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Supervisor: Rowena Jansson

Examiner: Christopher Allen

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Error Analysis of the National Test in English courses A and B

Aida Alagic

Abstract

This paper sets out to examine the most common errors in the national test and whether the students make the same errors in English course B as in English course A at Upper Secondary School in Sweden. The method used for this study is quantitative where nine grammatical features are used to count the errors made. Twenty national tests were used to carry out this study; ten national tests are from English course A and the other ten from English course B. Results from all the features from English course A are compared with the same features from English course B.

The results show that the most common errors made in the national test are subject verb agreement and tense. Those two features had also a worsening in the English course B. The genitive errors have also doubled in English course B. The best improvement happened with the capital letters. Other features either stayed the same or improved slightly. One of the solutions for grammatical errors could be that teachers and students pay more attention to it and that the teachers include more grammar in their lessons so that the students have an opportunity to improve.

Keywords: Error analysis, the national test, English Course A, English course B, common errors.

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1. Introduction

For all teachers at Upper Secondary School the most important evaluation is the national test. This is a guideline for teachers when grading their pupils and because students and teachers place such great importance on this specific test it is very interesting to investigate the grammatical errors that students make in the national test in English courses A and B.

English course A is a compulsory subject for all students at Upper Secondary School and the students are about 16 years old. On the other hand, English course B is optional; the students themselves choose if they want to study it or not. If the students choose to study English course B they can study it either in the second or third year when they are about 18 years old.

When doing the national test students are very focused on what is being written. They make a great effort not to make grammatical errors and they check their work twice before handing it in. This setting makes it much easier for the researcher to know that the errors are not produced because of time pressure or because the test is not very important to do well in.

This research is not only important for me as a future teacher but also for all other English teachers. It is really significant to know which mistakes occur most frequently so that the teachers can look at them more closely when explaining them to their students.

This study aims to analyze students' errors made in national tests at Upper Secondary School. Errors are investigated at the general level. The results from English course A are compared with the results from English course B in order to evaluate if some progress is made in English during one year. The results from each grammatical feature are compared to the same grammatical feature but from different courses. The library and the internet searches have been used.

Unfortunately, not much research is made about the errors that students make in the national test. Lack of this information makes it difficult to compare the findings with others but, on the other hand, this study might lead to interesting results, thus promoting worthwhile discussion.

Previously published research is examined and a short history of the national test is provided. Furthermore, the chosen methodology is closely explained and the justification for the selection of the method is given.

From then on, the main focus of the paper is to summarize the results and discuss them, and to assess whether the aim of the investigation has been achieved and to what extent.

2. Background

The national test is made by the National Agency for Education on a central level and the knowledge of the students is evaluated according to their norms. With the central national test an external evaluation tool was introduced and with that the government had an opportunity to influence teachers' marking and teaching (Lundahl 2009: 18). Even though the national tests in Sweden have been used since the 1960's, the breakthrough came first in the 1990's when Wigiforss and Hassler- Göransson laid the foundation on how the central national test could be used to standardize marking all over the country (ibid.: 20). The four main aims that the National Agency for Education (2004) wants to achieve with the national test are:

- to give students fair assessments and fair grading
- to make the Syllabus more concrete
- to show students' strong and weak sides
- to see to what extent the Syllabus is covered

2.1 The National test in English

The national test in English is produced by the department of Language and Literature at Gothenburg University and consists of four main parts:

- Speaking
- Reading
- Listening
- Writing

The **speaking** part of the test takes about 10-15 minutes and the students sit in pairs (or in groups) and discuss a subject. The content is specifically chosen so that the students can discuss it from their own experience. In the speaking part, students should have the desire and confidence to talk without any preparation about familiar subject and to exchange information, personal views and experiences (Skolverket).

The **reading** part of the test consists of several segments. The students have about 85 minutes to read and answer the questions. In order to provide different types of reading abilities the department of Language and Literature at Gothenburg University has chosen various genres and contents. There are short and long texts with open answers or with multiple choices and gap texts. In the short texts the students read the texts and answer the questions by writing the best alternative in the box. In the gap texts there are a number of words missing and the students have to fill the gap so that it makes sense in the text. The long texts should be read and answered by marking the best answer in the appropriate box or to write a whole sentence answer (Skolverket).

The **listening** part of the test is very varied. The students listen to the content and answer the questions that are required. The content is heard twice; the first time with pauses and the second time without. The test is to be completed within 45 minutes (Skolverket).

The **writing** part has always two different subjects that the students can choose between. The subjects can be narrative, expository or investigative. The students have support questions at their disposal and 80 minutes to do the assessment. The questions relate to the topic that the students write about (Skolverket). For example, in 2006 one of the topics was “The role of films in my life”. These are some of the questions that the students had at the disposal:

- What are the titles of the films?
- When did you see them? How old were you?
- What types of films were they?

2.2 Results of the national test

The intention with the tables below is to demonstrate what grades the students gained in different parts of English course A. In the first column of the tables the different programs at Upper Secondary School are shown. The second column demonstrates in percentage (%) how many students failed (IG), passed (G), passed with distinction (VG), and passed with special distinction (MVG). The last column shows the number of students that participated in the national test.

2.2.1 Table: The distribution of grades in English course A, Spring term 2002, Speaking part.

Gymnasieprogram/ Vuxenutbildning	Speaking				Antal elever
	Andel (%) elever med betyget				
	IG	G	VG	MVG	
Barn- och fritid	10	61	26	3	440
Bygg	10	65	23	2	255
EI	3	65	29	3	503
Energi	*	*	*	*	75
Estetiskt	2	31	45	23	537
Fordon	8	65	22	5	295
Handel- och administration	5	65	26	4	409
Hotell- och restaurang	4	58	31	7	578
Hantverk	9	56	29	6	101
Industri	5	61	30	4	126
Livsmedel	*	*	*	*	31
Medic	4	44	41	12	503
Naturbruk	*	*	*	*	60
Naturvetenskap	0	21	53	25	1 459
Omvårdnad	9	60	27	4	303
Samhällsvetenskap	2	34	46	18	2 726
Teknik	1	37	47	16	743
S:a nationella pgm (ovägt)	3	42	41	14	9 144
S:a nationella pgm (vägt)	4	43	40	14	9 144
Övriga gymnasieprogram ¹	2	36	41	21	1 019
Gymnasial vuxenutbildning	4	38	42	15	885
Total	3	41	41	15	11 048

* Resultat redovisas ej för grupper under 100 elever eller från färre än tre skolor.

¹ Avser programmen SM, IV och IB-linjen, samt elever för vilka programtillhörighet ej angivits.

The speaking part of the test (2002 English course A) had the smallest percentage of failure, but it is remarkable what difference there is between the different programs. For

example, 25% passed with special distinction in the Natural Science Program although only 3% got the same grade in the Child and Recreation Program. (Skolverket 2002: 65).

2.2.2 Table: The distribution of grades in English course A, Spring term 2002, Reading part.

Gymnasieprogram/Vuxenutb.	Focus: Reading				Antal elever
	Andel (%) elever med betyget	IG	G	VG	
Barn- och fritid	31	39	28	2	469
Bygg	29	42	26	3	261
El	12	42	37	9	501
Energi	*	*	*	*	71
Estetiskt	9	28	44	19	528
Fordon	27	40	30	3	294
Handel- och administration	20	45	31	4	449
Hotell- och restaurang	20	44	30	6	611
Hantverk	19	44	33	4	103
Industri	24	48	24	4	135
Livsmedel	*	*	*	*	30
Medic	8	30	49	13	517
Naturbruk	*	*	*	*	57
Naturvetenskap	3	15	49	34	1 448
Omvårdnad	33	40	25	2	314
Samhällsvetenskap	5	31	48	15	2 733
Teknik	4	27	49	20	799
S:a nationella pgm (ovägt)	12	32	42	15	9 320
S:a nationella pgm (vägt)	13	32	41	15	9 320
Övriga gymnasieprogram ¹	7	27	44	22	1 027
Gymnasial vuxenutbildning	15	33	37	15	1 163
Total	12	31	41	16	11 510

* Resultat redovisas ej för grupper under 100 elever eller från färre än tre skolor.

¹ Avser programmen SM, IV och IB-linjen, samt elever för vilka programtillhörighet ej angivits.

The reading part has the greatest occurrence of failure. Yet again, the difference between the programs is noteworthy. In the Child and Recreation Program 31% fail in the reading part while only 3% fail in the Natural Science Program (Skolverket 2002: 67).

2.2.3 Table: The distribution of grades in English course A, Spring term 2002, Listening part.

Gymnasieprogram/ Vuxenutbildning	Focus Listening				Antal elever
	Andel (%) elever med betyget				
	IG	G	VG	MVG	
Barn- och fritid	17	36	35	13	459
Bygg	12	31	35	21	261
El	3	18	50	29	501
Energi	*	*	*	*	71
Estetiskt	4	17	41	38	529
Fordon	9	37	33	21	294
Handel- och administration	13	33	39	16	448
Hotell- och restaurang	7	32	40	21	608
Hantverk	10	27	45	18	103
Industri	7	27	45	21	133
Livsmedel	*	*	*	*	30
Medie	3	14	42	40	510
Naturbruk	*	*	*	*	57
Naturvetenskap	2	9	35	54	1 446
Omvårdnad	17	43	31	9	313
Samhällsvetenskap	3	15	45	37	2 722
Teknik	2	10	44	43	777
S:a nationella pgm (ovägt)	5	20	41	34	9 262
S:a nationella pgm (vägt)	6	20	40	33	9 262
Övriga gymnasieprogram ¹	4	14	42	40	1 023
Gymnasial vuxenutbildning	15	25	36	25	1 135
Total	6	20	40	34	11 420

* Resultat redovisas ej för grupper under 100 elever eller från färre än tre skolor.

¹ Avser programmen SM, IV och IB-linjen, samt elever för vilka programtillhörighet ej angivits.

The greatest occurrence of passed with special distinction and passed with distinction occurs in the listening part. For instance, in the Natural Science Program 54% passed with special distinction. At the same time the Child and Recreation Program gained only 13 % of the same grade (Skolverket 2002: 68).

2.2.4 Table: The distribution of grades in English course A, Spring term 2002, Writing part.

Gymnasieprogram/ Vuxenutbildning	Focus: Writing				Antal elever
	Andel (%) elever med betyget				
	IG	G	VG	MVG	
Barn- och fritid	21	57	20	1	455
Bygg	22	67	11	0	246
Ei	10	67	21	2	501
Energi	*	*	*	*	71
Estetiskt	5	37	42	15	533
Fordon	21	57	18	4	299
Handel- och administration	10	62	25	3	412
Hotell- och restaurang	14	61	21	4	581
Hantverk	13	58	23	6	103
Industri	17	55	27	2	133
Livsmedel	*	*	*	*	29
Medie	6	47	39	8	510
Naturbruk	*	*	*	*	55
Naturvetenskap	2	26	49	23	1 460
Omvårdnad	14	59	23	4	319
Samhällsvetenskap	3	41	41	15	2 737
Teknik	4	44	40	12	802
S:a nationella pgm (ovägt)	8	46	35	11	9 246
S:a nationella pgm (vägt)	8	46	35	11	9 246
Övriga gymnasieprogram [†]	4	37	42	17	1 024
Gymnasial vuxenutbildning	8	44	37	12	1 066
Total	7	45	36	12	11 336

* Resultat redovisas ej för grupper under 100 elever eller från färre än tre skolor.

[†] Avser programmen SM, IV och IB-linjen, samt elever för vilka programtillhörighet ej angivits.

The writing part has the lowest occurrence of passed with special distinction. The teachers are more critical of grammar in the writing part than in other parts of the test. It is noteworthy that students who take vocational programs have the most problems in achieving goals for the writing part of the national test. For example, in the Construction Program no one passed with special distinction (Skolverket 2002: 70).

3. Method & Material

In order to investigate which the most common errors in the national test are the quantitative method has been chosen where a large amount of data is collected and analyzed, as opposed to the qualitative method where a researcher has to go more in-depth to analyze a specific data.

Engelby and Söderberg (1999: 20) state that when using a quantitative method a researcher has not only to transcribe the rough data but also has to find a structure in the data and the similarities or differences with other data. The structure that a researcher discovers is going to determine the interpretation of what the data has to say (ibid.).

The choice to choose the quantitative method was made because the investigation is based on the most common errors in the national test. The qualitative method could have been chosen if the research was focusing on the analysis of the national test more closely, and to find out the reasons why the errors occur. Eliasson (2006: 30) states that a researcher should choose the quantitative method when it is important to get out some numbers out of the material. The quantitative method is also recommended when the researcher wants to give information about large groups (ibid.).

3.1 The approach and the justification of the selected method

A total of twenty national tests from an Upper Secondary School were included in this study. Ten national tests were from English course A and the other ten were from English course B. The students from English course A were the same as in English course B. The written part of the national test was analyzed and compared. The task was to write about a film and the text should include about 500-800 words. All national tests were originals and hand-written. Each script was analyzed and the errors found were marked and counted.

The selection of national tests was made in alphabetic order with the intention to prevent the teacher's selection. From a total of thirty students on the class list the first ten students were selected to be part of this investigation. In this study nine grammatical features were investigated because they are recognized as frequent errors among Swedish learners of English (Estling Vannestål 2007). A comparison was made between errors made in English course A and B.

The investigation was based on the most common errors in written English to see if the students make the same errors in English course B as in English course A. It is hoped that this will indicate areas of improvement and areas of continued problems. The results and the conclusion will be presented and discussed later.

3.2 Grammatical features

The following grammatical features were used, which Estling Vannestål (2007) reckons as frequent errors made among Swedish learners of English. The problems of the grammatical features are briefly discussed below.

1. Subject verb agreement
2. Run-on sentences
3. Sentence fragments
4. The indefinite article (a/ an)
5. The definite article (the)
6. Genitive(‘)
7. Capital letters
8. Countable& Uncountable nouns
9. Tense

Subject verb agreement creates big problems for Swedish learners of English because English verbs inflect in the present tense and Swedish verbs do not (Estling Vannestål 2007: 80). Swedish learners of English have problems with identifying a subject as singular or plural and make mistakes such as leaving out the-s in the singular or adding –s in the plural (ibid.: 81). One explanation could be that learners of English have misunderstood the principle and think that as an –s is added to the noun in the plural an –s should be added to the verb as well (ibid.).

A **run-on sentence** is a mistake made by many Swedish learners. They join two main clauses together without one of the coordinators (and, but, or) (ibid. 78).

A **sentence fragment** is an incomplete sentence; it lacks a main verb. This mistake is also often made by Swedish learners and according to Estling Vannestål (ibid. 79) sentence fragments are common in students’ essays. To convert a sentence fragment into an acceptable form the fragment should be joined with the first sentence by way of a comma or a dash (ibid.).

If we write/talk about something or someone in general then we use the **indefinite article**. "A" and "an" are the commonest general determiners and are placed in front of the singular form of a countable noun (Collins Cobuild: 54). Problems for the students are the use of a definite article when it should be an indefinite article.

The **definite article** "the" is the most common specific determiner and is put in front of any common noun (ibid. 43). According to Estling Vannestål (2007: 124) the definite article creates problems for learners because there are some cases where the definite article is used in English but not in Swedish and the other way around.

When something specific belongs to or is associated with someone an apostrophe "s" is added to a noun or name in order to express possession (**genitive**) (Collins Cobuild 1990: 102). The possessive form is placed in front of the thing that belongs to or is associated with that particular person (ibid.) Estling Vannestål (2007: 118) lists the three most typical mistakes made by Swedish learners of English. Those three errors are:

- Forgetting to add an apostrophe
- Putting the apostrophe in the wrong place
- Adding an apostrophe to a plural -s in a non -genitive construction

Most nouns do not begin with **capital letter**, unless they are used to start a sentence (Collins Cobuild 1990: 5). However, proper nouns, names, nouns which identify people of particular nationality or languages, and nouns which are the name of a particular product are always spelled with a capital letter (ibid. 6). The students' problem is that the personal pronoun 'I' and proper nouns are not written with a capital letter in Swedish language but in the English language they are.

Swedish learners of English may find it difficult to distinguish **countable** from **uncountable noun** when the noun is countable in Swedish and uncountable in English and the other way around (Estling Vannestål 2007: 97). An example of this is 'advice'. Advice is an uncountable noun in English but in Swedish the singular form is used as well as the plural form.

When a statement is made an indication of time also has to be made (Collins Cobuild: 245). With the verb group we indicate if the situation is happening now (present tense), in the past (past tense) or in the future (future tense). Estling Vannestål (2007:208) states that one of the most frequent mistakes made by learners of English is to use an incorrect verb **tense** form.

3.3 Error Analysis

Looking at the mistakes from the national test is a form of Error Analysis. Error Analysis is frequently discussed and people have different opinions about it. Some researchers claim that Error Analysis is not sufficient because it does not take into account errors that are not made; only the errors that are made are investigated. Other researchers argue that Error Analysis is very significant especially for the teachers.

Svartvik (1973: 29) states that one of the biggest disadvantages of Error Analysis is that it is only concerned with the errors that students make. In addition, Error Analysis does not account for the success that is made in the target language and that makes the Error Analysis insufficient (ibid.).

Corder (1967: 167), on the other hand, sees Error Analysis as very important. He claims that learners' errors are significant to the teacher in order to see if the learner has progressed and to see what the learner still has to learn. Furthermore, Error Analysis provides evidence on how a language is learned or acquired and what strategies the learner is using while discovering the target language (ibid.).

3.4 Problems and limitations

One of the major problems was to get hold of the national tests. Several teachers were asked to provide me with the national tests but they declined blaming the lack of time for such things. One teacher had promised to get hold of 20 national tests in the archive but the teacher's hectic schedule and an illness came in the way. However, after several weeks of asking, another teacher found the time to pick out the national tests from the archive.

Another problem that also occurred was that several students had not done the national test in English course B and because of that they had to be excluded from the investigation. After discussing this matter with the teacher she agreed to pick out the next students on the class list who had done the national test both in English course A and B.

4. Results and discussion

In the following part of the paper the results of the analysis of national test scripts are presented, analyzed and described. The results are presented in a table which represents the errors that occur in the performance data. In the left column, the nine grammatical features are shown while in the right column the percentage of errors made in each feature is presented. In addition, all features are divided into sections where they are described in detail and compared. The comparison is made between English course A and English course B.

Table 4.1: Errors English A & B

Errors made in the national test at Upper Secondary School	Percentage of errors made in English A	Percentage of errors made in English B
Subject verb agreement	33%	46%
Capital letters	24%	4%
Tense	15%	21%
Run-on sentences	7%	4%
Sentence fragments	6%	4%
The definite article	4%	7%
The indefinite article	4%	4%
Countable & uncountable nouns	4%	4%
Genitive	3%	6%

4.2 Subject Verb Agreement

As we can see, subject verb agreement was the most common error made by students at Upper Secondary School in English course A and B. Of all errors made 33% are subject verb agreement mistakes. In English course B the percentage of subject verb agreement was even higher than in English course A. The subject verb agreement mistakes increased with 13% in English course B.

The results show that the overused –s form had the highest occurrence. Students added –s from where it should not be and forgot to add the –s form where it should be. Another problem was that the students did not know when to put singular or plural verb.

One explanation why the students made those errors could be that subject verb agreement causes problems for learners whose mother tongue does not have verb inflections (George 1972: 109). In addition, he states that the lack of significance for the learner prevents the acceptance into the learner's permanent memory. This statement could explain why the percentage of subject verb agreement increased in English course B. The students perhaps do not consider inflections to be important.

Here are some examples of subject verb agreement errors:

- You thinks it is dead....
- The film have....
- Learning stuff from movies a good thing...

4.3 Capital letters

The large amount of capital letters mistakes was a big surprise. As high as 24 % made capital letters mistakes. These mistakes improved significantly during one year. In English course B only 4% were capital letters mistakes and an improvement of 20% has been made. Most frequently the students wrote the personal pronoun 'I' with a small letter but countries were also written without a capital letter.

Capital letters should not create problems for learners if their mother tongue uses a Roman alphabet and the same language conventions (George 1972: 97). That the students wrote the personal pronoun 'I' with a small letter could be explained through the difference

between the Swedish and English language conventions but an explanation why the students wrote the countries with a small letter could not be found.

These are typical errors that the students made:

- i went to watch this movie.
- america is a big country.
- It can happen in real life. this movie is ...

4.4 Tense

In English course A 15% of all errors were tense related. A worsening of 6% has been made in English course B. The students often used the wrong tense and shifted between tenses when they should not. Native speakers of English do not appreciate when English learners forget to add the past form –ed because it indicates that the action or activity or state has happened in the past (George 1972: 111).

Here are some examples of tense errors:

- He had learn that it is wrong...
- You don't have to drunk.
- Next morning when he wake up...(relating to something that has happened before)

4.5 Run on sentences

In the English course A 7% were run-on sentence mistakes. An improvement has been made in English course B where only 4% were run-on sentence mistakes.

These are typical errors that the students made:

- The plot is very common, both movie are to stay alive and fight the big bad alien, otherwise it will spread to the civilization and destroy all of mankind.
- The movie was great it was sometimes funny and sometimes sad.

4.6 Sentence fragments

In English course A about 6% of all errors were sentence fragments. In English course B this has reduced to 4% which indicates some improvement.

These are typical errors that the students made:

- Then later after 20 years. Ben grows and he had learned everything from Greg.
- One reason could be that one of my favorite actors is in them both. Orlando Bloom.

4.7 The definite article

The definite article was both overused and forgotten. Students could not distinguish where the definite article “the” should be used and where not. The definite article did not create big problems for the students in English course A where only 4% made the definite article mistakes. Surprisingly, in English course B the definite article mistakes increased up till 7% and that denotes a worsening of 3%.

George (1972: 102) claims that English learners often use the definite article “the” to fill a slot. Moreover, he says that teachers should teach the general “rule” to their students so that they know where to use the definite article (ibid. 103).

These are typical errors that the students made:

- ...and difficulty is...
- At the Oxford University...
- It can happen in the real life...

4.8 The indefinite article

The indefinite article mistakes do not occur very frequently. In English course A only 4% made that sort of mistake. There has not been any increase or improvement of the indefinite article mistakes.

One thesis that could explain why the students have problems with the indefinite article is that in English speech the indefinite article is a weak vowel and normally unstressed: it is seldom heard distinctly (George 1972:103). Because of the absence of the indefinite article in speech learners have difficulties to put the indefinite article in writing (ibid.).

These are typical errors that the students made:

- Cinema Paradiso is film...
- You can call it comedy...
- To have a children...

4.9 Countable and uncountable nouns

The countable and uncountable noun errors increased by 4% in English course A and B; no improvement or worsening has been made. The students made errors such as forgetting to add plural form to the noun when needed and adding plural form where it should not be. A problem which may occur for English learners is that a noun, in a given context, can be both countable and uncountable (George 1972: 97).

These are typical errors that the students made:

- The two most known movie are...
- Two peoples who are in love...
- ...find your sorts of film.

4.10 Genitive

In English course A 3% had problems with the use of the possessive form. A worsening has occurred in English course B where the percentage has doubled. The students do not know when or where to put the apostrophe which demonstrates possession. Often, the students add an -s to the noun but forget the apostrophe and form plural instead of genitive. Sometimes the students forget totally to express possession. George (1972:100) confirms these findings and says that the main error with possessives is omission of the inflection.

These are typical errors that the students made:

- Your mother credit card...
- My brothers camera...
- Fathers' car...

5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to investigate the most common errors in the national test and to find out whether the students make the same errors in English course B as in English course A. No comparison with other results could be made because not much research has been carried out regarding the most common errors in the national test. Because of that fact I thought that this particular investigation could be interesting for all English teachers and English teachers to be.

The investigation was carried out using twenty national tests and nine grammatical features to examine the most frequent errors among Swedish learners of English. The results from the grammatical features errors from English course A and B were compared. Only the written part has been examined in order to reduce the widespread area.

Another way of carrying out the investigation could have been a qualitative study, where the researcher focuses on the smaller area of the national test. Such investigation would give more in depth-results which would give us an understanding of why the errors occur.

The results of this study revealed that subject verb agreement and tense created the biggest problems for Swedish learners of English. Those two features even worsened in English course B. Another grammatical feature that worsened in English course B was the genitive. Genitive did not have as big occurrence of errors as subject verb agreement or tense but during one year the errors doubled. The only feature that improved significantly was capital letters. Other features had small improvements or stayed the same.

No general conclusion can be made from twenty national tests but reflecting upon what has been discovered in this study it seems that the most common errors in the national test are subject verb agreements and tense. Furthermore, the investigation shows that the students do make the same errors in English course A and B. It is noteworthy that some errors worsened during one year in school when the students should be improving their grammar. The only feature that improved drastically should have been learned way before Upper Secondary School. The question that remains is why the students make grammatical errors? Is it because the grammar is not important to them or did they not learn the grammar rules and because of that they don't know how to use it?

One solution to improve grammar could be that teachers pay more attention to it and teach their students how to use it properly. There have been many discussions about how grammar is not very important and that it is more important to be able to communicate. I agree that it is important to be able to communicate but grammar is important too. When a student has to write in English he/she cannot only rely on just being understood. We teachers/teachers to be should provide our students with the best conditions to succeed in English and that means to teach them how to use grammar properly.

In conclusion, it seems that the aim of this paper has been reached. This investigation can be continued with a further investigation where a questionnaire is presented to the students where they are asked what grammar means to them and whether it is important to know/understand the grammar rules. An additional investigation would deepen this study and provide more understanding of why the grammar errors are made and the extent to which both students and teachers are responsible.

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