sokolove, 2001; Payne, 1997; Poling,1994).

IV.3.4. the appropriate Structure of an academic email

The current sample is an example of a well-structured academic email that can be applied for any other academic purpose

Subject: Request for Test Marks for Group 15

Dear Mr. ****,

Good afternoon,

I hope this email finds you well.

I am writing on behalf of group 15 concerning our recent test. We are waiting impatiently our results to better understand our performances.

We kindly request that you send us our test marks at your earliest convenience. This will help identify areas where we need improvements.

Please let us know if there is any further information you need from us.

Thank for your assistance.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

Group 15

Conclusion

The present chapter has discussed the main findings obtained from students' questionnaire, teachers' interview at the department of English at MMUTO, and the analysis of first year students' emails in order to answer the research questions stated in the general introduction with referring to similar and different previous studies. The results have been presented in the form of qualitative and quantitative data. Following the presentation of the findings of the introduction section, it is analysed and discussed in the light of the analytical framework identified in the literature review. After answering to the research questions, we confirmed all the three (03) hypotheses highlighted in the general introduction as the following: The first hypothesis stated that first year students do not follow and respect the requirements of an academic email. The second hypothesis claimed that teachers appreciate the efforts of first year students. The third and the last hypothesis confirmed that first year students are unfamiliar with the structure of an academic email.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The present investigation has dealt with the analysis of emails written by first-year students in the Department of English at MMUTO. It has attempted to identify the genre conventions and linguistic features employed by first year students in their academic emails with regard to John Swales'(1990) Model (CARS). It has also sought out to determine teachers' reactions, opinions, and experiences towards their first-year students' emails. The research is worth remembering in the sense that it has explored the most communicative purposes included in first year students' emails in academic context. As highlighted in the General Introduction, the dissertation sets out to reach three (03) main research objectives. The first objective aimed at analysing first year students' emails. The second objective is then to demonstrate attitudes of teachers towards first-year students' emails. The last objective seeks to provide the appropriate structure of an academic email.

Relying on the findings which served as an answer to our hypotheses, the obtained results have been interpreted in relation to the questions raised up in the General Introduction. The analysed questionnaire has shown that students adhere to email communication, and considered email as a powerful medium of interacting with their teachers even including a formal language is challenging task for the majority of first-year students. More to the point, students viewed that providing guidelines from their teachers is crucial. So, the first hypothesis is confirmed where first year students do not follow and respect the requirements of an academic email. To answer the posed research question two (02), and to verify the second hypothesis of the research, an interview was designed for three (03) teachers, where the results revealed that all the teachers reacted positively and ethically towards their first-year students' emails, and they appreciated the efforts made by their students by gently advise them to write good academic emails. Thus, the idea of teachers' appreciation of students' efforts is considered as the confirmation of the second hypothesis. Additionally, the findings

of the corpus confirmed that first-year students were unaware and unfamiliar with the structure of an academic email so that it is also the confirmation of the third and last hypothesis of this research work.

As nothing is perfect, the present research is not as well. We have faced certain limitations mainly in the process of data collection. The challenge has been to get five (05) respondents to answer the teachers' interview in order to gather sufficient, and several opinions to use them in our research. Unfortunately, we have got only three respondents due to the teachers' overcharge because of the exam period. More to the mentioned limitation, we did not have the opportunity to access to all the wanted useful tools as books and articles because they did not have free versions.

Since email communications become an important medium of interaction between instructors and students in higher education, our hope is to open doors for further studies by providing guidelines to students on how to practice their email writing skills that could help them to increase their capabilities and awareness, and integrating this subject of email writing skills as a whole chapter in the curriculum either of ESP or in Study Skills modules. Shammon (1998) states that electronic mail is highly focused, formal and topical and should, therefore, have a strong place in writing across the curriculum theory and practice.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Students' Questionnaire

The purpose of the present questionnaire is to gather information about how first-year students in the Department of English at MMUTO contact their teachers via academic e-mails in order to have a better understanding about first-year students' views and use of e-mail communication. We kindly request to answer the questions. Your answers will help us to carry out our study. Your responses will remain completely anonymous and will uniquely be used for research purposes.

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Section One: *E-mail writing habits, genre awareness and perception of genre conventions*

1-How comfortable do you feel when writing e-mails for academic purposes?

- a) Very comfortable
- b) Comfortable
- c) Neutral
- d) Uncomfortable
- e) Very uncomfortable

2- Do you think that sending e-mails to your teachers is crucial during your learning process? If yes, please specify why ?

Yes

No

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

3- How often do you revise your e-mails before sending them?

- a) Always
- b) Often
- c) Sometimes
- d) Rarely
- e) Never

4-How familiar are you with these types of e-mails?

E-mail types	Student's familiarity			
	VeryFamiliar	Familiar	SlightlyFamiliar	Not Familiar
Inquiry e-mails				
Request e-mails				
Feedback e-mails				
Apology e-mails				
Announcement e-mails				

- 1. Inquiry Email:** An inquiry email is a message sent to request information or clarification on a particular topic or issue.
- 2. Request Email:** A request email is a message sent to ask for something from the recipient, such as assistance, permission, or action.
- 3. Feedback Email:** A feedback email is a communication sent to gather opinions, comments, or suggestions from recipients about a product, service, or experience.
- 4. Apology Email:** An apology email is a message sent to express regret or remorse for a mistake, error, or inconvenience caused by the sender or their organization.
- 5. Announcement Email:** An announcement email is a communication sent to inform recipients about important news, updates, or events.

5- When composing your academic e-mails, what are the typical components you include?

- a) Greetings
- b) Clear subject line
- c) Polite closing
- d) Purpose of the e-mails
- e) Self-introduction

Rank the previous mentioned purposes in order of importance.

6- Do you think that using a formal language is a difficult task when addressing your teachers? If yes, explain why?

.....

...

.....

...

.....

.....

7-Among all these elements, select those you think are apart of genre conventions of an academic email?

- a)Salutations
- b) The use of emojis
- c) Neglecting the ponctuation
- d) Clearrequest
- e) Intentionalmisspellings
- f) Forma l tone
- g) Casual language
- h) The use of abbreviations
- i) Good grammar and spelling
- j) Polite closing

Section two: Time and purpose effectiveness in students' e-mails

8-What is the appropriate time to send an e-mail for your teachers?

- a)In the morning
- b) In the evening
- c) At night
- d) Any time

9-How often do you send e-mails for your teachers?

- a) Daily
- b) Monthly
- c) Rarely
- d) Never

10-On average, how much time do you spend when composing an academic e-mail?

- a) Less than five minutes
- b) Five to ten minutes
- c) Ten to twenty minutes
- d) More than twenty minutes

11-When do you think it is necessary to send an e-mail to your teachers, and why?

- a) Before the exams
- b) During the exams
- c) After the exams

Why?.....
.....
.....

12-What are your purposes when sending an academic e-mail to your teachers?

- a) Asking questions
- b) Seeking for clarification
- c) Requesting information
- d) Submitting assignments
- e) Other (please specify)

.....

Section three: *Students' challenges, training and support*

13- What are the main challenges you face when composing your academic e-mails?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

14- How difficult is to include proper grammar, correct spelling and formality when you address your teachers?

- a) Very difficult
- b) Difficult
- c) Slightly difficult
- d) Not difficult

15- Have you ever cancelled your e-mail for fear of making errors?

- a) Yes, i have
- b) No, i have not

16- Have you ever received any formal guidance on e-mail writing skills from your teachers during your courseworks?

Yes

No

17- How important are teachers' feedback and guidelines in the improvement of your skills in writing formal and academic e-mail?

- a) Very important
- b) Important
- c) Slightly important
- d) Not important

18- Do you agree with the idea of integrating e-mail conventions into your curriculum in order to better write your academic e-mails?

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neutral
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix 02: Teachers' interview

Hello dear teacher,

We are conducting a research study based on analyzing first year students' emails. Your insights will be valuable to our research work Hence, we kindly request you to participate in the present interview.

Our research topic is: A genre analysis of emails written by first year students in the Department of English at MMUTO.

Thank you very much for your contribution

1. Could you please describe your experience while receiving and responding to first year students emails?
2. According to you, what are the main reasons that first year students typically email you?
3. In your opinion, what are the most important elements of a well written email in an academic context?
4. What are some of the most common issues (explain)you have noticed in the email writing skills of first year students?
5. How do you react when your first year students neglect or lack the appropriate structure and genre conventions of their academic emails?
6. Do you believe that there is a need to provide additional support for helping students to improve their email writing skill? IF so, what kind of support would be most beneficial?
7. How important do you think it is for first year students to be aware of different email genres within academic communication?
8. From your perspective, what strategies or approaches have been most effective in helping first ear students improve their email writing skills?
9. What if you provide the necessary guidelines or instructions to your first year students will help them to increase their academic writing?

Appendix 03: The Corpus of E-mails (33emails)

Requesting for Marks/Grades: (31%)

N°01:

Good evening miss! I hope you are doing well \ (^_^)/. I just want to ask you if you have done with the correction of the writing test. We are still waiting for you to provide us with our grades. Thank you in advance!

****, g1

N°02:

Good evening miss,

Can you please send us the test grades

Warm regards

Group13

N°03:

Sir can you send us the final grades, thank you in advance

N°4:

DearMs.****

Good afternoon misses, can you send us our marks of the test please,

Group15

Thank you!

N°5:

Good morning miss, can you please send us the marks of the test, thank you in advance

N°6:

Good afternonsory to send you this time but all student attend their marks 🙏

N°7:

Hello miss

Could you send our grades here.Thankyou

N°8:

Good evening sir can you send us our grades in the test

N°9:

Good afternoon Mister how about m'y Mark un civilization exam (name of the students and his group)

N°10:

Good Morning sir I hope you are doing well so I Don't found m'y Mark in exam in speaking and listening module.

Requesting for Consultation:(9%)

N°11:

RE: Exam paper consultation

Good morning sir, please when will we get to see our exam papers?

N°12:

Good evening sir, hope this finds you well

Please, when will we get to consult our exam papers with you?

thank you, have a great evening

N°13:

Good evening miss.

please, when will we able to see our exam papers?

thank you very much.

Need for confirmation:(15%)

N°14:

Good afternoon miss I would like to talk for you about the time of session at 11 they were agree

N°15:

Good evening miss

Is the exam paper consultation for tomorrow

N°16:

Good morning, miss we were just wondering if we are going to have a session on sunday or not

N17:

Mess good afternon! Please there will be an exam for phonetic or no thank you

N°18 :

Salut ! Mess y auras cours demain pour le groupe 13 ou nn ?? Merci

Need for more clarifications:(6%)

N°19:

Hi miss, I hope you are doing well.

i was wondering if you could give us more information on the homework is, as it is very unclear.

thank you.

N°20:

RE: clarification Request Regarding Exam Questions

Good afternoon sir, I want to discuss a concern regarding the exam of 11 about the question related to the civil war. In our earlier lesson during the first semester, we covered both the civil war between the monarchy and Parliament and the conflict between Mathilda and Stephen.

However, the question on the exam did not specify which war we should address. Could you kindly provide clarification on whether you intended us to focus on the Civil War between the monarchy and Parliament or the conflict between Mathilda and Stephen?

Additionally, for students who may have misunderstood this question, it would be helpful to know how the correction process will be handled. Knowing this information in advance will allow us to approach the correction with a clearer understanding and alleviate any concerns about potential misunderstandings affecting our grades.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your guidance.

Referring/Responding to previous emails:(18%)

N°21:

Thank you for the information.

N°22:

Yeeesss thank you it's esay that lesson

N°23:

We means our grades of S2

N°24:

Thank you sir good night

N°25:

D'accord bonne nuit

N°26:

Thank you so much

Inquiries about Course Materials:(12%)

N°27:

Good evening miss

I'm****

SA

group2

Practice: writing topics sentences to the paragraphs

Paragraph1:

Paragraph2.....

Paragraph3.....

N°28/

Good evening miss I'm **** from section A

group2

Number of group

The novel : little woman by Louisa may Alcott

N°29:

Good morning miss

This is ****

The members of our group are: Me****, ****, ****.

We choose 2 stories of William Shakespeare:

1-Romeo and Juliet

2-Othello

Thank you.

N°30:

hello miss

I added one member to my group, her name is:****

My group is now: ****, ****, ****, ****.

Thank you

Informing about Technical Issues in Platforms:(9%)

N°31:

Good morning sir I have a problem I cannot access online courses

Name: ****

Matricule: ****

Thank you

N°32:

RE: second semester test

Dear Ms. ****

I'm her to inform you that my second semester test was not put on the application progress. I hope that you find a way to fix the problem for me

Best Regards.

Ms.****.

N°33:

RE:1st semester test

I'm here to inform you that our 1st semester test in speaking subject wasn't put on the app Progress hope that you you'll find a way to fix it by giving our marks to the speaking subject teacher of group 3.

Best regards

Ms.****.

Ms.****.