

# *A Study of Personal Email Messages*

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## **Abstract**

This paper attempts to study some of the linguistic features of email messages or electronic mail messages as a means of communication and to find out whether emails; i.e. email messages can be considered as having features of the spoken language only or the written language only or both, or to regard emails as having a completely different language of communication, a language of its own that has its unique characteristics which do not exist neither in speech nor in writing. The corpus of analysis is 10 personal messages sent to the author of this paper and are selected from her two email boxes. These emails are analysed by the author herself and all of the studied categories are presented statistically.

It becomes very clear that internet, including email communication though an up-to-date means of communication, cannot be dispensed with due to the recent technological development that affects all aspects of life including the way people communicate with each other.

After analysing the data, it has been found very clearly that an email message has features of both speech and writing and such features do not make the language of an email message a wholly new one; i.e. a language that is different from speech or writing but a means of communication that is still evolving.

## **1. Introduction**

Technology has made a great revolution in human's life generally and internet and communication fields specifically. People shifted from the use of telegraph by Samuel Morris, to the use of telephone by Graham Bell then to the use of telex, fax and now to electronic communication (Baron, 1998: 140).

Price (1996: 363) states that the internet allows people to log into a variety of programmes by which files can be copied and other data can be exchanged. Internet, as a means of electronic communication, has influenced language and communication to a great deal. Crystal (2003: 424) and Stein (2006: 1) indicate that internet affects education, particularly, and economics. Internet includes: email or electronic mail (the main concern of this study), chatgroups, virtual worlds, game environment, discussion groups and the web. The use of internet converts the paper-based systems to digital technology.

Crystal (2003: 426) defines email as the use of computer systems to transfer messages. Baron (1998: 140) and Danet (2002: 1) state that email has its roots in 1960s and 1970s but only in the late 1990s that it becomes widely accessed and used by people and now it is one of the most well-known and widely used applications of online digital technologies. Crystal (2003: 424,426) indicates that it is the beginning of this new millennium which is regarded as the start of electronic communication. The first test email was sent in 1971 by Ray Tomlinson, an American computer engineer, who chose the keyboard sign @ which appears in email addresses.

The domain of exchanging messages via computer is known as computer mediated communication; these are instant messaging, email, texting on mobile, chat, listservs (mailing lists), newsgroups, etc. This means that email is communication by the use of computer. Email can be of two types:

1. Group-based or one-to-many communication which is used for interaction among a number of people.
2. One-to-one communication or two-person email; this is the corpus of the study analysis, and as its name implies it is used for communication between two persons. (Baron, 1998: 146)

## **2. Benefits and Disadvantages of Email**

The two following sections deal with some of the reasons that encourage people to use email and some other disadvantages that deter them from using it.

### **2.1 Reasons behind the Widespread Use of Email**

Fliss (1999:1) indicates that a study shows that the total number of personal emails exchanged daily in 2002 was 8 billion, a matter which means that people are attracted to the use of email and prefer to use it for a number of advantages which are mentioned by Baron (1998: 146, 148,159&160), Grosvenor (1998: 2&3 ), Fliss (1999:1), Suler (1999:1&2), Akers-Jordon (2003: 1&2) and Crystal (2003: 427).

Email is inexpensive or even free and it can be easily accessed to use. It is fast and it gives the feeling of closeness between the sender and the recipient of an email which allows them to interact more openly than in face-to-face speech.

Email gives the feeling of privacy because of the lack of face-to-face communication and paralinguistic cues so it encourages personal disclosure. In email emotions can be expressed in addition to visual word by the use of emotion icons (emoticons) which are also called smileys (smiley faces) like ☺ or ☹ and by typographical symbols such as :), <:-(, etc., which are viewed sideways. In the email header the address line, in the form of "from" and "to", and the subject line gives the email recipient the advantage which is not found, especially the subject line, in written letters which is finding out what the email is about even before opening the whole message.

Email is more durable than speech in that it can be saved, read and reread at one's own convenience. Both senders and recipients can compose and read messages while doing other things like listening to music or speaking to someone else.

Email enables users to discuss things which they will not or they would be shy to talk about in face-to-face conversations because of its anonymity in that email users may not know who and where the person with whom they are interacting is and mostly email users do not try to show their real identity or name; that is why they use pseudonyms in their messages or they can send their messages via an anonymous mailer service. Some of these advantages have disadvantages mentioned in the following section.

Email can be deleted at one's own sweet will unlike in conversations when a word is said, that is it. It is brief because it requires typing which is slower than speaking; therefore, it includes abbreviations, acronyms and eliminations of pronouns, especially first person pronouns. The brevity of used expressions in electronic communication is the main factor for the appearance of new abbreviated conventions and styles and the speed of this technology can be a source of language change.

Email is asynchronous which means that it does not need both the sender and the recipient to sit in front of the computer at the time a message is sent in order to respond to it. It can be sent and received anytime not according to a certain schedule even when the computer is off or not being online; i.e. it is comfortable. The response can be either immediate (synchronous) or asynchronous, to one's liking, in minutes, hours, days, weeks or even more or there may be no response at all. It allows sending the same message to more than one person and even to a group of persons using the "cc", on the address line at the header of the email, by making a mailing list.

## **2.2 Disadvantages of Email**

In addition to the above mentioned advantages of email, some of these advantages have disadvantages which are stated by Suler (1999: 1&2), Gamble and Gamble (2002: 564,566) and Akers-Jordon (2003: 2&3).

Giving the feeling of privacy, anonymity, the absence of face-to-face communication and paralinguistic cues encourage flaming, which is a slang computer word that means a disparaging email, owing to the appeal of sending immediate responses, misinterpretation and even sending emotional messages.

Many people think that email is totally private since no one is intruding upon their messages and they can be deleted; i.e. they are temporal. On the contrary, mailing service companies have employees to monitor the messages being exchanged; also they are archived by these companies. As a result, emails are durable. In addition, some business managers monitor their employees' computer activities, a matter which may be known or even unknown to the employees, using certain monitoring software programmes which enable them to have access to every online or offline message sent by their employees and even to read their personal emails. This privacy is also vulnerable to hackers who can send viruses via email besides being intruders without the sender's and the recipient's knowledge, and consequently, emails can be sent and forwarded to others without the origin's knowledge.

Some people do not prefer the use of emails as it requires writing and some people are not good at expressing themselves in writing. Email also demands the ability to use the computer keyboard for typing words on the screen and some people are not very skilled in typing.

When using email, email users usually see "spams" on computer screens; which are commercial messages that suddenly show up without requesting them to sell or buy products. The time and date in which a message is composed and sent by the sender to the recipient is shown at the top of the sent message. All these are evidence that email is not completely private.

### **3. Linguistic Characteristics of Email**

This section is a review of the different ideas that regard email as speech, writing or a new medium.

Baron (2001: 2) presents her survey of characterising email linguistically as follows:

1. Letters by phone (email as a form of writing).
2. Speech by other means (email as a form of speech).
3. Mix and match (email as a combination of speech and writing).
4. E-style (email as a distinct language style).
5. Contact system (email as a still evolving language style).

Danet (2002: 5-9) states that email is a "new kind of letter writing". There are two types of letters: formal and informal. A synchronous email which is composed immediately when receiving a message is more like speech since it is dynamic and an improvised kind of communication than an asynchronous email that is composed offline which is more writing-like. The latter gives more time to read a message carefully and to write it using a word-processor or spelling-checker unlike the first one which needs a fast reply.

Since an email is written on the screen, typing is needed. The use of different punctuation marks, misprints or typos, asterisks and capitals (for emphasis which occurs in spoken words); the utilisation of complex rather than simple or compound sentences; the organisation of information into paragraphs make it clear that she considers that an email has some characteristics similar to those of writing.

Baron (1998: 147) and Danet (2002: 9) regard email as speech because it is informal; that is why it is less carefully written, and because it employs emoticons, contractions, abbreviations, slang words, colloquial expressions and first and second person pronouns.

Danet (2002: 4&5) states that email is a kind of digital writing and considers it as "doubly attenuated" and "doubly enhanced" writing and speech. It is attenuated writing because a message is written on the screen and not something tangible. It is attenuated speech for it is interactive and ephemeral. It is enhanced writing as it is easy to communicate with others even if they are not logging on at that moment because a message is already sent. It is enhanced speech for the fact that it can be re-examined, reread and it can be stored in the computer's memory or on a CD, for example.

Fliss (1999: 1&2) considers email as writing because it has the same format as a formal letter in that it includes a "to" and "from" address, a subject line and a message body. It contains an opening, i.e. salutation, closing and signature lines separated from the message body. Both email senders and letter writers are physically distant from their recipients. He (ibid: 2-4) indicates that email is like speech because of the elimination or less attention given to punctuation or its overuse to compensate for the lack of paralinguistic features. An email tends to be informal in that it requires an immediate response and that the length of a message must be only one screen view. The random use of capital letters or writing an email in small letters only, the inaccurate usage of contractions, typos, abbreviations, shorthands, acronyms and slang expressions are enough to state that email is like speech more than writing.

Fliss (1999: 4) mentions that framing is a particular and unique feature of email messages, in that a large or small portion of a previously sent message can be mentioned when responding to it. The use of ellipsis in emails makes them resemble telegrams, for example.

Gimenez (2000:238-240) points out that email has more features of speech than those of writing because it is derived from telephone communication. He indicates that the language and style of emails exhibit features similar to unplanned spoken discourse than to planned spoken discourse. Emails have informal and straightforward language, personal and informal abbreviations and very few guidelines for users. He draws a comparison between emails and telexes and states that the above mentioned features which emails have are the opposite of those of telexes. He regards email as a written conversation since by nature it is speech but it has to be represented by writing in order to be transmitted or received by a computer.

Crystal (2003: 427,433) regards email as neither speech nor writing but as both in that the sentences used can be loosely structured using coordinated sentences or they can be elaborately structured using long and subordinate ones and emails use framing by which the sender's message can be manipulated where a text from a received message can be taken and a reply can be inserted in it.

Grosvenor (1998: 3) resembles an email to a conversational writing, as shown in the figure below, which means a combination of features of both speech and writing. This figure means that she considers email as having characteristics of both speech and writing.

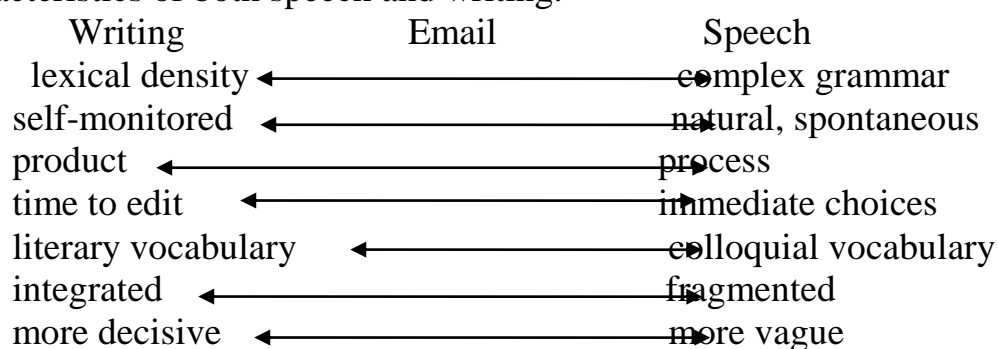


Figure 1

In fact, the author supports and prefers the ideas of both Fliss (1999: 1,2&4) and Crystal (2003: 427,433), as hereinabove mentioned, of considering email as a mixture of both speech and writing, an idea that is verified in this study as we are going to see in the following sections.

#### **4. Model of Analysis**

The model of analysis is eclectic and adopted from Baron (1998: 152, 154), Gimenez (2000: 241-248) and Danet (2002: 10-14). The corpus of analysis is restricted to 10 personal email messages sent to the author of this paper, to two of her email addresses shown on the title page of this paper and at the top of each analysed email, and are selected from her email boxes. The full email addresses of senders are concealed for privacy, only the first part of their email addresses before @ appears, but their real names are mentioned as they appear in the original messages.

Danet's model of analysis (2002: 1,15-17) deals with two corpora of email, 20 business email messages and 25 personal email messages sent to her, in which she investigates the salutation, closing, abbreviations, typos, punctuation, ellipsis, layout whether there is a space between the salutation and signature and the body of the message and the length of the message. She (ibid: 24,25) concludes that young people use informal speech patterns when writing their emails or in other words they tend to mix informal style when writing formal messages, whereas academics use a formal style when writing their email.

Baron (1998: 152-154) mentions four relationships which email shares with writing and speech. These are social dynamics, format, grammar and style, but not all their implications are investigated in this study. Her model of analysis in this study will be limited to the mentioned items and deals with the politeness of addresses forms, i.e. salutation, closing, signature, format whether it is one screen of text or more and length of sentences, contractions, pronouns, tense and level of formality.

Gimenez (2000: 239-248) draws a comparison between 40 business letters and 63 business email messages. He analysed the register and style (which this study tackles only) and conceptual aspects. He concludes that computer mediated communication has a great influence on business written communication; that is why emails tend to have a flexible register.

Gimenez (ibid: 241,242) investigates the register of email language depending on syntactic structures; i.e. whether sentences are coordinated or complex, length of sentences and the information units; i.e. whether they are complete or elliptical.

Gimenez (ibid: 242, 246) studies email style depending on abbreviations, the way senders have written their names and their recipients' when opening and ending an email, in initials or full, the use of contracted forms, lexical items, as formal or informal, lexical repetition, punctuation, capitalisation, spelling, the

way of addressing the recipients, with or without salutation, and the expressions used for addressing them, as formal or informal.

## 5. Analysis

This section is to verify whether emails look like speech or writing, by analysing 10 personal emails sent to the author which are selected from a great number of messages sent to her two email boxes, using the above mentioned models. This analysis depends on small data because it is a short paper; that is why the results cannot be considered as a generalisation but simply to find out what features emails have. The analysed messages appear as in the original source with the exception of the email addresses of senders which are concealed for privacy, as stated earlier. It is very important to mention that the senders of the selected messages are the initiators of the exchanges except for three of these messages which the author initiates.

### Message no. 1

From: "Laurie Weiss" <laurieweiss@----->  
Sent: Tuesday, 23 September, 2008 08:14  
To: "Mary" <maryam\_ma\_alattar@yahoo.com>  
Subject: I Don't Need Therapy...

Dear Mary,

I started "I Don't Need Therapy, but Where Do I Turn for Answers?"\* As a personal growth blog to make my writing more available to people who don't know me. But I don't think I realized how much it's about my own personal growth.

The answer to the question, "where do I turn for answers," is more complex than I thought. I truly don't need therapy. Once I did -- to help me grow up and to accept the lessons of life and to accept my parents as people.

One day I told my teacher and former therapist, "My parents are really just people doing the best they can with what they have. In fact, I appreciate them for what they are and I'm not angry at them for what they're not." That's the day I basically stopped needing therapy.

Oh, I've needed it at other times, to get through one challenge or another, but I didn't call it therapy. I called it education that just happened to be therapeutic. In fact that's what I've been trying to provide on the Personal Development blog (website) -- education that just happens to be therapeutic.

What does the word therapeutic mean any way? The dictionary says therapy is the attempted remediation of a health problem and therapeutic is a consequence of a particular treatment that is judged to be desirable and beneficial.

I have sometimes characterized therapy as a way to get to a stable emotional baseline so I could grow from there. I guess that fits the dictionary definition. Writing has often been therapeutic for me, and recently I learned that research shows cortisol levels drop when people talk about stress or stressful

events.(Cortisol is a hormone that is a marker or indicator of how stressed you are.) This verbalization can be either to another person (therapist or friend) or putting the experience into written form.

So I've learned a lot about reducing my stress by writing. I write to find out what I think. That may sound weird, but I truly write to put my vague feelings and inklings into concrete form. It energizes me.

Much of that writing shows up in the letters I send you. People have told me that reading the insights I write about myself has helped them to grow. I hope it helps you to grow, too

I've already taken to publishing the letters I sent you in the personal development blog. Now I'm going to start publishing more of the writing I do for my own personal clarification.

The answer to the question, "where do I turn for answers," is that I turn within myself. I turn to the

rich stew of information that I'm constantly ingesting just for the fun of it.

I dump it into my unconscious -- or whatever you call it -- cook it and then serve it up on the page. In the future, you'll find more of this at the "I Don't Need Therapy, but Where Do I Turn for Answers?" Blog.

I'll be glad to tell you when I post these musings. The easiest thing for you to do is subscribe to the blog in the upper right-hand corner of the page. You can do it right now at this link (website)

My first new style post is a piece I wrote based on this question, "What if I stopped...." (website)

I write whatever comes to mind. I usually scribble on paper but sometimes use the keyboard. If I want to share it I speak it into my Dragon voice recognition program software and then edit it.

I hope you enjoy it. Try the exercise and see what it helps you learn about yourself.

Warmly,

Laurie

\* "I Don't Need Therapy, but Where Do I Turn for Answers?" Is the title of a book I wrote that was published in 1991. It's now available on line as an ebook at (website). It's also the title of my Personal Growth Blog you can find at (website) .

(address)

This is a message sent form "Laurie Weiss" to "Mary" on Tuesday, 23/9/2008 and its title is "I Don't Need Therapy...". It is clear that it is a long message and the body contains 17 paragraphs. The total number of words is about 663 words and it is the longest message among the analysed data. She starts the message with a formal salutation "Dear" followed by the recipient's first name "Mary" and she concludes it with a friendly closing "Warmly" and a



signature of her first name in addition to her normal address. The total number of sentences is 42. They are distributed as follows: Simple sentences are used 8 times, compound 2 times, complex 21 times and compound-complex 11 times.

This message contains various tenses: Simple present tense occurs 68 times, present continuous 2 times, simple present perfect 7 times, present perfect continuous 1, simple past 15 times. Modals are distributed as follows: (May) 1 time, (will) 2 times, (can) 4 times and (could) 1 time. (Be going to) is used 1 time. The number of active verbs is 102 and of passive verbs is 2.

Contractions are used 20 times, as the auxiliary or (Be) with the pronoun or with (not). There are 5 capitalisation mistakes, 3 typos, 12 punctuation mistakes and 5 grammatical mistakes. "So I've learned a lot about reducing my stress by writing." is an example of contractions. "If I want to share it I speak it into my Dragon voice recognition program software and then edit it." This sentence contains a punctuation mistake which is a missing comma after the first part of "if" and a capitalisation mistake which is the use of a capital letter "D" instead of a small "d" with the word "Dragon". It also consists of a grammatical mistake in "I speak it..." without the use of (Will, Can or May) in the result clause. "The dictionary says therapy is the attempted remediation of a health problem and therapeutic is a consequence of a..." indicates a typo in the repetition of "is" with a punctuation mistake in "therapy" with no italics or quotation marks.

This message contains complete information units with the exception of 2 ellipses as in "What if I stopped..." and the other in the title. Pronouns are used as follows: (I) recurs 52 times, (you) 5 times, (they) 3 times, (it) 6 times as subject pronouns. Object pronouns are distributed as: (me) occurs 4 times, (them) 3 times, (you) 6 times and (it) 12 times. Reflexive pronouns are as the following: (myself) occurs 2 times and (yourself) 1 time. Possessive pronouns occur as follows: (my) is used 11 times.

There is 1 abbreviation in "ebook" for (electronic book). There are 32 lexical repetitions "stress", "stressed" and "stressful", as in "and recently I learned that research shows cortisol levels drop when people talk about stress or stressful events. (Cortisol is a hormone that is a marker or indicator of how stressed you are)." This sentence contains 2 typos in "cortisol" which must be written as "cortisone". There are 3 colloquial expressions used like "Oh, weird and dump."

Message no. 2

From: "Naomi Susan Baron" <nbaron@----->  
Sent: Thursday, November 20, 2008 9:15 PM  
To: marymarymaryam@yahoo.com  
Subject: Re: request

You will find many articles on my website. (Just google my name, and the website is the first hit.) I'm sorry I cannot send books.

Naomi S. Baron

This message is form "Naomi Susan Baron" sent to "Mary" on Thursday, 20/11/2008 and it is entitled "Re: request". She starts it with no salutation and no closing but it is singed with the sender's full name. It is very obvious that it is a short message. The total number of words in this message is approximately 28 words with a body of just 1 paragraph which contains 3 sentences only: 1 is simple, 1 is compound and 1 is complex and they are all active. It has 2 abbreviations: one is in the sender's middle name "Naomi S. Baron" and the other is in the title. This message consists of 1 contraction in "I'm sorry I..." and it does not contain any typos, punctuation or capitalisation mistakes. The information units are complete and the lexical items used are formal and it contains 2 repetitions of the word "website". The use of tense is 3 verbs in the simple present and the modals used are (will) and (can) each of which occurs 1 time. The use of pronouns is distributed as the following: (you) occurs 1 time, (I) 2 times, as subject pronouns and (my) occurs 2 times, as a possessive pronoun.

Message no. 3

From: "Naomi Susan Baron" <nbaron@----->  
Sent: Sunday, November 23, 2008 10:18 PM  
To: marymarymaryam@yahoo.com  
Subject: Re: Another Request

If you look on my website, you may find papers that are useful. That's the best I can do.

Professor Baron

This is a message sent from "Naomi Susan Baron" to "Mary" on Sunday, 23/11/2008 which is entitled "Re: Another Request". She starts with no salutation and no closing but she sings it using her academic title "Professor" followed by her last name "Baron". This is the shortest message among the analysed data in that the overall number of words is about 21 words and it has 1 paragraph which contains 2 sentences which are complex. It does not contain typos, punctuation or capitalisation mistakes. It includes 1 contraction as in "That's" and 1 abbreviation in the title as in "Re" for (Reply).

This message does not have any repetitions or ellipses and the lexical items used are formal. The pronouns used are as follows: (I) occurs 1 time, (you) 2 times, (my) 1 time and with no object pronouns. There are 3 verbs in the simple present and modals are used 2 times, 1 as (can) and 1 as (may).

Message no. 4

From: "You're Important" <URIMPORTANT2US@----->  
Sent: Friday, January 2, 2009 8:14 PM  
To: marymarymaryam@yahoo.com  
Subject: RE: Questia General Questions - Access service

Dear Maryam,

Thank you for contacting Questia Customer Support.

At this time Questia accepts credit card payments (Visa, Master Card, Discover, and American Express) and then Click and Buy. Click and Buy is similar to Pay Pal and offers many methods in which customers can fund their accounts.

Please go to (website) for more information on the service.

If you choose to use Click and Buy as an alternative Payment method, just select 'Other Payment Options' on the Questia Subscribe page at (website).

The material on our service cannot be downloaded as this is a restriction of our publishers and would be a violation of the agreements. All material must be read on-line or it can be printed. You can print one page at a time or print a range of pages for a small additional fee of .10 cents per page for half of the book and then .20 cents for the remainder.

If you have a slow internet connection, there would not be much that we could do if you were to phone in. We would only be able to recommend that you upgrade your internet service to have a faster connection.

Hope this information helps!

Thank you,

Questia Customer Support

This is a message from "You're Important" sent to "Maryam" on Friday, 2/1/2009 and its title is "RE: Questia General Questions - Access service". It starts with a formal salutation "Dear" followed by the recipient's first name "Maryam". It ends with "Hope this information helps!" and "Thank you" which are formal and it is signed with the sender's field of work "Questia Customer Support". It is not a long message in which the grand total of words is around 197 words and its body is divided into 6 paragraphs. The use of simple sentences recurs 1 time, compound 3 times, complex 5 times and complex-compound 2 times and so this makes them 11 sentences and they are all active except 3 passive ones. It has 10 verbs in the simple present tense, 1 in the simple past and 9 modals in which (can) is used 4 times, (could) 1 time, (would) 3 times and (must) 1 time.

The message contains 1 contraction in the message title and there are no typos but there are 2 capitalisation mistakes 1 in the message subject and the other in "Payment" in "If you choose to use Click and Buy as an alternative Payment method..." and 2 punctuation mistakes by the addition of a full stop before each of "10" and "20" in "print a range of pages for a small additional fee of .10 cents per page for half of the book and then .20 cents for the remainder."

Pronouns are used as in the following: (You) occurs 4 times, (we) 2 times, (it) 1 time, as subject pronouns, (you) 2 times, as an object pronoun, and as possessive pronouns, (their) recurs 1 time, (our) 2 times and (your) 1 time. There are 5 repetitions as in "Thank you for connecting Questia Customer Support" and "Thank you" at the end of the message. There is 1 abbreviation in "Re" for (reply) and 1 grammatical mistake as in "If you have a slow internet connection, there would not be much..." instead of (there will not). All the information units are complete with the exception of 2 ellipses as in "Hope this information helps!" by deleting the pronoun (we) at its beginning and the lexical items used in this message are all formal.

Message no. 5

From: "Mike Jay" <drwilke@----->  
Sent: Thursday, 1 January, 2009 01:03  
To: "Mary" <maryam\_ma\_alattar@yahoo.com>  
Subject: Happy New Year, Mary

Dear Mary,  
(I'm sorry if you are receiving this e-mail multiple times but I wanted to make sure you received this information.)

As many of you know, I've been traveling the world since the onset of my new "high-life period" starting with my 55th birthday...to be honest, I've hardly had time to take a breath, as I've been working in more than 18 countries since that time, spreading generati.

Now things are even busier as I've had the opportunity to coach billionaires in Russia, and of course, learn from them as well...as I have and continue to learn from all my clients, and for that I am grateful to them personally and to you personally for being a part of my network.

THANK YOU!

This message is sent from "Mike Jay" to "Mary" on Thursday, 1/1/2009 and its title is "Happy New Year, Mary". It is a formal message in its lexical items, its salutation as "Dear" followed by the recipient's first name "Mary" and the closing of "THANK YOU!" but the sender ends it with no signature. It is a short message in which the sum total of its words is about 125 words and its body is distributed to 3 paragraphs and it contains 1 complex sentence and 2 complex-compound ones; that is to say they all form 3 sentences. The tense of verbs is 7 verbs in the simple present, 1 present continuous, 2 simple present perfect, 2 present perfect continuous and simple past 2.

The message contains no typos but 1 abbreviation as in "e-mail" for (electronic mail), 3 punctuation mistakes as in "and of course, learn from them as well...as I have and continue to learn..." which contains 2 mistakes, one in the use of full stops which refers to ellipsis and one in that there is no comma or

full stop before "as". The message consists of 2 capitalisation mistakes as in "generati" which is the title of the sender's project which must be written with a capital "G". It has 5 contractions, the auxiliary or (Be) with the pronoun, as in "Now things are even busier as I've had the opportunity" and "I'm sorry" though it is written as a full form in "I am grateful".

This message contains full information units though the use of the three full stops "... " 2 times shows as if there is an ellipsis in each case and there are 2 repetitions of the word "personally" on the message last line. The Pronouns are 8 as (I) and 2 as (you), as subject pronouns.

Message no. 6

From: "Dawn Fields" <dawnfields@----->

Sent: Tuesday, 21 October, 2008 05:57

To: [maryam\\_ma\\_alattar@yahoo.com](mailto:maryam_ma_alattar@yahoo.com)

Subject: Personal Development

Dawn Fields

Motivational Speaker and Trainer

For Inspirational and Educational Life Development Skills

Call Dawn Fields (phone number)

Hey You!

I truly hope this email finds you in good spirits. I'm not sending out my usual email message today.

Instead, I thought I'd write you on a personal matter that I believe some of you may be interested in. Hopefully, all of you will be interested, but I would feel bad if I didn't share this information with you—just in case you are interested.

As you know, I have been involved in personal development for over 8 years now. That's why, when I first learned about what I am going to share with you, I felt it was a true blessing from God.

Without all the big fanfare, let me just give you the basics. There's a direct marketing company called Liberty League that concentrates on personal development. I've recently got involved in helping them market their product. Don't get it twisted, I'm not trying to SELL you anything. You know I don't normally push anything for you to buy, and I'm not doing that now. But what I am doing is informing you of an opportunity that may interest you. I know the holidays are coming up and who couldn't use some extra cash for the holidays. And I know that many of you have written to me personally and are struggling financially. This opportunity seems great to me and I wanted to share it with you.

Listen, this is something that can really help you. That's why I'm telling you about it. For all the details, in your spare time, do me a favor and call this number—(number) and push OPTION 2. Liberty League's direct marketing

personal develop strategy will be explained, in full detail, for you. The call is about 20 minutes so call when you have the time to really listen and give it your full attention. If you are interested, just send me a personal email and let me know your interested. You can email to me at (email). That's my home personal email. If I didn't think it was great, I wouldn't have shared it with you.

I know you will be as excited about this as I am. I'm looking forward to hearing from you, personally.

Take care and God bless!

Dawn Fields

Thank you for being a part of our community. If you enjoyed this eZine, why not pass it on to a friend and tell them to join for FREE tips and information on discovering your life's purpose.

For Inspirational and Educational Life Development Skills

Call Dawn Fields at (phone number) or visit our website at (website)

This is a message sent from "Dawn Fields" to "Maryam" on Tuesday, 21/10/2008 and it is entitled "Personal Development". The salutation is informal which is used in spoken English as "Hey You!" in order to draw the sender's attention, and ends it with a combination of a formal and an informal close "I'm looking forward to hearing from you, personally and "Take care and God bless!", the latter is used in spoken English. The sender mentions his name at the beginning and the end of the message with also his specialisation, phone number and website and he signs his full name at the end of message. It is a bit long message in which the grand total number of words is roughly 330 words and its body is distributed to 6 paragraphs and the entire number of sentences is 29 and there are 8 simple sentences, 3 compound, 10 complex and 8 complex-compound sentences.

The verbs utilised are all active with exception of 4 ones which are passive. There are 32 verbs in the simple present, 8 in the present continuous, 3 in the simple present perfect, 9 in the simple past and 1 as (Be going to). The types of modals used are 3 as (will), 3 as (would), 2 as (can), 1 as (could) and 2 as (may).

The subject pronouns used are (I) recurs 25 times, (you) 9 times and (it) 2 times. As object pronouns, (you) occurs 18 times, (it) 4 times, (me) 7 times and (them) 2 times. As possessive pronouns, (my) is used 2 times, (your) 3 times and each of (their) and (our) occurs 1 time.

The information units used are complete except for 2 ellipses "Thank you for being a part of our community" instead of (we would like to). There are 17 repetitions as in the 4 repetitions of the word "interested" and 1 abbreviation "eZine" for (electronic Zine). No capitalisation mistakes occur but the words "SELL" and "FREE" are written in capitals for emphasis. There are 4 punctuation mistakes as in "Don't get it twisted, I'm not trying to..." where a semicolon must be used instead of a comma and 2 typos as in "develop" which has to be (development) in "Liberty League's direct marketing personal develop

strategy will be..." Contractions occur 17 times, as the auxiliary or (Be) with the pronoun or with (not), as in "I'm telling" though it is written as "I am going" once.

The lexical items used are formal with the exception of 5 cases as in "I've recently got involved in..." instead of (I've recently been involved). Grammatical mistakes recur 5 times as in "If I didn't think it was great, I wouldn't have shared it with you." in which the mistake occurs in the result clause and the whole sentence may appear as either "If I didn't think it was great, I wouldn't share it with you" or "If I hadn't thought it was great, I wouldn't have shared it with you."

Message no. 7

From: "Dan Klatt" <colleen@----->  
Sent: Wednesday, 31 December, 2008 02:02  
To: "mary" <maryam\_ma\_alattar@yahoo.com>  
Subject: My life's work is ready to help you truly Think and Grow Rich...(best bonuses today, and for 1st 5, mary!)  
Hi mary,  
This has been in the making for six years and I believe you'll find it the best personal growth or success training,period.

I realize that's a bold statement to make, and yet I'm backing it with the promise that you'll know very quickly it'll be worth an extra \$20,000 to you, every year for the rest of your life, or you don't have to pay for it.

Look at how much you'll get out of the first 12 videos, and see for yourself why I can make such a strong promise:

Go to (website), and I think you'll also find the gifts just for visiting well worthwhile.

(And there is a time factor to consider, because it's worth thousands more to you by for sure doing the training within the first 24 hours, and then making sure you're one of the 1st five, 1st 20, and 1st 100 if you miss the 1st 5 and 1st 20.)

Believe me, you'll be very happy to have made it among the 1st five!

It's all explained at (website).

And I might point out that this message is going out to about 36,000 others, so please give this your full attention.

(You'll see at the top how giving me 20 minutes will be worth \$20,000 over each of the next 20 years, so I think it's a small thing to ask.)

Thank you,  
Dan

This message is from "Dan Klatt" sent to "Mary" on Wednesday, 31/12/2008 and is entitled "My life's work is ready to help you truly Think and Grow Rich...(best bonuses today, and for 1st 5, mary!). "Hi mary!" is an informal salutation and, is used in spoken English, in which the recipient's name is written in a small "m" instead of a capital "M", concludes it with the closing "Thank You" and it is signed informally with the sender's first name "Dan". There is no consistency when writing the message title in which some words are written in capitals and others in small letters. It is a short message and the grand total of words is approximately 215 words. It is divided into 9 paragraphs and it consists of 9 sentences, simple sentences recur 2 times, complex 1 time and complex-compound 6 times.

There are 14 contractions, either the auxiliary or (Be) with the pronoun or with (not), as "and I believe you'll find it the best..." and 4 punctuation mistakes as in the use of a colon in "and see for yourself why I can make such a strong promise:" where there is no need for it. It contains no typos but there are 3 capitalisation mistakes: 2 of them recur in the recipient's name and 1 is in the inconsistency of writing the title of the message. All of the lexical items used are formal except 2 expressions as in "Believe me" and "by for sure" which are colloquial. Abbreviations occur in "1st" 7 times though it is written as "first" 2 times.

There is 1 ellipsis which is in the title of the message and 14 repetitions as in the use of "1st" which is utilised 9 times. The pronouns used are (I) which recurs 6 times, (you) 9 times, (it) 4 times, as subject pronouns, (you) 2 times, (it) 4 times, (me) 2 times, as object pronouns, (yourself) 1 time, as a reflexive pronoun, and (your) 2 times, as a possessive pronoun. The tenses of verbs used are 16 as simple present, 1 as simple present perfect and 2 as present continuous. The modals used are (will) which recurs 8 times, (can) 1 time and (might) 1 time.

#### Message no. 8

From: "Dr. Jamie Fettig" <drj@----->  
Sent: Wednesday, 21 January, 2009 17:26  
To: "mary" <maryam\_ma\_alattar@yahoo.com>  
Subject: Accident

Dear mary,

Many people wrote saying they did not know I was in an accident.

So here is where I wrote about it in the past.  
(website)

And for all of you who sent their healing wishes, prayers, encouragement and support



THANK YOU!

I cried this morning reading them all.

Dr. Jamie Fetting  
(company)

(address)

This is a message from "Dr. Jamie Fetting" sent to "Mary" on Wednesday, 21/1/2009 and is entitled "Accident". He begins his message with a formal salutation "Dear" followed by the recipient's first name "mary", ends it with the closing "THANK YOU!" and he signs it using his title "Dr." followed by his full name, his company name and address. It is a short message in which the entire number of words is about 52 words and it is distributed to 5 paragraphs. There are 4 sentences and are all active, 3 are complex and 1 is complex-compound.

The pronouns used are (I) which occurs 3 times, (they) 1 time, as subject pronouns, (them), (you) and (it) occur 1 time, as object pronouns and (their) recurs 1 time, as a possessive pronoun. The simple present tense occurs 1 time and the simple past 6 times. There are 2 punctuation mistakes; these mistakes occur in the double space left before "THANK YOU!" and a missing comma before it.

No abbreviations, contractions, repetitions and typos recur but 1 capitalisation mistake occurs in the recipient's name "mary" and "THANK YOU" is written in capitals for emphasis. There are 2 ellipses in "I cried this morning reading them all" and the complete sentences "I cried this morning while I was reading them all." There is 1 informal lexical item which is "saying" in "Many people wrote saying..." instead of using "telling me" which fits for speech and writing.

Message no. 9

From: "Dr. Jamie Fetting" <drj@----->  
Sent: Wednesday, 21 January, 2009 05:44  
To: "mary" <maryam\_ma\_alattar@yahoo.com>  
Subject: My Healing

:Dear mary,

So a few people have asked, how am I healing.

So I thought I would send an email.

I am now without crutches, so that is well.

I still don't have any pain in my hip. Haven't had any since about 1 or 2 weeks after the accident.

With the exception of when I contract a muscle funny, i get a little pain, and when I stop contracting that muscle, the pain immediately goes away.

I "ran" a little bit yesterday.

I walked up steps normally last week

I got out of the shower normally (over the tub wall) yesterday

I balanced on one foot successfully today

I put my pants on normally today - one leg at a time : ) without sitting down.

it is amazing how you appreciate the little things in life when you lose them for a bit.

It makes me wonder, all the other little stuff that I didn't lose, and how i can find ways to appreciate them.

I started my PT yesterday.

No insurance company has given me any money yet.

So that kind of sucks.

But all in all, well.

I do stretches twice a day. and my range of motion is getting closer and closer to normal.

I am in good spirits.

Still crying almost every day.

and that is so not like me.

But hey, it doesn't hurt, so when I feel like it, I just cry.

Sometimes it is for no apparent reason.

Sometimes it is a song.

and sometimes it is because I think of some one elses suffering and pain.

Soon,

Jamie Fettig

(company)

(address)

This is a message from "Dr. Jamie Fettig" sent to "Mary" on Wednesday, 21/1/2009 and it is entitled "My Healing". He opens the message with a formal salutation "Dear" followed by the recipient's first name "mary", ends it with an informal closing "Soon" and signs it using his full name followed by his company name and address. In general the organisation of the message is not familiar in that when there is some space on a line, the following sentence is not completed on it but on the line that follows. The whole number of words is roughly 264 words and it is divided into 10 paragraphs and there are 26 sentences in which 14 are simple sentences, 3 are compound, 5 are complex and 4 are complex-compound.

The tenses used are as follows: Simple present recurs 20 times, present continuous 2 times, simple present perfect 3 times and simple past 8 times. As modals, both (would) and (can) are utilised 1 time. Punctuation mistakes occur

10 times, typos occur 2 times and capitalisation mistakes recur 8 times as in "Sometimes it is a song. and sometimes it is because I think of some one elses suffering and pain." This sentence includes 3 mistakes, where "and" is preceded by a full stop and it is written in a small "a", some one is written as two words and "elses" is written without an apostrophe which must be like "else's". As subject pronouns, (I) recurs 21 times, (you) 2 times and (it) 6 times.

There are 3 contractions, as the auxiliary with (not), as in "I still don't have any pain in my hip." and 1 abbreviation as "PT" for "Physical Training". Repetition occurs 13 times as in "With the exception of when I contract a muscle funny, i get a little pain, and when I stop contracting that muscle, the pain immediately goes away." where the words "contract, contracting, muscle, muscle, pain and pain" are repeated, each of which recurs 2 times. Ellipsis occurs in 3 instances and 7 informal expressions are used, as in "Still crying almost every day." which comprises both an ellipsis and an informal expression where "I am" is deleted and this expression is used in spoken English. There are 3 grammatical mistakes as in "I do stretches twice a day." in which "stretches" cannot be plural but it only occurs in a singular form as "a stretch". It is the only message in which the typographical symbol " :) " is used, which must be read sideways, and it expresses happiness.

Message no. 10

From: "Laurie Weiss" <laurieweiss@----->  
Sent: Wednesday, 21 January, 2009 07:59  
To: "Mary" <maryam\_ma\_alattar@yahoo.com>  
Subject: Reminder: special teleconference January 22

Dear Mary,

On Thursday, January 22nd from 8-10 pm ET Sharon Wilson, Founder and Chief Inspiration Officer from Coaching from Spirit Institute will be conducting the F.R.E.E. teleconference that I've told you about: "The Missing Element to Your Quantum Entrepreneurial Success in 2009 and Beyond!"

On this call, you'll learn the amazing secret to "recession-proofing your business" and experience unshakable success and peace of mind in ANY economy.

Remember, this is the tele-class I told you about last week. If you forgot to sign up, you still have time.

Invite your friends to join you on this f.r.e.e. teleclass with special expert panel AND bonus 30 minute Q&A segment!

One of you might be one of the 3 lucky callers who W.I.N. one of the C.A.S.H. prizes!

Don't forget for those who stay until the end of the call, you'll receive a package via email worth more than \$1,000! This includes a gift directly from me as well as gifts from many of the other people involved in making this call possible.

Sharon is also throwing in an additional gift her 7 day e-course, "Success From Spirit". In it you'll enjoy astonishing (and easy!) success in your business by applying spiritual principles from an entrepreneur's angle.

This course normally sells for \$79.95 but it's yours F.R.E.E. just for attending this life-changing event!

AND - when you come on this call you'll learn how YOU can position yourself to be an expert on the Internet, and make an extra \$500-\$1000 in just a few hours time!

But you have to be on the call to get this info!

You do NOT want to miss this one! Reserve your seat now at:

(website)

Mark your calendar and show up a few minutes early as lines are expected to fill up fast!

Have your notepad and pen handy to take some notes, and listen carefully to see if you are one of the 3 lucky winners of one of the C.A.S.H. prizes!

Only those on the line will qualify! If your name is called and you're not present, another name will be selected!

Be sure to reserve your seat now and tell all your friends to come too!

This event will be jam packed!

(website)

Warmly,

Laurie

(address)

This is a message from "Laurie Weiss" sent to "Mary" on Wednesday, 21/1/2009 and it is entitled "Reminder: special teleconference January 22". She begins the message with a formal salutation "Dear" followed by the recipient's first name "Mary" and concludes it with a friendly closing "Warmly" and a signature of her first name. It is a bit long message in which the total number of words is around 360 words and it is divided into 16 paragraphs and there are 20 sentences: 4 of them are simple, 4 are compound, 7 are complex and 5 are complex-compound.

Contractions occur 8 times, as the auxiliary or (Be) with the pronoun or with (not), as in "Don't" and "You're" though they are written as "do NOT" and "you are". There are 6 abbreviations as in "info" for (information), 29 punctuation mistakes as in the missing quotation mark after the title of the teleconference "The Missing Element to Your Quantum Entrepreneurial Success in 2009 and Beyond! and 2 typos as in "Don't forgetfor..." where no space is left between "forget" and "for". There occurs 1 capitalisation mistake in "f.r.e.e." which occurs 2 times in capitals like an abbreviated form though it is not and 1 time in small letters and there are other 7 words all written in capitals for emphasis, as "ANY" and "W.I.N."

All the lexical items are formal with exception of "throwing in" in "Sharon is also throwing in an additional gift..." which is informal and all the

information units are complete. (I) recurs 2 times and (you) 12 times, as subject pronouns; (you) occurs 4 times, (it) 1 time and (me) 1 time, as object pronouns; (your) is used 10 times, (yours) 1 time and (her) 1 time, as possessive pronouns and (yourself) is used 1 time, as a reflexive pronoun.

There are 7 grammatical mistakes as "the 3 lucky winners" in "if you are one of the 3 lucky winners of one of the C.A.S.H. prizes" which must be "the 3 luckiest". Repetition recurs 18 times as "gift" in "This includes a gift directly from me as well as gifts from many of the people involved in making this call possible." All the sentences are active except for 4 passive ones and the tense of the verbs used is 24 in the simple present, 1 in the simple present perfect, 1 in the present continuous, 3 in the simple past and 1 in the future continuous. As modals, (will) is utilised 7 times, (can) 2 times and (might) 1 time.

## 6. Conclusion

Analysed Category	Frequency	Relative Frequency
Sentences	149	15.06
Tenses	321	32.45
Pronouns	328	33.16
Contractions	69	6.97
Abbreviations	21	2.12
Punctuation mistakes	67	6.77
Typos	9	0.91
Capitalisation mistakes	25	2.52
Total	989	100.00

Table 1

After the author has analysed these 10 personal emails, it has been found that emails have features of both speech and writing and so emails can be considered as an assortment of them both. The total number of words in the selected data is approximately 2255 words and the grand total of sentences is 149 constituting 15.06% of all the analysed categories, 134 of them are active forming 89.93% of all sentences and only 15 of them are passive making 10.06% of all sentences. The types of the sentences range from complex sentences which occur 56 times making 37.58% of the total number of sentences; message no. 1 contains the highest number of them, compound-complex sentences recur 39 times forming 26.17% of all sentences, simple sentences occur 38 times making 25.50% of all sentences and finally compound sentences are used 16 times forming only 10.73% of all sentences. As it is obvious from this analysis, the complex, complex-compound and simple sentences are the most highly recurrent sentences in the data. Therefore, the use of complex and complex-compound sentences shows that emails can be regarded more like writing than speech in this feature.

The recurrence of tenses utilised in the data is 321 times which forms 32.45% of all the analysed categories and varies from the present which is the highest whose occurrence is 220 times making 68.53% of all tenses, in which the simple present recurs 184 times constituting 83.63% of the total number of the present, the greatest recurrence of the simple present tense is in message no. 1, whereas the simple past recurs 44 times forming 13.70% of all tenses. Modals occur 57 times forming 17.75% of all tenses, where (will) recurs 22 times constituting 38.59% of all modals. In fact, the present tense is used highly in speech but in writing the present, past tenses and the future time are used. The analysis indicates that the present here is the most frequently used tense and because of this average, emails can be considered as speech regarding this feature.

The occurrence of pronouns is 328 times which makes 14.54% of the entire number of words and 33.16% of the analysed categories and it has been proved that first person pronouns occur the most; i.e. 162 times forming 49.39% of all pronouns. (I) is the highest recurring pronoun which occurs 120 times constituting 74.07% of all first person pronouns; it occurs the most in message no. 1. Second person pronouns occur 107 times forming 32.62% of all pronouns while third person pronouns recur 59 times making 17.98% of all pronouns. First and second person pronouns occur greatly in speech whereas third person pronouns occur very much in writing; consequently, emails are more like speech in this feature than writing.

It is clear that 69 contractions occur in the data of analysis forming 3.05% of all words and 6.97% of all the categories analysed; their recurrence is the highest in message no. 1. The use of contracted forms is used more in speech than in writing but this ratio makes it lucid that contractions cannot only be used in speech but they can also be used in writing. The occurrence of abbreviations is 21 times constituting 0.93% of all words and 2.12% of all the analysed categories; message no. 7 has the greatest number of them, but this rate is not very high as it is in speech. In the data analysed punctuation mistakes recur 67 times constituting 6.77% of the categories analysed; they occur the highest in message no. 10, typos occur 9 times forming 0.39% of all words and 0.91% of the categories analysed; they have the greatest recurrence in message no. 1, and capitalisation mistakes recur 25 times making 1.10% of all words and 2.52% of all the categories analysed; their greatest occurrence is in message no. 9. Such rates refer to the fact that some email senders do not read their messages before sending them or because they are in a hurry which means emails tend to look like speech in the above mentioned features.

There are 8 short messages and 2 long ones in this data, one is very long and the other is a bit long. Though this agrees with the idea that emails tend to be one screen view, only 3 of them are one screen view. So emails are like speech since brevity is a feature of speech. Concerning the length of sentences, 4 messages contain long sentences, 4 messages consist of short sentences and 2

messages vary in the length of their sentences in that they have some long sentences and some other short ones. There are 12 ellipses which form 8.05% of all sentences. This means that emails are like writing and speech regarding the length of their sentences.

Regarding the forms of address, it is plain that they vary in the style of their salutation from formal into informal; the formal is more frequently used than the informal. As to salutation, 6 messages begin with (Dear + recipient's first name) and this is a formal form of address, 2 messages start with no salutation, 1 message opens with (Hi + recipient's first name) and 1 starts with (Hey + You), the last two forms are informal and are particularly used in speech. As a result, emails are the same as writing in this feature.

The closings used are all formal, 2 messages end with very formal closings, 2 messages conclude with closings that are used in speech and in writing, 2 end in friendly closings, 1 concludes with a closing that is used in speech and 3 end with no closing. Thus, emails are like speech and writing in this feature.

Concerning signature, 3 senders sign their first name at the end of the message which is informal, 2 of them belong to the same sender who signs her name and her address; 3 senders sign their full name which is formal, 1 sender only mentions his phone number and a website in addition to his full name; 2 senders sign their messages using their title, one of them uses (Dr. + full name) with also his address and the other one uses her title (Professor + her last name); 1 signs using their field of work and 1 ends his message with no signature. So emails are like writing in that they have the tendency of being formal.

Finally, all the messages are written with no indention at the beginning of each paragraph but they all have a space between one paragraph and another. They also have a space between the message body and the salutation and the signature. That is why emails are like writing regarding their layout.

It can be said that emails have some features of the spoken language and the written language but electronic communication here represented by email cannot be considered as a completely new language of its own so far. It can be regarded as a medium of communication that is in fluctuation and may be it is too early to say that it is a new language.

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