DOCTORAL THESIS

On the Same Page

Collaborative EFL Writing in Swedish Primary Education

Elin Ruth

English and Education

LULEÅ UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

On the Same Page

Collaborative EFL Writing in Swedish Primary Education

Doctoral thesis by
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Department of Health, Education and Technology
Division of Education and Languages

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If it were up to me, watching videos of jellyfish would be an essential part of a PhD survival kit. While it may sound insane, this daily routine is actually one of the things that have kept me sane and focused throughout my five years as a PhD student. Nowadays, the mesmerising movement of translucent moon jellies is all I need to enter a state of complete relaxation. It is tempting to imagine myself floating peacefully like a jellyfish when life gets tough, but the lack of a heart and a brain is one of the less appealing qualities of a jellyfish and a downside, to say the least, in academia. Speaking of vital organs, the time has come for me to thank colleagues, friends and family from the bottom of my heart for helping me on my way towards becoming a Doctor of Philosophy.

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As I write these final lines, I am reminded of female sea turtles, who return to the same shore where they once hatched to lay their eggs. This resembles my educational trajectory, which could be described as a circular narrative in literary terms. After ‘hatching’ at Luleå University of Technology and earning my teaching degree in 2013, I returned to my alma mater years later to build new knowledge as a PhD student. While the circle may be the perfect expression of symmetry, a PhD journey is far from perfect or symmetrical, and that is only to be expected. This was one of the hardest lessons for me to learn: the pursuit of perfection is futile. Despite this, I have enjoyed every minute of trial and error during my PhD and cannot wait to see where the ocean currents take me.

Elin
Luleå, October 2026

Abstract

Collaborative writing (CW) is on the rise in primary English as a foreign language (EFL) education, which warrants further research on the opportunities and challenges of CW with young learners. The present thesis aims to contribute with knowledge about pedagogical implications of CW in EFL instruction at primary school. More specifically, affordances of CW are explored in four empirical studies targeting EFL teachers and young learners (aged 11–12) in Swedish school years 4–6. These studies build on qualitative interviews with teachers, audio- and screen recordings of young learners' computer-mediated CW in pairs, post-task interviews with CW pairs and handwritten narrative learner texts produced individually and collaboratively. The thesis is theoretically informed by affordance theory, while also drawing on teacher beliefs, social deontics and systemic functional linguistics (SFL). Methods employed include reflexive thematic analysis, and transitivity and appraisal frameworks, which are tools situated in SFL. The findings highlight affordances of CW from teachers' and young learners' perspectives, operationalised as actions taken that shape EFL learning opportunities. Such affordances encompass (meta)linguistic, social and affective aspects. (Meta)linguistic affordances, such as the potential of CW to enhance vocabulary knowledge, are emphasised by teachers as well as by young learners. The comparative analyses of the narrative texts also reveal linguistic affordances of CW, since texts written collaboratively use evaluative language to a greater extent than individual texts and are therefore potentially more engaging to a reader. When constructing the narrative texts, (meta)linguistic affordances offered by peer/teacher support and Google Translate are frequently enacted by the young learners. The use of this digital tool can, however, encourage or discourage pairs' joint discussions about language, and their critical awareness of suggestions made by Google Translate varies greatly. In addition, peer support and the CW situation are affected by social relationships formed either prior to or during CW, which fluctuate in interaction and are shown to influence EFL learning opportunities. As an example, the teachers voice concerns about how to pair young learners to stimulate language learning and ensure collaboration, and classroom data confirm this challenge. The teachers further assign CW a motivational role in primary EFL education, which exemplifies a prominent affective factor and positions CW as not merely a (meta)linguistic practice. The results thus indicate that CW is a multifaceted activity and, as such, may require considerable pedagogical efforts on behalf of the teacher.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, collaborative writing, writing instruction, young learners, affordance theory

List of papers included in the thesis

Paper I.

Ruth, E. (2026). EFL teacher beliefs about collaborative writing at Swedish primary school. *Education Inquiry*, *17*(3), 475–493.
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Paper II.
Ruth, E., & Lundström, S. (in press). Young EFL learners' interactional positionings in collaborative writing. *Nordic Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*.
Accepted.

Paper III.
Ruth, E. Young EFL learners' enactment of affordances and post-task understanding of collaborative writing.
Manuscript.

Paper IV.
Ruth, E., & Björk, O. From CAF to meaning-making: Comparing transitivity and appraisal in young learners' individual and collaborative EFL narratives.

Manuscript.

List of abbreviations

ARE	activity-related episode
CAF	complexity, accuracy and fluency
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CRE	content-related episode
CW	collaborative writing
EFL	English as a foreign language
FL	foreign language
FLA	foreign language anxiety
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
L1	first language
L2	second language
LRE	language-related episode
SFL	systemic functional linguistics
SLA	second language acquisition
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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1 Introduction

Writing in English as a foreign language (EFL) was once viewed as an individual task (e.g., Storch, 2023; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009) but is nowadays performed collaboratively in many classrooms. The increasing popularity of collaborative writing (CW) in EFL is noticeable even at primary school, which warrants further explorations of its pedagogical implications for teaching young learners, defined as children between the ages of five and twelve (Emery, 2018). CW is widely understood as "an activity that requires the co-authors to be involved in all stages of the writing process, sharing the responsibility for and the ownership of the entire text produced" (Storch, 2019, p. 40). As such, CW has started to gain ground worldwide in recent decades as a means to enhance writing and other EFL skills (e.g., Li, 2018; Li & Storch, 2025; Martins et al., 2025). Research findings namely suggest oral, written and metalinguistic learning opportunities during CW (e.g., Elabdali, 2021; Storch, 2013), but such findings generally apply to adolescents and adults learning EFL or English as a second (L2) language[1]. Less is known about how young learners can benefit from CW, and what challenges pupils and teachers may face when implementing CW in primary EFL education.

CW in EFL is an expanding field of research, where Storch's (2013) seminal work has contributed to spark the interest in this topic (Li & Zhang, 2023). Although young learners are not targeted as often as adolescent or adult learners, the number of EFL studies of CW at primary school are increasing (see, e.g., Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023a, for an overview). Both CW and writing in general are being investigated to a greater extent than previously at primary school, which can partly be explained by the societal prominence of writing in English and the demands of digitalisation (e.g., García Mayo, 2017; Pfenninger & Singleton, 2019). Despite the growing interest in CW in primary EFL education, scholars (e.g., Azkarai & Calzada, 2024; Martins et al., 2025) maintain that young EFL learners' CW is an understudied area.

Up to this point, studies of CW with both EFL teachers and young learners as participants have not been conducted in Sweden, where the present thesis is situated. In fact, Jansson (2024) notes that writing is a neglected area in research targeting various subjects in Swedish school years 4–6 (pupils aged 10–12). Berggren (2019), similarly, points out that young learners have long been an underexplored target group in EFL research on writing (see also Geng et al., 2022), which motivates investigations of their specific needs and ways of developing their EFL writing skills. Such skills could encompass collaboration, given the potential cognitive, linguistic and affective gains of peer interaction (Pladevall-Ballester, 2026). Collaboration also prepares pupils for participation in a society and a working life that frequently necessitate joint text production (e.g., Li & Storch, 2025). Due to the occupational use of CW and the language learning opportunities associated with it, researchers may wish to continue to pursue the question of how CW can inform EFL writing instruction for young learners and shape their future as writers.

[1] Following Butler (2019), no distinction is made between children learning an L2 and a foreign language (FL) in this thesis, although L2 learners may be more extensively exposed to the target language than FL learners. When referring to Swedish young learners, specifically, the term EFL is used, since English does not have official status as an L2 in Sweden (see also Section 2.3 on the Swedish context).

The increasing scholarly and educational focus on CW at primary school means that young learners may very well have the opportunity to write collaboratively in the EFL classroom. Notably, the extent to which collaboration is included in writing instruction can depend on steering documents, such as curricula and syllabi. The Swedish syllabus for teaching English in school years 4–6 does not mention CW, whereas the syllabi for teaching Swedish and Swedish as an L2 explicitly state that writing individually and *in groups* is part of the core content of the subjects (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a). The absence of CW from the English syllabus does not imply that teachers cannot use it in their EFL classes, but it can potentially influence their willingness to do so and result in teachers prioritising areas that are listed as core content.

As young learners work towards becoming independent EFL writers, they may face a number of challenges along the way. The challenges they can encounter are understandable when considering "the cognitive load associated with writing" (Martins et al., 2025, p. 256). Undoubtedly, writing is in many respects a cognitive process, where writers generate ideas and need to decide on how to express and organise these ideas in a text (Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023a; Li & Storch, 2025). Writing is also a social and cultural process, since writers communicate with real or imagined recipients and adapt their texts accordingly to different contexts and genres (Li & Storch, 2025). The cognitive, social and cultural dimensions all add to the complexity of writing, a skill which is perhaps particularly complex when young learners do not have full command of the target language. Martins et al. (2025) pose the questions whether CW starting at an early age can relieve the cognitive load young learners may experience when writing, and whether CW can maintain their engagement (cf. Milla & García Mayo, 2024, who recommend introducing CW in primary education for motivational reasons). Seeking ways to facilitate pupils' development of writing skills is therefore justified, as are explorations of the potential of CW to assist pupils on their journey as EFL writers in formal education.

To capture collaborative EFL writing at primary school as extensively as possible, research should preferably consider young learners' writing process as well as their texts. If focusing only on the process or the product, that is, the collaborative texts, it is more difficult to arrive at a fuller understanding of what CW can bring to primary EFL instruction. Since CW is a dialogic and multifaceted activity (Li & Storch, 2025), its influence is not restricted to the actual texts produced. As Lázaro-Ibarrola (2023a) observes, studies of young learners' CW combining a focus on process and product are scarce but a promising line of inquiry. Schleppegrell (2004) even argues that making the distinction between "writing as process" and "writing as product" is "a false dichotomy" (p. 149), since both are essential to writing instruction. Many CW studies, however, focus on either or (Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023a). Research on CW and EFL writing at primary and secondary school is often quantitative (see Geng et al., 2022, for a review) and centred on pupils' production of language-related episodes (LREs), defined as "any part of a dialogue in which students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or other- or self-correct" (Swain, 1998, p. 70). For this reason, this thesis aims to complement findings from quantitative studies and broaden the knowledge of CW at primary school by offering a qualitative take on CW in school years 4–6.

By studying the CW process and collaborative texts, while also allowing teachers and pupils to reflect on CW, this thesis offers further insights into CW in primary EFL education. As has been mentioned, little is known about implementations of CW with pupils at primary

school, at least in comparison with available studies including older or more advanced learners. Even less is known about teachers' and pupils' understanding of CW, despite the fact that they are key figures in classroom implementations of CW. A scientific account of CW is therefore lacking a pivotal piece if discourses about CW are created by scholars and exclude voices from teachers and pupils (cf. Azkarai & Kopinska, 2020; Storch, 2023). This thesis brings novel approaches to young learners' CW as it attempts to bridge the research gaps identified above and encourage additional studies of CW in primary EFL settings around the world.

1.1 Aim and research question

The overarching aim of this thesis is to contribute with knowledge about pedagogical implications of CW in EFL classrooms with young learners. To illuminate such implications, a variety of study objects were considered indispensable. Since teachers and pupils heavily influence the CW situation, their understanding of CW was paired with studies of in-class CW and analyses of pupils' narrative texts. This combination of study objects adds different perspectives on the use of CW in EFL instruction for young learners, while also expanding the body of CW research at primary school.

This thesis is guided by the following research question:

- What affordances does collaborative EFL writing in Swedish school years 4–6 entail?

The answers to this research question are pursued in four studies referred to as Studies I–IV, which are briefly introduced in the section below.

1.2 Studies I–IV

The present thesis comprises a total of four studies that, taken together, highlight CW from both teachers' and young learners' perspectives. While this thesis frame draws on affordance theory (Nguyen, 2025; van Lier, 2004) as its main theoretical underpinning, a combination of other theories and methods was deemed necessary to capture affordances of CW, which refer to actions taken that affect EFL learning opportunities, in the data sets. This was done with a focus on the CW process as well as on learner texts. The CW process is approached in this thesis through analyses of (i) pupils' enactment of affordances during CW and (ii) the relationship between pupils' interactional positionings, that is, their rights to influence the directions of the CW, and the EFL learning opportunities possibly created during computer-mediated CW in teacher-selected, mixed-proficiency pairs. In addition, handwritten narrative learner texts produced individually and in researcher-selected, same-proficiency pairs are compared. The individual and collaborative texts are contrasted as regards linguistic resources for meaning-making, which include the ways in which writers represent and evaluate the world. This thesis also contributes with the much sought-after teacher beliefs (see, e.g., Li & Storch, 2025; Storch, 2023) and post-task interviews with pupils who wrote narrative texts collaboratively on laptops. Here, the materials consist of interviews with EFL teachers and with teacher-selected pairs of pupils. Stimulated recall was used in the latter case as the

pupils were asked to share their post-task understanding of the CW situation by commenting on parts of their CW process captured by screen recordings.

Table 1 gives an overview of Studies I–IV as it states the school year(s) focused on in each study and shows the participants, who were the same EFL classes and teachers in Studies II–IV. The table also summarises the data sets, theories, methods and study objects in the respective studies.

Table 1

Overview of Studies I–IV

	Study I	**Study II**	**Study III**	**Study IV**
School year(s)	4–6	5	5	6
Participants	15 EFL teachers	20 pupils (aged 11) 3 EFL teachers	20 pupils (aged 11) 3 EFL teachers	20 pupils (aged 12)
Data set(s)	Semi-structured interviews	Audio- and screen recordings	Audio- and screen recordings Semi-structured interviews	Narrative texts written individually and collaboratively
Theory	Teacher beliefs	Social deontics	Affordance theory	Systemic functional linguistics
Method(s)	Reflexive thematic analysis	Deductive analysis	Qualitative content analysis	Transitivity and appraisal analyses
Study object(s)	Teacher beliefs about CW	Pupils' interactional positionings in CW	Pupils' enactment of affordances and understanding of CW	Linguistic resources for meaning-making in individual and collaborative narrative texts

In **Study I**, EFL teachers in school years 4–6 were targeted in interviews to identify the potential language learning opportunities they associate with CW. The study is informed by teacher beliefs (Pajares, 1992) and thematises the ways in which CW affects pupils' EFL learning opportunities, according to teachers. Study I addresses the research question:

- How do teachers believe that CW affects pupils' EFL learning opportunities?

Studying teacher beliefs alone is not sufficient to evaluate pedagogical implications of CW in the young learner classroom. The interview study was therefore supplemented with audio- and screen recordings of pupils' CW in pairs to capture their interactional positionings during the CW process. These recordings supported **Study II**, which enabled explorations of the potential language learning opportunities created in pupils' interaction as they write collaboratively. Drawing on social deontics (Stevanovic, 2018), the second study aims to outline the characteristics of interactional positionings in pupils' CW of narrative texts. It further sheds light on what consequences such positionings may have for young learners' EFL learning opportunities in oral interaction during CW. Study II is guided by the following research questions:

- What characterises the interactional positionings in pupils' CW of narrative texts?
- What implications do the interactional positionings have for pupils' opportunities to deliberate on language and content when they write collaboratively in EFL?

Study III draws attention to the relationship between pupils' understanding of CW and their enactment of affordances in the actual CW situation. This study relies on audio- and screen recordings and post-task interviews with pupils who had written collaboratively in pairs. The pairs were shown sequences of their respective screen recordings during stimulated recall sessions and were asked to comment on these sequences to delve into their post-task understanding of CW. Study III answers the research questions:

- What affordances affecting EFL learning do young learners enact in the CW situation?
- How do young learners understand the CW situation and its implications for their EFL learning?

The final study included in this thesis, **Study IV**, employs frameworks situated in Halliday's (1978) systemic functional linguistics (SFL) to compare linguistic resources for meaning-making in pupils' individual and collaborative narrative texts. More specifically, such resources express and evaluate what is happening in clauses and are a vital part of young learners' literacy development, for example, as they can be used to engage readers of narrative texts. The linguistic resources focalised in Study IV are rarely covered in comparative studies of CW and individual writing in EFL, although they constitute potential affordances of CW. The research questions answered in Study IV are:

- How are ideational and interpersonal meanings realised in individually and collaboratively written narratives produced by young EFL learners?
- In what ways do collaboratively written texts differ from individually written texts regarding the variation in linguistic resources used for ideational and interpersonal meaning-making?

1.3 Overview of the thesis

The present thesis consists of a thesis frame and four appended studies. By taking an overarching perspective on CW in EFL instruction for young learners, the thesis frame contextualises the thesis and discusses the joint contribution of the four studies.

The thesis frame is structured in the following manner. The introductory chapter briefly presents CW as a field of research and outlines EFL writing at primary school before stating the aim and research question. This first chapter also gives a condensed overview of the four studies. Chapter 2 constitutes a background to the thesis, where a definition of young learners is provided and EFL writing instruction at primary school is introduced. The background further includes the Swedish context in which the studies were conducted, since contextual aspects can have a bearing on the results. This encompasses EFL teaching at Swedish primary school, the curriculum and syllabi that guide such teaching, the status of the English language in Sweden and Swedish pupils' proficiency in EFL. Next, Chapter 3 offers a definition of CW and synthesises previous research on CW, for example, regarding learner interaction and the effects of CW on learner texts. In Chapter 4, the theories employed are accounted for, and the implications of the theoretical choices and combinations are addressed. The data collection and analyses are described after this in Chapter 5, where the empirical data as well as the participants in the four studies are presented. Potential consequences of the researcher's choices, roles and influence are further reflected on in relation to the data collection and methodological choices. Chapter 5 also covers ethical considerations in designing and conducting the four studies. Among such considerations are research with child participants, collaboration with in-service teachers and data storage. The four studies are summarised in Chapter 6 and are appended in this thesis frame to offer the opportunity to review their results in more detail. In the final chapter, Chapter 7, pedagogical implications of the results are discussed and future lines of inquiry are suggested in research on young EFL learners' CW. The thesis frame concludes with a summary in Swedish.

2 Background

This chapter serves to contextualise the present thesis and is divided into three sections. In Section 2.1, the term *young learners* is defined, and an introduction to the characteristics and complexities of primary EFL writing instruction is given. Since this thesis is situated in Sweden, Section 2.2 presents EFL instruction at Swedish compulsory school and steering documents for teaching English, while Section 2.3 discusses the status of English as an L2 or an FL in Sweden and outlines Swedish pupils' proficiency in EFL.

2.1 Young learners' EFL writing in formal education

Part of contextualising CW is to define who young learners are. A young learner can easily be interpreted as denoting a child of school age, but referring to a child as a young learner suggests a wide chronological span "from the fetus to the young adult" (Nunan, 2017, p. 69; see also Gopnik et al., 2001). In L2/FL studies, young learners often mean children between the ages of five and twelve (e.g., Emery, 2018; Linse, 2005), whereas the term *very young learners* generally applies to preschool children under five (Emery, 2018). The aforementioned age span suggested for young learners is used in L2/FL studies that aim to inform teaching at primary school (Nunan, 2017) and is also adopted in the present thesis. Furthermore, *pupils* is used in reference to young and adolescent learners aged five to 19 in primary, secondary and upper secondary education, while *children* encompasses individuals up to the age of twelve, not necessarily in educational contexts. Adult learners are referred to as *students* throughout this thesis, and *learners* may apply to young, adolescent and/or adult learners, especially when used in compound nouns, such as *learner texts* or *learner interaction*.

EFL instruction for young learners in Europe has traditionally centred on what is known as *the four skills*: listening, speaking, reading and writing (Edelenbos et al., 2006), but categorising a complexity such as language learning or communication in this manner has been deemed inadequate. For this reason, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the CEFR[2], has replaced the four skills with four modes of communication: reception, production, interaction and mediation. According to the Council of Europe (2020), this is a more adequate reflection of how people use language for communication, but the division into four skills remains evident in handbooks targeting EFL teachers in primary education (e.g., Keaveney & Lundberg, 2023). Teaching the four skills to young learners in the EFL classroom usually starts with listening activities before moving on to speaking, after which reading and writing are introduced at a later stage (Kırkgöz, 2019). As Shin and Crandall (2019) note, however, reading and writing do not need to be delayed in the young learner classroom, but can instead begin when EFL instruction begins. Since English spelling and pronunciation differ greatly, acquiring reading and writing skills, jointly referred to as *literacy*, is potentially a demanding process (cf. Matsuda & Silva, 2005; Shin & Crandall, 2019). Although the acquisition of any skill can be perceived as complex, writing in particular is believed to be difficult to teach and learn (Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023a; Silva & Matsuda, 2010). This belief can possibly explain why writing is somewhat neglected in L2/FL primary classrooms compared to oral skills (e.g., García Hernández et al., 2017; Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023a).

[2] The CEFR is an international standard comprising six levels describing what a user can do with a language (see also Section 2.2).

Some descriptions of writing can serve to illustrate the complexity of this skill. As an example, Cumming (1998) points out multiple meanings of writing, which can denote the process of composing, the social act of discourse or the product. Similarly, Li and Storch (2025) highlight cognitive, social and cultural dimensions of writing. All these dimensions are demonstrated by Lynch (2017), who summarises some of the skills required in writing (see also Brown, 1994). According to Lynch (2017), a skilled L2/FL writer first needs to be able to form and produce letters, which is a lower psychomotor skill relevant to handwriting in primary education. The writer further has to adapt their writing rate to the purpose of the writing task, while also using vocabulary, morphology and grammar appropriately to express meaning. The text produced is then expected to be structured, which involves the use of cohesive devices, making clear connections between ideas and adhering to the conventions of writing. Included in such conventions is an awareness of genre and the intended audience, which Lynch (2017) regards as a higher cognitive skill (cf. Langer's, 2000, high literacy accounted for in Study IV). In addition to this, L2/FL writers need to employ a variety of strategies during the writing process, such as outlining, drafting and soliciting feedback. In modern-day society, the writing process commonly includes computer-assisted language learning and other technological tools for feedback and assessment, which is one of the future directions for EFL writing research at primary and secondary school envisioned by Geng et al. (2022).

The foundation for literacy development is laid at primary school, but assisting all pupils in gaining literacy is perhaps one of the most challenging tasks that teachers can face (cf. Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023a; Schleppegrell, 2004). Contemporary classrooms often include large and heterogeneous groups of learners, and the teaching needs to be adapted to pupils who are unequally prepared for reading and writing in primary education. Not only are EFL classes likely to be linguistically and culturally diverse, but pupils' exposure to Extramural English (Sundqvist, 2009), that is, English outside school, will vary due to activities, such as listening to music, using social media or gaming. Variations of these kinds will obviously affect both EFL instruction and pupils' literacy development. Young learners' reading comprehension also tends to be at a higher level than their writing ability (Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2019), which is an insight that teachers may wish to consider as they plan their literacy instruction.

In the early years of schooling, many of the texts encountered in the classroom will be narratives, since the narrative genre usually has a prominent position in EFL writing instruction (Coyle et al., 2020; Geng et al., 2022; Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021). Christie (2012), however, underlines the importance of broadening pupils' written repertoire. Given their future needs for academic literacy, she stresses the fact that young learners will eventually have to transition from writing narrative texts to writing academic texts. Thus, the demands on pupils to possess EFL literacy increase as they grow older and progress throughout compulsory school. As adolescents, they are expected to read and write texts of various genres and enhance their academic literacy, which does not simply emerge. Pupils rather need explicit instruction and support to develop literacy and thrive as academic readers and writers (cf. Butler, 2019; Shin & Crandall, 2019).

When teaching literacy, research indicates that teachers may need to take measures to motivate young learners to write in EFL. A well-known publication that demonstrates waning motivation is the ELLiE study (Enever, 2011) conducted in seven European countries with 865 young learner participants aged 10–11. This study showed that pupils are initially

motivated to write in EFL at primary school, but less motivated at a later stage of primary education. Notably, young learners' reluctance to write is not limited to EFL settings but is evident in other subjects as well, such as first language (L1) Swedish, which Jansson (2024) has noted in school years 4–6. Such findings warrant explorations of approaches that can maintain young learners' short- and long-term interest in writing, both in and beyond EFL courses. According to Villarreal and Munarriz-Ibarrola (2021), CW is possibly such an approach, since "collaboration clearly addresses the negative beliefs held about writing in English" (p. 110), at least judging from their findings in a secondary school setting.

2.2 EFL instruction at Swedish compulsory school

Compulsory education in Sweden begins in preschool class as children are six years old and finishes in school year 9 between the ages of 15 and 16.[3] As is the case in many European countries, English is the first FL to be formally introduced in Sweden, and it is also the only mandatory FL in Swedish compulsory education (Education Act, 2010). A common starting point for EFL instruction in Sweden is in school years 1–3 when pupils are seven to nine years old, but English may even be introduced in preschool or preschool class (Sylvén, 2022). This is in line with the growing trend towards starting formal EFL instruction as early as possible (e.g., Enever, 2011; Lundberg, 2007; Porsch et al., 2023).

The time spent on formal EFL instruction in Sweden varies at different stages of compulsory education. Pupils receive a total of 480 hours of formal EFL instruction between school year 1 and school year 9 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2026c). In primary education, only 60 of these hours are allocated to school years 1–3, whereas 220 hours are spent on EFL instruction in school years 4–6. At secondary school, an additional 200 hours of English are included in school years 7–9 (pupils aged 13–15 or 16). Thus, 280 hours constitute primary EFL education in school years 1–6. This number can be compared to the 48 hours of teaching other FLs in school years 4–6, where pupils start studying another FL in addition to English, such as French, German or Spanish. As they reach secondary school, the time increases to 272 hours in school years 7–9, resulting in a total of 320 hours of FL instruction in primary and secondary education (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2026c). The lower number of hours allocated to FL instruction mirrors the prominent position of English relative to other FLs in the Swedish school system and society.

Compulsory education in Sweden is governed by the curriculum (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a), which first presents the fundamental values and mission of Swedish schools and then moves on to overall objectives and guidelines. The subsequent sections of the curriculum focus on aims and core content in preschool class and school-age educare before introducing the syllabi for the subjects taught at compulsory school. These syllabi are important tools for ensuring high and equal quality in education for all pupils in Sweden (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a, 2022b; see also Education Act, 2010). Teaching should be planned and conducted in accordance with the aim and core content stated in the syllabi, while the grading criteria are the basis for assessment and grading (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022b).

[3] As of autumn 2028, compulsory school in Sweden will encompass ten years, where preschool class will be replaced with a revised version of school year 1. This will also result in a new curriculum being implemented (see Swedish National Agency for Education, 2026d). The following stages are included in the ten-year compulsory school: school years 1–4, school years 5–7 and school years 8–10 (see Education Act, 2010).

The syllabus for teaching English at Swedish compulsory school initially states an overarching aim of the subject, which is "to help pupils develop knowledge of the English language and of the areas and contexts in which English is used" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a, p. 43). Pupils should further be given the opportunity to develop plurilingualism (Council of Europe, 2020), that is, to draw on their knowledge of multiple languages, and have confidence in their ability to use English for different purposes in a variety of situations (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a). As such, EFL teaching in Sweden aims to assist pupils in gaining "an all-round communicative ability" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a, p. 43) at compulsory school. This communicative ability presupposes the use of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in communication and interaction, but it also covers pupils' ability to adapt their use of language to the context, purpose and recipient (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a). Furthermore, communicative ability encompasses linguistic confidence and the use of strategies to aid communication when the pupils' language skills are insufficient.

The emphasis on communicative ability reveals that the syllabus, as well as EFL teaching in Sweden, is heavily influenced by communicative language teaching (see, e.g., Siegel, 2022), which started gaining ground in the 1970s through Hymes's (1972) concept of communicative competence. In brief, communicative language teaching means allowing pupils to practise using the target language effectively in different contexts instead of focusing on its distinct features. Fluency rather than accuracy is prioritised in this type of teaching, as is often the case in real-life communication and authentic texts. In line with this, "the functional and communicative view on language" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2025a, p. 17, my translation) is explicitly mentioned in the commentaries on the English syllabus for compulsory school. A communicative and action-oriented view on language is also promoted by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020), which the English syllabus is aligned with (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2025a). In the CEFR, the following six levels of FL proficiency are outlined: A1 and A2 (Basic User), B1 and B2 (Independent User) and C1 and C2 (Proficient User). Each of these levels can be subdivided to pinpoint additional nuances in a language user's proficiency, for example, A1.1 and A1.2. Pupils in Sweden are supposed to be A2.1 users of English when they finish school year 6 at the age of 12, and B1.1 users at the end of school year 9 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2025a). These two CEFR levels correspond to the lowest passing grade in the respective school years, which implies that some pupils may have progressed beyond the A2.1 and B1.1 levels as they complete school years 6 or 9 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2025a).

Following the CEFR, the English syllabus stresses the role of language as it is actively used in various contexts by individual language users, who are seen as social agents. This communicative aspect, rather than individual constituents of language, is thus the main focus in the syllabus according to the commentaries on it (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2025a), which is reflected in the core content for teaching English. The core content is mandatory to teach and divided into sections on communication, reception, production and interaction (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a). Examples of texts that constitute core content in the syllabus for school years 4–6 are presentations, instructions, messages, stories and descriptions. Pupils are also tasked with revising their written output and adapting their written communication to the purpose and the recipient. Such core content concern production as well as interaction and can be compared to the 'can do' statements in the CEFR. Some examples of what an A2 user, or a pupil in Swedish school year 6, should be able to

achieve in overall written production is that they "[c]an produce a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 66). In overall written interaction, an A2 user "[c]an compose short, simple formulaic notes relating to matters in areas of immediate need" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 82). These 'areas of immediate need' are alluded to in the communication content for school years 4–6, where "[s]ubject areas that are familiar to the pupils" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a, p. 44) are expected to be covered in EFL teaching.

What pupils can do in writing is to be assessed and eventually graded for the first time at the end of school year 6. According to the grading criteria for the lowest passing grade that are applicable to EFL writing, pupils should be able to express themselves in "a simple and comprehensible manner using words, phrases and sentences" and use "strategies that facilitate and improve the interaction to a limited extent" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a, p. 47). It is, however, up to each teacher to decide how to work towards these goals in the classroom. While the core content is obligatory to cover, teachers have a great amount of freedom when it comes to selecting teaching approaches (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022b). As an example, there seems to be collaborative elements in the core content of the syllabi for Swedish and Swedish as an L2, but not in the English syllabus. In Swedish and Swedish as an L2, pupils in school years 4–6 should engage in "[r]evising the content and form of texts written individually and *in a group*" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a, p. 245 and p. 258, respectively, my emphasis). CW is thus not mentioned explicitly in the English syllabi for primary school, but language learning is positioned as a social process in the commentaries on them (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2025a). The lack of CW in the English syllabus targeting school years 4–6 is, importantly, not a hindrance to using CW. In fact, the Swedish National Agency for Education (2022b) express their trust in teachers' professionalism and therefore allow them the freedom to interpret and implement the steering documents in ways deemed suitable to their groups of pupils.

2.3 English in Sweden

The educational setting is a potentially influential factor in EFL teaching and, as such, cannot be ignored. In Sweden, the opportunities to encounter and use English outside school are abundant and may influence classroom teaching. While English is labelled an FL by the Swedish National Agency for Education (2022a), it is not unanimously perceived as an FL in Sweden. Sylvén (2022) notes that the status of English in Sweden is rapidly gravitating towards that of an L2, although it is still officially viewed as an FL. Citizens of all ages are highly likely to encounter or use English frequently, possibly even on a daily basis, since the English language permeates contemporary Swedish society in many areas, such as business, politics, economy, music and entertainment (Mežek, 2024; Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a). This omnipresence has given rise to debates where the view on English as an L2 rather than an FL is advocated (Sylvén, 2022). Differentiating between an L2 and an FL is, however, not necessarily a straightforward task. Scholarly opinions are divided on this matter, since some researchers (e.g., Butler, 2019) do not distinguish between L2 and FL learners, whereas others (e.g., Oliver & Azkarai, 2017) make a clear distinction between L2 and FL contexts, arguing that L2 learners are those who have access to the target language outside the classroom, while most FL learners only receive between two and five hours of

weekly instruction in the target language at school. Here, it can be argued that an FL context is a setting where English, as an example, is mainly used in the classroom instead of in society at large (cf. Nation, 2013), while an L2 would play an important role in a country's educational and governmental settings without being the users' L1 (Sylvén, 2022).

If defining an L2 as a language that is a prerequisite for participation in certain societal areas, English does not qualify as an L2 in Sweden. It is fully possible to navigate and participate in the Swedish society as a monolingual speaker of Swedish, and English is not officially recognised as a language spoken in Sweden. Between two and five hours per week is also a common amount of time spent on formal EFL instruction in Sweden, which aligns with Oliver and Azkarai's (2017) view on an FL. At the same time, the constant exposure to Extramural English begs the question whether the English language should be considered foreign to Swedish pupils at compulsory school (e.g., Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). Following the Swedish National Agency for Education (2022a), and given the fact that English is not the primary language of instruction or communication in education and the Swedish government, it is regarded as an FL in this thesis (but see Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016, for English as an L2 on an individual level). It is still highly likely that children familiarise themselves with the English language before starting formal primary EFL education in Sweden, especially with access to the Internet, which means that "exposure to English is only a click away also for very young individuals" (Sylvén, 2022, p. 122). Sylvén (2022) therefore envisions a future where the English school subject may need to be revised to maintain very young learners' interest, assuming they are well acquainted with English before starting school.

The exposure to Extramural English is a possible explanation for why Swedish pupils generally demonstrate a high command of English in international benchmarking of EFL skills. This becomes evident in the most recent European Survey on Language Competences (European Commission, 2012), which included Swedish 14–15-year-olds in school year 9. The results of this survey were aligned with the CEFR levels (Council of Europe, 2020) as they outlined pupils' EFL proficiency in reading, listening and writing. It was revealed that 81% of the Swedish pupils attained the broad B level in reading, while 91% attained the same level in listening. Yet, the pupils were rated lower for writing, since only 75% of them achieved the B level here. The broad A level was achieved by 24%. In comparison with reading and listening, the results for writing can indicate that EFL writing is more demanding than receptive skills. This suggests a potential challenge in EFL classrooms when transitioning from understanding English to using English independently as writers in increasingly challenging academic genres.

In addition to international comparative studies, there are national statistics regarding pupils' EFL proficiency at compulsory school based on mandatory exams known as the National Tests of English. In school year 6, pupils in Sweden take the National Tests of English for the first time before taking them again in school year 9 and, eventually, at upper secondary school. These exams comprise (i) oral production and interaction, (ii) reading and listening comprehension and (iii) written production and interaction (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2026b). The National Tests are especially important to consider when teachers grade pupils (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2025b) for English, meaning that the results in school year 9 may affect pupils' admission to upper secondary school. The most recent report published by the Swedish National Agency for Education (2025c) for the academic year 2024/2025 shows that 96% of the pupils in school year 6 passed the National Tests of English. It is note-worthy that more than 31% of the pupils received the second

highest grade, and nearly 25% received the highest grade. These results in school year 6 can be compared to those in school year 9 for the academic year 2024/2025 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2025c). Nearly 98% of these pupils passed the National Tests, and almost half of them, close to 48%, received the highest or the second highest grade. The percentage of passing grades remains high in upper secondary education, where 98% of the pupils passed the National Tests of English 6 in autumn 2025 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2026a). English 6 is the second out of three English courses at upper secondary school, corresponding to the B2.1 level on the CEFR (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2025a), and a passing grade for this course is obligatory to be eligible for tertiary education in Sweden. To sum up, the statistics presented in this section support the claim that Swedish pupils are fairly skilled EFL users and writers, but despite this, studies indicate that they are insufficiently prepared for facing the demands of academic English after completing upper secondary school (e.g., Eriksson, 2023; Malmström et al., 2025). Such findings warrant studies exploring how EFL literacy can be enhanced from an early age to support pupils throughout the Swedish educational system.

3 Previous research

CW as a field of study is examined more closely in this chapter. After offering a definition of CW, research trends in studies of CW are accounted for and models for studying interaction during CW are introduced. Research findings on young learners as collaborative EFL writers are further synthesised, which include the effects of pairing on interaction during CW, characteristics of collaboratively written texts as well as teachers' and young learners' perspectives on CW. The chapter also covers the impact of various task types and concludes by presenting scholars' proposed suggestions for promoting young learners' collaboration in the L2/FL classroom.

3.1 What is collaborative writing?

Writing collaboratively entails at least two writers working on the same text. This may seem self-explanatory, but a closer look at a widely cited definition of CW reveals its complexity. Following Storch (2019), the present thesis defines CW as "an activity that requires the co-authors to be involved in all stages of the writing process, sharing the responsibility for and the ownership of the entire text produced" (p. 40), but see Lowry et al. (2004) for alternative definitions. Storch's (2019) view on CW clarifies that it is not simply a matter of writers dividing the workload between them, where each person contributes with a separate part before merging them into the same document. This would be referred to as cooperation, whereas collaboration presupposes that the writers rely on each other's contributions throughout the writing process and, as stated by Storch (2019), share a sense of joint ownership of the text (see also Ede & Lunsford, 1992; Li & Storch, 2025; Storch, 2013). Lázaro-Ibarrola (2023a) stresses the importance of distinguishing between cooperation and collaboration, since only tasks "that meet specific criteria [i.e., as defined by Storch, 2019] for CW will offer learners the language learning benefits of CW" (p. 51). Writing collaboratively is thus understood as "a co-construction process" (Li & Storch, 2025, p. 8), where learners interact substantially by exchanging ideas and have the opportunity to make decisions that will somehow affect the text. In other words, collaborative writers should aim for equal involvement in the CW task. Achieving equality, however, is precisely one of the challenges brought up by Storch (2023), which suggests that this potential issue deserves teachers' and researchers' attention.

3.2 Research trends in studies of collaborative writing

The body of L2/FL research covering CW has grown substantially over the past decades, which has allowed certain patterns to emerge. One prominent pattern in research on CW can be attributed to digitalisation, as reviews of CW in international L2/FL contexts (e.g., Li, 2018; Talib & Cheung, 2017) reveal that participants usually interact in digital settings rather than writing face-to-face. Storch's (2019) review confirms this finding, as she states that the focus has shifted from early studies highlighting face-to-face interaction, to more recent studies opting for explorations of digital CW. The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have contributed to the surge in online CW tasks, as observed by Martins et al. (2025) in their review of CW research published between 2023 and 2024. Similarly to the aforementioned reviews,

they found technology integration and distance learning to be a salient topic. Particularly relevant to computer-mediated CW is the concept of *the triadic ecology* (Musk, 2016; cf. van Lier's, 2002, triadic interaction), which encompasses two pupils and a computer. The use of digital tools and collaboration in the triadic ecology has been shown to create lexical learning opportunities during CW at Swedish upper secondary school (Musk, 2021, 2024), but gains from collaboration and from the inbuilt spell checker can also be reduced (Musk, 2016, 2021). To facilitate for pupils to reap the potential benefits of digital tools, several researchers (e.g., Li & Storch, 2025; Musk, 2021, 2022, 2024; Musk & van der Meij, 2024; Villarreal et al., 2021) have pointed out the need to explicitly teach strategies for critically using digital tools, such as spell checkers, online dictionaries and online translation tools.

Another pattern is young learners' CW, which is an ever-expanding field of research in L2/FL contexts (Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023a), although higher education is more often represented compared to other educational levels (Martins et al., 2025). In recent years, a significant number of studies have started paying attention to young learners' CW in primary EFL education, and Martins et al. (2025) note a scholarly interest in patterns of interaction here. Most such studies have been generated by three research groups, who have conducted their studies in Spanish or Spanish-Basque settings (but see, e.g., Kos, 2023b, for a study of young EFL learners' CW in Germany). Each research group has embarked on a particular line of research when approaching young learners' CW, resulting in studies of (i) the potential of written corrective feedback, predominantly using model texts, (ii) the interplay between CW and other factors, such as pairing, and (iii) task repetition versus written corrective feedback in individual writing and CW in pairs (see Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023a, for an overview). The research group following this third line of inquiry has also introduced task motivation, which goes beyond linguistic outcomes and measures young learners' enjoyment of CW tasks (see, e.g., Azkarai & Kopinska, 2020).

Future CW research will potentially elaborate on one, or both, of the patterns outlined above. For example, Martins et al. (2025) suggest that CW studies explore AI from a pedagogical perspective and identify the need for additional research at the primary level. Likewise, Li and Storch (2025) visualise an increased focus on young learners, since this target group remains underrepresented in comparison with adolescents and adults. The situation in L1 contexts, however, appears to be quite the opposite. Svenlin and Sørhaug (2023) demonstrate that many CW studies are conducted at primary school, which indicates that L1 research needs to encompass older participants to a greater extent. As a final example, Li and Storch (2025) encourage more studies of assessment of CW in L2/FL settings, which are currently scarce. They propose that such research takes multimodal text types into consideration and investigates assessment of CW from teachers' perspectives (cf. Li & Zhang, 2023). Future studies may also include both teachers and (young) learners as participants when addressing the CW process and/or collaboratively written texts.

3.3 Studying interaction in collaborative writing

Research on CW is frequently informed by either cognitive or sociocultural theories (e.g., Li & Zhang, 2023). Nunan (2017) observes that Vygotsky's (1978, 1986) theoretical contributions have been highly influential in L2/FL studies in general, which can be seen in the so-called social turn in the field of second language acquisition (SLA), where cognitive perspectives that previously dominated research were increasingly supplemented by social

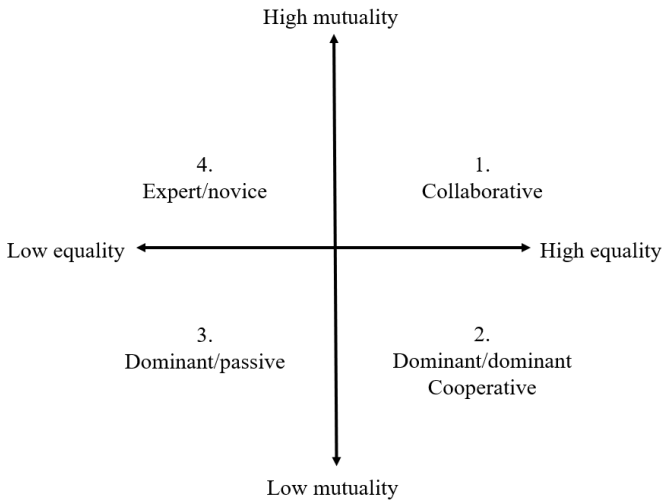
perspectives (Atkinson, 2011a; see also Oliver & Azkarai, 2017, for this shift in research on children's SLA). Especially sociocultural theory (e.g., Lantolf, 2011) is intimately connected to Vygotsky, who emphasised the role of social interaction in cognitive development and language learning. This development is believed to occur when an expert assists a novice. In the classroom, the teacher or a more knowledgeable classmate could be considered the expert, whereas a learner would be the novice. The belief that an expert supporting a novice is conducive to learning was termed *scaffolding* by Wood et al. (1976). The notion of scaffolding is also employed when investigating pair interaction in CW, which is evident from Storch's (2002, 2013) suggested expert/novice pattern (see Figure 1). Effective scaffolding, or the right amount of scaffolding, is captured by Vygotsky's (1978) construct of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which pinpoints the difference between what a learner can accomplish on their own and with assistance. The ZPD hence works "by achieving through collaborative mediation what is unachievable alone" (Lantolf, 2011, p. 29) and reveals an individual's current and potential future abilities in relation to a specific task.

Depending on the researcher's theoretical stance, different terms are used to describe language learning opportunities that stem from interaction during CW (see Storch, 2013, for an overview). In research drawing on sociocultural theory, *languaging* (Swain, 2006, 2010) is one of the terms adopted, deriving from Vygotsky's (1978, 1986) work and defined as a "process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language" (Swain, 2006, p. 98). As Swain and Watanabe (2013) note, the suffix *-ing* creates a verb, indicating that language is viewed as a process, not an object. Another term that frequently occurs in sociocultural research is *collaborative dialogue* (Swain, 2000; Swain & Watanabe, 2013), which encompasses problem solving and knowledge building, not only when studying languages but also in other subjects taught at school. Learners engaging in collaborative dialogue use language as a cognitive tool to mediate their own and others' thinking. By co-constructing meaning, they arrive at a new or deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Swain & Watanabe, 2013). Research employing cognitive theories, on the other hand, often highlights the potential of CW to encourage learners' *negotiation for meaning* central to Long's (1983, 1996) Interaction Hypothesis. When negotiating for meaning, the interlocutors attempt to overcome issues that impair comprehension through the use of strategies, such as reformulations, confirmation checks or repetitions (Long, 1996). While the three terms explained above are associated with different theories, they all mirror interactional elements that can constitute the CW process.

Studies of learner interaction in CW have been significantly influenced by Storch's (2002; 2013) model of dyadic interaction, which is based on a sociocultural rather than a cognitive understanding of language learning. As shown in Figure 1, her model consists of two intersecting continua: equality and mutuality. Equality relates to each writer's individual contribution and control over the task, whereas mutuality concerns the pair's engagement with each other's contributions when performing the task. According to Storch (2013), high equality not only suggests that the writers contribute equally, but also that they share decision making and authority over the task. High mutuality, then, is characterised by co-construction and learners providing extensive feedback to one another.

Figure 1

A model of dyadic interaction (reproduced from Storch, 2013, p. 62)



The two continua allow four patterns of interaction to emerge. The first one is the *collaborative* pattern with high equality and high mutuality, where both writers contribute and deliberate suggestions. This pattern is often perceived as the desirable outcome of CW activities, since collaboration is assumed to lead to language learning (Storch, 2013). In the second pattern labelled *dominant/dominant* or *cooperative*, equality is high but mutuality is low, meaning that both learners contribute but do not engage in each other's input. The third pattern, the *dominant/passive* pattern, is characterised by low equality and low mutuality, which implies that one writer takes control over the task and the other one barely contributes. Finally, the fourth pattern is the *expert/novice* pattern with low equality and high mutuality, where one learner acts as a tutor who encourages the other one to contribute. These four patterns are not static, which entails that the same pair of learners can alternate between different patterns on a single occasion where they collaborate. Such fluctuations are recognised by Storch (2002, 2013), who acknowledges the fact that they result in an imprecise coding for patterns of interaction. She would still categorise a pair's interaction based on their predominant pattern, but there are alternative and quantitative approaches to coding (see Li & Storch, 2025, for an overview).

Although Storch's model is widely used in CW studies, other researchers (e.g., Butler & Zeng, 2015; Chen, 2017) have found it necessary to suggest additional patterns (see also Azkarai & Kopinska, 2020, for a summary of additional patterns since Storch, 2002). This indicates that pupils' conversations are potentially more complex than Storch's four-field model shows. Other patterns that have been proposed include the *expert/passive* pattern, with low mutuality and equality (Watanabe & Swain, 2007), and the aforementioned cooperative pattern (Tan et al., 2010), which resembles the dominant/dominant pattern. The difference is

that none of the learners attempt to take control over the task in the cooperative pattern. Figure 1 above reveals that the cooperative pattern is included in Storch's (2013) later publications, which can be explained by the fact that Storch herself is one of the co-authors of Tan et al.'s (2010) paper. Moreover, Butler and Zeng (2015) have renamed the cooperative pattern as *parallel/passive* to further distinguish the cooperative pattern from the collaborative pattern. Even triadic patterns have been suggested (see Azkarai & Kopinska, 2020, for an overview), but these are excluded here since the present thesis relies solely on dyadic CW.

Li and Storch (2025) highlight additional factors that impact which patterns of interaction are formed in CW. They divide such factors into two types: those relating to the design and implementation of the CW activity and those relating to individual learner factors, where the former have received more attention in research compared to the latter. Especially the following have been rather thoroughly explored: (i) group size, composition and formation, (ii) task mode and type and (iii) pre-task training and modeling. Individual learner factors are still highly relevant to pursue. Li and Storch (2025) observe that learners' goals and attitudes, which are dynamic and situational, shape the patterns of interactions formed. As they put it, "ultimately collaboration is internally created and shaped by individual learner factors, which are largely beyond the control of the teacher" (Li & Storch, 2025, p. 94). In light of this, teachers and researchers are faced with a difficult task when attempting to predict which pattern of interaction learners will form in CW.

Before learners can write collaboratively, or perform any type of joint work, they need to be assigned at least one partner. According to Storch (2013), pairs rather than small groups are more common in implementations of CW, since some members may contribute very little to the text if the CW task is completed in groups. Storch (2013) further suggests that each individual has more opportunities to contribute to pair work than to group work. These observations imply that pairing is a well-known challenge in CW, which Storch (2023) acknowledges. Decisions concerning how to best pair learners is guided by the aim of the activity, and the dyadic relationship formed may be more significant than proficiency-pairing (Storch & Aldosari, 2013). Despite this, the writers' proficiency is a variable that is often taken into consideration when pairing learners prior to CW. This can result in either same-proficiency pairs[4] or mixed-proficiency pairs being created. Storch (2013) elaborates extensively on the potential consequences of different types of pairing and notes that mixed-proficiency pairs can lead to writers taking on either dominant or passive roles. Moreover, she argues that teacher-selected pairs are less likely to collaborate than self-selected pairs or pairs who share a similar level of proficiency (Storch, 2023). It should be noted that her claims are mainly based on adolescents' and adults' CW. In the young learner classroom, proficiency pairing has primarily been investigated in studies including Spanish or Spanish-Basque children (aged 10–12) learning EFL. Such studies (e.g., Basterrechea & Gallardo-del-Puerto, 2020; García Mayo & Imaz Agirre, 2019) have shown that same-proficiency pairs are more collaborative in Storch's (2002, 2013) sense than teacher- or self-selected pairs.

The benefits of writing collaboratively in same-proficiency pairs have also been illustrated through young learners' production of LREs. For example, Basterrechea and Gallardo-del-Puerto (2023) found that their 10–12-year-old EFL learners produced more target-like LREs in same-proficiency pairs. Another study by Basterrechea and Gallardo-del-Puerto

[4] In the literature, pairs who share a similar level of proficiency are also referred to as *matched-proficiency pairs*, or it is simply stated that learners were *proficiency-paired*. The term *same-proficiency pairs* is consistently used in this thesis to avoid confusion.

(2020) demonstrated that young EFL learners aged 10–12 generally produce more meaning-based (i.e., relating to vocabulary) than form-based (i.e., dealing with morphosyntax) LREs, regardless of the pair formation. Notably, their same-proficiency pairs accurately resolved meaning-based LREs more frequently than self-selected pairs did. This can be compared to García Mayo and Imaz Agirre's (2019) findings, where they reported on same-proficiency pairs producing more LREs than pupils in teacher- or self-selected pairs (cf. Mozaffari's, 2017, study of adult Iranian EFL learners, who produced more LREs in teacher-selected than student-selected pairs). In other words, research indicates that young learners' discussions during CW are more focused on language use in pairs who share a similar level of proficiency, whereas self-selected pairs are less focused in their interaction (see Martins et al., 2025, for a review).

Studies of young learners' CW have further shown that the patterns of interactions (Storch, 2002, 2013) most typically exhibited are the collaborative and cooperative ones (e.g., Azkarai & Calzada, 2024; Basterrechea & Gallardo-del-Puerto, 2023; García Mayo & Imaz Agirre, 2019). In addition, the pattern of interaction most prominent in young learners' CW seems to affect the nature of the LREs. Pairs who establish collaborative and expert-novice patterns have proven to be more successful in providing accurate solutions to LREs, especially to meaning-focused ones (e.g., Basterrechea & Gallardo-del-Puerto, 2020; García Mayo & Imaz Aguirre, 2019). Other patterns are potentially preferable to correctly resolve form-focused LREs, as this was achieved by dominant-dominant pairs in Basterrechea and Gallardo-del-Puerto's (2023) study. Although the empirical data on this particular pattern is limited, they cite competitiveness and a desire for control as potential driving forces in finding the correct solution. Basterrechea and Gallardo-del-Puerto's (2023) results also suggest that expert-novice pairs discuss grammatical features to a greater extent than other pairings.

The LRE is by far the most common unit of analysis in studies of learner interaction during CW, but it is not the only one. Kos's (2023b) findings draw attention to the fact that young learners (aged 10–11) writing narrative texts collaboratively may employ content-related episodes (CREs) as well as activity-related episodes (AREs) with limited teacher involvement. A CRE refers to a situation where pupils discuss the task, such as the plot of a narrative text, practise a dialogue or read their text out loud, whereas an ARE occurs when pupils address the instructions for the assignment, talk about the next step or how to complete the task, or negotiate or assign roles (Kos, 2023b). Arguably, there are no clear-cut borders between LREs and CREs, since language also constitutes content. By necessity, pupils discuss the content whenever they discuss linguistic features used in a collaboratively written text, but a great number of LREs were resolved incorrectly or left unresolved in Kos's (2023b) study, despite the teacher being present during the CW. It can therefore be questioned whether language can truly be separated from content, as is done in LREs and CREs.

3.4 Task types in collaborative writing

Writing tasks in the L2/FL classroom are usually designed based on two pedagogical goals: (i) to learn the target language by writing and/or (ii) to learn to write in the target language (Geng et al., 2022; Li & Storch, 2025; Manchón, 2011). The former is often labelled the *writing-to-learn* approach, where writing tasks are introduced with the intention to support language learning. The latter includes *learning-to-write* tasks and aims to develop literacy in

the L2/FL (Manchón, 2011). In CW, the task type will differ depending on whether the goal is for pupils to write to learn or to achieve literacy.

Researchers exploring CW typically differentiate between *language-focused* (or *form-focused*) and *meaning-focused* tasks (Storch, 2013). A language-focused task is constructed to direct the learners' attention to predetermined vocabulary items or a specific grammatical form, for example, the third person present tense singular *-s*, as in Calzada and García Mayo's (2021a) study with Spanish young EFL learners aged 11–12. As such, language-focused tasks are frequently used to practise writing-to-learn. If pupils instead engage in a meaning-focused task, there is no explicit focus on any linguistic feature, and form–meaning connections are highlighted. A written or pictorial prompt tends to be the starting point for meaning-focused tasks (Storch, 2013), but examples also include argumentative essays and research papers (Li & Storch, 2025). Kos's (2023b) study, introduced more thoroughly above in Section 3.3, exemplifies a meaning-focused task: a narrative text in the form of a roleplay.

The task type learners are assigned will possibly differ depending on whether they write face-to-face or in online settings. Kessler (2023) observes that form-focused tasks are more commonly implemented in face-to-face writing sessions, while meaning-focused tasks prevail in studies of computer-mediated writing. Due to advancements in digital technology and communication, researchers have recently even started to replace the concepts of form- and meaning-focused tasks with monomodal and multimodal writing tasks (Li & Storch, 2025). This novel distinction is not made in any of the studies included in the present thesis, where the CW tasks were meaning-focused, as is usually the case in narrative writing at school (Zhang & Plonsky, 2020).

When teachers introduce CW in the classroom, the choice of task type might be influenced by the learners' age. Task types that stimulate young learners' collaboration are exemplified by Kos (2024): *jigsaw*, *spot-the-difference* and *dictogloss* tasks (see also Nunan, 2018, for advantages of the dictogloss). Each pupil who engages in a jigsaw task holds a necessary piece of information that needs to be exchanged with their partner(s); for example, they may have read or listened to different versions of a story or have access to pictures describing a part of a story. They then reconstruct the story in collaboration with their peers. In a spot-the-difference task, pupils are given different versions of a picture and need to take turns asking and answering questions to identify a number of differences between their pictures. The dictogloss (Wajnryb, 1990) is the most widely used task type in CW studies (see Storch, 2013). Typically, this task entails a text being read out loud twice by the teacher. Pupils simply listen the first time, take notes the second time, and are eventually asked to collaboratively reconstruct the text as accurately as possible.

All of the above task types have their place in the young learner classroom, but Kos (2024) also acknowledges some of their potential drawbacks. For instance, the amount of information exchanged in a jigsaw is dependent on learners' engagement with the task, which is why pupils may need to be monitored by the teacher. As regards spot-the-difference tasks, Kos (2024) expresses his concerns about low language learning benefits in L2/FL contexts, unless young learners are encouraged to use the target language. He further notes that while dictogloss tasks are popular in CW studies, they may not be as popular in classroom teaching and do not automatically lead to collaboration, as shown by Azkarai and Kopinska (2020). In fact, scholarly opinions on the dictogloss appear to have been divided over the years. Some earlier studies (Fortune, 2005; Leeser, 2004) reported on in Storch (2013) have argued that the dictogloss is more appropriate for advanced learners, but recent studies (e.g., Azkarai &

Kopinska, 2020; Calzada & García Mayo, 2021a) have demonstrated its merits with young learners, such as being perceived as motivational and having the potential to generate LREs. Regardless of the task type employed, it can be assumed that it will influence pupils' interaction during CW to some extent.

3.5 Collaborative writing and its influence on learner texts

To understand what CW can bring to primary EFL writing instruction, its effects on learner texts must be considered. As noted by Li and Storch (2025), such effects are frequently captured using complexity, accuracy and fluency (see also Li & Zhang, 2023), which together are labelled CAF measures. In brief, complexity often refers to the use of language that is perceived as difficult or challenging. Such language can, for example, be captured through the concept of lexical sophistication and complex sentence structures. Accuracy encompasses the writer's ability to adhere to target language norms as regards lexical and grammatical aspects. Fluency in writing is usually measured in text length and concerns the smoothness or flow of the text. Notably, CAF measures are not the only ways of evaluating quality in learner texts (see, e.g., Hidalgo & Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2020; see also Norris & Ortega, 2009, for a critique of CAF measures), and it may even be unreasonable to expect young learners to produce complex, accurate and fluent texts in an L2/FL, since their EFL skills are still emergent (cf. Nikolov & Timpe-Laughlin, 2021). Hidalgo and Lázaro-Ibarrola (2020) emphasise that researchers cannot rely only on CAF measures. Instead, they propose a combination of quantitative and holistic measures (cf. Bllaca & Dalton-Puffer, 2026; Villarreal et al., 2021), since their own use of CAF measures was not adequate to capture statistically significant improvements in content, structure and task fulfilment as they set out to explore young EFL learners' (aged 12) texts.

Comparisons of individual and collaborative learner texts have yielded inconclusive results at primary and secondary school, as observed by researchers (e.g., Bllaca & Dalton-Puffer, 2026; Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021). Some studies (e.g., Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023b; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2021) have not identified any differences between young learners' (aged 11–12) individually and collaboratively written texts, while others have found grammatical complexity (Calzada & García Mayo, 2021b), syntactic complexity and lexical diversity (Luquin & García Mayo, 2024) to improve as a result from CW, and from using model texts, at primary school. In secondary EFL education, studies (e.g., Villarreal & Gil-Sarratea, 2020) have indicated that lexical as well as grammatical complexity is slightly improved when pupils write collaboratively. The collaborative texts in Villarreal and Gil-Sarratea's (2020) study were, in addition, shorter and more accurate than the individual texts (see also Villarreal et al., 2021, where collaborative EFL texts produced at secondary school were more accurate than individual texts). This finding is in line with studies of adult learners' CW, where it has been demonstrated that collaboratively written texts are shorter than individual texts and display a higher grammatical accuracy (e.g., Elabdali, 2021; Fernández Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009). In fact, accuracy is the CAF measure most commonly shown to be enhanced as a result from CW (Bllaca & Dalton-Puffer, 2026). As is often the case in CW research, this conclusion is based on texts written by adult participants (e.g., Mozaffari, 2017), but some CW studies with 11–12-year-old EFL learners (e.g., Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2024; Villarreal & Martínez-Sánchez, 2024) have proven positive effects on accuracy.

The observation that collaborative texts are shorter than individual texts is not necessarily applicable to the young learner context. While there is evidence from primary and secondary classrooms to suggest that CW results in shorter texts compared to those written individually (e.g., Villarreal & Gil-Sarratea, 2020; Villarreal & Martínez-Sánchez, 2024), not all studies have arrived at such a result when it comes to fluency. Some researchers (e.g., Bueno-Alastuey & Martínez de Lizarrondo Larumbe, 2017; Villarreal et al., 2021) have found that 12–13-year-old EFL learners produce longer texts when they write collaboratively rather than individually, but the difference was not statistically significant in Villarreal et al.'s (2021) study. Pairs at secondary school have further been shown to produce the longest texts, and groups the shortest ones (Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021). This means that the inconclusive results mentioned above become apparent once again, which warrants further research. Since scholars (e.g., Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2024; Villarreal et al., 2021) have noted that EFL studies comparing young learners' individual and collaborative texts constitute a fairly small body of research, more studies are needed to generate new knowledge about CW and its influence on learner texts. Quantitative and qualitative studies should be seen as complementary, as neither can provide the full picture, but in combination they can yield "a more reliable representation of the effects of collaboration" (Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021, p. 94). To balance out the predominantly quantitative focus on young EFL learners' collaboratively written texts, qualitative studies can be a valuable asset to the field of CW with young EFL learners.

3.6 Teachers' and pupils' perspectives on collaborative EFL writing

EFL writing researchers seldom consider teacher and student beliefs, perceptions or feelings about teaching and learning EFL writing. This is revealed by Geng et al.'s (2022) review article, in which they suggest future explorations of how teachers and learners view EFL writing. Given the scarcity of such research proposed by Geng et al. (2022), it is perhaps unsurprising that there is also a general scarcity of studies looking into EFL teachers' and young learners' perspectives on CW, although Storch (2023) deems teachers' attitudes and understanding of CW an essential research area to pursue. Likewise, Azkarai and Kopinska (2020) advocate personal interviews with pupils to gain an in-depth understanding of their motivation in CW tasks, but especially the lack of teacher perspectives has been recognised by several scholars (e.g., Li & Storch, 2025; Li & Zhang, 2023; Storch, 2023; Zheng et al., 2021). To the best of my knowledge, no previous studies have been conducted at primary school with the intention to map EFL teachers' beliefs about CW. If extending the focus to teachers of older learners, the body of research is still small (but see, e.g., Zheng et al., 2021).

There is a greater number of studies on CW from young learners' perspectives than from teachers' perspectives in primary EFL education. Woo et al.'s (2011) case study situated in Hong Kong is one of few studies in which a teacher of young learners and the pupils themselves are asked about their perceptions of CW. The study aimed to explore potential benefits and challenges of digital CW using a wiki tool that was implemented in primary L2 education with young learners aged 10–11. The sole teacher participant was interviewed and stated that CW contributed to improving the pupils' writing skills, as they learned new vocabulary and language forms. The young learners participated in focus group discussions and answered questionnaires, which suggested that the collaborative wiki task was generally perceived positively. In fact, studies have demonstrated that young and adolescent learners aged 11–13 are

usually positive towards collaboration and CW (e.g., Azkarai & Calzada, 2024; Azkarai & Kopinska, 2020; Calzada & García Mayo, 2020; Luquin & García Mayo, 2025; Milla & García Mayo, 2024; Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021), and studies with adult learners (e.g., Shehadeh, 2011; Storch, 2005) have arrived at similar results.

As implied by the findings presented above, motivation is an area that is frequently of interest to researchers who wish to hear young learners' voices on CW. Some studies (e.g., Azkarai & Kopinska, 2020; Milla & García Mayo, 2024) have adopted motivation thermometers to measure young learners' pre- and post-task motivation in CW and found that their pre-task motivation was high, while their post-task motivation was even higher. Among the positive pre-task answers in Azkarai and Kopinska's (2020) study were a willingness to do the task or an activity in English (in this case: a dictogloss), along with expectations for the task to be fun or easy and a desire to work with a partner. After having completed the dictogloss, some motivating aspects were that the pupils enjoyed working with a classmate, and that the task was perceived as easy or fun (cf. Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021). The pupils who held negative attitudes before completing the dictogloss believed that the task would be difficult or that they would get bored, whereas those who were negative towards the dictogloss after completing it stated that the task was difficult or that they were nervous. Similarly, Villarreal and Munarriz-Ibarrola's (2021) post-task questionnaire with 12–13-year-old Basque-Spanish EFL learners revealed that negative comments on CW related to boredom and group management issues, which included seeking agreement. Additional reasons cited to explain a negative impression of CW were an unequally shared workload, a preference for individual work or mistrust about the writing partner's knowledge.

Other studies can be regarded as a complement to findings from research using motivation thermometers or questionnaires. As an example, Azkarai and Calzada (2024) focused on social, cognitive and affective dimensions of engagement with language in their study, which includes a post-task interview with 11–12-year-old Spanish EFL learners. The young learners had completed a picture story task in pairs, after which ten of them were invited to participate in focus group interviews. The young learners shared their views on the collaborative work experience in the interviews, which captured social as well as affective engagement at the individual level. This revealed that the pupils were overall satisfied with the task and their writing outcome. Some of them claimed to enjoy working in pairs, while others stated that they prefer to write individually to concentrate better (cf. Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021). As has been shown, affective factors, such as motivation, seem to be prominent in previous research and are a relevant line of inquiry. Geng et al. (2022) namely argue that student as well as teacher beliefs about their ways of learning and teaching are paramount to EFL writing research, considering the importance of writing and difficulties surrounding learning and teaching writing (cf. Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023a; Matsuda & Silva, 2005; Silva & Matsuda, 2010).

3.7 Promoting collaboration in the young learner classroom

Simply pairing or grouping any learners will not necessarily lead to collaboration in Storch's (2019) sense. Achieving collaboration in primary education may prove more complex than assigning random pairs or groups a CW task, which is why researchers have suggested ways of encouraging and facilitating pupils' joint work required in CW. Such ways are relevant to consider in a thesis exploring pedagogical implications of CW, which may require in-class

preparations before the actual CW takes place. Li and Storch's (2025) monograph is one of the publications that includes suggestions for teachers who wish to use CW in their classes. The authors do not primarily target teachers of young learners, but some of their suggestions are applicable to the young learner classroom. As an example, they highly recommend pre-task training sessions where young learners practise CW tasks before they are implemented. Part of such training sessions can be for the teacher to explain what collaboration entails and why it is important. If necessary, the teacher can also introduce online collaborative writing platforms and allow the pupils to become acquainted with these tools. One of the arguments that Li and Storch (2025) put forward in support of pre-task activities is that research (e.g., Kim & McDonough, 2011) has proven that they stimulate young and adolescent learners to collaborate. In other words, teaching CW before implementing it has been shown to support young learners' formation of collaborative patterns of interaction (see, e.g., Storch, 2013, for such patterns).

Other examples of how to enhance collaboration in the young learner classroom are found in Kos's (2024, 2025) publications, which aim to inform L2/FL instruction at primary school. He provides language teachers of young learners with pedagogical ideas for stimulating peer collaboration and proposes three stages of teaching based on collaborative principles and strategies: (i) *awareness-raising*, (ii) *strategy instruction and practice* and (iii) *reflection* (Kos, 2025). The first stage, awareness-raising, involves making pupils aware of the concept of collaboration and how collaboration can benefit their language learning (cf. Li & Storch, 2025). At this stage, learners are introduced to collaborative principles on *engagement*, *agreement* and *help*, which Kos (2025) has adapted from Storch (2002). Such principles include doing one's best to achieve the goal and contribute to the task (engagement), seeking agreement and discussing disagreements (agreement) and asking for as well as offering assistance (help). Alternatively, Kos (2025) suggests that teachers and pupils can collectively formulate their own principles.

When pupils have been made aware of collaboration and its benefits, the second stage entails putting theory into practice. The young learners are taught collaborative strategies, which, for example, are modelled by the teacher or through videos of pupils engaging in a similar task as the one at hand. Likewise, Li and Storch (2025) stress the fact that modelling collaborative interaction is particularly relevant when teaching young learners (cf. Villarreal et al., 2021), since they may have little or no experience of group work and CW. Kos (2025) further lists several examples of strategies, drawing on his own previous work (Kos, 2023a), some of which are: suggesting ideas or solutions, offering correct language or positive feedback and requesting clarification, information and confirmation. Once young learners have been taught such strategies, they can begin to apply them as they work jointly in the classroom. The third and final stage constitutes an attempt to strengthen young learners' awareness of the gains from collaboration and, at the same time, increase their metacognitive knowledge of collaborative strategies. This is done through reflection in pairs or groups, where pupils (i) consider questions regarding whether the joint work went well or not and give reasons for their opinions, (ii) discuss what they believe they learned from collaborating, (iii) reflect on how they contributed to the pair or group work and (iv) identify the collaborative strategies they used. Since young learners are a heterogenous group, Kos (2025) acknowledges the fact that the three stages outlined above are not fully applicable to all pupils, whose individual developmental differences have to be considered in collaborative activities.

4 Theoretical underpinnings

The theoretical perspectives underlying the present thesis and the four appended studies are accounted for in this chapter. In brief, these perspectives are affordance theory, which is used in this thesis frame and in Study III, teacher beliefs (Study I), social deontics (Study II) and SFL (Study IV). The chapter begins with a rationale for combining these four theories, including the compatibility of their epistemological assumptions. After this, each theory is described in further detail while paying particular attention to its contribution and value when paired with the study object in the respective studies (see also Table 1 above).

4.1 Four perspectives on collaborative writing

Studies of CW and young learners' L2/FL acquisition in general are often underpinned by either cognitive or sociocultural theories of learning (Li & Storch, 2025; Li & Zhang, 2023; Oliver & Azkarai, 2017). When reviewing previous research exploring young EFL learners' CW, Lázaro-Ibarrola (2023a) observes that LREs are the predominant area of interest. For these reasons, it can be argued that additional theoretical perspectives are beneficial to diversify the body of research (cf. Li & Zhang, 2023) and illuminate CW from several angles, thus potentially yielding novel insights. The four theories adopted in the studies that constitute this thesis were therefore selected to complement widely used theories and to expand on the linguistic focus on CW, represented by LREs. At the same time, viewing a phenomenon from different perspectives mirrors classroom practice, where teachers seldom make pedagogical decisions informed by a single factor (cf. Basturkmen, 2012), such as one theory of learning.

While four different theories are employed, affordance theory (Nguyen, 2025; van Lier, 2004) is the main theoretical lens that is used to discuss the results of Studies I–IV in this thesis frame. Following van Lier (2004), learning opportunities are believed to emerge through relations between learners and the physical and social world, that is, through learners' interaction with elements in their environment. This indicates that interaction is given special prominence in this thesis, as reflected by the choice of affordance theory as the main theoretical perspective but also by other theories, such as social deontics (Stevanovic, 2018) and SFL (Halliday, 1978), which emphasise contextual aspects of meaning-making through language. The present thesis thus takes a constructivist view on knowledge and learning as something that is not transferred between people but rather actively (co-)constructed through social interaction and use of language. Language is hence considered a form of social action whose expressions are dependent on the context.

Teacher beliefs, social deontics and SFL can be seen as supporting theoretical lenses that, taken together, capture different affordances of CW at primary school. In line with affordance theory, these theories allow for a social take on CW, with teacher beliefs possibly being an exception. Since teacher beliefs are included in teacher cognition (e.g., Borg, 2015), they could be labelled a cognitively situated domain. Teacher beliefs are, however, not merely mental constructs. In this thesis, they are assumed to be dynamic and changeable with experience (cf. Borg, 2017) and influenced by social interaction, such as classroom practice. As Bråten (1991) argues, cognition cannot be separated from the social context, which implies that social and cognitive theories are by no means incompatible in teaching and research (cf. Nunan, 2017). The use of sociocognitive theories (see, e.g., Atkinson, 2011b; Geng et al.,

2022) in L2/FL research also proves this point, as does Li and Storch's (2025) conceptualisation of writing as a cognitive, social and cultural process, which justifies the need for diverse theoretical starting points.

Similarly to teacher beliefs, the post-task interviews with young learners in Study III incorporate elements of cognition or, more specifically, metacognition. Such elements are embedded in Nguyen's (2025) framework drawing on affordance theory that Study III departs from. Previous research (e.g., Azkarai & Kopinska, 2020; Calzada & García Mayo, 2020; Luquin & García Mayo, 2025; Milla & García Mayo, 2024) has mainly explored young EFL learners' attitudes towards CW or their task motivation, which Study III aims to progress beyond by covering the CW situation. Including post-task interviews with young learners as a part of this thesis was vital to shed light on pedagogical implications of CW at primary school (cf. Kos, 2025), since pupils are significant agents during in-class CW, whose experiences are rarely represented in studies of CW at primary school. Pupils' as well as teachers' perspectives on CW can enhance the scholarly understanding of CW and add to the picture of CW with its many expressions of the interplay between cognitive, social, cultural, affective and contextual aspects.

4.1.1 Affordance theory

Informed by ecological psychology, Gibson (1979) originally introduced affordance theory. At the heart of the theory is the concept of *affordances*, defined by Gibson (1979) as "what it [the environment] *offers* the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes*, either for good or ill" (p. 127, italics in the original). Several researchers (e.g., Kress, 2010; Norman, 1988, 2013) have elaborated on this definition over the decades, but in this thesis, affordances are understood as "*action potential*" (van Lier, 2004, p. 92, italics in the original) that arises when a learner encounters a certain environment (see also Nguyen, 2025). More specifically, affordances highlight how learners actively engage with elements in their physical and social world, thus capturing the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between an individual and the environment (van Lier, 2004). Notably, affordances do not impose certain actions on learners but rather constitute context-sensitive opportunities for action, which learners shape as well as enact (Kordt, 2018; Nguyen, 2025; cf. also Bateman et al., 2017). In CW, there is constant interplay between pupils and various aspects of the shared classroom environment, but a shared environment does not equal shared affordances. The affordances may instead vary from individual to individual or from time to time for the same individual in the same environment (Kordt, 2018).

Adopting affordance theory in studies of language education has been deemed beneficial by researchers. As an example, Kordt (2018) describes its value when aiming to illuminate the relational aspects between "the individual, the environment and the emergent character of language learning opportunities" (p. 135). Nguyen (2025), similarly, advocates affordance theory to capture "the emergent complexity of contemporary language learning environments" (p. 2). Given the attention to perception, agency and context in affordance theory, researchers can draw on it to explain why some opportunities for action lead to language learning, whereas others are unnoticed or unused by learners (e.g., Nguyen, 2025; van Lier, 2004). Affordance theory can also make a contribution to studies of CW. This perspective seems highly compatible with CW, since one of the main theoretical assumptions is that affordances emerge through interaction with various elements in the environment (van Lier,

2004). In Storch's (2019) definition, CW is an activity that necessitates a high degree of interaction with the writing partner(s) and, possibly, with the teacher as well as with artefacts and technologies, such as texts, laptops and digital tools. For instance, the pupils in the present thesis who engaged in computer-mediated CW were offered potential affordances from Google Translate, which was frequently used by the pairs.

In Study III, Nguyen's (2025) five-dimensional framework was employed to illuminate observable affordances affecting EFL learning that pupils enact in a CW situation. This framework was developed to be particularly suitable in language teaching and research and presupposes an ecological and a rhizomatic understanding of learning, which emphasises the relational and situational nature of affordances and a view on learning trajectories as non-linear, emergent and highly personalised (Nguyen, 2025; van Lier, 2004). The five suggested dimensions are: (i) *perceptibility*, (ii) *learning valence*, (iii) *compositionality*, (iv) *normativity* and (v) *intentionality*.

According to Nguyen (2025), perceptibility is fundamental, as this first dimension provides a basis for enacting subsequent affordances. If an affordance is perceivable, it is visible, noticeable or discoverable to the learner. Some researchers (e.g., Chemero, 2003) maintain that the existence of an affordance is not dependent on perception, but Nguyen (2025) argues that a prerequisite for a learning affordance, specifically, is that the learner perceives it and acts upon this opportunity in the environment. When doing research with child participants, however, it is plausible that recordings of learner interaction during CW may reveal what the researcher interprets as enactment of an affordance, but the pupils themselves may be unaware of this affordance in post-task interviews. The affordance in question could still constitute a learning affordance despite not being perceived, at least in the future, since Nguyen (2025) observes that part of the learning process is to eventually begin to perceive affordances that were previously invisible. He further notes that teachers can assist learners in arriving at this point by attempting to make affordances explicit to them.

The second dimension is learning valence, in which Nguyen (2025) categorises affordances as either positive or negative as regards how learners perceive them and their influence on learning opportunities. For an affordance to be positive, the learner must perceive it as being aligned with their personal goals, motivations and growth within the learning environment. A positive affordance thus supports learning, whereas a negative one impedes learning. While a negative learning affordance can be an unidiomatic translation provided by Google Translate, affordances can also be considered negative in light of classroom norms and the teacher's expectations. For example, the pupils were allowed to use aids when they wrote collaboratively during the series of lessons reported on in Studies II and III. Using Google Translate was possibly even expected, since this is what the pupils would normally do when writing in their EFL classes. Had this not been the case, the pupils could have refrained from using Google Translate or other aids due to fear of being reprimanded by the teachers. In such a scenario, the use of aids could be said to constitute a negative affordance. Although this binary division into positive and negative affordances cannot be used to fully evaluate the complexities of educational activities, learning valence does offer insight into the consequences of enacting affordances in a CW situation.

Compositionality is the third dimension, which refers to the structural complexity of affordances. Nguyen (2025) distinguishes between *low-compositionality* and *high-compositionality* affordances. A low-compositionality affordance is a single clear relation, where only one tool and one user action is involved, such as a pupil asking a peer or the teacher for

the English translation of a Swedish word and receiving the answer without any further interaction. A high-compositionality affordance consists of several elements that are contingent upon each other, meaning that the affordance collapses if one of the elements is removed. In the language learning classroom, this is applicable to computer-mediated CW, where multiple components need to be in place: peer interaction, social compatibility between the writers, technological knowledge and so on. If one of the writers in a CW pair decides to leave the classroom, the other one can obviously not engage in CW. When accounting for compositionality, Nguyen (2025) also pays attention to affordances that are not realised. In Study III, this is exemplified by the spell- and grammar checker in Microsoft Word, whose suggestions were usually not taken into consideration by the pupils. The data do not reveal whether this affordance was unnoticed or whether the pupils consciously decided not to use it. Following Nguyen's (2025) reasoning, this is a missed affordance and, as such, it can be examined to assess compositionality. If understanding all the elements this potential affordance is composed of, teachers and researchers can identify which element(s) contributed to the affordance not being realised.

The fourth dimension is labelled normativity and shows that social and cultural norms influence how affordances are noticed, perceived and acted upon. Nguyen (2025) posits that such norms are either *internal* or *external*. The former include beliefs, identities, anxieties and habits, while the latter are used in reference to explicit rules, roles and cultural scripts. Both types of norms regulate what learners should or should not do, or even what they must or must not do, in a certain learning environment. An internal belief may be expressed if a pupil asks their CW partner to do the writing and cites poor spelling skills or a limited English vocabulary as an explanation. As demonstrated in Study III, external norms were reinforced in the classroom when the teacher reprimanded a pupil who was uncollaborative and consistently rude to his writing partner. The definition of CW offered by Storch (2019) further reflects external norms regarding involvement and shared responsibility and ownership of the collaborative text.

Lastly, intentionality is the fifth dimension, where the focus is on learners' goals, intentions and strategic orientation when they enact affordances. In this dimension, it is desirable to understand whether a learner purposefully engages with an affordance as part of a learning strategy. If a pupil claims to write better when they write with a classmate, this could be seen as an awareness of a learning strategy (i.e., collaboration) as a means to achieve a certain learning goal (i.e., improved textual quality). Deliberate and indeliberate choices may have different consequences in a learning environment, which is why Nguyen (2025) stresses the importance of this fifth dimension in relation to learner autonomy and metacognitive awareness. Being able to reflect on one's own writing is crucial to become a versatile EFL writer, who can adapt their use of language and content to the context and recipients (cf. Xiao & Zhao, 2025). For this reason, Study III includes post-task interviews with young learners, since CW research can be enrichened by encouraging young writers themselves to reflect on their CW process and texts. Such reflections constitute a potential learning opportunity for pupils, and teachers can use them to identify perceived benefits and challenges of writing collaboratively and adapt their teaching in accordance with these observations. Young L2/FL learners, however, cannot necessarily be expected to be able to enact affordances intentionally, since doing so requires metacognitive skills that are often emergent at primary school (e.g., Roehr-Brackin & Tellier, 2019; Teng & Zhang, 2021), but teachers can support pupils at primary school in becoming accustomed to taking a meta perspective on their learning.

4.1.2 Teacher beliefs

The perspective selected when approaching CW in Study I was teacher beliefs. Opting for teacher beliefs as a theoretical starting point was deemed suitable to fulfil the aim of this thesis, which is to highlight pedagogical implications of CW in primary EFL education. Studying teachers' beliefs about CW can provide a better understanding of the reasoning behind implementing, or not implementing, CW tasks. In this way, researchers gain knowledge about principles that guide classroom instruction (Borg, 2015; Phuong & Le, 2024), which are paramount to consider when critically evaluating the use of CW with young learners.

Teacher beliefs was adopted as a framework in its own right (cf. Gill & Fives, 2026; Kim et al., 2013; Pajares, 1992) in Study I, although teacher beliefs are part of the wider field of teacher cognition, where researchers are concerned with what teachers think, know and believe (Borg, 2015). The term *beliefs* is widely operationalised as "an individual's judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition" (Pajares, 1992, p. 316), but in the present thesis beliefs are not used in such a general sense. They should rather be understood as educational beliefs about aspects related to teaching and the educational process (Pajares, 1992). Following Borg (2003), teacher beliefs hence cover teachers' knowledge, beliefs and experiences, which inform their views on teaching and learning. Beliefs are further assumed to be dynamic and changeable over time and with increasing experience (cf. Borg, 2017).

The importance of taking teacher beliefs into account in educational research is stressed by Phuong and Le (2024), who view them as "the bedrock of educational practice" (p. v). Furthermore, Borg (2015) emphasises that studies of teacher beliefs can contribute to "deepening our understandings of what it means to become and to be a teacher" (p. 2). Despite this potential, teacher beliefs were often only alluded to in the past as a part of studies with other focal points, but they have grown to become a direct focus of inquiry (Gill & Fives, 2026). Teacher cognition research in general also used to be relatively scarce in L2/FL contexts and centred on literacy, while a much greater number of studies were generated in L1 settings (Borg, 2015). There is no longer a lack of studies informed by teacher beliefs in English language teaching research (Borg, 2026), but reports on teacher beliefs about an area as specific as CW remain rare. Yet, scholars (e.g., Li & Storch, 2025; Li & Zhang, 2023; Storch, 2023) suggest exploring CW from teacher perspectives in future publications. Acknowledging this research gap and the contribution teacher beliefs can make, the decision was made to take teacher beliefs as a starting point in Study I.

Teachers' beliefs may directly influence their classroom practice, as suggested above. For example, Kim et al. (2013) propose that teachers who are convinced that collaboration brings more benefits than individual learning are more likely to include group work in comparison with teachers who see few or no advantages of having learners working collaboratively. At the same time, Borg (2026) argues that teachers at primary school will describe pair work as a beneficial pedagogical strategy, but he expects to find little evidence of pair work in their classes should he observe them. It is a well-known fact that there may be a discrepancy between theory and practice, which in this case means that teachers' beliefs can deviate from the actual teaching conducted (Borg, 2017; Phipps & Borg, 2009). Some reasons for inconsistencies between beliefs and practice are external factors, such as a prescribed curriculum, which constraints teachers to enact their beliefs (cf. Zheng et al., 2021), but gaps in teachers' knowledge concerning subject matter and pedagogical issues are other possible explanations (Borg, 2017). Borg (2026) also cites immensely powerful contextual factors,

such as large class sizes or limited pedagogical training and/or lesson time, as a reason for discrepancies between beliefs and classroom practice.

Study I did not set out to investigate whether teachers' beliefs correspond to their EFL writing instruction. As such, it is not concerned with classroom practice; it merely maps the language learning opportunities that teachers ascribe to CW. The focus in Study I is thus on *stated* beliefs, rather than *enacted* beliefs (see Borg, 2017, for this distinction). Stated beliefs are expressed by the teacher without the researcher taking any measures to confirm if these beliefs are put into practice, for example, through classroom observations. Enacted beliefs, on the other hand, presuppose observations of what teachers do in the classroom. If the analytical interest in Study I had been enacted beliefs, it would have been problematic that four of the 15 participants lacked experience in implementing CW in their EFL classes in school years 4–6 (see Table 3). It can, however, be argued that individuals may hold a belief without possessing any practical experience. As an example, it would certainly be possible that a teacher refrains from incorporating CW activities into their EFL classes based on the belief that a group of pupils are not mature enough to write collaboratively in a responsible and respectful manner.

Another aspect that could have affected the teachers' beliefs about CW is their varying degree of EFL teaching experience (see Table 3). If assuming that beliefs are dynamic and influenced by experiences, a consequence is that more experienced teachers were potentially able to elaborate more extensively on their thoughts in the interviews compared to their less experienced colleagues. Interviewing this heterogeneous group of teachers can still be considered an asset, since it contributed to a greater diversity in the conceptualisations of CW reported on. Even if teachers who had used CW had been exclusively targeted in the study, their beliefs can never be fully captured in one short interview (cf. Borg, 2017). While Study I does not claim to be an exhaustive account of teacher beliefs about CW, it complements Studies II–IV and lays a foundation for discussing pedagogical implications of CW in primary EFL education.

4.1.3 Social deontics

In Study II, social deontics was used to illuminate young learners' interaction during CW. This perspective is described by Stevanovic (2018) as "a tool to analyze a specific aspect of human power, namely the capacity of an individual to determine action" (p. 370) and is often paired with conversation analysis. As such, social deontics was deemed fruitful to shed light on the CW process, given that Storch's (2019) definition of CW necessitates joint interaction, decision-making and negotiations concerning future actions (see also Stevanovic, 2012, on joint decision-making in dyads). To the best of my knowledge, social deontics has not been adopted in EFL studies of CW up to this point (but see Magnusson, 2021, for a study of CW in a participatory democracy workshop with 18–19-year-olds in Sweden). Drawing on social deontics hence contributes to an increased theoretical diversity in the field of CW and complements the much larger body of research using Storch's (2002, 2013) influential model of dyadic interaction (see Figure 1), where four patterns of interaction are proposed.

The aim of Study II is to contribute with knowledge about pupils' interactional positionings during CW and how these positionings might affect their language learning opportunities. To fulfil this aim, a number of concepts central to social deontics were utilised when demonstrating interactional positionings. One such concept is the pupils' *deontic rights*,

which were explored in relation to the language learning opportunities potentially created during CW. The negotiation of deontic rights is a core analytical interest to researchers employing social deontics and refers to the different forms in which a speaker's ability to determine action is expressed (e.g., Magnusson, 2022; Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012).

To understand the concept of deontic rights more fully, it must be viewed in terms of *deontic* as well as *epistemic* dimensions of authority (see, e.g., Bochénski, 1974; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Stevanovic, 2018). Both types of authority capture which speakers have the right to decide actions, but epistemic authority, specifically, concerns the amount of knowledge a speaker has, which would refer to pupils' amount of knowledge about various aspects of English in an EFL setting. As noted by Stevanovic and Peräkylä (2012), the rights associated with epistemic and deontic authority differ across contexts and may shift in interaction depending on the topic being discussed. The two dimensions of authority are thus built on social relations between speakers, such as friendship or animosity, which may be established and upheld both inside and outside the classroom. A conflict between two young learners in their spare time may therefore influence their CW process if they are paired during a lesson.

Notably, deontic authority is contingent upon the speaker's interlocutor granting the speaker such authority; if not, the speaker's claims for deontic rights are insignificant. While deontic and epistemic authority are fluctuating in interaction, the latter is possibly perceived as being more discernible to teachers than deontic authority, for example, due to pupils completing various types of assignments, taking diagnostic tests, giving oral presentations and so on. Since it has been shown that mixed-proficiency pairs are common in CW (e.g., Storch, 2013), it can be argued that teachers often consider pupils' varying degrees of epistemic authority when they create expert/novice pairs for scaffolding reasons.

Authority in interaction can be further outlined using the concepts *deontic stance* and *deontic status,* which are fundamental to social deontics. Deontic stance refers to speakers' ways of publicly displaying their authority relative to their interlocutors (Stevanovic, 2018; Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2014). This authority is expressed by the linguistic form of a particular utterance (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2014). Speakers' deontic status, on the other hand, is their actual opportunity to exert influence over a certain domain of action, irrespective of their public claims (Stevanovic, 2018; Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2014). Speaker A may position themselves as highly authoritative by claiming a deontic stance, but their influence, or deontic status, will be low if Speaker B does not accept their claim. In CW, this situation could be exemplified by a pupil ordering their writing partner to rewrite a part of the text and also instructing them how to rewrite it, but the writing partner refuses for some reason. This implies that deontic authority is an interactional achievement that needs to be accepted by the interlocutor (e.g., Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012).

Between the stance and the status, deontic rights are continuously (re)negotiated, meaning that neither deontic nor epistemic authority is static but, as has been mentioned, rather fluctuates in interaction (e.g., Magnusson, 2022; Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012). This (re)negotiation may result in either symmetrical or asymmetrical deontic rights and is metaphorically explained as a seesaw by Magnusson (2022). Symmetrical rights are referred to as *deontic congruence*, where both speakers grant each other equal rights, while asymmetrical rights give rise to *deontic incongruence*. Especially important for understanding learning opportunities in collaborative EFL writing is *epistemic-deontic incongruence*. Stevanovic (2018) explains that this form of mismatch often appears during collaborative planning,

where participants negotiate future actions. In such contexts, one person may claim epistemic authority, while the other one claims deontic authority. When speakers negotiate future tasks, such as deciding what to write in CW, deontic and epistemic authority constantly interact. An example from Study II illustrates this. When one pupil claims epistemic authority by pointing out the correct spelling of a word, his writing partner resists this correction and, seemingly annoyed, replies "But wow" in an attempt to gain influence through deontic authority.

To sum up, social deontics is an apt theoretical starting point for exploring how young EFL learners (re)negotiate their rights, responsibilities and obligations during CW. Studies informed by social deontics can provide detailed accounts of power relations, which are part of the CW process in addition to matters strictly relating to the target language. As Stevanovic and Svennevig (2015) show, participants in collaborative work do frequently rely on directives, such as commands, requests and suggestions in their interaction. The negotiations regarding which writer has the right to suggest ideas, revise the text and make linguistic choices highly influence not only the collaborative text but also language learning opportunities that can arise as a result from engaging in a CW task.

4.1.4 Social semiotics and systemic functional linguistics

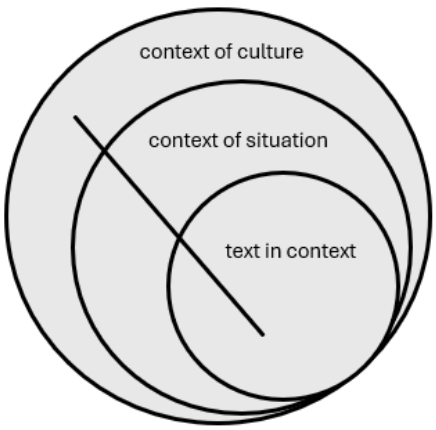
Halliday's (1978) SFL, which takes a social semiotic view on language, was applied to the analyses of young learners' narrative texts in Study IV. A general definition of semiotics is the study of signs, but Halliday and Hasan (1989) extend this definition to encompass the study of sign systems and meaning. According to them, language is perhaps the most significant way of meaning-making. This statement pinpoints the social semiotic foundation of SFL, which stipulates that language is primarily used for meaning-making and is studied with a particular focus on social dimensions. Language, as proposed by Halliday (1978), is equal to meaning potential, or a system of choices (cf. Halliday, 2013), where every language user makes multiple linguistic decisions either consciously or unconsciously. One of the central tenets of SFL is thus that language is influenced by context as well as by speakers' choices (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In other words, linguistic choices will vary depending on the context, which explains why a text may be considered functional in a certain situation but not in another.

Figure 2 shows the relation of language to social context as *stratification*, where three different levels of organisation are presented: context of culture, context of situation and text in context. Language users' cultures are manifested in every interactional situation, and an interactional situation is, in turn, manifested verbally as text in context (Martin & Rose, 2008). A text is therefore influenced by the culture, where the situation in which the writer(s) or speaker(s) created the text, and the text itself, are embedded. In this way, culture, situation and context continuously shape each other, which is referred to as *realisation*. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), language realises the following strata: semantics, lexicogrammar, phonology and phonetics, which entails several possible expressions of the same meaning. An example that is applicable to the CW situation is the desired intention to revise the text, which expresses a particular semantic content. The writers could then realise this meaning in multiple linguistic ways, perhaps by stating, "Rewrite this paragraph!" or asking, "Maybe we should rewrite this paragraph?", which exemplify two different uses of lexicogrammar to convey the same meaning. Hence, the meaning potential is defined by the

context of culture, while the context of situation determines how language users actively choose to realise such potential (Martin & Rose, 2008).

Figure 2

Stratification of text in context (reproduced from Martin & Rose, 2008, p. 10)



SFL researchers further theorise that language serves three overarching social purposes, which are known as the *ideational*, the *interpersonal* and the *textual metafunctions*. When engaging in any linguistic activity, such as writing, language is used ideationally to express how the writer chooses to represent the world. Through the interpersonal metafunction, language establishes and maintains relationships between language users, for example, between writers in CW or between readers and writers. Language also needs to be structured in some manner, and the textual metafunction expresses how the organisation of texts contributes to conveying meaning.

To illustrate how each situation offers a certain potential, three additional terms are connected to the metafunctions, which show that the context influences language use: *field*, *tenor* and *mode*, together labelled *register* (see, e.g., Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; see also Martin & Rose, 2008, for genre as an additional stratum). The ideational metafunction realises the field variable of a given situation, and the linguistic choices made regarding what is being talked or written about. Speakers' or writers' relationships to each other, that is, how they use language to (re)assign roles and (re)establish relationships, are realised through tenor, which aligns with the interpersonal metafunction. The textual metafunction realises mode and captures how a message is delivered, such as in speech or writing, how a text is organised and what tools are used in communication. In a joint process, such as CW, interpersonal aspects are especially important, as is the ideational metafunction when at least two writers' experiences of the world are to be negotiated in one text. Interpersonal

and ideational meaning-making is therefore focalised in Study IV, which compares linguistic resources used when pupils write narrative texts individually and collaboratively. The use of such resources is understood as expressions of context-dependent meaning through various linguistic choices (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Framed in SFL terms, pupils writing collaboratively constantly have to address aspects related to all three metafunctions as they compose their text.

The use of SFL when approaching young EFL learners' texts contributes to shifting the attention from CAF measures to other textual aspects. Researchers (e.g., Housen et al., 2012; Li & Zhang, 2023; Norris & Ortega, 2009) have namely observed that analyses of oral as well as written production in L2/FL settings have relied extensively on CAF measures, which offer different insights into vocabulary and grammar in comparison with SFL. As SFL captures the wider context, the use of this theory broadens the linguistic focus of CAF measures to other levels of meaning-making that are equally vital perspectives on literacy development (cf. Derewianka et al., 2024). Some of these levels are the ideational and interpersonal resources addressed in Study IV. As a complement to the contributions of CAF measures, it is warranted to investigate how texts serve communicative purposes when pupils represent and evaluate the world to engage a reader. This can be done to draw conclusions about linguistic development beyond CAF measures, since SFL allows for analyses of meaning-making and evaluation instead of relying on quantifications of the complexity or accuracy of lexical and grammatical items. As an example, two texts can resemble each other in terms of CAF measures but adopt different resources to position a stance or engage a reader. While not explicitly focused on in Study IV, the employment of ideational and interpersonal resources further reveals an emerging awareness of the conventions of the narrative genre, which is common in primary school classrooms (cf. Coyle et al., 2020; Geng et al., 2022; Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021). As pupils construct their narratives collaboratively, the language used in the text can be regarded as a learning outcome, but language is also a tool young learners use in social interaction and collaboration. Since CW goes beyond linguistic factors, the relational and situational emphasis in SFL is highly suitable as a valuable theoretical lens to study texts that are a direct result of joint work. Analyses of SFL, compared to CAF measures, investigate how linguistic choices construct interpersonal and ideational meaning. Such analyses can be useful to discuss the semantic and functional aspects of learner texts, instead of exclusively forming an impression of a text based on CAF measures. Taking other units of analyses and not merely CAF measures into consideration can also assist teachers in guiding pupils as EFL writers when, for instance, adapting their use of language to different contexts and recipients. Making conscious decisions of this sort can certainly be considered desirable in an educational setting.

5 Methodology

In this chapter, the participants and the empirical data are presented in relation to the four appended studies. The data are summarised in Table 2 below and consist of teacher interviews (Study I), merged audio- and screen recordings of pupils' dyadic CW (Studies II and III), individual and collaborative learner texts (Study IV) and stimulated recall interviews with pairs of pupils, in which screen recordings of their CW were revisited (Study III). The collected data serve different purposes when highlighting affordances of CW in the present thesis. The recordings represent the CW process and offer insight into how the pupils discuss and construe the collaborative texts, which includes the digital tools they use, or do not use, such as Google Translate and the spell- and grammar checker in Microsoft Word. The learner texts are the result of implementing a CW task, while interviews with teachers and young learners contribute with their perspectives on both the CW process and collaborative texts. The data supporting Studies I–IV were collected before, during and after CW sessions in three EFL classes, and these sessions are also outlined in this chapter.

Table 2

Overview of data sets and their total length in Studies I–IV

Study I	Semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers ($N = 15$) 11 hours and 15 minutes
Study II	Merged audio- and screen recordings of CW in 10 pairs ($N = 35$) 18 hours and 20 minutes
Study III	Merged audio- and screen recordings of CW in 10 pairs ($N = 35$) 18 hours and 20 minutes Semi-structured interviews with CW pairs ($N = 10$) 2 hours and 25 minutes
Study IV	Individually and collaboratively written narrative texts ($N = 30$) 4,629 words excluding titles

The methods for data collection and analysis are further discussed in the sections below. These discussions include reflections on methodological or analytical choices, ethical

considerations when planning and conducting the studies and my roles and potential influence as a researcher.

5.1 Participants

This section introduces the participants, who were EFL teachers at primary school and young learners of EFL at the time when the studies were conducted. A total of 15 female EFL teachers in school years 4–6 were interviewed for Study I between February 2022 and May 2024. To come into contact with these teachers, I initially reached out to school leaders via phone and/or email with information about the study and a request to interview teachers who would be interested in participating. Where applicable, EFL teachers were contacted directly via email. Participants were sought in one of the largest cities in Sweden as well as in municipalities in the north of Sweden. There were no specific requirements for being eligible for participation, apart from being a qualified EFL teacher in school years 4–6. Those who volunteered were selected and signed a consent form (see Appendix A) before being interviewed. In the one interview that was conducted face-to-face, it was especially important that the participant who had volunteered was easily accessible, but proximity was not required in the 14 online interviews (see Section 5.3 on semi-structured interviews).

One of the consequences of the sampling is that all the participants are female, which obviously means that a male teacher perspective on CW is lacking in this thesis. At the same time, the participants' gender mirrors the current situation in Sweden, where most EFL teachers at primary school are women. Another consequence of the sampling is the wide span as regards the teachers' experience. Table 3 presents each participant's EFL teaching experience in school years 4–6 and states whether they had used CW in their EFL classes with young learners before being interviewed. The numbering of the participants corresponds to the numbers they were assigned in Study I.

Table 3

Participants in Study I

Participant	**EFL teaching experience in school years 4–6**	**Had implemented CW in EFL in school years 4–6**
Teacher 1	12 years	Yes
Teacher 2	9 years	Yes
Teacher 3	7 months	No
Teacher 4	15 years	Yes
Teacher 5	10 years	Yes
Teacher 6	30 years	Yes
Teacher 7	5 years	Yes
Teacher 8	6 years	Yes
Teacher 9	4 years	No

Teacher 10	4 months	Yes
Teacher 11	27 years	Yes
Teacher 12	4.5 years	Yes
Teacher 13	8 years	Yes
Teacher 14	None	No
Teacher 15	9 years	No

Table 3 reveals that the participants' experience as EFL teachers in school years 4–6 varies greatly, ranging from no teaching experience at all to 30 years. Four of the teachers had not implemented CW in school years 4–6 prior to the interview. These aspects can potentially have affected the results, for example, leading to more in-depth reflections by teachers who had taught EFL for many years and possibly even used CW activities. As suggested above in relation to the sampling, it is likely that the variation in the participants' experience of teaching EFL and using CW stems from the decision not to formulate more extensive criteria that interviewees had to meet before participating in Study I. The consequences of interviewing this heterogenous group of teachers are also discussed in Section 4.1.2 on teacher beliefs.

In addition to interviewing teachers, data for Studies II–IV were collected in three EFL classes at two different schools in northern Sweden. The same classes first contributed with data in school year 5 (spring term 2023) and subsequently in school year 6 (autumn term 2023). The classes consisted of 54 pupils, but not all of them attended the EFL lessons regularly nor participated in the studies, which explains why there are 51 pupils in Studies II and III and 49 pupils in Study IV. Table 4 introduces the number of pupils in each EFL class, the gender distribution between boys and girls and the number of pupils who were included in the data collection. The table also shows that the classes were taught by three of the participants in Study I: Teacher 2, Teacher 11 and Teacher 12 (see Table 3 above). The pupils taught by Teacher 11 and Teacher 12 shared joint classes in other subjects at least once a week but were separated for their EFL lessons. Before collecting any data in the classrooms, the teachers and the pupils' legal guardians signed a consent form (see Appendices B and C). Ethical considerations relating to consent from children are addressed more thoroughly in Section 5.6.3.

Table 4

Participants in Studies II–IV

EFL class	**Teacher**	**Total no pupils**	**Total no boys**	**Total no girls**	**Total no of pupils who contributed with data**
1	Teacher 2	22	9	13	13
2	Teacher 11	16	8	8	10
3	Teacher 12	16	8	8	9
Total	3	54	25	29	32

The three teachers who volunteered to be interviewed and participate in a classroom implementation of CW all adopted a similar educational approach in their EFL classes. Their pupils were accustomed to cooperative learning both in the English subject and in other subjects, but the teachers had not used CW in EFL in these specific classes. Still, it needs to be acknowledged that the young participants in Studies II–IV were familiar with pair and group work prior to writing collaboratively in EFL (cf. Villarreal et al., 2021, where this was also the case). This could have affected their engagement with the CW tasks, although experience in joint work does not guarantee that collaboration in Storch's (2019) sense is achieved. A consequence of the sample is therefore that all three classes had some prior knowledge of what collaboration, or cooperation, entails.

5.2 Implementing collaborative writing in the EFL classes

The pupils who contributed with data to Studies II–IV wrote narrative texts collaboratively in school year 5 as well as in school year 6. In the former case, each pair produced their text on a shared laptop in teacher-selected, mixed-proficiency pairs, and in the latter case, they wrote individually and collaboratively by hand in same-proficiency pairs created by me. The CW sessions were thus not designed identically in school years 5 and 6, and these sessions are now described, compared and reflected on in further detail.

5.2.1 Collaborative writing in school year 5

Prior to implementing CW in school year 5, I met with the three participating teachers to establish a joint plan for how to introduce CW in EFL to their pupils. The teachers expressed a desire to focus on narrative texts, especially stories, since they constituted a part of the core content in the English subject (see Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a) that the teachers had not yet covered extensively in their classes. They also stated that their pupils had primarily written narrative texts in Swedish, and only individually. In light of this, it was decided that the teachers and I should co-plan a series of six lessons (approximately 40 minutes each in length) centred on CW, which was eventually taught by the teachers using a mix of English and Swedish to ensure comprehension. All pupils present in the classroom performed the CW activities, but only some of them contributed with data (see Table 4 above). Ecological validity was strived for when planning and implementing CW in a way that resembled the pupils' regular EFL lessons in school year 5 (cf. Villarreal et al., 2021; Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021, on ecological validity). Prioritising ecological validity is beneficial when a study is informed by affordance theory (see Section 4.1.1), as Study III and this thesis frame are, since working under real conditions results in the findings being more applicable to pedagogical settings (Nguyen, 2025; cf. also Cohen et al., 2018).

Before the six lessons were taught between May and June 2023, I visited each class to introduce myself, the doctoral project and the data collection in an age-appropriate manner using a PowerPoint presentation (see Section 5.6.1 on ethical considerations). The pupils had the opportunity to ask questions and familiarise themselves with the digital voice recorders that were used to capture their CW. They were informed about their right to decline to participate, even if their legal guardians had signed the consent form that was distributed (see Appendix C).

The first lesson aimed to introduce CW, allow the pupils to voice their opinions about CW and spark their creativity in preparation for narrative writing. First, the pupils discussed three questions in pairs: (i) What do you think about when you hear the words *writing together*?, (ii) What can you learn from writing together? and (iii) What do you think is difficult when you write together? These questions align with what Kos (2025) terms awareness-raising, where young learners reflect on collaboration and its potential language learning benefits before actually collaborating. As a second step, the pupils were asked to brainstorm ideas based on pictures. For example, they were shown an image of two people on a beach and were instructed to talk to a classmate to decide who the people are, where they are and what they are doing, thinking or saying. In the final part of the first lesson, each teacher provided input of her own choice on how to write dialogues. This obviously means that the classes did not receive the exact same input, but the decision was deemed reasonable to maintain ecological validity. Furthermore, no data were collected at this stage and no comparisons between the classes or with control groups were to take place, which made the use of different materials less of an issue. The lesson concluded with the pupils collaboratively writing and performing a dialogue based on pre-selected pictures, using the second step described above as inspiration. This first lesson can therefore be considered a type of pre-task training session, which is recommended by Li and Storch (2025), although the pupils did not produce a complete narrative text.

In the second lesson, the pupils were given examples of how to structure a specific type of narrative text, a story. The teachers initially had the pupils work in pairs and discuss what characterises a narrative text, and how such a text can be recognised. They were also encouraged to provide their own examples of narrative texts that they were familiar with. Next, the teachers presented a simple story structure consisting of the following components: a title, an introduction, a problem, a solution to the problem and an ending. As in the first lesson, each teacher provided her own materials to exemplify story structures and assist the pupils in identifying the parts of a narrative text. Finally, the pupils received the instructions for the meaning-focused CW task (appended in Studies II and III) they would perform in the third, fourth and fifth lessons, which were spent writing in the classroom. Ten pairs who had consented to participate provided audio- and screen recordings of their CW during the three writing sessions. These mixed-proficiency pairs were teacher-selected and created to encourage scaffolding, according to the teachers. More specifically, they had paired the young learners based on their proficiency in the four skills and their knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar. Table 5 below introduces the pairs, the pseudonyms used in Studies II and III and their teachers, who are referred to using the same numbers as in Table 3 above. The table also shows the gender distribution and that all pairs, except Pair 10, had collaborated with each other previously in their EFL classes.

Table 5

Profiles of teacher-selected, mixed-proficiency CW pairs in Studies II and III

Pair	Pseudonyms	Gender	Had collaborated previously	Teacher
1	Amanda and Jennifer	Girl + girl	Yes	Teacher 2
2	Jenny and Hanna	Girl + girl	Yes	Teacher 2
3	Werner and Niko	Boy + boy	Yes	Teacher 2
4	Minna and Liza	Girl + girl	Yes	Teacher 2
5	Alva and Elsa	Girl + girl	Yes	Teacher 11
6	Emelie and Meja	Girl + girl	Yes	Teacher 11
7	Viktor and Malte	Boy + boy	Yes	Teacher 11
8	Felicia and Wilma	Girl + girl	Yes	Teacher 12
9	Liam and Edwin	Boy + boy	Yes	Teacher 12
10	Petra and Johannes	Girl + boy	No	Teacher 12

The audio recordings were made using voice recorders, as has been mentioned, and the screen recordings were made on the pupils' laptops, using the programme VLC and/or the inbuilt screen recorder. In all three EFL classes, the pupils had access to their own laptops, which were provided by the respective schools. The pupils were allowed to use aids, such as Google Translate, since this mirrors how they would normally engage in EFL writing at school, in line with the intention to prioritise ecological validity. Hence, the CW activity took place in a face-to-face setting, but was performed on computers, which makes this implementation what Li and Storch (2025) call a blended mode of CW. During the sixth lesson, the pupils presented their collaborative texts to some of their classmates by reading them out loud in groups of four. Within a week after completing the texts, the ten participating CW pairs were interviewed to gain insight into their CW process and their collaborative texts (see Section 5.3).

5.2.2 Collaborative writing in school year 6

The writing sessions in school year 6 differed from those in school year 5. To enable a comparative study of individual and collaborative texts, that is, Study IV, the pupils were first asked to write narrative texts individually in October 2023. This time, they wrote by hand, were not allowed to use any aids and had a maximum of one lesson (40 minutes) to complete their texts on a topic of their own choice. These instructions were given by me in the classroom, and the teachers did not provide any assistance to the pupils as they wrote their texts.

Each individual text was rated by me using Trüb's (2022) rating scale for stories ranging from 0 to 4 (see Appendix D), and a selected number of texts were co-rated by another researcher. The rating scale is described as semi-holistic by Trüb (2022) and was deemed suitable, since it is based on the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020) and thus focuses on what

writers can do with language instead of pointing out their deficiencies. Compared to the grading criteria for English in school year 6 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a), the rating scale is also more detailed. It encompasses a wide range of criteria relevant when assessing a narrative text: communicative effect or creativity, level of detail, coherence (logical organisation), cohesion (linguistic connectivity), complexity of syntax and grammar, correctness of syntax and grammar, vocabulary range, orthography and punctuation. Table 6 presents the number and rating of individual texts based on Trüb (2022) and illustrates how each rating corresponds to the CEFR levels.

Table 6

Individual texts collected and their respective ratings

Rating	**CEFR level**	**No of texts**
0	Below A1.1	---
1	A1.1	5
2	A1.2	12
3	A2.1	14
4	Above A2.1	7
Total	---	38[5]

The individual texts were subsequently used to form same-proficiency pairs in preparation for the CW session, which took place in November 2023, five weeks after the pupils had written individually. The rating resulted in a total of 18 rather than 19 same-proficiency pairs, since two pupils were absent from the CW session. Ten of these pairs consented to participate in Study IV. Table 7 shows the pairs' gender, the rating of the texts the pupils wrote individually before being paired and their teachers, who are referred to using the same numbers as in Table 3 above. Unlike the pairs in Studies II and III, these pairs were not given pseudonyms, since their texts and not their CW process were subject to analysis.

[5] In Study IV, it is stated that a total of 42 individual texts were collected. In four cases, however, the legal guardians did not consent to their children's data being shared with other researchers, which explains the lower number here.

Table 7

Profiles of researcher-selected, same-proficiency CW pairs in Study IV

Pair	Gender	Rating individual texts	Teacher
1	Girl + boy	1	Teacher 12
2	Girl + boy	1	Teacher 11
3	Girl + girl	2	Teacher 12
4	Girl + girl	2	Teacher 11
5	Girl + girl	2	Teacher 2
6	Girl + girl	3	Teacher 11
7	Girl + girl	3	Teacher 11
8	Boy + boy	3	Teacher 11
9	Boy + boy	3	Teacher 2
10	Girl + girl	4	Teacher 2

During the CW session, the pupils received the same instructions from me as in the individual writing session. This means that they once again wrote narrative texts by hand, self-selected the topic and completed their texts during a 40-minute lesson without using any aids or teacher support.

5.2.3 Pedagogical decisions in school years 5 and 6

There are similarities as well as differences between the CW sessions in school years 5 and 6, stemming from pedagogical decisions made by me as a researcher. A note-worthy similarity is the fact that the pupils were allowed to use Swedish, which was their L1 or shared language, when they wrote collaboratively. As Azkarai (2023) observes, using the L1 during CW activities in an L2/FL setting is a debated issue, and teachers may fear that learners overuse their L1 when they are supposed to write or work collaboratively in an L2/FL (Storch, 2013). The decision to allow the pupils in the present thesis to use Swedish was made, since they were beginner learners, whose EFL skills could have proven inadequate to thoroughly discuss their narratives. While it is desirable to encourage young learners to use the target language as extensively as possible, drawing on the L1 in an EFL context does not necessarily impede learning. In fact, the use of the L1 in primary EFL education has proven beneficial to develop pupils' communicative competence and can be advocated in peer interaction to promote plurilingualism (Vraciu & Pladevall-Ballester, 2022). Using more than one language in the L2/FL classroom also aligns with the values expressed in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020) and in the English syllabi (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a). The use of an L1 or a shared language can thus be regarded as a strategy or an affordance that young learners choose, or need, to enact, since their EFL skills are still emerging and may not suffice to express the desired communicative content (cf. Kos, 2025, on the necessity of allowing young L2/FL learners to use their L1). As such, the L1 or shared language can facilitate collaboration (cf. Azkarai, 2023) and allow for language learning opportunities to be created.

When a researcher assigns pupils a task or a test as part of an L2/FL study, Pinter (2022) highlights the risk that such tasks or tests are unfamiliar to the pupils. She argues that this, in addition to anxiety, can result in pupils being unable to show what they can do or know in the L2/FL. To prevent this from happening, the pupils were given tasks on narrative writing on both CW occasions. Given the popularity of narrative texts and storytelling in primary EFL education (Coyle et al., 2020; Geng et al., 2022; Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021), the pupils were expected to be familiar with the narrative genre. The pupils self-selected topics for their narratives both in school year 5 and in school year 6, which gave insight into their interpretations of the narrative genre. At the same time, the decision to focus on narrative writing in both school years could have led to a task repetition effect. The writing sessions in school year 6, however, took place several months after the CW in school year 5, and the pupils did not receive identical instructions for the task on both occasions. In school year 5, the pupils were given a meaning-focused task (appended in Studies II and III) with a writing prompt. The writing prompt was not used by all pairs but aimed to help them get started if they were struggling with how to begin their text. From a pedagogical perspective, it was deemed reasonable to provide inspiration in the form of a writing prompt but also to allow the pupils the freedom to construct their text as they wished. Had the task been language-focused, this could have altered the discussions during CW, since the task type is known to influence the directions of CW (see Section 3.4).

A prominent difference between the studies conducted in school years 5 and 6 is the time spent on CW. In the former case, the pupils had three lessons, or approximately 120 minutes, to complete their texts, while they only had 40 minutes in the latter case. Three 40-minute lessons may seem like a generous amount of time to perform a CW activity, but writing and revising the same text for several lessons was a common practice in the pupils' regular EFL classes. Li and Storch (2025) also note that face-to-face CW where meaning-focused tasks are performed is usually more time-consuming than CW of form-focused tasks. The three-lesson time limit in school year 5 proved to be both advantageous and disadvantageous. It rendered a rich material that enabled several aspects of CW to be studied, but it also resulted in pairs becoming unfocused and distracted from the CW task. When there is more time to write, it can be tempting to assume that there is also more time for language learning opportunities, but the data sets supporting Studies II and III suggest that some pairs spent parts of the three lessons on matters unrelated to CW or the task at hand. When they realised they were running out of time, they seemingly rushed to complete the narrative, which can affect the overall impression of the text. Similarly, the CW session in school year 6 may have caused stress as it resembled a test situation with a limited amount of time (40 minutes) and no use of aids. The fact that the pupils wrote by hand in school year 6 can further have affected their CW, since they were used to writing on laptops (cf. Villarreal et al., 2021, where texts written by young EFL learners at secondary school were more fluent in Google Docs, but more accurate when written on paper). As a result, it is possible that their writing and editing progressed more slowly than usual.

Another difference between CW in school years 5 and 6 is that the pupils in school year 5 took part in two preparatory lessons before writing collaboratively for three lessons and finally presenting their work to each other in a sixth lesson. No such pre-task input was provided in school year 6, but the pupils were given a brief oral reminder of the CW they had engaged in when they were approaching the end of school year 5. The lack of pre-task input could have decontextualised the CW task and enhanced the pupils' potential perception of

this writing session as a test situation. Likewise, the series of lessons in school year 5 could have influenced their CW, but the pupils were not taught any strategies for collaborating here that they could subsequently have used in their CW process.

A final difference that needs to be acknowledged is pairing, which is a factor that has been shown to affect CW (see Section 3.3). All the teacher-selected, mixed-proficiency pairs in school year 5 were used to collaborating with each other, except one pair. In school year 6, I created same-proficiency pairs approved by the teachers, who knew their pupils better than I did and could tell whether the pairs were socially compatible or not, that is, if the pupils had "a fluent relationship with their partners" (Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021, p. 97). While pairing is not a variable that was tested or investigated further in any of the appended studies, different types of pairs are warranted for pedagogical reasons. Since the pupils in school year 5 were used to writing collaboratively, a new writing partner meant new opportunities to practise collaboration. Different pairings were hence included to allow the pupils to collaborate in different contexts and gain richer experiences from joint work. Since all three teachers had paired their pupils with scaffolding in mind, same-proficiency pairs allowed them to potentially establish other roles than expert/novice (see, e.g., Storch, 2013, for this pattern of interaction; see also Figure 1). The teacher-selected pairs in school year 5 was also a way of maintaining ecological validity (cf. Kos, 2023b) and minimising my interference as a researcher, and as an adult fairly unfamiliar to the pupils, at the beginning of the data collection.

5.3 Semi-structured interviews

To capture teacher beliefs about CW in Study I and pupils' post-task understanding of the CW situation in Study III, semi-structured qualitative interviews were opted for. Such interviews are beneficial when seeking to uncover participants' understanding of a phenomenon, in this case CW, and they also allow for the possibility to ask follow-up questions when needed (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Semi-structured interviews were thus selected in an attempt to promote teachers' and pupils' in-depth reflections on CW.

A total of 15 teachers and 20 pupils were interviewed for Studies I and III, respectively. This number of participants is in line with Onwuegbuzie and Leech's (2007) recommendations, where a sample size of 15 to 20 participants is advocated in semi-structured interview studies. Admittedly, this sample size is rather small, but a low number of participants may be a necessity in semi-structured interviews due to time and resources available and the law of diminishing returns (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018), meaning that additional interviews cease to yield new insights after a certain point. At the same time, the sample size in Studies I and III offers a potential limitation, since the beliefs and understanding expressed cannot necessarily be generalised and deemed representative of all EFL teachers and pupils in Sweden or in other countries. To gain a greater number of perspectives on CW, a questionnaire would have been a less time-consuming alternative than semi-structured interviews (see Cohen et al., 2018, for interviews versus questionnaires). The use of a questionnaire, however, would have entailed the risk of missing out on the in-depth reflections sought after to provide a nuanced picture of the language learning opportunities that teachers associate with CW. Questionnaires could further have been challenging to conduct with young learners, as they may find the entirely word-based format off-putting (Smith & Haslett, 2016). Interviews, on the other hand, can be perceived as more personal and engaging and improve young learners'

response rates (O'Reilly & Dogra, 2017). Interviewing the pupils was therefore a way of ascertaining that they comprehend the questions and that they are given the chance to provide all the information they wish to share.

In Study I, 14 teacher interviews were conducted online due to the restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic and/or due to the physical distance between me and the interviewees. One interview was conducted face-to-face after the pandemic. All the interviews with the pupils in Study III took place in person at their respective schools. Both the interviews with the teachers and with the pupils were conducted in Swedish to ensure that all participants were able to express themselves freely, which may not be the case if an L2/FL, such as English, is used (see Squires, 2009; Temple & Young, 2004, for language barriers and translation dilemmas in qualitative research). All interviews were recorded using Zoom, after which the teacher interviews were transcribed verbatim and the interviews with the pupils were transcribed using selective protocol (Mayring, 2022), where only parts that were relevant to the research questions in Study III were transcribed.

Interview protocols were created for both Studies I and III and are appended in these studies. The interview protocol targeting teachers in Study I was piloted before being used to evaluate the aptness of the questions, which first related to writing in the EFL classroom before focusing on CW, specifically. This means that parts of the interviews concerned EFL writing in general, which was deemed necessary as contextualisation before transitioning to CW. While the questions about EFL writing rendered insights into teachers' reported practices of writing instruction, these data are beyond the scope of the present thesis. In Study III, the interview protocol divided questions into the CW process and the CW product. These questions were jointly explored in the CW pairs, who were prompted to comment on certain parts of their recordings using stimulated recall (Calderhead, 1981). The stimulated recall sessions were a valuable complement to the recordings to allow the pupils to reflect on their CW process and get a glimpse of their perspectives on the CW situation and their collaborative texts. By focusing on a specific part of the recording, the use of stimulated recall possibly contributed to pupils perceiving the interview questions as less abstract compared to a question in isolation, such as "What do you think about the language and content of your text?" (see interview protocol appended in Study III). Conducting the stimulated recall sessions shortly after the pupils had finished their collaborative texts was also a way of minimising potential reconstructions.

A risk that applies to stimulated recall sessions and to interviews in general is the well-known fact that the presence of a researcher may influence what participants say, or do not say, in interviews. As observed by Punch (2002), especially young participants may view the researcher as an authority figure and provide the answers they believe the researcher wants to receive. This risk was somewhat mitigated by the inclusion of open-ended questions in the interview protocols. Such questions allow for elaborated answers and increase the validity of the findings, since they invite participants to steer the conversation in a direction not anticipated by the researcher (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). This flexibility offered by open-ended questions, and by semi-structured interviews, results in the interview situation not being fully replicable with other participants and another researcher.

5.4 Four types of qualitative data analysis

The present thesis has argued for the need to explore CW through a variety of theoretical lenses. Similarly, the study objects in Studies I–IV required different methods for analysing the data. These methods are reflexive thematic analysis (Study I), qualitative content analysis (Study III) and analyses of transitivity and appraisal (Study IV). Each of these methods are introduced and reflected on in the following sections.

5.4.1 Reflexive thematic analysis

To analyse the teacher beliefs expressed in the interviews underlying Study I, a reflexive thematic analysis was conducted. This "methodish" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 4) analytical tool was selected because it allows for rich, interpretative analyses of teacher beliefs, which have been shown to be contextually situated and not necessarily aligned with practice (see Borg, 2026, for an overview of studies of teacher beliefs in English language teaching). Initially termed thematic analysis, it was developed in Braun and Clarke's (2006) seminal paper. The reflexivity added in their subsequent publications (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2022, 2023) relates to the researcher's subjectivity throughout the analytical process consisting of six phases (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022):

- Familiarising oneself with the data
- Generating initial codes
- Searching for themes
- Reviewing themes
- Defining and naming themes
- Producing the report

As a first step, the teacher interviews were transcribed manually and verbatim. While manual transcriptions are time-consuming, they allow the researcher to gain a valuable initial understanding of the data and form a foundation for the upcoming analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A reflexive thematic analysis does not require the same level of detail in the transcripts as a conversation analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), for example, which is why readability was favoured over meticulous renditions of speech. This meant omitting filler words and refraining from indications of the speaker's intonation and pauses. The ambition to ensure readability was also motivated by the fact that each participant received a copy of their transcript and was asked to read through it. The purpose of this was to offer the teachers the possibility to make any additional statements, but none of them wished to do so.

When the interviews had been transcribed and reviewed by the teachers, the reflexive thematic analysis of the transcripts followed the six phases outlined in the bullet point list above. The first phase is devoted to familiarisation with the data, which can include transcribing. In this phase, Braun and Clarke (2006) stress the importance of immersion, which in my case entailed reading the transcripts repeatedly. As recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006), I read through the entire data set once to become acquainted with it before I re-read it several times and commenced the process of identifying patterns across the data set. The act of re-reading is beneficial before starting the next step, that is, coding the material, as ideas and possible patterns are shaped when the researcher reads through the data set (Braun

& Clarke, 2006). As preparation for the coding, I took notes while reading and colour-coded parts of the transcripts that seemed to belong to a certain pattern.

The second phase is when the researcher begins to generate initial codes, which are broader than themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once I had familiarised myself with the data, I had produced notes and colour-coded patterns that could potentially constitute themes. Since the analysis took an abductive approach, it was informed by the research question in Study I as well as by findings from previous research. An example of such a finding is the potential of CW to stimulate learners' discussions about vocabulary, or engagement in lexical LREs (see Section 3.3). Being aware of this finding, I deliberately scanned the data set for mentions of lexical benefits of CW. This approach rendered the analysis theory-driven instead of data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006), since I coded with specific areas of language learning in mind, while also being open to novel patterns.

Based on the patterns created in the second phase, the researcher starts considering how different codes can form themes in the third phase. In other words, this phase focuses on the relationship between codes, themes and the different level of themes, that is, either overarching themes or subthemes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To arrange my codes, I created tables that grouped codes into sections that appeared to address the same topic. In doing so, not all data were coded or included in the analysis, since some of the questions in the interview protocol (appended in Study I) did not specifically concern CW.

Reflexive thematic analysis is an iterative process, which the fourth phase reflects. At this stage, the researcher starts refining the potential themes created, for example, by noticing additional data within the themes that were potentially unnoticed during the initial coding. This fourth phase entailed re-reading and re-coding the transcripts to confirm that the themes represent the data set as accurately as possible and relate to the research question posed in Study I. As Braun and Clarke (2006) note, it might be the case that some themes generated in the third phase are now either merged into one, separated or even discovered not to be themes. This occurred in my refinement of the themes as well, where an example of an excluded theme is the teachers' belief that CW promotes collaboration or cooperation skills. The reason this was not considered a theme is due to a lack of data to support it (cf. Braun & Clarke, 2006). There were simply not sufficient examples of ways in which CW is believed to enhance collaboration or cooperation skills, nor did the teachers clarify what such skills encompass. This vagueness and lack of concrete examples made it difficult to elaborate on the belief and create a theme based on it.

As a result of the fourth phase, the themes were deemed to have been adequately distinguished from each other. My analysis then entered the fifth phase, in which I further defined the themes, that is, attempted to capture the most important feature of each theme and the themes overall. Having defined these overarching themes and subthemes, the next task at hand was to name the themes based on their essential features, or the most important characteristics of a theme. The intention here is to identify the parts of interest and understand why they are interesting. In doing so, I considered the themes in relation to each other. The names of the themes were chosen to immediately inform the reader of what the theme is about. All themes were named in a similar way, consistently beginning with 'CW' followed by a verb, such as *CW decreases foreign language anxiety* (FLA) *in the classroom*. The purpose of this labelling was to achieve consistency and clearly signal what the teachers believe that CW leads to in terms of EFL learning opportunities.

The sixth and final phase is to write up the report, which in this case is Study I. Great care was taken to represent all the teachers' beliefs through quotations supporting the reflexive thematic analysis. This was done to offer insight into the analysis and convince the reader of its plausibility or validity (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Throughout the analysis, the researcher's reflexivity, or subjectivity, played an important role. Braun and Clarke (e.g., 2022) do not only deem this subjectivity inevitable but also consider it an asset when engaging in a reflexive thematic analysis. Since the point is not for researchers to seek agreement in the creation of themes, inter-rater reliability is rendered unnecessary (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Had another researcher conducted a reflexive thematic analysis based on the teacher interviews in Study I, it is plausible that they had arrived at different themes, which is only to be expected, according to Braun and Clarke (2022). The researcher's subjectivity makes a reflexive thematic analysis irreplicable. My reflexivity in the analysis underpinning Study I included an awareness of topics highlighted in previous research on CW, which, together with the research question, guided the creation of themes. My reflexive thematic analysis was thus not truly inductive, but instead took an abductive approach, which allowed for the creation of new themes while also highlighting themes generated based on existing research findings. The time-consuming nature of CW was a novel theme, and the affective factors were also believed to be especially prominent in Study I in relation to previous research (see Chapter 3) with adolescent and adult participants.

Part of the researcher's reflexivity are also ontological and epistemological positions. A reflexive thematic analysis is never conducted in a theoretical vacuum (Braun & Clarke, 2023), and in my case, relativism underpinned the analysis. As Braun and Clarke (2022) explain, a relativist approach entails rejecting the notion of a singular reality. Instead, reality is conceptualised as multiple and as the product of human (inter)action. What is presented in Study I is then my reading of a specific data set, that is, the transcripts of the teacher interviews, which is intended to give an account of the realities produced and constructed by the participating teachers (see Braun & Clarke, 2022, for the researcher's task in a relativist reflexive thematic analysis). My reading could have been affected by the fact that I am an English teacher myself, as are the participants in Study I, and I therefore entered the interview situations with pre-formulated views on English teaching. As is evident from Section 4.1, such views include an understanding of learning as a social and relational endeavour. While my personal views could have influenced the direction of the conversations, the use of open-ended questions and follow-up questions was a way of preventing participants from providing answers they believed I as a researcher expected (see also Section 5.3 on conducting semi-structured interviews).

5.4.2 Qualitative content analysis

Study III sets out to capture EFL-related affordances enacted by young learners as they write collaboratively, while also taking their post-task understanding of the CW situation into account. A directed qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was opted for to illuminate affordances in the recordings and interviews that constitute the data underlying Study III. This means that the study objects were approached deductively, which was considered suitable, since previous EFL research (see, e.g., Martins et al.'s, 2025, review) has already identified a number of ways in which CW can influence language learning opportunities at primary school. What is largely lacking from the body of research, however, is young

learners' understanding of these language learning opportunities, which are therefore investigated further in Study III. In addition, a deductive approach seemed warranted, as the study adopts a five-dimensional theoretical framework proposed by Nguyen (2025). The analysis was informed by this framework, but also by previous research and the research questions pursued in the study. Predetermined concepts, such as peer support and involvement central to Storch's (2019) definition of CW, thus guided the analysis from the outset. Despite this, I attempted to keep an open mind throughout the deductive analysis, as recommended by Hsieh and Shannon (2005), to allow patterns not captured by the initial framework to be created.

When conducting the analysis, the transcripts of the recordings and interviews were read repeatedly to gain familiarity with the material. Selective protocol was employed during the transcription phase, which entails that only parts that were relevant to the research questions were transcribed (Mayring, 2022). After this, the analytical process followed the steps accounted for by Graneheim and Lundman (2004), where the material was divided into *meaning units*, which are words, sentences or paragraphs whose content and context make them interrelated. The meaning units were then *condensed*, that is, shortened with their core preserved. After this, the process of *abstraction* followed, which is where the researcher creates codes, categories and subcategories (see Study III for examples of my analytical process including raw data). Categories are parts of content that share a common feature (Krippendorff, 2018), constitute the main outcome of a qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2022) and are hierarchical ways of structuring the content. The analysis was deductive, as has been mentioned, and the theoretical framework, previous research and research questions in Study III can be said to be the coding manual that guided the analysis. Had the analysis been inductive, a coding manual would have been developed and evolved during the analysis, since the researcher then creates codes as patterns emerge (see Mayring, 2022, for inductive category formation). The categories in Study III reflect note-worthy patterns in the material, but they are not frequency-based, although category formation based on frequency is common in qualitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018). Some researchers, such as Graneheim et al. (2017), imply that forming categories based on frequency is not a rule that needs to be followed strictly, as qualitative content analysis has changed from a "counting game" (p. 29) to a more interpretative process.

A qualitative content analysis shares some similarities and differences with a reflexive thematic analysis, which was employed in Study I. Both types of analyses can be used to establish patterns in a data set, but a difference between them is the role of the researcher. A qualitative content analysis can be described as less subjective than a reflexive thematic analysis, emphasising objectivity and intercoder agreement (Mayring, 2022), which do not have a place in reflexive thematic analysis (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2022). A qualitative content analysis is also supposed to be replicable (Krippendorff, 2018; Mayring, 2022), unlike a reflexive thematic analysis, where the researcher's subjectivity is central and deemed an asset (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Yet, Lindgren et al. (2020) suggest that a qualitative content analysis can be both descriptive and interpretative. This is evident in Graneheim and Lundman (2004), who differentiate between manifest and latent content. The former refers to visible, obvious content, and the latter to interpretations of the underlying meaning of a text. Bearing these two types of content in mind, it is important to be transparent and differentiate between the participants' voices and the researcher's interpretations (Graneheim et al., 2017), which was done in Study III through representative citations. Graneheim et al. (2017) further stress the

importance of being aware of and transparent about "the researchers' pre-understandings" (p. 33) when conducting interviews, asking follow-up questions and interpreting interviewees' narratives. This echoes Braun and Clarke's (e.g., 2019, 2022) reflexivity, and it can therefore be concluded that the qualitative content analysis, as applied in Study III, resembles a reflexive thematic analysis in some respects.

5.4.3 Transitivity and appraisal analyses

To complement previous research using CAF measures (see Section 3.5), individual and collaborative narratives are compared in Study IV drawing on two analytical tools situated in SFL: transitivity and appraisal. Studying transitivity in learner texts offers a means of exploring how writers use language to represent their experiences of the world as they construct meaning. The Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005; see also Folkeryd's, 2006, seminal work in the Swedish context) captures how writers position themselves, make judgements and evaluate the world, such as people, events and objects. Through analyses of appraisal, researchers can gain insight into how young learners position themselves in writing and attempt to engage an intended reader. Combining transitivity and appraisal frameworks, as is done in Study IV, thus implies a focus on two out of three metafunctions of language. Transitivity is associated with the ideational metafunction, whereas appraisal concerns the interpersonal metafunction (see, e.g., Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, for the metafunctions; see also Section 4.1.4 on SFL).

A transitivity analysis begins by breaking a text down into clauses, which constitute its starting point. This is done to identify three main elements in each clause: (i) *processes*, which are verbs or verb groups indicating what is happening in a clause, (ii) *participants* denoting who or what is involved and (iii) *circumstances* providing additional information about the conditions under which something occurs, typically realised by adverbial or prepositional phrases (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Analyses of these elements can contribute to answering a wide array of research questions, for example, regarding characters' behaviour in narrative texts or whether characters are portrayed as being active or passive.

First, the individual and collaborative learner texts analysed in Study IV were digitalised and each clause was identified. Next, all the clauses were divided into processes, participants and circumstances. In Study IV, participants and circumstances were omitted in line with the analytical interest in ideational resources, meaning that the results reported on exclusively cover *process cores*. A process core is the central verbal element of a clause and, as such, decides what is taking place and controls the types of participants involved. In the English language, six types of process cores are recognised in reference to either internal or external events: *material* (doing), *mental* (sensing), *relational* (being or having), *existential* (existing), *verbal* (saying) and *behavioural* (behaving) process cores (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; see also Study IV for examples of process cores using excerpts from the learner texts). Since the process types are "fuzzy categories" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 216), one type of process core cannot always be easily distinguished from another. As an example, behavioural and material process cores resemble each other as they both express a participant's actions (cf. Holmberg & Karlsson, 2019). The difference is that behavioural process cores involve physiological or psychological actions (e.g., *laugh*), while material process cores denote a change in the physical world (e.g., *paint*). Despite this, they were both categorised as material in Study IV due to the overlap between them and grammatical inconsistencies in the learner

texts, which at times made it difficult to decide which process core the writer(s) intended to use. In fact, behavioural processes are considered a subgroup of material processes in the Swedish language, and existential processes are incorporated into relational processes, given their similarities (Holmberg & Karlsson, 2019). These examples illustrate some of the differences between transitivity in English and in Swedish. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) identify six types of processes in English, as mentioned above, but only four of them are recognised in Swedish: material, mental, verbal and relational processes (Holmberg & Karlsson, 2019). Such differences need to be acknowledged in relation to Study IV, since they may have affected the pupils' use of transitivity in English, which they approached by mainly communicating in Swedish during the CW.

When all clauses in the learner texts had been analysed based on transitivity, they were coded for expressions of appraisal. The Appraisal framework extensively captures interpersonal resources for evaluation (Martin & White, 2005; see also Folkeryd, 2006). The framework is informed by Bakhtin's (1986) dialogic view on written texts, according to which interaction takes place not only between readers and writers, but also between texts. The latter type of interaction is commonly referred to as *intertextuality*. When applied to learner texts, appraisal can be used to understand how texts communicate with readers and highlight pupils' meaning-making as expressed through linguistic resources for social evaluation. Appraisal can also "serve as an educational tool and foster dialogic environments where pupils can explore diverse possibilities, including lexical and syntactic choices, during the writing process" (Lindgren et al., 2025, p. 6). While the potential of appraisal extends beyond text analyses to classroom practice, the use of the framework in this thesis is restricted to exploring evaluative language in individual and collaborative texts.

Three major categories are part of the Appraisal framework: *Engagement*, *Attitude* and *Graduation* (Folkeryd, 2006; Martin & White, 2005). The first category, Engagement, is clearly Bakhtinian as it comprises *dialogic positioning*, meaning that all utterances are somehow connected to or given in response to prior utterances (cf. Bakhtin, 1981). Engagement also concerns *intertextual positioning*, which Folkeryd (2006) describes as a subtype of dialogic positioning that language users engage in when they refer to or quote others. The second category is labelled Attitude and expresses *attitudinal positioning* when language users assess people, places, things, happenings or states of affairs. Graduation is the third category and addresses scaling in terms of the force or preciseness of an utterance. Both Attitude and Graduation have a number of subcategories. Attitude can be further divided into *Affect*, *Judgement* and *Appreciation*. Affect captures positive or negative feelings, Judgement is at work when language users draw on social norms to evaluate human behaviour as either positive or negative, and Appreciation involves positive or negative assessments of objects, for example, rather than human behaviour. As regards the category Graduation, its subcategories can express either *Force* or *Focus*. The former deals with grading according to intensity or amount, and the latter concerns prototypicality (see Study IV for examples of appraisal categories in the learner texts). Notably, the subcategories of Attitude and Graduation have subcategories of their own, which Folkeryd (2006) presents extensively.

The subcategories, perhaps especially those of Attitude, may seem to realise binary evaluations, but this is not an entirely correct assumption. Since meaning is context-dependent in SFL (e.g., Halliday, 1978), the same word can be interpreted positively in Context A, but negatively in Context B. Consider, as an example, the sentence *The music was loud*. To a person at a concert enjoying the music being played, *loud* could be a positive experience, but

a person who wakes up and hears their neighbour playing music in the middle of the night is more likely to perceive *loud* negatively. A certain word can even be interpreted in multiple ways in the same context, such as *a scary film* used in one of the learner texts in Study IV. The quality of being scary can obviously have a negative impact on the recipient, but it can also be appreciated and deliberately sought for in the form of *a scary film*. These examples once again show the fuzziness of language, which is acknowledged by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). When conducting appraisal analyses, it is therefore up to the analyst(s) to decide on an interpretation and present arguments to support it. In the case of Study IV, the context in the learner texts often provided clues to reasonable interpretations. For example, the clause *Klara scary* was interpreted as *Klara was scared*, and *they knodist* was interpreted as *they noticed*. Any ambiguities regarding appraisal or transitivity were discussed and resolved with the co-author.

The combination of transitivity and appraisal is jointly referred to as *functional variation* in Study IV, which captures four different constellations of ideational and interpersonal resources. This four-field visualisation (see Study IV) constitutes a complement, not a supplement, to CAF measures and intends to describe young learners' use of language beyond the complexity or accuracy of grammar or lexical items. Arguably, transitivity and appraisal are particularly suitable tools for analysing narrative texts written by young learners, since their EFL skills are emergent and cannot be restricted to CAF measures. Their texts can employ meaning-making resources relevant to the narrative genre and demonstrate an awareness of the reader, but such merits might go unnoticed if the focus is solely on grammatical and lexical complexity and/or accuracy, which can be challenging to achieve for beginner learners of English. Through analyses of transitivity and appraisal, researchers and teachers can further their understanding of how content is constructed and evaluated in texts written at primary school. In doing so, it is possible to shed light on the linguistic choices pupils make and to discuss functional aspects of their narrative texts.

5.5 Trustworthiness in qualitative research

The four appended studies in the present thesis are of a qualitative nature. One of the consequences of conducting qualitative research is that subjectivity and interpretation are acknowledged as parts of the scientific process. For example, the researcher's subjectivity plays a vital role in the reflexive thematic analysis conducted in Study I, and the qualitative content analysis employed in Study III does not rely on frequency-based category formation or intercoder agreement. Such methodological and analytical choices may raise questions about the validity and reliability of the findings. As an alternative to criteria for judging the quality of quantitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced the concept of *trustworthiness* to evaluate research situated in the qualitative paradigm. According to them, qualitative research can be assessed based on four criteria: (i) credibility, (ii) transferability, (iii) dependability and (iv) confirmability.

Credibility has to do with the truthfulness of the research findings. In Studies I–IV, credibility was strived for in a number of ways. As an example, the participating teachers in Study I were given the opportunity to read the transcripts of their interviews to confirm that their beliefs had been accurately expressed and to add or alter any statements. Another example of how to achieve credibility is to invite colleagues to scrutinise one's work and offer critical feedback, as emphasised by Mustajoki and Mustajoki (2017). Studies II and IV were co-

authored, and in both cases, there was transparency regarding the analyses, which were jointly conducted and/or discussed. The findings presented in Studies I–IV have also been thoroughly discussed not only with co-authors, when applicable, but also with other academics. Such discussions took place during seminars at the department where the research was carried out and at conferences in Sweden and in other countries, meaning that an international audience of senior researchers have contributed to assessing the credibility and scientific quality of the studies.

In quantitative research, generalisability is an important indication of scientific quality, but Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue for the use of transferability in qualitative research. Transferability captures the extent to which the research findings can be transferable to other contexts, in this case educational ones. To decide whether the research findings are transferable, it is helpful to provide extensive descriptions of the participants and the setting(s) where the research was conducted. When it comes to CW, specifically, it is possible that all findings are not fully transferable, for example, from primary education to tertiary education (or vice versa), as these two contexts differ significantly from each other. Primary and secondary school settings are more closely related, although it still cannot be assumed that all findings are transferable from one of these settings to another (cf. Oliver & Azkarai, 2017). Analyses of transitivity and appraisal, however, which Study IV relies on, exemplify analytical tools that are applicable to data sets created in a variety of contexts. The Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005) was developed for the English language, but its use is not restricted to English (see, e.g., Folkeryd, 2006, for text analyses of appraisal in L1 Swedish). Nor are the process types outlined by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) exclusive to English; they can also be expressed in the Swedish language (but see Holmberg & Karlsson, 2019, for differences between Swedish and English as regards processes recognised; see also Section 5.4.3). Theoretical and/or methodological constructs as such are thus not necessarily language-specific, but it should be noted that the realisations of meaning-making resources differ between languages.

Dependability in Lincoln and Guba's (1985) sense corresponds to reliability in quantitative research. Through transparency concerning choices related to data collection and analysis, the reader can decide on the scientific rigor of the studies conducted, for example, in terms of consistency. As Rolfe (2006) notes, it is up to the reader to judge the quality of a scientific account, and the author is responsible for presenting the research in a way that persuades the reader of its trustworthiness (see also Graneheim et al., 2017). Similarly, the criterion of credibility aims to ensure that conclusions are not drawn based on the researcher's bias. Instead, they need to be firmly grounded in the empirical material. Transparency is once again required here and was pursued through reflections on my reflexivity as a researcher (see, e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2022, for such reflexivity) and through continuous presentations and discussions of my research with the national and international academic community.

5.6 Ethical considerations

A theoretical awareness of ethical guidelines is not enough in research; it needs to be complemented by an understanding of the rationale for ethical rules and practical knowledge of how to handle ethical dilemmas (Shamoo & Resnik, 2015). Hence, the ethical issues that may occur when data are collected in schools are addressed in this section. As the

participating young learners and their EFL teachers are most directly affected by the research, special attention is paid to them. Specific conditions for conducting research with children are outlined, including young learners' roles in research and obtaining consent from, as well as interviewing and recording, child participants. The process of co-planning studies with in-service teachers is discussed, and at the end of this section, the measures taken to ensure the participants' confidentiality are covered, in addition to data storage.

5.6.1 Preparations for doing research in primary school classrooms

Studies including child participants require the researcher to consider ethical issues even more extensively than when working with adult participants (Geng et al., 2022). For this reason, opportunities and risks were carefully reflected on prior to designing and implementing the in-class activities that Studies II–IV rely on. Before collecting any data, the Swedish Ethical Review Authority was asked to give an advisory opinion, in which they concluded that my doctoral project was exempt from undergoing an ethical review (reference number 2023-00454-01). The studies included in the present thesis were not designed to collect any data that warrant an ethical review in accordance with the Swedish Ethical Review Act (2003), such as sensitive personal data.

Since the data collection required me to attend EFL lessons, I needed to establish a professional relationship with the pupils. Being an adult that they were not familiar with, my presence in the classroom could potentially have been perceived as intimidating, or they could have been inhibited by me as a figure of authority (cf. O'Reilly & Dogra, 2017; Punch, 2002, on interviewing children). To facilitate for the pupils to get accustomed to my presence, I visited each class to introduce myself, socialise with them and present my doctoral project before the data collection began. This was done using a PowerPoint presentation including some information about me as a person and a researcher. I explained to the pupils why I was interested in learning more about EFL writing and what I intended to do in their classrooms. They were told about the plan to write narrative texts in pairs and that I would be making audio- and screen recordings and conducting post-task interviews with pairs who allowed me to do so. The pupils had opportunities to ask questions throughout the presentation, and I stressed the fact that participation is voluntary (see also Section 5.6.3). As has been mentioned in Section 5.2.1, the pupils could also try out the voice recorders that were to be used during the data collection. In my presentation, I further established my role and that of their respective teachers: I would be observing without evaluating or assessing them, and the teachers would be in charge of the lessons. Yet, once the data collection started, I found myself alternating between the roles of being an observing researcher and a teacher.

My roles and influence during the CW differed between school years 5 and 6 (see Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, respectively), although the pupils often treated me as a second teacher in both cases. On some occasions, they asked me questions and requested my assistance with vocabulary and spelling. When this happened in school year 5, I encouraged them to try to resolve the LRE themselves or use other strategies available to them as a first resort. I did assist them with vocabulary and spelling at times, which can be warranted as the pupils were allowed to use aids and consult teachers. This suggests that some of the learner texts in school year 5 may bear traces of my or the teachers' input, particularly in terms of vocabulary and spelling, but these texts are not analysed in the present thesis (see also Study III for an example of a CW pair who rewrote their entire text following a comment made by their

teacher). I as a researcher did not ask the teachers to refrain from offering input to the CW pairs in school year 5, given the ecological validity strived for (see also Section 5.2.1). Despite this, the three teachers interacted with the pupils who contributed with data to a varying degree. For unknown reasons, Teacher 2 allowed the pairs to write collaboratively without interfering, while Teachers 11 and 12 more frequently approached the pairs to see how they were progressing. In school year 6, however, the pupils were instructed to write individually and collaboratively without using any aids, which is why I did not provide any assistance here, and nor did the teachers.

5.6.2 Collaboration between teachers and researchers

Science is a social activity in modern-day society, as observed by Shamoo and Resnik (2015). This is certainly true when it comes to studies where teachers and researchers work in close collaboration. As an example, Ellis and Shintani (2014) advocate that SLA researchers take teachers' insights and pedagogical challenges as their starting point instead of first conducting research and then outlining its pedagogical implications. Being a teacher educator, I was aware of the perceived challenges of teaching L2/FL writing (see, e.g., Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023a; Silva & Matsuda, 2010, for such challenges), since they had been pointed out to me by pre-service and in-service EFL teachers. While I as a researcher decided that the study object in the present thesis was to be CW, I did so bearing teachers' perceptions of L2/FL writing instruction in mind and with the intention to involve EFL teachers in my doctoral project. Collective efforts made by teachers and researchers can be beneficial for enhancing pupils' L2/FL learning at school (Butler, 2019). In the specific field of CW, Li and Storch (2025) anticipate that teacher–researcher partnerships will increase in the future and contribute to moving CW practices forward. Collaboration between teachers and researchers is also motivated by steering and legal documents in the Swedish context. The Swedish school system and educational research are closely intertwined, which is evident from the Education Act (2010), where it is stated that teaching should be based on a scientific foundation and proven experience.

Collaborating with the three teachers to plan the CW activities in Studies II–IV entailed a number of ethical considerations. For instance, by asking the teachers to participate in the studies, there was the risk of increasing their workload. Two out of three teachers were senior teachers, meaning it was part of their job description to initiate and contribute to educational development. Yet, the third teacher was not expected to undertake such responsibilities but nevertheless decided to participate. All three teachers did so voluntarily, and the doctoral project was also known to their respective school leaders, who approved of the teachers' participation. Despite having support from school leaders, teachers may often experience multiple duties and a lack of time when participating in research (Eriksson, 2018). Such experiences reminded me to be flexible, to compromise and adapt the planning and in-class CW to their needs, that is, make ecological validity a priority. The teachers had the opportunity to influence the implementation of CW and, as has been mentioned, the focus on narrative texts was requested by them. Furthermore, each teacher took part in designing the lesson series in school year 5 and selected materials to be used in class to introduce narrative texts. Teachers' lack of time, noted by Eriksson (2018), eventually became noticeable, when the teachers first visualised additional implementations of CW of argumentative texts in school year 6. Later on, we jointly decided to omit argumentative writing due to the teachers

experiencing a dense curriculum caused primarily by preparations for the National Tests of English.

Teachers and researchers conducting research together meet in the metaphorical third space, where collaboration between these two groups are emphasised, as they are dependent on each other's knowledge (Prøitz et al., 2020). It has been shown that teachers frequently tend to view themselves as objects of study, or expect to learn from the researcher, who is believed to be the expert, more knowledgeable and superior (e.g., Bergmark, 2019; Eriksson, 2018; Mustajoki & Mustajoki, 2017; Thomsen et al., 2017). In line with Mustajoki and Mustajoki's (2017) reasoning, it is relevant to ask myself if, or why, I am entitled to this expertise. When consulting the Swedish Institute for Educational Research (2024), it becomes clear that the researcher is not the only expert: teachers' as well as researchers' experiences are significant when developing new knowledge. Bergmark (2019) supports this statement when recommending that the researcher and the participants in a joint research project should strive for complementary and symmetrical relationships. Doing so necessitates ethical discussions, or guided dialogue (Mustajoki & Mustajoki, 2017), aiming to delineate the characteristics of such relationships, and to decide whether symmetry is an achievable outcome. Arguably, no relationship can be fully symmetrical, but the teachers' and my perspectives were certainly complementary. Having experience as a teacher at upper secondary school, in adult education and at university, my role as a researcher would be considered what Jarvis (1999) labels an outsider in school years 4–6, since I lack practical experience in teaching this target group. Through my doctoral project, however, I gained insight into EFL teaching at primary school, while the participating teachers gained experience in co-designing and co-conducting research, which also resulted in teaching materials that can be reused in the future. To take collaboration a step further, the teachers could have been invited to co-analyse the data collected. The appended studies are now exclusively the result of my and my co-authors' interpretative processes. In light of this, the present thesis does not claim to give voice to teachers or pupils (see Mitra, 2018; Talmy, 2010, for the challenges of attempting to do so), since voice is believed to be context-dependent and co-constructed in discourse (cf. Shamoo & Resnik, 2015; Talmy, 2010, on science and research interviews, respectively, as social practice).

5.6.3 Obtaining consent from child participants

All participants, regardless of their age, should give their consent to participate in a study before any data are collected. Providing consent requires an understanding of the study and its purpose, which children are entitled to attain through intelligible information about the research (cf. Swedish Research Council, 2024), but researchers may find it challenging to inform children in an age-appropriate manner. Mustajoki and Mustajoki (2017) recognise this challenge with young participants, while also stressing the importance of ensuring that they have fully understood what their participation entails. Arguably, it can be difficult to ascertain that participants 'fully understand' and to reach a consensus on what this understanding encompasses, but Pinter (2023) emphasises that even young children can develop an emergent understanding of consent, provided that it is explained in a relatable way.

If accepting the view on children as individuals in their own right (see Pinter, 2022, on the traditional and alternative paradigms; see also Section 5.6.4), it follows naturally that the researcher should ask for their consent prior to conducting any studies. Pinter (2023)

paradoxically observes that the only consent that matters is the one obtained from legal guardians, whose consent is needed in the Swedish context as well (Swedish Research Council, 2024). The fact that legal guardians are prioritised over children in this case stems from the traditional belief that children are uncapable of providing a reliable and trustworthy account of their experiences and are therefore in need of an adult spokesperson, who can take the liberty of volunteering children for research, even without their consent (Pinter, 2023).

The pupils in Studies II–IV consented orally after all legal guardians had received information about the doctoral project and signed a written consent form (see Appendix C). Data were only collected from pupils who had consented to participate themselves. The pupils were also continuously informed about what their participation entailed, and even if the legal guardians had approved of their children's participation, I emphasised the pupils' right to choose not to participate or withdraw their consent at any time. Hence, their willingness to participate was frequently revisited, as recommended by Pinter (2023). Allowing the children and their legal guardians to ask questions was considered paramount throughout the project and, for this reason, I made myself available to the young learners in the classroom as well as to their legal guardians, who could contact me via email or phone if they wished.

5.6.4 Children's roles in research

Ethical reflections on studies at primary school involve an awareness of how young participants are viewed and which roles are assigned to them. Studies exploring children's SLA have largely been conducted from adult perspectives (e.g., Oliver & Azkarai, 2017; Pinter, 2022), but more studies are becoming child-centred. Pinter (2022) captures this shift in the recent decades when she accounts for two paradigms in research including children: the *traditional paradigm* and the *alternative paradigm*. In the traditional paradigm, which is often associated with a positivist approach, children are at risk of being objectified and portrayed as lacking certain abilities. Researchers view them as passive and unknowing participants, who are unable to speak for themselves or provide reliable information in scientific studies. The alternative paradigm, or New Childhood Studies (e.g., James & Prout, 1990), opposes the objectification of children and declares that children do have agency and a voice of their own. As Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2019) put it, classroom studies with young learners enable adults and researchers to "hear their voices and to learn more about their experiences" (p. 595). Researchers in the alternative paradigm further reject the notion that there is a universal childhood or universal patterns of development and instead perceive childhood as a social construction. The traditional and the alternative paradigms are thus extreme opposites, and the researcher's position will significantly influence how studies are conducted.

This thesis supports the claims of the alternative paradigm, where children's perspectives are believed to be important to consider in research. Unfortunately, children themselves may not regard their perspectives as valid. When I visited one of the EFL classes to introduce myself and my doctoral project, a boy looked at me in disbelief and questioned why I was interested in talking to him and his classmates about CW. "After all", he said, "we're just kids, nobody cares what we think". Although this statement was disheartening, I attempted to reassure him that I do care about their input and convey this interest verbally and through body language. Part of my ethical responsibility as a researcher is to acknowledge the pupils' experiences and demonstrate that I value them.

To better understand children's roles in research, Pinter (2022) presents a continuum of research *on*, *about*, *with* and *by* children (see also Christensen & Prout, 2002; Kellett, 2010; O'Reilly & Dogra, 2017, for positioning children in research). Doing research *on* children means seeing them as passive and unknowing objects, who are studied from an adult point of view. As noted by Oliver and Azkarai (2017), SLA studies have been criticised when they are conducted on children instead of with children (see also Pinter et al., 2013). If conducting research *about* children, the adult researcher attempts to understand children as unique individuals, but this is still done from an adult perspective. In other words, children are research subjects, who are of interest to the researcher as individual learners. Doing research *with* children presupposes collaboration between adults and children, where the latter contribute as partners at some, or even all, stages of the research. In fact, young learners are nowadays not only regarded as vital sources of information on matters concerning learning and teaching, they are also seen as "partners in research on early learning of English" (Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2019, p. 583) and not mere objects or data givers. Finally, research *by* children allows children themselves to be researchers, ask questions and make decisions related to the research. Considering the re-evaluation of children's roles in research, it is possible that future SLA studies will be child-led to an even greater extent (Oliver & Azkarai, 2017; Pinter, 2022; see also Pinter, 2023, on engaging children in applied linguistics research).

In this thesis, research about and with children are the most applicable labels. While the children did not 'contribute as partners' at all stages, there was, arguably, some degree of collaboration between me and the pupils before, during and after the data collection. For example, I encouraged them to view themselves as creators of empirical data and reminded them of the fact that the research could not have been carried out without them. After the data collection, I revisited the EFL classes in May 2024 to present preliminary results to each class. They were shown anonymised excerpts from the recordings and post-task interviews, and I invited them to the analytical process by asking them to reflect on and jointly discuss the excerpts (cf. Mitra, 2018, who argues for the need to go beyond respondent validation and allow pupils to analyse research data). In doing so, I was hoping that the pupils would find the excerpts relatable and see their CW process and statements about CW represented in my research.

5.6.5 Recording and interviewing young learners

Studies II and III both rely on audio- and screen recordings to document young EFL learners' CW process. The experience of being recorded may be intimidating to some participants, regardless of their age, and recording devices are often believed to negatively influence the authenticity or naturalness of the data (but see, e.g., Speer & Hutchby, 2003, where the relevance of a recording device is negotiated in interaction rather than seen as a constraint). Bearing these potential limitations in mind, the young learners who participated in Studies II–IV were allowed to prepare in a playful way for the situations where they were going to be recorded. As has been mentioned, they had the opportunity to try out the recording devices themselves, if they wished, before the actual data collection began. Following Morrison's (2013) recommendation, the recordings were made in an environment that the pupils were familiar with, which in this case meant classrooms they used on a regular basis. These decisions were part of ensuring that the recordings were made in a respectful and responsible

manner, as stipulated by good research practice (Swedish Research Council, 2024). Since classrooms were used, there was the risk of non-participating pupils and staff entering during the recordings, which could have compromised a significant amount of data. To prevent this from happening, I created door signs to clearly indicate that the CW pair in a certain classroom was being recorded and was not to be disturbed.

Video recordings of learner interaction were considered, which would have enabled a more extensive analysis including body language in the form of gestures, mimics, gaze and so on (see, e.g., Musk, 2022, 2024, for such analyses during CW). When addressing interactional positionings and authority, as is done in Study II, such aspects could have provided valuable information as pupils negotiate their deontic rights. Manifestations of power are not limited to the verbal or linguistic domain, which is what audio recordings can be expected to capture. Undoubtedly, video recordings could have offered a much more detailed insight into the pupils' CW process and even captured the physical conflicts between pairs in Studies II and III. At the same time, the audio- and screen recordings were sufficient to gain thorough access to the stages of producing a joint text. The decision to only audio record was further made based on ethical considerations. It is possible that video recordings would have been perceived as more intrusive than audio recordings, especially by young learner participants (see, e.g., Thomson, 2008, for how video recordings may influence young participants' behaviour in educational research). Being video recorded may also take a longer time to get used to compared to being audio recorded, and my ambition was to make the pupils feel at ease as soon as possible when the data collection began.

After the pupils had written collaboratively in school year 5 and contributed with audio- and screen recordings, they were interviewed in their CW pairs (cf. Villarreal et al., 2021, who suggest interviews and recordings to explore young learners' computer-mediated CW). The focus of the interviews was their post-task understanding of CW, which is part of Study III. The interviews were made by me without the presence of the respective teachers and were conducted in the pupils' L1 or shared language, that is, Swedish. As pointed out by Punch (2002), the interviewing researcher can affect young learners in multiple ways, for example, by being perceived as a figure of authority (see also O'Reilly & Dogra, 2017, on the power differentials between the researcher and young participants). This can lead to the fact that they aim to please the interviewer by giving the answers they believe the interviewer wants to hear. For this reason, it is crucial to formulate questions in ways that do not reveal any answers expected by the researcher (see Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, for the potential impact of the types of questions the researcher asks in an interview). This is why the interview protocol included in Study III had mostly open-ended questions, and I informed the pupils of the fact that there were no right or wrong answers. To facilitate the interview situation, I also interviewed the participants in Study III as a pair in a familiar environment, which in this case was a room at their respective schools. Researchers (Morrison, 2013; see also Cohen et al., 2018) stress the importance of the physical location in interviews, since this is a means of increasing the chances that the children are comfortable and experience safety during the interview (cf. Pinter, 2023). Since the interviews took place approximately six weeks after I had first entered the classrooms to collect the empirical data that this thesis relies on, the children had had time to become acquainted with me and my presence in the classrooms. I thus made an effort to help the participating children feel confident and at ease in the situation to increase the likelihood of a mutually informative interview.

5.6.6 Confidentiality and data storage

When collecting the data for Studies I–IV, the implications of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council (2016), also known as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), were considered. The legislation permits researchers to process participants' personal data if doing so "is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest" (GDPR, 2016, Article 6e). For this reason, only the most necessary types of personal data were gathered, such as names, schools and classes. To process some personal data is unavoidable, but no sensitive personal data were collected. The children's teachers and legal guardians were further asked to specify what data could be collected, and whom this data could be shared with, by circling options in the consent forms (see Appendices B and C). The consent forms included information about data storage and informed the teachers and the legal guardians of their rights to have their, or their children's data, erased in accordance with the GDPR (2016, Article 17b).

The data sets were stored on secure, access-controlled servers, since they contain personal data within the meaning of the GDPR. The teacher interviews underlying Study I were transcribed manually by me, as were the audio recordings of pupils' interaction in Studies II and III and the stimulated recall interviews that Study III relies on. In these transcriptions, and in the digitalised versions of the learner texts analysed in Study IV, any information that could identify the participants was omitted to ensure confidentiality. Examples of such information include the pupils' names and names of their family members, references to pets owned by the pupils' families and explicit mentions of the participating schools. Any physical copies of the data, such as handwritten learner texts, were stored in a locked room with access restricted to me and the co-authors of Studies II and IV. When the doctoral project had been completed, the data were archived in line with Swedish legislation and the procedures of the university where the research was carried out. Since the material underlying the present thesis contains personal data, the GDPR remains applicable to the archived versions of it. Should the data sets be made available to other researchers in the future for scientific purposes, they are subject to safeguards in accordance with the GDPR (2016, Article 89). The data sets that other researchers gain access to can then be anonymised to prevent participants from being directly or indirectly identified.

6 Summaries of Studies I–IV

The overarching aim of this thesis is to shed light on pedagogical implications of CW in primary EFL education. A total of four studies were conducted to capture such implications, which concern the CW process and collaborative texts also from EFL teachers' and young learners' perspectives. In this chapter, the respective studies and their main findings are summarised.

6.1 Study I

Ruth, E. (2026). EFL teacher beliefs about collaborative writing at Swedish primary school. *Education Inquiry*, *17*(3), 475–493. https://doi.org/10.1080/20004508.2024.2408938

The first study is informed by teacher beliefs and aims to identify EFL learning opportunities that teachers at primary school associate with CW. To achieve this aim, 15 semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers in school years 4–6 were conducted, and these interviews constitute the empirical data used in the study. The transcriptions of the teacher interviews were approached using a reflexive thematic analysis, which generated six themes divided into *linguistic gains from CW*, *affective factors* and *organisational constraints*.

A linguistic gain from CW is expressed in the first theme, as the teachers believed that CW supports pupils' vocabulary learning. In particular, the teachers stressed the benefits of pupils having access to their own and a classmate's vocabulary knowledge during a CW task. The teachers explained that pupils can support each other by sharing vocabularies and thus expand their vocabulary knowledge, for example, regarding synonyms and spelling. In addition to these lexical benefits, the teachers highlighted another linguistic gain: writing improvement, which constitutes the second theme. Such improvement was described in terms of text length, since the teachers had experienced that CW leads to longer texts compared to when pupils write individually. The content of a collaboratively written text was also perceived to be richer than in an individual text. The teachers did not specify any linguistic features that contributed to the improvement but rather emphasised global aspects, such as text length and content.

In the interviews, certain affective factors were brought up as a complement to the linguistic gains. The third theme captures the teachers' belief that CW can be used to increase the motivation to write in the classroom. Reporting on their pupils' reluctance to write, the teachers pointed out the joy of CW and how the activity may boost pupils' confidence as writers. Similarly, the fourth theme gives prominence to the potential of CW to decrease FLA. Having a writing partner can, according to the teachers, prevent pupils from feeling exposed or solely responsible for the text, including any potential mistakes and errors. In the teachers' views, pupils who have written collaboratively are also more likely to be willing to read their texts out loud to their classmates.

The fifth theme concerns an organisational challenge, which may influence pupils' language learning opportunities: how to pair or group pupils to maximise their language learning opportunities. All teachers interviewed drew attention to the difficulties surrounding pairing or grouping, especially pointing out unequal participation. Most of the teachers would have scaffolding in mind and pair a more advanced learner with a learner who has not developed

their English skills as thoroughly, but some of them observed that the more knowledgeable pupil may lack stimulation. Creating the perfect CW pair, however, was not the only organisational constraint mentioned. The sixth and final theme presents another organisational challenge: finding the time for CW. The teachers interviewed in this study conceptualised CW as a major task involving multiple drafts and spanning over several weeks. While CW was believed to require a considerable amount of time, the teachers still argued that it is worth the time, given the potential learning opportunities.

Based on the results of Study I, it can be concluded that CW is viewed as a multifaceted activity that can enhance purely linguistic aspects, but also lower young learners' affective filters. CW does entail challenges, as is evident from the themes relating to organisational constraints, but the fact that four out of six themes concern benefits indicates that the teachers generally perceive CW as advantageous in school years 4–6.

6.2 Study II

Ruth, E., & Lundström, S. (in press). Young EFL learners' interactional positionings in collaborative writing. *Nordic Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*.

The second study draws on social deontics as it sets out to illuminate the interplay between pupils' interactional positionings, that is, their rights to determine action, and their opportunities to deliberate on language and content during CW in EFL. As a first step, the study explores the characteristics of pupils' interactional positionings and subsequently addresses the implications these positionings may have for language learning opportunities. Ten teacher-selected, mixed-proficiency pairs in school year 5 (aged 11) contributed with data as they wrote narrative texts collaboratively on laptops. The data consisted of audio- and screen recordings collected during three lessons ranging between 40 and 60 minutes in length. These recordings were analysed deductively to identify instances of deontic and epistemic (in)congruence, which can be understood as the pupils' symmetrical or asymmetrical rights to determine action. More specifically, deontic and epistemic (in)congruence capture expressions of authority as well as subject knowledge of EFL.

A central finding in Study II is that congruence during CW can lead to pupils collaborating seemingly effortlessly, but language learning opportunities may not be created in such collaboration. Deontic and epistemic congruence is demonstrated by pupils agreeing with each other and accepting the writing partner's suggestions without further discussion. When no struggles for deontic and/or epistemic authority took place, the pupils did not face any linguistic challenges and instead reproduced knowledge they already possessed. For this reason, incongruence is found to be a more fertile breeding ground for language learning. While pupils who never questioned each other's input did not seem to expand their knowledge, pairs who did question each other's ideas and suggestions discussed language and content to a greater extent. Their discussions could also encompass their roles as writers and contributors to the collaborative text, which can constitute a starting point for developing a meta perspective on writing.

Similarly to the implications of congruence, the language learning opportunities decreased if the pupils primarily engaged in struggles for deontic rather than epistemic rights. In such pairs, one pupil would usually be more eager than the other to display their authority and decide the course of action, which diminished the focus on the CW task and highlighted

social relationships displaying the writers' unequal status. This finding reveals that CW at times entails deontic rather than epistemic matters, meaning that pupils may be preoccupied with struggles relating to authority instead of the text being produced.

Another finding concerns Google Translate, which was the aid the pupils most frequently turned to when in need of assistance. Google Translate was occasionally assigned the role of an epistemic expert, suggesting that some pupils would trust its translations completely without questioning them, whereas others would be more sceptical and willing to deliberate on its suggestions with their writing partner. The use of this particular aid is shown to result in deontic as well as epistemic incongruence, as the pupils did not necessarily agree on whether Google Translate should be consulted and, if so, whether its input should be considered trustworthy and incorporated into their collaborative text. Discussions concerning Google Translate were further observed to potentially assist pupils in gravitating towards a meta perspective on writing.

To conclude, the second study challenges the claim that collaboration is conducive to language learning. It also draws attention to pedagogical challenges when implementing CW with young learners, such as maintaining their focus on the CW task. Furthermore, the results point to the difficulty in pairing or grouping young learners, since the teacher would have to consider fluctuating relationships that are likely to have been established prior to CW and, possibly, prevail outside the classroom.

6.3 Study III

Ruth, E. Young EFL learners' enactment of affordances and post-task understanding of collaborative writing.

The third study highlights EFL learning opportunities enacted by young learners (aged 11) as they engage in computer-mediated CW to produce narrative texts in Swedish school year 5. In doing so, the study also explores the pupils' understanding of the CW situation after they have written collaboratively. The EFL learning opportunities enacted by the pupils are referred to as affordances in this study, which is informed by affordance theory. The data consisted of audio- and screen recordings of CW in ten teacher-selected, mixed-proficiency pairs and post-task interviews with the pairs. This material was approached deductively through a directed qualitative content analysis.

As a result of the analysis, two categories were created and labelled *Peer support in collaborative writing* and *Two competing sources of knowledge*. The former was divided into two subcategories: *The dyadic ecology*, which draws attention to how two pupils support each other during CW, and *The triadic ecology*, where two pupils bring Google Translate into their CW. The second category captures the teacher versus Google Translate as an epistemic expert. Thus, the analysis illuminates affordances concerning the interplay between (i) pupils, (ii) pupils and Google Translate and (iii) pupils and teachers.

In the subcategory *The dyadic ecology*, the pupils are shown to frequently offer and require assistance concerning vocabulary and spelling. The nature of their peer support, however, was not identical in all the pairs. While some pairs offered mutual peer support and collaborated to a great extent, others could not reap the potential language learning benefits of writing collaboratively and were instructed by the teacher to write individually due to social and physical conflicts. Bringing Google Translate into CW also had consequences for

the peer support (not) provided, as becomes evident in the subcategory *The triadic ecology*. The pairs displayed a fluctuating level of critical awareness of this digital tool, which resulted in some pairs actively and constructively questioning input provided by Google Translate. Others uncritically incorporated unidiomatic suggestions made by Google Translate into their text or wrote in silence and relied on Google Translate for spelling assistance, which reduced their interaction. Notably, Google Translate was the only digital tool that the pairs relied on, and they thus did not consult any alternative sources.

When the pupils turned to the teacher, they often did so to receive spelling advice or ask her to read their text. This exemplifies an intentional use of the teacher for language learning purposes, but the teacher's input can also be considered an incidental affordance in some pairs, since she commented on their texts without being asked to do so. The pupils' views on the affordances offered by the teacher were divided, and the category *Two competing sources of knowledge* illustrates that the teachers in these classes were challenged by Google Translate. Some pairs did not hesitate to consult their teacher, while others claimed to prefer Google Translate instead of teachers or classmates, since they deemed it a reliable tool for spelling advice.

The study indicates that computer-mediated CW in EFL is possibly time-consuming at primary school and requires several elements to be in place, not only EFL writing skills but also peer interaction and technological skills. Since not any young learners can be paired and expected to collaborate, the study concludes that CW in primary EFL education requires careful monitoring on behalf of the teacher to avoid the types of social and physical conflicts demonstrated in the study. In addition, the frequent, and often uncritical, use of Google Translate warrants teaching of strategies for critically using and evaluating digital tools, which are likely to be part of computer-mediated CW.

6.4 Study IV

Ruth, E., & Björk, O. From CAF to meaning-making: Comparing transitivity and appraisal in young learners' individual and collaborative EFL narratives.

The fourth study intends to compare young EFL learners' (aged 12) use of linguistic resources for meaning-making in their handwritten narrative texts produced individually (N = 20) and collaboratively (N = 10) in same-proficiency pairs in school year 6. Such resources are central to SFL, which is the theory informing this study, and illuminate how pupils construct content in writing and position themselves in relation to the content. In other words, particular attention is paid to how young EFL writers employ resources for ideational (experiential) and interpersonal (evaluative) meaning-making. Ideational resources were operationalised as six types of process cores, which are verbs that indicate what is happening in a clause, and interpersonal resources were captured by the three categories of the Appraisal framework, realised by adjectives, adverbs and intensifiers. Together, ideational and interpersonal resources are referred to as *functional variation* in the study, where it was of special interest to investigate how, or if, CW diversifies such variation in comparison with individual writing.

To describe functional variation in the learner texts, four categories are proposed: (i) *Limited* (low ideational and interpersonal variation), (ii) *Ideationally expansive* (high ideational variation and low interpersonal variation), (iii) *Interpersonally expansive* (high interpersonal

variation and low ideational variation) and (iv) *Broad* (high ideational and interpersonal variation). The results suggest that most individual and collaborative texts can be considered Broad. Collaborative texts, however, demonstrate a wider span of interpersonal resources in this data set, meaning that evaluative language may be used to a greater extent in collaborative texts than in individual texts.

The fact that most texts analysed were labelled Broad is not the only similarity between individual and collaborative texts. For example, material and relational process cores denoting action and being, respectively, were most frequently used in both individual writing and CW. Such a finding is expected, since these two types of processes are the most common ones in the English language and a prerequisite for describing characters and their actions and behaviour in narrative texts. The pupils' use of verbal (saying) and existential (existing) process cores further revealed their awareness of the narrative genre, as their texts included dialogues or formulaic expressions conventional to fairytales, such as 'Once upon a time'. Based on these results, similar ideational meanings appear to be construed when pupils write individually and collaboratively, at least if using process cores as the unit of analysis.

Further similarities between individual and collaborative texts were identified through the appraisal analysis encompassing the main categories Engagement, Attitude and Graduation and their respective subcategories. Attitude was the category most commonly expressed, generally relating to expressions of feelings and emotions in the subcategory /In/security, as in 'She was scared'. The high prevalence of Attitude is likely attributable to the narrative genre, similarly to the use of verbal and existential process cores. Engagement rarely occurred in the learner texts, which can also be explained by the narrative genre, as the positionings expressed by this category are often found in other genres, such as argumentative texts. Instances of Graduation typically concerned the subcategory Force, expressing intensity or amount, and they were more seldom used in collaborative texts than in individual texts.

To sum up, the increase of interpersonal resources in collaborative texts suggests that CW may enhance pupils' high literacy, which encompasses the use of evaluative language at advanced levels. The study also offers a complement to traditional measures of complexity, accuracy and fluency that are usually adopted in text analyses and therefore nuances the discussion about what constitutes quality in learner texts.

7 Discussion

The appended studies summarised in Chapter 6 contribute with four different perspectives on CW, which together paint a multifaceted picture of CW in classroom practice and as understood by EFL teachers and pupils. In this chapter, the main findings of the studies are synthesised and divided into *(meta)linguistic affordances* and *social and affective affordances* of CW. Based on the joint contribution of the studies, pedagogical implications of using CW with young EFL learners are discussed, which include the teacher's involvement in CW at primary school. The chapter also provides suggestions for future research and ends with concluding remarks regarding the role of CW in EFL instruction at primary school.

7.1 (Meta)linguistic affordances of collaborative writing

The merits of CW are often ascribed to the combination of oral and written elements, which has the potential to stimulate pupils' (meta)linguistic discussions (see, e.g., Storch, 2013, for an overview). Studies II and III confirm that such discussions do arise during young learners' CW and are mainly centred on vocabulary and spelling. For this reason, these two areas are further addressed in Section 7.1.1 below. When pupils engage in (meta)linguistic conversations, the present thesis found that they predominantly enact affordances offered by the writing partner, the teacher and Google Translate, which are subject to discussion in Section 7.1.2. Lastly, Section 7.1.3 focalises findings from Studies I and IV, where it is shown how CW affects, or is believed to affect, collaborative learner texts.

7.1.1 Deliberations on vocabulary and spelling

When the findings reported on in Studies I–III are synthesised, discussions about vocabulary and spelling emerge as prominent (meta)linguistic affordances of CW. This aligns with previous research that has found a focus on precisely vocabulary and spelling, but also grammar (e.g., Basterrechea & Gallardo-del-Puerto, 2023; Calzada & García Mayo, 2021a; Kim & McDonough, 2011; Kos, 2023b; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2024; Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021), when young and adolescent learners write collaboratively in EFL. In studies of CW, pupils' deliberations on spelling are usually referred to as mechanical LREs rather than lexical LREs (see Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023a, for a summary of different types of LREs), although knowing a word includes knowing its spelling. This reveals the fuzzy edges of language (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), which can make it challenging to categorise linguistic features or separate language from content, as researchers have attempted to do by proposing the division into LREs and CREs (e.g., Kos, 2023b; see also Section 3.3). Instead of making any such distinctions here, vocabulary and spelling are discussed as salient (meta)linguistic affordances during CW, which are also emphasised by EFL teachers. From their perspectives, Study I illustrates that CW is believed to support pupils' vocabulary knowledge, since writing collaboratively requires joint discussions about which word to use. The pupils' CW process, documented in Studies II and III, corroborates the teachers' belief that vocabulary is a common area of focus when young learners write collaboratively.

To gain assistance with vocabulary and spelling, the pupils in Studies II and III primarily enacted affordances offered by their peer, their teacher and Google Translate. Consulting

classmates and teachers can be described as a low-compositionality affordance in Nguyen's (2025) terms (see Section 4.1.1 for an introduction to his framework), since doing so is not a particularly complex action. Enacting this affordance often only requires the pupils to ask a question and receive an answer without critical reflections or discussions about it. When pupils do question input received from another person or from a digital tool, such as Google Translate, this action stands out as conducive to language learning in the data sets (cf. Musk, 2024, for incongruence as a driving force in CW). Questioning linguistic suggestions, however, does not automatically entail that pupils arrive at a prescriptively correct or idiomatic solution (see Musk's, 2022, CW study for the discrepancy between solutions that pupils believe to be correct and the most widely accepted solutions). Still, the possibility of discovering potential mistakes or errors may increase if pupils do engage in discussions, which could encompass seeking confirmation from more than one source, as the pupils in Musk and van der Meij's (2024) study did. As classmates, teachers and Google Translate are not infallible sources of EFL knowledge, teachers could assist pupils in enhancing their critical thinking skills, for example, by using an additional source to double-check input received from Google Translate. In fact, seeking information from different sources is part of the core content in the syllabus for teaching English in school years 4–6, and pupils in school years 7–9 should not only search for, but also evaluate, information from various sources (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a). Evaluation appears to be particularly relevant during computer-mediated CW, since pupils in Studies II and III expressed an immense amount of trust in Google Translate and thus positioned this digital tool as an epistemic expert.

Assigning Google Translate high epistemic status can reduce the number of (meta)linguistic discussions in CW pairs, as demonstrated especially in Study III. Based on this result, it can be argued that peer support during CW is supposed to be complemented, not supplemented, by 'peer support' from digital tools. If used intentionally to enhance language learning (cf. Nguyen, 2025), Google Translate and other digital tools can contribute to pupils taking a meta perspective on their (collaborative) EFL writing. This meta perspective can lead to the use of complementary sources to evaluate linguistic input before incorporating it into the joint text. As has been mentioned, the pupils participating in Musk and van der Meij's (2024) study did not rely on a single source, but the pupils in Studies II and III did, which can possibly be explained by the age difference. Whereas the present thesis targets young learners, Musk and van der Meij's (2024) data were collected at upper secondary school. Older learners can be expected to have progressed further in terms of taking a meta perspective on their writing, but young learners' metacognitive skills are likely to be emergent (e.g., Roehr-Brackin & Tellier, 2019). This is also alluded to in Villarreal and Munarriz-Ibarrola's (2021) CW study, where pupils expressed mistrust about their writing partner's EFL knowledge, while being overly positive towards their own writing skills. Such results, combined with the findings of Studies II and III, implicate metacognition as a vital part of CW (cf. Xiao & Zhao, 2025) and beg the question how teachers can enhance pupils' metalinguistic awareness during CW. Arguably, one way of doing so is to make affordances perceivable to pupils (cf. Nguyen, 2025). This could involve pointing out the functions of inbuilt spell- and grammar checkers or encouraging pupils to pay attention to global aspects of texts instead of focusing extensively on spelling, which must be considered a micro feature of a text. It is further likely that explicit teaching of strategies for using digital tools is beneficial, since pupils then can draw on such strategies to intentionally support language learning in computer-mediated CW. As shown in Study III, pupils do not enact the affordances of the spell-

and grammar checker in Microsoft Word (cf. Musk, 2016, 2021), nor do they enact all the affordances offered by Google Translate. Engaging in critical reflections regarding online tools, and being taught strategies for using them, therefore seems paramount (e.g., Li & Storch, 2025; Musk, 2021, 2022, 2024; Musk & van der Meij, 2024; Villarreal et al., 2021) as part of developing metalinguistic awareness during computer-mediated CW.

7.1.2 The battle for epistemic authority

During the in-class CW described in Studies II and III, it became obvious that the peer, the teacher and Google Translate do not enjoy the same (epistemic) status. This gives rise to a battle for epistemic authority, where the person, or tool, perceived as the most knowledgeable one in EFL is granted the right to decide action (see Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Stevanovic, 2018, for deontic and epistemic authority; see also Section 4.1.3 on social deontics). When two pupils produce a text collaboratively, however, the most knowledgeable pupil does not necessarily decide what to write. Instead, studies indicate that the pupil typing usually makes this decision (Musk, 2024), or that the pupil with more determination is in control of what is written (Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021). The latter finding aligns with the results reported on in Study II, where it is argued that pupils' deontic status trumps epistemic status.

Two pupils writing collaboratively in what Musk (2024) terms the dyadic ecology often negotiate epistemic authority concerning vocabulary and spelling, as discussed above in Section 7.1.1. Here, it could be questioned whether agreement on a prescriptively correct linguistic alternative is the desirable outcome of such negotiations. As implied by the results of Study II, collaboration in Storch's (2019) sense does not automatically lead to language learning opportunities. Seeking agreement or consensus can equal a lack of instances where the writers' knowledge is challenged, as exemplified by a pair of boys in Study II. In the best-case scenario, friction between two pupils can create language learning opportunities and prompt pupils to consult a third or even a fourth party to verify the information received (see Section 7.1.1). From a teacher and researcher perspective, it is tempting to consider the CW failed if the pupils inaccurately resolve LREs or do not resolve them at all, but arriving at a linguistically accurate solution is not the only potential gain from CW. The act of discussing, questioning and challenging each other's input serves a purpose, regardless of whether the pupils arrive at a correct solution or not. Young learners' interaction during CW can potentially develop their critical thinking as well as their social and collaborative skills even if they do not resolve the LRE at hand. There might thus be other gains than purely linguistic ones from having a battle for epistemic authority, as pupils practise how to argue, negotiate and interact in a constructive and respectful manner.

The peer is not the only agent offering potential affordances that pupils can enact in a CW situation. In the data supporting the present thesis, affordances provided by the teacher and Google Translate are frequently enacted, where the use of the latter established a triadic ecology (Musk, 2016) consisting of two pupils and a computer. Notably, the pupils who participated in Studies II and III did not express the same opinions regarding using the classmate, the teacher or Google Translate for EFL assistance. The results of Study III point to divided opinions among the pupils when it comes to consulting one's classmate in a CW pair. Some pupils expressed a preference for asking their writing partner questions, while others claimed to trust Google Translate to a greater extent. Similarly to the case in Study II, where deontic status is shown to trump epistemic status, Google Translate appears to

occasionally trump pupils as well as teachers as the epistemic expert. While some of the pupils were reluctant to consult their teacher in Study III, EFL pupils in previous CW research at secondary school have expressed the belief that they learn more from the teacher than from their peers (Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021). The teacher is supposedly a figure of authority to a varying degree in different educational settings, who is expected to possess EFL knowledge and provide pupils with the correct solutions. Internal and external norms (cf. Nguyen, 2025) can therefore guide pupils' decision to question, or not question, the teacher's input, as well as their decision to consult the teacher as a first or last resort. The pupils' willingness to consult each other may also offer certain clues about social relationships (see Section 7.2 below). Pairs who frequently attempted to jointly resolve linguistic issues were plausibly comfortable with each other as writing partners, while pairs who preferred Google Translate over social interaction, as in Study III, may have been less comfortable with each other, although there might be several other reasons for these behaviours.

The teacher's lower status compared to Google Translate gives rise to questions concerning what the teacher can do to be granted higher epistemic authority by the pupils, or whether the teacher should even attempt to gain and maintain epistemic authority. Storch's (2002, 2013) model of dyadic interaction presupposes equality and mutuality, but since equality can possibly never be fully achieved, peers, teachers and Google Translate cannot be considered to offer equal affordances in a CW situation. Despite this, they do not necessarily have to compete with each other, as they appear to do at times in Studies II and III. Since affordances, similarly to deontic and epistemic authority, are fluctuating in nature and may vary from individual to individual, or even for the same individual from time to time in the same situation (Kordt, 2018), the peer, the teacher and Google Translate can be seen as providing different affordances or ways to achieve an end, that is, usually to resolve spelling or lexical issues, as suggested in Studies II and III. At the time of the data collection, Google Translate was the primary digital tool used to resolve LREs. In the present-day and future classrooms, however, AI tools are increasingly taking over as digital support tools and will challenge the teacher's epistemic authority, which is why future battles for epistemic authority are envisioned in this thesis and are likely to encompass AI tools.

7.1.3 Collaborative writing as a means to improve learner texts

Writing improvement is another (meta)linguistic affordance highlighted by the teachers in Study I. Claiming that CW leads to EFL writing improvement necessitates a clarification of what such improvement is, and an answer that may vary depending on the person being asked the question, for example, a researcher, a teacher or a pupil. According to the teachers in Study I, the input from a peer during CW leads to texts that are 'richer', as they put it, in content and longer than individual texts (cf. Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021, where EFL learners at secondary school expressed the belief that CW improves content, grammar and vocabulary in texts). The teachers' comments on length can be interpreted as a perceived improvement in fluency, which is one of the CAF measures through which learner texts are frequently evaluated (see, e.g., Li & Storch, 2025; Li & Zhang, 2023, for the prominence of CAF measures in analyses of L2/FL writing; see also Section 3.5). Yet, fluency (i.e., text length) can be questioned as a way of assessing young learners' texts. As an example, Study IV discusses the fact that a longer text may not be grammatically or lexically complex or accurate, while a shorter text can constitute an emergent narrative with a more complex or

accurate use of language, at least from a prescriptive point of view. Other researchers (e.g., Bllaca & Dalton-Puffer, 2026; Hidalgo & Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2020; Villarreal et al., 2021; Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021) have also advocated and/or used a combination of (quantitative) CAF measures and (qualitative) holistic measures to more fully account for the potential influence of collaboration on young learners' texts. Combining quantitative measures with qualitative ones can therefore be lucrative and balance out the cognitive paradigm in studies of L2/FL writing (see, e.g., Atkinson, 2011a; Geng et al., 2022) by foregrounding the social and cultural dimensions of writing emphasised by Li and Storch (2025). Such dimensions are prominent especially in Study IV, given the focus on ideational and interpersonal meaning-making in texts produced during a joint process.

The textual traits in the data set underlying Study IV are, to some extent, typical of narrative texts, implying that writing improvement needs to be discussed in relation to genre. The study reveals that the pupils exhibited an awareness of the narrative genre in terms of conventional expressions used in fairytales, such as 'Once upon a time', regardless of whether they wrote individually or collaboratively. The narrative genre does hold a prominent position in primary EFL education, as pointed out by several researchers (e.g., Coyle et al., 2020; Geng et al., 2022; Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021), which is why it can be assumed that many young learners are well acquainted with it. Findings concerning appraisal (see Section 5.4.3) in Study IV can also be attributed to the narrative genre, such as the high frequency of the subcategory Attitude in the learner texts, which is a common feature of narrative texts (Folkeryd, 2006). Another finding that illuminates the relationship between genre and the linguistic resources used is the low number of instances of the subcategory Engagement, which narrative texts more seldom rely on (Folkeryd, 2006). This can be an explanation for why resources expressing Engagement were rarely used in the narrative texts in Study IV. Based on these results, the present thesis cannot identify any need for teachers to use CW as preparation for individual writing of narrative texts, since the pupils appeared to already be familiar with narrative genre conventions in their individual writing.

There is a growing trend towards using CW in L2/FL classes (e.g., Li, 2018; Martins et al., 2025), which warrants discussions about the role of CW relative to individual writing at primary school. In the present thesis, CW is not positioned as a practice that is intended to replace individual writing in primary EFL education. Similarly to the relationship between CAF measures and the four-field visualisation proposed in Study IV, individual writing and CW are complementary. Opting for CW may not have a significant impact on the texts produced, as no major differences could be discerned between individual and collaborative texts in Study IV, at least not in representations of the world expressed through process cores, which were one of the units of analysis selected. Other studies (e.g., Lázaro-Ibarrola, 2023b; Lázaro-Ibarrola & Hidalgo, 2021) have drawn a similar conclusion when comparing texts written by young EFL learners aged 11–12, that is, they did not indicate any differences between individual and collaborative texts. It was suggested in Study IV, however, that CW can increase the use of evaluative language, operationalised as appraisal resources. This can potentially contribute to improving the overall impression of a narrative text by engaging the reader. Such a finding sparks the interest in investigating how, or if, CW can enhance young learners' texts in other genres as well and facilitate the transition from narrative writing to argumentative or academic writing as they grow older (cf. Christie, 2012; Schleppegrell, 2004).

7.2 Social and affective affordances of collaborative writing

CW is supposed to be an interpersonal activity, where the interaction between at least two writers can be influenced by a number of social and affective factors. One example is that some of the teachers who were interviewed in Study I emphasised the fact that CW provides safety, resulting in pupils having the courage to use English in front of the class and contributing to a safe classroom environment. Yet, the findings reported on in Studies II and III demonstrate that safety does not always follow from CW. In both studies, CW is permeated by social conflicts, which at times culminate in physical conflicts that overshadow the CW task.

The most extreme example of how social hierarchies prevail in CW is the pair consisting of a boy and a girl in Study III. The boy verbally and physically bullies the girl, and when the teacher notices his unsupportive behaviour, she decides to let them write individually instead. This decision shows that an affordance is not necessarily binary, that is, either positive or negative (cf. Nguyen's, 2025, dimension of learning valence). There are seemingly gains as well as losses following the teacher's action here. In this particular case, the girl is likely to have found individual writing beneficial from a social and affective perspective, since she no longer had to endure being abused by her writing partner. At the same time, individual writing obviously does not require any interaction with a classmate, which, in turn, means no opportunities for deliberating on language and furthering her EFL skills. Arguably, the teacher did make a pedagogically sound decision as she prioritised the girl's well-being over the potential gains from collaboration. This type of conflict is plausibly best handled by a teacher, but the results of Studies II and III suggest that CW can also invite pupils themselves to practise how to handle conflicts. In Study II, a pair of girls contribute unequally to the text, and the more active one repeatedly asks her writing partner to focus on the CW task as a way of dealing with a passive or unfocused peer. A pair of boys, also in Study II, have a physical conflict at one point, where one of them reprimands the other rather severely, but the conflict is resolved as they start singing. Examples such as these point to the normative aspects of CW, and normativity is a dimension of Nguyen's (2025) framework that was found to be especially influential in CW in Study III. If CW is to be conducive to language learning, external norms may need to be enforced, for example, concerning how to offer and receive constructive peer feedback and communicate respectfully with classmates. In Study III, CW was also guided by normativity as regards acceptable topics to write about and whether asking the teacher for help is encouraged.

Affective factors in previous EFL research have often been addressed through measurements of pupils' pre- and/or post-task motivation towards a CW task, which generally have revealed positive attitudes (e.g., Azkarai & Calzada, 2024; Azkarai & Kopinska, 2020; Calzada & García Mayo, 2020; Milla & García Mayo, 2024; Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021). In line with these findings, the teachers in Study I expressed the belief that CW can lower young learners' affective filters by increasing their motivation to write and decrease FLA[6]. While there is support in previous research when it comes to the motivational role of CW, using CW as a way to decrease FLA has, to the best of my knowledge, not been reported in previous studies conducted at primary school, and Studies II and III did not set out to prove that young learners experience less FLA when writing collaboratively. Likewise, motivation

[6] Notably, FLA is not unanimously recognised as an affective factor; see Sparks (2025) for a discussion of whether second language anxiety, as he terms it, should be considered an affective or a linguistic variable.

was not an area deliberately investigated in the present thesis, but the results of Studies II and III can still be used to discuss the extent to which both pupils in a CW pair are motivated to engage in the task based on social and/or affective factors.

Studies II and III both exemplify pairs where one young learner is more active than the other. It is tempting to assume that the pupil who stays silent more often during the CW process, or simply types what the other pupil tells them to write, is less motivated than their writing partner, who seems to contribute to the task more actively. Being active or passive, or dominant and passive in Storch's (e.g., 2013) sense, are positions that are continuously (re)negotiated in social interaction (cf. Stevanovic, 2018). Especially Study II suggests that taking the role as the writer, for example, is a deliberate choice and that a pupil may not necessarily agree with the writing partner's evaluation of their respective contributions. Taking on, or not taking on, a certain role can also stem from affective factors, such as fear of not having sufficient writing or spelling skills. While CW can potentially boost some pupils' confidence as EFL writers, as proposed by the teachers in Study I, pair dynamics can also reinforce internal beliefs (cf. Nguyen, 2025) and lead to pupils staying in their comfort zone. For this reason, young learners' CW may need to be monitored by the teacher, who can encourage them to take turns typing, offer constructive feedback and point out their strengths as EFL writers along with areas of improvement. Teachers also need to acknowledge the fact that not all pupils appreciate CW and may prefer to write individually instead (cf. Azkarai & Calzada, 2024; Azkarai & Kopinska, 2020; Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021), which implies that CW necessitates teachers being sensitive to social and affective factors shaping classroom practice in their specific group of learners.

7.3 The efforts collaborative writing demands of the teacher

The results of Studies I–IV point to a number of organisational implications for the teacher when it comes to planning and implementing CW. Some of these implications have already been discussed, such as the need for teaching pupils strategies for using digital tools to support language learning during computer-mediated CW (see Section 7.1.1). Another organisational implication has to do with time constraints. Some of the teachers in Study I perceived CW as time-consuming and, for this reason, rarely included CW activities in their EFL classes. The parts of CW that were believed to require a substantial amount of time were collaboration as such and the conversations that CW entails, where pupils need to seek agreement on what to write. It is thus clear from the teacher interviews in Study I that the participants understood CW as a lengthy process, involving the production of multiple drafts. If conceptualising CW in this manner, it could certainly be time-consuming, but despite this, the teachers suggested that CW is worth the time. A CW process that spans over several weeks can allow pupils to create language learning opportunities, but they can also do so in a shorter amount of time as part of a lesson. In the Swedish educational setting, it should further be noted that the time allocated to the English subject is regulated by the Swedish National Agency for Education (2026d), who also stipulate core content that is mandatory to teach (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022a). Teachers can therefore experience a dense curriculum and are faced with making constant priorities as regards what to teach, and when and why to teach it. As a consequence, their beliefs may not align with their classroom practice (Borg, 2017, 2026; Phipps & Borg, 2009), where teachers can refrain from using CW,

although it was generally conceptualised as advantageous for young EFL learners in Study I.

CW at primary school can be time-consuming for other reasons, in addition to ensuring that pupils have sufficient time for writing, revising and interacting with each other. All the teachers in Study I brought up pairing as a major challenge of CW, which can add to the belief that CW is time-consuming. Most of the teachers interviewed stated that they would opt for scaffolding when creating pairs, as appears to be common in CW (e.g., Storch, 2013), but they also recognised the potential lack of linguistic challenges for the more proficient pupil in such a pair. Here, the teachers expressed concern about unequal participation, and Studies II and III reveal that their mixed-proficiency pairing did occasionally result in one pupil being more passive than the other when completing the CW task (cf. Villarreal & Munarriz-Ibarrola, 2021, where pupils cited unbalanced work share as a reason for their negative attitudes towards CW). The consequences of the mixed-proficiency pairing also became apparent in Study III, where a pair consisting of a boy and a girl were supposed to collaborate for the first time in EFL. The girl was deemed more proficient by the teacher and was expected to scaffold the boy, which she attempted to do, but he repeatedly rejected her suggestions (see also Section 7.2). Such a result could be hard to predict, since these two pupils had never worked together in the EFL classroom. If interpreting this finding through the theoretical lens of social deontics (Stevanonic, 2018), the pupils did not grant each other equal deontic and epistemic status, which is further exemplified by other pairs in Study II. The teachers had knowledge about their respective epistemic status, since they paired them with scaffolding in mind, but it is potentially more difficult to take their deontic status into consideration, as this fluctuates and varies greatly and rapidly in interaction. This adds to the complexities of pairing young learners for CW to achieve the incongruence that is positioned as beneficial to language learning in Study II.

The outcomes of the mixed-proficiency pairing beg the question whether another type of pairing would have yielded a different result. In CW research with young learners, same-proficiency pairs have been shown to be more collaborative than teacher-selected and self-selected pairs (Basterrechea & Gallardo-del-Puerto, 2020; García Mayo & Imaz Agirre, 2019). The pairs in Studies II and III were teacher-selected, as has been mentioned, and Storch (2023) argues that such pairs are less collaborative than self-selected pairs. Given the social and physical conflicts that took place in some CW pairs in Studies II and III (see Section 7.2), it is tempting to claim that there is a point in allowing young learners to self-select pairs if this leads to smooth social interaction. There are, however, downsides of allowing them to do so, since some pupils can easily be excluded, and self-selected pairs are potentially at greater risk of straying from the CW task, since such pairs have been observed to be less focused in their interaction (see Martins et al.'s, 2025, review of CW research). Likewise, a pair may be highly collaborative and socially compatible without necessarily developing their EFL skills further, as in Study II. From such findings it can be concluded that CW needs to be practised repeatedly. Kos (2025) has proposed three strategies for promoting collaboration in the young learner classroom, and offering young learners such input prior to CW would possibly contribute to the time-consuming preparations. Despite this, it can be necessary to prepare young learners for CW (Li & Storch, 2025). Pre-CW teaching can also serve to highlight the normative aspect of CW (cf. Nguyen, 2025) by establishing clear expectations and guidelines that are supposed to inform the collaboration. Undoubtedly, the results of Studies II and III, in particular, indicate the need for teacher involvement for

guidance, avoidance of social and/or physical conflicts and support in EFL development and metalinguistic awareness. As Martins et al. (2025) note, the teacher is indispensable if CW activities are to be successful, which the present thesis suggests is the case in primary EFL education.

7.4 Suggestions for future research

The present thesis sheds light on the CW process and collaborative texts from different perspectives, including those of teachers and pupils, but its account of CW in primary EFL education is far from exhaustive. A suggestion for future studies is to focus more extensively on the role of the EFL teacher in CW at primary school, whose importance is emphasised by Martins et al. (2025). The teacher's role is partially covered in Study III, where her influence on the CW process as well as the collaborative texts is exemplified. There is still much scholarly work to be done if aiming to gain a better understanding of the teacher in CW situations. Studies including the role of the teacher are warranted, since the results of Studies I–IV draw attention to several pedagogical challenges that teachers may face prior to and during in-class CW, such as pairing, handling social and/or physical conflicts between pupils and guiding them linguistically as they construct their collaborative text. These challenges are not unique to CW but need to be addressed in relation to CW, specifically, as research indicates that collaboration is becoming increasingly prominent in L2/FL writing instruction. Further explorations would thus offer insight into the actions teachers can take to maximise pupils' language learning opportunities during CW and to overcome challenges that teachers themselves as well as pupils experience.

One way of approaching the role of the teacher in CW is to create opportunities for collaboration between researchers and in-service teachers. As anticipated by L2/FL researchers (e.g., Butler, 2019; Ellis & Shintani, 2014), teaching targeting young learners will benefit from researchers and teachers pursuing areas of common interest together. In doing so, CW lessons could be jointly designed, as was done in the present thesis, and strive for ecological validity to capture the role of the teacher in a setting that is as authentic as possible. Researchers and teachers can further work together to identify what skills teachers need to implement CW, which Martins et al. (2025) deem crucial due to the rapid changes taking place in today's society. As they note, such changes also have implications for teacher training. It is reasonable to assume that courses at university will need to be adapted to adequately prepare pre-service teachers for (collaborative) writing instruction in a world that is overflowing with technology. Collaboration between teachers and researchers can also contribute to other voices than those of researchers being heard when discourses about CW are created. Pupils themselves could be given more prominence in CW studies, since they are the ones writing and learning and should have a say about CW to assist teachers and researchers in adapting implementations of CW to the needs of pupils at primary school.

One of the technological advancements that has revolutionised writing and writing instruction is AI tools. While AI tools may not be utilised to a great extent by all pupils at the primary school level, they constitute a potential writing partner in CW that cannot be ignored. Studies II and III in the present thesis have illuminated Google Translate as a writing partner, but many areas remain to be explored concerning the use of digital tools in CW in primary EFL education and their influence on the CW process and collaborative texts. This could

preferably be done in longitudinal studies instead of one-shot design studies (see Elabdali, 2021), where pupils only write collaboratively on one occasion.

7.5 Concluding remarks

CW is given an increasingly prominent role in (primary) EFL education, which is why it is of utmost importance to continue evaluating this type of writing instruction. The present thesis has offered insight into possibilities as well as constraints of CW with young EFL learners and therefore positions CW as a double-edged sword. The question, it seems, is not as simple as whether CW should be implemented at primary school or not, since all types of teaching approaches come with a set of benefits and drawbacks. Rather, EFL teachers are faced with the question of whether the benefits of CW reported on in research outweigh the challenges. If recognising the EFL teacher's professionalism, it follows that each teacher is best suited to decide how, or if, to use CW and make informed decisions based on research findings. While CW may be advocated from a researcher's perspective, it may not be seen as advisable from a teacher perspective, for example, due to its potentially time-consuming nature, social conflicts between pupils or the difficulties surrounding pairing. The present thesis has not argued in favour of allowing CW more prominence than individual writing in EFL classes at primary school, but CW could suggestibly be viewed as one of many tools in the teacher's toolbox to achieve variation in writing instruction and attend to young learners' different needs as they transition from primary to secondary education.

8 Summary in Swedish – svensk sammanfattning

Den här avhandlingen utforskar kollaborativt skrivande på engelska och dess didaktiska implikationer i år 4–6 i svensk grundskola. Från att ha betraktats som en individuell uppgift har skrivande på engelska som främmande språk blivit en alltmer kollaborativ aktivitet de senaste årtiondena. Att kollaborativt skrivande ökar i popularitet i klassrum världen över kan bero på de forskningsrön som vittnar om fördelarna med att samarbeta vid skriftlig produktion. Bland annat har studier visat att elever som skriver kollaborativt utvecklar muntliga färdigheter parallellt med skriftliga färdigheter, samtidigt som de övar upp sin metaspråkliga förmåga genom att diskutera språkliga valmöjligheter.

Inom forskningsfältet kollaborativt skrivande på engelska som främmande språk har ett stort antal studier genomförts med tonåringar eller vuxna som deltagare. Detta innebär att grundskolekontexter har fått mindre uppmärksamhet i vetenskapliga studier jämfört med äldre målgrupper. Fler forskare har dock börjat intressera sig för grundskoleelevers kollaborativa skrivande, vilket är välkommet då kollaborativt skrivande har blivit en allt större del av skrivundervisningen i grundskolor. Ett vanligt fokusområde i studier med elever i 10–12-årsåldern är de metaspråkliga samtal som förs under det kollaborativa skrivandet, vilket ofta har visat sig beröra vokabulär och stavning. En del studier har även jämfört individuellt och kollaborativt skrivna elevtexter med varierande resultat. Till exempel har viss forskning visat att kollaborativt skrivande ökar den lexikala och grammatiska komplexiteten i elevtexter, medan annan forskning inte har kunnat påvisa några skillnader mellan elevtexter skrivna enskilt och i par. Resultat som inte är entydiga, och det faktum att kollaborativt skrivande ökar i grundskolan, utgör ett motiv för fortsatt forskning som belyser fördelar och utmaningar som elever och lärare kan möta när unga språkinlärare skriver texter i par.

Det övergripande syftet med föreliggande avhandling är att utöka kunskapen om det kollaborativa skrivandets didaktiska implikationer i engelskämnet i år 4–6. För att åstadkomma detta angrips kollaborativt skrivande ur olika perspektiv, vilka innefattar skrivprocessen, elevtexter samt lärares och elevers uppfattningar och förståelse av kollaborativt skrivande. Särskild vikt läggs vid *affordanser*, som förstås som handlingar vilka påverkar elevers språkinlärningsmöjligheter inom ämnet engelska som främmande språk. Avhandlingen utgår från följande forskningsfråga:

- Vilka är det kollaborativa skrivandets affordanser på engelska i år 4–6 i svensk grundskola?

Forskningsfrågan besvaras i fyra delstudier som sammanfattas i tabellen nedan.

Översikt över Studie I–IV

	Studie I	**Studie II**	**Studie III**	**Studie IV**
Skolår	4–6	5	5	6
Deltagare	15 engelsklärare	20 elever 3 engelsklärare	20 elever 3 engelsklärare	49 elever
Data	Semi-strukturerade intervjuer	Ljud- och skärminspelningar	Ljud- och skärminspelningar Semi-strukturerade intervjuer	Berättande texter skrivna individuellt och i par
Teori	*Teacher beliefs*	Social deontik	Affordansteori	Systemisk-funktionell lingvistik
Metod	Reflexiv tematisk analys	Deduktiv analys	Kvalitativ innehållsanalys	Transitivitets- och appraisal-analyser
Studieobjekt	*Teacher beliefs* om kollaborativt skrivande	Elevers interaktionella positioneringar vid kollaborativt skrivande	Elevers nyttjande av affordanser och förståelse av kollaborativt skrivande	Meningsskapande språkliga resurser i individuellt och kollaborativt skrivna texter

Tillsammans bidrar delstudierna till att nyansera bilden av det kollaborativa skrivandets pedagogiska potential genom att tillämpa en kombination av teorier och kvalitativa metoder för att analysera de olika typerna av data.

Resultat

Studie I

Avhandlingens första delstudie redogör för engelsklärares uppfattningar (*teacher beliefs*) av de språkinlärningsmöjligheter som kan skapas för elever i år 4–6 vid kollaborativt skrivande. Totalt 15 semi-strukturerade intervjuer genomfördes med verksamma engelsklärare i år 4–6, och detta material analyserades sedan genom en reflexiv tematisk analys. Sex teman skapades och delades in i *språkliga fördelar med kollaborativt skrivande*, *affektiva faktorer* och *organisatoriska utmaningar*.

De språkliga fördelarna inryms i de två första temana. Det första temat belyser lärares syn på kollaborativt skrivande som ett sätt att utöka elevers ordförråd, då ett par som skriver kollaborativt uppgavs använda varandra som resurser, dela vokabulär och därmed lära sig nya ord, synonymer och stavning. Det andra temat visar hur lärare upplever att kollaborativt skrivande förbättrar elevtexter, framför allt med fokus på längd och innehåll. Jämfört med

individuellt skrivna texter menade lärarna att kollaborativt skrivna texter är både längre och fylligare innehållsmässigt.

Affektiva faktorer behandlas i det tredje och fjärde temat. Det kollaborativa skrivandet framstår som en motivationshöjande aktivitet i det tredje temat, eftersom lärare argumenterade för att den här typen av skrivande inte bara minskar elevers skrivmotstånd, utan också ökar deras självförtroende som skribenter och skapar skrivglädje. Det fjärde temat illustrerar hur kollaborativt skrivande enligt lärare kan minska elevers rädsla för att använda engelska muntligt i klassrummet (*foreign language anxiety*). Att skriva en text tillsammans med en klasskamrat kan enligt deltagarna resultera i att elever vågar dela med sig av texten genom att läsa den högt inför klassen, då ingen enskild elev blir utpekad som ensam ansvarig för eventuella språkliga fel i texten.

De två sista temana handlar om organisatoriska utmaningar som lärare kan möta när de låter sina elever skriva kollaborativt. En utmaning som samtliga deltagare lyfte är par- eller gruppindelning, som utgör det femte temat. Lärarna påtalade att de ofta har stöttning i åtanke när de skapar elevpar inför kollaborativt skrivande, där avsikten är att en elev med mer djupgående kunskaper i engelska ska stötta en annan som ännu inte har nått samma språkliga nivå. Här uttryckte lärarna också funderingar gällande hur eleven som stöttar sin klasskamrat ska få språkliga utmaningar, och det fanns en oro för att båda elever inte blir lika delaktiga i skrivuppgiften. Slutligen beskrev deltagarna kollaborativt skrivande som tidskrävande, vilket utgör det sjätte temat, där att skriva kollaborativt likställdes med processkrivande av flera utkast. På grund av en upplevd tidsbrist hävdade lärarna att de inte låter sina elever skriva tillsammans särskilt ofta, trots att de pekade på många fördelar med den här typen av skrivundervisning.

Sammanfattningsvis lyfter studien fram kollaborativt skrivande som en mångfacetterad aktivitet. Å ena sidan ses det som ett verktyg för att utveckla språket och sänka elevers affektiva filter i engelskundervisningen, å andra sidan medför kollaborativt skrivande utmaningar för lärare på grund av par- eller gruppindelning och tidsbegränsningar. Då de första fyra temana uttrycker fördelar, får kollaborativt skrivande ändå sägas uppfattas övervägande positivt av de deltagande lärarna.

Studie II

Den andra delstudien utgår från social deontik och illustrerar hur elever i år 5 förhandlar sig till möjligheter att bestämma utformandet av berättande texter vid kollaborativt skrivande på datorer. Studien utforskar närmare bestämt hur dessa möjligheter till bestämmande, eller interaktionella positioneringar, påverkar elevers språkinlärningstillfällen på engelska när de skriver kollaborativt. Det empiriska materialet består av ljud- och skärminspelningar gjorda i tio lärarinitierade par under tre lektioner som varade mellan 40 och 60 minuter vardera. En deduktiv analys genomfördes, där deontisk och epistemisk (in)kongruens var styrande. Med andra ord eftersöktes exempel på när elever antingen är överens eller inte överens angående vad som ska skrivas och vilket språkligt uttryck som ska användas.

Resultaten visar att kongruens sällan leder till språkinlärningsmöjligheter. Elever som ständigt var överens varken ifrågasatte eller utmanade varandras förslag, och som en följd av detta riskerade de att inte utveckla ny kunskap, utan snarare reproducera kunskap som de tillägnat sig vid tidigare tillfällen. I vissa fall förlitade sig eleverna i hög grad på Google Translate, som var ett frekvent använt hjälpmedel, och uppfattade detta verktyg som en

epistemisk expert som de inte ifrågasatte. Par som däremot ifrågasatte varandra, eller input från Google Translate, skapade betydligt fler språkinlärningstillfällen, vilka dessutom utgjorde en grund för att anlägga ett metaperspektiv på sitt skrivande. Resultaten tyder därmed på att inkongruens, eller friktion, är mer gynnsamt för språkinlärningen jämfört med kongruens, och studien kompletterar därför tidigare forskning där ett kollaborativt interaktionsmönster kännetecknat av kongruens ses som det önskvärda utfallet av kollaborativa skrivuppgifter. Vidare indikerar analysen att deontisk status, alltså den faktiska rätten att bestämma riktningen för samtalet, ibland tar överhand och trumfar epistemisk status i form av elevernas kunskaper i engelskämnet. Vid ett antal tillfällen blir det kollaborativa skrivandet en social maktkamp snarare än en fråga om språkinlärning. Detta tydliggörs exempelvis när en fysisk konflikt inträffar i ett elevpar och tar fokus från textproduktionen. Sociala hierarkier som eleverna möjligtvis både skapar och upprätthåller i och utanför klassrummet påverkade således det kollaborativa skrivandet.

Studien slår fast att par- eller gruppindelning inför kollaborativt skrivande är en stor utmaning för lärare, framför allt beroende på att deontisk status kan variera ofta och snabbt i interaktion. En lärare kan troligen lättare bilda sig en uppfattning om elevers epistemiska status, till exempel genom uppgifter och diagnostiska test, men de sociala hierarkierna som i hög utsträckning styr det kollaborativa skrivandet är betydligt mer svårfångade.

Studie III

I den tredje delstudien ligger fokus dels på vilka affordanser som elever nyttjar i språkinlärningssyfte vid digitalt kollaborativt skrivande i år 5, dels på hur elever uppfattar den kollaborativa skrivsituationen och dess möjliga inverkan på deras språkinlärningsmöjligheter. Studien har sin teoretiska grund i affordansteori, och materialet består av ljud- och skärminspelningar i tio lärarinitierade par samt intervjuer med dessa par efter att de färdigställt berättande texter. Inspelningarna och intervjuerna analyserades deduktivt med hjälp av en kvalitativ innehållsanalys som genererade kategorierna *Kamratstöd vid kollaborativt skrivande* och *Två konkurrerande kunskapskällor*. Den första kategorien innehåller två underkategorier: *Den dyadiska ekologin* och *Den triadiska ekologin*, där den förstnämnda syftar på interaktionen mellan elev och elev och den sistnämnda på interaktionen mellan två elever och Google Translate. I den dyadiska ekologin hjälpte elever ofta varandra med stavning och vokabulär, vilket de också lyfte i intervjuerna som genomfördes efter det kollaborativa skrivandet. Alla par hade dock inte nytta av en skrivpartner som kunde agera lexikalt bollplank. En pojke och flicka som skrev tillsammans för första gången exemplifierar hur sociala och fysiska konflikter överskuggade det kollaborativa skrivandet, då pojken utsatte flickan för mobbning. När läraren uppmärksammade hans nedsättande kommentarer fick paret istället turas om att skriva texten individuellt fem minuter åt gången. I efterintervjun var paret till synes inte medvetna om anledningen till lärarens beslut, men betonade att det kunde bero på att de inte brukar umgås med varandra.

I *Den triadiska ekologin* visas att flertalet elever lyfter in Google Translate som en tredje part i sitt kollaborativa skrivande. Elevernas kritiska medvetenhet gentemot detta verktyg varierade kraftigt, då vissa elevpar accepterade förslagen som Google Translate gav utan diskussioner och reflektioner, vilket kunde medföra att oidiomatiska formuleringar på engelska förekom i texterna. I andra par hade en av eleverna invändningar mot förslag som genererats av Google Translate och öppnade på så sätt för möjligheter att diskutera språkliga

val och komplettera digitalt stöd med kamratstöd. Google Translate återkommer även i den andra kategorin, *Två konkurrerande kunskapskällor*, där elevernas benägenhet att använda klasskamraten, läraren och Google Translate för att lösa språkliga problem varierar. Läraren användes främst för att få hjälp med rättstavning, och hennes hjälp efterfrågades då aktivt av eleverna. Andra gånger anslöt läraren till den triadiska ekologin på eget initiativ genom att erbjuda muntlig respons på elevtexterna utan att eleverna själva hade bett om den. Sådan respons påverkade elevernas skrivande och texten, som allra mest i ett elevpar som skrev om sin text efter att läraren benämnt den ”svamlig”. I vissa fall blev läraren däremot utmanad av Google Translate som epistemisk expert. Några elever uttryckte en stor tillit till detta verktyg och påstod att de hellre använder Google Translate än frågar läraren eller en klasskamrat, vilket kunde minska elevparets samtal och interaktion med varandra under det kollaborativa skrivandet.

Med tanke på hur Google Translate antingen tycks kunna öka eller minska antalet elevsamtal om språkliga dilemman, trycker studien på vikten av att läraren poängterar hur, när och varför klasskamraten, läraren och digitala verktyg kan bistå elever vid kollaborativt skrivande. Eftersom ingen av dessa aktörer kan förväntas ge ett språkligt korrekt förslag varje gång de tillfrågas, kan lärare med fördel medvetandegöra elever om strategier för att kritiskt granska information och använda digitala verktyg vid kollaborativt skrivande. Till exempel kräver digitalt kollaborativt skrivande kunskap om affordanser som stavnings- och grammatikkontrollen i ordbehandlingsprogram kan erbjuda, något som eleverna i den här studien inte med säkerhet var medvetna om. Samtidigt visar studien att lärare står inför ett antal sociala utmaningar, så som att säkerställa att elevpar inte ägnar skrivtiden åt sociala eller fysiska konflikter, utan istället samarbetar konstruktivt. Detta kan kräva träning och förberedelse, vilket gör kollaborativt skrivande i grundskolan till en potentiellt tidskrävande process.

Studie IV

I den fjärde och sista delstudien görs en jämförelse mellan individuellt och kollaborativt skrivna elevtexter producerade för hand i forskarinitierade par i år 6. Studien tar fasta på språkliga resurser för meningsskapande och utgår från systemisk-funktionell lingvistik när den belyser hur elever konstruerar innehåll och positionerar sig i förhållande till detta innehåll i sina texter. Resurser kopplade till innehåll operationaliserades som sex typer av processkärnor, det vill säga verb som styr vad som händer i en sats, och resurser kopplade till positionering utgjordes av värderande språkbruk som fångades genom appraisal och dess tre huvudkategorier Dialogicitet, Attityd och Gradering med tillhörande underkategorier. Textanalyserna berör således de ideationella och interpersonella metafunktionerna inom systemisk-funktionell lingvistik. Resurser för ideationellt och interpersonellt meningsskapande benämns *funktionell variation* i studien, som särskilt intresserar sig för om kollaborativt skrivande kan öka sådan variation i elevtexter. För att fånga funktionell variation föreslås följande kategorier:

1. *Begränsade*, som betecknar elevtexter med låg variation vad gäller ideationella och interpersonella resurser
2. *Ideationellt expansiva*, som betecknar elevtexter med hög ideationell variation men låg interpersonell variation

3. *Interpersonellt expansiva*, som betecknar elevtexter med hög interpersonell variation men låg ideationell variation
4. *Breda*, som betecknar elevtexter med hög variation vad gäller ideationella och interpersonella resurser

De flesta elevtexterna som analyseras i studien bedöms höra hemma i kategorin *Breda*. Detta gäller både individuellt och kollaborativt skrivna texter. Värt att notera är att i de kollaborativt skrivna texterna används värderande språkbruk i högre grad jämfört med de individuellt skrivna texterna, vilket kan tyda på att en läsare eventuellt uppfattar en kollaborativt skriven text som mer engagerande. Innehållsmässigt liknar de individuella och kollaborativt skrivna texterna varandra, åtminstone baserat på de processkärnor som används i texterna. Materiella och relationella processkärnor, som uttrycker görande respektive varande, var vanligast förekommande. Detta är ett förväntat resultat då dessa utgör de vanligaste processtyperna i det engelska språket och behövs för att beskriva karaktärer och berätta om deras agerande. Verbala och existentiella processkärnor var också relativt frekventa i elevtexterna, där de föregående uttrycker något som yttras och de senare något som existerar. Användandet av dessa tyder på en genremedvetenhet hos eleverna, då dialoger och formuleringar som ”Det var en gång” ofta förekom och är kännetecknande för berättande texter. Appraisal-analyserna visade på ytterligare likheter mellan individuellt och kollaborativt skrivna texter. Attityd var den kategorin som oftast tillämpades och uttryckte många gånger underkategorin (O)trygghet, vilket syns i meningar som ”Hon var rädd”. Även förekomsten av Attityd kan ses som ett tecken på en medvetenhet om den narrativa genren, och detsamma gäller det låga antalet uttryck för Dialogicitet, då den typen av positioneringar oftare återfinns i argumenterande än i berättande texter. När eleverna uttryckte Gradering gjorde de ofta det genom underkategorin Styrka som anger intensitet eller mängd, och denna kategori användes mer sällan i kollaborativt skrivna texter jämfört med individuellt skrivna texter.

Sammantaget visar studien att kollaborativt skrivande kan öka användandet av interpersonella resurser och därmed stödja en viss aspekt av elevernas språkutveckling, det som benämns *high literacy*, där det ingår att visa medvetenhet om läsaren i alltmer krävande akademiska genrer. Studien utgör också ett komplement till studier av komplexitet, korrekthet och flyt, vilka ofta fokuseras i studier av elevtexter i engelska som främmande språk, och bidrar därför till att nyansera debatten om vad som utgör kvalitet i elevtexter.

Diskussion

Avhandlingens fyra delstudier belyser tillsammans kollaborativt skrivande främst utifrån *(meta)språkliga* respektive *sociala och affektiva* affordanser. I likhet med tidigare forskning kommer avhandlingen fram till att elever som för (meta)språkliga samtal under kollaborativt skrivande har en tendens att uppehålla sig vid vokabulär och stavning, och här nyttjar de deltagande eleverna framför allt affordanser som klasskamraten, läraren eller Google Translate erbjuder. Ett primärt resultat är att användandet av Google Translate kan utkonkurrera både elever och lärare som kunskapskällor. Konsekvenserna av att positionera Google Translate som epistemisk expert blir ibland minskad, eller till och med utebliven, interaktion med den andra eleven i ett kollaborativt skrivande par. Därför kan lärare med fördel tydliggöra vilka affordanser en samarbetspartner, en lärare och digitala verktyg tillhandahåller, samt betona när, hur och i vilka syften sådana affordanser kan nyttjas vid kollaborativt skrivande.

Avhandlingen pekar här på behovet av att hjälpa elever välja och värdera olika affordanser innan de nyttjar dem. Till exempel kan lärare behöva presentera strategier för att kritiskt använda och utvärdera information från digitala källor och göra elever medvetna om stavnings- och grammatikkontrollens affordanser i ett ordbehandlingsprogram inför digitalt kollaborativt skrivande. Vad gäller det kollaborativa skrivandets produkt, elevtexterna, upplevs de av lärare ha ett fylligare innehåll och vara längre än individuellt skrivna texter. Längd som mått på textkvalitet utmanas i Studie IV, som kommer fram till att kollaborativt skrivande kan göra texter mer engagerande för en läsare då användandet av värderande språk tycks öka vid textproduktion i par. Eftersom de deltagande eleverna visar medvetenhet om karaktäristiska drag i berättande texter, finner avhandlingen inget stöd för att kollaborativt skrivande skulle kunna förstärka elevers förståelse av hur berättande texter kan skrivas.

Förutom (meta)språkliga affordanser kan kollaborativt skrivande medföra fördelar och utmaningar gällande samarbete och konflikthantering. Avhandlingens resultat indikerar att kollaborativt skrivande på många sätt är styrt av normer, till exempel för hur elever ska ge konstruktiv feedback åt varandra, vad som är tillåtet att säga eller skriva om eller hur acceptabelt det är att be läraren om hjälp. Normer är alltså ett avgörande inslag i det kollaborativa skrivandet, och dessa kan lärare och elever med fördel klargöra och diskutera tillsammans. Sociala hierarkier kan dock vara svårfångade och uppstå både i och utanför klassrummet, vilket innebär att kollaborativt skrivande kräver en betydande insats av läraren för att säkerställa att elevparen samarbetar på ett respektfullt och konstruktivt sätt. De sociala och affektiva affordanserna som lyfts i den här avhandlingen bidrar till att styrka de deltagande lärarnas bild av kollaborativt skrivande som potentiellt tidskrävande innan det kan bli ett lärtillfälle för alla elever i engelskklassrummet. Kollaborativt skrivande visualiseras ändå som ett av många verktyg i lärarens verktygslåda, som kan användas exempelvis för att uppnå variation i skrivundervisningen och tillgodose elevers olika behov vid övergången från skrivande i år 4–6 till det alltmer krävande skrivandet i år 7–9.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Consent form Study I

Luleå tekniska universitet
Institutionen för hälsa, teknik och lärande
Forskarskolan PROFS (Praktiknära Skolforskning)
Elin Ruth, Cathrine Norberg, Marie Nordlund och Malin Lidström Brock

Samtycke för medverkan i studie samt för lagring av intervjumaterial
Du tillfrågas härmed om att delta i en intervju som en del i ett doktorandprojekt om kollaborativt skrivande i engelskklassrum i år 4–6. Denna intervjustudie är projektets första delstudie med syftet att få en förståelse för lärares uppfattningar om kollaborativt skrivande i engelskämnet.

Du är anonym i din medverkan. Din medverkan i intervjustudien är frivillig och du kan närsomhelst avbryta din medverkan utan att ange orsak genom att kontakta studiens kontaktperson, Elin Ruth. Den inspelade intervjun och transkriptionen av densamma kommer att lagras bakom lösenordsskydd. Datan kommer att användas i vetenskapliga artiklar samt i presentationer.

När du medverkar i denna intervju innebär det att Luleå tekniska universitet behandlar dina personuppgifter. Att ge samtycke till detta är frivilligt men krävs för att forskningen ska kunna genomföras. Du har alltid rätt att ta tillbaka ditt samtycke utan att behöva ge några skäl för detta. Luleå tekniska universitet är ansvarig för behandlingen av dina personuppgifter, och du når dataskyddsombudet på dataskydd@ltu.se eller via 0920-49 10 00. Om du vill läsa mer information om hur Luleå tekniska universitet behandlar personuppgifter och om dina rättigheter kan du hitta den informationen på www.ltu.se/about/Behandling-av-personuppgifter-GDPR.

Jag har läst och samtycker till medverkan samt lagring av personuppgifter och intervjumaterial:

_____ _____
underskrift ort, datum

_____
namnförtydligande

Kontaktperson: Elin Ruth
elin.ruth@ltu.se, 0920-493173

Appendix B. Consent form for teachers Studies II–IV

Informerat samtycke – lärare

Jag heter Elin Ruth och är doktorand i engelska med didaktisk inriktning vid Luleå tekniska universitet. Under vår- och höstterminen 2023 genomför jag ett forskningsprojekt med arbetsnamnet *Samskrivande på engelska som främmande språk i grundskolans år 5–6*. Jag intresserar mig särskilt för elevers användning av språkliga strategier när de skriver olika typer av texter tillsammans i klassrummet. I samarbete med engelsklärare kommer jag att planera lektioner där eleverna får i uppgift att skriva tillsammans i par eller mindre grupper. Dessa lektioner är en del av den ordinarie undervisningen och eleverna kan därför inte välja att avstå från dem. Däremot deltar eleverna frivilligt i datainsamlingen och kommer att få åldersanpassad information om projektet. Lärare kan också välja i vilken utsträckning de är villiga att ge mig tillgång till sin personliga data. All personlig data kommer att lagras lösenordsskyddat (för elektroniskt material) eller inlåst (för pappersmaterial). Om du vill veta mer eller har frågor om projektet, kontakta gärna mig eller min huvudhandledare (se kontaktuppgifter nedan).

Anonymitet
Jag kommer att säkerställa att du inte kommer att kunna identifieras i mina vetenskapliga publikationer. Om jag hänvisar till ditt arbete eller till tankar och åsikter som du uttryckt kommer jag att använda en pseudonym istället för ditt riktiga namn.

Hur länge får jag spara din data?
Forskare måste spara all data i tio år efter det att projektet har avslutats. Om du inte vill tillåta mig att spara din data så länge, var då snäll och låt mig veta det så att jag inte oavsiktligt spelar in dig. Din identitet i detta avseende kommer att vara känd enbart för forskaren under projektets gång. Ringa in det alternativ som passar dig.

Du får inte spara min data. (Skriv ditt namn) _____
Du får spara min data i tio år efter projektets färdigställande.
Du får spara min data för alltid.

Vilken data får jag samla in?
Jag godkänner insamling av följande data. Ringa in alla alternativ som stämmer.
Mitt namn och min kontaktinformation.
Ljudinspelningar av intervjuer.
Tillgång till material som används eller produceras i klassrummet.

På vilket sätt får jag använda denna data?
Jag godkänner att min data delas med (ringa in alla alternativ som stämmer):

Forskare
Engelsklärare inom projektet
Engelsklärare som inte deltar i projektet
Blivande lärare

Om du samtycker till att delta i projektet, vänligen **fyll i denna samtyckesblankett** och skicka den till mig **senast den 24 april 2023**.

Samtycke
Signatur (underskrift): _____

Namn i versaler: _____

Kontaktuppgifter till ansvarig forskare:
Elin Ruth, doktorand i engelska med didaktisk inriktning, Luleå tekniska universitet, Institutionen för hälsa, lärande och teknik, 971 87 Luleå. Telefonnummer: 0920-49 31 73. E-post: elin.ruth@ltu.se

Kontaktuppgifter till huvudhandledare:
Monica Karlsson, professor i engelska med didaktisk inriktning, Luleå tekniska universitet, Institutionen för hälsa, lärande och teknik, 971 87 Luleå. E-post: monica.karlsson@ltu.se

Appendix C. Consent form for legal guardians Studies II–IV

Informerat samtycke – vårdnadshavare

Jag heter Elin Ruth och är doktorand i engelska med didaktisk inriktning vid Luleå tekniska universitet. Under vår- och höstterminen 2023 genomför jag ett forskningsprojekt med arbetsnamnet *Samskrivande på engelska som främmande språk i grundskolans år 5–6*. Jag intresserar mig särskilt för elevers användning av språkliga strategier när de skriver olika typer av texter tillsammans i klassrummet. I samarbete med engelsklärare kommer jag att planera och närvara vid lektioner där eleverna får i uppgift att skriva tillsammans i par eller mindre grupper. Dessa lektioner är en del av den ordinarie undervisningen och eleverna kan därför inte välja att avstå från dem. Däremot deltar eleverna frivilligt i datainsamlingen och kommer att få åldersanpassad information om projektet. Vårdnadshavare kan också välja i vilken utsträckning de är villiga att ge mig tillgång till sina barns personliga data. All personlig data kommer att lagras lösenordsskyddat (för elektroniskt material) eller inlåst (för pappersmaterial). Om du/ni vill veta mer eller har frågor om projektet, kontakta gärna mig eller min huvudhandledare (se kontaktuppgifter nedan).

Anonymitet
Jag kommer att säkerställa att ditt/ert barn inte kommer att kunna identifieras i mina vetenskapliga publikationer. Om jag hänvisar till tankar och åsikter som ditt/ert barn uttryckt kommer jag att använda en pseudonym istället för barnets riktiga namn.

Hur länge får jag spara ditt/ert barns data?
Forskare måste spara all data i tio år efter det att projektet har avslutats. Om du/ni inte vill tillåta mig att spara ditt/ert barns data så länge, var då snäll och låt mig veta det så att jag inte oavsiktligt spelar in ditt/ert barn. Ditt/ert barns identitet i detta avseende kommer att vara känd enbart för forskaren under projektets gång. Ringa in det alternativ som passar dig/er.

Du får inte spara mitt/vårt barns data. (Skriv barnets namn)_____
Du får spara mitt/vårt barns data i tio år efter projektets färdigställande.
Du får spara mitt/vårt barns data för alltid.

Vilken data får jag samla in?
Jag/Vi godkänner insamling av följande data. Ringa in alla alternativ som stämmer.
Mitt/Vårt barns namn, klass och skola.
Ljudinspelningar av elevintervjuer.
Ljudinspelningar av elevsamtal vid samskrivande.
Skärminspelningar vid samskrivande på dator.
Tillgång till material som används eller produceras i klassrummet.

På vilket sätt får jag använda denna data?
Jag/Vi godkänner att mitt/vårt barns data delas med (ringa in alla alternativ som stämmer):

Forskare
Engelsklärare inom projektet
Engelsklärare som inte deltar i projektet
Blivande lärare

Om du/ni samtycker till att ditt/ert barn deltar i projektet, vänligen **fyll i denna samtyckesblankett** och lämna till ansvarig engelsklärare **senast den 24 april 2023**.

Samtycke

Signatur (underskrift): _____

Namn i versaler: _____

Samtycke

Signatur (underskrift): _____

Namn i versaler: _____

Kontaktuppgifter till ansvarig forskare:
Elin Ruth, doktorand i engelska med didaktisk inriktning, Luleå tekniska universitet, Institutionen för hälsa, lärande och teknik, 971 87 Luleå. Telefonnummer: 0920-49 31 73. E-post: elin.ruth@ltu.se

Kontaktuppgifter till huvudhandledare:
Monica Karlsson, professor i engelska med didaktisk inriktning, Luleå tekniska universitet, Institutionen för hälsa, lärande och teknik, 971 87 Luleå. E-post: monica.karlsson@ltu.se

Appendix D. Trüb's (2022, pp. 102–103) rating scale for stories

	0 Below	1 Approx. level A1.1
Communicative effect / creativity E.g. has a witty ending, creates tension, captures the reader's attention, takes a surprising twist	Not enough assessable language or the text is not comprehensible.	The text is comprehensible but has only a very limited communicative effect.
Level of detail E.g. detailed descriptions, reasons/explanations, emotions	Not enough assessable language.	Describes the scene, people and actions without much detail.
Coherence (logical organisation) Setting the scene, development/complication, resolution, story ending	Text almost completely incoherent or not enough assessable language.	The writer does not fully succeed in developing a storyline. The text is incomplete and sometimes unclear.
Cohesion (linguistic connectivity) Repetition of key words, connectors (and, but, or, because, then,...), pronouns (he, she, they, it,...), demonstratives (this, that, there,...), comparatives (same, another, more...)	No linking of words and phrases, only isolated chunks of language or not enough assessable language.	Only few and very basic cohesive devices or reference words are used to link words and sentences (e.g. and). The text mainly consists of isolated phrases and sentences.
Complexity of syntax and grammar	Not enough assessable language.	Uses very simple and partly incomplete sentences and very simple grammatical structures, mainly in formulaic expressions.
Correctness of syntax and grammar	Not enough assessable language.	Only very limited control and many inconsistencies. Some reduction or omission of elements.
Vocabulary range	Most of the text written in another language or not enough assessable language.	Basic chunks and limited vocabulary, some words and/or phrases in another language.
Orthography	Text hardly comprehensible or not enough assessable language.	Only very limited control and many inconsistencies. Comprehension sometimes impaired.
Punctuation	No or almost no use of punctuation.	Limited use of basic punctuation (e.g. full stops, question marks), sometimes incorrect or missing.

2 Approx. level A1.2	3 Approx. level A2.1	4 Above
The text has a small communicative effect. There are a few elements that catch the reader's attention.	The text has a simple communicative effect. It contains some elements that make the story interesting or has a witty ending.	Above The story has a clear communicative effect. It creates tension and has a witty ending.
Describes the scene, people and actions with a few details.	Describes the scene, people and actions with some details.	Above Describes the scene, people and actions in detail.
It is evident that the writer is trying to tell a story. There is a very simple storyline with some gaps or incoherences.	The writer succeeds in telling a story with a simple and mostly coherent storyline. There are only few gaps or incoherences.	Above The storyline is coherent and contains all elements of a simple narrative structure.
A small number of very basic cohesive devices and reference words (e.g. and, this, it) are used to link words and sentences. The text contains some isolated phrases and sentences.	Some simple cohesive devices and reference words (e.g. and, but, because, then, or, he, she, they) are used to link words and sentences. No or only few isolated phrases and sentences. Mostly linguistically well-linked text.	Above A larger variety and amount of cohesive devices and reference words are used to link words, sentences and text passages. Linguistically well-linked text.
Uses simple sentences (e.g. one-clause sentences) and simple grammatical structures (e.g. plural '-s'), often in formulaic expressions.	Uses a mixture of simple and more complex sentences and grammatical structures (e.g. simple subordinate clauses, 3rd person '-s', past or future forms, reporting clause for direct speech).	Above Uses more complex and varied sentences and grammatical structures.
Only limited control and many inconsistencies.	Uses a few simple structures correctly but still systematically makes basic errors.	Above Uses some simple structures correctly but still makes basic errors.
Basic vocabulary (e.g. simple home and family vocabulary, simple verbs, few adjectives), enough vocabulary to write the text mainly in English (no or only few words in another language).	Mainly simple but also some specific and/or varied vocabulary that allows a slight elaboration of the text.	Above Wider range of vocabulary that allows a clear elaboration of the text.
Only limited control and many inconsistencies, but the text is comprehensible.	Short and very common words are written with reasonable phonetic accuracy. Still makes basic errors.	Above Common words are written with reasonable phonetic accuracy. Still makes errors.
Mostly correct or correct use of basic punctuation (e.g. full stops, question marks), only occasionally missing OR Use of some further elements but basic punctuation sometimes incorrect or missing.	Correct use of basic punctuation. Use of some further elements, e.g. exclamation mark, colon or commas for a series of words or phrases, not necessarily correct. OR Use of some difficult elements but basic punctuation sometimes incorrect or missing.	Above Correct use of common punctuation. Use of some difficult elements, e.g. commas for dependent clauses or quotation marks, not necessarily correct.

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