A STUDY ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROCESS OF LEARNING TO WRITE EMAILS IN ENGLISH

TRAN THI TO, LE PHAM HOAI HUONG
Univeristy of Foreign Languages, Hue University

Abstract: The present study was carried out to investigate students' perceptions of the process of learning to write emails in English. The participants comprised of 100 high school students of grade 11. Data collection methods include questionnaire, interview and reflective journals. The study found that students had good awareness of email writing skills in the classroom. They shared their viewpoints on the process of learning to write emails in English both negatively and positively, with positive opinions outweighing negative ones. The findings also revealed that the respondents had positive attitudes toward email writing skills and tended to accept their difficulties as motivation in their language classes. Based on the findings of the study, implications were put forward as to how to teach and learn to write emails in English effectively.

Keywords: Email writing process, reflections

1. INTRODUCTION

The important roles of email in improving EFL learners' language proficiency and supporting human beings in daily work have been studied by many researchers. Findings from studies on email learning and teaching have showed that email has been so far the most popular and useful tool for foreign language education (Chaffee-Sorace, 1999). Thus, studying students' perceptions of the process of learning to write emails in English is necessary for both teachers and learners in increasing the instructional quality.

The importance of emails in teaching and learning

Nowadays technology, especially email is developing rapidly all over the world. As a result, the use of email is increasing in the classrooms for the purpose of promoting language learning and teaching. It can be seen that email writing is one of the most important skills that students should master in order to support them not only for learning but also for real-life situations, especially when they are preparing for university study.

The rapid increase in the use of web tools in language teaching and learning has promoted email as a common interpersonal communication medium. As its high transmission speed, email has been widely used for both personal communication and institutional communication, particularly in academic and business institutions (Crystal, 2001). Schwienkorst (1998) and Warschaur (1995) indicated that email writing provides a context for real-world communication and authentic interaction by connecting foreign language speakers outside the classroom with other speakers in communicative

situations. In the context of the classroom, email provides immediate feedback and allows students to discuss and communicate directly and cheaply with key pals around the world (Hoffman, 1994).

Email is also a useful tool for students to improve their English writing skills. According to Alias and Hussin (2002), web- based activities such as searching for information, exchanging of messages via email and participating in discussion groups are helpful to learners in their writing process. Accordingly, the students can enrich their knowledge about the world and foster their writing ideas. What's more, speed, power, and flexibility of the computer and email can effectively facilitate their second language acquisition, and then help students raise their awareness of learning writing.

More importantly, developing email writing skill is especially necessary for English language students at the secondary stage. In terms of developing the overall ability of writing for high school students, they have to learn how to write emails in English. It can be said that the secondary level of education is a stage of consolidation, supporting and reinforcing English language basics previously learnt by students during the preparatory stage (Abdel-Razek, 2006). By using emails, they also become familiar with a communication tool that is vital to their survival in the 21st century. Thus, mastering writing skills during the high school study helps students' progress in their university studies (El-Shafie, 2006).

Students' reflections on the process of email writing

Reflection is a term which has been much used in the educational literature over the past decade (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985). Among many various definitions about reflection, Boud et al. (1985) shared the definitions with some common features and these are worth considering in more detail. Reflective thought was defined as active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further evidence by which the reliability and worth of a belief can be established so as to justify its acceptance. It is clear that an important outcome of the reflection process is changing one's perspective as new information and experiences are encountered (Hay et al., 2004a). The reflection processes not only involve in the self but the outcomes of reflection also lead into a changed conceptual perspective, which helps learners understand the relationship between their learning and problem-solving goals.

In the light of developing one's knowledge and skills, reflection can be considered as a learning tool and action process has long been seen as a crucial prerequisite to effective decision making, especially in decision environments that contain ambiguous problems, unique elements, and no defined solutions (Pee et al., 2000; Schon, 1987). Therefore, it supports to revise extant understanding or to construct new meaning when experience incorporates a variety of mental and emotional processes such as dealing with fuzzy ideas to reconcile ambiguity and inconsistency; to recognize that one's current knowledge set may be confused, incomplete or misconceived; culminating in the purposeful realignment of meaning to that which is different (Maclellan, 2004).

When making a discussion about reflection in teaching and learning process, McAlpine et al (1991) stated that reflection can also occur prior to, concurrent with, and retrospective to instruction. Besides, teaching and reflection can also be a continuous and synchronous process in which they occur concurrently (Schon, 1987). However, this researcher also indicated that reflection may also occur asynchronously at some point when finishing the classes, and thus be disconnected from teaching actions. According to him, the retrospective reflection-on-action represents the most common conception of reflection. In other aspects, it also provides the opportunity for dramatic, extensive structural changes, and is more likely to take place in the strategic or epistemic sphere.

Previous studies

So far, there have been researches related to the fields of email writing in teaching in language education. For example, Liu (2011) conducted a research on EFL students' perceptions of power differentials and their negotiation strategies when communicating with native English-speaking students via emails. The main participants, twenty eight Taiwanese and American undergraduates, participated in a semester-long cross-national email writing activity. The research showed that students in both places recognized power differentials. Especially, focusing on the Taiwanese students, the study identified their textual identities and writing styles used to negotiate power differentials in three types of interactions – balance, endurance, and resistance. Obviously, this study tried to provide insights into how important emails are applied to communicate with native English-speaking students. The findings offer important implications for teaching English writing in cross-national digital spaces.

Mansor (2007) concentrated on collaborative learning via email discussion. Throughout exploring the strategies of implementing email in ESL writing classroom, the study focuses on how emails can be implemented in a collaborative learning ambience incorporating the stages of writing process approach and pair work activity. In order to obtain the success of the approach, both teachers and learners share their responsibilities together. Besides, the study was carried out with the hope that collaborative learning environment via email discussions has a positive effect on the students' writing performance particularly in ESL writing classrooms.

Another study was carried out by Mahfouz (2010) at a Jordanian university. The researcher tried to explore email exchanges with native speakers and how they can be used as a useful tool to improve the students' foreign language proficiency in general and writing skill in particular. The research collected data from 110 university students in the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts at UNRWA University in Amman, Jordan through a set of questionnaire. The results showed that students' perceptions of using email interactions with native English speakers for improving their writing skills were generally positive. Besides, the study also pointed out three main differences among participants that related to whether they have a computer at home, how many years they can study at university and how often they can exchange emails with native English key pals so as to improve their writing skills.

The fact was that email writing is important for both teachers and learners; however, few studies have been carried out to investigate the student's reflections on the process of learning to write emails in English to see that the students' viewpoints can better the email writing skills for learners and improve teaching quality. The current study was set out to fill this gap.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of study is to investigate the students' perceptions of learning email writing in English, how they write emails in English in writing periods. Hence, the study focused on gathering data from high school students only. In order that the data reliability is strengthened to provide a clearer understanding of the problem, research triangulation with three data collection instruments including questionnaire, interview, and reflective journals was employed in this study. The study called for the voluntary participation of 100 students of grade 11 at a high school in Quang Tri province. All of them began learning English at the age of 8-11.

Bell (1993, p.76) argues that questionnaire is very useful tool for gathering a wide range of data cheaply and quickly. Therefore, using questionnaire is so useful because of its convenience. The questionnaire was designed and sent to 100 students of grade 11 students. It consisted of 35 statements basing on a five-point scale. The questionnaire involving in the content of how students learn to write emails in English includes four main clusters. Cluster 1 focused on teacher's effort in encouraging students to learn email writing in English. Clusters 2 dealt with teacher's methods in instructing students how to write emails. Students' ways of learning to write emails in English was discussed in Cluster 3 and then Cluster 4 focused on teacher's feedback for students' email writings.

The current study also interviewed 10 students of grade 11 in order to gather a variety of information about how they learn to write emails in English, their attitudes and reactions toward their email learning in English classes. There are five questions in the interview. The questions asked the interviewees about how they learn to write emails in English, how the teacher guided them to write emails, whether they got help from classmates and teachers. In addition, the students' reflections on that learning process and some difficulties they had to face in email writing lessons were also mentioned in the interview.

Besides, twenty students were invited to write reflective journals to reflect on the process of learning to write emails as well. It is believed that the focus on learning from reflective processes has the potential to enhance and illuminate the realities of the context in which practice takes place, and to help the students and practitioners to describe and understand their feelings and influence in the situation. Also, there is the potential, through critical reflection and action, for the students and practitioners to challenge the 'existing order' through an understanding of the factors which are influenced beyond and outside their immediate situations (Foster and Greenwood, 1998). Therefore, reflective journal writing is recognized as not only a valuable tool to promote students' learning but also an

educational strategy for facilitating learning in the practice setting. In this study, the reflective journal was designed by the researcher. The students reflected on the practice of learning to write emails in English, how they learnt emails at school, how they felt about the effectiveness of the email writing lessons, some difficulties they face with. Six questions were designed to support students whether they know what should be included in their writing. In addition, the reflective journals aim to collect information about what the students really think about email writing lessons at school. Hence, they are required to write the journals after finishing the email writing periods. Moreover, students were required to write journals in Vietnamese at home. Then, twenty reflective journals were collected for data analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before presenting numerical facts, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to test the reliability of the questionnaires. It reached 0.790 indicating acceptable reliability of the questionnaire. The mean scores of four clusters were presented in the following table:

Table 1. *Mean scores of four clusters*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Cluster 1	100	2.00	5.00	3.59	0.61
Cluster 2	100	2.57	5.00	3.79	0.54
Cluster 3	100	2.00	5.00	3.71	0.51
Cluster 4	100	1.75	5.00	3.24	0.65

As shown in Table 1, the mean score of the all clusters with 100 participants was rather high (M>3). In addition, the standard deviation for most clusters was at acceptable level. These statistics show that the current study employed a reliable tool for data collection. The study continued examining the statistics of how students learn to write emails in English. The following table presents the statistics of teacher's effort in encouraging students to learn email writing.

Table 2. *Teacher's effort in encouraging students to learn email writing in English*

Number = 100	Min	Max	Mean	SD
1.The teacher often discuss directly with us the importance of emails writing in the class activities.	1	5	3.38	0.98
2.The teacher starts the lesson with interesting pre-email writing activities to stimulate our participation	1	5	3.54	1.04
3.The teacher provides some supplementary information or appropriate strategies for us to write emails.	1	5	3.69	0.91
6.The teacher often brings hunour into the classroom	1	5	3.94	1.04
22.The teacher often take time to celebrate students' success in email writing lesson.	1	5	3.40	1.01

Among the above items for teacher's effort in encouraging students to learn email writing in English, the mean of teacher's humor in the classroom reached 3.94; this was also the highest score whereas the lowest value for item 1 stands at 3.38. To the items 2, 22 and 3, the mean scores were 3.54, 3.40 and 3.69 respectively, significantly higher than the average. However, the statement 3 achieves the lowest SD, at 0.91, showing the response rate to be closer to the mean value. Whereas, the item 2 reaches the highest SD indicating that the response rate was quite spreading out. Clearly, the teacher's humor got the highest mean in the study.

Moreover, when being invited to answer the interview, one male student expressed that he expected to learn in a funny atmosphere in the classroom and he felt satisfied with his lesson. He said: *"I supposed that email writing activities toward our learning were really important. I did not want to be under high pressure during email writing; however; I felt lucky when studying with my English teacher, Mrs. Huyen, who always tried to bring us many funny stories, interesting activities in our lessons".*

Another student shared her viewpoints about the process of email writing in reflective journals. She wrote: *"Our teacher helped me to recognize that email writing not only supported us to send, receive the data quickly and shared information easily but also contributed to improve our writing skills".*

Tallon (2008) also indicated that teachers should usually encourage students that their language proficiency certainly gets better if they try to learn. It was the teacher who could motivate their students why email writing played an important role in writing skill and engage them in learning email writing through interesting activities. The students, hence, have more belief in themselves and try to reach higher achievement in language proficiency. In the reflective journal, a female student shared: *"For me, learning to write a good email in English is difficult; however; emails supported me to manipulate with the modern technology easily and I did not become out of date. Thanks to our teacher's explanation and the exchange of learning experiences every day, I have improved my email writing skill so as to support my study and my work in the future".*

The current study implies that the students really expect the funny, comfortable learning environment in email writing lessons; hence, both teacher and students should pay more attention to how to create interesting activities to make the lesson more effective. Furthermore, the teacher should also try to begin the email writing lessons with many exciting writing activities, help students understand the necessity of learning email writing, and provide supplementary information or appropriate strategies toward the students' email writing learning.

The Table 3 displays the data for teacher's methods in instructing students how to write emails in English.

As shown in Table 3, the mean score of the grammar supplies achieved the highest value, M= 4.04 showing that grammar is the most important factor that students would like to master. Regarding new/more words (item 8, M= 3.96) and the explanation how to write email from English teachers (item 15, M = 3.95), the study revealed that the

majority of students considered these values as integral as grammar. The mean value of item 10 ranks fourth, followed by items 7 (M= 3.68) and item 4 (M= 3.69) respectively. Item 4 has the lowest mean score, at 3.45. The standard deviation for most items was rather similar, excepting from items 4 and 5. These values show reliability in responses given by the respondents for teacher's methods in instructing students how to write emails in English.

Table 3. *Teacher's methods in instructing students how to write emails in English*

N= 100	Min	Max	Mean	SD
4.The teacher often requires us to participate in pair and group work activities during email writing lesson.	1	5	3.69	1.05
5.We learn email writing with technology such as activeboard, computer, powerpoint.	1	5	3.45	1.24
7.The teacher scaffords the questions related to email writing from simple to more complex.	1	5	3.68	0.90
8.The teacher often explains new/more vocabulary for us before we write an email.	1	5	3.96	0.92
9.The teacher often supplies more/correct grammars for us before we write an email.	1	5	4.04	0.81
10.I learn the organization of an email before I write it.	2	5	3.77	0.95
15.The teacher explains to us how to write an email and then we practice writing.	1	5	3.95	0.84

The statistics from interview and reflective journals also provided similar results. A female student wrote about their teacher's methods in guiding them how to write an email, *"Firstly, the teacher taught us about the organization of an email required in the textbook. After that, our teacher provided us with some useful languages, grammar points that we could employ in our email writing. Especially, we were supplied with some samples which illustrated more clearly about how to use those structures appropriately"*.

Regarding new/more words (item 8, M=3.96) and the explanation how to write email from English teachers (item 15, M=3.95), the survey showed that the majority of students considered these values as integral as grammar. A male student answered in the interview: *"In a limited time of giving instructions, my English teacher demonstrated necessary structures and vocabulary for our email writing; however; I myself could not develop my opinions as expected. The fact was that I lacked so many expressing words or grammar structures so as to fulfill my writing. I thought it was my weakness"*.

In addition, the teacher scaffords the questions related to email writing from simple to more complex, thus the students could easily understand how to make their writing better. The value of 3.68 (item 7) supported the conclusion that the illustration from English teacher had a great influence on students' language proficiency and the students hoped to be explained more carefully as much as possible.

However, there were still a small number of students who stated that both teachers and students should discuss together the teaching and learning methods. It was clear that there was mismatch between the teacher's instruction and students' ways of learning. A student wrote in her journal:

"Practically, my teacher guided us how to write email; however; I sometimes had my friends to explain the instructions again or had to look at the sample in the textbook as an exampel to imitate their style of writing. I did not want to mention to the reasons, but I thought that I should try more to become better in the future".

Besides, students' learning email writing with technology such as activeboard, computer, PowerPoint (M= 3.45) showed the student's agreement when they were taught email writing with modern technologies. A student revealed in his interview:

"I liked learning with an active board because it is a modern device which can illustrate our lesson by lively images. Especially, this active board allowed us to write directly on it and the internet was also available in this specialized room. Thus, we could ask our teacher about the way to send, to receive or tag files when using emails".

It can be said that the students' attitudes toward their teacher's methods in teaching them how to write emails in English were mainly positive. They showed their satisfaction with what the teacher instructed and engaged them in the email learning activities. The study also indicated that email writing was not only a compulsory part in writing skill at school but also a useful tool to better the students' writing, to help them reach the higher level of knowledge in the world. Although there were still small negative opinions about the methods that the teacher applied in the classroom, a large number of them expressed their agreements on the process of learning to write emails. Moreover, they all attempted to engage students by creating a less stressful classroom atmosphere with interesting classroom activities, gentle personality, technology, student understanding and teacher's guidance.

Regarding how students learn to write emails in English, another cluster was designed in the study to find out students' ways of learning to write emails in English. Detailed statistics is presented as follows:

Table 4. *Students' ways of learning to write emails in English*

N= 100	Min	Max	Mean	SD
11. I figure out the purpose of an email before I write it.	1	5	3.74	0.86
12. I write draft emails before the final one.	1	5	3.61	1.00
13. I employ lexical knowledge related to emails for my writing	1	5	3.84	0.88
14. I read the instructions in the textbook about email writing.	2	5	3.81	0.80
16. I examine the email sample in the textbook.	1	5	3.75	0.89
17. After writing an email, I seek help from the teacher and classmates to revise it.	1	5	3.54	0.90

As evident in Table 4, all the means reach higher than value 3, ranging from 3.54 to 3.84, revealing the stable and high level of responses of the participants for students' ways of learning to write emails in English. In contrast, their responses changed remarkably with SD from .80 to 1.0. Among the six items surveyed, item 13 achieves the highest mean score whereas the lowest mean value belongs to item 17.

As can be seen that the means values of item 13 (M = 3.84) and item 14 (M= 3.81) were the most reliable to conclude that the students prepared quite carefully before writing emails. A female student who was interested in English shared that lexical items were really important in email writing. She wrote in her journal: *"I could not write my email without useful lexical items; therefore, I tried to read the sample in the textbook, listen carefully to the teacher's instructions to find out some important words or word phrases, which could help me to express my ideas in my email."*

One male student responded in the interview, *"Before writing, our teacher offered us many useful language expressions to write the emails. Also, she often guided us how to use these word phrases in the current context. For my writing, I tried to make full use of the supplied words and combine with the lexical items I experienced so as to write the final email writing. I felt better in writing now.*

However, these values also implied that students' vocabulary is limited, which should be improved immediately. Limited vocabulary items strongly influenced ideas expressing in writing and reading instructions or comprehension texts.

In another aspect, when being asked about the process of learning email writing, some students complained about the time for discussion and the effectiveness of group/pair work. A male student shared in his journal, *"The fact was that we discussed together in pairs or groups; however, the time was not enough to do the task. Therefore, we had to work in a hurry and the quality of the writing was not really expected".*

The statistics indicated that the students had good awareness in taking part in pair and group discussions which helped them to improve the email writing skill by themselves and probably contributed to better their language proficiency in the future. Similarly, Mansor's (2007) found the benefits from email writing. His study focused on how emails can be implemented in a collaborative learning ambience incorporating the stages of writing process approach and pair work activity. However, the current study expected to explore how the students made full use of their ability in solving problems related to email writing by themselves, how they worked together in order to write a good email. The study showed the students' efforts in developing their email writing skill though there were still some weak points in group or pair discussions.

The following table displays the results of the study on teacher's feedback on students' email writings.

Table 5. Teacher's feedback on students' email writings

N= 100	Min	Max	Mean	SD
18.The teacher should give you feedback by a grade or mark only	1	5	2.61	1.15
19.The teacher gives you feedback by a grade or mark first, then comments.	1	5	3.25	1.17
20.The teacher gives you feedback by comments first, then a garde or mark.	1	5	3.78	1.07
21.The teacher gives you feedback by comments only.	1	5	3.35	1.14

Table 5 demonstrates students' expectation in receiving feedback from their teachers. As depicted in Table 5, most of the mean scores were over than 3 (ranging from 3.25 to 3.78), indicating the respondents mostly have a high agreement on teacher's feedback. However, with the value of 2.61 for item 18, showing the disagreement level was not low as well. In other aspect, all the standard deviation range from 1.079 to 1.175 implying that the responses spread out from the mean scores remarkably.

As showed in Table 5, many students did not want to be given feedback by a grade or mark only (item 18, M = 2.61). A male student shows that he did not care of how many grades he had received because it might make him become more dependent on the final results and ignore the main goal of learning English. He responded in the interview, *"I did not want to focus on marks so much; I hoped to receive comments from my teacher to foster my writing skill rather than marks only. The comments provided me with useful advice that I could improve my email later"*.

Similarly, another student shared in her reflective journal that comments were better than grades because it was comments that could help the student recognize the real strengths and weakness. She wrote: *"One of the reasons why I did not like grades or marks only was that many students did not realize what were good or bad in the email writings, they just focused on the final results and satisfied with what they had done"*.

However, not all feedback is the same and not all feedback is equally effective in promoting learning (Black & William, 1998). When being asked about this issue, a female student said that marks or grades were the standard, which could be used to measure whether the student was good or bad. She expressed in the interview, *"I thought that grades should be a standard used to assess the students' level. As you could see that our final results at the end of each term was assessed by grades. Each student should be aware of their own learning through grades that they got from their teacher"*.

To the item 20 (M= 3.78), many participants strongly agreed that both comments and grades or marks were really fundamental to them. Comments could help the students recognize their limitations or strengths, and then they could adjust their learning strategies more appropriately. Meanwhile, grades or marks could be considered the final results, which motivated them in learning and achieving higher levels.

The analysis indicated that feedback by comments strongly influenced students'

subsequent performance. Receipt of a low grade might lead to a substantial decline in writing performance by students who thought the grade has come from the instructor, but a praise or positive comment from the instructor appeared to ameliorate students' motivation to learn to write emails. However, in the absence of detailed feedback, a grade appeared to enhance subsequent performance just modestly. These statistics also imply that the teachers should be more flexible in giving feedback to their students and try to leave some comments on good points, bad points so that students can clearly understand what should be done to improve their email writing.

4. CONCLUSION

This research adopts questionnaire, interview and reflective journals to study students' perceptions, reflections and the actual process of learning to write emails in English. Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of the study.

Firstly, the study found that high school students in this study had good awareness in foreign language learning. They showed their positive attitudes toward email learning and the process of teaching how to write email as well. They seemed to be more concerned about teacher's methods in guiding them how to write emails (M=3.7914) than the other aspects when learning email writing.

Secondly, the students shared their viewpoints on the process of learning to write emails in English both negatively and positively, with positive opinions outweighing negative ones. The mismatch between teacher's methods and learner's style of learning sometimes made students get bad results for email writing because they had a great deal of difficulties in grasping language knowledge of email writing and focusing on language classes. The students also indicated that they always tried their best to improve their email writing skills thanks to their teachers' and classmates' supports. However, not all students had the same attitudes toward this email writing process. Some of them mentioned negative aspects, which affected students' participation in email writing activities, and then they became inactive, unconfident and timid to raise their voice in writing classes.

Thirdly, the study implies that some difficulties in language knowledge and inappropriate methods of teaching and learning made students unable to write good emails in English, which results in their poor performance. One of the difficulties that students considered to be the most problematic for them was lacking of vocabulary and grammar. In addition, fear of negative feedbacks made students passive in email writing classes; however, it also created learning motivation for some students.

Pedagogical Implications

From the findings of this study, several implications are put forward to both teachers and students regarding the process of learning to write emails in English.

For teachers:

- Teachers should consider email writing as an important skill in the classroom and try to

make it become a very familiar and useful tool for all students. It is important for teachers to often ask the students carefully about their difficulties in email writing lessons. Additionally, teachers can base on the way students write their emails to determine what problems they are facing with. Finding out students' problems can help teachers deal with students' difficulties in learning to write emails in English more easily.

- Teachers' attitudes and expectations are also important factors in L2 writing classrooms (Williams, 2003). Therefore, in order to be more effective, teachers must feel good about teaching and about students and believe that they can influence students' learning (Proctor, 1984). In addition, teachers should pay attention to enriching their personalities such as humor, friendliness, tolerance and patience, which can help students feel less anxious and more motivated in learning to write emails (Young, 1991). It is believed that good teachers know how to adjust their emotion and reduce negative evaluation to students' mistakes, which enhances students' learning and motivation as well.

- The teacher should create a learner-centered learning environment in which students can develop their abilities in their classroom. Pair work, small group work, stimulations and structured exercises should be employed to encourage students to communicate and interact. The importance is that teacher should encourage students to think, plan, and search for ideas, develop, organize, review their writing and above all meet the requirements of examinations and academic life.

- Teachers should combine between theory and practice by giving students chances to exchange information through daily emails and cooperate with students to deal with their difficulties. Furthermore, many students expressed that they were afraid of making mistakes and losing face in front of the class, which stops them from expressing their ideas. Having positive attitudes towards making mistakes in writing lessons can help students deal with this problem.

For students:

- Students need to take their active role in learning to write emails in English and enthusiastically participating in writing activities in class. In order to become confident in writing lessons, students should be fully aware of self-study and should not depend on the teacher.

- Students should recognize and accept their obstacles in email writing and consider these obstacles to be motivation that makes them try more in language learning. Besides, it is necessary for them to consult advice from teachers and other students to have effective learning methods.

- They should have positive attitudes toward their email learning and writing in English. It is a good way for them to combine many different ways of leaning such as: group work, pair work, online learning on websites or from other sources. This will help students be more and more familiar with email writing and can feel less and less nervous. Especially, in the era of technology 4.0, the approach of many effective

learning methods support students in dealing with difficulties easily by combining what they have learnt at school and their practice in daily life.

To sum up, the current study employed questionnaire in order to collect students' opinions about the process of learning to write emails in English. The results from interview and reflective journals were briefly reported in the study because of the scope of the paper. Further studies can be carried out with a larger sample with more students of diverse backgrounds so as to increase the reliability, and discover more generalized findings that can be applicable in different settings. It is also worth investigating the improvement of students' email writing in longitudinal studies.

REFERENCES

[1] Abdel-Razek, T. (2006). *The effectiveness of the genre-based approach in developing the writing skills for EFL first year secondary school students*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Faculty of Education, Menoufia University, Egypt.

[2] Alias, N., Hussin, S. (2002). *"E-learning in a writing course at Tenaga National University"*. TEFL Web Journal.1 (3). Retrieved August 1, 2018, from http://www.teflweb-j.org/v1n3 Alias_Hussin.htm.

[3] Bell, J. (1993). *Doing Your Research Project*. Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open.

[4] Black, P., & William, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 5(1), 7-68.

[5] Boud, D., Keogh, R., & Walker, D. (1985). Reflection: *Turning experience into learning*. London: Kogan Page.

[6] Chaffee-Sorace, D. (1999). Computer pen pals: Writing activities for subjects of foreign languages. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 56(2), 351-354.

[7] Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[8] El-Shafie, S. (2006). *The effectiveness of using computers in improving English composition writing for secondary stage students*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Faculty of Education, Menoufia University.

[9] Foster, J. Greenwood, J. (1998). *Reflection a challenging innovation for nurses*. *Contemporary Nurse*. 7 [41:165-172.

[10] Hay, A., Peltier, J.W., & Drago, W.A. (2004a). Reflective learning and on-line management education: *A comparison of traditional and on-line MBA students*. Strategic Change, 13(4): 169-182.

[11] Hoffman, R. (1994). Powerful, personal: Electronic mail and the L2 writing process. *ReCALL Journal*, 6(2), 53-62.

[12] Maclellan, E. (2004). How effective is the academic essay*? Studies in Higher Education*, 29 (1): 75-89.

[13] Mansor, N. (2007). Collaborative learning via email discussion: strategies for ESL writing classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 13(3).

[14] McAlpine L., Frew E. & Lucas, M. (1991). *Mechanisms for helping becoming practitioners develop professional ways of knowing*. In M. Baskett, V.J. Marsick, T.G. Pearson, D.R. Klevans & J. Delehanty, eds, Proceedings of the Continuing Education Preconference of the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education, pp. 67–73. University Park: Penn State University.

[15]   Pee B., Woodman T., Fry H., & Davenport, E.S. (2000). Practice-based learning: Views in the development of a reflective learning tool. *Medical Education*, 34: 754-761.

[16]   Proctor, C. (1984). Teacher expectations: A model for school improvement. *Elementary School Journal*, 84(4), 469-481.

[17]   Schön, D.A. (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

[18]   Schwienkorst, K..(1998). *"The third place" -virtual reality applications for second language learning*. Recall, 10(1), 18-126. Warschauer, M., E-mail for English teaching. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

[19]   Tallon, M. (2008). A Culture of Caring: Reducing Anxiety and Increasing Engagement. *The Collaborating for Student success: Building Engagement in learning* (pp. 1 -20). San Antonio, TX: University of Incarnate Word.

[20]   Young, D. J. (1991). Creating a Low-Anxiety Classroom Environment: *What Does Language Anxiety Research Suggest? The Modern Language Journal, 75*, 426-439.

[21]   Williams, J. D. (2003). *Preparing to teach writing: Research, theory, and practice*. London: Routledge.