ISSUES IN ENGLISH CORRESPONDENCE: STUDENT LETTERS AT THE FACULTY OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

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Abstract This article presents the most common issues faced by students at the University of Maribor's Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security when writing formal letters in English. It presents a brief overview of correspondence (Kompara Lukančič, 2021) followed by a survey that was conducted in 2022 and included fifty-five second-year students at the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security. The analysis focuses on the product approach (Nunan, 2001)—that is, the production of an error-free and coherent text—and imitation of a model text (Steele, 2004). In line with these concepts in the analysis, the focus was on the layout of the letter, the general content of the letter, language use, and common errors. The article presents the most common linguistic issues when writing formal letters.

1   Introduction

English is often defined as an international language (Moses & Mohamad, 2019; McKay, 2012; Sharifian, 2009) and, as Sharifian states, (2009) it "has 'traveled' to many parts of the world" (Sharifian, 2009: 1) to serve as tool for exchanging not just words but thoughts and cultural views. English is also characterized as a world language (Bailey, Gorlach, & Arbor, 1986) and, as stated by Moses and Mohamad (2019: 1), it is "by far the most widely used language around the world," a lingua franca (Holliday, 2009). According to Sharifian (2009), many prominent authors (Abbott & Wingard, 1981; Bailey & Görlach, 1982; Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Crystal, 1997; Graddol, 1997; Holliday, 2006; Jenkins, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2007; McKay, 2002) have devoted their research interests to the processes, implications, and consequences of the spread of English as a worldwide language. Language acquisition as part of a multilingual society is also promoted by the European Union (Romaine, 2013), and knowledge of English is seen as a facilitator in the Europeanization process, according to Modiano (2009). Slovenia is an active country with regard to language acquisition. Slovenian primary schools are rapidly striving to introduce English as the first foreign language into the primary school curricula. Smajla and Podovšovnik (2016) present the professional positions of primary school principals in the introduction of the first foreign language in primary school, following the approach of content and language integrated learning, or CLIL (Smajla, 2014). Despite the policy of promoting foreign language learning, improvements are also needed in tertiary education. In her study, Čepon (2008) presents the situation of business English classes at the Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana and states that including language classes in the first year is necessary to prevent a gap in language knowledge. She warns about the one or more years of a gap in language acquisition; in particular, that students do not have English classes in the first year of tertiary education but only in the second or third. A crucial factor that influences language knowledge and language learning is motivation (Dörnyei, Henry, & Muir, 2015; Cook, 2016) which is a precondition for starting to learn a language. Beyond this, in language acquisition one must bear in mind optimization and the principle of language transfer (Nećak-Lük, 2008). This article focuses on the case of acquisition of English in tertiary education, focusing specifically on students' writing skills and their academic performance in writing.

2   An overview of writing in English

According to Moses and Mohamad (2019), writing in English is seen as a challenge in second language acquisition among students. Jusun and Yunus (2016: 470) see writing as "the most challenging skills to be learnt and to be taught in ESL (English as a second language) classroom[s]." From this perspective, developing students' writing skills is one of the major challenges language teachers face at all school levels. Moses and Mohamad (2019) state that writing has always been among the major difficulties faced by students learning English, already starting in elementary school. The complexity of writing is not only faced by students but is also a challenge for teachers (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). Tangpermpoon (2008) states that for language learners writing is considered the most difficult skill, mainly because background knowledge in the foreign language is needed. Among the skills required are rhetorical organization, appropriate language use, and a specific lexicon because all of these are needed in communication with the reader (Tangpermpoon, 2008). Writing plays a crucial role in the development of academic performance, and it contributes to individuals' social and emotional development (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). Selvaraj and Aziz (2019) state that academic writing in tertiary education goes beyond words and involves meaningful communication. According to Zhu (2004), in academic writing one has to understand distinctive procedures of ideas and interaction because they are needed as a foundation for basic or general writing abilities. According to Moses and Mohamad (2019), teaching writing is complex because students face difficulties in learning writing skills, but advanced writing skills are crucial in academic performance (Kellogg & Raulerson, 2007). As discussed by Klimova (2014), the skill of writing has a crucial position in language teaching because it involves the other three language skills (listening, reading, and speaking) and it requires students to develop cognitive skills. Knowledge of writing is valuable in language learning and communication. Walsh (2010, cited in Klimova 2014) highlights the importance of writing in higher education and states that a lack of knowledge of writing skills is also a lack of knowledge of communication skills. One must also bear in mind that the majority of professional communication is written (i.e., e-mail, minutes, reports, applications, etc.), and writing is therefore part of daily life situations. Moses and Mohamad (2019) state that students with weak writing skills experience drawbacks in their academic performance. Their inability to write well also affects their career and professional path. Among the challenges faced by

students are a lack of vocabulary, deficiencies in knowledge of grammar, poor spelling skills, and lack of exposure to reading materials.

3   English in business correspondence

Being able to properly compose and prepare business correspondence implies, in the first place, adequate knowledge of business correspondence in one's native language first and next in the foreign language (Kvasina & Radičević, 2018). Language plays an important role in business correspondence: it represents the heart of international business communication (Brannen, Piekkari, & Tietze, 2017). In recent decades there has been an increase in the use and position of English in business communication and in the global economy because it has become the working language (Tammelin, 2004). Many authors therefore agree that English has attained the position of a "lingua franca" in business communication (Gajšt, 2014; Mauranen & Ranta, 2009; Tammelin, 2004; Nickerson, 2000), that it exemplifies the specialized field of economics and business studies, and that due to its diversity and specialization it is seen as a burden for students of foreign languages (Plos, 2009). Wlosowicz (2017) states that business English is a special genre of English language writing because it is an interdisciplinary branch of English for special purposes, which involves knowledge of economics, business, finance, and banking to understand the language (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998: 6–9).

Today English is the world language, and it is used in communication between native and nonnative speakers and often also among nonnative speakers (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998: 53). Gajšt (2014) states that during the present time of globalization English plays the role of a global language in modern society and is among the top languages used in international business. She adds that most international business communication takes place in English and mostly among nonnative English speakers. This means that individuals that communicate come from different cultural backgrounds (Gajšt, 2014). Selvaraj and Aziz (2019) say that writing skills are important skills that need to be acquired by students, and mastering writing skills is important because they are needed in all professions. Individuals should enter any workplace with good writing skills (Zhu, 2004) because the business world requires and expects good writing skills from all employees. According to Gajšt (2013), learning business English at the tertiary level includes the acquisition of specific language and general competences together with the possibility of independent

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language learning. In 2013, Gajšt focused on independent learning of business English.

Business English can be defined in various ways from the perspective of English as a language for special purposes. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) see the teaching of business English as a branch of English teaching that ranges from general to professional content. Ellis and Johnson (1994, cited in Tammelin, 2004) therefore state that teaching business English is a genre of language for special purposes that differs from other genres in that it is often a mixture of professional and general content. Ellis and Johnson (1994, cited in Tammelin, 2004) add that in the early 1960s and 1970s teaching English was focused on teaching vocabulary (e.g., banking), and in the 1970s the focus shifted to communication skills, written communication, and listening and reading comprehension of business content. Ellis and Johnson (1994, cited in Tammelin, 2004) state that in the next phase, which continued into the 1980s, teaching business English focused on the functional aspect (e.g., giving advice and, above all, using what had been learned). Therefore, university students' knowledge of business English is typically more theoretical than practical, although some students already have extensive work experience (Ellis & Johnson, 1994, cited in Tammelin, 2004). According to Tammelin (2004), the role of business English in today's work environment and the complexity and dynamism of today's work environment are forcing universities to become increasingly interdisciplinary and, consequently, an increasing number of conventional business English subjects are no longer in line with the complex issues of academic multidisciplinary needs.

4   The process versus product approach

This article focuses on the product and process approach in producing correspondence because a similar approach was used in Klimova's (2014) research. In that article, students' writing was examined through these two most common approaches in writing. As stated by Applebee (1981), Leki (1989), Chunling and Guoping, (2009), and Graham and Sandmel (2011), the process approach has been used more than the product approach because it emphasizes the composition process rather than form. According to Graham and Sandmel (2011), the process approach is one of the most popular methods for teaching writing. Chunling and Guoping (2009) state that the process approach in teaching English writing has been advocated in contrast to the traditional product approach, and researchers are still

discussing which is better. According to Chunling and Guoping (2009), there is still no universally accepted definition of the process approach in writing, although according to Graham (1993) the process approach views all writing as a creative act that needs time and positive feedback. Steele (1992) states that the process approach is oriented more toward varied classroom activities aimed at promoting the development of language use, such as brainstorming, group discussion, and rewriting. According to Steele (2004), the process approach is oriented toward the text as a resource for comparison where ideas as starting points need more than one draft and the focus is on purpose, theme, text type, and so on. In the process approach, the reader is emphasized; collaboration with other peers is promoted, and creativity is desired. The product approach in writing involves a model text that is discussed and analyzed, and later the learners construct a similar or parallel text. Although this may be seen as a mechanical task, learners familiarize themselves with discourse structure, linguistic features, and the overall organization of ideas. Steele (2004) defines the product approach as an imitation of a model text in which the organization of ideas is more important than the ideas themselves, and the emphasis is on the end product. McCrimmon (1994) states that there is a difference in writing as a way of knowing (process) and writing as a way of telling (product), and Murray (1980) points out that there is a difference between internal and external revision; namely, revising to clarify meaning for oneself versus revising in order to clarify meaning for the reader. According to Nunan (2001), there is a clear difference between the process and product approaches. The product approach is oriented toward writing tasks, in which the role of the learner is to imitate, copy, and transform the models supplied, whereas the process approach focuses on creating a piece of work. The aim of product writing is an error-free coherent text, and the aim of process writing is admitting the fact that no text is perfect, but that the writer will come closer to perfection by producing, reflecting on, discussing, and reworking successive drafts of a text. Chunling and Guoping (2009) state that, in the distinction between process- and product-oriented writing, there is one important point: a good product depends on a good process.

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5   The research

As part of the course English Terminology, criminal justice and security students learn about basic topics in security, justice, policing, criminal justice, law, and so on. They also learn about concepts of correspondence: preparation of cover letters, letters of reference, recommendation letters, and other forms of written correspondence. The textbook *English in Uniform* (Kompara Lukančič, 2021) was prepared by the language instructor as required course material. The book explains the theory of correspondence and, in line with the product approach, sample letters are displayed as models of good practice. In the chapter devoted to correspondence (Kompara Lukančič, 2021), criminal justice and security students learn about not only business communication but any written form of communication. Proper correspondence skills are of utmost importance in any field of communication, not only in criminal justice and security. As future police officers and inspectors, students must familiarize themselves with the basic concepts of correspondence because in their work they will have to produce written texts for different purposes: official notes, information for the media, formal letters, and so on. As part of correspondence, the students learn about the basic elements of communication, starting with the structure of a formal letter, with an emphasis on the importance of letter layout in formal correspondence. The research, which was performed in the 2021/2022 academic year, involved 120 second-year undergraduate students from the University of Maribor's Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security that attended the course English Terminology in the first and second semesters. As part of the course assignment, the students had to prepare a cover letter for a position advertised at the Ministry of the Interior. Fifty-five students participated in the survey by preparing cover letters for the position advertised.

5.1   Methodology

The analysis focused on the product approach. In line with Nunan's (2001) concept of the product and process approaches, the focus was on the product writing approach; that is, preparation of an error-free and coherent text. In line with Steele (2004), focus was placed on imitation of a model text, organization of ideas, and emphasis on the end product. In line with the above concept in the analysis, the following were emphasized:

a) The layout of the letter;
b) General content of the letter; and
c) Language use and common errors.

6   Text analysis and discussion

a) Letter layout

The layout of the letter plays an important role in writing formal letters, and it follows a general format that may differ from country to country. This is also the case for Slovenian and English, and it requires the inclusion of specific elements: a letterhead, a salutation, and so on. Among the parts of formal letter are the sender's address, which is written in the top right corner of the page, unless there is a printed letterhead. In British English no sender's name is placed before the sender's address. The sender's address is followed by the receiver's address, which is written below the sender's address, on the opposite side of the page or in block style. The receiver's address starts with a courtesy title—that is, *Mr*, *Mrs*, *Ms*, or *Miss*, where open punctuation is used. For the receiver's address, when one does not know the name of the person written to, the address can use the person's title or position in the institution (e.g., *The Dean of the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security*), the department (e.g., *The Department of Security Systems*), or the institution (e.g., *Nacionalni forenzični laboratorij*). Some exceptions are *for the attention of* instead of including the receipt's name or position in the address, and *to whom it may concern* in letters of reference, in recommendations, or for general purposes. The date is placed below the sender's address and is separated by a space. The receiver's address is followed by a subject line to give the reader clear information about the topic of the letter and the salutation, which is based on whether the addressee is a man, a single or married woman, a company, or a person whose sex is not known. Within the body of the letter, block style is used, whereas indented style is used in handwritten letters. The letter ends with a complimentary close; for example, *Yours faithfully* when addressing individuals whose name, sex, and marital status are not known, and *Best regards*, *Best wishes*, *Regards*, or *Yours sincerely* when the receiver's name, sex, and marital status are known. The letter finishes with a concluding sentence (e.g., *We look forward to hearing from you soon*; *We look forward to meeting you*; *I am looking forward to hearing from you soon*; *A prompt reply would be appreciated*; or *We apologize again for any inconvenience*) and a

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signature, which is composed of a handwritten signature, a typed name, and the position in the company or institution.

The research analyzed fifty-five cover letters. The first step checked the layout of the letters, verifying whether all the letter elements were included (i.e., the sender's and receiver's addresses, date, subject line, salutation, body of the letter, concluding sentence, complimentary close, and signature). Among the fifty-five cover letters, fourteen did not include the required letter elements. Ten letters included neither the sender's nor the receiver's address, four letters included only the receiver's address, and the block style was used. Ten letters were missing the date, and in the remaining four letters the date was written incorrectly, mainly due to influence from Slovenian. The most common mistakes were the following: *10. March 2022*, *16. March 2022*, *9th March 2022.*, and *March 14., 2022*, in which the period and comma should be omitted. The inclusion of the period resembles the Slovenian structure for the date; that is, *10. marec 2022*. The subject line was missing in all fourteen letters, and eight letters contained paragraphs in the body. The correct salutation (i.e., *Dear Sir or Madam*, applicable in cases when the addressee is not known) was used in seven letters, and among them open punctuation was applied only one time. Among the inappropriate salutations were salutations directed toward an individual (e.g., *Dear Mr. Nunić*), in three cases no salutation was included, and in one case the salutation was *Respected* and *Greetings*. The salutation *Dear Mr. Nunić* is inappropriate because in cover letters one usually does not address an individual, but the entire company or institution.

Regarding the complimentary close, the students did not follow the pattern of salutation versus complimentary close. They concluded the letter with a complimentary close used in cases when one does not know the individual being written to when addressing an individual by surname; that is, *Dear Mr. Halilović* and *Yours faithfully*, which is wrong.

Within the remaining forty-one letters that had an appropriate layout, the following was noticed. The sender's and receiver's addresses were included in all letters, thirteen letters used block style, and in the remaining twenty-eight letters the sender's address was placed in the top right corner of the letter. The date was missing in six letters, and fifteen letters included the date after the sender's address and before the receiver's address, both in block style or on the right side of the letter. In the

remaining twenty letters the date followed the two addresses, which is wrong. In twenty-nine letters, the date was provided with the following pattern: numbered day, spelled-out month, and numbered year (e.g., *5 March 2022*). In five letters, the date was provided as *March 17th, 2022* or *14th March 2022*. In one example, the date was written incorrectly because it followed the Slovenian structure (i.e., *13. 03. 2022*). The subject line was present in eight letters, of which only three had the correct structure (i.e., subject, colon, and name of position), and only had the one correct structure for that (i.e., *Public tender – police inspector, number xxxxx*). In the remaining two cases, the subject line was inappropriate (i.e., *Police inspector in the economic crime sector, criminal police sector,* or *Job for police inspector*). Also, among the remaining eight letters in which the subject was not included, there was only one correct structure (i.e., *Application for Police Inspector*). Other inappropriate structures included *To apply for the position – Police inspector* and *Apply for the position of Police Inspector*. Within the body of the letters, paragraphs were used in twenty letters. The correct salutation (i.e., *Dear Sir or Madam*, applicable in cases when the addressee is unknown) was used in twenty-four letters, and among them open punctuation was applied four times in one case (*sir/madam* was written in lower-case letters). In four letters, the salutation was not included. Among the inappropriate salutations were the structures *To whom it may concerned* (used mainly in reference letters), *Dear Sirs* (used when addressing a company), and a salutation directed toward an individual (i.e., *Dear Mr. Urbas*). There were also two inappropriate salutations; that is, *Dear Tina* and *Dear Klavdija*, with a low formality level that is not allowed in business correspondence. Regarding the complimentary close, the students did not follow the pattern of salutation versus complimentary close. They concluded the letters with a complimentary close used in cases where one knows the individual written to (i.e., *Sincerely*) in eleven cases. The correct pattern of salutation and complimentary close was used in thirteen letters (i.e., *Dear Sir or Madam, Yours faithfully*).

b)   General content of the letter

Among the fourteen letters that were not written following the appropriate letter style, in terms of general content it is necessary to point out two letters that cannot be characterized as letters because the students did not write a proper letter but simply copied the text from the job advertisement. In a way, the students partially translated the job advertisement and did not write a cover letter. An explanation of that might be misinterpretation of the guidelines provided by the language teacher.

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The remaining forty-one letters all followed the appropriate letter style, and in terms of general content they can all be characterized as letters. In two cases, the students provided their personal information, following the structure from the job advertisement and giving information in the form of answers to the job requirements (e.g., an adequate level of education, work experience, and so on in bullet points; e.g., *I am citizen of Slovenia, I have 2 years of work experience*). Such a structure is not common in business correspondence. Some cover letters were also too long. It is assumed that the students wanted to say everything in the cover letter, forgot the purpose of such communication, and misinterpreted the purpose of a resume and cover letter.

c)   Language use and common errors

Among the fourteen letters that were not written following the appropriate letter style, the elements of language use and common errors in the body of the letter were divided into the following categories:

- Stylistic inappropriateness
- Grammatical errors
- Spelling mistakes
- Level of formality

Table 1: Language use and common errors in inappropriate letters

Style	Grammar	Spelling	Formality
I am writing to express my interest …	*I feel that you would bring a lot of good to your organization.*	*University of Criminal justice and security*	*As a freshly graduate from …*
I have never committed a crime …	*14 years ago I diplomated in information security.*	*faculty of criminal justice and security*	*I am exited to submit my application …*
I have all the documentation …	*I am a citizen of Republic of Slovenia with permanent residence in EU.*	*english, slovene, hungarian*	*I am a perfect fit for the position …*
I want to …			
I have drive licence for B category.	*I m also not a part in any political party …*		

As seen in Table 1, among the inappropriate stylistic structures is repetition: in one letter composed of thirteen sentences, the student started ten sentences with the pronoun *I*. Repetition of the pronoun *I* was present in eight out of fourteen letters lacking a proper letter structure. Among the generally stylistic inappropriate sentences was also *I have drive licence for B category*, where *drive* is used as a verb instead of an adjective (i.e., *driving licence*), and the word order is incorrect (the correct sentence is *I have a B category driving licence*). Among the grammatical errors are sentences in which the wrong pronoun is used (i.e., *I feel that you would bring a lot of good to your organization*, where *I* has to be used instead of *you*). In this sentence, the level of formality is inappropriate; the structure *bring a lot of good* should be replaced by *I would contribute to the development of*, and the verb *feel* should also be omitted. The sentence *14 years ago I diplomated in information security* shows the wrong use of the verb; the verb *graduated* should be used instead. In the sentence *I am a citizen of Republic of Slovenia with permanent residence in EU*, the definite article is missing twice: *the Republic of Slovenia* and *the EU*. The sentence *I m also not a part in any political party* shows wrong use of the verb *to be* (it should be *I am* or *I'm*), and the structure *not a part in* should be replaced by *not a member of*. Spelling mistakes mainly involved names of languages, for which the first letter should be capitalized (*english*, *slovene*, *hungarian*), and also names of institutions, for which the first letter should be capitalized (*University of Criminal justice and security*, *faculty of criminal justice and security*). Regarding the level of formality, students tend to be too informal in written discourse, as is visible in the following structures: *As a freshly graduate from*, *I am exited to submit my application*, *I am a perfect fit for the position*. Words such as *freshly*, *perfect*, and *excited* should be strictly avoided because they reduce the level of formality. Also, in the example *I am exited to submit my application* the wrong verb is used; *excited* should be used instead of *exited*. Among the forty-one letters written in an adequate letter style, the elements of language use and common errors in the body of the letter were divided into the same categories as in the examples in Table 1.

Table 2: Language use and common errors in appropriate letters: style

Repetition	Contracted form
I am writing to express my interest	*I'm*
I am currently a student	*It isn't*
I believe my knowledge	*I won't*
I graduated	
I speak	
I understand	

As seen in Table 2, among the inappropriate stylistic structures is repetition (almost all letters repeatedly used the pronoun *I*). Among the letters analyzed, there are examples of sentences starting with the pronoun *I* in ten sentences out of fourteen in one letter. Sentences that mostly use the pronoun *I* imply that the individual producing the text has limited linguistic knowledge and has not put any effort into creating a concise, coherent, and cohesive text. Such structures are highly inappropriate for the tertiary education level. Among the inappropriate stylistic feature there are also contracted forms (e.g. *I'm, isn't,* and *won't*), which are not grammatically wrong but are not highly accepted in written discourse. Specifically, students are asked to avoid them in correspondence and research papers.

Table 3: Language use and common errors in appropriate letters: grammar

Articles, prepositions, etc.	Verb forms, etc.
I am currently a student at Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security	*I finished the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security*
I also worked on a police station	*I finished master's degree in security.*
I am working as a police officer for two years now.	*In July of 2021 I have passed the examination.*
I went through a website gov.si	*In the year of 2018 I have passed a ….*
This year I will graduate from Faculty of Criminal Justice	*I got my diploma on the Faculty of criminal justice*
I have also passed an examination for	*I frequented the Faculty*

Table 3 presents the most common grammatical errors errors: definite articles, prepositions, verb forms, and so on. In the sentence *I am currently a student at Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security* the definite article before the name of the faculty is needed. The sentence *I also worked on a police station* shows the wrong usage of the preposition; *at* should be used instead of *on*. In the sentence *I am working as a police officer for two years now*, the structure *for two years now* requires the use of the present perfect continuous (i.e., *I have been working as a police officer for two years now*). The sentence *I went through a website gov.si* should use the definite article. In the sentence *This year I will graduate from Faculty of Criminal Justice*, the definite article should precede the name of the faculty. When anticipating something planned, the structure *going to* is used; that is, *This year I am going to graduate from the Faculty of Criminal Justice.* Among the sentences are also examples of incorrect use of verb forms. In the sentence *I finished the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security* one could replace the verb by using *I*

completed my undergraduate studies at the Faculty. In the sentence *I finished master's degree in security* the verb should be changed to *I obtained my master's degree* because you finish your master's thesis and obtain your master's degree. In the sentence *In July of 2021 I have passed the examination*, the simple past should be used and *of* should be omitted (i.e., *In July 2021 I passed the examination*). The simple past must also be used in the sentence *In the year of 2018 I have passed*. In the sentence *I got my diploma on the Faculty of criminal justice* the verb *got* should be replaced with *obtain* (i.e., *I obtained*), and the preposition *on* should be replaced with *from*. In the sentence *I frequented the Faculty* the verb must changed (i.e., *I was enrolled, I completed my studies at the Faculty*).

Table 4: Language use and common errors in appropriate letters: spelling

Languages	Institutions	Spellchecker
english, sloveneSlovene, albanian	*faculty of criminal justice and security*	*facluty, univerty, submmit, aplication, job advertisment*
	university of Maribor	

Among the spelling mistakes in Table 4 are the incorrect usage of uppercase letters; that is, these are missing in the names of languages (*slovene*, *english*) and names of institutions (*university of Maribor*, *faculty of criminal justice and security*). Also, students did not use the spellchecker when writing their letters on a computer. Misspelled words such as the following occurred: *facluty, univerty, submmit, aplication,* and *job advertisment*.

Table 5: Language use and common errors in appropriate letters: formality

Inappropriate level	Paraphrase needed
I hope to work for Criminal Police	*My knowledge of official language is great.*
Like I said	*I am happy to submit*
I am excited to submit my application	*I have around three and a half years of experience*
	I'm very hungry for knowledge.

Table 5 shows errors in the level of formality for business correspondence. In this genre, verbs such as *hope*, *like*, *dream*, and *excited* should be avoided, as in *I hope to work for Criminal Police, Like I said,* and *I am excited to submit my application.*

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In the sentence *My knowledge of official language is great*, the adjective *great* must be omitted; a more appropriate sentence is *I have a satisfactory / an advanced knowledge of Slovene*. Sentences such as *I am happy to submit* should be omitted; instead, the structure *I am submitting / I submit* should be used. When providing information, one has to be concise and accurate; an inappropriate sentence is the following: *I have around three and a half years of experience*. Sentences such as *I'm very hungry for knowledge* should be avoided and paraphrased as follows: *I am willing to achieve new competences*.

7   Conclusion

This article presents the position of English as a lingua franca and the most widely used language around the world. It focuses on the position of English writing skills, highlighting the importance of writing in higher education. Writing skills are important skills that need to be acquired by students, and mastering writing skills is important because writing is needed in all professions. Individuals should enter the workplace with good writing skills because the business world requires and expects them from all employees. The importance of writing skills also applies to business correspondence in criminal justice and security. Using the process and product approach, this study involved fifty-five students from the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security that prepared a cover letter as part of their course assignment. The study is oriented toward the the product approach and it focuses on the layout of the letter, the general content of the letter, language use, and common errors. The examples presented show that the major linguistic issues are stylistic inappropriateness (repetition and contacted forms), grammatical errors (wrong verb forms), spelling mistakes (including not using a spellchecker), and formality level (using structures that are too informal).

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