



**MEKELLE UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND LANGUAGES**

**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES and LITERATURE**

**(GRADUATE PROGRAM)**

*AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ERRORS IN ENGLISH COMPOSTION WRITING:  
THE CASE OF GRADE TWELVE STUDENTS IN MEKELLE UNIVERSITY  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL*

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**ETHIOPIA, TIGIRAY, MEKLLE**

**AUGUST, 2025**

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COMMUNITY SCHOOL***

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**A Thesis Submitted to Department of Foreign Languages and Literature  
Presented In Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching  
English as a Foreign Languages (TEFL)**

**MEKELLE UNIVERSITY  
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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Hagos Hailemariam Abraha, entitled An Analysis of students' Errors in English Composition Writing in Mekelle University Community School grade 12 students in focus and submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) compiles with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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**GRADUATE PROGRAM**

I, Hagos Hailemariam Abraha, MA summer candidate in TEFL, agree that my supervisor has read all parts of my MA thesis submitted for defense and gave all the necessary comments which I have incorporated duly. Thus, I confirm that my MA thesis submitted for defense entitled An Analysis of students' Errors in English Composition Writing in Mekelle University Community School grade 12 students in focus and is ready for defense.

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## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

CA: Contrastive Analysis

EA: Error Analysis

EDL: English Language Development/ English Developmental Language

EFL: English As foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

MoI: Medium of Instruction

MTE: Mother Tongue Education

MUCS: Mekelle University Community School

PTAG: Parent-Teacher-Association Group

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TL: Target Language

TTI: Teachers Training Institute

**Abstract**

*Writing is a complex, cognitive process that requires recursive procedures of prewriting e.g. brainstorming, outlining, drafting, evaluating and revising. Composition writing Skills is one of the most difficult, and tough subject even to teach particularly in an EFL context like Ethiopia. More recently, error analysis has become an important field of research. This investigation is an outcome of the researcher's concerns and efforts to identify areas of difficulty in the writing skills among students and to work out remedial procedures to help them overcome their weaknesses in the future. By using quantitative techniques/approach, this study aimed at identifying, categorizing, and analysing the major errors in the written composition of 30 grade 12 students at Mekelle University Community School in 2025 academic year. The instrument used for this study was participants' written descriptive composition in English language. All of the errors in these compositions were identified and classified into different categories. The frequency of errors was calculated as percentage. The results show that all these students in this study committed nine common errors. These errors committed were verb- tense, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, capitalization, plurality, word order, articles, auxiliaries, and passive voice. But the most common errors committed were verb- tense and subject-verb agreement respectively. Finally, based on the findings of this study, a number of recommendations, and implications for future studies, that will help to reduce the students writing problems in the future are given.*

**Keywords:** writing, error, error analysis

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter concerned with the general organization of the study i.e., theoretical background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, significances, delimitation and limitation of the study as well as operational definition of key terms are included.

### **1.1. Background of the study**

Nowadays, all aspects of modern life such as government, education, industry, commerce, healthcare, to name just a few, depend not only on oral interaction but also on written communication (West, 1988, as cited in Geremew, 1999). Regarding this, Geremew (1999) points out that one must write in order to meet persistently changing social demands and peruse the personal interests. In a related line of argument, Guth (1989) emphasizes that students are judged mainly by their ability to put ideas down on paper. Thus, students at secondary school level need to write notes, assignments, reports and different types of essays. To accomplish these writing tasks successfully, they are required to develop their writing skills in the instructional language. Jordan (1997) also supports this view, contending that writing skills are a prerequisite for the completion of academic writing tasks. However, in the researcher's experience, the reality in Ethiopia falls short of these objectives; secondary school students writing performance is not satisfactory.

Error analysis is one of the most influential theories of second language acquisition. It is concerned with the analysis of the errors committed by second/foreign language learners by comparing the learners' acquired norms with the target language norms and explaining the identified errors. Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. It consists of a comparison between the errors made in the target language (TL) and that target language itself, Corder (1974). Corder is considered as the "Father of Error Analysis." It was with his article entitled "The significance of Learner Errors," Corder (1967) that Error Analysis (EA) took a new turn. Error analysis is a branch of applied linguistics that studies and analyzes errors made by second-language learners was established in 1970 by Corder and his colleagues. So, from this we can infer that compared to the second language learners, the issue has become an agenda for foreign language learners recently.

As far as I concerned, researchers are interested in errors because they are believed to contain valuable information on the strategies that learners use to acquire a language. The investigation of errors can be at the same time diagnostic and prognostic. It is diagnostic because it can tell us the learner's state of the language at a given point during the learning process and prognostic because it can tell the teachers, and the course organizers to reorient language learning materials based on the learner's current problems.

For learners themselves, errors are 'indispensable,' since making of errors can be regarded as a device the learner uses in order to learn. In 2001, Gass and Selinker (as cited Sun, 2010) defined errors as "red flags" that provide evidence of the learner's knowledge of the second language. An error may vary in magnitude. It can include a phoneme, a morpheme, a word, a sentence or even paragraphs. Due to this fact, errors can be viewed as being either global or local (Sun, 2010). Global errors hinder communication and they affect the structure of the entire sentence such as

missing essential parts of the sentence's subject or verb. They prevent the message from being comprehended. On the other hand, local errors do not prevent the message from being understood because there is usually a minor violation of one segment of a sentence that allows the reader or the hearer to guess the intended meaning.

Being good at writing is an important aspect of foreign language learning, and it helps not only to be holistic in a foreign language, but it plays also a very great role to understand the other subjects across different disciplines. That is one of the rationales why Mekelle University community school focuses on “English Writing Skills” as an independent lesson almost for all grades of the school. Fortunately, the researcher was assigned to teach English during 2018-2020 academic years. While he was teaching the subject, he found that the majority of the students had difficulties in writing. Some of these difficulties were problems related to grammar and vocabulary at sentence level, and how to organize sentences into a larger unit like the paragraph. Besides these problems, their academic writings lack unity and coherence, and many of the difficulties on their writing looked to have similar in type though it varied in frequency. The perpetuation of these problems almost throughout the semester motivated the researcher, to conduct a research on the topic “An Analysis of Students’ Errors in English Composition Writing: The case of grade twelve students in Mekelle University Community School.”

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

The last three and four decades have seen increasingly rapid advances in the field of error analysis. However, widely conducted research works have consistently shown that students have not attained an adequate understanding of how to reduce errors in writing. Writing in English can be a challenging task especially for students who learn English as a foreign/ second language. Some EFL students' social and cultural background prevents them from writing about subjects they consider taboo, like politics or religion. Students may also experience difficulties with, morphology, vocabulary and syntax that are different in English and their native language (Brown, 2000).

As far as I concerned, writing is hard work in one's own language let alone in a second/foreign language. We communicate orally and/or in writing. In spoken conversations with others, we make sense of the dialogue in a complex back-and-forth process of negotiation of meaning between speakers. However, in written texts, this back-and-forth negotiation is not possible; there is only one pass; the sentence is written and it is read. Since there is no possibility of negotiating meaning of written documents, the inevitable problems of misunderstanding will be aggravated.

Xu (2004) states that trained and sophisticated language teachers have undoubtedly applied error analysis to one degree or another for decades since applied error analysis came into being. These groups of teachers have studied their students' recurring errors, classified them into categories, and used them as the basis for preparing lessons and materials designed to remediate such errors. The study of errors would be significant to teachers, to researchers and to learners as it involves error identification, categorization and analysis. These three interrelated activities help especially the teachers not only in order to understand errors, but also in order to use what is learned from error analysis and apply it to improve language competence. Only if the teacher is aware of them

and able to make use of them in the teaching process appropriately that findings of error analysis function as facilitator in language teaching in many ways (Erdogan, 2005).

Lightbown and Spada (2000, 176-192) argue that when errors are persistent, especially when they are shared by almost all students in a class, it is useful for teachers to bring the problem to the students' attention. Corder (1974, 125) notes that Error Analysis (EA) is useful in second language learning because it reveals the problematic areas to teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers. This also works for foreign language learning too. Errors can tell the teacher how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and consequently, what remains for him or her to learn. So, students' errors are valuable feedbacks.

Many teachers (especially, English language teachers) at MUCS have complained that most students are weak in writing lessons, namely in composition writing skills. This problem is invariably reflected in many departments of the school. These problems are observed in students' different continuous activities of other subjects, besides English language lessons, which request writing activity such as in examinations and in assignments. This makes evaluating students' assignments, tests, final examinations etc. one of the toughest activities.

Due to the mentioned multifaceted problems, students have an apparent deficiency of English language skills of which writing skill is the major one. To work on their deficiency, it is important to show the gap to be filled by the current study.

The research gaps are:

Most previous error analysis studies, both local and international, have focused on university-level students, neglecting secondary school learners, especially those at Grade 12 level in Ethiopia. However, errors made by beginner or school-level writers are equally important, as early identification and correction of these errors can prevent fossilization—the process where language mistakes become permanent.

Additionally: Despite widespread teacher complaints about students' poor writing skills at Mekelle University Community School (MUCS), few studies have investigated the specific factors affecting EFL writing at this level.

Prior studies have not sufficiently explored the real classroom context, writing challenges, and students' actual written output at the secondary school level in Ethiopia.

No research has directly addressed the specific factors influencing Grade 12 learners' writing skills in MUCS or similar settings.

There is a lack of focus on the mismatch between teaching methodologies and classroom realities, as well as the effects of using the first language (L1) in English writing instruction.

Generally, writing needs hard work in one's own language let alone in a foreign language like the case in Ethiopia. As a result, it is necessary to investigate this problem and find, the remedial procedures that can elevate the students' writing level so that their overall achievement can be improved.

### **1.3. Objectives of the study**

#### **1.3.1. General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to explore the kinds of errors which are made by grade twelve students' in composition writing at MUCS.

#### **1.3.2. Specific objectives**

The Specific objectives of this study are:

1. Identify the different errors of the students' written compositions,
2. Categorize the different errors of the students' written compositions, and
3. Analyze the different errors of the students' written compositions.

### **1.4. Research Questions /Hypotheses**

The study aimed to address the following key research questions:

1. What are the most common linguistic errors that students made in their written compositions?
2. How frequent do these errors occur in their written compositions?
3. What are the sources of these errors?

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

This study mainly will provide an insight into the major errors that grade12 MUCS students commit when they write. This in turn has different significances from different perspectives. For example, it may help the English language teachers to be aware on the major error areas to be focused during teaching composition writing Skills lesson. And it has the following major significances.

Error analysis enables teachers to get an overall knowledge about the students' errors, to obtain information on common difficulties in language learning as an aid to teach or in development of teaching materials, to carry on their studies in accordance with what the learner needs to know and what part of the teaching strategy to change or reconstruct, to devise appropriate materials and effective teaching techniques, and to construct tests suitable for different levels and needs of learners.

Learners' errors can help them identify their linguistic difficulties and needs at a particular stage of language learning so that they can avoid different kinds of errors in writing and they can look for appropriate remedy, which will resolve their problems and allow them to discover the relevant rules for greater improvement.

The errors enable the other language researchers to gain new evidence to understand how language is learned and acquired, what strategies the learners use, and what is the nature of

foreign language learning among students on the basis of which they can conduct further research for the formulation and establishment of better theory of foreign language learning.

This investigation may also help to serve as a starting point so as to conduct further investigation in related issues such as to check the presence of these problems across different departments, at different institutions, at different levels of study, etc.

### **1.6. Scope/Delimitation of the Study**

Although there are different language skills in which teachers and students may find themselves in language teaching and learning, it is difficult to study all these language skills at the same time. The researcher believed that in the field of education teaching plays a dispensable role to arise learning motivation. In most occasions teaching is a conscious effort that can create learning motivation in the recipients. Thus, this study addresses only an analysis of students' errors in English composition writing. The setting of the study is in Tigray region, Mekelle city, Hadnet sub city, at Mekelle university community school . Hence, in order to manage the study well, the researcher delimited on Mekelle university community secondary school of grade twelve. Moreover, the study delimited on descriptive written compositions.

At Mekelle university community secondary school, there are 199 students. Among these students, 30 were selected using simple random sampling technique. The study employed quantitative method to collect data. As it has been discussed so far, grade twelve students at Mekelle university community secondary school were inefficient in composition writing skill. Therefore, the researcher analyzed the cause.

### **1.7. Limitation of the Study**

While the researcher was conducting the study, he faced challenges. The challenges were: the outbreak of COVID-19, the impact of war (conflict-related disruptions), internet access, Small sample size, single geographic area (one school), transportation issues, the breaking down of electricity power and financial constraints, because the university-provided budget was insufficient and not fully received.

In spite of these problems, an effort was made to ensure the reliability of the study by taking measures to overcome the challenges. For instance, the researcher recommended broader future studies with varied participants and adjusted financial help for his school and colleagues in printing the research paper and other activities.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The analysis of the production of errors shows quite clearly that not all systematic errors produced by the learner can be attributed to the interference from the source language. Such errors provide evidence for a much more complex view of the teaching/learning process, in which the learner is considered as an active participant in the formation of and revision of hypotheses regarding the rules of the target language (Xu, 2004).

### **2.1. Error Analysis**

Crystal (1999) as cited in Bain (2006) defines "error analysis" in language teaching and learning, as "a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language, using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics."

Errors are assumed to reflect in a systematic way the level of competence achieved by a learner; they are contrasted with "mistakes," which are performance limitations that a learner would be able to correct" (p.125).

Okuma 2000, cited in Xu (2004) states, there are three approaches to the analysis of "learners English" namely, contrastive analysis, error analysis, and transfer analysis. But all these approaches differ in focus. For example, contrastive analysis compares the structures of two language systems and predicts errors. Transfer analysis on the other hand, compares "learners English" with L1 and attempts to explain the structure of those errors that can be traced to language transfer. But, Error analysis compares "learners English" with English (L2) itself and judges how learners are "ignorant."

### **2.2. Writing difficulties to be consider as an error**

Different scholars have different suggestions concerning the natures of errors. Richards, and Schmidt (2002, 184) define an error as the use of language in a way which a fluent or a native speaker of the language regards as faulty or incomplete learning. An error refers to a systematic error of competence, both covert and overt, that deviates from the norms of the target language. They define covert errors to be grammatically correct but not interpretable within the context of communication, whereas overt errors refer to the obviously ungrammatical utterances. But they are different from mistakes. Richards, and Schmidt (2002, 184) define mistake as an inconsistent deviation, which means sometimes the learner "gets it right" but sometimes "gets it wrong." Brown (2000, 95) states that a mistake is made by a learner when writing or speaking which is caused by lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or other aspects of performance.

### **2.3. Sources of errors**

In related to the sources of error, there are one main important concept; language transfer. The term "transfer" was first technically defined by behaviorist psychologists as "the automatic, uncontrolled, and subconscious use of the past learned behaviors in the attempt to produce new responses." Positive transfer or facilitation is any facilitating effects on acquisition due to the influence of cross-linguistic similarities. On the contrary, negative transfer or interference is as

cross linguistic influences resulting in errors, overproduction, and underproduction (Richards and Schmidt, 2002). Identifying errors and their types are not the only concerns of error analysis research. In general, researchers are interested in investigating the sources of these errors. Regarding sources of error, Corder (1974) classified them in to two types.

### **2.3.1. Interlingual errors**

Interlingual errors can be identified as transfer errors which result from a learner's first language features, for example, grammatical, lexical or pragmatic errors.

### **2.3.2. Intralingual errors**

Intralingual errors on the other hand are overgeneralisations in the target language, resulting from ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete applications of rules, and false concepts hypothesised.

## **2.4. Significances of error analysis**

Richards and Schmidt (2002, 184) point out that EA may be carried out in order to:

- Identify strategies which learners use in language learning,
- try to identify the causes of learners' errors,
- Obtain information on common difficulties in language learning as an aid to teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials.

Language learning in general, and learning writing skills, in particular, is a step-by-step process during which errors or mistakes are to be expected. Errors are visible proofs that learning is taking place. Error analysis is a valuable aid to identify and explain difficulties faced by learners. Candling (2001) considers the second/foreign language learners' errors as potentially important for the understanding of the processes of language learning. Findings on error analyses can be used to determine what a learner still needs to be taught. They provide the necessary information about what is lacking in his or her competence. Similarly, the findings of the present study point out the significance of learners' errors as they provide the current status of the students' performance, as they are evidences of how language is learned and what strategies or procedures the learners are employing in learning the language.

The implication of error analysis to language learning and teaching can also be viewed from the aspects of language teachers, and syllabus designers. Findings from error analysis provide feedback; they also tell the teachers something about the effectiveness of their teaching. Error analysis serves as a reliable feedback to design remedial teaching methods and materials. Stark 2001, cited in Mungungu (2010) recommends that teachers need to view students' errors positively and should not regard them as the learners' failure to grasp the rules and structures of English, but they should view his errors as processes of learning. Errors, if studied systematically, can provide significant insights into how a second language, (in our context a foreign language) is learned.

## 2.5. Challenges of error analysis

An error analysis investigation is one of the difficult areas in second language learning research (Richards and Schmidt, 2002, 379). This situation is worst in the context of foreign language. Since the majority of the teachers (researchers) are non-natives, there is a tendency of using "error languages" by themselves. So, the recognition of error depends crucially upon the analyst (teacher). In other words, during error analysis, it can be difficult to decide what an error is and what is not. An error in one situation may not be an error in another. For instance, vocabulary tests are generally geared to a particular set of items. Using another word with the same meaning might result the students mark for ingenuity. Even if errors count in different situations, they may have different weights. For instance, a spelling error would count heavily in a spelling test, and probably little in an extended essay. Error interpretation and evaluation really depend on the weight given to an error which varies from exercise to exercise, and from teacher to teacher.

The other weakness of error analysis is a danger in giving too much attention on learners' errors. For instance, in the classroom the teacher tends to become so pre-occupied with noticing errors that the correct utterance in the foreign/second language will go unnoticed. Although the diminishing of errors is an important criterion for increasing language proficiency, the ultimate goal of foreign/ second language learning is still the attainment of communicative fluency in a language (Xie, and Jiang, 2007, 13).

Another shortcoming is the overstressing of production data than comprehension data which is equally important in developing an understanding of the process of language acquisition. Xie, and Jiang (2007, 13) claims that error analysis can be said to only deal effectively with learner production, that is speaking, and writing, but not with learner reception, which is listening and reading.

Error analysis does not account for learner use of communicative strategies such as avoidance, when learners simply do not use a form with which they are uncomfortable with. For example, a learner who for one reason or another avoids a particular sound, word, structure or discourse category may be assumed, incorrectly, to have no difficulty there with.

Error analysis can keep us too closely focused on specific languages rather than viewing universal aspects of language. Although error analysis is still used to investigate specific questions in SLA, the quest for an overarching theory of learner errors has largely been neglected (Xie, and Jiang, 2007, 13).

Though error analysis has these main drawbacks, its advantages outweighed significantly. As a result, error analysis has become an important aspect of language learning in general and second or foreign language learning in particular. Hence, it is very common to see different studies in Europe, America, and in Africa. Even this area has started attracting few Ethiopian scholars, including the researcher. Even the researcher strongly believes that there will be numerous studies in near future.

## **2.6. Stages of error analysis**

In order to conduct error analysis studies, certain stages in the literature must be followed (Corder, 1974). He suggests three models in error analysis research, which includes three stages. These are data collection, description, and explanation. Besides Corder, Gass, and Selinker (1994 as cited in Brown, 2000) elaborate on this model and give six steps which are important during studying error analysis. These include data selection, error identification, error classification, error explanation, error evaluation, and error correction. But for the present research, the first model, which is given by Corder (1974), is applied.

## **2.7. Studies on error analysis**

### **2.7.1. Error Analysis Studies in Europe**

There may be different investigations in different parts of Europe, which base error analysis (EA) as their center of discussion. But as far as the researcher's reading concerned, Llach, Fontecha, and Espinosa's 2005 investigation, which is cited in the works of Mungungu (2010), is found to be very related and relevant to the current research. These scholars investigated the quantitative and qualitative differences in the production of lexical errors in the English written paragraphs written by young Spanish and German learners of English. And they indicated that the lexical errors production per composition was significantly higher for German participants than the paragraphs of the Spanish learners.

Since this study focused mainly on the influences of the learners native language in related to making errors in a foreign language, (English) it is different from the current research.

### **2.7.2. Error analysis studies in Asia**

Eun-pyo (2002) conducted an error analysis study on Korean medical students' writing. The subjects in the study were 35 second year premedical students who took English writing in the third semester of their two-year English curriculum. The primary purpose of the study was to analyze what errors intermediate to advanced level learners, at a medical college, made in their writing by reviewing their formal and informal letters (Mungungu, 2010). This study is relevant to the present investigation, since both studies evaluated students' written pieces and identified the types and frequencies of errors made. The distinction lies in the fact that Eun-pyo's (2002) study focused on students who scored high marks in the Test of English For International Communication (TOEIC) test that they wrote at tertiary level, whereas, the present study focused on all beginners (grade 12 students' performance during their composition writing).

### **2.7.3. Error analysis studies in Africa**

According to Mungungu (2010), some studies have been conducted on error analysis in different countries of Africa. Almost all of these research works had similar objectives; checking the influences of their mother tongue in related to making errors in English composition. In one way or the other, these investigations have some relationship with the current research though their depth and focus might vary.

#### **2.7.4. Error analysis studies in Ethiopia**

As far as the researcher's reading concerned, studies in the field of Error analysis in Ethiopia are few. Fearing that it (saying there is few studies in Ethiopia) may be a mere generalization, the researcher exerted his at most effort so as to check whether there were different studies in error analysis or not. And finally, the researcher found a total of four investigations, which are conducted on error analysis.

Alamrew (2005) made an investigation having three different variables (Perception of Writing, Writing Instruction, and Students' Writing Performance). It made a kind of correlation among these variables. It did not identify, categorize, and analyze the errors made by the students writing. Hence, it is different from the current research in different perspectives.

The other study was made by Dumessa, and Miressa, (2011). This study investigated the causes of grade nine students' spelling errors at Donbosco High and Preparatory School in Batu town (Orimia regional state). Similar to the previous work, this is also different from the current research. For example, its main focus was only in spelling errors, and identifying the different factors which made the students to commit spelling errors.

The third investigation on error analysis was made by Ferede, and Tefera (2012). This research examined the perception about writing and the practice of teaching the skills among English language teachers at preparatory schools in Jimma Zone (Orimia regional state). And the findings show that, due to teachers' failure to put into classroom practice, their beliefs about the nature of writing and how it should be taught, writing is given little attention and is taught inappropriately. In other words, the study demonstrated that teachers' perception of writing and their practice of teaching the skills are loosely correlated. Here again, it is too easy to understand that this research work is quite different from the current research.

Recently, there is an investigation, which is conducted by Birhanu (2013). There are many things in common between these two investigations. For example, both investigations are conducted in the same institution (Bahir Dar University). Above all, both investigations had more or less similar objectives i.e. identifying, categorizing, and analyzing, different errors, which are committed by the students during their English paragraph writing.

The current research has two major differences from Birhanu's investigation. The participants of Birhanu's research were pre-engineering students, who are assumed to have better educational background than students, who are enrolled in other faculties like Science faculty, Birhanu (2013). As the government has given more emphasis towards Engineering and Technology, these groups of students are expected to have better command of English language, especially in writing skills. Besides these, one of the major differences between these two investigations lay in terms of frequency in which different error types occurred. For example, Birhanu's investigation revealed that the students' written texts are dominated by errors of spelling (25.47%), word choice (21.65%) subject/verb agreement, (11.46%), and punctuation (8.9%) respectively. Whereas, the present research shows that students made more number of errors in verb tense (28.03), subject-verb agreement (16.65), prepositions (15.91), word order (9.85), articles (9.09), capitalization (7.58), auxiliaries (4.54), plurality(4.54), and passive voice(3.79) respectively. So,

there is very clear discrepancy between these two investigations not only in terms of frequency of errors student made, but also in the type of errors they made. And even the current researcher believes that there is a need to make still another investigation across schools and even grades so that the problem could be clearer to make the appropriate remedy.

### **2.7.5. Error analysis studies in Arab**

A number of studies have been carried out on Arab learners of English employing EA, mainly in Saudi Arabia and Jordan. AlTameemy and Daradkeh (2019) included error types and frequencies in their analysis of 80 compositions of Preparatory Year Deanship students at Prince Sattam University in Saudi Arabia. Students committed errors in grammar (42.15%), punctuation (16.4%), followed by spelling (18.81%) then capitalization (10.19%). They also studied errors based on gender differences proving that there are statistically significant differences in grammar in favor of males, but none in non-grammatical errors. In his 2013 study, Sawalmeh examined 32 essays of male Preparatory Year Programme students at Hail University. Verb tense accounted for 16.5% of errors, articles (12.4%), then sentence fragments and spelling (11.7% and 11.6% respectively).

Article errors were the focus of Alhaysony's analysis (2012) of written samples of 100 female first year students of the English Department at Hail University. Surface Structure Taxonomy was employed in analyzing errors which included omissions, additions and substitutions. Similarly, Al-Qadi (2017) analyzed article errors of 50 male students at King Saud University. Addition errors ranked highest, substitution followed and then omissions. 90 paragraphs from semester final exam papers of Computer Science, Engineering and Medicine students at King Khalid University were examined by Nuruzzaman et al. (2018). The students mostly committed grammatical errors. They committed mechanism errors, lexical errors and semantic errors too.

In 2016, Sharma studied paragraphs of 120 students from four different colleges at Jazan University. The researcher used two of Chanquoy's (2001) classification of errors— spelling and grammar. Spelling accounted for the highest of all (25.22%), followed by subject-verb agreement (23.8%), and verb tense and form (19.98%).

In another study by Aldeibani (2018), a linguistic analysis of errors was conducted on scripts of male EFL majors in Sharorah-Najran University. Errors included misuse of possessives and pronouns, subject-verb disagreement, auxiliary omission/ misuse, misuse of tenses, sentence disorder, preposition and punctuation errors, word choice, spelling errors, and article errors. The study does not include frequencies, but suggests possible causes of the errors.

In Jordan, Al-Khasawneh (2014) analyzed 26 written paragraphs of university students of different academic majors at Ajloun. Based on Chanquoy's (2001) classification, articles were the predominant errors, followed by prepositions. Additionally, Khuwaileh & Al Shoumali (2010) collected written samples in both Arabic and English from 150 Jordanian university students studying scientific subjects. Their study indicated lack of cohesion and coherence, and tense to be the most serious error.

In 2016, the focus of Ngangbam was syntactic errors of 60 freshmen students specializing in a Teacher Training Programme at Muthah University. Spelling outnumbered errors (9.65%), followed by punctuation (5.77%), and fragments (5.42%). Al-Jamal (2017) examined 57 essays by EFL postgraduates at Instruction and Curricula departments at Jordanian public universities. The study concluded that structure errors outnumbered others, followed by articles, and then punctuation.

Finally, grammatical and lexical errors committed by 350 10th grade students from different schools in Ajloun were analysed by Zawahreh (2012). Subject- verb agreement, prepositions, omission of main verb, tense use and wrong use of lexical items were the most predominant errors at the different levels of analysis.

Moving to other Arab countries, Hourani (2008) chose to analyze 115 essays of 3rd year male secondary students from the Eastern Coast of UAE, along with interviews with supervisors and questionnaires for teachers and students. The error with the highest frequency was subject-verb agreement (25%), then verb tense and form (22%), then prepositions (15%). An additional study by Zahra (2015) analysed written errors committed by 74 secondary school students in which fragments accounted for the highest errors, followed by spelling, punctuation, and then grammar.

As for Oman, Mahmoud (2013) was concerned with the spelling. Errors of 30 English major university students were studied, indicating that 26% of spelling errors were interlingual, however; 74% of errors were intralingual. Atashian and Al-Bahri (2018) carried out a study of grammatical errors of 90 students at Nizwa University. Tenses were the most frequent errors, followed by adverbs, then pronouns. Moreover, students were interviewed to discuss their perceptions on errors they commit. To them, the reasons included differences between Arabic and English languages, lack of practice and methods of teaching. Articles were again the concern of Crompton (2011) who analyzed essays of 95 first- and second-year students at the American University at Sharjah. The study indicated errors with generic references as the predominant in the written samples.

The researcher concluded that more errors were made when English and Arabic are similar. Students of the same university were the participants in Scott and Tucker's study (1974) who analysed written and oral samples from a low-intermediate intensive English course. Students committed errors when using verbs, prepositions, articles, relative clauses, and nouns.

As for Palestine, Dweikat and Aqel (2017) studied the most frequent errors in written samples of 245 sophomore EFL students of the Methods of Teaching English Department at Al-Quds Open University. The most frequent errors were in spelling (39.60%) and were due to L1 and L2. Errors of wrong word, tense, capitalization, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, pronouns, and singular/plural confusion were mainly due to intralingual factors. Tenses were the focus of Al-Farra's study (2018) which analyzed writings of 31 female English major students at Al-Aqsa University, Gaza. It concluded that present perfect was the most problematic tense with a 34.27% of all tenses. Al-Aqsa University was also the scope of Hammad's study (2014), in which 60, 4th year English major sub skills were evaluated. Hammad concluded that students' greatest problem lies in the skill of language use followed by vocabulary, mechanics and organization.

In another study, Mahmoud (2015) investigated common spelling mistakes of 241 UNRWA school students in the cities of Nablus and Jenin. Frequent letters, dropping letters, putting letters before others, dropping letter —eł, and unpronounced letters all formed the main errors. Borraaka (2011) analyzed the compositions of 219, 12th grade students at Jericho governmental schools. The study concluded that syntactic errors had the highest frequency, followed by semantic errors. With focus on error analysis and causes of errors, none of the previous studies compare the performance of governmental and private school students when writing in EFL.

### **2.7.6. Studies on Governmental and Private School Student Performance**

Comparing student performance of governmental and private schools divides researchers and educators to two groups. The first groups are proponents of the idea that private school students perform better in different subjects. "It seems to be commonly believed that public school graduates are handicapped academically in comparison with private school products" (Davis and Frederiksen, 1954, p.1). Research has been carried out in support of this belief. Babalola (2018) compared the performance of 15700 students in English language in Nigeria, and concluded that private school students were better than their public-school counterparts. Adeyemi (2014) also compared the performance of 240 primary public and private school students in English, mathematics and social science in Nigeria. The study assured that there is a statistically significant difference in the performance, with private school students showing higher results.

The same fields were analyzed by Ahmed et al. (2017) with a sample of 240 Pakistani public and private high school students. They used a questionnaire and the Pupils' Achievement Test (PAT). 70.1% of private school students scored above average, while 25.2% scored above average at public schools. Shabbir et al. (2014) compared performance, achievement and effectiveness of the two types of schools in Pakistan with a close-ended questionnaire distributed among teachers, headmasters, parents and students from 60 public schools and 45 privates. School achievement, mathematics, general sciences, English and Urdu were compared. Private schools outperformed in the first three, except for Urdu Language, the better performance was for public schools as it is the language of instruction.

As for India, Rasool (2019) compared student performance at 240 public and private schools, showing a significant statistical difference in favor of private schools. Additionally, private school students at the Philippines showed higher achievement and motivation in the study of Bernardo et al. (2014) with a sample of 1,694 high schools' students. Private school students of EFL also showed better speaking performance when Khoshshima and Toroujeni (2017) conducted their study on 220 school students.

However, some research does not agree with the common perception and has been able to show that there is no preference for private schools over governmental/public schools. For many, certain factors as social background and school environment cause the performance disparity, and need be controlled to reach accurate results on student performance. They believe "it is time for a critical reexamination of common assumptions regarding the effectiveness of public and private schools (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2005, p.699). For instance, Witte (1992) analyzed research based on the High School and Beyond study. He argued that any statistically significant

differences in achievement between schools, after modeling achievement, are trivial in size and highly uncertain. Moreover, Kim (2012) reported no evidence on private school achievement in English and Korean being better than public schools once controlling variables as competition and student sorting. Olneck (1981) rejected the reports of Coleman et al. (1982), which considered private schools more effective. He considered their conclusions 'unconvincing', and argued that they do not use all strategies that reduce biases. Somers et al. (2004) stated that "after the effects of student background have been taken into account, the achievement differences decline markedly" (p.64) between student achievement of both schools in language and mathematics, in 10 Latin American countries based on UNESCO data.

Chudgar and Quin (2011) used the Indian Human Development Survey of 2005 on school children aged 8-11. The regression results of their study showed the necessity for taking certain covariates into consideration when comparing achievement outcomes of public and private schools. Once variables are matched, no significant difference can be seen. Insufficient evidence was found in their study to claim that private schools outperform public schools. As for Sassenrath et al. (1984), they studied reading and mathematics achievement of two groups of 49 high school students. One group included students who had attended private schools earlier, but shifted to public. They controlled variables as gender, age, ethnicity...etc., and concluded that financial reasons are what control the choice of schools, without claiming private schools' higher achievement. Kamwedo (2010) examined achievement based on school type with particular reference to gender in Malawi. The study concluded that boys and girls in public schools do better than in private schools.

In another study, Davis and Frederiksen (1954) compared the regressions of average grades in Liberal Arts at Princeton on ability measures for public and private school graduates at freshman and sophomore years. They found that public school graduates made a higher academic average at the two years. Peterson and Llaudet (2006) used information from the 2003 national sample of public and private school students collected as part of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to compare student performance in mathematics and reading at four different types of schools. They believe the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) study of 2006, which claims that private school students do better than public ones, has some 'oddities' (p. 3). For instance, it relies on administrative data rather than data collected from students. They do not conclude from their findings that private schools are more effective in raising student test-score performance.

Finger and Schlessler (1963) carried out their analyses on a sample of 313 Colgate University students (216 attended public schools and 97 private). Once aptitude and motivational factors are matched, GPA results for both groups become more alike. Similarly, Yakubu et al. (2019) analyzed biology achievement of 361 students in Nigeria. They stated that "the type of school did not make any difference in the determination of students' academic achievement" (p.159).

Lubienski and Lubienski are strong supporters of private schools not being advantageous. In (2006), they used data from the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress in mathematics at private, charter and public schools. They concluded that demographic differences as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race...etc. accounted for private and charter school higher achievement. Once controlled, no private or charter school means were higher than public school

means. The same idea is present in their 2008 and 2005 studies. Their views were supported by Harry (2016) when analyzing mathematics and English performance in 106 schools in Trinidad.

In the study by Deraney and Abdelsalam (2012), the performance of 178 female Saudi university students was analyzed at years of admission and graduation. They concluded that once English language skills were learnt at university, public school students were able to bridge the gap and even outperform their private school peers. Al-Duwaila (2012) compared student academic performance in mathematics at 20 schools in Kuwait. The study revealed some statistical differences between the two schools in favor of private schools, but these were due to differences in "teaching methods, mathematics curriculum and educational and scholastic environmental components" (p.203).

Based on the previous literature, it can be noticed that most research on writing errors in Arab countries is recent. This indicates that teachers and researchers are becoming more aware of the necessity to understand student writing problems and suggest solutions. However, research on Palestine and mainly university students is scarce. This assures the need for this study, so as to understand the situation of writing among EFL learners in the country and raise the level of students' writing abilities. Moreover, research comparing performance of public and private schools in the Arab world is also limited. Somers et al. (2004) stated that "while much ink has been spilled over the U.S. case, there is less empirical evidence from low- and middle- income countries" (p.49). Likewise, Jimenez and Lockheed (1995) reported that till recently, evidence is restricted to developed countries.

### **2.7.7. Global Studies on Writing Error Analysis**

According to Krashen's "Monitor Theory"(Krashen, 1982, 1985), structural knowledge play a limited but well-defined role in language use as Monitor to check on the accuracy of production and self-correct according to known rules when time and the attention of the language user allow for it. These conditions are met to some extent writing. Monitoring is also limited to the use of relatively easy rules, and there is some evidence (Tarone, 1986) that the attempt to monitor using complex rules actually decreases the accuracy of language production (Krahnke, 1987:29).

The students were presumably using their monitor or grammar knowledge while expressing their views about the subject matter. Different students used their knowledge in different ways, those who were optimal users, used grammar subconsciously which allowed their consciousness to focus on; effective organization of thoughts, correct syntactic construction, and correct morphological forms.

Whereas those students who had syntactic and grammar mistakes were often limited by their conscious use of monitor (over users) or neglecting the monitor of English language largely (minimal users). The analysis of students' writings is undertaken here to assess the degree of syntactic errors as the marker of over use or under use. Those students who are over users were taking longer time in sentence construction therefore they were able to write a sample of the required size or less with grammatical errors as they were concentrating on retrieval and organization thus overburdening the expressive capacity. On the other hand, those students who

were minimal users wrote just about the right size and under users of the monitor were able to write extensively but with many syntactic errors.

Kwok (1998) stated that EA is significant for all aspects of the learning process, therefore; we find a bulk of research adopting it in analyzing written samples of EFL learners at different levels of education. Sermsook et al. (2017) analyzed sentence errors of 26 Thai 2nd year University English major students. 17 types of errors were committed at two different levels. The sentential level, with punctuation the highest, and the word level, with articles the highest. Fareed et al. (2016) analysed 1217 errors in 30 written compositions of Pakistani undergraduates. The highest were grammatical, followed by syntax, with an abundance of spelling and punctuation errors. Ab Manan et al. (2017) studied samples from MARA University students in Malaysia. Transfer of rules, redundancy, reduction, and overgeneralization were errors committed due to mother tongue interference.

Likewise, Atmaca (2016) studied final examination writing samples of 32 elementary level students at Gazi University, Turkey. Errors fell into ten categories with prepositions and verbs first ranking (23.33% and 17.03% respectively), while gerunds and possessives the least. Momenzade et al. (2018) conducted a study to investigate errors of 42 Iranian graduate year medicine students at Shiraz University before and after taking a writing course. They used the Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay et al. (1982) and concluded that omissions were the most frequent errors. The same strategy was adopted by Imaniar (2018) for analyzing 12 compositions of 9th grade Indonesian students. Omissions and misformations accounted for the most frequent errors which the researcher considered to be a result of both intralingual and interlingual factors.

In another study, Mungungu (2010) analyzed 360 examination scripts from 12th graders from different secondary schools in Namibia. Following James's (1998) Taxonomy of EA, spelling showed to be the most frequent, followed by tenses, then prepositions and finally articles. As for Vethamaiccam and Ganapathy (2017), errors committed by 37 Form One students at a private Chinese school were investigated along with interviews with students and teachers. Errors of mechanics were the most frequent, accounting for 27%, followed by tenses (22%), and word choice (19%). The least were prepositions and subject-verb agreement errors.

## **2.8. Theoretical framework**

### **2.8.1. 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).

### **2.8.2. Writing Composition**

Level (2001:39) states, “A composition is a group of paragraphs that all work together to develop a single focus.” It means that a composition is composed of paragraphs with shared focus, and presented in a systematic way. Within composition, each paragraph has a definite function. Whatever organizational strategy it is, it will have a beginning, a middle and end. In writing composition, these parts are called the introduction, the body and the conclusion.

Wishon and Burks (1980:370) state, A paragraph may serve the purpose of introducing, developing and summarizing. The introductory paragraph states the subject of the whole composition. The introduction should limit the subject and tell what aspects of it will be treated. The developing paragraphs are the body, or main part, of the composition. A composition may consist of as many developing paragraphs as there is the main topic to discuss. The summarizing paragraph usually restates in different words the main points that have been made in developing paragraphs. The summarizing paragraph does not usually introduce new ideas. It should give the feeling that the composition is completed and that a conclusion has been reached.

When someone plans a composition, it is important to identify the main points of the topic sentence that will be used in the paragraphs. Read each one, and make sure it is relevant to the main idea of the composition. It is natural when someone deletes sentences which are not in accordance with the main idea. All of the sentences and paragraphs must be clearly connected to the main idea. There are several types of writing; that which tells a story is called narration, that which describes is called description, that which explains is called exposition, and that which argues is called argumentation (Wishon and Burks, 1980:377-378).

### **2.8.3. Kinds of composition writing**

There are 4 kinds of compositions; they are narration, description, exposition and argumentation. Wishon and Burks (1980) stated:

First narration is a basic writing strategy for presenting past event or activities. It can be used for a variety of purposes such as to illustrate and support ideas with anecdotes, to entertain readers with revealing stories, to analyze causes and possible effects with scenarios, and to explain procedures with process narrative. Based on Hornby (1974), “Narration is telling of a story”, meanwhile based on John M. Echols and Hassan Shadily (1986), “Narration adalah (1) Penceritaan, pengisahan; (2) Cerita, kisah”; (3) The Victory of Adwa , Teacher G.kidan . Narratives are stories. Narratives are plots. They are essays that tell a story, hopefully in an

interesting way, that also convey themes. Often, if you are asked to write a narrative essay, you will not be asked to research a theory or topic. Rather, you will be asked to use your imagination instead of a bibliography. You may need to research for this narrative essay; nonetheless, the writing may come more easily to you for you do not need to quote specific words from primary sources.

Second, description is a strategy used to create a dominant impression. It is used to create a visual image of people, places and even of units of time-days, time of day or seasons, exposition is used in giving information, making explanation, and interpreting meanings and narration is the form of writing used to relate the story of acts or events." For example, students describe a place in order to set a scene and make readers aware of its atmosphere and to describe people to show a kind of person's performance.

Third, exposition /classification is aimed to classify number of items or ideas into a small number of classes. In a classification of paragraph, it is important to set up adequate categories and define what goes into categories.

Fourth, comparison and contrast are to compare similar aspects or to contrast different aspects of two subjects, people or things. At last, argumentation is to argue ideas or opinion by giving some argues to proof the concept or research. "Argumentation is used in persuading and convincing; it is closely related to exposition and is often found combined with it.

## **2.8.4. Types of Writing Activities**

### **2.8.4.1. Controlled Writing**

In this kind of writing, error is not tolerated and students are expected to write accurately. This could be achieved through practice with structure. (Reid 1993). According to Raimes (1993), in controlled composition grammar, vocabulary and syntax in context are usually expected to be reinforced. Besides, the students are also expected to use every important point of the conventions of writing English such as intonation, punctuation, correcting words and spelling. However, in these types of writing, the students are deprived of their rights of thinking, visualizing or generating ideas of their own in the written drills they practice. Since the focus is language of structure, second language and foreign language writing students are not creative or productive. Because of this, scholars like Hedge (1988) discourages using controlled writing by calling it as the "writer's block".

### **2.8.4.2. Guided Writing**

It is a type of writing used as a bridge between the controlled and free writing. According to Pincas (1982: 126), in guided writing there is a partial freedom and partial control. Raimes (1983) suggests that guided writing is different from that of controlled writing because guided writing uses different techniques that would lead students to write similar paragraphs, by giving sample paragraphs, providing first sentence, last sentence and even an outline to fill out. Others also recommended various guided exercises that would help writing students use as a model such as reproduction of a model paragraphs, using lists of vocabulary and expressions as sentence

combinations, dialogue completion, parallel writing and so on (Pincas 1982, Byrne 1988, Reid 1993).

### **2.8.4.3. Free Writing**

The third type of writing is free writing. In this type of writing, the students are expected to bring their own personal feelings, needs and knowledge to the topic they write about. Of the three types of writing, free writing encourages students to generate ideas of their own. In free writing activity, the teacher is expected to facilitate conditions and give clear instructions that would help students to be able to write about any topic they like regardless of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. When students do not focus on errors and attempt to write what they want to say, their power and confidence over their second language will develop. In this kind of writing, students write about what they are familiar with and interested in (Leki, 1991). Hedge (1988:44) says that as free writing is the result of the flow of ideas, one should put his ideas on paper as quickly as possible because the focus of free writing is on generating ideas. Raimes (1983) also says that in writing teachers and students should stress on content than on form. She further says that the students should never worry about form or the structure of their writing at the beginning. They should stress on content and fluency with limited error correction.

The development of students' EFL writing can be influenced by different factors such as personality, age, background, education, prior linguistic knowledge, Geez (L1) writing ability, EFL proficiency, and writing experiences in both languages (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2008; Kubota, 1998). A writing process is a complicated process in both L1 and EFL. Many studies illustrated L1 as a dominant element in teaching and learning EFL 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 EFL is demanding for students in MUCS, too (Munden & Myhre, 2016, p. 133). English teachers experience that students often write the words the way they sound or use direct translation from Geez (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 EFL to minimize language interference in students' EFL 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 EFL. 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 Ethiopia to explain why students may experience difficulties in the writing process. English is one of the most important disciplines in Ethiopia basic education. It is “a key subject for cultural understanding, communication, formation, and identity development” (The Ethiopian Directorate for Education and Training, 2023, p. 1). Learners of English in Ethiopian primary school are expected to “apply appropriate strategies for communicating orally and in writing in different situations” (The Ethiopian Directorate for Education and Training, 2023, p. 2).

A new Core Curriculum has been adopted in Ethiopia and took effect from the school year 2023/24. In this curriculum, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are four basic skills, and these are integrated into the core elements for the English subject. The core elements are organized into two major language items: vocabulary development and grammar. Written communication as a fundamental skill is integrated into all two core elements. It considers the ability “to express ideas and opinions understandably and appropriately in different types of texts, on paper and digitally” (The Ethiopian Ministry of Education).

Moreover, the Ethiopian 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 EFL 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.

### **2.8.5. 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 EFL 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 unsystematically, 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 EFL performance. He agreed with Corder's statement that mistakes can be self-corrected and do not need special attention. However, errors cannot 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 cannot (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 MUCS 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.

### **2.8.6. 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 EFL teaching and learning (2006, p. 25). Error correction can be considered an essential part of these perspectives, and it must be discussed concerning EFL 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 EFL linguistic systems to predict difficulties that could occur. Lado was the first linguist to introduce the Comparative Analysis Hypothesis. He compared L1 and EFL 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 EDL (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 EFLs 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 foreign language” (Gass, Behney & Plonsky, 2013, p. 21). One of the most radical hypothesis of the field was that learners created their language system while learning EFL. 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 EFL learning as: “language transfer, the language of training, strategies of foreign 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 EFL learning and teaching. During the 1970s, many theorists refused the use of CA since research studies showed that many errors made by EFL 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.

### **2.8.7. 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 EFL 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 EFL is not recognizable for the learner; systematic errors, when the learner uses a wrong rule in EFL; 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 EFL 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.

### **2.8.7.1. The Classification of Error Based on Linguistic Category Taxonomy**

They state these linguistic category taxonomies classify errors according to either or both the language component or the particular linguistic constituent the error affects. Language components include phonology (pronunciation), syntax and morphology (grammar), semantics and lexicon (meaning and vocabulary) and discourse (style). While constituents include the elements that comprise each language component. Many researchers use the linguistic category taxonomy as a reporting tool which organizes the errors they have collected. In case of writing analysis, the focus is on morphology and syntax.

### **2.8.7.2 .The classification of Error Based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy**

Surface strategy taxonomy highlights the ways surface structures are altered: Students may *omit* necessary items or *add* unnecessary ones; they may *misform* items or *misorder* them. Analyzing errors from this category perspective holds much promise for researchers concerned with identifying cognitive process that underlie the students' reconstruction of the new language. In this category, errors can be classified in to four types: omission, addition, misformation, and

### **2.8.7.3. The Classification of Error Based on Comparative Taxonomy**

The classification of errors based on this comparative taxonomy is based on comparison between the structure of second language errors and certain other types of constructions. Second language errors have most frequently been compared to errors made by students learning the target language as their first language and to equivalent phrases or sentences in the learner's mother tongue.

### **2.8.7.4. The Classification of Error Based on Communicative Effect Taxonomy**

Certain types of errors make a critical difference as to whether or not the listener or reader comprehends the speaker's intended message. While the surface strategy and comparative taxonomies focus on aspects of the errors themselves, the communicative effect classification deals with errors from the perspective of their effect on the listener or reader. It focuses on distinguishing between errors that seem to cause miscommunication and those that don't. This category consists of two types, they are: global errors and local errors.

In this research, the writers choose the Linguistic Category Taxonomy which is divided into morphology and syntax.

### **2.8.8. English as a part of Ethiopian education/Standards**

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

The Ethiopian ELT framework is reflected through the national English subject curriculum. English is an essential discipline in Ethiopian secondary education (The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, ministry of education, Directorate for Education and Training, 2021). 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 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, ministry of education, Directorate for Education and Training, 2021). The 2021-version of the Ethiopian curriculum stresses the importance of both written and oral communication (Bøhn & Hansen, 2019, p. 5).

In the Ethiopian 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 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, ministry of education, Directorate for Education and Training, 2021). 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 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, ministry of education, Directorate for Education and Training, 2021). Language learning element implicates knowledge of English as a system, its phonetics, vocabulary, syntax” (The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, ministry of education, Directorate for Education and Training, 2021). The last component develops diversity in linguistic and cultural contexts (The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, ministry of education, Directorate for Education and Training, 2021).

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 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, ministry of education, Directorate for Education and Training, 2021).

Moreover, the English subject Curriculum underlines the prominent role of written communication as one of the main subject areas (The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, ministry of education, Directorate for Education and Training, 2021).

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Research design**

As it is mentioned earlier, this investigation was aimed at identifying, categorizing, and analyzing the errors which were found in the English language compositions. To achieve its purpose, the researcher used quantitative research designs. These research designs were preferred since they can allow the researcher to achieve his very goal successfully; identifying, categorizing, and analyzing errors that occurred in the English compositions written by grade12 students at Mekelle University Community School in 2025 academic year.

### **3.2 .Participants and sampling techniques**

The subjects of this study were Grade12 (n =30, 15 males, and 15 females), at Mekelle University Community School during the 2025 academic year. The rational for choosing these students as a subject for the study was since the researcher was assigned to teach them English subject in the earlier mentioned academic year. As the very nature of this lesson, writing many paragraphs, it was more suitable to conduct the study, which focused error analysis of written compositions. At the time of selecting the participants of the present study, available or comprehensive sampling technique was used as their numbers were manageable.

### **3.3. Data gathering instrument**

The major data gathering instrument the researcher used to answer the basic research questions of the study was the written compositions of all the participants. Hence, the data analyzed for this study were the errors in students' written compositions. The test was administered after these students learn Composition Writing Skills lesson throughout the second semester. This is because, at the end of the semester, they were expected to write coherent, organized and error free compositions as they had practiced throughout the period of the lesson.

### **3.4. Data collection procedures**

The researcher ordered the participants to write a descriptive paragraph, which could contain 1000 to 2000 words within the given 40'; this task was done under examination conditions. This examination was not a part of students' assessment, but to increase the validity of the result, the researcher did not inform them. The researcher administered the test himself, normally after the time of the semester was over, where students were supposed to write as error free paragraphs as possible. Students could write a descriptive paragraph deliberately to give this opportunity, one topic or title was given. This was, "Coronavirus and how it has changed our world." This topic was chosen deliberately because it seemed likely that most students would have a strong opinion on these matters, and it was unlikely to favor any student over another.

### **3.5. Data analysis procedures**

Preliminary analysis of the data involved the separation and classification of errors to identify their type (the most frequent errors) as Errors in verb tense (28.03%) and subject-verb agreement (16.65%) etc. All 30 essays were collected and examined word by word to extract, analyze, calculate and explain the errors. 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 punctuation and capitalization, spelling, adjectives, and adverbs, were omitted. These errors were taken into consideration but not analyzed in the context of the study.

After getting the required data, its analysis went through the stages of collection of the data, following the stages proposed by Corder (1967). These are, identifying and labeling of errors according to standard norms of usage, classification of error categories, and determination of the frequency of errors with their descriptions. As it is stated in the research design sub-sections of this study, the data were analyzed quantitatively. In identifying the written errors, besides the researcher, an expert, who has taught the lesson (Composition Writing Skills) for more than seven years, was involved.

Last, to obtain the percentage of identified students' errors in their writing composition the researcher applied the following Linguistic Category Taxonomy formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where: P = Percentage of error  
F = Frequency of error made  
N = Number of students' error

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS and INTERPRETATIONS (Findings)

### 4.1. Analysis of participant's texts

#### 4.1.1. Identification and classification of errors in the composition writing of Grade 12 Mekelle university community School students

In this chapter, the data collected through the major instruments of the research (students' composition writing exam) from the participants of the study are analyzed and discussed, and it is presented quantitatively. The quantitative data are analyzed and then discussions are made at the end. Since the aim of error analysis is to describe and explain errors committed by the foreign language learners while writing in the language, the current researcher strongly believes that the analysis reveals for the teacher about the areas of difficulties, where the learners need more careful explanation and guidance. In this section, the researcher presents and discusses the findings of the study in light of its objectives.

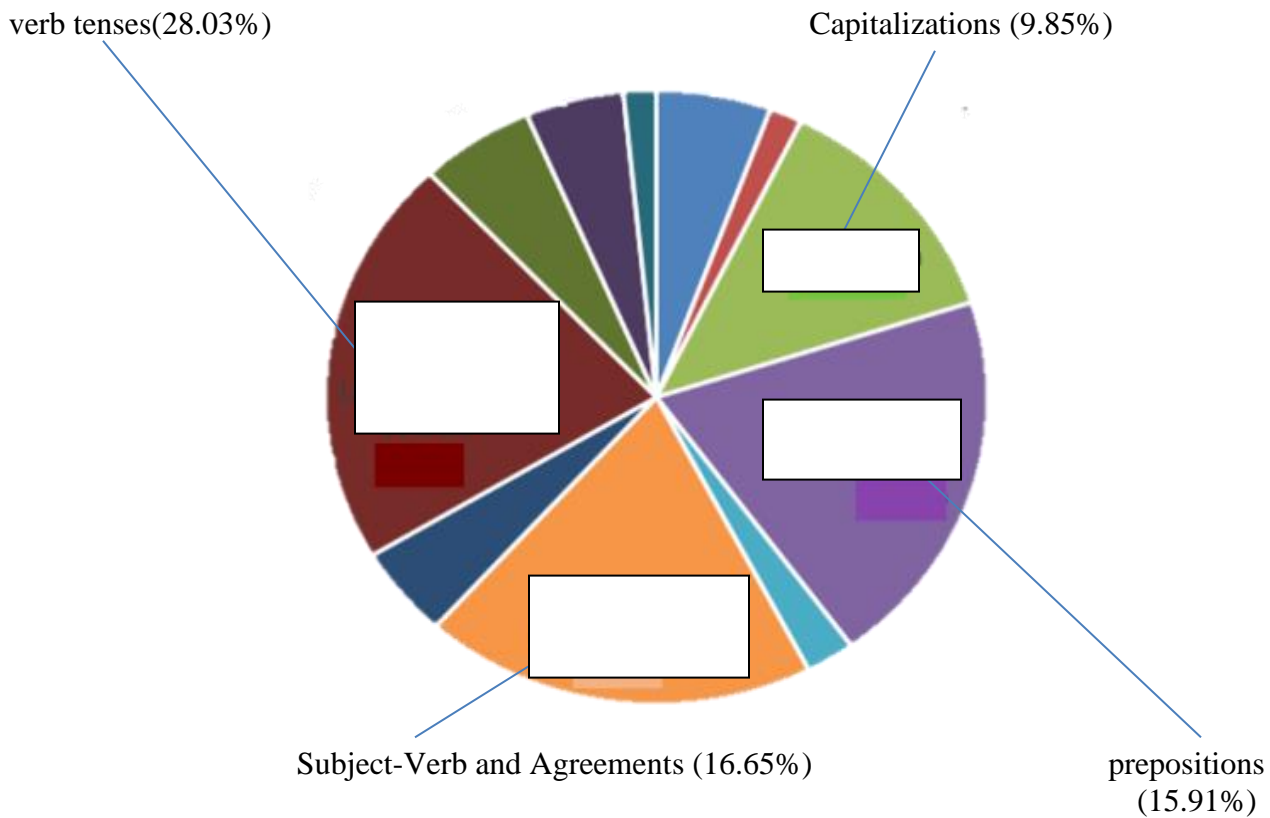
First, the errors made by the students are identified; second the errors made by the students are classified, and finally, some of these errors made by the learners are corrected as examples. The following table (Table 1) shows the descriptions, and frequencies of errors, which were committed by the participants, with their percentile.

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: Descriptions, frequencies and percentage of detected errors, found in the students' compositions*

As it is depicted in the above table (table 1), the researcher found a total of 264 errors. It indicated that the students made more number or errors in verb tense 74 (28.03%), subject-verb agreement 44 (16.65%), Prepositions 42(15.91%), capitalization26 (9.85%), Plurality 24(9.09%) word order 20 (7.58%), articles (4.54%), auxiliaries (4.54%) and passive voice (3.79%) in their written compositions. These results show that many of the errors were attributed to verb-tense, subject- verb agreement, preposition and capitalization respectively. From these figures, we can infer that the students were not aware of the verb tense forms at different contexts, they are not able to form subject- verb agreed sentences , the students have a problem of either missing of

prepositions or wrongly using of a prepositions and also they are not differentiated when to capitalize letters. All these major and the other minor problems of their writing had made teaching the lesson very tough as there were many situations where reading, and evaluating their written texts were too difficult to do. For the sake of ease of understanding, the students' major errors distribution (verb tenses, subject-verb agreements, prepositions, and capitalizations) is summarized in the following pie chart.



*Figure 1: The distribution, and frequency of the students' major errors*

The pie chart below is a summary of the above table (Table 1) and depicts the minor error types recorded from the participants' written compositions. Though the message it conveys is similar to what is stated in the table, the researcher believes that it can clearly demonstrate the frequencies of the minor errors distributions.

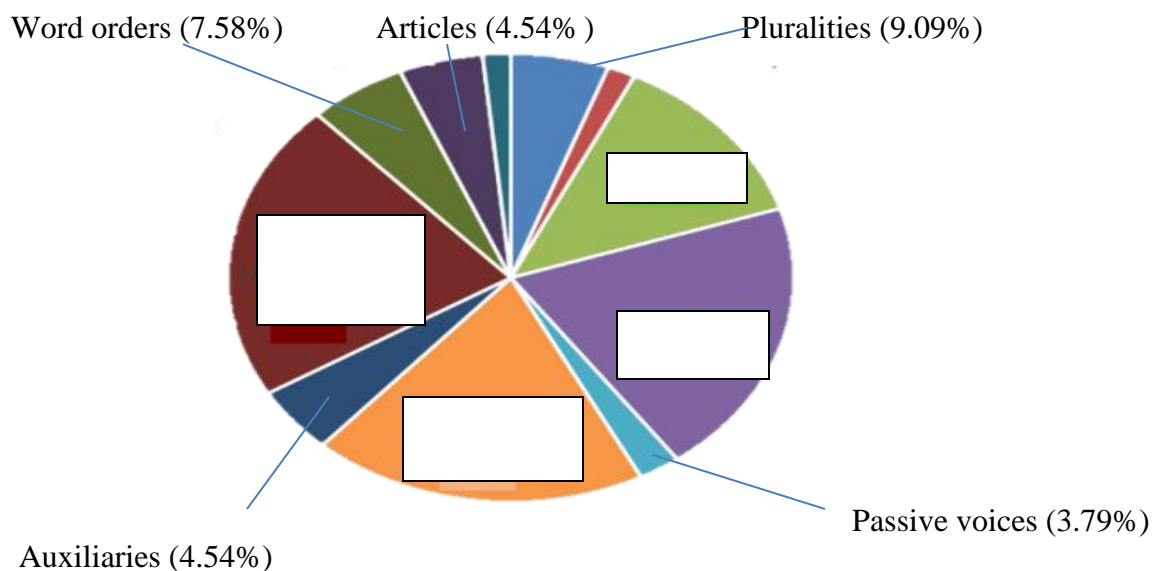


Figure 2: The frequency, and distribution of the students' minor errors

N.B. The rest errors, which did not fit into these categories, e.g., lexical errors, punctuations, spellings and adverbs vs. adjectives were excluded.

#### 4.1.2. Error Analysis in the writings of Grade 12 Mekelle university community School students

**Table 2: Sample students' transcribed verb tense errors**

Code No	Error	Correction	cause
O21.	“Many people didn’t <u>understood.</u> ”	● Many people didn’t <u>Understand.</u>	
018.	“He will <u>losing</u> his childhood. (Lose).”	●He will <u>lose</u> his childhood.	
022.	“I was watching television and heard when they <u>tells</u> news and <u>gives</u> information about Corona.”	●I was watching television and heard when they <u>told</u> news and <u>gave</u> information about Corona.	
026.	“All the symptoms I <u>have</u> a <u>name.</u> ”	●All the symptoms I <u>have named.</u>	

\* 'Code No' refers to the code which is given to the texts being analyzed.

\* There are certain texts which may contain more than one type of error.

Here in table 2, the first example: 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 Tigrigna tense system. The problem is the wrong use of the negation system in English. The second example illustrates the confusion between tenses. The student has obviously learned the rules of future and continuous tenses but used them wrongly. The third example also observed that students used inconsistent verbs when they were focused on one passage or idea. 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 fourth 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.

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 Tigrigna one. The incorrect use of verb tenses shows that the MUCS 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 Tigrigna tense system and English is immense..

**Table 3: Sample students' transcribed subject - verb agreement errors**

<b>Code No.</b>	<b>Error</b>	<b>Correction</b>
002.	1. "It <u>have</u> many names."	●It <u>has</u> many names.
006.	2. "The sickness <u>cause</u> many symptoms."	●The sickness <u>caused</u> many symptoms.
017.	3. "All the reasons I have a name <u>is</u> significant for me."	●All the reasons I have a name <u>are</u> significant for me.
004.	4. " <u>It is has</u> many symptoms that you can die from."	● <u>It has</u> many symptoms that you can die from.

\* 'Code No' refers to the code which is given to the texts being analyzed.

\* There are certain texts which may contain more than one type of error.

In the above table 3 examples 1 and 2, 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. 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 Tigrigna 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. The third example also shows a lack of agreement between the verb and the subject in the sentence. Thus, there is evidence of singular and plural verb agreement in other parts of the students’ writings. In the last fourth example, the student is confused about grammatical patterns; he made a sentence with both to be and has. This error resulted from insufficient learning of EFL 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.

According to English grammar rules, the subject and the verb segments should agree in number and person. In this study area of committed errors has the second highest percentage (16.65%) it consists of 44 errors (see Table 1, p. 30)

**Table 4: Sample students' transcribed preposition errors**

<b>Code No</b>	<b>Error</b>	<b>Correction</b>
011.	1. “My school closed last year <u>because</u> corona.”	●My school closed last year <u>because of</u> corona.
024.	2. “Many people die <u>from</u> Coronavirus.”	●Many people die <u>of</u> Coronavirus.
029.	3. “Go <u>to</u> a walk.”	●Go <u>for</u> a walk.
010.	4. “ <u>In</u> the corona pandemic.”	●. <u>During</u> the corona pandemic outbreak.

\* 'Code No' refers to the code which is given to the texts being analyzed.

\* There are certain texts which may contain more than one type of error.

The possible explanation for table 4 examples 1-4 is ignorance or insufficient knowledge of rules. The transfer of propositional expertise could also be the reason for committing those errors.

Based on the students’ text analysis, lack of prepositions and the wrong use of prepositions comprise 42 errors and 15.91% of the total errors (see Table 1, p. 30). The difficulty of English prepositions was accentuated in the related studies of Ridha (2012), though these were ranked third after subject -verb agreement.

**Table 5: Sample students' transcribed capitalization errors**

<b>Code No</b>	<b>Error</b>	<b>Correction</b>
012.	1. "Great."	●great
020.	2. Vacations.	●vacations.
023.	3. "The most <u>i</u> missed is to travel."	●The most <u>I</u> missed is to travel.
013.	3. "It started in december 2019."	●It started in <u>December</u> 2019.
008.	4. "I don't like saturday and sundays anymore." ".	● I don't like <u>Saturday</u> and <u>Sundays</u> anymore.

\* 'Code No' refers to the code which is given to the texts being analyzed.

\* There are certain texts which may contain more than one type of error.

In the above table examples 1 and 2 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. In example 3 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 Tigrigna. The absence of capitalization, in this case, can cause problems for students, and it is crucial to work on this aspect. Additionally, in examples 3 and 4, the names of weekdays and months were not capitalized. L1 strongly influences this type of error. In Tigrigna, 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 EFL use.

Based on the students' text analysis, the incorrect use of capital letters caused 26 errors; rated 9.85% (see Table 1, p. 30). Students capitalized many words in the samples.

**Table 6: Sample students' transcribed Plurality errors**

<b>Code No</b>	<b>Error</b>	<b>Correction</b>
014.	1. "The <u>disease</u> can cause many other disease like pneumonia, headache and high fever."	● The <u>diseases</u> can cause many other diseases like pneumonia, headache and high fever.
026.	2. "Many <u>childs</u> miss playing with their friends." ".	● Many <u>children</u> miss playing with their friends.

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\* 'Code No' refers to the code which is given to the texts being analyzed.

\* There are certain texts which may contain more than one type of error.

Here in table 6, 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. EFL students as MUCS, 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. 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.

Based on the analysis 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.

**Table 7: Sample students' transcribed word order errors**

<b>Code No</b>	<b>Error</b>	<b>Correction</b>
012.	1. "We from time to time <u>wondered</u> when it is over."	<u>We wondered</u> from time to time when it is over.
019.	2. "How <u>we can</u> stop the spreading of disease worldwide?"	How <u>can we</u> stop the spreading of disease worldwide?

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\* 'Code No' refers to the code which is given to the texts being analyzed.

\* There are certain texts which may contain more than one type of error.

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In table 7, the analysis showed that there were some sentences where the students used the Tigrigna verb-third word-order. This error issue can be accounted as an interlanguage error developed from transfer from Tigrigna, as it illustrated in example1. The second 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.

Word order errors were also discussed in related studies as one of the most challenging areas. It 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.

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**Table 8: Sample students' transcribed article errors.**

<b>Code No</b>	<b>Error</b>	<b>Correction</b>
027.	1. “The whole started in 2019 in <u>the</u> China.”	●The whole started in 2019 in <u>China</u> .
016.	2.“Many people <u>have</u> <u>same problem</u> with Corona.”	●Many people have <u>the</u> <u>same problem</u> with Corona.
018..	3. “ <u>One of major issues</u> for people nowadays.”	● <u>One of the major issues</u> for people nowadays.

---

\* 'Code No' refers to the code which is given to the texts being analyzed.

\* There are certain texts which may contain more than one type of error.

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Here in table 8, example 1 illustrates articles' addition when it is not necessary. 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. 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. The Tigrigna 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 Tigrigna. However, Tigrigna has three genders, masculine, feminine, and neutral, and the nouns correspond with these genders. Students may be confused by the differences between L1 and EFL, and the committed errors are partially explained by interference from L1 and lack of knowledge of the English article system.

Further examining of sentence patterns in students' writings shows that the English article system is intricate for MUCS 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.

**Table 9: Sample students' transcribed auxiliary errors.**

<b>Code No</b>	<b>Error</b>	<b>Correction</b>
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004.	1. “ <u>Be a dangerous disease</u> ; it can kill many people.”	● <u>Being a dangerous disease</u> ; it can kill many people.
O14.	2. “ <u>Have done their work</u> , they went away.”	● <u>Having done their work</u> , they went away.

\* 'Code No' refers to the code which is given to the texts being analyzed.

\* There are certain texts which may contain more than one type of error.

As the above table, the example and 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.

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

**Table 10: Sample students’ transcribed passive voice errors.**

<b>Code No</b>	<b>Error</b>	<b>Correction</b>
007.	1. “Coronavirus <u>can be caused</u> a threat to health.”	● Coronavirus <u>can cause</u> a threat to health.
030.	2. “Our health will be <u>influence</u> by the corona.”	● Our health will be <u>influenced</u> by the corona.

\* 'Code No' refers to the code which is given to the texts being analyzed.

\* There are certain texts which may contain more than one type of error.

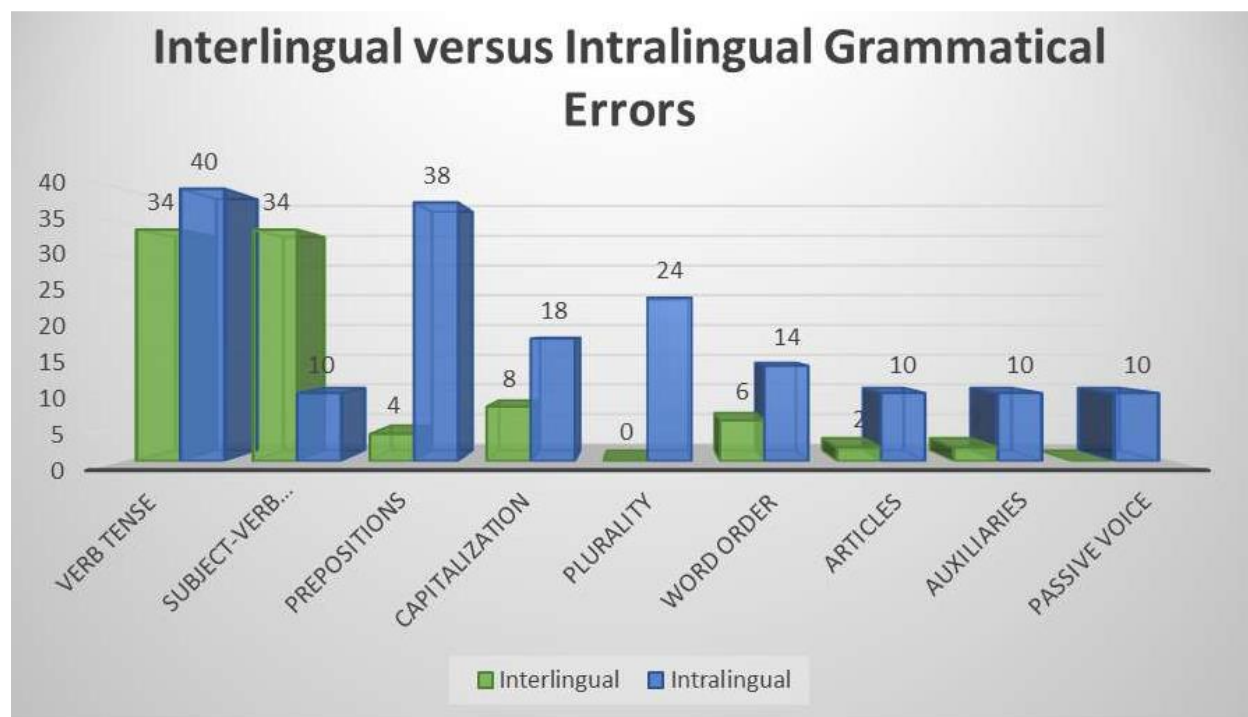
Table10 example 1 illustrated that error can probably be explained by repetitive training that has resulted in the overgeneralization of the rule. The second example is categorized as a misformation of an infinitive verb. Here the student used an infinitive verb influence instead of influenced. Influence 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.

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 above.

As a result of analyzing the texts, which were written by the selected students, the researcher found that the students made different errors. Some of the students writing contained a great deal of ambiguous sentences, which even prevented the researcher from analyzing the errors. This clearly shows us their level of English language proficiency or their major areas of language difficulties such as verb tense, subject –verb agreement, preposition and capitalization. Besides this, it also reveals that the teachers should give more concentration on these items when they teach Writing Skills lesson, especially, when they teach composition.

#### 4.1.3. Interlingual versus Intralingual Grammatical errors in the composition writing of Grade 12 Mekelle university community School students



Graph 1. Interlingual versus Intralingual Grammatical errors in the composition writing of Grade 12 Mekelle university community School students

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.

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 EFL (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 EFL 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 EFL 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 Tigrigna 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 cannot meet my friends."

In English norms, the first personal pronoun and weekdays are always capitalized. This rule does not apply to the Tigrigna language system, thus, MUCS Grade 12 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 distance*.

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.”

Tigrigna word order is often very different 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 EFL. In the process of language acquisition, since learners are still in the developmental stage, they have incomplete knowledge of EFL rules. In other words, intralingual errors develop from insufficient learning of EFL when students attempt to produce EFL 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.

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that Grade 12 students in MUCS committed many grammatical errors due to both interlingual and intralingual causes. These are the primary sources of the most common grammatical errors. However, they committed more errors due to intralingual reasons.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Summary**

The primary objective of this study was to analyze the students error committed when they write compositions in English, and specifically it had the following two main objectives:

1. Identifying the most common linguistic errors that students made in their written paragraphs?
2. Identifying how frequent do these errors occur in their written paragraphs?

This study involved 30 students' written texts and the results highlighted the presence of preponderance of different types of errors though these errors occurred at different rates of frequency. Totally 264 errors of different types were found. This investigation revealed the most frequent type of errors committed. These were verb tense 74 (28.03%), subject-verb agreement 44 (16.65%), Prepositions 42(15.91%), capitalization 26(9.85%), Plurality 24(9.09%) word order 20 (7.58%), articles (4.54%), auxiliaries (4.54%) and passive voice (3.79%) respectively were among the common language errors, which were observed almost in each of the participants writing (from the highest to the lowest frequency).

Writing is a productive skill. It is one of the most difficult and frustrating subject even to teach particularly in an EFL situation like Ethiopia. It is especially difficult for nonnative speakers because learners are expected to create written products that demonstrate their ability to organize the content, to address the correct audience as well as to demonstrate their linguistic ability (vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, etc.).

### **5.2. Conclusion**

After having analyzed the data gathered, the researcher concluded that all the participant students made almost all types of errors in their written composition. It is possible to say there was no student, who could write a standard composition. This reflects the need to improve their ability in English composition writing. Students' errors were therefore found to be indispensable and unavoidable in their learning; however, these errors can be very useful for more realistic and effective teaching. Based on the findings obtained from this research, the current researcher found that students, who participated in the study, have a poor mastering of a number of aspects in writing a composition in English, and students writing skills progress is below the expected.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

Considering the results obtained from this study, the following recommendations are provided: Teachers should raise students' awareness of the importance of being able to write in English (including compositions) throughout their future academic and non-academic career so that students themselves could exert their effort for the betterment of their writing. This can be done with employing different techniques. Such as , with exposing the students to authentic written materials that will help them expand their vocabulary and write well organized, reasonably coherent paragraph since it will give them better opportunity to practice as they are a foreign language learners, encouraging the students to carryout self, and peer corrections in order to further their learning and regulate their language learning and language using skills as they can internalize their grammatical and lexical knowledge and utilize it for production, giving students

different and frequent writing activities, and even advising the other subject teachers to give the students different activities that make the students write, and report in English when they teach their own lessons, trying to correct students errors as frequently( with certain degree of flexibility) as possible, and last but not least, finding a mechanism so as to establish students writing lab. All these and other similar measures can increase the students' awareness so that they can compose less erroneous compositions.

Teachers should consider errors as a natural process, with giving more focus on the errors which are observed frequently, and they should include more exercises on these errors rather than being desperate when they encounter different errors committed by the students, and in line with this, there is a need to know whether inter-lingual or intra-lingual errors are the main sources behind the students' major errors so that teachers can provide appropriate remedy in a better way.

Remedial materials or programs that are important to the needs of the students, and that can improve their competence in writing should be designed. Thus, if the school has a plan to do this, grade 12 students should be first given the priority to take part in any of these programs. In related to this, the teaching materials such as students' textbooks, modules, handouts etc. should contain very brief and clear explanations, and adequate practical exercises on verb tense 74 (28.03%), subject-verb agreement 44 (16.65%), Prepositions 42(15.91%), capitalization (the four most frequent errors students commit based on this study).

Different error correction techniques which can help to improve the students' ability in writing a standard composition should be further investigated so that not only grade 12 students but also students in the other grades at MUCS can be benefited. Besides this, further research should be conducted to investigate the errors that could be made by different grade students and among different batches.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: “Coronavirus and how it has changed our world”**

#### **Samples of students` compositions**

(16 essays of 30 are presented below)

##### **Sample 01**

###### **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 Tigray 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 02**

###### **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, but the war between Ethiopia federal state and Tigray regional state created. After the Pretoria agreement 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 2022. 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 03**

#### **Coronavirus and how it has changed our world!**

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 Tigray 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 moswach our hands werrymutch. I hope everyday life becomes normal again. I hope that the China will also help. Bye.

### **Sample 05**

#### **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 were masks and have social distancing. People could not go out and many people got temporarily laid off from their jobs. Somewhere people where 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 06**

### **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 Freminatos 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 07**

### **Coronavirus and hos it changed our world?**

I was watching televishon and heard when they tells news and gives information about Korona. Cornavirus changed that we nid to juse mask and antibac. Coronavirus can be caused a threat to health. And meny people die, and people feling bad and if we are sick we ned to take corona test. Covid-19 started in 2019 in December. We cant met people and meny people ned to do online job and online shool. But corona vaccine has meny people Get but not evryone. The oldest has get the veccine and you nede to take 2 doses of the vaccine. We have to hold 1 meters. We dont celebrate 28.may because coronavirus.

## **Sample 08**

### **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 been said that it changed the whole world Now I'm going to tell the story about corona.

It's al began in March 2020 the corona virus has been in the hole 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 where masks and have one meters from other people. And stay in queue to go inside a shop. And in school we have zone to hold one meters 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 09**

### **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 Ethiopia 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 010**

### **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 Ethiopia's Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmmed came out with things that we needed to start doing. He 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 011**

### **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 Tigray created some serious rules. We was having school from home and not go out with friends. I mesi 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 meseret of the standard now. But later today comes a new press conference. I hope that the rules get thighter so we Kan get rid of this pandemic. I think it will be over soon...

## **Sample 012**

### **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 013**

### **Corona**

The coronavirus got discovered december 2019. The infection control measures was created March 12th 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 014**

### **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 015**

### **Corona virus and how it has changed the world**

Corona is a virus which to Tigray 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. They 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 016**

### **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 B: The most common errors extracted from students` composition**

“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 Kan 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 Ethiopia's Prime Minister Dr. Abyi Ahmmed came out with things that we needed to start doing."
37. "He 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 Ethiopia 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 meseret 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 Ethiopia/Tigray 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 apatient."
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 28.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 tothe 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 wiil 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 one 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."