



## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (IJEMP)

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# EXPLORING THE POWER OF GENERATIVE AI: ENHANCING BUSINESS EMAIL WRITING SKILLS FOR L2 LEARNERS

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### Article Info:

#### Article history:

Received date: 18.04.2024

Revised date: 13.05.2024

Accepted date: 15.06.2024

Published date: 30.06.2024

#### To cite this document:

Shafie, L. A., Aiyub, A., & Najmi, N. A. N. (2024). Exploring The Power Of Generative AI: Enhancing Business Email Writing Skills For L2 Learners. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices*, 7 (25), 198-214.

DOI: 10.35631/IJEMP.725017.

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### Abstract:

L2 learners at higher education often face difficulties in writing business emails in English, which hinder effective workplace communication and academic success. Therefore, higher education institutions should educate their learners about business email literacy. This study analysed how thirty-one business degree Malay students at a public university in Malaysia utilized generative AI tools for composing business emails. These participants presented their reflection investigation on the application of generative AI in business email writing for their group class assignment for English for Business Communication. This study's research approach included a qualitative document analysis on PowerPoint presentation slides of the participants, and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings reveal three themes emerged from the study; Theme 1: Preferred generative AI, Theme 2: Optimising generative AI prompts for business email writing, and Theme 3: Ethical usage of AI. Theme 1 has three sub-themes; user friendliness, relevant business contexts and quality generated texts. The results showed that all groups had different AI tools due to their personal choices. Theme 2 has two sub-themes; prompts for external email and prompts for internal email. The participants used generative AI tools for idea expansion and paraphrasing. These L2 learners also wrote specific prompts for different types of email. Two emerging sub-themes of Theme 3 are writing assistance and best practices on ethical usage of generative AI. The participants stressed the significance of understanding plagiarism and effectively using generative AI tools. Learners should be educated on intellectual property and ethical AI tool usage. Higher education institutions should integrate these tools into their courses to enhance business email writing skills and prepare students for AI-driven workplaces, fostering ethical and effective usage.

**Keywords:**

L2 Learners, Business Email Literacy, Generative AI Tools, Ethical Usage, Workplace Communication

**Introduction**

The challenges faced by novice business email writers, who are L2 learners, have been a subject of growing concern, as their difficulties in writing business emails in English can significantly impact effective workplace communication and success. Studies have highlighted the prevalence of inappropriate language use in L2 learners' emails, which can have a negative impact on their academic and professional endeavours (Alemi & Maleknia, 2023; Dai, 2023). In response, higher education institutions have increasingly focused on educating L2 learners about business email literacy (Nicholas, Blake, Mozgovoy & Perkins, 2022). Despite these efforts, learners often lack adequate practice in this domain.

L2 learners often use generative AI tools to learn their target languages, enabling them to engage in written conversations with AI in their target language, practice real-time interactions, and receive assistance in improving their writing skills. Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as Scite, Consensus, Jenni, perplexity, Chatgpt, Unriddle, Bard, writesonic, Paperpal and Julius. University students often find using generative AI tools to assist them in their academic tasks (Nelson & Creagh, 2023; Jonsson & Tholander, 2022). However, many academicians are cautious about using generative AI tools due to ethical considerations, including concerns about bias amplification, misinformation, intellectual property issues, data privacy, and ethical dilemmas (Shi & Xuwei, 2023). Yet, not allowing and educating their learners on the proper usage of AI tools may jeopardize their learning, as it could lead to potential misuse, misunderstanding of the technology, and an inability to harness the benefits of AI in an ethical and responsible manner.

In addition, current learners engage in collaborative learning, working together in groups or pairs to discuss concepts, find solutions, and complete tasks, which has been shown to enhance their understanding and promote higher levels of thinking. Social learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and collaborative learning highlights that learning occurs when learners socialise with one another through communication. Collaborative learning encourages learners to be more active and engaged with learning tasks (Kasumi, Hysen & Xhemali, 2023).

This study explored the utilization of generative AI tools in the composition of business emails, the categories of prompts employed, and the ethical application of these tools within academic environments. By conducting a detailed document analysis of the evaluations and practices of university students, this study aims to provide valuable insights into Malaysian undergraduate students' experiences using generative AI in a public university's English language programme. The study only concentrated on the application of generative AI in business email writing for their group class assignment for English for Business Communication.

**Literature Review**

Email has an integral role in corporate correspondence these days. A case study in Taiwan revealed that for professional career enhancement, the participant had to learn how to write business letters in English; many of the participant's foreign clients did not know her well,

letters served as their only means of communication (Hsu, 2020). Language learning is learned effectively when learners collaborated in online contexts (Jeong, 2019). Previous studies indicate that language learners are more engaged in their learning and enhance their language skills when they work with other learners (Balol, 2023; Sembiring & Dewi, 2023). For instance, learners are more engaged in their speaking tasks when they collaborated with other learners (Sembiring & Dewi, 2023). Using ICT in language learning classes enhances learners' language performance and increase vocabulary (Balol, 2023). Learners find that working in groups is more challenging than completing individual language assignments (Juver & Prasetya, 2022). This is because the instructors need to guide the learners on how to collaborate with other learners as collaborative tasks have higher metacognitive skills (Bozkurt, & Aydin, 2023).

ChatGPT supports the process of learning a target language as includes input in target language, emulation of real-world conversations, topic-specific question answering, and feedback which are essential for supporting the process of learning a second or foreign language (Cong-Lem & Daneshfar, 2024). Students were able to concentrate on text production and produce texts of excellent quality when they used generative AI in digital multimodal composition. (Liu, Zhang & Biebricher, 2024). The draft produced by ChatGPT served as a model text to help them with their English writing in terms of language, organisation, and substance, while AI visuals could add enjoyment to their digital multimodal composition process. The customised experience offered by generative AI technologies supported the idea that AI may be used in education to give tailored instruction that takes into account the unique requirements and differences of each learner (Yilmaz et al., 2022). However, generative AI finds it hard to replicate humanistic writing in term of rhetorical flexibility, writer voice and identity, and emotional depth (Barrot, 2023).

Previous studies on L2 have examined learners and educators' attitudes towards ChatGPT, the pedagogical uses of ChatGPT in learning and teaching of the target language and academic integrity (Cong-Lem et al., 2024; Kim & Park, 2023; Yan, 2023). Educators' familiarity with generative AI will ensure that these tools will be used in language classes (Kohnke, Moorhouse & Zou, 2023). Cong-Lem and Daneshfar (2024) employed Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory to investigate on second language acquisition which can be enhanced by using ChatGPT as it highlights three key principles for successful L2 acquisition: (1) the conducive environment for the target language; (2) internalisation through meaningful and active social interactions; and (3) optimal L2 acquisition when properly scaffolded in the individual's zone of prime comprehension.

Research has shown that generative AI technologies help improve writing quality from the standpoint of second language learners. It has been identified that generative AI technologies provide excellent assistance in producing emails as learners may compose them effectively. Chang et al. (2021) discovered that AI-powered writing tools, such as grammar checks, writing assists, and automated content creation, have become increasingly common due to their potential advantages in aiding English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' writing improvement. Generative AI technologies offer immediate input on a range of writing-related subjects, such as grammar, vocabulary, syntax, content, and structure, and can assist students in promptly recognizing and fixing errors.

Additionally, several AI writing tools, including Grammarly, QuillBot, Wordtune, and Jenni, greatly enhance students' writing abilities (Marzuki et al., 2023). Common mistakes in

grammar, punctuation, and syntax can be found with the use of generative AI technologies because of their sophisticated algorithms. These generative AI technologies also have special features including the ability to paraphrase and improve the impact of phrases. According to educators, the significance of AI tools lies in their ability to serve as individualized writing instructors. Prior research identified these tools' functions as supplying grammatical recommendations, improving vocabulary usage, and guaranteeing the logical flow of arguments (Marzuki et al., 2023). Email writers can improve their email writing skills with the use of two popular generative AI applications, Grammarly and Jenni, especially for those learning a second language. According to Tambunan et al. (2022) research, learners' grammar and punctuation improved when they used Grammarly. In addition to helping learners with text analysis, Grammarly is a generative AI that offers instantaneous recommendations for improving grammar, spelling, punctuation, clarity, engagement, and performance. From the standpoint of educators, artificial intelligence writing tools have significantly improved students' writing abilities, especially when it comes to producing logically cohesive and well-written essays. It shows that this feature makes writing itself an educational process. Learners of second languages may make grammatical mistakes, therefore having generative AI tools like Grammarly might be quite beneficial for them while writing emails. Furthermore, Marzuki et al. (2023) found that another AI-based writing assistant, Jenni, offers automatic sentence recommendations to aid email learners in composing emails, reports, articles, and other documents more quickly. On the other hand, user feedback points to a favourable effect on writing creativity and productivity.

As a result, learners need to be thoroughly instructed on how to apply these tools because they often struggle with making their work coherent. After all, some students find it difficult to write coherently regularly. Despite the obstacles, it is apparent that generative AI technologies have great potential for improving L2 learners' business email writing skills. It has been demonstrated that artificial intelligence writing tools are useful for giving immediate criticism and suggesting ways to rearrange phrases and paragraphs. All of the educators have acknowledged this advantage, which has led to notable advancements in the overall composition of the students' work.

The use of generative AI tools in business email writing has gained significant attention due to the challenges faced by novice business email writers who are L2 learners. These tools, which specialize in email writing, use large language models to recognize, summarize, predict, and generate text, thereby assisting users in automating mundane tasks such as writing, sending, and responding to emails. The availability of several AI email-writing tools, such as EmailTree.ai, Flowrite, Jasper, and others, has provided L2 learners with the means to improve their email writing productivity and efficiency. These tools offer features such as email-writing automation, message templates, and personalized content for sales and follow-ups, making them valuable assets for L2 learners seeking to enhance their business email writing skills.

The integration of generative AI tools in email marketing workflows has been found to significantly speed up the time spent on email marketing, offering benefits such as the ability to create compelling outreach emails and respond promptly to customer inquiries. The use of AI email writers as personal email-generating assistants has been highlighted as a means to write high-quality email content in a fraction of the time it would take to do so manually, thereby enhancing the productivity of business email writers, including L2 learners. These tools have the potential to address the challenges associated with writer's block and the time-consuming nature of email writing, particularly for individuals who are not native English



speakers. Generative AI tools can explain well-known concepts but have difficulties elaborating complex or lesser known concepts (Megahed, Chen, Ferris, Knoth & Jones-Farmer, 2023).

While the use of generative AI tools in business email writing offers significant potential, it also raises ethical considerations, particularly in academic settings (Nelson & Creagh, 2023). The ethical usage of these tools, including the prevention of plagiarism and the proper understanding of their capabilities, is crucial for L2 learners and other users. The growing prevalence of AI-generated writing tools, such as GPT-4, and their widespread adoption by major companies, suggests that AI-generated writing is here to stay and will continue to be widely utilized. Table 1 highlights relevant studies on generative AI on writing contexts.

**Table 1: Summary of Relevant Studies on Generative AI in Writing Contexts**

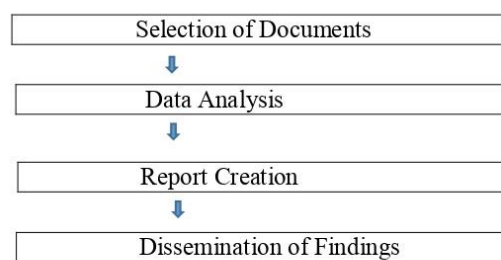
Study	Findings
Cong-Lem and Daneshfar (2024)	Employed Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory to investigate on second language acquisition which can be enhanced by using ChatGPT as it highlights three key principles for successful L2 acquisition: (1) the conducive environment for the target language; (2) internalisation through meaningful and active social interactions; and (3) optimal L2 acquisition when properly scaffolded in the individual's zone of prime comprehension.
Liu, Zhang & Biebricher (2024)	Students were able to concentrate on text production and produce texts of excellent quality when they used generative AI in digital multimodal composition.
Balol (2023)	Using ICT in language learning classes enhances learners' language performance and increase vocabulary.
Barrot (2023)	Generative AI finds it hard to replicate humanistic writing in term of rhetorical flexibility, writer voice and identity, and emotional depth.
Marzuki et al. (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Another AI-based writing assistant, Jenni, offers automatic sentence recommendations to aid email learners in composing emails, reports, articles, and other documents more quickly.</li> <li>Several AI writing tools, including Grammarly, QuillBot, Wordtune, and Jenni, greatly enhance students' writing abilities.</li> </ul>
Sembiring & Dewi (2023)	Learners are more engaged in their speaking tasks when they collaborated with other learners.
Juver & Prasetya (2022)	Learners find that working in groups is more challenging than completing individual language assignments.
Tambunan et al. (2022)	Learners' grammar and punctuation improved when they used Grammarly.
Yilmaz et al. (2022)	AI may be used in education to give tailored instruction that takes into account the unique requirements and differences of each learner.
Chang et al. (2021)	AI-powered writing tools, such as grammar checks, writing assists, and automated content creation, have become increasingly common due to their potential advantages in aiding English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' writing improvement.
Hsu (2020).	Revealed that for professional career enhancement, the participant had to learn how to write business letters in English; many of the participant's foreign clients did not know her well, letters served as their only means of communication.

More studies should be conducted to find out how well generative AI can improve L2 learning and teaching (Cong-Lem & Daneshfar, 2024). Therefore, it is essential for educational institutions and L2 learners to embrace these tools and develop a comprehensive understanding of their ethical and effective usage to support language learning and communication across diverse contexts.

## Methodology

This research conducted a qualitative document analysis on four power point presentation slides of 4 groups of business students who evaluated three AI Tools for Business Email Writing, created 10 prompts for Generative AI and used Generative AI to prevent plagiarism. Purposive sampling was used as they will be able to give rich information (Patton, 2002). The study was founded on genre-based approach, ethical considerations in AI implementation and collaborative learning theory.

This study examined the practice of thirty- one business degree Malay students at a local university in Malaysia in using generative AI tools in the writing of business emails. These students were enrolled in a Business English course at a public university in Malaysia. They were asked to work in groups to present their reflection investigation on the application of generative AI in business email writing for their group class assignment for English for Business Communication. The research questions for this study were adapted from the existing literature on the use of generative AI tools in academic writing and business communication. Figure 1 shows the flow chart of the research methodology of the study.



**Figure 1: The Flow Chart of Research Methodology**

Thematic analysis was used in this study. Data immersion, coding, theme development and report creation were used in thematic analysis were time-consuming and subjective. The data was reviewed and reread repeatedly to create absorption with the data to enhance researchers' familiarity with the data to verify the accuracy of data. During coding phase, researchers created a codebook which contained codes and definition of codes. Both inductive and deductive coding were employed. In the coding phase, the researchers identified and categorised traits or patterns pertinent to the research issue from the data immersion and transcribing. Pilot testing was conducted in the beginning of the data analysis phase. After coding, the researchers developed themes from related codes to explain more of the data. To ensure a cohesive pattern, themes were found, looked at, and developed. Selecting transcript portions to emphasise key topics was the final step. Peer review and external audit were implemented by asking a qualified qualitative researcher to check the codes and the usage of codes in analysing data. Audit trail provided a detailed research process, making it easier for others to evaluate the trustworthiness of the findings and potentially replicate the study. In order to ensure that the themes created a coherent pattern and appropriately represent the entire set of data, they are polished on two levels. The last step comprised of selecting examples to emphasise important themes as well as recognising, categorising, and assessing the themes.

## Findings and Discussion

The thematic analysis process applied to the transcripts revealed two key themes present in the data.

### *Theme 1: Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools*

This theme is defined by learners' diverse specific preferences in selecting AI tools. The findings suggested that the university students use generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist them in writing business emails in English. These tools use large language models to assist learners to draft, proofread and rewrite business emails. These tools also allow learners to identify the tone, write clearer emails for different purposes and audience. Table 2 shows preferred generative AI tools.

**Table 2: Preferred Generative AI Tools**

	Choice 1	Choice 2	Choice 3
Group 1	Writesonic	Write with Transformer	Text Blaze
Group 2	Jasper	Mailerlite	Copy.ai
Group 3	Unriddle Ai	Bard Ai/ Gemini	Perplexity. ai
Group 4	ProWritingAid	Jasper Chat	Grammarly

The results showed all the groups have different AI tools due to their personal choices. All the groups had their own preferences. Group 1 chose Writesonic, Write with Transformer and Text Blaze, whereas Group 3 opted for Unriddle Ai, Bard Ai/Gemini and Perplexity.ai. Similarly, the preferred Generative AI tools for Group 2 and 4 are different from other groups. These findings support findings from previous studies that learners used the tools for their academic success (Nelson & Creagh, 2023; Jonsson & Tholander, 2022). Generative AI tools enhance machine translations and text classification (Yang & Laki, 2023). Generative AI should be used to encourage deep learning and critical thinking skills (Kohnke, Moorhouse & Zou, 2023). Theme 1 has two sub-themes: (i) User friendliness, and (ii) Relevant business contexts

### *Sub-Theme 1: User Friendliness*

In the context of AI writing tools, user-friendliness refers to how simple it is for participants to engage with and use the programme to efficiently write content—especially for those who lack considerable technical understanding. Table 3 describes how the participants chose AI tools for their user-friendliness.

**Table 3: User Friendliness for AI Tools**

Group 1	Writesonic •Provide templates •Provide a guided process for creating different types of content • Allow users without extensive technical knowledge	Write with Transformer •Allow users to interact with GPT-3 •Provide a straightforward interface for generating text •Easy to use for individuals without technical expertise	Text Blaze •Provide user-friendly interface • Integrate with various platforms make it convenient for business professionals to enhance their email writing efficiency
Group 2	Jasper •Offer many writing features • Give super intuitive and makes it easy to create and edit content •Provide browser plugin that allows the user to generate AI content anywhere • Provide feature-packed AI tools	Mailerlite •Easy to use •User-friendly	Copy.ai •Familiar to chatgpt users •Provide up-to-date information
Group 3	Unriddle Ai •Connect Ideas •Provide effortless Writing and Citation	Bard •Text Formatting •Chat History	Perplexity •Personalized learning •Flexibility •Cost-effective •24/7 availability
Group 4	ProWritingAid •Offers an easy interface •Straightforward navigation •Use in many platforms	Jasper •Enable users to interact and receive assistance	Grammarly •Easy to use •Accessible browser extensions, desktop apps and applications

Group 1 chose Writesonic as their most favourite AI generative tool which was a user-friendly platform for generating content, including business emails. It provided templates and a guided process for creating different types of content, making it accessible for users without extensive technical knowledge (Group 1). Whereas, Group 2, Group 3 and Group 4 chose Jasper, Unriddle Ai and Prowritingaid. The findings revealed that participants selected AI tools based on the ease of use for their learning objectives. The results obtained are consistent with those found in previous studies (Cong-Lem & Daneshfar, 2024; Liu, Zhang & Biebricher, 2024; Yilmaz et al., 2022).



***Sub-Theme 2: Relevant Business Contexts***

The ability of these tools to particularly address demands and requirements connected to business can be defined as relevant business contexts in the field of AI writing tools. Table 4 highlights how participants chose generative AI tools based on how they offer relevant business contexts.

**Table 4 : Relevant Business Contexts**

Group 1	Writesonic • Provide specific templates and prompts for business-related content • Allow users to tailor prompts for generating emails, proposals, and other professional documents	Write with Transformer • Adapt business contexts through fine-tuning or by providing specific prompts that guide the AI in generating business-related content	Text Blaze • Understand repetitive patterns • Customise snippets for common business phrases, reducing the time spent on repetitive email writing tasks
Group 2	Jasper • Provide results 5x faster	Mailerlite • Write AI emails within your email designer • Email automations	
Group 4	ProWritingAid • Improve writing across different genres, business writing • Offer clarity, style & grammar	Jasper • Has features that allow it to grasp industry- specific language, jargon and context generated text aligns with professional standard	Grammarly • Extend beyond grammar checks, offering styles and suggestions • Aligns with professional standard

For instance, Group 2 chose Writesonic because of its personalised templates and editable prompts, users may quickly and effectively create business-related content such as proposals, emails, and formal documents. Whereas Group 4 selected ProWritingAid for its clarity, style, and grammar enhancements to improve writing quality in a variety of genres, including business writing. Similarly, generative AI tools can be used to enhance students' academic success (Nelson & Creagh, 2023; Jonsson & Tholander, 2022). Learners use AI tools to understand academic endeavors (Megahed et al., 2023).

***Sub-Theme 3: Quality Generated Texts***

Quality generated texts refers to quality content generated by AI tools tailored to the desired tone for business communication. Table 5 exemplifies how the participants opted for the AI tools. Group 2 insisted that Copy.ai generated engaging and high-quality content. Meanwhile, Group 4 considered Jasper created excellent content that fits the context is crucial to enhancing business emails.

**Table 5: Quality Generated Texts**

Group 1	Writesonic •Utilise AI language models to generate content, resulting in coherent and contextually relevant text •Allow users to fine-tune the generated content to match the desired tone, ensuring the quality of business emails	Write with Transformer • Generate quality text •Provide various styles and tones for different audience for business emails	Text Blaze •Aid users in quickly •Insert pre-defined customized text snippets •Ensure accuracy and consistency in business communication
Group 2	Copy.ai •Generate content with GPT-4 •Help students create engaging and high quality written content		
Group 4	ProWritingAid •Provide reports on various aspects of writing grammar, style, readability, and more •Help users identify strengths and weaknesses	Jasper •Consider factors like coherence, clarity, and relevance •Produce high-quality and contextually appropriate content is essential for improving business email	Grammarly •Provide high-quality suggestions punctuation, grammar and style •Emphasise clarity, coherence and tone

The findings revealed that learners opted for AI generative tools which provide an extensive array of features and functionalities to improve their business writing skills for a variety of audiences and situations. The findings presented here align with the outcomes of earlier research (Marzuki et al., 2023).

### ***Theme 2: Optimizing Generative AI Prompts for Business Email Writing***

This theme is defined by the specific prompts created for types of email learners used in their business email. A prompt is a precise input or directive provided to an AI system so that it can produce unique and creative content—like text, photos, or music—using the patterns and data it has been trained on. The following sub-themes or categories emerged from the document analysis; (1) Prompts for external email, and (2) Prompts for internal email.

#### ***Sub-Theme 1: Prompts For External Email***

Prompts for external email are concise instructions or cues provided to generative AI to guide the technology in generating content for email for external communication. Table 6 indicates that participants as L2 learners wrote prompts for client communication, business partners and applicant communication. For instance, Group 1 wrote a prompt for AI tools to write an introductory email to a new client. Group 2 asked an AI tool to compose a gratitude email to an existing customer which offered a special discount to engage their loyal customers. Group 4 wrote a detailed prompt to generate an appropriate apology email.

**Table 6: Types of Prompts and Examples for External Email**

Types	Examples
<b>1. Client Communication</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introductory email to a new client</li> <li>- Letter of Apology apologizing to customers for a recent service disruption</li> <li>- Request for Feedback on a Proposal</li> <li>- Introduction to a New Product/Service</li> <li>- Invoice and Payment Reminder</li> <li>- Client Inquiry Response</li> <li>- Collaboration Proposal</li> <li>- Customer Appreciation</li> <li>- Thank You email</li> <li>- Customer Complaint Response</li> <li>- Generate a subject line</li> <li>- Invoice submission</li> <li>- Event Invitation</li> <li>- Clear Information Request</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prompt 1</b> Compose an introductory email to a new client, highlighting our company's strengths, services, and expressing eagerness to collaborate. (Group 1)</p> <p><b>Prompt 2</b> Generate an email expressing gratitude to loyal customers. Offer a special discount, share upcoming promotions, and encourage continued engagement. (Group 2)</p> <p><b>Prompt 3</b> Write an email to let customers know about {specific problem} and apologize to them for the convenience caused. Assure them that the problem will be resolved soon. Keep the tone apologetic and sincere. Keep the message under 100 words. (Group 4)</p>
<b>2. Business Partners Communication</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Follow-Up Email to Business Partners</li> <li>- Formal Business Meeting Schedule</li> <li>- Polite and Concise Business Proposal Decline</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prompt 4</b> Generate a follow-up email requesting a meeting to discuss the upcoming project timeline and deliverables. (Group 1)</p> <p><b>Prompt 5</b> Generate a follow-up email after a business meeting. Summarize key points discussed, express appreciation, and outline next steps or action items. (Group 2)</p>
<b>3. Applicant Communication</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Job Application email</li> </ul>	<p><b>Prompt 6</b> Utilizing the following details about your qualifications and experience, draft a formal email cover letter: "Your information." Write the email with {specific company} and {specific role} in mind, emphasizing your qualifications for the position. Ensure that the email is formatted correctly and has a clear, neutral tone. (Group 4)</p>

The findings suggested that when communicating with clients, the participants were aware that they wrote effective emails for various scenarios and audience. Each email should be personalized, clear, and concise, with a focus on maintaining a positive and professional relationship with the client. In addition, follow-up emails are an essential part of business communication, and they can be used for various purposes, such as requesting a follow-up meeting, following up on an unanswered email, following up on a meeting, and sending an invoice and payment reminder. The participants also used prompts for application communication. The most frequently used purposes such as seeking information, writing a complaint, replying to an email of complaints and requests, and scheduling a meeting or call.

The findings suggested that these prompts for external email communication provide structured guidance for composing various types of professional emails, ensuring effective and tailored correspondence across different scenarios and recipient groups. These findings are in line with the results of previous research (Kohnke, Moorhouse & Zou, 2023; Tiwari & Chaturvedi, 2023; Yang & Laki, 2023).

***Sub-Theme 2: Prompts For Internal Email***

Prompts for Internal email refers to concise instructions or cues provided to generative AI to generate content for email for internal communication. Table 7 depicts two types of prompts and examples for internal email. These types for prompts for internal email are employee engagement recognition and internal communication as illustrated in Table 7.

**Table 7: Types of Prompts and Examples for Internal Email**

Types	Examples
1. Employee Engagement Initiatives - Employee Training Announcement - Employee Appreciation Email	<p>Prompt 7 Compose an email recognizing an employee's exceptional contribution to a recent project and expressing gratitude for their dedication. (Group 1)</p> <p>Prompt 8 Write an email recognizing and appreciating the contributions of a team member. Highlight specific achievements and express gratitude for their dedication. (Group 2)</p>
2. Internal Communication - Inquiry about Product/Service Features - Follow-Up on an Unanswered Email - Announcement of a Company Event - Internal Team Update - Project report - Change in Project Timelines Notification - Collaborative Email for Group Project - Announcement of New Company Policy	<p>Prompt 9 Draft an email announcing an upcoming company event, providing details on date, venue, and activities, and encouraging employee participation (Group 1)</p> <p>Prompt 10 Compose an internal team update email regarding project progress. Share milestones achieved, challenges faced, and outline upcoming tasks for team members. (Group 2)</p>

Both Group 1 and 2 wrote prompts asking for sample emails that recognised employees' contributions and made the employees felt valued. In internal communication, Group 1 asked the AI tools to write email for a future event while giving specific instructions what to be included in the email. Whereas, Group 2 wrote a prompt for an email of a project progress which highlighted milestones, challenges and future tasks for the group. These findings suggested that employee-related communication is a vital aspect of organizational success, encompassing various forms of information sharing, engagement, and connection within the workforce. This includes communicating employee recognition, announcing training programs, providing internal team updates, and sending job application emails. Effective employee communication is essential for maintaining a motivated and productive workforce, and it can take place through various mediums such as email, mobile applications, intranets, and collaboration tools.



The results showed that these internal email prompts provide structured guidelines for acknowledging staff accomplishments, disseminating information, and giving updates within the company. This encourages team members from various departments and projects to collaborate and foster an environment of appreciation. These findings are supported by the results of previous studies (Medland, 2021; Santos et al, 2023).

### ***Theme 3: Ethical Usage of Generative AI Tools***

This theme is defined by the ethical use of generative AI by learners to ensure the responsible and effective integration of these tools into their business email writing practices. Two emerging sub-themes on ethical usage of generative AI are writing assistance and best practices on ethical usage of generative AI.

#### ***Sub-Theme 1: Writing Assistance***

This theme refers to learners using generative AI tools for writing assistance in ensuring ethical usage of generative AI. Table 8 indicates that learners use AI generative tools as writing assistance to generate ideas, outlines, or drafts for their assignments to improve their writing quality.

**Table 8: Excerpts of Writing Assistance**

Writing Assistance
Excerpt 1 Generate ideas, outlines, or drafts for their assignments (Group 1)
Excerpt 2 Use AI Plagiarism tool, use a range of sources (Group 2)
Excerpt 3 Paraphrasing Assistance - Generate paraphrased versions of sentences or paragraphs... Grammar and Plagiarism Checkers- Improve the overall quality of writing, to identify and avoid plagiarism Idea Expansion- Use AI to assist develop the concepts and ideas they find in their research (Group 3)
Excerpt 4 Understanding and summarizing- Utilise reference to content generated by AI to understand difficult topics or compile different perspectives. Idea generation- AI can assist in coming up with concepts or outlining concepts (Group 4)

These tools were also used to check plagiarism, summarise, paraphrasing. In short, generative AI is used as a supportive tool, and students should develop their own style, use AI plagiarism tools, and utilize a range of sources to maintain originality and quality as supported in previous studies (Marzuki et al, 2023; Tambunan et al, 2022). In contrast to previous studies, the participants did not use generative AI on grammar, punctuation, and syntax unlike previous studies (Chang et al, 2021; Marzuki et al, 2023; Tambunan et al, 2022).

**Sub-Theme 2: Best Practices**

This theme defines best practices for learners to utilize AI writing tools to ensure ethical usage of generative AI. Table 9 illustrates how the participants employed their ethical usage of generative AI as their best practices when using these AI tools for academic writing.

**Table 9 : Best Practices**

Best practices
<p>Excerpt 5 However, it's crucial to ensure that the final work is a result of their own understanding and effort. To prevent plagiarism, they should thoroughly review, edit, and cite any external content generated by AI, giving proper credit to the source. It's essential to use generative AI as a supportive tool rather than relying solely on its outputs. (Group 1)</p> <p>Excerpt 6 Don't just copy , develop your own style (Group 2)</p> <p>Excerpt 7 Understand the content before using AI to rephrase it. Double-check that the expanded content offers more information or facts and is written in their own words. Educate Themselves on Ethical AI Use- Keep updated on the moral standards for using AI in educational contexts. Act responsibly, respecting the intellectual property rights of others (Group 3)</p> <p>Excerpt 8 Double-checking originality - This helps in confirming that none of the sources your content is too similar to previously exist. Paraphrasing and combining- Utilise it as a guide and rephrase the material in your own words while maintaining its major ideas (Group 4)</p>

The participants realised that the ethical standards for utilizing AI in educational settings and acted responsibly, respecting the intellectual property rights of others which is a challenging issue in academic contexts (Nelson & Creagh, 2023). The participants suggested that they need to understand the definition of plagiarism and how to use generative AI properly. Many of them used generative AI for idea expansion and paraphrasing. The participants stated that they needed to have a comprehensive understanding of the content and verified the content before employing the sources for AI tool for paraphrasing. They were aware that these tools aided in improving their writing quality, identifying and preventing plagiarism, and expanding on research ideas. However, they did not emphasise on citing sources. It is recommended that learners learn intellectual property and ethical usage of generative AI. Newer AI tools need to be monitored as they could mislead researchers and learners (Megahed et al., 2023). Universities should provide comprehensive support by offering professional training to prepare their educators for the ethical and effective utilization of generative AI in both teaching and learning, in addition to the customary practice of providing written instructions and emails (Kohnke, Moorhouse & Zou, 2023)

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the research successfully achieved its objectives by providing insights on the prevalent use of generative AI tools by university students to assist them in writing business emails in English, the diverse preferences of learners in selecting AI tools and the specific prompts they create for various email purposes, and the need for learners to grasp the nuances

of plagiarism and the ethical utilization of generative AI, particularly in the context of idea expansion and paraphrasing. The study makes several key contributions. First, the study highlights how generative AI tools assist L2 learners in writing effective business emails to enhance their workplace communication skills. Second, diverse preferences of learners in selecting AI tools and the specific prompts they created for various email purposes further emphasize the need for tailored and context-specific support in business email writing. Third, the study emphasizes on understanding and practising ethical usage of generative AI.

The study highlights the following challenges regarding the use of generative AI tools for writing business emails by university students. They need to have comprehensive understanding of intellectual property and ethical usage of generative AI writing tools. This is crucial to ensure the responsible and effective integration of these tools into their business email writing practices in educational and professional settings. The potential of these tools to support language learning and communication across diverse contexts is evident, but it is essential for educational institutions and learners to embrace them while upholding ethical standards.

As the field of AI-generated writing continues to evolve, it is imperative for educational institutions and businesses to stay abreast of the latest developments and to provide learners with the necessary guidance and resources to leverage these tools effectively. The growing availability of AI email-writing tools, each with its own unique features and capabilities, offers a wealth of opportunities for L2 learners and business professionals to optimize their email writing processes. By embracing these tools and fostering a nuanced understanding of their ethical and effective usage, learners can position themselves for enhanced workplace communication and success in an increasingly AI-driven landscape.

### Acknowledgement

The authors are grateful for the support given by Universiti Teknologi MARA Perlis Branch, Kolej Matrikulasi Perlis and University of Melbourne.

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