

## Negotiation and Impoliteness Strategies in Saudi and Australian Postgraduate Students' Emails

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### Abstract

Although negotiation via email takes place every day between students and their supervisors/lecturers, the processes underlying these negotiations have been largely neglected in research to date. Further, there is a need to investigate the linguistic email communication problems that Saudis encounter when they study abroad. This study aims to identify the dominant features of email communication of twenty Saudi and Australian post-graduate students with their lecturers. The research sought to understand the following: to what extent negotiation moves differ from one group to another; if there is a significant difference between the two raters when rating native speakers (NS) versus non-native speakers (NNS); whether there is a significant relationship between students' scores and total number of words used in negotiation moves; the most important moves that might have affected the raters' decisions when giving the highest scores versus the lowest scores; and whether there is difference between total scores of NS and NNS. Whereas the qualitative analysis employed (im)politeness as the theoretical framework, the quantitative analysis focused on the moves used by students in terms of context, proposal, justification, options, and requests. It was found that NS and NNS had similar likelihoods of gaining higher grades when using more details. When both NS and NNS failed to employ a focus-on-context move, they were likely to fail in their negotiations. International students need to be encouraged to give more detailed explanations to improve their negotiation techniques. Pedagogical implications include greater insights into the appropriate use of email negotiation strategies between students and their lecturers.

**Keywords:** academic negotiation, gender differences, (im)politeness in email communication, (im)politeness strategies, negotiation moves

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