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The Theory and Practice of Misspelling : A Linguistic Analysis

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THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MISSPELLING:

A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

By

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THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MISSPELLING:

A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Arts, and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirements for this degree. Acceptance of this thesis does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

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My mother, Margaret Frasch, who remains forever amazed at her daughter's academic achievements.

My mother- and father-in-law, Helen and Alfred, who steadfastly maintained: "You'll get your degree; it's just a matter of time."

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JFW

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INTRODUCTION

Background

    I have always enjoyed a healthy interest in words, their etymologies, and spellings as far back as the seventh grade when I entered and was fifth runner-up in the Lehigh Valley Spelling Bee as a representative from Our Lady Help of Christians School in Allentown, Pennsylvania. I was always fascinated with words, and was continually pulling out the Merriam-Webster Dictionary in order to look up the etymologies and meanings of certain words that I had heard on television or seen in print. "Linguistics" was a word unfamiliar to me until college when I enrolled in my first course. It was there that I discovered that phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, which had always held my interest but had remained nameless, finally became grouped under one heading.

    Sister Mercedes, one of my high school English teachers, never called what she was teaching "Linguistics"; she merely taught her ninth graders which phonetic sounds represent which letter(s) of the alphabet, stressed the use of a dictionary/thesaurus to enhance our word power, and attempted to illustrate how etymology can be a good guide to remembering the spelling of certain "foreign" or "polysyllabic" words. As I think back now, she always approached teaching optimistically (and prescriptively), and one of her positive statements with which she impressed her students concerning the necessity of cogent writing (and which she had us commit to memory) is the Latin

proverb "Verba volent, scripta manent," or "The spoken word flies away, the written word remains." I found myself unconsciously impressing this upon my Freshman Composition students during the semesters I taught without connecting that fact until now.

As a graduate teaching assistant instructing a freshman writing course, I found teaching both rewarding and challenging. The satisfaction that I derived from helping students improve their writing skills is immeasurable. Moreover, I found grading themes quite a learning experience. It taught me not to look solely at errors in grammar and syntax as mere "dumb" mistakes which were written by students with below-average intelligence out of carelessness or haste, although there were those kinds as well. On the contrary, it challenged me to use all my resources to inspect errors analytically and more critically in an attempt to discover why and how they were made. My curiosity was aroused because I sensed a much deeper source to the spelling problem than just ordinary carelessness or stupidity. I began wondering about the workings of the students' minds as they "invented" new words and "created" innovative spellings, and thus, an idea for a master's thesis was born.

Methodology

The freshmen at South Dakota State University are primarily students who have lived their entire lives in small agricultural communities. They are neither stupid nor unintelligent but merely inexperienced in writing formal exposition. Many of them come from

towns with populations under one-thousand and high school graduating classes of twenty-five to fifty. Their primary means of communication (up until they enrolled in college) was through speech. Because they rarely write, they feel very uncomfortable about learning to write effectively. For the most part, these inexperienced writers are bright but unable to express themselves orthographically. There were some who, in spite of their limited linguistic knowledge, excelled far beyond what would normally be expected of them. The majority, though, were inexperienced writers who wrote as they spoke because they were simply unaware of those basic differences which separate speech from writing. These were the students from whom I collected misspelled words to be used ultimately as data for my thesis.

I collected and typed on individual index cards over five-hundred errors from which I selected representative samples based on Chomsky's "clear case principle." These unusual spellings and hyper-corrections are attempts by conscientious students to master the language in written form. Furthermore, in an attempt to write more "educated" words, the inexperienced writer goes beyond correctness and produces an "innovative" word or phrase. Noam Chomsky, in his book entitled <u>Syntactic Structures</u>, defines what he means by the "clear case principle":

> The fundamental aim in linguistic analysis of a language L
> is to separate the 'grammatical' sequences which are sen-
> tences of L from the 'ungrammatical' sequences which are not

sentences of L and to study the structure of the grammatical sequences. The grammar of L will thus be a device that generates all of the grammatical sequences of L and none of the ungrammatical ones.... The grammar is set up in the simplest way so that it includes the clear sentences and excludes the clear non-sentences.... A certain number of clear cases, then, will provide us with a criterion of adequacy for any particular grammar. (13-14)

I selected only those errors from freshmen who were native Americans, excluding the errors of any foreign students I had in classes. These particular student errors were collected during the 1981-82, as well as the 1983-84, academic year. I chose only the "clear case" errors that directly demonstrate the theory of error analysis I wish to develop. The other unused errors from each category are listed in the Appendix at the end of each chapter.

Not only did I choose the "clear cases" that exhibit clear syntax, but I also chose examples that exhibit clear semantics. This is known as the "construal principle." Just as Chomsky believes that the grammar under analysis should be "sentences" and not "non-sentences," Fillmore goes one step further and states that not only should the examples under analysis be grammatically "clear" sentences, but also semantically "clear" as well. In his article entitled "On Generativity" in the book by the title, Goals of Linguistic Theory, Fillmore explains what he means by the "construal principle":

Figurative speech [is a string of words] where what is of interest is the structural type which the speaker/[writer] wants the hearer/[reader] to perceive as a framework upon which the hearer's/[reader's] 'construing' abilities can impose some sort of interpretation--hopefully the intended interpretation.... Somebody whose lexicon contains only the literal interpretation of the noun [bitch] but who is observed to use it nevertheless when referring to human beings has made a creative extension of the scope of the word that is accounted for by reference to the knowledge that participants in our civilization use attributions to human beings of nonhuman animal properties for pejoration; somebody who does not use the word when referring to female dogs lacks the original sense and has a lexical entry for <u>bitch</u> with the pejorative sense built in rather than acquired by a construal principle. (8 and 11)

These two criteria, namely, grammar and meaning, were essential elements when I chose representative samples. With these two key factors in mind, I want to present a brief overview of my error-analysis categories.

Overview

The errors that I analyzed comprise five separate categories: anticipation/perseveration, metathesis, blends, tip of the tongue, and malapropisms. I decided on these five areas because I felt that these

were the "interesting" and "intelligent" errors which would warrant my close analysis and inspection, and in so doing, allow me to delve deeper into the workings of the mind in terms of how morphology, phonology, semantics, and syntax play an important role in "justifying" them. A sixth chapter deals with "convergence" and makes use of a number of different kinds of errors to illustrate a specific point. Each type of error was analyzed thoroughly by my looking at syllabification, phonetic similarity, sentential stress, feature similarity, syntax, semantics, and morphology. Only by examining all these areas can one arrive at any kind of meaningful and beneficial conclusions regarding the evolution of error.

The first category of errors is anticipation which deals with a sound or phoneme which appears erroneously in a word as a result of the influence of the same sound or phoneme occurring in the word(s) following the error. An example of this type of error is rad apple instead of red apple where the a of apple is anticipated, and prematurely appears in the adjective red as well as the noun in which it is found. Perseveration, the opposite of anticipation, deals with a sound or phoneme which appears erroneously in a word as a result of the influence of the same sound or phoneme occurring in the word(s) preceding the error. An example to illustrate this point is the phrase blue bloxes instead of the intended blue boxes. The l of blue is perseverated or carried over into the following word boxes.

Metathesis is the second category from which I selected errors. It deals with the transposition of letters within words as a

result of some similarity in sound, stress, and structure which are found in other words within the sentence. An example to illustrate this type of error is the word parnets instead of parents.

Next are the blends which consist of the combining of two words so that portions of both words are eliminated and portions of both are retained which blend together to produce a "new" word. An example of this type of error is the "invention" of the word prejudism as a result of the blending of the two words, prejudice and racism. It should be noted that the ice of prejudice and the rac of racism are discarded.

Tip of the tongue (TOT), the fourth category, deals with those words which cannot be immediately recalled, and therefore, what results are words which approximate the intended ones in certain ways, namely, number of syllables, stress pattern, and identical initial and final letters. An example of this phenomenon is the TOT word predesaned for the intended word predestined.

The fifth category of errors is known as malapropisms which are words that resemble the intended ones in sound, stress, syllable structure, and similar initial and final letters, but have very different (and sometimes humorous) meanings to the intended words. An example from this category is the word inhibited which is used instead of the intended one inhabited.

The last category deals with various kinds of egregious errors in order to demonstrate the "convergence principle" which, simply defined, means that students who tend to make errors consistently

throughout their themes suffer from what is known as a "converging" effect, that is, their errors multiply toward the ends of sentences, paragraphs, and themes because these students become either physically or mentally tired and/or lose motivation. An example to illustrate this effect is the following excerpt: <u>Monday I work on my Research paper all day a most of that night. I wanted to get done because I wanted to leave early for Thanksgiving. But once it was done I fealt geart.</u> There are many kinds of errors in this excerpt which point to physical and mental fatigue as a result of writing a research paper continuously for one day and a good deal of the night.

This is a general overview of the kinds of errors that I will analyze in the following chapters. I find these errors fascinating to examine because they lead to insights into the world of phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, and lexicon. These areas linguistically intertwine during the course of the encoding process, and because they intertwine, the students produce "innovative" and "creative" additions to the English language. Moreover, in analyzing them, one moves a little closer to understanding how the mind operates and how ingenious and complex human language really is.

To illustrate vividly the kind of inexperienced writers I dealt with in the course of teaching, I am reminded of one student in particular who represents a typical male student who enrolls in a Midwestern state college in South Dakota. Eldon usually came to class except during Hobo Week festivities and the days preceding and following "long" weekends and holiday breaks. He shuffled into the

classroom wearing a bright green cap with the inscription "Northrup/King Seeds" written in yellow letters across the front, a pair of cowhide boots, and a tee shirt boasting that "Cowboys do it better." Eldon wrote exactly the way he spoke and was not the least bit intimidated by all the red marks and comments that were written on his themes. He came from a small West River ranching community where his father owned a considerable acreage of land and a sizable number of cattle. It was obvious from the start that Eldon was enrolled in college because his parents had insisted.

One day in class we were discussing why a college education is important and more particularly why it is necessary to learn how to write effectively (and to take Freshman Composition). After talking a while, exchanging views with a number of students, and giving some pertinent examples to illustrate my point, I noticed Eldon shaking his head negatively from side to side and wearing a cynical smile while at the same time moving a wad of Copenhagen from one cheek to the other and spitting the excess saliva into an empty Coke can. I asked him if he had something to contribute to the discussion and he answered: "I ain't never gonna have ta write nothin cuz my major is ageraculture and I'm fixin ta be around aminals all my life. Besides, I learned a lot of that English crap in high school and reckons I knows enough to git by." Then the bell rang. I also shook my head from side to side, smiled disbelievingly, moved from one side of the desk to the other in order to collect out-of-class themes, and wondered just what kinds of "interesting" errors I was going to discover in Eldon's theme.

CHAPTER 1

ANTICIPATION AND PERSEVERATION

Anticipation is the type of spelling error that results because the student's brain thinks ahead of what that person actually writes. Cohen, in his article entitled "Errors of Speech and Their Implication for Understanding the Strategy of Language Users," defines anticipation as follows: "Whenever the segment which is actually being produced clearly reflects the influence of a segment that should occur later..." (89). For example, in the sentence The two main qualities of grade three thinkers, prejudicy and hypocrisy, can be found in Hitler, the word prejudicy is spelled with a y because this student anticipates or concentrates on the segment [y] at the end of the word hypocrisy. This type of error is not necessarily the result of the student's inability to spell prejudice, but is the result of the slow motor operation of the hand and arm trying to maintain the same speed as this student's rapidly-thinking brain. When the mind continues to think ahead of what the hand can actually write, confusion inadvertently occurs.

The fact that prejudice also has the /s/ sound as does the word hypocrisy makes it easier for the student to analogize and add the [y] to the end of that word. This inexperienced writer is obviously aware of the parallelism that is stressed in grammar, but goes beyond correctness at this point to hypercorrection. The phonetic similarity, along with the hypercorrection and the brain's

speed thinking, account for the error. It should be noted that both words /prɛ́jədɪsi/ and /həpákrɪsi/ are nouns and their syntax is that of appositives in the sentence. The anticipation error occurs in the unstressed syllable and, as a result of the added [y], there is a secondary stress placed on the third syllable of the misspelled word.

When teachers discover errors, they must look at all aspects of sentence construction, namely, the phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, in order to determine why such errors are made. All errors cannot be dismissed as mere stupidity on the student's part, but can actually be "intelligent" errors that produce more information for researchers and teachers alike on how the mind operates during the encoding and writing process.

In another example, The laser is more practicle than the particle beam at a surface base because the particle beam is limited to its angle of firing, where the laser isn't, the word practicle has the ending le instead of al in anticipation of the le ending of the word particle. /Prǽktəkəl/ and /pártəkəl/ are similar in sound, stress, and spelling. The vowel a, pronounced /æ/ in practical and /a/ in particle, is the difference that can be heard between these two words or seen in their phonetic transcription. The a is also found in the last syllable of practical and not in the word particle, but the pronunciation for both end syllables is identical because both are unstressed and therefore phonetically receive the schwa /ə/. In this anticipation error there is a substitution of one ending le for the

correct one al. The brain's gestalt formed much faster than the motor operation of this student's hand in an attempt to finish the sentence.

Some interferences operate in this sentence to confuse the student further. First, the error and another word in the sentence are similar to each other in sound, stress, and spelling. Second, the word particle plays an important role in the meaning of the sentence because it is compared to the laser and the word itself is repeated twice within the sentence. This student's brain is forming many gestalts during the writing process, namely, expressing a thought in words, deciding how the words should be placed syntactically in the sentence, choosing words that are semantically appropriate, monitoring the sentence for completeness and accuracy, and sending impulses to the arm and hand to transcribe the thought orthographically. With all these gestalts continually going on, it is easy to understand why an anticipation error, such as the one noted above, occurs.

D. B. Fry, in an article entitled "The Linguistic Evidence of Speech Errors," devises a particular schema for the encoding process which he believes occurs in a person's brain before it becomes speech. The same process occurs for writing; the only difference is the type of motor control, that is, the arm and hand muscles are used instead of the vocal cords, tongue, and mouth. Fry names the stages of the encoding process in the following manner:

Semantic Encoding

Lexical Encoding

Morpheme Encoding

Phoneme Encoding

Motor Control   (158)

His series of gestalts is an ongoing one which means that the writer's brain does not finish the first gestalt (Semantic Encoding) before going on to the second one (Lexical Encoding) and so on through the five gestalts, but rather the first gestalt begins ahead of the other operations in the process and each successive step is constantly monitored by the student's brain. Lashley, in his article entitled "The Problem of Serial Order in Behavior," defines monitoring by explaining that "after a movement is initiated, it is continued until stopped by sensations of movement and position, which indicates that the [student's] limb has reached the desired position" (122). When the student is satisfied that the necessary morphology, phonology, semantics, and syntax are correct and/or complete, that student continues on to the next sentence. The crucial element, then, in Fry's schema is _time_ (158) and in Lashley's explanation it is sentence completion (188).

A look at another example illustrates an anticipation error that occurs at the levels of lexical and morphemic encoding. _Also, there is no real equiptment needed except for a good pair of running shoes._ The word /ikwÍpmənt/ without the _t_ is the intended word, but the _t_ is added as a result of the word _except_ which is found a few words later in the sentence. It should be noted that the error occurs in the stressed syllable of that word and in the word it anticipates. Because the letter _p_ is found in both words and the stress falls on

the syllable containing the consonant [p], may be all the more reason why this student unconsciously placed a t in the word equiptment. The error can also be the result of the student's dilemma about which idiomatic preposition to use: except meaning other than or the colloquial version except for meaning if it were not for. This indecision could have caused the anticipation error because the student's mind was distracted by other decisions. Likewise, it is possible that this student reanalyzed the word. The verb equip in the past tense is spelled /əkwĭpt/. The -ed sounds like a [t]. The student may have been thinking about past tense and the voiceless /t/, and added the morpheme {ment} to the word in order to derive the noun form. There are a great many operations at work when the student is in the process of constructing an orthographically-correct sentence. In this particular instance, the lengthy monitoring process and the morphophonemic rules of grammar may have collided to produce the error cited above. This error points particularly to the importance of proofreading and editing material after it has been written. The inexperienced writer is not likely to go through these extra steps because this kind of writer is not accustomed to checking and re-checking the written word.

In the next example, there is a substitution error. A vowel is substituted for the letters er. The example reads: The word victory sounded like the right thing to pray for, yet did they really undustand what an actual victory would result in? In this error the student's mind was operating at the motor level of putting a thought

orthographically on paper and monitoring the other levels of encoding for correctness and completeness of thought. This student may have been concentrating on the word <u>actual</u> while the arm and hand muscles wrote the word <u>undustand</u>. The student anticipated the [u] in /ǽkšyuəl/ and that letter <u>u</u> unconsciously made its way into the word /ʌndərstǽnd/ as /ʌndustǽnd/. The frequency of the letter <u>u</u> in this sentence also contributes to the likelihood of error. the /ər/ and /u/ have similar features in that both use rounded lips to form the sounds and the tongue is placed low and back in the mouth. The error occurs in the unstressed syllable of the word, and an unstressed syllable many times assumes the schwa or /ə/ sound. In this sentence the student seems to be in doubt about expressing this thought. The person begins the sentence with the words <u>The word victory</u> as though the writer were going to define or explain <u>victory,</u> and then continues on a different trend of thought by asking a question concerning what an <u>actual victory</u> entailed. This uncertainty about how to express the thought and subsequent time lapse that slowed down the encoding process probably added to the confusion and resulted in the anticipation error.

In the next two examples, the anticipation error occurs within the word itself whereas previous examples dealt with errors that resulted because of other words in the sentence. The first example reads: <u>But I would think the man was a sage, who has dealt with the promblem and thought it out to both ends</u>. In the word <u>problem</u>

/práblǝm/ the student has placed an m in the first syllable in anticipation of the m which occurs in the second syllable. The /m/ is a strong nasal sound which is formed by closing the mouth and allowing the air to escape through the nose. The /b/, on the other hand, is a voiced bilabial which is formed by closing the lips, vibrating the vocal cords, and then allowing the air to explode from the lips as they are opened. Both of these sounds can be easily articulated, one right after the other, because of the unconscious ease by which the velum opens or closes. Since there are no other m's in the same clause, it can safely be assumed that this student anticipated the /m/ sound at the end of the word and concentrated so heavily on that particular sound that the student unconsciously placed an m before the b as well as after the e. There is phonetic similarity as well because the [p], [b], and [m] are a natural bilabial set in English.

The ending of this sentence, to both ends, tells me that the student was uncertain about how to end this sentence because there may have been some confusion over whether to state it thought it out completely and the strong desire to mention that the man considered both aspects of the problem. Phonetics, semantics, and syntax become confused, and therefore, the anticipation error is more likely to occur than if the student were only concerned with spelling. This indecision contributes to the "problem."

The second example is another within-the-word anticipation error. The sentence reads as follows: The piece "Eulogy for Anwar Sadat," it almost accuses death to be a thief of mand-kind. The

syntactic structure of this sentence is erroneous, first, because the student has pleonastic double subjects, piece and it, and this pronominal apposition is a colloquial syntactic pattern prevalent here in the Midwest. Second, the student chooses the wrong preposition, namely, to instead of the more appropriate one of. The concern, though, is not with syntax although this may be an intrusion that interferes with the student's error of anticipation.

The d of the second syllable, kind, interfered with the student's spelling of the first part of the word. /Mǽnkáynd/ is one word without the hyphen. Whether or not to insert the hyphen could have been a source of confusion for the student when writing the word. Both syllables have an n in them and this similarity of structure makes it easier for the inexperienced writer to place the d on both words without even realizing it. This particular word can be accented on the first or second syllable, depending on the stress and intonation of the sentence. In this particular case it undoubtedly falls on the second syllable. All these intrusions, namely, doubt about syntactic structure, doubt about the hyphen, and anticipation of the morpheme being given sentential stress, may have been contributing factors that added to the likelihood of the anticipation error in spelling. The student was monitoring other areas and proceeding through the stages of encoding and, because of doubt concerning these competing gestalts, created an obvious spelling error.

Now it is time to turn to another area of misspelling known as perseveration. It is the reverse of anticipation and in many ways

related to it. Cohen defines perseveration by stating that it occurs "whenever a segment is produced which clearly reflects the influence of a segment that had already occurred earlier..." (89). Perseveration errors occur less frequently than anticipation errors, and there are hints to the process determining why in the article entitled "Consonant Features in Speech Errors" by van den Broecke and Goldstein. They hypothesize that "initial segments in a word and/or syllable are more likely to be affected by speech/[written] errors than syllable- or word-final segments, possibly because they are more focused on during production" (48). Likewise, Nooteboom in his article "The Tongue Slips into Patterns," notes that:

> Anticipations far outnumber perseverations.... This predominance of anticipations gives us the impression that the speaker's [writer's] attention is normally directed to the future. Preoccupation with what has already been spoken/[written], resulting in perseverations seems to be a relatively rare event. Experimental evidence was given, however, that the percentage of perseverations increases considerably, when the speaker/[writer] is forced to pronounce/[write] phrases that are intuitively felt as difficult. (147)

Moreover, Cohen contends that physical fatigue may be a strong factor influencing this type of error (90). There was no way of measuring fifty Freshman Composition students for levels of fatigue, but it is

reasonable to assume that tiredness contributes to error frequency, especially when so many times students write themes late at night or early in the morning.

The first example is as follows: <u>Also the psychologist must be a trained professional because some depressed individuals are suicidual and the wrong word or a break of trust could be fatal for the patient.</u> /Suəsɪ́dyuəl/ is a perseveration of the word /ɪndəvɪ́dyuəls/. Both <u>ual</u>'s occur in the fourth syllable, and in both words the accent falls on the third syllable. As a result of this misspelling, <u>suicidual</u> contains an extra syllable. Moreover, <u>indi-viduals</u> is a noun whereas <u>suicidual</u> is an adjective. The proximity of the words, plus the fact that they have some similar letters, could have encouraged the misspelled word. There is an obvious lack of punctuation in this sentence, namely, the omission of commas after the word <u>also</u> and after the first part of the compound sentence which ends with the error <u>suicidual</u>. The student experienced several gestalts, which in turn contributed to the likelihood of the perseveration error. Those interferences, such as doubt about punctuation and the similarity of letters within both words <u>individuals</u> and <u>suicidual</u>, are going on at the same time that the student is writing the sentence down on paper.

In the second example, which reads <u>Floyd Dell was filled with dismay and dispare when he learned the truth</u>, there are two per-severations, one in each syllable of the word /dɪspέr/. The student persists in spelling the word <u>despair</u> in the same manner as the word <u>dismay</u>. Phonetically, both words are similar, namely, /dɪspέr/ and

/dɪzmeʹ/. As a result of similar sounds, the i and a of dismay find their way into the spelling of the word despair as dispare. The student was obviously aware of the spelling of dismay and the concentration level of the student on that particular word carried over to the subsequent error. The i of dismay and the e of despair have the central lax /I/ sound because the first syllables of both words are unstressed. Both words contain the consonant d as their first letters, the first syllables have the same sound, both words have two syllables with the stress falling on the second syllable, and both words have the vowel a in the second syllable. With so much similarity in their favor, the writer seems to hypothesize that both words could easily be spelled in the same manner.

The third example is as follows: The self-conscious walker is also easily spotted by a watchful passer byer. The word /pæsərbayər/ is a perseveration error whereby the writer continues to dwell on the sounds, syllables, and morphemes that precede the error. It is a compound word made up of a noun and preposition, and according to Webster's New World Dictionary, should be hyphenated. This student is aware of the morphophonemic rule that states: add {-er} to the end of a verb in order to change it to a noun. The confusion arises when there is an accompanying preposition as well. The student may have recalled the rule with the word end remaining a dominant part of it. The word walker is also a noun which is formed by adding {-er} to the verb walk. The perseveration that occurs in the sentence above takes place within the word, but the fact that there is another verb-turned-noun in the same sentence makes the likelihood of error much greater.

Also, the effect of anticipated sentential stress in the sentence could definitely be a contributing factor.

Anticipation and its reverse, perseveration, appear to be particular types of errors to which inexperienced writers are prone. Because the mind works continually during the different stages of the encoding process, all the while monitoring that which it has encoded, it has quite a task to complete. No one is immune to these kinds of errors. Anticipation occurs more often when there are other intrusions into the encoding process, such as similarity between error and another word or words in the sentence, undue concern about the spelling of a particular word, and doubt about syntax or morphophonemic rules. Other contributing factors to perseveration errors in particular may be physical fatigue and semantic uncertainty, both of which cause confusion in the encoding process. Errors of this nature are interesting and enlightening because they allow teachers and researchers to understand more clearly the intricate workings of the mind, and certainly demonstrate that the exceptions prove the rules.

APPENDIX

Anticipation:

The convenconal method of new life in humans requires two parents.

As a member a the "baby boomer" era I can not afford to quit trying to achieve in todays world.

I have found many comparasions and contrasts.

This would give new information on new forms of life, differnent body forms, and different nutrition for the needs of Martians or whatever.

Scientists are searching for a "swith" that they believe triggers reproductivity of life.

There will be massive economical and technical advances because of man's strife to control his own life.

Bourgeouis or capitalist means the communal solidarism as an alternative to capitalist individualism and socialist collectivism.

Monday I work on my Research paper all day a most of that night. I wanted to get done because I wanted to leave early for Thanksgiving. But once it was done I fealt geart.

Other planetarian existance might enable us to gain valuable knowledge.

Perseveration:

The East could endure and grow due to the enthusiastic support from an enumerous number of Western intellectuals.

At SDSU you may have a easier time getting help with some of your weakier subjects.

There is this really dumb show on t.v. It is about these people who live together in Africa an they share everything I mean everything. There clothes there hair and it is really werid.

Hundreds of thousands will die in infancy from malnutrition; millions of others will survive but will be limited in their physical and mental capasilities, because of the delilitating effects of severe malnutrition in or at infancy.

CHAPTER 2

BLENDS

A blend or portmanteau word is defined by Rulon Wells in his article entitled "Predicting Slips of the Tongue" as "the simplest kind of slip of the tongue...formed from two other words (very rarely more than two) by dividing each of the two original words into two parts, and combining one part from each original word into the new word called the blend" (85). It is not uncommon in the English language to fuse words in order to compact our word structure into more meaningful expressions. Television commercials advertise the all new flexerciser which helps people to maintain physical fitness at home. The blend flexerciser is the combination of the adjective flexible and the noun exerciser. Jerry Lewis has his annual telethon over Labor Day to promote the Muscular Dystrophy Association. The word telethon is a blend of the two nouns telephone and marathon. These two words are combined and blended into one word with an extend-ed meaning. In addition to all these "commercial" blends, there are also political blends. Reaganomics is a term that has become quite popular over the last couple years, and it attempts to put into concise terminology just what is happening in the economic affairs of the nation under President Reagan. This word is a blend of two nouns, a proper and a common, namely, Reagan and economics.

Blends are becoming increasingly noted curiosities in literature. For example, in the preface of Lewis Carroll's "The

Hunting of the Snark," he discusses portmanteau words and declares that:

> Humpty-Dumpty's theory, of two meanings packed into one word like a portmanteau, seems to me the right explanation for all. For instance, take the two words 'fuming' and 'furious.' Make up your mind that you will say both words but leave it unsettled which you will say first. Now open your mouth and speak. If your thoughts incline ever so little towards 'fuming' you will say 'fuming-furious'; if they turn, by even a hair's breadth towards 'furious,' you will say 'furious-fuming'; but if you have that rarest of gifts, a perfectly balanced mind, you will say 'frumious.'
>
> (754)

Fromkin contends, though, that "[this] sort of 'complete' blend is seldom found in just this way in 'normal' speech/[writing]. That is, a blend of /fyúriəs/ and /fyúmɪŋ/ is more apt to occur as /fyúmiəs/ or /fyúrɪŋ/, particularly because the first syllables are identical" ("The Non-Anomalous Nature of Anomalous Utterances" 29). A further note of interest is that of the five categories of errors that I analyzed, blends formed the largest category of "interesting" errors.

Moreover, Fromkin goes on to explain further that blends are more commonly the combining of words which are:

> Represented by a set of semantic features which together constitute its 'meaning.' Where two words have the same set

of features, or closely overlapping sets it is more likely
that blends will occur since a choice is involved by the
speaker/[writer] in attempting to verbalize [transcribe] his
message.

(<u>Speech Errors as Linguistic Evidence</u> 36)

Fromkin implies that most blends that occur are usually the same form
class, that is, noun/noun, verb/verb, or adjective/adjective combina-
tions or that both words are taken from nearby semantic storage areas
in the brain; there thus arises a dilemma over which word of the set
to use. The problem is resolved by the brain's unconscious combining
of portions of both words and ultimately the writer "invents" a new
one, sometimes without ever realizing it.

In the first example, the sentence reads: <u>He was just a</u>
<u>person who wanted a simplier way of life</u>. The student blends the two
words <u>simpler</u> and <u>easier</u> to arrive at the fused word <u>simplier</u>. <u>Simple</u>
and <u>easy</u> are synonymous and the student was searching for an adjective
that means uncomplicated. Two words are pulled from storage. The
adjective being sought had to be put into the comparative degree,
which meant adding {-<u>er</u>} to the adjective. In the word <u>simple</u>, it is
necessary to add only an <u>r</u> to the end of the word. In the case of the
word <u>easy</u>, another step is required. This rule of grammar states that
when an adjective ends in <u>y</u> and the comparative degree is desired, one
must change the <u>y</u> to <u>i</u> before adding {-<u>er</u>}. It is obvious that this
student wrestled with two words with similar meanings, and indecision
on a choice of word prompted the unconscious combination of the two

words. Furthermore, this blend resembles and sounds like an English word. It is not just syllables thrown together at random, but it is a precise plan that the grammar of English word formation dictates. In this particular example it is not so much phonology or morphology that is the overriding factor determining the blend but the semantic property. As M. F. Garrett says in his article entitled "Levels of Processing in Sentence Production," "There is significant parallelism in the system, and it begins with semantically determined lexical selection" (211). The encoding process is slowed down because of a time lag involved in this semantic encoding, and as a result, the fused words are constructed.

At this point, the word <u>fused</u> needs some clarification. <u>Fused</u> means to join or unite by "melting" or blending together. <u>Blend</u>, on the other hand, means to mix or fuse thoroughly so that parts merge and are no longer distinct. <u>Fusing</u>, then, may be a more specific term in explaining exactly what happens when a blend occurs. In the first example, <u>simplier</u> resulted after the {eas-} of <u>easier</u> was blended into oblivion. It ceased to exist. Only the <u>simpl</u> of <u>simpler</u> and the <u>ier</u> of <u>easier</u> were joined to form this unique word. Fusing, then, is a term that refers not only to the combining of two synonymous words but also to the major loss of morphemic material.

For example, this next sentence displays the fusion of two adjectives. <u>Actually jogging could be considered hazardious to your health</u>. /Hɔzárdiəs/ is a blend of /hǽzɔrdəs/ and /ɪnǰyúriəs/. Both words <u>hazardous</u> and <u>injurious</u> are adjectives and their last syllable

is <u>ous</u>. <u>Hazardous</u> means dangerous, risky, or perilous and <u>injurious</u> denotes harmful or damaging. Therefore, both words are similar in meaning in terms of a cause/effect relationship. This student's brain went to storage looking for a word fitting the categories "adjective" and "not good or not healthful." Two words, <u>hazardous</u> and <u>injurious</u> were retrieved as possibilities. Both words end in <u>ous</u>, which adds to the confusion and indecision. Ultimately the brain fused the two words together by joining <u>hazard</u> from one adjective to <u>ious</u> of the other. It is a blend that resembles and sounds like an English word; therefore, this student quickly and unconsciously accepted it.

<u>A cute impish glance from her eyes can eliviate any trouble that might have come her way</u>. In the above sentence /əlíviet/ phonetically resembles the grapheme <u>alleviate</u>. The word <u>eliminate</u> was also going through this student's mind. <u>Alleviate</u> means to decrease or reduce and <u>eliminate</u> means to remove or get rid of. Both words have four syllables, syntactically both are verbs, both have similar meanings, and their first and last syllables are phonetically alike. In trying to decide which word to choose, the student automatically combined the two words because of their many similarities.

The next sentence reads: <u>The lyrics in Wake Up Little Susie are a long way from being permissous but for that time they drew attention</u>. /Pərmísəs/ is a fusion of the two words /pərmísəv/ and /promískyuəs/. <u>Permissive</u> means overindulgent and <u>promiscuous</u> means an overindulgence in sexual behavior. In the song that this student alludes to the young boy and his girlfriend fall asleep in a car and

get home late. There are sexual overtones, but only in terms of what sleeping together connotes in the minds of people. Permissive and promiscuous are adjectives, both have the initial letter p, both contain the consonants r, m, and s, both have shades of similar meaning, and stress is on the second syllable of both words. This particular student was searching for an adjective that connotes sexual permissiveness. Since both words are similar in sound, meaning, structure, and stress, this student fused the initial portion of one word with the final portion of the other. The new word is not foreign or nonsensical sounding; on the contrary, it very much resembles a word in the English language.

As the direct result of intensive blend analysis, Rulon Wells devised three laws regarding blends which he considers necessary components in order for a word to be a "true" blend.

> The First Law. A slip of the tongue/[pen] is practically always a phonetically possible noise/[word].
>
> The Second Law. If the two original words are rhythmically similar, a blend of them will, with high probability, rhythmically resemble both of them.
>
> The Third Law. If the two original words contain the same sound in the same position, a blend of them will contain that sound in that position.   (86)

These three laws of Wells certainly apply to the examples analyzed previously and also to the ones analyzed subsequently. As a matter of fact, the next blend explicitly displays all of these qualities.

The sentence reads: <u>As a society we have seen the number of alcoholics increase. We now see the need for more empathis on curing the problem drinker</u>. /ɛmpˈəθi/ and /ɛmˈfəsɪs/ are the two words which form the blend <u>empathis</u> in the sentence above. <u>Empathy</u> means the ability to share in another's emotions or feelings whereas <u>emphasis</u> denotes special attention given to something in order to make it stand out. This student blended two words whose meanings are inferred by the manner in which both sentences are expressed. There are obvious similarities between these two words, namely, stress on the first syllable, three syllables in both words, initial letters <u>em</u>, and the letters <u>p</u> and <u>a</u> common to both words. Although the meanings are different, the student has both meanings in mind when referring to the problems of heavy drinkers. With all this similarity in both words, the student became confused over which word to use, and resolved the conflict by blending both words to "create" the word above.

As John D. M. Laver points out in his article entitled "The Detection and Correction of Slips of the Tongue," "The planning function [of the student's brain] activates more items from storage than it finally selects for the neurolinguistic program" (135). Obviously, this student selected two possible word choices, <u>empathy</u> and <u>emphasis</u>, and because of the indecision, this writer ultimately blended the words instead of choosing one and discarding the other.

In the next sentence, the fused word is a combination of the two nouns frustration and futility. Sudden anger and frustrility we both had when we finally realized what had happened. The fusion /frʌstrɪləti/ is an unusual-sounding word, but it becomes obvious to the reader what the writer's intentions are. In most cases the blends are not enigmatic but rather creative semantic innovations (as in advertising language). Frustration and futility both have similar definitions, namely, defeat of purpose or inability to realize something. As the student's brain was engaged in semantic encoding, it searched for a noun with the meaning "sense of hopelessness," and pulled out these two words as possible choices. Indecision coupled with a lapse in the time sequence caused the brain to fuse frustration and futility into the unique frustrility. This fusion contains four syllables as in the word futility, and retains the same syntax in the sentence. The two competing words have the initial consonant f and the vowel u in them albeit with different sounds, namely, /ʌ/ and /yu/. It is worth noting in each of the blends thus far the unusual combinations which resemble meaningful words in structure, stress, and phonology. Archibald Hill confirms my findings when he notes in his article entitled "A Theory of Speech Errors" that "in all...blends there is an element of phonetic similarity" (207).

Besides this phonetic similarity, blends are also the result of two competing collocations, and Fromkin writes about the notion of "competing" in the introduction to her book entitled Errors in Linguistic Performance: Slips of the Tongue, Ear, Pen, and Hand. She

says that "Errors occur when, prior to articulation/[writing], the speaker/[writer] is presented with a 'competing plan'" (2). Carol Fowler, in her review article of Fromkin's book mentioned above, goes on to say:

> Errors occur when segments are concurrently available in a plan and that two segments compete for a slot in the planned utterance/[sentence] to the extent that they are similar. This hypothesis predicts that the relative frequency of a given target-error pair is a function both of the likelihood that the two segments are concurrently in mind and of their phonetic similarity; two concurrently available segments are more likely to interact the more similar they are.   (823)

According to Fromkin and Fowler, then, there are "competing plans" during the encoding process which, together with phonetic similarity, cause the student to blend or fuse certain words instead of choosing one over the other.

In this next sentence two phrases instead of two words are blended which results in a most interesting and unusual fusion. We've all heard the old saiding "Star light star bright wish I may wish I might have this wish I wish tonight." This student appears to be wrestling with two phrases, namely, heard it said and heard the old saying. Instead of choosing one or the other, this student combined the phrases and took heard the old ing of one phrase plus said of the other phrase and arrived at the unusual word above. The verb said has

the {-ing} of the noun saying attached to it and as a result, a syntactically erroneous word is derived.

Here again in this last example, two phrases are ultimately fused because the student's brain was wrestling with the selection process. In my opinion people don't have a perspective point of view in time of war. The two phrases, proper perspective and clear point of view, present problems of indecision with which the brain has to cope. Unconsciously, the student picked the word perspective of one phrase and joined it to point of view from the other. Proper perspective means the ability to see things in a true relationship whereas point of view means a mental attitude or opinion. Since the meanings are similar, the phrases can be used interchangeably. In fact, the student may have been thinking of the word proper instead of clear, and it is likely that the student arrived at perspective because of both words' similarities, namely, initial consonant p and the letters er.

American writers may tend to favor blends because we are so immersed in media which subliminally affects us. The blends consist of two words joined for the benefit of conciseness. Snappy slogans and portmanteau words attract attention and give people a sense of being different and unusual in a world of mass-produced sameness.

Students unconsciously form blends in their writing because the mechanism of the brain simultaneously retrieves two words similar in meaning and this causes indecision about which word to use. This refers to the gestalts that occur during the encoding process and the

act of "competing" that results when the student's brain retrieves
more than one word from storage. As Hockett reminds us:

> The phonological system of a language imposes a variety of
> constraints on what speakers/[writers] of the language may
> say/[write], by way of either smooth speech/[correct
> writing] or lapses/[errors]. The most general of these
> constraints is...that two words or phrases cannot be
> uttered/[written] simultaneously.   (98)

It is said that humans have an inexhaustible ingenuity for coping with
unexpected situations, and certainly this category of errors illus-
trates the innovative element in human language.

APPENDIX

Blends and Fusions

Because there is not a permanent, reliable way to store the radio-active wastes produced at nuclear power plants around the world, there is a huge amount of backlog. Backlog which <u>dratically</u> needs to be taken care of.

I guess just emotionally I would want my family and myself to show more outward feelings, and this would differ from my parents' lives <u>emensely</u>.

It was difficult for him to go anywhere without being <u>hastled</u>.

Life will never change that drastically as to not ever have <u>prejudism</u>.

The <u>trinkling</u> of the clear, sparkling water is running over the rocks and <u>downstream</u>.

People in Orwell's day could only hear about through hear say or through a very <u>staticy</u> radio.

It would be as <u>lucridious</u> as anything to suggest that rock first captured the essence of man's desires....

I didn't realize all the pains of <u>heartship</u>.

While he served on the Senate, he was for immediate and complete <u>exploritation</u> by private interests of the nation's natural resources.

He went back to shut the house door. The cat had <u>wisened</u> up by this time, so when Joe came back to....

He does <u>actknolize</u> that writing is not for everyone, but just as cows give us <u>milk</u>, Mencken gives us his thoughts on paper.

Pink Floyd, also, challenged cognitive enlightenment in the recently popular song Just Another Brick in the Wall, while he pathetically <u>bellared</u> the contradictory (and grammatically incorrect) phrase "We <u>don't</u> need no education."

She went to many hospital camps, but the sight that she saw when she walked in was <u>disquisting</u>. She went to camp Cairo and found it filthy.

George Orwell brings out the <u>declination</u> of our writing and speaking.

Herpes can be <u>disgnoised</u> but can't be cured.

APPENDIX (continued)

They are expected to participate in the upliftment of the nation.

During those influential years when children are impressioned by either outside or inside sourecs, or those which are posotive or negative, it is hoped that the direct influences the nuclear family had on shaping society itself, will have the same infloence on those members of society within the nuclear family.

In my opinion I have been a nice person to everyone and have taken advantage of the opportunities I have had uptil today.

It had taken the government a decade to get back the property Fall had sold in cash and bonds, and to put two of the puncipals in jail.

His speech on how we would have victory; having God Almighty granting to our soldiers a strong and fierceful hand in combat.

Imagery is an intrical part to these plays.

I am constantly amazed by the immaculous happenings in the Bible.

Although my time in the hospital sure wasn't a great event, it sure will be a rememberable one.

That would change dramastically the best place to live and the best way of life.

According to an alienated Mexican, he made $200 a month along with 3-6 million other wetbacks who have relatively low pay also.

Simply for the satisfication of his whims.

On the other end of the speculum it appears that not many people are interested in hard work.

There is still a lot of discrimination and predudism.

I stombled into the hall with my luggage in hand to check into my room.

...He had become ill with a fateful disease.

After I arrived we elected to go down to the munincipal Liquor store and have a few beers.

As I'm growing life is going to be even more technicalized.

APPENDIX (continued)

My friend had confronted this guy and they talked about what was going on and the guy went to a physcatrist for awhile and was diagnosed as "cured."

The birds chirped virgiously and we moved peacefully on down the river.

Every muscle in his body becomes tense, his hands begen to sweat, as he holds the steering wheel, and excelorates the pickup toward the wayward cow.

Although Charles Lindberg recieved numerious medals, offers of money, congradulations from high ranking political figures, and parades, he never deterred from his goal of promoting the development and use of airplanes.

Aslo there are some moves that are pretensionally dangerous and therefore stopped.

His methods again show good judgment in that he got the attention of his audience with a controversial introduction (a messenger from God) and used good, relatable examples to illustrate his points.

This again, is due to a more technologized society.

There not physically frightened of them, they just think that they're not smart enough to operate some new electronical gadget.

Many times grade two thinkers alienate people because of their contradictive ways.

Running also helps the cardio-vasculatory system and it gives the heart and lungs exercise.

In a town whose peoplulation is just over 1,300 the VFW chapter has nearly 180 members.

Running is helpful for you physicily and mentally.

As a result, [of watching too much television] I go to class with an uncompleted Algebra assignment and I feel as if the teacher is talking in Greek to the class.

The types of jobs we hold as we go through life are very important to us. Some are tremendously gratifying and enjoyful, while others are not.

APPENDIX (continued)

Due to South Dakota's <u>inclimate</u> weather, silage tends to freeze in a stove silo and is scraped off the top.

CHAPTER 3

METATHESIS

Metathesis is a word etymologically derived from Greek and defined as the transposition of letters or sounds in a word. This particular kind of spelling error occurs frequently in the written compositions of inexperienced writers. In the following examples an intense analysis is directed at the word, its syllabification, its stress, its pronunciation, its syntax, and its qualities of articulation. Mina Shaughnessy, in her book entitled <u>Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing</u>, contends that inexperienced writing students are:

> accustomed to seeing whole words rather than word parts and to seeing the beginnings of those configurations more clearly than the middles, where letters tend to coagu-late.... Spelling, the "leveler" of letters, demands equal attention to all letters whereas speech and reading demand selective attention to words and syllables.   (174)

This quote reflects the gestalt model of encoding in its lexical and phonemic steps that is referred to in an earlier chapter. Inexperienced writers lack this distinct ability to focus on individual letters of words. Many of the themes from which these examples were taken were written out in longhand as opposed to being typewritten;

therefore, each letter of each word was formed with some kind of phonemic order in mind.

In the first example, <u>The game was in the fourth qaurter and</u> <u>we had a comfortable lead</u>, the <u>a</u> and <u>u</u> of the word <u>quarter</u> are transposed. It may be possible that this particular student per-severated the <u>ou</u> of the previous word. /Kwɔ́rtər/ and /forθ/ have similar sounds, namely, the /or/. Looking at Shaughnessy's diagnosis, one observes in this case that the student did indeed look at the whole word rather than each letter in the word, and as a result, metathesized the middle part of it. Furthermore, the pronunciation of the word as /kórtər/ rather than /kwɔ́rtər/ may have added to the spelling confusion. The assimilation of the <u>u</u> and <u>ar</u> to simply <u>or</u> may have been deceiving as well. There is emphasis on the word <u>fourth</u> and the stress falls on the first syllable of <u>quarter</u>. This emphasis and intonation could also have contributed to the error.

The next example reads as follows: <u>At the time my father and</u> <u>grandfather started the construction, buisness was good</u>. The word /bɪ́znəs/ is derived as a result of the adjective <u>busy</u> plus the morpheme {-<u>ness</u>}, namely, /bɪ́zinɛs/. Over the years the <u>y</u> became <u>i</u> and then eventually became a silent letter. What resulted was a two-syllable word which had formerly been a three-syllabled one. The <u>u</u> assumed the sound of /I/ and this change presents spelling diffi-culty to a great many students. This inexperienced writer is aware that the word itself contains both a <u>u</u> and an <u>i</u>, but becomes confused on their order in the word because the old word /bɪ́zinɛs/ retains its

original spelling while adopting a new pronunciation. Even though the "gestalt" oriented writer does not think in terms of derivation and etymologies, it is important to point out that, because of derivation, the word presents spelling difficulty.

Furthermore, in the sentence the student writes <u>the construction</u> as though wanting to say <u>the construction business</u> but hesitating because of the use of <u>business</u> as the very next word. It may be this doubt about using the same word again and perhaps not being able to think of another synonym to replace it that caused this inexperienced writer to transpose the <u>u</u> and <u>i</u>.

In the third example, the morpheme {<u>-age</u>} is transposed as <u>eag</u>. <u>Misuseag of cloning could result in total catastrophe as well as limiting our chance of survival</u>. The metathesis occurs in the second syllable which is the accented or stressed one. Confusion may have arisen because of the word <u>use</u> which may have been reanalyzed from this particular noun form. <u>Use</u> is both a verb and a noun whereas <u>misusage</u> is a noun constructed from the verb <u>misuse</u> by adding the morpheme {<u>-age</u>}. The word that the student really should have used is <u>misuse</u> because it refers to the incorrect or improper use of something. On the other hand and ironically, <u>misusage</u> generally refers to the misapplication of words.

Here we have another case of hypercorrection. This inexperienced writer confuses the proper meanings of these two words, <u>misuse</u> and <u>misusage</u>, and inadvertently chooses the wrong noun. Still further, this particular student may have used the dictionary, but in

so doing, she chose the first of the two words that appears in the column. In this case misusage is found immediately before misuse. Because this writer knew approximately the word she wanted but did not realize there are two similar words except for morpheme endings, she just picked the first word that she found without investigating further the variant meaning of both misusage and misuse. This hyper-correction, then, is a going beyond correct to the "innovative" incorrect.

Another sentence reads: Of course there will be aches and pains after a ten mile jog, but these trivial nusiances are easily forgotten with the realization of highly toned muscles and elimination of excess body fat (if there is any left). The word nuisances is misspelled because the u and i are transposed. /Núsǝnsǝs/ as opposed to /núsiansǝs/ means that because of the misplacing of two vowels, the error becomes a four-syllabled word instead of three. This particular word presents spelling difficulty because the i is silent. It is another case where the word has undergone a pronunciation change after being adopted from another language but retains some of the letters of its original French spelling.

The word easily which follows two words after the misspelled word may have been anticipated while this student wrote nuisances. They both have three syllables, stress on the first syllable, some similar letters, and the i of both the misspelled word and the word easily occur in the second syllable.

On the other hand, it may be a case of perseveration of the i in trivial, which immediately precedes the error. Trivial is not a word common to the average student's active vocabulary whereas easily is. This use of the not-so-common adjective may have caused this inexperienced writer to concentrate more heavily on that word, and as a result, misspell another uncommon word nuisances. In this case both correctly-spelled words have three syllables and the stress is on the first syllable. The student may have realized that, first, there is an i in nuisances, and second, it is a silent letter; therefore, one does not have to worry about where to place it because it is not pronounced anyway. Since this inexperienced writer concentrated so heavily on the spelling of trivial and its ia vowel order, this student automatically perseverates the ia spelling in the word nusiances, without realizing of course that because of the vowel transposition, the word assumes four syllables. This word certainly fits Shaughnessy's contention that inexperienced writers see the beginnings and ends but not the middles of words because these writers focus on entire words instead of individual letters in words.

In the following sentence a student transposes a consonant cluster. They also act as though they just came out of a mental intsitution. Metathesis occurs between the consonants s and t in the word /ɪnstətúšən/. According to a personal communication which Victoria Fromkin had with Peter Ladefoged (a linguist particularly interested in acoustic phonetics), she received verification that the position of the sibilant [s] is a difficult sound for people to judge

within words (<u>Speech Errors as Linguistic Evidence</u> 228). The perception of the "hiss" noise that [s] makes is very difficult for speakers/[writers], especially those who transcribe what they say, to recognize within a word. Consequently, it appears that this student had difficulty placing the /s/ within the word <u>institution</u>. The /t/ is an unvoiced phoneme which combines with /s/ to form a consonant cluster <u>st</u>. The combinations /st/ and /ts/ are features common to English words. There may have been anticipation of the /t/ sound in subsequent syllables of the word. It may also be the case that this student was not keenly aware of the middle of this polysyllabic word, and as Shaughnessy stresses, "is accustomed to seeing whole words rather than word parts" (174). In addition, it could also be that this student is influenced by the <u>nt</u> of the word <u>mental</u> in the preceding word.

Another example of metathesis occurs in the sentence: <u>Fianlly, he had something that most sages throughout history had--a disbelieving audience</u>. /Faɦnəli/ becomes /faɦənli/ where the /n/ and the /ə/ are transposed. The first syllable of the word receives the stress, leaving the last two syllables unstressed. The second syllable <u>nal</u> becomes <u>anl</u>. <u>Nal</u> is a combination of sounds common to the English language whereas <u>anl</u> is not one that is used as a pattern in our writing system. When the adverb <u>finally</u> is pronounced, it could be assimilated to /faɦnli/. It may well be that the student syncopated the syllables /ə/ and /n/ to /n/ and was aware, nevertheless, that the letter <u>a</u> is found in the word.

The /n/ is a voiced nasal pronounced by placing the tip of the tongue on the alveolar ridge and allowing the air to escape via the nose. The /ʌ/ or /ə/ is articulated by using the central part of the tongue and forcing air out of a widely-opened mouth. It is just as easy to pronounce /nʌ/ or /nə/ as /ʌn/ or /ən/. In the former, the tip of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge and then the air is released through a widely-opened mouth. In the latter, the reverse occurs. Since articulation is unhampered in both cases of pronunciation, the student most likely chose the one closest to the syncopated version mentioned above, which is more frequently used in rapid colloquial speech.

The next sentence contains two metathesized words. This semester I should recieve at least a 2.0 for a GPA, this is what my advisor says is nessecary to stay in school. /Rəsív/ and /nésəsɛri/ both have letters transposed. The word receive presents spelling difficulty for a great many students who fail to remember the mnemonic device taught in grade school, namely, "[i] before [e] except after [c] or when sounded like /e/ in neighbor or weigh or in a separate syllable like society, or in caffeine, weir, or weird" (obviously a bad mnemonic device). The word receive is the Latin derivation of recipere, and Latinate words generally present spelling difficulty to the average student. the [ei]/[ie] reversals are a source of confusion in many words. The ei is the exception because many more words in English have the ie combination; hence, students do not

remember the rule concerning the exceptions. The orthograph c assumes the /s/ sound in this word to add to the spelling confusion.

The second metathesis occurs in the word /nésəsɛri/, another Latin derivation. In this case the consonant c and the geminate ss are transposed. The difficulty here lies in the fact that the sibilant /s/ can be represented by many different allographs, namely, ps, ss, s, c, sc, and st. When the c falls between two vowels, as it does in the word necessary, it adopts the sound /s/, otherwise it assumes the sound /k/. This allophone confusion connected with the sibilant /s/ presents difficulty for many speakers/writers of English. This student is aware that there is a c in the word necessary, but is unsure of its position. As Ladefoged stated earlier, it is difficult to know where to position the /s/ in many words because of the "noise" or "hissing" that this phoneme makes within words (Speech Errors as Linguistic Evidence 228). It is especially difficult to place the /s/ in necessary both because of the double "hiss" and the fact that two different letters assume the same sound.

In the last example of this specific error group, two syllables are transposed. Patronizing means to be deconscending. In the word /kandəsɛndɪŋ/ there is confusion regarding which morpheme should appear first. {De-} and {con-} are two common prefixes used in the English language. It is interesting to note that in this case a morpheme is transposed whereas in previous examples phonemes are metathesized. There may have been confusion in the mechanism of the brain between the words /disɛnd/ and /kənsɛnt/. It is believed by

that is, prefixes, suffixes, and roots are stored in certain "files" or areas of the brain in addition to whole words. As the encoding process was progressing, the student became confused about the choice of prefixes. This inexperienced writer may have analogized that the de should appear first because the meaning trying to be achieved is "down" and the prefix {de-} means exactly that.

Metathesis can occur within the same syllable, between two syllables, and even between words. When it occurs between words, it is known as a spoonerism (for a more detailed look at Professor Spooner and the medical conditions which caused his disability, see Potter's article in Fromkin 1980). Spoonerisms are more common in daily conversation than they are in the written word. The metathesis that most often occurs in written form is the kind between phonemes of the same word. As Donald G. Mackay, in his article "Spoonerisms: The Structure of Errors in the Serial Order of Speech," has found (and as I too have discovered), "[In] the average separation of reversed phonemes...it can be seen that reversed phonemes occurred in adjacent syllables more frequently than in non-adjacent syllables" (170). It occurs frequently in Freshman Composition papers for a number of reasons. Students may not be familiar with the middles of words because their preception generally does not focus on the individual letters that constitute a word, but on the whole word as a unit. As a result, students haphazardly place letters in the middles of words, relying solely on how the words sound in conversation or how they remember seeing the words in print. They usually retain the correct

spelling for the initial and final sounds of the word, but the middle portion many times becomes a fuzzy collection of sounds and spellings.

Another reason that inexperienced writers metathesize is because of anticipation or perseveration. This may result because of the students' concentration on certain sounds in the sentence or because of similarity between the misspelled word and some other word in the sentence. This was the case in the example nuisances where this particular student may have been influenced both by anticipation and perseveration. The anticipation may have occurred because of similar stress, similar letters, and same number of syllables as that of the word easily which follows it; it may be a case of perseveration, on the other hand, because of the vowel similarity, same stress, and same number of syllables of the word trivial which precedes it. As Lashley reveals in his article "The Problem of Serial Order in Behavior," "the frequency with which such contaminations [anticipations and perseverations] occur is increased by haste, by distraction, by emotional tension, or by uncertainty and conflict as to the best form of expression" (119). Besides these "contaminations" that result because of anticipations and perseverations, students also tend to metathesize because of phoneme confusion.

Phoneme confusion, another reason for metathesis, results mainly because phonemes have varying "strengths" and are capable of fogging words. In their article entitled "The Limited Use of Distinctive Features and Markedness in Speech Production: Evidence from Speech Error Data," Shattuck-Hufnagel and Klatt show in their phoneme

confusion matrix that /s/, /š/, and /č/ produce more errors than other phonemes (43). The sibilant /s/ is particularly prone to this kind of confusion when it appears more than once in the same word in its different allophonic forms. As Shattuck-Hufnagel and Klatt contend, "most phoneme errors occur as the result of a mis-selection between two similar planning segments competing for a single location in an utterance/[sentence]..." (41).

It makes sense, then, that metathesis occurs mainly because of students' unfamiliarity with many polysyllabic words, because of their anticipation/perseveration of certain letters in other words located in the same sentence, and because of phoneme confusion. Likewise, if students are limited to a smaller-than-usual vocabulary, they may have great difficulty writing interesting and varied themes. They remember words from a certain text they read or from hearing them used in the course of a college lecture. In an attempt to become better writers, they begin to vary their word choices, but fail to use a dictionary as an aid to spelling and accuracy of meaning. They rely solely on phonetics memory. When this happens, a whole new confluence of productive processes of errors surfaces.

It is interesting to note how metathesis correlates so strongly with other egregious errors. It appears that once inexperienced writers begin to make metathesis errors, they also produce other kinds of errors, such as homophone confusion, wrong morpheme selection, phoneme substitutions, and incorrect reanalysis of words. This phenomenon is known as the "convergence effect" and was coined by Dr.

John Taylor, linguist on the faculty at South Dakota State University, in the course of his many encounters with errors in the themes of inexperienced writers. Simply defined, the "convergence effect" means that once a student's motivation decreases because of physical/mental fatigue and/or carelessness, then that inexperienced writer will continually make all sorts of mistakes, and a good many of them will converge at the end of sentences, paragraphs, and themes. That is why it is so necessary for the inexperienced writer to use a dictionary on a continual basis, to proofread and edit work before the final copy is written up for class, and especially to begin themes well in advance of their due dates. One writing and reading is just not enough time for the inexperienced writer to correct convergent errors in phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax.

APPENDIX

Metathesis:

I helped him by working with him how to throw gernades.

The best friend ever to be had was right next door, usually because of no other reason than pure convienence.

In light of his explarotion he asks the people if this is what they really want and warns the people to think about what the perish is praying for.

The women of this country must realize that men are not cutting them down, when we disagree with belifes about the superwoman.

He states that he works because of insticnt, an insticint present in every living being.

The customized shirt industry is big today. There is alot of adveristing involved.

I was excited for tonight. Jammy invited me over to her house for a phesnate dinner.

The congregation was astounded by the mans actualizations, especially since their techinques of prayer has been critisized.

He then claimed he was on herion and was going to blow their boss up while he was coked to the gils.

In the old days women were supose to stay home and be bear foot pregnant and in the kitchen.

A person with a sincere tounge of voice, good eyes contact, and perhaps a smile can take up other people's trust easily.

For example, when we are watching The Brady Bunch on television, he gets so preturbed, hu just dispieses that program.

The main use of a Ruby Laser is in the field of ophthalomologist.

...visun is just paying attention too the comercials. They have a way of persuading somone in to impluse buying, for example when shopping in a store, and see a certian product and the little comercial jingle comes to mind without even thinking pick up the product and plop, it goes right into the shopping cart.

Three years ago I had a quiet pronounced wieght problem, I wieghted 270 lbs. and had a waist and chest of 46 in. and 38 in. respectively.

APPENDIX (continued)

In <u>conculsion</u>, I believe that television watching starts bad manners.

So I study, go home for a break, get my grades and my <u>parnets</u> say see we told you everything would work out.

Also that the corpses never fully decompose but stay in the hideous state of partial decomposition and are forever giving of their <u>pugnent</u> odor.

CHAPTER 4

TIP OF THE TONGUE

The tip of the tongue phenomenon is an experience everyone has had at one time or another when trying desperately to recall a word, name, place, or event. As Brown and McNeill in their article entitled "The 'Tip of the Tongue' Phenomenon" explain:

> The 'tip of the tongue' (TOT) phenomenon is a state in which one cannot quite recall a familiar word but can recall words of similar form and meaning.... The recall of parts of words and attributes of words is termed 'generic recall....' The features that figure in generic recall may be entered in the [mental] dictionary sooner than other features.... The features favored by attention, especially the beginnings and endings of words, appear to carry more information than the features that are not favored, in particular the middles of words. (325)

I experienced a TOT state some time ago when trying to recall the name of the younger daughter of some acquaintances of mine. The name _iron_ repeatedly came to mind, and I spelled it backward as _Nori_. Somehow I remembered that I was supposed to reverse the letters, but still had no idea what the name was although I had the sensation that I was getting closer. I also remembered that the child's name contained two syllables with the stress falling on the very first

syllable. I knew it was an unusual name, one I had not heard before, and that I had used the mnemonic device, that of iron, to recall the name. I began going through the alphabet, adding first an [a], then a [b] and so on to the word Nori but deleting the [N]. When I was nearing the end of the alphabet, [t] to be exact, a bell went off in my head (figuratively speaking). I experienced a sensation of great relief from the frustration I had been feeling. The little girl's name is Tori. I wondered at first how I ever came to associate the word iron with the name Tori and remembered that I wanted to retain the name when we were first introduced, but in order to do that I told myself I had to have some memory aid to help me remember the unusual name. That's when I devised the method of reversing the letters in her name because they resembled the word iron, from which I was supposed to delete the [N] and add the letter [T]. Since that terrible ordeal with TOT, I have always remembered her name.

Anyone can experience the tip of the tongue state at any time of the day or night. The only necessary catalyst is wanting to recall something that is "forgotten" and having that word so near at hand that one can "almost taste it." The TOT state itself is analogous to an unresolved gestalt going on in one's brain. William James, author of The Principles of Psychology, explained it very well when he noted that:

> The state of our consciousness is peculiar. There is a gap therein; but no mere gap. It is a gap that is intensely active. A sort of wraith of the name is in it, beckoning us

in a given direction, making us at moments tingle with the sense of our closeness and then letting us sink back without the longed-for term. If wrong names are proposed to us, this singularly definite gap acts immediately so as to negate them. They do not fit into its mould. And the gap of one word does not feel like the gap of another, all empty of content as both might seem necessarily to be when described as gaps.   (243)

This TOT state, then, is one in which our total time is consumed deliberately thinking about a specific word, and nothing else can disturb us until that ecstatic moment when the correct word surfaces and we feel a state of complete satisfaction. Our "gap" is filled with the right word and we can breathe a sigh of relief.

Students experience a somewhat similar state when writing Freshman Composition themes. They recall skeletons of words which they want to use in their themes, but cannot remember the entire words. They always remember the first letter or letters, many times recall the last few letters, but rarely recall the middles of the words. This particular phenomenon is in complete agreement with A. R. Jensen's findings. He wrote an article entitled "Spelling Errors and the Serial-Position Effect," and as a prerequisite to such an article, he analyzed thousands of spelling errors from various grade levels including middle school, high school, and junior college. His data proved that his suspicions were correct. Regardless of age level, students inadvertently remembered the beginnings of words to a very

great degree, the ends of words to a lesser extent, and the middles of words almost never (106).

In addition to serial position of letters in words, it is also important to note that syllable stress plays a significant role in TOT state. Brown and McNeill's study of syllabic stress revealed that "SS [similar sounding] words tended to stress the same syllable as the target words.... We are left suspecting that S [a student] in a TOT state has knowledge of the stress pattern of the target..." ("The 'Tip of the Tongue' Phenomenon" 330). Moreover, they noted also that "S [a student] in a positive TOT state has a significant ability to recall correctly the number of syllables in the word he is trying to retrieve" (329). This stress pattern and syllabification similarity, in addition to the serial position effect that Jensen examines (106), certainly corroborate strongly with the examples I analyzed below.

The first sentence reads as follows: They have a tenacy to embarrass their owners. /Ténəsi/ is the word used instead of /téndənsi/. This tip of the tongue error resembles the target in number of syllables, initial and final syllables, and primary stress. It is neither difficult to understand the semantics nor to figure out what the intended word is supposed to be. The ten and the cy are identical to the target word tendency. This student substituted an a for the syllable den. The substituted a and the intended vowel e both contain the schwa /ə/ sound which occurs in unstressed syllables. This example, then, fits Jensen's and Brown and McNeill's paradigm

regarding a positive TOT state, namely, initial and final letter similarity, primary stress, and same number of syllables.

In the next sentence, the student cannot quite determine the correct allographs for a dimly-perceived morpheme. <u>For example, a football game takes appoximently three hours to complete</u>. /ʌpáksəmɛntli/ can be classified as a tip of the tongue error because it so closely resembles the target /ʌpráksəmətli/. As this student proceeded through the lexical stage of the encoding process, his brain searched for a word with the meaning "almost" or "nearly," one which was polysyllabic with the primary stress falling on the second one, and one with the first syllable beginning with the vowel <u>a</u> and the last syllable ending in <u>tly</u>. The word <u>approximately</u> could not be accurately retrieved from storage and, consequently, this student settled on a word resembling it in structure, syllabification, stress, and sound. The letter <u>r</u> is deleted and the <u>en</u> is substituted for the vowel <u>a</u>. The word has an incorrect "middle" which fits the serial-position ordering on which Jensen elaborates and the same syllabification and stress pattern which Brown and McNeill go to great length to explain in their article.

<u>Bowie Kuhn was selected to be commissioner of baseball on August 13, 1969 when the owners of the twenty-four major league baseball clubs unamiously agreed to offer Kuhn a seven year contract</u>. In this sentence the word /yunǽmiɔsli/ is substituted for the target word /yunǽnɪməsli/. Both error and target contain five syllables and the primary stress falls on the second one. The first and last

portions of both words are identical, namely, una and ously whereas the middle section of this polysyllabic grapheme is erroneous. The student knew some vital information about the target word, such as meaning, number of syllables, initial and final segments, and where the primary stress falls, but could not recover the unstressed middle syllable nim. The misspelled word was close enough to the correct one, nevertheless, to satisfy this inexperienced writer.

Then there also would be no matinence cost [on the car]. In this sentence the word /métənəns/ is the tip of the tongue word used in place of the target /méntənəns/. In this phonetic transcription only the [n] is deleted. The erroneous grapheme matinence is different than the actual word maintenance. The student searched for a three-syllabled word with the stress falling on the first syllable. The first and last parts of the word are recalled accurately, but the middle is somewhat muddled. It very well may be that this student did not HEAR the [n] in the first syllable when the word was previously used in conversation; this is known as the nasalization phenomenon. It also could be the case that the [nt] was assimilated to [t] for ease in pronunciation. The [n] is a voiced nasal which is articulated by placing the tip of the tongue on the alveolar ridge and forcing air out through the nose. Similarly, the [t] is a voiceless stop which is formed by placing the tip of the tongue on the alveolor ridge, but instead of forcing the air out through the nose, it is allowed to explode through the mouth when the tongue is moved away from the alveolar ridge. Because both sounds are made in the same place in the

mouth, when they are found together in the same word, one is likely to assimilate the two sounds. This assimilation occurs because of consonant strength. When n and t are juxtaposed in a word, it is highly likely that the [n], which is of weak consonant strength, will assimilate to just [t]. However, if the student had reanalyzed that maintenance is the noun form of the verb maintain, the student might have been able to arrive at the correct spelling. Rather, this inexperienced writer relied on the sound of the word to the exclusion of its derivation. Because inexperienced writers rely heavily on the phonetics of words and how these words sound in conversation, they frequently misspell words.

The [Blacks] have no way to make money so they become prostotent. Because this student failed to recall the exact word and specific letter-to-letter correspondences found in the word /prástətut/, he substituted the word /prástotənt/ instead. Both words resemble each other in number of syllables, primary stress, initial and final letters, and same form class. The target this student is aiming for is prostitute, but the closest he can come to the intended word is prostotent. The semantics of the sentence is easily under-stood, and the error can be easily interpreted by an experienced reader although it is not so certain whether or not an inexperienced reader could understand and interpret the semantics.

This inexperienced writer may have encountered the word prostitute in the course of his reading or during a college lecture. This polysyllabic word is not part of the average student's active

vocabulary. In his attempt to remember an unfamiliar word and also to improve his theme writing, he settled on a word as close as possible to the target he sought. The target, prostitute, has the identical first syllable pros as that of the error prostotent; in the second syllable the intended i becomes an o; in the final syllable the tute assumes the tent spelling. This is another case where the TOT state is an attempt by the inexperienced writer to recall a vaguely perceived polysyllabic word which is not part of his active vocabulary. In a sense, he hypercorrects by coming as close to the target as possible.

Perhaps it is necessary here to talk briefly about targets and the perception of targets. Target, for the purpose of linguistic analysis, means a goal or objective. When inexperienced writers use polysyllabic words unfamiliar to them, they endeavor to reach a goal or achieve an objective of writing those words correctly according to incomplete recall; in effect, they rarely hit the target or remember the word correctly, but write as close a representation to the target as they can recall or recreate. Their perception of this target is not always accurate because as Shaughnessy points out about inexperienced writers: "[They are] accustomed to seeing whole words rather than word parts" (174), and as Jensen corroborates, "Spelling errors occur more frequently in the middle of words, with fewest errors at the beginnings and end of...word[s]" (106). As a result of these two factors, inexperienced writers frequently misspell words which are not familiar to them.

The next example reads as follows: The marriage ended in deforce. /Difórs/ is the closest that this particular student can come to the target /dĭvórs/. There is a similarity in the phonetic spelling although the graphemic transcription is somewhat varied. As this student was writing the sentence and her brain was engaged in the encoding process, the target word was approached but the correct spelling was not quite achieved. The similarities between the error and the target are worth noting. Both words contain two syllables, the stress falls on the second syllable, and both words begin with /d/ and end with /rs/. The f is a voiceless continuant whereas the v is voiced. Voiced simply means the vocal cords vibrate as air forces its way through the throat to the mouth whereas voiceless phonemes are articulated with no vibration of the vocal cords. Continuant means the stream of air continues without interruption by the tongue through the mouth opening. The e of deforce instead of the i of divorce results mainly because of speaking and hearing idiosyncracies on the part of the student. In speaking/listening, this person may very well have spoken or heard /i/ instead of /I/, and in writing she constructs words according to phonetic sounds. It is more likely, though, that this inexperienced writer has a strong tendency to analogize, re-analyze, and thus, hypercorrect.

In another sentence the word distorted is unconsciously written as desterted. The only accurate evidence would be in a few newspapers but as time goes by it would be desterted again and again until it was worse and more grotesque then before. This sentence,

first of all, is a run-on, and a comma is necessary to separate the two complete thoughts in this compound sentence. A comma is also required after the word <u>by</u> in order to separate a dependent clause from the main clause. The adverb <u>then</u> is used instead of the conjuction <u>than</u>. This error might be classified as a perseveration because the word immediately preceding it is a polysyllabic word with the vowel [e] in it. <u>Grotesque</u> is a difficult word for the average student to spell correctly, and this particular student may have been concentrating efforts on the spelling, and as a result, missed the error in the word <u>then</u>. Moreover, this inexperienced writer seems to generalize, that is, hypercorrect--"When in doubt, spell with an <u>e</u>."

The apparent word /dɛstʌ́rdəd/ is substituted for the intended word /dɪstórdəd/. During encoding she was searching for a word meaning to misrepresent, containing three syllables with the stress on the second one, and having the initial phoneme /d/ and the final ending [rted]. It is highly likely that the words <u>evidence</u> and <u>grotesque</u> influenced this student's choice of [e] in the misspelling. There are many similarities in the error and target, and as a result, this student writes a word that has similar beginning and ending letters but contains an unclear middle section; in other words she "creates" a "fuzzymorph." It can be said, then, that TOT induces hypercorrection which in turn points to the fact that there are students who are more motivated and/or less fatigued when writing themes.

Another example that follows is interesting to analyze because of the way the misspelled word is transcribed. Etiology is the study concerning with the knowledge of an unknown phanoman. In the first part of the sentence the student struggles between two phrases concerning the and concerned with, and ultimately combines the two into concerning with. This student probably expended so much monitoring effort on etiology that she ran out of psychological gas at the end of the sentence.

Phanoman is mistakenly written for the word phenomenon. This student appears to have been searching for a word with the initial letters ph and the final sound /ən/. She was aware that the word had an unusual spelling ph which is comparable to the English f and knew there were nasals /m/ and /n/ sprinkled throughout the word. This student was probably aware that the word was marked [-English, +Foreign, ?Greek, ?Latin, ?French]. Notice, however, that it is the middle of this word of Greek origin that presents the most difficulty. The error contains only three syllables whereas the correct word contains four. It is highly likely that this particular word is not part of this student's active vocabulary, but it may have been seen in print on occasion or heard by the student in the course of a conversation or college lecture. As is the case with words that are not common to one's vocabulary, portions of the word and certain sounds are recalled but not the entire word. This could well be another "fuzzymorph."

In the last example on tip of the tongue errors, there is a glaring error that illustrates often humorous incongruity and apparently witty irony. <u>Sure, I could of been anyone of these if I really wanted. However, who really wants to be a dumb old solitudinarian anyway?</u> An obvious error in the first sentence of this example is the substituting of the preposition <u>of</u> for the modal auxiliary <u>have</u>. This confusion is the result of transcribing in the manner by which we colloquially pronounce the contraction <u>could've</u>.

/Salɪtudənériən/ is substituted for the target /səlutətóriən/. It appears that this student was seeking <u>salutatorian</u>, but only remembered the first and last parts of the noun, namely, /səlut/ and /riən/. Not recalling what the middle portion of the word was or where the primary stress occurred, she guessed at both and arrived at an unusual deviation. It may well be that this student recalled something about the meaning of the word, in particular, that this special person stands up in front alone on the stage to present an opening or welcoming address to the graduating class. Concentrating more on the word <u>alone</u> than on the word <u>opening</u> or <u>welcoming</u>, the student arrived at the misspelled word. This example illustrates vividly how TOT induces reanalysis and results in an interesting hypercorrection. This particular student was conscientious in her attempts to become an effective writer. She even typed out her themes and there were seldom a great many egregious errors. On the contrary, she handed in themes which were grammatically correct and interesting in style and choice of words. She is what might be called a more sophisticated writer who

Tip of the tongue phenomenon occurs more often than people are aware of because we do not always say or write exactly what we think, especially when monitoring for errors. The initial and final letters of the target word are generally recalled but the middle remains unclear. This observation agrees perfectly with Jensen's hypothesis that we memorize the beginnings of words as a matter of course, sometimes retain the endings of words as well, but we rarely if ever recall the middle portions because our attention is always focused on the initial and final sounds of words (106), and this likewise corroborates with Brown and McNeill's findings that syllabification and stress are important features of the TOT state (329-330).

Students who lack an extensive vocabulary and the ability to read beyond what is required of them experience great difficulty in composition courses where written material is essential to fulfilling the requirements of the course and a formal polysyllabic vocabulary is necessary to be able to write interesting and expressive compositions. In tip of the tongue state, inexperienced writers lose sight of the individual letter-to-sound correspondences and rely simply on their own versions of the words they wish to transcribe. Many times these students, in trying to recall a word, remember the number of syllables, where the primary stress falls, usually the initial and final sounds of the word, and generally the meaning of the word. These particular features are part of the storage technique of the brain when it files away words for future retrieval.

Outside intrusions can also present themselves while the encoding process is in progress, and this in turn, can confuse the

writer. Reanalysis can thwart the correct spelling of a word if the form being reanalyzed is an incorrect one. Assimilation can alter spelling decreasing the number of syllables in a word. Anticipation and perseveration can also thwart the spelling of a word by forcing premature closure on a gestalt. All these particulars contribute to the likelihood of error. It is the unique, indeed pathological, individual who proceeds through the encoding process without any interruptions or interferences that may cause spelling error. There are many external and internal forces which act upon a person's brain to cause it to err.

Stress and syllabification, in addition to serial position of spelling, play important roles in the inexperienced writers' attempts to improve their writing skills. Shaughnessy observes that:

> People who do little reading and writing are inevitably bad spellers, for without constant experience with written words, it is impossible to absorb the sound-letter correspondences that govern English spelling, to build a memory for the looks and haptical feel of words, or to become a closer observer of letters.... [This] lack of visual acuity with words and letters, a habit of seeing which swiftly transforms what is on the page to what is in the mind of the writer...produc[es] not simply a misspelling but a completely different word from the one the writer has in mind. (172-173)

Therefore, it is necessary for inexperienced writers to take into account a number of different considerations when they construct sentences, namely, the stress that occurs in words, the syllabification of polysyllabic words, and the "sound-letter" correspondences that are so important in writing correctly-spelled words. If inexperienced writers assume responsibility for becoming better writers, they may discover the value that results when they consider "the sum of these expenditures, namely, the habit of noticing, doubting, and thinking about the spelling of words and the awareness that even misspellings yield to thought" (Shaughnessy 186).

APPENDIX

Tip of the tongue:

President Eisenhower was <u>aminent</u> about Nixon learning the duties of the President as well as <u>Vice President</u>.

I was twenty minutes late for my <u>badmitten</u> class.

In this manner he is <u>counterdicting</u> himself. He stated that the English language is becoming more <u>clustered</u> with big words and yet its old words are worn out.

Not many people <u>consciencelessly</u> realize the relation between an ordinary house cat and a lion or tiger.

Then I started asking the hard questions, the why questions my mother could not always answer the questions, <u>neighter</u> could my father.

It was so much more exciting to see and hear the attempted <u>assination</u>, than just having our teacher report to our class how it <u>happened</u>.

If the younger age is expected to teach the younger age this will result in a <u>nonrespansible</u> generation to come.

Fleeting, choppy body movements may betray a lie. If one has trouble controlling his jerky and <u>undisguished</u> movements, he should practice lying in front of a mirror.

He alone was able to complete this task and reveal the <u>sacreligion</u> of the first prayer.

Cloning of humans could change society <u>durmaticly</u>.

We are <u>predesaned</u> to what we do.

Through this second prayer, the aged stranger <u>enucceated</u> what the assembly was inevitably praying for.

If I sold my car there would be many things I could no longer take for <u>granit</u>.

As I view works by Harvey Dunn, the majority <u>exceberate</u> this sort of feeling.

<u>Unfortuantly</u> they also have a huge amount of liabilities.

Not even Leonardo's much <u>afamed</u> "Mona Lisa" could energize your emotions more while enlightening....

APPENDIX (continued)

One of the people that came to visit the grave was the <u>misterous</u> lady in black.

In Eagle Butte there is almost as much <u>existment</u> as there is in a ghosttown.

Since the law will not be able to <u>incarsate</u> the killers.

The main drug <u>is</u> marijuana is PCD which is a drug that <u>vetinarians</u> use to.

I know how to suck down drink <u>apound</u> drink.

We should as christians pray for hope and an end to war, not through <u>d</u>istruction but through talks and <u>negotions</u>.

They also can be used much more easily and more <u>efficantly</u> than the conventional methods now being used.

Basketball, however is a milder sport, although some fights are <u>prdsable</u>.

It required years to <u>synchorize</u> the organization with the efficiency it had to make the cheap price of the Model T possible.

The conditions <u>flexuate</u> day to day.

This stranger showed the truth so <u>vivantly</u> that it was a shock to us to see how a prayer is <u>subseptable</u> to be mis<u>s</u>leading unless examined in full.

I like to receive letters <u>expectally</u> from my friends.

CHAPTER 5

MALAPROPISMS

A malapropism is "a ridiculous misuse of a word, in place of one it resembles in sound, especially when the speaker is seeking a more elevated or technical style than is his wont and the blunder destroys the intended effect" (Hockett 110). Many malapropisms are humorous in their semantic context because they are so unlike the intended word in denotation. Cutler and Fay, in their article "One Mental Lexicon, Phonologically Arranged: Comments on Hurford's Comments," hypothesize that "a malapropism arises when the language production device selects, instead of the intended word, its nearest neighbor in the lexicon" (107). Many linguists concur with the idea that the brain has a storage system much like a computerized dictionary/file cabinet combination. Words and portions of words are stored in a highly sophisticated manner and are easily retrieved when the correct "address" is given (Cutler and Fay 111). These authors explain clearly what an "address" is and how a malapropism originates:

> This address is an n-place expression in which each place can have m possible values (where m equals perhaps the number of phonemes in English).... The address is not arbitrary, but is instead a direct function of the phonological structure of the word. Malapropisms arise when the production device makes a mistake in reading off the address and proceeds to an erroneous location. (111)

In essence, they say that the brain is a very complex organ which has a relatively fixed but highly sophisticated method of retrieving information when it is needed.

Donald A. Norman, in his article entitled "Categorization of Action Slips," notes that the use of one word when another is intended has:

> Several contributing causes, with the actual word selection being influenced by a combination of syntactical considerations, meaning, and phonological selection from the set of possible words, as well as by activation of underlying motives and plans. (2-3)

He attempts to confirm as relevant what Freud clearly believed was the dominant reason why people use the "wrong" word for an intended word, and Norman also attempted to correlate linguistic reasons with Freud's psychological assumptions. Freud believed that there are "'wandering' speech images which lie below the threshold of consciousness and are not intended to be spoken..." ("Slips of the Tongue" 49).

These "wandering images" are comparable to references made earlier concerning intruding, competing, or interfering gestalts which attract the attention of the writer's brain to such a large extent that they directly influence the output. It is as Norman contends "[that] a complete error theory seems likely to require autonomous subconscious processing, with intentions, past habits, thoughts, and memories all playing some role in corrupting the intended behavior"

(2). He felt that Freud's insights were valuable but not necessarily a complete model of unconsciously made errors.

Freshmen are prone to using malapropisms in their written assignments, and these "slips" may be Freudian and/or phonological malfunctions. A look at the first example, however, bears out Fay and Cutler's contention that there are generally three "interesting properties" associated with malapropisms. "First, the target and error are of the same grammatical category in 99% of the cases. Second, the target and the error frequently have the same number of syllables (87%...). Third, they almost always have the same stress pattern (98%...)" ("Malapropisms and the Structure of the Mental Lexicon" 507-508). The sentence reads as follows: <u>The child's skin is soft and subtle</u>. The word /sʌ́təl/ is spelled correctly as it stands, but the student means /sʌ́pəl/; therefore, this is a case of mistaken identity. The student searched for a word in the memory bank with two syllables, with initial consonant <u>s</u>, and final ending <u>le</u>. If one were looking for only these three similarities, either word would be suitable. The distinguishing characteristic, however, is that each word means something entirely different from the other. <u>Subtle</u> means clever, crafty, or sly whereas <u>supple</u> means flexible or resiliant. It is obvious which word is the intended one. The [b] of <u>subtle</u> is a voiced labial and the [p] of <u>supple</u> is voiceless. It may well be that because the feature of articulation is identical, the student mistook the voiced quality for the voiceless. This may have been aided by the fact that the <u>b</u> of <u>subtle</u> is a silent letter, although marked as

voiceless in articulation. <u>Subtle</u> does fit Fay and Cutler's paradigm of malapropisms because it and the target <u>supple</u> are the same syntax, have the same number of syllables, and share the same stress pattern.

The amusing error in the next sentence results from the person's inability to differentiate between "domestic fowl" and "trifling or insignificant." <u>On the other hand, the AFL would bring a poultry 1,300,000 to their stadiums</u>. /Póltri/ is mistakenly written for the word /páltri/. The stress in both words falls on the first syllable and both words contain two syllables. The significant difference, however, lies in the vowel sound in the first part of the word. In <u>poultry</u>, the [ou] has the long vowel sound /o/ whereas in <u>paltry</u>, the [a] has the /a/ sound. It is a good probability that this student heard the target word in conversation or saw it in print. <u>Paltry</u> is not a word found in the average student's active vocabulary. <u>Poultry</u>, on the other hand, is a commonly-occurring word here in Midwest farming communities and suggests connotatively, a large "flock," hence, a large number or indistinguishable mass. The confusion results because of phonology and pronunciation as well as semantic context.

The next example might very well fit Freud's analysis of an unconscious slip with psychological undertones. <u>I hope I can get some descent grades</u>. /Dəsént/ and the intended word /dísənt/ are phonetically different. First of all, the stress is placed on different syllables. In the error <u>descent</u>, the accent falls on the second syllable whereas in the target <u>decent</u>, the accent is placed on the

first part of the word. Moreover, the stress pattern changes the e of the first syllable to /i/ in the word decent and /ə/ in the word descent. Likewise, the e sound in the second syllable is changed to /ə/ in decent and /ɛ/ in descent. This student was not relying on letter-to-letter or letter-to-sound correspondences, but rather on the appearance of the whole word as a unit. Both the error and the intended word are very similar on first glance; the only apparent difference appears to be the sc of descent versus the c of decent. The phoneme /s/ can assume many different allographs in words, namely, ps, ss, c, sc, and st; therefore, it is a phoneme which may cause spelling confusion for the average student.

In spite of this allographic confusion, Freud still might have analyzed the error in such a way as to hypothesize that there were certain outside influences or unconscious "images" interfering with the correct spelling. He might have conjectured that this particular student was aware perhaps of failing grades, but was hoping upon hope that they would be passing. The outside influence or "unconscious image," then, were the low grades being achieved by the student. It very well may be a Freudian slip, but one cannot make such assumptions primarily on such a shallow basis. On the contrary, it is more sound to look at the phonology, stress pattern, and articulation differences in order to arrive at other conclusions concerning the source of error.

In the following example there is some humor associated with this malapropism because of the semantic confusion of the two words,

namely, one meaning chief executive and the other denoting priority.

"The Brethren" - It was kind of amazing what the Supreme Court Justices could and were getting away with, and these people were setting presidents for later cases and laws. In this sentence the student uses two auxiliary verbs could and were, but uses only one form of the verb get, namely, getting. The student is condensing the sentence by using only one form when, in fact, the student should be writing could get and were getting.

The word /prɛ́zədəns/ as opposed to the target /prɛ́sədəns/ has the voiced /z/ instead of the voiceless /s/. Phonetically both words resemble each other except for this one feature of voice. The word presidents is a much more common vocabulary word used in conversation and seen in print than the word precedence. Because of the un-familarity with the word precedence, this inexperienced writer relied more on similarity of sound, stress, and syllabification. Referring to Ladefoged's remarks to Fromkin in an earlier chapter, he states that /s/ and /z/ are "hissing" sounds and very difficult to differ-entiate between, especially when they occur in the middle portion of a word (Speech Errors as Linguistic Evidence 228). In this particular case the s of presidents is given the voiced /z/ whereas the c's of precedence are given the voiceless /s/. The allophone distinctions in both cases may have added to the confusion. It should be noted further that semantics also may have added to the confusion. The word presidents is marked [+power, +persuasion, +high rank, +authority, +world known]. These qualities may very well have intruded on this

student's error causing him to write the word with the stronger connotation.

The next malapropism replaces the intended word, which is an adjective, by a past tense verb. It is common knowledge that past tense verbs and past participles are regularly leveled and that past participles function as adjectives, but in this specific case the error is particularly interesting because of the change of meaning associated with it. <u>Stuck-up people are called conceded people</u>. The neutralization of /t/ and /d/ in these two particular words causes this student to write /kənsídəd/ as /kənsítəd/. Phonetically, there is a considerable likeness between both words. Moreover, the error and the target both contain three syllables and have the stress falling on the second syllable. The difference between <u>conceded</u> and <u>conceited</u> is that one means to acknowledge defeat and the other means vain or exaggerated. The <u>e</u> of <u>conceded</u> and the <u>ei</u> of <u>conceited</u> both have the tense vowel sound /i/. In addition, there is a certain amount of confusion caused by the voiceless /t/ and the voiced /d/. In certain words the <u>d</u> has a /t/ sound, which is known as the Flap /d/, and some examples are <u>dripped</u>, <u>kissed</u>, <u>kicked</u>, and <u>stuffed</u>. Because they end in <u>ed</u> but have the /t/ sound, the student may have trouble differentiating between the two sounds /d/ and /t/ because the Flap /d/ neutralizes the voiced/voiceless distinction. The word <u>conceited</u> is difficult for the average student to commit to memory because of the way it sounds versus the way it is written. It is

another one of those "i before e except after c" cases that this student failed to remember.

Freud would have had a successful time analyzing this next malapropism because of the underlying connotations connected with it. Intermarriage is just one person marring another. This student unconsciously substituted the word /máriŋ/ for the intended one /mǽriIŋ/. On sight, the graphemes marring and marrying are quite similar because only the y is omitted, but on closer inspection, they are quite dissimilar phonologically. Marring has two syllables whereas marrying has three, and the vowel of the erroneous word is pronounced /a/ whereas the vowel of the intended word sounds like /ǽ/. Moreover, the denotations for both words are quite different. Marring means spoiling, damaging, or disfiguring and marrying means uniting or joining in wedlock. It must also be taken into consideration that this error may be a pen skip. Sometimes in the haste of writing down thoughts, people skip or omit certain phonemes. The word mar has a single consonant r in the present tense, but when one writes it in the present progressive, the consonant r must be doubled before adding the inflection {-ing}. Marry, however, ends with the phoneme /i/, and in order to change it to present progressive, one simply adds {-ing} to the end of the word. Both words share more resemblances to each other when they are written in the present progressive. Freud might have hypothesized that this student had a negative view of marriage, and as a result of this unconscious interference, the psyche affected the student's writing performance.

This next sentence, however, does not contain an error due to connotation but one of foreign derivation. The poignant drug put the child to sleep quickly. In this particular example the student writes the word /pɔ́yŋənt/ instead of the intended word /pótənt/. Both words are two syllables long and the stress falls on the first part of each word. It is interesting to note that poignant is a French word whereas potent has a Latin origin, a distinction that a student would collapse into marking as [+Foreign]. The former means sharp, biting, or penetrating whereas the latter means effective or powerful in action. When semantically analyzing the words, often one can readily determine which word was intended, but the problem is one of phonology as well as semantics. The oig becomes /ɔy/ and because of the significance of that sound, the a in the second syllable assumes a /yə/ sound. In the word potent, the o has the long vowel sound of /o/ and the e has the schwa or /ə/ sound because the second syllable is unstressed. The word poignant is not part of the average student's active vocabulary, so it must be assumed that this student saw the word in print (because of its correct spelling). It might be rather easy just to classify malapropisms as the result of tip of the tongue states; but, in the case of TOT words, they are always misspelled. However, malapropisms are correctly-spelled words, but their semantic context differs from that of the intended word.

The next example reads: Babies wetting their pants are discussing. The word /dɪskʌ́sɪŋ/ replaces the intended word

/dɪsgʌstɪŋ/. These two words have similar sounds, but have entirely
different meanings. Discussing refers to speaking about something in
a deliberative manner whereas disgusting means a sickening distaste or
dislike. In these two words the /k/ and /g/ phonemes are the point of
confusion, along with the omission of the t in the erroneous word.
The /k/ is voiceless whereas /g/ is voiced. Both are velar stops
which means the "airstream is stopped by the back of the tongue making
a complete closure with the velum" (Fromkin and Rodman 72). These two
consonants are confusing because they are formed in the same part of
the mouth, namely, at the velum. The only outstanding feature is that
one makes the vocal cords vibrate during articulation (the g) and the
other does not (the k). Likewise, the /s/ and the /t/ are formed in
the same part of the mouth. The s is formed by placing the tongue
loosely against the alveolar ridge and pushing air out between the
tongue and ridge. The t is made by placing the tongue firmly against
the alveolar ridge and the air is stopped completely in the oral
cavity for a brief period before it is expelled. Therefore, a person
pronouncing the st of disgusting has simply to push the tongue firmly
against the alveolar ridge when going from the articulated /s/ to the
/t/. Because of the similarity between features of articulation for
the /g/ and /k/ as well as the /s/ and /t/, together with the close
resemblance the error and the intended word share, this student had
difficulty differentiating between which spelling word should be used.
Both words would be common, that is, "unmarked," in the average
student's active vocabulary.

It should be noted here that markedness is that feature whereby a word is "labeled" as difficult/foreign or unmarked as easy/familiar. These marked features of a word are determined by inexperienced writers as they observe polysyllabic structure as well as phonological and morphological components. This is a means whereby inexperienced writers determine whether or not a word is within their power of spelling.

This last malapropism is a source of amusement because the meaning of the error is so far-fetched as to be downright silly. Inductive reasoning is from the pacific to the general. The word /pəsɪ́fək/ is a semantic error replacing /spəsɪ́fək/. Pacific means mild, calm, or tanquil whereas specific means definite or precise. Phonetically, both words share a great resemblance, and the only difference is that the [s] is omitted from the erroneous word. Both have three syllables and the stress falls on the second one. Orthographically, however, pacific and specific are quite different. The initial syllable of the error is pa and of the intended word spe. Ladefoged contends that the sibilant /s/ is a very loud "hissing" sound, and its noise presents problems as to where the phoneme is located in some words (Speech Errors as Linguistic Evidence 228). Compound this problem with the fact that the intended word has two /s/ sounds represented by two different allophones, namely, s and c, and confusion is bound to prevail. The sibilant [s] is formed by placing the tongue loosely against the alveolar ridge and pushing air out between the tongue and ridge. The [p] is formed by placing both lips

together and forcing air out between them. The [s], then, is an alveolar fricative and the [p] a bilabial stop. It is much easier to go from a /p/ to an /s/ than it is from an /s/ to a /p/ to another /s/. Such is the case with the words pacific and specific. This student may have confused the location of the sibilant while simultaneously opting for an easier pronunciation. In speech as well as in the written word, the brain functions in much the same way. The only difference between the two is that in speaking, the articulatory organs voice the words and in writing the motor operations of the arm, wrist, and hand transcribe the words.

Malapropisms are an unusual category of spelling "error" because they are specifically involved with the semantic stage of the encoding process. The errors, as such, are not actually misspelled words, but are erroneously substituted words that usually have similar appearances to the intended words. As Fay and Cutler believe, there are:

> Three major characteristics of malapropisms: First, the erroneous intrusion is a real word--not the intended word, of course, but not a meaningless string of phonemes either. Second, the target and error seem to be unrelated in meaning. Finally, there is a close relation between the pronunciation of the target and the pronunciation of the error. (505)

Furthermore, in many instances the beginnings and endings of the two words are identical and only one or two phonemes differ. This is the only classification of errors that has a predominantly humorous touch, and the humor stems from the fact that the meanings are so outrageously different.

Freud's contributions are significant even though they tend to be one-sided. There very well may be psychological interferences which act as unconscious intrusions into the spoken and written word of humans. After all, humans cannot detach themselves from their emotions every time they wish to engage in speaking or writing activities, even if they wanted to. Outside intrusions do play a significant role in speaking and writing, but it is unfair and wholly unjustified to examine only the psychological aspects of errors without considering the phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactical, and semantic areas as well. The fact that there are significant similarities between malapropisms and the intended words is all the more reason why emphasis should be placed equally on the linguistic analysis.

In addition, the strong theory of malapropisms seems to focus on meaning--it is ultimately a semantically-based phenomenon with only secondary phenomena involving phonology; the weak theory is that phonological confusion from similarity of articulation causes the "misuse" of semantic meaning. For example, in the sentence: Some parents think their children are prodigious, the student has the correct meaning in mind. This inexperienced writer, however,

reanalyzed the word <u>prodigy</u> by means of analogizing. The student means <u>unusually talented</u>, but <u>prodigy</u> is a noun and this student syntactically needs an adjective. Therefore, he takes the noun <u>prodigy</u> and adds the morpheme {-<u>ious</u>} in order to obtain the adjective form, never realizing that he is, in fact, changing the meaning of the intended word. What results, therefore, is a word similar in articulation to the intended word, but unlike it completely in semantics.

The test cases above seem to focus on whether or not the examples are funny, witty, or outrageously incongruous. This phenomenon, as humor, may be related to punning then, and as Hockett distinguishes: "an exact pun is a stretch of speech of a determinate phonemic structure which is susceptible of two or more interpretations" ("Where the Tongue Slips, There Slips I" 113). However, puns are deliberate whereas malapropisms are unconscious deviations which occur because they are similar to the intended words in structure, stress, and sound but unlike them in meaning. Furthermore, inexperienced writers oftentimes lack the ability to differentiate between polysyllabic words which are similar in phonology because these students are unaccustomed to using these words in their active vocabularies.

APPENDIX

<u>Malapropisms</u>:

As though to expand these new jazz <u>rythems</u>, the costumes of the Twenties, basically unfitted <u>triangles</u>, were decorated with embroidery, flounces, and deep fringes designed to <u>reverberate</u> each motion of the body.

Man has made a great stride in a fight against this force of nature, but is barely holding his own. More research, money, time and knowledge must be <u>expanded</u> before the entire study of flood <u>preventation</u> can be brought <u>under</u> control.

The <u>flowar are</u> standing at attention as young men with their colorful faces and amazingly blue uniforms stand out in the <u>mists</u> of the excitement.

The woman's <u>indolence</u> at the funeral seemed natural.

Some parents think their children are <u>prodigious</u>.

Television has <u>installed</u> in me a fear that will take years, if ever, to overcome.

Some of the disadvantages of finding out that another planet is <u>inhibited</u> by human like beings would be that not only would the planet earth have wars between the countries but the whole planet would have to organize a militia to protect earth from a Martian attack.

Elusive means a mental <u>gasp</u>.

The killer was <u>welding</u> a knife.

People <u>commit</u> on how big she is.

We're both <u>bespeckled</u>.

This in a <u>sorted</u> way is like when the young boy was going to Church.

Life usually starts with the <u>combing</u> of male and female sex cells.

The 3 prisoners were <u>indicated</u> for the killings.

No book has <u>infiltrated</u> me more.

The lady was a little on the <u>plumb</u> side.

The female sex-role defines woman by her sexual function of child-bearing and <u>muttering instints</u>.

APPENDIX (continued)

There was a lot of chance & luck that one you see, because with out the construction our family would not be able to have, do or emotionally nature the people within it.

Her job entitles a number of duties.

After a few months that relationship came to a subtle halt and I went from "cloud nine" to about sealevel for some time.

By eating good meals one gets his body already to do some serious parting.

Although this is not the only way to exceed in this career, you can go to a trade school or the armed forces.

I feel this way because Castro appears to me as somewhat of an egotistic who survives on conquest and power.

Thoreau went to the woods deliberatively, so that he would not find out, after he had died, that he had not lived life to its fullest.

CHAPTER 6

CONVERGENCE

For the basic writing student, academic writing is a trap,
not a way of saying something to someone. The spoken
language, looping back and forth between speakers, offering
chances for groping and backing up and even hiding, leaving
room for the language of hands and faces, of pitch and
pauses, is generous and inviting. Next to this rich orche-
stration, writing is but a line that moves haltingly across
the page, exposing as it goes all that the writer doesn't
know, then passing into the hands of a stranger who reads it
with a lawyer's eyes, searching for flaws.   (Shaughnessy 7)

This one paragraph says it all. Inexperienced writers are jostled
back and forth between being able to express themselves unmistakably
in words with gestures and intonations and having to express them-
selves orthographically in five-hundred-word themes in the college
atmosphere. Many college freshmen are just such inexperienced writers
with little sense of how to express themselves logically, coherently,
and meaningfully on paper. They are simply creatures of speech who
have very little practice in the formal written word.

Up to this point, the chapters have concentrated specifically
on certain categories of errors. In this chapter there are sentences
with multiple errors that range from rule incompetence, reanalysis,

and phoneme confusion to suffix chunking, anticipation/perseveration substitution, and tip of the tongue state (TOT). It is a potpourri of phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic errors. It is simply an attempt to expose the reader to a variety of errors which occur within the framework of basic writing compositions and to analyze closely what the writers intend to write and what they actually write. This convergence effect, as it is called, is noticeable in student writing because motivation may slacken toward the end of the writing, coupled with the fact that the student may be physically and/or mentally tired. This motivation lapse and/or tiredness causes the student to make errors not only throughout the theme, but more specifically at the ends of sentences and paragraphs. The student surrenders, so to speak, to those conditions which afflict many college freshmen. They believe that writing courses which are required as part of the curriculum are "slough" courses or ones which are to be taken very lightly. As a result of this philosophy, many students write assigned themes the day, night, or morning before the work is actually due. A look at the first example demonstrates the convergence effect.

In this first example, there is not only confusion between which form of indefinite article to use but also doubt about the spelling of a word uncommon to the average freshman. I wish I could get into an lucrative sceam. The indefinite article a/an is used indiscriminately by many students because they partially learned or never took the time to completely master the rule that states: the

article a is used when the word following it begins with a consonant and an is used when the word following it begins with a vowel. This error may also be induced by the perseveration involving the preposition into. Part of a speaker's/writer's success depends on that person's ability to use the correct preposition before certain adjectives and nouns. This female student uses two Latinate words, namely, lucrative and scheme. She may be trying to impress the reader with her large vocabulary. She may well be uncertain about the preposition that precedes these words and finally settles on into. As the motor apparatus of her hand writes the sentence, her mind may still be concentrating heavily on the correct preposition. As a result of this dual action, she inadvertently writes an instead of a, perseverating on the letter n of into.

/Skim/ is not in the average student's active vocabulary and its spelling remains unclear. She may be analogizing in the form of reanalysis. She remembers that scream has the same sound as scheme, minus the r. Thus, she determines that since both words are very similar in sound, they must also be similar in spelling. She arrives at sceam by adding {-eam} to the initial letters sc.

This inexperienced writer may not have had to worry before about which form of the indefinite article to use because she always managed to express herself clearly in speech. The hearer invariably understood what was said and easily overlooked any errors that resulted. Now there is a distinct need to know not only what is said but also how to spell it correctly in order to get the message across

from writer to reader. Moreover, speaking words phonetically is always simpler and clearer than having to figure out which prefix or suffix to add or what set of graphemes represents a certain sound in written exposition. All of a sudden one encounters a whole new set of rules and spellings which must be recalled in order to get the meaning across. This is exactly the case in the next sentence which deals with allomorph confusion.

I have chosen Pacific University in Oregon as a first choise and ICO secound. /čɔys/ is a morpheme and the /s/ is a phoneme which has alternate forms known as allographs. Allographs are different letters which represent the same sound. In the word /čɔys/ the phoneme /s/ can be represented in a number of different ways, namely, s, ss, c, sc, st, or ps. It is confusing when words have the /s/ sound but use another letter or letters to represent that sound. This student may be familiar with the phonetic transcription from looking in the dictionary, or she may be reanalyzing from the word chosen which appears earlier in the sentence. Since chosen is a verb form and she wants the noun form, she realizes that certain changes have to be made. She may know that choice is the noun she wants, but per- severates the s of chosen when writing the word. She may also have decided on the /s/ sound because it is such a prominent formant in the word and the ce never occurred to her.

The word /sɛkənd/ is pronounced as though the second vowel is an /ə/ or a u. The schwa replaces the vowel sound in unstressed syllables and the sound becomes more of an uh sound. Since this sound

/ə/ is so pronounced, this student may have suffix chunked the {-und} onto the end of the word. She was aware that an o is part of the word and proceeds to place the o before the suffix ending {-und}.

It is obvious from this particular sentence that there are a great many functions which must be performed before she can express herself orthographically. Rules must be remembered, phonetic versus actual spellings have to be recalled, and correct suffixes and pre-fixes have to be retained. With attention focused on phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax, this student had some difficulty expressing herself in a correct manner. Because this encoding process is ongoing, inexperienced writers have difficulty writing the correct sentences because their backgrounds are weak in grammar and syntax. It should be noted that the errors come at the end of the sentence. The process taxes the monitoring function. Another inexperienced writer makes mistakes in phonology, morphology, and syntax because his attention is focused on an emotional subject.

Although meant have had to do these things for a lot longer, things have getten even tougher for him since the womens movement. The first error noted in the sentence above is the word /mɛn/ spelled meant. It is generally known that the brain is a complex storage file in which words, syllables, segments, and phonemes are stored. It is likely that one portion of storage consists of suffixes. In the error above, this student may have been thinking in two directions, namely, what to say next and how to spell men. Because this was an in-class exercise with students responding to the "superwoman myth," he may

have felt pressed for time. In the excitement of getting some thoughts down on paper, he pulled out meant instead of men. Both words have the same vowel sound /ε/, and he confused the preterite of the verb mean with the plural form of the noun man. In addition, it is conceivable that this student anticipated the word movement which appears at the very end of the sentence. He obviously "means" what he says and feels very strongly about the "movement."

In the second error, the student uses the verb getten instead of the perfect tense verb gotten. He attempted to choose between the present perfect have been getting and the perfect have gotten. This inexperienced writer was undecided about which tense to use and resorted to a blend of both tenses, namely, have getten. Another possibility for the error could be anticipation. Fromkin states in her book entitled Speech Errors as Linguistic Evidence that when a person speaks/writes, the encoding process is already several words ahead in the sentence in anticipation of what is to follow (43). Since the word women presents spelling difficulty both in its singular and plural forms, this student may have been concentrating heavily on that portion of the sentence and it was anticipated as early as the verb gotten, in which case the student inadvertently wrote /ε/ instead of /ɔ/. Fromkin also notes that the incidence is higher for antici- pation in a sentence when the words that follow have the same sound or letter within them ("The Non-Anomalous Nature of Anomalous Utterances" 30). In this case the letter e occurs seven more times after the error in the words even, tougher, since, womens, and movement.

Another error that occurs within this sentence is the lack of the plural pronoun them to agree with the plural subject men. The confusion concerning the spelling of men may have interfered with this student's remembering to make all pronouns agree with their plural antecedents.

The last error in this sentence is the student's omission of an apostrophe to denote possessive case. Women's should have the apostrophe between the n and s because women is already plural. There seems to be a general tendency with inexperienced writers to delete apostrophes in their writing. This may stem from the fact that students unaccustomed to formal writing tend to omit punctuation because there is no need for it in the spoken word. The student may also feel that as long as the words are written out and a sentence is formed, the reader will understand the message without any diacritical marks.

This particular student's theme was written out in longhand and the writing exercise took place in class. The topic being dis-cussed is a highly emotional one for both women and men. This writer was troubled with spelling, verb tense, pronoun agreement, and punctuation. He obviously feels emotionally involved in the woman's movement because his masculinity and power structure are threatened. Emotions are outside elements that interfere with the correct format of the written word. A Freudian might analyze his errors as negative feedback about the modern woman's acquisition of freedom, power, and success. Whether or not these outside influences affected the way

this student wrote is a matter of conjecture. We do know, however, that the pressure of writing something meaningful within a certain amount of time can be a source of anxiety for the inexperienced writer.

This next example was not written in class as the previous sentence was, but it exhibits some unusual phonological substitutions that are baffling. Hundreds of thousands will die in infancy from malnutrition; millions of others will survive but will be limited in their physical and mental capasilities, because of the delilitating effects of severe malnutrition in or at infancy. The two words /képəsɪlətiz/ and /dəlɪlətetɪŋ/ are unusually misspelled. An s is substituted for the b in capabilities and an l replaces the b of debilitating. The s contains the features: [+continuant, +sibilant, and +alveolar] whereas the b is [-continuant, +voiced, and +labial]. The l contains quite a few more features than the other two sounds put together, namely, [+sonorant, +continuant, +voiced, +liquid, +lateral, and +alveolar]. Since the s and b have no similar features on which one can attach any correspondence, it is necessary to look elsewhere for a solution. The l and b share one feature in common, that of voicing. The sibilant s has a strong hissing noise which makes it a difficult sound to place within words (Ladefoged in Fromkin 288). The sentence itself contains fifteen /s/, /z/, or /š/ sounds, nine before the word capabilities and six following it. Because of the frequency of this particular phoneme, the student may be perseverating the previous sibilant sounds. She may also be fusing two

words, namely, <u>capacities</u> and <u>capabilities</u>, in which case <u>capasilities</u> is the likely outcome. She may have been wrestling with a choice between these two words and unconsciously blended them to arrive at the "new" word.

<u>Debilitating</u> is likewise misspelled. It is very probable that this student perseverated the <u>l</u> because there are thirteen of them contained in preceding words. This particular example was written out in longhand, and the effect of writing that many tall loops is that another word will be perseverated. The <u>l</u> and the <u>b</u>, besides having the feature of voicing in common, are also shaped similarly, which contributes to the likelihood of error.

Both misspelled words occur near the end of this unusually long sentence. At the beginning of this sentence, the concentration level of the student is at a high peak because of the attention that must be given to so many processes, namely, correct spelling, proper punctuation, complete thought with correct syntax, proper use of lexical items, and proper morpheme usage. With all the monitoring in progress, it is highly likely that toward the end of the sentence the monitoring of this inexperienced writer broke down and she became in-attentive to those misspelled items either from physical or mental fatigue and/or lack of motivation. This fatigue may be caused by the student's inability to pace herself during the theme.

Lack of motivation may be the result of false impressions given to students before they enrolled in college. Parental expecta-tions are high because they want "Johnny" and "Susie" to have the

college educations they never had the opportunity to acquire. To ease their sons' and daughters' fears about college, parents tell them that it will be easy because "Johnny" and "Susie" always performed well in grade and high school and received high grades, and college is no different. Suddenly at college, inexperienced writers have to take formal writing seriously, and they are not prepared to assume that kind of responsibility or the hard work that it requires to become good writers who are able to express themselves logically, coherently, and creatively. The motivation that was so high when they first arrived at college immediately plunges to zero. Therefore, ill at ease, they assume the task of writing half-heartedly and convince themselves that they will write what is required with little concern for accuracy or thought. The next set of errors contained in an excerpt taken from a freshman theme displays what happens when inexperienced writers are not attentive to the rules that make up our language.

Even though there are run-on sentences, the student is aware, nevertheless, that there are boundaries marked by punctuation whereby the reader can pause before going on to the next thought. His lack of rule application, along with morphemic and phonemic errors, create a great deal of "noise" or "interference" within the sample that make reading the sentences tedious. The following example was written by a male student who had some interesting and insightful thoughts to express but somehow became laden with a great many spelling errors.

All he [the foreman] has to do is <u>made</u> sure his crew is doing the work properly and that the job is progressing according to <u>scheduale</u>. The

next easiest job would be that of the carpender all he has to do is
cut and nail boards togather. The most difficult job is that of the
laborer he's the one that gets the backbreaking job of digging holes
or cartting around wheelborrows full of cement. Foremen sit in their
vehicle reading bluprints.

This example of basic writing is taken from a theme in which
the topic centers around a particular kind of work and what responsi-
bilities that job entails. This student chooses construction and
develops his theme around the pattern of easiest to most difficult
tasks. He uses some good examples to illustrate his point and above
average vocabulary.

The first error appears in the verb /med/. The present and
the present progressive are the tenses this student uses in the first
sentence. Instead of is make, the student reverts to past tense made.
A d replaces the k. It is possible that the student anticipates the
/d/ sound in the verb doing which is found five words later in the
sentence, or that he is already concentrating on the d of the word
schedule. This word presents spelling difficulty for the average
student because it is a two-syllabled word which may times is pro-
nounced with three syllables /skɛ́ǰuəl/.

/Skɛ̌jul/ is a Latin word which has an sch spelling and an /sk/
pronunciation. The manner in which this student spells the word,
namely, scheduale, indicates that he pronounces it with three sylla-
bles or hypercorrects, and therefore, writes as he pronounces it. The
first part of the word with the sch difficulty is spelled correctly;

it is the last part of the word that contains the error. The student inserts an <u>a</u> to replace the schwa sound that occurs in unstressed syllables. Since the first syllable receives the stress, the second and third are unstressed. This word is not part of the average student's active vocabulary and because it is derived from Latin, presents even more spelling difficulty. Looking at the next error, one may say that it is a possible perseveration of the word <u>schedule</u>.

/Kárpəntər/ substitutes the voiced <u>d</u> for its unvoiced counterpart, <u>t</u>. Fromkin and Rodman state in their "Rules of Phonology" that "an alveolar stop becomes a voiced flap when preceded by a stressed vowel and followed by an unstressed vowel" (125). In other words, when people pronounce words such as <u>writer</u> and <u>rider</u>, they pronounce them identically, both with a Flap /d/. This inexperienced writer writes as he speaks. The stressed vowel <u>a</u> in the first syllable and the unstressed vowel <u>e</u> of the last syllable force the speaker to use the Flap /d/ rule, and because of this pronunciation similarity in speaking, this student writes the word incorrectly.

Whether or not he perseverates the schwa sound as he wrote it in the word <u>scheduale</u> or just perseverates the letter <u>a</u> because it is found fifteen times previous to the misspelled word and eight times in the same sentence is a matter of close inspection and analysis. /Təgéðər/ is misspelled as <u>togather</u> with an <u>a</u> replacing the <u>e</u>. There may be some interference between the meaning "to join in a unified whole" and the job itself of accumulating or gathering the boards before they can be cut and then nailed together. After all, he talks

about construction and how the duties become progressively more difficult as one goes down the line from the person overseeing the project to the actual physical laborer putting in eight physically-strenuous hours. He may be concentrating so heavily on the amount of difficulty involved in the job that he inadvertently confuses semantics with lexicon. Whether or not it is perseveration and/or interference, the fact remains that this inexperienced writer makes more errors as the excerpt continues. This particular theme from which the excerpt was taken was written in longhand; it may well have been written within a short period of time. This inexperienced writer may not have had a strong grammar or spelling background during his twelve years of public education (resulting in interference), or he may have applied the wrong rules when spelling words (resulting in hypercorrection).

Cartting is misspelled with two t's instead of one, and this student may have been applying the rule for final consonants. Hanna, Hodges, and Hanna state that:

> The gemination of consonants [was] an example of an effort on the part of our forebears to spell sounds in certain consistent ways. The fact that a doubled consonant was already often used to write a final consonant sound preceded by a short-vowel sound (add, egg) led to a new rule that such a final consonant should be doubled when a suffix beginning with a short-vowel sound was added (Bat/batting).

(212)

This student vaguely remembers but misapplies the rule to the word carting. The r changes the short-vowel sound from /æ/ to /a/ and as a result, the t does not have to be doubled. He may have been perseverating the geminate consonant g in the word digging. He remembers and applies the rule correctly to this word, but does not remember the exact rule when writing the word carting. It is quite noticeable now that the errors are "converging" or appearing in more rapid succession as the theme progresses. The next error is only two words away.

The word wheelborrows contains a phoneme anticipation. The first o replaces an a. There are ten o's preceding the error, all in the same sentence. It may well be the case that this student perseverates the o sound in these words. The error occurs near the end of the sentence, and by this time the inexperienced writer may be losing motivation. It could also be an error in the way the student pronounces this particular word. In other words, it may be an "ortholect" error, that is, an orthographic/dialect problem. The student may be accustomed to pronouncing the word as /wílbarәz/ instead of /wílbæ rәz/. The student may be writing in a manner resembling his speaking patterns. This is not uncommon in Freshman Composition themes. In fact, it is more the rule than the exception, especially when students come from schools which do not emphasize practice in formal writing. The next error also points in this direction.

The obvious error in this last sentence is that the student does not pluralize the word vehicle to make it agree with its subject

and verb. He remembers to spell the plural <u>foremen</u> correctly, and the plural of <u>man</u> always presents spelling difficulty for a great many students. His attention may have been focused so heavily on this particular word that he failed to add the {-<u>s</u>} to <u>vehicles</u>.

The last error of this excerpt refers to what was said in a previous paragraph concerning phonetics versus actual spelling. In the word <u>blueprints</u>, the student omits the <u>e</u>. It is a silent letter which signals a tense vowel sound preceding it. This rule forgotten, the inexperienced writer copies the word the way it sounds, namely, /blúprɪnts/. This error is the last word in the sentence, and points very much to the fact that student motivation usually wanes at the end of a sentence and that is where a good many errors are found.

Although this student uses good examples and an above average vocabulary, he misses the whole point in writing, that is, to get one's point across in as few mistakes as possible while at the same time maintaining reader interest. It appears that this inexperienced writer failed to learn adequately the rules of grammar and punctuation. The writing can be understood despite the number of errors, but the reader is left with the impression that this writer is a careless, insufficiently-skilled, poorly-trained orthographer. A student may go to great lengths to acquire an impressive vocabulary, but if he fails to use it precisely, then he has defeated his whole purpose in writing.

The next example also leaves the reader with a very poor impression of the student's writing capabilities. It carries the

message that somewhere during his school years he failed to acquire the necessary linguistic information vital to logical, coherent, and unified writing. <u>Time kept runing, problems kept adding, constration kept away, and the need for learning still there, there where my mind always was, by the time runing and two weeks later which I lost all my constration at the school, and without notecing that is a wast of time and effecting my school, then I noteced how bad I was effected by those events, so I decied to catch up at the school and try to forget about those troubles and as soon as possible, I start tring that mean while trouble didn't stope, but increased back home, and news over phone was coming day after day, in letters weak after another, and again I lost all my constration at the school.</u>

This combination run-on/comma splice is obviously an excerpt from an inexperienced writer's theme. First of all, this student has a problem with punctuation and syntax. This type of writing (minus the errors) might be found in a William Faulkner novel where stream of consciousness plays an important part in arousing the reader's emotions and evoking thought. This kind of writing has no place in Freshman Composition. Learning to write formal exposition is the primary goal of this course. As mentioned previously, this is an "ortholect" type of writing. With very little practice in formal writing, the basic writer has no recourse but to write as he talks. In order for a teacher to find out what specific problems this in-experienced writer must overcome in formal writing, she must analyze each error carefully.

In the very first error <u>runing</u> is spelled incorrectly because this student failed to observe the rule for geminate consonants. The short vowel /ʌ/ preceding the consonant <u>n</u> and the short vowel /I/ of the suffix necessitate doubling of the <u>n</u>. It may be lack of rule knowledge or carelessness in applying the rules.

The next error might be classified as a TOT state where the student remembers the initial and final portions of a word but fails to recall the middle. /Kənstréʃən/ is written for the word /kansəntréʃən/. This four-syllabled word is reduced to three syllables because of the student's inability to recall the entire word. It should be emphasized that the error is not a random one; it appears three times in the passage, namely, in the beginning, the middle, and the very end.

Interference and hypercorrection tend to be insistent and recurring. Shaughnessy mentions in her book that inexperienced writers tend to lose sight of individual letters when they write and merely focus on entire words. Furthermore, in focusing on entire words, she says that these same students remember initial and final sounds but the middle sounds become fuzzy conglomerations of phonemes (174). Polysyllabic words are especially susceptible to being misspelled because of their length. In the next error it is likewise the middle of the word that is erroneous.

/Nótəsɪŋ/ is misspelled with an <u>e</u> instead of an <u>i</u>. It may be that this student reanalyzed <u>notecing</u> from the word <u>note</u> instead of <u>notice</u>. The syllable with the wrong phoneme is an unstressed one and

here that this is a traditional shibboleth which appears on many standardized tests and college entrance examinations.

Effecting is used instead of the verb affecting. Further down in the sentence the word effected is used again erroneously. This confusion between the noun and the verb are frequently-occurring errors in freshman themes. The semantics may have interfered with the results that happen because of these so-called problems that were arising. The noun /əfέkt/ has the stress falling on the second syllable which leaves the unstressed first syllable with the schwa or /ə/ sound. This schwa sound may have influenced this student's spelling of the word. Because this student is "affected" by confusion between similar-sounding words, he unconsciously omitted the d in decided.

This word has three d's within a short space of seven letters, and the student may have become confused because of the high incidence of this one letter in such a small word. The incidence of three d's in one small word is not as common, and so the student inadvertently deletes one in the middle because the initial and final letters are identical.

The y of trying is omitted in the next error and this causes the word to become one syllable. It is possible that the student dropped the y because he was thinking of the rule that concerns words which end in y and the y changes to i before adding the suffixes {-ful}, {-ed}, {-est}, and {-es}. In the case of the ending {-ing}, the y remains and the ending is simply added on. This student neither

keeps the y nor changes it to i, but rather omits it altogether. It may be a pen skip or the lack of concentration on the student's part. If the student were observing the rule mentioned above, he may have seen the i and thought he had changed the y to i already. In omitting the y, this student changes a two-syllabled word to one syllable. In the next error one word becomes two words.

Meanwhile is one word, but this inexperienced writer has written it as two words and in the process changes the meaning of that part of the sentence. Meanwhile is an adverb, but the separation of the word changes it to the verb mean and the conjunction while. This confusion adds to the "noise" in the sentence and makes it that much more difficult to understand. This is a hypercorrection based on an incomplete knowledge of compounding and idioms.

The word stope is spelled with an e. Adding the diacritic e to the end of a word signals the reader that the vowel is long. What this inexperienced writer has written is /stop/ for /stæp/. It may be that this student anticipates the e ending on the words home and phone. The letter e is found twenty-three times in words preceding the misspelled one. It could be the case that the student per-severates the e sound because of its high incidence in this lengthy sentence. Obviously the student is not aware of the diacritic e rule, or if he is, disregards it in this case.

The word /wik/ is misspelled as weak. It may be that outside interference causes some distraction in the spelling of this word. The student's concentration becomes weaker as the problems at home

become greater. As a result of outside influences, the student writes _weak_ instead of _week_. Even the phrase that contains the error is faulty and incomplete. The student means _week after week, one letter right after another_, but instead shortens the phrase to _weak after another_. The word _week_ is such a common word that it is difficult to understand how it can be misspelled unless some outside influence is acting on the student as he writes the word.

In this longer-than-usual sentence, there are a great many errors on the levels of syntax, morphology, phonology, semantics, and punctuation. All these errors are compounded by the fact that this inexperienced writer incorrectly uses idioms such as _at the school_ for _at school_; _that mean while_ for _but meanwhile_; omits necessary articles such as _news over phone_ for _news over the phone_; and shortens phrases and causes them to lose their impact, namely, _weak after another_ for _week after week, one letter after another_. To say that this student lacks sufficient skill to write precisely is stating it mildly, and yet this is the sort of writing a teacher can expect to receive when students are poorly prepared for formal writing, and furthermore, lack the motivation necessary to write coherently and logically.

Inexperienced writers who come to college generally lack the awareness and motivation necessary for good writing. They are not totally to blame because they have very little choice over their environment or schooling. However, they do have a choice when it comes to motivating themselves to weed out their grammatical errors one by one. It is a time-consuming, tedious process that is not

easily accomplished over a short period of time. They need a great deal of determination to overcome those obstacles which stand in their way. There is no easy cure to overcoming phonological, morphemic, syntactic, and semantic weaknesses. Inexperienced writers must persist in their efforts to learn the rules of grammar and syntax if they are ever to become literate in the sense that they can express themselves clearly, concisely, and correctly in writing. As Shaughnessy so succinctly puts it: "For the basic writing student...writing is but a line that moves haltingly across the page, exposing as it goes all that the writer doesn't know..." (7).

In the past two years, I have taught approximately two hundred Freshman Composition students. It has been my experience during that time to have at least ten such inexperienced writers per semester but certainly not more than twenty-five. These are the students I quickly came to recognize as needing remedial assistance in grammar and spelling. When I noticed significant improvement in their writing skills by the end of the semester, indeed these were the ones from which I had received the biggest challenge but had derived the greatest satisfaction. A teacher cannot help all of these inexperienced writers because some lose motivation and the will to improve their writing skills, but if she can strengthen the writing skills of just a few of them during the semester, and in turn strengthen their self-confidence and self-image, then she has accomplished that which is expected of her as an educator.

CONCLUSION

Becoming proficient in writing skills is the aim of all conscientious students and the goal of every English teacher. In order to write effectively, one must commit to memory many phonological, morphological, and syntactic rules. These rules are the underlying foundation upon which our language operates. This appears to be an almost impossible task for the inexperienced writer to accomplish. It is a process, however, that all of us begin even before we can talk. According to Condon and Sander in their article from Science:

> If the infant, from the beginning, moves in precise shared rhythm with the organization of the speech structure of his culture, then he participates developmentally through complex sociobiological entrainment processes in millions of repetitions of linguistic forms long before he later uses them in speaking and communication. By the time he begins to speak, he may have already laid down within himself the form and structure of the language system of his culture. This would encompass a multiplicity of interlocking aspects: rhythmic and syntactic 'hierarchies,' suprasegmental features, and paralinguistic nuances, not to mention body motion styles and rhythms. (101)

Therefore, whether or not a person acknowledges the fact, we are immersed in the language and what Hockett calls an "internalized

grammar" (94) from the very day we are born. Essentially, we have the rules drilled into us through the use of numerous examples and repetitions, and when we begin formal education, we learn the written rules underlying why we speak and write the way we do.

There is no magic method to becoming a good writer. It is a slow, cumulative process and as Shaughnessy contends, "is something writers are always learning to do" (276). Errors are mainly the result of the inexperienced writer's ability to concentrate steadily when there are a number of continual processes going on at one time in sentence production (Fry 158), among which are the student's efforts to use polysyllabic words which ordinarily are not familiar to the inexperienced writer. As a result, hypercorrections occur. When the inexperienced writer has to "monitor" (Laver 132) syntax, semantics, morphology, phonology, and lexicon, that writer's attention will invariably break down, and again hypercorrections result. Moreover, in the process of encoding, the student's mind will always be several words ahead or several words behind returning to words or phrases about which that student is doubtful. Therefore, there is this constant movement of the mind back and forth checking on what has been and what is going to be transcribed. As Anne Cutler definitively states in her article entitled "Errors of Stress and Intonation," "There appears to be a kind of Murphy's Law...that states: There is no component or stage in the production of a sentence but an error can occur there" (67).

In looking at all the errors I analyzed, I noticed particularly that they generally occurred as the result of the same stress, structure, and/or spelling between the errors and some other words which occurred in the sentence. It is, then, not only a matter of the inexperienced writer having to know how to spell certain words correctly but also a matter of that student having the proper intuitive knowledge of where syllabic and sentential stress must fall. Stress, it seems, is an important aspect in cogent writing. For example, in anticipation/perseveration errors, stress plays a relatively important part because most of the errors occur as a result of similarities in sound, structure, but especially, stress. Similarly, in metathesized words the transposition occurs predominantly in the stressed syllable of the word. Blends, likewise, show an identical stress pattern not only in the two words which are blended but also in the blended word as well. Moreover, in TOT words and malapropisms stress is a crucial feature, and for the most part, occurs in the same syllable of the misspelled or misused words as it does in the intended words. Along with stress, other linguistic similarities are also relevant.

In fact, the more similarities there are between the error and the intended word, the more likelihood of error. For example, in anticipation/perseveration, the similarity of phonemes within words, phrases, or entire sentences is a common source of error. Likewise, in metathesized words there is normally phoneme similarity within the words, and this phonetic similarity contributes to the likelihood of

error. Furthermore, semantic similarity is a predominant feature of blended words. Because two words with similar meanings are competing for a place within a sentence, both words are likely to combine, creating a "new" word. Other similarities in blends which are important to examine are phoneme and morpheme similarity before the two words are blended and syntactic similarity. Likewise, TOT words and malapropisms result because of a great many similarities, namely, same initial and final letters, same sounds within syllables, same number of syllables, same features of articulation, and same part of speech. It is obvious, then, by looking holistically at the patterns into which these types of words fall that one can readily confirm the fact that the incidence of error is more likely to surface when there are many similarities in sound, structure, and stress between errors and intended words than if there were no similarities at all. Anne Cutler posits that:

> A correctly produced sentence involves the successful imposition of suprasegmental features at several points: the assignment of primary lexical stress to the correct syllable of polysyllabic words, the correct placement of stress within the sentence and within each constituent of it, and the imposition of an intonation contour, the latter determined by a number of factors, linguistic (whether or not the sentence is a yes-no question, for example), para-linguistic (the emotional state of the speaker/[writer]),

and pragmatic (the functions of the sentence in context,
whether irony is intended, etc.). (67)

It is apparent from the error analyses I performed that stress, in
addition to meaning and structural similarity, contributes to the
effectiveness and meaning of the written word.

In looking at all these important areas, one must conclude
that there is no panacea for inexperienced writers' spelling ills.
They must accommodate themselves to two or three times the effort that
the more experienced writers do. Mina Shaughnessy concludes that the
inexperienced writer possesses to a certain degree the same diffi-
culties that all writers possess:

> For the problems of getting an idea and beginning to write,
> of remembering where one is going as sentence generates
> sentence, of sustaining the tension between right and
> readable and being oneself--these are problems few writers
> escape... The [inexperienced writer] merely comes to them
> later than most and must therefore work harder and faster to
> solve them. (293)

There is no tried and true method of solving the problems of
inexperienced writers. Because they are more accustomed to speaking
than writing, they must learn, first of all, that there is a dis-
tinction between both modes of communication, and second, that writing
requires more steps than just thinking of an idea and expressing it in
words. Moreover, it requires careful consideration and

re-consideration of punctuation, grammar, spelling, meaning, and word choice. There must be respect for the <u>process</u> as well as the <u>product</u>.

Teachers, too, must examine themselves introspectively in order to be certain that they have a sincere, unbiased attitude toward the inexperienced writers whom they will no doubt encounter in their teaching careers. Moreover, these teachers need to examine every aspect of the inexperienced writers' capabilities in an honest attempt to discover alternate ways of helping these students achieve their goals and desires. When teachers do this, Shaughnessy says that:

> He begins to search in what students write and say for clues to their reasoning and their purposes, and in what <u>he</u> does for gaps and misjudgements. He begins teaching anew and must be prepared to be taxed beyond the limits he may have originally set for himself as a teacher of writing. He will need to give not simply more time but more imaginative and informed attention to what his students write than he may have given in the days when freshmen had learned most of what they needed to know about writing BEFORE they got to college. He will need to question and even abandon styles and methods of teaching that seemed to work before. He will need to cultivate patience for the slow pace of progress in this most complex of crafts and find ways of refreshing his own belief that writing is not only a necessary skill in college and an advantageous skill in work but the most

accessible way people have of exploring and perfecting their thoughts.   (292-293)

The inexperienced writers, then, who come to South Dakota State University from small communities are undoubtedly going to encounter writing difficulty because of their deficiencies in writing skills. The teachers of these students will need to possess a great deal of patience, maintain an optimistic outlook in the face of many defeats, and change their traditional ways of looking at misspelled words. This may even entail the enrollment of these teachers in linguistic, paralinguistic, or special analysis classes in order to change their traditional views on spelling errors. As a result of their attitude changes, they will begin to notice a great many hyper-corrections in student writing which they never noticed before or failed to analyze. This going "beyond correct" to the "creative" or "innovative" incorrect presents novel words with which teachers can study how inexperienced writers' minds function as they process words, phrases, and sentences; furthermore, this intense inspection will highlight those weak areas of the writing process that require further study and concentration.

GLOSSARY

ALVEOLAR RIDGE: Designating the bony ridge of the gums behind the upper front teeth. Formed, as English t, d, s, by touching or approaching the alveolar ridge with the tip of the tongue.

ANALOGIZING: Explaining something by comparing it with something similar. The process by which new or less familiar words, constructions, or pronunciations conform to the pattern of older or more familiar (and often unrelated) ones. For example, energizer is formed from energy by analogy; with apologize from apology.

ANTICIPATION: A sound or phoneme that appears erroneously in a word as a result of the influence of the same sound or phoneme occurring in the word(s) following the error, for example, block dog for black dog.

ARTICULATORY PROCESS: To produce a speech sound by moving articulators, that is, the vocal cords, tongue, and lips in such a manner as to produce sounds and words.

BILABIAL: To stop or constrict the air stream at the closed or nearly closed lips, as in the English stops p and b.

BLEND: Known also as a portmanteau word. A word formed by combining parts of two other words. Motel is a blend of motor and hotel; smog is a blend of smoke and fog.

CONTINUANT: A speech sound that can be prolonged as long as the breath lasts, with no significant change in the quality of the sound. F, v, th, s, z, sh, j, l, r, y, m, w, and h and all vowels are all continuants.

CONVERGENCE: The predominance or increase in error that results in writing because of physical/mental fatigue and/or lack of motivation. This convergence of errors most often occurs or increases at the ends of sentences, paragraphs, and themes.

ENCODING PROCESS: Recording spoken communication through graphic marks or symbols. The morphemic, phonological, semantic,

lexical, and syntactic gestalts that the brain performs before a thought or an idea can be transcribed.

FLAP /d/: A sound produced by slapping the tongue against the roof of the mouth or alveolar ridge. In certain words the ed ending assumes the sound of /t/, for example, pushed, parked, and picked.

FRICATIVE: Pronounced by forcing the breath, either voiced or voiceless, through a narrow slit formed at some point in the mouth. The air particles are pushed one against the other, producing noise because of the friction. The fricatives in English are s, z, f, v, th, sh, and j.

FUSION: A sub-type of blends. Joining together or uniting as in the case of words such as somewhat, oftentimes, and nevertheless in order to produce a new word with a different syntax. In addition, fusion occurs when two words are joined together to form one word as in the case of blends. For example, fierceful is a fusion of fierce and forceful where the force of forceful is blended into oblivion because fierce and ful have joined together to form an entirely new word.

GEMINATE CONSONANTS: A term used to denote a doubled consonant grapheme; for example, the dd in add or the nn in running.

GESTALT: Any of the integrated structures or processes that the brain forms when it encodes a thought or an idea into speech or the written word.

GRAPHEME: A unit of writing which in alphabetic systems represents a spoken sound. Thus, the graphemes which represent the word /bɔy/ are b and ɔy, whereby b represents /b/ and oy represents /ɔy/.

HYPERCORRECTION: A term used to describe the process whereby a person writes/speaks an erroneous word when that person actually wants to write/speak in an "educated" manner. It is often an attempt to impress someone else. When inexperienced writers attempt to become more effective writers in composition, they go beyond the acceptable "correct" to the "innovative" incorrect; for example, the word contradictory becomes contradictive where the wrong morpheme ending {-ive} is used in place of {-ory}.

INTONATION: Significant levels and variations in pitch sequences within an utterance; the manner of applying final pitch to a spoken sentence or phrase, that is, to ask a question with a rising intonation.

LATERAL: An articulation in which the airstream flows over the sides of the tongue, as in the English l in leaf.

LEXICON/LEXICAL ITEM: The total stock of morphemes in a language, especially of words as isolated items of vocabulary rather than elements in grammatical structure. Consists of whole words and portions of words, such as prefixes, suffixes, and inflections.

LIQUID: Without friction and like a vowel: used to describe certain consonants, particularly l and r.

MALAPROPISM: The ludicrous misuse of words, especially through confusion caused by resemblance in sound but unlike the intended words in meaning, for example, muttering for mothering.

METATHESIS: The transposing of letters or sounds in a word, for example, techinques for techniques.

MORPHEME: The smallest meaningful unit in a language. It may be a complete word, as boy, or it may be a speech sound that has no meaning when pronounced by itself but contributes to the meanings of words. For example, the sound /z/ represented by the s in boys. Noted in curly brackets { }.

MORPHOLOGY: The branch of linguistics that deals with the internal structure of words, and of the rules by which words are formed. With syntax, it forms a division of grammar. In other words, the "word building" properties of a language.

MORPHOPHONEMIC RULES: These determine the different phonetic representations of a morpheme. Thus, the regular plural morpheme is phonetically /z/, /s/, or /ɔz/, depending on the final phoneme of the noun to which it is attached.

NASAL: Produced by stopping all or part of the breath in the mouth and permitting it to pass through the nose, as in the sounds m, n, ng.

ORTHOGRAPHY: Spelling in accordance with accepted usage. How words are spelled in a language. "The science of spelling by the eye instead of the ear."

Allograph: Any of the ways a unit of a writing system, as the letter of an alphabet, is formed or shaped. Any of the units or combination of units that can represent a single phoneme, morpheme, syllable, and so forth. For example, the phoneme [s] has the allographs ps, ss, c, sc, and st.

Ortholect: Refers to the way in which writers, unfamiliar with the written language, transcribe words. They write in the same manner in which they speak.

PERSEVERATION: The sound or phoneme that appears erroneously in a word as a result of the influence of the same sound or phoneme occurring in the word(s) preceding the error. For example, brown fringers is written instead of brown fingers.

PHONEME: A set of phonetically similar but slightly different sounds in a language that are heard as the same sound by native speakers, and are represented in phonemic transcription by the same symbol, as in English, the phonetically differentiated sounds represented by p is pin, spin, and tip. The smallest meaningful unit of sound whereby the substitution of one for another changes the meaning of a morpheme as in the following two sentences: I'll bat you on the

head. I'll pat you on the head. Noted in slash brackets / /.

PHONETICS: The branch of language study dealing with speech sounds, their production and combinations, and their representation by written symbols. The system of sounds of a particular language. Noted in square brackets [ ].

PHONETIC/PHONOLOGICAL TRANSCRIPTION: A system whereby sounds are written out in some sort of notation that can be understood by others who speak that language. For example, the phonetic transcription of the word phonetics is /fənɛ́tiks/.

PHONOLOGY: The study of the sound structure of a language including phonetics and/or phonemics. The study of the changes in speech sounds in the development of a language or dialect. For example, the word language might be pronounced /læ′nwəj/ in one part of the country or in another dialect; a popular pronunciation might be /læ′nwɪj/.

PREMATURE CLOSURE: When the mind suddenly halts its spelling of a certain word because another sound or phoneme or gestalt in the sentence interferes with the correct spelling; this is especially true in anticipations and perseverations. For example, in the phrase trivial priblems, there is premature closure because of perseveration of the letter i in trivial whereas in trovial problems there is anticipation of the o in problems.

PSYCHOLINGUISTICS: The study of the psychological factors involved in the preception and response to linguistic phenomena.

REANALYSIS: When the form of one word is derived by looking at another derivation of that word. For example, the word preventation reanalyzed from the verb prevent by adding the ending {-ation} to obtain the noun form.

SCHWA /ə/: The neutral, uncolored, central vowel sound of most unstressed syllables in English; the sound of a in ago, e in agent, and i in sanity. The most common sound in English.

SEMANTICS: The branch of linguistics concerned with the nature, structure, and especially the development and changes, of the meanings of speech forms, or with contextual meaning.

SENTENTIAL STRESS: The sequence of voice stresses normally given to words in a sentence. Voice stress given to certain words or syllables in a sentence for emphasis, contrast, irony, satire, and so forth.

SHIBBOLETH: Traditional usage solecisms, usually sets of words such as allusion/illusion which look alike but have different meanings. These sets of words are often incorrectly used by inexperienced writers who possess a limited vocabulary.

SIBILANT: A consonant characterized by a hissing sound, as in s, z, sh, ch, and j.

SONORANT: A voiced consonant that is less sonorous than a vowel but more sonorous than an unvoiced plosive. The English sonorants are l, m, n, r, y, and w.

SPOONERISM: [Named after the Reverend W. A. Spooner (1844-1930), of New College, Oxford, famous for such slips]. An intentional interchange of sounds, usually initial sounds, in two or more words. An example is a well-boiled icicle for a well-oiled bicycle.

SUFFIX CHUNKING: Takes place when an inexperienced writer is doubtful about the end of a word, and therefore, puts a suffix on it that seems correct. An example is the word succeedment instead of success.

SYLLABIC STRESS: The most prominent sounds or the more heavily stressed part of a polysyllabic word. In the word syllable, the syl of the first syllable assumes the primary stress.

SYNCOPATION: The dropping of sounds or letters from the middle of a word, as in cuboard for cupboard.

SYNTAX: The arrangement of words as elements in a sentence to show their relationship to one another; the organization and relationship of word groups, phrases, clauses, and sentences, that is, sentence structure. An example is The boys enjoy eating ice cream, but not Enjoy boys the ice cream eating.

TARGET: The word intended in an utterance or written sentence. For example, the word adament is the target, but the inexperienced writer does not quite achieve the objective and writes aminent instead.

TIP OF THE TONGUE: It is a state in which one cannot quite recall a certain word, name, place, or event, but recalls parts of the word, such as number of syllables, initial and final letters, and primary stress; may recall synonyms and even the meaning of the word. For example, the word vivantly is a TOT error used in place of the intended word vividly.

VELAR: Pronounced with the back of the tongue touching or near the soft palate, as in English [g] in guy.

VELUM: The soft, movable part of the palate at the back of the mouth.

VOICED/UNVOICED: Having vibrations of the vocal cords during articulation, as in English [m] in the voiced word me.

Pronounced without vibrations of the vocal cords, as in English [s] in voiceless see.

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