DATA PAPER

Normative Data for Email Writing by Native Speakers of British English

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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

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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 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
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(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
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.