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LINGUISTIC PATTERNS IN STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SHORT MESSAGES TO LECTURERS

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Abstract
The use of digital communication media has increasingly shaped the way students interact with lecturers, especially through short messaging applications. This study aims to describe the linguistic patterns used by students in academic short-message communication with lecturers. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the study analyzes a selected set of anonymized student messages through content analysis. The data were selected based on their relevance to academic matters, such as permission requests, questions about lectures, schedule clarification, and responses to lecturers' instructions. The analysis focuses on greetings and salutations, message openings and closings, lexical choice, sentence structure, formality, and interactional roles. The findings show that students generally use polite openings, formal address terms, apologetic expressions, gratitude, and relatively complete sentence structures when communicating with lecturers. These patterns indicate that students' awareness of academic roles influences how messages are written in digital settings. The study contributes to the understanding of academic digital communication and may support the development of practical guidelines for student-lecturer interaction through short messages.

Keywords: *Linguistic patterns, academic communication, short messages, students, lecturers, digital politeness.*

INTRODUCTION

Digital communication technology has brought noticeable changes to interaction practices in higher education. Communication between students and lecturers, which previously relied mainly on face-to-face meetings, is now often conducted through short messaging applications. These platforms are widely used because they offer speed, accessibility, and practicality in academic communication. However, the increasing reliance on short messages also raises questions about how language is used and adapted within academic contexts.

In academic settings, language functions not only to convey information but also to maintain professional relationships and reflect institutional norms. The choice of words,

sentence structure, and overall tone of a message can influence how the message is interpreted by the recipient. Therefore, the way students compose short messages to lecturers becomes an important linguistic issue to examine, as it reflects students' awareness of academic roles and communication ethics.

Previous research has shown that students' digital messages to lecturers often contain politeness markers, greetings, apologies, self-introduction, requests, and expressions of gratitude (Yuliawati, Hazma, & Bakhti, 2020; Nurdiyani & Sasongko, 2022). These studies indicate that academic messages are shaped by power relations, social distance, and the need to reduce possible imposition. In this sense, student messages to lecturers cannot be treated merely as casual digital texts; they also represent institutional interaction.

At the same time, short messaging applications tend to encourage speed, brevity, and informal expression. This creates a communication tension for students: they need to write messages efficiently while still observing academic etiquette. Linguistic features such as greetings, honorifics, openings, closings, lexical choices, and sentence structure therefore become important indicators of how students manage formality in digital academic contexts.

Although several studies have examined politeness strategies in WhatsApp or short-message communication, many of them focus mainly on politeness maxims or strategies. Less attention has been given to a simple descriptive mapping of linguistic patterns that appear in everyday academic short messages, especially in terms of message structure, wording, and formality. This study addresses that gap by identifying the linguistic features that students use when communicating with lecturers through short messages.

Based on this background, the research question of this study is: How are linguistic patterns realized in students' academic short-message communication with lecturers? Accordingly, the objective of this research is to describe the forms of language used by students in academic communication through short messages.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. This method is appropriate because the research aims to describe and interpret linguistic patterns rather than test a hypothesis or measure statistical relationships. The data consist of short messages sent by students to lecturers concerning academic matters, such as requests for permission, questions related to lectures, schedule clarification, and responses to lecturers' instructions.

The data were collected through documentation of academic short messages. The selected messages were limited to texts that contained student-lecturer academic interaction. Messages that were unrelated to academic matters, contained purely personal content, or did not show a complete communicative purpose were excluded from the analysis. All names, phone numbers, class identities, and other personal details were anonymized to protect the privacy of the participants.

The ethical handling of data was considered because the messages came from private digital communication. The researcher treated the messages as confidential data and used them only for academic analysis. The examples presented in the findings were anonymized and adjusted only to remove identifying information, without changing the linguistic pattern being analyzed.

The data were analyzed using content analysis. The analysis involved several steps: reading the messages repeatedly, identifying linguistic features, grouping the features into categories, interpreting their communicative functions, and relating the patterns to the academic context. The categories used in the analysis included greetings and salutations, message openings and closings, lexical choice, sentence structure, interactional roles, responses to warnings, and level of formality.

To strengthen trustworthiness, the classification was checked through repeated reading and comparison across message examples. Each category was examined based on the visible linguistic form and its communicative function in the academic interaction. This procedure helped the researcher avoid relying only on general impressions and made the interpretation more systematic.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of students' short messages reveals several linguistic patterns that characterize academic communication with lecturers through digital media. The data include messages related to academic information, formal requests, instructional responses, and reactions to lecturers' warnings. These messages show how students adapt their language use when communicating in an academic setting through an informal medium.

Table 1. Summary of linguistic patterns in students' academic short messages

No.	Linguistic pattern	Representative expression	Communicative function
1	Greetings and salutations	Assalamualaikum, Good morning, Sir/Madam	Opening the message politely and recognizing lecturer status
2	Apologetic opening	I apologize for disturbing your time	Reducing imposition before making a request
3	Gratitude closing	Thank you; thank you in advance	Closing the message respectfully
4	Formal lexical choice	permission, schedule, assignment, clarification	Maintaining academic tone and clarity
5	Complete sentence structure	A sentence that states identity, purpose, and request	Making the message understandable
6	Brief acceptance of warning	Yes, Sir; I apologize	Showing compliance and responsibility

As shown in Table 1, the students' messages generally follow an academic structure. The messages often begin with a greeting or salutation, continue with an apology or self-positioning statement, present the main academic purpose, and end with gratitude. This pattern shows that students do not use short messages only for quick information exchange. They also use them to maintain respect and reduce social distance in communication with lecturers.

Use of Greetings and Salutations

One prominent pattern identified in the data is the frequent use of greetings and formal salutations at the beginning of messages. Students commonly open their messages with expressions such as Assalamualaikum, Good afternoon, or Good morning, followed by honorifics like Sir or Madam. This practice indicates that students are generally aware of the hierarchical relationship between themselves and lecturers. Greetings function not only as polite openings but also as markers of an academic tone before the main message is delivered.

Some variations were also found. While most messages contain both greetings and honorifics, some messages omit one of these elements. This variation suggests that students do not always share the same awareness of academic communication norms. In digital contexts, such inconsistency may occur because students are influenced by the speed and informality of the platform.

Message Openings and Closings

In addition to greetings, students frequently employ apologetic expressions at the beginning of their messages, such as I apologize for disturbing your time or Sorry for the late message. These expressions serve to mitigate potential imposition and demonstrate respect for the lecturer's time. Such linguistic strategies reflect students' attempts to position themselves politely within the interaction.

At the closing of messages, expressions of gratitude are commonly used, including thank you, thank you in advance, or thank you for your attention. These closing remarks help reinforce a respectful and cooperative tone. They also signal that students recognize the lecturer's authority and contribution within the academic setting.

Lexical Choice and Sentence Structure

From a lexical perspective, students tend to use vocabulary that is formal yet accessible. The word choices generally avoid slang or excessive abbreviations, which indicates an effort to maintain clarity and appropriateness. Academic words such as permission, schedule, assignment, meeting, and clarification appear as indicators that the messages are connected to classroom or institutional matters.

In terms of sentence structure, many messages consist of complete sentences that clearly state the purpose of communication. Some messages also employ more complex sentence structures, especially when students provide background information or explain the reasons for their requests. This use of multi-clausal sentences suggests that certain students can adapt their linguistic resources to convey detailed information within the constraints of short messaging platforms.

Interactional Roles and Power Relations

Differences between students' and lecturers' messages reveal the presence of institutional power relations. Lecturers' messages are typically brief, direct, and instructional, especially when addressing procedural matters or issuing reminders. Students, in contrast, tend to use longer and more carefully structured messages. This asymmetry reflects the unequal institutional roles of the participants and influences how language is used by each party.

Students’ Responses to Warnings

In cases where lecturers issue warnings or reminders, students' responses are generally short, polite, and accepting. Expressions such as I apologize and Yes, Sir are frequently used, indicating acknowledgment of responsibility and compliance with academic expectations. These responses demonstrate students' awareness of the seriousness of such interactions and their effort to avoid conflict or misunderstanding.

Level of Formality

Overall, the level of formality in students' short messages is relatively high. This can be seen in the consistent use of greetings, polite expressions, and the limited use of informal language or abbreviations. Even though short messaging applications are generally informal, students still attempt to follow academic communication norms.

The findings also show that formality is not produced by one feature only. It emerges from the combination of greetings, honorifics, apologetic openings, careful word choice, complete sentence structure, and gratitude. Therefore, academic formality in short messages should be understood as a pattern of language choices rather than a single expression.

The findings suggest that students' linguistic patterns in academic short-message communication are influenced by context, communication goals, and social roles. The use of greetings and honorifics functions as a politeness marker because students are writing to lecturers, who hold higher institutional authority. This finding is in line with politeness perspectives that view language choice as a way to maintain social harmony and reduce potential face threat in unequal interactions (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 2014). Apologetic openings can be interpreted as mitigation strategies. By writing expressions such as I apologize for disturbing your time, students attempt to reduce the burden of their request. This pattern shows that students are aware that asking for permission, clarification, or schedule information may interrupt the lecturer's time. In this way, the message does not only deliver information; it also manages the relationship between sender and recipient.

The formal lexical choices and relatively complete sentence structures also indicate the presence of an academic register. Although short messaging applications commonly encourage informal communication, students still adjust their wording when the recipient is a lecturer. This supports the view that digital communication is shaped not only by the platform but also by the social context in which communication occurs. Nevertheless, the findings should be read within the limits of the data. The study describes selected academic short messages and does not compare messages across departments, universities, or different digital platforms. Future research may involve a larger corpus, compare student messages from different academic backgrounds, or examine how lecturers respond to various types of student messages.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that students' short-message communication with lecturers displays identifiable linguistic patterns related to greetings, word choice, sentence structure, politeness, and formality. These patterns reflect students' efforts to adapt their language use to academic contexts, even when the communication takes place through informal digital media.

The findings indicate that academic short messages commonly contain polite openings, honorifics, apologetic expressions, clear academic purposes, and gratitude. Such patterns help students maintain respectful interaction with lecturers and reduce the possibility of misunderstanding. Therefore, linguistic awareness is important in digital academic communication.

Practically, the findings may help students become more aware of appropriate language use when contacting lecturers. Educational institutions may also use the findings as input for developing simple guidelines for student-lecturer communication through digital media. However, the study is limited to selected message data; future studies should involve broader data and more varied institutional contexts.

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