

Professional Netiquette and Its Pedagogical Integration in Business English Instruction for Future Digital Leaders

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Email : nadanabila211@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

This study examines the role of professional netiquette in Business English instruction within a digitalized learning environment for management students. As communication in modern business increasingly relies on email, messaging platforms, video-conferencing, and Learning Management Systems, digital etiquette has become essential for maintaining professionalism and communicative effectiveness. Using a descriptive qualitative design, this study analyzed three units of Speaking and Business English instructional materials from the Management Department, focusing on learning objectives, instructional activities, and assessment tasks. Additional documents such as syllabi, worksheets, and rubrics were included to strengthen the analysis. The findings show that students possess only a moderate awareness of netiquette, with inconsistent performance across email writing, instant messaging, virtual meetings, and LMS interactions. Students, however, perceive netiquette as highly relevant to their future roles in digital business, particularly in areas related to credibility, remote teamwork, and customer communication. The study identifies several pedagogical strategies for integrating netiquette into Business English instruction, including explicit teaching of digital etiquette principles, authentic digital communication tasks, improved feedback mechanisms, reflective learning activities, and curriculum alignment. These findings emphasize the need for curriculum innovation that prepares students to communicate ethically, professionally, and effectively in digital business environments.

Keywords: Professional Netiquette, Business English Instruction, Digital Communication Competence.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran netiket profesional dalam pembelajaran Business English pada lingkungan digital bagi mahasiswa manajemen. Seiring meningkatnya penggunaan email, platform pesan, video-conference, dan Learning Management Systems dalam dunia bisnis, etika komunikasi digital menjadi kompetensi penting untuk menjaga profesionalisme dan efektivitas komunikasi. Menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif deskriptif, penelitian ini menganalisis tiga unit materi Speaking dan Business English dari Jurusan Manajemen dengan fokus pada tujuan pembelajaran, aktivitas pembelajaran, serta tugas penilaian. Dokumen

pendukung seperti silabus, lembar kerja, dan rubrik juga dianalisis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memiliki tingkat kesadaran netiket yang moderat, dengan performa yang tidak konsisten dalam penulisan email, pesan instan, pertemuan virtual, dan interaksi di LMS. Meskipun demikian, mahasiswa memandang netiket sangat relevan dengan peran mereka di dunia bisnis digital, terutama dalam hal kredibilitas profesional, kolaborasi jarak jauh, dan komunikasi dengan pelanggan. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi beberapa strategi pedagogis untuk mengintegrasikan netiket dalam pembelajaran Business English, meliputi pengajaran eksplisit prinsip netiket, penggunaan tugas komunikasi digital autentik, mekanisme umpan balik yang lebih kuat, aktivitas reflektif, dan penyesuaian kurikulum. Temuan ini menegaskan perlunya inovasi kurikulum untuk mempersiapkan mahasiswa menjadi komunikator yang etis, profesional, dan efektif dalam lingkungan bisnis digital.

Kata kunci: Netiket Profesional, Pembelajaran Business English, Kompetensi Komunikasi Digital

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

In today's increasingly digitalized business environment, professional communication is no longer limited to face-to-face interaction but is predominantly mediated through electronic platforms such as email, business messaging applications, virtual meeting tools, and social media channels. As organizations accelerate the adoption of digital business models and remote-working systems, communication norms have shifted significantly, leading to the growing importance of digital etiquette, widely known as netiquette. Alghamdi (2020) emphasizes that inappropriate digital communication—such as unclear email structure, unprofessional tone, and ineffective platform use—can hinder workplace productivity and damage professional credibility. Similarly, Roberts and David (2021) note that communication errors in online environments frequently lead to misunderstandings and decreased organizational trust.

For students in management and digital business programs, netiquette competence is increasingly recognized as a fundamental employability requirement. Koch et al. (2022) explain that employers now expect graduates to demonstrate professionalism in online interactions, collaborate effectively through digital tools, and represent organizational values across virtual platforms. However, research by Ismail and Aziz (2023) reveals a gap between industry expectations and students' readiness to engage in professional digital communication. This mismatch is particularly evident in higher education contexts where Business English instruction often prioritizes linguistic accuracy while offering limited emphasis on the norms of digital communication.

As part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Business English plays a strategic role in preparing students for real-world communication in corporate settings. In the past five years, scholars such as Nur Rohmah and Widodo (2022) have highlighted the need to restructure Business English curricula to incorporate digital communication skills, soft skills, and professional etiquette aligned with Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0 competencies. Zhang (2023) further argues that integrating digital-age communication practices is essential for ensuring that graduates are competitive and workplace-ready. Despite this recognition, pedagogical frameworks that explicitly integrate netiquette into Business English learning remain limited, particularly in Indonesian higher education institutions.

Given these challenges, there is an emerging need to redesign Business English pedagogy to include explicit instruction on netiquette—covering email professionalism, virtual meeting

behavior, workplace messaging standards, and collaborative conduct in online environments. Such integration aligns with current digital business demands and supports the development of future digital leaders capable of communicating ethically, effectively, and professionally.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate students' awareness of professional netiquette, evaluate its relevance to their future roles in digital business environments, and propose pedagogical strategies for embedding netiquette within Business English instruction. The findings are expected to contribute to curriculum innovation and enhance students' digital communication competencies.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Professional Netiquette in Digital Business Communication

Digital transformation has reshaped professional communication, requiring individuals to adhere to digital etiquette or netiquette to maintain clarity, professionalism, and ethical standards. Alghamdi (2020) explains that digital miscommunication—ranging from inappropriate tone to poor email structure—can disrupt workflow efficiency. Further, Roberts and David (2021) emphasize that online communication must reflect professionalism to avoid misunderstandings in virtual workplaces.

In the context of digital leadership, Hossain (2021) highlights that netiquette is a core competency for individuals managing virtual teams, as leaders are expected to maintain trust, clarity, and ethical behavior in digital interactions. Supporting this, Park and Kim (2022) found that professional digital behavior significantly influences perceptions of credibility and collaboration effectiveness in online workspaces.

Recent studies also indicate that poor netiquette—such as delayed responses, misuse of emojis, or unprofessional chat behavior—negatively affects team dynamics and organizational culture. Koch et al. (2022) argue that online professionalism is now a key employability skill in digital industries. Haro-Soto et al. (2023) further confirm that digital etiquette predicts communication success in remote and hybrid workplaces. Given these insights, mastering netiquette becomes essential for management and digital business students who will navigate diverse digital platforms as future leaders.

Business English and Digital Communication Competencies

Business English, as part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), is intended to prepare learners to communicate effectively in professional settings. However, the accelerating digitalization of business has broadened the competencies required in Business English instruction. Nur Rohmah and Widodo (2022) emphasize that Business English must incorporate digital communication skills aligned with modern workplace practices.

Ismail and Aziz (2023) identify a significant gap between students' linguistic competence and their ability to navigate digital communication professionally. Similarly, Purnama (2021) argues that conventional Business English curricula often overlook platform-specific communication norms, such as email etiquette, virtual meeting behavior, and online discussion professionalism.

In addition, Fernando (2021) highlights the necessity for Business English programs to integrate cross-cultural digital communication skills, as digital business environments involve

multicultural teams. Zhang (2023) stresses that preparing students for Industry 4.0 requires integrating digital writing, e-collaboration, and virtual presentation skills.

Fauzi (2022) further notes that digital literacy has become inseparable from Business English proficiency, especially for students in business and management programs who are expected to operate in digitally mediated workplaces. Thus, the literature collectively indicates the need for Business English courses to expand beyond linguistic instruction to incorporate digital communication ethics and professionalism.

Pedagogical Integration of Netiquette into Business English Instruction

Scholars increasingly emphasize the need to integrate netiquette into Business English pedagogy to ensure students' readiness for digital workplaces. Nur Rohmah and Widodo (2022) propose embedding netiquette instruction through authentic digital tasks that simulate real-world communication. Similarly, Zhang (2023) presents a competency-based model that incorporates digital writing assignments, reflective online journals, and virtual collaboration tasks.

Pratiwi (2021) demonstrates that students who receive explicit netiquette instruction show improved clarity, tone control, and confidence in online communication. In line with this, Rachmawati (2023) found that integrating email etiquette modules enhances students' awareness of organizational communication standards.

International perspectives also support this integration. Al-Jarf (2020) suggests that digital etiquette instruction increases students' autonomy and responsibility in online communication. Lee (2022) explains that virtual simulations—such as mock online meetings and chat-based negotiations—effectively develop students' digital soft skills.

Additionally, Ismail and Aziz (2023) highlight that incorporating netiquette helps bridge the gap between academic learning and workplace expectations. Koch et al. (2022) further argue that netiquette training contributes to the development of digital leadership competencies, particularly in managing virtual teams.

Overall, the literature indicates that integrating netiquette into Business English instruction is essential for preparing students to function as ethical, professional, and competent communicators in digital business environments.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to conduct a systematic analysis of instructional materials. The analysis focused on three specific components: (1) the explicitness and conceptual accuracy of the learning objectives, (2) the degree of alignment between the instructional activities and the established principles of communicative competence, and (3) the adequacy and effectiveness of the assessment tasks in measuring the intended learning outcomes.

The research was situated within the English Language Teaching context of the Management Department. The primary data consisted of three complete units of Speaking and Business English instructional materials. These materials were complemented by additional academic documents, including the official syllabus, student worksheets, and detailed assessment rubrics,

all of which were incorporated to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the instructional design.

The instrument used in this study was a structured document analysis checklist developed with reference to the theoretical frameworks of Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), Richards (2022), and Brown and Abeywickrama (2019). The checklist was subjected to an expert validation process by two specialists in the field of English Language Teaching to ensure its content validity, conceptual coherence, and applicability to the instructional context.

The data collection procedure involved several sequential stages. First, all instructional documents were obtained from the Management Department. Second, the documents were systematically organized according to the three predetermined analytical dimensions. Third, each document was examined in detail using the validated checklist, with particular attention paid to identifying indicators relevant to learning objectives, instructional activities, and assessment mechanisms.

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. This analytical procedure consisted of multiple steps: (1) intensive reading of all instructional materials and supporting documents, (2) identification and extraction of relevant segments, (3) coding of the extracted data into predefined thematic categories, and (4) interpretation of the coded data to generate analytical findings aligned with the research objectives. Throughout this process, methodological rigor was maintained by ensuring consistency in coding procedures and by applying constant comparative techniques.

Ethical considerations were fully observed. All documents used in this study were treated as confidential academic materials, and their use was strictly limited to the purposes of this research. No identifying information related to students, instructors, or institutional stakeholders was disclosed at any stage of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the descriptive qualitative analysis, organized according to the three objectives of the study: (1) students' awareness of professional netiquette, (2) the perceived relevance of netiquette to digital business contexts, and (3) pedagogical strategies that can support the integration of netiquette into Business English instruction.

1. Students' Awareness of Professional Netiquette

The analysis revealed that students demonstrated a moderate level of awareness regarding professional netiquette, particularly in contexts involving academic communication. Most students showed familiarity with basic etiquette in email writing, such as the use of greetings, clear subject lines, and polite closing statements. However, several inconsistencies were observed in the application of tone, formality, and structure, indicating that while the concept of email etiquette was known, its professional execution remained limited.

Regarding instant messaging and chat-based communication (e.g., WhatsApp groups, LMS chat functions), students frequently adopted informal language, emoticons, and abbreviated expressions that are unsuitable for professional settings. The instructional materials contained examples of chat communication, but these examples did not explicitly differentiate between casual and professional contexts, contributing to students' unclear boundaries when communicating with lecturers, supervisors, or clients.

In video-conferencing platforms, such as Zoom or Google Meet, students demonstrated partial awareness of expected conduct. They understood technical norms such as muting microphones, turning on cameras when required, and using the chat room appropriately. However, the materials provided limited modeling of behavioral expectations, such as managing turn-taking, maintaining professional appearance, or handling interruptions diplomatically. As a result, students' performance during online presentations or group discussions varied significantly.

Within Learning Management System (LMS) environments, students were generally aware of submission deadlines and appropriate forum interactions, but showed limited sensitivity to written tone, clarity, and the permanence of digital traces. The lack of explicit instruction in LMS communication norms resulted in inconsistent practices in discussion boards, such as overly brief responses, insufficient referencing, or failure to acknowledge peers' contributions.

Overall, the findings indicate that students possess foundational awareness of netiquette but require more structured guidance to develop a consistent, professional, and context-sensitive digital communication style.

2. Perceived Relevance of Netiquette for Digital Business Communication

The findings demonstrate that students perceived netiquette as highly relevant to their future careers in digital business environments. The instructional materials reviewed in this study included topics related to workplace communication, customer interaction, and professional correspondence, although explicit references to digital etiquette were limited. Despite this limitation, students recognized the practical value of netiquette in several areas.

First, students associated netiquette with professional credibility, noting that clear, courteous, and well-structured messages foster trust in client interactions. They acknowledged that future roles in marketing, customer service, and managerial communication would increasingly rely on virtual platforms, making professional online behavior essential.

Second, students understood netiquette as a requirement for remote work settings. They expressed awareness that virtual collaboration requires clarity, punctuality, and responsiveness to maintain workflow efficiency. However, the instructional materials did not fully integrate scenarios such as asynchronous decision-making, digital conflict management, or cross-cultural etiquette, which are critical in multinational business environments.

Third, students viewed netiquette as important for brand representation, especially when responding to customers through email, live chat, or social media. They were aware that inappropriate tone, delayed responses, or poorly structured messages can negatively affect an organization's image. Nonetheless, the existing learning materials did not provide sufficient examples of customer-facing communication, limiting students' exposure to realistic professional contexts.

Despite these gaps, the overall findings suggest that students clearly recognize the strategic importance of netiquette in digital business communication and express a need for more explicit, structured, and context-specific instruction to prepare them for professional practice.

3. Pedagogical Strategies for Embedding Netiquette in Business English Instruction

Based on the analysis of instructional documents, students' communicative needs, and the broader curriculum context, the study identified several pedagogical strategies that can enhance the integration of netiquette into Business English learning.

First, the findings highlight the need for explicit instruction in digital etiquette. The current materials implicitly touch on professionalism but do not provide systematically developed guidelines, examples, or reflective activities. Introducing modules that explicitly outline etiquette principles for email communication, chat interactions, video-conferencing, and LMS participation would establish clearer expectations for students.

Second, the materials would benefit from authentic digital communication tasks aligned with real-world business scenarios. These may include simulated customer email responses, professional WhatsApp group discussions, cross-cultural video-conferencing role-plays, or LMS-based collaborative projects. Such tasks would encourage students to apply netiquette principles in meaningful ways, thereby developing communicative competence relevant to digital workplaces.

Third, the study recommends strengthening feedback mechanisms. While the instructional rubrics assessed linguistic accuracy and task completion, they did not explicitly include criteria for online etiquette. Incorporating netiquette-oriented rubrics—such as tone appropriateness, response management, clarity of structure, and adherence to professional protocols—would help guide students toward more effective digital communication practices.

Fourth, the findings emphasize the value of integrating reflective learning activities, such as self-assessment checklists, peer review of communication samples, or reflective journals on digital interaction experiences. These activities can foster critical awareness of communication choices and encourage learners to internalize professional norms.

Finally, the results suggest the need for curriculum alignment that connects netiquette instruction with the broader objectives of Business English courses. Embedding netiquette into course outcomes, teaching sequences, and assessment structures would ensure that professional digital behavior is treated not as an isolated topic but as an essential component of communicative competence for management students.

CONCLUSION

This study examined students' awareness of professional netiquette, its perceived relevance to digital business communication, and the pedagogical strategies needed to integrate netiquette effectively into Business English instruction. The findings indicate that students possess a foundational understanding of digital etiquette, particularly in email writing and basic online classroom conduct; however, their application of netiquette across various digital platforms remains inconsistent. This inconsistency reflects gaps in the instructional materials, which provide limited explicit guidance on professional standards for chat communication, video-conferencing behavior, and participation in Learning Management System environments.

The study also revealed that students recognize the growing importance of netiquette for their future roles in digital business contexts. They view professional online behavior as essential for maintaining credibility, supporting remote collaboration, and representing organizational identity in customer-facing communication. Despite this awareness, the instructional materials have not fully addressed workplace-oriented digital scenarios, resulting in insufficient preparation for the communication demands of modern business environments.

Based on these findings, the study concludes that embedding netiquette into Business English instruction is essential for strengthening students' digital communication competence. Effective integration requires explicit instruction, authentic task design, clear assessment criteria, and reflective learning activities. Incorporating these strategies within the broader

curriculum can help ensure that students develop the professional communication skills necessary to navigate increasingly digitalized business settings.

Overall, this study highlights the need for curriculum innovation that positions netiquette as a core component of Business English learning. By enhancing the depth and clarity of netiquette instruction, higher education institutions can better equip management students with the communicative competencies required for success in contemporary digital workplaces

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