

# DEVELOPING PEER CORRECTIVE SKILLS IN BUSINESS LETTER WRITING IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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MONTA FARNESTE

University of Latvia, Latvia

OLGA PAŠINSKA

The Red Cross Medical College of Riga Stradiņš University, Latvia

**Abstract.** Peer corrective feedback (PCF) implementation is a topical issue in writing skills development at tertiary level. Those researchers who explore the application of PCF in higher education (e.g. Liu and Sadler, 2003; Hyland, K. and Hyland, F., 2006) admit that students face difficulties in providing qualitative feedback that determines the effectiveness of this teaching tool. Therefore, the goal of this paper was to investigate what actions could be taken in order to develop students' PCF skills and, consequently, foster the quality of PCF. The primary research method was a case study in which the participants were 24 second-year undergraduates majoring in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at a university in Latvia. The materials of the case study involve the genre of a business letter, which plays a vital role in people's professional and everyday life. The results of the research revealed that providing students with an assessment scale and teaching how to apply it increase the quality of PCF.

**Key words:** peer corrective feedback, feedback quality, writing skills, undergraduates, EFL case study

## INTRODUCTION

In the process of language acquisition, an error is an unavoidable and temporary 'simplified or distorted representation of the target competence', which appears due to 'failure to learn', 'inefficient teaching' as well as students' desire to communicate in the target language (Council of Europe, 2001: 155). According to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, advanced students of a foreign language are expected to be competent in spotting errors and assessing their written output 'on a complex academic or professional topic' 'within his/her field of interests' (Council of Europe, 2017: 76). In order to become competent in these tasks, peer-corrections, which include analysis and explanations, could be regularly implemented during English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes (Council of Europe, 2001: 155).

With the aim to ensure assessment skills development, Peer Corrective Feedback (PCF) has been used in the classes of EFL since the 1980s (Chang,

2016: 82), and even now lively discussions about its effectiveness take place. It is emphasized that PCF, as a teaching tool, could be implemented during classes, due to its aid not only in developing one's writing skills, but also in contributing to other skills of great importance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, namely, in helping students to develop critical thinking (Rollinson, 2005: 29), promoting learner autonomy and responsibility (Maas, 2017: 128) as well as collegial ties (Nassaji and Kartchava, 2017: 66).

Fiona Hyland (2000: 50–52) points out that students face difficulties when they are asked to detect errors and provide qualitative feedback on each others' texts. Those researchers who investigate the disadvantages of PCF admit that when a text is given for peer editing, students 'tend to deal primarily with surface errors' (Leki, 1990: 9), such as grammar, spelling, vocabulary and punctuation (Farneste, 2005: 31). It is challenging for them to provide feedback to global aspects of a text, such as 'content, organization, and idea development', and, as a result, they comment papers quite ambiguously (Liu and Sadler, 2003: 194). Moreover, they are unable to provide appropriate (Amores, 1997), comprehensive and helpful feedback (Leki, 1990: 9), differentiate valid and invalid peer feedback as well as identify text's 'strengths and weaknesses' (Tsui and Ng, 2000: 168). One of the reasons for the above-mentioned student actions is their unpreparedness to provide PCF. The findings of Berg (1999) and Min (2005) show that prepared and trained students produce significantly more relevant, specific and meaning-based comments and suggestions and, thus, can be considered to be more qualitative (discussed in Hyland, K. and Hyland, F., 2006: 85). Thus, the goal of the present paper is to investigate what could be undertaken to develop students' PCF skills and, therefore, promote the quality of PCF. In order to reach the goal, two research questions have been formulated:

1. How does the application of the assessment scale influence the quality of PCF by student writers?
2. What tasks could be used to develop student writers' PCF skills?

## THE NOTION OF QUALITATIVE PEER CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

Liu and Hansen (2002: 1) define peer feedback as 'the use of learners as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities [...] in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing'. Corrective feedback, including the peer one, can be considered as qualitative if it

- 1) helps to clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, expected standards);
- 2) facilitates the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning;
- 3) delivers high quality information to students about their learning;

- 4) encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning;
- 5) encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem;
- 6) provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance;
- 7) provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape teaching. (Nicol and MacFarlane-Dick, 2006: 205).

There are different perspectives on the quality of PCF. One of the perspectives defines PCF in terms of accuracy and consistency (Gielen et al., 2010: 306). In this case quality criteria are ‘the number of errors detected from the total number of errors’, ‘the number of errors accurately and completely corrected and justified out of the total number of errors’ as well as ‘a holistic score for the correctness, exhaustiveness and explicitness of peer comments’ (ibid.). Another perspective is defined in terms of content and/or style of a piece of writing (ibid.). It implies that the more students focus on content and style characteristics, the more qualitative PCF.

Sluijsmans, Brand-Gruwel and van Merriënboer (2002) combined those two perspectives and considered PCF quality in terms of accuracy and consistency, as well as in terms of content and style. In order to analyse the quality of the feedback provided by students, they suggest the rating form which includes seven variables:

- 1) use of criteria;
- 2) positive comments;
- 3) negative comments;
- 4) constructive comments;
- 5) posed questions;
- 6) naive word use;
- 7) structure (Sluijsmans et al., 2002: 446).

The first variable, called ‘use of criteria’, deals with the students’ adherence to a specific assessment scale proposed by a teacher to learners before starting revision.

As the focus of the present research is on a business letter as a genre, a business letter assessment scale offered by Cambridge English Language Assessment was chosen for the present study (see Table 1 in Appendix 1). It is used for assessing candidates’ business letters who take the international examination *Business English Certificates*. The criteria in the assessment scale draw students’ attention to such aspects as ‘content’, ‘communicative achievement’, ‘organisation’ and ‘language’, providing them a detailed description of the aspects (Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2016: 3).

Four other variables proposed by Sluijsmans et al. (2002) are related to the presence of additional information to peers from which they can benefit and improve works, namely, ‘positive comments’, ‘negative comments’, ‘constructive comments’ and ‘posed questions’.

When one provides additional information to a peer, they can appeal to correction codes, for example, the ones proposed by Vyatkina (2011: 73) for a better understanding of the nature of an error (see Table 1).

*Table 1 Correction codes* (Vyatkina, 2011: 73)

Correction codes	Meaning
C	content
SO (T)	structural organization (text level)
SO (S)	structural organization (sentence level)
GA	grammatical accuracy
LA	lexical appropriateness
P	punctuation
S	spelling

According to Hyland, correction codes enable a reviewer ‘to provide implicit feedback and reduce negative and disheartening effects of indicating writing errors without reducing the effects of error correction’ (Hyland, 1998, discussed in Azizi et al., 2014: 56). The variable ‘structure’ implies the assessment of peer’s performance in general, which means that a reviewer is expected to summarise their feedback in the form of points and/or comments.

By the variable ‘naïve word use’, Sluijsmans et al. (2002) understand the proper formulation of comments, questions and a summary of corrective feedback. It implies that comments, questions and/or a summary are clear, concise and at the same time comprehensive (ibid.).

As the quality of corrective feedback is the most important criterion in determining how much writers can benefit from peer work (Sackstein, 2017: 65), it is suggested that students should be prepared for it (Hyland, K. and Hyland, F., 2006: 91). First, students should be provided guidelines for revision (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996: 387), e.g. an assessment scale, so that they would be aware of what they should look for and understand how to comment. Further, PCF is to be modelled (Hyland, 2003: 203).

In addition, constant practice, which is controlled by a teacher, is significant for qualitative PCF (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996: 387; Hyland, 2003: 203). According to Andrade and Evans (2013: 116), students are ‘unaccustomed to evaluating each other’s academic performance or even their own performance’. Therefore, training is needed not only to train students to edit and assess peers’ works, but also to change students’ negative attitude to PCF which may appear due to the reason that they do not know how to use their present knowledge (Farneste, 2005: 23) and/or ‘lack confidence in their abilities’ (Andrade and Evans, 2013: 116). Students’ reluctance to assess peers also influences the quality of PCF. Reluctance appears due to the negative influence that peer assessment may have on interpersonal relationships, e.g. ‘break up relationships between

friends' and 'aggravate animosity between the students who are not on good terms with each other' (Mahmoud, 2012: 1989). Practice is essential to give students the necessary training in order to teach them to detect errors in a letter written by a person they do not know, without worrying about offending a peer and/or being offended.

## METHOD

In order to investigate the ways to influence writers' PCF quality, 24 second-year undergraduates majoring in English at a university in Latvia were chosen for the current case study. Six classes of ninety minutes duration were allocated to teaching business English correspondence, namely complaint, recommendation and enquiry letters, and developing students' PCF skills.

The procedure of the present research had the following steps:

- 1) First, the analysis of the responses in the pre-questionnaire (see Appendix 3), which included two questionnaire items about the writing aspects to which the students pay their attention to when revising peers' papers and the reasons for students' resistance to provide feedback to peers, was carried out and analysed.
- 2) Further, a pre-test was used to identify the students' ability to provide PCF on one of the types of a business letter, namely a complaint letter. The pre-test results were analysed, and the gaps in peer-editing were identified, in order to trace the changes in students' PCF quality after they had been introduced to a business letter assessment scale and corrective codes.
- 3) After the identification of the problems the students face in peer-editing, they were introduced to a business letter assessment scale by Cambridge English Language Assessment (2016) and correction codes by Vyatkina (2011). The students were asked to apply these criteria when doing the tasks discussed below.
- 4) During the research the students were offered different tasks aimed to develop PCF skills, e.g. to modify a letter's tone and/or style, adjusting them to the proper ones (see Task 1 in Appendix 2); to revise a letter consisting of the errors of various types (see Task 2 in Appendix 2); to compare letters (see Stephens, 2005: 9); to provide corrective feedback to a business letter and evaluate it (see Task 3 in Appendix 2). When doing the tasks, the students were asked to provide implicit comments in order give them an impetus to discover errors themselves and thus avoid them in further papers. The tasks were implemented to give the students the possibility of practicing error detection and of assessing business letters; as well as they offered an opportunity to explain to them that PCF is just a part of the learning process, and corrections and comments should not be taken personally.

- 5) Then, the adapted assessment model proposed by Sluijsmans et al. (2002) was used to analyse the quality of PCF (see Table 1). In this study, the section 'use of criteria' was not included in the table, as it was not clear whether the students adhered to a particular assessment scale when assessing business letters. Special attention was devoted to whether the students added various comments, including the positive, negative and constructive ones, as well as whether they posed questions to the writer. It was explored whether the comments and questions were clearly formulated and could be easily understood by the receiver of PCF. In addition to this, the inclusion or exclusion of a summary in the provided feedback was examined.
- 6) The analysis of 71 samples of students' feedback, gathered from 24 research participants, was carried out.
- 7) Finally, a post-questionnaire, which included three questionnaire items about the writing aspects to which the students began to pay their attention after being taught the genre peculiarities, the changes of their attitude to PCF after the present research as well as students' opinions concerning the effectiveness of the proposed tasks, was administered (see Appendix 3).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the analysis of 71 samples of students' feedback as well as their responses provided in the pre- and post-questionnaires.

### 1 THE IMPACT OF ASSESSMENT SCALE APPLICATION

In the present subsection the changes in the research participants' PCF quality are presented, as one of the research questions was to find out how the application of a business letter assessment scale influences the quality of PCF. The discussion includes the analysis of the students' feedback provided on the complaint letters, which were used as a pre-test in the present study, then followed the analysis of the recommendation and enquiry letters. Particular attention was devoted to the inclusion of different types of comments, summaries as well as their clear formulation. The results of the changes in PCF quality on three business letters are displayed in Table 2.

*Table 2 Changes in PCF quality*

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Relevant positive/negative/ constructive comments / posed questions (%)</b>	<b>Summary (e.g. in a form of a table) (%)</b>	<b>Proper formulation of comments and summaries (%)</b>
Complaint (pre-test)	79	4	79
Recommendation	71	71	67
Enquiry	71	96	67

The students' ability to provide PCF were tested by giving them a possibility to write a letter of complaint. With regard to the presence of positive, negative and/or constructive comments as well as questions posed, 79 per cent of the students added at least one comment providing feedback to the complaint letters, which was the pre-test. However, it was noticed that the research participants did not manage to identify all errors present in the peers' papers.

As to the inclusion of a summary of feedback on a peer-edited letter, 92 per cent of the research participants did not reveal the general impression about the complaint letters they reviewed. There was only one student who provided a summary: 'You should mention some additional information of the product. [...] I think your letter should have a better structure. [...] I think you used a word 'your' too much. [...]'

The comments of 79 per cent of the research participants were formulated in an understandable way, as their receivers took them into consideration when revising their papers. For example, the peers used such comments as 'This phrase is usually used with a "with", rather than "of"', 'I think "yours sincerely" would be more appropriate' and 'Repetition of "with"'. Seventeen per cent of the peers did not provide any comments, but just coded errors, and remaining 4 per cent (one student) did not provide any feedback to their peer at all.

Concerning the PCF provided on the recommendation letters, the analysis of different types of comments and questions in them shows that 71 per cent of the research participants provided comments, e.g. 'GA (capital letters, check other places, too)', 'SO: The structure of this sentence sounds a bit awkward.' and 'LA (try using more cohesive devices)'. It is 8 per cent less in comparison with the PCF provided on the complaint letters, when the students were unaware of the above-mentioned scale and codes. It was established that the students identified more errors in comparison to a complaint letter; however, they did not comment on all of them but just coded them.

As students were asked to provide a summary of their feedback on a recommendation letter in the form of a table, 71 per cent of the students did it, so that a receiver could understand what the reviewer's general impression was. Some of the students just allocated points for three aspects, while others, being asked, explained the number of points they gave. The following is an example of a summary provided by one of the students:

'Content and communicative achievement: 3 points. Everything is done very well. [...]', 'Organisation: 3 points. Every paragraph has its own function. Different transitional words are used. [...]' [and] 'Language: 3 points. Formal vocabulary (for instance), as well as simple sentence construction, which is needed in a business letter. [...]'

As far as the formulation of the comments is concerned, 67 per cent of the participants did it comprehensively. Four per cent of them, however, did it vaguely, which means that it was difficult for the students to understand what

a problem in this or that aspect was. Twenty-nine per cent did not add any remarks and suggestions.

Regarding the third letter, i.e. a letter of enquiry, 71 per cent of the students provided comments, but 29 per cent of them – did not. The quantity of the identified errors increased. The following is an example from the commentaries of one of the students:

‘SO (T). Think about the order of the information of the sender and recipient.’, ‘C: Maybe try a different approach in this paragraph, at least in the first half. Because it sounds like you are making demands, not requests.’ [and] ‘LA, maybe choose an expression of a higher register.’

Ninety-six per cent of the peers included a summary at the end of the text commenting on all three writing aspects of an enquiry letter. The following is the summary by one of the research participants:

‘Content and communicative achievement: 3 points. You fully explain your situation. An alternative is present. Reason is explained.’, ‘Structure: 3 points. The text was organized just fine with a coherent organization’ [and] ‘Language: 1 point. There were a few grammatical errors and other things that can be improved upon like selection of words.’

It was seen that 67 of peers formulated their comments and summaries understandably for their receivers as they were considered. The remarks of 8 per cent of the participants were vague. Twenty-five per cent did not support their feedback with judgements and used only correction codes.

## 2 THE IMPACT OF TASKS

One of the research questions was to identify what types of tasks could be used to develop the participants’ PCF skills. Such tasks as modification letter’s tone and/or style, revision of a business letter consisting of the errors of various types, comparison of business letters, and provision of corrective feedback to a business letter and its evaluation helped to develop students’ PCF skills, namely to teach them to detect errors, formulate comments clearly, summarize their ideas about a paper and differentiate qualitative and not qualitative papers as well as valid and invalid feedback. The above-mentioned conclusions were drawn after the analysis of the responses in the pre- and post-questionnaires and 71 samples of PCF.

The results of the data analysis of the students’ responses to the third question in the post-questionnaire (Appendix 3) indicate that the participants have found the tasks ‘useful’, ‘beneficial’ and ‘helpful’ for understanding the assessment scale. According to the analysis of the second group of items in the post-questionnaire, the participants were not afraid to offend their peers by critical comments. Since the number of the participants who felt uncomfortable by PCF comments had decreased by 30 per cent, it is possible to suggest that the tasks



helped the participants to realize the benefits of peer review comments and peer feedback in general.

Also notable was the change in the students' focus upon corrective peers' writing. According to the analysis of the first items in the pre- and the post-questionnaires, before the students had been introduced to the genre peculiarities of the types of business letters covered during the present research and had done the proposed tasks, the students had focused more on the surface errors. The majority of the students, that is 87 per cent, focused on grammar when providing corrective feedback on the papers of their peers. Another writing aspect on which a substantial number of the students (79 %) provided PCF appeared to be vocabulary. The next aspect which the students (63 %) did not hesitate to review was spelling. As concerns punctuation, in 58 per cent of the cases PCF was provided on this aspect. After the students had become aware of other features of the genre and had been trained, they began to pay their attention to such aspects as layout, organisation and content when providing feedback to the recommendation and enquiry letters. Being asked to tick the aspects that were the most difficult for them to edit in peers' letters, only 20 per cent of the students admitted that it was challenging for them to identify and edit errors connected with the writing aspect 'layout'. Only 25 per cent of the participants claimed it was difficult to review organisation of a letter and 33 per cent of the students found it difficult to comment on the content of a business letter.

The analysis of the data showed that the participants' feedback on the complaint letters was wordy because of the presence of a substantial number of comments. After the introduction of the scale and codes as well as fulfilment of tasks, the number of comments and questions decreased. One of the reasons for such decrease might be that the participants followed the example of the teacher's feedback, in which comments were added, if an error was not self-explanatory and could not be easily understood by a receiver of feedback. Another reason might be that they became more skilful at providing PCF and began to consider the appropriateness and/or usefulness of a comment. As to their formulation, it was noticed that the comments became clearer, and the feedback more complete, which might be also due to the experience gained.

PCF demonstrated that the tasks had been helpful in teaching the students to provide genre-based feedback. It was noticed that the comments and summaries that the students had given in the pre-test were provided using mainly the tool *recast*, in which an 'error is always reformulated without providing any metalinguistic information about it' (Lyser and Ranta, 1997: 46–47). It means that the peers were aware of what had been changed and recommend in what way it could be done. As to the PCF given on the recommendation and enquiry letters, it became the metalinguistic one, respectively, it contained 'either comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form' (ibid.: 47). It follows that the receivers of the feedback elicited information from the peers' comments by themselves.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of the case study presented here, although limited in generalisability, showed that after the students were presented an assessment scale and had been trained to revise business letters with the help of tasks such as error identification, letter revision, letter comparison and assessment, the students began to provide fewer non-surface level suggestions and more comprehensive, constructive and, thus, qualitative PCF. That is, they began to give more relevant comments and pose leading questions, which were clear and concise and not confusing for the receivers of feedback. Student feedback became more objective, as the participants adhered to the proposed assessment scale. They started to deliver the summary of feedback, which gave its receiver a new insight into their business letter. Additionally, the participants started to focus on such aspects as content, organisation and layout when providing feedback to a peer. However, the number of comments decreased, which means that PCF became less detailed after the introduction of the assessment scale. Moreover, the comments and summaries became less comprehensive in some cases, presumably, due to the reason that the research participants appealed predominantly to the correction codes.

Despite the small number of participants in the sample selected, the narrow field of students' studies and a few examples of the genre chosen, the findings could be treated as useful for developing further, more wide-ranging peer-assessing skills in EFL at tertiary level. In order to make wider generalisations, more studies linked with PCF at tertiary level could be applied in other study programmes. Moreover, the number of students and genre types could be increased to fully explore the issue.

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## APPENDIX 1

## BUSINESS LETTER ASSESSMENT SCALE

*Table 1* **The assessment scale of a business letter** (modified from Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2016: 96)

Aspect	Description	Points
<b>Content and communicative achievement</b>	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed. All structural elements of a particular type of letter are present. The tone and style of a letter are appropriate. They help a writer to hold the target reader's attention with ease, fulfilling all communicative purposes.	3
	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions are present. Target reader is, on the whole, informed. Almost all structural elements of a particular type of letter are present. The tone and style of a letter are appropriate and effective. They help a writer to hold the target reader's attention.	2
	A lot of irrelevances are present. Target reader is minimally informed. A lot of structural elements of a particular type of letter are not present. The tone and style of a letter are appropriate not in all parts of a letter.	1
<b>Organisation</b>	Text is perfectly organised. A variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns are used.	3
	Text is well organised. Letter is in general cohesive and coherent.	2
	Text is not organised in a proper way. Few linking words and organisational patterns are used.	1
<b>Language</b>	A range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, is effectively and precisely used. A wide range of simple and complex grammatical forms is used with full control, flexibility and sophistication. Only few errors are present.	3
	A range of everyday vocabulary and some common lexis is used appropriately. Simple and sometimes complex grammatical forms are used. Occasional errors are present, but they do not impede communication.	2
	Everyday vocabulary is used, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Only simple grammatical forms are used. A number of grammatical errors are present.	1

Total points /9

## APPENDIX 2

### TASK SAMPLES

**Task 1.** Read the letter. Assess the letter, using the assessment scale by Cambridge English Language Assessment (2016). What are the possible tone and style errors in it? Modify it adjusting it to a proper tone and style.

Mr Drissler!!!

I am writing about the AWFUL facilities, food and service at the holiday dinner JRD Corporation gave for its employees on Tuesday evening, 11 December, at Scripps.

First, Ballroom B was much extremely cold for comfortable dining –with several very strong drafts along the west wall. Was it the method of getting rid of your guest as soon as possible? Moreover, audio systems at parties in Ballrooms A and C were loud and distracting for our entertainers as well as our guests.

In addition to this, the food service was more than poor – we had contracted for dinner at 6:30 p.m., and the first guests were not served until 8 p.m. They were almost dying from hunger. The main course was cold; our ice cream dessert was melted.

Third, there was no one available from Sales and Catering to offer help, and those we talked to at the front desk were ‘not responsible.’ Where it you who trained them to treat the guests this manner?

In connection with this you must reduce our room rent and food bill by one-half; I have enclosed our agreement with the original total.

If appropriate measures are not taken, wait for negative consequences!

It was the first and last time I used the service provided by your company.

And be assured that I will do my best and take an advantage of my linkages to inform about its quality as many people as possible.

Janet Coen

(modified from Carey (ed.), 2002: 210)

**Task 2.** There are no capitals and punctuation in this enquiry letter (British English format). The organisation of the components is also wrong. Correct all errors.

Clark Fitzpatrick Builders Inc.  
Dunstable Road  
Luton, Bedfordshire  
LU23LM

Kitchen units  
Reference KU2345

3 September 2016

Ms Doreen French  
*KitchenComf*  
386 Winterwood Lane  
St. Joseph, MO 94703

Dear Ms French,

thank you for your letter and the enclosed catalogue giving details of your kitchen units the main item we are interested in is the unit on page 22 it appears to meet all our specifications for the apartment block I described in my letter I am sending herewith a plan of a typical apartment which gives the exact dimensions before placing a firm order we would need samples of all materials used in the manufacture of the units could you please confirm that you guarantee all your products for two years against normal wear and tear I would also be grateful for details of your terms regarding payment and of any trade and quantity discounts if the price and quality of your products are satisfactory we will place further orders as we have several projects at the planning stage

sincerely yours,  
Terry Spalding  
purchasing manager

(modified from Ashley, 2003: 14)

**Task 3.** Assess the letter, using the assessment scale by Cambridge English Language Assessment (2016).

Dear Manager,

Recently, I booked a holiday with your company and what a waste of money it was! I am very disgusted with you and your staff and I'd like to know what you plan to do about it. The holiday we had was on page 54 of your brochure and we were there from 13–23 July. My parents paid for my friend and me to go on this holiday so that we could enjoy ourselves and have a good time after our exams.

It cost them a lot of money but they didn't mind, they thought we were going to a good place. When we went to the travel agents the man said that the resort was good for young people but when we got there we found it was full of boring grey haired old people, there was nothing to see and do and nowhere for us to go in the evenings so we were really bored. The hotel was not good because there were no disco's just old fashioned singers and entertainers and everything finished by 10.30 in the evening, we just had to go to bed and it was really disappointing.

The travel agent said that we would have a hotel room with a sea view and a balcony but when we got there our room was at the back and the balcony was so small we could only stand we couldn't sit down or sunbathe. And the view from our room was not of the sea, it was of the back of the hotel where they put all the rubbish. It smelt very bad, too.

I expect to get a refund and an apology.

Best wishes,  
Sonya Brown

Aspect	Evaluator's mark (1–3 for each aspect) and comments
Content	
Organisation	
Language	

(based on Stephens, 2005: 9)

## APPENDIX 3

### PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Student,

I would appreciate it if you could fill in this questionnaire by writing in or ticking (✓) your answers. They will be kept confidential and used for the research concerning written peer corrective feedback in business letter writing.

#### 1. I correct the following aspects in peers' written works.

1.	Content	
2.	Organisation	
3.	Grammar	
4.	Vocabulary	
5.	Punctuation	
6.	Layout	
7.	Spelling	
8.	Another variant (name it):	

#### 2. I do not like peer editing, because...

1.	I get offended when my classmates correct me.	
2.	I do not trust classmates' comments' and corrections.	
3.	I feel that I do not have enough knowledge of English to correct someone's work.	
4.	I do not know how to edit someone's works.	
5.	I do not want to offend my friend by correcting him/her.	
6.	I know that the person who does not like me will try to find a lot of errors in my work (to hurt me).	
7.	Another variant (name it):	

### POST-QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Student,

I would appreciate it if you could fill in this questionnaire by writing in or ticking (✓) your answers. They will be kept confidential and used for the research concerning written peer corrective feedback in business letter writing.



**1. Tick the aspects which were the most difficult for you to edit in peers' letters.**

1.	Content	
2.	Organisation	
3.	Grammar	
4.	Vocabulary	
5.	Punctuation	
6.	Layout	
7.	Spelling	
8.	Another variant (name it):	

**2. I did not like giving peer corrective feedback within the course on business correspondence, because ...**

1.	I got offended when my classmates correct me.	
2.	I did not trust classmates' comments' and corrections.	
3.	I felt that I do not have enough knowledge of English to correct someone's work.	
4.	I did not know how to edit someone's works.	
5.	I did not want to offend my friend by correcting him/her.	
6.	I knew that the person who does not like me will try to find a lot of errors in my work (to hurt me).	
7.	Another variant (name it):	

**3. Which way did the proposed tasks help you to improve your business letter writing and peer corrective feedback skills? \_\_\_\_\_**

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**Monta Farneste** (Dr. paed., Assoc. prof. in Applied Linguistics) is currently working at the University of Latvia. Her research interests include discourse studies, acquisition of written communication and communicative grammar. Email: Monta.Farneste@lu.lv.

**Olga Pašinska** (MA philol., lecturer) is currently working at The Red Cross Medical College of Riga Stradiņš University. Her research interests include language acquisition at tertiary level and ESP. Email: olgapashinskalv@gmail.com