Citation:
Thiel, L and Sage, K and Conroy, P (2015) Normative Data for Email Writing by Native Speakers of British English. Journal of open psychology data. ISSN 2050-9863 DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/jopd.aj

Link to Leeds Beckett Repository record:
http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/2459/

Document Version:
Article (Published Version)

Creative Commons: Attribution 3.0

The aim of the Leeds Beckett Repository is to provide open access to our research, as required by funder policies and permitted by publishers and copyright law.

The Leeds Beckett repository holds a wide range of publications, each of which has been checked for copyright and the relevant embargo period has been applied by the Research Services team.

We operate on a standard take-down policy. If you are the author or publisher of an output and you would like it removed from the repository, please contact us and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Each thesis in the repository has been cleared where necessary by the author for third party copyright. If you would like a thesis to be removed from the repository or believe there is an issue with copyright, please contact us on openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.
DATA PAPER

Normative Data for Email Writing by Native Speakers of British English

Lindsey Thiel¹, Karen Sage² and Paul Conroy³

¹ NARU, School of Psychological Sciences, University of Manchester, UK
lindsey.thiel@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk
² Bristol Speech and Language Therapy Research Unit, Frenchay Hospital, University of the West of England
karen.sage@uwe.ac.uk
³ NARU, School of Psychological Sciences, University of Manchester, UK
paul.conroy@manchester.ac.uk

This dataset includes emails from forty two control participants ranging from 16 to 88 years of age (mean = 46) and 9 to 24 years of education (mean = 13). Three emails were produced by each participant (between 2011 and 2014), each within a time limit of three minutes. It is expected that this normative data will be useful for clinicians and researchers working with adults with acquired language disorders in assessing email writing.

Keywords: Email; writing; neurotypical; control

Funding statement: This work is supported by an Economic and Social Research Council bursary to Lindsey Thiel [Award number ES/I020233/1]

(1) Overview

Context

Collection Date(s)
2011–2014

Background

Introduction

Internet use has become an important part of everyday life for people of all ages for participating in work, education and social communication [1,2]. Of all internet activities, email use is the most common [2] and is now considered to be essential for work and education [3, 4]; therefore, those who do not have access to the internet can be considerably disadvantaged [5]. People with aphasia, an acquired multi-modal language disorder resulting from brain injury [6], have significant difficulties with internet and email use, due to their language impairment [7–9]. Although assessments have been developed for measuring internet skills [10–12] and writing abilities [13, 14], there is no standardised measure of email writing. Considering email writing skills in healthy individuals are likely to vary from person to person depending on factors such as experience, keyboard skills, age and education, there is a need for normative data to firstly understand what constitutes neuro-typical email writing ability in order to determine whether an individual could be considered as impaired on this task. Normative email writing data could also be used as a ceiling so that therapists and researchers can measure change following therapies using statistical methods.

(2) Methods

Sample

Forty two participants were recruited to this study. Three different groups were approached: firstly, a database of retired university staff and other healthy adults who had expressed an interest in taking part in psychological studies, representing a range of professional background and years of education; secondly, secondary level school students (aged 16–18) who volunteered to participate in psychological research studies while taking part in a university outreach event; and finally, personal acquaintances of the first author were recruited, including friends and family members. Nine participants were male (21 %) and 33 (79 %) were female. The mean age of participants was 46 (SD = 25) with a range of 16 to 88 years. Half of the participants were between 16 and 50 years of age and the other half were between 51 and 88 years of age. The mean number of years of education was 13 (SD = 3) with a range of 9 to 24 years spent in education. All participants were native speakers of British English. Potential participants were excluded from the study if they had been diagnosed with a neurological condition, learning disability, dyslexia or dysgraphia.

Procedures

Participants were either tested at the university or at home. They were asked to complete the following three email tasks in a Microsoft Word Document on a laptop computer:
1. Write an email arranging to meet a friend at a certain time, place and date.
2. Write an email to a friend telling them about a recent holiday.
3. Write an email to your Member of Parliament (local political representative) about an issue of concern to you at the present time, e.g., library closure.

Participants were timed by the first author. For each task, they were asked to stop writing after three minutes but could also stop before if they wished.

Quality control
The task was explained in detail to participants. The first author monitored time keeping in order to ensure writing tasks took no longer than three minutes.

Ethical issues
The current study was approved by the University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee. Prior to taking part in the study, each participant was given a participant information sheet and was asked to sign a consent form. Participants’ personal information was stored in locked cabinets and on secure university network drives. Participants were referred to with numbers throughout the study. Within emails, personal identifiable information such as names, addresses and professions have been replaced with different names, addresses and professions with the same number of letters.

(3) Dataset description

Object name
Normative data for email writing by native speakers of British English

Data type
Primary data

Format names and versions
Excel workbook
Version 2

Language
English

Repository location
doi:10.7910/DVN/28204

Publication date
07.04.2015

(4) Reuse potential
This email data could be used to answer questions concerning the quantity, quality and range of written language performance in email samples within a neurotypical population. For example, linguistic analyses such as percentage of open class words or adherence to politeness forms could be conducted. Furthermore, age and education could be examined as factors relating to specific email characteristics. Finally, the data could be useful to clinicians or researchers in the rehabilitation of writing disorders who may wish to use the same email tasks on their patients or participants and to compare results to establish whether they are impaired. Norms on any particular aspect of language could then be used as a ceiling so that changes following therapy can be subjected to statistical analysis.

References
1. Bunz, U 2004 The computer-Email-Web (CEW) Fluency Scale—Development and validation. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 17: 479–506. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327590ijhc1704_3
2. Conti-Ramsden, G, Durkin, K and Walker, A 2012 The messages they send: e-mail use by adolescents with and without a history of specific language impairment (SLI). *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 47(2): 217–228. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-6984.2011.00096.x
3. Deursen, A and van Dijk, J 2010 Measuring internet skills. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 26(10): 891–916. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2010.496338
4. Egan, J, Worrall, L and Oxenham, D 2004 Accessible internet training package helps people with aphasia cross the digital divide. *Aphasiology*, 18(3): 265–280. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02687030344000562
5. Egan, J, Worrall, L and Oxenham, D 2005 An internet training intervention for people with traumatic brain injury: Barriers and outcomes. *Brain Injury*, 19: 555–568. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0269905050013659
6. Elman, R 2001 The internet and aphasia: Crossing the digital divide. *Aphasiology*, 15(10/11): 895–899. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02687040143000267
7. Goodglass, H, Kaplan, E, and Barresi, B 2001 *BDAE-3. The Boston Diagnostic Aphasia Examination* (3rd Ed.). Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins.
8. Hair, M, Renaud, K V and Ramsay, J 2007 The influence of self-esteem and locus of control on perceived email related stress. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 23: 2791–2803. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2006.05.005
9. Hallowell, B and Chapey, R 2008 Introduction to Language Intervention Strategies in Adult Aphasia. In R. Chapey (Ed.) *Language Intervention Strategies in Aphasia and Related Neurogenic Communication Disorders* (5th ed.) (pp. 3–19). Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
10. Kay, J, Lesser, R and Coltheart, M 1992 *Psycholinguistic Assessments of Language Processing in Aphasia* (PALPA). Hove, UK: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Ltd.
11. Menger, F, Morris, J and Salis, C 2014 From Facebook to finances: How do people with aphasia use the internet? *Proceedings of the 16th International Aphasia Rehabilitation Conference 2014*, The Hague, The Netherlands.
12. Office for National Statistics 2014 *Statistical Bulletin: Internet Access – Households and Individuals* 2014.
Available at http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/rdit2/internet-access---households-and-individuals/2014/stb-ia-2014.html [Accessed 5.12.14.]

13. Steyaert, J 2002 Inequality and the digital divide: Myths and realities. In S. Hick & J. McNutt (Eds.), Advocacy, activism and the Internet (pp. 199–211). Chicago, IL.: Lyceum Press.

14. Van Dijk, J 2006 Digital divide research, achievements and shortcomings. Poetics, 34: 221–235. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2006.05.004

Peer review comments: https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/ubiquity-partner-network/jopd/aj/jopd-aj.pdf