

## MASTER'S THESIS

# AN ANALYSIS OF COMMON ERRORS IN ENGLISH WRITING: THE CASE OF SIXTH GRADE STUDENTS IN NORWEGIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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## Abstract

During the past fifty years, there have been many suggestions in the field of Error Analysis.

“However, research has persistently shown that students have not achieved an adequate understanding of how to reduce errors in writing” (Sawalmeh, 2013, p.1).

Besides, writing in English may seem difficult for students in Norway. This thesis explores previous research on errors in English as a foreign language and conducts an Error Analysis of texts written by Norwegian primary school students. Thirty students and ten teachers have participated in this study, including essays and questionnaires, both for the learners and the teachers. The students’ written texts were analyzed to explore and classify the most common grammatical errors according to different types and frequency. Knowing and studying the most common errors give teachers knowledge about problems learners deal with when writing in English.

Keywords: EFL context, errors, EA, Norwegian students.

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## List of abbreviations

BIBSYS - an administrative unit organized by the Ministry of Education and Research in Norway

CA - Contrastive Analysis

EA - Error Analysis

EFL - English as a Foreign Language

ERIC - Education Resources Information Center

L1 - First Language

L2 - Second Language

SL - Second language

SLA - Second Language Acquisition

TL - Target Language.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Writing is a basic skill that plays a significant role in language acquisition, promotes critical thinking, and empowers students to communicate and express their ideas and opinions.

Writing is a necessary skill for communication and language production because “by writing, you can have control not only of information but of people” (Tribble, 1996, p. 3).

Furthermore, writing is a crucial competence for learners to communicate in the globalized and digitalized world. In contrast to the ability to communicate orally, which can be considered as a naturally acquired skill, writing skills need to be accurately learned. To develop and master writing skills, students must learn rules and practice to gain confidence in their writing ability. Learning to write is a complicated task that requires time and effort. It is traditionally considered the most complex and challenging language skill (Tribble, 1996, p. 3). Nation stated that writing is a complex skill made up of many different skills (2009, p. 113). Farred agreed that writing is difficult, especially in second language (L2) learning, where students experience it as challenging (2016, p. 81). Expressing ideas and thoughts in a written form in L2 often demonstrates the most excessive challenge to students of all ages, especially essay writing, because of its extended structure (Farred, 2016, p. 81).

In Norway, English is a foreign language (EFL), and students find it challenging to write without errors of different types. English teachers experience that students usually resort to translating word by word from Norwegian and spelling words the way they sound (Munden & Myhre, 2016, p. 133). Therefore, it is essential to know and analyze the most common types of these errors. For this reason, an Error Analysis (EA) is a necessary tool in language teaching. It also helps teachers to select teaching strategies that can reduce learners' errors.

Further, it is crucial to set apart errors from mistakes. Corder (1967, 1974) was one of the first to distinguish between errors and mistakes. He stated that errors are systematical and mistakes are not (Corder, 1967, p. 166).

According to Brown, mistakes refer to “a failure to utilize a known system correctly”, whereas errors concern “a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner” (1994, p. 205).

Corder (1967, 1971) stated that mistakes could be self-corrected, while errors could not. Errors are “systematic” and not recognized by the learner; only the teacher or researcher would locate them (Gass & Selinker, 1994, p. 67).

Norrish (1983) made a clear distinction between errors and mistakes. He stated that errors are “systematic deviation when a learner has not learned something and consistently gets it wrong” while mistakes are “inconsistent deviation” (Norrish, 1983, p. 7).

Cunningworth defined errors as “systematic deviations from the norms of the language being learned” (1987, p. 87).

A significant number of articles have studied aspects of defining and classifying errors and their sources (see Darus & Ching, 2009; Darus & Subramanian, 2009; Ghani & Karim, 2010; Ridha, 2012; Sawalmeh, 2013; Kirmizi & Karci, 2017; Salehi & Bahrami, 2018; Nuruzzaman, 2018; Salmani Nodoushan, 2018; Khatter, 2019) and concluded that first language (L1) interference determined the appearance of errors in the learners’ writing process. To my knowledge, no studies have been conducted to investigate the most common types of errors in Norwegian primary school students’ English writings.

## 1.2 Aim and research questions

This study’s main aim is to explore common English language errors in the context of Norwegian primary school students. It is also vital to examine the frequency and sources of these errors. This study could help teachers and educators clarify the nature of learners’ errors and prepare the educational material adopted to learners’ needs. For students, an EA is vital as it helps to reveal the problems in their writing. The present study is an effort to narrow the literature gap and contribute to Norway’s English language education research.

The study aims to answer the following three research questions:

- 1.) “What are the most common grammatical errors found in essays written by Norwegian primary school students?”
- 2.) “What is the frequency rate of these errors?”
- 3.) “What are the sources of these errors?”



## 1.3 Thesis structure

This thesis paper first provides the reader with background information and introduces the study's aim, research questions, and thesis structure. The study is divided into two main parts: the first part is the theoretical framework, which presents a concise review of the existing literature on writing skills, historical perspectives on error correction, EA approach, methodology, taxonomy, causes, and sources of errors, also the role of English in Norway. Topics named above are presented in chapter two. A literary review is submitted in chapter three. The next chapter focuses on the methodology of the project.

Further, the study presents EA results from the selected samples; it is the practical part of the thesis. Chapter five presents the data analysis, while chapter six presents findings and results. Chapter seven examines the analysis of students' and teachers' answers to questionnaires. The next chapter presents a discussion. Chapters nine and ten interpret the findings and close with several implications, limitations, and suggestions for further research. Finally, the thesis concludes with a conclusion.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Writing Skills

Many researchers have different views about the concept of writing and define it in various ways. Nunan explained writing as “an extremely complex, cognitive activity for all, in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of several variables simultaneously” (1989, p. 36). According to his definition, the skill links to the cognitive aspect that can often create difficulties while producing written pieces.

Moreover, writing is also defined as “the act of making up correct sentences and transmitting them through the visual medium as marks on paper” (Widdowson, 1978, p. 62). From the definitions above, it may be said that writing is a cognitive activity that results in sharing ideas on paper.

Writing is a necessary language skill that requires spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and the ability to organize thoughts. Tribble underlined the importance of the skill and stated that “through the mastery of writing the individual comes to be fully effective in the intellectual

organization” and “in the expression of ideas and arguments” (1996, p. 13). Further, Tribble also stated that writing as a language skill is difficult to acquire (1996, p. 3).

The development of students’ L2 writing can be influenced by different factors such as personality, age, background, education, prior linguistic knowledge, L1 writing ability, L2 proficiency, and writing experiences in both languages (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2008; Kubota, 1998). A writing process is a complicated process in both L1 and L2. Many studies illustrated L1 as a dominant element in teaching and learning L2 and stated that writing often demonstrates the most excessive challenge to students of all ages (Benson, 2002; Fledge, 1999; Lekova, 2010; Sripabha, 2015).

Expressing ideas, thoughts, and opinions in a written form in L2 is demanding for students in Norway, too (Munden & Myhre, 2016, p. 133). English teachers experience that students often write the words the way they sound or use direct translation from Norwegian (Munden & Myhre, 2016, p. 133). The English teachers’ challenge is to find correct strategies and techniques to increase students’ writing proficiency and exclude common errors. According to Lekova, the teacher should also know the system of the L1 and L2 to minimize language interference in students’ L2 learning (2010, as cited in Lao, 2017, p. 35).

As stated above, writing is a strenuous activity that is difficult to master in both L1 and L2. According to Byrne (1979), writing problems are divided into linguistic, cognitive, and psychological ones. The psychological problems originate from writing as an individual activity when students write without the possibility of interaction or immediate feedback. As a result, “it makes the process of writing difficult” (Byrne, 1979, p. 4). Linguistic problems are caused by grammatically incorrect utterances that usually go unnoticed in oral communication. Cognitive problems are connected to the fact that “writing is learned through a process of instruction: we have to master the written form of the language and to learn certain structures [...] which are important for effective communication in writing” (Byrne, 1979, p. 5).

Moreover, Byrne identified false generalizations and transfer from L1 as two major sources of errors and specified that “learners’ errors can help shape our remedial teaching” (1979, p. 123).

Similar to Byrne, Alfaki categorized various difficulties in writing in English: grammatical problems, such as “problems with subject-verb agreements, pronoun references, and

connectors”; mechanical issues as a result of lack of time and short writing; sentence structure and word choice problems; also cognitive problems that include “problems of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, content, and organization” (2015, pp. 44-45).

Every language teacher aims to help students reduce or eliminate these problems, and EA can be an effective method to do this. Analyzing students’ errors and identifying the sources of these errors will help both teachers and students to be more aware of writing problems that they have to deal with.

It is also essential to know about the role of the English subject in Norway to explain why students may experience difficulties in the writing process. English is one of the most important disciplines in Norwegian basic education. It is “a key subject for cultural understanding, communication, formation, and identity development” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013, p. 1). Learners of English in Norwegian primary school are expected to “apply appropriate strategies for communicating orally and in writing in different situations” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013, p. 2).

A new Core Curriculum has been adopted in Norway and took effect from the school year 2020/21. In this curriculum, writing, reading, numeracy, oral and digital skills are five basic skills, and these are integrated into the core elements for the English subject. The core elements are organized into three major areas: communication, language learning, and meeting with English language texts. Written communication as a fundamental skill is integrated into all three core elements. It considers the ability “to express ideas and opinions understandably and appropriately in different types of texts, on paper and digitally” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020, p. 4).

Moreover, the Norwegian curriculum emphasizes the importance of writing comprehension and highlights the significance of the students’ ability to write grammatically correct texts adapted to purpose, recipient, and situation.

As Richards and Renandya stated, “there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master. [...] The skills involved in writing are highly complex” (2002, p. 303). Therefore it is essential to look into the progress of writing and its teaching and indicate typical errors. Thus, EA is a necessary tool in language teaching that helps teachers select

teaching strategies to improve writing skills. The following sub-chapter provides a theory on errors and mistakes.

## 2.2 Errors and mistakes

This sub-chapter presents definitions of “errors” and “mistakes” and the importance of the distinction between them.

It is significant to define errors and mistakes and distinguish between them to understand EA’s background. Plenty of research studies and articles (Hammarberg 1974; Lennon 1991; Schachter & Celce-Murcia 1977) have examined aspects of defining and classifying errors and mistakes and have proposed a considerable number of definitions within linguistics (Jiménez, 1997, p. 61). As Sunardi stated, those definitions were similar but formulated in different ways (2002, p. 45).

Corder (1967, 1971) was one of the first linguists who distinguished between these two categories. He declared that all errors could be systematic and underlined that “the opposition between systematic and nonsystematic errors (mistakes) is essential” (Corder, 1967, p. 166). In the process of linguistic performance, every adult native speaker can commit errors “due to memory lapses, physical states, such as tiredness and psychological conditions such as strong emotion” (Corder, 1967, p. 166). This kind of error does not reflect an insufficient knowledge of L1. When these errors appear, a native speaker usually becomes aware of them and can correct these himself. To expect the same act from the L2 learner will be illogical, according to Corder (1967, p. 166). Corder’s main criterion to describe errors and mistakes is the self-correction of mistakes by the learner himself.

Consequently, it is necessary to differentiate between mistakes, which can appear in specific conditions of linguistic performance from errors that inform about the learner’s knowledge or his “transitional competence” (Corder, 1967, p. 166). The slips of linguistic performance will be characterized as unsystematical, and these are mistakes, and “transitional competence” errors will be systematical, and these are errors.

Additionally, Corder assumed that it could be challenging to determine what a learner’s mistake is and what is a learner’s error and suggested further studies and EA as additional implements (1967, p. 167). He also described the significance of errors in the process of

language acquisition and noted that “mistakes are of no importance to the process of language. In contrast, errors are significant in different ways” (Corder, 1967, p. 167).

For this reason, various competent definitions of errors discovered in the written texts will be presented further. The first definition is “the error is a systematic deviation, when a learner has not learned something and consistently gets it wrong” (Norrish, 1983, as quoted in Sunardi, 2002, p. 45). Norrish defined mistakes as “inconsistent deviations” that appear when a learner uses correct forms inconsistently, even after learning a particular rule (1983, p. 7).

Further, Cunningsworth defined errors as “systematic deviations from the norms of the language being learned” (1987, p. 87). Byrne also recommended separating errors from mistakes. He defined mistakes as slips that students usually can correct themselves, and errors “appear when learners try to do something with the language which they are not yet able to do” (Byrne, 1979, p. 123).

As Corder, Brown pointed out the significance of a distinction between errors and mistakes (1994, p. 205). He defined a mistake as “a performance error that is either a random guess or a slip, in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly” (1994, p. 205). According to Brown’s definition, making mistakes is a part of human behavior, and all people can be inaccurate in both L1 and L2 performance. He agreed with Corder’s statement that mistakes can be self-corrected and do not need special attention. However, errors can not be self-corrected and require special treatment. Brown defined them as “a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the learner’s interlanguage competence” (1994, p. 205).

Like the theorists mentioned above, Edge defined a mistake as a slip that can be self-corrected by the learner, while error can not (1989, as quoted in Ancker, 2000, p. 39).

According to Lennon, an error is “a linguistic form or combination of forms which in the same context and under similar conditions of production would, in all likelihood, not be produced by the speakers’ native speakers counterparts” (1991, p. 182).

As already indicated in this sub-chapter, errors and mistakes are technically seen as two different language production phenomena. It is recommended to study and analyze errors to be aware of their sources and causes. Thus, this study aims to determine what types of errors occur in young Norwegian students’ writings and the frequency of these errors. Moreover, it

is crucial to recognize the significance of errors in various contexts and be acquainted with the historical perspectives of error correction described in the next sub-chapter.

## 2.3 Historical perspectives of error correction and error analysis

It is vital to take into account historical perspectives, and for this reason, this sub-chapter gives an insight into theories on how language errors occur.

Russel claimed that the history of error correction is a controversial subject in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) (2009, p. 21). He also added, “whether and how to correct errors usually depends upon the methodological perspective to which a teacher ascribes” (Russel, 2009, as cited in Pawlak, 2014, p. 8).

According to Dabaghi, there are various perspectives on L2 teaching and learning (2006, p. 25). Error correction can be considered an essential part of these perspectives, and it must be discussed concerning SLA theories (Dabaghi, 2006, p. 25).

Historically, based on behaviorist theory, there was an assumption that learners should not make mistakes or errors, and these were severely prohibited. The attitude of behaviorists during the 1960-s can be illustrated through Brooks, who compared errors with sins: “Like sin, the error is to be avoided, and its influence overcome [...] the principal way of overcoming it is to shorten the time lapse between the incorrect response and a presentation once more of the correct model” (1960, p. 56). To prevent errors, teachers were supposed to correct those immediately.

According to Skinner, who was a supporter of the behaviorist approach to language learning, the language was a “process of habit formation – the acquisition of a series of responses to external stimuli developed through a process referred to as operant conditioning” (1957, cited in Roberts & Griffiths, 2008, p. 282). Herewith, making errors was regarded as an impractical activity that led to the formation of bad habits. To avoid errors and find a solution, it was recommended to use accurate correction practices and Contrastive Analysis (CA). The main idea of CA was to compare native and target languages and pay attention to their differences. In CA, based on behaviorism, errors were identified as “bad habits.” According to Richards and Schmidt, the theory of CA was based on the assumption that all errors resulted from the L1 interference (2010, as cited in Al-Sobhi, 2019, p. 49).

Further, it was proposed to compare both L1 and L2 linguistic systems to predict difficulties that could occur. Lado was the first linguist to introduce the Comparative Analysis Hypothesis. He compared L1 and L2 languages and explained the writing difficulties in the process of SLA. Lado considered the descriptive, structural analysis of two languages as a key to ease these difficulties and claimed that one “could predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning” (1957, as cited in Al-Sobhi, 2019, p. 50). The next stage of the Comparative Analysis Hypothesis was to prepare teaching materials to minimize the influence of L1. However, the empirical studies conducted by Nemser (1971), Corder (1981), and James (2013) did not support the Comparative Analysis Hypothesis. They showed that errors could be attributed to many sources, not just the learner’s L1. These studies’ results, including research by Dulay and Burt, showed that the L1 structure was not automatically used while learning L2 (1975, p. 34).

Chomsky questioned Skinner’s approach and claimed language learning to be “a process of rule formation and a cognitive process” (1959, as cited in Roberts & Griffiths, 2008, p. 283). He was the primary defender of another approach to language learning, a cognitive approach. The cognitive approach viewed errors as an explanation of some cognitive processes and as a transition phase in SLA. In the process of SLA, learners form hypotheses using specific rules. Consequently, errors became the evidence that learning is taking place. These are seen as a natural part of the learning process and do not only develop from the L1 interference.

In the 1970s, it became essential to know how L2s were learned, and this influenced the development of the SLA field. SLA is both a theoretical and a practical field that examines “how learners create a new language system with only limited exposure to a second language” (Gass, Behney & Plonsky, 2013, p. 21). One of the most radical hypotheses of the field was that learners created their language system while learning L2. Selinker proposed the term interlanguage as hybrid language or “a separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner’s attempted production of a TL norm” (1972, p. 214). Selinker also stated that it was possible to obtain knowledge about the interlanguage by collecting information from performance situations (1972, p. 214). He defined critical processes within L2 learning as: “language transfer, the language of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication and overgeneralization of TL linguistic material” (Selinker, 1972, p. 215).

Another notion within interlanguage is language transfer. Gass and Selinker identified interlanguage transfer as “the influence of one language on another” (2008, p. 152). One distinguished between positive transfer that arises when two languages have the same structures and negative transfer when used structures do not exist in both languages (Benson, 2002, p. 68).

Corder (1971), on the other hand, disagreed with Selinker about an interlanguage as a hybrid language and used a notion of transitional competence instead. He also proposed the term distinctive dialect as the learner’s internal individual language system (1981, p. 20). EA is the analysis of learners’ errors, and these, in their turn, provide evidence of the interlanguage (Corder, 1981, p. 10).

The interlanguage hypothesis contributed to the idea that it was necessary to study learners’ oral and written language. Since errors are an inevitable part of speech, error study or EA became a crucial part of L2 learning and teaching. During the 1970s, many theorists refused the use of CA since research studies showed that many errors made by L2 students did not result from L1 interference alone. To find a more theoretically defensible approach to study language learners’ errors, theorists within linguistics such as Corder, (1974, 1981); Selinker, (1972); Richards, (1984), and others proposed an alternative method, EA, that focused on errors as a source for learning.

Unlike the CA and cognitive approaches linked to the behaviorist learning theory, EA is identified with Chomsky’s mentalist learning theory. The following sub-chapter describes the significant role of error correction and errors in SLA.

## 2.4 The importance of errors, their correction, and error analysis

This sub-chapter describes the significance of errors, correction, and EA in an SLA field. It provides several justifications why the linguistic items mentioned above can be helpful for teachers and learners.

Error correction has always been an essential and challenging task. Amara claimed that

Correcting students’ language errors has still received much importance because of its significance for analyzing those errors and providing students and teachers with useful techniques and



strategies to avoid or at least minimize the number of those errors while practicing the foreign languages (2018, p. 45).

Numerous theorists in the EA field have emphasized the importance of errors. For example, Corder (1981) stated that learners' errors are crucial in three ways: to a teacher, a researcher, and a learner himself. Learners' errors provide teachers with knowledge about their language learning progress and the aspects that should be worked with further. These also provide a researcher with information about how languages are learned and the strategies learners use while learning L2. Learners can treat errors as a possibility to learn how to avoid these in further language acquisition. Corder explained:

First, errors tell the teacher how far the learner's goal has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. Second, they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language. Thirdly, to the learner, we can regard errors as a device the learner uses to learn (1981, p. 12).

Similar to Corder, Richards considered the significance of errors in three different areas: to linguists, psychologists, and teachers (1971, as cited in Keshavarz, 2008, p. 45). He supported Corder's views and remarked that errors are significant to:

- Linguists, because as Chomsky suggests, the study of human language is the most fruitful way of discovering what constitutes human intelligence.
- Psychologists, because by looking at children's speech and comparing it with adult speech, they have examined the nature of the mental processes that seem to be involved in language.
- Teachers, because by analyzing learners' errors, discover their difficulties and devise a method for comparing them (1971, as cited in Keshavarz, 2008, p. 63).

Besides, Jain emphasized two reasons for the significance of errors. He declared that "errors help to understand the process of SLA and plan courses incorporating the psychology of second language learning" (1974, p. 180, as cited in Richards, 1974, p. 17).

Dulay and Burt (1975) presented two reasons why errors are critical in SLA: First, errors provide information about the nature of language learning. Second, errors illustrate the areas where learners have difficulties, and it gives the possibility to adjust curricula and teaching techniques to the problems learners have (1975, as cited in Dabaghi, 2006, p. 11).

Burt also stressed the importance of errors in the L2 field since “familiarity with the types of errors students actually make is a valuable guide for determining the sequence and emphasis of instruction in the EFL classroom” (1974, p. 2).

In the SLA study, errors facilitate teachers, researchers, and learners in dealing with the existing problems in the learning process. As Corder observed, the learners’ errors demonstrate both facts of the current learning process and the strategies learners use in this process (1971, as cited in Richards, 1973, p. 18).

Further, one of the reasons for the growing interest in EA is connected to the fact that “although L2 learners attain relatively high levels of comprehension ability and, to some extent, fluency in oral production, they continue to experience difficulties with accuracy, particularly in terms of morphology and syntax” (Ammar & Spada, 2006, p. 544).

Corder presented the rationale and theoretical justifications for studying learners’ errors and the EA (1981, p. 1). According to him, the pedagogical rationale aspect includes “a good understanding of the nature of the error, which is necessary before a systematic means of eradicating them could be found” (Corder, 1981, p. 1). The theoretical justification aspect provides information about the process of L2 learning, which is necessary to develop teaching appropriate materials and techniques. Corder stated that these arguments are emphasized in all his papers, in addition to the emphasis on the value of EA (Corder, 1981, p. 1).

There are multiple reasons why EA can be a beneficial tool for teachers, particularly in assessing and correcting learners’ performance. By studying errors, teachers can develop awareness about the difficulties learners have and are thus better equipped to eliminate these errors. EA has a feedback value in itself, and an investigation of errors “helps teachers choose the proper sort of treatment” (Erdoğan, 2005 as cited in Abusaeedi & Asghar, 2015, p. 40). Additionally, based on the EA results, teachers can improve their pedagogical approaches and adjust them to their learners’ levels and needs.

Next, identifying the source of errors is a vital stage in EA. There are many explanations for why errors occur, including the L1 interference, overgeneralization, fossilization, complexity,

or deficit knowledge of the target language. Erdoğan underlined the importance of this stage and declared that “errors show the way to be treated when their sources are identified correctly” (2005, p. 267).

Abusaeedi and Asghar added that “sources of language learners’ errors tell us why, when, where, and how the errors are committed” (2015, p. 31). It is essential to identify errors to treat those and give an appropriate assessment of learners’ performance. EA provides a possibility to differentiate between errors and mistakes, identify the errors’ sources, and help learners be aware of their difficulties.

Besides, it is necessary to teach the learners to be aware of their errors. It will help them develop strategies they can use to eliminate the errors and improve their skills (Abusaeedi & Asghar, 2015, p. 40).

The study of errors is an essential tool for educators and researchers too. It will help design remedial teaching materials adjusted to learners’ difficulties in SLA (Keshavarz 1999, as cited in Abusaeedi & Asghar, 2015, p. 40). According to Corder, learners’ errors are evidence of interlanguage, the particular system of the language they use at the moment (1981, p. 10). For this reason, these errors can contribute to data about the process and strategies used in language learning.

The crucial role of errors in language learning and teaching is described here. Arguments for its significance are extracted from research studies conducted by Amara, 2018; Corder, 1967, 1981; Jane, 1974; Dulay and Burt, 1975; Richards, 1973; and others. Considering all these arguments, it can be stated that knowledge of errors is helpful for the teacher, syllabus designers, and learners.

To better understand and analyze the errors that Norwegian students produce, it is appropriate to examine the literature in the field of EA, causes, sources, and patterns of errors. The following sub-section describes the theoretical field of EA.

## 2.5 Error analysis

To explain the nature of the most common errors Norwegian students might produce, it is important to examine different EA definitions given by researchers within the SLA field.

Many linguists within SLA have attempted to identify L2 learners' common errors in writing and pointed out the importance of EA described in the previous sub-chapter. Understanding the origin of errors "will help teachers know students' difficulties [...] and adopt appropriate teaching strategies to help EFL students learn better" (Heydari & Bagheri, 2012, p. 1).

As a part of applied linguistics, the field of EA was established by Corder and his colleagues in the 1970s (Ellis, 1994, as quoted in Ghani & Karim 2010, p. 24).

Corder stated that "errors provide feedback, they tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of his teaching materials and his teaching techniques, and show him what parts of the syllabus [...] need further attention" (1967, as quoted in Hendrickson, 1978, p. 389). According to Corder's statement, EA is an essential data source for teachers and can be considered a fundamental language-teaching instrument.

EA is a linguistic approach for finding, analyzing, classifying, and explaining the inexpedient patterns produced by L2 learners. EA provides teachers with information about what learners can and discloses the competence learners obtained (Sinha, 2009, p. 119).

In line with the growing interest in EA research, L2 researchers offered a considerable number of definitions, as described in the text below (Sinha, 2009, p. 119).

Coder declared the study of errors an essential part of applied linguistics that substantiates contrastive studies' findings (1967, p. 167). EA became an experimental technique because it made valid or invalid predictions of CA and provided information about psycholinguistic processes of language learning (Corder, 1981, p. 34). Consequently, EA was defined as "an experimental technique for validating the transfer theory that informs about language learning's psycholinguistic processes" (Corder, 1981, p. 35).

Ellis agreed with Corder about the critical role of EA for teachers and researchers and described it as a procedure that involves "collecting learner language samples, identifying the selection errors, describing these errors, classifying them according to their hypothesized causes, and evaluating their seriousness" (Ellis, 1985, p. 296).

According to James, "error analysis attempts to explain the errors within the language of the second language learners by comparing the language produced by the learners to the standard norms of the target language" (1986, p. 1). Later he used the term "unsuccessful language" to determine errors.

Brown explained EA as “the process to observe, analyze, and classify the deviations of the rules of the second languages and then reveal the systems operated by learner” (2000, as cited in Ridha, 2012, p. 26).

Xie and Jiang (2007) acknowledged Lado, who systematically examined errors and established theories about the nature of errors in the 1950s. They used the terms “interlingual transfer from the native language” and “cultural interference” as two main reasons for errors (2007, p. 10). The linguists recommended determining the errors within the language the learner produced and then describing those (2007, as cited in Salehi & Bahrami 2018, pp. 3-4). In other words, EA indicates the errors of the L2 learners and suggests the system of their classification to teachers and researchers.

Selinker and Gass defined EA as a procedure for analyzing and explaining errors made by the L2 learners (2008, p. 517).

Sawalmeh described EA as “a type of linguistic study that focuses on the errors learners make and consists of a comparison between the errors made in the TL and within that TL itself” (2013, p. 3).

Khansir and Pakdel (2014) compared EA with CA. They mentioned the significance of both L1 and the learning strategies learners use while making errors. They also declared the importance of understanding the difference between error and mistake in the process of identifying and analyzing errors.

Regardless of EA’s efficiency described above, some researchers criticized it for its absolute reliance on errors and excluding such information as correct language, complexity, and linguistic variation. Besides, it is often challenging to distinguish between errors and mistakes and their origins. Therefore, they argued, “one needs to consider non-errors as well as errors to get the entire picture of a learner’s linguistic behaviour” (Gass & Selinker, 1994, p. 104).

According to Hammarberg, EA was considered an inadequate approach since it was difficult to distinguish between errors caused by L1 interference and nonsystematic errors, which had their origin in other factors (1974, p. 1). EA is often regarded as the incomplete treatment of errors for its practice of “analyzing out the errors and neglecting the careful description of the non-errors” (Hammarberg 1974, p. 2). Faerch, Haastup, and Philippon, as a response to Hammarberg, suggested a Performance Analysis as an alternative to EA, the approach that took into consideration both errors and non-errors. Bell criticized EA for its invalid

assumptions about the nature of interlanguage and claimed that the methodology of EA is impossible in practice (1974, p. 38). Schachter added that errors alone could not inform the teacher about the learners' knowledge (1974, p. 56). Despite all criticism, EA is considered a valuable tool in L2 teaching and learning, and the following sub-section describes how it can be implemented through its different stages.

## 2.6 Methodology of Error Analysis

The traditional method of EA incorporates the following stages: to assemble data from samples; to identify and classify errors into different categories; to define the frequency of error types; to identify the areas of difficulties in the target language; and then to “treat” these errors using appropriate pedagogical strategies (Sridhar, 1975, p. 16).

Some linguists also included analyzing the source of errors, such as L1 interference, spelling system, overgeneralization, etc. (Dušková, 1969, p. 15). Rossipal suggested calculating “the degree of disturbance” caused by the errors (1971, p. 119).

Corder (1974) recommended one of the most recognized methods for treating errors in his article about EA. It was described by Ellis (1994) and is followed in this master thesis. Ellis (1994) described the five steps of EA research suggested by Corder (1974): “a collection of a sample, identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors, and evaluation of errors” (1994, p. 48). He also developed this model further and illustrated it with some practical examples of identifying and analyzing errors (1997, pp. 15-20). Ellis stated that it is essential to perform a grammatical analysis of all errors and subsequently explain these.

Likewise, Gass and Selinker classified six stages of EA: to collect data; to identify errors; to classify errors; to quantify errors; to analyze sources of errors, and remediate, based on the category and frequency of an error type (1994, p. 103).

Additionally, errors and their sources can be divided into different categories presented by linguists within the field of EA. The following sub-chapter presents different taxonomies of errors.

## 2.7 Taxonomy of errors

This section describes error taxonomy, which is a classification of errors into different categories. There are different taxonomies presented within the field of EA. Once when errors are identified from the samples, the next step is to classify them. Such researchers as Corder (1971, 1973); Lennon (1991); Ellis (1997); and Brown (2000) have tried to identify the common errors and established their classification system.

First, Corder classified errors based on the differences between the L2 learners' utterances and the reconstructed version of these utterances (Corder, 1971). This classification is used as a fundamental stage of dividing errors into categories in this study. Corder proposed to divide between overtly and covertly idiosyncratic utterances (1971, as cited in Ridha, 2012, p. 27). According to this classification, errors are divided into four subcategories: omission of some obligatory language items; addition of some irrelevant or grammatically incorrect items; selection of incorrect items; and the last was the misordering of the language items (1971 as cited in Erdoğan, 2005, pp. 263-264).

At the same time, Corder admitted that the classification he proposed was unfulfilled. For this reason, he added morphology, syntax, and lexicon categories of errors (1973, as cited in Erdoğan, 2005, pp. 263-264).

Later, he arranged errors into pre-systematic errors, which appear when the existence of a specific rule in L2 is not recognizable for the learner; systematic errors, when the learner uses a wrong rule in L2; and post-systematic errors, when the learner recognizes the specific rule but misuses it (Corder, 1981, as cited in Ellis, 1997, p. 56). Ellis stated that it was essential to interview learners to define these kinds of errors (Ellis, 1997, p. 56).

According to Thornbury, learners can make errors at the level of words or sentences or text structure (1999, pp. 114-115). Due to this division, errors can be lexical, when the learners choose the wrong word; grammar errors, when learners make errors within syntax, morphology, or semantics related; and discourse errors, which reflect issues related to the structure and organization of texts (Thornbury, 1999, pp. 114-115). He also specified that it was essential to take into consideration the possibility of overlap between these categories and divided further errors into transfer and developmental. Correspondingly, identifying the cause of errors could be problematic too. In his book *How to teach grammar*, he mentioned L1

influence, in the form of both negative and positive transfer, or as it was defined earlier, L1 interference (Thornbury, 1999, pp. 114-115).

This study is limited to analyzing the most common grammatical errors, one of the categories suggested by Thornbury (1999).

Brown commented on Corder's model and stated that any sentence produced by the L2 learners could be analyzed for idiosyncrasies (2000, p. 220). He differentiated between overt and covert errors. According to Brown, "overtly erroneous utterances are unquestionably ungrammatical at the sentence level". In contrast, "covertly erroneous utterances are grammatically well-formed at the sentence level but are not interpretable within the context of communication" (Brown, 2000, p. 220).

Lennon (1991) also considered Corder's model and suggested a similar taxonomy by dividing errors into domain and extent. Lennon characterized domain error as a "linguistic unit that must be taken as the context for the error to be understood," and extent error as "a linguistic unit that would have to be deleted, [...] to repair the sentence" (1991, as cited in Ridha, 2012, p. 28).

Richards distinguished between performance and competence errors (1971, p. 24). Corder supported this distinction while he differentiated between mistakes and errors (1969). The performance errors (mistakes) are sporadic, caused by some cognitive factors, while competence errors are systematic and represent learners' competence (Richards, 1971, pp. 12-13). Next, Richards contributed with an error taxonomy, where he created a classification of errors based on linguistic categories (1971, as cited in Ellis, 1997, p. 54).

Politzer and Ramirez argued for dividing errors based on syntax, morphology, and vocabulary elements (1973 as cited in Ellis, 1997, p. 54).

Burt discovered global errors that interfere with communication and influence languages; and local errors that usually do not interfere with communication since they affect only single elements and not the whole sentence (Burt, 1974, pp. 6-7).

Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) presented a more general taxonomy. They titled it "surface strategy taxonomy, "and it included "omission, addition, misinformation, and misordering" (1982, as cited in Ellis, 1997, p. 59).



While conducting EA, it is crucial to discover the sources of errors to analyze the difficulties learners have. The following sub-section describes the origins of errors.

## 2.8 Sources of errors

To analyze errors, it is necessary to determine their sources. Corder (1974) identified such primary sources of errors as language transfer, overgeneralization or analogy, and methods or materials used in language teaching (1974, p. 130).

Richards presented three sources: interference errors, which result from the mixing of languages, intralingual errors, which indicate the fact of rules learning; and developmental errors connected to the previous experience used in language learning (1971, p. 206).

Gass and Selinker distinguished between five crucial sources of errors: “language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of the second language (SL) learning, SL communication strategies, and overgeneralization of TL linguistic material” (1974, as quoted in Richards, 1974, p. 37).

Next, James introduced three leading causes of errors:” interlingual, intralingual, and induced errors” (2013, pp. 179-200). He agreed with Brown, who stated that interlingual errors result from the L1 influence of the learner (2000, as quoted in Al-Sobhi, 2019, p. 56). Among causes for intralingual errors, James named misanalysis, prevarication, false analogy, insufficient use of rules, overuse of correction strategies, overgeneralization, and language switch (2013, pp. 179-200). Induced errors were explained as errors that resulted from the classroom situation factors as teaching material, pedagogical strategies, and types of exercises (2013, pp. 179-200).

Brown determined two primary sources of errors: interlingual and intralingual (2000, p. 204). Errors identifiable with L1 interference are entitled “interlingual” or “transfer errors,” and these are traceable to a negative interlingual transfer (Ridha, 2012, p. 29).

The terms “interlingual” and “language transfer” are already described in earlier sections, and these terms are connected to the interlanguage of a learner. Interlingual errors are illustrated through morphological, semantic, grammatical, and lexical transfer into the target language.

Intralingual errors result from insufficient learning of L2 (Fang & Xue-mei, 2007, p.11).

Erdoğan supplemented that “intralingual errors occur as a result of learners’ attempt to build

up concepts and hypotheses about the target language from their limited experience with it” (2005, p. 266). These errors incorporate “overgeneralization, simplification, communication-based and induced errors” (Ridha, 2012, p. 30). Brown’s source classification is partially reflected in James’s theory (2013).

Additionally, Keshavarz proposed five sources of errors: transfer of training, language learning strategies, interlingual error, and communication strategies, and last, the intralingual and developmental errors (2003, p. 62).

However, various experts within linguistics proposed different terms, in this master thesis, the classification of error sources offered by Corder (1974), Thornbury (1999), and Brown (2000) is used. It is the primary theoretical classification for this study to determine the learners’ error sources.

## 2.9 English as a part of Norwegian education/Standards

The previous sections presented the theory within errors and EA. For this master thesis, selected samples of learners in a Norwegian context are analyzed. For this reason, it can be necessary to describe the role of English as a part of the Norwegian educational system.

The Norwegian ELT framework is reflected through the national English subject curriculum. English is an essential discipline in Norwegian primary education (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). It develops skills that learners will use in their future working and social lives requiring “English-language competence in reading, writing, and oral communication” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). The 2020-version of the Norwegian curriculum stresses the importance of both written and oral communication (Bøhn & Hansen, 2019, p. 5).

In the Norwegian curriculum, the four basic skills are oral, to be able to write, to be able to read, and digital skills, and these are incorporated in the competence aims for English (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). Basic elements are arranged into three categories: communication, language learning, and meeting with English-language texts. The communication element includes learners’ ability “to use the language orally and in writing in different situations” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). Language learning element implicates “a knowledge of English as a system, its

phonetics, vocabulary, syntax” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). The last component develops diversity in linguistic and cultural contexts (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020).

The following competence aims after 7th grade, related to writing skill, include the competence of using strategies in communication; ability to express themselves in a different context; to use a variety of grammatical construction in written texts; and a requirement to follow the rules for spelling and sentence structure (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020).

Moreover, the English subject Curriculum underlines the prominent role of written communication as one of the main subject areas (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). The coming section provides a literary review of studies within EA.

### 3. Literary review

There is a long history of using EA to improve language learning. This study used the existing literature on EA approach’s theoretical framework, methodology, taxonomy, causes, and sources of errors. It is limited to research published in refereed journals and books from 2009 to 2019, and this limitation refers to only the following part of the study. The decision to limit the review to this term was motivated by the interest in the relevance and importance of the upcoming study’s information. The primary purpose of the theoretical review is to create a strong foundation for future research. The literature review consists of previous studies that examined the most common written errors. These studies followed specific restrictions: they were peer-reviewed studies from 2009 to 2019 that analyzed the most common types of errors of learners of different ages and levels. This review includes articles identified from ten representative journals dedicated to research on L2 education and language learning. Three steps were followed to identify representative journals. First, a keyword search using “error analysis study/the most common errors study” was performed on ERIC/BIBSYS library websites. The investigation was defined by topic, language, year, and document type. Only journal articles published from 2009 until 2019 in English were included. Second, all the materials that were not peer-reviewed were excluded. Third, most of the articles’ authority was double-checked on The Norwegian Register’s website for Scientific Journals, Series, and Publishers.

The studies' objectives described below identified and classified the most common errors performed in L2 learners' writing, their causes, and sources. The majority of studies conclude that L1 interference determined the appearance of errors in the learners' writing process, as shown below. This is a review of the literature from the past twelve years about the most common writing production errors.

Darus and Ching (2009) investigated the most common errors in essays written by 70 Chinese students. Error classification schemes developed by Darus (2009) and Markin 3.1 software were instruments used in this research study. They identified the four most common errors within "mechanics of writing, tenses, prepositions, and subject-verb agreement" (2009, p. 251). The causes of these errors were L1 interference and insufficient knowledge of L2 grammatical rules. The study concluded, "L1 played an important role in causing students to make errors when they wrote in English" (2009, p. 252). It was essential for students to be aware of the differences between the languages and use correct grammatical rules in writing in English (2009, p. 252).

Later that year, Darus and Subramanian used Corder's (1967) model on EA and analyzed the errors extracted from 72 essays written by Malay participants. The study revealed that the most challenging aspects of English writing resulted in six error types: "singular/plural form, verb tense, word choice, preposition, subject-verb agreement, and word order" (2009, p. 483). The results showed that participants had most problems with grammar, and they internalized the rules of L2, as was mentioned in a previous study by Darus and Ching. The authors stated that EA provides information on students' learning problems, and it is a valuable instrument in minimizing these problems (2009, p. 493).

Ghani and Karim (2010) conducted a comparative study of L2 writing at different proficiency levels in Pakistan. The study's findings revealed that the students on the lower levels made 910 errors while the higher-level students made 710 errors. The problem areas were speech, spelling, punctuation, word choice, syntax, sentence fragment, and literal translation (2010, p. 51). It was observed that the sources of many errors were "L1 interference, overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules, ignorance of rules restrictions and false concepts hypothesized" (2010, p. 54). Among pedagogical implications, the authors mentioned better teaching of grammar rules, feedback, teachers as role-models, and the importance of reading habits (2010, p. 55). Finally, the study confirmed that many errors had been traced because of translation from L1 to L2 (2010, p. 56).

Additionally, Ridha (2012) examined the writing production of 80 Iraqi students and then classified errors into “grammatical, lexical/ semantic, mechanics, and word order types of errors” (2012, p. 22). The L1 transfer was referred to as the primary source of errors. The researcher recommended that teachers emphasize the influences of L1 on the students’ learning and that students analyze their errors (2012, p. 42).

In research conducted by Sawalmeh (2013), the researcher explored the common errors among the writings of 32 Saudi learners of English. As did Darus and Subramanian (2009), he used Corder’s (1967) model of EA as a method in his study. The results showed ten different categories of errors: “verb tense, word order, singular/plural form, subject-verb agreement, double negatives, spellings, capitalization, articles, sentence fragments, and prepositions” (2013, p. 1). Based on the discussion of the findings, the author suggested that L1 transfer was one of the main causes of errors (2013, p. 14).

The aim of a study conducted by Kirmizi and Karci (2017) was to investigate linguistic and lexical errors and their causes made by Turkish students. They collected and analyzed essays using the taxonomy of Wakkad (1980) and Tan (2007). EA showed that the five most common errors were within the article and preposition system, word choice and order, and subject-verb agreement (2017, p 47). The significant causes of these errors were interference from L1, overgeneralization, and insufficient use of rules. The study’s findings provided information about the language learning progress of L2 learners and showed the problems learners experienced in their writing. Kirmizi and Karci recommended organizing a new curriculum and developing the possibility for learners to study their errors. Besides, it was essential to “develop an error correction strategy and find remedial programs to help students avoid committing such errors” (2017, p. 51).

Salehi and Bahrami (2018) pinpointed the common errors in 40 scientific articles written by Iranian students. The investigation results categorized the common errors within tenses, parts of speech, subject-verb agreement, and word order. As in previous studies, the researchers suggested that the reasons for these common errors were related to intra- and interlingual transfers (2018, p. 1). They also advised using the study’s findings for teachers to use correct strategies and syllabus designers to redesign books according to the students’ needs (2018, p. 11).

Nuruzzaman (2018) carried out a study on the written English errors committed by 90 Saudi students of different proficiency levels. This research used Corder’s (1967) taxonomy of

writing errors. Findings revealed that grammatical errors were the most common errors made by students (2018, p. 36). The data analysis revealed that two primary sources caused errors made by the participants: “inter-lingual errors, which occur as a result of L1 transfer, and intra-lingual errors, which occur due to the lack of L2 knowledge” (2018, p. 37).

A study by Salmani Nodoushan (2018) attempted to classify common errors in the 15785 written samples of lower-and upper-intermediate Iranian learners. Similar to Darus and Subramanian (2009) and Sawalmeh (2013), he used Corder’s (1967) model to extract and analyze errors from the samples. The main kinds of errors found in the written production involved syntax errors, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling (2018, p. 70). The researcher divided errors into cognitive, structural, and discursive errors categories (2018, pp. 70-72). Cognitive errors showed a transmission of thinking model from Persian to English. Consequently, students needed to develop the ability to think in English (2018, p. 71). To avoid discussed errors, the author recommended providing students with corrective feedback and using a focus-on-form approach (2018, p. 71).

Khatter (2019) reported dominant errors that occurred in essays of 40 Saudi female learners. The common errors were punctuation, spelling, word choice, pluralization, verb tenses, preposition, and article errors (2019, pp. 371-372). The findings proposed that the sources of errors contained ignorance or incorrect use of L2 rules, literal translation, lack of motivation, and writing practice (2019, p. 376). Further, future studies on EA were recommended since it could provide teachers with helpful information for better teaching of L2 (2019, p. 377).

Although many studies on foreign language learners’ errors have been conducted during recent years, few have focused on Scandinavian (Norwegian) native speakers who learn English as L2. For this reason, this master thesis focuses on the research of the errors made by young Norwegian students, using the approaches recommended by Corder (1967, 1974), Thornbury (1999), and Brown (2000).

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Research design

This study applies a mixed-method design that consists of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Integrating these two approaches provides more detailed information on

investigated questions. First, the quantitative data (essays) was collected; afterwards, the qualitative data (questionnaires) was collected to add to findings and results. The study is limited to analyzing the frequent grammatical errors made by a group of thirty 6th grade Norwegian students in their writings.

## 4.2 Data collection/Analysis

The process of data collection and analysis consisted of three stages. First, the EA procedure suggested by Corder (1974) was followed in this master thesis. The procedure usually consists of five steps: a collection of a sample, identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors, and evaluation of errors (Corder, 1974, as quoted in Ellis, 1994, p. 48). Since the last stage, evaluation of errors is affected by a number of contexts in which errors occur and requires an independent research, it was excluded in the EA conducted in this study.

All 30 essays were collected and examined word by word to extract, analyze, calculate and explain errors and their sources. The master thesis aims to investigate the most common grammatical errors, and the EA was limited to nine grammatical categories. Hence, certain errors, which could not be classified in the chosen grammatical categories, such as spelling and punctuation, adjectives, and adverbs, were omitted. These errors were taken into consideration but not analyzed in the context of the study.

Afterwards, all participants, both students, and teachers replied to questionnaires with close-ended questions/four, five-fold Likert scale (see appendices A, B). Finally, the information received from both essays and questionnaires was analyzed. The findings and results of the current research are presented according to the three research questions described earlier.

## 4.3 Participants

Thirty students and ten teachers participated in the research study. The participants of the study are 6th grade students of Norwegian primary school. They are fifteen boys and fifteen girls whose age ranges from eleven to twelve years old, mostly with Norwegian background. The students have learned English as a foreign language since first grade. Besides, ten

teachers who teach different primary stages participated in a survey and answered the questions about the reasons for errors in students' writings.

## 4.4 Instrument

To receive the information regarding the most common errors made by participants, 30 pieces of their written work were collected. Primary school students' essays were analyzed to explore and classify errors and their sources according to different types and frequency. First, in the preparation phase, students spent some time every day for a week looking for relevant information in newspapers and online sources. They made notes that could be used later in their essays. This is considered a useful activity as a prelude to the production of their written works (Nation, 2009, p. 2). Secondly, students wrote a composition in English about the topic "Coronavirus and how it has changed our world."

To meet the aims of this study and find the sources of errors, a survey was given to the Norwegian learners and teachers (see appendices A, B). Besides, teachers answered the question about the reasons for errors in students' writings.

Considering the theoretical information provided in part one of the master thesis, the following chapter of the thesis presents the EA of students' samples, findings, and results.

## 5. Data analysis

### 5.1 Identification and classification of errors

In this study, the grammatical errors were classified into different categories in order to analyze various error types in students' essays. As already mentioned, the EA in a given study is conducted according to Corder's model that usually consists of five steps "a collection of a sample, identification of errors, description of errors, explanation of errors, and evaluation of errors" (1974, as cited in Ellis, 1994, p. 48). Many studies do not include stage five, evaluation of errors, since it has been seen as a separate issue with its own inquiry methods. The current study introduced pedagogical recommendations instead of evaluation at stage five.



During the first stage, the collection of samples, the study used specific samples as Corder (1974) recommended. These involved language samples collected from a limited group of learners, the 6th grade students from Norwegian primary school. Ellis recommended considering some factors that can influence the first stage of errors analysis (1994, p. 49). Factors that affected the collection of samples were medium type, in the form of written production, genre, which is an essay, content, which is topic students are familiar with, their level, and L1, Norwegian.

At the next stage, identification of errors, there was a clear distinction between errors and mistakes, since it is essential to distinguish between these. Since the collected samples are relatively short, many strategies were used to differentiate between mistakes and errors. First, it was necessary to pay attention to the repetitive patterns of errors in the texts. Next, it was essential to make the students aware of these error patterns and see if they could correct them. Finally, a teacher's log was started to follow the learning process further.

At the same stage of the EA, identification of errors, errors were further classified into overtly idiosyncratic, ungrammatical errors independent of context, and covertly idiosyncratic, errors depend on context. It was concluded that almost all the errors are overtly idiosyncratic. According to Corder, all errors should first be classified into overtly idiosyncratic and covertly idiosyncratic, as this is a crucial foundation phase that is necessary before going to the next stage (1981, p. 36).

At the description stage, errors were classified according to the following grammatical categories: Verb tense, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, word order, articles, capitalization, auxiliaries, plurality, and passive voice. Errors, which did not fit into these categories, e.g., lexical errors, punctuation, spelling, or adverb vs. adjective, were excluded.

All detected errors were counted and illustrated in a frequency and percentage format in three steps at the description stage. Firstly, all errors found in each sample were calculated and divided into the categories above. The same errors were counted as separate units. All errors were divided into either interlingual or intralingual errors as in Brown's classification (2000, p. 204). A total amount of 264 errors was counted in this study (see Table 1). Since this master thesis considers grammatical errors, only errors within grammar were included in the rate frequency calculations. Errors of other types were excluded in this thesis. Then, the total number of errors from all samples was estimated, calculated in percentage rate, and analyzed in tabulated and graphical form.

At the explanation stage, a detailed description of errors and their sources is provided. Finally, some pedagogical implications are suggested in order to minimize the number of errors in students' writings and develop their writing skills. The last stage of the conducted EA, the evaluation stage, recommended by Corder (1974), was not completed in this study.

No	Grammatical errors	Frequency	Percentage
1	Verb Tense	74	28, 03
2	Subject-Verb Agreement	44	16, 65
3	Prepositions	42	15, 91
4	Capitalization	26	9, 85
5	Plurality	24	9, 09
6	Word order	20	7, 58
7	Articles	12	4, 54
8	Auxiliaries	12	4, 54
9	Passive voice	10	3, 79
	Total	264	Sum: 100%

(Table 1, Frequency and percentage of detected errors).

## 5.2 Error Analysis in the writings of Norwegian primary school students

In this section, the examples of students' errors were taken directly from the research data essays; the errors are presented and underlined in the text below. Correct forms follow each example.

### 5.2.1 Verb Tense

A high frequency of errors occurred within the category of verb tenses. It is illustrated in Table 1 and consists of 74 errors. These errors have the highest percentage of 28, 03% of the total (264) amount of errors. The reason for committing errors within this category often lies in the fact that the grammatical system of English verbs and tenses is different from the Norwegian one. The incorrect use of verb tenses shows that the Norwegian students find it challenging to apply correct rules to the tense and verb form.

Errors within verb tenses can be explained by the difficulty of understanding and applying rules and the grammatical differences between the two language systems. Students have learned most about past simple, present perfect, and continuous tenses, and it is still evident that the tenses are misused. The difference between the Norwegian tense system and English is immense. English has so-called continuous tenses, which we do not find in Norwegian.

The typical errors included overgeneralization, as in the following example:

- Many people didn't understood. (Understand).

Here the student overgeneralized the use of the past tense and used a past form in both verbs. The error can be traced back to the relative simplicity of the Norwegian tense system. The problem is the wrong use of the negation system in English.

- He will losing his childhood. (Lose).

The given example illustrates the confusion between tenses. The student has obviously learned the rules of future and continuous tenses but used them wrongly.

It is also observed that students used inconsistent verbs when they were focused on one passage or idea. They switched tenses as in the following sentence:

- I was watching televishon and heard when they tells news and gives information about Korona. (Told, gave).

The tense in this sentence changed from past progressive to past and present. The student is on his way to constructing an English tense system, and most likely, he attempted to use three tenses instead of using past progressive in the main clause and past tense in verbs *tells* and *give* in the subordinate clause.

The following example illustrates the wrong use of tense:

- All the symptoms I have a name. (Have named).

This example could also be interpreted as the wrong word class, but the EA detected more repetitive patterns of this grammatical construction through the student's text, hence, it is the error of the wrong use of tense, not a mistake.

Based on the EA, it can be assumed that students developed their interlanguage for tenses since they used various tenses in their writings.

## 5. 2. 2. Subject-Verb Agreement

Another common type of errors made by students is subject-verb agreement that consists of 44 errors. According to English grammar rules, the subject and the verb segments should agree in number and person. This area of committed errors has the second highest percentage (16, 65%) (see Table 1, p. 34). In the examples below, we can see that the morphemes *-s* and *-ed* are required sentence segments since they are connected to a verb in the present tense and past tense.

- It have many names. (Has).
- The sickness cause many symptoms. (Caused).

In the context of the given examples, the absence of the bound morpheme *-s* and *-ed* in words *have* and *cause* represents an inappropriate grammatical comprehension and can be considered an error. In the Norwegian language, the morpheme *-s* is not used. For this reason, it can be stated that the appearance of errors from the examples above is influenced by L1 and can be considered as a negative transfer.

Additionally, there was a lack of agreement between the verb and the subject in the sentence:

- All the reasons I have a name is significant for me. (Are).

Since *er* is used for both singular and plural agreements in L1, it can also be regarded as a negative transfer from L1. Thus, there is evidence of singular and plural verb agreement in other parts of the students' writings.

One more example needs to be commented on:

- It is has many symptoms that you can die from. (It has).

The student is confused about grammatical patterns; he made a sentence with both *to be* and *has*. This error resulted from insufficient learning of L2 and can be traced to the extended use of grammatical rules to contexts where they do not occur, or overgeneralization.

Similar to this research results, Hendrikson (1979) also found that many common errors resulted from subject-verb agreement.

### 5.2. 3. Prepositions

The next issue within committed errors is lack of prepositions and the wrong use of prepositions that comprise 42 errors and 15, 91% of the total errors (see Table 1, p. 34).

The difficulty of English prepositions was accentuated in the related studies of Ridha (2012), though these were ranked second after tense agreement.

- My school closed last year because corona (Of).
- Many people die from Coronavirus. (Of).
- Go to a walk (For).
- In the corona pandemic. (During the corona pandemic outbreak).

If to compare differences between L1 and L2, one needs to consider that most prepositions have their equivalents in both languages. The possible explanation for many errors in this area is ignorance or insufficient knowledge of rules. The transfer of propositional expertise could also be the reason for committing those errors.

### 5.2.4 Capitalization

Based on the students' text analysis, the incorrect use of capital letters caused 26 errors, rated 9, 85% (see Table 1, p. 34). Students capitalized many words in the samples:

- Great - (great).
- Vacations - (vacations).

The words *Great* and *Vacations* are capitalized and can be considered errors, not mistakes, since, throughout the text, one can see more examples of this.

- The most i missed is to travel. (I).

Next, the first personal pronoun *I* is spelled without a capital letter. It can be considered an error in some students' written production because the pronoun is not capitalized in any sentences and not just in one. Capitalizing the first personal pronoun *I* as a grammatical rule does not exist in Norway, and the Norwegian equivalent *jeg* is not spelled with a capital letter. The absence of capitalization, in this case, can cause problems for students, and it is crucial to work on this aspect.

Additionally, in some texts, the names of weekdays and months were not capitalized.

- It started in desember 2019. (December).
- I don't like saturday and sundays anymore. (Saturday and Sundays).

L1 strongly influences this type of error. In Norwegian, the names of weekdays and months are not capitalized. It is a very illustrative example of negative language transfer since L1 rules were applied to L2 use.

### 5.2.5 Plurality

24 errors within plurality were found in the students' texts. The errors within plurality included the omission of -s at the end of countable nouns and the wrong use of irregular and regular plural forms. These errors composed 9, 09% of the total rate of errors.

Examples of errors within plurality:

- The disease can cause many other disease like pneumonia, headache and high fever. (Diseases).
- Many childs miss playing with their friends. (Children).

In the first example, the -s was omitted at the end of a countable noun. It could be referred to as a slip in the written production when the student forgot to write the correct ending.

Simultaneously, one can find these errors throughout the whole text, and for this reason, these are classified as errors. A possible explanation can be that the student did not understand that plural nouns follow after the determiner *many*. It could occur as a result of deficiency of training or confusion about rules.

The second example demonstrates the students' confusion related to irregular and regular plural nouns. Norwegian students, in general, are confused about the use of regular and irregular plural nouns (Munden & Myhre, 2016, p. 140). Usually, they add -s to irregular nouns, as shown in the second example. It can probably be explained by the association with the L1 system when -er is added to plural nouns. Another explanation can be that they overgeneralize the rule when -s is added to show plurality. Jane (1974) stated that students use overgeneralization to simplify rules they have already learned. In such a case, students usually classify countable nouns as uncountable and vice versa.

### 5.2.6 Word order

Furthermore, there are some issues with the word order in the students' writings. The analysis showed that there were some sentences where the students used the Norwegian verb-second word-order. This error issue can be accounted as an interlanguage error developed from transfer from Norwegian, as the following sentence illustrates:

- From time to time wondered we when it is over. (We wondered).

Word order errors were also discussed in related studies as one of the most challenging areas. Word order is the sixth highest frequency error in this study and consists of 20 errors. The errors within the word order compose 7, 58% of the total rate of errors.

- How we can stop the spreading of disease worldwide? (Can we).

The example above demonstrated the overgeneralization when students tried to form the correct form of the question. This error can probably be referred to as insufficient knowledge of English grammatical rules.

### 5.2.7 Articles

Further examining of sentence patterns in students' writings shows that the English article system is intricate for Norwegian students. Errors related to the use articles consist of 12 in total. The errors within the article system compose 4, 54% of the total rate of errors. Students' texts demonstrate the omission and addition of articles. Students are particularly confused with the use of definite articles, although they used articles correctly in many sentences.

The example below illustrates articles' addition when it is not necessary.

- The whole started in 2019 in the China. (China).

This sentence is an example of rule overgeneralization when a student added an unnecessary article, and it is evident that the student has an incomplete understanding of the grammar rule related to the absence of articles with proper nouns.

- Many people have same problem with Corona. (The same problem)

The second example illustrates the omission of the article. Since there is a ranking adjective here, one should use the article *the*. So here, it can be concluded that these errors result from incomplete comprehension of rules. These rules should be understood, automatized, and applied correctly.

The third example also shows the omission of articles:

- One of major issues for people nowadays. (Of the major issues).

The Norwegian article system is similar to the English one to some degree when it comes to meaning but different by form. Articles can be definite or indefinite in both English and Norwegian. However, Norwegian has three genders, masculine, feminine, and neutral, and the nouns correspond with these genders. Students may be confused by the differences between L1 and L2, and the committed errors are partially explained by interference from L1 and lack of knowledge of the English article system.

### 5.2.8. Auxiliaries

As the EA already showed, students had difficulties using the main verb in English. The proper use of auxiliary verbs is more complex since students have to separate between the main verb and the auxiliaries in different contexts. For this reason, errors within these verb forms were analyzed as a separate category. Improper use of auxiliary verbs that consisted of 12 errors (4, 54%) will be discussed here. *Be*, *have*, and *do* as auxiliary verbs should be distinguished from the verbs *could*, *should*, *would*, and *might* as past forms of *can*, *shall*, *will*, and *may*. Although, from the EA conducted in the study, it can be concluded that the students usually find it difficult to differentiate between these forms. The students' performance in the use of auxiliaries was relatively poor. Many errors arose from the little knowledge of the



primary and modal auxiliaries. The collected data indicates that the auxiliaries were misused since they did not comprehend the syntactic difference between an auxiliary verb and a complete verb. The students did not know when exactly to use *be*, *been*, *being*, *has*, *had*, *do*, and *doing*.

- Be a dangerous disease; it can kill many people. (Being a dangerous disease).
- Have done their work, they went away. (Having done).

One reason for students misusing the auxiliary verbs is the semantic and syntactic differences in English and Norwegian. Although L1 transfer is not the only reason, the learners' disability to distinguish between auxiliary and main verbs may also play an important role.

### 5.3.9 Passive Voice

The number of errors found within the passive voice is 10 errors, which is a percentage of 3, 79% of all errors. The type of the given task did not require passive voice structures, but still, some students included them in their texts. The EA showed that students confused active and passive voices, as in the example below:

- Coronavirus can be caused a threat to health. (Can cause).

This type of error can probably be explained by repetitive training that has resulted in the overgeneralization of the rule.

- Our health will be influence by the corona. (Influenced).

The second example is categorized as a misformation of an infinitive verb. Here the student used an infinitive verb *influence* instead of *influenced*. *Influence* is an infinitive verb, while a past participle verb is required in passive voice construction in the following sentence. So here, it can be concluded that this error resulted from incomplete comprehension of rules.

## 6. Findings and results

### 6.1 The most common grammatical errors and their frequency

The first and second research questions of this master thesis were:

1.) “What are the most common grammatical errors found in the essays written by Norwegian primary school students?”

2.) “What is the frequency rate of these errors?”

The following findings are linked to these research questions and provide the answers.

The analysis of data revealed that the students committed 264 errors in total. In terms of grammatical categories, students committed errors of verb tense, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, word order, articles, capitalization, auxiliaries, plurality, and passive voice.

The errors of verb tense and forms are highest at the number level. Correct verb forms and tenses seem to be a considerable problem for the learners, as they do not know how to use them correctly. The students struggled with using proper tenses in the context of sentence patterns. They often used different tenses that were inappropriate for the situation at hand. Likewise, subject-verb agreement errors turned out to be the second highest in number and rational levels. The difficulties students faced mainly were related to the omission or misuse of the correct verb forms demanded by the sentence context. The errors of prepositions are the third highest in relation to the total score. These errors mainly illustrated the ignorance or insufficient knowledge of rules, even though many English prepositions have their equivalents in Norwegian. The errors of prepositions involved misuse and omission of prepositions. In the case of capitalization, errors occurred when students did not use the rules of capitalization properly, primarily with first personal pronouns, names of weekdays, and months. Sometimes, they started new sentences using small letters, and sometimes, they used capital letters when writing proper nouns. These errors are the fourth highest in relation to the total amount of errors. Next category, the errors of plurality occurred due to the omission of ending -s or overgeneralization of rules as to when the apostrophe was placed at the end of the nouns. The findings also showed students’ confusion about countable and uncountable nouns. The errors of word order are the sixth highest category in relation to the total amount of analyzed errors. These errors were observed chiefly when adverbs were placed in the wrong place or when students used the Norwegian verb-second word order. Many errors of word order resulted from L1 interference.

Furthermore, the errors of articles, which are the seventh according to the descending order, developed from omission or addition of articles. Primarily it was difficult for students to understand and use definite and indefinite articles correctly.

Errors of auxiliaries appeared as students were incapable of distinguishing between auxiliary and primary forms of verbs. These errors can be called the errors of literal translation and can be traced to L1 interference.

The last grammatical category of errors is passive voice. Here overgeneralization could be observed when students mixed active and passive voices in sentence patterns.

While conducting the EA, it was observed that the sources of errors were similar to sources already described by many researchers discussed in the literary review. These sources are insufficient knowledge or applications of rules, L1 interference, overgeneralization, omission, addition, ignorance of rules, and misleading hypotheses.

Furthermore, it is essential to consider that sometimes error causes can be complex when errors overlap and do not belong to a clear category. Unquestionably, L1 influence and language knowledge are significant factors in SLA. The students who performed interlingual errors need to understand the difference between L1 and L2, since L1 interference is the cause of their errors. The students, who performed intralingual errors, need to improve their knowledge of rules since their limited linguistic knowledge causes them. As in the category of interlingual errors within the subject-verb agreement, one could argue that some errors did not belong to this category or that they overlap each other. Still, it is evident that many of these errors are caused by L1 interference since the structure of the languages is different. Besides, the findings of the EA should be interpreted in the context of factors such as the level and linguistic knowledge of participants. There were some cases where it was difficult to decide which category to place the errors as in the sentence: “The sickness cause many symptoms.” This may be considered an intralingual error. The English 1. and 2. person singular forms and plural forms are overgeneralized and also used in the 3. person. It may also be seen as an interlingual error. The conjugation system of Norwegian, where all present tense forms are identical, is transferred to English. Concerning the described difficulties, one may state explicitly that tables/results presented in the study must be read with some degree of uncertainty.

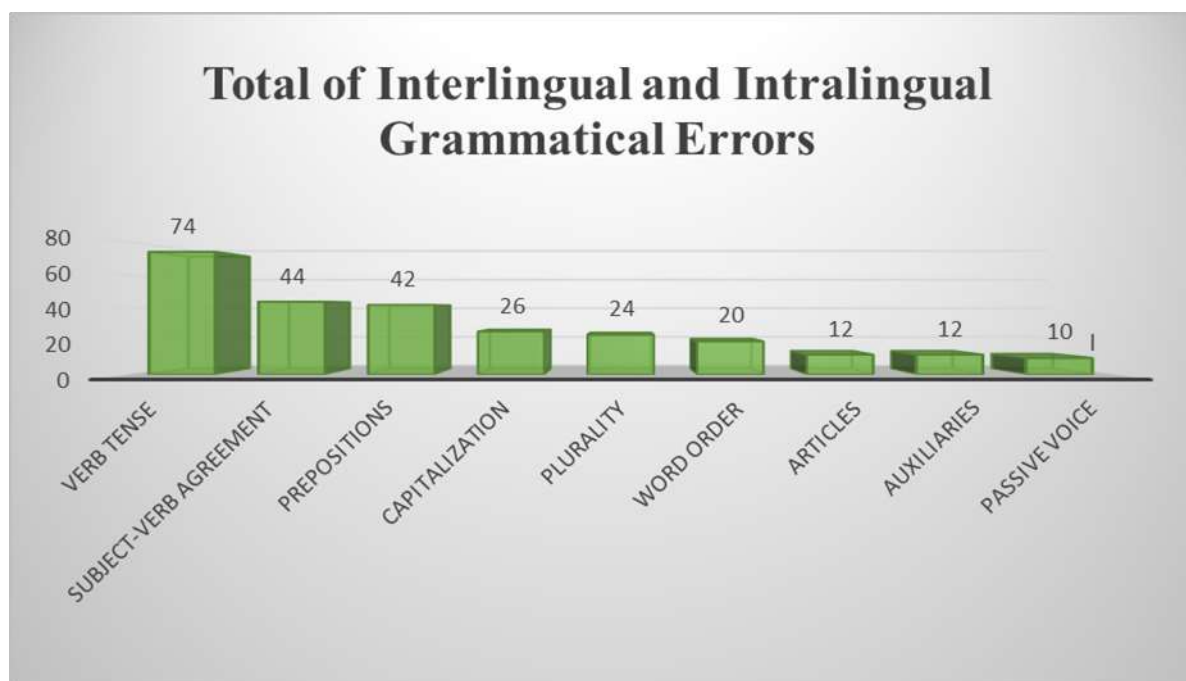
## 6. 2 Causes of errors in students’ writings

After the students’ samples were collected, the errors were identified manually by highlighting those. Based on the EA procedures, the description stage consisted of

identifying, counting, and categorizing errors. The explanation stage consisted of the stage where the sources of errors were explained, based on interlingual or intralingual categorization. The third research question of the study is: “What are the sources of these errors?”

Based on the EA conducted in this study, it can be concluded that Norwegian primary school students commit errors for different reasons such as L1 transfer, insufficient knowledge of rules, limited writing practice, and literal translation.

The detected errors were tabulated according to frequency and percentage rate (see Table 1, p. 34). The most common grammatical errors were limited to nine types. Afterwards, each category was analyzed in terms of interlingual and intralingual errors in order to find their sources (see Graph 1).



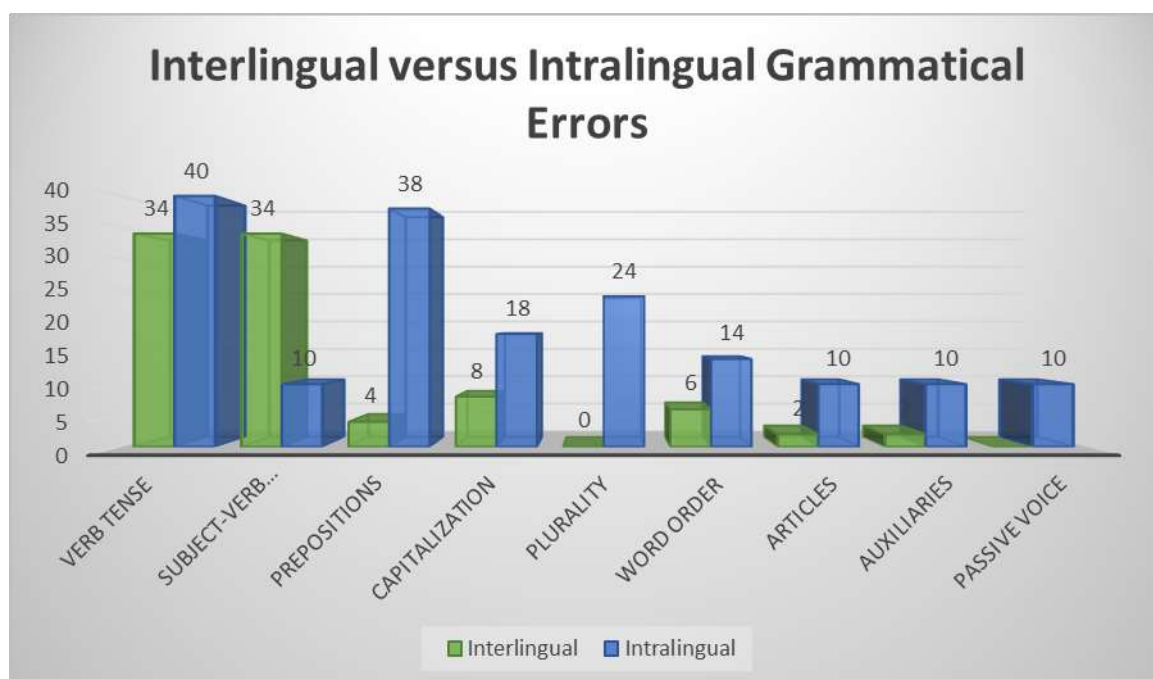
Graph 1. Total of Interlingual and Intralingual Grammatical errors.

Since it was evident that some errors had different explanations and could be traced to the same sources, all results must be read with caution. According to the conducted analysis, students made both interlingual and intralingual errors. The analyzed data showed that the intralingual errors were more frequent than the interlingual ones. This contradicts many research studies referred to in the literary review where it was stated that students usually make more interlingual errors, and L1 interference is regarded as the most important source of

errors. Here it can be noted that students' errors in this study have different sources, as will be described later in this chapter.

Graph 1 illustrates the total amount of nine interlingual and intralingual types of grammatical errors detected in students' writings. It can be seen from the graph that the most common grammar errors were made in verb tense, 74 errors (28, 03%) of which 34 errors were interlingual, and 40 errors were intralingual.

Graph 2 displays the number of interlingual and intralingual within separate categories. The analysis revealed 174 (65, 9%) intralingual errors and 90 (34, 01%) interlingual grammar errors. The number of interlingual errors was highest in verb tense and subject-verb agreement (both 34 errors, 37, 8%). The highest percentage for the intralingual errors was in the verb tense (34 errors, 37, 8%) and prepositions categories (38 errors, 21, 8 %). These findings relate to both the first and second research questions about the most common errors and their frequency. It was interesting that no interlingual errors were found within the grammatical categories of plurality and passive voice. Other interlingual errors included prepositions, 4 (4, 4%) errors were detected, capitalization 8 errors (8, 9%), word order 6 (6, 7%), articles and auxiliaries 2 (2, 2%) errors in each category.



Graph 2. Interlingual versus Intralingual Grammatical errors.

Intralingual errors included: errors within subject-verb agreement 10 (5, 8%), prepositions 38 (21, 8%), capitalization 18 (10, 3%), plurality 24 (13, 7%), word order 14, (8%), articles 10 (5, 8%), auxiliaries 10 (5, 8%) and passive voice 10 (5, 8%). Interestingly, intralingual errors

within subject-verb agreement, articles, auxiliaries, and passive voice had equal frequency in the students' essays.

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that primary school students in Norway committed many grammatical errors due to both interlingual and intralingual causes.

However, they committed more errors due to intralingual reasons.

These findings answer the third research question about the sources of errors committed by students.

Interlingual errors originated from L1 interference. Selinker stated that by collecting and analyzing learners' language production, knowledge of individual language created by learners themselves, interlanguage, could be established (1972, p. 214). Errors are a natural component of interlanguage. Another essential component within interlanguage is fossilization, the process where learners apply L1 rules to the structures of L2 (Gass, Behney & Plonsky, 2013, p. 27). Based on this study's findings, it can be argued that fossilized constructions and rules of L1 appeared in the interlanguage of the students. This process is determined as negative language transfer since it occurred when L1 and L2 differed from each other and did not share the same structure (Benson, 2002, p. 68). Language transfer is identified as the learners' strategy that recompenses a target language's lack of knowledge. It exists on all linguistic levels, according to Gass and Selinker (2001). The examples of interlingual errors illustrated below represented the negative language transfer when the L1 functioned as an additional source for making hypotheses about constructing the L2 items.

Interlingual errors of omission, addition, selection, and misordering were found in students' samples presented in this study. When students omitted morphemes *-s* or *-ed* or suffixes in word formation in the sentences "Corona come from china I think" or "It have many names", it can be argued that omission resulted from insufficient knowledge of rules and simplification. Regardless of this, the interlingual factors caused these errors in all probability since word formation is different in L1. Omission errors also appeared when articles were left out in the sentence construction, as in the following sentence "And now there are lot of many parents that are working home." The Norwegian system of articles is relatively different from English, and many students struggled to use them correctly. Other illustrative examples of omission could be found within capitalization, like in "And i couldn't play football with contact" or "I don't like saturday and sundays anymore because I can not meet my friends."

In English norms, the first personal pronoun and weekdays are always capitalized. This rule does not apply to the Norwegian language system, thus, Norwegian students frequently made errors within capitalization in their writing.

Interlingual errors of addition occurred when learners overgeneralized rules and unnecessarily added morphemes, suffixes, or words. The students failed to produce grammatically correct sentences, and thus overgeneralization could be related to redundancy. The addition was observed in seven of nine grammatical categories of errors, as in the auxiliary category “If we don’t can have distance, we have to use masks”, where students attempted to create a sentence construction similar to their L1 but failed. Interestingly, that false addition frequently occurred within the plurality error category when students added an unnecessary -s ending in order to produce plural forms “We have to hold 1 meters” or “We have to keep 1 meters distance from each other”. These errors can be regarded as typically interlingual since they displayed the norms of L1 sentence construction *én meters avstand*.

Interlingual errors of misordering were observed in many categories, but primarily within subject-verb agreement and word order errors, as in the sentences “Many people is quarantined over the entire world.” or “When you are in quarantine, can you not go outside.” However, Norwegian word order is often very similar to English; at the same time, it still has some special rules that often confuse students, especially considering affirmative sentences.

Additionally, many essays had interlingual errors when students used the wrong forms of words or sentence construction. Mainly these errors were observed within verb tense and subject-verb agreement categories. The following sentences, “I hopped the corona is over soon” or “There is so many versions of Corona” demonstrated that students applied a word form (*hopped* instead of *hope*, *is* instead of *are*) inappropriate in a given context.

Unlike interlingual errors caused by L1 interference, the source of intralingual errors is L2. In the process of language acquisition, since learners are still in the developmental stage, they have incomplete knowledge of L2 rules. In other words, intralingual errors develop from insufficient learning of L2 when students attempt to produce L2 based on their limited knowledge and experience (Erdoğan, 2005, p. 266). Intralingual errors analyzed in this study were caused by false analogy, overgeneralization, simplification, and incomplete rule application.

False analogy errors appeared when students already had learned how to form plural nouns but misused them, as in the following sentence, “There have been many meets to find solutions to remove corona.” It is evident that students were confused about forming plurality by adding -s to nouns and created it by adding -s to a verb *meet*, instead of the noun *meetings*.

Overgeneralization and simplification errors resulted in omission and addition and could be found in almost nine error categories. Overgeneralization errors appeared when students used inappropriate rules according to the given context of the sentences. Particularly many overgeneralization errors were found within the verb, auxiliaries, and passive voice categories when students added the wrong verb forms as in the following sentences: “People didn’t understood” or “He will losing his childhood.” Using the correct verb forms and tenses seemed difficult for students, and they committed modal-, gerund-, infinitive-, present-, and past-related errors.

Using the definite and indefinite article in English also seems very complicated for students. Thus, when students were unsure whether to use the definite or indefinite articles, they often overgeneralized or simplified the rules by omitting the article. In this sentence, “And people will get many the presents when it will be over,” the student added unnecessary definite article and used overgeneralized rules. In the following sentence, the article *the* is omitted due to the simplification: “It is one of most significant problems for people nowadays.”

Simplification errors appeared when students used simpler forms instead of complicated structures because they did not quite understand the rules. When students avoid using complex structures and choose less complex structures instead, errors that are committed are caused by linguistic simplification. Almost all errors within the verb tense grammatical category were identified as simplification errors: “In 2020 come corona in March all the people get in quarantine” or “Afterwards a person from Japanese come to some other country in the world like England.”

Incomplete application of rules included errors when students failed to produce a grammatically correct item or construction. Examples of errors that can be included in this category are presented in the sentences “Coronavirus has my my daily life a lot” or “The was not funny.” or “How I know when this ends”. In these sentences, the errors were found in the absence of necessary elements to make these sentences complete and grammatically correct.

In addition to the errors discussed above, composition errors were likely to occur since students did not perform a post-writing stage. Many students did not revise their writings



before submitting their tasks, even though they were told to do so. Additionally, they wrote their texts on computers and had many opportunities to correct their errors, at least using a spellcheck. However, the fact that their texts still contained many errors in spelling and grammar displayed the lack of awareness of the importance of revising their work prior to submitting it.

In this study, intralingual errors were more frequent than interlingual errors. This indicates that the lack of mastery and not the negative transfer from the L1 was the main factor in influencing language production.

To conclude, Norwegian primary school students commit many grammatical errors due to intralingual and interlingual sources of errors, such as intralingual and interlingual transfer. These are the primary sources of the most common grammatical errors. This provides the answer to the third research question about the sources of errors.

## 7. Teachers' and students' perspectives

### 7.1 Teachers' perspectives

To achieve a complete picture of why Norwegian students commit errors in their writings, it is essential to consider the teachers' perspectives. Ten teachers were interviewed and shared their opinions about the reasons for errors in students' writings. They recognized the teacher's role in the classroom and admitted the difficulties students have in their writing. The teachers were asked: What are the reasons that students commit errors in their writing?

One teacher answered,

“It is a problem that has many explanations. Among these, I can mention a lack of vocabulary, L1 influence, and insufficient knowledge of grammatical rules”.

Another teacher blamed the internet as a source of quick solutions,

“Many of students are dependent on the internet and have used to quick solutions. They use Google Translate instead to look up into vocabulary. They find a word, use it and forget”.

Some teachers mentioned lack of time as the most important reason,

“Lack of time used for written activities during the learning process is an important factor responsible for this. For example, the 6th grade has just two single lessons of English every week. The teacher is required to design a well-balanced set of learning activities integrating all skills. It is demanding to focus on all five skills during the limited time only. Students do not have any possibility to practice the language enough”.

Lack of interest and motivation were also mentioned as one of the main reasons for students’ weak English writing skills.

Many teachers admitted that the teacher’s role and taking into account students’ needs are crucial in the teaching and learning processes,

“According to my opinion, the teacher plays an enormous role in forming the students’ writing skills. It is up to teachers how to plan activities and adjust these to the level of students”.

“Adjustment is a keyword here. All students are different, with different knowledge, experience, and skills”, stated another teacher.

“In my opinion, both teachers and students can be blamed for weaknesses in English writing skills. Some teachers still use teaching techniques that are not adapted to the new English educational program’s objectives. Some students do not take responsibility for their learning and take everything for granted without increasing their skills. At the same time, it is a responsibility of both teachers and parents to support students and supply them with guidance”.

From the answers above, it can be concluded that teachers are of the opinion that many factors influence students’ writing skills negatively.

## 7.2 Questionnaires: findings and discussion

Considering the data collected from students’ responses in the questionnaires, it was found that a significant quantity of students (25) think that teaching methods often were responsible for their weaknesses in English writing. Teachers must adopt appropriate teaching methods and techniques when teaching English writing skills. According to the teachers’ answers,

most teachers used seldom (5) or sometimes (5) additional writing tools; simultaneously, they were not satisfied with the curriculum in relation to writing. Additionally, all teachers (10) confirmed that the school did not often provide any supplementary courses in the teaching of writing. This can be due to the world's current situation and the pandemic; even so, there are many possibilities to organize courses online.

An analysis of the teachers' answers shows that several factors influence the Norwegian students' weak English writing skills. The most important is the lack of time to teach and learn the curriculum. Teachers felt that there was not enough time to concentrate on teaching all basic skills, and this concerned writing in particular.

The data obtained from the teachers' responses illustrates that teachers were aware of the fact that students commit errors of different types in their written production since all teachers answered positively to this question. Nine teachers also confirmed that they often experienced that students lack basic writing skills.

Further, the students' answers showed that twenty-nine students believed that L1 interference plays an essential role in developing writing skills in English. However, the findings of the study showed that most errors were of an intralingual nature. Twenty-nine students also identified the complexity of grammar rules as an influential factor that led them having weak English writing skills. Other significant factors named by students were a lack of writing activities at school/homework and an insufficient vocabulary level. Twenty students strongly agreed or agreed that they suffered from a lack of motivation, which can be explained by topics that were not based on their interests.

Based on the analysis of both teachers' and students' responses, it can be concluded that essential factors that influence the development of students' writing skills are classroom teaching methods, curriculum, lack of time and writing activities, L1 interference, difficulties with grammar rules, vocabulary and lack of motivation. These factors are reflected in the answers cited above.

## 8. Discussion

As already discussed in the theoretical review in the thesis, this study aims to analyze the most common grammatical errors found in the essays written by Norwegian 6th-grade

students, and the discussion focuses on grammar errors only. The research findings are in agreement with results of related studies conducted by researchers from different countries (Darus & Ching, 2009; Darus & Subramanian, 2009; Ghani & Karim, 2010; Ridha, 2012; Sawalmeh, 2013; Kirmizi & Karci, 2017; Salehi & Bahrami, 2018; Nuruzzaman, 2018; Salmani Nodoushan, 2018; Khatter, 2019). It is evident from the mentioned studies that the L1 interference and other factors determined the appearance of errors in the learners' writing process, and some of the researchers distinguished between interlingual and intralingual errors. The teacher's responsibility, including obtained knowledge from the EA, is to understand that the presence of errors is the evidence that learning is taking place. These errors are important to find appropriate pedagogical methods. Besides, it is vital to carefully plan a process of error correction, avoid controlled drilling, and instead use other relevant techniques.

Next, based on research findings, it is evident that grammar errors were the most common among other error types, e.g., lexical errors, punctuation, spelling, or adverb vs. adjective, though the frequency and sources are different, and these types were not analyzed.

L1, Norwegian, and its differing structure compared to L2, English, played an essential role in the occurrence of errors, but other factors also influenced it. Gass and Selinker stated that the degree of transfer is dependent on closeness degree and similarities in the structure of both L1 and L2 languages (2001, p. 245). They considered language transfer as a variable that constantly changes in the process of SLA (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 246). Besides, learners' perceptions and practice can be considered essential sources for positive and negative language transfer.

Keeping in view the EA conducted in this study, it may be concluded that Norwegian primary school students need to develop and improve their writing skills. Many factors such as lack of interest and motivation, inappropriate teaching styles and materials, and lack of writing activities are responsible for this process.

Additionally, the following pedagogical suggestions are recommended in the context of this study in order to improve students' writing skill and minimize the number of committed errors:

Teachers should emphasize the importance of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and digital skills and encourage students to practice their English. Both students and teachers should expose themselves to English through different activities combining all five skills

To avoid L1 interference, teachers must remind the students about the different features of both languages. It is crucial not just to memorize the grammatical rules but also to understand them, and it can be recommended to compare L1 and L2 features while working with rules. It is essential while learning the rules to consider exceptions regarding different areas of language. Further, students should develop their own language learning strategies. While correcting students' errors, teachers should explain why certain patterns are grammatically incorrect. It is vital to use appropriate correction methods. As verb tense, subject-verb agreement and preposition errors are highest in proportion, more attention should be paid to teaching verbs, tenses and prepositions.

## 9. Pedagogical implications.

Learning EFL is a complex and demanding process and committing errors is a natural part of this process. Studying and understanding the nature of errors "will help teachers know students' difficulties and adopt appropriate teaching strategies to help EFL students learn better" (Heydari & Bagheri, 2012, p. 1).

Therefore, EA is an essential tool in language teaching due to its ability to define and analyze learners' problem areas. Implementing EA in language learning and teaching can be beneficial for learners, teachers, and curriculum designers.

Significantly, teachers need to be interested in "how to deal with students' errors than the simple identification of them" (Corder, 1967, p. 163). Different factors can cause errors: L1 interference, overgeneralization, and incomplete knowledge of L2, L2's complexity, and fossilization (Corder, 1967, p. 167).

The present study's findings discovered the relevance of learners' errors as they provided information about how language is learned and what problem areas teachers should focus on. For example, this study shows that verb tense, subject-verb agreement and prepositions cause the most common errors that primary Norwegian school students produce in their writings.

Corder stated that teachers “should be aware that different types of written material may produce a different distribution of error or a different set of error types” (Corder, 1974, p. 126). Teachers should guide and support the learners in using the relevant strategies to become better language users.

Besides, it is not enough to study and identify errors, it is also essential to correct them. The classification and sources of the errors influence what kind of feedback the teacher might give since errors provide the teacher with knowledge about the success of teaching styles and methods used in language teaching.

Therefore, the findings of an EA can function in beneficial ways only if both teachers and students are aware of them and can use these to improve the teaching and learning process.

Teachers and students can also benefit from EA findings since errors help measure the students’ progress in achieving the goal. Based on these findings, the teacher can adopt appropriate teaching strategies according to the students’ needs and levels. Furthermore, errors call attention to the areas that need further development.

Additionally, errors provide essential data for educators and syllabus designers for what topics or language items should be included in the syllabus. Findings from EA give feedback on the effectiveness of methods and materials, and these findings should be considered while planning an educational program or designing new books.

Studying the nature of errors will help teachers and educators adopt the appropriate remedial teaching styles, adequate materials, and construct tests suitable for learners’ different levels and needs. Simultaneously, EA enables teachers and researchers to better understand how the language is learned and what areas are the most problematic for students. According to Richards, errors help identify strategies that learners use in language teaching, the causes of learner errors, and help to obtain information about common difficulties in language learning as an aid to teaching or in the development of teaching materials (1984, p. 231).

## 10. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

The limitations of this study are related to the limited time, the one, single geographical area, a low number of participants and samples, and the one chosen area of learners’ difficulties -

writing. Future research should consider these limitations and try to widen the scope to obtain generalizable results.

Considering the limitations above, future studies should include a sufficient amount of time, areas, locations, participants, and general investigation questions to get a clearer picture of Norwegian learners' errors.

Every study usually ends with both answers and questions. After conducting the present study and examining the results, several suggestions can be proposed for future researchers interested in EA.

Future research can conduct a study including a more significant number of participants from different country areas.

Besides, it is suggested that future research can examine separately scale considering errors committed by male and female students in different age categories.

Furthermore, it is essential to study students' perspectives to find the sources of their writing difficulties. It can provide researchers with in-depth insight into studied problems.

Several variables can be taken into account, such as reading and writing activities, the amount of practice, and the use of digital devices in classrooms to strengthen students' writing skills. Due to time limitations, the current study did not concentrate on the errors across proficiency levels. Future research could focus on analyzing students' errors considering their proficiency levels.

Since the present study focused on primary school students' errors, more research is needed to investigate the nature of secondary school and higher secondary school level students' errors.

Finally, it was difficult to find studies that have examined the question of what common errors Scandinavians, especially Norwegian students, commit in their writing. The majority of the studies used in the literary review have examined the error patterns characteristic of international classrooms. Future research might investigate the most common errors Scandinavian and especially Norwegian context could benefit the EA field.

So, to generalize the results, further extensive studies considering all suggestions above are needed.

## 11. Conclusion

This master thesis aimed at conducting the EA by identifying, describing, counting, and categorizing the most common grammatical errors made by 6th grade students in the Norwegian primary school.

The study aimed to answer the following three research questions:

- 1.) “What are the most common grammatical errors found in essays written by Norwegian primary school students?”
- 2.) “What is the frequency rate of these errors?”
- 3.) “What are the sources of these errors?”

The study attempted to answer research questions and it was discovered that Norwegian students find it challenging to write without errors of different types. Students committed 264 errors in their English writings. Errors extracted from students’ essays were limited to nine grammatical categories recommended by Thornbury (1999): Verb tense, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, word order, articles, capitalization, auxiliaries, plurality, and passive voice. Errors, which did not fit into these categories, e.g., lexical errors, punctuation, spelling, or adverb vs. adjective, were excluded. Errors within verb tenses and forms, subject-verb agreement and prepositions were the most frequent among committed errors.

In this master thesis, the classification of error sources offered by Corder (1974), Thornbury (1999), and Brown (2000) was used. After analyzing the errors, it was revealed that students made errors due to both interlingual and intralingual sources. Intralingual errors were more frequent than interlingual ones in samples written by Norwegian students.

Based on the results and findings, it is evident that students still have difficulty producing a written production based on L2 norms. The origin of errors could be found in L1 transfer, literal translation, and insufficient knowledge of L2.

It can be concluded that teachers, students, and educators should collaborate on working further to strengthen and develop the students’ writing skills. School curriculum, appropriate teaching methods, and styles should contribute to improving the writing skills of the students.



Both teachers and students should be aware of grammatical errors in order to minimize those. Therefore, it is essential to look into the progress of writing and its teaching and indicate typical errors.

The EA conducted in this study helped to determine the most common language problems students have. It informs teachers on what specific problem areas they should concentrate, and what methods and materials they can use in language teaching. Besides, it gives the possibility to help students minimize or even exclude these errors.

The L1 interference caused a number of errors, but mostly errors resulted from the lack of mastery.

Overall, it may be said that the development of students' writing can be influenced by various factors such as L1 influence, language mixing, different levels and skills, social factors, and inappropriate use of rules of L2. These factors might be taken into account while planning a teaching process.

Finally, it is suggested that this thesis is open-ended and all findings must be read with caution because teaching and learning are both interrelated processes.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Students Questionnaire

The statements under are common statements about your opinion regarding the difficulty of writing in English. Please, mark relevant alternatives, which apply to your opinion. We appreciate your answers, and these will be used in developing strategies to improve your writing skills.

What do you believe to be the most challenging aspect of writing in English?

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Lack of vocabulary	2	26	2	-	-
2	Mother tongue interference	-	29	-	1	-
3	The teaching methods	-	25	3	1	1
4	Lack of motivation	10	10	5	5	-
5	The complexity of grammar rules	29	1	-	-	-
6	Lack of writing activities at school/homework	20	5	4	1	-
7	Uninteresting topics	4	15	1	5	5
8	The complexity of mechanics of writing	-	-	4	26	-
9	Unclear aims	-	4	10	6	10
10	Insufficient feedback	4	10	10	5	1

## Appendix B: Teachers Questionnaire

The questions under are common questions regarding your view/opinion about your students writing skills. Please, mark relevant alternatives which apply to your opinion. We appreciate your answers, and these will be used to improve the teaching of writing skills.

No	Question	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Always
1	Do you experience a lack of basic writing skills in your students?	-	1	7	2
2	Are you satisfied with the education curriculum in writing?	-	6	4	1
3	Do you use additional writing tools?	-	5	5	-
4	Do you feel there is enough time to concentrate on the teaching of all basic skills?	8	2	-	-
5	Do your students have writing activities every day?	-	1	7	2
6	Do your students make errors of different types in their written production?	-	-	-	10
7	- Does the school provide any supplementary courses in the area of writing?	-	10	-	-

Adapted from (Hourani 2008, pp. 65-67)

## Appendix C: Consent form

Til foreldre/ foresatte i 6. klasse

### Samtykkeerklæring til masterprosjekt

I fjor vår ble dere informert om at jeg, Maryna Kushniruk, tar videreutdanning i engelsk på masternivå. Jeg skriver en masteravhandling nå og i forbindelse med dette, vil jeg bruke tekster skrevet av 6. trinn elever som anonymiserte forskningsmaterialer dersom dere foresatte gir tillatelse til det.

Ta kontakt om dere har spørsmål.

### Samtykke

Jeg gir en tillatelse at elevens skriftlige besvarelser kan være en del av forskningen i forbindelse med masteravhandling.

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Jeg har lest og forstått samtykkeerklæringen om masterprosjektet og gir min tillatelse:

Underskrift av deltaker (elev): \_\_\_\_\_

Underskrift av foresatt: \_\_\_\_\_

Dato: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

### “Coronavirus and how it has changed our world”

#### Samples of students` essays

(16 essays of 30 are presented below)

##### Sample 1

How corona has changed the world. Corona came to the world in December 2019. Corona started in China. Corona is a virus. Corona changed everybody's life. When corona came to Norway you couldn't train football with other friends. You couldn't meet other friends, it was just very bad. We started with homeschool in March. We had homeschool in two months.

Now you have to wear face mask and you have to stay one meter away from people. On school we have to wash are hands. I hope everyone to wear face mask. I hope corona ends very soon. Remember wash your hands.

##### Sample 2

How COVID-19 has changed the world

In 2020 it came a virus that Is named COVID-19, we call it corona. People thinks it was because of a person in China who ate a bat. In 2020 at approximately spring time, we had to go In quarantine. That's where our journey started. We thought that this was just a little outbreak, however this showed up as a very serious situation. In quarantine we all were confused and worried. We then got information and it showed up this was a serious virus.

We couldn't even go out at first, but then we started wearing corona masks. This was a new rule. We could only go out if we wore corona masks. This was not a rule for the baby's and the kids under 12 years old. But the state advised the one's who didn't wear masks to stay inside. When the it was almost summer vacation we could go to school again. After the summer vacation we actually came back to school. And from that time we started to go to school until it was Christmas. But we of course had rules at school. We had to wash our hands when we came in. In addition to that we had zones when we had breaks. This changed very

many people's lifestyles. Right now it's the year 2021. It's still the same rules and stuff, but now we can go more out with friends. I am very grateful for that because I didn't like homeschool at all. I was very sad at that time because I couldn't be with my friends. Many people died because of this virus, many families has lost family members, people have lost friends, but i believe and hope that this virus will take an end soon. If we all work together and follow the rules it will be much easier to get a normal lifestyle again. It will be alright

### Sample 3

Coronavirus and how it has changed our wordl! Corona did Change my life and the whole world! Because now we are using masks on the buss and wen we are at the mall and we need to use handsanatiser and more stores are closed I hope that corona is going to be done in 2022! Now I can't go to my family so much anymore And now we can't go to the place in are school so now we have sons. And now they're people who have lost there jobs because of COVID-19. Some schools are homeschooled because of corona. And now we need to wash are hands more often in are daily life. And now there are lot of many parents that are working home. And now we need to do what the state is saying. Now we have the vacsen in Norway and many other states.

### Sample 4

Coronavirus and how it has changed our world?

The coronavirus is a type of virus that does you sick. Be a dangerous disease; it can kill many people. The whole started in 2019 in the China. It was wery many who became infected. I was on the school when we got to know we should have home school. We had home school in three months. After that we got to comeback at school three dans in the week. Now we most go with mask in in the shop. We most also keep one meter away. On the school we mos wach our hands werry mutch. I hope everyday life becomes normal again. I hope that the China will also help. Bye.

### Sample 5



## Coronavirus

In 2018 we were not afraid of any new virus even do we should have been. In 2019 a virus started spreading in Wuhan in China to be exact the Coronavirus or COVID-19. That's when we had to wear masks and have social distancing. People could not go out and many people got temporarily laid off from their jobs. Somewhere people were set into lockdown. Now I'm going to tell you how it affected me. We had to have homeschool and we couldn't see our friends. And I couldn't play football with contact. Hopefully this virus stops spreading and we can have contact and go out again. It's impossible to say when this virus is going to end but I think in 2023.

### Sample 6

Coronavirus! This is text about the coronavirus and how it started. The coronavirus was reported to the world health organization on December 31 2019. Coronavirus got confirmed that it was a virus in January 30 2020 and in March 11 2020 the coronavirus started. It had some unfinished business with us, from the day I am writing this text is it 2 days until it was one year since the lockdown started! It was a tough time for people, many lost their jobs, homes and special people to their family, for me it was a okay time, we had school on net and we had iPads that we used to do our work on. We had something called teams that we FaceTimed on. My mom is a teacher, so she had meetings and work to do, my dad works in a job called omsorgspartner there he helps people with mental health problems. Now we have a vaccine that changed our world! It will take a long time to all the people in the world to get the vaccine, and I hope maybe when I get a bit older I will read this text and remember these days. I hope you liked my text!

### Sample 7

Coronavirus and how it changed our world? I was watching television and heard when they tells news and gives information about Korona. Coronavirus changed that we had to use mask and antibac. Coronavirus can be caused a threat to health. And many people die, and people

feeling bad and if we are sick we need to take corona test. Covid-19 started in 2019 in December. We can't meet people and many people need to do online job and online school. But corona vaccine has many people get but not everyone. The oldest has get the vaccine and you need to take 2 doses of the vaccine. We have to hold 1 meters. We don't celebrate 17 May because coronavirus.

## Sample 8

Coronavirus and how it has changed our world

In 2020 come corona in March all the people get in quarantine. This virus is dangerous for the old people. It could be said that it changed the whole world Now I'm going to tell the story about corona.

It's all began in March 2020 the corona virus has been in the whole world. In March we got in quarantine we have homeschool the parents had to work from home. Now we aren't in quarantine. But we have to wear masks and have one meter from other people. And stay in queue to go inside a shop. And in school we have zone to hold one meter from other students. And now we wait to others rules. I don't like Saturday and Sundays anymore because I can not meet my friends. And that's the story of corona virus in 2020. We hope it's over soon. But until that's happening be careful. Bye

## Sample 9

Coronavirus and how it changed our world

The all started with one person in Japanese got Coronavirus and that person gave it to the whole Japan. Afterwards a person from Japanese come to some other country in the world like England. Afterwards a person that came from England come to Norway and that's how the Coronavirus started. My whole life has changed because of the Corona. I can not hug people, I can not go to shopping with my friends and I need to wear a face mask because of the Corona crisis. It's very hard to hold distance to other people but I can handle it. I don't like the Coronavirus because my family and I can not eat at restaurants anymore because of the Corona crisis.

I really hope the whole Corona thing is gone in 1 year. Because I really want fly to other countries again.

## Sample 10

Coronavirus and how it has changed our world

Today I'm going to talk about a virus that started in China December late 2019 and soon took over the world.

What is Coronavirus? Coronavirus is a virus that can easily spread by contact. That means you can't touch people and you should have at least one meter distance. If one person in your class has corona most likely you have it too. If you think about it for a second that's actually crazy!

What is some common Coronavirus symptoms? Here are some: Headaches, Sore throat, Loss of taste and smell, Diarrhea, Fever, Cough, Breathing difficulties, Runny nose and Vomiting.

Is Coronavirus dangerous? Coronavirus can be dangerous for everyone but for people with diseases it's even more dangerous. Many people have same problem with Corona. Same with old people cause their bodies are old and tired. But for kids however it's not that dangerous. You should not worry at all! People that's old and people with diseases is in a zone that we call the danger zone.

Coronavirus and how it has changed my daily life.

Coronavirus has my my daily life a lot. Not only that I have lost basically a year of my childhood I haven't been able to do things kids should be able to. Such as: Sleepover with friends, Not able to be in contact with each other, Being in quarantine, Being anti social, Being bored a lot and can't do my favorite sport: Soccer/Football.

What was something you needed to do during this pandemic?

12 of March 2020 Norway's prime minister Erna Solberg came out with things that we needed to start doing. She said we needed to start washing our hands many times a day. We also needed to take hand sanitizer if we did not have something to wash our hands with. As I said earlier we needed to be at least one meter away from each other. But 12 of March 2020 we needed to be two meters away from each other. Even everybody knew that was hard we all

needed to try. What is something you wish when Coronavirus is over? I will get my whole class and we will hug together as a group. I will also do a lot of thing I wasn't able to do in the pandemic.

## Sample 11

Corona

Much written on virus, but we do not know much information still. It is one of significant problems for people nowadays. Our health will be influence by the corona. It started in the kinase city Wuhan, where a doctor discovered a dangerous disease on a patient. He told the warned people about a SARS like disease. The police said that he needed to stop spreading fake rumours. Later the doctor died by the virus. Rest in peace dr. Li Wenliang. And this was when it all started. The coronavirus was now spreading at an extreme speed, and not much after Li's it was all around the world. Country was starting to realise what this virus had become. They started with rules about what you could do and who you can be with. They have a name that it is dangeros. They have a name that we should be home."The biggest change in my life was on March 12th 2020. It was that day Norway created some serious rules. We was having school from home and not go out with friends. I kinda liked it because we didn't have do wake up so early at the morning. But still millions of people got infected old many died. The US did not believe in it so many died. Now it's not so much talk about corona. There are still rules but it is kand of the standard now. But later today comes a new press conference. I hope that the rules get thigher so we Kai get rid of this pandemic. I think it will be over soon...

## Sample 12

Coronavirus and how it has changed our world!!

Hi, today I am going to tell how the coronavirus changed our world/life. Corona came in 2019 december. It started in China and after that, corona came in more places. Corona is a virus that is dangerous, people die and get sick. There is so many versions of Corona. Corona change the world. When corona came, the world had to be in quarantine. When you are in quarantine, can you not go outside. From time to time wondered we when it is over. You have

to be at home. Luckily I can go to school, but we have to have 1 meter away from each other. And we have zones in the brakes. And you can't celebrate Christmas or any holidays with your family, but luckily they found a vaccine. I hope corona gets over soon. Because I want to give hugs, be with my whole family and go to vacations. And its not fun to have corona. I hope it will be Great again.

### Sample 13

Corona

The coronavirus got discovered December 2019. The infection control measures was created March 12<sup>th</sup> 2020. Many people is quarantined over the entire world. In big city's is the most public places closed. We have to keep 1 meters distance to each other. If we don't can have distance, we have to use masks. There have been many meets to find solutions to remove corona.

### Sample 14

Coronavirus and hos it changed.

Today I will talk about corona virus. Coronavirus can be caused a threat to health. The disease can cause many other disease like pneumonia, headache ad high fever. Corona that comes from an animal. It spreads fast. It dangerous for the older people's. We must follow rules and there are many schools that are closed. Corona take over the world 🌐 it change lives in a special way. And I don't like masks it's very uncomfortable . They take syringes at people. Have done their work, they went away. They has done it before. We has people who say rules to all.corona makes. A lot of attention around people. We must not touch people. We must keep our distance. Corona come from china I think. My school closed last year because corona.

I thought it's stupid not to go where you want to go school because we have zones. I hopped the corona is over soon. And people will get many the presents when it wiil be over.

### Sample 15

Corona virus and how it has changed the world

Corona is a virus which to Norway March 2020. Corona virus was created in China. Corona changed the world because China eat bat. Corona changed my life because I can't be with my friends. We had to have homeschooling, I don't like it. The was not funny. I had corona virus. We have to keep a meter distance. We must have zones. We have to wear mask when we take the bus and to the city. I hope it's be gone.

### Sample 16

Corona virus and how it has changed the world

Corona virus is a virus that changed the world. The corona virus it can make sick cough and fell very bad. The corona virus came from China. People say that the corona virus came by eating bats but there is many other story. The corona virus changed our family's life. It made us harder to get food and clothes and many more. We have to wear masks and I don't like it. School is different because we can't be as close to friends. In brake time we have to be in zone's. We have to wash our hands and use hand hand cream. I hope that everything will get better soon. And I hope that the world will get better.

## Appendix E

The most common errors extracted from students` essays

“Coronavirus and how it has changed our world”

Grammatical errors

### 1. Verb tense and form

1. “People didn’t understood”
2. “He will losing his childhood.”
3. “When you have to listen to this, you will...”
4. “The corona virus it can make sick cough and fell very bad.”
5. “ Did Change my life and the whole world!”
6. “Corona changed the world because China eat bat.”
7. “We had to have homeschooling.”
8. “Many people died because of this virus, many families has lost family members, people have lost friends, but i believe and hope that this virus will take an end soon.”
9. “We was having school from home and not go out with friends.”
10. “Corona change the world.”
11. “It had some unfinished business with us, from the day I am writing this text is it 2 days until it was one year since the lockdown started!”
12. “In March we got in quarantine we have homeschool the parents had to work from home. Now we aren’t in quarantine.”
13. “I hope that the rules get thigher so we Kai get rid of this pandemic.”
14. “The coronavirus was now spreading at an extreme speed, and not much after Li’s it was all around the world.”
15. “I hope everyone to wear face mask.”
16. “Corona come from china I think.”
17. “In 2018 we were not afraid of any new virus even do we should have been.”
18. “We hope it’s over soon. But until that’s happening be careful.”
19. “I hopped the corona is over soon.”
20. “The oldest has get the veccine and you nede to take 2 doses of the vaccine.”
21. “But corona vaccine has meny people Get but not evryone.”

22. "People say that the corona virus came by eating bats but there is many other story."
23. "I hope that corona is going to be done in 2022!"
24. "I was on the school when we got to know we should have home school."
25. "And now we need to do what the state is saying."
26. "But later today comes a new press conference."
27. "They have a name that we should be home."
28. "Country was starting to realise what this virus had become."
29. "They started with rules about what you could do and who you can be with."
30. "And now they're people who have lost there jobs because of COVID-19."
31. "We could only go out if we wore corona masks."
32. "I hope it's be gone."
33. "I was watching televishon and heard when they tells news and gives information about Korona."
34. "They have a name that it is dangeros."
35. "Coronavirus has my my daily life a lot."
36. "12 of March 2020 Norway's prime minister Erna Solberg came out with things that we needed to start doing."
37. "She said we needed to start washing our hands many times a day."
38. "Afterwards a person from Japanese come to some other country in the world like England."
39. "Afterwards a person that came from England come to Norway and that's how the Coronavirus started."
40. "In 2020 come corona in March all the people get in quarantine."

## 2. Subject-Verb Agreement

1. "It have many names."
2. "Corona take over the world 🌐 it change lives in a special way."
3. "The sickness causes many symptoms."
4. "Many people is quarantined over the entire world."



5. "We has people who say rules to all corona makes."
6. "The was not funny."
7. "In big city's is the most public places closed."
8. "A lot of attention around people."
9. "There are still rules but it is kand of the standard now."
10. "We was having school from home and not go out with friends."
11. "And I don't like masks it's very uncomfortable."
12. "It's still the same rules and stuff, but now we can go more out with friends."
13. "We have to wear mask when we takes the bus and to the city."
14. "Corona is a virus which to Norway March 2020."
15. "And that's the story of corona virus in 2020."
16. "All the symptoms I have a name."
17. "I love vacations, so without traveling, no pleasure for me."
18. "All the reasons I have a name are significant for me."
19. "There is also beautiful lights to look at."
20. "The infection control measures was created March 12th 2020."
21. "Some schools is homeschooled because of corona."
22. "People thinks it was because of a person in China who ate a bat."

### 3. Prepositions

1. "Different factors can cause by symptoms."
2. "Many people die from Coronavirus."
3. "They take syringes at people."
4. "Later the doctor died by the virus."
5. "It started in the kinase city Wuhan, where a doctor discovered a dangerous disease on a patient."
6. "I was on the school when we got to know we should have home school."
7. "We had home school in three months."
8. "And we have zones in the brakes."

9. "And now there are lot of many parents that are working home."
10. "I was on the school when we got to know we should have home school."
11. "I thought it's stupid not to go where you want to go school because we have zones."
12. "My school closed last year because corona."
13. "We have to keep 1 meters distance to each other."
14. "Go for walk."
15. "And now we wait to others rules."
16. "And stay in queue to go inside a shop."
17. "On school we have to wash are hands."
18. "We dont celebrate 17.may because coronavirus."
19. "Many people is quarantined over the entire world."
20. "It started in China and after that, corona came in more places."
21. "In the corona pandemic."

#### 4. Word order

1. "How we can stop the spreading of disease worldwide?"
2. "And its not fun to have corona."
3. "But we of course had rules at school."
4. "But still millions of people got infected old many died."
5. "We then got information and it showed up this was a serious virus."
6. "But later today comes a new press conference."
7. "When you are in quarantine, can you not go outside."
8. "The all started with one person in Japanese got Coronavirus and that person gave it to the whole japan."
9. "From time to time wondered we when it is over."
10. "In 2020 come corona in March all the people get in quarantine."
11. "But corona vaccine has meny people Get but not evryone."

#### 5. Articles

1. "And people will get many the presents when it will be over."

2. "It was a tough time for people, many lost their jobs, homes and special people to their family, for me it was a okay time. And stay in queue to go inside a shop."
3. "It will cause death."
4. Many people have same problem with Corona.
5. "This is text about the coronavirus and how it started."
6. "This virus is Dangerous for the old people."
7. "It is ne of significant problems for people nowadays."
8. "The whole started in 2019 in the China."

## 6. Capitalization

1. "The all started with one person in Japanese got Coronavirus and that person gave it to the whole japan."
2. "I hope it will be Great again."
3. "Many people died because of this virus, many families has lost family members, people have lost friends, but i believe and hope that this virus will take an end soon."
4. "In 2020 at approximately spring time, we had to go In quarantine."
5. "In 2020 it came a virus that Is named COVID-19, we call it corona."
6. "And i couldn't play football with contact."
7. "Corona came in 2019 december."
8. "This virus is Dangerous for the old people."
9. "I don't like saturday and sundays anymore because I can not meet my friends"
10. "Such as: Sleepover with friends, Not able to be in contact with each other, Being in quarantine, Being anti social, Being bored a lot and can't do my favorite sport: Soccer/Football."
11. "Here are some: Headaches, Sore throat, Loss of taste and smell, Diarrhea, Fever, Cough, Breathing difficulties, Runny nose and Vomiting."

12. "I can not hug people, I can not go to shopping with my friends and i need to wear a face mask because of the Corona crisis."

13. "This virus is Dangerous for the old people."

## 7. Auxiliaries

1. "Be a dangerous disease; it can kill many people."
2. "If we don't can have distance, we have to use masks
3. "Have done their work, they went away.
4. "They has done it before.
5. "I hope that corona is going to be done in 2022!"
6. "In 2018 we were not afraid of any new virus even do we should have been."

## 8. Plurality

1. "The disease can cause many other disease like pneumonia, headache ad high fever."
2. "We have to keep 1 meters distance to each other."
3. "Many child miss playing with their friends."
4. "And in school we have zone to hold one meters from other students."
5. "It dangerous for the older people's."
6. "This was not a rule for the baby's and the kids under 12 years old."
7. "But we have to where masks and have one meters from other people."
8. "There have been many meets to find solutions to remove corona."
9. "In big city's is the most public places closed."
10. "We have to hold 1 meters."
11. "I will also do a lot of thing I wasn't able to do in the pandemic."
12. "People say that the corona virus came by eating bats but there is many other story."

## 9. Passive voice

1. “Coronavirus can be caused a threat to health.”
2. “It can be caused by animals.”
3. “It could been said that it changed the whole world.”
4. “Our health will be influence by the corona.”
5. “Coronavirus is a virus that can easily spreaded by contact.”
6. “Much written on virus, but we do not know much information still.”

## Masters of Education in Foreign Languages at School Reflection Note

I am a lifelong learner, and it has always been my dream to get a Master's degree in Norway. When I decided to study further, I was unsure about the direction I wanted to choose. Since I had full-time work, it was challenging to combine it with higher education studies, but this choice could significantly improve my chances of success. After months of research, I decided to seek a Master's of Education in Foreign Languages at School at Østfold University College. From my research, it was evident that this education would allow me to become a better practitioner.

After the past three years, as I reached the end of my graduate studies, I completed the writing of my master thesis: "An Analysis of common errors in English writing: the case of sixth-grade students in Norwegian primary school." I invested a lot of time and energy into this study, and it was essential for me that the topic of the study was relevant for my working experience. I chose to conduct an EA and investigate errors made by Norwegian sixth-grade students. With the feedback of my fantastic advisors, Eva Lambertsson Björk and Kåre Solfeldt, I worked hard to improve my writing. My advisors were of great help throughout the process of writing my thesis. I appreciate their knowledge, encouragement, and patient guidance in every step that added considerably to my experience about the importance of EA and how I can use it in my future teaching.

This writing experience contributed to my understanding of students' language learning and how EA can be an essential tool for educators, students, and researchers.

At times, I struggled to see some obvious mistakes in my writing, but my advisors guided me in the right direction again. Furthermore, since error causes can be complex when errors overlap and do not belong to an explicit category, it was sometimes difficult to decide which category to place the errors students made. It was also challenging to distinguish errors from mistakes, but I used some strategies described in my study above.

In addition, writing this paper helped me to recognize the importance of errors since these provide information about the nature of language learning and illustrate the areas of difficulties. Consequently, it gives the possibility to adjust curricula and teaching techniques based on EA results.

Throughout my studies, I improved my writing skills and developed a habit of being a pedagogically reflective practitioner. This education had provided me with the knowledge

needed to be a competent teacher who can create a positive learning environment for my students, adapted to their levels and needs.