



“The greatest mistake is to imagine that we never err.”

Thomas Carlyle

An Errors Analysis of Grammatical Errors in The Written Productions of
Swedish Students in a Vocational High School

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Abstract

As an approach to spotting and analyzing students' errors, error analysis provides information that gives us a better understanding of students' knowledge of second language grammar, so we can offer them more effective teaching. This study is an error analysis that investigates the most common grammatical errors focusing on verbs, prepositions, articles, and pronouns in English writings produced by first-year high-school students at a vocational school in southern Sweden. The findings of this study illustrate which errors cause the most difficulty for the students. Additionally, it suggests some teaching methods, based on the results of the study, which will enable the students to deal with their grammatical problems regarding word classes. In the first step, all grammatical errors from the mentioned word classes were marked when reviewing the corpus of the study. The results illustrate that most errors occur in the verb category, and these students mostly struggle with subject-verb agreement as well as time and tense. Moreover, there is a great affinity between the outcomes of this study and previous ones in the same area, i.e., error analysis of written productions. The findings suggest that the students need to do more exercises on verb usage, particularly in writing. Grammar exercises can include different types, such as recognizing verb errors, completing sentences with a correct verb, substituting the best alternative, and even peer correction in writing assignments or communicative tasks to inspire them to apply their grammar knowledge.

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1 Introduction

In Sweden, English is not only a core subject at school, but it is an inextricable component of everyone's daily life. Watching a movie on TV, checking a brief video on social media, and at a higher level, requesting new opportunities to work outside of the country, all necessitate understanding English at different levels. According to the English syllabus in the National Curriculum (2020), English as a subject aims to develop a versatile, communicative ability and such language skills are necessary for international contacts, and future studies. Education in English also aims to give students the opportunity to develop linguistic knowledge in speaking and writing and the ability to adapt the language to different purposes, recipients, and contexts (Skolverket, 2020). The school should strive to increase students' linguistic self-confidence and develop a lifelong interest in language learning in students. Besides, achieving communication skills in English is a prerequisite for living in an increasingly internationalized world.

In second language learning, errors and mistakes are inevitably a part of students' language productions. At first glance, it may seem that finding them in learners' performance should be problematic because they demonstrate that the teacher did not achieve the determined goal, which is always the success of all students. However, analyzing errors can be an efficient method to learn more about the learners' language development in order to plan ahead for future teaching sequences. Language errors are not always signs of insufficiency of teaching, but there are different reasons resulting in disturbances in linguistics productions. Understanding errors and knowing how to deal with them is necessary for achieving better accuracy in language production. Ellis (2006) and Tornberg's (2020) solution for this problem is to arrange the teaching contents based on students' errors in their productions since errors provide information about how much students know about the grammar of the target language.

For some students, learning English is a challenge due to their various talents in the art of language learning. They struggle with the entire learning process at times and only a particular area or aptitude at other times. For example, a student may have a good ability to speak English and communicate easily but have difficulty reading or writing. Knowing students' strengths and weaknesses in L2 learning is an effective measure in helping them to develop their performance. Giving them feedback about their incorrect production is beneficial for encouraging students to develop a conceptual understanding of the language learning process (Ellis, 2012). Thereupon, error analysis as a method of investigating

students' productions allows teachers to provide suitable feedback by which students' progress is more achievable.

In order to clearly know what the most common errors were in the writings, it seemed ideal to identify all the grammatical errors. However, pointing out all grammatical errors would have been too time-consuming, and it was not possible within the framework of this study. Reviewing some previous research in the same field (Köhlmyr, 2003; Taher, 2011; Krokström, 2012; Jonsson, 2015) made it clear that different word classes such as verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns, as well as articles (even if articles are not recognized as a distinguished word class) were those that repeatedly included the most common errors in students' writings. So, the decision was made to focus on these word classes because they were thought to consist of more errors in the texts and analyze them as far as it was possible within the study. The word classes are presented in the research aim section.

This study aims to examine and analyze the English written productions of students in the first grade of a vocational high school to identify their most common grammatical errors. The focus is on the grammatical errors based on word classes. Those categories which consist of most errors will be analyzed, evaluated, and discussed.

Word classes are the fundamental parts of all sentences and have many rules of usage in English grammar. Verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, as well as articles, are essential word classes that in different studies were the categories with the most errors (Köhlmyr, 2003; Taher, 2011; Krokström, 2012; Jonsson, 2015). Analyzing students' errors provides us with insight into their grammatical grasp of the English language, which allows us to assist them through different strategies to enhance their performance in language learning. Data documentation arising from the learners' errors, particularly systematic errors due to a lack of grammatical knowledge, can lead to this goal. Although the students have errors in various grammatical categories, as well as spelling, and punctuation, only the categories that according to the results have the most errors are in focus to attain higher accuracy within the time limitations.

The following research questions express the objectives of the research are

1. to investigate the most common grammatical errors in certain categories based on word classes and determine the frequency of the errors,
2. to assess the cause of the errors using research sources and estimate the impact of negative transfer from the Swedish language, and

3. to present some suggestions for more effective grammar teaching.

Believing in the necessity of teaching grammar, finding adequate information to choose required grammar subjects, and making decisions about teaching methods can be good reasons for research, so this study is an opportunity to intensely discuss the students' performance and make the upcoming information the basis of further investigations.

2 Theoretical framework

In this chapter, the main theory of the study as well as different views on grammar teaching are taken into consideration and at the end, the status of grammar teaching in the Swedish curriculum for English language is discussed.

2.1 Error Analysis (EA)

Error analysis is a combination of different methods to classify, determine, and describe language learners' errors. According to Corder (1981), identifying learner errors is essential for three reasons: first, it allows teachers to learn about their students' knowledge of the language and help them in the process of learning; second, it provides information for researchers to study the procedure of language learning and third, it helps the learner to learn the rules of the new language and being able to manage their learning.

The first step in analyzing errors is to distinguish mistakes and errors and then define their source. It takes time for students to handle the structure of the new language well, so during this period mistakes and errors are inevitable. Failure frequency for a given structure is a clue to whether that failure is just a mistake or an error. Managing a structure frequently but not being successful on one or two occasions is a clue that the failure is a mistake; otherwise, it is an error if it happens often and repeatedly.

Concerning the definitions of error and mistakes, there is a preference for analyzing errors rather than mistakes since it is believed that analyzing mistakes does not provide helpful information that can help teachers and learners in language learning. Nevertheless, we should remember that both errors and mistakes are inevitable processes in language learning. Corder (1974, as cited in Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005) distinguished different steps for error analysis: the first step is assembling data from the learner's production in language and then

recognizing errors, followed by describing and explaining them, and finally interpreting the errors.

According to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), even though error analysis is an excellent method to discover the students' weaknesses in language learning, it misses error-free areas. In other words, it does not give any information about the structures that students do not use in their products. As a result, it does not provide a good picture of learners' capability. For instance, if a student does not use passive structure in his/ her text, it is not possible to know anything about his/her knowledge in this regard.

Error analysis was introduced as an alternative to contrastive analysis, and instead of focusing on comparing the structures of two languages and use differences as a predictor of difficulty, it focuses on the errors that learners make in the target language. The challenge in error analysis is the definition of errors and deciding on how to categorize them. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) point out two criteria for identifying errors; *grammaticality*, which refers to the extent to which a sentence conforms to the grammar rules of a language, and *acceptability* which is about how far native speakers of a language can approve a sentence in each situation. In this study, the criterion is the grammaticality meaning that the errors are identified according to the grammatical rules presented in standard grammar books which are used as teaching sources in schools.

2.2 Identifying Errors

Errors may have interlingual or intralingual roots. Interlingual errors, a concept introduced by Pit Corder (1981), occur when the learners export their knowledge about the characteristics of a language (e.g., first language) to another language (e.g., second language), like transfer errors, and it happens both for grammatical and lexical rules. Intralingual errors, such as overgeneralization and simplification, do not occur because of first and second language differences, but the focus is on the target language rules. According to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), overgeneralization arises whenever learners generate deviant structures grounded on the target language rules. These errors are probably due to insufficient or incorrect knowledge, or the ignorance of rules and regulations of the target language associated with using rules in an inaccurate situation. On the other hand, simplification errors, according to Littlewood (1984), ensue from a process by which learners mistakenly try to fit their new linguistic information into the frameworks they already have in mind, such as using the simple present instead of the progressive form.

Before further discussions about Error Analysis, let us clarify what we mean by Error in this study. An error occurs when a language learner uses the language in a form that is incorrect according to prescriptive grammar presented in grammar sources. For example, a Swedish-English speaker might say, "Today go I to the library"; this is not what competent English speakers say; the correct form should be "Today, I go to the library" or "Today, I'm going to the library."

According to Corder (1982), we need to distinguish between non-systematic and systematic errors. The first group usually appears in the daily use of language due to different mental (psychological) and sometimes physical conditions like tiredness, anxiety, or even slips of the tongue. As Corder (1982) stated, such errors are performance errors or mistakes that can be detected immediately by the speaker and corrected. Systematic errors or errors of competence reveal the shortcomings of learners' language knowledge. These errors occur due to divergence from a particular grammatical rule, resulting in the same situation whenever the learner needs to apply that grammatical rule. These errors can give us information about the learner's knowledge of the rules of the language they learn (Corder, 1981).

According to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), for identifying errors, we need to describe the areas of our analysis. Do we think about words individually or about their position in combination with other words as in a sentence? The core concept at this stage is deciding the domain and extent of an error. The domain of an error means the length of the unit in which we analyze the error. Do we consider words or sentences? In this study, the sentence is considered as the domain of the error.

Swan and Smith (2001) highlight the typical errors made by Scandinavian learners in learning English. The errors, they discussed within different word classes and especially the verb category, are more relevant to this research and are useful in understanding the most prevalent errors in each category. Some of the subsections Swan and Smith (2001) identified in the verb category are as follows; *do constructions*, *-ing forms*, *progressive aspect*, *tense*, *voice*, and *modal verbs*. The categories proposed by Köhlmyr (2003) serve as the foundation for the additional categories mentioned in this study.

The next step after identifying errors is to explain them. According to Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982), there are two categories for *explaining the errors*, meaning the linguistic and the surface structure. Linguistic class is based on grammatical descriptions, such as sentence structure, verb and noun phrases, prepositions, etc. Each of these may extend to some subdivisions based on the analysis of errors; in other words, the researcher can decide about this factor depending on how detailed the study of errors should be.

Surface structure taxonomy is a different approach for describing mistakes. This approach focuses on how the surface of a sentence differs due to a variety of modifications, including omission (the absence of an element required for a well-formed sentence), addition (inclusion of something unnecessary in a sentence), wrong formation (using the incorrect form of a word or structure), and incorrect order (putting words together in the wrong order) (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005). This method provides us with an understanding of learners' cognitive knowledge about the L2.

2.3 Grammar teaching

As earlier stated, the second purpose of this research is to identify successful techniques in teaching grammar based on the suggestions of previous studies and other sources. As a result, in this section grammar teaching techniques, approaches, and theories are discussed.

There are various discussions about whether teaching grammar is a necessity or not. Tornberg (2020) and Ellis (2006) both mention Krashen's argument (1981) about the role of grammar instruction in language competence; he claimed that grammar does not contribute to the natural process of language learning. Krashen (1981, as cited in Tornberg, 2020) differentiated between two concepts, learning, and acquisition, and assumed that the conscious process, learning, by which we learn grammar rules does not necessarily provide better language performance. This theory has been criticized and rejected for being unsustainable and not provable since then (Tornberg, 2020).

Thus, there is evidence that instruction leads to acquired knowledge as well as learned knowledge. Other studies have also shown that students who received grammar teaching performed better in language learning. Still, the order of acquisition was the same for them and another group who did not have grammar lessons (Ellis 2006).

Reviewing many different studies about L2 learning, Ellis (2012) determines that all forms of grammar instruction, whether explicit or implicit, as well as any kind of corrective feedback, will help students achieve greater accuracy. However, the most compelling evidence shows that some grammatical structures are more challenging to learn. Additionally, the learnability of some specific structures depends on the learners' background knowledge or their development stage in the language (Ellis, 2012).

Pienemann (as cited in Tornberg, 2020) focused on grammar teaching and language development and claimed that teaching grammar is beneficial in cases where the rules

presented are suitable for the students' level of knowledge in grammar. The grammar structures that students are not mature enough to understand will not be effective and will not lead to learning. This hypothesis is called the theory of teachability and argues that effective grammar teaching occurs when it is compatible with the learners' stage in language development (Ellis, 2006). It would be useless to attempt to teach complicated grammatical structures to students who do not have basic grammar knowledge.

Grammar can be taught using a variety of methods and approaches. Ellis (2006) distinguishes between intensive and extensive grammar teaching methods, explaining that the intensive method encompasses instruction that focuses on a specific grammatical structure, such as teaching conditional structures in a single or a few sessions, whereas the extensive method includes teaching sessions that cover a wide range of grammatical structures in such a way that every structure receives only a few minutes of attention, for instance, reviewing all verb tenses in one session. Both extensive and intense grammar teaching methods have advantages and disadvantages. Intensive teaching, for instance, restricts the number of structures that are taught while still giving students ample time to practice some challenging ones. However, extensive teaching does not give students the time they need to practice structures that are more difficult to learn but makes it possible to cover more grammatical structures (Ellis, 2006).

There are two main approaches to teaching grammar, as Ellis (2006) mentions, deductive and inductive approaches. In the deductive method, the teacher presents the rule and structures, and learners produce the language based on them. It mostly starts with instruction, and then it is followed by examples. In the inductive approach, the teacher presents many examples so that students can learn or discover the structure through practicing those examples. However, both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. The deductive method is time-consuming and teacher-based, and it has been shown to provide a better possibility for teaching more complicated grammatical structures. In this regard, Ellis (2012) brings up a few studies that failed to demonstrate which of these approaches—deductive or inductive—is better for teaching languages. The differences were noticeable during short-term experiments, but they vanished in long term (Ellis, 2012).

On the other hand, the inductive method is learner-centered and gives the opportunity for a great deal of practices and exercises. Concerning the different findings of several studies about the advantage or success of each approach in grammar classes, Ellis (2006) concludes that studies do not illustrate the same results because of different variables. So, it seems logical to get the benefit of both methods depending on the complexity of the grammar

structures. It is important to consider the goals and contexts of a particular language teaching situation in order to decide which of these methods is most suitable for students.

Ellis (2006, 2012), referring to the results of research, states that there is no significant difference between the “*acquisitional processes*” of students who have received grammar instructions and those who have learned the language naturally without learning the structures. However, the same results show that the former group progressed faster than the latter group and reached a higher level of proficiency in language. Furthermore, after analyzing the results of different research about language learning, Ellis (2012) highlights that comprehension-based instruction methods which give priority to understanding rather than producing the language, show better and more effective results in teaching language because the emphasis is on developing significant comprehension skills before asking the learner to produce the new language. Although this method seems to be more effective for beginners, there is no evidence as to whether this method is beneficial for more advanced learners or not (Ellis, 2012).

Another approach in language teaching is task-based instruction, a communicative method that students do tasks using the authentic language used in real life rather than explicitly trying to apply rules. According to Ellis et al. (2020) the goal of the task-based approach is to provide students with chances to communicate with the language they use outside the classroom while grammar is used to serve the communication and is not in focus. Ellis (2009) assumes four characteristics for tasks in this method; first, the emphasis should be on students' production of language (meaning). Second, the purpose of doing the task should be to give information or express an idea, and then to complete the task, learners should use their knowledge and information (linguistic or non-linguistic). Finally, the result must take precedence over the use of language, or in other words, the language must serve the outcome. Such activities may be developed in all major language skill domains, including listening, reading, speaking, and writing, and they can be modified to suit students at varying proficiency levels, from beginners to experts. These tasks provide learners with the opportunity to produce the language while using and understanding the necessary forms and structures.

Irrespective of what method is more beneficial and how grammar should be taught, it should be admitted that it has a key role in language teaching. Ellis (2006) remarks on several key findings concerning grammar teaching, including how not only the forms but also the meanings and use of each grammatical structure should be included in teaching, and it is important to give feedback and pay attention to the areas in which students have problems.

Moreover, students' understanding of the language should be considered before planning for grammar teaching and the focus should be on communicative approaches to encourage students to apply what they have learned.

Focus on form and focus on forms are two other approaches in the field of grammar teaching. Loewen (2018) points out that the focus on the form approach emphasizes meaning-based interaction (the language generated between communicators), although it may occasionally include a brief grammar lesson. The main idea of this method is that language learning improves when students pay attention to the linguistic elements required for communication. Large-scale, incremental input, as well as corrective feedback, are the hallmarks of this approach. Comparing these two approaches, Loewen (2018) states that the focus on forms is primarily concentrated on the explicit teaching of grammar rules because in this approach linguistic structures take precedence over meaning. Moreover, three stages of presentation, practice, production (PPP) and direct teaching of grammatical structures are the key factors of the method.

2.4 Grammar teaching in the National Syllabus for English

It is stated in the English syllabus (Skolverket, 2020) that students should develop their communicative ability in language both in reception (reading and listening) and production (writing and speaking). They should be able to adapt their language to different situations, purposes, and recipients, meaning they need to learn to express their thoughts through different strategies and variations in language. Achieving all these qualifications demands a good knowledge of grammar.

The word grammar appears only once in the core content of the high school English curriculum, which could thus be regarded as not being in focus. Elmqvist (2020) focuses on the importance of grammatical knowledge and how it is taught in Swedish high schools and illustrates that the role of grammar is ambiguous and not specified in the previous national English syllabus. In the core content of the latest version 2022, it is briefly stated that grammatical structures and sentence construction should be included in the teaching. Meanwhile, the knowledge requirements of the English syllabus (2022) demand students to adapt their written productions to situations and recipients and have variety and clarity as well, which can be interpreted as a need for grammar ability because correct grammar, without doubt, improves communication. It is also worth mentioning that components such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar are not independently defined as distinct and crucial

test areas in national assessment (Erickson, 2020). Instead, they are measured under overarching categories such as reading and listening comprehension, as well as writing, and speaking.

3 Previous research

In order to obtain a background of research in the field of error analysis in Sweden, several studies were reviewed, the findings of which are summarized here. Köhlmyr's Ph.D. thesis (2003), "To Err Human...", is the most useful research since it covers a wide range of grammatical errors in written production by 16-year-old students in Sweden. It is based on two approaches, error analysis, and contrastive analysis. The purpose of the study is to investigate the most common grammatical errors of Swedish learners, analyze the reason for the errors, and suggest applicable teaching methods to cope with them. According to the study's results, the most prevalent errors were verbs, nouns/ articles, concord, and prepositions categories. Students made roughly the same errors, regardless of their knowledge and level of English.

Moreover, the outcomes showed that overgeneralization and transfer from the first language were the dominating factors of errors, and other factors were simplification and blending. Köhlmyr (2003) discussed the differences between students' actual performance and the goals of the national curriculum, the importance of grammar teaching, and feedback. The result also confirmed that about 60% of errors were intralingual ones, like overgeneralization, simplification, and blends. The rest were due to transfer.

Another study in the same field is a student paper by Krokström at Gothenburg university. The study was conducted in 2010 and explored errors in 36 essays of ninth-grade Swedish students who participated in the National Assessment Program in English. Word order, the plural of nouns, nouns/ articles, adjectives /adverbs, verbs /concord errors, and prepositions were the categories investigated in the study to examine the frequency of errors in each category. The results revealed that verb-subject concord, prepositions, and nouns/ articles categories accounted for the vast majority of errors in the students' written productions. Krokström (2010) argue that the errors were mostly due to negative transfer from the L1 which was Swedish and so-called delayed effects, which referred to a delay in learning subjects that were taught in the classroom.

In another study at Uppsala University in 2011, Taher investigated the grammatical knowledge of a group of Swedish students in junior high school by analyzing their written productions. The method is error analysis, and the researcher intended to find the most frequent errors that the students made. She investigated two kinds of written texts; one text that students wrote freely, and the other one had a specific subject and a limited period of

time. The study focused on (a) the most frequent grammatical errors in the students' production, (b) the reasons for the errors, and (c) differences between two forms of writing situations. The most frequent errors were *verb tense*, *verb inflection*, and *subject-verb agreement*, and two reasons were recognized for the errors: lack of grammatical knowledge, as well as incorrect transfer from Swedish into English. Furthermore, the results did not significantly differ between free and controlled productions regarding errors and their frequency.

Jonsson (2015) from Linnaeus university investigated forty essays written by Swedish pupils in year nine for grammatical errors. The frequency of errors and the possible reasons for them were in focus. Once more the results of a study revealed that errors in the categories of subject-verb concord, plural nouns, article usage as well as prepositions included the most common errors in the students' essays. Jonsson (2015) determined that interlingual transfer, i.e., negative transfer from the students' L1 was one of the most significant reasons causing errors in the essays while other causes could be found as well, such as intralingual errors.

Elmqvist (2020) analyzed a number of student texts for grammatical errors to observe how errors affect the quality of students' writings, based on the knowledge requirements and assessment instructions for the National Tests in English 5. Two groups of students participated in the study and had different numbers of errors, but the survey results show a homogeneous pattern in the errors. The findings of the study determine that the most common errors were in the verb usage, varying from concord errors to tense errors, coupled with errors in punctuation like missing commas in compound sentences or periods at the end of statements, as well as missing capital letters at the beginning of sentences. Besides problems in verb forms, both groups showed a lot of problems regarding prepositions and pronouns. Elmqvist (2020) mentions that there is no explicit and clear instruction about grammar teaching or grammar knowledge requirements in the National Curriculum Gy2011. However, grammar is taken into consideration as a criterion when students' writings are evaluated on the national exams through concepts like variety, sentence structure, text binding, and grammatical structures. Accordingly, she concludes that there is a discrepancy between the governing documents and the national tests. This situation caused a lack of enough grammatical knowledge for students and consequently weak performance in their productions (Elmqvist. 2020).

Through the previous research and studies reviewed in this field, a clear result stands out: the verb category is the most common group of grammatical errors for students who participated in these studies. Even though the studies were carried out in various parts of

Sweden at different times with students at different levels, the results reveal the same pattern; managing verb conjugations is the most challenging category in learning English grammar, especially when it comes to production.

4 Method

As the method for the study, the focus is on Error Analysis, and whenever possible, Contrastive Analysis is used to identify the reasons for errors and to discuss transfer from the L1 can be the cause of the errors. All the texts were reviewed several times. All the mistakes were marked since it was not clear whether they would be repeated or not, and it was necessary to have a record of all of them to know what errors were frequent. In this section, the material of the study, methodological procedures, participants, and ethical considerations of the research are presented. In order to explain the errors in different categories and describe the structures I use “*A University Grammar of English: With a Swedish Perspective*” by Estling Vannestål (2015).

4.1 Method and material

The methodology used in this study is a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Because the frequency of grammatical errors is documented first, and then the data is evaluated to determine the causes of the errors. The number of grammatical errors in students' texts, as well as the number of errors in each category, are among the quantitative findings of the study. The study is deemed qualitative when it examines the errors, their causes, and their consequences.

In different grammar sessions, the students who participated in the study had already been taught the main word classes which are verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, as well as prepositions, pronouns, and articles (even though it is not recognized as an independent word class). Accordingly, the error categorization in this study was based on the above-mentioned word classes to distinguish areas of difficulty for the students. As the initial step of the analysis, all grammatical errors and mistakes were marked in all of the texts as far as I could recognize them. The errors were then assigned numbers to fit into one of the aforementioned word classes. To be clear, the core categories were verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and nouns, as well as articles, prepositions, and pronouns, which were also among the major categories in

Köhlmyr's (2003), Krokström's (2010), Jonsson's (2015) studies and were discussed in Swan and Smith (2001) as challenging areas for Scandinavian learners of English.

The use of patterns from previous research to categorize errors is critical since it becomes possible to compare the results with previous findings and reach a clearer conclusion about the cause of the errors. Accordingly, Swan and Smith's (2001) classification which is based on their definition of significant problems that Swedish learners of English have, as well as different categories for errors from Köhlmyr (2003) provides information for deciding how to classify the errors of the study. Köhlmyr (2003) has organized the errors in grammatical categories on a word class basis and then discussed concord errors separately.

As the reason for choosing these categories, it is worth mentioning, that according to Swan and Smith (2001), these are the most common errors for Scandinavian English learners, which may be the results of negative transfer from their mother language. The discussion for each category of errors includes information about the frequency of the error and an explanation of whether the error is a result of interference from the first language or an overgeneralization error. Of course, it may not be entirely possible to define the difference between these two types of errors.

Errors in all categories were counted and, whenever possible, classified into subcategories. When they were divided into categories, it was discovered that the verb category with the greatest difference had the majority of the errors, while the other categories contained far fewer. This means that students found it challenging to cope with verb usage in their writing; thus, it's worth delving into and studying all of the subcategories in the verb area. However, due to the lack of time and limitations regarding the number of words, it was not possible to thoroughly analyze all categories; consequently, the verb category has been highlighted and other errors in categories such as prepositions, articles, and pronouns are briefly mentioned. The verb category, as in Köhlmyr's study (2003, p.62), is divided into seven sub-categories, time & tense, progressive aspects, auxiliary do, modal auxiliaries, passive voice, non-finiteness, and transitivity. The same sub-categories were considered for this study. Since no errors from the sub-categories passive voice and transitivity were detected, these two were eliminated.

4.2 Participants

Participants in this study were all students in a natural resource high school in southern Sweden. Graduating from this school, students are typically employed in the natural

resource industry, primarily in wildlife management, nature tourism, and forestry. Completing high school education is crucial for the establishment in the labor force because it is becoming increasingly difficult to get a job without a high school diploma. Torun Rudin (2020), head of the high-school department at Skolverket, points out that young people with a high school diploma can more easily apply for higher education and get a job. Consequently, a grade in English 5 as a core subject in Swedish education is undoubtedly significant. It is also worth mentioning that according to statistics from the association of natural resource schools (Naturbruksskolornas Förening), about 20 to 25 percent of the students in the natural resource high schools continue their studies to higher education, which makes it even more necessary for students to have a grade in higher-level English.

All the participants had the Swedish language as their mother language and were in the first grade of high school, studying English 5, which is approximately equivalent to the intermediate level, B1, according to CEFR. CEFR stands for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which is an international standard for describing language learning achievements. In this standard, there is a six-point scale in which A1 is for beginners and C2 is for those who are fluent in the language. Students were between 16 and 18 years old. They all agreed to participate in the current research by producing a writing task as one of their obligatory assignments. Thirty nine contributors who submitted their text were in two classes with different high-school programs. Students created these papers as one of their first assignments in English 5, meaning they were just a few weeks into the course and had not yet received many grammar lessons. This study has been carried out over a short period, and the focus is only on one written assignment by the students. No attempts have been made to make comparison with other assignments or follow-up on the results after the feedback. Seven students had been diagnosed with dyslexia, a learning disorder relating to difficulty reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and connecting them to letters and words. Students with this reading disorder usually have problems with writing and it is difficult to read and understand their productions. The productions of these students were not included in the analysis because so many spelling mistakes had such a substantial adverse effect on the text that even in some cases, it was not possible to recognize the intended words.

Example 1: “Butt wone day it started strong and the wind hatted tree and Snow fallin the branches on the tree and from nowhere a hog etch wide hit the tree and it foal over and it got Kauten up to logs and got transportedd away from the hill to near the city” (S 33)

The case about the writings of students with dyslexia has also been discussed with the special education teacher at the school. She confirmed that these students' errors could not be classified in the same category as the other students because these students' writing errors might not have the same source and basis as the other students. The students with this disorder have problems in syntax and grammar, meaning that they probably have a challenge in knowing how words and parts of words are put together into sentences. Accordingly, their language often gives the impression of the language of much younger children, especially in the second language. It is also common for them to have problems with word order as well as for function words such as "and, but, or"; they usually omit these words (Logopeditjänst, n.d.). Under the circumstances of this study and due to the lack of time, it was not possible to decode that many errors and recognize whether they have their roots in dyslexia or if they are the consequence of a lack of grammatical knowledge, so they are not included in the results.

4.3 Collection of data and material

The data for this study come from 32 texts that, as mentioned earlier, students wrote as an obligatory assignment. The content that students created is not the center of the study; rather, the grammatical structures they employed to build their texts. First, they were supposed to read a short story by Hans Christian Andersson and then write a summary, a narrative text, of a minimum of 250 words. The task was the same for all the students, and they did not have a limited time to do it, meaning they could submit their text whenever they finished during the session. However, some of them needed a longer time to complete the task, so they received 30 minutes more.

The texts could be written in two ways, as a digital form written in a Word document or as a traditional paperwork assignment, to give them a choice and make them feel better about completing the task. Most of them preferred to write it in a word document which, of course, made it much easier for me to read and analyze the texts because there was no longer a problem with reading different handwriting, and saved me a lot of time. However, two students chose to write on paper, so they were given the possibility to do.

For this study, the students were not allowed to use any online translation services or grammar checkers. However, it turned out that one of them had used Google Translate to produce the text since there were no mistakes in the text, and the footprints of translation were evident. The paper which was thought to have been translated into English was excluded from the investigation. So finally, 31 texts were reviewed and analyzed for the study. The students'

texts ranged in length from around 210 to 320 words, and they did not receive special writing instruction.

Several steps have been taken in order to categorize the errors. The basis for organizing errors into several verb categories was the recognition of the correct form of the verb that would be used in sentences. For instance, if a student used the simple present in a sentence while the simple past was the proper form, that error was classified as a verb error under the past tense of the tense and time subcategory. After several times reviewing the papers, a comprehensive table of all the errors found in the paper was prepared, and the categorization was done based Köhlmyr (2003). To ensure that every error was categorised appropriately, the table was emailed to the supervisor at least three times. To confirm that the classification was accurate throughout this procedure, the errors were additionally examined in accordance with Estling Vannestål (2015).

4.4 Ethical considerations

Under the supervision of the high school principal, students received an invitation and some explanations about the purpose of the study and the process in which their texts would be incorporated. They could withdraw if they did not want to participate, which signifies that the texts analyzed in this study have been written by students who gave their permission to us to use their texts in the research. All the names on documents were removed, and instead, numbers were given to make it possible to follow each paper during different stages of the study. Also, all the detailed information gained from each paper was confidential during the research.

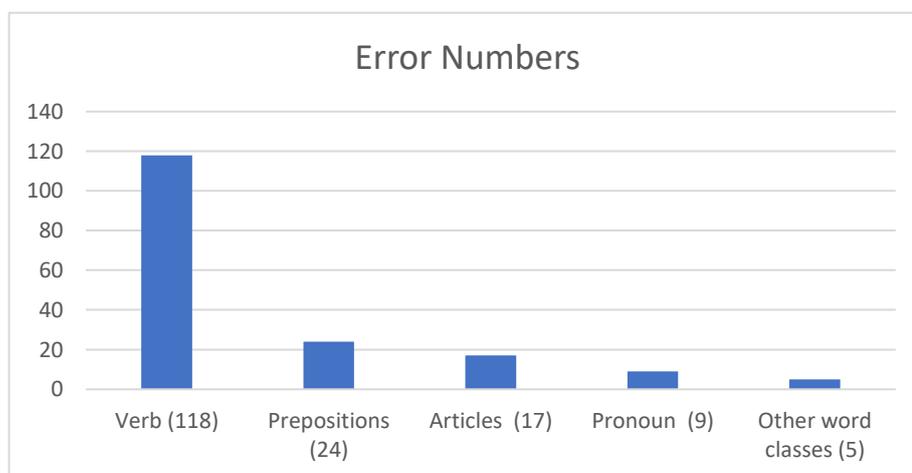
5 Results and discussion

This section summarizes the findings of the study, starting with a broad overview of the total number of the most common errors and then focusing on the categories, which contain the most errors. As previously stated during the review of the texts, errors from different word classes such as verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns, and articles were marked to see which word class had the most errors in students' writings. After going over all the texts, it became evident that the bulk of the errors was in the verbs, prepositions, articles, and pronouns. Other categories, such as nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, had so few mistakes that they did not seem worth analyzing. Thus, the categories with the most errors were given precedence in the result section.

In total, 173 errors were detected, and the largest group included verbs with 118 errors. There is only one text with no verb error while all the others had at least two and at the most 22 verb errors. The second largest group of errors are prepositions making up 24 errors, then articles with 17 errors, and the last group is the pronoun category with nine errors. Five more mistakes were found in the texts which were in other word classes and are not discussed here because they were so few.

Figure 1:

The number of errors in different categories



As it is apparent in figure 1, the most error prone area in grammar for the students participating in the study is verb usage, followed by prepositions, articles, pronouns and the miscellaneous category "other word classes". There is no text with no grammatical errors, and approximately all the papers include at least three grammar errors. Obviously, spelling and punctuation errors are observed in all the texts of this study, such as missing capital letters at the beginning of sentences, run-on sentences, combining clauses without proper punctuations (example 2), or even using Swedish terms in several sentences, but these are not in focus.

Example 2: "the old oak tree weren't really pleased he wanted all of the other bushes and trees should be able to grow as high up as the old oak and al of a sudden every flower tree and all sorts of herbs rise higher and higher." (S 1)

The verb category makes up most data in the study which is divided into different subcategories and are presented separately. Each subcategory starts with a table summarizing the number of errors found in students' texts, followed by a description, and then a comparison with previous findings.

5.1 Verb errors

The largest group of errors consists of 118 verb errors which are described under eight different subcategories, and the concord errors are the most frequent ones or i.e., the largest subcategory. The subcategories are time and tense, progressive form, do-constructions, modal verbs, non-finiteness, and subject-verb concord. Approximately all students' texts include some verb errors, at least one to at the most 22 verb errors in one of the essays. These errors are mostly found in sentences with compound subjects or complex verbs. The errors of verb conjugation are relatively frequent in cases where there is a distance between the verb and the subject in a sentence, which probably makes it difficult for students to manage the verb correctly. Another area of verb errors includes irregular verbs, for example, using -ed instead of the correct form of the verb. Table 1 illustrates the total number of errors in all categories, followed by a description and examples of each in the same order that they are presented in the table.

For verb subcategories, the model in Köhlmeyer's (2003) study used eight subcategories mentioned above. There is a difference between the classifications in this study and the classification in Köhlmeyer's (2003); in that research, all concord errors, subject-verb concord, subject-complement concords, and other errors related to this area like gender, number, tense, person, or case are classified in the same category, i.e. "Concord", but in this study, subject-verb concord errors are included in the verb category.

Table 1

The number of verb errors in each subcategory

Errors	concord	Time& tense	Progressive	Non- finite	Modal auxiliary	Do- constructions	Voice Passive	Transitivity
Numbers	61	41	7	3	1	5	0	0

The number of errors detected in each subcategory of verb errors in this study are listed in table 1 that shows six subcategories with errors. It is clear that the concord subcategory has the bulk of errors, whereas the modal auxiliary subcategory contains the fewest ones—just one—and the passive voice and transitivity subcategories include no errors at all.

5.1.1 Subject-verb concord errors

In the current study, the most frequent errors are subject-verb concord making up 61 errors in all papers. Nine texts do not include any subject-verb concord errors, while four texts contain six to 13 errors of this subcategory. The errors of subject-verb concord can be divided into two forms; first when a singular subject is followed by a plural verb (example 3), and the second one is when a plural subject is accompanied by a singular verb (example 4).

Example 3: “And the oak only sleeps at the winter and are awake the rest of the year.” (S 17)

Example 4: “The sailors that had has it as a landmark was sad about it.” (S 14)

In table 2 subject-verb concord errors are divided into two further subdivisions which makes it clear how many singular subjects received plural verbs and vice versa. Examples from students’ texts and descriptions about the errors will follow the tables.

Table 2

Number of concord errors based on plural or singular subjects

Singular subject + plural verb	Plural subject + singular verb
41 (7 be verbs, 34 other verbs)	20 (7 be verbs, 13 other verbs)

In 41 cases of verb errors that are identified in the concord category of this study, plural verbs are incorrectly used with singular subjects; 17% of them occur with *be* verbs, and 83% of other verbs, for example, *come, speak, die, ...* One of the most significant problems in these errors is the use of *-s* in the present tense verbs in the third person singular, which is mentioned in different grammar sources as an area of difficulty for many English learners as well as Scandinavians (Estling Vannestål, 2015). Moreover, in the Swedish language, “[t]here

is no inflection for person or number” (Swan & Smith, 2001, p. 30). This can be identified as the reason for students not using the third person -s in their verbs for third person singular. So, the reason for the error for Swedish students is probably negative transfer from the mother language.

Example 5: “In the summer the oak tree speak whit a fly” (S 14)

Example 6: “The oak see them.” (S. 4)

The next case of error in this subcategory is the use of the verbs *are* for singular subjects. In all the texts, there are seven cases where the verb *are* is used for a singular subject which probably is because of transfer.

Example 7: “Every body are sorry and wont to cry” (S 17)

Example 8: “It’s an old oak that are awake on the days and sleeps on the night” (S 12)

Swan & Smith (2001) mentioned that *are* is close to the verb *är* in Swedish, which is equivalent to *am, is, are* in English. In that case, as well, the reason is presumably a negative transfer from the Swedish language.

The other errors inside the concord category occur when plural subjects receive singular verbs. In this group of errors which consists of 20 cases, there are plural subjects from different word classes: noun/ noun phrase (15), pronoun (1), and relative pronoun (4) that are given singular verbs either in the present or the past tense. Comparing the two groups of errors in this subcategory, it is shown that the number of errors related to plural subjects with singular verbs is nearly half of the error in which a singular subject received a plural verb.

Example 9: “all animals and flowers sing and was happy”. (S 23)

Example 10: “we are out in the forest and thins the forest”. (S 27)

Example 11: “Some sailors who had survived the storm runs up to the tree and sings a Christmas song for it”. (S 18)

Although the number of errors in some categories is very low, they are included in the results because verb errors are the focus of this study and mentioning all of them can provide a better picture of the difficult aspects of verb management in students' texts. For example, only in one case, the first-person pronoun *I* is followed by a single verb in the present tense ending in -s. It could suggest a lack of English grammar knowledge, especially since the same student has ten additional verb errors.

In previous studies, concord errors were among the most common ones, especially the first form of concord which is the agreement between verbs and subjects. In Köhlmyr's study (2003), the concord forms are the third most frequent errors in the students' compositions, though the author discussed all forms of concords in one section. The same results are also identified in some other studies, such as Krokström (2012), and Jonsson (2015), in both studies subject-verb concord was a sub-category in the verb category the most errors. There can be different reasons for these errors, but since Swedish does not have subject-verbs inflection, it seems that the problem is a negative transfer from L1, especially when it comes to *be* verbs.

Classification for subject-verb concord includes three further categorizations regarding the different forms of subjects, i.e. noun/ noun phrase, pronoun, and relative pronoun. The concord errors in the first category i.e., noun/ noun phrases had the greatest number of errors. The number of errors within each of these subcategories is cited in table 3. The subjects of 41 mistakes in this subcategory were nouns/ noun phrases, a pronoun was the subject in 11 cases, and relative pronouns were the subject in nine cases. The disparities in the number of mistakes are due to the fact that students employ pronouns and relative pronouns less frequently than a noun or noun phrase.

Table 3

Subject-verb concord errors regarding different subjects

Noun/ noun phrase	Pronoun	Relative pronoun
41 (67%)	11 (18%)	9 (15%)

The results for subject-verb concord errors show that five subjects are noun and noun phrases (66%), nine are pronouns (22%), and five are relative pronouns (12%). In a sentence

where there is a distance between the subject and the verb, regardless of whether the subject is a noun or a pronoun, it is more likely that students make a mistake using the right agreement pattern of the verb (examples 12 and 13). Another scenario that appears to be problematic is when students are required to adapt a verb to a noun phrase that consists of several words, or when they have a relative clause as a subject. It seems that deciding to apply a correct verb in these situations is not easy for students (example 14).

Example 12: “The tree is awake by day but sleep through winter”. (S 7)

Example 13: “The tree is 365 years old and are very happy” (S 17)

Example 14: “the people that lived there was very sad about it [...]” (S 20)

5.1.2 Time & tense

In this study, the time & tense subcategory holds 41 errors. Most of the students have difficulties managing time and tense of the verbs in their texts. Since the text was a narrative one, students could write the text in the past or the present tense. However, it was observed that they had used different times and tenses, even within a single sentence, especially for complex sentences. The following example is a sentence with different verbs with different times and tenses.

Example 15: “Even if this is a oak he had a sole and he dreaming about fun things he could do.” (S 9)

Time and tense are used together and according to Estling Vannestål (2015), tense is a grammatical category and is realized in an inflection on the verb. From a grammatical point of view, there are just two “real” tenses in the English language: the past and the present. The future is not considered a real tense because there is no inflection (Estling Vannestål, 2015). The present perfect and the past perfect are considered two verb phrase constructions that indicate time but once more according to Estling Vannestål (2015), they are not considered tenses. Apropos of time and tense management in writing, there are differences between the English and the Swedish. As Estling Vannestål (2015) mentions, when an action is considered finished in the past, the inclination in the English language is to use the past tense, while in the Swedish language, it is common to use the past tense or the present perfect.

Following the same classification adopted by Köhlmyr (2003), this category covers the errors within these times and tenses: the past tense including the past perfect and the present perfect as subcategories, the simple present, and the future. The errors in this subcategory resulted from three different situations in which students may have added, substituted, or omitted anything, but here the most errors occurred due to incorrect substitutions. Table 4 presents the quantity of errors in different subcategories of the time and tense category.

Table 4

Errors in Time and Tense subcategory

Present			Past									Future	
			Past perfect				Present perfect			Simple past			
Substitution	Addition	Omission	Realization	Substitution	Addition	Omission	Substitution	Addition	Omission	Substitution	Addition	Omission	
22	0	3	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	12	0	0	0

As stated before, for each time and tense, three subcategories of substitution, addition, and omission are considered. According to Köhlmyr (2003), a substitution error occurs when an expected time or tense is replaced by another; an addition error happens when a verb is incorrectly introduced somewhere in a sentence in terms of time and tense, and an omission error appears when a sentence lacks a verb with an expected time and tense.

The present tense contains the most errors in the time and tense category, making up 25 errors, 22 of which are substitution errors and three of which are omission errors. In eight cases, present tense verbs are replaced by a verb in -ing form. In only one case, the replaced verb is in present progressive form i.e. be + verb + ing. In cases where the verb is in the -ing form without be (example 11), certainty about the correct form of the verb is nearly impossible, which means it is not easy to identify whether the student intended to write a progressive form or a simple present verb. In each case, the decision is based on the other verbs of the text, particularly sentences before and after the wrong verb.

Example 16: “The old oak thinking of sleeping for the year. And he dreams of the world.” (S 17)

The simple past tense has replaced the intended present tense in the remaining errors in this category, accounting for nine examples.

Example 17: “the oak usually talks to the insect Empheora which is an insect that lives only one day and the tree spoke to the insect [...]” (S 8)

Example 18: “The drem continues and in the end the old start fly and fild very happy [...]” (S 23)

In the past tense subcategory consisting of the simple past, the present perfect, and the past perfect, there are 15 errors in which all but one are substitution errors. The most errors in the past tense were cases for which the expected time were incorrectly substituted with another time. The exception case was an incorrect rendering of the past perfect using an incorrect form of a past participle. This is what Köhlmyr (2003) called *realization* problems, which is when students seemingly understand that they need a complex verb form but do not realize it correctly.

Example 19: “The sailors that had has it as a landmark was sad about it.” (S 14)

In two cases the intended present perfect verbs were substituted by the past perfect verbs (example 20). And in the third one, an incorrect form of the past participle was used (example 21).

Example 20: “On his 365 years he had se many flys flew by and one day a fly whit name cam to the oak.” (S 23)

Example 21: “[...] because he has live for so long and the oak hopes that lives a long time more.” (S 17)

The corpus of this study had no errors in the subcategory of the future time. Probably since the students were required to write a summary of the short story, thus it stands to reason that the past and present tenses were preferred.

5.1.3 Progressive aspect

There were seven errors in this category of verbs, and the omission of the auxiliary *be* characterizes them all. All times and tenses i.e., the present, past, and future times, and even both perfect tenses can appear in the progressive aspect. Typically, it signifies that something is happening right now, and its form is an auxiliary *be* followed by a verb and *-ing*. The Swedish language has no such structure, and the equivalents are “*håller på att ... , ligger/sitter/star och ...*” (Estling Vannestål, 2015, p. 210).

Example 22: “As the oak tree falls into sleep it reliving its life into the dream.” (S 2)

5.1.4 Non-finiteness

This category contains three errors, in two of which the *-ing* suffix was missing after the preposition *for* (example 23), and one of them lacked the *-ing* following the verb *start* (example 24).

Example 23: “When the ice is gone the sailors comes and uses the old oak tree laic a tawer for recognize the island”. (S 20)

Example 24: “The drem continues and in the end the old start fly and fild very happy [...]” (S 23)

Verbs can take both finite and non-finite forms in English grammar. The finite verbs are those to which person and number apply like the present and past tense verbs, as well as imperatives, and the three non-finite verbs are infinitives, gerunds, and participles (Estling Vannestål, 2015).

5.1.5 Modal auxiliaries

The focus in this category is on modal auxiliaries. Auxiliaries were rarely used in the texts written by the students who participated in this study. The reason for this could be that

they had not yet received any instruction on auxiliaries, hence they did not use them in their texts. However, there was one error regarding modal verbs which seems the student used *should* instead of *would* which was supposed to be equivalent to *skulle* in Swedish.

Example 25: “The oak think the storm should the wind push his roots of.” (S 9)

Auxiliary verbs are usually used with other main verbs and illustrate tense, time, voice, etc (Estling Vannestål, 2015). There are two groups of auxiliaries, primary (*be, do and have*) and modal auxiliaries (e.g. *can, may, should...*).

5.1.6 Do-constructions

There were four errors in this subcategory. Regarding the three situations of substitution, addition, and omission, the errors found in the do-construction category were mostly omission errors and there was only one addition one. According to Estling Vannestål (2015), the do-construction is used in negative sentences and questions and has no equivalent in Swedish.

Example 26: “They also told the oak that the beauty of a life not ends with the dead.” (S 7)

Example 27: “The old oak felt sad for the ephemera and so did it repeat every summer.” (S 19)

5.2 Preposition errors

Prepositions made up 24 errors overall across all sample texts, making them the second most prevalent category of recurrent errors. Among the 31 texts, there were 14 papers with no preposition errors, five papers with two or three errors, and the other papers with one error apiece. Incorrect use of the prepositions *in, on, at*, and a few instances of *for* and *about* predominated. In 18 cases prepositions were misplaced, such as when the preposition *on* was used in place of the preposition *in*. Prepositions were added wrongly in six instances, such as *for* before a *that-clause*.

Prepositions were among the most frequent errors made by many Swedish learners, according to Swan and Smith (2001) and Köhlmyr (2003). It is not rare for pupils to use

prepositions incorrectly when they generate texts because Swedish and English have different preposition usage forms and structures. Swan and Smith (2001) pointed out that it can be challenging for a Scandinavian learner of English to employ the right preposition in a number of circumstances. For instance, using the Swedish preposition *i* when other prepositions than *in* are typically used in English, or using a preposition before a *that-clause* (example 28), which is analogous to an *att-clause* in Swedish (example 29).

Example 28: "And the old oak his very thankful for that he have a long life." (S 17)

Example 29: "In the same time but in the reality it is a storm." (S 14)

5.3 Article errors

The third category of errors covers the definite and indefinite article, totaling 17. There were six instances of these errors in the corpus used for this study, which highlights one of the common issues students have with article usage: knowing where to use the indefinite articles *a* and *an*.

Example 30: "The story is about a old oak tree in the forest." (S 17)

It appears from the texts that students generally had a predisposition to use the article "the". The most frequent type of article errors found in this study involves using "the" rather than the indefinite articles or even when no article was needed at all. Estling Vannestål (2015) states that the names of seasons when they are used generically (example 31), the names of religions and political ideologies, as well as various expressions of time following these prepositions (at, before, by), are few instances in English where a noun does not receive an article (example 32). Other errors that were frequently observed in the texts of this research included uncountable and plural nouns that in English should be written without an article when used in a general sense, but the definite article is used for them in Swedish (example 33) (Swan and Smith, 2001).

Example 31: "They talk about the life during the summer." (It happens every summer.) (S 9)

Example 32: "Unlike people when they are awake by the day but sleep on the night." (S 4)

Example 33: “They talk about the life and how that are to be a oak and how it is to be a fly and that they only livs one day.” (S 9)

5.4 Pronoun errors

With nine errors, pronouns are included in the last group of common errors of the study. Three errors of reflexive pronouns, three cases of relative pronouns, and two errors of possessive pronouns. According to Estling Vannestål (2015), there are eight types of pronouns i.e. personal (e.g. she, they), reflexive (e.g. myself), possessive (e.g. his, their), demonstrative (e.g. this, those), interrogative (e.g. who, whose), relative (e.g. that), exclamatory (e.g. such), and quantifying (e.g. all, some) pronouns. Possessive and reflexive pronoun errors were quite frequent in this study, but there were also relative pronoun errors and quantifying pronoun errors.

Example 34: “One day in the woods the oak meet a fly and she’s name was Ephemera.” (S 17)

Example 35: “The tree stretches himself to haven till his roots are free from the ground.” (S 14)

Example 36: “The last dream of the old oak is a story about an old oak tree not far from the open seacoast who have lived for 365 years.” (S 1)

The quantitative results of this study regarding grammatical errors in different categories are consistent with what Köhlmyr (2003) presented in her study. Moreover, they have also been mentioned in Swan & Smith (2001) as the major problems that Swedish learners have in English. The results of this research show a great harmony with the outcomes of other studies reviewed in the same field. Despite a long time since Köhlmyr's study in 2003, verb errors still constitute the most common errors in the students' writings. And comparing the results of the current study with the comprehensive research she did about twenty years ago illustrates that the same areas of grammar are still challenging for Swedish students.

Not only Köhlmyr's (2003) study but also the other studies that were reviewed in the section on previous studies illustrate the same results. Even though the previously mentioned studies focused on different grammatical categories, something is common in all of them;

verb usage is the most challenging area for students because it included the greatest number of errors in all the studies. So, to a great extent, the outcomes are consistent with the results of the previous research.

Additionally, when comparing the grammatical structures of the Swedish and English languages using study sources, it appears that negative transfer from the first language (Swedish) has the strongest impact on students' performance, notwithstanding all other potential causes of grammatical errors.

6 Conclusion and pedagogical solutions

The findings of this study provide information about the students' understanding of grammar. Consequently, it is possible to offer better teaching material and strategies for them and focus on those parts in which students need to develop their knowledge and improve their proficiency in English. The results illustrate that the students who participated in the study do not have a good knowledge of English grammar and mostly require grammar lessons focused on verb management. Many errors were found within different essential areas of grammar, but the most problematic area is mainly the verb category. Obviously, the verb is a crucial part of all sentences, so a lack of knowledge in this category has a tremendous negative effect on every text. Regarding this fact, the current study tries to discuss all errors of this category in detail to provide an overview of the challenges that students cope with. Additionally, the outcomes of the study, once more, emphasize the importance of grammar teaching and the fact that grammar knowledge definitely offers quality in language learning.

The results also show that L1 Transfer, where students apply their knowledge of Swedish grammar to the grammatical structure of English, was a major contributor to many errors of the study. Of course, this case has been raised in previous research, and the studied sources also confirm this conclusion.

Comparing the findings of the current study with those of previous research in the same field, a clear result stands out: the verb category is the most common group of grammatical errors for students. In spite of the fact that the studies were carried out in various parts of Sweden at different times with students at different levels, the results reveal the same pattern; managing verb conjugations is the most challenging category in learning English grammar. Therefore, for two reasons, firstly, the importance of verbs in all sentences, and secondly, students' challenges in using verbs, grammatical materials, and teaching methods

should create more opportunities for students to improve their performance in verb management.

Ellis (2006) indicates that teaching grammar is more effective when students have a basic knowledge of the subject. Students enhance their linguistic awareness, reflect on the language rules, and practice it actively when they have a certain level of knowledge of a language. So, we can draw the conclusion that high school students have a reasonable possibility of receiving grammar knowledge because they have already acquired some fundamental information about the language and are prepared to attain grammar rules. When high school students, regardless of which program do they study in, have a good and sufficient knowledge of language grammar, it gives them a possibility of achieving a better result in that subject, which consequently leads to success in their high school education and, later, more job opportunities.

Proper grammar is essential in producing content in order to communicate clearly, through speaking or writing. It is the structural framework by which communication is possible. The more students understand how it works, the better they can keep track of the meaning and efficacy of the language in their writing as well as speaking. Grammar knowledge increases the accuracy of language, makes it easier to detect ambiguity, and develops the usage of a variety of expressions. In other words, mastering grammar will help students make their work more transparent and understandable. A combination of deductive and inductive methodologies, as well as more engaging content, such as content relating to their study programs, appears to be reasonable. It requires variation in approaches and content to allow students to learn grammar in a way that best matches their particular needs, including motivation, aptitude, and changing classroom dynamics.

The literature review of the study reveals the significance of including grammar in language lessons since it can speed up language learning and help students reach a higher level of proficiency. As a result, given that each student has a unique set of skills, a distinct learning style, and a range of basic knowledge, the teaching approach should be sufficiently diverse to provide all students the chance to brush up on their grammar skills and learn more effectively. Based on the methods reviewed for the study, it appears that inductive methods consisting of flooding input and different tasks that offer students the possibility of practice can be effective. On the other hand, focus on form method has the most affinity with the requirements of the current syllabus of English in Sweden because it emphasizes communication which is the crucial factor in this syllabus. Providing students with

communicative tasks (consisting of required structures) and corrective feedback on their products is an optimal way without forcing them to learn subjective grammar rules that may seem complex and not attractive.

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