

Experiencing Troubles in Placing Modifiers in Students' Teaching Practice Stories Across Disciplines

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ABSTRACT

Mastering grammar is essential for English learners, particularly the accurate placement of modifiers, which is often overlooked in academic writing. This research investigates the types of misplaced modifiers found in the teaching practice blog posts written by SEA Teacher participants. Misplaced modifiers can disrupt clarity and change the intended meaning of a sentence, yet they are often overlooked in academic writing instruction. Referring to Fowler and Aaron's (2012) classification, this research aims to identify and analyze seven types of misplaced modifiers. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the researcher analyzed 30 narrative blog posts by SEA Teacher participants. The data were collected by identifying sentences that contained misplaced modifiers, then categorizing them based on their types. The analysis reveals that the most frequently occurring type is misplaced phrases and clauses (36.4%), followed by incorrect adverb placement (21.2%). These two types are dominant because they involve longer, more complex sentence structures where the intended meaning is often lost when modifiers are placed too far from the words they describe. Less frequent errors include squinting modifiers, limiting modifiers, and the incorrect order of adjectives. These findings indicate the need for more explicit grammar instruction to help pre-service teachers improve their syntactic accuracy in academic and reflective writing.

Keywords: *Misplaced Modifiers, Modifier Types, SEA Teacher Program, Teaching Practice Blogs.*

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INTRODUCTION

The international language used worldwide is English, and one of essential elements that learners must master is grammar. According to Royani & Sadiyah (2019), grammar is a system used to create different meanings of words that help construct sentences in writing. Dalil (2013) also points out that grammar is a structured system made up of various interconnected elements that help maintain clarity and correctness. For non-native English speakers, mastering grammar is important because it helps avoid misunderstanding and improves language accuracy. When learners do not follow correct grammatical patterns especially the use of modifier, the writing can become confusing, that leads to misleading in meaning even if the vocabulary is good.

A modifier is a word or group of words that gives more information about another word in a sentence. It makes the meaning easier to understand by showing which one?, what kind?, or how?. For example, in the sentence "The small cat slept on the couch," the word "small" is a modifier that tells us more about the cat. According to Luo (2022) a modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that provides description, clarification, or additional detail to another element within a sentence. To make writing clear, modifiers must be placed correctly to avoid confusion from misplaced modifiers.

A misplaced modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that is positioned incorrectly, making it unclear which word or words it is intended to modify (Bryan, 2023). This is considered a grammar error because it can change the meaning of a sentence or make it hard to understand. According to Bryan (2023), misplaced modifiers can be categorized into three types: limiting modifiers, misplaced phrases and clauses, and squinting modifiers. Fowler & Aaron (2012)

also point out misplaced modifier into seven types: clear placement of modifiers (misplaced phrases and clauses), limiting modifier, squinting modifier, separation of subject, verb, and object, separation of parts of infinitives or verb phrases, position of adverbs, and order of adjectives. Correct placement of modifiers helps make writing clear and easy to understand. Modifiers play a key role in writing because they help make the meaning of a sentence clearer and more detailed. Lunsford and O'Brien (2011), emphasize that modifiers should be placed correctly to ensure they clearly and unambiguously refer to a specific word or phrase in a sentence. These issues are particularly relevant in written narratives, such as teaching practice stories, where clear and accurate writing is very important for understanding.

The SEA-Teacher Project, initiated by SEAMEO (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization), is an international practicum program that provides pre-service teachers from Southeast Asian countries with cross-cultural teaching experiences in partner schools across the region (Wijayanti & Syahrurah, 2021). As part of the program, participants are encouraged to reflect on their practicum experiences by writing narrative essay blogs of their teaching practice. According to SEAMEO (2025), these narrative blogs serve not only as personal reflections but also as a platform for sharing educational and cultural insights gained during the exchange. A narrative essay, by definition, tells a story; while it follows a conventional academic structure, it offers greater freedom for creativity and personal expression compared to other academic writing genres (Mohammed, 2021). Therefore, it is essential to ensure that the teaching practice narrative blogs written by SEA-Teacher students are free from misplaced modifiers to maintain clarity and coherence in their storytelling.

Some researchers have taken a closer look at misplaced modifiers in English, pointing out how even tiny errors can totally change what a sentence means. Al-samarrai (2021), who Identifying Misplaced Modifiers in English sentence explained how misplaced modifiers can make sentences confusing or unclear. They found that many non-native English speakers make this mistake because they do not fully understand sentence structure. Another study is by Julaiika et al. (2025) entitled *Exploring Student Awareness of Sentence Construction: The Role of Misplaced Words and Phrases in One-Clause Sentences*, also showed that students often do not realize when they write with misplaced modifiers. They noted that this issue is not just about grammar rules, but also about how people think and organize ideas in writing. In addition, Putri & Fatimah (2020), in *Students' Ability in Understanding Dangling Modifiers at Universitas Negeri Padang*, focused specifically on students' comprehension of dangling modifiers. Their quantitative study revealed that many students struggled to identify and correct dangling modifiers, particularly those involving elliptical clauses, which resulted in generally low grammar test scores. Lastly, Ojonugwa & Sule (2023) in the research *Linguistic Analysis of Dangling Modifiers in the Written Essays of Undergraduates of Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba* analyzed undergraduate essays and found that dangling modifiers frequently resulted from the misuse of passive voice, participial phrase misplacement, and pronoun ambiguity.

Although previous researchers have discussed misplaced modifiers, however; their researches did not extend to an analysis of how these errors manifest within more complex forms of formal writing, such as narrative blogs, academic papers, or student assignments, where the stakes for clarity and coherence are much higher. To fill the gap, this research focuses on analyzing seven types of misplaced modifiers in real-life writing, specifically in narrative teaching practice blog posts written by students participating in international teaching programs across disciplines. The researcher examines narrative teaching practice blog posts from the SEA Teacher program, in which student teachers who are non-native English speakers share their teaching experiences. Since the blogs are written by non-native speakers, so grammar mistakes, including misplaced modifiers, are likely to appear. Studying these blogs can help us understand what kind of grammar problems student teachers commonly face in storytelling. Based on that, the research questions posed in this research are meant to know what types of misplaced modifiers found in SEA Teacher narrative blogs and their occurrences in the teaching practice narrative blog.

The results of this study can be useful for several groups. For English teachers and lecturers, it can help them create better learning materials that focus on sentence structure. For students, especially those who are not native English speakers, it can help them become more aware of how to write clearly and avoid confusing sentences. Finally, for researchers in applied linguistics, this study provides insight into how grammar works in authentic written narratives, especially in international and multicultural teaching contexts like SEA Teacher.

METHOD

Research Design

This research used a descriptive qualitative design to explore the types of misplaced modifiers found in students' teaching practice stories written in the SEA Teacher Batch 10 blogs. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research helps researchers understand a problem in its natural setting, focusing on meaning and context. The design was chosen in order to explore the various types of misplaced modifiers found in teaching practice narrative blogs and to determine which types occurred most frequently, providing a deeper understanding of students' writing patterns as non-native English speakers.

Data Source and Participants

The data were collected from 30 blog posts written by 30 SEA Teachers Batch 10 participants across various disciplines who took part in international teaching internships. These blog posts, which reflect each participant's teaching experience, were selected because they are written in English and follow a narrative format. The participants come from different Southeast Asian countries, such as Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, and represent various academic backgrounds, including English education, mathematics, and science. Since the blogs are publicly available and written as reflections, they provide authentic examples of how student teachers use English in real writing contexts.

Data Collection

The data were collected by visiting the SEA Teacher Batch 10 blog website, where each participant's blog link is listed in a column. The researcher manually clicked on each student's link to access their individual blog. From these blogs, narrative entries describing teaching practice experiences were selected. Each post was carefully read, and sentences that contained modifiers were highlighted. Sentences that showed signs of unclear, ambiguous, or incorrect modifier placement were selected for analysis. These included examples where the modifier appeared too far from the word it was supposed to modify, causing a change or confusion in meaning.

Data Analysis

The analysis in this research adopts the framework of misplaced modifiers presented in *The Little, Brown Handbook* by Fowler and Aaron (2012). According to this framework, a misplaced modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that is incorrectly separated from the word it modifies, often causing confusion or unintended meaning in a sentence.

This research focuses on identifying and categorizing various types of misplaced modifiers, as described in each group below:

Clear Placement of Modifier (Misplaced Phrases and Clauses)

Clear placement of modifiers refers to the proper positioning of a phrase or clause so that it clearly modifies the intended word in a sentence. When a modifier is placed too far from the word it is meant to describe, it creates confusion or unintended meaning. This type of error is commonly referred to as misplaced phrases and clauses. A misplaced phrase, such as in "*She served sandwiches to the children on paper plates,*" can be confusing, making it sound like the children were on the plates. A better version is "*She served the children sandwiches on paper plates.*"

Limiting Modifier

These include words such as only, just, almost, and even, which must be placed directly before the word they modify to avoid ambiguity. Incorrect placement can completely change the meaning of the sentence. For example, a limiting modifier like only in the sentence "He

wore only cowboy boots to the rodeo," sounds like he wore nothing else. The corrected version, "He wore cowboy boots only to the rodeo," shows he wears them only for rodeos.

Squinting Modifier

These are modifiers placed between two parts of a sentence, where it is unclear whether the modifier refers to what comes before or after it. This placement causes double interpretation. Squinting modifier placed in the middle of two ideas, like "Running quickly improves your health," is unclear. It can be revised as "Running improves your health quickly" to avoid confusion.

Separation of Subject, Verb, and Object

When modifiers are awkwardly placed between subjects, verbs, or objects, they disrupt sentence flow. One example from the handbook is "The city, after the hurricane, began massive rebuilding." A smoother version would be "After the hurricane, the city began massive rebuilding."

Separation of Parts of Infinitives or Verb Phrases

Infinitives and verb phrases are best kept together. Separating them with modifiers often results in unnatural phrasing. Consider the sentence "The weather service expected temperatures to not rise." The more fluent revision is "The weather service expected temperatures not to rise." While some split infinitives are acceptable, careful placement is essential to avoid clumsiness or confusion.

Position of Adverbs

Misplaced adverbs can cause a sentence to sound unnatural or misleading. For instance, "Robots often are helpful to workers" places the adverb awkwardly. A better version is "Robots are often helpful to workers." Another example, "Robots have been useful especially in making cars," is clearer as "Robots have been especially useful in making cars".

Order of Adjectives

English has a conventional order for adjectives, typically: determiner, opinion, size or shape, color, origin, material, and noun used as adjective, and noun. Ignoring this sequence can result in jarring constructions. For example, "this wooden square table" violates the typical order. The corrected version, "this square wooden table," feels natural and adheres to the expected adjective pattern.

Each sentence identified was categorized into those the seven types. The analysis was carried out in four stages. First, the blog posts were read carefully to identify all sentences containing modifiers. Second, it was determined whether each modifier was placed correctly or not. Third, any misplaced modifier found was classified according to its specific type. Finally, the frequency of each type was counted to determine which type occurred most often.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This research analyzed misplaced modifiers found in blog posts written by SEA Teacher Batch 10 participants, in which they reflected on their teaching practice. A total of 30 students created individual blogs as their final project for the SEA Teacher program. After identifying the data, it was found that the most common type of misplaced modifier was misplaced phrases and clauses.

This section presents the results of the data analysis, which are expected to address the research questions. Specifically, it answers the question regarding the types of misplaced modifiers found in the narrative teaching practice blog posts. The total number of misplaced modifiers identified is shown in the table below:

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Misplaced Modifiers

Misplaced Modifier	Frequency	Percentage
Misplaced Phrases and Clauses	24	36.4%
Limiting Modifier	3	4.5%
Squinting Modifier	8	12.1%
Separation of Subject, Verb, and Object	9	13.6%

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Separation of Parts of Infinitives or Verb Phrases	4	6.1%
Position of Adverbs	14	21.2%
Order of Adjectives	4	6.1%
Total	66	100%

As shown in Table 1, the most frequent type of misplaced modifier found was misplaced phrases and clauses with a frequency of 24 times (36.4%), followed by misplacement of adverbs with a frequency of 14 times (21.2%). The lowest occurred was limiting modifiers with a frequency of 3 times (4.5%).

The following sections provide a detailed description of each type of misplaced modifier found in the SEA Teacher narrative teaching practice blog posts, along with the example.

Misplaced Phrases and Clauses

According to Fowler and Aaron (2012), misplaced phrases and clauses is a type of modifier error that occurs when a descriptive phrase or clause is placed too far from the word it is intended to modify. This misplacement can lead to confusion or an unintended meaning in the sentence. In this research, there were 24 instances, or approximately 36.4% of misplaced phrases and clauses found in the SEA Teacher teaching practice blog posts. One example is shown below:

Data 17

Incorrect sentence: *I gave worksheets to the students after explaining the lesson with incorrect answers.*

Correct sentence: *After explaining the lesson, I gave worksheets with incorrect answers to the students.*

This sentence is confusing because the modifying phrase “*with incorrect answers*” is placed at the end, directly following “*the lesson.*” This positioning makes it seem as though the lesson had incorrect answers, which likely isn’t what the writer meant. The phrase is too far from the noun it is supposed to describe (*worksheets*), so the sentence creates an unintended meaning. Readers may misunderstand the message and think that the teacher explained a flawed lesson, rather than distributing flawed worksheets.

By moving the phrase “*with incorrect answers*” closer to “*worksheets*” in the corrected version, the meaning becomes clearer: “*After explaining the lesson, I gave worksheets with incorrect answers to the students.*” This revision properly aligns the modifier with the noun it is meant to describe. As a result, the sentence delivers the writer’s intended meaning effectively – clarifying that the worksheets, not the lesson, contained the incorrect answers. This correction improves clarity, grammatical structure, and overall readability.

Limiting Modifier

Limiting modifier, as defined by Fowler and Aaron (2012), is a modifier that includes words like *only*, *just*, *almost*, and *even*. It must be placed directly before the word it modifies. Wrong placement can create a completely different meaning in the sentence. In this research, there were 3 instances, or approximately 4.5% of limiting modifier found in the SEA Teacher teaching practice blog posts. This is demonstrated in the example below:

Data 18

Incorrect sentence: *I only allowed students to submit their group work on Monday.*

Correct sentence: *I allowed students to submit their group work only on Monday.*

In this sentence appears after the writer explains their commitment to following a strict schedule: “*I strictly followed my lesson plan, making sure that all activities remained on schedule and that the material was covered within the designated time frame.*” The purpose of this statement is to show how the teacher managed time efficiently. However, in the incorrect sentence, the word “*only*” is placed before “*allowed,*” which changes the meaning. It implies that the teacher’s sole action was giving permission – as if they didn’t teach, explain, or assess – when in fact, the focus should be on when students were allowed to submit.

In the next sentence, “*This helped me to organize the checking schedule more efficiently,*” the writer clearly wants to emphasize that submission was limited to Monday as a way to stay organized. Therefore, the correct version is: “*I allowed students to submit their group work only on*

Monday." This revision places the word "only" before "on Monday," which is the actual information being limited. It accurately reflects the teacher's intention and avoids confusion. This example shows how misplacing limiting modifiers like *only* can unintentionally shift meaning—and why correct placement is essential for clarity.

Squinting Modifier

Squinting modifier is a modifier that is placed between two parts of a sentence, making it unclear whether it modifies the part before it or the part after it, this causes confusion (Fowler and Aaron, 2012). In this research, there were 8 instances, or approximately 12.1% of squinting modifier found in the SEA Teacher teaching practice blog posts. An example of this is provided below:

Data 19

Incorrect sentence: *Discussing their difficulties clearly improves how students respond to feedback.*

Correct sentence: *Discussing their difficulties improves clearly how students respond to feedback.*

In the incorrect sentence "*Discussing their difficulties clearly improves how students respond to feedback,*" the adverb "*clearly*" is placed between two parts of the sentence: "*discussing their difficulties*" and "*improves how students respond.*" This positioning creates ambiguity because it is unclear whether "*clearly*" is modifying the act of discussing or the verb *improves*. One interpretation is that students should clearly discuss their difficulties, while another is that the act of discussing clearly improves their response to feedback.

To clarify this, the sentence is revised as "*Discussing their difficulties improves clearly how students respond to feedback.*" In this corrected version, the adverb "*clearly*" directly modifies the verb *improves*, emphasizing that the act of discussing their difficulties has a clear and noticeable positive impact on how students respond to feedback. This placement eliminates the earlier ambiguity and makes the intended meaning more precise. It highlights that the improvement in student responses is what occurs clearly—not necessarily the clarity of the discussion itself.

Separation of Subject, Verb, and Object

Fowler and Aaron (2012), defined that separation of subject, verb, and object is a misplaced modifier type where a phrase or clause interrupts the natural flow between subject, verb, and object. In this research, there were 9 instances, or approximately 13.6% of Separation of subject, verb, and object found in the SEA Teacher teaching practice blog posts. One example is shown below:

Data 54

Incorrect sentence: *This roadmap, during the sessions, helped me organize effectively the content and activities.*

Correct sentence: *During the sessions, this roadmap helped me organize the content and activities effectively.*

In the incorrect sentence "*This roadmap, during the sessions, helped me organize effectively the content and activities,*" the phrase "*during the sessions*" separates the subject "*this roadmap*" from the verb "*helped,*" while the adverb "*effectively*" disrupts the natural connection between the verb "*organize*" and its objects "*the content and activities.*" This interruption in the typical subject-verb-object order makes the sentence harder to follow and affects the clarity of the intended message.

The corrected version, "*During the sessions, this roadmap helped me organize the content and activities effectively,*" restores the natural flow of the sentence. The introductory phrase "*during the sessions*" sets the context without interrupting the core structure, and "*effectively*" is placed at the end to clearly modify the verb phrase "*organize the content and activities.*" This revision enhances readability and ensures that the meaning is communicated smoothly and precisely.

Separation of Parts of Infinitives or Verb Phrases

Separation of parts of infinitives or verb phrases is a misplaced modifier problem where a modifier is placed between *to* and the verb, or between parts of a verb phrase (Fowler

and Aaron, 2012). It often sounds unnatural. In this research, there were 4 instances, or approximately 6.1%, of separation of parts of infinitives or verb phrases found in the SEA Teacher teaching practice blog posts. The point is demonstrated in the following example:

Data 55

Incorrect sentence: *I reminded myself to always try to not correct students immediately when they were thinking.*

Correct sentence: *I reminded myself to always try not to correct students immediately when they were thinking.*

In the incorrect sentence "*I reminded myself to always try to not correct students immediately when they were thinking,*" the phrase "*to not correct*" separates the parts of the infinitive "*to correct.*" This separation creates a slightly awkward and unnatural flow, making the sentence harder to process. It also draws unnecessary attention to the word "*not*" and may confuse the reader about what exactly is being negated – *trying* or *correcting*.

The corrected version, "*I reminded myself to always try not to correct students immediately when they were thinking,*" keeps the infinitive "*to correct*" together and places the modifier "*not*" in the appropriate position. This revision restores the smooth and natural structure of the verb phrase, making the intended meaning clearer: that the teacher tries not to interrupt students' thinking by correcting them immediately. Proper placement of modifiers in infinitives and verb phrases helps avoid ambiguity and ensures clarity in writing.

Position of Adverbs

According to Fowler and Aaron (2012), Position of adverbs is a misplaced modifier type that occurs when an adverb is placed too far from the word it modifies, resulting in confusion or an unnatural sentence. In this research, there were 14 instances, or approximately 21.2% of position of adverbs found in the SEA Teacher teaching practice blog posts. An example of this is given below:

Data 14

Incorrect sentence: *I can ask easily them everything.*

Correct sentence: *I can easily ask them everything.*

In the incorrect sentence "*I can ask easily them everything,*" the adverb "*easily*" is placed between the verb "*ask*" and the pronoun "*them.*" This placement creates an unnatural sentence structure and may confuse the reader. It disrupts the flow and makes it unclear whether "*easily*" is modifying "*ask*" or "*them,*" which affects the clarity of the sentence.

In the corrected version, "*I can easily ask them everything,*" the adverb "*easily*" is correctly placed before the verb "*ask,*" clearly indicating that it modifies the action of asking. This structure is more natural and easier to understand. By placing the adverb closer to the word it modifies, the sentence becomes smoother and more precise, demonstrating the importance of proper adverb placement to avoid misinterpretation.

Order of Adjectives

Fowler and Aaron (2012) state that Order of adjectives is a misplaced modifier type that refers to using adjectives in the wrong sequence. English follows a standard order: determiner, opinion, size or shape, color, origin, material, and purpose (noun use as adjective). In this research, there were 4 instances, or approximately 6.1% of order of adjectives found in the SEA Teacher teaching practice blog posts. An example of this appears below:

Data 56

Incorrect sentence: *I included educational fun small games that were relevant to the topic.*

Correct sentence: *I included fun small educational games that were relevant to the topic.*

In the incorrect sentence, the adjectives "*educational,*" "*fun,*" and "*small*" are placed in an unnatural sequence, making the sentence sound awkward. Although each adjective is appropriate, the order in which they appear does not follow the typical flow used in English. This can subtly confuse the reader or make the sentence feel less polished.

In the corrected version, the adjectives are reordered to reflect a more natural progression in description: "*fun*" as an opinion, "*small*" as size, and "*educational*" as purpose.

This arrangement improves clarity and fluency, making the sentence easier to read and understand. The example shows that when multiple adjectives are used before a noun, their placement should align with familiar patterns to maintain smooth and effective communication.

Discussion

The findings of this research reveal that misplaced phrases and clauses are the most frequently occurring type of misplaced modifier in SEA Teacher participants' teaching practice blog posts, with 24 instances accounting for 36.4% of all identified errors. This indicates that many students experience difficulty in properly positioning descriptive elements within sentences. When a modifying phrase or clause is placed too far from the word it is supposed to modify, it can create confusion, obscure meaning, and even lead to unintended interpretations. In academic writing—especially reflective narrative writing, such as blog posts—clarity and coherence are essential. Therefore, the frequent occurrence of this error type suggests a pressing need to strengthen students' understanding of sentence structure.

This research is in line with the research conducted Julaika et al. (2025), who also found a high number of misplaced words and phrases in student writing. Their research attributed these errors to factors such as first language interference and limited explicit grammar instruction. While their research primarily explored students' awareness and perceptions through interviews and observations, the present research offers a different perspective by focusing on the actual patterns and frequency of such errors in authentic writing samples. Although the focus of the two pieces of research differs, both highlight that misplaced modifiers—particularly phrases and clauses—remain a significant issue in student writing. These errors can lead to confusion and may alter the intended meaning of a sentence. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to provide students with more targeted practice and clear explanations on how to place modifiers correctly. Doing so will help students improve their sentence construction and become more effective writers.

This research is also supported by the findings of Manik et al. (2022), who found that errors involving adjective morphology were relatively rare—only 7 cases, or 4.6%. This is comparable to the current research's findings on the order of adjectives, which accounted for 6.1% of all errors. Both studies suggest that students may be more comfortable with basic, one-word modifiers such as adjectives, but experience greater difficulty when constructing or arranging longer modifiers like multi-word phrases and clauses. One possible reason for this is that adjectives in English follow a clear and consistent order, making them easier to learn and apply. According to Fowler & Aaron (2012), English adjective order typically follows a standard pattern: determiner, opinion, size or shape, color, origin, material, and purpose. Because of this fixed sequence, students are less likely to be confused when using adjectives, as they can rely on established rules.

The second most frequent error type identified was the position of adverbs, with 14 instances (21.2%). This suggests that learners often face difficulties in deciding where to place adverbs within verb phrases or clauses, which can significantly influence sentence emphasis or clarity. As Garnier (2012) explains, many adverbs are polysemous or convey different meanings based on their placement in a sentence, making their correct usage challenging—even for native speakers.

Other error types, such as the separation of subject, verb, and object (9 instances or 13.6%), squinting modifiers (8 instances or 12.1%), separation of parts of infinitives or verb phrases (4 instances or 6.1%), and order of adjectives (4 instances or 6.1%) were also observed in notable numbers. The least frequent were limiting modifiers, with only 3 instances (4.5%). Although less common, these types of errors can still significantly affect how accurately a sentence conveys its intended meaning, particularly in academic or reflective writing.

While offering strategies was not the primary aim of this research, the findings support established writing guidelines, such as those provided by Butte College (2019), which emphasize the importance of clear and precise modifier placement. According to these guidelines, there are four key rules that can help writers avoid most modifier errors. First, simple adjectives should precede the nouns they modify—for example, we say *aromatic tea*,

not *tea aromatic*—to maintain clarity. Second, adjective phrases and clauses should follow the nouns they describe and be placed as close as possible to those nouns to avoid ambiguity or unintended interpretations. Third, while adverbs can move around freely in a sentence, writers must ensure that each adverb is positioned next to the word it modifies, especially in longer or more complex sentences, to prevent confusion. Finally, limiters—such as *only*, *almost*, *just*, and *nearly*—should be placed directly before the word they are meant to modify, as misplacement can significantly change the meaning of a sentence.

These practical strategies are relevant to the most frequent types of misplaced modifiers identified in this research, especially in phrases, clauses, adverbs, and limiters. By applying these principles, writers can ensure that their sentences are not only grammatically correct but also clear and unambiguous, thereby improving the overall quality of their academic writing.

In conclusion, modifier placement remains a significant challenge for many students, particularly in the context of reflective writing. Misplaced modifiers, especially phrases, clauses, and adverbs, can disrupt clarity, shift meaning, and undermine the effectiveness of written communication. These findings highlight the importance of integrating focused grammar instruction into writing curricula, with an emphasis on practical strategies and error analysis. Through consistent practice, teacher feedback, and exposure to well-structured examples, students can gradually develop stronger control over sentence construction. Future research may explore the impact of targeted grammar interventions or the influence of students' first languages on modifier placement patterns, to further support learner development in academic writing.

CONCLUSIONS

This study highlights the persistent challenge of correct modifier placement in student writing, which is crucial for clarity and effective communication. The findings demonstrate that errors such as misplaced phrases, clauses, and adverbs are common, often influenced by factors like limited explicit grammar instruction and first language interference. Addressing these issues through targeted teaching strategies, consistent practice, and constructive feedback can significantly improve students' sentence structure and overall writing quality. Emphasizing practical rules for modifier placement, as supported by established guidelines, can help learners produce clearer and more precise sentences. Future research should explore the effectiveness of specific interventions and consider linguistic backgrounds to further enhance teaching approaches and learner outcomes.

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