

The effect of language barrier on students' academic performance

Sweta Datta



Choose Ohio First

INTRODUCTION

Language is an aspect of our lives that we often take for granted. However, there are many ESL students today who struggle with the curriculum of colleges due to language barrier. Many studies were conducted to identify the issues these students face and how to solve them. It was found that ESL students struggled more in writing and reading than in speaking, because writing and reading need to be grammatically correct.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify issues for ESL students in regards to essay writing;
- Determine what feedback teachers are providing to ESL students on their work; and
- Find solutions to ESL students' writing problems

METHODS

- The authors (Kashef & Seyyed, 2012) surveyed 30 ESL students and 10 teachers
- Questionnaire and essay examination (274–284 Nelson & Carson, 1998)
- Peer review groups (Mangelsdorf, 1992)



Figure 1. For ESL students, teamwork and inclusiveness are the key factors for success.

COMMON GRAMMATICAL ERRORS

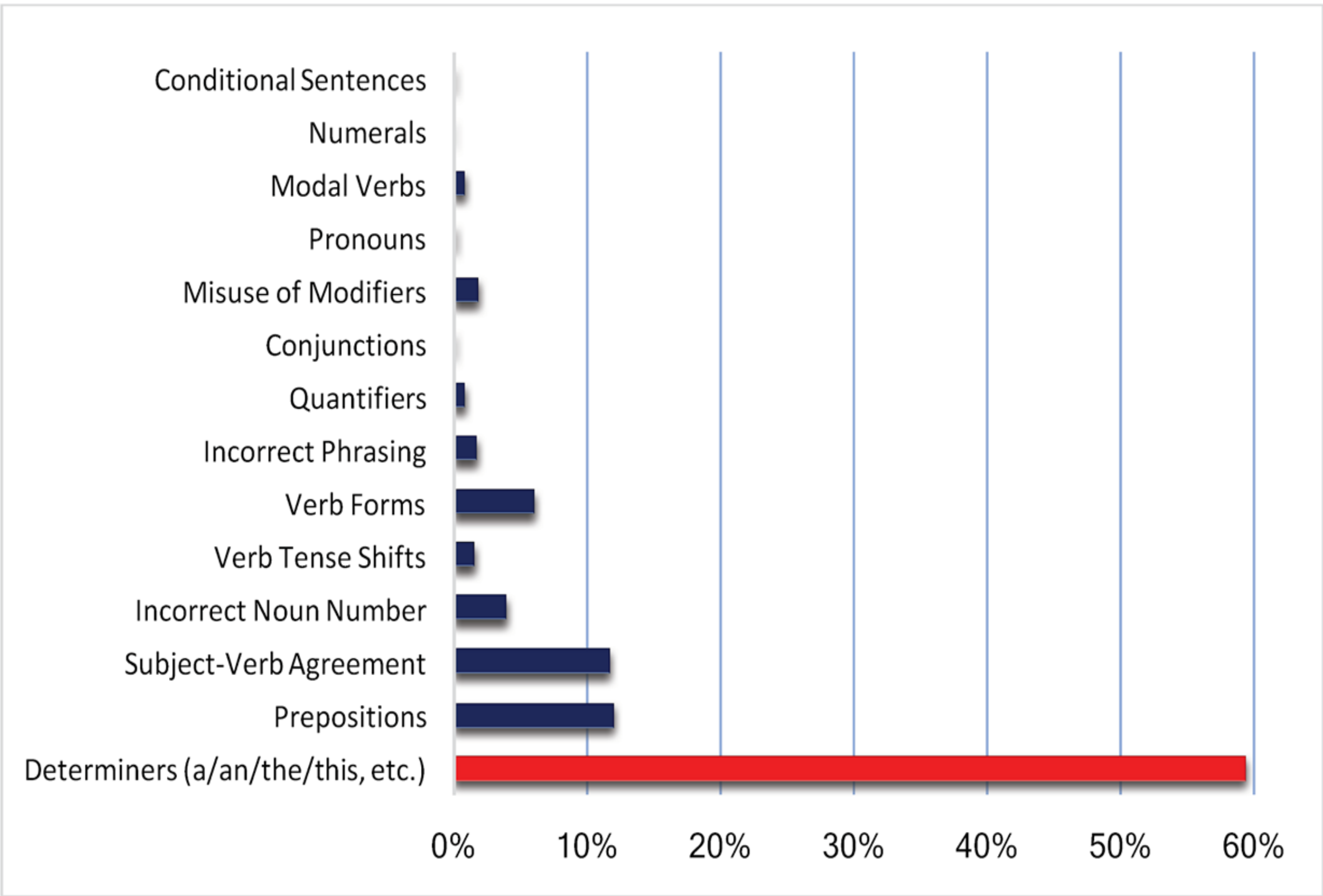


Figure 2. Some common errors that were found in the students' writings were found to be similar to ones found in non-ESL students' writing (wordvice.com, 2012)

RESULTS

- Use of semantics had highest level of errors
- Grammar was the second most prominent error in student writings
- Conventions and punctuations were on average generally okay because of help from technology and the students' ability to memorize general writing rules



Figure 3. It is important to celebrate every achievement in order to stay motivated for the journey of the learning process.

CONCLUSIONS

Between all the sources, the results came out to be that ESL students collectively on average struggle in similar areas: punctuation, grammar, and spelling (Mangelsdorf, 1992). The students struggled in similar areas that even non-ESL students struggle in, but in the ESL students' case, there was more struggle due to comprehension trouble in lectures and communication complications (Nelson & Carson, 1998). While these studies recognized the struggles of ESL students, they don't ask the students what resources were made available to them and what resources assisted them. I think in the future, we should go straight to students and include them in our search for a solution to their problems. In conclusion, language is a struggle for everyone, and we should all work together to make it a tool for success rather than an obstacle.



Figure 4. The struggle to learn a new language is real, and we should be observant of how we can improve our existing programs.

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