
Dhaulagiri Journal of Contemporary Issues

ISSN: 2990-7993

Publisher: RMC, Dhawalagiri Multiple Campus, Baglung

Examining +2 Level Students' Email Writing Proficiency: A Critical Analysis and Recommendations

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Abstract

This paper examines +2 level students' email writing proficiency critically and recommends the necessary tips for improvements. Email writing has become a crucial aspect of teaching and learning activities in EFL classes. It is the quickest means of communication for bulk messaging. The practice of post offices is almost obsolete. The postman used to deliver letters to people from one place to another place and the delay was common. Now, in the digital age, email writing has become the fastest means of communication for disseminating the messages to the recipients. Despite this, both the teachers and students do not take the email writing process as a crucial matter. The findings of the study show that +2 level students write emails like a letter in their exam papers. They can do the same in reality as well. Their teachers should instruct them properly. Email writing is not as simple as the teachers and students think. Email writing does not only inform, it also persuades the recipients. The study aims at empowering the +2 level students' email writing proficiency by suggesting with required methods, techniques and tips. Their skills are not well patterned because their teachers do not instruct them sincerely. Therefore, both the teachers and students should tackle this email writing with the exact formats and methods. The study is qualitative research and it adopts the descriptive survey methods for the analysis of their email writing skills.

Keywords: communication, current trends of writing, EFL classes, email writing, intermediate students

Introduction

Today, email writing has become one of the most unavoidable aspects of teaching and learning activities in EFL classes at the +2 level as well as in real life. It has been mandatory in the age of information and communication technologies (ICT). Not only in the field of education but also equally mandatory in the fields of business and politics. Except for some invitation cards, paper use or writing a letter is almost obsolete. The printed cards are also emailed these days because this is fast and smart. Simultaneously, people use Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp, Viber and Messenger to communicate and promote business and politics. Bush (2013) states, Emails are explicitly attached to our names and accounts (p. 107). Or email ID has been an integral part of life. Those who are affiliated with office work or some kind of simple business or commerce need to have an email address. Without this, they cannot inform others and be informed on time. Therefore, for literate people, email id has become compulsory.

The history of email writing is not so long. Jennings (2016) writes, it was in 1971 when Ray Tomlinson invented and developed electronic mail, as

we know it today, by creating ARPANET's networked email system. ARPANET means (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network).

This has eased communication among people. We used to write a letter on paper in the exams by drawing a picture of an envelope and writing the addresses on the envelope of both the sender and recipient. Now in the age of digital, physical letter writing has been time-consuming and boring, whereas email writing is smart writing. This article critically analyzed the +2 level students' email writing proficiency and found that most of their skills are not satisfactory as is found in their exam papers. So, the study attempted to recommend the necessary email writing pattern tips to these students. The +2 students do not care about the format of the email sincerely. They write what they know. They have to use all the formats: subject line, salutation, message, closing, and signature block properly. Email, which is formal writing, is the quickest means of communication for bulk messaging. McBride (2006) claims that one sends an email to 1000 recipients in one click. The number can be increased in future as required. So, email writing has become one of

Article information**Manuscript received:** 5 June, 2023**Accepted:** 28 June, 2023

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the integral parts of academic writing to every individual.

While writing this research paper, the researcher talked to a retired postman informally. He is Bishnu Prasad Dahal, Inaruwa-3, Sunsri of sixty-eight. He told this story of the post office, the means of communication of the past in Nepal. According to him, the history of correspondence was a letter. The postman would carry the posts. Only the physically strong and fast-walking energetic persons were selected for the job of delivering the letters. The post office would authorize the postman to carry the posts from one place to another and deliver them to the recipients. The time delay was common. There were two types of postmen to transport the posts: from one post office to another post office and from the post office to persons. The postman was given the high authority of the posts. No one would disturb or hurt him on the way while carrying the posts. If some people would disturb or attack him, the punishment would be very heavy.

The postman would carry a strong stick attached with jingling bells on it. This would produce the sound. The pedestrians would know who was coming from the back side, and they had to make room for him as soon as he came close because the path would be narrow. They had to go by the hills and through the forests without any hesitation. They were a kind of present ambulance and fire engine. The post office is still working nominally for sending the hard copy files from one office to another but this practice is almost no more.

The staff from post offices have been merged into other offices. Anyway, the world has come to this stage from that reality. Nowadays, the job of the postman is no more. The email has replaced the post offices. Thus, email writing has been mandatory but the +2 teachers and students do not seem to prioritize it. This article focuses on teaching email writing to the +2 level students in EFL classes sincerely and effectively. There has to be sufficient research works on this site, too. In the English syllabus of the +2 level, email writing and press release have been prescribed. Almost every year, there is a provision of asking one question for 8 or 10 marks on email writing in the +2 level board exams. This provision forces the students to know email writing. Therefore, their email writing proficiency has to be enhanced not only to pass the academic exams that are career oriented but also to pass the exams of their practical life. The email writing skill goes with them until death. The study concerns this research question. Why do the +2 level students and teachers not consider email writing sincerely?

This research aims at concerning the exam papers checking system that is a bit more liberal. The final score depends on the volume and good handwriting rather than the content base. The average students are also heavily awarded with good scores. A lot of minor mistakes seem to have been overlooked by the examiners while checking the exam papers. It is because they get the signal from the authorized body for being liberal. Here lies the point. It must be corrected. The students who fail two or three subjects in the internal terminal exams can have good scores in the board exams. This is one of the major reasons why both teachers and students do not prioritize email writing sincerely in class. The research suggests all the teachers or examiners, students and administrative body should correct these negligible lapses. The very negligible lapses may turn into major lapses when they cannot be corrected.

Literature Review

The study reviews a few related books and journal articles for the discussion. There are not sufficient email writing materials in the Nepali markets. Rubin (2016) states, an email is far more than a simple block of text from one person to another (p. 36) that reaches the recipients in no time. Or email means a simple block of text messages that is disseminated from one person to another through electronic media. Last (2019) claims that Email is familiar to most students and workers. In business, it has largely replaced print hard copy letters for external (outside the company) correspondence, and in many cases, it has taken the place of memos for internal (within the company) communication (p. 182). Because of the digital world, electronic media sparked the lifestyle.

Email writing has been a popular medium to disseminate messages. The one-time sending email would be of a certain length. Rubin (2016) states that the typical length for a content-heavy newsletter (as opposed to an invitation or simple notice) is two or three screens' worth (pp. 17-18) in general email. It means a one-time email would be about two pages of handwritten. Or on one screen, the whole page is not visible. It has to be scrolled down to read the later part. In this way, how many times do you scroll down while reading the email? This is what the screen is. About types, [b] usiness to business emails are often at the higher end of that range, and mass market consumer emails are the lower (p. 20). This suggests that email can be personal and official. Business-to-business email means formal and mass-market consumer emails mean personal. But most +2 students write emails without caring about the difference between formal and informal. They treat both in a similar way. This is what

they write in their exam papers. They treat email like an informal letter although it is formal writing.

Email writing is an electronic mail for bulk messages. One of the big advantages that Email has over the telephone, fax or snail mail is that you can send messages to 1000 people as easily as you can send them to one (McBride, 2006, p. 92). Just in one click, 1000 people can be messaged. Thus, the +2 students have to be well-updated with email writing skills or communication skills. The situation is a bit more alarming in many colleges so their correction is a must. The emails which we receive from different firms and institutes are also not fully in the pattern. This research proposes all the +2 students study the patterns of email and tips sincerely. They can easily avail them on the websites. The teachers have also to facilitate them. So, when these students become competent in email writing, they can deal with different businesses, firms, and institutions formally. Then they can become a good entrepreneur in the future.

Now people give out email addresses instead of phone numbers. They put their email addresses on their business cards (visiting cards), and send billions of emails every year. Life has changed (Turner & Housley, 2008). Even the phone call is not well entertained in developed countries but email is entertained well by every individual. For a growing number of people, the most useful telecommunications device is email, which conveys messages written on a computer keyboard, again, inner-real time (Baron, 2001). The major concern of the study is to make the students well-equipped in email writing in terms of both language and format.

Email writing has been common practice in the age of science and technology. It is an easy way to disseminate the message to a big group seemingly at no cost. As, sending email is a great way to communicate your message on a regular basis (Baggott, 2007a). The +2 level students have to be up-to-date with such important tips for email writing. The study explores that their performance in email writing is not well patterned. In addition, Baggott (2007b) opines, email just happens to be one of the best mediums to build long-lasting relationships (p.16) either for individuals or firms or organizations. The purpose of the email is not only to disseminate the information, it has more to do with building long-lasting relationships, too. The +2 level students should have all this theoretical knowledge. When they realize the significance of email, they initiate enhancing their email writing proficiency.

This study found that the teachers do not instruct the +2 level students by following the standard pattern and necessary tips of email writing during the

teaching and learning process, said Rishi Ram Ghimire and Dr Hukum Thapa, the assistant professors of Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus. They claim that they have limited time for teaching. So, teaching email writing does not get prioritized in a full-fledged manner. They have to skip it. Here lies the problem. First, the teachers have to be up-to-date and the students should initiate it. This study reveals that both the students and teachers need to be trained well to develop their email writing proficiency. Emailing means not only disseminating the messages but also promoting the institutes and businesses. Email marketing can have a powerful impact on your business (Groves, 2009, p. 11). There are several media like posters and pamphlets through which business people communicate to the public but they are more expensive and limited coverage. The email's coverage is infinite. The +2 level students must know this because writing email is a systematic process that follows a system to develop a meaning-making text in a specific subject matter or issue or area for a target group.

To promote and enhance the business, email writing has been mandatory. One business sector informs the clients and the other sisterly business branches or sectors through email shortly. There is no extra charge for emailing. It is safe and secure if the user maintains secrecy although the email is hacked sometimes. There are other means of communication besides email. Maxwell (2020) presents the data that [m]ore than 2 million bloggers daily make a post. . . . In addition, there is email. During 2017, 2.7 billion people sent 269 billion emails each day, of which 50% were non-spam. This is impossible through physical letters. Information technology has eased modern life. Today's +2 students must have updated knowledge of this thing and they do not have to overgeneralize the facts of email writing. The geography and horizon of email is infinite or beyond one's imagination.

To sum up, Rubin (2016) talks about the length, types, and fast dissemination service of email and Last (2019) talks about the familiarity of email. McBride (2006) discusses about the number of recipients of the email that can be disseminated at one time. Turner & Housley, 2008) points about how the telephone is replaced by mail. Baggott (2007a) prioritizes email as an easy way of communication. Baggott (2007b) considers email as one of the best mediums for building a long-lasting relationship. Groves (2009) adds information about the coverage of email that is too wide in comparison to posters and pamphlets while business people advertise their products. Maxwell (2020) talks about a large number of bloggers that can be run through electronic media. Although none of these authors talks

about the immediacy and urgency for the enhancement of communication skills or email writing skills of the +2 level students as well as university levels, they have provided sufficient information about email writing's importance and its proper uses to the researcher. They also do not talk about the mistakes the +2 level, as well as university-level students make while writing emails. This study highlights the impacts of email writing and some lapses that email users do. Anyway, these authors as well as others contributed to the research in a great deal to bring this article into this form.

Methods

The study adopts the descriptive survey methods for the analysis of +2 level students' email writing proficiency. The data are collected from teachers and students. The researcher investigated from the library, journal articles and websites, and in students' exam papers. The study also incorporates the teachers' suggestions and experiences. This is qualitative research. Different writers have discussed the various important aspects of email writing and a lot of tips in their books and journals. The researcher incorporated these tips in the study as it was secondary data. The key terms like 'email, email writing, ICT, writing skills and communication skills were used for finding the references and authentic sources for the support of this research. Therefore, this study is a combination of primary and secondary data and empirical research.

To authenticate the research more, he interviewed about twenty +2 level teaching faculties and he incorporated the information of twelve of them. The researcher interviewed about fifty students in the classes and he incorporated a few of their experiences and suggestions into the study with due respect to their enthusiastic participation. To conduct this activity, the researcher spent about a week. This was the random data collection that were randomly incorporated in the research but the researcher did not use the statistical software for analyzing the literature. Similarly, the researcher collected twenty +2 students' exam papers from Trinity College and Golden Gate College randomly. This primary data collection process was conducted on 15 Dec. 2023. The students were also interviewed orally in the classes during teaching hours. And about 25 % of their exam papers were analyzed and incorporated into the study.

Discussion and Results

The +2 level students write the email like a personal letter that is informal. The students must know that language of email is direct, formal and to the point that is information oriented. It is different from an

informal letter. Some students write an email like love letters. Both the teachers and the students do not consider email writing a matter of great concern, or they do not prioritize it. This study aims at empowering the students with all the formal techniques and structures of email writing. This information has been collected through books, journals and the teachers who have been teaching English at +2 levels for years at Trinity, Golden Gate and Global Colleges. The researcher informally talked to them and they expressed their live experiences and views. This issue was also discussed with other English teachers who have been teaching at Global College and Liverpool College as well. They also expressed similar experiences and views about the +2 students' email writing proficiency. So, the teachers have to promote the students' email writing skills or their communication skills.

This study found that the students' email writing proficiency is not well patterned because they are not instructed well to follow the standard pattern during the teaching and learning activities, as the grade 12 students of Golden Gate shared with the researcher in the class. Email writing is formal writing that follows the systems strictly. It has to be academically acceptable. The +2 level students' email writing proficiency in terms of formats and languages that we can see in their exam papers is poor. Some students write flowery language which the email does not entertain. The language should be direct but smooth.

The +2 level students in EFL classes do not follow the appropriate pattern of writing emails. Their email writing proficiency is shaky. Uttam Poudel, assistant professor of English, Balmiki Bidhyapith, shared his experience that the condition of master's level students is also terrible in terms of writing emails. Whereas, Mukunda Raj Kadel, a senior lecturer at Trinity College, says that about eighty per cent of students do write emails satisfactorily but they write nothing at the signature block. Twenty per cent of students' email writing proficiency is horrible. There are selected students at Trinity College. Every college does not have this condition. Email writing has become the most important aspect of teaching and learning activities.

In the modern age, most offices and individuals communicate through email. Except for some formal letters, most information is disseminated through emails. The +2 level students' email writing proficiency is not as efficient as required because both the teachers and students seem to be negligible while considering email writing. They are not well aware of technical words. There is a difference between day-to-day language and email language but many students use the

day-to-day language. They think that electronic communication is similar to letters. We hope that no one is eavesdropping on our email, but it can and does happen, sometimes with embarrassing consequences. Just as with ordinary paper mail, electronic mail is not delivered immediately to the recipient; it goes through intermediate stops before being deposited somewhere near the addressee (Orman, 2015). Every time email does not go to the recipients as soon as the senders click the send button but it does not take a long time. And this study shows that the +2 level students in English do not take email writing as a crucial thing. They do not follow all the technical aspects of email writing as a communication skill in terms of language and format. During the teaching and learning activities of email writing, neither the teachers nor the students show deep interest. They take it so lightly.

Email writing has been mandatory in the present-day world because it gets disseminated in no time. This is fast and free though the charge for the internet is to be paid. So, a free email newsletter goes out to over 240,000 subscribers worldwide (Patterson, 2010, p. v). It is cheap and best as well as authoritative and effective. The +2 level students must know all the technical aspects of email writing formally because email writing question is more often asked in board exams. Email has been a kind of trustworthy media message dissemination platform and a park for timely information. The timely information helps for the sustainable development of any country. Here are some general tips for writing good emails by Paul Emmerson (2003) as presented below by paraphrasing:

Use a 'subject line'; use short, simple sentences; one subject per email is best; be very careful with jokes, irony, personal comments etc.; take a moment to review and edit what you have written; don't ignore capital letters, punctuation, spelling, paragraphs, and basic grammar; use the replies you receive to modify your writing to the same person; be positive! Look at these words: *activity, agreed, evolving, fast, good question, helpful, join us, mutual, productive, solve, team, together, tools, useful*. Now look at these: *busy, crisis, failure, forget it, hard, I can't, I won't, impossible, never, stupid, unavailable, waste*. The words you use show your attitude to life. (5)

Emmerson (2003) makes it clear that these are important tips about what to do and what not to do while writing emails. Although email writing is to inform or disseminate the message, it is too formal writing. Once you click the 'send' button, it will go to hundreds of recipients and you cannot undo it. So, before you click

the 'send' button, you have to be watchful. Moreover, Emmerson (2003) points out, Writing gets a low priority in many course books, and very few give a systematic and comprehensive treatment of emails. This is surprising, because emails are by far the most common method of written communication, and writing emails is included in many examinations (p. 6). This quote claims that email writing gets a low priority in many course books. Nepal is not untouched of this condition. There are few books on writing or email writing compared to literature. Emails are the most common method of written communication to communicate with hundreds of people with just a click. Similarly, he suggests that the [t]he reader and writer are both busy so the language is simple, clear and direct. Sentences are short and there is the use of contractions (I've for I *have* etc.). However, the style is not similar to speech - it is too direct (8). The language of +2 students is not as suggested here. This shows that email writing is formal and the recipients and senders are both busy and they read the email just for information. For this, the language should be simple, clear and direct not like in literature. The language in email is, once it is read message is disseminated. There should not be any confusion. The +2 students should consult the websites time and again for updated knowledge of anything, not only for email.

This paper proposes teaching email writing to +2 level students effectively in EFL classes. Scholars have to focus their research in this field as well. It seems to have been considered as a negligible issue or not an issue. The weight of email writing proficiency cannot have been realized by the +2 teachers and students as a genuine subject. Most +2 students write emails carelessly. When the students become competent in email writing, they can communicate with different firms and institutions formally. This study attempted to enhance the +2 level students' email writing proficiency by providing certain tips as mentioned before so that they contribute to empowering their communicative skills. Some students' email writing proficiency is horrible. We find them when we check their answer sheets for internal or board exams. It is because they are not instructed well to follow the standard patterns of email writing during the teaching and learning processes. And they also do not show their interest in email writing keenly. This study proposes that both +2 students and teachers need to be trained well to enhance students' email writing proficiency.

Email writing has become very common in modern information technology. Its horizon has been wide in the communication field. Its advantages are beyond imagination though there are some

disadvantages, too. Lucas, (2006) opines that identifying the sender of an email is more difficult (p. 28). The email ID can be anything else so, sometimes, the unwanted emails bother the recipients. Some product companies send regular emails that also bother the receivers. They do it for advertisements. It is not easy to locate the natural sender of the email. Despite these negligible demerits, email has only the merits and it has become an integral part of life.

Conclusion

The study was carried out to examine and analyze the email writing proficiency of the +2 level students because these students must be competent in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT), to run any firms, industries, institutions, and businesses smoothly in the future. The main focus of this research article was to empower the young energetic manpower in the digital world so that they would boost up the nation toward sustainable development of the world economy. The +2 level, especially, English teachers should teach the students email writing sincerely and effectively. They should not ignore email writing skills because email writing has become an integral part of modern life. None can remain untouched in the email writing process, either in the field of education or business or politics. Email writing has to be carried out formally but both teachers and students of +2 level take it lightly. Carrying the posts by the postman in well-structured bags has been outdated. Sometimes, because of human error or negligence, one letter took a long time to reach the concerned person.

In the digital age, cheap and fastest means of communication like email can inform about 1000 people at once. This number might be extended in future. On the other hand, email writing is a very effective means of communication for those who have a crazy schedule, as the son emails his father from one room to the next. This is effective that the receiver cannot deny the reception. But the people would claim that they have not received any letter though they have. The sender did not have any evidence to prove that he had sent the letter. Now this chance of speaking a lie is no more because there is a record. Email writing has been the current trend of academic English writing in this digital age. The implications of email writing and its horizon have become beyond the general prediction.

This paper concluded that the +2 level students do not follow the email writing patterns and techniques properly while writing emails in their exam papers as well as in their practical life. The researcher has scrutinized many students' exam papers. He suggests both the +2 level teachers and students should tackle

email writing sincerely so that today's students will be able to run firms, industries and any kind of business in future as communication skills are necessary skills. This helps them be a good entrepreneur in future. Therefore, the beauty and vitality of email writing do not have to be overlooked which the +2 students do in their exam papers. They write the email lightly like personal letters. Though the email looks like a personal letter, it has a certain format and structure that makes it different from letter writing. The email writer must be careful while writing the individual spelling or any graphic signs or punctuation marks of the email address.

The researcher informally interviewed the +2 level teaching faculties and collected twenty +2 students' exam papers from Trinity College and Goldengate College randomly. Some selected suggestions from the teachers have been incorporated into the study for analysis. Similarly, about twelve students' proficiencies found in their exam papers have been incorporated into the study. This study suggested that both students and teachers need to be trained well to enhance +2 level students' email writing proficiency. For current ideas, they can see on the websites as well as they can take help from chatgpt/AI. They have to see all the subject lines, salutation, message, closing and signature blocks of the email format respectively without fail. Some students write their email addresses by making the box themselves. They write as, from:tututiei@yahoo.com, and they write the recipients' address on their exam papers, whereas it is not necessary. They have to write only the recipient's address. They must know this while sending the email on the computer because there is no option for the sender. To minimize the +2 students' lapses, the college administration has to manage the writing and communication skills workshop seminars for the teachers from the senior scholars once a year. The teachers' mere personal knowledge may not help the students as much as required. Then the teachers can handle the email writing classes and the students become competent in communication skills. Anyway, this article attempted to highlight both email writing and press release, but it could not discuss the latter. The future researcher can work on it.

Declarations

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

I declare that this research/review was conducted ethically.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to the UGC which helped me financially prepare this paper. If this institute had not helped, this paper would not have come into this form. This paper has been prepared on the budget for faculty research we have received from the UGC. The +2 faculties from different colleges helped me by sharing

their experiences and information. I am grateful to the students who participated enthusiastically in my research. My colleagues from the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, have also encouraged me to accomplish this paper with the necessary suggestions and recommendations as required.

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