

# Communication using Electronic Messages and its Effects among the EFL Undergraduate Students inside the Classroom

وأثره على طلاب التواصل باستخدام الرسائل الإلكترونية داخل الفصل الدراسي  
المرحلة الجامعية للغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية

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## Abstract

This study aims at bringing out to light the effect of communicative electronic messages among the EFL graduate students inside the classroom. The research will familiarize the potential reader with the meaning of central words in this study. The researchers used a questionnaire of fourteen questions delivered to twenty students at the University of Alhadera in Tripoli-Libya to see how much this phenomenon of sending electronic messages among students inside classroom can affect their language performance. The study found out that most of the students are not aware enough of the consequences of communicating through electronic messages inside the classroom and most of the EFL students are not paying enough attention during lectures. Therefore, students must be well educated about how to lessen the affective filter by their teachers and the administration of the university before they start their studies so that their learning performance keeps improving. In addition, some recommendations are included.

## المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إبراز أثر الرسائل الإلكترونية التواصلية لدى طلاب المرحلة الجامعية للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية داخل الفصل الدراسي. سوف يعرّف البحث القارئ المحتمل بمعنى الكلمات المركزية في هذه الدراسة. استخدم الباحثون استبيانًا يتكون من أربعة عشر سؤالًا تم طرحه على عشرين طالبًا بجامعة الحاضرة بطرابلس -ليبيا، لمعرفة مدى تأثير ظاهرة إرسال الرسائل الإلكترونية بين الطلاب داخل الفصول الدراسية على أدائهم اللغوي. توصلت الدراسة إلى أن معظم الطلاب لا يدركون بشكل كافٍ عواقب التواصل عبر الرسائل الإلكترونية داخل الفصل الدراسي وأن معظم طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لا يولون الاهتمام الكافي أثناء المحاضرات. لذلك، يجب تثقيف الطلاب جيدًا حول كيفية تقليل المرشح العاطفي من قبل معلمهم وإدارة الجامعة قبل بدء دراستهم حتى يستمر أداءهم التعليمي في التحسن. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم تضمين بعض التوصيات.

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays Electronic messages has been playing an essential role as means of communication between people in different parts of the world and in particular among the undergraduate students who are learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Language means interaction and interaction means how to use the language and be in contact with others and that is going to be through communication. Thus, communication using technology has facilitated to us, humans, a lot of difficulties we meet in our daily life. Unlike the past, we can do many things in a very short time with the help of electronic messages. If you want to convey something or any important or urgent news, no need for taking a car or other means of transport, what would you do is just writing the message in your mobile phone, computer or any other electronic devices, and send it immediately to the receiver. This system of sending messages is spreading commonly among the undergraduates. Concerning those who are learning a foreign language, this phenomenon is considered to be very useful for developing and improving their foreign language use. And indirectly they will find themselves practicing two out of the four language skills (writing and reading). Although there are many mistakes will be made during their use of the foreign language; with time, they can correct their mistakes and be better in writing. It has been noticed that

students write in a special way in text messaging and many undergraduate students try to shorten the words like the subject (you) becomes (u) and the auxiliary verb (are) becomes (r). Add to this, using other signals as short forms of bigger ones. Communication through messages is very useful and it can save a lot of time for us generally and the undergraduate students in particular upon whom this research is about.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Many EFL undergraduate students communicate using electronic messages inside the classroom. This phenomenon has led to teacher interruption and students' stress raising and consequently the affective filter likewise which negatively impacts the language performance. This serious habit is not given enough attention from the researchers' points of view, even though students are getting their performances affected by such a habit. For this reason, this research is going to be conducted to emphasize how serious the communication through the electronic messages in the classroom can affect students' affective filter and thus learning.

## **3. Research Questions**

This study attempts to find answers to the following questions:

1. Do the EFL undergraduate students know how the affective filter is going to raise in case of sending electronic messages inside classroom?
2. Do the EFL undergraduate students know how much writing mistakes can be made as a consequence of sending electronic messages among them inside classroom?

## **4. Objectives of the Study**

The study aims to meet the following objectives:

1. To highlight to the EFL undergraduate students how this common phenomenon is bad inside the classroom.
2. To shed light on this phenomenon and that it creates a lot of interruption to colleagues inside the classroom which is called in education affective filter.
3. To shed light on how much the levels of the EFL undergraduate students in writing are going to be affected.

## 5. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in its aim to shed light on its serious consequences on students' performance. Clarifying to EFL undergraduate students the dangerous risks of this habit inside the classroom is considered crucial. The study also highlights the potential damage that electronic messages can cause to students' writing. By raising awareness of this issue, teachers can take steps to implement policies that encourage all students to follow the rules.

## 6. Limitations of the Study

This research will be conducted at the University of Alhadera-Tripoli, Libya. It will be focused on the EFL undergraduate students of the first year (males and females).

## 7. Definitions of Terms

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**Affective Filter:** a theoretical construct in second language acquisition that attempts to explain the emotional variables associated with the success or failure of acquiring a second language. The affective filter is an invisible psychological filter that can either facilitate or hinder language production in a second language/ foreign language.

## 8. Literature Review

### 8.1. Previous Related Studies

**Tercan and Dikilitas, (2015) and Horwitz, et al. (1986)**

They have claimed that English as Foreign language communication apprehension skill has many fear of its negative aspects and that is felt through people's experiences while trying to communicate in the target language. And here we focus on one of the situations that take place inside the classroom such as communicative process by sending electronic messages among undergraduate students inside the classroom. This type of communication using electronic messages inside the classroom can affect any person who learns a foreign language. However, there are also some factors that affect the level of experience such as classroom atmosphere, gender, and teacher-student relations.

**Jafarigohar and Behrooznia (2012)**

Gender factor has been discussed by many researchers for many years and also the conflict is still uncertain even if many studies

were conducted. For some researchers female students are good at language learning comparing with male students and because of this fact, female learners of EFL can feel more anxiety in having this phenomenon of sending electronic messages between them inside the classroom. Furthermore, many studies have made it clear that female learners of foreign language are going to be more worried, and feel fear of making many mistakes when sending these electronic messages inside the classroom such as wrong writing, incomplete sentences, shorten words, grammar structures, etc.

**Underwood, 1984 (cited in Paradowski et al., 2015)**

The researchers pointed out that foreign language teachers can help learners overcome anxiety by prohibiting this practice of sending messages among students inside the classroom. Because such a terrible practice habit can make EFL students more unpleasant and less appreciative of their teachers, resulting in antagonism between students and teachers and low achievement in the classroom.

**Tseng (2021)**

As a result of practicing this harmful habit of sending electronic messages among the undergraduate students, some learners of EFL expressed that learning and speaking a foreign language in the classroom is always a problem. "That is why language teachers should provide warm and respectful classroom atmosphere and respect to the students" (p.83). Teachers should try to understand their students' learning process and provide them with non-threatening learning environment.

**Cicekci and Sadik (2019)**

The researchers have drawn attention to the fact that the teacher can also conduct a classroom where she/he will inform to their students that learning a foreign language is complicated and long-term process, which every learner go through in a different pace (2019). Therefore, troubles which can make the EFL student create mistakes that should also be corrected indirectly. In this sense, I mean when the teachers discover the existing of this habit of sending electronic messages among the students, and they know how much it will affect negatively on the their students' levels by committing many mistakes. They should advise their students indirectly to help them to overcome their feelings, and facilitate the learning process.

**Fredrickson (2001)**

Sending electronic messages between EFL students inside the classroom is considered as a typical negative emotion, like anxiety and others. This would narrow the resources of cognition and impose restrictions, difficulties, obstacles, and many problems on the advancement of English Foreign Language learners' ability to focus on new things. While sending the messages, the EFL student is going to apply certain linguistic structures that do not exist before. Therefore, this phenomenon shall delay him / her perfect achievement.

**Jones (1989), cited in Budianto (2011)**

Reported on her experiences as an intermediate learner of Indonesian as a second language learner in an intensive program, during her studies, she has been focusing on two negative phenomena; one of them was sending messages inside classroom. They are social and psychological factors which influenced her foreign language learning. Therefore, students' psychological conditions, as one of the internal factors, are potential to influence the foreign or second language acquisition.

**Gregersen (2020)**

He asserted that language learning is an emotionally and psychologically dynamic process driven by a plethora of ever-changing variables and emotional "vibes" that result in moment-to-moment changes in learners' adaption. This individual-level study triangulates physiological, idiodynamic, interview, and self-report survey data from three high and three low anxiety language learners in order to investigate their language anxiety, its triggers, and the interpretations of rapidly changing affective reactions over a short period of time. Participants in Spanish as a Foreign Language class were videotaped presenting a presentation while wearing heart monitors. Participants self-rated their moment-by-moment anxiety 42 times over three and a half minutes using the idiodynamic approach, and then explained their reactions in an interview. The high correlation discovered between the numerous converging data. The strong relationship observed among the various converging data sources demonstrates the strength of considering language learners go on an individual level using triangulated quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study generated pedagogical implications for dealing with both positive and negative emotions, facilitating the

reinterpretation of physiological cues, planning “escape routes” that allow participants to remain active in communication exchanges, and invoking the positive power of preparation, planning, and rehearsal.

**Burleson (2007)**

Some people constantly speak more skillfully than others in a variety of contexts. You probably know some really skilled communicators—people who can recognize what is going on in social situations quickly, understand the meanings and messages of others, convey their ideas to others in effective and appropriate ways, and smoothly enter and manage conversations. You almost surely know people who appear ignorant in social circumstances, who never seem to catch the purpose of another's message, who can't communicate their own thoughts in ways that others can understand, and who always sound aggressive, if not nasty, in conversation. What do some people understand that allows them to be highly successful and effective communicators?

Sending communicative electronic messages inside the classroom will generally make the EFL students not feel better about a loss of their feelings and in this case they will receive poor kind of knowledge which may lead to the damage of their stock of knowledge. As to learn a new language that means new patterns of information and linguistic structures should be existed in the students' mind.

## **9. Methodology**

### **9.1. Questionnaire**

This quantitative method deals with descriptions of the phenomenon through gathering data in numerical forms, explaining the issues and analyzing the data (Kothari, 2004). In this study, the quantitative instrument of the questionnaire was used to gather accurate information about the problem of the research. The research used a questionnaire of ten questions including (agree), (neutral), and (disagree), and five questions of (yes) or (no). The questionnaire is distributed to 20 EFL students in their first year at the University of Alhadera in Tripoli-Libya. Then after that, the researchers are going to analyze this questionnaire and to see how much this phenomenon of sending electronic messages among the students inside classroom can affect their language performance. In addition, the questionnaire shall have more facts and clarification to support this research more clearly.

Table "1"

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Did you use to communicate by electronic messages inside the classroom?	55%	15%	20%

In the first question, we find 55% of the respondents have answered 'agree' and this answer reflected their highly dependence on their phones to communicate while they are in the same place. 15% were neutral, while the other 20% disagreed concerning this habit and they may consider using electronic messages to communicate inside the classroom to be a bad habit.

Table "2"

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Do you know how much harm may be caused using electronic messages inside the classroom as an increaser of the affective filter?	60%	20%	20%

Here in table 2, most of the students have known that in case of using this kind of communication inside the classroom, certainly their affective filter will raise, which stands as a barrier towards their FL acquisition. 20% were neutral and did not speak up. The last 20% of the respondents did not know how much harm they can be exposed to if they communicate inside the classroom using the electronic messages.

Table "3"

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Is communication using electronic messages inside the classroom useful?	40%	15%	45%

In this table, we discovered that 40% of the respondents consider communication through electronic messages inside the classroom to be useful. The researchers consider this point of view to be misled. The students do not know how much their understanding during the lecture will be confused. 15% did not tell whether such



communication is useful or not. However, 45% considered this kind of communication inside the classroom to be not useful. This can be attributed to the fact that they were hard-working students who prefer face to face interactions and they want to focus on their study during the time of the lectures.

Table "4"

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Does communicating inside the classroom using electronic messages lead to writing mistakes.	55%	30%	15%

More than half of the respondents agree that communicating using electronic messages inside the classroom may lead to writing mistakes. This is correct and they know the damage that will happen, because of their non-concentration during working in the lectures and many grammatical structures are not going to be used properly. This seems logical and accepted perfectly. 30% were neutral. This may be attributed to their preference of this communication and the students do not care of its negative effect upon the writing as a crucial skill which enables them to use it accurately. A quarter of the respondents disagreed that such a phenomenon may negatively affect students' writing.

Table "5"

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Does communicating inside the classroom using electronic messages motivate EFL students?	70%	25%	5%

Surprisingly, most of the respondents agree that communicating inside the classroom using electronic messages motivate EFL students. This may seem to be not logical as such a habit could disrupt students' concentration. In addition, 30% were neutral. They may like this communication and they don't care of its negative effect. Only a very small percent of the respondents have stated that this habit does not motivate EFL students.

Table "6"

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Is sending electronic messages among the students inside the classroom a good habit?	40%	35%	15%

In table 6, 40% percent of the respondents agree concerning sending electronic messages among the students inside the classroom to accept it as a good habit. Those students are neglecting and ignoring the difficulties they are going to face when they miss the valuable information which can be given to them directly from their teachers inside the classroom. 35% were neutral while 15% accepted it as a bad habit.

Table "7"

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Can sending electronic messages among the students inside classroom help the EFL students acquire the language fluency?	85%	10%	5%

In this table, the majority of the students, 85%, showed that sending electronic messages among the students inside classroom can help the EFL students acquire the language fluency. While 10% were neutral, only 5% disagree against this habit, because it cannot help the EFL students to acquire the language fluency.

Table "8"

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Does the teacher feel pleased when he/she sees the students engaging in electronic messages' communication?	70%	15%	15%

In table 8, it seems that the respondents may not have understood the question clearly. How teachers see the students engaging and communicating through messages inside the classroom and instead of being angry at them, they are pleased. 15% were neutral respondents. The other 15% replied by disagreeing because they know well no teacher can be pleased if the students are busy inside the classroom with other things.

Table "9"

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Does repeating this phenomenon of sending electronic messages among the EFL students inside the classroom has harmful effect?	25%	35%	40%

In table 9, 25% of the respondents reject repeating this phenomenon inside the classroom because it is considered as an affective filter and it may hinder the process of learning. 35% of the respondents were neutral. The researchers cannot judge whether they like repeating this kind of communication inside the classroom or dislike it. The bigger number of respondents disagreed and considered repeating the phenomenon to not have harmful effect.

Table "10"

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Is communication by sending electronic messages inside the classroom among EFL students interesting?	%50	%40	%5

In table 10, 50% of the students agreed to consider such a habit interesting. Those respondents focus on such things a lot and not even give any serious attention to their purpose of getting into classroom, as they should have put their high interest in learning and acquiring the language more than occupying themselves a long time in sending messages. 40% of the EFL students were neutral and this is a big number. While 5% disagreed by telling that communication by sending electronic messages inside the classroom is not interesting, as if they want to say this is not our goal inside the classroom.

Table "11"

Statement	Yes	No.	Sometimes
Do the teachers notice the negative and the positive effects of such a habit of communication through electronic messages inside the classroom?	80%	5%	15%

In this table, the respondents' answers were that 80% of them said that their teachers have noticed the effects. However, we do not know if there were any positive effects to the phenomenon. 5% this is very meager number of teachers who have not noticed the effects occurred. 15% of students said sometimes the teachers have noticed

such affective filter symptoms and we do not know whether teachers talked to students about its negative effects or not.

**Table "12"**

Statement	Yes	No.	Sometimes
Are there many benefits come out to the EFL students from using the communicative electronic messages among them inside the classroom?	35%	5%	60%

In table 12, 35% of the respondents said 'yes' when they were asked if the using of electronic messages inside the classroom will provide many benefits. While 5% of the students did not see any benefits to such a habit, 60% were reluctant and said 'sometimes'.

**Table "13"**

Statement	Yes	No.	Sometimes
Do your teachers use this habit of communicating using electronic messages inside the classroom?	20%	45%	30%

Table "13" has shown that 20% of the respondents' teachers use this habit of communicating using electronic messages inside the classroom. The researchers believe that sometimes the use of the teachers to these kinds of communication is necessary for them to get information from anywhere related to the lecture when they are inside the classroom. 45% said 'no', meaning that their teachers are not used to deal with this kind of communication inside the classroom. However, 30% said that their teachers are sometimes communicating using electronic messages inside the classroom.

**Table "14"**

Statement	Yes	No.	Sometimes
Do you agree if the administration tries to use cameras to stop this habit of sending electronic messages inside the classroom?	10%	85%	5%

In table 14, only a small number of EFL students estimated as 10% agree that cameras be installed to observe them inside the classroom, while 85%, which is considered the majority, refused cameras to be used to observe them inside the classroom. Besides, 5% of the EFL students said sometimes they agree and sometimes they do

not. Their agreement is not full and they do not like such observing inside the classroom.

## 10. Findings

This research discovered that most of the students are not aware enough of the dire consequences of communicating through electronic messages inside the classroom and most of the EFL students are not paying high attention during the course of their lectures. The paper has also found out that students must be well educated on how to lessen the affective filter by their teachers and the administration of the university before they start their studies. The lower the affective filter, the higher their performance will be.

## 11. Recommendations

### To the Teachers

1. They should pay their full attention to the students' actions during the lectures inside the classroom.
2. Teachers should try to make the classroom interactive to make the whole class active and engaged.
3. The teachers must try to notice those troublesome students and gently guide them.

### To the Students

1. Students should focus on their study especially inside the classroom as communication through electronic messages inside the classroom is considered as an increaser of stress and hence of the affective filter.
2. The students must respect their teachers and not pay full attention to them especially during the work of lectures in order not to disturb them.

## 12. Conclusion

To sum up, the researchers would like to introduce the effects of communicative electronic messages and their influence upon the EFL students and hinder the way of their learning the language correctly. The research has taken the negative sides of both elements of the classroom control, the teacher and the student, with greater emphasis on the student. Added to that, the research attempted to reflect to the teachers, the students and the potential readers how to observe such phenomenon and how to tackle it. The research has

proposed some solutions in order how to deal with such affective filter just like installing cameras to try to prohibit using electronic messages inside the classroom.

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